

## **Popular education in times of societal transformation—A Swedish perspective**

Petros Gougoulakis and Michael Christie  
Stockholm University, Sweden

---

*The aim of this philosophical and historical position paper is to discuss the ways in which Popular Education—folkbildning—has contributed to the social transformation of Sweden through self-directed and collaborative educational practices. One of our premises is that individual transformative learning, fostered by folkbildning, has contributed to a collective transformation of Swedish society since the late 1890s and laid the ground for a modern and coherent society with a high level of trust among its citizens.*

---

### **Introduction**

Scandinavia has been an inspiration for many countries when it comes to organised, well-funded and effective adult education. In Australia for example, Adult Learning Australia (ALA) looked to

Sweden in the mid-1990s, when it applied for government funding to create study circles to address a number of important social issues. This initiative has evolved into the Australian Study Circles Network Pty Ltd (ASCN) which, to quote its own website, 'is a central resource for those who want to learn about study circles or organise a Dialogue to Change (D2C) program in Australia'. In Sweden, there has a long tradition of study circles and other forms of popular education (*folkbildning*) and although this tradition has also changed and evolved over time, popular education has played an important role in Sweden, especially in times of societal transformation. This article places popular education in context and makes the distinction, firstly between mass movements and popular movements, and secondly between mass education and popular education. It is important to point out that we use these terms in a particular way and in a particular context—namely, as ways of differentiating between two different types of societal change in the intellectual and spiritual life of Sweden. We use Habermas (1984–1986) to help make these distinctions and refer to major political, religious and social changes that we claim have been either initiated within the 'system-world' or from within the 'life-world'. The historical context is the gradual emergence, since the time of the Swedish reformation, of a socially cohesive, well functioning democracy. The example of a mass movement that included mass education, which we use in this article, is the overthrow of Catholicism by the Swedish King, Gustav Vasa (1496–1560) and the establishment of the Swedish Lutheran Church. This change begins with a struggle within the the 'system-world' and over two centuries results in a shift of power and privilege from the Catholic to the Swedish Church. By the 1800s the Swedish state Church encompassed and impacted on the lives of most Swedes and was responsible for a system of mass literacy. It, in its turn, was resisted, but this time from within the 'life-world'. Religious reformers, backed by ordinary people, created the Free Church

movement, which we characterise as a popular movement that used popular education to spread its ideas.

Habermas' theory of Communicative Action (1984–1986) helps us understand, analyse and draw conclusions about the role of popular education, historically and today. For Habermas, there are different types of action that are motivated by different types of reason. He labels his first category *strategic/instrumental action*. This type of action can countenance unilateral, non-inclusive means when the end is considered important enough. Quite often power and money tends to steer the process. *Communicative action* seeks common understanding and agreement via a process of rational discourse in order to achieve a mutually acceptable end. In communicative action all parties are given a fair hearing. According to Habermas 'the system-world' that includes the market, government and non-government organisations, has been increasingly characterised by *strategic/instrumental action*. Habermas does not exclude the use of communicative action in the system world but is concerned that instrumental reason and action, which is most often found there, is seeping into and contaminating both public and private spheres of 'the life-world' (Eriksen & Weigård 2003: 101). It is ultimately the 'life-world', in democratic societies, that has to be responsible for keeping the 'system-world' honest.

The shift in power from government by privileged few to parliament elected by universal suffrage, and the time it took to achieve this, is an another example of societal change brought about by a struggle between 'system' and 'life' worlds. Both Sweden and Australasia have experienced this struggle. New Zealand led the way by introducing voting rights for men in 1879 and by extending the right to women in 1891, while in Australia propertied men could vote in many colonies in the 1850s and in 1901 federal Australia extended that right to all adults. It took Sweden until 1911 for men to win the right to vote and another decade before women were given that right in 1922.

The struggle for political and labour rights was begun by individuals who formed unions and was resisted by right wing governments voted in by property owners. Examples of resistance on the part of the 'system-world' were the crushing of the forest workers' strike in Sundsvall, Sweden, in 1879 and the breaking of the Australian shearers' strike of 1891 in central Queensland, Australia. In both cases the army was called in. These traumatic events were a catalyst for the creation of social democratic parties in both Australia and Sweden. The emergence of strong parliamentary democracies in Australia and Sweden are, we argue, examples of popular movements supported by popular education. Today there are other threats to democracy, including acts of individual and group terrorism. The tragic event that occurred in and near Oslo in the summer of 2011, when a right wing terrorist exploded a bomb outside the office building that housed the social democratic Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, and then drove to the party's youth camp and shot 69 young social democrats, exemplifies the fear and hatred that a genuinely democratic institution can inspire in extremists. It also underscores how important it is for a democracy to be grounded in a common set of beliefs and values that are fostered and renewed by individual transformative learning maintained via popular education.

