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Call for chapters
(Deadline for abstracts: 1st June 2012)

Origins: A Sustainable Concept in Education?

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> "I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning. If you knew when you began a book what you would say at the end, do you think that you would have the courage to write it?"
> Michel Foucault (1982) *Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault* (25 October 1982)

The etymology of *origin* derives from the Latin word *originem* (nom. *origo*) "rise, beginning, source," and from the stem of *oriri* "to rise, become visible, appear". Though the word has been around in many languages for many centuries, talking about origins is a very postmodern subject. As such, even though we live in "liquid times" (Bauman, 2004), where identities are said to be unstable, hybrid, plural and opportunities for altering the Self unlimited[1] which unsettle, amongst others, national identities and "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1992), sticking to, being relegated to or attempting to find one's origins are thriving. The fact that the stranger, the "other" is often asked where s/he comes from is a strong signal. The renewed interest in genealogy in many countries, the revival of certain languages and traditions from the past, the unearthing of one's "heritage", etc. all contribute to re-create and sometimes reimagine origins in order to deal with the pressure of postmodernity and globalization. For certain migrant and mobile individuals, origins can serve as a way of reassuring themselves when they feel threatened or marginalized. According to the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2004: 20), such endeavours, which are very much related to identity-seeking, are "born out of the effort (…) to bridge the gap between the 'ought' and the 'is'". Societies themselves do contribute to create groups (*us vs. them*) and thus to label those within and outside (Bauman, 2001).

Just like culture, origins can be used for justifying some practices, behaviours, attitudes, discourses, opinions and even values (ex.: *I am from Italy and this is why I do this* or *my roots are in Karelia, the area between Russia and Finland, and in Karelia people are quite talkative*). Many anthropologists and sociologists have noted the tendency for origins to emerge when people are faced with problems (in "the tumult of battle", Bauman, 2004) or when they need

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[1] These are of course not new ideas: the philosopher Henri Bergson in the early 20th century or Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, where he claimed that "being is said in many ways", have discussed this.

to explain what they do or think, through the use of words such as *culture, identity, tradition*, *roots, community*, etc. They also highlight the dangers of putting origins at the forefront in some situations (putting people in "boxes"), especially when they contribute to injustice, prejudice and even dreadful political acts (Wikan, 2002, cf. also outside anthropology e.g. Sen, 2006).

In education, Bhatia argues that discourses on "minority students" often contribute to simple, unproblematized and limited uses of the idea of origins (Bhatia, 2011) and can easily lead to institutionalized racism. Besides these also often create *volens nolens* hierarchies between origins. Researchers themselves can also add to these by starting from a solid indicator of origins such as national identity or social class in their work (Dervin, 2011; Bourdieu, 1981).

Yet as Amin Maalouf (2001: 24-25) reminds us in his book *In the name of identity: violence and the need to belong*: "Imagine an infant removed immediately from its place of birth and set down in a different environment. Then compare the various "identities" the child might acquire in its new context, the battles it would now have to fight and those it would be spared. Needless to say, the child would have no recollection of his original religion, or of his country or language. And might he not one day find himself fighting to the death against those who ought to have been his nearest and dearest?". Undoubtedly this urges us to reconsider the importance and use of origins, which is often branded as a slogan in research, teacher education and education.

Questions

This volume examines the discourses and uses of the word *origins* in educational contexts. There is no limitation in terms of geography or educational level. The proposals for chapters can deal with any of the questions below:

- Who uses the word origins or its "synonyms" in education? For what purposes? What explicit and implicit statements about origins are made in education?
- Is the word origins dynamic in education?
- Who isn't allowed to talk about (whose) origins? Why?
- Are the statements that are being made about origins empowering or oppressing the groups or individuals involved (which ones and how)? Are origins imposed on children or students?
- Do some students reject 'their' origins? Why? How?
- Is it necessary for students to know "what" they are (cf. Foucault at the beginning)?
- What origins seem to be privileged in education (class, ethnicity, language…)?
- Are some origins "staged" in schools (e.g. "multicultural days")? Who organizes them? For what purposes?
- Are origins taken into account in pedagogy, school administration, architecture, etc.?
- Do discourses and actions related to origins in education allow pupils, students and teachers to "meet"?
- What are the advantages and drawbacks of working with origins in education? Do origins contribute e.g. to injustice, marginalization or

"racism without races"?

- What is the potential role of parents in introducing origins in education?
- Are origins the enemies of such notions as mélange, métissage or hybridity in education?
- Is it bad to talk about origins in education and if yes, why?

Deadlines

Abstract of proposed chapter (300 words): June 1st, 2012

Full chapters to be submitted: December 1st, 2012

Authors are invited to submit a **300-word** proposal (including a few lines about the author(s)) in English to **_both_** editors by **1st June 2012** (fred.dervin@helsinki.fi & hannar@hi.is). The proposals should clearly explain the theoretical positioning and concerns of the proposed chapter, and include a short description of a corpus (where applicable). A basic bibliography may also be added. Full chapters are expected to be submitted by **1st December 2012.** The chapters will be blind peer reviewed. The proposed book will be submitted to Sense Publishers (https://www.sensepublishers.com/).