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INTERNATIONAL & COMPARATIVE EDUCATION | REVIEW ARTICLE

Various ways of understanding the concept of andragogy

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Abstract: This article deals with the concept of andragogy and the understanding of the same from a historical and professional perspective. It also includes a clarification of the difference between European and North American andragogy. Andragogy concerns adult education and learning in some way or another, but, beyond this, the concept is ambiguous. Many perceive it as being synonymous with Knowles's andragogy from the 1970s, but this perspective is divorced from a sense of history. European andragogy arose long before Knowles's andragogy did and is also more ambiguous. This article accounts for various understandings of andragogy, from the first known user of the concept to date.

Subjects: Adult Education and Lifelong Learning; History of Education; International & Comparative Education

Keywords: andragogy; adult learning; adult education; adult pedagogy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the ambiguity of the concept of andragogy. The common understanding of the concept is somehow generally attached to Knowles's andragogy (Henschke, 2015), and a great deal of the literature in the field from the 1970s onward centres on this approach. The debate in the wake of this approach has entailed support for, or opposition to Knowles's andragogy (Henschke & Cooper, 2006). This conception is narrow and divorced from a sense of history. Knowles's andragogy is only one of several conceptions, and may be the one that differs most from "the big picture".

This presentation is mainly descriptive, and is based on books, articles, reports, and other written material. The texts have been selected to clarify various ways of understanding the concept of

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Andragogy deals with adult education and learning in some way or another. It is commonly associated with Malcolm Knowles, who developed his adult pedagogical principles under the name of andragogy from the 1970s on. Knowles's andragogy has been widely accepted; it seems to form the basis for the common understanding of andragogy in the English-speaking world. However, this is an insufficient approach; there are several other conceptions of andragogy. European andragogy arose long before Knowles's andragogy and is also more ambiguous. This article reveals the various understandings of the concept.

andragogy and how these conceptions are related to each other. There is a shorter concluding discussion with emphasis on the present situation.

1.1. The concept

The essential meaning of the concept of andragogy has to do with adults. The Greek, *aner* (genitive *andros*), means “man”, while *agein* means “to lead”; so andragogy means “leading men,” which can be paraphrased as “leading adults”. Mohring (1989) believed that the basis of the concept should be the Greek, *teleios*, denoting adults of both sexes. *Teleiagogy* could then replace *andragogy*. However, the concept of *andragogy* has been maintained, and it holds a meaning that includes adults of all genders.

2. The first known user of the concept

The history of andragogical ideas and practice can be traced far back in time. According to Henschke (1998) and Savicevic (2008), andragogical institutions existed several hundreds of years before schools for children were established; hence, they traced andragogical thinking back to Hellenistic and Jewish culture in ancient times.

However, to find the first known user of the concept of andragogy, we must look back to the 1800s (Loeng, 2017). In 1833 Alexander Kapp published the book, *Platon's Erziehungslehre als Pädagogik für die Einzelnen und als Staatspädagogik, oder dessen praktische Philosophie* (Kapp, 1833), taking all that Plato had written about education as a starting point. The book had a separate section about the education of adults, which he called *andragogy* (Andragogik). In it, he argued in favour of education for adults and the qualities that it was important to develop. To Kapp, andragogy was essentially about *character formation* and *self-knowledge* and included both general education and vocational education. He claimed that, in vocational education, character formation was superior to practical occupational skills and that the development of outer, objective skills must not take place independently of the inner formation of human character (Loeng, 2017).

His contemporary educators did not welcome his dichotomisation of Plato's educational theory, according to which, pedagogy covered child and youth education and education for adults was called andragogy. Herbart (1835) most clearly expressed this with harsh criticism of Kapp's arguments. Among other things, he claimed that the results of introducing the concept of andragogy would be “a general state of unauthority”.

3. Developmental work attached to andragogy in the 1920s

Kapp's contemporaries were not receptive regarding his andragogy and it remained unpursued (Loeng, 2017). Consequently, the concept was forgotten for nearly 100 years until Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy adopted it in the 1920s. Rosenstock-Huessy was, at that time, a central actor in the sphere of adult learning in Germany. He was a member of *Hohenrodter Bund*, a group of scholars of different disciplines who sought to develop a new direction for adult learning in Germany (*Neue Richtung*). The group conducted to greater theoretical reflection on questions associated with adult learning, and Rosenstock-Huessy played a very central role in this work (Loeng, 2017).

