Documentary Method and Biographical Narrative Interview for Understanding Participation in Adult Education

In this article, it is asserted that researches in the field of adult education need a more comprehensive understanding of participation which goes beyond the dominant psychological theoretical framework in which the motives toward participation as internal/subjective factors on one side, and the deterrents toward nonparticipation as external/objective factors on the other, are examined. A more holistic approach to participation in adult education should consider that the decision and the act of participation do not happen arbitrarily, but as an outcome of the biographical experiences of the individual, which are accumulated through a lifelong path within a particular social field. Accordingly, it requires a better methodology which helps the researcher overcome the epistemological limits of the question-answer scheme in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Documentary Method and biographical narrative interview as discussed in this article provide the opportunity to understand participation in its contextual and relational dimensions.

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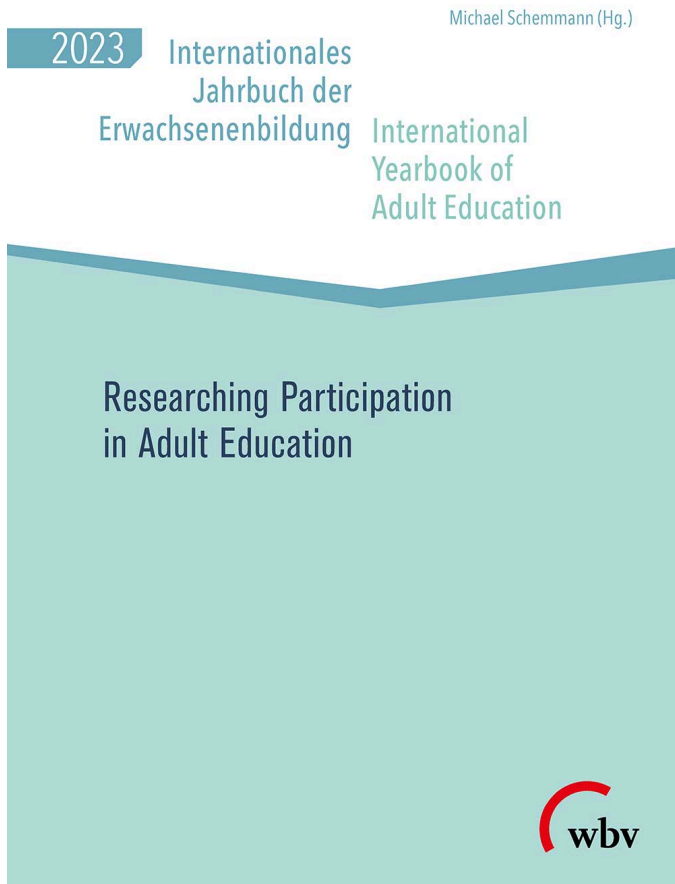In this article, it is asserted that researches in the field of adult education need a more comprehensive understanding of participation which goes beyond the dominant psychological theoretical framework in which the motives toward participation as internal/subjective factors on one side, and the deterrents toward nonparticipation as external/objective factors on the other, are examined. A more holistic approach to participation in adult education should consider that the decision and the act of participation do not happen arbitrarily, but as an outcome of the biographical experiences of the individual, which are accumulated through a lifelong path within a particular social field. Accordingly, it requires a better methodology which helps the researcher overcome the epistemological limits of the question-answer scheme in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Documentary Method and biographical narrative interview as discussed in this article provide the opportunity to understand participation in its contextual and relational dimensions.

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Documentary Method and Biographical Narrative Interview for Understanding Participation in Adult Education[1]

Ş. Erhan Bağcı

Abstract

In this article, it is asserted that researches in the field of adult education need a more comprehensive understanding of participation which goes beyond the dominant psychological theoretical framework in which the motives toward participation as internal/subjective factors on one side, and the deterrents toward nonparticipation as external/objective factors on the other, are examined. A more holistic approach to participation in adult education should consider that the decision and the act of participation do not happen arbitrarily, but as an outcome of the biographical experiences of the individual, which are accumulated through a lifelong path within a particular social field. Accordingly, it requires a better methodology which helps the researcher overcome the epistemological limits of the question-answer scheme in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Documentary Method and biographical narrative interview as discussed in this article provide the opportunity to understand participation in its contextual and relational dimensions.

Keywords: Documentary Method; biographical narrative interview; habitus, field; participation

The main problem to be handled in this article is to elaborate a methodological framework to comprehend how we can grasp participation and nonparticipation orientations of adults in education. For this purpose, deriving from my insights on my own work (see Bağcı, 2019), I am first going to present a contextual and relational theoretical approach to participation in adult education, and after that I am going to give a theoretical and practical outline on methodology for participation researches, biographical narrative interviews in Documentary Method, which provides us with the opportunity to make interpretations based on qualitative empirical data.

