Julius-Maximilians-
UNIVERSITÄT
WÜRZBURG

ISCAE

6th ISCAE Conference
at Julius-Maximilian University Würzburg
February 15-18, 2017

Conference Proceedings

Photo: University of Würzburg

ISCAE / COMPALL conference
Wuerzburg, Germany, February 15 - 18, 2017

Proceedings - Table of Content

Welcome to the 2017-conference of ISCAE (International Society for Comparative Adult Education) and COMPALL (Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning)!

For a long time, comparative adult education was a field of research only undertaken by a few colleagues from the small world of adult education with special international interests. International work had to be carried out under difficult circumstances, with little recognition, only few research activities and limited resources. During the 80s and 90s, adult education started to attract the interest of German academics, given the wide range of activities offered in this field across the country, but at that time this interest was mainly focused on Germany. The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the Bologna Process can be seen as challenging an exclusively national understanding of adult education in Germany. Nowadays it is common practice to internationalize research and teaching in all disciplines, whereby adult education is still subject to regional and national influences. International projects support collaboration and joint research projects all over Europe and beyond, as evidenced by the Asia-European Partnership featured in ASEM Meetings. All such projects trigger comparisons and better understanding both of oneself and others. Large-scale, international studies and international benchmarking are therefore not the only source of such comparisons. In addition, the increasing economization of society automatically leads to the ongoing comparison of prices, conditions, environments etc. Nevertheless, these two developments – ongoing internationalization and comparison – still have not led to comparative international research in adult education being carried out extensively. Such an undertaking necessarily requires methodological skills but it also requires a knowledge of the context, a willingness to reappraise and question one's own situation and an acceptance of the limitations of one's own understanding. It also requires one to continually strive to understand oneself and others and accept and respect the co-existence of seemingly conflicting attitudes. Such attitudes and understanding of contexts cannot be learned as a methodological skill. Instead, developing a comparative approach in adult education means seeing the results of one's own research in the context of international research and accepting that they can be very different. In consequence, the validity of one's own research results might well be narrowly confined to a specific context. For these reasons, a readiness to accept the validity of different research techniques and results is vital.

We must therefore remember when discussing comparative research results in adult education that they contain a range of different focuses based on different international perspectives. With the Würzburg Winter School on Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, we intend to bring together young people doing a master's or doctorate and encourage them to work on comparative perspectives in their fields. Our vision of an excellent outcome of this conference is for participants from diverse backgrounds to have identified shared categories of comparison. These will enable them to create shared perspectives of the extremely heterogeneous field of adult education as an academic discipline and in practice.

This year, the COMPALL/Winter School has an extra dimension, as some of the School’s activities will be part of an international conference organized by the International Society for Comparative Adult Education. This is intended to provide all the participants with an added-value experience. We hope that enabling an international group of students to meet specialists in comparative/international adult education will give all concerned a unique opportunity to learn from each other.

We, the organizers of the 6th ISCAE conference at the University of Würzburg, wish you all valuable discussions and exchanges of ideas characterized by an appreciation of different opinions, so that together we can develop the field and methodology of comparative adult education.

Würzburg, February 2017

Regina Egetenmeyer
Michal Bronn Jr

The ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning"[1]

The Strategic Partnership COMPALL is developing a joint module in "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning". There are seven partner universities from five European countries that are integrating the joint module into their master's and doctoral study programmes on adult education and lifelong learning. These include the Julius-Maximilian University Würzburg as coordinator, the University of Lisbon, the University of Florence, the University of Padua, the University of Pécs, the Helmut-Schmidt University in Hamburg and Aarhus University. Due to the exchange programme at the Julius-Maximilian University Würzburg with other international universities, namely the University of Delhi, the International Institute of Adult and Lifelong Learning in New Delhi, the Obafemi Awolowo University in Nigeria, and the University of Belgrade, this partnership is enriched by participants from around the globe. The joint module includes a preparatory phase, a two-week intensive phase at Campus Würzburg, Germany, and the possibility of publication for doctoral students and colleagues. The Winter School offers topics on international policies in adult education and lifelong learning as well as comparisons on selected issues within adult education and lifelong learning. The programme is augmented by field visits to adult and continuing education providers. During the preparation phase, students are educated through on-campus sessions on issues of adult education in their local and national contexts and sessions on European and international policies in adult education. They are also taught analysis strategies to facilitate undertaking comparative studies in the field of adult and continuing education. These sessions are supported by online tutorials, which are being currently developed in a joint effort by all partner universities. These issues serve as preparation for the first week of the Würzburg Winter School. Additionally, all participants prepare by writing a transnational essay on one of the selected issues in adult and comparative education. This serves as the preparation for the second week, during which participants attend one comparative group session on a selected issue in adult education and lifelong learning. These include learning cities, learning regions and learning communities and competencies in formal, informal and vocational education. These groups are moderated by international experts in adult education and lifelong learning. Results gathered from these comparisons are presented at the end of the second week to the other groups. After the Winter School, doctoral students work together with the moderators on selected results arising from the comparative group sessions, allowing for deeper comparisons. The results of these comparisons are presented in this volume.

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1 Text extracts from project publications:
Regina Egetenmeyer, Sabine Schmidt-Lauff, Vanna Boffo (forthcoming): Internationalization and professionalization in adult education: an introduction. In: Regina Egetenmeyer, Sabine Schmidt-Lauff, Vanna Boffo (Eds.): Adult Learning and Education in International Contexts: Future Challenges for its Professionalization. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
Regina Egetenmeyer (2016): Comparing Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Europe and beyond: An Introduction. In: Egetenmeyer (Hrsg.): Adult and Lifelong Learning in Europe and Beyond. Comparative Perspectives from the 2015 Würzburg Winter School. Frankfurt. S. 13-26.

Furthermore, COMPALL is developing a professional online network for graduates and young researchers in adult education and lifelong learning. This allows the development of sustainable international networks among fellow students. Such networks provide opportunities for participants for helping to find appropriate partners for transnational studies and research. It further provides information on current international studies, research possibilities and international vacancies in adult education and lifelong learning. The professional network is located on LinkedIn and is open to anyone interested in adult education and lifelong learning (URL: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/ 8445381). Additionally, each year, a closed network is developed on LinkedIn, through which Winter School participants can connect with each other and with the fellow students they met during their stay in Würzburg. An information tool on the COMPALL homepage provides further study information on international and comparative adult education (URL: http://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/ compall/information_tool/). Topics are based on the information in the country reports on adult education available, datasets for comparative research in adult learning and education, international study offers in adult learning and education, online networking opportunities, and information on preparation material for the Winter School.

In order to share the results of COMPALL with a wider public audience, the project is working on what measures need to be taken so that the results of projects can be presented and discussed. This will happen each year at the end of the Winter School Multiplier Events until 2018. These events are organized in collaboration with international networks that have an emphasis on comparative and international studies in adult education and lifelong learning (with the International Society for Comparative Adult Education in 2017 and with the ASEM Hub for Lifelong Learning in 2018). This approach stresses the didactical focus of the Winter School, which intends to lead students from research-based

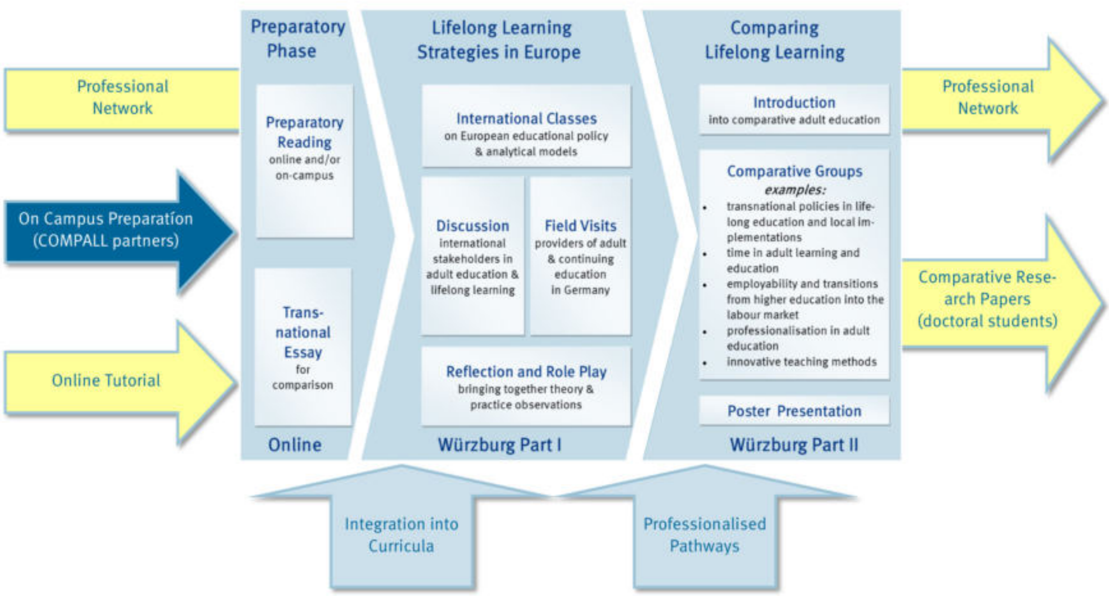


Table 1: Structure of the COMPALL Project (Source: COMPALL project)

learning to hands-on research. (Egetenmeyer/Schmidt-Lauff/Boffo forthcoming)

Bringing young people together for comparative research allows for starting a process of understanding international and intercultural phenomena. Comparisons in international groups provide new insights into other countries and into new aspects and variations of new models. They also facilitate a better and more detailed understanding of the situation in one's own home country. Furthermore, they give participants a sense of how difficult it is to compare situations in other countries. For promoting peace, another step is necessary: to understand in a cognitive, emotional, and social way the limitations of our understanding of our own and other phenomena. Ideally, this insight leads to an attitude of further questioning one's own understanding in an ongoing endeavour to working on deeper understanding. An ideal 'result' of the Winter School is to never have a final result, but to continue the never ending journey of personal efforts to try to understand each other. This also means searching for the things that link us to each other: to be aware of the always existing boundaries of our own understanding while developing an attitude of 'constantly trying'. In this way the approach of the Winter School goes beyond Charters and Hilton, because it doesn't only ask for explanations of similarities and differences but also cultivates a comparative attitude of students, which explicitly includes emotional and cognitive aspects of non-understanding.

(…) We realise that internationalisation and globalisation not only pulls the world closer together, it also means that international conflicts of various kinds are coming closer: the world-wide refugee situation; political conflicts that also affect Europe, and the fiscal challenges within the Eurozone. These are just some examples from a European perspective. All these challenges ask for people who are willing and able to work further on understanding each other. This can be understood as a key foundation for peace development. The Würzburg Winter School aims to qualify young people to do comparisons in their academic discipline to be analytically equipped for working on deeper understanding. (Egetenmeyer 2016)

ISCAE
International Society for Comparative Adult Education[2]:

Mission and the understanding of “international comparative”

The general aim of the society is to increase awareness, value, and quality of international comparative adult education. The Society is organized for international comparative research, networking, and educational purposes.

The Society wants to encourage the growth of international comparative adult education studies by

- providing an opportunity for international networking in the field of comparative adult education;
- promoting research in the area of international comparative adult education;
- organizing scholarly conferences and meetings for members and others interested in this area;
- documenting and sharing developments and standards in the field of international comparative adult education through publications;
- co-operating with other societies with similar aims.

ISCAE focuses its access to “international comparison” to two specific types of comparison:

1. To “comparison”, meaning the identification of similarities and differences of adult education in two or more countries, and trying to understand why they occur and what their significance is.
2. To field- and method-reflections: reflections about the methods, strategies, and concepts of international comparison, and summarizing reports about developments in the international comparative field on a material or meta-level.

The meaning of “international comparative”

There exist many international organizations in adult education (field of practice) and andragogy (scientific approach), and national associations also have task forces or divisions to deal with international topics. What are the specifics of ISCAE?

The title of the society describes the specifics with which ISCAE wants to deal: with International Comparative Adult Education. But this does not finally clarify the specifics, because "international comparative" is a denomination that can be interpreted either broadly or narrowly.

Knowledge about the education of adults in other countries can be gained from various sources:

A first source, mostly evaluated as “pre-scientific”, comprises “**travellers tales**”, the reports we get from international travellers. Such reports are mainly delivered by travelling writers or vacationists, but also by scholars who attend a conference abroad and have to report to their funding agency - and publish this report at the same time in a journal. If these descriptions are more systematic, they are labelled “**travelers reports**”, or - if they are less systematic, “travellers tales”.

These types of international documents are mostly characterized as “subjective-impressionistic”. Their value is evaluated as ambivalent: Critically it

2 Text extracts from http://www.iscae.org/mission.htm

is argued that, because of the random observation and the subjective description, it is not clear how reliable and how representative the descriptions are. On the other hand the plea is made that especially in this subjective focus of eye-witnesses there might be strength from these type of reports. In the framework of a new appreciation of qualitative research these reports may get a new interest.

At the scientific level, five different types of international-comparative research are identified:

1. During the 1970s and 1980s mainly **country-reports** were presented. "Adult Education in the Republic of ..." is a typical title of this type of report. These papers tried to describe the system of adult and continuing education in one particular country. They could be written by an author of this country or by a person from outside. Some of these reports were, and are, rather impressionistic. Others followed a well developed outline and structure.
2. During and after the 1980s we find an increasing number of **program-reports.** These describe foreign adult education programs, institutions, and organizations. Examples of this type can be found in the publications of Charters/Hilton (1989) or the case studies collected by Knox (1989 - see the description in Reischmann, Bron & Jelenc 1999). Included in this type (sometimes presented in a separate category) are the *topic-oriented studies* or the *problem approach*: a certain topic or problem is discussed in the context of a nation.
   Country reports as well as topic-oriented studies and the problem approach focus more on “international”, less on “comparison”. Because only one country or program is presented, no comparable object is available. Especially when an author presents his own country or program it is difficult to refer to another national system. If, for example, a German author describes a German program for a publication in English: should parallels be drawn to the English, Scottish, US-American, Canadian or Australian systems? If country-reports or program-reports are collected in a reader or textbook, the readers have to draw the comparative conclusions themselves.
3. A third type is **juxtaposition.** Data from two or more countries are presented. These reports show: In country A we can observe a, in country B we find b. A series of statistical reports represent this type. But no explicit comparison - where are the similarities, what are the differences? - is given. An example of this type in Germany is the international volume of the *Handbuch der Erwachsenenbildung* (Handbook of Adult Education 1978), edited by Franz Pöggeler, or Peter Jarvis' “*Perspectives on Adult Education and Training in Europe*” (1992). This juxtaposition can also be topic- or problem-oriented when a topic is presented in a series of contributions from various countries: In Pöggeler's “*The State and Adult Education*” (1990) a series of articles deal with the role of the state in individual countries.
4. The **comparison** goes one step further: It reports from two or more countries, and an explicit comparison is offered which attempts to make the similarities and differences understandable. ISCAE uses here mostly the definition of its founding father: "A study in comparative international adult education ... must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions. Comparative study is not the mere placing side by side of data ... such juxtaposition is only the prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects

under study ... The real value of comparative study emerges only from ... the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination ..." (Charters/Hilton 1989, p. 3). This for example can be found in the final chapter of Charters/Hilton (1989).

5. Finally **field- and method-reflections** are seen as part of international comparative adult education: reflections about the methods, strategies, and concepts of international comparison, and
6. **summarizing reports** about developments in the international comparative field on a material or meta level.

ISCAE tries to promote a narrow focus of its specific task: The focus of ISCAE is type 4 and 5 (comparison and field-/method-reflections). ISCAE tries to develop, support, and share standards of the methodology of international comparison that might help researchers towards a better understanding of comparison and more sound, reliable, and economic ways of comparing internationally. That means that ISCAE especially invites those researchers that are interested in doing comparative work: researching one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries.

There are many other national and international organizations where reports of interesting travels, “Adult Education in the Republic of X” or “The Interesting Program or Idea Y in Country Z”, can be presented - this should not be a topic at ISCAE-meetings. But the “should” and “tries” indicates that the reality sometimes is different. The problem, how to define and interpret the term “international comparative” showed up at all ISCAE-conferences. Although the above definition of comparison was cited in the “Call for Papers”, country- and program reports were presented as well. Should we reject the papers of colleagues who travelled half way around the world and needed an accepted paper to get funding for attending the conference? That is also something which can be learned in the international field: to avoid seeing things too narrowly.

Perspectives

International-comparative adult education is basically justified on the grounds of two central arguments (for a more differentiated portrayal see Knoll in Reischmann, Bron & Jelenc 1999):

1. On a practical level “borrowing” is expected - that we learn from foreign experiences to adapt successful experiences for our own practical work and to avoid mistakes.
2. On a theoretical level it is expected that the international-comparative perspective helps to overcome ethnocentric blindness - that we learn, irritated by observations in a foreign context, to better perceive and understand our own field and system.

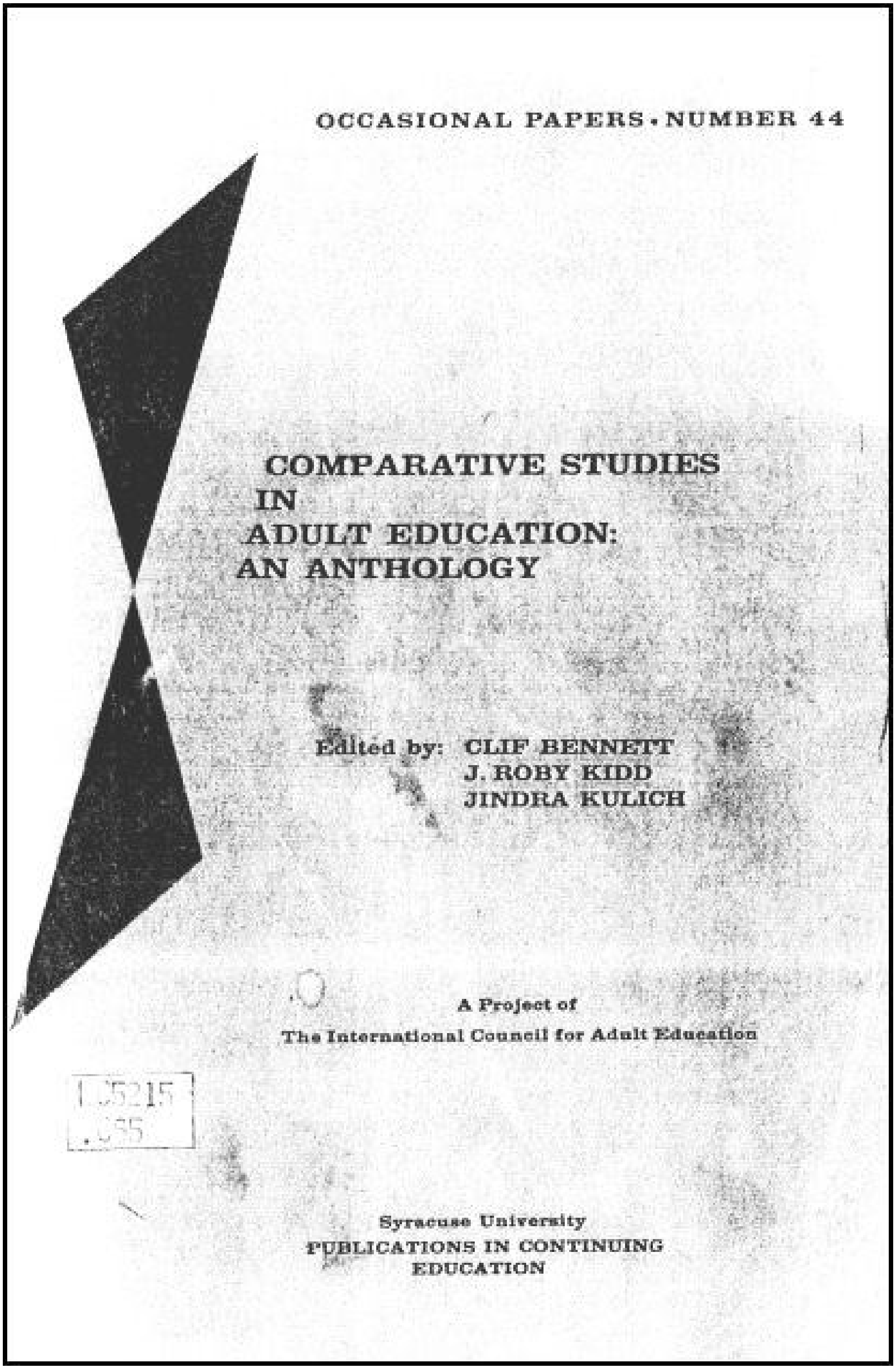
Certainly cultural differences limit the transfer from one country to another. Comparative research - by helping to understand the differences/similarities and their significance for adult education - clarifies the possibilities and limits of understanding and borrowing. Both are indispensable in a world where in many countries experiences in the various fields of adult education are gained and needed.

Technology opens today many chances for international exchange. ISCAE offers more: a person at the other end of the telephone- or E-mail-line. And it offers a chance not only to maintain virtual contact but also to have face-to-face-contact. Persons interested in international comparative adult education are invited to join ISCAE.

More information: www.ISCAE.org
ISCAE published two volumes, describing and analyzing the comparative "state of the art", presenting selected and edited papers from the ISCAE-conferences in Bamberg (1996) and Ljubljana (1998) and St. Louis (2002) and Bamberg (2006):

Reischmann, Jost, Bron, Michal Jr & Jelenc, Zoran (Eds.) (1999): *Comparative Adult Education 1998. The contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study.* Ljubljana, Slovenia: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. 394 pages; ISBN 961-6130-27-7. www.ISCAE.org/publications/ISCAE-book1999.pdf

Reischmann, Jost & Bron, Michal Jr (Eds.) (2008): *Comparative Adult Education 2008. Experiences and examples.* Frankfurt, New York: Peter Lang Publishers.282 pages; ISBN 978-3-631-58235-0. www.ISCAE.org/publications/08-Reischmann-Bron-Comparative-Adult-Education2008Intro.pdf



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COMPARATIVE STUDIES
IN
ADULT EDUCATION:
AN ANTHOLOGY

Edited by: CLIF BENNETT
J. ROBY KIDD
JINDRA KULICH

A Project of
The International Council for Adult Education

Syracuse University
PUBLICATIONS IN CONTINUING
EDUCATION

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PREFACE
by
Alexander N. Charters

The International Conference on the Comparative Study of Adult Education at Exeter, New Hampshire, U.S.A. in 1966 was a landmark in the evolution of comparative adult and continuing education. Growing interest in the field since then may be a reflection of the study of comparative education in general, or a result of real concern for the education of adults worldwide. Comparative study can of course be conducted within a nation, but the focus at Exeter and much of what followed was for comparative studies between and among nations. This book provides an up-to-date discussion of some of the major issues of comparative adult education.

Awareness is increasing of the linkage between the development of adult and continuing education and the human, social, political, and economic development taking place in nations at various stages of growth. The relationship of education, including adult education, to the policies and activities of development is undergoing major review by national and international organizations. The following quotation succinctly and bluntly states the present relationship between education and development as seen by one international organization, the World Bank:

> Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries during the last two decades because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies which were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries.

A succeeding statement from the same report presents the potential role of education:

> A broadening of development objectives implies that education also needs to adapt itself to the needs of people living in these sectors. A major implication is emphasis on mass education...

Just as education is an integral part of development, so adult education is an integral part of lifelong education. Focus on adult education's role in overall development plans must be considered in relation to the concept of lifelong education, or "education permanente." President Nyerere of Tanzania states:

> First, we must educate the adults. Our children will not have an impact on our economic development for five, ten, or even twenty years. The attitudes of the adult on the other hand, have an impact now...

The linkage of adult education with development extends the base and need for study of comparative adult education.

Comparative adult education is also founded on the premise that citizens of all nations can learn from one another. People of the same country are extremely varied, differing as much from each other as from persons of other nations. For example, within one nation there may be great variations among people in areas such as coping skills, functional literacy, and management competencies. For the purpose of making national or international comparisons, the type of educational need, however, should not be confused with the extent of the need, because the percentage of the population at any level of competence varies greatly from one nation to another. In brief, many problems transcend national boundaries. To attack a national problem, it is useful to seek possible solution from a similar experience in another country. Such comparisions, however, must involve more than a description of programs within a nation. They must include investigation of commonalities and differences between and among nations. This makes it possible to determine relationships among the elements and to analyze cause and effect. In this way comparative adult education can help in attacking urgent national as well as international problems. Nations more developed in adult education do provide funds, plans, models, and ideas to the developing nations. In turn, however, the more developed nations should learn from the experiences and results of other nations. All peoples must learn from each other through greater reciprocal exchange of alternative solutions to problems. One step would be for nations, expecially those more developed, to learn how to reciprocate--to learn how to receive as well as to give. The Multi-national Conference on Adult and Comparative Studies held in Washington in January 1975 had presentations of programs from developing countries and more developed nations. It was designed for mutual learning from experiences in several nations and constitutes one example among many of what can and has been done. Comparative studies of this kind indicate acceptance by educators of adults of the view that whatever their backgrounds they too can be learners--that both teachers and students are learners.

Comparative studies in adult education relate to another current concern which may be called accountability. Educators must be made more accountable for the use of funds, for the time and effort of adults spent in learning activities, and for other resources. Meager as the overall commitment of resources is or seems to be, adult educators are not excused from responsibility for evaluation and accountability, nationally or internationally. As educators of adults assume greater responsibility for the resolution of major problems, they must also be prepared to accept the responsibility for failure. They should be prepared to recognize alternatives, to minimize opportunities for failure, and to increase their responsibility for both failure and accountability. Comparative studies are useful for the achievement of more accountability.

As alternative patterns and strategies for adult education are being formulated for the future, reciprocity and accountability, as well as the urgency of major issues, assume increasing significance. Comparative studies in adult education do suggest alternative solutions to major national and international problems.

This book is a collection of some previous publications in the area of comparative adult education and several statements being published for the first time. A number of articles are on issues encompassing the whole field of education. In other cases authors draw heavily on other fields of study, particularly the social sciences. The range and scope is clear in the Table of Contents.

The anthology should be a valuable contribution to research workers, scholars, graduate students, and professors. It should also be useful as a bridge between research workers and practitioners in the field.

EDITORS' FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since the first graduate course in Comparative Adult Education was not given until 1967, and since most other university programs have been in existence only months rather than years, the theoretical writings, case studies, and research reports are still modest in number and range.

This ANTHOLOGY has been prepared in an attempt to assist students and teachers seeking materials in their special field. The papers have come from several countries, and they have been selected by a process in which students and professors read and applied them and found them useful in their efforts to explore and understand comparative studies.

The ANTHOLOGY is by no means complete in itself; it should be used along with some of the excellent reports, texts, and journals that are referred to in the Appendix.

The editors are more aware than anyone of the shortcomings, the gaps that still exist, and the important subjects which receive only the most cursory treatment. But they also believe that these are deficiencies to be corrected and are confident that a second ANTHOLOGY, that may appear in five or ten years, will be superior in all respects. We therefore invite anyone interested in comparative adult education to undertake further exploration of this new and fascinating field.

It is evident, as well, that comparative adult education is one part of the broader field of comparative education, that it has borrowed deeply, and should begin to play a larger part in the general field as well as in cultivation of its own particular interests.

We have been gratified with the generosity of colleagues who have offered access to their work. All papers are used with permission and the source of each is noted. We are indebted to them, to colleagues who have assisted in the process of selection, to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where these papers were first collected and tested, and to the International Council for Adult Education under whose stimulus the project has been carried out. Our special thanks goes to Isobel Wilson for editorial assistance.

C. Bennett
J.R. Kidd
J. Kulich

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INTRODUCTION
by
Malcolm S. Adiseshiah

When living or traveling in cultures other than one's own, one is continually faced with the interplay of differences and similarities in people and institutions. At times, the differences between various cultures and socio-political systems appear overwhelming; at other times, and often far from home, one sees a great similarity in approaches, problems, and institutions.

Similar problems may justify the same response, but it may also be that a fairly uncritical transfer of institutional patterns based on conventional thinking has taken place. In Africa, for example, it is quite apparent that many of the differences in institutions and practices found between English-speaking and French-speaking countries have their explanation in the links that have existed, and to a large extent still exist, between these African countries and the United Kingdom or France. How else can we understand the many similarities in educational patterns between Senegal and Madagascar or the many differences between Ghana and the Ivory Coast?

One of the tasks of comparative studies in adult education is to map out similarities and differences in institutions and practices between different countries and also those within one country. Globes and maps of the world have, in some ways, become misleading; they certainly will not tell us the time it takes for a message to reach one place from another. Because of air travel, airmail, and telecommunications, to which satellite communication is today adding a new dimension, one capital may be much closer to a capital in a distant country than these capitals are to apparently nearby villages in their respective countries. The result is that among some groups of people, often scattered throughout the world, knowledge and ideas move further and faster than ever before, while among other groups, there has been little change in the traditional reliance on the spoken word as the only means of communication. These changing patterns of distance complicate comparative studies but also make them more challenging and interesting in that more correlations can be found and more lessons drawn from them.

In countries where imperialism and political colonialism have come to an end, cultural or ideological colonialism continues. There may be outside attempts, conscious or unconscious, to improve existing institutions or patterns in a country, in adult education as well as in other areas, and there may even be an eagerness to import outside patterns. Cultural "borrowing" can be as valuable as cultural revolution, but the more consciously choices, decisions, and adaptations are made, the more likely it is that the borrowed adapted elements will enrich rather than impoverish the existing culture.

Comparative studies in adult education help to widen the options and to develop a consciousness of the alternatives; this represents a significant emancipation. But it is important that such studies are undertaken not only by countries that are willing to make their experiences available to others; they must also be pursued by countries that wish to benefit from experience obtained elsewhere.

In a period when adult education is not only expanding but undergoing significant change, there is particular value to be derived from comparative studies. According to a Hungarian proverb, a fool is a man who learns only from his own mistakes, while the wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Mistakes are unavoidable, but a great deal can be done to reduce repeating the same mistakes.

Adult education is so varied in its approach, its methods, and its organizational patterns and usually so closely linked with the national culture that it is much more difficult to make comparative studies in this field than in formal education. But at the same time, comparative studies in adult education may be particularly rewarding because in many countries, or rather in many adult education programs, adult education has been less tied than formal education to centrally approved syllabi and examination requirements and thus freer to relate more closely to the needs and aspirations of the participants and to develop in a more functional direction. There has been a great deal of flexibility and innovation in adult education, but often on a microscale. The problem has been that the experiences acquired in any program have remained with the participants, but have not been presented in a form that would enable communication with others. Comparatively little has been done to report in depth on many interesting adult education projects, let alone to evaluate them. The Asian Centre of Educational Innovation for Development (ACEID), recently established by UNESCO at Bangkok, will be a first effort at disseminating information on educational innovation.

At a time when the availability of funds depends to a large extent on cost/benefit ratios, it is not sufficient that students and tutors engaged in adult education are rewarded with a feeling of doing worthwhile work. The benefits must be spelled out, and where possible, quantified, and costs must be calculated so that comparisons of an economic nature can be made between different programs or methods This is one way in which adult education in its various forms is likely to attract the resources it needs to make a full contribution to growth and change.

The idea of lifelong integrated education is now steadily gaining ground throughout the world, but as no country starts with a tabula rasa in its educational development, it is not surprising that few, if any have as yet embarked on a full-scale systematic construction of such programs. However, many and varied initiatives are being taken in different parts of the world, thus contributing to the creation of opportunities and facilities that will bring us nearer to a proper system of lifelong education. It may, however, be an advantage that neat systems of lifelong integrated education are not spelled out in full detail at international levels. According to several studies in cross-cultural diffusion, it is very difficult to transfer institutions and organizational patterns from one culture to another. Ideas and concepts can be exchanged; the actual institutional embodiment of these ideas must be worked out in accordance with the culture in which they are to be implemented if they are to succeed in being acceptable and relevant.

Clarification of the concept of lifelong integrated learning may therefore in fact come about through the efforts of implementation in different countries, but if this is to be done without wasting time and resources and without repeating the mistakes of others, it is essential that comparative studies be made so that the experience of one country becomes available to another with a minimum of delay. It may well turn out that some developing countries, those with imaginative thinkers and with institutions that are

flexible, will be able to demonstrate solutions to richer countries that may suffer from institutional rigidity. For example, changes now taking place in the adult education provisions in Tanzania, Bangladesh and Venezuela are likely to be of interest to more developed countries because they constitute clear moves toward increased functionalism, toward the integration of work and education throughout life.

On the other hand, an organization such as UNESCO is, by its very nature, important in its contribution to comparative studies in adult education. At present, the major effort in this field is found in the Experimental Literacy Program. The problems encountered and the solutions worked out, in major projects, in micro experiments, and in cooperation with member states, that take the form of technical assistance, are continually compared and exchanged in writing, through meetings, and by personal contacts. Eventually, a common body of experience, though differentiated experience, will be available. This approach is basically a problem-solving one. No single right answer is expected but a range of options will emerge, enabling each country to select the approaches best suited to its circumstances.

