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ERASMUS MUNDUS INTERNATIONAL MASTER  
**ADULT EDUCATION  
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

**Creating Critical Consciousness through Arts-based Pedagogies in Post-2011 Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

Egypt's 2011 revolution is an important political event in the country's recent history. Although the event united multiple movements with distinct rich histories, which continue to strive until this date, the occasion of the 2011 uprising is often depicted as a completed discontinuous event. In response to this disjointed mode of thinking, the study aimed to identify how Egypt's revolution shaped the pedagogical approaches in several arts-based adult education organisations that emerged in the post-revolution timeframe, by examining the lived experiences of their educators and participants. The study was designed with a qualitative approach, using critical research methodology and in-depth interviews as methods of inquiry. The results of the research show that Egypt's revolution served as a learning site, that played role in shaping critical consciousness of the future adult education practitioners of the selected organisations. These critical experiences of learning took part in the selection of pedagogical approaches and shaped them as arts-based and critical. In turn, creative means of learning allowed the participants of the educational activities to form critical and collective consciousness about their daily struggles. By looking into the field of arts-based adult education, the study demonstrates how the revolution is a complex continuous system, that undergoes the process of development through practice in different fields.

*Key words:* revolution; arts; critical pedagogies, Egypt.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

*And when the techniques allow the people to look inside, they do so and as if a “new eye” happens inside of them. ... And also, there’s something that moves inside of you. Something that was hidden and gives you a new breath, as if when you speak, a new voice comes out” (Aya, Programme participant).*

The current study attempts to investigate the ties between revolutionary events, artmaking, and education by examining the educational activities emerging after the events of the 2011 uprising in Egypt. In the current chapter, I will make a short chronological outline of the Egyptian revolution and the field of adult education in Egypt. Furthermore, by overviewing some literature around the topics, I will clarify the problem posed by this research. I will then introduce the aim of the study, further elaborating on its significance and contribution.

On 25 January 2011, the streets of the Egyptian capital were flooded with massive demonstrations rioting against poverty, social injustices, corruption, and many other misdeeds committed and reproduced by the country’s authoritarian regime, headed by the ex-president Hosni Mubarak for 30 long years (Abushouk, 2016; Rutherford, 2013). On February 4, 2011, Mubarak’s resignation was announced and the Tahrir square turned into the venue of the massive celebration. However, this date marked only the start of the turbulent changes in the country’s political arena. The event of ousting the country’s president was followed by multiple series of shifts in power between the two main political actors - the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the Muslim Brotherhood (Shehata, 2018).

Within the short period of 2011-2014, the country witnessed multiple significant political events, which included elections and reforms of major state bodies, such as the elections of People’s Assembly and the Consultative Council, the presidential elections, the public referendum for adopting the new constitution. The second massive uprising took place on 30 June 2013, resulting in a military coup (announced by then Defence Minister and now country’s president, Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi), toppling,

and detaining the elected president from Muslim Brotherhood, Muhammad Morsi. In 2014 another presidential election was held in the country, marking the start of the rule of the current president. Each phase of the described process was accompanied by multiple public demonstrations organized by different political actors (Shehata, 2018).

Although the unfolding events that were initiated in 2011 are often referred to as the revolution, I diverge myself from the literature that depicts the processes of January 2011 and the subsequent years, as completed revolution. Rather, I share the argument of the multiple authors (see for example Abdelrahman, 2014; Abushouk, 2016) who suggest that the 2011 uprising was an episodic event of the ongoing struggles of many social groups and activists taking place in the country for multiple years preceding the massive uprising of 2011. Abdelrahman (2014), calls the process long revolution, urging to see beyond the activism of few revolutionaries during the 2011 uprising, and instead points to the strenuous efforts made by multiple movements that paved the way to this event. Achcar (2013) shares this sentiment, further providing evidence of how the events of January 2011 and the subsequent years had deep roots of social struggles and organized movements. Yet, Achcar also argues that the massiveness of the event also “set a revolutionary dynamic in motion” (p. 17).

Thus, I recognize the long history and roots of this revolution that can be tracked as back as to the previous century, as well as the preceding decades to the uprising. Nevertheless, in the current study, I particularly look at the timeframe commencing in January 2011 and the subsequent years until now. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to this period as the post-revolution timeframe. I agree with Megahed (2017) who suggests that the intensified rhythm of changes and events happening in the country shift the attention away from the field of education. She further emphasizes the significance of exploring the trajectories emerging in the field of education during such volatile and chaotic times. The authors also refer to the importance of exploring the learning process taking place during such events



(Dorio, 2017), as well as investigating the forms of educational spaces developed during and in the aftermath of these occurrences (Megahed, 2017).

This leads us towards the need to understand the background of the field of Adult Education in Egypt. As clarified by Iskander (2005), historically, the field of adult education in Egypt has been vastly dominated by the literacy and vocational programmes, provided both through formal and non-formal education programmes (Sywelem, 2015). A few authors have detected the changing tendencies in the field of adult education after the events of 2011. However, it should be noted that the main educational fields explored through this set of literature pertain to the fields related to the intersections between individuals and political processes, such as citizenship education, peace education, political education, political empowerment, resistance through education and many others (Dorio, 2017; Megahed, 2017; Mirshak, 2019; Wafa, 2014). The main interest has been shifted to the fields of education that are seemingly more political in nature (Schmitter & Sika, 2017). However, there are no studies that investigate the arts-based educational programmes in the post-revolution timeframe, despite the argument of multiple authors about the inherent political and critical nature of arts-based pedagogies (Eisner, 2002; Grace & Wells, 2007; Morris, 2008).

Thus, through this study, I aim to understand how the arts-based education organisations emerging in the post-revolution timeframe create critical consciousness about the daily struggles of their participants. More precisely, I attempt to respond to the following research questions: How have the experiences of the Egyptian uprising (2011) and the events unfolding in the subsequent years, lived by the organizers/instructors/facilitators of the selected non-formal arts-based education organisations shaped the mentioned spaces? What kind of spaces, formats, programmes, and pedagogical approaches do these institutions offer? How have the arts-based educational activities employing critical pedagogical approach reshaped the perceptions of programme participants about their daily struggles? It's worth noting that I do not measure the level of intensification of the arts-based education in post-

revolution Egypt, neither do I argue that the birth of these organisations has been the result of the revolutionary events. Instead, I explore the lived experiences of the educators and participants within the arts-based organisations/projects that have been established (or introduced adult education as a subdivision of their work) particularly in the timeframe after 2011. This allows me to inquire about the personal experiences related to the work of these individuals, as well as the events lived during the uprising of 2011 and onwards.

By approaching these questions qualitatively through critical research theory, the study intersects with a couple of fields of research. Firstly, it attempts to make a contribution to the literature around the social movement learning theory, by contextualizing the topic under Egypt's revolution. On the one hand, it tries to demonstrate the learning instances experienced by individuals during the uprising and the events developed in the following years. Consequently, it tries to undermine the linear mode of thinking about history (Abdelrahman, 2014; Salem S. , 2018), and instead tries to demonstrate how Egypt's revolution represents a long and complex process that can be traced on micro and meso levels (Scandrett, et al., 2016). Furthermore, it illustrates that this ongoing process is vividly present within individual experiences and is expressed in the types of work performed by the practitioners of adult education in Cairo. Secondly, the study attempts to enrich the understanding of the non-formal and informal adult education activities taking place in Cairo after the events of 2011. Precisely, it looks into the arts-based adult education programmes that are considerably under-researched in the context of Egypt. Thirdly, the study aims to shed light on the power of arts-based pedagogical approaches in building critical consciousness. Particularly, it targets to understand how methods employing creativity and emotions penetrate the daily lives of the programme participants and build a critical and collective understanding of their daily struggles. Finally, by providing the evidence of how the events commencing in January 2011 are still vividly present in the experiences of the practitioners and participants of one particular field, I intended to contribute to the process of overcoming the hopelessness, which I believe

has been misleadingly created by depicting Egypt's revolution as a completed and discontinuous single event.

The significance of the current study will be further elaborated in the following chapter, reviewing the main body of the literature that builds the basis for understanding this study. The literature review will be followed by the chapters of theoretical framework and methodology, which delineate the theoretical and methodological scope of the study. The methodology chapter will provide further details about my positionality, as a researcher in the study, and explicate the ethical considerations and limitations of this work. In the subsequent chapter, I will outline the key findings of the study, listing the main themes identified in the research process and bringing the direct voices of the participants to the forefront. The final chapter will analyse the results of the study in the light of the selected literature, further discussing the implications, limitations, and recommendations of this work.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

In this chapter, I will provide a critical overview of the existing literature around the topics of the current research. To draw the context for this work, I will first overview the academic debate about the conceptualization of Egypt's 2011 events as a revolution. Secondly, I will critically evaluate the existing literature placing adult learning in social and political movements, in the context of Egypt and other parts of the world. I will then overview the scene of non-formal adult education in post-revolution Egypt, drawing the boundaries for the concepts of critical consciousness used in this study. Finally, based on the overview of each section, I will identify the existing gaps in the literature about the Egyptian revolution and non-formal and informal learning taking place during and after the events.

### **2.1 - Conceptualizing Egyptian Revolution**

The massive demonstrations that started across the region of the Middle East at the end of 2010 continue to mark an important period of Egypt's current history. As described in the previous chapter the episode united multiple important events in a short historic period (Shehata, 2018). A huge body of

literature has been created about the Egyptian revolution in various fields. Some of them argue about the success of the event, while others refer to it as a failure due to the lack of tangible political transformations in the process of democratization (Abushouk, 2016; Schmitter & Sika, 2017; Stepan & Linz, 2013). What these articles have in common is that they discuss the event of mass protests that took place across Egypt in January 2011 as a singular completed case of revolution that started and ended in that specific time-space (Malak & Salem, 2015; Roccu, 2019).

In contrast to the above-listed set of articles, other authors vehemently criticise the discontinuous and linear modes of thinking about time and history. Instead, they urge to view Egypt's revolution as a long process stretching across the time before, during and after Mubarak's regime (Abdelrahman, 2014; Achcar, 2013; Salem S. , 2018; Smet, 2015). Salem (2018) in her article suggests viewing the events through Braudel's (1982) model of temporal dimensions, who disagreed to view history as a "series of dramatic discontinuities" (p. 126). While the author emphasizes the importance of the uprising, she asserts the need of placing this event in the context of holistically perceived history (Braudel, 1982, as cited in Salem S. , 2018).

Multiple other authors follow a similar line of thought while contextualizing the timeframe of Egypt's revolution (Abdelrahman, 2013; Abdelrahman, 2014; Achcar, 2013; Roccu, 2019; Roccu & Salem, 2019; Salem S. , 2018). They argue that protests of January were "one of many episodes of struggle" (Kandil, 2012, p. 4; Underhill, 2016). Instead of viewing it as a project of failure or success, they suggest concentrating on the existing movements represented within the revolution and how they continued operating in the aftermath of it (Abdelrahman, 2014). Others proposed viewing this revolution in the context of the development of the movements and activist identities (Smet, 2015; Valbjørn, 2014). More precisely, they suggested viewing the movement as an entity that experiences its own path of development from the starting point of the event throughout the whole process. They argued this can

happen through collective and collaborative learning taking place in the movement (Kilgore, 1999; Smet, 2015).

While continuity of history is well demonstrated in the above-mentioned articles by joining the dots between the time-periods preceding and following the 2011 uprising, it can and needs to be traced in current events as well. Ollis (2011) emphasized the significance of the resistance produced by community workers in their everyday work, equating its role with massive demonstrations. Similarly, other authors demonstrate the continuity of various social movements and their principles through the everyday work of participating communities (Lowan-Trudeau, 2017).

The continuous nature of revolutions through everyday community activities has been demonstrated by multiple authors within Egypt's context as well. Pilati et al. (2019) assert that "informal networks and loosely structured social groups" represent the sites where individuals find free spaces for expressing their grievances (p. 467). They characterize these spaces as both, spontaneous and organized, while Bayat (2010) labels them as "nonmovements," considering that the resistance expressed overtly during the uprising acquires a covert form in everyday activities (p. 4).

Taking the above arguments into account, the mentioned articles set the ground for perceiving certain political events as integral parts of continuous history, thus allowing us to conceptualize Egypt's 2011 uprising as a revolution and, a part of a wider social movement. English and Mayo (2012) demonstrate an important point while attempting to conceptualize the events unfolding in Egypt as a revolution. They show that the events represented a space where learning took place, as well as created the need for further engagement in adult education. Similarly, building upon Kilgore's (1999) idea of collective learning in social movements, Smet (2015) argues that the 2011 revolution was part of a bigger process within which the prior movements, communities and groups engaged in it experienced a certain development through collective learning. Based on these ideas and following the line of argumentation that seeks to see Egypt's uprising as a part of the continuous long revolution, the events

unfolding on Tahrir Square will be referred to as a revolution and will be considered as part of a wider social movement. Consequently, the two terms will be used interchangeably in the article.

Multiple authors point to the parallels between the lived experiences of the revolution and non-formal and informal educational spaces created during and after the uprisings of 2011 (Dorio, 2017; Mirshak, 2019; Wafa, 2014). Since the purpose of the current study is to explore both, the experiences of incidental learning taking place during the demonstrations and the forms of non-formal education created after the revolution, we will explore the literature regarding both stages of social movement learning. While attempting to comprehend the experiences lived during the days of demonstrations, I acknowledge that they are inextricably entangled with other experiences of social and economic struggles, engagement in various movements and everyday activities (Abdelrahman, 2014). Yet, given the scope of the research, the study seeks to explore the continuous nature of these events in the experiences precisely lived during and after the mass protests taking place in 2011.