Rosenstock-Huessy described andragogy as “the name that includes all school-like education for adults,” adding, “Andragogy represents an important break with mere pedagogy and demagoguery” (Rosenstock, 1924, p. 5; my translation).¹ It was a new kind of teaching, aimed at solving social problems and moving towards a better future (Rosenstock-Huessy, 1925). To him, the andragogical and the socio-political were interlocked. Andragogy was aimed at developing the adult's sensibility for the spirit of the age and at motivating him/her to take action with the purpose of improving society.

Besides *Hohenrodter Bund*, there were arenas within which Rosenstock-Huessy could realise the goal of his andragogy. Two central ones were *the Academy of Labour* in Frankfurt-am-Main (*Die Akademie der Arbeit*), which offered a university college education for workers and, Rosenstock-

Huessy founded in 1921, and the *Work Camp Movement* (Die Arbeitslagerbewegung), organising work camps where various social groups could work together on projects of public utility and contact across social dividing lines was important. These work camps were converted into indoctrination camps when Hitler came to power in 1933.

A very small part of Rosenstock-Huessy's considerable literary production dealt with andragogy in the sense in which the concept of andragogy is typically used. Nevertheless, the way he explained the concept of andragogy makes it possible to assert that most of his work concerned andragogy.

Despite the modest publicity he received in the literature of adult learning and education, Rosenstock-Huessy inspired other central figures in the field both during the interwar period and the postwar period (Loeng, 2013). This influence was most apparent where Eduard Lindeman was concerned. He was one of the foremost contributors to the field of adult learning in the 1920s. However, he did not develop an independent theory of andragogy. He applied the concept only when referring to the work of Rosenstock-Huessy at the Academy of Labour (Die Akademie der Arbeit), in an article (Lindeman, 1926b) and in the book, *Education through Experience* (Anderson & Lindeman, 1927), interpreting the methods used at the academy.

4. European andragogy in the prewar period

In the 1950s, there were several publications on andragogy in Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, and what was then Yugoslavia (Reischmann, 2004a). Like andragogy in the 1920s, the events of the war constituted an important factor in the developmental work on adult pedagogy after 1945. There was a need to shape a form of education that could contribute to justice and peace and that would show that the societies in question had learnt lessons from the racial hatred and intolerance that accompanied the war. This led to rapid growth in the field of adult education after World War II. There was a demand for basic literature that would make it possible to cope with the challenges, but such literature was scarce. Central works from the interwar period were brought up, and they included the writings of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, Werner Picht, and Martin Buber.

According to Faber (2006), the adult educators of the pre-war period constituted the generation of combined disciplines (Generation der zweifachen Disziplin). They were engaged in adult learning within their disciplines, for instance, education and sociology, at university and were among the first to mainly reflect on issues concerning adult learning. The German-speakers among them included individuals who played noteworthy roles in connection to the development of andragogy in the 1950s: namely, the Swiss Heinrich Hanselmann (1951) with his book, *Andragogik—Wesen, Möglichkeiten, Grenzen der Erwachsenenbildung*, and the German Franz Pöggeler (1957) with *Einführung in die Andragogik*.

According to Hanselmann (1951), andragogy was not about adult schools but about helping adults with the learning process, and he regarded the goals of andragogy as a continuation of the goals of pedagogy. Andragogy was supposed to contribute to the adults' self-education, and he considered this to be a life process that was independent of school as an institution.

Pöggeler (1957) is considered the first to attempt to give andragogy a scientific basis through his book, *Einführung in die Andragogik*. The book widely received approval and acceptance as a fundamental work on the goals, motives, content, methods, and institutions of adult learning. Pöggeler (1957) argued that andragogy should cover the study of all systematic forms of adult education and adult learning. He focused on the characteristics of the field to avoid making the goals and methods of childhood and youth education uncritically valid for adults. Moreover, he included Rosenstock-Huessy among those who taught him what was most important in adult pedagogy (Pöggeler, 1957).

Moreover, the second half of the 1950s saw a development towards establishing andragogy as a separate science in then Yugoslavia (Babic, 1985). Andragogy as an academic discipline was

established at the University of Belgrade first, then elsewhere in the country. Dusan Savicevic was the individual from then Yugoslavia who attracted most attention internationally. He was a professor at the University of Belgrade and one of the foremost experts of andragogy in South-eastern Europe. His publications covered comparative studies of andragogy in different countries among other subjects.

In Great Britain, interest in the concept of andragogy was not awakened until the 1970s with the exception of an article by Simpson (1964). In his opinion, andragogy could denote relevant knowledge for those who dealt with adult education.

The University of Nottingham in particular focused on the concept and established a group for its closer study (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1981). This group's work was based on the theories of Paulo Freire and on Malcolm Knowles's andragogy. It defined andragogy as follows:

Andragogy can be defined as an approach i.e. the total embodiment and expression of a philosophy of education for adults. This approach is aimed at enabling people to become aware that they should be the originators of their own thinking and feeling (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1981, p. 2).