The cooperation that exists between nongovernmental organizations and UNESCO has also, over the years, led to major advances in mutual comprehension and cooperation among adult educators from different nations. Study tours for workers' education leaders have served the same purpose. UNESCO has, through its support of regional centers for functional literacy in rural areas (ASFEC and CREFAL), the Institute of African Adult Education in Ibadan, the Latin American Institute of Adult Education in Caracas, and the International Institute for Adult Literacy Methods in Teheran, as well as through the European Center for Leisure and Education, Prague, contributed to building up the international framework needed for the development of comparative studies in adult education.

UNESCO also has active regional offices of education in Bangkok, Dakar, Beirut, and Santiago de Chile. An adult education specialist is a member of the team working at each office. As adult education becomes increasingly linked with economic and social development, as well as with the general educational system of each country, it is necessary that adult education be considered in the context of the general programming of the country. The regional adult education specialist is able to assist each country in shaping its own education policies, but in the light shed by the experience of other countries.

The world conferences on adult education, held at Elsinore in 1949, at Montreal in 1960, and at Tokyo in 1972, have also provided much material for comparative studies as well as for action.

However, much remains to be done. Only a few countries can claim that the necessary studies and comparisons, of different kinds and in different combinations, have been made. National documentation centers and research institutes are needed, and regional institutes and associations must be strengthened. A number of details must be worked out; problems of terminology and definition often obscure mutual comprehension, statistics are usually inadequate for the purpose of international comparisons, and the comparative studies of legislation concerning adult education have hardly begun.

Fortunately, during the 1960's a number of regional adult education associations have come into existence,* and although they all

* The Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, the African Adult Education Association, and the Federacion Interamericana de Educacion de Adultos, in addition to the European Bureau of Adult Education.

suffer from inadequate resources in terms of money and personnel, they nevertheless provide a basic framework for both institutional and personal contacts, which can be of considerable value in developing comparative studies in adult education and in applying the lessons that can be learned from such studies. The establishment of the International Council of Adult Education, with its headquarters in Toronto, in 1973, is a significant means of strengthening these regional associations and developing the means of action of the sixty national associations affiliated with the Council. Its bibliographical and documentary services have in the two years since its initiation become important source material in comparative adult education studies.

The world educational crisis is forcing us to break away from conventional thinking; we shall need all the imagination we can muster but we shall also need factual knowledge. The continuous education of adults is destined to play a role proportionately more significant in the overall educational enterprise of man than it has been since the idea of sending children to school was first invented. We must learn from each other, from our past experience, and from our ongoing experiments--and this is what comparative studies are about.

4

COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION: THE FIRST DECADE

by

J.R. Kidd

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible--but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

Gandhi

For almost the entire period of adult education, there has been an attempt to keep the windows open to the entire world, and to dig in against alien hurricanes. Yet adult education came late to the bazaar of comparative education. There has long been an abiding interest in "international education," in forms and modes of other societies. While adult education can display a score of institutions or special forms of learning transferred from the country of innovation to many adopting countries, the systematic, careful, rigorous modes of adoption or rejection are scarcely practiced. One country will be hospitable, or hostile, to the concept or program of another country, but the decision to accept or reject is prompted by intuition, politics, fashion, or distrust. It is rarely based on a rational analytical process. Whatever the triumphs or tribulations of the general field of comparative education, its need requires little argument or demonstration. Matthew Arnold expressed it well almost a century ago: "It is not more enlightening to study education without comparative education than to study anatomy without comparative anatomy." Still, the period of systematic study and application is less than a decade.

Histories of comparative education usually choose as their beginning date the publication of an essay by Marc-Antoine Jullien. His objective "to collect facts and observations arranged in analytical charts, which permit them to be related and compared in order to deduce from them certain principles and determined rules" is often quoted with approval. Among western scholars, Jullien is an excellent choice, although with better information we might have preferred an Indian, a Chinese, or a Persian of several centuries before. Selecting Jullien sets the operative date as 1817, while accepting all the earlier scholars as part of the heritage of comparative (adult) education.

But it is possible to find a precise date at which planned, thorough, systematic efforts at comparison began in the field of adult education. The date is June 1966, the place an international seminar on comparative adult education held at Exeter, New Hampshire, U.S.A. Twenty-six persons from nine countries attended this first meeting. Its chief instigator was Alexander Liveright of the United States, who contributed much until his untimely death just a few years later. The seminar report, entitled the Exeter Papers, published by the former CSLEA, is an essential beginning to understanding comparative adult education. The conceptual plan adopted for the seminar did not prove useful, and the recommendations have only historic interest, but the seminar and the Exeter Papers constitute a significant step forward.

Twice already we have made a distinction between the general or

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generic field of comparative education and the sub-field of comparative adult education. In adult education, there is usually some tension between the need for stressing continuities in learning--e.g. the concept of *education permanente* --and the necessity for focusing on problems and needs and methods suitable to the adult rather than the child. The latter emphasis can best be seen in the work of scholars who have developed the concept of andragogy--the science of the teaching behavior for older or adult students, as distinguished from pedagogy, or the teaching of the child or the young. The recent emphasis on *mathetics*, on the behavior of people (of all ages) who are learning, as distinguished from the behavior of people who are teaching, is a reinforcement of attempts to underscore continuity.

We have noted earlier that adult educationists have come late to comparative research, indeed to any systematic forms of educational research, and this may be the chief explanation. It was largely true that comparative educationists gave their primary attention to schooling and formal education, while adult educationists are concerned about out-of-school and non-formal activities, and to extensions of post-secondary education. Each was operating in circles that scarcely seemed to intersect.

Moreover, when the adult educationist looked over the fence into the pasture of comparative education he was rarely impressed. The questions that comparative educationists appeared to be pursuing seemed to be academic and unreal, the performance to be mediocre, and the controversies about method to be stifling. Adult educationists have often been poor in resources, but have inclined to the grandiose, not the picayune, in objective. Some of them may never have heard of Francis Bacon, but they would have understood him when, at age 31, he wrote: "I confess I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends: for I have taken all knowledge to be my province." Perhaps because adult education is a comparatively young field, there has sometimes been disdain for any restricted goal or vision, even when this may have resulted in a greater clarity in the solution of important short-run objectives. Adult educators perceived comparative education as an academic coterie, and not as a central intellectual movement. It is only as comparative adult educationists have begun to forage for themselves that they have been ready to admit their debt, and learn from those who were earlier in the field of comparative education. They have also kept their eyes on channels open to other comparative disciplines, notably anthropology and comparative sociology, even comparative religion.

There is more to be encountered than theory. Adult education, in most of the forms and institutions through which it is organized and expressed, has been outside the official, government-supported forms of education and usually out of touch with the field of comparative education.

Obviously, it is important for adult education, as well as the whole family of education, that the sub-field of comparative adult education should not continue to be separate and aloof. However, in 1966, as the adult educationists began to develop their sub-field, there was a realization that considerable preliminary work was essentia before they would be able to take an effective place in the wider fiel On this developmental task, they have been proceeding. Indeed, in 1970, when comparative educationists were meeting in Ottawa to plan an international association of comparative education societies (The World Council for Comparative Education), there was an informal international meeting of comparative adult educationists.

The latter, working almost in isolation (with a few individual exceptions), have lost something by their separateness, but in the process they have developed some distinctive approaches and identified some modes of comparing that are particularly appropriate to adult education. Comparative adult educationists seem also to have put a stress on different goals (on the one hand, emphasis on the learning of the individual about himself and on the other end of the continuum, rational social change) than have scholars more concerned with school systems. As comparative adult educationists begin and continue to take a greater part in the broad field of comparative education, they have much to contribute and share, as well as to gain.

However, while substantial progress has been made in a relatively short time, it should be acknowledged that comparative adult education has not advanced beyond a very primitive, preliminary stage. This judgment will be substantiated in the book of readings to follow. The readings borrow heavily from theory and modes developed in the broad field of comparative education. Adult educationists working in the comparative field are as much in debt to scholars like Halls, King, Holmes, or Anderson, Bereday, Noah, and Eckstein, as anyone in the total field of comparative education. The work specifically in adult education is seen to be elementary and exploratory. Gaps are many and the readings need to be supplemented by other materials drawn from the literature of adult education and of comparative education. They have been collected by students learning about comparative studies, they are organized in a form that invites the inclusion of additional material, and it is anticipated that they will soon be superseded by additional and better material.

We acknowledge the limitations but make no apologies. The book represents an important stage in development. All of the readings selected have been tested in use in several universities in three countries. Scholars elsewhere have provided suggestions, will conduct further testing, and will collaborate in developing better materials. The compilation of the readings has gone on simultaneously with the recording, on video and oral recorders, of interviews with leading theorists in comparative education. Case studies are beginning to emerge; one excellent project in cross-national research, involving at least eight countries is under plan. National "profiles" of adult education are being prepared in many countries. Modes that have been identified as being most suitable to the problems and goals of adult education are being tested. *In other words, this book is not so much a text as it is a step in the long process of developing an important field of study. It is a step taken not by experts but by learners, and readers are invited to collaborate in the process by reading critically, testing the assumptions and conclusions by their own experience, offering criticisms, and better still, preparing papers that will build on and replace what is here.*

Definitions and conduct

The very first problem with comparative adult education is the prevailing lack of agreement about terms. Almost everyone who has spoken or written about adult education has commented on the "confusion that still reigns about the meaning of adult education within each country," as John Lowe reported in a UNESCO publication, or "the jungle of adult education terminology," to use the metaphor that John

Bowers and E.A. Fisher employed in a recent paper on "The Search for a Terminology of Adult Education and for Better Statistics." It is a curious fact that the essential work of defining, clarifying, developing glossaries and taxonomies, which, despite difficulty, should have proceeded anyway, is likely to be accomplished because of the demands for clarity of expression and agreement on terms imposed by the computer.

Rightly or wrongly, we have turned our backs on the term comparative education despite the valuable contributions of many who have carried out their work under this general rubric. To many today, comparative education is a term lacking precise meaning, or at best, one that connotes a small section of the specific field of education. But our concerns go far beyond the field of education. We are interested in that which can be applied from comparative history, comparative sociology, or any other discipline; we are concerned with the impact of events and happenings and circumstances--activities that are rarely considered in a course in education--upon the learning of people. Consequently, we have adopted, as a generic term, *comparative studies*, to include any phenomenon that affects learning.

We have noted above that the objectives of adult education are rarely cast in simple or restricted terms. In this respect, at least, they follow Comenius:

> Our first wish is that all men should be educated fully to full humanity; not only one individual, nor a few, nor even many, but all men together and single, young and old, rich and poor, of high and low birth, in a word, all whose fate is to be born human beings.... Our second wish is that every man should be wholly educated, rightly formed not only in one single matter or a few, or even in many, but in all things which perfect human nature.

The teachers are also many. To quote Emerson, "Raphael paints wisdom; Handel sings it, Phidias carves it, Shakespeare writes it, Columbus sails it; Luther preaches it, Washington arms it; Watt mechanizes it." So no single measure or formula can possibly serve to monitor or analyze such an enterprise.

Of course, choosing such a comprehensive term gives rise to another problem, that of having a term so broad that it is almost meaningless. We have tried to increase rigor by emphasizing the word comparative, and we have been seeking ways to compare that are systematic and effective enough to result in understanding and in changes of practice.

Nomenclature is important. It is more than rhetoric, more than a game. The world may be becoming a global village, but villagers still must learn how to talk with each other, how to share with and learn from each other. Not only should they stop making their own mistakes, but they should stop copying the mistakes everyone else has made. They need to know how to welcome, not simply be resigned to, constructive change; how to resist fads or innovations that will contribute little to human happiness; and how to stand against changes that will demean and belittle and cripple human beings.

In other words, comparative studies may become a kind of universal language, perhaps as universal and as significant as the language of science. This stage may be a long way off, but the possibility alone should be a major incentive.

While we are considering concepts, it may be worth pointing out that the concepts in adult education that have occasioned greatest interest in the past decade have all been those that lend themselves to the process of comparative analysis. Examples of concepts:

> éducation permanente or lifelong learning--a concept that allows one to visualize, plan for, and assess growth and change over an entire life-span--and provides a useful time unit for comparison.
>
> learning system involving all forms of organized education in a given society.
>
> learning force or the total number of human beings who are engaged in the activity of learning.
>
> educational delivery system or the means by which learning is organized and made accessible.

All of these concepts are capable of being expressed in both quantitative and qualitative forms and thus provide units for comparison.

Debate over method

Until recently there has been little discussion about method in comparative adult education, except by those who decried efforts to identify suitable methods and regarded such efforts as academic gamesmanship. This is perhaps because to many people the need for action seems so urgent. They are alarmed or ashamed because hundreds of millions of men and women are illiterate and multitudes have never had, and cannot now have, the education which the Charter of Human Rights declared is the birthright of every member of the human family. They are too well aware that adult education, even their own efforts, has aided most those who are already in an advantaged position, has provided least to the disadvantaged, and may have broadened and deepened the fissure separating the "two solitudes." They may feel as Illich has expressed it, that the effort to provide traditional schooling, particularly the costlier forms of higher education, may consume the available resources and prevent large numbers of people from getting the education they need to survive. They are wearied of debate about esoteric educational theories and concepts, which they perceive as intellectual diddling while millions of people are burning with frustration and hatred because their legitimate aspirations seem no nearer to achievement. Such persons want to know what the fuss about methods is all about. However, others, and their numbers are growing, because what they have read about comparative studies often seems *ad hoc* and pointless, are determined that an appropriate rationale be found and articulated.

In practice, both groups will, and do, find common ground as they discover that methods are closely related to goals and that for comparative adult education there are multi-goals that must be sought by the use of multi-methods.

We need not spend too much time here on definitions of adult education. At the International Conference on the Comparative Study of Adult Education in 1966, the following definition was used: "Adult education is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programs are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes, or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems." Defined in this way, adult education includes: literacy and fundamental education; vocational education or job training; education in health, consumer, and family problems, as well as education in physical and personal development; literature, art, drama, and other cultural programs; community development, social education, and community organization; political and civic education; religious or economic education; and a vast variety of other educational programs designed primarily for adults.

Goals

Comparative adult educationists place a great deal of stress on goals and believe that they encompass vocational as well as liberal-humane objectives. They feel that some of the confusion and dissension in the broad field of comparative education has arisen because of confusion or disagreement about goals. They believe, for example, that since the objectives are several and different, multi-modes and multi-methods must be employed and the search for a single optimal method is bound to be futile. Concerned as most of them are with problems of development and social change, they have had less respect than perhaps should be accorded for exercises that bring academic respectability, or for sophisticated measures that cannot be applied except with costly resources.

The most common goals for comparative studies in adult education are:

.to become better informed about the educational system of other countries;

.to become better informed about the ways in which people in other cultures have carried out certain social functions by means of education;

.to become better informed about the historical roots of certain activities and thus to develop criteria for assessing contemporary developments and testing possible outcomes;

.to better understand the educational forms and systems operating in one's own country;

.to satisfy an interest in how other human beings live and learn;

.to better understand oneself;

.to reveal how one's own cultural biases and personal attributes affect one's judgment about possible ways of carrying on learning transactions.

In earlier times, comparative education was fostered with the definite purpose of "borrowing" successful forms and activities from abroad to be adopted in one's own system. The purpose was similar to the proverb from Ghana, "It is to blow dust from each other's eyes that one finds two antelopes always working together." In those early days, comparative educationists were mainly reformers. Today, "reformers" in this sense have been replaced by educational planners, and comparative studies are as much a preparation for educational planning as are studies of economics or sociology. In more recent decades, comparative modes have been sought that might assist educationists in one country in those difficult decisions about whether to welcome or resist cultural innovations from another. Comparative modes have been recommended as essential tools for educational planning, and for educational assessment. One interesting objective for comparative adult education is to identify those characteristics or patterns of behavior which are culture-bound, related to a given society, from those that may have universal characteristics.

In other words these goals may be considered *vocational* for an individual who is going to another country, or working with another culture, as an educational planner. The same educational activity for other students may be to satisfy their curiosity and for them, the study can be categorized as *liberal-humane*. For some, comparative studies are to obtain a perspective or a "mode of discourse" for research or writing. For others, the search is for hypotheses, or for clues for evaluation.

These are all positive goals. Some people would also include as a significant goal the capacity to withstand pressures, to accept alien practices, or to resist those aspects that are inimical to the host culture. Insights into cultural differences and values might be employed for making or resisting change. In any such consideration, of course, one's values are central.

Perhaps this list of goals is long enough, although I am sure that we could identify other goals of equal importance. On examining such a list it becomes evident that if these goals are to be achieved, it will be necessary to follow practices that have been devised with considerable care. It is obvious enough that rigorous and consistent methods must be invented and applied and refined and re-applied. The problems are many, not the least being the paucity of comparable data. The data that do exist are usually gathered in answer to questions that are rarely uniform, that are not exacting, that are on different time axes, and that are asked in scores of languages and related to concepts that are not identical. The difficulties will only yield to systematic, painstaking work in improving and organizing data collection everywhere. But we also have a great deal of evidence to show that there are underlying similarities in human need and human response to need, and that there may be ways of tapping and ordering these similarities.

One other fact may seem so obvious that it needs little comment: comparative studies will not grow by waiting for one great integrative genius, like Plato, who will bring together all that is known into one system. Such Plato-like acts are needed, but we cannot and need not wait for a towering scholar to arrive. This goal is so important that we must press on. The process can be as that described by Galbraith, speaking of technological advance:

> Most technological advance is now the result not of accident

or inspiration or genius, but of highly purposeful effort. Once we had to wait for the Edisons and Wrights. Now through education and organization we get something approaching the same results from much more common clay. We now get the larger part of our agricultural and industrial growth not from more capital investment but from improvements brought about by improved men. And this process of technological advance has become fairly predictable. We get from men and women pretty much what we invest in them.

It is equally obvious that since goals are so many and varied, no single mode of enquiry will suffice. One of the least profitable exercises that dominated *comparative education* for a decade or more was the search for a basic method. Clearly multi-methods are required, chosen in relation to multi-goals. However, for a while some scholars were obsessed with the notion of making comparative education a viable discipline and, seemingly, based on a single and scientific methodology. Of course, we do not denigrate any efforts to make *comparing* more systematic where possible, to develop, select and order data that can be expressed in computational forms, to free oneself as far as possible from one's own cultural biases. But these are efforts not at all inconsistent with the acceptance of multi-methods; they are simply criteria to be applied in the selection of methods.

The task of developing comparative studies is so big that it must be undertaken by men and women of many countries from many disciplines, and with many ways of perceiving truth. There are so many facets to this task that many of us with rather humble attainments can make our contribution. But our contribution will not be effective unless it is assessed carefully and diffused by others. Somehow we must establish collaboration between interested people in various countries through exchanges of papers, course outlines, readings, and evaluations of each other's plans.

International dimensions of adult education

The first graduate course in comparative studies in adult education did not appear until 1967. But significant international associations in adult education have been in existence for centuries. Throughout the ages many adult education ventures were advanced by men who were passionate about reforming society. This was true of institutions of adult education that grew up around a desire for religious reform (such as the "Sunday schools" for men and women in England and the Welsh campaign for literacy, both in the eighteenth century). Other examples were education associated with political reform (the Chartists) and responses to the industrial revolution (the mechanics' institutes). Reform-minded people are not only prepared to proselytize; some of them are eager to discover and borrow ideas and activities that will advance their cause. Exchanges of information on libraries, university extension, classes for women, and vocational training, for instance, were consciously sought. Accordingly, some forms of adult education, of which correspondence study is just one example, were not only invented at several times and places, but it would seem also that conscious attempts at diffusion and adoption were made. The spread of the folk high schools in Scandinavia and the Sokol movement in Czechoslovakia are examples of deliberate efforts to diffuse and deliberate efforts to borrow cultural phenomena.

This borrowing of cultural phenomena seems to have taken place without much assessment of the way in which the new activity might change the host society. However, some ideas and certain institutions met heavy resistance. The Danish folk high school penetrated other Scandinavian countries, but only after it was modified substantially. Although the idea of the folk high school has spread to most continents, and has been influential in stimulating activities in scores of countries, the actual form of the institution has only in a few and rather special circumstances been adapted elsewhere.

Some of the activities in adult education that have facilitated the exchange of experience and the collection of comparative data include world conferences in adult education: London, 1929: under the auspices of the then established World Association for Adult Education. Working papers dealing with each country represented were prepared and a report of the conference was published. For about ten years the World Association published reports and other papers. Elsinore, 1949: under the auspices of UNESCO. A working paper was prepared but the documentation was not very complete. A report of resolutions was produced. Montreal, 1960: under the auspices of UNESCO. A number of working papers were prepared but these are extremely fragmentary. A report of the recommendations was published. Tokyo, 1973: This conference was preceded by the collection of reports from member states which, together, constitute the most complete record on adult education to date. This material was summarized by Professor John Lowe in the document entitled, "A Retrospective International Survey of Adult Education" (Montreal 1960 to Tokyo 1972).

Comparative adult education has been fostered through three major UNESCO institutions:

(i) International Bureau of Education: In 1973, a group of experts in adult education met at IBE in Geneva to draft a plan for developing and exchanging information and research in adult education. When this plan is implemented much of the data necessary for systematic comparative studies may become available.

(ii) International Institute for Educational Planning: The processes of ordering data for educational planning constitute essential steps in comparing, and the work of IIEP and the publications and case materials have become a major resource for comparative studies in adult education.

(iii) UNESCO Institute of Pedagogy, Hamburg: Until 1972 this Institute was concerned largely with problems affecting elementary and secondary schools as well as the training of teachers. However, some shifts in emphasis have begun, including a cross-national study of *education permanente* and the ways in which different educational systems foster or inhibit lifelong learning.

Most significant of all is the direct intervention of UNESCO, and the Department of Adult Education in comparative studies. The seminar on comparative studies held in Nordberg Denmark in January, 1972, under the auspices of UNESCO and the Ministry of Education of Denmark, provided an opportunity for review and planning. The work of this seminar and its conclusions are found in the Readings. A second seminar has been planned for 1975 to take place in Africa.

Some modes and methods

When we examine modes and methods we are struck by the fact that there seem to be more alternatives than approved paths of enquiry. This may daunt some, yet alternatives are essential. An interesting confirmation of this general principle was supplied by one of England's Prime Ministers, Lord Clement Atley who, at age 83, infirm and sitting quietly in his favorite chair in his club, was asked by an enquiring reporter from a daily newspaper, "Tell me, Lord Atley, how does it feel to be eighty-three years old," and Atley cleared his throat, looked the young man in the eye, and said: "It feels very good when you consider the alternatives." This answer itself affords a fascinating comparison, for when Winston Churchill, Atley's great adversary and colleague, was being interviewed under similar circumstances, and the young reporter ended the talk by saying he hoped for another interview on Churchill's hundredth birthday, the latter granted, "Perhaps you will, young man, you look healthy enough."

Professors Noah and Eckstein have characterized much of the recent broader field of comparative education as one foot firmly planted in pedagogy and the other in the wider area of the social sciences. More recently a movement towards empirical and quantitative methods of enquiry has become apparent. Comparative education in its most recent phase emerges as an attempt to use cross-national data to test propositions about the relationship between education and society and between teaching practices and learning outcomes.

Comparative adult educationists began with an analysis of their problems; the second step was to identify modes of comparing and to estimate those best suited to their objectives. This analysis ranged over several years and many disciplines. It is the subject of Michael Henry's excellent bibliography, "Methodology in Comparative Education," published in Comparative Education Review, Vol. 17, No. 2.

For a considerable period of time the historians held sway in comparative education, almost as if it were their private domain, somewhat as more recently psychologists have tended to treat learning as if it were a sub-field of psychology and not something to which many disciplines speak. There are at least three main applications of historical methods to comparative studies: (a) history may furnish insights or hypotheses for testing the present; the testing may be done by applying methods from other social sciences, as is the case in cost benefit studies; (b) experience in the past may be utilized to further test hypotheses formulated in the present; (c) knowledge from the past may help an observer who is engaged in obtaining first-hand observation in the complex present.

During the past few decades many behavioral scientists, in addition to Anderson, have offered their insights or have begun to apply them to some problems in comparative studies. There is no space here to provide an inventory of the variety of problems or methods, but the list is substantial and is growing longer. We shall, however, illustrate what has been happening by referring to the notion of co-variants as applied to comparative education by Professor S. Nadel. Nadel uses a computer, advanced statistical techniques, and analyzes variables in different educational systems. The following steps are taken: (a) an examination of variations of relationships in a single society at a given time, e.g. post-secondary education in Ontario and Quebec; (b) an examination of variations or relationships in two or more societies that have basic cultural similarities but are different in some respects, e.g. Australia and Canada; (c) an examination of variations or relationships in several societies that are different in nature but share some common features,

e.g. Albania and China; (d) an examination of variations or relationships in the same society at two periods of time, e.g. Canada in 1890 and 1970.

Multi-methods

Some writers, such as Donald Adams of the University of Pittsburgh, maintain that there is no single method for comparative education, that many methods must be employed, and that anyone interested in comparative studies should be searching constantly within the behavioral sciences for concepts or insights that might be applicable. Adams maintains that at the beginning level comparative studies should be general; they should be designed to acquaint the learner with the scope of the entire field and with a few systems of organization by which information may be collected and general principles derived. He would accent a few select, organizing, harmonizing concepts. But for the research specialist, Adams advises the application of any concept that seems relevant to the solution of particular problems. He does not appear to be upset by the relative chaos in the field at present and offers hope that synthesis will come later when much more groundwork has been accomplished. He suggests that the following seven major factors should be considered in most problems of comparative studies: a sense of national unity (compare Canada and Nigeria with Australia); the general economic situation (compare Uruguay with Paraguay); the basic beliefs and traditions (compare Albania with Portugal); the status of educational thought (compare United States with Russia); the languages and language problems (compare India with France); the political orientation (compare East Germany with West Germany); and the attitude toward international cooperation (compare Spain with Sweden).

Micro or partial solutions: problem orientation

Discouraged by attempts to find sufficient data or to order whole systems of education in any meaningful way, and disdaining, or refusing to use, some organizing principles such as national character, some writers have advocated beginning with certain problems--selected from a few countries and from different periods in history--on which sufficient information is available for purposes of comparing. Examples of kinds of problems selected for comparing include vocational training for mechanics and teaching reading at the elementary level. Those who advocate that a beginning be made with such problems have usually urged that the specific problem be seen in and related to the national or societal context. Most scholars engaged in comparative studies have found it useful to adopt a problem-centered approach at least part of the time. This approach is applicable to adult education as it is to the schooling of children and adolescents

Functions

Another approach to examining parts of a system rather than the whole is to identify functions. Long before the cultural anthropologists began their observations, it was known that a function that may be provided by a specialized institution in one society may be provided in a different form in another. To use a single example, the coming of age of an adolescent girl, which in middle and upper class European or North American society used to be celebrated by a "coming-out" party, takes very different institutional forms in India. But the function seems to be much the same. The function of occupational training may be provided by a specialized apprenticeship in one society, by a formal training school in another, or by a factory in a third. The study of the functions, of the ways in which they are fostered, and of the education associated with them does seem to provide a useful key to better understand that society.

Macro solutions

In contrast to those who study parts of an educational system, there are those who advocate macro solutions. They would argue that any system of education must be perceived and assessed as a component of a total cultural system. Few will dispute such an assertion, but the consequent difficulties are extreme. One of the best-known systematized approaches to comparative education, in which an educational system is viewed as a component within a larger cultural context, has been devised by Professor G.Z.F. Bereday. He refers to comparative education as "a political geography of schools. Its task, with the aid of methods of other fields, is to search for lessons that can be deduced from the variations in educational practices in different societies." There are no easy solutions for Bereday. He advocates, as preliminary preparation, that a familiarity with the educational system of one's own country or area be acquired and that another system be studied. Essential factors in this study are familiarity with the language, residence in the host country, and "never ceasing watchfulness to control one's own cultural or personal biases." To look at an educational system in its cultural context, Bereday's approach would include the following steps:

1. Description and collection:of pedagogical facts.

2. Interpretation: an analysis of the facts by the methods of the different social sciences. Examples: political geography, which deals with descriptions in world perspectives of political and social institutions, of which education is one; political science, particularly comparative government and international relations.

3. Juxtaposition: the preliminary comparison of facts and finding concepts or principles for ordering the data, both experimentally and by following some formula such as systems analysis.

4. Comparison: the final fusion of the facts with similarly assembled data from other countries for the purpose of comparison and to derive plans for action, hypotheses for testing, or principles for evaluating. One of the stages in either step 3 or 4 may be to isolate specific problems for intensive investigation (e.g. the education of girls and women) before moving on to comparisons of whole systems.

Robert Havighurst, in his attempt to study educational systems, analyzes each one in relation to the basic social institutions in each society--the family, the economy, the religion, and the state.

"One good way," he says, "to study education comparatively, is to study the educational responses made by various societies to their social problems, such as racial diversity, religious diversity, socio-economic stratification, social revolution and technological problems." These approaches by Havighurst, developed in his book, *Comparative Perspectives in Education*, might combine well with other methods.

Another interesting attempt to apply a large concept took place at the first international conference on comparative studies in adult education, reported in the *Exeter Papers*. Here there was an attempt made to examine adult education in any country as part of a larger system. Examples:

The Anglic system: including the United Kingdom, India, Hong Kong, Nigeria, and the Sudan.

The Gallic system: including France, French-speaking Canada,and other French-speaking African and Asian countries.

The North American system: including the United States, English-speaking Canada, and programs in certain parts of Asia and Africa such as the University of Nasuka in Nigeria and the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

The Scandinavian system: including Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as well as some aspects of adult education in some countries in Africa.

The Hispanic system: including various Latin American countries.

Mixed or new systems: including Yugoslavia and Israel.

However, this attempt at classification did not and does not stand up to critical examination. There are as many or more differences within the so-called Anglic system as there are between, let us say, the Anglic and the North American. Such classificatior reveal certain features, but they tend also to obscure or distort others.

A search for new methods that may be appropriate to adult educatior

Upon reviewing some of the established approaches, we discover that only within narrow limits or when modified do they apply to adult education. We will now consider some new approaches and variations of those already considered that offer some hope of application. Some of these approaches are fragmentary, but may later be included within larger strategies, and others constitute distinct and separate methods.

Cross-cultural activities and studies

Many of the phenomena one encounters in conferences and journals that have multicultural dimensions provide information and may provide insights valuable for comparative education. Here are only a few examples:

1. Studies of behavior in different cultures. A very elaborate study being carried out in several countries is aimed at finding out how people use their work time and free time, and what choices they actually make when they are able to choose how to spend their time.

2. Studies and reports by psychiatrists who, for historical and other reasons, have traveled quite widely and worked in many countries, but who have kept in touch with each other. Note in particular that there are several journals devoted to cross-cultural problems as well as many articles that analyze data drawn from several cultures.

3. Studies of economic plans, based on the common language of mathematics and statistics.

4. Attempts to prepare people for exposure to new societies--military forces, political representatives, immigrants, international teams of experts, and so on.

Comparative approaches to different disciplines

It can be anticipated that comparative studies in adult education may profit considerably from comparative history, comparative law, comparative literature, comparative sociology, and so forth. It may be a useful strategy, from time to time, to bring together representatives from these disciplines to discover what parts of their theory and practice might be applied to comparative studies in education.

Comparative philosophy and religion

Considerable work has been done in both comparative philosophy and comparative religion. However, until the present, there has been little application of insights or methods. Yet it is probable that the efforts in these fields may be as applicable and meaningful as anything yet derived from history, economics, sociology, or psychiatry.

Planning

Because of the nature of this work, the new profession of educational planning is developing techniques and finding devices for comparing educational phenomena that may become extremely valuable for comparative studies.

Systems analysis and operations research

For a decade or more the application of systems analysis to comparative studies has been recommended. But the first major attempt to utilize its insights and methods in comparative studies was made by Philip Coombs and his colleagues at the International Institute for Educational Planning at UNESCO. One study was prepared for an international conference in 1968 and later published as a book entitled *The World Educational Crisis*. Systems analysis is restricted to the examining of data that can be quantified. While the omission

of other kinds of data can be serious, particularly if the omission is not recognized, the systems approach does give promise of one method that may be applied as part of a general strategy to check on other kinds of data and to derive questions for further study.

Application of simulation games

The use of learning materials that simulate reality in some form, such as socio-drama, psychodrama, role playing, and case study, is gaining recognition. People who are being trained to live and work in another culture are prepared for the shift by taking part in an experience in which some aspects of the host culture are dramatized or simulated. Attempts are now being made to study other societies and their educational systems comparatively by using well-designed simulation materials. In some cases these exercises are combined with the examination of large-scale computer-based models of other systems.

Comparative study of creative products

With appropriate methods, it may be quite possible to learn a good deal about an educational system from an examination of the arts, music, handcrafts, imaginative literature, films, and other creative products of the people concerned. Considerable work has been done in the comparative analysis of children's art, as well as in the examination of art in different cultures, for clues to personality study. These studies may yield hypotheses and methods for further evaluation.