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1   Participation in Adult Education

Participation is one of the main topics in adult education. We have a vast number of studies which focus on both theoretical and practical aspects of participation from different points of view. Smith (2010) outlines the main models and theories of participation in literature, such as needs hierarchy theory, congruence model, force-field theory, life transition theory, reference group theory, social participation theory, and chain of response model. Considering the relevant literature, Henry and Basile (1994: 65) assert that the main assumptions of Houle's typology and Boshier's scale are the regulatory framework among the studies in this field. In these two studies, Houle (1961) puts adult learners into three categories as goal-oriented, activity-oriented and learning-oriented; and Boshier (1977) introduces an Education Participation Scale as an instrument to test Houle's typology.

Henry and Basile (1994), in their comprehensive inquiry, state that although there are sociologically oriented approaches which consider the social context, most of the studies to explain adult participation in education remain within a psychological framework in which the motives as internal factors on one side, and the deterrents as external factors on the other are examined. This framework presupposes that motives and deterrents are unrelated with, independent of or external to each other. However, we know that approaches such as social and human capital that focus on the relationship between decision to participate and social conditions, assert that motivation to participation is not free from the social factors in which the individuals live (Knipparth & De Rick, 2015). Likewise, Rubenson and Desjardins (2009: 197) oppose the idea that participation is a voluntary act that the individual freely chooses due to motives inside or to deterrents outside. They emphasize that the decision to participate rests on the intersection of the purposeful behavior of social agents and the constraints caused by the social and material contexts of that behavior, since dispositions and preferences are not totally independent of conditions. By implying the interrelatedness in-between, they call on a more holistic approach that situates the individual's decision-making process on participation in the social context.

The decision and the act of participating in adult education is not an instantaneous reaction to immediate stimuli, but it is rooted in the biographical experiences of the individual. Human beings are social agents that are products of history of their accumulated experience of a path within the whole social field, but not particles of matter determined by external causes, or not little monads guided solely by internal reasons (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 124–136). The idea of motivations inside and deterrents outside regards participation as an arbitrary practice that the individual conducts, depending on the clash of internal (subjective) and external (objective) factors. However, practices, such as participation in adult education, can be accounted for only by relating the subjective to the objective.

A helpful concept in situating the decision to participate in the social context, or relating the subjective to the objective, is the "milieu". In their study on types of social

milieus affecting participation in adult education in Germany, Barz and Tippelt write that (2001: 1):

> "People who share a common set of core values and beliefs constitute social groups which are called 'social milieus'. As a matter of fact, each social milieu is composed of a number of persons who agree roughly with one another concerning the basic realities of everyday life, such as work, leisure, preferences, tastes, relationships, hopes, fears and dreams. Simply stated: a social milieu can be regarded as a group of like-minded people."

The authors try to demonstrate in their study that individuals of the same social milieu exhibit the same attitudes and patterns of behavior, including participation. So, the concept of milieu links the motives underlying the attitudes and behaviors of individuals to the group they belong to. Likewise, for Nohl (2009: 147), it can substitute for the concept "culture": milieu is a multidimensional social space of conjunctive experiences that connects people to each other, no matter if they are at the same place or not. It refers to the commonalities among the members. Individuals from the same milieu, or space of conjunctive experiences, talk and act similarly out of their commonly shared biographical experiences. However, a social actor's experiences cannot be reduced to a single factor, such as social class, ethnicity, religion, gender, level of education and the like; therefore, one can argue that milieus are made up of various layers of conjunctive experiences, which means they are multidimensional. They are also collective and they exist before the individual, and the individual becomes socialized in these spaces of conjunctive experiences. Frames of orientations which guide the practical action of an individual are generated among these milieus (Bohnsack, 2014: 225). The notion of milieu connects the practical actions of social actors to their biographical experiences.

On this account, in order to understand participation, we need to employ a perspective that covers and focuses on the relationship between individuals' practices and the social and historical conditions in which they live, which brings us to Bourdieu's concepts, "habitus" and "field" (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 94–140). Habitus is the socialized subjectivity which serves as the motivating structure of human practices through the relationship between the cognitive system of the individual and the practical world (ibid.: 126). It mainly refers to the durable, but also transposable dispositions which are produced among the interplay between social milieu and human practice (Costa & Murphy, 2015: 6). And field is a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions, which have specific and irreducible logic of its own, and in which habitus is structured, by producing practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and so forth. There is a number of fields in highly differentiated societies, such as the artistic field, or the religious field, or the economic field which all follow specific logics. The limits of any field can be considered as the space within which the effects of the field are exercised (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 97–100). While the field generates habitus on one side, habitus makes the field meaningful for the individual on the other. Therefore, the main point of the relationship between field and habitus is the *concordance* in-between without which habitus could not exist in that specific way, and should be transformed accordingly. However, habitus tends to resist to perpetuate structures cor-

responding to its conditions of production, but still it is not necessarily adapted to its situation nor necessarily coherent; habitus has different degrees of integration (see Bourdieu, 2000: 160). When the harmony between the field and the habitus is interrupted, habitus is forced to accord.