### **Building ideologies and mentalities**

A person's world-view consists of concepts, ideas, assumptions and theories that are expressed in meaningful acts of consciousness in the individual's social and cultural milieu. An individual's world-view may begin as a more or less articulated response to one's environment, for example, as the adoption of parental values or the acceptance of viewpoints expressed by school or other authorities. In time this rudimentary world-view is built into a more or less functional and sustainable noetic system. We employ our world-view to construe meaning of our experiences and other meaning schemes

we encounter. But that same world-view can obstruct and narrow meaning (Cranton 1994, Mezirow 1997, Taylor 1998).

The ability to reflect and communicate with others forms, frames and conditions the way we learn and such learning, in turn, leaves impressions on and shapes meaning structures. Such individual structures arise within social structures, which in turn 'survive' in the human mind and body as memory traces (Giddens 1984, Haugaard 1997). Meaning structures are socially determined knowledge that include both individual as well as collective resources and which help contribute to the full use of the human potential. The nature of social knowledge, according to Giddens (1984), is represented in three different forms: practical consciousness, discursive consciousness and the unconscious. In this paper we concentrate on the first two forms. Practical consciousness is a knowledge of everyday practices that actors carry in their minds as tacit knowledge. It differs, however, from the form of knowledge called discursive consciousness, which is reflected and possible to express verbally, as, for example, when human agents discuss and reflect on their activities. It is, primarily, through discursive consciousness that actors become able to change their behaviour patterns, especially when they are inspired by role models, when the need for change arises or when they face uncomfortable or disorienting dilemmas (Giddens 1984, Haugaard 1997, Söderström 2006).

Ideas, analytically speaking, constitute the first level of a more comprehensive process of 'idea building'. On this foundation of ideas rests the next level that is characterised by the way in which a number of ideas, as well as other signs and utterances, relate to each other. These specific patterns of relationships between key ideas constitute the growing ground for ideologies. Ideology is related to other systems, such as religion, industry, science and art, and together under certain conditions can form sub-cultures and cultures. The concept of culture is very broad but, in the anthropological sense,

denotes our entire way of life and includes not only our spiritual and intellectual life but also its material base (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, Anderson et al. 1999). Culture is inseparable from our everyday lives since it is a 'given' and permeates everything we are and do (Jensen 1988). Broadly speaking, culture refers to the collective heritage of ideas, knowledge, beliefs and values, and the patterns we use to communicate these to each other (see for example, Hammer 1910, Dewey 1966, Ödman, 1995). Culture cannot be made intelligible unless we approach it from a developmental and an educational perspective, which includes understanding the specific views of individuals and groups who make up the culture. Communicative practices, that include formal and informal education, are prerequisites for meaning-making in society. This process of communication and meaning-making involves people in different contexts who interact for specified purposes. In other words, cultures are a social construction.

The third level of the 'idea-building' can be described by the term mentality/mentalities. Mentalities, or 'habits of the mind' (Mezirow 1997, Taylor 1998), are referential frames, patterns of attitudes, values, beliefs and feelings that are founded during a long-term socialisation and acculturation process in specific socio-cultural contexts. Mentalities give culture its original aesthetics and constitute its 'mental universe'. They are social/collective manifestations of thinking, action, dispositions and frames of reference marked by specific existential conditions that together constitute meaning-making. Carriers of mentalities are rarely aware of the underlying processes that create conditions for the emergence of specific ideological and theoretical systems. In the course of time mentalities appear to be canonical, that is, contradiction-free and 'given', which obscures the fact that they once, long ago, emerged from conflict arenas where violent power struggles were fought. Mentalities are therefore cognitive and emotional structures, whose texture consists of the deposits that victorious (political) regimes give rise to,

reshaped continually into effective mental and material expressions. A dissection of mentalities is likely to reveal segments of ideas, habits and practices of previous generations (rituals), latent collective sentiments (feelings and intuitions) and cognitive schemes that fabricate intentions and orchestrate acts.