## **2.2 - Egypt's 2011 Uprising as a Learning Site**

As suggested above, several authors demonstrate the evidence on how learning takes place before, during and after social movements (Crowther et al., 2012; Hall, 2009; Lowan-Trudeau, 2017; Scandrett, et al., 2016). Hall (2009) classifies social movement learning under three main groups. Firstly, incidental learning happens informally while engaging in activities of a specific social movement. Secondly, intentional learning takes place through educational activities organized within the frame and towards the goals of a social movement. And finally, formal and informal learning happens within a wider public as a result of activities undertaken by the activists of a given social movement. In other words, the learning is created experientially, through structured initiatives and observation (Hall, 2009; Lowan-Trudeau, 2017, p. 106). I shall return to discuss this in relation to my study in chapter five.

Scandrett et al. (2016) follow Gelpi's theory on lifelong learning and conceptualize learning happening within social movements by identifying a two-way process (Gelpi, 1979). Firstly, recognizing

social movements as sites of learning. Secondly, identifying the curriculum that emerges from a given social movement. The authors classified social movement learning under macro, micro and meso levels. The current study looks into the meso and micro levels of learning instances. It scrutinizes the meso level by trying to understand how the organisations emerging in post-2011 Egypt “broaden the context and analysis that is required by the learner to locate and explain experience” (Scandrett, et al., 2016, pp. 136-137). Thus, it attempts to grasp how the organisations adapt their formats and pedagogical approaches in order to allow learners to make sense of the significant experiences lived by them. On the other hand, it looks into the micro level by attempting to understand the individual experiences of the learning taking place in Egypt’s revolution. More specifically, it looks at how individuals are inspired towards specific curriculum and pedagogies, as a result of experienced struggles both from the societal conditions and the engagement in the mass protests.

Foley (1999) delineates the process of incidental learning happening during social movements which takes place through various means, such as identifying oneself with social struggles and demands, observing political activities undertaken, or becoming a member of a voluntary organisation. Some scholars propose that beyond protests, social movements represent “epistemological communities engaged in the generation and distribution of knowledge, theory and culture through ‘cognitive praxis’ and the creation of spaces for social learning” (Scandrett et al., as cited Lowan-Trudeau, 2017, p. 97). Thus, the learning happening within social movements transcends mere exchange of information and instead, provides a space for questioning the authority about the production of knowledge. Furthermore, the site becomes a space for tackling the pre-existing beliefs and introducing new critical thoughts, which Foley (1999) describes as “the unlearning of dominant, oppressive ideology and discourses and the learning of oppositional, liberatory ones are central to processes of emancipatory action” (p. 4).

Crowther et al. (2012) argue that social movements in addition to providing sites of learning, also foster the motivation for engaging in adult education. Asserting this point, Dorio (2017) invites us to envisage the Egyptian revolution as a critical pedagogical workshop. The author demonstrates how the incidental learning taking place at the site of public demonstrations, embedded in other lived experiences allowed participants to revisit their daily struggles with a critical mindset. It shows how the experience of engagement in the demonstrations allowed certain individuals to personalize the demands voiced at the revolution, as well as how it helped them map their own social grievances in the wider picture of the social struggles of the community. The article further illustrates how this experience has pushed certain individuals to initiate and get engaged in the field of adult citizenship education. Thereby, the article does not address how the experience of revolution acting as a learning site, becomes the birthplace of specific educational formats and pedagogical approaches, which I believe is an important point of observation and thereupon, the question that the current study aims to address. Hence, as suggested by English and Mayo (2012) the main point to be raised under question at this point is the forms of learning that emerge from social movements.

### **2.3 - The Scene of Non-formal Education after 2011 Uprising**

A few authors have selectively brought the educational spaces emerging in the post-2011 timeframe of Egypt under scrutiny. As introduced earlier, Dorio (2017) examined citizenship education in terms of the process of identity formation of educators. Alternatively, Wafa (2014) selects executive education in academic spaces, asking how it has been reshaped in its format and content in the post-revolution timeframe. Unlike Dorio (2017), she explores how functions and educational methods get adjusted to the existing transformations taking place in Egyptian society in the light of the reverberations of the revolution. Nonetheless, Wafa concentrates exclusively on the spaces of higher education and does not explore the experiences emerging from the events of the revolution (Wafa, 2014).



Likewise, Mirshak (2019) sets changes happening in post-revolution Egypt as the period of study. He explores how pedagogic approaches and educational formats are reshaped to seemingly non-political simulations and games in order to tailor political education to the limitations faced by the field of adult education in the post-revolution context (Mirshak, 2019). Finally, all three authors explore specific and narrowly defined educational fields, such as citizenship, executive and political education. These fields constitute an important part of overall adult education, however, represent limited areas of the field, as well as target concrete social groups of the Egyptian community. The mentioned articles do not build the ground for bridging the experiences related to the revolution with the emergence of specific types of educational formats and pedagogies (Dorio, 2017; Mirshak, 2019; Wafa, 2014). Furthermore, some literature concerning the educational formations in post-revolution Egypt show how educational initiatives are used as a possible space for resistance, or activist identity formation spaces (Malone, 2012; Mirshak, 2019). However, they do not explore how these spaces were pedagogically moulded through the lived experiences of the revolution, developing their discrete goals and mission.

Addressing the mentioned gap, the question of emerging pedagogies is crucially important for the current study, especially while trying to grasp the ties between the experiences of the revolution and adult learning. Lowan-Trudeau (2017) argues that the sites of social movements create critical awareness about the issues of their scope. However, most importantly they give birth to “pedagogical opportunities” for individuals coming from different communities with their own problems and needs (Lowan-Trudeau, 2017, p. 96). Cox (2019) demonstrates that pedagogical processes emerging from social movements, also serve the goals of the movements, thus, they often represent “popular fronts from below” (p. 83). Other authors also provide evidence on how pedagogies are created within the everyday work of activists of social movements in different contexts outside of Egypt, asserting the need for this field to be further explored (Hall, 2009; Clover D. , 2002; Lowan-Trudeau, 2017).

Ollis (2020) calls these opportunities “pedagogical turn” which in the frame of a social movement, shifts the attention to both individual and collective learning about specific issues (p. 217). Heidemann (2020) shares this idea and argues that formalized spaces of adult education carry an important role in impeding society with the principles of a social movement as they “act as free spaces which facilitate the construction of strategic capacities and collective identities” (p. 335). Thereby, I aim to illustrate how a protest site becomes a space for incidental learning, creates further motivation for initiating and engaging in adult education, and most importantly, generates shifts in pedagogies and curriculum. By displaying these points, we can dismantle the perception of social movements as “disconnected actions” and comprehend their continuous nature in the context of adult education (Welton, 1993, p. 193).

Another important area that has been vastly under-researched in the context of Egypt is the creative means of learning during Egypt’s revolution and the arts-based educational spaces created in the aftermath of it. Welton (1993) points out that multiple creative activities born within social movements continued to serve as modes of resistance among the communities through “music, dance, speeches, displays, art, playfulness, and imaginative modes of defines.” (p. 159). Lowan-Trudeau (2017) articulates that many protests, with no such prior intention, become quite creative. Egyptian protests of 2011 are no exception, as Tahrir square became the space of free expression through various forms of art, including underground music, street art and many others (Haghani, 2015; Sprengel, 2019; Sprengel, 2020; Winegar, 2016).

Providing the engaging space for multiple creative expressions, Egypt’s uprisings made diverse forms of learning possible. In the practical sense, for example, Emergency law that was operating in the country during Hosni Mubarak’s regime for decades was abolished in June 2012 (Auf, 2012). Although temporarily, the abolishment of this state made various forms of free expression, including public performances legally and practically possible (Textures, 2016). Thus, artistic ways of expression gained a

chance to come into light more openly during and after the 2011 uprising (Salem & Taira, 2012; Textures, 2016). For the current study, it is important to build the ground for understanding what educational possibilities are brought along through arts-based methods. This will be explored in further detail in the following section.

#### **2.4 - Artmaking as a Critical Pedagogical Method**

Despite the significant role that art played during the days of uprisings in Egypt, there is a paucity in research that examines the arts-based educational organisations using critical pedagogical approaches that emerged during and after this event. Some authors argue that incorporating culturally relevant art in pedagogies allows students to reflect upon their historical and cultural experiences and socio-economic conditions, as well as challenge the limitations they face within their communities (Angeles, 2012, p. 106; Desai & Darts, 2016; Kwon, 2020; Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016). Although the literature about why arts-based educational interventions create deeper dimensions of learning is quite vast, some works raise particularly important points for the context of the current research. More, precisely, some authors outline how aesthetic approaches to education serve as critical pedagogies.

Firstly, Arts-based education in deprived communities provides an opportunity to newly approach specific topics. As suggested by Fattal (2014) arts-based educational methods invoke learning on multiple levels, allowing learners “to gain new and deeper understandings of self, society, and life’s enduring themes or issues” (p. 382). By approaching these topics in a new and artistic way, individuals get an opportunity to alter the modes of perception of their surrounding environment and their place in it. Eisner (2002) suggests that arts allow individuals to turn their focus to their inner selves, thus, learning more about one’s mental and emotional processes. He argues that work in arts exceeds its function of creating an aesthetic object and becomes a means of “creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture” (Eisner, 2002, p. 3). Thus, arts enable individuals to stay alert about the

environment that they live in, as well as contrast the position they occupy in it with their inner desires, feelings and thoughts (Eisner, 2002, p. 11). Zorrilla & Tisdell (2016) explain that the social world in which individuals are engaged in is understood through various “systems of representation” (p. 277). Arts in this instance becomes an additional system of representation that allows individuals to make a better sense of this world. Furthermore, authors suggest that arts can become a means of nonverbal dialogue to better understand “power imbalances, hopefully challenging ideology and perhaps affecting the status quo” (Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016, p. 285).

Secondly, arts-based creative ways of learning engage learners in the process more deeply and intimately. While writing about antiracist arts-based education, Bell and Roberts (2010) assert that the aesthetic experience of storytelling engages students in the modes of thinking that are more “creative, deep and intimate,” hence creating an opportunity for more comprehensive and profound learning (p. 2302). Eisner (2002) further claims that arts-based approaches allow the process of “slowing down perception,” making individual experience dominant in the process of learning (p. 207).

A third important point that refers to the potentiality of critical pedagogies in arts-based methods is the significance of emotional, sensual, and body-based learning in this approach. Multiple authors argue that the artmaking process allows individuals to get acquainted with oneself both on mental and emotional levels (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Eisner, 2002; Kwon, 2020). Eisner (2002) suggests that artmaking allows individuals to engage in reflective processes emotionally. The art that individuals create conveys the information about their emotional state back to them (p. 11). Furthermore, arts-based learning creates “connections between body and mind (embodiment),” thus making the process more holistic and engaging in diverse ways (Silva & Menezes, 2016, p. 42).

Fourth, art can create a sense of connection and community at deep levels. Initially, as summarized by Morris (2008), Freirean education for critical consciousness envisages arts as a form of language and culture through which individuals could build their dialogue. Lewis’s (2009) work further

elucidates that the artistic space creates the base for dialogue to happen between learners.

Subsequently, the engagement of emotions in learning through arts methods, as well as the inherently diverse nature of art, lays the foundation for the acceptance of individuals and groups that are different from us. This creates mutual understanding and empathy through visual, verbal, silent or emotion-based means (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Clover D. E., 2006; Eisner, 2002).

Lastly, arts-based methods create a space for individuals to step into the world of imagination. On the one hand, they get to recreate the existing world and within this process challenge its incompleteness. On the other, by allowing imagination to be incorporated, arts-instructed learners get an opportunity to make an intervention and alter the incomplete reality based on their desires, needs and intuition (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Eisner, 2002; Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016). Thus, creative expression becomes a tool for testing the change in an imaginary world, which also serves as a rehearsal for the real world (Eisner, 2002). As Graham (2015) suggested, “Artmaking becomes part of a socially responsive process of reflection, critical thinking, and transformation” (p. 379).

Understanding the context of Egypt’s revolution in terms of expression through arts, as well as the role of arts as forms of pedagogies is crucial for the current study, as the organisations selected for the research specialize in arts-based learning. Furthermore, the selected organisations are targeting the participants in the spaces surrounded by deprived living conditions.

Although writing about ecological activism, Graham (2015) refers to “critical place-based pedagogy” articulating the big role the space and the location plays in art-instructed critical pedagogies. He suggests that “It is an approach grounded in the peculiarities of the local community and attentive to how power and culture work through places to enhance or limit human potential” (p. 379). This point is also critical in understanding the context of the study, as the selected organisations and projects were located in one of the most disadvantaged districts of urban Cairo and targeted mainly the community of the neighbourhood.

Besides arts-based methods, another niche that the organisations occupy in the field of adult education is their focus on therapy, healing, meditation, and other emotion-based pedagogies. Remarkably, some authors suggest that pedagogy of emotion takes a pressing role in social movement learning (Walker & Palacios, 2016). Kwon (2020) explored how critical pedagogy is tightly linked with emotion by utilizing “critical emotional praxis” (p. 2). The strategies used by the author outlined three main areas of “mutual vulnerability, strategic empathy, and creative methods” which strongly correspond to the methods and goals of the selected organisation (p. 82).

Another educational tool utilized by the organisation is a forum /playback theatre. As suggested by Roccu and Salem (2019), telling one’s own stories not only creates a reflective experience but also “becomes a way of making meaning and collective memory a tool of resistance in and of itself” (p. 221). Roccu (2019) further suggests that the Arab uprisings provide an opportunity for redefining the perception of political time, suggesting that specific social groups get an opportunity to create “individual and collective memories of the past” (p. 239). In the context of the social movement learning and pedagogical turns created through this experience, the method of telling one’s story through artistic expressions once again shows the significance of arts-based approaches in adult education.