Within the field, there are asymmetries between various specific forces that confront each other (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 101) due to which social agents hold a position depending on the capital they have (Costa & Murphy, 2015: 7). Capital is any resource effective in a given social arena that enables one to appropriate the specific profits arising out of participation and contest in it (Wacquant, 1998: 221). Positions in the field are distributed among social agents according to the overall volume and the composition of their (social, economic, cultural) capital and the relative weight of those regarding the total assets in the whole field (Bourdieu, 1985: 724). Since every actor in the field tries to gain a more advantageous position, it becomes a field of conflict, containing struggles and negotiations which produce distinctive rules of its own. Each field rewards a specific kind of capital of a specific composition: a certain field may reward a certain composition of capital whereas the other may not. That is to say, entering a new field would probably change the relative value of the individual's capital, forcing them to take action if she has lost ground to others.

Consequently, since practices derive from the interplay between one's dispositions (habitus) and relative value of possessed resources in the field (capital), within the current state of struggles and negotiations in that social arena (field) (see Maton, 2008: 51), the decision and the act of participation in adult education does not happen incidentally, but as a result of the struggles in the very social and historical conditions that the adult is in. Therefore, any scientific attempt to understand participation should aim to reveal the frame of reference, or habitus of an individual, which requires employing a methodology to cover the biographical experiences of the adult, and the participation orientations in relation to the field and the possessed capital in order to grasp the reasons why an adult participates, or not, in education.

2 Narrative Interviews

Social actors narrate: we create and tell stories. The lexical meaning of the verb narrate is giving a spoken or written account of something, and it comes from the Latin verb "narrare" which means "to tell". According to the Oxford Dictionary, "narrare" comes from the word "gnarus", which is an adjective in Latin, that means knowing, or knowledgeable (Lexico, 2022). When social actors speak, they tell what they know. Narrative inquiry, as a qualitative research methodology, therefore aims to reveal what social actors know from what they speak.

We make meaning of our experience by constructing and reconstructing narratives, and speak and act upon them. Creating narratives helps us to make our chaotic experiences coherent so that we are able to make sense. Constructing and reconstructing narratives means establishing connections between and among our experiences,

sometimes by locating them within a particular existing narrative, or sometimes by creating a new narrative in order to deal with them (Clark & Rossiter, 2008). This is a process of production or reproduction of narratives. Therefore, narratives are manifestations of our frames of reference by providing knowledge on how we make meaning out of our experiences.

Narrative interview as a qualitative data collection technique was introduced by Fritz Schütze (Nohl, 2010: 196; Bauer, 1996: 2) based on the idea that the narratives we tell are the stories which we figure out from our biographical experiences. Schütze (2014: 227) expresses his motivation for making an analytical methodology for narrative interviews as understanding how macro-historical processes and mechanisms are experienced and interpreted by persons and groups involved in them. The main purpose of the narrative interview is to grasp the perspective of the interviewee, called the "informant", related to the research problem. According to this main idea, the interviewer conducts the interview as an everyday communicative interaction, by asking the interviewee to speak in a spontaneous language in the narration of events. Narrations refer to personal experiences, by giving a context of the action in sequential terms which starts and ends at particular points. An adequate analysis of any narration reveals the place, time, motivation and the actor's symbolic system of orientations (Bauer, 1996).

Nohl (2010: 196) underlines that Schütze analyzed the "process structures of the life course", which can be found in any impromptu biographical narrative, in order to reconstruct the informant's explanatory models and interpretations related to their biography. These process structures can be considered as the mediators between the objectivity and subjectivity of life stories, and this is the point where narrative interviews may help understand the participation orientations of adults in education.

3 Biographical Narrative Interviews in Understanding Participation in Adult Education

Ask any participant, or nonparticipant, directly why they participate, or not. Your question may be in a form of a questionnaire that provides a number of choices for the respondent to pick, or it may be in a form of an open-ended question that informants could write whatever they want; or it may be in a form of a semi-structured qualitative interview that leaves more room than the previous quantitative forms for the respondents to express themselves. In any case, the participant would mention many reasons, such as a desire to learn, getting a new job, or finding new friends, etc. Likewise, the nonparticipant would claim reasons such as lack of money or time, long distance from the place of education, and so on.

