The Anglophone International(e): A Bibliometrical Analysis of three Adult Education Journals, 2005-2012

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**The Anglophone International(e)
- A bibliometric analysis of three adult education journals, 2005–2012**

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Abstract

Research funding, promotions, and career trajectories are currently increasingly dependent on the emerging economy of publication and citations (EPC) across the globe. Such an economy encourages scholars to publish in international journals that are indexed in databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. These developments place an increased emphasis on the question of who is allowed to publish in the journals listed there and whose research counts as valuable. Based on bibliographic data from articles submitted to the three main journals in the field of adult education research between 2005–2012, we scrutinize the extent to which the emerging EPC is dependent on national and regional boundaries. Our results show how four Anglophone countries dominate the field both in relation to published articles and the share of most cited articles and where the publication pattern of these authors are national and regional rather than international.

Keywords: adult education research; bibliometrics; economy of publication and citations

Introduction

What can be measured can be compared, and what can be compared can more easily be managed. Academic publishing is undergoing major shifts that are impacting the publication patterns of both collective and individual researchers. One of the more influential shifts in recent times is the emergence of an ‘economy of publication and citations’ (EPC) (Larsson, 2009; 2010). As Larsson (2009) has argued forcefully, publications in academic journals—especially those categorized as international journals included in the dominating databases such as the Web of Science and Scopus—are of increasing importance to the scientific communities around the world because politicians and university administrations tie the distribution of material and scholarly assets (money as well as merit) immediately to the symbolic tokens of the EPC. When research funding, promotions, and career trajectories become more dependent on the extent and impact of published papers, issues of what ‘counts’ and what becomes recognized as scholarly content in articles are underscored. It also leads to the question of who is allowed to enter those arenas that ‘count’ in the EPC.

This article aims to empirically investigate the bibliometric logic of the field of adult education research, particularly in relation to the geography of authorships. We base this study on data from publications and citations in three main journals in the field: *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (IJLE), and *Studies in Continuing Education* (SICE). By gathering aggregated statistics based on publications in these journals between the years 2005 and 2012, we will scrutinize the extent to which the emerging EPC is dependent on national and regional boundaries. This will be done in three ways. First, we measure the total share of articles published by authors with institutional affiliations from the same country. Second, we compare this with the share of top-cited

articles originating from that country. Third, we further scrutinize those countries with the highest share of publications; the relationship between country and publication outlet (journal) will be analysed, thus making visible the (trans)national flow of publications across the dominating countries.

Our analysis will provide results that indicate who contributes to these journals and who is picked up as worth citing. The results will also help characterize the national characteristics of the few top publishing countries. By ‘objectifying’ publication channels, which are often taken-for-granted, we hope to provide a ground for scientific reflexivity as dominant structures are identified and exposed (cf. Bourdieu, 1988, p. xii).

On the emergence of an economy of publications and citations

Since de Solla Price’s (1965; 1975) seminal accounts of the networks of citations between scientific publications and track records of scientific recognition, bibliometric research has been dragged into the highly controversial and political debate of how the reward system of the modern university will function. What will be the basis of ‘quality’ assessments of universities? How will money and merit be distributed fairly across the different disciplines? Lacking other comparative measurements, and in the wake of the intensification of “new public management” within universities (Hasselberg, 2012; Hicks, 2012; Liedman, 2013), governments and management boards across a large part of the world have begun to turn towards the standardized outputs of publications and citations. For example, the new research excellence framework (REF) in the UK draw on citation analyses (impact of research) as part of the evaluation of research quality. Such analyses influence decisions on the distribution of research funding to higher education institutions (see www.ref.ac.uk). A similar system is already enacted in Sweden, where the government divides a share of its research funding to higher education institutions based on citation analyses (Ministry of Education, 2007). At the time of de Solla Price’s analysis (1965), citation and publications were seen as signs of *internal* recognition and scientific production among colleagues, whereas citations and publications have now emerged as *external* tools to manage and hierarchically order scientific production.