Having discussed the main literature around the topic, we have now identified the specific spatial and temporal frame, in the context in which the current study is grounded. Furthermore, we have drawn the scope for the concepts of social movement learning, Egypt’s 2011 revolution, post-revolution timeframe, critical pedagogies, and arts-based methods in adult education. We have further pinpointed the existing gaps in the literature, which will be targeted through this research. Based on this conceptual frame, the next section will develop the theoretical framework through which the findings of the research will be interpreted.

## 2.4 - Theoretical Framework

As argued in the reviewed literature, social movements can be identified as sites of learning, and beyond, as critical pedagogical workshops, further paving the way for non-formal and informal educational formations. Thus, the theoretical frameworks of the research at hand will follow Scandrett et al's (2016) conceptualization of Gelpi's (1979) theory about incidental learning within social movements, in order to identify the process of learning, taking place in Egypt during the demonstrations of 2011. Furthermore, Dorio's (2017) analysis of envisaging the revolution as a project of critical learning will be utilized to explain how the Egyptian revolution could serve as such a workshop. Works of Freire and his notion of critical awareness will be followed to further narrow the theoretical frame proposed in this research. Finally, Gramsci's notion of the philosophy of praxis will be introduced to provide the basis for explaining the co-dependency of the selected non-formal educational organisations and their participants in the context of the post-revolutionary timeframe.

Scandrett et al (2016) conceptualize Gelpi's (1979) theory in the context of social movement learning arguing that social change and adult education are strongly intertwined. Moreover, the theory provides the basis for understanding how a social movement can not only become a space for constructing a specific type of knowledge, but also for the emergence of new actors (Scandrett, et al., 2016). According to the authors, education, whether overtly political or non-political, always occurs in the middle of some kind of social transformation. While these circumstances create additional obstacles for learners, they also generate opportunities. They suggest that such opportunities can be cultivated if education takes up a role "to make explicit the implicit contradictions and to reflect the conflicts of the situation back to the social actors so that all may learn to take appropriate action individually and collectively" (Scandrett, et al., 2016, p. 127). These points of Gelpi's theory are crucial for the current research, as it allows to identify Egypt's revolution as a site of learning. Moreover, it further seeks to grasp the understanding of how these learning incidents then lay the foundation for specific types of

educational projects. In addition, it coincides with the Freirean educational philosophy, valuing the process of reflection and action, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter (Freire, 1974; Gelpi, 1979; Scandrett, et al., 2016).

Based on Gelpi's (1979) theory on lifelong learning, the authors draw two main conclusions through which learning can be traced within social movements. Firstly, they suggest that struggles for justice in the frame of specific movements can be perceived as important spaces for lifelong learning. They argue that these spaces allow learners to identify the existing contradictions between their social realities and the official knowledge disseminated in public. Secondly, a curriculum materializes from these contradictions (Scandrett, et al., 2016).

This process represents a second important point for the theoretical frame of this research. It formulates how learning taking place in Egypt's revolution can then be translated into specific types of educational formats and pedagogies. In addition, it gives a framework that can allow us to uncover how motivations to engage in adult education activities, as education practitioners are born. Thus, Scandrett et al's (2016) theorization of Gelpi's work in this form lays the basis for tracing the critical pedagogical experiences within Egypt's revolution, first, by pinpointing it as a learning site that alters pre-existing perceptions about one's social and economic struggles. Second, it creates motivations, pushing individuals towards the field of adult education. Third, it gives birth to specific types of curriculum and pedagogies. (Scandrett, et al., 2016).

Having outlined the frame built upon Gelpi's theory through which lifelong learning takes place in social movements, we now have the foundation to better understand how a social movement can serve as a critical pedagogical workshop (Scandrett, et al., 2016). Merging the basic principles underlying social movements with the Freirean vision of adult education, many authors illustrate the parallels between critical pedagogy and social movements (Cox, 2019; English & Mayo, 2012; Foley, 1999;



Scandrett, et al., 2016). Incidentally, some authors even suggest that adult education based on critical pedagogy represents a social movement itself (English & Mayo, 2012).

English and Mayo (2012) following Foley's (1999) model of social movement learning explain that:

Critical pedagogues inspired by Freire and others of similar critical bent adopt a pedagogical approach that focuses on exploring the contradictions concealed by the dominant ideology. This is precisely the task which social justice oriented social movements claim or are said (by those who invoke them) to carry out, when raising awareness about the issues of oppression with which they are particularly concerned (English & Mayo, 2012, p. 122).

The authors further suggest that social movements become spaces that create critical awareness about individual and collective struggles. Simultaneously, these spaces generate further educational programmes serving the movement's social goals (English & Mayo, 2012).

Dorio (2017) who analyses the experiences of educators gained during Egypt's 2011 revolution, presents four points through which the event can be perceived as a critical pedagogical workshop. Firstly, according to him, the experience of revolution has created a "deeper identity" and "sense of belonging" to the struggling community amongst the participants (p. 32). Secondly, the participants felt the need to further engage in learning about the political system of Egypt, which demonstrates their deeper understanding of the political nature of education. Thirdly, they felt the urge to form a certain action in the field of politics, which was caused by the altered perception of identity and belonging. Finally, the participants saw action in the field of education, through the role of educators, as a critical step to take (Dorio, 2017).

Similarly to and building upon Dorio's (2017) model, the research at hand looks at the event of Egypt's revolution as a critical pedagogical workshop. Nevertheless, it narrows the model by concentrating on the Freirean notion of critical consciousness (Freire, 1974). The Freirean notion of

praxis as a pedagogical method, where learners get engaged in the dialectical process of reflection, action and theory is well depicted in our prior discussion of Scandrett et al's work. (Scandrett, et al., 2016) While theorizing Gelpi's theory of lifelong learning in the context of social movements, they describe a process, where participants of social movements reflect upon their beliefs and perceptions through incidental learning. Concurrently, they get to build an action through engaging in a specific type of educational activities emerging from those movements. Thus, although the two authors wrote about different learning settings, the core understanding of educational praxis is shared in the context of social movement learning (Freire, 1993; Scandrett, et al., 2016).

Following the idea of praxis, Freire (1974) explained that the notion of critical consciousness combined reflection and action upon the existing conditions. This educational method entailed collaborative learning between the members of the oppressed groups where they questioned and problematized one's socio-economic conditions and created the capacity to further act upon this. Watts, Diemer and Voight (2011) conceptualize the notion of critical consciousness by identifying three distinct and essential components of it: "critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action" (p. 46).

According to the authors, critical reflection occurs while reflecting upon one's experiences and analysing one's conditions and circumstances about existing societal inequalities. Political efficacy explains a process where an individual gains the perception of capacity to act upon the recognized inequalities and change them. Finally, critical action refers to a tangible action formed individually or collectively that is targeted to change the perceived inequalities. The three components are interrelated and interdependent while forming critical consciousness (Watts et al., 2011). The Freirean notion of critical consciousness and, precisely, this detailed conceptualization of it allows us to closely scrutinize the experiences of incidental learning during Egypt's revolution through the lens of critical pedagogies. At the same time, it enables us to examine the experiences of learning within the selected educational formation.

In order to address the question of creating criticality in the daily struggles of the programme participants, we will follow Smet's (2015) conceptualization of collective learning built upon Gramsci's notion of the "philosophy of Praxis" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 323). Gramsci argued that every member of society practices philosophy in different forms. He coined the term "spontaneous philosophy" which represents the knowledge developed through individual experiences. It signifies the type of knowledge which people attain by living in specific contexts. It is comprised of interrelated and often overlapping aspects of language, "common sense" and "folklore" (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 94). Spontaneous philosophy is a raw, uncritical consciousness, however, is not "false" consciousness, rather it is the base upon which critical consciousness can be built (Smet, 2015, p. 93).

Alternatively, Gramsci offers the notion of "philosophy proper", which he argues introduces criticism to and replaces common everyday modes of thinking (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 95). This type of philosophy is similar to that of scientific form, as it includes reasoning, logic and systematization of real-life experiences. Moreover, the key feature of this type of philosophy is criticality, thus, approaching the everyday experiences with a critical mindset (Smet, 2015).

Gramsci argues that the two types of philosophies are closely interrelated, as well as interdependent: "Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continuously transforming itself, enriching it with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary 'life'" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 44). The dialectic relation of the two philosophies represents the philosophy of praxis. He explains that the philosophy of praxis has to be closely linked and even deriving from spontaneous philosophy, however, at the same time it should be a logical and systematic criticism to the everyday common modes of thinking – "it is not a question of introducing from scratch a scientific form of thought into everyone's individual life, but of renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 331). Thereby, the philosophical praxis creates a process of "upward growth"

of everyday struggles into a scientific frame, as well as “downward growth” from scientific concepts into the everyday experience (Gramsci, 1971, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 97).

In the context of the educational organisations born during or after the revolution, understanding this interdependency is crucial. The educational organisation assumes the role to present criticality to already existing knowledge that was gained through lived personal experiences of its participants, including that of Egypt’s 2011 demonstrations and the incidental learning happening within its time-space. On the other hand, the educational formats and pedagogical approaches are fuelled by, as well as tailored to the existing raw experiences of these participants. In turn, for organisations, it becomes a form of reflection upon their educational activities.

Having grounded the theory in the context of the Egyptian revolution, this model of Smet (2015) will be followed to analyse the experience-driven learning taking place in the selected educational institutions. The suggested model allows us to see how perception about our own experiences and personal stories of struggle can be shifted by introducing criticality to the modes of thinking and feeling. It becomes even more important to comprehend how this happens through arts-based methods. Thereby, in Gramscian language, we are attempting to see how a transition happens from spontaneous philosophy to philosophy proper and vice-versa.

The literature review and the current theoretical framework have highlighted the importance of social movement learning and the need to investigate Egypt’s 2011 uprising through this lens. by synthesizing the works of different authors, I have developed a frame that will allow us to comprehend the event as a critical pedagogical workshop. Although other authors have successfully identified Egypt’s revolution as a site of learning, their points of further interest were how this learning served as a means of building activist identities or perpetuating resistance through adult education practices. Additionally, all literature around the topic examines the educational programmes, that are specialized in specific types of political education.

Alternatively, there has been no study that attempted to comprehend the pedagogical choices used in the adult education organisations through the experiences of learning occurring during the revolution. Moreover, there has been no targeted attention towards arts-based experience-driven methods. Consequently, this study has selected the organisations that use creative methods in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Cairo. By exploring the lived experiences, the study aims to understand how learnings of the revolution have been translated into artistic and critical pedagogical approaches. In turn, it tries to see how educators invite learners to critically reflect upon their experiences through these methods. For this purpose, the experiences of carefully selected organisation members have been sought. The methods through which I attempted to answer the research questions will be explained in detail in the following chapter.

### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

The current study has broadly used a qualitative research approach, basing its ontological, epistemological, and methodological principles in critical research theory. The study intended to understand the ways in which critical awareness was formed through the lived experiences of Egypt's 2011 revolution and involvement in educational activities using critical pedagogical approaches. Thus, it attempted to look into the learning instances happening within the social movement experiences and the ways these experiences were adapted to the non-formal educational scene within the post-revolution timeframe. Thereby, it tried to understand how the connecting thread runs through various personal experiences of its participants and the context within which these experiences are shaped, by examining specific individual instances of non-formal and informal learning. In this chapter I will explain the choice of methodology and methods used for this study, I will justify their selection, explain the specific steps undertaken, define my position, as a researcher, as well as describe how the issues related to ethical considerations have been addressed.

### **3.1 - My story, as a researcher**

I come from a country that experiences rapid social transformations, poverty, Russian military intervention, its perpetuated colonialism, neo-liberalization of state institutions, the rise of ultra-right violent groups and many other challenges. Thus, growing up in post-Soviet Georgia has given me a childhood full of instability, social struggles, and protests. As I became a young woman, the things I was hearing through these movements happening in my country, city, neighbourhood, family, took embodied forms as my own lived experiences of injustice. This has led my way to be involved in multiple social movements myself, including ecological, workers' rights, urban activist, social justice, minority rights, feminist and many other movements that were directly or indirectly linked to my own personal struggles. Living through these events have tremendously shaped me, as a person, by defining my worldview, interests, passions, character, friendship groups. Furthermore, it has allowed me to know myself at a deeper level by observing what makes me angry, what matters and moves me the most and how I share the membership with others in my community. My personal experiences have allowed me to see the importance of social movements, in terms of how much can be learnt there and how transformative they can be.

In 2012, I arrived in Cairo as part of my studies and stayed there for two years. It was a vibrant period to visit the country for the first time, as the mass demonstrations of 2011 had just happened, and the city was living through the reverberations of it. The public and private spaces I found myself in, were full of heated conversations conveying personal stories, expectations, hopes, and feelings around the events. It was not much later until I realized that I was part of another big movement, however, unlike previous times, my role had shifted from a participant to a witness. This allowed me to reflect upon multiple experiences I have personally lived through and perceive them in a new light. Thus, the events of 2011 acquired a significant meaning personally for me as well.

During my stay in Cairo, I was getting involved in many cultural events, that put me in touch with arts-based learning for the first time. This engagement was allowing me to reflect upon my personal experiences on a very deep level. Simultaneously, witnessing the experiences of revolution so vividly present amongst my friends and being involved in educational activities that so creatively brought these memories to life, I realized that our struggles were present and thriving in those spaces. This realization altered my perception of social movements and sparked multiple interests in me, which strongly determined the topic of the current study.

More specifically, it challenged my prior perception of movements and revolutions, as discontinuities and dualistic, either successful or failed. Such perception undermines the invaluable labour of the practitioners of many fields that carry the experiences of revolution into their daily lives and practice. While these practitioners might not necessarily be implementing direct political agendas of the revolution in their work, their lived experiences certainly demonstrate the footprints of learning during the revolution. Furthermore, being exposed to artmaking allowed me to deepen my awareness about the learning I had done non-intentionally during the movements I had been part of.