The efficiency of mentalities on both individual and collective levels is 'crystallized' in what Bourdieu describes as *habitus*: a system of structured, structuring (unconscious) dispositions, constituted in praxis and based on past experiences, which, while it integrates the individual's previous experiences, at any given time can also serve as a matrix for an individual way to perceive, evaluate and act. Members of a group or class, being products of the same objective conditions, share a habitus. The practices of these members are better harmonised than the agents themselves know. According to Bourdieu, habitus is a precondition for coordination of practices, and mobilisation (Bourdieu 1992, Berner et al. 1977, s.53). The gradual establishment of a State run Swedish Church is a good example of habitus. The various study associations that make up much of popular education in Sweden today are arguably other examples.

Mentalities are therefore culturally shaped, while at the same time culture-forming. Ödman (1995) has coined the term *immanent pedagogy* to describe all forms of subtle influence that permeate our lives. Such a pedagogy is inherent in almost all life situations and its subtle impact can be mentality-forming:

Pedagogy and mentality are in my view closely related to each other. It is through pedagogical activities that mentalities are shaped, and pedagogy is, in turn, shaped by the mentalities of the 'educators', in a dialectical interface. (Ödman, 1995, our translation)

Since mentalities are shaped and spread through long-term, socio-cultural processes, it is difficult to delimit mentalities such as mass and popular movements or the mass and popular forms of education

that have been linked with them. In the rest of this paper, we will analyse the development of three popular movements in Sweden and a common form of popular education (the study circle) that was developed by them. We argue that these movements, and the study circles that supported them, formed an effective reaction to what we, in the context of this inquiry, refer to as mass movements and the types of mass education that were connected to them.

### **Three popular movements and their use of study circles**

The three popular movements we refer to in this section are the Free Church Movement, the Temperance Movement and the Labour or Trade Unions Movement. In all three we can detect a reaction to a dominant ideology or mentality and a determination on the part of individuals and groups of individuals to react against a system or habitus, built on and protective of power and privilege. Activists in the 'life-world' who initiated change were themselves subjected to the existing mentality that privileged the churchmen, capitalists and politicians. This mentality embodied the ideologies of a state-run church, a capitalist economy and a property-based constitutional monarchy. Despite their early conditioning, activists from the 'life-world', through a process of discursive and reflective consciousness, were able to build a new ideology or mentality that was embraced by ordinary people rather than being imposed upon them.

These three popular movements, and the popular education (*folkbildning*) system they inaugurated, began in the wake of the industrial revolution in Sweden. Although there are many historical parallels between Sweden and its English neighbour (for example, the development of a state church), both the agrarian and industrial revolutions occurred later in Sweden. Industrial machinery was being used in the logging industry in the early nineteenth century and by the middle of the century Sweden's growing textile industry had shifted to steam driven carding, knitting and weaving machines, but



these developments had already occurred in England almost a century before.

The system of mass literacy that we mentioned in the introduction benefited activists from all three popular movements mentioned above. They understood that knowledge was a source of power and was an essential tool in any attempt at reform. The system of annual literacy checks was initiated by the Swedish Church in 1686 following the translation of the bible into the vernacular. Once a year parish priests visited farms and villages and tested their parishioners in their ability to read a passage from the bible and answer catechism questions. This system was continued for two centuries and, although it was a means to maintain Church control, it also inadvertently led to a general level of literacy that is unparalleled in other western countries. When the three movements mentioned above set up study circles to educate their members, many who participated in them were already able to read.

Leaders within the Free Church Movement objected to the way the Swedish Church controlled ordinary people's place and form of worship and outlawed private prayer meetings. The law banning such meetings and the practice of any faith other than Swedish Lutheranism (enacted 1726) was abolished in 1858. Pietists, Evangelicals, Baptists and Methodists were able to create legal organisations that used popular educational methods to educate their members. Some of these members, in turn, helped start the Temperance Movement and the Union Movement. Both of these movements reacted to the large-scale poverty, oppression, marginalisation and ignorance associated with societal change that followed enclosure laws, rural unemployment and a shift to the cities, where housing was cramped and unhealthy. Conditions were so poor, the hours so long and the temperatures in winter so severe that the work day often began and ended with an issue of vodka (brännvin). Both these movements grew in strength and numbers

during the second half of the nineteenth century and there was an overlap of membership, especially among study circle leaders (Gougoulakis 2001, Christie 1996). A number of labour leaders, for example, gained knowledge, organisational skills and the motivation to reform society via membership in the temperance movement. At the end of the 1800s, these and like minded activists began to organise themselves into trade unions and political parties, and made use of the same means of spreading their message as the teetotallers. They used libraries, study circles and lectures as a means to achieve their political, social and cultural objectives. In 1912 the various worker groups organised their educational activities under a central organisation, the Workers' Educational Association. Later, other adult education associations were established by different groups with particular ideological and political profiles.