The shift towards an EPC also contains a series of questionable assumptions. One of its core assumptions is that the value of research can be estimated fairly by ranking the place in which it is published, as well as how often a publication is cited. Because research funding is distributed partly based on how much you publish in what are construed as top-ranked journals and on how often other articles in those journals cite your articles, the economy is likely to produce a new behaviour among researchers. Publishing in these journals may become more important than publishing in journals that are a better fit for the specific research area. Or, rather than choosing a publication format based on the research question and content or based on the tradition of the scientific field, the rationality behind scientific publications can be skewed towards the EPC (cf. Hicks, 2013). Due to considerable national, regional, and scholarly differences in the history of science, this potential reactivation among scholars is obviously going to look different depending on what they make of this ‘new economy’, what kind of field they are in, and how much autonomy the field has against value criteria enforced by external actors.

The emergence of an EPC favours the format of articles published in journals that are indexed in databases such as the Web of Science and Scopus. The database that is currently positioned as the most important one is Web of Science, which is run by the private company Thomson Reuters. Bibliometric studies have confirmed that the content of Scopus and the Web of

Science is very similar (Archambault, Campbell, Gingras & Lariviere, 2009). The majority of journals within the field of education indexed in both Scopus and Web of Science are published in English and come mostly from Anglophone countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. For example, there are 216 journals within the field of education indexed in the Web of Science.¹ These journals are registered in the following way: United Kingdom (81), United States (80), the Netherlands (15), Spain (8), Australia (7), New Zealand (4), Germany (4), Turkey (3), South Korea (2), South Africa (2), Croatia (2), and one each for the following countries: the Philippines, Italy, Canada, Lithuania, Brazil, Poland, Belgium, and Mexico.²

When the vast majority of indexed journals are published in the Anglophone world, the issue of language becomes a challenge. Out of the 216 journals within education indexed in the Web of Science, 194 are published in English, and the rest are distributed in the following way linguistically: Spanish (7), Turkish (4), German (3), Croatian (2), multilingual (2), and one each for the following languages: Italian, Spanish/multilingual, Portuguese, and Dutch.³ Hence this distribution of indexed journals force researchers in countries, where the EPC is prevalent, to publish their research in English, a language which is often not their native tongue. On the one hand, such a trend may be considered positive if it allows researchers in linguistic and geographic peripheries to be plugged into strong academic communities of the Anglophone world and render their research available to a much broader audience. On the other hand, it is also problematic in that it creates research that is neither fully understandable nor easily accessible in some of the countries that contribute. As Hicks (2013) and Hasselberg (2012) argue, social scientists in smaller countries might, in order to be “internationally recognized”, choose topics for research that interest foreign academics. Arguably, such tendency towards marketable scholarly work is reinforced when university evaluation systems are based on international publications indexed in the Web of Science. The conditions for contributing to scientific debates and discoveries have also been shown to be stratified (cf. Alatas, 2003; Arunachalam & Manorama, 1989): those who have English as a native tongue possess a great advantage in being able to formulate their arguments in their own language as well as publishing in journals that originate from their own country, with collegial connections to editors and advisors in the editorial boards and so on. This is rarely the case for researchers situated elsewhere.

We use the category “Anglophone” throughout this paper acknowledging that it is a complex category as there are decisive cultural and ethnic diversity within English speaking countries. However, we use this broad category to illustrate how countries with English as their national language have similar characteristics within the emerging EPC in terms of publication and citations as compared to other countries.

Bibliometrics and adult education research

We have identified a few previous articles that report on bibliometric analyses of adult education journal publications. Boshier and Pickard (1979) analysed publications within *Adult Education Quarterly* from 1968 to 1977 with a focus on whether citations were to primary or secondary sources, what impact individual scholars had, and who were the most cited authors. The results indicated a steady increase in primary-source citations, which the authors connect to the argument that “the existence and use of a unique body of knowledge (primary

¹ As of August 25, 2013.

² Being registered in one country does not necessarily mean that editors from those countries run the journals.

³ As of August 25, 2013.

literature) is one of the hallmarks of an emerging discipline” (ibid., p. 47). Another bibliometric study is Rachal and Sargent’s (1995) analysis of the publication productivity of different institutions in North America, proposed as an indicator for the quality of the programs offered. They analysed five key journals in the field, as identified by North American adult education professors. The results illustrate a total dominance of North American institutions among those best represented in these journals, how bigger programs tend to be more scientifically productive, and that the most productive researchers often had been employed at one of these bigger programs during the time of the study. The study was later followed up by analysing the period 1993-2002 (Rachal & William, 2005), where the researchers illustrate a greater visibility of non-US and Canadian institutions among those best represented in the journals.