The value orientations I have, my passion for activism, as well as my interest in both, Egypt's revolution and education using arts-based critical pedagogies, have led me to shape the research questions of the current study. Acknowledging that research and production of knowledge is not a neutral process, I face a huge responsibility as a researcher. The ethical challenges stemming from this responsibility will be further addressed in the later section of the current chapter. Along with my value orientation and the nature of the research questions, my ontological and epistemological stances have guided me to methodologically position my research within the critical theory. This will be disclosed in more detail in the following section.

### 3.2 - Ontology, Epistemology and Methodological Approach

I have selected critical theory as a guiding methodological approach for this study for multiple reasons. Firstly, while critical theory focuses its attention on uncovering power structures and processes of its production and reproduction, it also places its interest in the processes of empowerment that “engage marginalized people in the rethinking of their socio-political role” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 290). I acknowledge that similarly to other qualitative research approaches the critical research theory seeks to understand and interpret specific perspectives of individuals, representing one out of multiple realities. However, at the same time, it regards the research as one of the steps towards change by providing evidence of the continuous nature of history that can be traced through individual and collective activities in the field of adult education (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Secondly, a critical research approach is based on a dialectical theory that argues that “individuals are created by and simultaneously create social realities” (Strunk & Betties, 2019, p. 73), which emphasizes the importance of understanding the context within which individuals operate and form their decisions. Thus, critical research theory espouses the holistic approach to the issue studied, by examining the everyday lived experiences of individuals, however, keeping a researcher grounded into the context by critically reflecting upon the social forces within which the individuals inquired are operating (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 295).

Anyon (2009) argues that merely examining curriculum, student demographics, selected pedagogies and other units of research in traditional studies do not provide sufficient understating of the problem. Instead, the selected points of interest need to be explored by situating them into a wider social context (p. 14). He further suggests that “critical social theory can be a powerful tool with which to make links between educational “inside” and “outside,” between past, present, and future, and between research design and larger social meanings” (Anyon, 2009, p. 14). Thus, approaching research through critical theory, I attempt to not only understand the actions taken and processes unfolding



within an educational environment, but also the conditions outside of that particular physical and timely space, which set the ground for shaping these actions and processes.

The holistic and dialectical nature of critical research theory has been an essential criterium while selecting it as a guiding approach in designing the current research. The study at hand examines the educational institutions and activities taking place in informal and disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Cairo in post-revolution Egypt. Furthermore, it explores the educational activities guided by critical pedagogical approaches. The geographic space, time and pedagogical activity selected for scrutiny have not been arbitrary. Instead, they are taken as crucially important conditions and contexts that shape the existing educational activities of individuals. At the same time, these activities are tailored to, but also targeted towards reshaping the mentioned conditions. The current study does not aim to unravel the existing power structures operating in these neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, it attempts to deeply comprehend the conditions created through such context and beholding to this understanding, then seeks to trace the nature of various educational activities from the perspectives of educators and participants.

Similarly to other qualitative interpretivist approaches, critical research theory ontologically recognizes the existence of multiple realities which can be partially sought through individual perspectives. Carspecken (1996) further suggests re-categorizing the ontological basis of critical research. He argues that ontologies can be “subjective, objective or normative-evaluative”, based on what a researcher attempts to grasp (p. 26). The ontological basis in the current study is situated under subjective and objective categories, as it tries to trace the individual experiences and the perceptions gained through these experiences. Simultaneously, it tries to understand how some of the shared experiences shape collective awareness. Furthermore, it attempts to grasp the “holistic modes of human experience and their relationships to communicative structures” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 311).

Closely linked to the theoretical frame, the selected research design used the critical theory as a “map” at all stages of research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 288). A critical approach entails the interdependency of the research and theory, as “theory and data involve and invoke one another” and allow us to identify the wider social struggles in individual experience, while also make sense of what is shared with us, through pre-existing theory about social structure (Anyon, 2009, p. 14).

### **3.3 - Methods, Sampling and Field Work**

The study used in-depth interviews as its main data collection method, as it provided an opportunity to inquire about the topic of interest through conversational flow while adjusting the questions to the context of each individual (Carspecken, 1996; Lune & Berg, 2017). The interviews were held through the online platform, Zoom. They were conducted within two main educational institutions that used critical pedagogical approaches and arts, as their main methods of instruction. Additionally, one interview was conducted with the founder of a two-year performative and educational project that ran across Egypt from 2011.

The two organisations were sampled through a purposeful sampling strategy, according to the criteria of being stationed in impoverished neighbourhoods of urban Cairo and targeting to work specifically with the local community through arts methods.

Purposeful and snowballing sampling strategies were used to select the research participants. Considering the peculiarity and diversity in performed work of each practitioner within the organisations, they were purposefully targeted and asked to share their experiences with me (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 39). The key contact persons of the organisation served as gatekeepers to the staff members and participants. Each organisation provided an official letter, giving a written consent for me to conduct research activities within their organisation and agreeing to provide contact information of the individuals that I could reach out to. As the interviews were conducted, further contact persons were sought from each participant, with the purpose of diversifying the sources of the interviewees.

A total of nine interviews were conducted across the two institutions and one project. The interviewed sample can be categorized under four main groups – 1 founder, 2 organisational staff members, 2 educators, and 4 programme participants. It should be noted that these categories are interchangeable, as many of the participants were part of more than one category. This provided an additional layer to the richness of their experiences and gave me an opportunity to hear about different perspectives of the same work.

Eight of the sampled participants were female, while one was male. The imbalanced representation of sex was predetermined by the general domination of the field and organisations by female demographic group, as well as the sampling strategy incorporated in the research. This imbalance is an important observation and, thus, has not been purposefully attempted to be addressed.

Broad research guides were created for the interviews with participants of various backgrounds – founders, teachers, organisational staff members and students, which can be found in the appendices of the thesis. The guide provided the frame within which the topics of conversation were navigated, however, each interview was fully tailored to the context of each participant and their individual stories (Lune & Berg, 2017; Packer, 2011). Part of the interviews was conducted in English and the other part in Arabic, based on the preference of each research participant. The interviews were then transcribed in original language and translated if necessary.

### **3.4 - Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used for interpreting the collected data. My value orientation was determined before involving in the process of analysis. I acknowledge that by engaging in the process of interpreting other individuals' thoughts, I am myself engaging in the process of meaning production (Braun & Clarke, 2011; Carspecken, 1996). As suggested by Kincheloe & McLaren (2011), in the process of analysis, I tried to create a "bridge between reader and text, text and its producer, historical context and present, and one particular social circumstance and another" by attempting to situate the individual

voices and myself in wider social contexts and theory, while simultaneously engaging in critical self-reflection throughout the process.

The codes and themes were formed from the data both inductively and through theory, as well as through the reflective process after each interview and during the themes-generation process. I broadly followed the 6-phase guide, suggested by Braun and Clarke (2011), while engaging in the process of generating main themes: familiarising myself with the collected data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing a report (pp. 16-23). Ultimately, three main themes were defined, with each containing 3-4 codes.

### **3.5 - Ethical Considerations**

Each stage of this research was strictly guided by ethical considerations. For this purpose, Maynooth Research Ethics Policies and University of Glasgow Ethics Guidelines were followed. The research went through ethical clearance through the Department of Adult and Community Education of Maynooth University. The research gained approval after several suggestions and amendments to the ethics application, which included the description of the project, the ethical concerns and considerations outlined in detail, in addition to the appended consent letters provided by the organisations, as well as the information sheet and consent forms intended to be used for the interviews.

The main ethical concerns were related to the anonymity and confidentiality of the study. Various types of ethical precautions were taken into account throughout the research process, considering the nature of the topic, which involves examining the experiences of individuals related to a significant political event. It should be noted that the study did not attempt to inquire about the positionality of the participants in political events during or after the revolution. It strictly concentrated on the personal journeys of learning. Considering the above mentioned, anonymity of the involved organisations and participants are strictly protected. Where the study provides the direct quotes of the

participants, it uses pseudonyms and minimum features describing them to ensure that their identities cannot be disclosed.

Each organisation was addressed with an official letter explaining the nature of the study, its purpose, the background of the researcher and the institutions that I affiliate with, signed by the programme leader. The letter was followed by the meeting with me, where the organisation representative had an opportunity to pose any existing questions, prior to deciding the involvement of the organisation in the research. After such decision, each organisation presented a consent letter, providing permission for me to carry out research activities within their institutions, as well as specifying the restrictions to my activities which I rigorously followed throughout the study.

Each research participant was addressed with an information sheet where the details about my research project and myself were clearly presented, both in Arabic and English languages. They affirmed their consent to participate by providing an electronic signature to the consent form which was provided to them online with my signature. The participants had an opportunity to refamiliarize themselves with the nature of the study and provide their consent by selectively clicking different ethics-related statements. Through this outline, they had an opportunity to opt-out of the questions related to the topics they did not wish to be asked about. Before the start of the interview, the information was once again delivered verbally, where participants had an opportunity to ask questions about the interview or the project.

The interviews were conducted in the Zoom platform, through the University of Glasgow student secure account. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were recorded for being transcribed afterwards. For assuring the transparency and accuracy of the content, the participants were offered to review the transcripts. Based on the ethical guidelines, the recordings and transcripts will be deleted within three years of their production. The data is securely stored on the University data

storage platform, protected with an enclosed password. I have ensured to stay open and approachable to each participant, may they have questions or concerns arising after the completion of the interview.

### **3.6 – Methodological Limitations**

As mentioned earlier, I have been fully acknowledging that I came to this research with my own subjectivity and context, which created multiple limitations and ethical concerns. I dedicated time to acknowledge my place in the current research, thus, addressing the limitations of the study with certain prepared steps.

Firstly, I engaged in systematic self-criticism before identifying the focus of the research. According to Strunk and Betties (2019), engaging in this process is crucially important for critical scholars in order to understand how the oppressive dimension of the research itself (p. 77). As suggested by Carspencken (1996), a critical scholar should identify one's value orientation in relation to a social issue before planning research. Thus, prior to forming the research aim, I intensively engaged in critical literature around the topic, questioning my understandings and beliefs about the problem. Only after recognizing my value orientation and its position in the ongoing debates about the topic, I form my research aim and questions.

The second ethical challenge that I had to consider was how much my value orientation would intervene with what I was ready to hear from the participants of the research. Carspencken (1996) argues that value orientation also comes at the stage of selecting the theory and methodology. However, he suggests that the value orientation should not determine the findings (Carspecken, 1996, p. 6). For this to be possible, Kincheloe and McLaren (2011) suggest that the research should be led by self-criticism throughout each phase, identifying the researcher's "own subjective, inter-subjective, and normative reference claims" (p. 301). Thus, significant time and the role was dedicated to the process of critical self-reflection during each phase of the research.

Researching during the Covid-19 pandemic represented an additional layer of challenge which determined the format of the interviews happening online. This made gaining trust and rapport with the interviewees more challenging, and thus, required ever more openness and transparency from my side.

## **Chapter 4 - Key Findings**

The findings of the current study have been generated with the guidance of the original questions posed by the study, the critical research theory, and my own systematic reflective practices. Following Braun and Clarke's (2011) model, while making sense of the data, I familiarised myself with the data, generated initial codes, searched for themes, reviewed themes, defined and named themes, and produced a report (pp. 16-23). The reflective process took place at each step of the route. While research participants shared their lived stories, I tried to listen carefully to hear various perspectives about the topics, in order to include the diversity of experiences. Nine participants in total were inquired. The names used in the study are pseudonyms assigned to each participant. The analysed data is presented under three main themes in the below report of findings – revolution as a learning site, spaces formed in post-revolution timeframe and collaborative space between educators and participants. Each theme contains relevant subthemes which will be further explained in each section of the chapter.

### **4.1 - Revolution as a Learning Site**

Although some participants did not directly link Egypt's 2011 revolution with their work, they identified the experience as significant and vivid, as well as transformative, both for their lives and their surrounding environment. They further articulated the importance of the experience, as it provided a learning opportunity on multiple dimensions. Moreover, a few participants who proceeded their career in the field of adult education observed that the experience allowed them to question specific societal topics which later was brought into their educational practice. Additionally, the perception of how these topics could be targeted through their work with communities was also shaped by the events.

More precisely the experience allowed them to evaluate their surrounding realities, existing conditions and work through a critical lens. On the one hand, the revolution served as a reflective space and allowed them to question some of the pre-approved societal norms. On the other hand, fast-paced changes happening during the event created a perception about the possibility of changing the reality, thus, creating a sense of empowerment individually and collectively. Finally, it formed an urge of taking an action, which often manifested in paving the way of individuals into different professions, including that of the field of adult education. The portrayed process of how revolution, as an experience was a learning instance is further broken down under four main subthemes, which have been titled using the quotes of the participants.

#### ***4.1.1 - Revolution Inside and Outside***

The current subtheme illustrates the experiences of the individuals who shared how living through the revolution (either personally experienced through participation or conveyed through stories of the surrounding circles), entangled in multiple other personal experiences, created a reflective process that led them to question the authority of different types in their personal lives. As described by one of the facilitators, the revolution served as a “pause” which provided time and space for various types of learning. Firstly, the process provided a platform to showcase different societal issues that had not had the possibility to be massively voiced prior to the event. As the revolution united multiple social movements in one space, different intentional learning materials were displayed through slogans, speeches, protest signs or street art. The visibility of these ideas in massively popular space created an informal learning opportunity. Additionally to the intentional activities, living through the event itself, became a significant incidental learning experience on mental, emotional, and bodily levels.