Comparative study of the "graduates" of an educational system

A range of questions is now being asked in regard to those who have been students in adult education. For example, what kind of people take part in programs of adult education in the United States? Do people of a similar economic, social, or intellectual level take part in West Germany, Japan, or Russia? How do the graduates of such programs compare, and how do they differ? What might be learned about an educational system through the judgment and reflection of those who were students in that system? It is possible, through interviews and student essays, from examining diaries, biographies, autobiographies, and even novels and plays, that much useful material can be obtained. Such material can also be used to develop questions and hypotheses or as a check on data obtained in other ways--by systems analysis, for example. This method seems promising but much work is needed in collecting evidence and improving methods of comparing.

Innovation theory and cultural diffusion

Considerable work has been done in organizations of adult education concerning the adoption of innovations. Much interest has been aroused in the relative advantage of adopting methods or institutions from another country by a host country. Some examples of methods that have been adopted by some hosts and rejected by others include the following:

1. Mechanics Institutes originated in the United Kingdom and

spread to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.

2. Folk high schools, originating in Denmark, were adopted in other Scandinavian countries, and later, in modified form, in India and Africa and then in Holland and West Germany. Despite many attempts, however, they were not successfully transmitted to the United Kingdom, the United States or Canada.

3. University extension and extramural studies have spread considerably from England and the U.S. to many countries.

4. The Workers' Educational Association has spread from England through western and northern Europe to Ghana, Australia, and New Zealand. The WEA was not adopted in the United States, and its initiation in Canada, rapid at first, was resisted and halted.

5. Sokol was diffused to several countries in eastern Europe and, as an activity of immigrant groups, to Canada and the United States.

6. The Women's Institute first appearing in Canada and the Associated Countrywomen of the World is an organization that has spread to more than fifty countries from its headquarters in the United Kingdom.

7. Farm Radio Forum is the term used for education carried on by radio in India and in several countries in Africa. The idea of farm forum which originated in Canada markedly influenced a program for adult illiterates in Colombia. The organizational pattern of farm forum, applied under different names, such as "Listening Post," spread to the English-speaking territories of the Caribbean.

Around these examples some important questions can be raised. Why did these activities spread in some places and not in others? Have these adopted programs nourished or inhibited the development of indigenous educational activities? Much criticism of the international development projects of the western countries has been focused on the adoption of technological practices developed in the west. Even if the immediate results seem to be beneficial, many questions remain.

Cross-national studies

Another useful form of research is coming into greater use--cross-national studies. Such studies may not be strictly comparative--one could broadly survey adult education in two dissimilar countries and not even employ the same categories--or a cross-national enquiry may be designed for systematic comparison or to throw up hypotheses for later and more rigorous comparative investigation.

There are many advantages to cross-national studies. Cooperation and division of labor are usually found and the studies can be undertaken with very modest resources. They are excellent for training colleagues. Moreover many problems of adult education are cross-national, illiteracy to take one example, or how to cope with a harsh Arctic environment which affects men and women in the USSR,

Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. There has been considerable success in this field by educationists working in several countries of Eastern Europe and at least one such study contrasts the views about education in communities there and in communities in Canada and the United States. The minimum precondition for success in cross-national studies is to have at least one investigator or a team of researchers in each country represented in a position to take responsibility in their respective countries, and to reach agreement among the participants about the subject to be investigated, including definitions and categories, and in general, the methods to be followed. It is essential, as well, for the participants to meet periodically to exchange experiences and refine instruments and methods.

It is probable that this approach will be resorted to for many more kinds of enquiry.

The problem of selection

Any review of the above indicates a richness, a profusion even of method. But this opulence results in some difficult problems of selection.

When newcomers arrive on the scene of comparative studies, as did the educational planners about a decade ago, and as are arriving th adult educationists, they are almost overwhelmed by complexity and by the number of methodological paths that invite one but whose destination is far from clear. The newcomers are usually curious about, but don't wish to become involved in, methodological quarrel in the family of comparative education. Nor do they want to tread all of the slow-paced steps of evolution that have been or can be traced in that study. They tend to reject the notion that a single method can satisfy all needs and accept, almost as axiomatic, that combinations of modes will be required. This leads them quickly to ask about criteria to govern selection. Can these modes be reasonably culture-free? Can they reflect and encompass values? Can they be sufficiently flexible to accommodate many kinds of experience? Can they move towards precision without excluding everythin that cannot be quantified? Can they be utilized by mere fallible scholars or must they be so complicated that only a god, or a super man, or a supercomputer can cope?

In seeking such criteria, one can glance at other fields to see if patterns of action, or a model, might emerge. The field of health may offer some clues: here doctors and scientists have followed practices that bear a resemblance to comparative education In their observations, health scholars are obliged to look at whole systems and cultures, as well as the individual patient. In the study of the patient they are concerned about his health history, structure, as indicated by comparative measures of height and weight as well as by processes and interaction as indicated by temperature, blood pressure and blood chemistry; energy as indicated by heart action, the quality of self-control as indicated by respiration, as well as such measures as cost effectiveness, cost benefit, and so forth. One can build up interesting analogies with comparative education.

It is possible, as well, that criteria may be found through a more exacting study of total systems, or by examining such phenomena as cultural diffusion, or rigorously testing out hypotheses such as those of Havighurst, namely, that it is possible to obtain most of the data one needs by concentrating attention on a few key institutions in society, rather than attempting to comprehend complete systems. Others propose that criteria may be found by focusing on the performance and on the products and expression of the learner, through a careful examination of his biographies, journals, painting, crafts, and music. We are not lacking in exciting prospects for research, but we have not yet defined our strategies.

While much of our work should be designed to attain more precise modes of perceiving, ordering, analyzing, and comparing data, this should not result in shutting out other modes that may yield less numerical formulations but equal or greater understanding.

It is interesting to observe the goals of other comparativists: comparative religion, for example. Theirs are both more elementary and loftier aims. Comparative religionists, for the most part, do not anticipate changing much their own religious practices but have concentrated on an attempt to understand another faith and thus become more aware of the faiths that move mankind. The comparative artist seems rarely to have articulated his goals, but his starting point is to learn and utilize the language and forms of expression of the other artists, and he allows these perceptions and forms to sink deep into his consciousness where they may influence his own creative processes. The cultural anthropologist, particularly if he comes from a developing country, may be intent on understanding other systems and values in order to defend his own from cultural inundation. The comparative historian has usually attempted to live in the present, utilizing for analysis and testing the perspective of what is already known and has been experienced.

Despite the seeming contradiction, the comparative historian in actual practice resembles more the "futurist." Those who carry out "Delphic probes" and busy themselves inventing the future claim that they have perfected radical new techniques of analysis. But the actual modes of ordering data that they employ are very similar to those of the comparative historian, although they may put more emphasis on imagination.

Application

What can one say about application of comparative adult education? To answer this, one must consider goals.

Literally, thousands of people use some form of *comparing* in trying to understand themselves, their culture, their own educational system, a different people and educational system and what makes for differences. Most of these individuals are untrained in systematic comparative analysis, but most of them could improve their competence in such comparisons. Students who take courses in comparative studies almost invariably report that their reading, the movies or television they see, or the travel in which they participate all have richer meanings because of their enhanced sensitivity and the improvement of their analysis. However, what has been achieved in a few places could become widespread and occur in greater depth. A small but significant number of universities are adding these courses to their calendar and it is anticipated that this number will increase. But some of the work could be organized in undergraduate programs and much of it could be employed in continuing adult education activities.

One cannot report many examples where those making decisions in one country and facing the possible application of educational practices or models from another country either employ systematic

comparative methods or engage comparative educationists as consultants. Yet this is precisely the kind of function that a comparative educationist should undertake.

Nor has comparative studies been a feature of the preparation of many individuals who have gone from one culture to work or live in another. However, younger people in increasing numbers who have worked outside of their homeland, or who intend to do so, are registering for courses and undertaking research to improve their capacity for rational comparing.

Promising beginnings and next steps

Since we are reporting on a movement which, in any organized form is hardly a decade old, the results should encourage, not dismay. Courses are now offered in more than a dozen countries where there were none before, and those who have completed the courses report high interest and achievement. Goals are now better understood and suitable methodologies are at least being identified. Those adult educationists most responsible are in touch with each other and some simple forms of cooperation have been devised.

But, in the face of what there is to do, it constitutes a slender beginning.

Still, some of the next steps are clear.

First and foremost is clarification of terms, refining definitions, obtaining agreement, developing glossaries and taxonomies. This work must go on constantly, as rapidly as possible, albeit with the realization that adult education is growing, expanding, altering, deepening and terms and concepts will also change.

Organized ways must be found of monitoring research and activities that take place in several score languages.

It is essential to improve the kinds and qualities of reporting information so that data bases can be developed which make genuine comparing possible.

Modes of comparing have been identified but not all are equally useful. Some form of division of labor is needed so that most of the adult educationists or other scholars interested in this field may share in its development. An immediate step could be taken to test out a dozen or so of the modes reported above, test them out in several countries so that there can be cross-cultural analysis.

The efforts at the International Bureau of Education, efforts to improve definition and nomenclature and to distribute research abstracts from many countries should be supported.

Conclusion

When one begins to list the multitude of means for comparing educational systems and for obtaining a better understanding of ourselves, it is a little overwhelming. Some of the methods may not work very well, may not succeed with the kinds of data now accessible, or may be too costly or too clumsy, like using an elephant gun for a squirrel hunt. The complexity may defeat us. One can become intimidated by the multiplicity of methods. It would be possible to become like the professor of whom Benjamin Franklin wrote: "he was so learned that he could name a horse in nine languages but so ignorant that he bought a cow to ride on." Many of us have fallen into the trap of persuading others, or even ourselves, that some institution, technology, or method used in green pastures elsewhere is just what is needed. We sometimes have "given to others the advice that we can't use ourselves." Recently a writer was asking: "Can you imagine Moses or Jesus having brainstorming sessions to pound out the Ten Commandments or deciding what miracles should be performed?" But it is easy to imagine a self-appointed Canadian Moses proposing that his favorite method be utilized, whether it be effective in the host culture or not.

What, therefore, is needed? We need a great deal more practical demonstration of the approaches described above or of other approaches. Do these methods help us make meaningful comparisons? Can the necessary data be found? Do the methods yield results that can be replicated and results that seem to help us with our central questions?

In addition to our own research and field tests, we need to keep in touch with colleagues engaged in a similar quest. There is so much to be done and the more associates we can find for the work, the better. And, despite the need for inventing and refining an array of effective methods, the main need of all is, as Bereday put it, "never ceasing watchfulness to control one's own cultural or personal biases." But that's different from giving up or becoming paralyzed, lest we damage someone else with our ideas. Who knows, we might even stimulate him to go far beyond us.

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Betwixt and between: Insider-outsider research and its implications for International Comparative Education

Introduction

We live in volatile times when established orders are being dismantled, when millions of refugees have sought, and are still seeking, shelter in Continental Europe on a scale not witnessed since the end of the Second World War. It is also a time when, once again, increasing ethnocentrisms are on the rise and when borders are being re-erected rather than pulled down; when to some 'strangers' seem threatening while others seek to understand and welcome them. In such turbulent times, disciplined research in both lifelong learning and comparative education has significant contributions to make to the quality of education and to wider issues of equity, inclusivity and social justice.

In everyday language it is surprising how often we hear, read and refer to, 'insiders' and 'outsiders' on an almost daily basis. These words are part and parcel of our everyday consciousness. We speak of outsiders who are, or are not, welcome; outsider art, insider traders, the inner circle, the outer walls. Other terms, such as newcomers, strangers, migrants and refugees highlight similar sentiments. All have their own connotations and place in history. An example of such contradictions occurred during the Venice Biennale in 2015 when a contemporary artist who is Swiss, was sponsored by the Icelandic government to produce a showpiece in relation to the exhibition theme of 'Power' (ArtNews 27/5/2015). He, set out to convert an old Venetian Catholic Church, which had been empty for many years, into a 'Mosque', a first in such a 'Historic City'. In this instance, tensions arose between the global and the local, the old and the new, the newcomers and the established communities, and the powerful and powerless. But who were the outsiders and insiders here? Where were the boundaries and where were the shared spaces? It is increasingly apparent that in a complex world of shifting identities and competing economies there are clear tensions between those on the inside and those looking in from the outside; between those who want to, above all, hold on to their cultural identity and those who welcome the richness that other cultural communities can offer; those who seek to facilitate the shift from being an outsider to becoming an insider (Guo 2010).

Insider-outsider research, as discussed here, is concerned with individuals, or groups of individuals, who have experience of, or are moving into and out of different cultural communities and the challenges they face as researchers when accommodating cultural perspectives and ways of thinking other than their own. The underlying concepts of 'insideredness' and 'outsideredness'.therefore, focus on thought processes which enhance critical awareness and the creation of new knowledge and understanding. All compel researchers to examine their own subjectivity and shifting positions within their chosen research paradigm. However, it seems that earlier binary definitions of the outsider as detached and objective, and the insider as culturally-embedded and subjective, are challenged when set within an international research context which recognises increased mobilities and migration of people, ideas and diverse research positions. Individual and group identities are often multiple, flexible and permeable, less stable and less easy to draw on. More complex strategies are, therefore, needed to understand how such delineations might impact on research findings and the development of new knowledge.

This paper falls into three sections: the first part relates to the rationale for revisiting relatively old concepts; the second considers some theoretical perspectives which have influenced these debates and the third offers illustrative examples which highlight research dilemmas and complexities. It draws on the work of a group of researchers involved in the Thematic Forum *Revisiting Insider/Outsider Perspectives in International and Comparative Education* which was sponsored by the British Association for International Comparative Education (BAICE) and led by the University of Bristol and The Open University (2012-2015).

BAICE = British Association for International Comparative Education

Why revisit discussion about insiders and outsiders?

What do discussions about 'insiders' and 'outsiders' have to offer the comparative researcher in the contemporary contexts? There are many ways of answering these questions, albeit from very different perspectives and time frames which are cloaked in the different mantles of academic disciplines. Insider/outsider perspectives have been discussed, theorised and researched across many academic disciplines over several decades: in anthropology from the perspective of the observer studying different cultures; in sociology with regard to social groupings and class, the dynamics of power relationships and social mobility; in psychology with regard to group behaviour and interaction; in linguistics and intercultural studies in the context of second language acquisition and cultural integration; and in philosophy in terms of the individual, the self, phenomenology and reflexivity.

All these perspectives have left their mark on research theories, methodologies and methods those including those appropriate to international, comparative education. Here conflicts about 'insideredness' and 'outsideredness arose during the 1970s when qualitative case study research began to be seen in conflict with the positivist research example. Could those on the inside in small scale case study research - teachers in schools in other countries, for example, - be part of the comparative enterprise? Could those on the inside be as objective as those on the outside looking in? These may seem like old arguments but for many, particularly new researchers, these conflicts have not really been resolved.

There are other aspects to consider. As educationalists and researchers we may lament the fact that education has become a global commodity, often embedded within a range of power-related economic agendas. Policy-makers increasingly rely on large-scale *international* surveys such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) or TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) for comparison between one state and another; they seek 'evidence' to support *national* changes in education – often without regard to different cultural/ historical/linguistic contexts. Writers such as Crossley (2014) and challenge current funding and policy pre-occupations with large-scale surveys that compare attainment across countries in an aggregated, de-contextualised way. They also draw attention to the value of context specific studies which can do more to reveal the culturally determined links between discourse, pedagogy and practice. This was at the heart of comparative research in education because "global forces heighten the significance of the contextual sensitivities that comparative researchers have a particular responsibility to identify, discipline and advance in the future" (Crossley and Jarvis 2000, p. 407).

The aims of the BAICE-funded projects were to examine some of these questions. It was led by Michael Crossley, Elizabeth McNess of the University of Bristol and Lore Arthur, The Open University. The project involved a number of workshops, conference presentations, academic papers and finally an edited book with the same title (see McNess, E., Arthur L., and Crossley M, 2015; M.Crossley, L. Arthur and E. McNess, 2016). All three have had extensive experience researching other cultures, sometimes as insiders, sometimes as outsiders though usually somewhere in between. Arthur, for example, as a German living in the UK, has undertaken a numerous studies where her German background and language competence has usually been an advantage - but then not always. As a member of a European-wide higher education project involving 15 European countries and a variety of languages, the REFLEX study on graduate employment, she was at times an insider as well as an outsider, with shifting perceptions and understandings which led to the realization that these concepts are not juxtapositions, but like shifting sands, they change, adapt, mutate constantly (Arthur, 2007). Similarly, Elizabeth McNess, who was involved in the ENCOMPASS project, which looked at pupils' experience of schooling in England, France and Denmark (McNess 2006), involved researchers from all three countries who each wrote about their initial reactions when visiting project schools in a different national context. The result was illuminating, producing not only an informative outsider's perspective of a different national system, but also an insider's re-evaluation of those 'taken for granted' elements in the researcher's own national context.

Michael Crossley, meanwhile, with his North/South collaborative research has drawn upon post-colonial perspectives and critical theory to create more equitable and participatory approaches to comparative research that highlight local voice, as well as the increased recognition and inclusion of indigenous knowledge. Crossley and Vulliamy (1984) have written extensively about such dilemmas with reference to their own fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. They demonstrate the strengths of well grounded, multi-level case studies that combine both insider and outsider perspectives. They argue that this can facilitate research that is more sensitive to local context, while retaining systematic rigour and an important degree of detachment from the culture and world view being studied. Such work is seen as holding the potential for improvement in the impact of research upon policy and practice within diverse cultural contexts, and for stimulating local research capacity building in ways that do much to challenge traditional insider/outsider relationships (Barrett *et al*. 2011).

Some theoretical perspectives

In some ancient cultures the monstrous 'Other', such as the Chimaera, defines and makes clear the civilised self. In modern culture, the song "*Baby it's cold outside*" (Loesser 1944) seductively invites the listener to stay indoors where it is warm and welcoming. Being an insider can make one feel comfortable and ensure a sense of belonging. On the other hand, a person can be an insider, while feeling like an outsider. Differentiated groups from within the 'inner' circle can exercise power, sometimes beyond what can be expected: just as outsiders can be powerful oppressors - the strangers who are not really part of us. Some outsiders may just be travellers, newcomers, migrants or settlers trying hard to become part of the insider majority. As teachers and researchers we often assume that drawing learners inside the learning community is, indeed, a good thing. We aim to create a sense of safety and belonging, though this can also lead to the imposition of one set of values and norms over another.

The project drew on several, relatively well-known theoretical perspectivesm before moving into a more contemporary context. This sense of belonging, of wanting to be part of a community, has been explored by many scholars, including early social scientists such as Ferdinand Toennies (1855-1936) against the background of increasing modernity, industrialisation, urbanisation and isolation. Toennies theorised about *Gemeinschaft* (community) which offered intimacy and warmth, as opposed to *Gesellschaft* (society) which was seen as unwelcoming to outsiders. He argued, well over a hundred years ago, that modern society was caught in an irresistible process of disintegration. Its very progress was doomed. It was the community that would offer comfort, while the outside world was inevitably strange and somewhat hostile (Lindenfeld 1988)

The sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1928), also considered the role of the outsider from the perspective of the individual migrant in his seminal paper, 'The Stranger' (Simmel 1908). This was set in the context of a Germany where, by 1907, five per cent of its working population (12 million) were migrants (Bade 1983). The resulting fear of foreigners/outsiders became emotive and widespread, and this was coupled with the desire to preserve one's own cultural heritage or insiderness. Paradoxically perhaps, Simmel also explored the notion of the newcomer or wanderer who does not mind being an outsider. Indeed, his stranger is strong and self-sufficient. Simmel's sociology was informed by the dialectic approach which characterises the individual and society. He argued that there is no such thing as a harmonious group because any social relationship needs to include both harmony and conflict, attraction and repulsion, love and hatred:

> The stranger thus is not to be considered here in the usual sense of the term, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the man who comes today and stays tomorrow – the potential wanderer, so to speak, who, although he has gone no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going. (Simmel cited in Levine, 1971:143)

Simmel's understanding of the stranger is that of an objective outsider arguing that, because the stranger is not bound by roots and traditions, they can confront the group with a distinctly objective attitude, bringing with it a freedom to understand more clearly, without the filter of the cultural prejudices of the host community. This type of stranger, or outsider, is seen in a positive light, as the expert who sees things clearly and has much to contribute. The contemporary researcher, too, can experience that sense of being the knowledgeable outsider, the objective one, who can observe and perceive matters more clearly than a subjective insider. The methodological limitations and 'political' implications of such dualistic thinking underpin the significance of our renewed analysis and reconsideration.

Alfred Schuetz, (1899-1959) took an altogether different stance when considering the role of the individual outsider, the stranger. Schuetz was an Austrian migrant to the USA from Nazi Germany in 1938. This had a bearing on much of his writings. His equally seminal paper 'The Stranger' (1944) concerns an individual who tries to be at least tolerated by the insider group that s/he approaches. Insiders are viewed as the dominant group to which the newcomer, or stranger, tries to become accepted by seeking to gain cultural knowledge of the insider group. Such new knowledge may remain incoherent, inconsistent and lacking in clarity, but for members of the in-group it may offer sufficient coherence for allowing the stranger to be admitted.

This idea of a 'past', or history, is also important in terms of interpreting meaning and understanding when we look across cultures. It is noteworthy that the strangers of both Simmel and Schuetz perform a different function with regard to conflict within the group: Simmel's stranger observes conflict situations within the local group from the outside; while Schuetz's stranger is in conflict from within. A comparison between these two concepts shows that Simmel's stranger is credited with objectivity because the locals are seen to need the outsider perspective, while Schuetz's stranger needs to work hard to seek acceptance from within the new community in order to become an insider.

It is not difficult to see how these two opposing perspectives of the insider and outsider have relevance for the field of international and comparative education. Concepts such as objectivity and subjectivity are central to all research deliberations. In one sense we are all newcomers, strangers or outsiders though, as researchers, we are rarely entirely on one side or the other – and in practice, we are often somewhere in between. This tension is developed further by Schuetz (1945) through his concept of the 'homecomer' who is, simultaneously, both insider and outsider. The homecomer is someone who has been away for a prolonged period of time and is about to rejoin a group even though s/he may feel like an outsider to it. Homecomers expect to return to an environment of which they think they still have intimate knowledge - although the home environment may have changed. The Chinese have a nickname for such a returnee, 'sea turtle' (*hai-gui* in Mandarin), which refers to someone who was born on a shore but has been across the sea, and is now returning to that same shore (Gill 2010). This ambiguity - of being both inside and outside - affects many who have spent a prolonged period in a different culture and who experience a sense of not quite belonging in either culture. The following quotation, from an international student based in the UK, illustrates this perspective.

> I have got two sets of values: one is for here [the UK] and one is for China…I think they are just natural…I am grown-up here. When I went back to China, I just went back to being the same – who I was before I came here…but it [England] is not my place. I am a guest and the guest is always less powerful. (Gu, Schweisfurth and Day, 2010:17)

This is important because it raises the relative power of insiders and outsiders, which can have profound effects on all involved in the research process. It is interesting to note that, in this situation, the student sees himself/herself as less powerful as an outsider because of his/her status as a 'guest'.

The American sociologist Robert Merton (1972) examined the insider/outsider concept, not from the perspective of the individual, but from that of social groupings such as suppressed black communities in a predominantly white American society. He argued that researchers should look at power relationships beyond their own organisations and their own contexts; being an insider does not necessarily mean the same as being a member of the community being researched. Merton went on to say that in structural terms, we are all insiders and outsiders, members of some groups and, sometimes, not of others. He wrote about distrust between social groupings and of extreme insiderism. He argued that this can lead to a mistaken assumption that, for example, only black scholars can understand black issues, or only women can understand women's issues. Following this logic, the outsider would be characterised as having a structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups. This can set up essentialist views of one group being superior to the other, or some knowledge being more relevant or valuable than others. Merton argues that there is no need to be Caesar in order to understand Caesar though, without a detailed understanding of the history and cultural underpinning of a group, outsiders may be distracted by what they see as different and so focus on certain aspects, such as collectivism or individualism, without real depth of analysis or deep understanding. Researchers, and policy makers, beware!

Sociologically, of course, we might consider that we are all both insiders and outsiders: members of some groups and not of others by reason of gender, language, cultural/professional background, nationality, ethnicity and age, adding to the fluidity of such terms. Soudien (2009) takes a different stance when explores the concepts of insider and outsiderness within the two dominant critiques of globalisation, that is, the 'delinkers' who stand outside globalisation and its educational cultures, as opposed to the 'subverters', who call for the reform of structures from within. With reference to the developing world and the developed world, he links the term 'outsiderness' to rationality and individualism, the 'white' hegemony, on the one hand, and to power and oppression within globalisation discourses on the other. However, such polarisation, in Soudien's view, does not reflect the realities of the gap, the third space, the in-between space which is a feature of everyday life. The third space is neither inside nor outside but pivots across the difference of being outside and inside. The old and the new can live side by side. Different cultural traditions can be accommodated with the more powerful discourses of the new.

McNess et al (2015) argue that if we move beyond the bipolar and essentialist constructs of insider/outsiderness we must acknowledge the space and tensions between. Such tensions are part of multiple cultures, ideas and belief systems which make the creation of new understandings and interpretations possible. Multiple identities can play out differently in different situations. Moreover, we all have past histories and what Gadamer (2012) refers to as 'prejudices' or pre-judgement, creating a 'historically-effected consciousness' (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein)*, which Gadamer sees as a positive attribute. It is through our historically-effected consciousness that we understand and interpret the world. For Gadamer, the past has a truly pervasive power in the phenomenon of understanding. The past cannot be restricted to merely supplying the texts or events that make up the objects of interpretation, but it is what creates our horizon (*Horizont*) of understanding. Thus Gadamer develops a concept of understanding that takes the interpreter's present participation in history into account.

In a similar vein, the cultural theorist, Bhabha (1994) draws attention to a 'Third Space' which can be seen as between the insider and outsider. Communication between the two requires the 'production of meaning' which relies, not only on a general understanding of the use of language, but an understanding of the 'performance' of language in a particular context, which might not be fully understood on either side. This draws into the discussion the role of language in mediating meaning. As outsiders we need to be able to understand and interpret, not only what is said in a literal sense, but also the underlying meaning of historically and culturally-embedded discourse. There is a growing body of literature from cultural and activity theorists, and others, which argues that, in the process of intercultural communication, there is a third perspective which is constructed when the insider and outsider meet. This liminal space of in-betweeness can be an area of hostility but also one of great creativity, mutual understanding and new wisdom. Summing up these debates, Hellawell (2006) maintains, that are then subtly varying shades of 'insiderism' and 'outsiderism'. The important point has to do with empathy, trying to understand the other person, or the other context, rather than closeness or distance. Moreover, it can sometimes become apparent that the same researcher can slide along more than one insider-outsider continuum and in both directions during the research process.

Critiques, ambiguities and diversity

Such theoretical considerations were outlined the first project workshop. Almost all participants were actively involved, or had been at some time, with international comparative research. Many were bi/or multi-cultural, often speaking several languages. Others had visited the country under investigation without knowing much about cultural differences, customs and expectations which caused pitfalls of their own. All used as the starting point for their discussion the insider-outsider concept – all though not all very comfortable with its implied dualism. Robinson-Pant (2016) indeed was concerned about essentialism provoked by such discussions. Like other dualisms, such concepts can be seen to close down rather than open up understanding, pushing us into categories with a tendency to polarise people's identities. Others saw the insider-outsider spectrum as an *entry point* but not an *end point* for further theorisation. The argument is that in the social relations there are no insiders and outsiders, only those of social construction. The use of binary oppositions like 'outsiders' and 'insiders' , 'other' and self, 'them and us' can be interpreted as a socio-cultural expression of social relations that privilege one half of the binary over the other. One researcher (Colin, 2016) described her dilemmas the following way:

> "Though I am American, the Mauritian context was very familiar to me because I had lived in Mauritius from time to time for more than twenty years – first as a student, then later as a researcher, teacher trainer and spouse to a Mauritian national. Thus, as a returning researcher with extensive insider and outsider understanding, I had to make conscious choices about portraying myself as an insider or outsider according to Mauritian social hierarchies. For example, I knew that if I spoke English with the government officials they would interpret it as a sign that I was well educated and a professional social scientist. In contrast, with teachers I chose to be a participant observer and, as such, felt that I should act as 'local' as possible: speaking only Mauritian Creole and discussing my personal and family history." (in Savides et.al, pg.119)

Using a participatory approach in Keyna, - another researcher who is white and British and thus did not want to appear as the 'outsider looking in' – using participatory research methods, she wanted to achieve a shift in the power dynamics by getting the insider participants to design the interview questions and the form of interviews to be conducted themselves. Much of the existing literature Milligan (2016) argues, focuses on how researchers see themselves in the research process. But it is a balancing act between the positioning of the researcher and those to be researched. By referring to Merton' she finds the insider-outsider not entirely satisfactory. She is white, young, a woman, an adult, a teacher, a mother, an English-speaker, a researcher, an academic, she argues. Such multiple positions defy either-orisms; they have their own power dynamics within the comparative research process of which the researcher must be aware.

McCafferty (2016) has undertaken research in Gypsy and Traveller communities within the UK where she, as an outsider, had considerable difficulties gaining access to the community. In the end, she only succeeded with the help of an insider, a fellow traveller on whom she had to increasingly rely. In due course, however, she was able to enter what Bhaba (1974) describes as the 'third space'. Her dilemma was that the more she became a kind of semi-insider, that is accepted and trusted, the more she was drawn into the role of advocacy, taking up issues with authorities, for example, rather than tend to her initial research plan. Her position as the outsider had become increasingly blurred and difficult to maintain as a researcher.

Some others involved in the project found that rather using terms 'insider-outsider' developed other concepts such as 'alongsider' (Wickins, 2016). As the research process developed the relationship between the researcher and participants changed. He used the metaphor of two ships sailing side by side in stormy waters, both are affected by the same circumstances but the researcher retains his own identity and perspective

Salter-Dvorak (2016) in her small scale detailed analysis involving only two postgraduate students at her UK university, one from China and the other from Iran, found it more satisfactory use the metaphor 'frontstage, backstage' as an analytical lens. In an ritualised institutional setting, she argued, those in the front of the stage behave differently from those at the back, when drop their front.

Conclusion

In this Insider-Outsider project those involved were not trying to develop new theoretical perspectives but to raise awareness about methodological complexities and sensitivities in the process itself. But it was argued that insider-outsider perspectives within international comparative research should embrace the following considerations:

- recognition of boundaries and third spaces;
- positionality and perspectives;
- accommodation and rejection;
- time, contexts, distances and localities;
- power relationships;
- cultural, linguistic, historical, knowledge
- epistemologies and ontology.

Being an insider or outsider, McNess et al (2015) argue, has much to do with our own constantly evolving lives, academic scholarship, previous experiences, and prior knowledge of the context to be researched; and how we each perceive the world, and how we ethically interpret what we see and experience. A key word here, according to Hellawell (2006), is 'empathy'; this means, the capacity to recognise and share thoughts or feelings that are being experienced by others. International comparativists often aim to build bridges, to mediate between different cultural communities, between those on the inside and those outside – and to construct intercultural meaning. The researcher, as the mediator of meaning, seeks a new body of ethical directiveness fitted for our contemporary world. In this, mutual understanding and shared meaning are important. Bhabha (1994) takes this a stage further by arguing that it is by moving through the 'third space' of intercultural dialogue, beyond the concepts of the insider and the outsider, that we can produce new meaning that does not result in 'merging or mixing' but mutally enriches understanding. Certainly, all researchers need to come to terms with their own position within the research process and engage with a diversity of expectations and perspectives – many of which may be fragmented, imaginary, or even contradictory and divisive.

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The development of students' employability in Higher Education: a comparative perspective on universities' approaches at European level[1]

Abstract

The problem of graduates' transitions (Otto, Atzmüller, Berthet, Bifulco, Bonvi, 2015) from higher education to labour market has become increasingly relevant in last years for the field of adult education. In fact, transition to work represents not just the beginning of professional career, but it involves the entrance into adulthood as well (Eurofound, 2014). Higher education systems have been starting discussing this topic, focusing on the most effective educational pathways and tools to support transitions to work. In this sense, the category of employability (Yorke, 2006; Harvey, 2003; Erabaddage, Shukri, Khatibi, 2015; Guilbert, Bernaud, Gouvernet, Rossier, 2016) has been developed in order to deal with this challenge: as a matter of fact, it aims at supporting the development of capabilities (Stephenson, Yorke, 1998, Nussbaum, 2011) for career, and for the whole life, to face the multiple transformations it may occurs as well. The educational process, which wants to develop students both as future workers and citizens (Dewey, 1916; Nussbaum, 2011), represents the base of many national and international policies at higher education level (Teichler, 2013; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

In this framework, universities have implemented different models and practices for supporting students' employability within curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (Yorke, Knight, 2006; AHECS, 2014). After a presentation of the higher education systems in Italy and Ireland, the paper intends to present the state of the art of a comparative research project (Bereday, 1972; Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014) about European universities' strategies for developing the young adults' employability skills and capabilities. The results of the project could provide an overview that range over many approaches: Career Service (Dey, Cruzvergara, 2014) and Career Development learning (Watts, 2006), activities embedded in the curriculum and work-related experiences (Moreland, 2005; Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaac, Lawton, 2012) are just some examples of a broad spectrum of solution for the development students' employability in higher education.