Unlike many other European countries, which overthrew their monarchies or drastically reduced their power in the revolutionary year of 1848, Sweden followed a reformist path, using the right to mass education as one means of averting revolution. When Sweden lost its war against Russia in 1809, the King was deposed and his uncle installed, on condition that a new constitution gave increased power to the Riksdag, Sweden's representative body for the four estates—nobles, clergy, merchants and farmers. In the same year Gustaf Abraham Silverstolpe called for basic education for all classes of society, arguing that it would help inculcate morality, love of country and an acceptance of one's place in society. Education was seen as a means of averting revolution and instituting reform. Others, like the teacher Carl Broocmans and the botanist Carl Agardh (later the Bishop of Karlstad) rejected the notion, arguing that education should be the exclusive privilege of the clergy and the upper classes and instead, supported libraries and other forms of popular education. By 1833 this push for educational reform had another motif. Erik Gustaf Geijer insisted that poverty was founded in ignorance and that education could be used not only to inform people

of their duties and moral obligations but also to improve their social and economic situation. On 18 June 1842, the government bowed to demands for educational reform and introduced basic schooling (mass education) for all and provided some support for parish libraries (Steele 2007, Gougoulakis 2001, 2006 & Christie 2002).

Ultimately, the driving force behind any popular movement, and an indispensable condition for it to attract supporters, is the existence of a strong idea, a desirable and necessary goal. The temperance movement and the workers' movement were two great popular movements that, at the turn to the twentieth century in Sweden, contributed decisively to the achievement of 'social solidarity and social responsibility'. This was a period of social awakening that highlighted the demand for a new type of citizen, one able to embrace and realise a great social idea. For the temperance movement, it was public sobriety and abstinence from drink; for the workers' movement, it was a vision of economic liberalisation in which a fair day's work received a fair day's pay. The ideal of the free churches was the freedom to practise their beliefs anytime and anywhere, which meant having to undermine the hegemony of the state-run Swedish Church. In their struggle for religious, social and political rights, the popular movement utilised education as an important tool. Gradually, this kind of educational practice took organisational manifestation in the form of educational associations. Study associations acquired and coordinated resources that could be used to realise the particular social movement's organisational objectives (Svensson 1996, Amnå 1999). As Olsson points out:

Participation in organizational activities and the internalization and realization of an association's idea through practical work, strengthened its members. By participating in social work and by deliberating and discussing general issues, a large strata of workers gained a real education, which in due course helped counterbalance the formal education that leading social classes were in possession of. In this way, a good foundation was also

laid, quite unconsciously, for a more thorough, theoretical and personal self-education when the association's members took part in the training sessions and study circles. (Olsson 1922:48, our translation)

The Swedish word for popular education is *folkbildning*. If we consider its mass character, the activation and participation of diverse—mostly indigent—groups of adults in learning activities, as well as its perception of learning as an instrument for empowerment, social advancement and assertion of fundamental political rights, it is possible to see a connection with the German concept of *bildung*. For the individual, the idea of education as a lifelong and life-changing process rather than simply the acquisition of knowledge and skills, fits quite snugly into Wilhelm von Humbolt's notion of education or *bildung*. In this sense too, popular education is separated from compulsory school (formal) education in regards to educational, organisational and curricular goals, because it has an autonomy that is based on principles of self-education and the cultural needs of the participants. (Gougoulakis & Bogotaj 2007, Christie 1998, 2002).

### **Study circles**

Since the late nineteenth century, the study circle (a self-directed, democratic and collaborative learning method) acted as a balance to a mass school system that became more exclusionary the older its students became. The study circles became places for collective learning and communication and the loci of social networking. They were also used as a means of achieving political objectives when organised by associations with such aims. The study circle in its broadest sense was already being used in the mid-nineteenth century by popular movements, but as a more strict educational form and strategy it dates from 1902 and Oscar Olsson is regarded as its 'instigator' (Törnqvist 1996, Arvidson 1991; Andersson et al 1996, Vestlund 1996, Gougoulakis 2001, 2006).