What are the main epistemological assumptions of the aforementioned approaches to collecting scientific data on participation in adult education? Firstly, both the question-answer approaches mentioned above, no matter whether they are quantitative or qualitative, presuppose that the informant has the objective knowledge on why they participate, or not, in education, and the right answer would be provided explicitly

thanks to the researcher's question. Secondly, the researcher, as the knowledgeable partner in that interaction, knows the possible true reasons for participation in fact, and tries to support or elaborate the truth with the help of selected topics in a prearranged order for the questions. And thirdly, there is an equal relationship between the researcher and the respondent, in which the respondent speaks freely.

However, there are some doubts about these assumptions: First, do informants really know how and why they participate, or not, in adult education? In an interview, they would probably claim that they do, but the nature of any habitualized human practice is generally impossible to be known by the social actor's self. We, as social actors, do not think about why and how we act in our daily lives. Therefore, in general we do not know why and how our habitual practices are in the way that they are, or why and how we act as we act, unless we reflect on them, which we do not usually do. This is why understanding the orientations that underlie social actors' practices requires reflection. An adult participates in education just because they want or have to do it, and they do not have a barrier. They do not think about what brought them to that decision and action because they do not need to. If the researcher asks them for the reason, they would probably give a "stock answer", like "I believe that learning makes me better", or "I want to find a job", and etc. These answers are not worthless; they have meaning, but they do not provide us with sufficient knowledge on the habitus/orientations of the informant. This is why we need to employ a more comprehensive epistemological approach to informants' knowledge about their own experiences.

Second, does the researcher really know how and why adults participate, or not, in education? Interacting with the interviewee through preplanned questions implies that the interviewer is already expecting some specific answers. It imposes a certain structure to the interview by selecting the theme and the topics to be handled in the interview, by providing a certain order of questions and answers, and by choosing certain terms to be used while speaking of the interviewee's experiences (see Bauer, 1996). That the research aims to reveal the informants' orientations, not the researcher's, one can claim that the question-answer scheme does not come up with the opportunity to access the frames of reference of the informants.

And third, do the informants speak freely within the context of an interview, and give the answers under no influence? By definition, scientific questioning should exclude any effects on the informant from the researcher. However, there is always a symbolic violence within the interview, in which the interviewee feels dependent on the researcher. Although the research relationship somehow differs from everyday life, it still remains a social relationship and contains the effects of a social structure that is hierarchical (see Bağcı, 2019). The symbolic violence of the interview may cause several problems, such as the informant may assume that the researcher already knows something about the topic, so they do not have to talk about everything, or the researcher expects a specific answer to the question, so they have to guess what it is (Bauer, 1996). The fact that the researcher sets up the rules of the interview creates an asymmetry between the ruler and the ruled, which causes the symbolic violence within the interview (Bourdieu et al, 1999). It is the researcher who is responsible for and capable of overcoming this adverse effect, both through the interview and the interpretation phases.

Biographical narrative interviewing claims to help the researchers overcome the epistemological limits of the data collection techniques provided by quantitative or (semi-)structured qualitative procedures, so called question-answer schemes (Bauer, 1996) when trying to understand participation orientations of adults in education comprehensively. It seeks to reveal the tacit meaning beyond the utterance of the informant by sticking to the data provided within the very interview, not within the theoretical structure framed before the interview, and by leaving the informant free to speak about the topics in a self-selected order. Consequently, regarding the researches on adult participation in education, the epistemological framework of narrative interview enables the researcher to move beyond the biased data from question-answer scheme by relying on life-stories and/or biographical narratives for understanding the orientations of adults on participation, or nonparticipation.

4   Documentary Method and Biographical Narrative Interviews

The Documentary Method was originally used to analyze group discussions but later on was also adopted for the interpretation of biographical interviews, semi-structured interviews, field notes from participant observations, pictures and videos, and so on (Bohnsack, 2014: 217–218). Main assumptions of the Documentary Method and narrative interview associate with each other, especially in two terms: the commitment to stay within the limits of the informants' points of view; and the problem of the dual nature of knowledge produced through the interaction of the researcher and the informant.

Biographical narrative interviews give us the tacit knowledge on how informants connect their experiences and make them cohere; namely how they make meaning. Therefore, they are convenient to capture the informant's sense of self, since meaning making is a narrative process by storying experiences to establish connections between and among them (Clark & Rossiter, 2008: 62). Using a biographical approach in researching participation in adult education provides material for analysis related to education, and also gives the opportunity to theorize processes of education in the context of learners' life histories (West et al, 2007: 11), which is also an essential point in Documentary Method. In a biographical narrative interview, the researcher is able to record the biography of the informant in sequential terms by allowing them to speak off the cuff about their life story and experiences. This helps the researcher to stay with the point of view of the informant by considering their knowledge as an empirical basis (Nohl & Ofner, 2010: 242; Nohl, 2010: 196).