The group asserted that andragogy should be an alternative to pedagogy and andragogical practice must be a unity of reflexion and action, with dialogue as a central feature.

5. Malcolm Knowles and his andragogy

The individual who contributed the most to making andragogy known was the American Malcolm Knowles. His book, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy* made the concept known in the United States (Knowles, 1970). The previously mentioned Dusan Savicevic informed Knowles about the concept of andragogy in 1966 (Sopher & Henschke, 2011). After participating in one of Knowles's summer courses at the University of Boston he said to him that he was preaching and practicing andragogy (Knowles, 1984, p. 6). Knowles had never heard the word before, so Savicevic told him that, in Europe, the concept was used in parallel to pedagogy to denote the growing knowledge about adult learning.

The concept must have excited Knowles because he adopted it as a term for his still nameless theory of adult learning, which he had developed over many years of practice. He applied the concept for the first time in his article, "Androgogy² not pedagogy" (Knowles, 1968).

Knowles defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn". This was a narrower approach than the one that was prevalent in Europe up to that time. Knowles's andragogy was, to some extent, very practically oriented. In general, one could say that he explained andragogy with a set of assumptions about adult learners and made some recommendations concerning planning, directing, and evaluating adults' learning. His assumptions were as follows:

As individuals mature:

- (1) Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards being a self-directed human being;
- (2) They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning;
- (3) Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly towards the developmental tasks of their social roles; and
- (4) Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and, accordingly, their orientation towards learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness.³ (Knowles, 1980)

Later, Knowles (1984) added a fifth assumption:

- (5) As a person matures, the motivation to learn is internal (Knowles, 1984)

Knowles's book started a rather comprehensive debate, leading to the deepening of many central questions concerning adult learning. It must be mentioned that, in the light of this debate, Knowles changed the subtitle of the book to *From Pedagogy to Andragogy* (Knowles, 1980), because the subtitle of the 1970 edition indicated a dichotomy between andragogy and pedagogy, while the criticism asserted, that the relation between these concepts should indicate a continuum—consequently, a difference between children and adults concerning degree, not kind (Hartree, 1984).

One of Knowles's greatest inspirations was the previously discussed Eduard Lindeman. They first met in the middle of the 1930s, when Knowles worked at the National Youth Administration in Massachusetts and Lindeman became his mentor. Lindeman's book, *The meaning of adult education* (Lindeman, 1926a), inspired Knowles tremendously; he declared that it became his main source of inspiration and ideas for a quarter of a century (Knowles, 1989). Moreover, it was Lindeman who introduced the concept of andragogy to the United States, but it was not made use of at that time.

6. The critique of Knowles

It is not possible to outline all aspects of the comprehensive debate on Knowles's andragogy from the 1970s onwards within this article, but some major points should be mentioned.

The general impression is that practitioners welcomed Knowles's andragogy. Many were satisfied to finally have a theory which was applicable in practice. Knowles also became a long sought-after spokesman for adult pedagogy as a separate discipline.

The critics were, among others, researchers and academics who were of the opinion that Knowles's andragogy suffered from a weak or non-existent empirical basis and that, consequently, andragogy could not be called "a theory of adult learning". This particularly applied to Knowles's assumptions about adult learners. Among others, Jarvis (1984) and Davenport (1987) pointed out that these assumptions lacked empirical basis.

Sandlin (2005) claimed that by considering the learning process and the individual to be separated from the social, political, economic and historical context, Knowles ignored the relationship between the individual and society. In that sense, he did not consider how privileges and suppression attached to race, gender, and class influenced learning. This presupposed that all humans and cultures valued ideals such as individualism, self-realisation, independence, and self-direction. Finger and Asun (2001) claimed that Knowles's andragogy failed to critically examine society and organisations and that his view on adult learning did not challenge the status quo and the norms and values of the American middle class.

7. Andragogy as a scientific discipline

The second half of the twentieth century is considered to have been the most fruitful period for the development of andragogy as a relatively independent scientific discipline. During it, there was an increased focus on professionalization within the field of adult learning in Europe and in North America (Savicevic, 2008).