A recent analysis has been conducted by Larsson (2010) whereby he focuses on publication patterns within three adult education journals in terms of the geography of the authors and citations, as well as on citation relations (in terms of citations between the journals in the field). By analysing two volumes of the UK-based journal *Studies in the Education of Adults* (*SIEA*), he illustrates the dominance of Anglophone authors as well as a vast majority of references to texts authored by Anglophone authors. He further demonstrates how the citation relation between the adult education journals is relatively low. For example, there are only very few references to *SIEA* in articles published in the *AEQ*, which Larsson (2010) takes to be a sign of scientific immaturity or weakness.

Although bibliometric research is rather limited within the adult education field, some additional analyses have touched upon similar issues that will be addressed in this paper. These papers address, in particular, the content of adult education journals and the issue of the geographical location of authors. Taylor (2001), for example, illustrates that 89.3% of all submissions to the *AEQ* from 1989 to 1999 came from four Anglophone countries: the United States (75.5%), Canada (9.5%), Australia and New Zealand (4.5%). Harris and Morrison (2011) illustrate how there has been a dominance of authors from Anglophone countries during the 2000s in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (*AJAL*) (70% from Australian authors and 12% from authors in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Canada). St. Clair’s (2011) research also indicates an Anglophone dominance of authorship in the last seven volumes of the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* (*CJSAE*), where 80% of the contributions were from Canadian authors.

In sum, prior studies reveal that a vast majority of authors that have published in adult education journals come from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, or Canada. Furthermore, Larsson’s (2010) study – albeit based on a rather limited empirical sample – indicates how authors from the same countries seem to draw the vast majority of citations in the field. In this study, we wish to take the argument further. We wish to not only illustrate the geographical distribution of authors. Rather, based on all articles published in the abovementioned three journals that are published in three different continents during the years 2005–2012, our interest is in analysing who is allowed to enter these journals and who benefits from the EPC in terms of being taken up and cited. In other words, who are the current winners and losers in the EPC within the adult education research field? In order to enhance our understanding of publication patterns, we will also analyse the (trans)national flow of publications between those countries with the highest share of published articles. What possible connections can be found when comparing publication venues and the institutional affiliations of the authors? Are authors in highly productive countries publishing mainly in journals that originate from the same country/region?

Methodology, data, and analysis

We have conducted a simple bibliometric analysis of citation patterns within the field of the education and learning of adults, and as represented by these three journals: *AEQ*, *IJLE*, and *SICE*. The bibliometric overview provides a comparison between the full body of publications appearing in these journals between the years 2005 and 2012 and those publications that have gathered the most citations within each journal.⁴ We have focused on the period 2005–2012 in order to provide a contemporary analysis of how the field operates. We also venture to suggest that this is a period where the EPC was emerging and permeating into academia. Our focus on academic journals is centred on the premise that academic publishing provides *one* important knowledge base for any discipline or field of research. A research journal represents a publication output where papers that have been refereed and deemed to have reached a certain level of rigour and quality are published (cf. Buboltz, Miller & Williams, 1999; Tseng & Tsay, 2013). This is in contrast to book chapters and books that are less likely to have to go through such a rigorous collegial peer-review process (although they sometimes are). In other words, publishers play a major role in the dissemination of knowledge and academic communities tend to regard refereed journals as important publication channels, a propensity that is further emphasized through a series of current political reforms connected to the EPC.

A second important reason for our choice of using journal publications as our unit of analysis is that many journals are indexed in databases that provide a basis for generating bibliometric data. Our data has been generated through the database Scopus. Besides being one of the main indexing databases in the academic community – partly because it uses certain quality procedures when including journals – the reason for choosing this database is foremost pragmatic. First, the three journals selected to represent the field—*AEQ* (United States), *IJLE* (United Kingdom), and *SICE* (Australia)—are all listed in Scopus, whereas only two of them, *AEQ* and *SICE*, are listed in the Web of Science. Second, these three journals represent three different geographical locations, in terms of both country and continent and could provide some differences in terms of geographical affiliations of authors as well as present the opportunity to identify the academic flow of publications across national borders.

The following research questions will be addressed more fully in our analysis:

- What are the geographical and institutional affiliations of all authors, and how do the affiliations of top-cited contributions differ from the full sample of publications?
- What is the (trans)national flow of publications between the countries with the highest share of publications (measured by institutional affiliations)?