25<sup>th</sup> of January was the pause, was exactly the pause. This place needed it actually. Let's call it whatever, let's call it failed, the succeeded, whatever... but it was the pause of what's happening and what's going on? Is there another potentiality to anything that we're doing?



And that's why it was a learning experience, so, actually that's why I'm very interested in the idea of “pause” (*Mariam, Educator*).

Both types of learning within the movement, firstly and foremostly, allowed the research participants to challenge some of the public knowledge and beliefs that were previously unquestionably taken for granted. It provided an opportunity to critically observe one's own struggles and search for the origins of them on multiple social levels:

It was a sort of a de-structuring of everything, like de-structuring of everything working on a national level, and then de-structuring of also, my thought processes and I was starting to unlearn certain things that I've learned in my life, and so it was a revolution inside and outside (*Heba, Organisational team member*).

Thus, questioning of the public knowledge happened not only on the societal level but through observing one's own thought patterns, questioning them, and discovering the inherent contradictions within one's own beliefs and realities. The participants described the process of questioning their perceptions of their everyday reality and connecting them to the wider social and economic conditions. This allowed them to become observant and sensitive to the existing power dynamics.

It [The ideas that were questioned] was related mostly to power dynamics and certain kinds of, how I saw class in Egypt. It was always engulfed in this framework of rich and poor and that takes away power from a certain group of people and that they have to have someone who speaks for them (*Heba, Organisational team member*).

The participants underlined that the process was not simply mental, rather it took place on emotional and bodily levels as well. *Mariam* who described the revolution as a “pause” further expanded on the term, explaining that the pause, is a vivid, vibrant, and mobile process. Nevertheless, through its reflective opportunity, the pause changes the quality of how a person moves:

The pause is to just slow down and keep moving with awareness. ... You're aware of your senses, it activates your senses. And this is what happened with the revolution actually then, it activated the scenes. It activated you as a human being, as continuous and connected (Mariam, Educator).

Thus, the learning that took place in the revolution activated different senses which made the experience deeper and much relatable to the individuals. This deep experience formed the ground for perceiving the living conditions and forms of struggles in new ways. More importantly, it allowed them to question their position in the society which gives or takes away their freedom in actively choosing the quality of how they exist.

The quality of your being is way different from your being. So, the way you exist, this is what I'm looking at - how you exist. Not whether you're existing ... but if you are choosing consciously, deciding on how you will exist (Mariam, Educator).

Finally, the experience of being involved in the process of the revolution on mental, emotional, and bodily levels created a new perception of identity, which transcended an individual and laid the foundation for a collective one. Thus, the learning that took place through this engaging experience allowed the individuals to re-estimate the notion of community and their sense of belonging to it. Aya described this process as:

We exit our individual consciousness and enter the new group consciousness... There was no "I" anymore, it became "we." It became a collective demand. ... The group and the thing for collectiveness became a priority, instead of individualism. And it was not a verbal agreement, it was an agreement that happened with body... They just followed the freedom of their bodies, the leadership of the body" (Aya, Programme participant).

#### **4.1.2 - Another Scenario is Possible**

The previous theme showed the clear process of questioning the pre-existing beliefs and the thought patterns within oneself which led them to alter the perception about the stability of the existing social reality. This lays the foundation for understanding the next theme, the sense of empowerment. More precisely, the participants described how the experience allowed them to gain the sense of capacity to challenge this reality. Personally witnessing the changes happening to the enduring system of Egypt's political scene, set the dynamic of change, marking the experience as significant: "My engagement and the way I looked on life, and my perspective, my mental model, it went upside down. I am very grateful to this event and will be grateful forever, actually" (Mariam, Educator).

The belief that an alternative reality was possible was being established both on individual and societal levels. A few participants claimed that the experience lived through the revolution was a personally empowering occurrence, as it allowed them to acknowledge that the change could take place in their individual realities, including their personal and professional lives:

I think the main change was my self-confidence. Also, after the revolution, I was saying to myself, maybe there's another scenario meant for you. A small step can do a spectacular change and maybe this is the time for you to take a step. So, before the revolution, I wasn't thinking about any of this that I'm working with now (Mariam, Educator).

For other participants, the experience also created the sense of possibility to change the social reality that they operated in. It allowed them to mentally and emotionally recognize their ability to challenge the existing social contradictions within the community. Moreover, the acquired collective identity and sense of community further deepened their feeling of empowerment.

In turn, the feeling of empowerment created during the experience of the revolution generated the belief that the change was possible, and it could and should have started from the community,

rather than impinged upon the community. This further encouraged individuals to believe that they were able and responsible for creating the change towards the potentiality of altered reality.

#### **4.1.3 - *I have a Role in Life, Away from Being the Status Quo***

The above-described process shows how the experience of the revolution created a sense of empowerment to contribute to the manifestation of a different reality. Furthermore, it also enabled specific types of action on physical, spatial, and legal levels. One evident example of this is public expressions through artistic means, such as performances and street art in publicly visible spaces. Most importantly, the experience created a sense of responsibility and the urge to take action towards changing specific social surroundings on local levels: “Maybe I have a role in life, away from being the status quo. Maybe, I have something else to do” (Mariam, Educator).

Simultaneously, witnessing the vibrant changes resulting from the mobilization that happened within a physical and social space, formed an example of how space can be appropriated and targeted towards social needs and demands. This newly emerged perception of space and urge to take action allowed the participants to see space and time as a tool for mobilization, action and possible change. It allowed the participants to see how the same place can serve different purposes at different times and questioned their own role in this process:

And I think the question is the question of life, what do we do with our life, what do we do with the time and places, how we move on it. the square, which was a magical place at a specific time and was made for people, a place where we learn, where they drink coffee, place for playing, place for revolution, place for fighting, and a place for power, and a place for presence, and a place for demands (Aya, Programme participant).

Some participants mentioned that this sense of responsibility and aspiration towards change became the force that pushed them towards specific professions, including that of the field of adult

education. Furthermore, they mentioned that particularly artistic forms of educational activities were enabled and born through these experiences:

With the revolution and after the revolution, I thought of it as a necessary way to continue the change, to complete the change ... in order to really transform our knowledge, to decolonize our knowledge, we need to employ all forms and tools of pedagogy and artistic and cultural interventions (Leila, Founder).

Another participant who is engaged in the activities of the selected organisation, as a learner shared the sense of responsibility that was born within her to go against oppressive practices in education and therapy:

There is a huge number of malpractice, so I was convinced that my plan is, even if I won't be able to get out to provide a great difference, at least I don't want to make harm and so that's where I start (Nada, Programme participant).

Thus, it is apparent that the newly born awareness and the sense of responsibility that came along with it, paved the way of some individuals towards the field of arts-based adult education, both as educators and as participants.

#### ***4.1.4 - Replicating the Model***

Besides paving the way towards the field of adult education, the described experiences also played a role in shaping the formats and pedagogical approaches used by the educators. Although none of the selected educational organisations/projects identifies their practice as political or directly link their activities to the wider agenda of Egypt's 2011 revolution, the general idea of challenging the power structures and authoritative modes of thinking through creative ways became the core of their practice. The topics that they organized their workshops and activities around are vastly related to individual and collective well-being, as well as the social conditions that determine the state of well-being. These topics

included: mental health, labour, neo-liberal approach to education and skills, urban space and its ownership, authority and power dynamics, social otherization, class and so on.

More importantly, the experience of living through the events of the revolution shaped how the education practitioners designed their pedagogical methods and formats of the selected educational activities.

Actually, I replicated the model [model of the learning in the revolutionary setting]. That's why it's a very, very big opportunity and very amazing spectacular learning opportunity, this is the power of "pause" ... and this is the power of this event. And that's why it's very connected to my practice now (Mariam, Educator).

Furthermore, the process described in the above section where individual educators went through the process of questioning the public knowledge and gaining a sense of empowerment was later embedded in and scattered across the activities designed by them. It was, particularly, done through an arts-based approach where mental, emotional, and physical learning was equally valued. More precisely, what was experienced by educators in terms of bodily involvement that activated their learning on multiple sensual levels, was translated into their approaches: "And that's why [referring to the experience of the revolution] I'm saying to the people. People – let's pause for a minute and let's ask our bodies what they feel actually. our body has consciousness and has a mind." (Mariam, Educator).

Another important educational approach that was recreated into the practice of a few educators was the idea of collaborative learning and formation of group identity: "But if we can take something out of this event, and it worked on it in a very interesting way was, again collaboration is the origin of everything. ... we were allowing each other to be and to become" (Mariam, Educator). Gaining a group identity and experiencing it as a strong tool was identified as an important educational component that needed to be cherished through artistic approaches. The findings about these methods will be outlined in more detail in the next chapter.

## 4.2 - Spaces Formed in Post-revolution timeframe

The current chapter further expands upon the types of formats and curriculum emerging from the experiences of the revolution. It is one of the main themes of the study, as it goes into detail describing the selected organisations, their essence, goals, and approaches. It should be noted that the study by no means identifies the emergence of these organisations as a direct consequence of the experiences of the revolution. Instead, as shown in the above chapter, the experiences lived during the events of the revolution were one of many personal encounters that made the perspectives of each educator unique. In turn, they translated into professional practices in diverse ways. At the same time, the selected units that were studied under the current study are the experiences of the educators involved in the adult education organisations that emerged after the 2011 uprisings, or projects that were initiated within this timeframe inside of the organisations that existed before. Thus, the findings show diverse perspectives of educators about the formation of these spaces. Within these diverse perspectives, I tried to trace the ones particularly linked with the experiences lived through the learning process during the revolution.

The selected organisations and projects have multiple commonalities. Firstly, they target art as a field to be introduced and spread in the communities. Secondly, they envisage art as an educative tool that allows the exposure of the communities to multiple topics, such as mental health and development in critical and sensual ways. Thirdly, they target communities in socially disadvantaged “popular” quarters of urban Cairo. And finally, they utilize critical pedagogical approaches that are “discussion, experience, and problem-based.” Despite the similarities, each project undertaken within the institution has discrete goals, thus the format, activities, pedagogical approaches, and content are tailored to each separately.

The projects run in the selected organisations include psychodrama theatre, forum drama – theatre of the oppressed, TOT – training for trainers, Community engagement sessions, Urban

development project, Voice-over (Empowerment of the voice), lab of the body, colours lab, Research and writing lab, personal development and professional development. Each project/workshop is arts-based and while targeting various topics assigned to it, the main common themes are running within each and across every one of them. These themes include awakening the new awareness, collaboration, and bodily experiences. These are presented in more detail as subthemes of the current section.

#### ***4.2.1 - Awakening the “New Eye”***

As highlighted by some of the educators and organizers, the inherent idea of the conducted workshops is to create new awareness about oneself and situate the self within a wider social picture. One of the facilitators mentioned that the project targets to allow individuals to question the thought patterns built within themselves, as well as in the societal conditions that create these patterns. Describing the performative project run across the nation in the subsequent years of the revolution, the founder stated:

It is a form of performance that is interactive, that is open, that addresses the systems of thinking and facilitates the possibility to criticise, to examine conflict, and also to understand our own mentality and our own mental pedagogies, those we were raised into. So, it is also a way to criticise our own thinking or explore it in a performative way (Leila, Founder).

It becomes evident that the wider social realities creating conditions within which individuals construct their own systems of thinking is challenged by targeting these thoughts and putting them under question. Thus, the first process that is given space and importance within the learning journey is getting to know oneself. “The ideas have lots of distortions and I ask - do you believe in this? Is this yours? and does this belong to you?” (Mariam, Educator). In other instances, the act of knowing one’s thoughts and beliefs happens on emotional and bodily levels:



We do creative writing, and we do expressive arts, and we do lots of things trying to bridge the gap between what I think, what I feel, what I express, and what I need, after all, this is the main question for any tool that we actually use (Mariam, Educator).

Thus, exploring and learning how to identify the emotion behind thought and vice-versa is a big part of each stage of these workshops, which allows individuals to get closer to knowing their own selves.

Another important phase of getting to know oneself is done by questioning the point of the needs and fears. The educators and learners highlighted the importance of this in the learning process, as one gets to know what the base of specific thoughts and emotions are.

So, in addition to identifying emotions, cognitive distortions, understanding your needs was another thing that we learnt. In the middle of the anger, you say, one second... what do you need now? As soon as I understand the need, the uncertainty that is there settles down a bit. It is not easy to grasp the core (Dina, Programme participant).

While an individual gets to settle upon the question of what the need is, then they are asked what the conditions restricting the fulfilment of these needs are. They are invited to observe the inner fears, as well as the internal intuitive voices. While being attuned to the "inner voice" dictated by individual experiences, emotions and body language is strongly encouraged and supported, participants are also invited to question whether these voices enable or dismantle personal freedom.

The process following the act of knowing oneself is creating the connection between this knowledge and the outer world.

For me, education is connecting the inside, with the outside, so the conflicts actually start from within ... The gap here is what I have inside and how to connect it to the outside. And here comes the programme. (Mariam, Educator)

The educator creates a setting for an experience where she constructs a close connection of an individual with their own self, allows them to be bonded to the senses, emotions, thoughts, fears, voices, and needs. And through this connection, she creates the foundation for questioning the outer world. Through creative methods, the educator aims to make social conditions closely relatable to individual struggles. One of the participants described a strong experience of reflective and sensual presence that is born through the process, labelling it as the birth of the “new eye”:

This “new eye” is not temporary, it’s a long-term thing. And you are witnessing the birth of it ... and the new eye is an eye which is full of wisdom, it sees a wider picture and it can distinguish to not be restricted. ... as if a new consciousness happens, or a certain level of the awareness of ourselves and of the world (Aya, Programme participant).