The perspectives on andragogy as a discipline varied. Savicevic (1991, 1999b) examined the concept of andragogy in 10 European countries (five Western European countries and five Eastern European countries) and concluded that there were five distinct approaches to European andragogy:

- (1) Andragogy was one of the pedagogical disciplines, with pedagogy as the superior discipline. Representatives of this view included some authors in Germany, Poland, then Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Soviet.
- (2) Andragogy was understood as a sort of integrative science, where different established disciplines such as sociology and psychology, were unified in a common andragogical science. The Netherlands was the only country where this approach had been attempted.
- (3) The conception was, in essence, a pragmatic and practical one, focusing on the behaviour of teachers and learners in the learning situation.
- (4) The possibility of establishing andragogy as a separate science was opposed. Andragogy was considered to be a field of research belonging to established sciences such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology. This view was particularly prominent in France and Great Britain.
- (5) Andragogy was considered to be an independent scientific discipline with its own scientific structure, specific fields of research, and a system of sub-disciplines. Advocates for this conception were found in Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, then Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia.

This overview shows that the perception of andragogy as a scientific discipline varied. Some rejected the possibility of establishing an independent andragogical science, while others on the opposite extreme argued in favour of andragogy as an integrative science, with other sciences being subordinate to andragogy (the Dutch variant). Somewhere in between, andragogy was subordinate to pedagogy or other established sciences. According to Savicevic (1999a), andragogy at then Yugoslav universities developed from pedagogy and continued to be a part of pedagogical studies. That was why andragogy there was first introduced at universities that offered pedagogical studies. The approach did not necessarily ignore andragogy as a scientific discipline but including it under the pedagogical umbrella meant that the approach did not consider it to be an independent discipline. In other words, the approach presupposed that andragogy stemmed from pedagogy, and, thus, andragogical areas of research were limited (Savicevic, 2008). There was also a variant that subordinated both pedagogy and andragogy to a general educational science.

In Germany, Franz Pöggeler was a central figure in the development of andragogy and is considered to be the first to attempt to give andragogy a scientific basis with his book *Einführung in die Andragogik* (1957). Lifelong learning was a central area of research for Pöggeler, so he was preoccupied with all phases, from childhood to old age. In his opinion, not only was a pedagogical science required, but an andragogical science and a gerontagogical science were also necessary. The latter two were central areas of research for him. He considered andragogy to be the study of all systematic forms of adult education and adult learning.

The most ambitious approach to andragogy was the one that was initiated in the Netherlands in the 1960s; it involved already established sciences, such as sociology and psychology, being integrated under a common andragogical science (van Enckevort, 1971; ten Have, 1973). At the forefront of this work was Tonko Tjarko ten Have, a professor of social pedagogy. He ascribed a very broad meaning to andragogy and considered it to be an integrating science. In addition to adult education, it encompassed social work (popular education included) and social planning. Later, ten Have carried out a trisection of andragogy, differentiating between the activity (andragogy), the normative theory (andragogics), and the science (andragology). Andragogical activity was then based on the normative theory (andragogics), while andragology was the scientific study of andragogy and andragogics.

Considering andragogy as an integrating science led to great tension, and this approach has now been abandoned. Psychology, sociology, and other disciplines were not willing to give up their identity to be integrated under andragology.

Previously the different variants of andragogy are connected to geographical locations. The different views are revealed by authors who obviously are influenced by the society they are

part of and their personal experiences in that society. Somehow the different variants of andragogy partly seem to arise out of social conditions. For example, Knowles's andragogy is worked out in the US, and reflects individualistic values such as freedom, independence, self-realisation and self-direction. Rosenstock-Huessy and his andragogy is also related to society, but in a different way. He was influenced by the horror of the World War I, leading to deeply divided social classes and professions in Germany. A central question appearing from his variant of andragogy was how individuals and groups could regenerate themselves and their country. In some way or the other andragogical variants developed by different persons, seem to reflect the society surrounding them.

8. The andragogical chair in Bamberg

An institution that has contributed significantly to the development of andragogy as a scientific discipline is the University of Bamberg in Germany. In 1994, an andragogical chair (Lehrstuhl für Andragogik) was established; the associated *concept of andragogy* denoted the scientific part of adult education. The argument for this was the enormous development within the science and practice associated with adult education and the need for a chair that would concentrate on the scientific side of adult learning (Reischmann, 1996). Andragogy then became the scientific discipline that studied adult education and learning. The andragogical chair at Bamberg understood andragogy as the “lifewide learning” of adults, which comprised not only institutionalised forms of learning but also self-directed, partly purposeful, and non-purposeful forms of learning. This definition implied that adult learning also took place in many situations outside schools and other institutions.

Terms commonly used for this “lifewide learning” are formal, non-formal and informal learning activities. To describe the unintentional learning situations, Reischmann (2017) uses the term “learning en passant”. In his view this is a more positive description.