The study circle, as a systematic and self-governing meeting place of learning, has become a national educational standard for popular education. It has also been a tool for both individual and collective emancipation and a means for social and community development (see for example, Coleman 1990, Gougoulakis & Bogataj 2007, Larsson 2001, Oliver 1987, and compare Candy 1991, Brockett & Hiemstra 1991). The pedagogy of study circles was, and still is, premised on a free and open dialogue between equals. Participants exchange ideas and experiences under self-directed and deliberative learning processes, beyond the sort of hierarchies associated with conventional schooling. Study circles provide a public place that seems to appeal to ‘creative people’ (compare Florida 2006).

After a century and half of struggle, the state today not only recognises Swedish popular adult education as a free and voluntary form of learning but actually ensures its independent existence via legislation. The state view on the character of non-formal, popular education is expressed as follows:

Popular education is and should be free and voluntary. This free and voluntary popular educational work enables all to seek knowledge on the basis of their own experience, preferences and learning style, without limitation from demands for results, and without mechanisms of exclusion. The approach permits dialogue, involvement and questioning, without a preconceived framework. By reason of this, popular education fulfils a role not covered by any other educational institution, a role which also contributes to maintaining the vitality of democracy (Government Bill 1997/98:115:5).

### **Popular movements’ educational agenda for societal transformation**

After a long struggle in the nineteenth century the history of Sweden’s popular movements, and the popular educational forms they embrace, is now an integral part of Sweden’s modern history. From the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards, the movements’

historical development can be divided into four phases using distinct signs that mark shifts and transformations in the values of civil society. Following a radical phase of formation, the new social movements became established as legitimate actors in the country's political life. This was made possible through state recognition and public economic support. Civil society was gradually incorporated within the dominant political culture marked by a social-democratic, reformist orientation towards co-operation, pragmatism, compromise and equality. The new movements toned down their protest profiles and supported the new *folkhem* (people's home) project, which is a metaphor for the Social Democratic Party's political vision of a public welfare system (Gougoulakis & Bogotaj 2007).

The post-war spirit of consensus was followed in the 1960s and 1970s by a new phase of civil-social development. During this time of reappraisal, radical new social forces entered the political arena, impelled by the agenda of post-material values. The individual's need for personal integrity and self-realisation infused cultural debate and challenged the predominant collectivistic thinking of the period. This phase of awakening and criticism targeted the social model of production. The popular education organisations became more independent vis-à-vis their 'original' founders and were rejuvenated with new members and new or evolved social movements.

A number of tendencies during the last three decades of the twentieth century forebode great changes in Sweden's society, economy and cultural life. A new 'social morphology' of networks that use *information* as a basis for productivity and power were established (see Demertzis 1996). In the swell of globalisation, the role of the state in public life is decreasing and at the same time individualisation is spreading. The redrawing of the power map involved in globalisation is generating both new winners and losers and new areas of resistance. New movements are emerging, organised on a network basis and not dependent on national borders. In some ways, these

movements express civic commitment with global awareness and responsibility. They are composed of new identities constructed chiefly out of *meaning* and *spirituality*. The roles of established movements are being questioned as more and more people abandon them. Yet this cannot be seen as a waning interest in politics, but rather an expression of an individual-centred search outside of given collective structures. The purpose is largely the same as it always is, to reduce susceptibility to various risks; but the means seem to consist to a greater extent of individualised strategies for eliminating the effects of these risks (Demertzis 1996).

Popular education and its pedagogical theory are compelled to take a stance regarding these social changes. The individual is clearly becoming the actor in the new era, but the focus on the individual need not, perhaps should not, be allowed to deny the significance that a functioning collective has for the individual's opportunities to develop and be well. As a field, civil society is not homogenous but rather an arena full of conflict where the various agents compete for preferential rights of interpretation, the creation of world images, and ideological hegemony. In addition, every agent is characterised by defined relations toward other agents within civil society and toward the state and the economy (see Granovetter 1985).

As mentioned at the outset a vital 'life-world' is a prerequisite for a healthy, functioning 'system-world' in which structures and strategic action supports, rather than undermines, a truly democratic society. Participation in civil associations empowers people with resources to help shape and form their collective destiny. Today, the individual is exposed to new threats and risks (Beck 1998, Castells 1996, Giddens 1994). This makes the ability to learn and develop, collaborate and deliberate, act and reflect, a necessity of life. Study circles and popular education can help build this ability. Popular education contributes to transformative learning within society by

fostering and strengthening democratic virtues that enable citizens to participate politically in a modern society (compare Larsson 2001).

