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The role of the University of the Third Age in meeting the needs of older adult learners in Poland

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of older adults in society is becoming a major social focus. The article discusses demographic changes in Polish society in the context of the role played by the educational institution known as the University of the Third Age. Although implementing the idea of lifelong learning, such institutions constitute an important space allowing participants to experience life more fully by improving its quality. The information in this article can be used by other countries to organize education for older adults.

KEYWORDS

Lifelong learning; university of the third Age; adult education; older adult students

Introduction

This article examines educational institutions working to engage older people, which in Poland are known as Universities of the Third Age (U3A). The article presents the benefits from lifelong education resulting from the positive influence on the participants' quality of life. The authors also attempt to assess the effectiveness of actions aimed at older adults in the context of increasing their quality of life.

The aging of society has a significant effect on all countries of the European Union, and state social policy toward older people is therefore beginning to gain increased importance. Aging is a global phenomenon. All populations are aging, although the process varies between countries and nations. In more developed countries, the percentage of the total population reaching the age of 65 or more is 13–20%. In less developed countries, this proportion is below 10% (Fry, 2005). According to Eurostat forecasts (Eurostat, 2015), aging of populations in the coming decades will continue at a rapid pace – by 2080, the proportion of people aged over 65 is predicted to grow to 30% of the entire population of the European Union.

As a less socio-economically developed country, Poland faces challenges regarding demographic changes that take place so fast that it is hard to react to them. The results of the Statistics Poland study *Population Projection 2014–2050* indicate an intensification of the aging population process. Despite an expected decrease in the population size of 4.5 million by 2050, a systematic growth in the population aged 60 and above is also likely. The number of people this age will grow to 13.7 million, comprising more than 40% of the total population. Meanwhile, the Statistics Poland study *Resident Population Projection 2015–2050* points to a change in Poland's demographic structure manifested in an increase in the number of people aged over 65 by around 5.1 million. A double aging phenomenon is also forecast, meaning not only a general percentage increase in the older population, but also the fastest

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Too young for tinder? The palaeoecological context and possible function of subfossil fungi (basidiomes) found in the settlement from the Early Iron Age in Podłęże, S Poland

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ABSTRACT

Two well-preserved fungal remains (basidiomes of polypores *Fomes fomentarius* and *Fomitopsis pinicola*) were found in a fossil peatbog in Podłęże, near Kraków (S Poland), in the context of culture layers dated to the Early Iron Age (mid-1st millennium BCE). Their context, age, and the cause of their occurrence in peat, which is exceptional, are discussed. Due to the location on the outskirts of an inhabited prehistoric settlement and because of the traces of detachment of the upper part in the *Fomes fomentarius* basidiocarp, we argue for their deposition in the peat layer via a human action. The host trees, however, could have grown in situ, since a drainage episode enabled the peatbog to be overgrown by sparse riparian forest at the onset of the Subatlantic. The possible use of the *F. fomentarius* fragment as tinder is discussed against the limited evidence of such use from later European prehistory.

1. Introduction

In contrast to other plant and animal remains, fungi are not really a common category of finds at archaeological sites. This is due to their fragile nature that rarely enables their preservation, rather than the minor role that they could have played in prehistoric societies. Their importance is, however, well-known and underlined by ethnographic data from all over the world (Boa, 2008). An exhaustive account on the presence of fungi in the archaeological record of prehistoric Europe was recently delivered by Berihuete-Azorin et al. (2018) on the occasion of presentation of some fungal fruiting bodies (basidiocarps, or basidiomes) found at the Neolithic site of La Draga (Spain). Due to the ecological requirements of the recorded taxa, as well as the traces of manipulation on some items, the authors interpreted the finds as a result of a deliberate collection of fungi from different woods near the settlement in order to use them as tinder. The same interpretation is widely employed for other cases of polypore species preservation in archaeological contexts, including the most recognized find, that of Ötzi (the Iceman), who carried with him some dried pieces of *Fomes fomentarius* and *Piptoporus betulinus*, initially prepared as tinder (Peintner and Pöder, 2000).