Reischmann (2015) claimed that the concepts “Erwachsenenbildung” and “Adult education” were mainly associated with the practical activity and institutions linked to practical adult education. In his opinion, anyone could call themselves an adult pedagogue. What was missing was a term for the academic discipline which studied adults' education and learning and could give a professional identity to academics and students in the field. According to Reischmann (2002), this would lead to conceptual clarity, with the use of different concepts for the field of practice and the science.

In addition to Jost Reischmann, there was a central figure associated with the development of the andragogical chair in Bamberg: namely, Werner Faber. He was a professor of the chair from 1977 to 1993, and, as a professor emeritus, he supported the 1994 name change to “Lehrstuhl für Andragogik” (Faber, 2006).

9. European and North American andragogy

According to Reischmann (2004b), in Germany there was a lack of knowledge about adult education in the United States and vice versa. When he published his book, *Adult education in West Germany in case studies* (Reischmann, 1988), he discovered to his great surprise that it was the first book on German adult education written in English. He also observed that Americans hardly participated in German conferences because they did not speak German. Moreover, he had been the only German participant at most conferences that the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education had arranged.

The distinction between the individual perspective and the social perspective epitomised the difference between European andragogy and North American andragogy. In European andragogy, the social perspective was more prominent (Höghielm, 1985). Not least, this applied to then Yugoslavia, where the socially formative role of andragogy was emphasised. North American andragogy, represented by Malcolm Knowles, attached much more importance to the individual

and the development of the individual, while Eastern European andragogy in particular emphasised social needs to a greater extent; consequently, andragogy had a socialisation function as well as a self-realisation one.

However, Savicevic (1991, 1999b) showed that a distinction did not just exist between European and North American andragogy; there were also marked differences within European andragogy (see the chapter on “Andragogy as a scientific discipline”). He also claimed that the understanding of andragogy in Great Britain was more like the one in North America than the one in Germany.

North American andragogy, represented by Malcolm Knowles, largely stood out from most tendencies within European andragogy. A fundamental difference had to do with emphasis on the social aspect versus that on the individual one (Fischer & Podeschi, 1989). A somewhat extreme way of putting it would be to say that Knowles engaged in a relatively uncritical effort to update the prevailing social conditions. According to Hartree (1984), Knowles was a modern individualist; therefore, it was important to him to contribute to individual self-realisation through career and lifestyle.

It is worth noting that Knowles’s great inspiration, Eduard Lindeman, who was himself an American, was closest to European andragogy with his emphasis on adult learning as a means to social change. To Lindeman, emphasis on individual needs was a means to reach social goals, while, to Knowles, it was a goal in itself to a great extent. Lindeman claimed that each individual had to desire to develop himself/herself and that this was linked to social commitment and social change. In Knowles’s opinion, the andragogical process had to be used with honesty and integrity so that it would not be mistaken for an attempt at social change. This was a radical change in emphasis. As Savicevic said, Knowles never understood the European concept of andragogy.⁴

10. The concept of andragogy in the Nordic countries

The term andragogy did not gain a foothold in the Nordic countries mainly due to their rich tradition of popular education (Fejes, 2016; Korsgaard, 1997). There was no need for andragogy because the ideas within popular education attended to the same ideals.

Larsson (2006) and Håkansson (2007) also indicated that the andragogical ideal, as it appeared in Knowles’s andragogy, was not always suitable for adult learners. In a school situation such as the communal adult education context in Sweden (KomVux), it is sometimes necessary to depart from principles such as experience-based and self-directed learning. Learners’ experiences must sometimes give way to educational demands, leaving the responsibility to the teacher. Then, self-directed learning might be wishful thinking, which does not always fit in the actual learning situation. Many adult learners do not always fit into the frame of expectations that the principles of andragogy point to. The assertion that adults are competent by virtue of their experiences and that self-direction is natural and necessary for adult learners is not convenient for all adults.

Tøsse (2005) wrote that this American adult pedagogy did not break through in Norway and that the attempts to make adult pedagogy a separate discipline did not succeed to a great extent (p. 591). Rather, Norwegian adult education remained associated with the popular cultural work.

Finland did not particularly stand out from the Nordic countries regarding the tradition of popular education, but, earlier, it sought to facilitate the study of adult learning at the university level. In 1929, a chair of adult education had already been established at Medborgarhögskolan, and, in 1946, Finland got its first professorate of adult education at the University of Tampere.

Moreover, plenty of research on adult pedagogy/adult learning was carried out in other Nordic countries. The researchers included Kjell Rubenson, Staffan Larsson, and Andreas Fejes from Sweden and Bjarne Wahlgren from Denmark, all professors of adult pedagogy. In Norway this research was associated with the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning at NTNU in

Trondheim; the department underwent several name changes after its establishment in 1976 as the Norwegian Institute of Adult Education (Norsk voksenpedagogisk institutt).