*Popular education* and *study circles* created public spaces for dialogue and analytical, critical reflection in the past. Today, ten Study Associations arrange approximately 280,000 study circles each year, where nearly 1.8 million individuals across the country participate in the most varied of topics. These study circles enable adult citizens to practise their civil liberties and contribute to a specific Swedish political culture, which, in turn, has shaped the mentality of Swedish people. It is a mentality that has served Sweden well and will continue to do so if, via popular movements and the educational associations they build, it continues to embrace analytical, critical, transformative learning principles.

## References

- Amnå, E (ed.) (1999). 'Det idealiserade föreningslivet', in *Civilsamhället*. SOU 1999:84, Forskarvolym VIII, Demokratiutredningen, Stockholm: Fakta info direkt.
- Andersson, B (1980). *Folkbildning i perspektiv.—Studieförbunden 1870–2000. Organisering, etablering och profilering*, Stockholm: LTs förlag.
- Andersson, E, Laginder, A-M, Larsson, S & Sundgren, G (1996). *Cirkelsamhället. Studiecirkelns betydelser för individ och lokalsamhälle*, SOU 1996:47, Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Andersson, LG, Persson, M & Thavenius, J (1999). *Skolan och de kulturella förändringarna*, Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Arvidson, L (1985). *Folkbildning i rörelse. Pedagogisk syn i folkbildning inom svensk arbetarrörelse och frikyrkorörelse under 1900-talet—en jämförelse*, Högskolan för Lärarutbildning i Stockholm. Institutionen för pedagogik: CWK Greerup.
- Arvidson, L (1991). *Folkbildning och självuppföstran. En analys av Oscar Olssons idéer och bildningssyn*, Eskilstuna: Tidens Förlag.
- Beck, U (1998). *Vad innebär globaliseringen? Missuppfattningar och möjliga politiska svar, (Was ist Globalisierung? Irrtümer des Globalismus—Antworten auf Globalisierung)*, Göteborg: Daidalos.



- Berner, B, Callewaert, S & Silberbrandt, H (1977). *Skola, ideologi och samhälle. Ett kommenterat urval franska utbildningssociologiska texter av Bourdieu/Passeron, Baudelot/Establet, Poulantzas*, Stockholm: Wahlström&Widstrand.
- Bourdieu, P (1992). *The logic of practice*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Castells, M (1999). *The information age: Economy, society and culture*, Malden: Mass.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Christie, M (1998). 'Encouraging critical awareness of one's assumptions and values in adult and vocational education', in Christie, MF (ed.), *Diversity and innovation in adult and vocational education*, Darwin: NTU Press.
- Christie, M (2002). 'Social and historical factors in the development of Swedish adult education', *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 42(1): 57-74.
- Coleman, J (1990). *The foundations of social theory*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cranton, P (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Demertzis, N (1996). *Ο Λόγος του Εθνικισμού. Αμφίσημο σημασιολογικό πεδίο και σύγχρονες τάσεις*, (The nationalist Discourse. Ambivalent semantic field and contemporary tendencies (in Greek), Aten: Ant. N. Sakkoulas Publishers.
- Dewey, J (1966). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*, New York: The Free Press.
- Eriksen, EO & Weigård, J (2003). *Understanding Habermas: Communicative action and deliberative democracy*, London: Continuum.
- Florida, R (2006). *The rise of the creative class. And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*, New York: Sane Agency & Susan Schulman.
- Giddens, A (1989). 'A reply to my critics', in Held, D & Thompson, JB (eds.), *Social theory of modern societies: Anthony Giddens and his critics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, A (1994). *Beyond left and right : The future of radical politics*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*, Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.