Introduction

The category of employability is relatively new to the pedagogical and educational studies. It is detectable in the Anglo-Saxon context (Robbins, 1963) where, right from the beginning of the 1960's began to raise the issue of the

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[1] The paper is the result of joint work in the common parts of *Planning the Index, Ideas of Paper, Abstract* and *Bibliography*. However, paragraph *Introduction* and *Conclusions* can be attributed to Vanna Boffo, paragraph *Employability in Higher Education: curriculum, Career Service, teaching and learning* to Gaia Gioli and paragraphs *The Context and the Methodology of the Research* and *The Research Project: a Comparison between Italy and Ireland* to Carlo Terzaroli.

relationship between Higher Education and the world of work (Harvey, 2003). Currently in Italy, this ratio is at the centre of the debate on the role of the University in a developed country.

The most important theme that represents the basis of the comparative study, which is here presented, is, in fact, just the sense and meaning of the University of the future. We could also call it the problem of Higher Education in a world that changes in quick succession (Nussbaum, 1999, 2010, 2011).

The relationship between the category of Employability, the contexts of Teaching and Learning and the Services that are beside the university programs is central to the comprehension of the role of learning in Higher Education for the future. Reflecting on the context within which the research is allocated is an imperative for the scholars of the educational action. Indeed, from this perspective, it should be paid attention to the following reflection.

What does the of *employability* development of university students mean? The main question deals with academic careers, curricula and interdisciplinarity, with work-related and work-based didactics, and student services: it appears a clear framework within which is located the comparative research carried out in two contexts European universities, the Italian and the Irish ones.

What we would like to highlight is the ability to bring out in the first place the centrality of a category so pervasive and yet so neglected, at least in Italy; secondly, we think it is important to understand the reasons of the centrality of the employability for a different configuration of the curricular paths. Finally, we emphasize how career services can foster the construction of a linkage with the world of work that lies in the DNA of university training.

Comparison helps us to learn from the differences as well as to understand the diversities from the past which can allow a combination between the role of university, that trains and transmits knowledge, with the role of university, that can innovate and knows how to be part of a market that changes and transforms itself rapidly and unavoidably.

Indeed, we know that the social, cultural, educational and training differences are consistent between the two countries, as we also know that the curricular paths are strongly supported by the transition to the labour market, in one case, strongly anchored to the development of tradition basic knowledge, in another. What interests us is to create new way of learning that transforms the current model of University and transfer of knowledge in a very innovative model that can offer to our countries the best chances for the future economic, social and cultural development.

The research focuses on the development of knowledge and innovation. In this sense, it explores an original concept of education that reveals an intersection between innovative curricula, career services and the relationship with a labour market able to receive transformations creating new alliances with universities. On one side, Ireland seems to be already part of this new paradigm that concerns the challenge of future education; Italy looks blocked due to the inability to renovate its university system on the other side. Nevertheless, we can stress the strategic importance of Higher education for the democratic development of countries, continents and the whole world as well (Nussbaum, 2011).

To conclude, this paper focuses on the topic of knowledge construction and, in this context, it indicates a new training concept that goes precisely to the winning combination of innovative curricula, career services and labour market which is ready to receive the change and to create an agreement of solid connection with the context of higher education.

If, on the one hand, Ireland seems to adhere to this paradigm of an education for the future, on the other hand Italy seems to suffer from an inability to renewal at a university level. In any case, we can see how the centrality of the University is important for the democratic development of a country, a continent and of the world (Nussbaum, 2011).

1 - Employability in Higher Education: curriculum, Career Service, teaching and learning

Multiple studies have been developed in the last six decades on the topic of employability starting from the "Robbins report" (Robbins, 1963) which identified employability as one of the main goals of Higher Education institutions. From that moment on, many researchers tried to identify one common definition that could be generalizable and adaptable at all contexts, yet without success (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Knight & Yorke, 2002; Pool &Sewell, 2007; Confederation of British Industry – CBI, 2009). For example, it can be re-read through the lens of the capability approach (Sen), the lifecycle approach (Günter & Markowitsch, 2010), entrepreneurship (Hall, 1996) or higher education (Yorke, 2006), as a "multi-dimensional concept" (Lees, 2002: 2).

As a consequence, the definitions of employability can be organized in two main groups. The first one relates to the abilities of students to get, retain and develop themselves within a job after the final thesis (i.e. Hillage & Pollard, 1998: 3). The second one is linked with the assets – skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities - that students can acquire in order to be employable in the long-term.

The distance between the two groups of definitions is remarkable. As a matter of fact, in the first definition the attention to the employability is soft-skill based and the choice about the professional career is postponed after the completion of the higher education studies. Yet according to the second definition, the factors that a young person can equip him/herself with are just one element of all the existing ones, since external factors such as the higher education system, the labour market, social and cultural norms, economic situation of the region can deeply affect the actual employment of a graduate (Harvey, 2000; Pegg et al., 2012: 7).

The second approach to the category of employability had better fate since most of the following researchers opted for the coexistence of intrinsic factors that can enhance the employability potential of individuals and external factors that impact on employment. This much more realistic approach can be better explained by many important employability models.

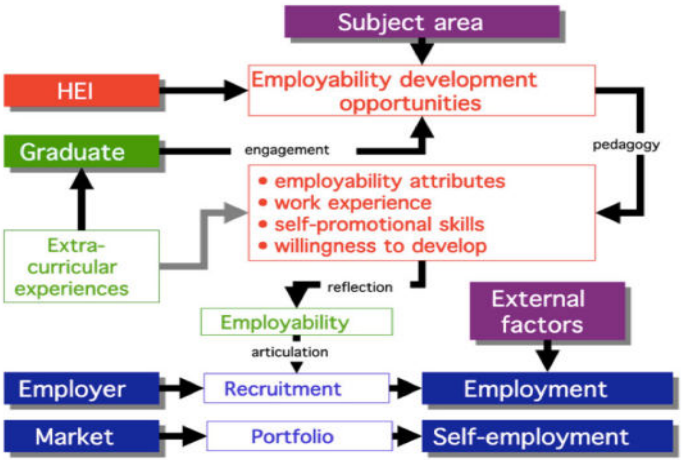
Among the others, we can recall the graduate employability model (Fig. 1) centred on the employability development opportunities offered by higher education institutions and by extracurricular activities such as the work experience. This complex model is based on considering employability as a lifelong learning process that involves the categories of engagement, pedagogy, self-reflection and articulation.

Yet it is with the Higher Education Academy definitions that the concept of employability becomes a pedagogical-oriented category and a vital and integral asset for the Higher Education

As a matter of fact, from the Higher Education Academy the USEM model

(Table 1 and Fig. 2) followed the Graduate employability model in order to «attempt to put thinking about employability on a more scientific basis, partly because of the need to appeal to academic staff on their own terms by referring to research evidence and theory» (Knight & Yorke, 2004: 37).

Figure 1 - Graduate employability model



Source: Harvey L. (2002: 4)

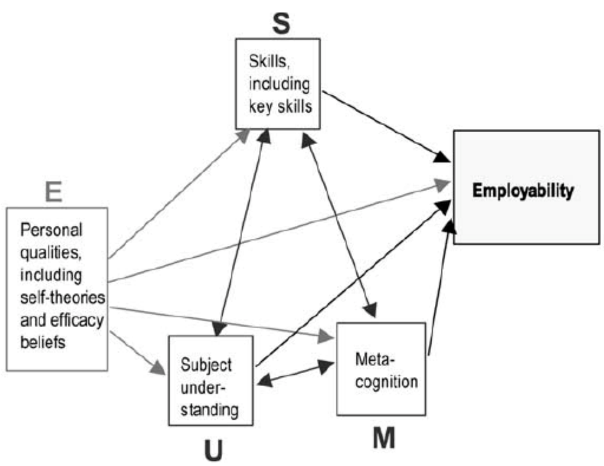
The USEM model was developed by Yorke and Knight in 2004 and refers to employability as a being influenced by «four broad and inter-related elements»:

Table 1- The USEM account of employability

Element	**Explanation**
Understanding	Propositional knowledge in the form of mastery of the subject matter of the degree
Skillful practice	What are often called 'generic skills' as well as subject-specific skills. These can be characterized as procedural knowledge.
Efficacy beliefs	Belief that one generally can make some impact on situations and events. This dispositional element can be loosely interpreted to refer to other aspects of personality.
Metacognition	Awareness of what one knows and can do, and how one learns more.

Source: Yorke P. & Knight M. (2004) Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education, p. 38.

Figure 2 - USEM model



Source: Yorke & Knight, 2005, *Embedding Employability into the curriculum*, p. 4.

The USEM model, thought it was created in order to develop a common taxonomy, in a rather general sense, it became one of the most known employability models. Indeed it draws attention not only on skills, yet on a set of abilities that are greatly important in the development of human being and in human learning; in addiction it does not involve directly the category of learning because it can be addressed as a form of work because «when the learning in question is complex and varied […], then the similarities between learning and work are pronounced. Our argument is that similar processes are likely to drive success in higher education and, with some reservations, in the workplace» (Yorke & Knight 2004: 41). As a matter of fact, we can affirm that the USEM model helped researchers to pay attention to the work-related practices.

Another model was developed after the USEM. It is the DOTS model that was created by Watts (2006) and is based on four main pillars that make the model very simple and elegant and thus persistent and popular. They are:

- Self awareness
- Option awareness
- Decision learning
- Transition learning

In 2007 Pool and Sewell proposed a new model, i.e. the CareerEDGE framework, in order to overcome the limits of the previous models and introduce a significant innovation on the employability studies. The model, summarizing over five decades of studies, clearly identifies five skills categories that could bring to employability, and thus to the labour market, namely: career development learning, work and life experience, degree subject knowledge and understanding, generic skills and emotional intelligence. The new element introduced by the CareerEDGE model is the emotional intelligence that is here concerns with self-reflection and consciousness, with the ability to take care of the inner self, of personal emotions and of the others'.

In other words, we can affirm that the model focuses on the human being as individual and in this context, it leads the reader in the reflection on the skills, capabilities and knowledge that can foster a smooth transition from the higher education context to the labour market.

From a certain point of view, it may be criticized that the model does not pay attention to the elements that are external to the subject and that can support the study-work transition, i.e. the social and environmental conditions. At the same time nor does it refer to combination of innovative curricula, career service, learning and teaching environments.

It is settled that the educational model, that can enhance the match between the labour demand and offer through the category of employability, assumes that universities and higher education, in general, are at the center of the relationship with the labour market and the whole civil society. At the same way there are the university curricula.

Referring to the Yorke's definition of curricula, we can find out that there is a wide variety of types in which employability is implicitly or explicitly sustained because «not one size fits all» (2006: 13-14) and because, as Harvey declared in 2002:

«The cultural change in higher education has seen a shift towards central support services working with programme staff to help develop attributes as part of the curriculum and maximise reflection on an array of different work experiences. Selfpromotion and career management is no longer a separate activity but increasingly integrated into the programme and linked to career planning and recording achievement. This is important as graduates must be able to do more than just sell themselves; they have to be able to perform in a job once they are recruited. Conversely, potentially good performers also need the skills to get a job in the first place. Emphasis is also being placed on learning to learn, through programmes, with a shift in pedagogy from 'knowing what' to 'knowing how to find out', and through reflecting on work experience». (Harvey et al., 2002: x)

As a consequence, it becomes clear that it is not possible to talk and reflect on employability from a scientific point of view without considering how curricula are built up. This is a result of the institutional and political sensitivity towards the concept of students employability and the importance of a strategical vision for its implementation.

Nonetheless it is recognized that, in order to develop the main soft skills for employability, such as «reflection and articulation, willingness to learning and continue learning, self-promotional or job getting skills and employability attribute development» (Yorke & Knight, 2003) there are a lot of possibilities among which the 'ideal type' of curricula emerge. They are:

- Employability through the whole curriculum
- Employability in the core curriculum
- Work-based or work-related learning incorporated as one or more components within the curriculum
- Employability-related module(s) within the curriculum
- Work-based or work-related learning in parallel with the curriculum (Yorke, 2004).

All these models reflect the interest and the attention that Anglosaxon scholars have been paying since the beginning of the 20th millennium to the urgency of the employability development issue.

2 - The Context and the Methodology of the Research

According to the theoretical categories presented above, the following paragraph deals with the structure of the research project. It aims to understand the pedagogical dimension of Higher Education policies for employability (Harvey, 1999; Yorke, 2006). As a matter of fact, Higher Education has been involved since 1999, in the well-known process of transformation called *The Bologna Process*[2]: in specific terms, it represents

[2] «The *Bologna Process,* launched with the Bologna Declaration, of 1999, is one of the main voluntary processes at European level, as it is nowadays implemented in 48 states, which define the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). […] The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is the result of the political will of 48 countries, which, step by step during the last eighteen years, built an area using common tools. These 48 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values – such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent students unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. Through this process, countries, institutions and stakeholders of the European area continuously adapt their higher education systems making them more compatible and strengthening their quality assurance mechanisms. For all these countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability» www.ehea.info (November 2016).

> «a collective effort of public authorities, universities, teachers and students, together with stakeholder associations, employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations, and institutions, including the European Commission [to also support] the modernisation of education and training systems to make sure these meet the needs of a changing labour market» (European Commission, 2016).

Moreover, policy makers highlighted some key priorities for Higher Education during the Yerevan Bologna Process meeting (2015):

- Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching;
- Fostering the employability of graduates throughout their working lives;
- Making our systems more inclusive;
- Implementing agreed structural reforms.

In this perspective, the research project follows this mainstream since it aims at supporting students' growth, from the personal and professional point of view, by the development of employability. That means that the category of employability could represent a link between Higher Education and society, through effective transitions from education to work (Eurofound, 2014). In fact, the youth unemployment rates in European Union express issues and challenges for young adults' transition towards the labour market and adulthood in general as well. That's why universities are transforming their traditional activity areas, focusing also on the so-called "third mission" (Frost, 2013; E3M Project, 2012).

The research project assumes this macro development as the framework for a comparative analysis. It aims to glance at the pedagogical and formative values of Higher Education policies for bolstering transitions from university to work. The pedagogical background is adult education and work pedagogy, as research fields that investigates adults' transformations within life contexts (Boffo, Torlone, Vieira, 2015). In this sense, the project intends to understand young adults' transitions (Harvey, 2003) and to provide some evidences about the impact of employability activities (within the curriculum or within Career Services) on individual formative processes.

According to that, it focuses on the policy level of the employability development in Higher Education (Bereday, 1972). Starting from a macro context analysis, it aims to highlight policies at mega level of institutions (Bray, 2005), to understand the characteristics of university measures concerning students' transitions to work. Since «one of the principal aims of comparative education is to 'learn lessons' from the experience 'elsewhere'» (Phillips, 2006, p. 313), the research intends to support well-informed and evidence-based policy making (Federighi, 2011)

The comparison between Italy and Ireland started with a collaboration within the European project ESRALE[3] between the University of Florence (Italy) and Dublin City University[4]. The relationship between the two institutions provided opportunities for gathering data by literature review, policy documents collection, but also through field visits and interviews. Following this previous positive

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3 More information on the ESRALE project - European Studies and Research in Adult Learning and Education (540117-LLP-1-2013-1-DE-ERASMUS- EQMC) can be found at https://www.esrale.org/ (November 2016).

4 The research project is coordinated by Prof. Vanna Boffo, President's Delegate for Job Placement at the University of Florence, within the Department of Education and Psychology, in cooperation with Gaia Gioli (Post-doc) and Carlo Terzaroli (Doctoral student).

experience, the PRIN EMP&Co. project[5] helped scholars to collect other interesting data on the relationship among Higher Education policies, curricula and the construction of employability in young graduates.

The present project is based on the experience of the University of Florence's Career Service Project, whose model was developed by the Research Group lead by Prof. Vanna Boffo as Rector's Delegate for Job Placement of the University of Florence since 2015. Concerning Higher Education policies for employability, it focuses on the investigation of Career Service models for the development of skills and capabilities (Stephenson, 1998; Bennett, Dunne, Carré, 2000). The institutional point of view has been assumed as the priority, since it represents the way through which universities can support students facing the transition to the labour market.

The comparative project is based on a methodological approach that refers on multiple scholars in adult and higher education (Bereday, 1972; Charters, 1992; Bray, 2005; Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014). It is based on the model developed by Phillips (Phillips, 2006; Slowey, Schuetze, 2012; Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014) and re-elaborated on the own perspective of the research unit as showed in Figure 3.

The structure of the inquiry, following the Phillips's approach that develops Bereday's model, starts from a first stage in which the research question emerges from the conceptualisation of key dimensions (in this case, the development of employability in Higher Education and Career Service models). The second stage comprises «detailed description of educational phenomena in the countries to investigated» (Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 118). The third stage concerns the attempt to highlight differences and similarities of the phenomena through «conceptual labels» (Mortari, 2012, p. 153) elaborated from the data collected. The fourth stage involves explanation of factors and causes through hypotheses: «'Given that what we can observe differences in terms of *x*, between *a* and *b* in the context of *y*, what might explain those differences/similarities?'» (Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 118). The fifth and last stage intends to evaluate the applicability of results to different contexts, to suggest institutions and policy makers how to improve the effectiveness of specific measures. In this sense, the aim is to highlight "what works" to support institutional learning, policy learning and policy borrowing (Federighi, 2011; Slavin, 2002) at Higher Education level.

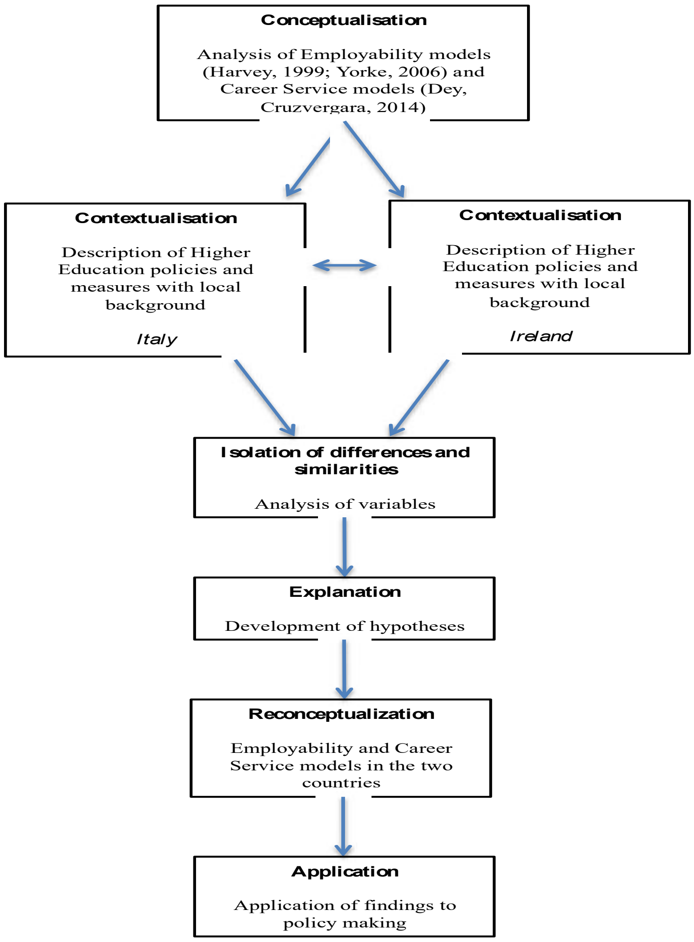
According to the well-known multilevel framework for comparative analysis elaborated by Bray and Thomas (Bray, 2005), the topic is analysed at state level, focusing on higher education policies for bolstering students' development of employability skills: it means that the target group is obviously young adults in transitions.

In this perspective, the comparative research refers to an explanatory approach that wants to generate new hypotheses or research pathways and to explore new potentials for adult education research (Phillips, 2006, p. 306) In such case, comparative analysis can't refer only to gathering data, but it needs to investigate the implicit and explicit understandings of the assumed concepts:

[5] The PRIN EMP&Co. project is guided by Prof. Vanna Boffo as University of Florence's head scientist of the Scientific Research Programmes of Great National Interest (PRIN2012LATR9N). It has developed a qualitative longitudinal study on University-work transitions in the period 2014-2017. For more information see www.empecoprin.it.

starting from the conceptualization level, it is crucial to fix the dimension of meanings (Phillips, Schweisfurth, 2014) (Fig. 3). In order to examine that, the research is based on an ecological paradigm (Mortari, 2012) that aims to observe the phenomenon in an evolutionary perspective, attentive to the relationship between the object and the whole context. That's why the project assumes qualitative methods, since they better inspect the plurality and complexity of meanings involved through an interpretative process (Denzin, Lincoln, 1998). Qualitative research involves multiple methodologies and research practices, considering that it is used in many disciplines.

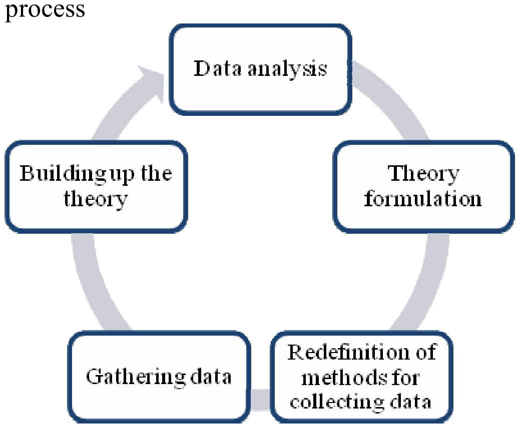
Figure 3 - Structure of comparative inquiry



Source: own elaboration from Phillips and Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 119.

According to that, the inquiry assumed the method of grounded theory as an approach able to generate theories by comparative analysis (Glaser, Strauss, 2006). The theory, based on data, is able to use systematically a set of procedures that produces «an inductive method of theory development» (Glaser, Strauss, 2006, p. 114). In particular, it consists in a circular process of collecting data, analysis and theory elaboration that reveals the steps of the interpretation.

Figure 4 - Grounded Theory process



Source: own translation from Mortari, 2012, p. 150.

The structure of the methodology used for the comparative inquiry suggests to deeply reflecting on techniques for gathering data. Since the field of adult education studies for employability and Career Service is still not so widespread, it has been chosen to adopt document analysis (not least for practical reasons of distance) for a glance at policies and practices at Higher Education level in Italy and Ireland. Beside that, semi-structured interview represents the principal procedure through which collecting data that could reveal the shallow and deep understanding of the conceptual dimensions in the two countries.

The questionnaire, elaborated for semi-structured interviews with Heads of Career Service, involves five strategic dimensions of Higher Education policies for employability:

- Institutional strategy for students' and graduates' employability;
- Career Service organization;
- Relationship among University and Labour Market;
- Relationship between Employability and Curriculum;
- Future challenges and perspectives for the development of students' employability.

Next paragraph turns to the specific elements of the research phases, basing on the theoretical and methodological framework presented above in the specific context of Italian and Irish universities.

3. The Research Project: a Comparison between Italy and Ireland

The following paragraph analyses the current state of the research project about Higher Education policies for employability in Italian and Irish universities. The background of employability studies (Harvey, 2003; Yorke, 2006) describes the main elements for the inquiry. Since the project is not concluded yet, the following statements represent just some mid-term considerations for re-projecting the whole process (Glaser, Strauss, 2006).

Contextualisation: Youth Labour Market in Italy and Ireland

According to the theoretical framework presented in the second paragraph, the research is going to deepen the contextualisation phase. Before collecting data through in-depth interviews, it seems important to analyse the current situation of the specific circumstances in which the two countries are involved. Since the aims of the study concerns transitions from higher education to work, the process examines youth labour market in Italy and Ireland. In particular, the analytical data is taken from the KOF Youth Labour Market Index (KOF YLMI) (Renold, Bolli, Egg, Pusterla, 2014)[6], which allows comparing different elements across countries (and group of countries).

The basic idea of the tool is inspired from the Global Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum that presents a set of indicators to compare national situations[7]. Four categories and twelve indicators compose it:

Activity State:

1. Unemployment Rate
2. Relaxed Unemployment Rate
3. Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training Rate (NEET Rate)

Working Conditions:

4. Temporary Contract Workers Rate
5. Involuntary Part-Time Workers Rate
6. Atypical Working Hours Rate
7. In Work at Risk of Poverty Rate
8. Vulnerable Employment Rate

Education:

9. Formal Education and Training Rate
10. Skills Mismatch Rate

Transition Smoothness:

11. Relative Unemployment Ratio
12. Long-Term Unemployment Rate

The KOF YLMI tool provides the opportunity to compare up to four countries and regions, following the development of youth labour market situation over time. In this case, we chose two countries (Italy and Ireland) and two regions (the 28 European countries and OECD countries) to glance at the general tendencies of the context in which they are involved. The data refers to 2014, as the most recent cohort of available data.

The Figure 5 illustrates the information about youth labour market concerning the different categories and indicators. The dark blue line, that represents Italy, shows some issues especially concerning activity state (unemployment rate, relaxed unemployment rate, NEET rate and long-term unemployment rate) and working conditions (Involuntary part-time workers rate) in respect to the average rates at European level. On the other side, the light blue line, that exemplifies Ireland, is in line with European countries for the majority of indicators: we can emphasize good values for temporary workers rate and for people in work at risk of poverty rate, that could suggest a certain stability of working conditions; moreover, it shows a negative value for the skills mismatch[8] rate, instead of Italy

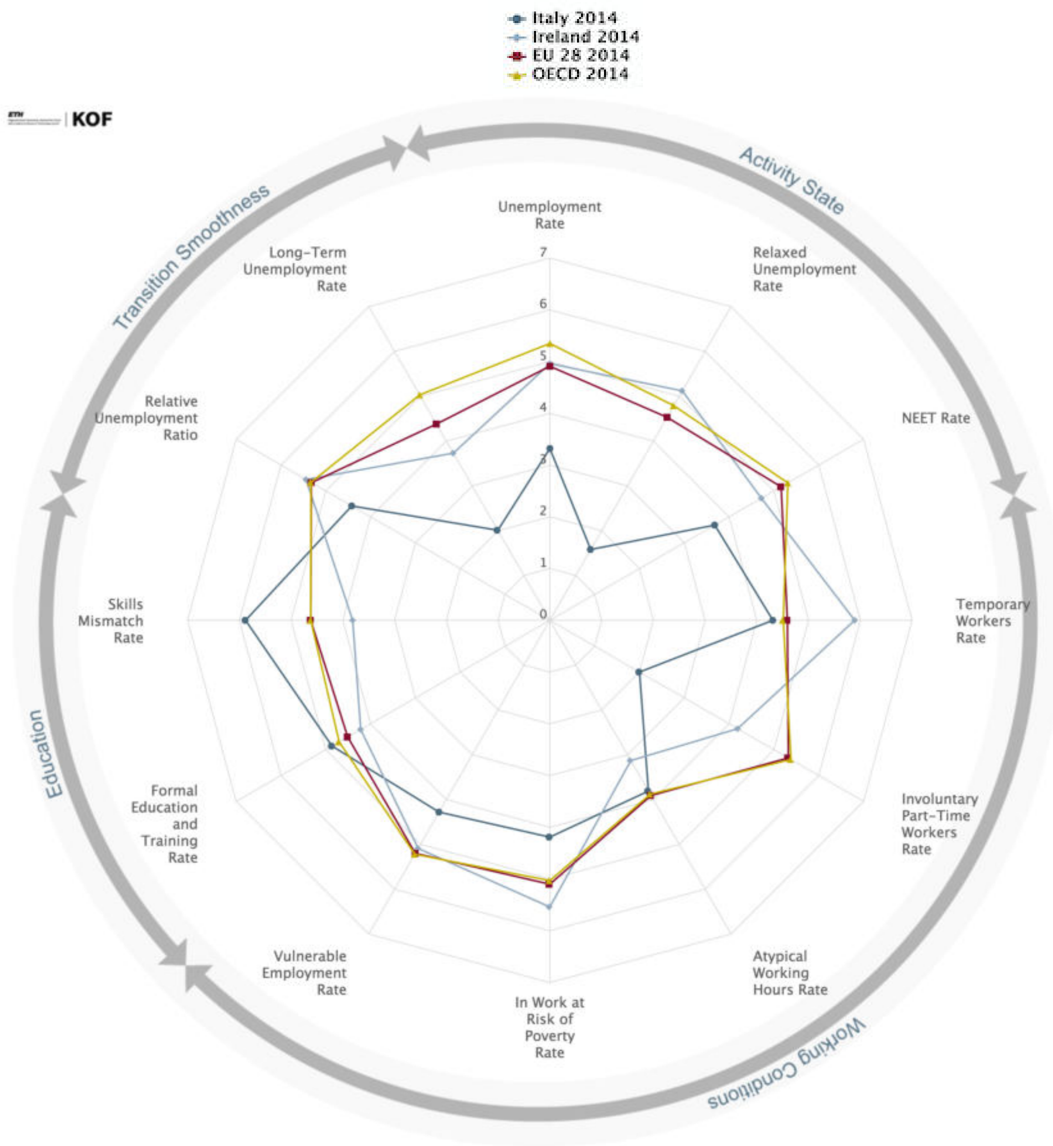
[6] The KOF Youth Labour Market Index (KOF YLMI) has been developed by the Swiss Economic Institute to show the complex dimensions of the young adults' working conditions in 178 countries. It offers a multidimensional approach to compare the youth (15-24 years old) labour market situation across countries and over time.

[7] For an in-depth analysis of the categories and the indicators examine the paper *On the Multiple Dimensions of Youth Labour Markets. A Guide to the KOF Youth Labour Market Index* (Renold, Bolli, Egg, Pusterla, 2014).

[8] Note that the age range is stretched to 15-29 years for this indicator. The reason for this extension is that, because we are speaking about educational level, it is difficult that youth aged 15-24 have already finished a tertiary education (ISCED level 5-6). The enhancement till age 29 years enables us to consider the effects and consequences that a certain education level (especially a tertiary level) effectively have on the labour market» (Renold, Bolli, Egg,

that presents a good one.

Figure 5 - Spiderweb Chart of Scores, KOF YLMI



Source: KOF YLMI 2014, from http://viz.kof.ethz.ch/public/yunemp/ (20th November 2016)[9]

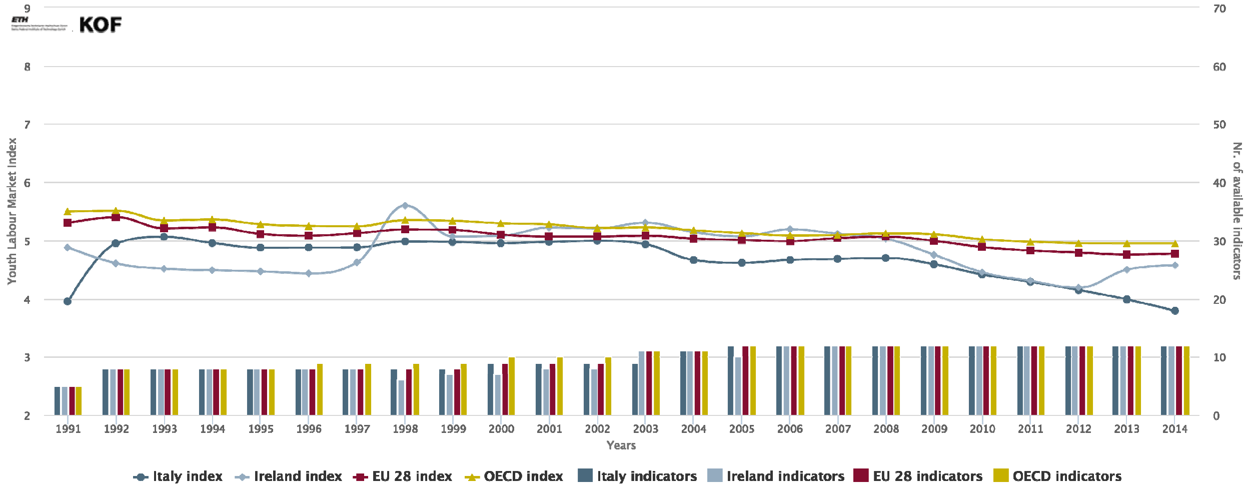
Figure 6 displays some more interesting elements regarding the comparison of young adults' working situation between Italy and Ireland. Considering the global financial crisis (2008) and the economic downturn period, we can observe a decrease of YLMI both for Ireland and Italy from 2008 till 2012: by contrast, at that point, the two pathways diverged. This aspect introduces a very interesting element for go deepen into the specific factors that support the transition from education (and higher education, in our perspective) to the world of work. What

Pusterla, 2014, p. 19).

9 Please note that «the further a value is from the centre, the more positive the situation is for the relevant indicator. If the value is zero, this means that no data are available for this indicator in the country concerned» http://viz.kof.ethz.ch/public/yunemp/ (20th November 2016).

produced this radical turnabout?