Introducing the three journals

Because the three journals under scrutiny have emerged in different geographical locations and are shaped in relation to different historical and social practices, it is necessary to provide some descriptions of them. In common for all investigated journals is that they have a relatively long history of publishing within the field of adult education, and thus make up a strong group of agents controlling the scientific influx of scholarly knowledge.

⁴ The citations counted here are limited to journal article citations included in Scopus. In order to maximize the number of citations used to select the top-cited works, we used all citations until June 2013. We have, however, excluded all self-citations, as these are not signs of collegial recognition.

Adult Education Quarterly was launched in 1950, is published in association with the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE). Four issues are published each year. The editorial work of the journal circulates at certain intervals between different universities within the United States, and there are currently four editors, all from the United States. There are 94 persons listed in the editorial board with the following geographical distribution: United States (81); Canada (11); United Kingdom (8); and one each from Australia, Botswana, Nigeria, South Korea, and China. Such distribution, together with the connection to the AAACE, gives the impression of a journal strongly focused on the North American continent. The journal is indexed in both the Web of Science as well as Scopus. *AEQ* states its aim and scope on its Web page:

[*AEQ*] is a scholarly refereed journal committed to advancing the understanding and practice of adult and continuing education. The journal strives to be inclusive in scope, addressing topics and issues of significance to scholars and practitioners concerned with diverse aspects of adult and continuing education. *AEQ* publishes research employing a variety of methods and approaches. . . . *AEQ* aims to stimulate a problem-oriented, critical approach to research and practice, with an increasing emphasis on inter-disciplinary and international perspectives. The audience includes researchers, students, and adult and continuing education practitioners of many orientations including teachers, trainers, facilitators, resource persons, organizational developers, community organizers, and policy designers. (*AEQ* Web page, accessed July 30, 2013)

The above text indicates the journal's ambition to enhance the understanding and practice of adult and continuing education, to be inclusive in terms of topics and methodologies, to be critical and inter-disciplinary as well as to promote international perspectives. The audience is broad, including researchers and practitioners as well as policymakers. Important to note is that the journal does not state that it is an international journal; rather, it limits itself to stating that it promotes international perspectives.

Studies in Continuing Education is located in Australia and was originally created in 1978 by researchers at the University of Adelaide as an Australian journal. However, after a few years, they no longer published the journal. In 1988, researchers at the University of Technology in Sydney (UTS) took over the name and re-launched the journal as an international one.⁵ The journal is still edited by the original editor-in-chief together with another colleague at UTS. *SICE* does not have any formal connection to any research association. *SICE* publishes three issues each year and is indexed in Scopus as well as the Web of Science.⁶ The editorial board comprises 23 persons distributed geographically in the following way: United States (6); United Kingdom (6); Australia (4); Canada (3); and one each from the following countries: Belgium, Finland, Singapore, and South Africa. Such distribution indicates a wish to reach a wider audience than just Australia, but to keep strong emphasis on the Anglophone world.

[*SICE*] is a scholarly journal concerned with all aspects of continuing, professional and lifelong learning. It aims to be of special interest to those involved in continuing professional education, adults learning, staff development training and development, human resource development. [*SICE*] publishes material which will contribute to improving practice in the field of continuing education and of bringing theory and practice into closer association.

⁵ Personal correspondence between one of the authors and the editor-in-chief, UTS professor David Boud.

⁶ *SICE* was included in the Web of Science in 2011.

Contributions are sought on all aspects of the field. These include: accounts of new initiatives, discussions of key issues, review articles, reports of research and development, and reflections on theory and practice. Papers drawing upon any one or more perspectives on the field are welcome. Of particular interest are contributions from practitioners in any area who may wish to engage in critical reflection on their own practices. (*SICE* Web page, accessed July 30, 2013)

The journal is wide and inclusive in its focus on continuing, professional, and lifelong learning, and invites papers drawing on different perspectives. There is a focus on contributing to improving practice where the relationship between theory and practice is important. Different kinds of papers, ranging from research papers to reflections on theory and practice, are invited, and researchers as well as practitioners can write papers. The target group is wide ranging, from researchers to practitioners, but special emphasis is on papers of interest to practitioners. There is no stated international ambition visible in the aim and scope of the journal.