- Gougoulakis, P & Bogataj, N (2007). 'Study circles in Sweden and Slovenia— Learning for civic participation', in Frane, A (ed.), *Social capital and governance, old and new members of the EU in comparison*, 203–236, Berlin: Lit Verlag.
- Gougoulakis, P (2001). *Studiecirkeln. Livslångt lärande...på svenska!* (Study Circle. Lifelong Learning ... in Swedish), Stockholm: HSL Förlag, PhD thesis.
- Gougoulakis, P (2006). *Bildning och lärande. Om folkbildningens pedagogik.* (Bildung and Learning. On the Pedagogy of Popular Education), Stockholm: ABF& Bilda.
- Granovetter, M (1985). 'Economic action and social structures. The problem of embeddedness', *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3): 481–510.
- Habermas, J (1984). *The theory of communicative action. Reason and the rationalization of society, Volume 1*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J (1987). *The theory of communicative action. Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason, Volume 2*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hammer, B (1988/1910). 'Om pedagogiska problem och forskningsmetoder', in Lindberg, L & Berge, B-M (eds.), *Pedagogik som vetenskap—vetenskap som pedagogik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur: 32–39.
- Haugaard, M (1997). *Constitution of power: A theoretical analysis of power, knowledge and structure*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jensen, JF (1988). 'Det dobbelte kulturbegreb—den dobbelte bevidsthed', in Hans Hauge, H & Fink, H (eds.), *Kulturbegrebets kulturhistorie*, Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.
- Kroeber, AL & Kluckhohn, C (1952). *Culture. A critical review of concepts and definitions*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.
- Larsson, S (2001). 'Seven aspects of democracy as related to study circles', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(3): 199–217.
- Le Goff, J & Nora, P (eds.) (1985). *Constructing the past: Essays in historical methodology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leffler, M (1999). *Böcker, Bildning, Makt. Arbetare, borgare och bildningens roll i klassformeringen i Lund och Helsingborg 1860–190*, Lund University Press, *Bibliotheca Historica Lundencis* 91.
- Mezirow, J (1997). 'Transformative learning: Theory to practice', in Cranton, P (ed.), *Transformative learning in action: Insights from practice, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 74, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 5–12.

- Ödman, P-J (1995). *Kontrasternas spel. En svensk mentalitets- och pedagogikhistoria*, Stockholm: Norstedts Förlag AB.
- Olsson, O (1922). *Det svenska folkbildningsarbetet. En sammanfattning. Folkets studiehåndbok*, Stockholm: Aktiebolaget Svenska Nykterhetsförbundet.
- Söderström, Å (2006). "Att göra sina uppgifter, vara tyst och lämna in i tid". *Om elevansvar i det högmoderna samhället*, Karlstad University Studies.
- Svensson, A (1996). *Folkbildningens institutioner*, SOU 1996:127. Delbetänkande av Kommittén om ett nationellt kunskapslyft för vuxna. Stockholm: Utbildningsdepartementet.
- Taylor, EW (1998). *The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review*, Information Series No. 374. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment, College of Education, the Ohio State University.
- Törnqvist, I (1996). *Oscar Olsson folkbildaren. I synnerhet hans tankar om universitetens roll i folkbildningsarbetet*, Stockholm: Sober Förlag.
- Vestlund, G (1996). *Folkuppföstran, folkupplysning, folkbildning. Det svenska folkets bildningshistoria—en översikt*, Stockholm: Brevskolan.

## About the authors

**Dr Petros Gougoulakis**, born in Greece, awarded a PhD 2001 at Stockholm University, Sweden, for a thesis entitled 'The study circle: Lifelong learning ... in Swedish! A non-formal meeting place for discussion and learning for all' (*Studiecirkeln: Livslångt lärande...på svenska! En icke-formell mötesplats för samtal och bildning för alla*). Gougoulakis is working as Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education, Stockholm University. His main research interests deal with learning processes in various contexts, and, in particular, the subject area of adult educators' qualifications as well as the phenomenon of 'folkbildning' (adult popular education). Gougoulakis is member of The European Society for Research in Education of Adults (ESREA) and Hellenic Adult Education Association (HAEA).

**Professor Michael Christie** was awarded a PhD in 1978 at Monash University, Australia, for a thesis entitled 'Aborigines and colonists in early Victoria, 1836–1886'. Christie has maintained an interest in cross-cultural research during his career but, in his recent research, has focused on university pedagogy, the supervision of doctoral students and the pedagogical use of information communication technology in university teaching and research. Michael Christie is Sweden's first Professor of Higher Education and has been active in building a national network of researchers in this area. He has strong connections with adult and higher education researchers outside of Sweden, including Australia.

### **Contact details**

*Petros Gougoulakis, IPD, Stockholm University,  
SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden  
Tel: + 46(0)8 1207 6364  
Email: petros.gougoulakis@edu.su.se*

*Michael Christie, IPD, Stockholm University,  
SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden  
Tel: +46 (0)8 163143  
Mobile: +46 (0)734605748  
Email: michael.christie@edu.su.se*