The other significant issue in Documentary Method and biographical narrative interviews is the dual nature of knowledge produced within the research interaction. In this regard, Nohl (2010) mentions that what is significant in Documentary Method for empirical analysis in interviews is not the explicit verbal communications by the informant, but the meaning that underlies that utterance. In narratives, there is a mean-

ing beyond the articulated of which the informant is not necessarily aware. Documentary Analysis puts that there are two kinds of meanings, immanent and documentary, in a narrative. Immanent meaning consists of direct, literal, simple and open meanings expressed in the narrative. The same narrative also has a documentary meaning which implies the underlying knowledge, in other words, the tacit or the atheoretical knowledge, from which the actor's orientations stem (Bohnsack, 2014: 220–221). By distinguishing between these two levels of knowledge, Documentary Method formulates priorities for interpretation, as Nohl and Somel argue (2016: 75):

> "The 'documentary' meaning then gauges the action or text according to the process by which it surfaced; that is, by its 'modus operandi' (Bohnsack, 2010b, p. 101). By drawing on other actions or texts by the same actor or author, documentary interpretation sees the modus operandi 'as proof' of a 'synoptical appraisal' undertaken by the researcher, which 'may take his global orientation [in original: 'habitus'; the authors] as a whole into its purview' (Mannheim, 1952a, p. 52). The important point here is the way in which a text or action is constructed, or the limits within which its topic is faced, that is 'the framework of orientation' (Bohnsack, 2010b, p. 107) within which a problem is handled... This is done by falling back on practice. In this practice, a 'tacit' (Polanyi, 1966) or 'atheoretical' knowledge (Mannheim, 1982, p. 67) exists ..."

Hence, the researcher draws the Documentary meaning, namely the framework of orientations, patterns of behavior or habitual actions, out of the practical aspects of the narrative. This is how Documentary interpretation works, leaning especially on the implicit meaning of the narrations, concerning the dual nature of interview knowledge. That is why practices stay at the very heart of Documentary understanding and interpretation. The interview should be designed and managed according to this very purpose to obtain the habitual practices of the informants.

5   Conducting Biographical Narrative Interviews for Documentary Interpretation

The epistemological assumptions of Documentary Method and biographical narrative inquiry require a detailed and careful approach to conducting an interview. A biographical narrative interview claims to minimize the effect of the interviewer on the process, namely diminishing the symbolic violence within the interview; and to let the informant speak freely about habitual practices, namely allowing the informant to provide data for sequential comparative analysis, which will be explained in the next section.

Symbolic violence within an interview is one of the most significant issues in a research process. The hierarchy between the researcher and the informant has quite a risk of spoiling the quality of the data. It may steer the informant to speak by limiting or shaping their narrative in a way that they consider the researcher would like. The research relationship is primarily built by the researcher, and in case the researcher does not take precautions to dismantle it, the hierarchy exists as a symbolic barrier for the researcher to access the informant's frame of reference. In order to avoid this adverse

effect in biographical narrative interviews, the researcher should build an open and trustworthy climate from the very beginning of the process. It starts with the very first communication with the informant, in which the researcher gives all the information about themselves and the research. The researcher should make sure that the informant knows what is going to happen throughout the process, in terms of the time to spend, recording, anonymization, publication, and so on. The place of the interview should be comfortable and silent enough because no interruption or disorienting noise is welcomed. This rule also goes for online interviews, which are more and more common after COVID-19: the software should provide efficient communication and recording opportunities for the interview. When the interview starts, the interviewer should be careful about not interrupting anyhow, avoiding comments and judgements, and not using any special terms or concepts that the informant could have difficulties in understanding (Güvercin, 2015: 178–179). Also, Bauer (1996: 10) suggests the interviewer to apply "ignorance as a method", pretending not to know anything about the topic, so that the informant could overcome the symbolic violence of the interview to a certain extent.

A biographical narrative interview has five main phases: preparation, initialization, questions about the initial narrative, other questions, and ending. Preparation consists of reviewing the relevant literature, finding and contacting the appropriate informants, and setting the date, time and place for the interview. Appropriate informant for a biographical narrative interview is the one who has sufficient experience related to the research problem. For instance, in my study on the participation of Turkish immigrants in adult education in Germany (see Bağcı, 2019), I started by finding informants, both male and female, who had participated in adult education. After that, in order to reveal the differences in-between, I interviewed the ones who had not participated, which provided me with the opportunity to make my comparisons richer. Then, from the Documentary Analysis of the first bunch of interviews, I figured out that the length of the period of migration could matter, and I diversified my study group with informants who had spent different time periods in Germany as immigrants. This is called a "theoretical sampling strategy" which Glaser and Strauss (2006: 45) identify as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges". In this kind of sampling strategy, the initial informants are selected upon a preconceived general theory, and as the interpretation of the initial data develops, the subsequent informants are determined depending on the emerging theory. Theoretical sampling suits biographical narrative interviews in this sense.