The *International Journal of Lifelong Education* is located in the United Kingdom and was initiated by scholars at the University of Nottingham, where the editorial work is currently located. There is no formal relation to any research association. The first issue was published in 1982. *IJLE* publishes six issues each year and is indexed in Scopus. There are currently four editors, two from the United Kingdom and one each from Australia and Denmark. The editorial board comprises 32 persons distributed geographically in the following way: United States (7); United Kingdom (6); Canada (3); Australia (2); Hong Kong (2); South Korea (2); South Africa (2), and one each from the following countries: Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Japan, Malta, and Sweden. Even though more than half of the board come from Anglophone countries, the distribution indicates an ambition to be geographically inclusive. *IJLE* states that the journal

provides a forum for debate on the principles and practice of lifelong, adult, continuing, recurrent and initial education and learning, whether in formal, institutional or informal settings. Common themes include social purpose in lifelong education, and sociological, policy and political studies of lifelong education. The journal recognises that research into lifelong learning needs to focus on the relationships between schooling, later learning, active citizenship and personal fulfilment, as well as the relationship between schooling, employability and economic development. With this in mind, the journal provides the context for an informed debate on the theory and practice of lifelong education in a variety of countries and settings. (*IJLE* Web page, accessed July 30, 2013)

The journal is wide and inclusive in its focus on lifelong, adult, continuing, recurrent, and initial education and learning. The relation between theory and practice is important, as are debates relating to a variety of countries and settings. The target group, as stated on their Web page, is practitioners as well as researchers. Through the title, the journal indicates an ambition to be international.

Based on these descriptions, some different characteristics of the journals emerge in terms of aim and scope as well as editorial work. All three journals are similar in being peer-reviewed journals within the wide field of the education and learning of adults. They all have an interest in contributing to the practices under scrutiny, although *SICE* differs in its emphasis on

inviting practitioners to write papers for the journal. All three journals position themselves differently in terms of how they describe their main interest areas. *AEQ* speaks about adult and continuing education; *SICE* speaks about continuing, professional, and lifelong learning as well as continuing education; and *IJLE* speaks about lifelong, adult, continuing, recurrent, and initial education and learning. Thus, the latter two, in their focus on education as well as learning, are wider in their own descriptions of what they define as part of what their journals cover. *IJLE* differs from the other two in its stronger international focus, which is visible in its title as well as in the geographical distribution of editorial board members, compared to *AEQ*, which positions itself as a ‘national’ journal focused on North America and *SICE* which in its policy statement does not position itself as international. *AEQ* is also the only journal connected to a research association.

Limitations of the study

There are, as always, some limitations to the study. Our description excludes a range of publications which could be of interest and which could be deemed to be of high importance in shaping the field of research (other journals, books, and book chapters). Hicks (2013) argues that within social science, what is included in the Web of Science often does not concur with similar analyses of national publication patterns or analyses of citations in relation to books. One limitation is that other journals active in the field might obtain a position and profile within the field that obscure the empirical findings of our analysis. For example, excluding the new journal *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, which aims to include a broad geographical range of papers, might provide a different geographical distribution of authors than would have otherwise been the case.⁷ Further, by focusing only on English-language journals, we exclude much of what is happening in parts of Europe and the world that is not published in English. Another potential limitation is that because of the delay effect between when a paper is published and when it is cited, the sample of the most highly cited articles is biased towards publications in the earlier period of the study.⁸

Bearing this in mind, we are not claiming that our analysis is fully generalizable in its findings in relation to the field as a whole, especially because other modes of publications and publication languages are completely left out. Furthermore, the study is not to be read as a full-fledged ‘field-analysis’ in Bourdieu’s very ambitious sense (Bourdieu, 1988). Our analysis is limited to saying something about the field of research on the education and learning of adults as shaped through these three key journals, and the articles within them.

Findings

In this section, we focus on three aspects: geographical distribution of authors, geographical distribution of most cited articles, and the flow of publications from countries with the highest shares of publications. All results have been standardized in terms of percentages.

Figure 1 below illustrates the geographical distribution of first authorship among all articles published in the three journals during 2005–2012, as well as the share of the most cited articles. The blue bar represents the share (in percentages) of the total number of published articles and the red bar represents the share of first authorship among those 57 articles most cited in the journals.

⁷ As previously stated, the reason for not including other journals was simply that they were not indexed in Scopus at the moment of our inquiry.

⁸ Fifty-four of the articles in the sample were published 2005–2008.