Figure 6 - Evolution of Youth Labour Market Index over time (Italy, Ireland, EU-28, OECD)



Source: KOF YLMI 2014, from http://viz.kof.ethz.ch/public/yunemp/ (20th November 2016)

The research sample: Universities involved

Basing on this labour market elements, the research identified some interesting universities for an in depth study through semi-structured interviews with the Heads of Career Service. The following figure depicts the members of the current sample in Italy and Ireland:

Table 2 - The research sample, Italian and Irish universities[10]

Italy	Ireland
University of Padua	Dublin City University
University of Pisa	Trinity College Dublin
University of Milan-Bicocca	University College Dublin*
Polytechnic University of Milan	National University of Ireland Maynooth*
University of Bologna	National College of Ireland*
University "Luigi Bocconi" Milan	National University of Ireland Galway*
University of Rome "La Sapienza"*	University College Cork*
University of Turin*	University of Limerick*
Polytechnic University of Turin*	
University of Venice "Ca' Foscari"*	

The overview shows a variety of typologies of institutions concerning the organization (public/private), the dimensions (small/medium/big universities) and the specific aims (general/polytechnic). Since the project is still in progress, we are not able to provide a definitive list of contacts yet: in fact, the sample will be enriched in next months.

Isolation of differences and similarities

According to the current state of the research, we can elaborate some preliminary assumptions regarding the conceptual labels that the assumed methodology suggests. Of course, the research methods presented in the second paragraph will

[10] Universities marked with * have not been interviewed yet. They will be contacted in next stages of the research project.

be elaborated in depth during the final reporting phase of the project. In this sense, the following considerations represent just a mid-term elaboration aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of tools and questions to improve the quality of the all process. Table 3 shows the labels that could compose the basis for the whole comparative analysis of Career Service models and practices.

Table 3 - Hypothesis of labels for the comparative analysis

Similarities	Differences
Skills development services for students	Organizational position of Career Service within University
Demand-supply services	Single Front Office Point and Career Development Centre
	Relationship among Didactics and Career Service
	Research activities supporting Career Service

The hypothesis suggests focusing more on the University policy level. Since the services seem to have similarities in their structure (even though, of course, different names and specific activities), we could concentrate on other aspects: first of all, the organizational area in which Career Service is inserted; the second point could be the relationship among Didactics (curriculum and teaching&learning); finally, the presence of research project specifically oriented to support Career Service and Career Development. Starting from that, the process will aim attention at these aspects to deepen the research question at the policy level.

The on-going process of explanation and reconceptualization

The state of the art of the comparative research about the development of employability in Higher Education recommends deepening some institutional aspects of the topic. The presence of similar services indicates that the key points are not just at the level of educational activities, but also at the political and institutional one. That’s why the study will proceed in that direction.

Conclusions

To conclude, the interpretive analysis we developed is related, on the one hand, on *similarities and differences,* as highlighted in the paper, and on the other hand on the future perspectives of the virtuous synergy among *employability, didactics and Career Service.* Regarding the first point, the comparative analysis developed on the types of Career Services highlights above all the different level of interpretation and acceptance of the category of employability as the backbone of the educational approach adopted in the university system. We are aware that in the last twenty years in the Anglo-Saxon countries there has developed this concept, which has been acquired as a reference point of the higher education system reform.

It can be seen from the theoretical approach that the curricula of the degree courses have a strong orientation towards the acquisition of skills for the labour market. They are culturally job-oriented and find their strengths in the relationship between university and the labour market.

The academic training offer prepares to a set of professions, to the construction of a professionalism that assumes, also, the meaning of adult responsibility, social maturity, vital commitment. There is a link between the effort of training to develop human capabilities for life and, at the same time, to organize transversal skills and techniques for career paths at the university level. In a world where learning is never enough, where knowledge dissolves in the shortest time ever thought, it is necessary to reflect on the presence of learning invariants or on the pillars of thought development (Morin, 2015, 2016).

Then, we can ask ourselves, why are the Career Services important in a University contest that knows and wants to support the employability of their own graduates?

The question is important because the international research (Candia, Cumbo, 2014) shows us how the evolution of the Career Service goes hand in hand with the evolution of the higher education system and with the evolution of the social and national environments of the Western economies. Almost to say that the University is also made of its own services and these are an integral part of the whole, until being an essential indicator for the performance evaluation of a training institution. Career Services represent the evolution of the classic model of University, the Association of Alumni is another example, the accommodation still another. Other examples can be found at different level.

Career support service is external to the courses, but at the same time is a support for the vicarious function that offers, compared to transversal skills that can be acquired in the laboratories for the reflection on the job hunting.

The service supports didactics when they develop skills that are traditionally delegated to the frontal classes. We know very well how the workshops, the matching with the public and private labour market, with the world of professions are unfamiliar to most actions in Italy, but not in Ireland. Therefore, the innovative function played by Career Service for the didactics in the Italian universities could be an useful and effective guide for a renewal of the same educational purpose.

Future perspectives concern the political strategies of construction of didactics embedded in the educational services. The University, which has really realized its training goal, is the one that has no need of services because the efficient and effective work-related and work-oriented didactics is found naturally in the culture that inspires and nourishes the growth of the human potential of a country. The research develops highly synergistic strategies, with the hope that they soon will turn into reality.

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What to compare? Comparative research issues in adult education

1. Introduction

Comparative research in adult education has long been characterised by its fragmentary results and rather small output (Reischmann/Bron 2008). It is still frequently conducted in small research projects by single researchers. At the same time, there are several interdisciplinary research projects currently in development that focus on issues related to adult education. Such research is frequently driven by international (political) organisations such as the EU, UNESCO or the OECD and linked to the availability of international datasets (e.g. AES, CVTS, PIAAC) (Egetenmeyer 2014/ Egetenmeyer 2015). This paper concentrates on adult education in a broad sense, focusing on issues and contexts that support adult learning. In many cases, the reasons for and goals of adult learning cannot be categorised as either only for professional goals or only for personal/social goals. This is why research in this field can hardly be divided into research on general adult education only or professional continuing education only. As a consequence, research in this field also commonly deals with questions of continuing (professional) education.

In this understanding of comparative adult education, the field of practice to be researched differs broadly from school education. Contexts, providers, organisations, reasons, goals, learners in adult education – to name just a few – differ substantially from school education. This is why comparative research in adult education raises some fundamental questions: what are the specific features of comparative adult education as opposed to comparative school education? What are the central clusters of research issues in comparative adult education? What are the (inter)disciplinary relations of comparative adult education to other (comparative) research fields in education and beyond?

Comparative education can be defined as

> an interdisciplinary subfield of education studies that systematically examines the similarities and differences between educational systems in two or more national or cultural contexts, and their interactions with intra- and extra-educational environments. Its specific object is educational systems examined from a cross-cultural (or cross-national, cross-regional) perspective through the systematic use of the comparative method, for the advancement of theoretical understanding and theory building. (Manson 2011, p. 215).

In her analysis of comparative education, Manson calls it a field with specific methods and objectives. But comparative adult education is far from reaching that stage. Comparison is a significantly smaller activity in adult education than in school education. Furthermore, the linkage to comparative school education is weak, consisting mainly in borrowing methodological aspects from the latter for the further development of comparative adult education.

Comparative research in adult education frequently refers to the definition of Charters and Hilton, which focuses on country comparisons:

> "A study in comparative international adult education ... must include one or more aspects of

> adult education in two or more countries or regions …." (Charters/Hilton 1989, p. 3)

This defining characteristic is still relevant. But in times of transnational discussions, the definition needs to be updated, as outlined below. Charters and Hilton go on to stress the importance of interpreting comparative data:

> Comparative study is not the mere placing side by side of data ... such juxtaposition is only the prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study ... The real value of comparative study emerges only from ... the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination...

With regard to the methodological discourse in comparative education, a country perspective, based on the idea of the nation state, should be changed to a context perspective, as globalization has created new "educational spaces which belong exclusively to neither nations nor systems" (Green 2003, p. 93). While a system perspective may be highly relevant for the comparative analysis of formal, school-based education, it may be far less appropriate for adult education, which is characterised by a highly diverse range of providers, levels and modes of learning. This means that countries, nations or states have a smaller influence on adult education than they do on school education, as the links of adult education to its state context are much smaller. Taking countries as the basis for comparison in adult education may therefore not lead to an adequate basis for the interpretation of similarities and differences. Moreover, transnational developments – as mentioned below - may be helpful in the interpretation of similarities and differences. This is why this paper argues for the need of designing adequate contexts for comparison in adult education. Comparative research in adult education will then compare phenomena in adult education in different contexts and will research the influence of the designed contexts on the respective phenomena.

It is advisable therefore to focus on *issues* in adult education, which can be compared between different contexts. Following this approach, comparative adult education can be understood as a specific perspective in adult education research (rather than a method or a research field in its own right), one that stresses interrelations and contexts of comparison:

> The comparative study of education is not a discipline: it is a context. It allows for the interaction of perspectives arising out of a number of social science disciplines and from a wide range of national backgrounds. It allows for a greater understanding or the interrelationship of educational variables through the analysis of similar and different educational outcomes of … case studies (Broadfoot 1977, p. 133).

This context-based perspective is even more important for adult education. Adult and continuing education is deeply integrated into societal, cultural, labour-market and international contexts. Rarely is adult education offered by state actors. The provision of adult education is highly dependent on the engagement of other societal actors (e.g. the market and civil society). This means that, in contrast to school education, adult education is rarely compulsory. Moreover, the provision of adult education is changing much faster, depending on the influence of the context (e.g. financial situation, learning needs, targets of providers, participation rate). Due to this influence, adult education provision has to be understood as being highly flexible to meet the need of its corresponding contexts. Studying the contexts and their interrelationships in the research situation can be understood as a central feature of comparative research in adult education.

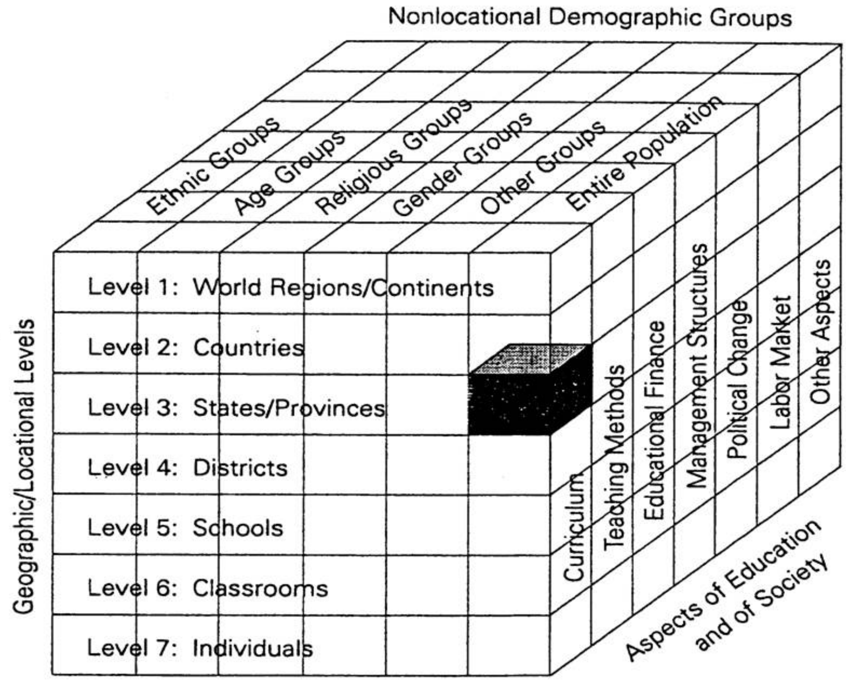
By emphasising contexts (rather than states) as a comparative perspective (e.g. liberal adult education provision by trade unions compared to liberal adult education by religious providers in Europe, adult education studies at the University of Würzburg compared to the University of Florence), the state-based perspective will become less precise and the comparative perspective can become more precise. Furthermore, a main context for comparison is defined, which can further be researched concerning its influencing contexts (e.g. the Core Curriculum for Adult Education of the German Association for Educational Research on Studies at the University of Würzburg, the influence of the Bologna Process on both studies). The research on these interrelating contexts can form a central basis for the interpretation of similarities and differences.

2. Comparative adult education as an issue of relations

Comparison in education research is becoming more complex, due to the issues raised by the internationalisation and globalisation of societies, the increasing influence of international organisations, and transnational developments (Welsch 1999). In many cases, it is not only or mainly the nation state that influences an educational context. Adult education contexts also have to be understood in their interdependencies with other (non-national) contexts. These can be educational and non-educational contexts, supra- and transnational contexts, cultural and societal contexts, community contexts or other contexts of adult learning (e.g. working context, leisure contexts). Comparative research into adult education needs to identify research contexts or cases that are interrelated. Early researchers in comparative education claimed that learning about their own context was their ultimate goal: “The practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and understand our own.” (Sadler 1900, reprint 1964, p. 310) Sadler refers to the situation that comparative education does not compare two contexts in the same way and with the same goal. Comparative research does not gain equal results from each researched context. Moreover, there are one or more main contexts to which comparative research is related. Other contexts will be used for mirroring the main context. This means that contrastive comparison is done with the main researched context to understand the main context in a better way. Other contexts will be researched for making interrelations, working on similarities, differences and/or interpretations as well as explanations. This approach is based on an understanding of comparative education that studies the “relationship networks” (Schriewer 2000) of the researched objects and its contexts. This context-based perspective forms a central element of comparative research. Research investigations in comparative adult education need to define the contexts of the researched objectives and questions.

One of the frequently cited frameworks for comparative education is the “cube” (Bray/Thomas 1995, p. 475). The authors outline three dimensions of “A Framework for Comparative Educational Analysis”. They distinguish between geographical/locational levels, nonlocational demographic groups, and aspects of education and society, arguing that the combination of these three dimensions has to be taken into account for the definition of research in comparative education. This cube already starts to differentiate different locational levels, arguing that a pure country-comparison is too limited, narrowing phenomena in education. As early as the 1990s, some researchers criticised the strong focus on the national level in comparative education. But nevertheless, the cube integrates a level-based perspective, assuming that the lower levels are completely integrated in the upper levels. Cross-, trans- and supranational influences and interdependencies are not taken into account.

Figure 1: A Framework for Comparative Educational Analysis (Bray & Thomas 1995, p. 475)



The context perspective proposed in this paper breaks down the purely hierarchical perspective into an interdependent perspective of relating contexts. It argues that a territorial perspective (geographic/locational) hardly makes sense in 2016. Adult education and its formation is not bounded mainly and solely by territorial borders. Moreover, it is influenced by diverse societal and historical contexts. This can lead to the situation that adult education contexts in two different countries may be more similar than adult education contexts within one country. Moreover, the above mentioned discourse on transnational developments leads to a perspective that identifies contexts within their interrelations to other contexts. Whereas the cube was developed from the perspective of school education and the strong influence of relevant state sectors, adult education is integrated in society in more diverse, fluid and diffuse ways.

Likewise, the other two dimensions also have to be modified to fit into the research and practice field of adult education. The nonlocational demographic groups are bounded very much on issues bounded back on birth – or even pupils' ethnic background. Adult education, by contrast, studies participants, nonparticipants and learners with a learning, education and social biography that has a fundamental impact on their learning and educational habits. Adult education research shows that adults' educational biography, migration biography, employment situation, civic engagement and gender has a strong impact on their learning and education. This is why this dimension has to be modified to address the research differences in adult education compared to school education. The dimension “aspects of education and of society” needs to be modified according to the research structure of adult education, as will be outlined below.

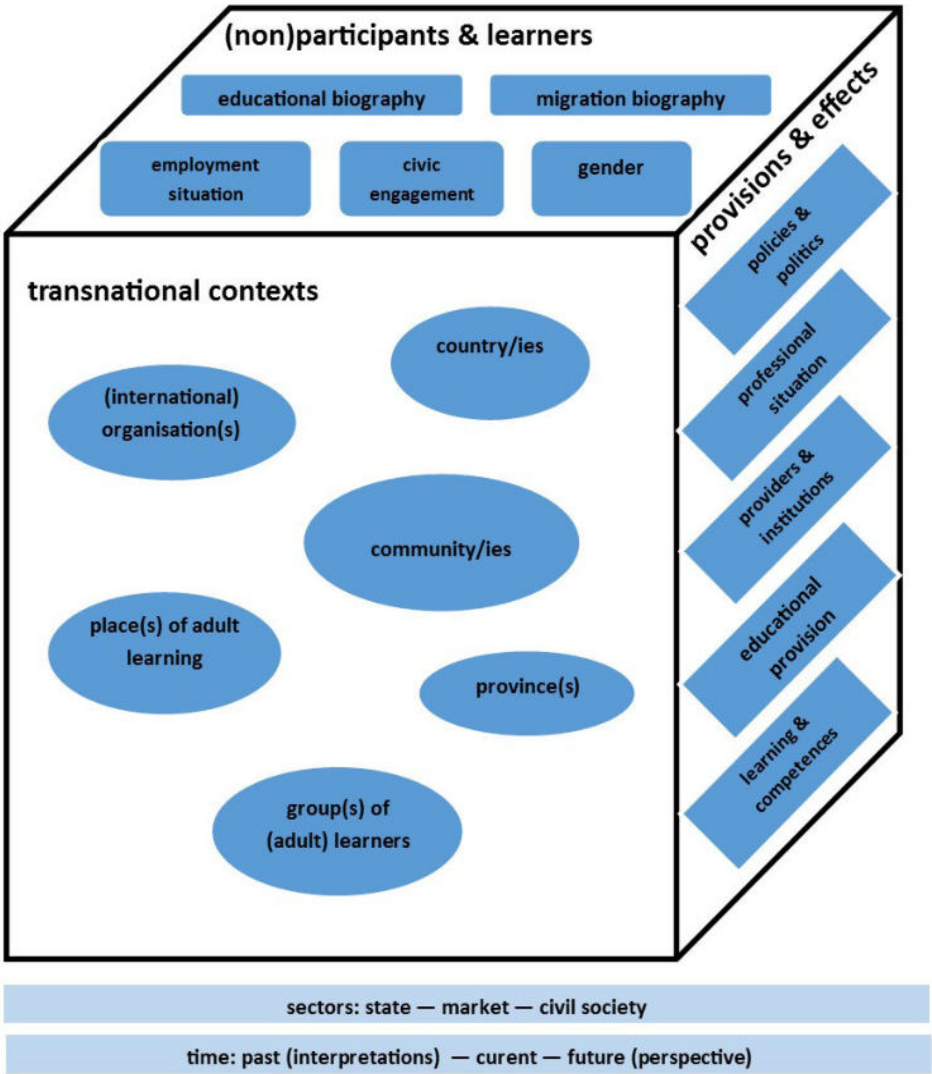
Whereas Bray/Adamson/Mason (2014) in newer publications have partly broken down all three dimensions into research units (places, systems, times, etc.), this paper adapts the “cube perspective” to comparative research in adult education. It defines three dimensions for the development of research questions in comparative adult education: (1) transnational contexts, (2) provision & effect and (3) (non)participants & learners.

- *Transnational contexts* form the spatial perspective “in which an ‘educational’ object of comparison is located” (Manson 2011, p. 163): the cross-contextual dimension.
- The dimension *provision & effects* focuses on research questions in adult education.
- The provision contexts have to be interrelated with *(non)participants & learners* in adult education. This aspect forms a third dimension in its own right. Adult education provision and effects can only be researched in relation to the biographies and demographic backgrounds of (non-)participants and learners in adult education.

The main arguments for the further development of the Bray and Thomas cube for comparative research in adult education are: (1) Adult education is fundamentally different from school education. both in terms of provision and in terms of adult learners. Furthermore, adult education as a discipline has research categories that differ from school education. Research categories in adult education are more deeply interrelated with the specific situation of adult education practice as it is outlined above. This means that research issues have a configuration that differs from school education. (2) Based on transnational developments, a shift from a hierarchical, vertical or horizontal perspectives of comparative contexts to an interrelated perspective of contexts is needed. Whereas the horizontal perspective looks at contexts alongside each other (Bray/Adamson/Mason 2014), the vertical perspective studies phenomena from a macro, meso and micro perspective. This means, for example, that phenomena at the micro-level are researched concerning their influences on the macro- and meso-level. The hierarchical perspective would research the direct interactions between the macro level and the meso- and micro-levels, and so on. The transnational perspective, by contrast, focuses on contexts. Studying the formation and configuration of the relationships between different contexts is a distinct part of the comparative research question.

Selecting one aspect of adult education in different countries and specific demographic groups does not meet the needs of research designs in comparative adult education. Moreover, research designs in comparative adult education may need to define the focus of *provision & effects* in adult education and identify *relevant transnational contexts*. How the studied contexts relate to each other forms the central issue of comparative interpretation. The question concerning similarities and differences as well as their interpretation through reasonable hypotheses is based on the researched contexts and the relations between them. During the whole research process, it is essential to reflect on the influence of the biographical and demographic characteristics of the respective *(non)participants and learners*. A comparative study on workplace learning in two companies, for example, should take account of both the organisational influence and the educational biographies of the researched learners. For example, researchers comparing National Qualifications Frameworks need to analyse the influence of the respective countries and that of the European Union. A central point is the interrelation of transnational contexts towards the researched aspect of adult education.

Figure 2: Relating Model for Comparative Research in Adult Education (author's own)



Furthermore, the relevant societal sector (state, market, civil society) of adult education has to be reflected when developing the research question. It can be expected that the contexts, provision & effects, (non)participants & learners as well as their interrelations are highly dependent on the societal sectors which influence the research context. The second edition of the international handbook "Comparative Education Research. Approaches and Methods" (Bray/Adamson/Mason 2014, p. 423) also includes a time perspective. This perspective stresses that the context of educational phenomena is also influenced by the respective time, and that comparative education can also compare educational phenomena in different times (e.g. present and 20 years ago).

Research in comparative adult education needs to reflect these interrelations. Doing comparative research in adult education needs to respect the disciplinary focus of practices and research in adult education. As a consequence, research clusters and categories in adult education emerge as comparative issues in adult education. These clusters and categories are named here as provision & effects of adult education and adults learning. This stresses the educational perspective of adult education. Doing comparative research in adult education means interrelating the research clusters and categories of adult education with two further dimensions: (1) (non)participants and learners in adult education and learning. Provision and effects in adult education depend highly on the respective (non)participants and learners. This has to be taken into account when identifying comparative research issues in adult education. This identification is essential for more making a more precise assessment of the provision aspect. (2) The interrelating transnational contexts form the comparative transnational contexts. Comparative research in adult education has to identify the contexts that will be compared and the relevant interrelated contexts that influence the comparison.

3. Issues in Comparative Adult Education

3.1 Policies

One of the currently central fields in comparative adult education is the comparative analysis of policies in lifelong learning and their interrelation between different contexts. These contexts are the ones that influence the development and existence of policies in lifelong learning (e.g. international organisations, regional laws, economy). This has to be considered in the context of the engagement of international organisations (such as the EU, UNESCO/UIL, OECD, World Bank) in the promotion of lifelong learning. It frequently includes the formulation of policies in lifelong learning, which in some cases target adult education directly and in others target adult education through a general concept of lifelong learning (Schemmann 2007, Bray et al. 2014). Studies can also be driven by, interrelated with, or critical of the policies to be analysed. Research acts in this context as a policy-driver and/or disciplinary configuration, which needs to be reflected (Egetenmeyer 2015). Comparative studies on policies in adult education and lifelong learning can be understood as the broadest issues to be compared in adult education. These studies involve the relations between EU policies, institutional policies, national policies, and so on.

The Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education of the European Society of Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA)n has recently worked on the analysis of the background developments of international policies towards adult education:

> "…to begin a process of 'picking apart' the complexities involved in researching policies that influence adult education in Europe. Decision-making processes … are no longer located at supra-national or national levels alone, but involve co-production, appropriation, and resistance, by a multiplicity of political actors – with diverse purposes and capacities – across a range of locations" (Holford/Milana 2014).

With this approach, the network provides important research results for the interpretation of the different transnational influences on adult education policies. Thereby, it focuses on the educational policy of the European Union as one of the most important interpretation models. Referring to political science, the concept of Europeanisation can provide an important interpretative model for comparative studies in adult education policies:

> The Europeanisation process refers not only to the vertical dimension (EU-member state); it is also characterized by horizontal dynamics (nation state-nation state). The horizontal dynamics result from the exchange of ideas, power and policies between member states' actors, created by the context provided by the EU. The horizontal process creates a culture of cooperation, which includes the harmonization of ideas and policies between the member states or between a member and a non-member state. Horizontal linkages put pressure on actors without the involvement of supranational institutions. Horizontal cooperation may also create linkages to other transnational organisations and non-EU members (Klatt 2014, p. 65).

This perspective is supported by results of ad-hoc comparisons done during the 2015 Würzburg Winter School on Comparatives Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning (Egetenmeyer 2016). The studies support the linkage between EU educational policies and the educational policies of non-EU members (for India see also Singh et al.).

Schemmann (2007) compared the lifelong learning policies of international organisations: the OECD, UNESCO, the World Bank and the EU. He analysed them using globalisation and internationalisation theories. Alongside policies, he also analysed the institutions' activities, action strategies, and the results they achieved. From the perspective of comparative research in adult education, the action strategies are especially interesting. Each of these international organisations have nation states as their members, but they do not have direct intervention authority in educational issues. Education remains the responsibility of the member states. Nevertheless, international organisations developed action strategies that govern member states in their policies (e.g. public benchmarks in adult education participation in Europe show member states how they compare to other member states). This can lead to a political reaction. Thereby the action strategies (e.g. the EU's Open Method of Coordination, the UNESCO's educational reporting or the OECD's peer-review processes) become a central issue, as efficacy is a central element for interpreting the transnational influence of international policies.

One key comparative study in the field of comparative policy studies in adult education is Holford et al. (2008). The authors researched lifelong learning policies in 13 Northern, Eastern and Central European countries. The study covers "Population, Labour Market Trends & Patterns of Participation", "The European Union & Lifelong Learning", "Use of Lifelong Learning Concepts in National Policies" and other aspects in this field. Furthermore, the study aims to provide a comparative typology of approaches towards lifelong learning (in Europe). The study and its chapters refer to the different contexts that have to be researched and taken into account for the interpretation of similarities and differences between national policies in lifelong learning. It explores the interrelations between national and European policies in lifelong learning but also the impact of demographics and labour market factors on national policies towards lifelong learning. The study tests two comparative typologies (Esping-Andersen 1993, Aiginger/Guger 2006, Björnavåld 2001) for a comparative interpretation cluster of national lifelong learning policies. Both typologies have been used in comparative research in lifelong learning. The study concludes that neither typology works for developing types of lifelong learning policies and practices by which countries can be differentiated. Other studies focus on regions for the comparative research of adult education policies (Agentur für Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung 2016).

Comparative adult education research with a focus on policy issues is frequently aimed at supporting policy development. An important example is

Federighi's (2013) analysis of research results within the 6^{th} and 7^{th} EU Research Framework Programmes. The analysis of the different data can also be understood as a comparison that seeks to identify similarities in the country-based dataset. The analysis of Federighi does not work on simplified similarities. Moreover, it provides a new relational perspective based on the differences between European countries. It takes a development perspective for the interpretation of similarities, thereby identifying a new perspective towards adult education development in Europe.

3.2 Professional situation

Comparisons of the professional situation in adult education focus on the people working in the field of adult education, comparing matters such as: their qualifications, their working contexts, their abilities and competencies, their training possibilities as well as the academic context of adult education. Although professionalisation in adult education can be understood as a central foundation for enhancing the quality of provision, there are very few broad comparative studies in this field. In contrast, research on professionalisation forms a broad field in adult education in Germany (Ludwig/Baldauf-Bergmann 2010). Nevertheless, several international research networks have been developed in recent years, working on the issue of professionalisation in adult education from an international perspective. The work of these networks also includes comparative perspectives. Two networks have been developed and initiated by the German Institute for Adult Education. (Besides the European Network on Q-Act-Conference/Qualify-to-Teach, there is also the Network on the Professionalisation of Adult Teachers and Educators in ASEM countries of the AsiaEuropeMeeting Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning (ASEM Hub for LLL)). ESREA has also developed a Research Network on Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development.

Most of these studies give interesting insights, including comparative perspectives, rather than doing genuine comparative research as defined above. They give insights into selected aspects of professionalisation rather than analysing the interdependencies and interrelations of different contexts. This situation can be explained by the diverse professional situations of people working in adult education. The situation is already very heterogeneous within different social sectors in local contexts. Therefore, comparative categories need to be developed that have equivalencies and realities in different transnational contexts. (If we start to compare the working conditions of adult learning professionals, for example, we have to identify professionals in the different contexts to develop a comparative research category.)

A few initial studies exist to provide an insight into the professional situation in adult education. The situation of professionals in adult learning is researched in the ALPINE study (voor Beleid 2008, Osborne 2009) as part of a project financed by the European Commission. Based on ad-hoc data gathering, the study gives an insight into employers, tasks, positions, career paths and the employment situation of professionals in adult learning. In a follow-up study, a similar consortium developed the so-called Key-Competences-Model for professionals supporting adult learning in Europe (voor Beleid 2010). The perspective of transnationally relevant professional competences in adult education is the subject of several studies, including studies researching different (national) contexts for formulating transnationally valid professional competences in adult education (Lattke/Nuissl 2008, Bernhardsson/Lattke 2011, 2012, Zarifis/Papadimitriou 2014, Wahlgren 2016). Comparative studies on teaching cultures and the professional identities of adult educators are an important perspective in several studies (Peters/Latham/ Ragland/Donaghy 2008, Bernhardsson/Lattke 2012a). Comparative research on validation instruments for the validation of adult educators' competences examines the use and implementation of these instruments (Sava/Shah 2015).

From a rather macro perspective, the ASEM Network on the Professionalisation of Adult Teachers and Educators in ASEM countries carries out research in different regions in Europe and Asia (Egetenmeyer/Nuissl 2010). Based on Freidson's theoretical approach toward professionalism, Doyle/Egetenmeyer/Singai Devi (2016) analyse German, British and Indian organisations supporting and monitoring professionalisation in adult and lifelong learning. With the advent of the Bologna Process, the study of master's programmes in various European countries also became a topic of research (Lattke 2012 Boffo/Kaleja/Sharif-Ali/Fernandes 2016).

This overview shows a need for developing categories that can be compared in the context of transnational research on professionalisation in adult education. It seems that European educational policies have created comparative categories (e.g. competences, validation, master's programmes) that are external to the academic terminology of adult education. Future work on professionalisation in adult education needs critical reflection on this situation from a disciplinary perspective. It is necessary to develop comparative categories and terminologies that are closely linked to the disciplinary discourse in adult education. This will avoid a non-critical use of a terminology introduced by international political organisations, which often lacks academic reflection.

3.3 Providers and Institutions

Like the professional situation, providers and institutions in adult education also vary considerably from context to context. There are several reasons for this situation. First, the role of the state, the economy and civil society/third sector in adult (and continuing) education is quite different from context to context. Only some countries (e.g. Switzerland) and regions (e.g. all German regions) have laws pertaining to adult and continuing education. Second, employers' engagement in continuing education depends on firm size, industry, employee positions, trade unions and the economic cycle (Dämmrich/Vono de Vilhena/Reichart 2014). And third, the role of civil society also varies from context to context. As the development of providers and the formation of institutions strongly depend on these dynamic contexts, giving an overview of the institutional situation in a limited context would be a challenging task. Nevertheless, research provides selected comparative insights into providers and institutions in adult education.

Based on a comparative research project within the EU Research Framework Programme, Saar and Ure (2013) developed a typology of "lifelong learning systems" from a sociological perspective. They derive and interrelate the typology with several societal factors such as a country's education and training system, the skill formation systems as well as forms of capitalism. These can be used for testing the influence of these societal aspects on the formation of adult education institutions. These macro-perspectives on differentiation between types of "knowledge societies" can also be found in Green (2006) and, with a special focus on the Nordic welfare state model, in Rubenson (2006). Several studies research the influence of varieties of capitalism (individual perspective) and the welfare-state regimes (societal perspective) on the development of (national) adult learning systems (cf. Desjardins/Rubenson 2013; Rees 2013). For a comparative analysis, the methodological perspective should also be taken into account (e.g. Ebbinghaus 2012).

The institutional focus in adult education research has most commonly fallen on institutions of higher education. As adult education institutions vary widely in different contexts, higher education institutions seem to be a kind of institution that can be found in different contexts. This allows for comparative research of adult education in higher education institutions. Focusing on higher education, the volume edited by Slowey/Schuetze (2012) on higher education and lifelong learners is one of the central studies in this field. It focuses on the engagement of higher education in non-traditional or adult learning in different countries. Although the structure may look like a classical cross-country study, the introduction and epilogue relate the topic to other contexts of the relational model for comparative adult education outlined above. In an inductive manner, it identifies a typology of target groups of non-traditional (adult) learners in higher education (second chance learners, underrepresented learners, deferrers, recurrent learners, returners, refreshers, learners in later life) (ibid., p. 15f.) and the main conceptions of lifelong learning provision (life stage, mode of study, type of programme, organisation of provision) (ibid., p. 13). The study provides a strong link to the perspective of (non)participants in adult education and the question of equality in the provision of adult learning. The epilogue differentiates learning in higher education according to the different types of institutions involved (polytechnics, universities etc.), creating a developed landscape of lifelong learning. It shows the provision of lifelong learning to be less available at (elite) universities than at polytechnics or adult education institutions but also more homogenous than in continuing education or work-based learning (ibd., p 286ff.). This triangle of provision, (non)participants and institutional constitution of adult learning also offers a focus for other researchers in the field of comparative studies in lifelong learning in higher education (Remdisch/Beiten 2016, Field et al. 2016).