The second phase, initialization, is of primary importance for the construction of the interview process. The researcher starts with an initial question after providing the informant with sufficient information about the research process, and obtaining the relevant permission to record the interview. The initial question should be very clear and as brief as it can be, and be free of any terms to lead the informant. My initial question for the above-stated study (Bağcı, 2019) was: "This research is about Turkish immigrants in Germany and education. I believe I need to know you for a good start.

Can you please tell me your life story, from the very beginning. I want to know everything about you, so please do not hesitate to give details."

The initial question is expected to induce the informant to speak off the cuff providing the researcher with the main narration in the interview which will be the basis of the analysis. Therefore, the initial narrative of the informant should not be interrupted or directed in any way until the informant stops. The researcher should give no comments, no verbal or non-verbal signals that would affect the interviewee. The next phase of the interview begins when the informant halts, and the researcher makes sure that the initial narration ends by asking whether the informant has anything to add or not.

Then comes the questioning phase, in which the researcher asks questions to fill the gaps in the initial narration part in the same sequential order of topics by paying utmost attention to avoid using any terms or concepts other than those the informant did. Here, questions would better be "what" questions, referring to the habitual practices of the informant, such as "what did you do when ...", or "what happened after ...", not "how" or "why" questions, referring to their opinions or evaluations on any issues. After the questions about the initial narrative, the researcher might introduce any other questions that they would like to ask.

At the end, when all the narrations, questions and answers end, the researcher asks the informant whether there is anything they would like to add, and if not, terminates the recording. Switching off the recorder generally triggers an informal conversation between the researcher and the informant. Bauer (1996) suggests continuing to take notes after the recorder is switched off as the so-called small talk at this phase might be helpful with the interpretation of the interview. The end of this small talk is the de facto final part of the process.

6   Documentary Analysis

The Documentary Method is an approach developed by Ralf Bohnsack, on the basis of Karl Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and Harold Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, for analyzing qualitative data. For both Mannheim and Garfinkel, documentary methodology was considered as an epistemological substantiation for qualitative research data on social issues to be scientific. Standing on their philosophical assumptions, Bohnsack was the founder of the Documentary Method as a guide to practical empirical qualitative inquiry in the 1980s (see Bohnsack, 2014: 217).

The Documentary Method relies on Mannheim, for he asserts that the normative rightness of an informant's utterances and depictions in any research interaction should be "put in brackets" in analysis. This metaphor implies that when people speak of their experiences, they do not convey the objective reality, but the way it is generated by them. Therefore, communication between the informant and the researcher could only help the latter reveal "how" the reality is generated, not "what" it is. And Garfinkel's ethnomethodology paves the way for Documentary Method by stating that the objective reality of social facts to be observed by the researcher is an ongoing accomplishment of the con-

certed activities of daily life, and the basis of the informant's constructions and typifications of everyday life is her/his frame of reference which cannot be observed, but should be reconstructed by the interpreter. But since the interpretation tends to depend on the interpreter's frame of relevance which derives from common-sense theories, not the "informant's empirical reality", the researcher should employ a scientific approach to analysis to avoid limiting the interpretation to reproduction of generalized knowledge in an idiosyncratic manner (see Bohnsack, 2014).

The idea of reconstructing the informant's empirical reality still neglects the epistemological nature of communication between social agents in interaction; namely the researcher and the informant. The Documentary Method turns back to Mannheim here again for he states that there are two layers of knowledge that constitute a structure of duality in everyday life, which are *communicative* and *conjunctive*. Communicative knowledge is *about* the phenomenon on which we speak, whereas conjunctive knowledge *results from* our existence in relation to that phenomenon. With reference to our topic of participation in adult education, the utterance of the informant within the interview has a communicative level, which frames participation in a generalized knowledge of the benefits and virtues of adult education. This communicative level can be explicitly found in an interview through the formal/theoretical utterance of the informant. However, there is also a conjunctive level when the informant speaks of the topic, which is not about their experiences, but derives from them. This conjunctive knowledge exists implicitly in the informant's utterance, and can only be figured out by reflecting on their conjunctive experiences, which can be reconstructed by the interpreter from the practical actions related to the research problem, which is participation in adult education in our case. This is called atheoretical, tacit, or incorporated knowledge, providing access to the informant's frame of reference which shapes their interpretations, attitudes and behaviors (see Bohnsack, 2014: 220–221).