We can see that the artistic methods allow educators to transcend the means of learning through mental processes and allows them to engage learners emotionally and physically. The next stage is questioning the indubitable nature of the given reality. This allows individuals to perceive the given social reality as incomplete that they do not have to be conformed to. In turn, it eases the sense of personal responsibility in one’s daily struggles and creates an awareness about the wider social inequalities.

Ultimately, the newly acquired awareness becomes the foundation upon which the educators build confidence through artistic activities. The empowerment is directed, first, towards allowing individuals to overcome personal struggles by addressing the issues of mental health. Second, it targets to create the space to challenge the unequal social reality through creative ways, more precisely, within an artistic realm of imagination.

When this [understanding the dynamics of conflicts and overcoming fear] is exercised inside the performance, it becomes like a rehearsal for the possibility of this very individual to later

feel empowered to change the way they are used to behave in relation to oppression in real life (Leila, Founder).

#### ***4.2.2 - Collaboration is the origin of everything***

An important component that ran through the learning environment created in the workshops of the selected organisations was collaborative learning and building group identity. It should be noted that the idea of collaboration was used both as a piece of curriculum, as well as an educative tool. The collaborative form of learning was built upon cherishing the individuality of group members and developing the language of communication through artistic ways.

Firstly, and foremostly, what I felt there was that – yes, we are a group, but we are unique individual entities. The same thing that I will be expressing, the person in front of me will take it, will understand it, will comprehend it, will feel it in a completely different way. And it's great, I don't want to be like someone, and I don't want anyone to be like me. There is a space for everyone to be their own selves (Dina, Programme participant).

Diversity was set as a valuable asset shared by the group, where individual input was appreciated for building the collaboration. The two-fold process can be identified in the learning process of some participants. On the one hand, an individual is encouraged to further deepen the awareness about oneself, which happens with the help of the group. On the other hand, this awareness about oneself creates the basis for creating deep and strong connections with the group, based on empathy and understanding. The interrelation between an individual and a group then becomes self-sufficient and co-dependent.

How can I explain this, you know, when you feel that you are very vulnerable, and you can feel any vulnerability of the others, any fragility? And this vulnerability does not mean, it's a weakness. The vulnerability means there is a connection. I feel that I have gained to have the

contact and entanglement with it. So, I'm in touch with my fragility and I'm empathetic with it and I can empathize with the fragility in others (Aya, Programme participant).

One of the pedagogical approaches actively used for making learning collaborative is bodily communication invoked through arts. An example of this is dance-movement communication. The process entailed introducing a specific type of movement to another group member, who then had a chance to improvise with it and transform it into a new movement. A common dance was created through this collaboration.

So, it enriches, as the teacher called it, the dictionary, the vocab of the body. Maybe, there is some movement my body has not comprehended, but her body did it and I take it and I try it, see how my body feels with it (Dina, Programme participant).

This type of approach to communication, firstly, fostered the value of diversity brought along by different members of the group. Simultaneously, it shifts the means of communication towards a non-verbal and non-mental form, which allows more body and emotion-based senses to be activated in the process of group learning. Finally, it demonstrates the complexity of the process of communication and the need to invest the effort while establishing a connection. Other forms of arts, such as mural painting were also incorporated in collaborative learning: "Oh I love how the mushroom is there because it tells me this ... and it's like okay, I didn't even think of this, but you add the meaning, as you make something" (Zeynab, Educator).

This form of sharing and co-creating allowed an environment where everyone's contexts, perspectives, ways of seeing were brought into one space and incorporated into the common creative work. The acceptance of the difference in another person was developed naturally, allowing the participants to face that the multiplicity of perceptions, while acknowledging it as something enriching the common work, rather than threatening one's individuality.

Such strong connections created through arts methods were further cultivated by educators, as they built the sense of community which was later led by the idea that “the support system of us, is also us” (Nada, Programme participant).

It’s something that was lived there and that’s it. It was a very deep and intense experience and starting that day, it has completely changed our relationship with each other ... without even speaking. I read something out and someone performed a dance and that was it. We understood each other. It was a very real experience (Dina, Programme participant).

The experience which was built upon sharing, trust, cherishing individuals, allowing emotions and collaboration, therefore, created a very strong sense of belonging to the group and was marked as a significant and profound experience by the participants.

#### **4.2.3 - Bodily Experiences**

The above section partially showed how the body and emotion-based approaches create strong connections between communities, as well as create the ground for building critical awareness. Forming bodily experiences through arts is targeted through specially designed workshops within the selected organisations, marking the experience as profound for the participants. They shared that the body-oriented approach to activities enabled them to reach some parts of the consciousness that were not attainable through verbally led activities. We can see that the body-based methods, on the one hand, create a new experience where individuals get to learn through multiple senses involved in the process. On the other, by involving the body in the movement and learning process, the body itself gets empowered and creates more space for further learning.

Presence of the body can take us to a new state of consciousness and awareness because it comes from the body, not from the mind. I’m a person, who usually thinks a lot and moves through mind more, so, I felt that the body was present, and it felt like my body got empowered (Aya, Programme participant).

The arts-based approaches directed to body empowerment also provide a space for expressing emotions. This happens, firstly, by involving emotions in the learning process and, thus, making learning deeper and more relatable. Secondly, this approach also allows individuals to direct the awareness inwards and be more observant of oneself. The participants also mentioned that they started to trace the energy that their bodies carried at specific times and places.

You know, when you lost about 70% of your emotion through talking. But in theatre you use all your qualities - your body your voice your facial expression, so it's a huge amount of emotions that could be expressed ... it's heavier, thicker experience (Nada, Programme participant).

A connection was born between, what am I feeling, what is my body saying, what is the action that my body wants to take. As if the body speaks by itself, which we usually don't see, don't recognize – what it wants, what it needs, what it feels like, to begin with ... we use it as a mechanical machine (Aya, Programme participant).

#### **4.3 - Collaborative Space between Educators and Participants**

The idea of collaboration was another important theme identified during the analysis. Unlike the subtheme of collaborative learning mentioned in the previous part of the findings, the collaboration here refers to the process happening on the organisational level between the institutions, represented by their educators and management team, on the one side and programme participants, on the other. The educational activities are not only tailored to the needs of the community but are informed and constructed by their experiences. The organisation cultivates the local experiences building its programme upon it. In parallel, the participants question their daily experiences and introduce criticality to their common routines. The cyclic interdependent process is, thus, created through this dynamic. The current theme will be presented under the two main subthemes, further detailing each side of the process.

#### **4.3.1 - Cultivating local experiences**

The organisations and projects, as well as educators, construct their activities upon the daily struggles and needs of the local community. This process takes place both as part of specially designated projects targeting this point, as well as an embedded component of different educational activities implemented within these organisations. For example, one of the organisations created a “research lab” that incorporated a form of participatory research, where their members studied the experiences of their community members, including those of their own. Through this, the participants strongly contributed to the process of setting the agenda of the organisation. As explained by the interviewee, introducing these projects aimed to provide the organisation with local and first-hand perspectives about the needs of the local community. Simultaneously, it created the learning experiences of how one’s own needs can be scrutinized and identified. Furthermore, the organisation also included the participants in the process of agenda-setting of the organisation, such as generating value code documents, creating the physical space and so on.

Amongst other daily struggles, the lived experiences related to the revolution were also mentioned as ones that were cultivated in direct or indirect ways. The process of “awakening” that took place during the revolution, described in the first section of the current chapter, is further built upon and deepened through educational activities. Education and performance are seen as direct ways of continuing the process of dismantling the publicly available unquestionable knowledge for some participants. Most importantly, education is seen as a means to further plough the experience that revolution had already prepared the ground for.

So, for me, this was the extended and slow-paced change - revolution, the slow evolution revolution, and I also thought that it was important to carry this project at that moment, because already everybody was realizing that they have the willpower, they can produce

change. ... The foundation was ready somehow and the realization that change is possible was already achieved by the revolution (Leila, Founder).

As explained by one of the organisational team members, they attempt to allow the community to fully appropriate the space as their own: "They have the space [organisation office] in order for them to do so and acknowledging that what they have to say, what their wants, what their feelings are something that should be part of what we do" (Heba, Organisational team member). The empowerment of the community to tailor the activities of the organisation upon "their emotions, their feelings, their opinions" is embedded in the values of these educational spaces.

Thus, experiences, including those related to the revolution, become central and acquire the role of educational material that is brought back to the participants through arts-based pedagogical approaches. These pedagogical methods re-create the experience in an artistic environment in a way that it becomes more empowering and creates a place for forming an action, both by the educators and the participants.

The idea of the experience being an essential part of the learning process was expressed outside of the context of the revolution as well. One of the participants described that she felt that the educator was approaching the learning process by bringing the existing experiences alive and turning them into the "learning content", which made learning deep and relatable to their context.

The role of bringing experiences into the space was also used by the educators for questioning their practice and understanding the perspectives of how their work needed to be done. For example, both, the participants and the educators got engaged in the playback theatre, where they exchanged their roles, and the participants were able to embody the role of the educators and vice versa. This, in turn, was used to further refine and adjust the educational techniques by the organisation.

Finally, the artistic ways of incorporating experiences into learning combined multiple components, including emotions, feelings, past memories, future hopes, in addition to the sense of



presence: “Things are connected and one idea, one emotion and one bodily experience can create a whole experience, a very complex experience, and here it comes [education]” (Mariam, Educator). This allowed educators to target, what one of the participants called a “real place” that participants were coming from.

#### **4.3.2 - Criticality to the Daily Life**

The above section demonstrated how local experiences are seen as the core aspect, upon which educational activities are built, thus bringing the lived experiences to close scrutiny. In this section, we will see how, in turn, the process of systematically incorporating the experiences into the educational practices develops a critical approach amongst the participants towards their daily routines and events, within which these experiences are developed.

Firstly, the thought patterns existing about oneself are challenged and the perception of different topics that previously were perceived as personal, are now seen through the lens of wider social structures. “If we are focusing on the societal conflicts, for instance, actually all the time appears inside the experience” (Mariam, Educator). An example of this is how one of the participants questioned their prior beliefs about their skills and employment. It is apparent that the participants learned to recognize their skills through the critical lens, instead of seeking the definition of the skill determined by the outer job market: “The meaning of skills itself, and how I used to understand it, changed completely. I did not gain many skills in this project, but the perceptions of the skills I have changed to a great extent” (Dina, Programme participant).

Another participant mentioned that the new awareness that she gained through these activities created the sense of responsibility that she carried in her daily life. This responsibility made her alert to the wider social challenges that were manifested in daily conversations and activities. Simultaneously, it triggered an action to prevent and change them locally. It is evident that this sense of responsibility has permeated both personal and professional domains of her life.

I feel this awareness gives me a responsibility to explain, prevent, change this. ... I feel that this new awareness has given me responsibility in my personal life and in my choices so that I am paying attention to these things so that there are no overflows. And I feel I want to take this later into my work (Aya, Programme participant).

One of the participants also points out that not only is the awareness and the sense of responsibility transformed, but the vocabulary and the language used by the community is modified. Specifically, there are certain self-compassionate expressions shared by them, as well as used and normalized on the daily basis. This is an indicator of what another participant explained about how the learning process is not confined to the space, but instead “it stays with us and develops with us, as we’re going until now. So, there is a lot of space for learning, expressing, starting off, experimenting and being mistaken” (Dina, Programme participant). Thus, the critical approach towards different aspects of participants’ daily lives and experiences are transferred from the learning space, into learners’ personal spaces outside of the organisation.

The introduced criticality to everyday life does not only happen on an individual level but on a collective one as well. We already witnessed how collective learning and acquiring group identity was marked as an important part of learning happening both during the revolution and within the selected educational organisations.

What happens from one person becomes source of revelation for another person, and then it becomes a thread, and the thread is building up and adding up to a kind of collective consciousness. And I think this is what happened with our forum theatre experience and also during the dynamics of the revolution (Leila, Founder).

Thus, the sense that everyone has their own part in adding to the educational process is strongly present among educators and participants. This, on the one hand, is a form of individual empowerment. On the other, it creates the type of connection within the community where power dynamics and

hierarchy are challenged at its core. It creates the sense of educators and participants truly being contributors to the learning process with a great degree of importance.

The biggest thing I learnt is that everybody has something to teach to the other. There is no such thing as someone understands it, and someone doesn't understand. There's someone educated, someone illiterate, that's not how it is. There is a human being, there are people, every human being has a value to add to the group (Aya, Programme participant).

Finally, it is important to note that not only does the collective awareness penetrate the daily lives of the programme participants, but this collective awareness is happening through a critical approach. The participant described it as: "It is not just an experience that is happening collectively, but it is happening collectively with a strong feeling of criticism and a strong discourse of criticism" (Leila, Founder). I will come back to these findings in the next chapter, as I discuss them in the context of the theory and literature.

## **Chapter 5 - Discussion**

### **5.1 - Discussion of the Key Findings**

Based on the findings and the selected literature outlined in the prior chapters, the key arguments of the study are as follows: Firstly, we see how the historic occurrence of Egypt's 2011 uprising and the consequent events serve as a significant experience for some participants. Secondly, the way the experience is described, allows us to identify it as a learning site. Thirdly, we can trace the footprints of learning taking place during the revolution within the experiences of the practitioners of the selected adult education spaces. This link can be observed in the stories of the educators and how they describe the contextual setting that their work takes place in, the targets they set for their practice and the means they choose for fulfilling these goals. Finally, the stories of the programme participants allow us to analyse the learner perspectives towards these educational spaces. In the current chapter, I

will interpret the findings of the study by placing them in the context of the wider literature around the topic, as well as the theoretical concepts drawn for this work.