In 2006, in Podłęże, Wieliczka district, near Kraków (south Poland), during archaeological rescue excavations preceding the construction of a motorway, a compressed peat layer was discovered. In this peat, several dozen archaeological artefacts were found connected with culture layers of the nearby multi-phase settlement (Fig. 1) dated to the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Middle Ages, and Modern times. Traces of occupation of these periods were documented over the whole terrain elevated above the flood plain (Dziągiewski, 2010, 2012; Dziągiewski et al., 2008, 2013, 2015). In the upper part of the peat layers, two almost complete fungi basidiomes were found, identified by D. Karasinski as *Fomitopsis pinicola* and *Fomes fomentarius*. The two fungi are of later age (mid-1st millennium BCE) than the examples from the Neolithic which we referenced earlier. Since the occurrence of polypores is rather exceptional in a growing peatbog, a number of questions arose concerning their precise age and the circumstances of their occurrence in the peat: (1) were they of the same age as the peat layers in which they were found?, (2) how did they get to the peatbog? In a natural way, or brought by humans?, (3) if by humans – was it accidentally (with wood), or on purpose?, (4) if in a natural way (from trees overgrowing the peatbog) – why, despite the location close to a settlement, was only a fraction of one of them used by settlers? Was it in connection with lesser

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'Defending the unborn', 'protecting women' and 'preserving culture and nation': anti-abortion discourse in the Polish right-wing press

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ABSTRACT

Poland has one of the strictest abortion laws in Europe, and anti-abortion discourse shapes the debate and social attitudes towards the issue. The paper aims to reconstruct the way in which this discourse, as exemplified in the Polish right-wing press, constructs negative views about abortion and to identify the legitimisation mechanisms it employs to sustain its interpretations. Based on our findings, resulting from a content analysis of articles from two right-wing weekly magazines, we distinguish three interrelated frames organising Polish anti-abortion discourse, centred on 'defending the unborn', 'protecting women', and 'preserving culture and nation'. While the first two have occurred in the liberal contexts of Anglophone countries, with one replacing the other, in Polish anti-abortion discourse they co-exist. The construction of abortion as a threat to culture and nation is specific to Poland. We argue that by blending together community-related and individualistic arguments, Polish anti-abortion discourse adapts to wider societal changes observable in the country, thereby sustaining its power to define debate.

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Introduction

With one of the most restrictive laws regarding access to legal pregnancy termination in Europe, Poland has one of the lowest levels of acceptance of abortion in Europe and highly polarised opinions on the topic. The relatively negative perception of abortion in Poland persists despite an observable societal shift towards post-materialistic values usually associated with more liberal views (Marody 2019). The question about how to account for this paradox and for the strength of anti-abortion discourse in Poland motivated this enquiry. Existing research on the social construction of abortion stresses the impact of the cultural and social context in which abortion stigmatisation takes place (Marecek, Macleod, and Hoggart 2017; Kumar, Hessini, and Mitchell 2009),

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Deferred Reference of Proper Names

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Abstract

In this paper, we argue that proper names have deferred uses. Following Geoffrey Nunberg, we describe the deferred reference mechanism by which a linguistic expression refers to something in the world by exploiting a contextually salient relation between an index and the referent in question. Nunberg offered a thorough analysis of deferred uses of indexicals but claimed that proper names do not permit such uses. We, however, offer a number of examples of uses of proper names which pass grammatical tests for deferred usage, as put forward by Nunberg.

1. NUNBERG'S HYPOTHESIS

Deferred uses of expressions are uses in which we refer to one object by exploiting another, and we do this by relying on the linguistic features of the expression (Nunberg, 1993). A typical example is referring to a person by pointing at a photograph of that person and using a personal pronoun. Geoffrey Nunberg proposed an influential analysis of deferred uses of indexical expressions (1993). In Nunberg (1992), however, he suggested that "unlike indexicals, proper names [...] don't permit deferred reference" (p. 298, n. 15), a thesis we will refer to in this paper as Nunberg's Hypothesis (NH). Our aim is to argue that, contrary to NH, some uses of proper names could be considered deferred uses.

The structure of this paper is as follows: First, we define and exemplify what Nunberg treats as deferred reference of indexicals and describe the grammatical tests he employs to argue for or against classifying particular cases as deferred reference. We then extend the definition of deferred reference to potentially include proper names and propose examples of the deferred use of names. We argue for treating those examples as cases of deferred reference by applying Nunberg's grammatical tests to them. In conclusion, we consider possible objections to our analysis and draw philosophical consequences for the semantics of proper names in general.

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