For several years, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning has supported an initiative for the development of the Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC). It stresses the role of the public authorities in supporting education and learning for society as a whole (Osborne et al. 2013). The comparative research of GNLC in different regions studies the communal engagement of learning cities. Han/Makino (2013, 2014), for example, distinguish between a "community relation model" (collective approach) and the European emphasis on human resources (individual approach).

3.4 Educational provision and participants

The existing comparative knowledge about educational provision is rather limited. Hefler/Markowitsch (2013) distinguish between seven types of formal adult education: basic skill programmes, second-chance education, higher education programmes, (re)-training, customised vocational programmes, continuing higher education and continuing professional education. They break down existing formal adult education opportunities by variety in institutions and length/content of programmes, and compare these between different European countries. A similar typology of non-formal and other adult education options is not available.

Comparative research about educational provision can be found indirectly in studies that research participants, non-participants and learners in adult education. The interdisciplinary research on participation and equality in adult education analyses participation as an indicator of the supply of non-formal learning provision for adults. In this context, research on participation in adult education can also be understood as research on education provision: By focusing on the question of who is participating in adult education, the research also looks at who is providing adult and continuing education and in which context.

Roosmaa/Saar (2010, 2012) analyse data from the Adult Education Survey. They take a theoretical perspective on institutional employment and labour-market structures in different countries. From a macro perspective, the study identifies institutional regimes that are analysed comparatively with the AES country data. The study interrelates the adult and continuing education supply with the situation of the corresponding economic context (skill formation in different types of political economies; innovation, demand for skills and training; occupational and qualification structure). The authors identify positive interrelations between participation in non-formal learning and the distribution of occupations (instead of qualifications). Furthermore, the researchers find adult education participation to have a positive impact on the reduction of inequalities suffered by low-skilled workers. This macro-perspective gives a new insight for the comparative analysis of participation data in adult education. Based on these studies, Markowitsch/Käpplinger/Hefler (2013) differentiate five welfare-state regimes (social democratic, conservative, familiaristic/sub-protective, liberal, neo-liberal & neo-conservative). The authors identify several similar developments of firm-provided trainings in the researched countries (based on CVTS-data). But there are several open questions– especially developments between CVTS 1 and CVTS 3 data, which cannot be explained by these regimes. Dämmrich/Vono de Vilhena/Reichart (2014) also research country-specific characteristics of participation in adult learning using the AES data. They find factors such as a focus on education and innovation in a country, a lower unemployment rate and a higher union presence to contribute to increased non-formal employer-sponsored adult learning. Boeren/Nicaise/Baert (2010) develop a model emphasising the interdependency of individual decisions and education institutions' perceptions. This is interrelated with other influences on the individual micro-level and educational meso level. Groenez/Desmedt/Nicaise (2007) also show how the interrelations between the economy, the labour market, social security and labour market policy, education, culture/values and demography influence participation in lifelong learning

3.5 Learning and Competences

The learning of adults does not only take place in the context of education provision. There are also informal and incidental ways of adult learning, which happen during other activities (e.g. work or leisure). This is why learning – and competences as one result of learning – form a distinct aspect of research in adult education. Comparative adult learning is a little researched field. The development of comparative adult learning will rely on the identification of comparative categories. Egetenmeyer (2011, 2012) identified categories of learning subjects, motivation, learning ways, resources and results for the comparative research of informal learning at the workplace. A comparative analysis of welfare regimes, learning motivation and the experiences of adults in formal adult education is available in Boeren/Nicaise/Rossmaa/Saar (2012).

The 2013 PIAAC report (OECD 2013, Rammstedt 2013) has made adults' competences in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments a focus of comparative research (in adult education). Based on a standardised series of tests (see anthology), adults between the ages of 16 and 65 in 24 countries were surveyed concerning these competences. Taking into account that these results and the so-called competences are obviously limited to such narrow definitions as are necessary for this kind of research, the data give new insights into comparative research in adult education. Although the international lifelong learning community appreciates the availability of the dataset and has high expectations concerning research possibilities, there have also been criticisms regarding the missing perspective of the wider benefits of adult learning beyond the economic (e.g. Holm 2014).

In the Skills and Labour Market to Raise Youth Employment (SALM) project, a research group at the University of Florence links competences to higher education supply and demand in the social economy (Boffo 2012, Boffo/Federighi/Torlone 2015). This perspective was researched in a comparative perspective in six European contexts. The study makes visible the interrelations between context, participants, labour market and globalisation.

Beside the studies exploring the impact on competences, there are also studies comparing the wage return of participation in adult education. In addition to individual differences (based on education and employment), these studies also find differences relating to engagement in formal as opposed to non-formal adult education and concerning the clustering of countries according to welfare regimes. Triventi and Barone (2014) use data from the International Adult Literacy Survey from the 1990s.

4. Conclusion

In summary, research issues in adult education are much less researched in a comparative way than in a non-comparative way. This means there is much potential for comparative research projects. Furthermore, current transnational developments provide more and more insights for understanding educational phenomena in a global and transnational perspective.

Comparative studies done by single researchers and with a narrow focus on educational theories seem to have very few connections to each other. At the same time, interdisciplinary comparative research projects are underway that focus on issues in adult education that seem to interrelate much more extensively. These studies use (quantitative) data provided by international organisations. This situation makes it obvious that international policies have a strong influence on how issues in comparative adult education are researched. Furthermore, the comparative results show that phenomena need to be studied from a broad interdisciplinary perspective to be understood in a comparative way. It can be expected that this approach will characterise comparative adult education research in the future. Researchers in adult education need to work together with colleagues from different disciplines to get deeper comparative insights into adult education. To that end, available datasets from international organisations can be used. This shows the links not only between contexts and phenomena in adult education but also to other theories, data and knowledge outside the educational perspective.

Although international organisations are now providing rich datasets, it should be kept in mind that these datasets are provided by political organisations and not by the academic community in adult education. This means that the decisions as to which data is collected follow a political rationale, not an (inter)disciplinary academic one. For comparative research in adult education, this means that the available datasets have to be translated into academic terminology to interrelate them with available disciplinary knowledge. This overview of issues in comparative research has shown that the perspective of participants and non-participants is a central cross-dimension for all research in (comparative) adult education. Adult education can only be analysed based on an understanding of who participates and who does not. Participant orientation is in this way not only a key didactical basis for adult education but also a crucial perspective for research.

Transnational developments that disconnect educational phenomena from narrow regional or national contexts require that the comparison of contexts becomes a central issue in comparative research. This issue is especially challenging for comparative research in adult education as not only comparable categories (what) but also comparable contexts (where, when and which) have to be identified and specified according to the research issue. In most cases, research cannot expect to use previously defined and tested categories or contexts. Testing categories and contexts in juxtaposition is a starting point for comparative research in adult education. Having finalised a juxtaposition, interrelating the data between the compared main contexts but also to other interrelating contexts is a central issue for the interpretation of similarities and differences of data. Only the interrelation to other contexts can explain similarities and differences. This approach can bring to light transnational interrelations, which are crucial for understanding phenomena in adult education.

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THE RISE OF A LEARNING REGIME IN EUROPE TRANSNATIONAL POLICY-TERMS MAPPED AND DISCUSSED

Key words: adult learning, bottom-up, discontinuity, individualism, integration, policy-terms

Abstract

Policy terms lead to change. They appear and disappear in policy papers across time and space and instigate continuity or discontinuity. To understand how this happens, policy terms need to be mapped. It could be done through a systematic analysis of models, hypotheses, quantitative data, antonyms and studies of time and space – *in comparison.* Appearance of the term *Lifelong Learning* and the change from *Teaching Regime* to *Learning Regime* is used as an example in this paper to show how this mapping could be done.

Introduction

The key elements signifying changes are policy terms used in policies and it is interesting to understand how they change in policy documents, leading to changes in policies and thereby, changing all aspects of life. Education policies in the last few decades could be understood much by studying the inclusion and exclusion of the term Lifelong Learning (LLL) in policy documents in an implicit or explicit way. However, the use of the term as just an *idea* and as a *reform* is not the same. [1] Much of the influence of a term comes from how it is included in a policy document. May differentiates between policy design and policy implementation[2] and it is important to see whether a term is a part of policy design or whether it is a part of the implementation. It remains just an idea until it is included finally in the implementation and this inclusion marks discontinuity or change.

Lifelong Learning (LLL) is labelled as a regime[3], designed by the EU, which is changing the rules of the game in education. A systematic mapping of terms shows how the term Learning appeared implicit or explicit in policy documents. Governments, intergovernmental bodies, and multi-national corporations were promoting new policy-terms before the EU took the lead. The methodology is based on models, hypotheses, quantitative data, antonyms and studies of time and space – in comparison.

December 1965 is taken as departure, which marks the beginning of this new

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1 Jakobi 2012a: 32,37

2 May 2012

3 *Regimes can be defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor`s expectations converge in a given area of international relations. Principles are beliefs of fact, causation, and rectitude. Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations. Rules are specific prescriptions or proscriptions for actions. Decision-making procedures are prevailing practices for making and implementing collective choice* (Krasner 1983:2). This definition from Political Science in the US is seminal for the study. An article by Jochim & May (2010) influenced the approach.

regime in three ways: The *horizontal and vertical integration of education policies* (promoted by UNESCO), *funding* by the Nordic Council of Ministers for *Adult Education* and the acknowledgement of the term Adult *Learning* (by the Norwegian Government).

It took 11 years in Norway to implement Adult Learning as a reform. In 1995, the *European Union* (hereafter the EU) announced 1996 as *The European Year of Lifelong Learning*, which marked the regime change- from a Teaching regime to a Learning regime. The *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* (hereafter the OECD) delivered a report called **Lifelong Learning for All** to its member countries in January 1996 while a global actor, the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (hereafter the UNESCO), published the report **Learning – the Treasure within** in the Spring of 1996. The EU, the OECD, and the UNESCO, three intergovernmental bodies, took action within few months and were all saying much the same.[4]

The European Commission worked on the policy design for 11 years (1996-2006) and the implementation process took off in the EU member states. *The European Commission* integrated the existing educational programmes, included adults as a target group and announced *The Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013* followed by an announcement of funding 6.9 billion Euros by the EU[5] for development of national strategies aligning to LLL.[6] Consequently, the EU decided and funded the development of a transnational policy-design, the OECD delivered expertise, and the UNESCO did marketing.

1. Theoretical framework

The growth in science production, in professionalization strategies, and in policy-designs (see the graphics in Figure 2, 3, and 4) makes it reasonable to apply an analytical model having more than one way. Figure 1 makes a consistent distinction between four *Ways of Thinking*. No more, not less.

Figure 1. Analytical Model about Thinking in Boxes

Way of Thinking embedded in Practice	**Way of Thinking embedded in Science**
Way of Thinking embedded in Profession	**Way of Thinking embedded in Policy**

Source: Ehlers 2006a:10-11.

The rationale behind the construction of the analytical model (Figure 1) is that the Way of Thinking embedded in one box will never be compatible with the Way of

4 Field 2000:8
5 Jakobi 2012b: 397
6 Pepin 2007:130

Thinking embedded in the other boxes.[7] Thinking completely *out of the box* is a utopia. The analytical model is constructed as a tool for studies of terminology. The assumption is that that the appearance of a new term in one of the boxes indicates Discontinuity. The crucial question is always: Which box is the home of the term? Context matters!

This analytical strategy was applied in a study of Danish policy-design in 2004.[8] During the implementation, policy-makers try to alter the Ways of Thinking in *the Profession Box*. However, the Way of Thinking embedded in *the Policy Box* can, according to this study, never be aligned with the Way of Thinking embedded in the *Profession Box*. Also, the normative approach, embedded in *the Profession Box*, is conflicting with the descriptive approach in *the Science Box*.

The focus, in the current study, is upon the terms (often referred to as floating signifiers) [9] appearing in the *Policy Box* .

2. Hypotheses and quantitative data

Lifelong as a prefix to education can be rooted back to the centuries old philosophical discussions but Lifelong Education as a policy has a short history.[10]

A general assumption is that LLL appeared as two *Generations*: One in the 1970s and another in the 1990s. though there are disagreements about it. Lee et al. consider the late 1960s as the first peak phase for LLL.[11] Alexandra Dehmel refers to Kjell Rubenson acknowledging the existence of two generations of LLL.[12] The study is considering the following hypotheses:

1. LLL as idea was promoted implicitly by transnational actors since 1965
2. LLL as reform was promoted explicitly by transnational actors since 1986
3. The European Internal Market triggered the transnational policy-design

Quantative data

A study of frequency of the terms *Education, Teaching and Learning* using Google Ngram in British English, French and German showed through the screenshots below suggests that appearance of the term *Learning* in publications showed minor discontinuity in the 1970s and major discontinuity in the 1990s in all three languages.

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[7] Figure 1 is an outcome of discussions with Jakob Wandall. The first version (Ehlers 2006a, preface) was inspired by a distinction between three Ways of Living (Højrup 1984)which was applied in a study of national policy-design (Ehlers 2000:113-148).

[8] Ehlers 2004a

[9] For instance Gleerup (2005), **Kompetencebegrebet i den pædagogiske diskurs** (the competence concept in the pedagogical discourse).

[10] Jakobi et al. 2010, Busemeyer & Trampusch 2011

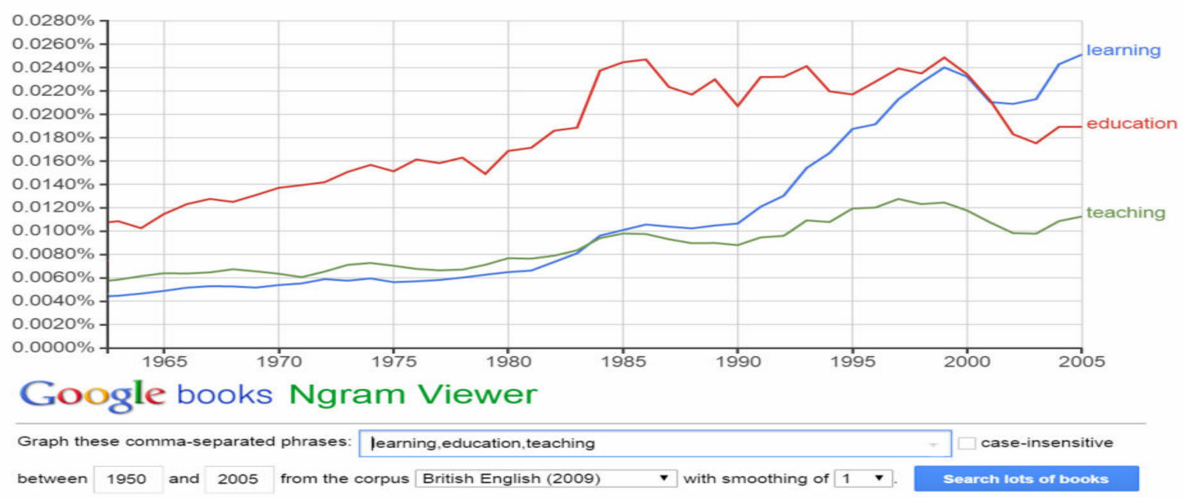
[11] Dehmel 2006 and Lee et al. 2008:448

[12] Rubenson used the metaphor in 1994: He described the development of two generations of the same policy (**Recurrent Education Policy in Sweden: A Moving Target**). He was, apparently, describing Recurrent Education *as idea* and used the generation metaphor to underscore continuity. However, Rubenson used the same metaphor in 1996 (**Livslangt Lærande – mellom utopi og ekonomi**). The current study is not aligning Recurrent Education and LLL as synonymous.

Interpretation of Figure 2 (British English)

Minor discontinuity occurred in the 1970s followed by major discontinuity in the 1980s and the 1990s.The order of appearance was after 1970: 1) Education, 2) Teaching, and 3) Learning. The order of appearance changed after 2000 to: 1) Learning, 2) Education and 3) Teaching.

Figure 2: British English

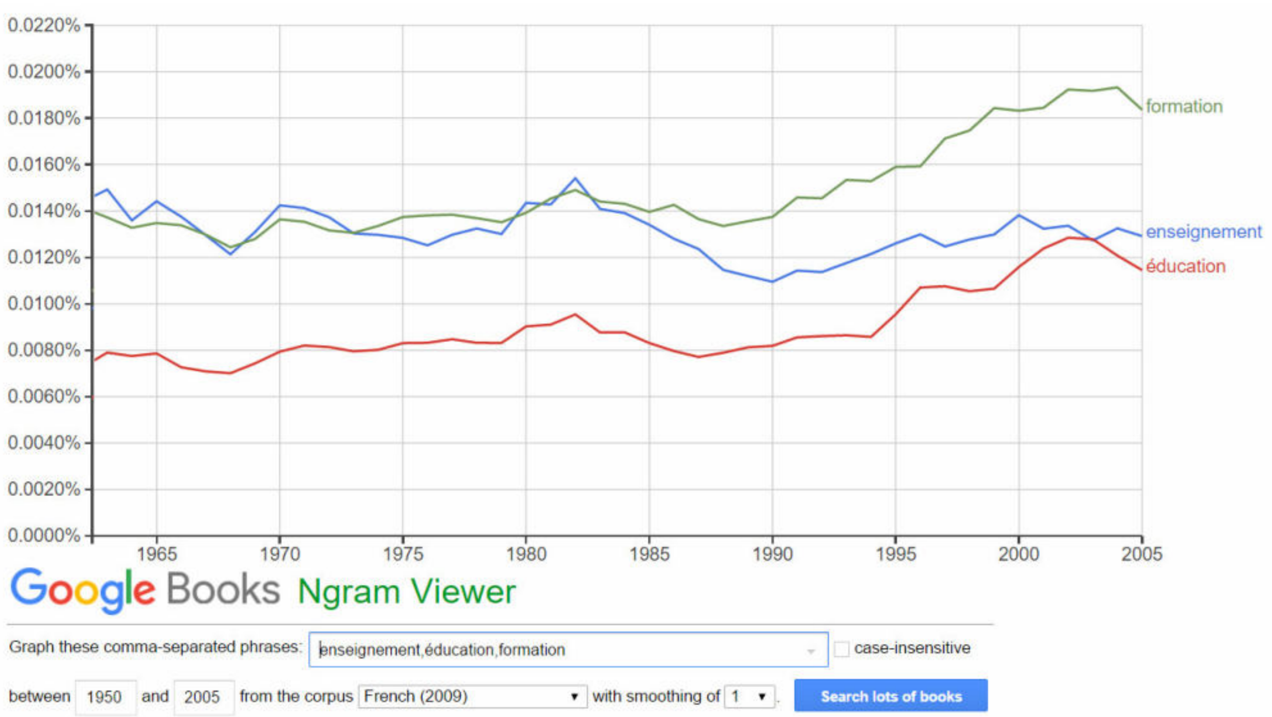


Interpretation of Figure 3 (French)

No major discontinuity occurred in the 1970s. Discontinuity occurred in the 1980s and the 1990s.

The order of appearance after the 1970s was: 1) Enseignement, 2) Formation and 3) Èducation. The order of appearance changed in the 1980s to: 1) Formation 2) Enseignement, and 3) Èducation.

Figure 3: French

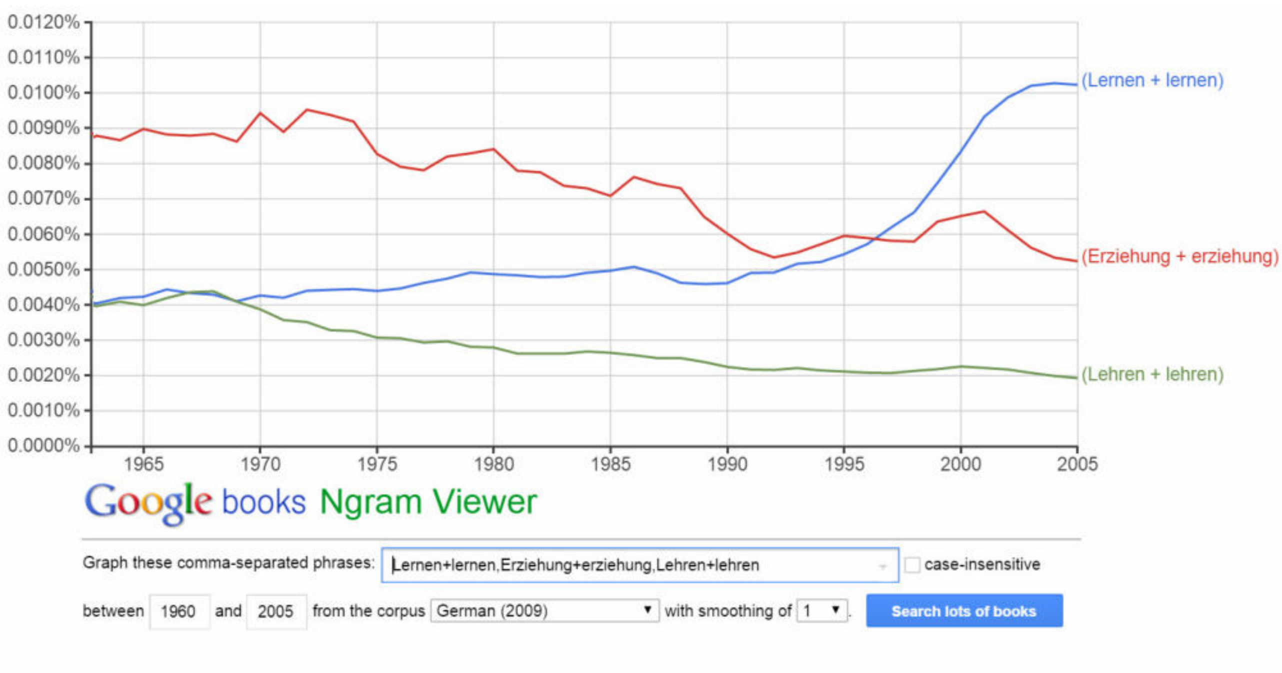


Interpretation of Figure 4 (German)

Major discontinuity occurred in the 1970s followed by minor discontinuity in the 1980s. Major discontinuity in the 1990s occurred once again.

The order of appearance was after 1970s: 1) Erziehung, 2) Lernen, and 3) Lehren. The order of appearance changed in the 1990s to: 1) Lernen, 2) Erziehung, and 3) Lehren.

Figure 4: German



The indications of discontinuity in Figure 4 are probably the most valid as to EU member states. The German language was frequent in Europe though English and French were used in written communication outside Europe too in former colonies. The German term *Lernen* became more frequent in the 1990s.

Jakobi, while differentiating between LLL as *idea* (*Profession Box*) and *LLL as reform* (*Policy Box*), took 1996 as the point of departure and concluded that LLL is becoming *a global norm*. One of her findings is that OECD-countries (rich countries) implemented *LLL as reform* while non-OECD countries (less rich countries) elaborated upon *LLL as idea*.[13]

The European Commission acknowledged *Learning* as a policy-term since December 1995 and promoted 1996 as *The European Year of Lifelong Learning*. OECD member countries were the first to re-design the strategies for education policy. How to label the new situation? Was an *Evolution* going on?[14] Would it give sense to call the discontinuity a *Paradigm*?[15] Maybe a *Silent Explosion*?[16] Or rather, one *Regime* replacing another Regime?[17]

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13 Jakobi 2012:50-51. See Lee & Friedrich 2011 about her findings.
14 Lee et al. 2008
15 Tuijnman 1992
16 Field 1998
17 Tushling & Engemann 2006

4. Integrated education

Integrated education policy, with adults as one of the target group characterizes the Learning regime. The term *horizontal integration* implies a process where activities on the same level are aligned with each other. Where as the term *vertical integration* is defined as a process where educational activities are aligned with each other in order to make it possible for the individual learners to move from one educational level to the next educational level - from birth until death.

Despite the fact that adults constitute the majority in all populations, educational opportunities for them are not given preference in policies perhaps due to the enormous burden of teaching children and youth and the assumption that all adults have had educational opportunities as children or youth. However, the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom have provided public funds for educational offers to adults since long.[18]

The design of Norwegian education policy in the 1960s-70s was radical and influenced by scientific studies.[19]. The government replaced the old term *Folkeopplysning (with a top-down approach)*[20] with the new term *Voksenopplæring* (adult learning) in 1965 to integrate two public policies: 1) the traditional educational cultural work provided by schools and voluntary organizations and 2) vocational and work-related education and training arranged by employers, trade unions, professional bodies and labour market boards. The Norwegian policy-design was radical and similar to the designs promoted by transnational actors in the 1960s and 70s. [21] In 1976, the Norwegian Parliament passed: 1) *Adult Learning as reform* and 2) the establishment of *Norsk Voksenpedagogisk Institutt* (a national institute for andragogy).

At the transnational level, the change began in UNESCO. Following the Montreal conference (1960), UNESCO appointed a *Consultative Committee for the Advancement of Adult Education,* which recommended a focus on Life-long Education for all among other recommendations. A European conference at the UNESCO institute in Hamburg followed in August 1962 where the themes aligned Adult Education to: 1) Society, 2) Work, and 3) The Individual. [22] The terms *Life-long Education* and the *Individual* were therefore, on the UNESCO agenda in the early 1960s.

The following definition of Lifelong Education (more political than conceptual)[23] adopted by UNESCO in 1965 was much more than just a definition:

> …the animating principle of the whole process of education, regarded as continuing through an individuals`s life from his earliest childhood to the end of his days, and therefore calling

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18 Knoll 2007:26

19 Slagstad 1998:321-332, Helsvig 2014:39,41

20 Nilsen (1958**), Interesser hos voksne. En kartlegging av fritidsinteresserne innen den norske befolkning i alderen 15-69. år**. Publications by Nilsen in 1963,1966, and 1972. The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies appointed Nilsen as professor in andragogy by 1970. Brikt Jensen, another Norwegian academic, stated by 1960 that *the Folkeoplysning* approach was outdated. Jensen was appointed by Oslo University as head of university extension by 1962 (Tøsse 2011:190).

21 Tøsse 2000:8-9 and Tøsse 2011:221. Tøsse referred to a judgement by Udjus. Ingelise Udjus was from 1965 head of university extension at Oslo University and a member of the Norwegian delegation at the UNESCO world conference in Tokyo (1972).

22 Valderrama 1995:140,165. Details in a report by Jessup (1962). The participant from Norway was Ingeborg Lyche, the Ministry of Education (Tøsse 2011:221).

23 Lawson (1982), Lifelong Education: Concept or Policy?

> for integrated organization. The necessary integration should be achieved both vertically, through the duration of life, and horizontally to cover all the various aspects of the life of individuals and societies….[24]

UNESCO, a global actor, appealed its member states to integrate and re-design *education policies*. UNESCO acknowledged the importance of an individual learner along with the society. In other words: Discontinuity was implied since December 1965.

The Council of Europe treated adult education as a culture policy and its Out-of-School-Education Committee (chaired by a Norwegian) organized a conference about adult education, hosted by Norway in 1965. The committee acknowledged the term *Permanent Education* as the European name for *Lifelong Education*[25] while France was promoting the term *Èducation Permanente* (term in French with the same meaning). In 1969 at a meeting of Education Ministers at Versailles, France promoted the term *Permanent Education* whereas Sweden promoted the term Recurrent Education. *Permanent Education* finally became dominant because UNESCO had a French General Director.

No intergovernmental body was in the 1960s acknowledging or recommending LLL. Also, the term *Permanent Education,* acknowledged by Council of Europe, and the term *Lifelong Education,* acknowledged by UNESCO, were synonymously interpreted.

5. Policy terms by the UNESCO, the OECD, and the World Bank

In 1970, the UNESCO General Assembly appointed an international commission led by Edgar Faure (former French minister) to analyse the world educational crisis[26][27], which came up with a report (probably written in French), translated into several languages with 21 recommendations. The report was released in December 1972, four months *after* the UNESCO World Conference (Tokyo 1972) and the Commission was able to consider the outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiations in Tokyo. The words used in the first recommendation were:

> Tout individu doit avoir la possibilité d`apprendre pendant sa vie entière. L ìdée d'éducation permanente est la clé de voûte de la cité éducative.[28]
>
> Every individual must be in a position to be learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society.[29]
>
> Jeder muss die Möglichkeit haben, während seines ganzen Lebens zu lernen. Die Idee permanenter Erziehung ist der Grundstein der Lerngesellschaft.[30]

The seven authors of the report wrote in their own right and did not represent UNESCO but the first recommendation focused upon the needs of the individual in alignment with UNESCO's 1965 definition of Lifelong Education. There are no

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24 Ehlers 2009:43-44, Valderrama 1995:151

25 Udjus 1982:121, Tøsse 2011:227, 221). Ingeborg Lyche was chair for the committee. She and Ingelise Udjus were for decades involved in transnational policy-design (Bjerkaker & Wivestad 1982:30,116). See Lyche 1964, Lyche 1974 and Udjus 1966, Udjus 1968, Udjus 1972.

26 Coombs argued for the existence of a world crisis in education (Coombs 1968). Philip H. Coombs was 1962-1968 director for the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning in Paris

27 Himmelstrup 1974:27,44. Per Himmelstrup was 1967-1976 senior official in the Danish Ministry of Education

28 Faure, E. et al. 1972a:205

29 Faure, E. et al. 1972b: 181

30 Faure, E. et al. 1972c:246

differences between the French text and the translations into English and German and all three versions acknowledge an individualistic approach.

The second sentence is having differences. The formulation in French is radical because the term *Citè* is less abstract than the term *Society*. Cities are living realities. The sentence in German includes *Erziehung* (upbringing), a rather conservative (top-down) term as compared to *Éducation* and *Education*. The argument is: The terms in the three versions reflect different national approaches. A similar finding in a document from 1995 is described later in the text. This shows there is a never-ending disagreement in *the Policy Box* (Figure 1 in section IV) because of the difference in interests

OECD was not promoting LLL in the 1970s. In a report called **Recurrent Education. A strategy for Lifelong Learning** in 1973 by *The Center for Educational Research and Innovation* (the CERI), a research unit within the OECD, comprising Swedish and Norwegian experts, the acronym OECD was missing. The term *Recurrent Education* from Sweden was used and the member countries discussed the CERI proposal until 1978/1979 when the overall policy context changed due to the second oil shock.[31] The introduction to the report considered the term LLL and referred to learning theory.[32] The CERI activities were, actually, isolated within the OECD.[33]

The World Bank promoted the term *Non-Formal Education* and did not influence the policy-design in Europe. [34][35]

In sum, Council of Europe and UNESCO promoted the term *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education*, which had a French touch. OECD was opting for the term *Recurrent Education,* which had a Swedish touch. The terms *Individual* and *Society* were included in 1) the definition by the UNESCO General Assembly (December 1965) and 2) the recommendation by the Faure-Commission (December 1972). The fact, that these statements mentioned individuals before societies, indicates a focus upon *the Learning Individual*. No intergovernmental body promoted LLL in the 1970s explicitly.

6. The Nordic Council of Ministers

A usual consideration is that intergovernmental bodies influence the policy-designs of the member countries but this study argues for the opposite, provided the small countries have the relevant intellectual expertise. This way of designing Policy is termed as *Two Level Game*.[36]

The Nordic Countries cooperate since 1947 under the Nordic Commission for Cultural Cooperation established in 1947 and formed *the Nordic Council of*

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31 Bengtsson 2013:345. Jarl Bengtsson was head of CERI. He was recruited from the Swedish Ministry of Education.

32 CERI 1973:17-18. Åke Dalin was an expert in work-based learning. He became head of the Norwegian Institute for Andragogy in 1977.

33 Eide 1990. Kjell Eide was a senior official in the Norwegian Ministry of Education. He was 1961-1964 attached to the OECD

34 Coombs (with M. Ahmed) (1974) adopted in the scientific report **Attacking Rural Poverty. How Nonformal Education Can Help**… *a concept that equals education with learning, regardless of where, how and when the learning occurs…* (p. 8).

35 It gives sense to align the term *Folkeoplysning* with the terms *Non-Formal Education* and *Informal Education* (Ehlers 2000:149-151). However, the Danish Ministry of Education did only practice alignment in the relations with Nordic countries.

36 Martens 2007 (with reference to Putnam 1988)

Ministers (hereafter NCM) in 1972.

NCM labelled the education of adults as cultural policy[37] and mapped non-traditional educational activities since 1975 to formulated joint action plans thereafter.[38] In 1984, a joint committee for *Folkeoplysning og Voksenundervisning (FOVU)* was appointed for further formalization of joint efforts.

The FO was an acronym for the Folkeoplysning. Folk (people) synonymous to nation (interpreted as a collective) and top-down, aimed at nation-building. The acronym VU stood for Voksenundervisning (adult teaching) a new policy-term based upon a Bottom-Up approach.[39] The NCM supported the development of andragogy to focus upon the individual adult interpreted as an individual, while the pre fix the Folk continued to be interpreted as the collective (the nation). The Bottom-Up approach in the Nordic countries was new.