The current section will be presented under three main sections, with each one of them targeting to respond to each question set by this study. The first section will discuss how the experiences of Egypt's Revolution lived by the educators and organizers shaped the selected educational spaces. The second one will cover the curricular content and forms of the selected organisations. And the final section will interpret the findings regarding the altered perceptions of the programme participants about their daily struggles.

### ***5.1.1 - Egypt's Revolution as a Learning Site***

As outlined in chapter one of this study, Gelpi's theory conceptualized by Scandrett et al. (2016), learning in a social movement can be identified within a two-fold process. Firstly, social movements allow individuals to question the existing paradoxes between publicly available knowledge and their own struggles. Secondly, curriculum emerges from these movements, both by highlighting the topics to be brought into learning and pedagogies through which these topics will be introduced. Based on this model, the findings demonstrate the experiences of learning during Egypt's revolution.

To comprehend this process in further detail, we can employ Hall's (2009) model of social movement learning. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Hall suggests that learning in social movements takes place in three different ways – incidentally, through casual conversations and observation of the events; via intentional educational efforts led by activists; and by means of formal, and informal activities observed by the wider public. The suggested model is well supported by the data of the study. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, some interviewees were active participants of the revolution, thus, living through the experience of informal learning by means of intentional educational efforts or incidental occurrences. Other interviewees were not direct participants of the revolution. However, the experience was marked as significant and educative for them, due to the

informal learning opportunity that was created through this event in the wider public. Thus, learning that took place was experience-based, both through structured activities and, mere observation of the events (Hall, 2009; Lowan-Trudeau, 2017, p. 106).

Having identified the revolution as a site of learning, we can now move to examine the form of this learning. Scandrett et al. (as cited by Lowan-Trudeau, 2017) suggest that learning taking place in social movements takes liberatory forms and creates space for questioning the public knowledge and authority of its production. This is what Foley (1999) described as “unlearning of dominant, oppressive ideology” (p. 4). This process is illustrated in the findings, what one of the participants described as the “revolution inside and outside.” The findings showcase how learning during the revolution was happening on multiple levels. For some participants, it was purely experiential and observation-based, where individuals were identifying incidental learning. For others, it was blended with formal and non-formal intentional learning.

Yet, the findings have demonstrated a similar pattern across the diverse experiences of the participants in relation to the revolution. They mention how they came to observe and challenge their own modes of thinking while identifying their individual grievances with the wider social and collective struggles that were voiced during the event. Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the participation or the observation of the event, which was described by participants as vivid, mobile, and vibrant, albeit strongly reflective, was marked as a deep and meaningful experience. These characteristics allow us to understand that the learning experience transcended mere mental and cognitive processes, and engaged learners experientially on multiple levels, including physical, emotional, and sensual (Foley, 1999).

Therefore, we see that the form of learning in this vibrant environment exceeds mere exchange of information, and instead provides a space for questioning the authority and power-plays through personal life instances. Through this, the site becomes a space for tackling the pre-existing perceptions

and introducing critical thought, which Foley (1999) describes as “the learning of oppositional, liberatory ones” (p. 4).

Another significant aspect of the learning process demonstrated in the findings is the birth of the sense of responsibility and empowerment. The reflection upon one’s social struggles was accompanied by the need and urge to contribute to the process of challenging the existing reality. For many educators and programme participants, this sense of responsibility and empowerment played a significant role in their future engagement in the field of adult education. Mariam’s choice of words depicts this process well: “I have a role in life, away from being the status quo.” These findings assert Crowther et al.’s (2012) theory, who argue that social movements, besides providing spaces for learning, create motivation for engaging in adult education.

The above-discussed points create the foundation for perceiving Egypt’s revolution as a critical pedagogical workshop (Dorio, 2017). More precisely, the findings show the process of Freirean critical consciousness taking place during the learning stages happening in Egypt’s revolution, which Watts et al. (2011) conceptualized under three main components – “critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action” (p. 45). It has been illustrated in the findings that the learning taking place during the event, allowed its participants and observers to reflect critically upon their social struggles, as well as their societal positions through which the conditions for these struggles are determined. In addition, the event provided a space to link the personal grievances with the collective ones, as well as question the authority of previously available knowledge. Thus, we see the process described under the notion of “critical reflection” unfolding (Watts et al., 2011, p. 45).

The findings show that, on the one hand, going through the critical reflection about the oppressive forms of their social conditions allowed the participants to perceive the social reality as incomplete and susceptible to change. On the other, this shift in perception took place in a vibrant and physically, emotionally, and mentally engaging space seeking change. Thus, it gave birth to the urge and

motivation, as well as the sense of empowerment to challenge and alter this reality, both on personal and collective levels. Furthermore, it set an example for the participants that it is possible for space and time to be appropriated and directed towards collective change. This can be understood as “political efficacy”, the second component of critical consciousness, described by the authors (Watts et al., 2011, p. 46). Having discussed how the Egyptian revolution created the experiences of learning, pushing individuals towards the field of adult education, we now bring the forms of these activities under scrutiny. The following chapter will address the curriculum emerging from these experiences, discussing its content, forms and pedagogical approaches.

### ***5.1.2 - Curricular Content and Pedagogies Used in the Selected Spaces***

At this point, the discussion allows us to identify Egypt’s revolution as an informal and non-formal learning site, which both provokes critical reflection amongst its participants, as well as creates the foundation for the sense of empowerment. A significant point to be brought under question now relates to the forms of educational activities born through social movement learning, as well as the form and content of the curriculum emerging from it (English & Mayo, 2012). In our case we put our attention to the pedagogies embedded in the curriculum, testing Cox’s (2019) suggestion that social movements lay the foundation for the selection of specific pedagogies. Ollis (2020) frames this process as a “pedagogical turn” shifting the attention to individual and collective learning about specific issues (p. 217). This is well shown in the data, in terms of what kinds of spaces these educational activities create and how they target these goals.

The spaces where the educational activities of some selected organisations take place are so-called “popular quarters,” meaning densely settled socially and economically deprived neighbourhoods. Although the space offers its services to the outsiders of these neighbourhoods as well, their main target group are the local communities. By placing the organisations there, the founders aim to encourage the participants to fully appropriate their own living spaces. The organizers allow them to completely adjust

the space to their needs and desires, while also giving resources to integrate the space into the local neighbourhood. Graham (2015) emphasizes the importance of the place and location through “critical place-based pedagogy” in arts-instructed educational activities. He suggests that “Involving students in these kinds of art study and practice connects art education to important issues within the local context of students' lives and encourages them to consider the convergence of politics, power, and culture in the places they inhabit” (Graham, 2015, p. 379).

Thus, the fact that the selected organisations have chosen arts-based methods as their means of pedagogical instruction and the popular quarters as their physical location is not arbitrary. In fact, strenuous efforts through artistic means are put into educational and non-educational activities of the organisations to allow participants to take ownership of the space and question their living conditions from the place that they experience this reality through. The educators also pointed to the connection between the events of the 2011 uprising and the place-based approach in their activities. During the days of demonstrations, the square became a space that was appropriated by the groups of people and used for uniting persons of various backgrounds, through which a collective act of challenging the power and authority took place.

The birth of critical consciousness amongst adult educators described earlier, which took place as part of the learning happening within the lived experiences of the revolution, can also be discovered in the selected educational activities. The data shows how educators deliberately designed the projects and activities with the purpose to trigger critical consciousness amongst programme participants. They attempted to create “critical reflection” by ensuring that the space enabled individuals to get familiarized with their own needs, fears, and modes of thinking (Watts et al., 2011, p. 45). They further created the space for bringing social struggles, hegemonic ideologies, and authorities to be questioned and challenged. Through this process, they created an opportunity for participants to perceive the social reality as incomplete and liable to change. They also targeted to develop confidence and generate



action within their participants, thus, setting the ground for “political efficacy” and “critical action” (Watts et al., 2011, p. 46). As shown in the findings, this was carried out by creating the space that aimed to facilitate the process of overcoming the sense of “stuckness” both in personal mental struggles and issues related to the wider societal inequalities.

While it is important to understand what contextual setting these organisations operate in and what goals they set for their educational activities, it is nonetheless crucial to comprehend how they manage to fulfil their purpose. The organisations/project facilitators utilize arts-based methods in the workshops pertaining to various topics, including mental health improvement, gender stereotypes, labour market, education, poverty, development, storytelling, community building and so on. The choice of these topics itself is important and represents one part of the materialized curriculum mentioned earlier. However, as Eisner (2002) suggests: “what is said cannot be neatly separated from how something is said. Form and content interpenetrate. The way in which something is spoken shapes its meaning; form becomes content” (p. 197). Some authors suggest that arts-based methods have inherent potential to be used as critical pedagogical approaches, due to the deep reflective experiences they can create in learning (Angeles, 2012, p. 106; Desai & Darts, 2016; Kwon, 2020; Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016). The data asserts this proposition and further provides a detailed picture of how specifically these reflective experiences are achieved through arts-based critical pedagogical approaches.

As shown in the findings, the participants of the selected organisations articulate that the primary point they acquired through their engagement in the activities is the altered perception of the reality that they operate in daily, as well as the position they occupy in it. We can clearly see that they go through the process which Eisner (2002) referred to as “directing attention inwards” to identify one’s beliefs and feelings, which becomes possible by learning through arts (p. 10). In turn, a profound understanding that individuals develop of their own selves then becomes a bridge towards comprehending the social reality that they live in (Eisner, 2002; Fattal, 2014; Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016).

They further specify that this artistic engagement allowed them to approach the everyday struggles of their daily lives in a new way. This allowed them to engage with the selected topics on much deeper levels (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Eisner, 2002). As Eisner (2002) suggests arts-based methods have the power to “slowing down perception” giving priority to the experience (p. 207). The same idea is also shared by the research participant who described it as the “pause” and suggested that one of the greatest opportunities born through an artistic approach to education is that it creates deep connection and awareness to the topic, which Mariam described as “The pause is to just slow down and keep moving with awareness.”

The findings also demonstrate that emotions, senses, intuition, and body is given great importance in these organisations. As mentioned by multiple participants, engagement in artmaking allowed them to become aware of one’s emotions and get familiar with their “felt life” (Henry James as cited by Eisner, 2002, p. 12). In turn, a space where individuals were welcome to be open and expressive of their emotions, further deepened the possibility of learning on multiple levels. More precisely, the ground was built for “the visual and verbal space wherein dialogue may take place” (Lewis, 2009, p. 228).

Furthermore, being mindful of one’s fragilities, created the foundation for individuals to understand, relate to and empathize with other people’s struggles, thus, creating the space for “mutual vulnerability” (Eisner, 2002; Kwon, 2020, p. 82). The artistic ways of communication, such as dance, mural painting, theatre, and others enabled creative ways of expression, which oftentimes were non-verbal and silent. This diversified the means of communication between the participants, further strengthening the bond between them and forming the ground for “traversing the boundaries of individual experience to connect with the experiences of others different from ourselves” (Bell & Roberts, 2010, p. 2303). These findings assert the proposition suggested by Lipson Lawrence (2005) who referred to the “holistic, natural, and creative” nature of arts-based education, which leads to

“deepening understanding of self, [others], and the world” (p. 3). Significantly enough, this shows us how artistic pedagogical approaches manage to create the experiences of deep, engaging, collective learning, which then underpins the understanding of oneself and their community, as well as the unequal social reality which determines the conditions of their lives.

Lastly, the findings show that through artistic approaches the participants are invited to give freedom to their modes of thinking and use their imagination. Thus, not only does the arts-based approach to various issues allow individuals to question the fairness of the existing social world, identify oppressive patterns in their social reality and their own modes of thinking and feeling, but they are further invited to imagine the alternative world (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Eisner, 2002). This process depicted in the findings quite scrupulously follows Eisner’s (2002) theory that arts affect critical consciousness, who suggested that “they [arts] promote the use of our imaginative capacities so that we can envision what we cannot actually see, taste, touch, hear, and smell” (p. 19). It is also important to understand that the arts-based educational space here serves as a “safety net for experiment and rehearsal” to take action towards and inside of the newly born possibilities of an altered world (Eisner, 2002, p. 19). It becomes a space of trying out how to act upon the challenges through the newly acquired artistic ways (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Eisner, 2002; Zorrilla & Tisdell, 2016).

Now as we come to wrap up the discussion of the curricular forms of the activities, it is imperative to observe the parallels between the learning taking place during the revolution and within these educational settings. We can identify multiple paternal similarities in the learning experiences of the educators/organizers within the revolution and the educational activities designed by them. In Particular, we can locate how arts-based activities are employed to target the same components conceptualized under the notion of critical consciousness discussed earlier (Watts et al., 2011). The findings show that it is partially linked to the critical pedagogical potential of the arts-based approach, thus, supports the argument built in the literature review. Partially, it is connected to the deliberately

designed workshops, grown out of the experiences of the educators developed during the revolution and the learning that was part of it. We will address particularly this aspect in the following section.

### ***5.1.3 - Experience-driven Collaboration between the Organisations and the Participants***

The findings show that the selected organisations target the existing power structures not only by the content and the form that they run their educational activities with but through the foundational philosophy and the organisational outline of these spaces. I will attempt to make sense of this part of the data by interpreting it in the light of Gramsci's theory, the "philosophy of Praxis" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 323). In particular, the organisations offer a space where both, educators and programme participants engage in a collaborative symbiotic relationship. This happens by bringing the lived experiences of their participants to the heart of the organisation's work, firstly, by making learning fully experience-based and, secondly, making these experiences operate as fuel for the functioning of the organisations.