This research in the Nordic countries did not occur under the name of andragogy. It was associated with the terms *adult education/adult pedagogy* (Norwegian: *voksenpedagogikk*), *adult learning* (Norwegian: *voksnes læring*), and, to some extent *lifelong learning* (Norwegian: *livslang læring*). Andersson, Laginder, Salo, Stenøien, and Tøsse (2008) stated that interdisciplinarity now strongly influenced the research in the field; hence, the term “adult learning” was preferable to “adult pedagogy”/“adult education” because the latter appeared to be too restrictive. There was also a shift in the direction of lifelong learning, a term that implied a focus on learning through the whole life cycle.

11. The relation between pedagogy and andragogy

Malcolm Knowles is one of those who clearly differentiates between pedagogy and andragogy. In his opinion they rely on assumptions that are fundamentally different. Knowles’s assumptions characterize adult learners as distinct from children and they are fundamentally different from the pedagogical assumptions (see “Malcolm Knowles and his andragogy”). In Knowles’s opinion adults should only be taught from the andragogical assumptions. He also claims that these assumptions can be applicable to children in certain situations. This weakens his assertion that andragogy is a theory of adult learning.

Knowles’s andragogy must be characterized as pedagogy-distant, because of his clear distinctions between pedagogy and andragogy. Lindeman, who was one of Knowles’s great inspirations, was closest to European andragogy with his emphasis on social change, but like Knowles he was pedagogy-distant. This is supported by the following quotation (Anderson & Lindeman, 1927, pp. 2–3):

Schools are for children. Life itself is the adult’s school. Pedagogy is the method by which children are taught. Demagogy is the path by which adults are intellectually betrayed. *Andragogy* is the true method of adult learning.

If we use Knowles’s description of pedagogy as a basis for differentiating between andragogy as pedagogy-distant and pedagogy-close, we find that maybe all andragogical approaches are pedagogy-distant. However, this depends on the view of pedagogy and how pedagogy is understood. If we compare to traditional “schoolmaster-pedagogy”, andragogy is the opposite of pedagogy. The question is whether this is a good foundation for describing pedagogy as a science. In the history of pedagogy we meet many other positions. Reischmann (2004a) mentions the following three examples differing from the “schoolmaster-pedagogy”: Comenius’ pedagogical perspective covers the whole lifetime; Rousseau does not educate Emile to be a child, but to become a person who in adult age can change society; Pestalozzi and his pedagogy is more like social work than schooling. Andragogy as pedagogy-distant can only be justified if we understand pedagogy one-sided as school science and school practice, in Reischmann’s opinion. Modern definitions of pedagogy, such as “the study and theory of the methods and principles of teaching” or “the principles, practice or profession of teaching” (Collins English Dictionary, 2018), also disagree with “schoolmaster-pedagogy”.

Some state more explicitly that their andragogy is one of the pedagogical disciplines, with pedagogy as the superior discipline (see “Andragogy as a scientific discipline”). This particularly applies to Eastern Europe. According to Savicevic (1999a) adult educational theory in East-European countries is mainly derived from two sources; it is based on pedagogy and branches of pedagogy, or on andragogy. He refers to then Czechoslovakia, East-Germany, Soviet Union and Romania belonging to the first source mentioned, while countries like Hungary, Poland and then Yugoslavia belong to the last one mentioned, that means based on andragogical theory. Savicevic (1999a) also claims that andragogy at Yugoslav universities developed from pedagogy and continued to be part of pedagogical studies. However, this does not mean that andragogy belongs to

pedagogy. Savicevic (1999a) claims that German philosophy and pedagogy forms a fruitful basis for andragogy, but rejects the idea that andragogy is derived from pedagogy. The reason is that they have two quite different starting points; pedagogy has developed from philosophy and has a deductive structure, while andragogy is a product of the labour movement and workers' education in the 19th century and the first decades of the 1900s, and has an inductive and empirical starting point, Savicevic claims. To understand the relation between pedagogy and andragogy, you must understand the historical origin, he argues.

Consequently, it is more correct to say that andragogy arose from the clash with pedagogy, not as a derivation from pedagogy. The important thing was to find an approach that was different from the pedagogical one. Andragogy must develop its own knowledge base and is in that way an independent discipline. Maybe it is more accurate to say that andragogy has arisen out of the pedagogical environment but has nevertheless developed its own knowledge base.