A Nordic action plan in 1988 called for joint aims of education policy leading to horizontal integration including adults as a target group. [40] It also linked the term *Competence* to LLL that had until then been used by the corporate world.[41]

7. The European Round Table of Industrialists

The ERT comprising of 24 multi-national corporations (MNCs) with headquarters in Europe was threatened by US and Japan as competitors. In February 1986, the EEC (later the EU) decided to have an internal market by January 1993. In 1994, the ERT appointed A *Standing Working Group on Education* with the CEO of NOKIA as chair and an economist from NOKIA as general secretary. Finns or Swedes chaired the four subcommittees. In the report **Education and European Competence. ERT Study on Education and Training in Europe**[42] published in February 1989 a joint policy-design had a specific focus upon the term *Competence* and ERT became the second transnational actor promoting the term *Competence.*

The Finnish CEO edited a publication compiling the findings of the subcommittees as well as the results from a survey with a radical title **Education for Life. A European Strategy.**[43] The *Standing Conference of Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors of European Universities* (CRE) became a partner in the lobbying since the recruitment of the Standing Work Group in

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37 Lyche 1974

38 Ehlers 2006b:347-348. The development of andragogy in Denmark, Sweden and Norway is described in a publication from the Danish Ministry of Education: Direktoratet for Ungdomsundervisning (1973), **Voksenpædagogisk forskning og uddannels**e…(andragological research and education…). Nordisk Ministerråd 1978, 1982, and 1983.

39 A sociologist has noted that the term *Læring* (learning) was from 1986 included in a Danish dictionary (Rasmussen 2004, note 134). A senior official at the Danish Ministry of Education was, for this reason, in the 1970s not able to apply the same policy-term as his Norwegian colleagues (Himmelstrup 1974:28). Another relevant finding: A senior official in the Danish Ministry of Education was in the 1980s considering the long term economic consequences of the Teaching approach (Undervisningsministeriet 1988:14-15, Rasmussen 2004:83-84).

40 Nordisk Ministerråd 1988:28. Translated by author

41 Mulder 2007

42 European Roundtable of Industrialists 1989

43 Kairamo (ed.) 1989

Education.[44]

The telling title of a Swedish publication from 1990: New Challenges in the Education and Training of the European Work Force Presentation. A Seminar for EC and EFTA Countries on Policies for Education and Ttraining of the Labour Force in a Changing European Economy[45] documented the predominance of MNCs.

The first report from the ERT Working Group (February 1989) focused upon the term *Learning* recommended to be a part of everyday life.[46]

ERT could be treated as a lobby organization because of the transnational strategies developed by this actor[47] with an unusual ability to influence the policy-design within the European Commission.[48] Swedish and Finnish multi-national corporations influenced the ERT and perhaps also the NCM because the term *Competence,* applied by the corporate world, appeared in the reports published by ERT as well as NCM.

8. Transnational reform strategies

Six transnational actors (the EEC, the UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the OECD, the ERT/CRE and the NCM) reformulated their strategies in the 1990s.

While the European Commission was pushing the Maastricht Treaty forward for an integrated internal market and more autonomy to the European Commission in policy design, UNESCO wanted to align its strategy with the expanding EEC/EU because of its weakening position[49][50] (USA announced to leave UNESCO in 1983 while UK and Singapore left in 1984). Jacques Delors, the acting President of the European Commission, in November 1991 was chosen by UNESCO to monitor the formulation of a global report in 1991 to design its global strategy for the coming years.[51] [52] The global influence of EU in education policy-design was quite evident.

Since 1970, the Council of Europe (the Council for Cultural Cooperation) funded projects developed under the *Permanent Education* umbrella. 1981-86 is described as …*adult education and community development…counteracting the crisis at local level*, whereas the focus for 1987-93 was *Adult education and social change…rebuilding adult education: a response to democratic challenges in Europe*.[53] The words document how the Council replaced a micro level strategy with a macro level strategy.

In the 1980s, OECD functioned as a think tank funded directly by the member

44 Cooperation between universities and industries had been on the Norwegian agenda since the 1960s (Dalin (ed.) 1969).

45 Abrahamson & Henriksson (eds.) 1990

46 European Round Table of Industrialists 1989:5

47 Apeldoorn (2002) claimed, according to Kauppinen (2014:502), that ERT cannot be defined as a lobby group: *...it is a cross-sectoral elite organisation that uses its agenda-setting power in order to (re)shape proactively different policies at European level…* Jakobi noted the broad perspective in the ERT activities: A non-typical NGO developing principles (Jakobi 2012a:44).

48 Nedergaard 1992, Cowles 1995, Apeldoorn 2000

49 Jones 2005:85

50 Mundy, 1999:42

51 UNESCO 1996, page 44 in the appendices

52 Ehlers 2013:29

53 Bogard 1994

countries and contracting with *transnational experts*.[54] OECD (a transnational actor) still recommended *Recurrent Education*. The headline for an intergovernmental conference, hosted by OECD in March 1988, was *Education and the Economy in a Changing Society* and an official OECD report, summarized the challenges related to education and training of adults.[55] In a report, published in Paris by CERI/OECD, two transnational experts highlighted the term *Learning* and proposed a *Paradigm Shifts*.[56]

The CRE and the ERT promoted LLL via the joint report **Lifelong Learning. Developing Europes`s Future Capability. The Role of Industry-University Cooperation** (June 1992). The lobbyists wanted the universities in Europe to become providers of LLL (horizontal integration). However, they interpreted the term as *Adult Education* (and not *Adult Learning*).

The governments in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden wanted the EEC to establish a European Internal Market. All Nordic governments appointed a think tank recruited from the three *boxes*: Science, Policy, and Profession in December 1993 to formulate a Nordic strategy for LLL.[57]

9. Growth, Employment and Competition

Jacques Delors specified imminent problems in a White Paper titled **Growth, Employment and Competition. The Challenges and the Ways forward into the 21st Century** (December 1993). [58]

In December 1993, the European Commission considered the relevance of the term *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education* but did not plan any transnational intervention while in 1995, the announcement of *the European Year of Education* signaled its move towards transnational policy-design.

The ERT published a new report called **Education for Europeans: Towards the Learning Society** in February 1995. The French President of the Working Group, had recruited two French experts replacing the Nordic influence in the management of the ERT Group.

The ERT proposed the development of an *Education Chain* linking pre-schooling with compulsory education and adult education with general and/or vocational education and higher education calling for *Vertical Integration.* The ERT policy-makers interpreted the term LLL as *Adult Education* (and not as *Adult Learning*).

NCM published its report **Golden Riches in the Grass, Lifelong Learning for All** in February 1995 (same month as the report produced by the ERT) and called for a *Learning* regime. The Nordic approach comprising *Equal Opportunities for All*, was unique in Europe.[59] The Nordic experts interpreted the term LLL as *Adult Learning* (and not as *Adult Education*).

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54 Grek 2015

55 OECD 1989

56 Tuijnmann & Van der Kamp (1991), Effectice Adult Learning. Theories and Policies. Tuijmann (1992), Paradigm Shifts in Adult Education

57 Nordic Council of Ministers 1995:6

58 Commission of the European Communities. 1993:16-17,122

59 West & Nikolai 2013

10. Teaching and Learning. Towards the Learning Society

Edith Cresson (French) became EU Commissioner for Science, Technology and Education in January 1995. The French version of the second EU White Paper had the title **Enseigner et Apprendre. Vers la Société Cognitive** (December 1995) The German version was in alignment with the French one**…Auf dem Weg zur Kognitiven Gesellschaft**. Both versions had a conservative approach.[60]

The ERT Group came up with a radical subtitle **Vers une Société qui Apprend**. (February 1995). The multi-national lobbyists called for cognitive competences (traditional) as well as non-cognitive competences (radical). The two approaches were not aligned: The Cresson Group had a conservative vision whereas the policy-makers in the ERT Group had a radical vision.

In the first White Paper (December 1993), the European Commission announced that 1995 (perhaps) would be nominated as *the European Year of Education*. However, the second White Paper (December 1995), said that the European Commission would launch a general debate in 1996 under the name *the European Year of Lifelong Learning.* The intention with a general debate was to make it easier to distinguish between:

- action to be carried out on local and national level
- action to be carried out on European level
- cooperation between the EU and its Member States [61]

The European Commission re-placed the policy-term *Education* with *Learning*.

The OECD asked for a five years mandate based upon its publication **Lifelong Learning for all** (January 1996). The official abandonment of the policy-term *Recurrent Education* by OECD signaled a weak Swedish position and a strengthened Norwegian position (in the context of the Nordic countries) maintained by Norway for three decades with minor adjustments.[62]

In comparison: The Danish Ministry of Education released the publication **10 punkt program for tilbagevendende uddannelse** (10 points plan for Recurrent Education) in 1995 aligned with the Swedish policy-term *Recurrent Education*.

Neither the policy-term LLL nor the policy-term Learning was acknowledged. In comparison: The Finnish Minister for Education was explicit in his acknowledgement of LLL.[63]

OECD achieved the desired mandate. The mandate interpreted *Lifelong Learning for All* as LLL for all age groups – not *Equal Opportunities for All*.

The international UNESCO commission, chaired by Jacques Delors released the report **Learning - the Treasure within** in the spring of 1996 and UNESCO had more than a year to market the term *Learning* before the Hamburg Conference. The international commission applied neither the term *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education* nor the term LLL. The prefix *Lifelong* was not included. [64]

However, the 1996 report aligned with the transnational documents published by the European Commission and OECD: The UNESCO approach became

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60 Field 1997:83

61 The Commission of European Communities 1995:31

62 Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet 1965, 1986, 1989, Norges Offentlige Utredninger 1972, 1988, 1997

63 Ehlers 2006b: 351-352

64 The UNESCO established the promotion of *Lifelong Education* in 1965

Eurocentric.[65] The global intergovernmental body recommended a *Learning* regime.

11. Discussions

11.1 LLL as idea was promoted implicitly by transnational actors since 1965

The distinction between *LLL as idea* and *LLL as reform* has, as demonstrated, been relevant for the study of the Discontinuity in policy-design, which appeared between December 1965 and December 1995. Which terms were applied in the transnational policy documents? When did transnational actors promote *LLL as idea*?

The following paragraphs are using four policy-terms as foundation stones for the construction of *LLL as idea*. The policy-term *Non-Formal Education* is not included because the World Bank was not interfering in the design of public policies in Europe. The opening question is about chronology: When did the transnational actors (in question) begin their promotion of certain terms?

Three transnational policy-terms appeared between 1965 and 1986: *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education* (the Council of Europe and the UNESCO), *Folkeoplysning/Voksenundervisning* (the Nordic Council of Ministers) and *Recurrent Education* (CERI/OECD). The mapping of their appearance has documented the existence of a *two level game* between nation states in Europe, a number of several intergovernmental bodies, and the multi-national ERT. While France favoured the transnational promotion of the double term *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education*, Denmark favoured the double term *Folkeoplysning/Voksenundervisning*, whereas Sweden favoured the single term *Recurrent Education*.

Norwegians officials occupied positions and thus gained influence in the Council of Europe and UNESCO because of its scientific approach in designing education policy. The radical policy-design was based upon a Bottom-Up approach. However, Norway promoted the term *Adult Learning* which is not synonymous to LLL The first targets only adults while the second (based upon vertical integration) includes all age groups.

The implementation of *Adult Learning as reform* started in January 1977. The Norwegian government decided to promote *LLL as reform* by September 1981 and a national commission delivered the report **Livslang Læring** by September 1986. However, the government did not announce a reform in the Parliament apparently, due to a revision of the national strategy. Something new was happening in the mid 1980s.

Originally, the policy-terms *Folkeoplysning/Voksenundervisning* (Nordic Council of Ministers) and *Lifelong Education/Permanent Education* (Council of Europe and UNESCO) were characterized in the cultural policy and governments categorize culture policy as costs. Council of Europe was re-designing the strategy for *Permanent Education* in 1986 and UNESCO was reducing all costs because the US, the UK and Singapore had left the organization. However, the term *Recurrent Education* (CERI/OECD) was characterized in the economic policy. The Swedish government was in favor of investing in *Recurrent Education*. No other country in Europe had in the 1980s *Recurrent Education* as its national

[65] Field 2000:3-4, Rubenson 2006:166, Lee & Friedrich 2011:160-161

strategy.

11.2 LLL as reform was promoted explicitly by transnational actors since 1986

The shift from cultural policy to economic policy, the shift from a costs perspective to an investment perspective, and the shift from imagining countries as nation states to imagining them as national economies, could be defined as Discontinuity. The following paragraphs are using two policy-terms as foundation stones for the construction of *LLL as reform*. The opening question is again based upon chronology: When did the transnational actors (in question) establish their promotion of the policy-terms *LLL* and *Competence*?

LLL and Competence terms appeared after February 1986 in transnational policy documents: They were promoted by ERT (February) and NCM(March) from 1988. The terms were in both cases presented as if they were inter-linked. In fact, the current study names these floating signifiers as the double term *LLL/Competence*.

The managements of the two transnational actors (the first ERT Group and the NCM) had a Nordic touch. The driving force behind the two lobby initiatives promoting the Nordic touch was the applications for EU membership from Finland, Norway, and Sweden who wanted to benefit from the European Internal Market (to be shortly operative). Economic considerations made Finland, Norway, and Sweden accept Discontinuity in the national policy-design.

The two EU White Papers signaled the drastic change in EU position from non-intervention (1993 Whitepaper focusing on *Education*) to intervention (1995 Whitepaper focusing on *Learning*) similar to the change in the Norwegian position in 1965. Finland and Sweden became EU member states and Norway, an associated member state by 1995.

The influence of France had again increased in the European Commission (the Commissioner for Education was a former French Prime Minister) whereas the influence of the Nordic countries was reduced. The European Commission was compromising between the proposal from NCM and the proposal from the multi-national ERT. The ERT was now opting for a transnational policy-design based on *horizontal* integration as well as *vertical* integration. The response from the European Commission was positive in both cases. The NCM had wanted *Lifelong Learning for all* to be included in the policy-design. However, the EU interpretation of the policy-term was not *Equal Opportunities for all*.

11.3 The European Internal Market triggered the transnational policy-design

The decision to establish the European Internal Market triggered, apparently, a downsizing of the policy-term *Teaching* (the old regime) in favor of the policy-term *Learning* (the new regime) marking Discontinuity after a century-long continuity. The replacement of the term *Adult Education* (cultural policy and cost) with the term *Adult Learning* (economic policy and investment) was a radical change.

The alignment between the long-term strategies of the EEC, decided in February 1986, and the EU proposals published in December 1993 and December 1995 is evident.

The first White Paper raised questions about growth, employment, and competition where as the second White Paper called for *The Learning Society*. The new strategy for the OECD countries, published in January 1996, titled **Lifelong Learning for All** acknowledged the policy term Learning apparently opening doors for more growth, more employment, and more competition within and outside EU. Discontinuity in policy-design occurred inside EU and outside it in OECD Countries.

A transnational regime, based upon horizontal as well as vertical integration, was born in Europe. One transnational actor, the EU, was having the strength and the economy to design and implement a transnational *Learning* regime. No other transnational actor was in the late 1990s having the same potential as the EU.

12. Conclusion

Mapping a term in policy documents needs a careful consideration about the time and space in which the term appeared for the first time in an implicit or an explicit way. LLL implicitly appeared as an idea from 1965 but it became explicit and was implemented as a reform much later. Considerations about the context, the reasons of appearance of the term, stakeholders and their stakes for the inclusion of the term in a policy document, human influences and interpretation are important elements in mapping a policy term. Apart from that, it is always a political decision to include or exclude a certain term in the policy document. Further, it depends upon who is promoting the term (like in the discussed case, EU was an influential actor that succeeded in bringing change using enormous funds). Movement of a term in a *Two Level Game* from one actor to another depends much on the context, language and the organization which is interpreting it.

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Comparative Program and Institutional Analyses. Conceptual and Methodological Considerations in the field of Cultural and Intercultural Education for Adults

Abstract

This paper is a beginning comparison of German and US approaches to cultural and especially intercultural education. This work is framed by the many studies done on the immigration and the cultural learning of immigrants. We then begin a discussion of the varying approaches taken by the two countries to aid in integration. Finally, we begin a preliminary analysis of the differences between the two countries. Some parts of this paper contain sections and formulations from a recently completed article by Robak and Fleige on the situation in Germany (2017 in press).

In recent years, increasing immigration has resulted in new attention to intercultural education in both the United States and Germany. Each country has approached this issue within its own historical context and contemporary concerns. Specific problems related to racism and anti-Semitism have been addressed in a similar fashion. In this paper, we propose to analyze programming from a transcultural perspective. This involves a perspective that focuses on the reflection of one's own position in changing connected cultures, as well as of hybrid identities and sense of belongings, affiliation, as well as of the consequences of migration. In particular, we will examine some of the ways that different learning forms and target groups are currently fostered by different kinds of educational institutions.

Background

Both Germany and the US have historically been the destinations for thousands of immigrants. In fact, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a world wide migration west from Russia and Eastern Europe that included Germany as a stop (Taylor, 1971; Moch, 2003). The waves of immigration were somewhat different in both countries. Both faced huge migrations at both the turn of the 20th century and presently. It must be borne in mind that the policies of both countries are historically rooted, particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War. But not only do we have to differentiate several forms or types of migration as well as re- and transmigration (Ibid.; Robak, 2016), but the forms and origins of migrations undergo severe changes now. The states of origin of escape caused by (civil) war, in particular, change dramatically over time. New questions of nationality, ethnicity, and integration are raised with great emphasis both in the US and in Germany, as in many countries in the world. Our concern as researchers is the response that adult education and adult educators give to immigration.

United States Immigration and Responses by Adult Educators

In the US, the waves of immigration were relatively distinct. The largest influx of immigrants occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This led to a large anti-immigrant reaction. While Chinese and Japanese immigration were cut off by 1900, immigrants from other non-English speaking countries was permitted until 1924 when it was essentially stopped as well. A limited number of refugees were admitted to the US during and immediately after World War II, but large numbers of immigrants did not begin arriving again until the early 1960s when the laws were changed.

Beginning in the 1960s, large numbers of Asians and Latina/o immigrants moved to the US. Some, as the Puerto Ricans were already citizens. Others, such as the Cubans had a special status easing their entry and route to citizenship. In the 1970s, Asian immigrants arrived from China, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. More recently, immigrants from India, Pakistan, and other middle Eastern countries have arrived.

All immigrants have been met with a mixture of welcome and revulsion. The key issues facing immigrants have been and remain: learning English, establishing themselves in jobs, learning on how to live in the US and negotiate its systems. Many of these needs have been addressed through formal and nonformal adult education programs and offerings.

Immigration and the response by adult educators in the U.S.

Since the US has no nationalized education, the responses to immigrants have been piecemeal and idiosyncratic. They involve varying combinations of public and private activities. These differing configurations are the result of multiple of ideological frameworks. For the purposes of this paper, we will begin an examination of several approaches that represent the differing funding streams. Adult Education has been used to teach English, but also to prepare immigrants for the workplace. The most difficult area has focused on integration into American life. As noted above, there are several different ways to approach this. Below we will discuss several of these.

Immigration and Responses by Adult Educators in Germany

We will not consider migration in pre- and post-Nazi Germany here but distinguish four central forms of migration as summed up by Öztürk (2014, pp. 18-26) in the Federal Republic of Germany. These comprise a) the so-called "foreign workers" wave (working immigrants from Spain, Greece, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Morocco and Tunesia in the 1960s, b) the subsequent immigration of family members since the 1960s, c) the migration of refugees from changing countries under (civil) war and d) World War II repatriates from Russia and Poland in the 1990s. Moreover, there are considerable effects of working migration within the EU according to the principle of freedom of movement.

The proportion of the German population that migrating after 1960 is presently twenty percent. The Federal Statistical Office, in its classifications, splits the population into "Germans" and "Foreigners" as well as Germans with and without "a migration background" and with or without their "own migration experience" pointing to those generations who were born in Germany. Numerous statistics and surveys deal with the participation of these groups in the labor market as well as in education and all kinds of social and cultural contexts. The term *migration background* has been adopted in the political discourse. The legal situation of the immigrants has gradually changed for the better (since 1978 when the first Federal Commissioner was in office). Descendants of immigrants who were born in the country are German citizens. Following a recent resolution of the Great Coalition of 2014, they are allowed dual citizenship.

However, policies adopted since the 1970s and 1980s have sought to cut immigration, to identify 'economic migrants', and to turn down a certain share of applications for asylum. We see a constant political argument on the question of whether Germany is legally – and not only virtually – a 'country of immigration'. The unprecedented wave of civil war refugees from Syria, Iraq and other countries into Germany from 2013 onwards peaked in 2015. At first it precipitated euphoria within the population (and the labor market) and then led to major discord and a strengthening of the Right. Since the Berlin attack of December, 2016 the country has seen a debate on how to identify terrorists among the asylum-seekers. A second, unrelated, quarrel addresses the subsequent immigration of family members of current refugees.

Adult education, in the past, has addressed migrants as a target group in many ways. With the 2005 Immigration Act an integration course comprised of language classes, civic education (*Orientierungskurs*), and culture and history was introduced. This course is mandatory for post-2005 immigrants and ends with an examination. The language courses are linked to a European certification system. The integration courses are coordinated and financed through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF). Both public and private institutions for adult education offer integration courses as either their main or secondary function. The development of this model was regarded as a milestone for integration while falling short in acceptance of cultural and societal integration in particular (Öztürk, 2014).

Current debates on immigration and adult education concern questions of how to help immigrants to integrate into the labor market, using federal, community, and private initiatives; how to raise the percentage of migrant participants from different social groups in adult education; and how to develop and implement intercultural learning, competences and education.

Research Questions

For this preliminary comparative study, we focus on the following research questions:

- What are the parameters of organizational structure and function as well as programs and participation as they relate to intercultural education and learning for adults in the US and Germany?
- What are the commonalities and differences between the two countries?

Methodology

This paper begins an analysis of data collected in Germany and compares it to programmatic structures in the US. The data for Germany are derived from studies on educational institutions with offerings in the area of cultural and intercultural education, such as the *Volkshochschule* (adult education centers) and denominational institutions (Robak & Petter, 2014; Robak, Fleige, Sterzig, Seifert, Teichmann & Krueger, 2015; Fleige, Zimmer, Lücker & Thom, 2015). We begin with case studies from the German and US situations.

The comparison that follows the explication of data and observations from the two countries will involve analyses of the following programmatic aspects: funding sources and impacts; organizational structure and objectives. We will also attempt to discuss the implications for policy development and practice. Most importantly, we will try to identify communalities and differences (Charters & Hilton, 1989).

Areas and Categories of Analysis for US and Germany

For our comparison we focus on the following areas: Organizational structures and funding, types of organizations and their (historical) purpose, topics and program structures including different programmatic areas (such as: intercultural learning as such (and its connection to cultural learning and education), language learning and civic learning/civic engagement. In order to present some contextual information we will outline the specific immigration patters and structural responses in adult education as well as pedagogical concepts in both countries.

Findings

Our preliminary findings look at the structure and program areas related to intercultural learning in the US and Germany. They take into account the contextual and philosophical contexts that lie at the heart of these programs.

US Models and Issues

This section will briefly discuss the models of integration and some examples of programs in the US. The intent is to provide an overview that will aid in the comparative exercise.

U. S. Immigration Patterns and Models of Integration and Resistance

In the US, approaches to immigration and learning how to become American have historically been categorized in four large groupings. These are the Melting Pot, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism and Transculturalism. The idea of the Melting Pot developed in the early twentieth century. It portrayed American society as the result of an amalgamation of the many different immigrant cultures in the US. It also portrayed American culture as inherently different from these immigrant cultures. While recognizing the immigrant contributions to American society, programs developed around this view focused on what has come to be called *Americanization*.

In reaction to this view of the melting pot, two philosophers, Horace Kallen and Alain Locke developed differing but complementary views of what they called cultural pluralism. They too saw the US as a combination of ethnicities and cultures, however they viewed it more as (in Kallen's words) an orchestra than a melting pot. Each group maintained its own distinctive voice while also combining into a new whole. While they both accepted the need to learn English, they rejected the idea that immigrants and African Americans needed to abandon their heritages as well. Kallen went to so far as to say that such an abandonment was impossible.

A somewhat middle ground was adopted by the social reformer Jane Addams. She believed that immigrants brought unique contributions to American culture and that the process of integrating them needed to be two-way. She termed this, quite simply, Immigrant grifts.

More recently, these terms, particularly cultural pluralism, have become fraught with political connotations. This has led to the consideration of multiculturalism as the term of choice. In this context, multiculturalism accepts the varying dimensions of pluralism, but elevates them beyond acceptance to a good that needs to be nurtured.

Organization of Adult Education: U.S. - Overview

The US does not have a centralized education system. Therefore, adult education differs regionally and by funding source. Adult education in the US is offered through higher education institutions, unions and workers programs, and community-based and religious organizations. Because of this diversity, it is difficult to discuss the full range of programming for adults on any topic, but especially programs for immigrants. The reason for this is that many agencies combine to work together through a variety of funding structures. In the US, the issues related to immigrants reflect on long term policies on jobs, health, and other social services, as well as education. Adult education fills a gap in several important areas. In the first, as most obviously, programs for teaching English to adults, are the most conspicuous of these programs. These are funded through higher education institutions and community based organizations. Programs for immigrations are generally found in community colleges, although other colleges and universities offer English as a Second Language (ESL) for the college student.

The funding for these programs comes from the state and federal grants. Sometimes the services are contracted out for programs for refugees. The complex and overlapping configurations are sometimes difficult to tease out.

Additionally, localities offer programs, often in combination with community based organizations. For example, in Aurora, Ilinois, the local community college offers ESL programming. In addition, down the block from the downtown campus of Waubonsee Community College, is the Dominican Literacy Center. This is a private group originally founded by nuns in the Dominican order. It focuses on English Language Learning and citizenship classes for women. This center relies on volunteer tutors, in the same way that literacy programs do. They also provide training for volunteer tutors. It seems to function based primarily on donations. There is low overhead and limited staff.

Finally, looking at one last group in the immediate area, World Relief is another faith-based organization working with refugees and immigrants. They are funded by monies from the Department of State, US Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as private donations. World Relief is an umbrella organization that provides services through cooperating in churches. A large part of their US operation revolves around programs for refugees, particularly citizenship training. And English language learning. The primary purpose is not educational, in fact the primary purpose is religious, but the goal is to aid in integration into society.

Refugee Programs

The US government provides funding for the resettlement of refugees. This includes an initial reception and assessment of circumstances. The services are mandated for a period not to exceed ninety days of services. The funds are dispersed to local agencies that actually provide the services. The mandated services for refugees include: housing, furniture and household items, food or a food allowance, seasonally appropriate clothing, pocket money for adults for thirty days, assistance in applying for cash and medical assistance within seven working days of arrival, assistance in applying for a social security card within ten days of arriving, assistance in enrolling in England language programs within ten days of arrivals, assistance in enrolling in other services as appropriate, help in accessing health screenings and other health programs, assistance in school enrollment, transportation in general and specifically to job interviews and job training, and assistance in registering for the draft (US Department of State, 2011). These services are provided through agencies that contract with the federal government. All services are specified, down to the number of towels. In addition, service providers must agree to train their staff to work with the refugees.

The funds for these basic services are supplemented by a variety of local philanthropies and municipal efforts. They provide supplementary help with the re-settlement process and further funding for living. For example, some municipalities have worked to provide a more coherent framework for the provision of services. The small city of Dayton, Ohio is often presented as a model in this work. Their plan, called the *Welcome Dayton Plan* represents an effort to coordinate services throughout the city. The aim of the Welcome Dayton Plan is to make the city hospitable to immigrants. It is explicitly predicated on the ideas that immigrants are essential to economic health. The plan is primarily focused around economic development and how this can be encouraged. The plan delineates the goals of designating an area for immigrant entrepreneurship; the development of systems to encourage small business group. However, it goes beyond this to consider how immigrants can be better integrated into the fabric of the city. The plan set as a goal the expansion of interpreter access and increased immigrant participation in government and non-governmental organizations. In addition, it calls for increased "trust and communication between immigrant communities and law enforcement (City of Dayton Human Rights Council, 2011)" and efforts to overcome language barriers in the court system. In the realm of social services, the plan calls for the elimination of barriers to services. It specifies steps that can be taken to eliminate the language and cultural barriers to full participation. Furthermore, the plan recommends the training of volunteers and the coordination of service providers.

In terms of what they have labeled *Community, Culture, Arts and Education,* the plan calls for the increasing of English as a Second Language (ESL) and basic literacy classes and the encouragement of cross-cultural programming. The recommendations in this section have a mixture of broad programming possibility and specificity such as the establishment of soccer event. The focus here is broadly on integration through cultural activities and schooling. The recommendations include the establishment of a *Cultural Brokers* training program to work with community volunteers; the building of a base of ESL and literacy tutors; coordination of services for school age children; and the establishment of *a Global Dayton Soccer* [football] event that would focus on cultural diversity. In terms of research, it is too early to say how successful this model has been, but the emphasis on coordination is one that is being copied across the country (Bidgood, 2017).

Programs for All Immigrants

While much of the present political discussion focuses on services for refugees, it should be clear that those services are only an extension of the broader services offered to immigrants. The Dayton Plan draws on already existing services and agencies to coordinate and help with the integration process, however the services are present. Offerings are available from a plethora of institutions as noted above. This section will look at some public and privately funded types of organizations. It should also be noted that most immigrants do not qualify as refugees and in fact do not qualify for any federal programs whatsoever (Moussavian, 2016).

Cities emulating the *Welcome Dayton Plan* have focused on the integration of services in an attempt to include a broader swathe of the population. Kerr, McDaniel and Guinan (2014) discuss the multiple ways that programs for immigrants and job growth intersect. They point out that in the Midwest US, initiatives at the state level have focused on helping undocumented immigrants get drivers' licenses and the provision of in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants. In the Midwest, and elsewhere in the US, the crisis over immigrants is often portrayed as a problem of illegal immigration. It is certainly true, that for the most part, undocumented immigrants, cannot apply for any of the benefits open to legal immigrants and citizens. The states have attempted to develop systems for dealing with the plethora of programs and funding sources. While these offices have different names (such as the Multicultural Coalition of Grand Island, Nebraska and the Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration in Fort Wayne Indiana), they all focus on integration of immigrants through a combination of job training, job development, and language learning. They also have a focus of civic participation. Usually, these initiatives are formulated not through an education office, but through workforce development initiatives.

German Models and Issues

The following paragraphs will discuss models and issues in Germany.

Immigration Patterns and Models for Integration

From a philosophical point of view, we can distinguish different pedagogical conceptualizations of adult education for immigrants, that also linked to patterns for immigration as well as different patterns of seeing Germany as a country of immigration. Not all of the historical concepts are aimed at integration (Öztürk, pp. 81-86): On a conceptual pedagogical level, the country saw changes from "Pedagogy for foreign residents/workers" in the 1970s, "then "Interculturality" and "Multiculturalism" in the 1980s and 1990s, turning to the concept of "Transculturalism", nowadays also as a sub-concept of the overall approach to "Diversity" in organizations and in society (Robak, 2013; Ibid., 2016; Dollhausen & Muders, 2016; Öztürk, 2014). More recently, with respect to theoretical explications of discrimination, considerations on intersectionality start to play a greater role. Also, theoretical hints at cultural *essentialism* and *culturalism* gain greater awareness, at least gradually (Robak 2013; Reckwitz, 2006). These concepts originated from new patterns of globalization, marketization and increased efforts at international dialogue and understanding since the 1950s (Robak 2013).

However, with the current new waves of immigration from Syria, Iraq, and

Afghanistan, new challenges have emerged for integration, civic learning and reflexive, and political education, for both migrants and hosts. A primary purpose of adult education, as argued by Gieseke (2016), Käpplinger, (2016b) and Robak, Fleige and Petter (2016), is to encourage civic learning to combat racism, ethnocentrism, and anti-Semitism. Additional areas of concern are: human rights, German law and commonly shared social norms; democracy; gender issues; empathy, cooperation and commonly shared cultural interests/values as well as cultural differences. Moreover, Gieseke (2016) asks how adult education may to compensate for the boredom that occurs in people's free time and may create social tension. Within the mandatory integration courses, civic learning issues have presented the greatest challenge (Schrader 2016; Käpplinger 2016b; Brandt; Loreit & Schöll 2016). Robak (2016) points to the need to allow the development of cultural belonging, as well as hybridity (which is considered as a paradigm of habitus, life worlds and the self).

Organization of Adult Education for Immigrants as well as of intercultural education for adults: Germany – Overview

In Germany, many organizations offer both special courses for immigrants and intercultural education. These include: The *Volkshochschule* (adult education center), Denominational organizations and union-sponsored programs for members (these are both recognized as public education); community-based organizations; higher education; private commercial providers; and associations of the civil society such as museums, and opera houses (Gieseke et. al, 2005).

Public adult education is subject to the laws at the *Länder*/federal states level with a broad variety of areas of study and institutions that are funded by various ministries. Within the public sector, offerings are co-funded either a percentage of overall costs or a fixed amount (see for instance for the federal state of Lower Saxony, http://www.aewb-nds.de/pruefung-und-anerkennung/finanzierung-nach-nebg/gesetz/). However, not all of the costs are covered and the organizations need to both raise additional money (which, then, can also be public) and to charge participant fees, which may be up to 100 Euros per course per semester. The underlying premise of these policies is that, public adult education should be available for all the citizens, open to the public and it should comprise a wide range of areas of study and topics both general and vocational.