Figure 1. Geographical distribution of affiliated first authorship among all articles published and most cited in three adult educational journals, 2005-2012

The results illustrate how the vast majority of all articles have a first author from one of the four dominant Anglophone countries: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia. However, not all Anglophone countries are part of the pattern of dominance, e.g. New Zealand, South Africa and Botswana. Together, the four dominant countries represent 66% of all published articles. Comparing Australia, the country of the four with the lowest share of publications, with Sweden, which is the country with the fifth-highest share of published articles, the difference is substantial. Australia has 13.9% of the bulk of publications while Sweden has 3.9%.

When focusing on the share of most cited articles, we can see how authors from the four mentioned countries together have authored an astonishing 87.8% of the top-cited articles. Comparing the share of published articles with the share of those with highest citations, we can see how UK and Australian authors have high revenues in the field — that is, they have the highest share of highly cited articles compared to their share of the total number of publications. US and Canadian authors also seem to uphold a privileged position in terms of generating citations out of publications, but their share of highly cited articles differs less substantially from the bulk of published articles, compared to UK and Australia.

In Figure 1 we can see that these four countries stand out both with regards to the total number of publications as well as the share of most cited articles. In order to further scrutinize the logic of their publication patterns, as related to the three investigated journals, we have constructed a cross-tabulation that illustrates the distribution of publications from each country in relation to each journal.

Table 1. Publication patterns of four major Anglophone countries in relation to three adult educational journals, 2005–2012. Majority stated in bold.

	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
<i>First Authors' Geographical Affiliation</i>	<i>SICE (AUS)</i>	<i>AEQ (US)</i>	<i>IJLE (UK)</i>	<i>TOT.</i>
UNITED KINGDOM	25% (32)	6% (8)	69% (90)	100% (130)
UNITED STATES	7% (8)	62% (69)	31% (35)	100% (112)
CANADA	17% (16)	39% (36)	44% (41)	100% (93)
AUSTRALIA	54% (49)	7% (6)	39% (35)	100% (90)
				N=425

The results presented in *Table 1* illustrate how authors from the four Anglophone countries to a large extent, publish their articles in the journal that originates from the same geographical location. UK authors publish 69% of their articles in the UK-based journal *IJLE*, US authors publish 62% of their articles in the US-based journal *AEQ*, and the Australian authors publish 54% of their articles in the Australian-based journal *SICE*. Canadians somewhat diverge from this pattern, however, by publishing 44% of their articles in *IJLE*, and ‘only’ 39% in *AEQ*, which is the journal with the closest geographical proximity.

The table illustrates how the transnational flow of publications across continents is surprisingly low. For example, the *AEQ* is a common outlet for US and Canadian authors (62% and 39% respectively), while Australian authors publish only a small share (7%) of their articles in *AEQ*. Further, US authors publish their work to a very small extent (7%) in the Australian-based *SICE*, while the Canadians publish to a little higher extent (17%). The results thus seem to suggest that North American and Australian scholars within adult education do not tend to disseminate their scientific findings across the two continents.

The flow of publications between North America and Europe is also relatively low. In the investigated period 2005-2012, UK authors published only some 6% of their articles in *AEQ*. However the flow of publications seem slightly higher in the other direction where US authors publish 31% of their articles in *IJLE*, and for the Canadians, as much as 44%. Finally, the flow of publications between Australia and the United Kingdom is more pronounced. This goes in both directions: UK authors publish 25% of their articles in *SICE*, and Australian authors publish 39% of their articles in *IJLE*.

Discussion

With the emergence of the EPC (Larsson, 2009), scholars in many countries are forced to publish their work in journals that ‘count’ in their evaluation systems. As we have argued, indexing databases are used increasingly as devices to rank knowledge and distribute resources. Against this backdrop, we have sought to unravel how publications and citations of three key journals in the field of adult education relate to the geographical location of the article’s first author.

The findings presented above are relatively consistent with prior research findings in one aspect: there is “Anglophone dominance” in the field of adult education. In our analysis, authors from four countries dominate the field: the United Kingdom, the United States,

Canada, and Australia (see Larsson, 2010; Taylor, 2001; St. Clair, 2011; Harris & Morrison, 2011).