12. Vague conceptual application

Savicevic (1991) asserted that the Finnish understanding of andragogy deserved more publicity, and, in that context, he pointed to Alanen (1978) and his approach. What was not evident from Savicevic's statement was that Alanen did not use the term "andragogy" to denote his approach to adult learning; he used the term *adult education*. Alanen applied the concept of andragogy only in his discussion and critique of Knowles's andragogy, not as a term for his own approach to the field. When Savicevic commented on the Finnish approach to andragogy, he obviously applied the term as a synonym for adult pedagogy/adult education, not as a reference to a sort of adult pedagogy. The reason for this may have been that, to Savicevic, andragogy was a discipline for the study of adult education and learning in all its expressions (Henschke, 2015). Because he did not clarify this, there was a certain vagueness concerning the use of the concept of andragogy.

Vague conceptual application recurred in several English-language scientific papers in the field. In some cases, it was difficult to decide whether the author was using andragogy as a general term for adult pedagogy/adult learning or it denoted a specific approach within the field. A number of authors also used the concept of andragogy as if there was only one sort of andragogy: Knowles's.

Some examples will illustrate this vagueness. Sandlin (2005) analysed andragogy from a critical, feminist, and afro-centric perspective. It was a critique of Knowles's andragogy and not a general criticism of andragogical approaches, but this was not clear. Sandlin (2005) also criticised andragogy for ignoring the social aspect of the learning process and for characterising the individual in psychological terms but as being separated from social, political, economic, and historical contexts (p. 28). It should have been pointed out that this criticism concerned Knowles's approach to the concept as well as similar approaches. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, who developed his andragogy in the 1920s, attended to all these elements. Among other things, he was aware of the importance of different social groups working together to increase their mutual understanding and as a pacificatory action (Loeng, 2013; Preiss, 1978).

Pratt (1993) named five basic conceptions of andragogy without clarifying that his discussion applied to Knowles's andragogy; however, one could argue that that was evident from the context. The same was true for Taylor and Kroth's (2009) analysis. Their article included a short historical retrospect, but its main point was a critique of *the andragogical theory*, which was implicitly identical with Knowles's andragogy and with a sidelong glance at the debate that occurred in the wake of this debate.

With a bit of goodwill, such insufficient clarification can be considered trivial, but it promotes an untidy impression of the field: Apparently, andragogy originated in the 1970s and many perceive it as being synonymous with Knowles's andragogy. A comparison with or an account of other approaches to andragogy is too often missing.

13. Three humanistic variants of andragogy

Approaches to the concept of andragogy can be roughly divided into three phases. Below, these phases are organised under the terms, *classical humanism*, *dialogical humanism*, and *romantic humanism*. The concept of *humanism* is multifaceted, and it is not unambiguous. What unites the different terms is the humanistic perspective, with its focus on the human being and on what is human.

Kapp's andragogy from the 1830s must be classified as *classical humanism*, leading back to Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates. "Know yourself" is, in this context, a central slogan, which is also key to Kapp's andragogy. Emphasis on reason, character formation, and self-knowledge is fundamental.

Next is the conception of andragogy that was developed in the interwar period, with Rosenstock-Huessy as a central actor. The approach is different. Experience and dialogue take over from reason as central elements. The dialogical principle is characteristic of andragogy in the interwar period. That perspective is carried over to aspects of andragogy in the 1950s, which can be termed *dialogical humanism*. The approach tones down the strong focus on the individual and self-sufficiency without losing the individual perspective. The individual must be prepared to engage in an existential dialogue to find satisfactory ways of living. He/she needs something greater than himself/herself to grow. As Rosenstock-Huessy (1970) argued, the human being must be in dialogue with both the past and the future, in addition to the inner and outer realities of life. The social perspective is prominent here.

The third phase emerged with Malcolm Knowles and his andragogy in the 1970s (Knowles, 1970, 1980). Here, the perspective is different from the one mentioned above. With Knowles, there is a more individualistic orientation. There is no talk about social change. Rather, the focus is on updating to the prevailing circumstances. Wain (1987) used the term *romantic humanism* in reference to this tendency, which, to a great extent, the humanistic psychology of the 1960s, with Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers as central representatives, influenced. It is natural to place Knowles's andragogy in this context. It is not about the human being meeting something "greater" than himself/herself in order to develop. Knowles's andragogy is aimed more at individual needs and the self-sufficiency of the individual. He stands out from a large segment of European andragogy, in which the social dimension is more evident. Romantic humanism emphasises to a much greater extent that the human being has the power for personal development. This is unlike traditional humanism, which considers the human being as an individual with a need to be shaped from the outside, having a need for some sort of upbringing. Some cues for romantic humanism are freedom, dignity, self-awareness, self-realisation, and the development of the whole human potential.