Based on the philosophical assumptions mentioned above, the Documentary Method provides specific techniques for data analysis. The very first step to take is transcription of the interview. For narrative interviews, not only the lexical content, but also paralinguistic features throughout the conversation, such as voice tone and pauses, are important (Bauer, 1996). Documentary interpretation of biographical interviews puts emphasis on including signs to remark the paralinguistic interaction in the transcript for a broader understanding of the talk between the informant and the researcher. Below is the table of signs by Bohnsack to be used in transcription (Bohnsack et al, 2010: 365):

Table 1: Talk in Qualitative Research

(3) :	seconds of a break
(.) :	short break
<u>No</u> :	emphasized
. :	strongly dropping intonation
; :	weakly dropping intonation
? :	strongly rising intonation
, :	weakly rising intonation
perha- :	interruption of a word
wou::ld :	extension of a word, the frequency of ":" corresponds to the length of extension
(well) :	uncertainty in transcription
( ) :	word(s) not understood, according to length
((moans)) :	events beyond language
@no@ :	spoken while laughing
@(.)@ :	short laughter
@(3)@ :	laughter of 3 seconds
//mmh// :	listener's signal (by interviewer, may be inserted into the text of interviewee)
∟ :	overlapping of speech acts
°no° :	spoken very quietly

The transcription of the interview should be rigorous, since the text is the empirical basis of scientific analysis. Documentary Analysis of biographical narrative interviews is emergent; collection and analysis of data happens through an interplay in-between; therefore, they are simultaneous. Although making comparisons is the main cognitive functional source of Documentary Interpretation, the process starts with the onset of the transcription of the very first interview, most of the time. First interpretation is inevitably loaded by the interpreter's frame of relevance, but as the analysis progresses, the effect of the researcher is diminished by Documentary Method techniques, which take a two-steps action.

The first step is *formulating interpretation* in which the researcher formulates the explicit meaning – what the participants have literally said – introducing the topical order of the interview (Bohnsack, 2014: 225). Nohl (2010) suggests three criteria for the selection of topical segments: first is the topics of interest that seem relevant to the research problem. Second is the topics for which the informant gave more details than others, namely the "focusing metaphors". And third is the topics which are iterated among the informants. Formulating interpretation is conducted by writing down reviews for each of these topical segments sequentially, in the researcher's own words. At this phase, the researcher figures out *what* was communicated and what were the significant changes throughout the interview, and takes a distance from it, which is required for the objectification of the narrative.

The second step is the *reflecting interpretation* in which the researcher is concerned with *how* the topics were handled by the informant. For that purpose, the researcher differentiates the interview text between four genres of articulation: descriptions, narrations, justifications and evaluations (see Güvercin & Nohl, 2015: 302). The framework of orientations or habitus that guides practical actions of the informant is represented in narrations and descriptions (Bohnsack, 2014: 225). In order to gain access to

the conjunctive knowledge of a narrative interview, the Documentary Method offers to conduct a comparative sequential analysis (see Nohl, 2010: 202) by comparing mainly the narrations and descriptions of different informants to discover the framework of orientations by paying utmost attention to the sequency of the topical segments of the informants' utterances. Building the interpretation on the narrations and descriptions among the cases seeks to take account of the actor's experiences without being taken in by their subjective ascriptions of meaning, for overcoming the dichotomization between the subjective and the objective (Nohl, 2010: 207–208).

Informant's empirical reality is a construction by the informant, and it is communicated within the interview. What the interpreter does is to reconstruct the knowledge in that communication through sequential comparative analysis. Reconstruction of the documentary meaning aims to reveal common and specific regularities in the narrations both within and among the experiences of the informants. Experiences are presented by the informant in a specific logical order, namely in an order of narrative sequences. These sequences are made up of segments that follow each other in a framework constructed by the informant. By comparing these sequential parts, it becomes possible to reconstruct documentary meaning. Nohl (2010: 209) summarizes the practice of the interpreter at this phase:

> "… we regard the second segment as a given and adequate continuation of a first segment during interpretation and try to discover alternative versions for this second segment through brainstorming. The comprehensive class of all alternative second segments, which would be an appropriate, homologous continuation of the first segment and are equivalent to the given second segment, forms the homologous orientation framework. This framework becomes particularly evident if it can be distinguished from other non-equivalent, i. e. heterologous second and third segments, in other empirical segments."

As stated above, the order of the segments in a narrative is considered as the informant's framework of orientation, and by comparing these frameworks among different narratives, the researcher tries to figure out the homogeneities and heterogeneities. It is important here to state again that the segments that are subjected to comparison are informants' narrations on practices. By comparative sequential analysis of the practices among the transcriptions, the researcher is able to reveal empirically how the informants dealt with any situation, depending on what they did.