Our analysis also allows us to compare the revenues of these publications in terms of citation output. These results clearly illustrate that Anglophone authors are those who have the highest revenue in terms of citations (88% of top-cited versus 66% of published articles). Such results are similar to Larsson's study (2010), which illustrates how 86–89% of all citations in articles published in *SIEA* between 2005 and the spring of 2009 were to articles authored by someone from the Anglophone world. Our analysis provides more detail, however, illustrating that UK and Australian authors have the highest revenue in terms of citations, here defined as the largest share of highest-cited articles *in relation to* the total published articles in a given time-span. Furthermore, both the size of the sample and the method deployed in this study strengthens the assertion that there is a structural dominance of Anglophone researchers active in the field, in relation to all those contributing to the field with non-Anglophone institutional affiliations.

Why do these three journals publish articles primarily from authors from four countries that have English as their first language, even though at least two of them explicitly allude to their “international” character? This question is not the least important as resources become tied to the emerging EPC (Larsson, 2009), based on the indexicality of English-oriented databases such as that of Scopus. Governments and university administrations across Europe are increasingly calling for their researchers to publish their work in what is commonly held as “international journals”, and in several countries research excellence is *defined* along these highly standardized, and arguably reductionistic measurements (Hicks, 2012; Larsson, 2009; Tseng & Tsay, 2013). Against this backdrop, one can expect an increase of submissions from researchers who do not have English as a native tongue. The question becomes even more urgent: why are there such low numbers of published articles from non-Anglophone authors in these three journals, and why is there an even lower number of highly cited non-Anglophone articles at a time of increased internationalization and presence of an EPC?

One possible answer to such a question can be found in our analysis of how authors from the four dominating countries publish across these different journals. What becomes obvious is how authors in these countries most often publish their work in the journal that has its location in the same country or region (see *Table 1*). Thus, publication patterns in the field of adult education are largely to be understood not as international but rather as *national* ones. Authors in these countries participate in provincial and regional discussions and the system of symbolic recognition assured through journal publishing has not expanded beyond these realms.

When investigating the extent to which authors from these countries publish in any of the other journals, we see how the flow of papers across geographical space is surprisingly low. Very few Australians and UK authors publish in the US-based journal, and likewise, very few US authors publish in the Australian-based journal. However, there seems to be some flow of papers from North America (Canada and the United States) to the UK-based journal. This picture is reflected in both the aim and scope of these journals as well as in the geographical distribution of members of the editorial boards. As has been illustrated, there is a clear dominance of Anglophone scholars on the editorial boards of the journals, where only *IJLE* stands out by having just over 40% of its editorial board members from non-Anglophone countries. Further, the *AEQ*, with its connection to the AAACE, has a clear national

concentration, one that might become the means of reinforcing its provincial and regional publication basis.

A second answer to the question might be that practices of adult education vary greatly between countries; there are great differences in the intellectual traditions as well (Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2010). For example, adult education in Sweden has a long history with formal adult-education institutions dating back to the mid-1800s, while in some other countries, institutional adult education practices are either a recent phenomenon or non-existent. Additionally, the language of adult education in Sweden is framed within a continental intellectual tradition, with keywords such as *bildning* (from the German *bildung*), *pedagogik* (with no English equivalent), and so forth. Translating such concepts and such intellectual heritage into the English language, to an English-speaking audience, might be problematic. Thus, the practices of adult education as well as the language of adult education might encourage national publication outputs. That is, it might be more inviting and easy to connect to a nation's own adult education and their research practices, as researchers there share the implicit knowledge of institutional arrangements, academic jargon and previous work published in the field. A question worth pursuing would be to see how well authors from different countries, publishing in the three journals, frame and contextualize their research: who is asked to contextualize what?

In providing a summary of our research findings in relation to the EPC, the following can be said: first, we venture the suggestion that authors in the four dominating countries do not need to publish elsewhere as the journals they have available in their own countries are categorized as 'international' and because they are published in English (or at least categorized as those you should publish in to be acknowledged by your employer and colleagues). *AEQ* and *SICE* are both included in the Web of Science, and thus classified as 'worthy' within those administrative systems of assessing research quality and excellence that have gained prominence.