14. Conclusion

From a contemporary perspective, Knowles's andragogy is the one that has been widely accepted. His andragogy rapidly gained renown in the English-speaking world and seems to form the basis for the common understanding of the concept of andragogy. The popularised version of andragogy that Knowles's concept represented did not accept the emphasis that Rosenstock-Huessy and Lindeman placed on the social role of andragogy in the 1920s and the similar trend in a great deal of subsequent European andragogy. It is a paradox that Knowles got to know the concept of andragogy through Dusan Savicevic, a representative of Eastern European andragogy.

It is also a paradox that Lindeman was Knowles's great inspiration, considering the former's focus on social commitment and social change. Knowles was preoccupied with the self-realisation of the individual. According to Fischer and Podeschi (1989), this was because Lindeman and Knowles were representatives of two different periods in the development of adult pedagogy. In the 1920s, when Lindeman published his first books, there were great weaknesses in the theoretical basis and organisation of adult pedagogy. It was dependent on "prophets" who could point out new directions and provide new hope for society. Knowles was a representative of the period when humanistic philosophy and behaviouristic philosophy were thriving at the expense of social emphasis.

A sidelong glance at some areas where andragogy constituted part of the theoretical basis also shows that the understanding of the concept was mainly associated with Knowles's andragogy. In Norway, some literature on the nursing profession adopted the concept of andragogy. Examples include Fagermoen (1993), with a chapter discussing the adult student perspective on motivation and learning, and Wisløff (1998), which used andragogy among other theoretical approaches. Both texts primarily referred to Knowles. The same was true for Berg's (2002) statement that the ideals of coaching were closely connected to andragogy; he was referring primarily to Knowles. Moreover, andragogical theory, with reference to Knowles, constituted part of the theoretical basis for the two learning methods of problem-based learning (PBL) and supplemental instruction (SI).

In the wake of Knowles's andragogy, a comprehensive debate arose, leading to the deepening of many central issues concerning adult learning. On the one hand, his andragogy had many supporters among practitioners, who were satisfied to finally have a theory that was applicable in practice. On the other hand, the opponents were particularly preoccupied with its empirical basis, which, in their opinion, was unsatisfactory or non-existent. They were of the opinion that, if it was to be called a theory of adult learning, it was necessary to demand empirical testing. These opponents included Davenport (1987), who asserted that andragogy had to be based on facts, not on belief and fantasy. Others claimed that such statements disparaged the value-related aspects of adult learning. A proponent of this view was Podeschi (1987), who stated that andragogy had to include both empirical and philosophical aspects; to shape a holistic theory of adult learning, it was necessary to consider facts and values together.

Though Knowles's andragogy had been met with approval and was a well-known theory in the English-speaking world, the subject of andragogy was not of high standing in Western Europe or the United States, compared to many Eastern European countries. In connection to this, Savicevic (1999a) mentioned universities in then Yugoslavia, where andragogy was valued as much as pedagogy and andragogical research was of a high standard. According to Reischmann (2004a), the debate on Knowles's andragogy had played a subordinate role in most European countries where "andragogy" was a term used to refer to a field of systematic reflection, and not a name of a specific approach. This also applied to the institution that Reischmann represented, namely, the andragogical chair at the University of Bamberg in Germany. To Knowles, the modern individualist, andragogy was neither a field of study nor an arena for social change but a practical approach towards adult learners. Expressed in somewhat extreme terms, Knowles responded rather uncritically to prevailing social conditions.

Savicevic (1999a) was surely right when he claimed that, in addition to the theoretical perspective, the historical and comparative perspectives had been absent from the andragogy debate. In his opinion, this was due to the lack of literature about European andragogy written in English. Hence, an important dimension was missing. So it is possible that, the common understanding of andragogy was extremely narrow because of linguistic inaccessibility. Still, this was probably not the reason for Knowles's success. His practical and pragmatic approach and strong appeal to practitioners was the more likely reason for that. The fact that he had the practitioners on his side most likely conduced to his andragogy being widely known.

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Notes

1. Original text (Rosenstock, 1924, p. 5):

Andragogik ist daher der Name, unter dem wir alle schulmässige Bildung Erwachsener zusammenfassen können. Die Entstehung von Andragogik ist als Abkehr von blosser Pädagogik und blosser Damagogik in jedem Falle bedeutsam.

2. Later, he admitted having misprinted the word.

3. In the 1970 edition of *The modern practice of adult education*, Knowles used the concept "problem-centeredness" instead of "performance-centeredness".

4. It refers to an oral statement from Savicevic (Reischmann, 2002, p. 67).

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