**(De)constructing ‘the migrant’? Methodological reflections on critical migration research in adult education: the example of a documentary film.**

Social change due to migration and integration can be seen as a topical issue for adult education research and practice. Powerful discourses such as on ‘belonging’, representation and the construction of the ‘other’ shape the field, not only in terms of the social conditions of education but also regarding the way how researchers look at phenomena. Not least individuals’ biographies and identities are tackled by ascriptions and discourses of differentiation. Postcolonial studies, critical migration research and other approaches have drawn attention to the related challenges.

This paper aims to discuss the role and the responsibility of the researcher looking at migrants’ biographies and narratives in terms of reproducing or deconstructing hegemonic discourses. The question of representation (who talks about whom, in which way, etc.?) against the background of specific power relations (be it the relation between the researcher and the researched or general power relations in migration societies) will be part of the analysis. Furthermore I will discuss the potential of appropriate research methods (including the presentation of outcomes) to deconstruct discourses and to make ‘unheard voices’ heard.

These questions will be explored by the example of the documentary film ‘On the Other Side of the Desk’, which I produced together with a colleague in 2014. The film portrays careers of adult educators with migrant backgrounds and addresses both the question of representation and the role of the researcher. The production of the film was part of a research project, which analysed the access of migrants in/to professions in the field of adult and continuing education in Austria. The methodological approach of the project included ‘classical’ methods such as qualitative interviews, online surveys, or focus groups. In addition, experts with migrant biographies were involved as researchers within a special setting of participatory research (‘Forschungswerkstätte’) – and this was also the context of the film production. The film can be seen as a concise summary of the overall research outcomes, a space for representation and critical reflection on migration and adult education research, but also as a challenging mode of transferring research findings to a broader public.

The paper will discuss the research process and selected outcomes by elaborating on the concept and the process of the film production. The role of the film-maker is set as an analogy to the role of the researcher and should inspire discussion on a variety of aspects, such as ways of looking at phenomena (considering the influence of historically transmitted and current discourses), depicting knowledge, constructing biographies, staying invisible ‘behind the camera’ versus stepping out, the responsibility of the filmmaker/researcher, dealing with power and control about the images, etc. The presentation of the paper would include the discussion of selected film clips.