On the one side, the educators bring the lived experiences of the participants to the forefront and employ them as learning material for multiple critical topics. Through artmaking, educators try to allow the participants to challenge the ways they interpret their experiences. This sets the ground for the critical approach of the participants towards how they think and feel about their daily struggles. In other words, the organisations practice the "philosophy proper" where they allow learners to reflect upon their lived experiences in the context of the wider collective struggles, as well as contrast these raw, previously unquestioned experiences with the critical ideas and artistic means of thinking (Gramsci, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 95). Scandrett et al. (2016) called this process "broadening context and analysis" through which individuals make sense of their lived experiences (pp. 136-137). Moreover, through the arts-based approaches, they manage to penetrate the daily lives of the learners and make critical thinking and feeling endure after the educational activities are over. Thus, individuals experience what Gramsci described as "upward growth" where their perception of daily struggles are altered critically (Gramsci, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 97).

On the other side, the findings depicted how programme participants contribute to this collaborative process through “spontaneous philosophy” where they feed the organisation with first-hand perspectives stemming from the lived experiences of the daily struggles (Gramsci, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 94). These experiences determine the existence of the organisations and the forms of their functioning, as the educational activities are fully operated by them. By bringing the voices of how the theories and philosophical propositions are manifested in real everyday life situations, the participants allow the organisation to go through the “downward growth” and shape and re-shape the activities, values, missions, and pedagogical approaches of their educational practices (Gramsci, as cited in Smet, 2015, p. 97).

Understanding this interdependent and collaborative process explained through the “philosophy of Praxis” becomes crucially important for comprehending the argument of this research. It allows us to see how personal experiences lived by the educators take part in the curricular choices of content and forms of their activities. Simultaneously, we see that these pedagogical choices give access to the lived experiences of the participants, which in turn, adjust these educational spaces to the contextual needs. ultimately, the participants alter their perceptions of their daily struggles and approach the usual everyday routines with critical consciousness.

## **5.2 - Towards A Conclusion**

To sum up the discussion, the current research has studied the micro and meso levels of learning happening during Egypt’s 2011 revolution. It has attempted to demonstrate how the marks of the events of the revolution are traceable in the field of arts-based adult education in post-revolution Egypt. It has identified the uprising of 2011 and the consequent occurrences in Egypt as a critical pedagogical workshop, firstly, because it has been marked as a site of informal and non-formal learning in the experiences of adult education practitioners of the selected organisations. Secondly, this learning has created the process of critical consciousness amongst the participants, pushing some individuals

towards the field of adult education. Thirdly, it has played a role in materializing the arts-based critical pedagogical curriculum through these experiences.

Thus, the studied spaces, although non-political in their overt nature, utilize critical pedagogical approaches through artmaking. In turn, participants of these programmes get engaged in artistic forms of learning, which alters their modes of thinking and perceptions of their daily struggles. Through this process, critical consciousness is also manifested amongst the participants of the selected educational programmes. Finally, the educational spaces are reflected back upon from their participants through creative expression of their voices, needs, strives and emotions, which develops the further basis for the operation of these organisations.

### **5.3 - Implications**

Living through or in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising and learning during these events, are part of multiple and diverse experiences lived by the research participants. As seen in the findings, some of them overtly made connections between their work within the selected organisations and their lived experiences of the revolution, while others did not see any explicit links between the two. Incidentally, as mentioned in earlier chapters, the organisations involved in this research openly classify their work as non-political. However, it should be well considered that the purpose of this research has not been to highlight specific organisations as spaces of continued resistance, as done in other studies (Wafa, 2014). In contrast, this study has attempted to trace how learning that took place during the revolution was translated into the field of adult education through individual experiences.

Therefore, the current research does not attempt to depict the educational spaces as a formation of resistance that continue to fulfil specific goals of Egypt's 2011 uprising. Neither does it study the process of identity formation of educators or future activists. Instead, by interpreting the data through the literature of social movement learning, critical and arts-based pedagogies, and critical consciousness, I have tried to show the uprising and the consequent occurrences as episodes of

continuous struggle (Kandil, 2012, p. 4), that significantly marked individual experiences through the process of gained critical consciousness.

By bringing the practices in one particular field to close scrutiny, I strive to throw light on how various experiences have paved the way for the critical pedagogical forms in arts-based educational organisations in post-revolution Egypt. Although not always necessarily purposefully, it shows us how these organisations take up the role of ensuring that the process of collaborative learning targeting critical consciousness, which took place during the revolution, is continued in a similar non-hierarchical and collaborative way. Thereby, the shift of revolutionary processes happens into everyday activities, which in this case is represented in the form of collaborative and creative educational spaces that allow the birth of critical and collective consciousness and creative modes of thinking in the everyday lives of individuals (p. 4).

I believe, demonstrating the complex processes that took place during Egypt's revolution and found their way into the field of adult education as arts-based critical pedagogical forms, contributes to the set of critical literature arguing against the dualistic perception of the revolution, as successful or failed (Abdelrahman, 2014; Roccu, 2019; Salem, 2018). Instead, by looking into the field of education, it provides a closer look at one puzzle of a greater picture of how the revolution represents a convoluted system, that is inextricably entangled with various social processes, fields and timeframes, as well as undergoes its own form of development (Abdelrahman, 2014; Kilgore, 1999; Salem, 2018). By demonstrating the continuous marks of Egypt's revolution in the field of adult education, I have attempted to make a small contribution to the valuable literature striving to overcome the sense of hopelessness misleadingly created through the depiction of this event as completed (Abdelrahman, 2014; Roccu, 2019; Smet, 2015; Salem S. , 2018).

#### **5.4 - Limitations**

Researching a topic pertaining to the revolution was quite challenging and posed multiple limitations, even though the research was not concerned with political events. A few participants mentioned that it was difficult to open up about the events to a foreign stranger, due to the existing fears about discussing the political events. One of the participants explained that the revolution was a traumatic personal experience, thus, it was difficult for them to openly speak about it. One of the organisations requested from me to only ask the questions related to the revolution to their educators and staff members, however, not to their participants, due to the openly stated non-political status of their activities. These limitations doubtlessly have affected the richness of my data and I acknowledge that the data I have been able to gather is affected by my identity, as a researcher from abroad.

Furthermore, the current study has been conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, which shifted the whole process to the online space. In addition to the methodological limitations, mentioned earlier, due to the impossibility of physically visiting the organisations, I have not been able to make informal observations within the selected organisations, which I believe also limited my perception of the spaces. Furthermore, the thesis was written as I moved between three countries, creating difficult conditions for my work. The supervision meetings were also taking place in the online space.

#### **5.5 - Recommendations**

Having identified the implications and the limitations of the study, I will now point to the future research that this study shows prospects for. The current research has identified how the experience of the revolution makes its way into the field of adult education, indicating the power of the arts-based methods to make the perceptions of the daily struggles of the participants more critical. However, it is outside of the scope of this study to identify whether this altered perception becomes the predicament of future resistance. Whether the newly acquired perception then contributes to the construction of new identities and pushes individuals to join specific movements can be a topic of future research. The



resistance formed through arts-based adult education can also be studied through the macro level, as the current study has only tackled individual and organisational units of inquiry.

Furthermore, the current study has shown how the revolution served as a learning site for educators. However, it also highlights the importance to examine the process of identity-formation of educators within the context of the revolution. Finally, the future work can also bring the interface of the experiences of the programme participants related to the revolution and their participation in the educational activities under scrutiny.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guides

### Guide for the Interviews with the Educators and Organisational Staff Members

#### *1. Work in the Organisation*

Can you tell me more about the (name of the organisation)?

How did it start?

How did it change over the time?

Can you tell me a bit about your work in the (name of the organisation)?

Can you share the story how you found yourself in this organisation?

Why did you join the field of education?

How would you describe the (name of the organisation)?

Why this place?

#### *2. Community and the Revolution*

Who are the people that you work with in the (name of the organisation)?

What do you think, what significance does your work have for this community?

Do you share some of the experiences with them? How about the experience of the revolution?

Do you ever speak about the revolution during your work? In what context?

Can you describe and tell me more about the space?

Where is it located? Why this neighbourhood?

Why is it for social change?

What kind of change is it seeking?

How is it a place for social change?

Tell me more about your teaching methods.

Why these methods?

Have you elaborated these teaching methods with the (name of the organisation) team or individually?

What would you say is the main purpose of your work?

### *3. Experiences Related to the Revolution*

Can you tell me a bit about your experience with Egypt's 2011 revolution?

Do you think you learnt anything there? What?

Can you tell me the most prominent parts of your memory from the experience of revolution? Why are these important?

What did these experiences feel like?

How would you relate this experience to the field of education?

How would you relate it to your particular practice?

What has your work in (name of the organisation) made you realize about the revolution?

### **Guide for the Interviews with the Program Participants**

#### *1. Experience in (name of the organisation)*

Can you share with me your experience with learning at (name of the organisation)?

What projects have you been involved in with them?

Can you describe the experience of this particular course?

How did you feel about your participation there?

Why did you choose this organisation?

Why specifically this course?

Why have you decided to learn through arts?

How do you feel about the space?

How do you feel about how you are taught?

What is the most important thing you will take away?

What is something new you discovered about yourself while learning?

Can you describe one great day for you in (name of the organisation)?

How would you describe the community that you're learning with, your course-mates?

#### *2. Prior Lived Experiences*

Can you tell me a bit about your typical day?

What were some of the experiences that made you think about going to (name of the organisation)?

Can you tell me a bit about your experience with Egypt's revolution?

Do you think you learnt anything during that time? What?

Have you questioned some of your prior ideas during/after the experience of revolution?

Tell me about your usual day, what are some of the difficulties you face daily?

How do you think these problems can be addressed today?

### *3. Interface of the Lived Experiences and Learning at (name of the organisation)*

Do you think some of the difficulties you face on the daily basis have motivated you to learn more or engage in community education?

What did you learn about yourself through these experiences?

What have you learnt about your community?

How do you feel connected to the community when you are involved in the courses of (name of the organisation)?

What are the common challenges you face with them?

Do you think you have gained more confidence by being part of the activities and community at (name of the organisation)?

## **Appendix B: Information Sheet and Consent Forms Provided to the Participants**

The text of the used Information sheet and consent form was proposed by the Ethics Review Committee of the University of Maynooth. Thus, many of the points mentioned below were taken from the proposed template and adjusted to the specificity of my study.

### **INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Information Sheet**

I am Ketevan Svanadze, a master's student of the International Master in Adult Education for Social Change (Erasmus Mundus). The study is conducted as part of the independent research project for the master's degree under the supervision of Dr Michael Murray and Dr Joyce Nicholson. The provisional title of the current study is 'Creating collective awareness through pedagogies of social change in Egypt'. The study aims to examine how an educational institution (name of the organisation) utilizing critical pedagogies was shaped in post revolution Egypt (2011) and how they attempt to shape collective awareness of its participants. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the lived experiences of the participants shaped in the context of post-revolution Egypt and through their participation in programs and courses offered by this institution. This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Department of Adult and Community Education. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it. You have been asked because of your involvement in the activities of the organisation of (name of the organisation).

You are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. However, we hope that you will agree to take part and give us some of your time to participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you decide to do so, you will be asked to sign a consent form and given a copy and the information sheet for your own records. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and/or to withdraw your information up until the research findings are analysed (30 March 2021). A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect your relationships with (name of the organisation).

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identified at any time. All hard copy information will be held in a locked cabinet at the researchers' place of work, electronic information will be encrypted and held securely on the PC of the researcher. The video-audio recordings will be discarded immediately after being transcribed. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you so wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your own discretion.

*'It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such*

*circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'*

The research will be written up and presented as a thesis. It may as well be discussed at internal group meetings, presented at National and International conferences and may be published in scientific journals. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

At the end of the interview, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. You may contact my supervisor Michael Murray at [Michael.J.Murray@mu.ie](mailto:Michael.J.Murray@mu.ie) and Joyce Nicholson at [joyce.nicholson@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:joyce.nicholson@glasgow.ac.uk) if you feel the research has not been carried out as described above.

If you need any further information, you can contact me: Ketevan Svanadze; +995598258123; [2471856S@student.gla.ac.uk](mailto:2471856S@student.gla.ac.uk)

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this**

### **Consent Form**

I ..... agree to participate in Ketevan Svanadze's research study with the provisional title 'Creating Collective Awareness through Pedagogies of Social Change in Egypt'.

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me verbally & in writing. I've been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Ketevan Svanadze to be audio/video-recorded

I understand that by giving my consent of participation, I am agreeing to be involved in an in-depth interview where I will be asked about my personal experience related to Egypt's revolution 2011, as well as my experience with the organisation (name of the organisation)

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data up to 31 March 2021.

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the final research report.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

I understand that the questions asked might be related to political events taking place during or after revolution and I acknowledge that answering some questions may bring possible harm to me.

I acknowledge that I can refuse to give answers to the questions I feel uncomfortable and unsafe to answer.

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications

I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree for my data, once anonymised, to be retained indefinitely in the IQDA (Irish Qualitative Data Archive)

I agree to all above listed statements

Signed.....

Date.....

Participant Name in block capitals .....

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*I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.*

Signed.....

Date.....

Researcher Name in block capitals .....



*If during your participation in this study you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact the Secretary of the Maynooth University Ethics Committee at [research.ethics@mu.ie](mailto:research.ethics@mu.ie); [angela.mcginn@mu.ie](mailto:angela.mcginn@mu.ie) or +353 (0)1 708 6019; You may as well contact the supervisors of the research at [Michael.J.Murray@mu.ie](mailto:Michael.J.Murray@mu.ie); [joyce.nicholson@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:joyce.nicholson@glasgow.ac.uk). Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.*

*For your information the Data Controller for this research project is Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Maynooth University Data Protection officer is Ann McKeon in Humanity house, room 17, who can be contacted at [ann.mckeon@mu.ie](mailto:ann.mckeon@mu.ie). Maynooth University Data Privacy policies can be found at <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/data-protection>.*

***Two copies to be made: 1 for participant, 1 for PI***