Thanks to comparative sequential analysis, the researcher comes to the typification phase, which includes two levels. First, the researcher reconstructs the framework of orientations or the habitus that the practical actions stem from. This is called *meaning-genetic typification*. Individuals of the same milieu, or space of conjunctive experience, talk and act similarly through their common framework of orientations, out of which the researcher can access the documentary meaning by comparisons. Nohl (2010: 211) mentions that using only subject-related tertium comparationis reveals meaning-genetic typifications which provide the reconstructed multidimensional orientation frameworks of the informants. A more complex comparative analysis with varied tertium comparationis is required for the second level, which is *socio-genetic typification*. At this level of analysis, the researcher tries to answer the question of what the

framework of orientation or habitus is typical for, in other words, what the genesis of
the generic principle is by comparing the social contexts of different meaning-genetic
typifications. Generating socio-genetic typifications by reconstructing multidimen-
sional typologies builds the relationship between the commonalities of the habitus of
informants and the social context (see Bohnsack, 2014: 229; Bohnsack, 2010: 111–112).
Documentary interpretation, therefore, stems from the informant's empirical reality by
reconstructing the multidimensional conjunctive knowledge out of the communica-
tive, related to the social context.

      Here is a simplified example from my study (Bağcı, 2019). There were three fe-
male Turkish immigrant informants, one of whom attended a vocational course right
after migration, and one of whom did not ever think of participating in adult education,
and the other of whom attended a course to learn how to ride a bike many years after
she migrated, be them F1, F2 and F3, respectively. In the formulating interpretation, I
saw that F2 did not ever participate in adult education, but F1 and F3 did. F1 chose to do
that right after migration, whereas F3 waited years and years for attending a course. F1
and F2 had university degrees from Turkey, and F3 came from a primary school level,
which made the case complex, since taken for granted explanations for relating partici-
pation in adult education to the level of prior education did not fit the empirical context.
I was unable to make a meaning-genetic typification out of these three orientations, so
I had to include more informants for comparison. As I progressed with more inform-
ants of both sex, and different participation backgrounds, I figured out that level of
prior education, namely cultural capital, was still a significant determinant, because the
ones who had attended adult education at earlier phases of migration were only the
ones with higher level of prior education, which made F2 an exception among the in-
formants. When I progressed with the sequential comparisons over the nonparticipa-
tion orientations of more informants, gender was revealed to be an important factor,
since it was significant in the construction of female immigrant habitus. Female immi-
grants' decisions and acts of participation in adult education were quite dependent on
their gendered division of labor within their families after migration, which could also
be reconstructed from F2's biographical experience. However, although F3 was a
woman with quite a low educational background, she still attended a course. But unlike
F1, the course she chose was not of a kind to help her ameliorate her socio-economic
status, and it was many years after migration. Therefore, although F1 and F3 had simi-
lar frames of orientation, there were still significant differences that needed to be ana-
lyzed deeper. Documentary Analysis of F3's participation narrative, by comparing with
other informants with similar experiences, revealed a specific kind of immigrant orien-
tation which results with participation long after migration, but again within their lim-
its of cultural capital (see Bağcı, 2019).

      By taking a glance at the aforementioned process, one can easily claim that compar-
ative sequential analysis is not linear, but a complex kind of spiral movement for enrich-
ing typifications empirically. It is not the same as comparing two cases with each other;
it's more of a continuous series of comparisons of the cases all with each other for reveal-
ing regularities, based on the narrations of informants on their habitual practices.

7   Conclusion

We have a considerable amount of knowledge on participation in adult education. This article argues that studies on this issue should move beyond the general psychological theoretical framework since the decision and act of participation can only be comprehended by a contextual and relational understanding. Adults participate in education, or not, within specific social and historical conditions, as an outcome of their biographical experience, and upon their frames of orientation, that is to say habitus. Only if one employs an appropriate methodology will they be able to cover the contextual and relational dimensions of participation, which this article claims to be the Documentary Method and biographical narrative interview.

Documentary Method and biographical narrative interview consider the knowledge of actors as an empirical basis, but detaches from the actors' ascriptions of meaning (Nohl & Ofner, 2010: 242) by specific techniques. With the help of this methodology, the researcher is able to develop a systematic understanding of the structure of meaning beyond the subjectively intended meaning of the actors, while retaining an empirical and analytical focus on the *knowledge of the actors themselves* (Bohnsack & Nohl, 2003: 371) while revealing the relevant dimensions of the informant's habitus. Therefore, Documentary Analysis provides us with the sufficient thinking tools for reflecting on the individuals' orientations, be it participation in adult education for our case, which we may call as reconstruction of the conjunctive knowledge of the social actors.

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