Second, if a journal is shaped through its publication pattern as a national output for research — as our results on authorship and membership on editorial boards indicate — certain contextual rules for what can be included and excluded can be expected to emerge. Thus, a journal that has emerged in a certain geographical location and that includes a bulk of articles from that same location, articulated in the first language of that specific location, are likely to gain advantages to publications produced elsewhere. Papers originating from elsewhere might use research practices that are deemed too different, draw on literature that is not from the same geographical location as the journal, connect with discussions that are taking place faraway, and so forth. As scholars from the host country of the journal often review the manuscripts, *the monolingualism of adult educational research* is, as a consequence, often tacitly encouraged. This is a particularly relevant point to make in relation to the field of the education and learning of adults, which differs both in terms of practice and intellectual traditions across countries and regions (cf. Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2010).

Conclusions and implications

By designing a comparison between the bulk of publications and the top-cited strata within a specific research field, we have been able to problematize how scientific quality is fabricated. This article contributes new and somewhat surprising results compared to previous research interested in characterizing the field of research on the education and learning of adults. Our results indicate that:

- Authors from Anglophone countries, especially the United Kingdom and Australia, have the highest revenue regarding their share of highly cited articles as compared to their share of published articles.
- Authors from the Anglophone countries publish mostly in journals from their own geographical location, which can be interpreted as a national rather than international publication output.
- Our results also, to some extent, confirm trends identified in prior studies, that is, a dominance of Anglophone authors and a marginalization of non-Anglophone authors.

Implications

If one is a scholar in a non-Anglophone country or at a university where an EPC is emerging around the major databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, chances are that the logic of rewards shifts in favour of a bilingual publication strategy where English unfolds as the second language. Such development has been going on in some academic disciplines for a long time, and it is not a very controversial issue in some scientific fields, particularly within more cumulative oriented natural science (Altbach, 2006; Sörlin, 1994; Salö, 2010). In the field of the education and learning of adults, however, foreign-language publication might be more contestable. For example, when non-Anglophone adult education researchers publish in English, will practitioners or people in those countries who might not be fluent in English be able to take part in the ongoing research in the field? Will the hegemony of English language allow research on adult education in non-Anglophone countries to be conceptualized in the best possible way? Or will non-Anglophone adult education researchers have to conduct research that is interesting foremost to the Anglophone world, rather than producing research of value to policymakers, practitioners, and the research debate that is taking place in the home country of the researcher?

For researchers, the publication strategy aimed at monolingual English journals such as *AEQ* and *SICE* might become a necessity if they wish to ‘stay’ in the field and accumulate measurable academic rewards. However, it seems to be a problem for non-Anglophone authors to be cited and published in the investigated journals. We have illustrated the problem of being cited, and we know that in order to empirically illustrate if non-Anglophone authors have a problem publishing in these journals we would have to look at both submission as well as publication patterns (see e.g. Taylor, 2001). However, within the framing of the EPC, we argue that the problem publishing in these journals is a plausible conclusion. So why is this the case? Might this be because the research from other countries lacks relevance for those assessing the quality of the papers? Or does it relate to national citation cultures? Or might non-Anglophone-language articles — based on the ‘strangeness’ of the context, the level of English, or the challenge of transferring intellectual traditions into English — be confused with bad research? The irony of the developments and patterns illustrated in this article is that non-English native speakers actively engage in a game that underscores their own subordination. As non-Anglophone authors do not cite each other when entering an English-speaking regime of publications, but rather import the standard references for the Anglophone academic worlds where they now seek recognition, they are ultimately contributing to the further marginalization of their own peripheral positions.

However, there are contemporary changes in publication patterns of scholars that may contribute to changing power relations within the EPC. The open access movement is starting to make some impact and may be contributing to destabilizing established rankings, prestige, and status hierarchies within the academic fields. Arguably, through such a movement, the position of main journal publishers is being challenged. On the one hand, numerous new

publishers and journals are emerging; on the other hand, the publication mode challenges the traditional business model of charging readers for accessing the journals. This can, e.g. be seen within the field of adult education with the launch, in 2010, of the open access journal, the *European Journal for Research on the Education of Adults*, available at www.rela.ep.liu.se. Because open access means free access to readers, those publishing in an open access journal raise their chances of being cited substantially because anyone can access the text (Eysenbach, 2006; Lawrence, 2001). On the other hand, if a journal is not indexed in the Web of Science or any other database that is considered as quality markers by current benchmarking practices, their publications and citations might still be deemed irrelevant within the emerging EPC. Thus, it will be interesting to see what happens when new open access journals permeate academic fields and challenge the established hegemony. Would this change the dominance patterns of publications for scholars? Or would these developments contribute to a diversification of what is published and who publishes? Only time will tell.

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