These principles and laws originated in the 1960s and 1970s and are still highly valued. However, there is still a vast percentage of adults who do not participate in adult education. At the same time, we see a decrease in public funding. At present, special funding (outside of the regular budget) is available for special (language) courses for migrants (Robak 2016; Grotlüschen, Haberzeth & Krug, 2011). This has led to calls for a uniform federal law.

Special Courses for Immigrants

In terms of special courses for immigrants, no general legal distinction is made between programs for immigrants as opposed to refugees. Several types of programming options are offered including: integration courses (containing language courses and civic learning); special (certified) German as a Foreign/Second languages courses; courses in health; and courses for vocational integration and competence development. Moreover, low qualified immigrants can participate in courses for alphabetization and basic competences open to everyone. Basic vocational adult education is still rare. Today, the most common types of courses for migrant target groups/ (Öztürk, 2014), include the integration course and German as a Foreign/Second Language Courses (Käpplinger, 2016a). The statistical survey of the *Volkshochschulen* operated by the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), found that language courses were the most prevalent. Public programs for vocational education for refugees, initiated by federal or communal or intermediary agencies are still rare (Robak, 2016). Moreover courses on cultural and civic integration are lacking, except where included in the integration course.

As for the integration courses themselves, the provision of extra money through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) alone is not enough. Additional funds are utilized for teacher training (Brandt, Loreit & Schoell, 2016; Schrader, 2016). Robak (2016) argues that the *Volkshochschulen* and other public adult education organizations offer a stable and guaranteed structure for operationalizing integration measures.

Finally, some courses provide access to higher education and bridge transitions between universities and the dual system. An overlapping discussion concerns the recognition of formal vocational qualifications and the tools that still have to be developed for this (Winther & Jordanowski, 2016).

"Intercultural Opening" of and diversity in adult education organization

A particular issue is the so-called *intercultural opening* of public adult education organizations. (Sprung, 2011; Ruhlandt, 2016; Öztürk, 2014). This concept is aimed at making public adult education institutions more sensitive to the needs individuals from all cultural backgrounds. This includes both language courses (as add-ons to integration courses) and other courses (e.g. in health) for special target groups.

In our small-scale qualitative study (Fleige et al., 2015), we reported that cultural education (such as creative classes that require less language skills) functions as an entry point to regular offerings. Cultural education also provides the opportunity to familiarize oneself with and to mold social spaces. Other tools provide child care within the organizations as well as day-to-day dialogue about issues and programs.

Individuals with a migration background are as diverse as the general population. Attitudes towards learning, patterns of participation and individual learning interests varied considerably among participants in our sample. We tried to capture this diversity by identifying and modelling four different types of participation. We found that vocational and cultural learning needs are balanced but that for some of the interviewees cultural learning was a means to compensate for the stress of the integration course and particularly the final examination.

Intercultural education for adults

According to our findings, programs of intercultural education in Germany include both intercultural learning itself and special courses for migrants as discussed above. From the mid-2000s, the pedagogical concepts of interculturality and transculturality have changed and expanded significantly. We identified a rapid increase in offerings, topics and learning forms, revealing on one side tendencies of radicalization (anti-Semitism, racism) that have to be dealt with but on the other side also a new approach to cultural understanding in a transcultural sense.

A framework for looking at intercultural education as a part of cultural education can be found in works by Gieseke and Kargul (2005) and Gieseke, Opelt, Stock and Börjesson (2005). Gieseke & Opelt (2005) first analyzed programs in Berlin and Brandenburg and identified three approaches or *participation portals* to (inter)cultural education: *a systematic approach* (i.e. lectures and courses offering knowledge of art, culture and the relation of different cultures), a *creative approach* (being creative, learning practices and techniques like drawing, dancing), a *communicative* and *intercultural approach* (i.e. communicative experiences of other cultures, intercultural training, intercultural communication). An additional, newer analytic portal is *the transcultural approach*. It calls for the analysis of perception and reflection on cultural similarities, while exploring identities, culturality and affiliations that transcend one cultural approach. This latter approach has been identified by Robak and Petter (2014) as one of several participation portals *within* the area of intercultural education: (1) The *Systematic portal*; (2) The *Creative portal*; (3) The *Intercultural portal of understanding and communication*; (4) The *Transcultural portal of understanding and communication*; (5) The *Portal of negotiation and reflection* covering the reflective exploration of interpretive patterns, values and standards such as emancipation, democratization and xenophobia integral parts of civic engagement and learning; (6) *Special courses for migrants* covering language courses, integration, alphabetization; (7) *Interreligious dialogue* which looks at living-together in pluralistic societies; and (8) *Intercultural further vocational training.* The research sample covered one fifth of the public adult education organizations in Lower Saxony, among them adult education centers, residential adult education centers (*Heimvolkshochschule*), and Protestant and Catholic adult education organizations. Analyzing programs (booklet and on the internet), flyers and project descriptions, we found that 627 *special courses for migrants* were offered. Topics included language learning, specifically German as a foreign language, integration classes, and classes that focus on integration and inclusion. In addition, Käpplinger (2016a) found an increase in language courses in 2008 and 2009, after the establishment of the mandatory integration course with the 2005 Immigration Act.

However, examining offerings through the lens of *intercultural education*, Robak and Petter (2014) found 520 offerings focused on foreign language but open to everyone. Additionally, 172 offerings could be considered creative. These included art education, cooking, dancing, and other creative activities. Thirty-five offerings could be considered transcultural in that they focused on personal education (Persönlichkeitsbildung as the education and shaping of the *self* in the sense of German idealistic philosophy of education). The final program type was reflective, with 34 offerings including personal and civic education.

Program structures

Breaking the program offerings down by percentage, the Creative approach (Portal 2), accounted for 15% of all offerings. The intercultural approach of understanding and communication (Portal 3) accounted for 37% of all offerings; special courses for migrants (Portal 6) accounted for 35% of all offerings. The other portals together formed the missing 13%.

The following listing provides a more detailed overview on the differentiation and range of program structures by areas of study that were found along with the portals:

- *Special courses for migrants* (627 offerings), with emphasis on *Language and German Culture* (German as a foreign language, integration classes, alphabetization), social space-related education, personal education and thus pushing forward integration and inclusion (in terms of cultural practices, the construction of social space, home` and belonging) as educational goals;
- *Intercultural understanding* (520 offerings), with an emphasis on *Foreign language and Cultural understanding*, personal and political education, and thus fostering the educational goals of understanding by practicing and communicating as well as constructing social spaces;
- The *Creative portal* (172 offerings) where intercultural education is based on art education, particular in the subareas of cooking and dancing, pushing forward the educational goals of cultural practices, physical experience, social-emotional learning.
- At the end of the range we found *Transcultural understanding* (35 offerings), with an emphasis on personal education (change in cultures, reflecting the notion/idea of 'home' and belonging), language (i.e. language classes for parents and children) and thus fostering the reflection of affiliations, consequences of migration and hybrid identities; and *The Reflective portal* (34 offerings),as an integral part of personal education as well as civic engagement and learning as well as "political education" and thus on constructing social space and participation, interpretation of cultural patterns and democracy.

The differentiation of program structures in the area intercultural education and special courses for migrants is becoming less distinct, particularly in organizations of public adult education. Furthermore, the transcultural approach is already present but not yet well developed. (Robak et al., 2015). Moreover it seems that that there is a lack of new concepts that support hybrid identities for a post-migrant society. Less developed is the dimension of civil, political education with only a few courses on antiracism, anti-Semitism and anti-discrimination. Overall, the general trend is seen in the development of intercultural education as a distinct area of study.

Preliminary Comparative Analysis

In the paper, we have attempted to lay out the varying structures involved in intercultural education in both Germany and the US. Looking at the rationales provided for programs, the differing discourses, as well as the differing structures and funding sources, it is clear that there are differing philosophical approaches to programming, even though some of the nomenclature is similar.

Looking at the public/private dimension, Germany has a greater range of publicly supported programs. Integration courses are affordable, and all the other courses that are open to the public, including special courses in language, vocational education or health, and regular courses can be attended by anyone interested. However, fees per semester can cost up to 100 Euros making it difficult for those with low incomes to participate. However, public (as well as appointed) organizations of adult education offer special courses for migrants and intercultural education. These incorporate a broad understanding of education and creativity while reinforcing cultural participation and including an increasing emphasis on business and semiprofessional contexts.

Cultural education in the political discourse can be seen as a means of fostering social inclusion while also encouraging creativity, especially in the workplace life (Robak et al., 2015; Fleige, Gieseke & Robak, 2015). Issues related to cultural education are now being linked to the migration of refugees in Europe, their integration, and fundamental problems of racism that have followed the latest migration waves. Within this framework, classes at public adult education organizations seem to be best able to react to individual learning interests (Robak et al., 2015; Robak & Fleige, 2017 in press;). They provide the broadest and most flexible access to (inter)cultural education with offers in all portals, including the transcultural portal.

In the US, programs are funded through an amalgam of public and private funding. The public funding comes from all levels of government (federal, state, and local). In addition, private philanthropies also provide support. These philanthropies are sometimes local, but may also be large national philanthropic foundations such as the Kellogg Foundation or the Mott Foundation. Issues related to immigration and the so-called *Americanization* approach have provided cultural programming models to be avoided. Much of the work with refugees has moved forward through local initiatives. The net result is that individual municipalities differ in the ways that they welcome immigrants. Additionally, programs are not segregated by group served, except of course for English language learning programs. Individuals may enroll in vocational programs or community programs, no matter what their immigration status is.

In the future, we can expect further developments in the collaborations among government entities (Fleige, 2016; Fleige & Specht, In Press). These developments are also true in the fields of culture and arts, where the use of all the senses and spaces matter. They are also linked to community outreach as well as to educational concepts that take social into consideration. In this respect, international and comparative studies could help to shape the specific roles of programs, institutions/organizations and providers of adult education in different countries, while paying attention to differing social norms, educational systems, policy and cultural settings.

This beginning study provides interesting implications for theory building in the area of program and institutional analysis. It also raises further questions such as: How exactly do providers and organizations develop profiles and how do they balance different interests in adult education? What are the driving forces in constituting programs and organizational forms? How do societal and cultural aspects as well as political interests and set demands in different countries affect program planning processes of different providers and in different organizational forms? How and why are certain areas of study fostered by financial politics and how does it affect programs and organizational structures? In addition, we need to consider how professionals analyze societal developments, their understand of needs, and how this understand affects programs (Rose & Fleige, In Press).

In order to answer these research questions, a framework that contains pedagogical and structural aspects such as societal development, providers, organizational forms, profiles, regional surroundings, missions, understandings and concepts of culture will be developed in order to grasp similarities and differences in the different countries.

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Institutional Conditions of Vocational Learning and its Effects on the Professionalization Process – Results from a Comparative Study of English and German Car Mechatronics

Introduction

Within the field of international and comparative vocational education and training research the majority of studies investigate and compare structures and training patterns of different vocational education and training (VET) systems and their transfer to other countries (Phillips and Ochs, 2004; Pilz, 2016). When VET research focuses on the individual learner then it is mostly about competence. There has been much research about competence-based training and learning and other related topics. It is undisputed that these research fields are important and need further attention. However, analyzing different relevant VET aspect from a subject-oriented perspective should not be neglected within the field of international and comparative VET research as it does not only lead to valuable information for micro level topics such as teaching in VET but also for macro level topics such as VET policies. One example shall illustrate this: due to the Copenhagen process Germany has been prompted to implement a stronger competence-oriented ('English-like') VET system, which for some German scientists and VET policy players lead to the assumption that this will impede the development of a holistic professional identity (Drexel, 2008; Kuda and Strauß, 2006), which is a central goal in the German VET system. Besides the fact, that there is the problematic issue of transferring one aspect of a culturally grown VET system of one country to another country, there is little known about how and to what extent the structures of VET systems affect the individual learner and his professionalization process. To tackle this research gap, at least partially, an international comparative study (described below) was conducted.

VET = vocational education and training

1. The Comparative Study on English and German car mechatronics

This chapter will provide basic information about the international comparative study *Biographical occupation orientations of car mechatronics in Germany and England* (Gericke, 2014). The first part will outline the intention of this research project, its theoretical framework, research questions and research design. The second part will present the comparison process in detail.

1.1 theoretical framework, research questions and research design

The intention of the study was to understand the interplay of the individual learner and his VET system in respect to his professionalization process – for England and for Germany, exemplarily with trained car mechatronics.

The concept of biographical occupation orientations was chosen as a concept was needed, which acts as a mediator between the structure level (VET system) and action level (professional activity). Biographical occupation orientations mirror the specific identity construction, which employed persons form in their individualization process and onto which they hold on to (Giegel, Frank and Billerbeck, 1988, p.10). Professionalism is part of biographical occupation orientations.

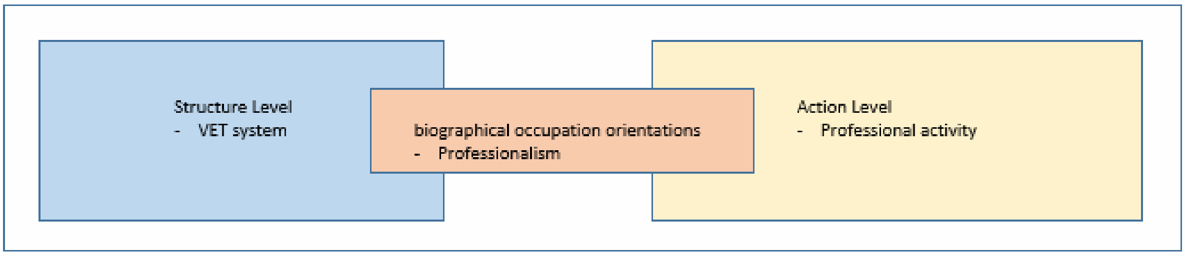

Figure 1 concept biographical occupation orientation as the link between structure and action level

With this concept in mind two research questions were posed:
- Which biographical occupation orientations do English and German car mechatronics develop?
- How does the fragmented English and the holistic German VET system affect the development of such biographical occupation orientations?

The countries Germany and England were selected as the institutional structures of their VET system differ greatly from each other. The English VET systems is fragmented, i.e. there are only a few binding regulations and many flexible structures (van Stripriaan and Lauterbach, 2011) and it is focused on the acquisition of single competences (Waterkamp, 2006). In contrast, the German VET system with its rigid structures is mainly characterized by its dual training, linking theory and practice and pursuing a holistic, i.e. concerning the whole person, training (Bertram, 2003; Waterkamp, 2006). Furthermore, many VET related discourses draw upon the English-German-VET-system comparison and perceive these two VET systems as *the* example for maximum-different VET systems, regardless of many shared similarities. (Deißinger, 2004; Brockmann, Clarke and Winch, 2008)

The car mechatronic occupation is traditionally taught through the dual system, i.e. vocational school and a company, which provides practical training. Furthermore, the car mechatronics occupation has been confronted with many technological innovations within the last twenty years. The automotive technology is changing rapidly and is of increasing complexity (e.g. electrotechnology in cars). Thus, there is the assumption that the issue of biographical occupation orientation including professionalism is an important one for the car mechatronics.

Due to its explorative character of the study and research questions a qualitative research design was chosen. The Grounded Theory methodology (Straus and Corbin, 1990) got applied with autobiographic-narrative interviews (Schütze, 1983) as the survey instrument and two analysis instruments: Grounded Theory coding (Straus and Corbin, 1990) which enabled the reconstruction of biographical occupation orientations in themselves and narration analysis (Schütze, 1981) which allowed the reconstruction of the development process of biographical occupation orientations. This research design also allowed to uncover comparison criteria from the collected data itself.

The study was carried out between 2009 and 2014 in two structural similar cities in Germany and England. Eleven interviews had been conducted in total, five in England and six in Germany. The interviews lasted from 50 to 180 minutes and, by agreement with the interviewees, were recorded digitally and subsequently fully transcribed. The researcher is trained in conducting autobiographic-narrative interviews and speaks both languages at a native level. The data material was analyzed by the researcher herself, who presented and discussed her findings and interpretations on a monthly basis in a research workshop in order to secure the fulfillment of quality criteria for qualitative social research (Przyborski and Wohlraab-Sahr, 2010).

1.2 reflections on the comparison process

The researcher followed strictly the two-step sampling process of the Grounded Theory methodology (Straus and Corbin, 1990). The first step was to select criteria which were based on logical assumptions about car mechatronics in both countries, i.e. which English and German car mechatronics will have been (unconsciously) confronted with the issue of biographical occupation orientations and have experienced the influence of their national VET system on the development process? The selection and thus comparison criteria were:

- English and German car mechatronics, who have gained a vocational qualification in their work area at some point of their life. (First, the researcher wanted equivalent English and German vocational qualifications, but as there was a lack of qualified English car mechatronics the researcher dropped this criterion).
- English and German car mechatronics, who have been working in their occupation for at least three years. The researcher assumed that within a three-year period the English and German car mechatronics have developed a certain work routine but at the same time had to face different technological challenges.

Looking specifically at the German and English workplaces and the car mechatronics' work objects the following criteria had been taken into consideration:

- The automobile brand the car mechatronics deal with.
- The type of workshop the car mechatronics work for (contract workshop dealing with one brand only, independent workshop dealing with a variety of brands).
- The employment relationship the car mechatronics have (self-employed, employed, operative level, management level).

First, the researcher analyzed the German data material and compared the different cases among each other. The following table gives an overview of the fulfilled selection/comparison criteria within the German sample:

	Vocational qualification	3-year work experience	Automobile brand	Workshop	Employment
G1 (Oliver Lehmann	✓	✓	Mercedes	Contract	Employed operative
G2 (Ralf Peters)	✓	✓	All	Independent	Self-employed management & operative
G3 (Thomas Schmidt)	✓	✓	All	Independent	Employed operative

Table 1 overview of fulfilled selection/comparison criteria within the German sample

The researcher found out that none of the chosen selection/comparison criteria played any role for the German car mechatronics' biographical occupation orientations, their development and professionalisation process. Instead the researcher uncovered – in collaboration with her research workshop – four central themes in the German data material:

- Different understanding of one's own work area and tasks
- Different perceptions of the rapidly changing automobile technology and strategies when dealing with it
- Homogeneous perception of the German dual training system
- Homogeneous professionalisation process

Second, the researcher analyzed the English data material and compared the different cases among each other. The English sample according to the aforementioned selection/comparison criteria appeared as the following:

	Vocational qualification	3-year work experience	Automobile brand	Workshop	Employment
E1 (Jack Miller)	✓	✓	All	Independent	Employed operative
E2 (Andrew Walker)	✓	✓	Ford	Independent	Self-employed management & operative
E3 (Kevin Perry)	✓	✓	Mercedes & all	Independent	Self-employed management & operative

Table 2 overview of the selection/comparison criteria within the English sample

Again, to her great surprise none of the aforementioned selection/comparison criteria played any role for the interviewed English car mechatronics in respect to their biographical occupation orientations, the development and professionalisation process. Instead she uncovered four central themes in the English data material:

- Different understanding of one's own work area and tasks
- Different perceptions of the rapidly changing automobile technology and strategies when dealing with it
- Homogeneous perception of the English VET system
- Homogeneous professionalization process

In a third step the researcher compared the four uncovered German and English themes with each other and was able to reconstruct:

- The same three different understanding of one's own work area and tasks in the German and English material
- The same three different perceptions of the rapidly changing automobile technology and strategies when dealing with it in the German and English material
- Homogeneous perception of the German and English VET system
- Homogeneous German and English professionalisation process

The three different understanding of one's own work area and tasks as well as the three different perceptions of the rapidly changing automobile technology and strategies when dealing with it in the German and English material were united (with other here not mentioned aspects) to three different biographical occupation orientations which were labeled as:

a) strategic use of qualification offers,
b) defining limits of one's own scope of duties and expertise, and
c) passionate professional practice.

The homogeneous perception of the German and English VET system and the professionalisation process were united to the extra category: subjective perception of the national VET system and the professionalisation process. The comparison criterion German/English was ‚confirmed' with this category. However, the comparison criteria automobile brand, type of workshop and employment relationship have proven to be unfruitful. Instead, three comparative aspects (i.e. the three biographical occupation orientations) have been reconstructed which enabled a data-grounded comparison of the interviewed German and English car mechatronics.

	strategic	limits	passion
G1 (Oliver Lehmann)	✓		
G2 (Ralf Peters)		✓	
G3 (Thomas Schmidt)			✓
E1 (Andrew Walker)	✓		
E2 (Jack Miller)		✓	
E3 (Kevin Perry			✓

Table 3 overview of fulfilled data-grounded selection/comparison criteria

Thus, the second step of the sampling process according to the Grounded Theory methodology (Straus and Corbin, 1990) is the theoretical sampling, i.e. the sampling is done by using theoretical selection/comparison criteria, which have been uncovered when analysing the first set of data. The theoretical selection criteria are grounded in the empirical data. In this case, the new selection/comparison criteria were then:

- strategic use of VET institutions and programmes
- defining limits of one's own scope of duties and expertise
- passionate handling of the car.

	strategic	limits	passion
G4 (Torsten Schmeling)	✓		
G5 (Denis Winkelmann)		✓	
G6 (Martin Ebeling)			✓
E4 (Allan Hammond)	✓		
E5 (Terry Becker)		✓	

Table 4 overview of data-grounded selection/comparison criteria for second sampling phase

The Grounded Theory as a methodology and as a (coding) instrument has proven to be a valuable instrument for uncovering comparison criteria. This approach enabled the researcher to unearth the tertium comparationis from the collected data itself. The researcher started with ‚external' comparison criteria like automobile brand (work objects), type of workshop (degree of work variety) and employment relationship (scope of duties). Once the researcher dug into the data material, she discovered the ‚real' comparison criteria, namely three perceptions of the rapidly changing automobile technology and strategies when dealing with it and the subjective perception of the national VET system and professionalization process.

Furthermore, Grounded Theory helped to fulfill the quality criteria for qualitative social research and in this case also international comparative research, because in order to conduct proper Grounded Theory coding one needs a regular research workshop, where one can present and discuss one's findings and interpretations with other researchers and thus check on validity, reliability and objectivity of one's findings (Przyborski and Wohlraab-Sahr, 2010).

2. Empirical Findings

This chapter will outline the empirical findings in respect to the English and German car mechatronics' subjective perception of their national VET system and the professionalization process they had gone through. In the second part explanations for the similarities and differences of the empirical findings will be presented.

2.1 subjective perception of VET system and professionalisation process

The empirical findings of this international comparative study can be located on two levels. The first level is the reconstruction of three patterns of biographical occupation orientations which are valid for both, the interviewed English and German car mechatronics. However, as this result level is not the focus of this paper there will be no further explanations to these findings. The second level is the reconstruction of the homogeneous subjective perception of the national VET systems and the professionalisation process the English and German car mechatronics went through.

The interviewed German car mechatronics report of early career choice actions within the family and peer-group (regular topic of conversation) and in school (obligatory work experience for one week and one visit of the vocational information centre). All interviewed German car mechatronics had a seamless transition to their vocational education and training.

They have all successfully gone through the dual vocational education and training for car mechatronics. The training lasted 3.5 years. They received theoretical input in a vocational school and practical training in a company. All interviewed German car mechatronics report that they were satisfied with their vocational training, especially the good linkage between theory and practice. They perceived their VET teachers' and company trainers' level of knowledge as up-to-date and experienced a learn-promoting atmosphere in the vocational school and company. Learning and working conditions were seen as good. The vocational schools' learning equipment was intact and up-to-date. Their general impression of the German dual system is one of a clear-structured system with clearly defined ways of vocational educational pathways. This clear-structured system is also perceived as rigid and inflexible.

The interviewed German car mechatronics underwent a plain and fast professionalization process. At an early age they got prepared to make a career choice. The clear structures helped to get an overview of available pathways and the German culture (family, peer-group) as well as educational institutions such as schools (obligatory work experience and visit of the vocational information centre) pushed the individual to an early career choice. With 3.5 years their vocational education and training was long and intense. They were taught about every aspect of the car and they developed a holistic occupational self-understanding as car mechatronics.

However, it shall not be left unmentioned that the German VET system is also problematic. People who need and want orientation and clear structures profit from the German VET system, whereas people who need and want to test several occupational pathways before they make their final decision will have difficulties due to the system's rigid and inflexible structures.

The interviewed English car mechatronics had neither family-related nor school-related input in respect to career choice. The focus had been on the final exams. After the exam results were out, one pondered about vocational pathways.

The English car mechatronics reported of a broad variety of VET programmes, starting from a three-week in-house course on single car components to a 4.5 year-long apprenticeship. All interviewed English car mechatronics told of difficult learning and working conditions in the vocational schools and companies. The learning equipment in the schools was old, the practice models outdated. The vocational teachers' level of knowledge was perceived as outdated. The working conditions at the companies were perceived as challenging – hardly any hygiene measures and low temperatures at the workplace. However, the most challenging issue was the company trainers' lack of any pedagogical suitability. There was hardly any instruction but mostly learning-by-watching. At the same time the trainees were seen as employees first and it was expected of them to fit into the workflow smoothly. Their general impression of the English VET system is one of confusing but flexible structures, low quality standards at the vocational schools and a weak position of trainees in companies.

The interviewed English car mechatronics underwent a creative and long professionalization process. Nearly all of them had collected work experience in one or more different work areas. Their brittle transition to the VET system was characterized by periods of unemployment and/or trying out different work areas as the flexible VET structures provided this institutional freedom. Once they made the decision to stay in the chosen work field some acquired basic vocational qualifications. Most of the interviewed English car mechatronics collected several vocational qualifications according to the single components of the car which they wanted to become knowledgeable about.

Although the English VET system is perceived as challenging for people who need a clear orientation, it offers space for personal search- and finding processes. This VET system works well for people who need and want time to try out different VET pathways before they make a final career choice.

This chapter has shown that the interviewed English and German draw upon the same criteria when they speak about their national VET system, namely: VET programme itself, vocational teachers' and company trainers' level of knowledge, learning and working conditions in the school and in the company. Furthermore, there is a homogeneous picture among the interviewed German car mechatronics about their German dual system and among the interviewed English car mechatronics about their English VET system. This chapter also outlined that due to the different institutional set-ups the professionalization process differed between the German and English car mechatronics. However, taken chapter 1.2 into consideration, i.e. German and English car mechatronics show one of the three patterns of biographical occupation orientation, it is important to note that both English and German car mechatronics despite their differently perceived VET systems ‚arrive' at one of three reconstructed patterns of biographical occupation orientations and thus show professionalism. This means that the national VET systems influence the professionalisation process itself, i.e. how the English and German car mechatronics get to one of the three patterns, but they do not influence the result, namely the patterns themselves.

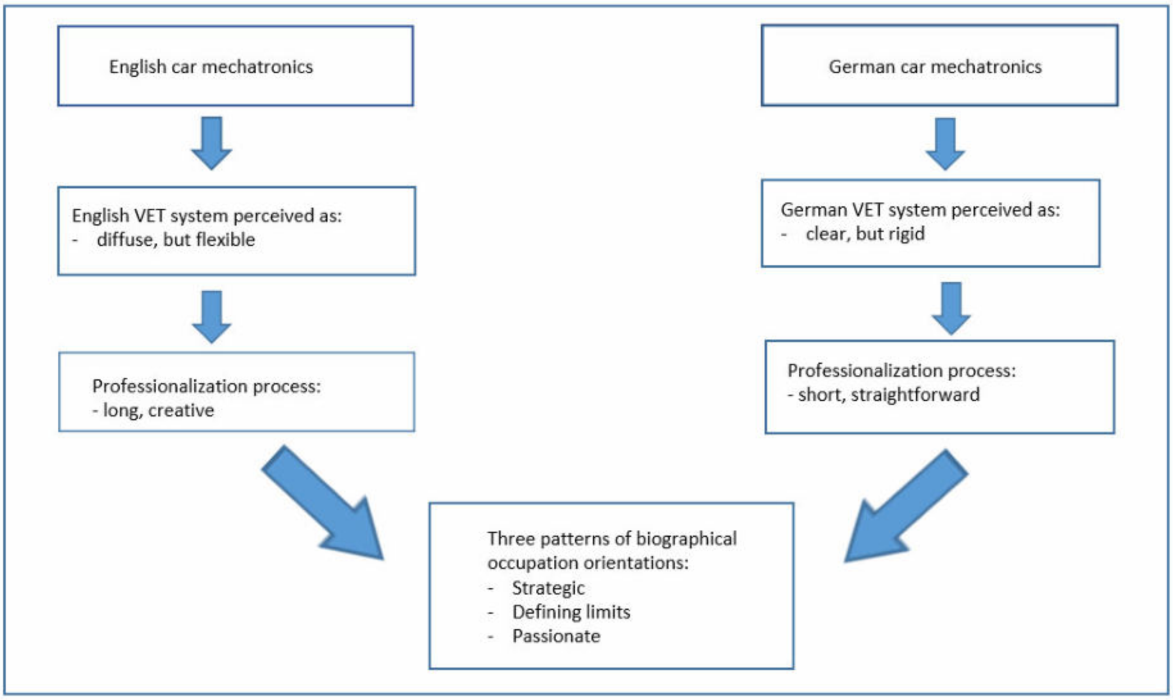

Figure 2 overview of empirical findings

2.2 educational traditions as explanatory model

This chapter aims at explaining why English and German car mechatronics share the same three patters of biographical occupation orientations and why there are differences according to the perception of the national VET system and professionalization process as “[t]he real value of comparative study emerges only from ... the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination ..." (Charters and Hilton, 1989, p. 3).

The interviewed English and German car mechatronics share the same three patters of biographical occupation orientations, because the biographical occupation orientations’ core is the perception of the automobile technology and the way they deal with it. The rapidly changing and increasingly complex automobile technology is *the* daily challenge of the interviewed English and German car mechatronics. Technological advancements does not stop at national borders, especially not in such a global industry like the automobile industry. Thus, English and German car mechatronics have to deal with the same challenge. The similar strategies – how to deal with the challenge – is an integral part of the biographical occupation orientations and cover the universal range of: a) trying the best to tackle a challenge (e.g. through lifelong learning, b) ignoring the challenge and avoiding any contact with the challenge, c) mastering the challenge perfectly.

The interviewed English and German car mechatronics show differences in respect to their professionalization process and the perception of the national VET system. Differences regarding the support for their vocational career choice, the different perception of the national VET systems the professionalization process can be explained with McLean’s (1990) knowledge traditions.

The interviewed **English** car mechatronics reported that they had no or hardly any support for making a vocational career choice. During their school career the focus had been solely on the final exams. There had been no work-related education or subjects. The reason for this cultural orientation is the English knowledge tradition, namely humanism (McLean, 1990). Technical-vocational subjects, which could initiate and/or orientate career choice processes were completely outside the humanist pale and thus “not easily admitted to the inner sanctum of humanist high status knowledge” (McLean 1990, 26). ‘Training’ was associated with occupations of lower social groups, whereas humanist education was designed for the higher and highest class and thus not desirable. In addition, ‘training’ was rejected as “it appeared to contain no possibilities for the development of moral sensibility” (McLean 1990, 26), which is one aim of the humanist knowledge tradition. The reason that the English VET system is fragmented, i.e. there are only a few binding regulations and many flexible structures (van Stripriaan and Lauterbach, 2011) and that it is focused on the acquisition of single competences (Waterkamp, 2006) lies in the humanist methodology of learning, which is according to Plato intuitive. Standardized learning – which is mirrored in the institutional setup – is not compatible with this intuitive view of education. At the same time is the focus on single competences – or specialization – is compatible with humanism as moral sensibility is not acquired by width of knowledge but depends on depth of perception and understanding (McLean, 1990, p. 27).

The interviewed **German** car mechatronics told about vocational career choice support by their families and schools. According to McLean Germany has a naturalist knowledge tradition, i.e. there is a strong work-orientation. The validity of knowledge is linked to everyday living and the effective performance of working roles. This work-orientation shows itself in the school curriculum – the obligatory visit of the vocational information centre and the topic of career choice in different school subjects. In contrast to the humanist knowledge tradition, knowledge and traditions do not depend on intellectual exercises but especially in Germany “there was a view that knowledge about a manual vocation was noble and morally enhancing” (ibid, p. 36). The German car mechatronic underwent a long and intense training and they developed an occupational self-understanding. McLean points out that there is the German cultural view that “every occupation required training, every occupation had dignity and the work of every occupation should be carried out with maximum commitment and thoroughness” (ibid, p. 37) – this explains the highly differentiated German VET system. In contrast to the English informants all German car mechatronics had acquired a vocational qualification. This can be explained with the German idea that “work is a moral activity and […] vocational education should be the basis of citizenship” (ibid, p. 80).

The universal technological advancements in the automobile industry explains, why the three reconstructed patterns of biographical occupation orientations are found with the interviewed German and English car mechatronics. McLean’s concept of knowledge tradition – humanistic tradition in England and naturalist tradition in Germany – does explain some differences in respect to the professionalization process, the spread of vocational qualification and the perception of the VET system. However, there are many outstanding explanations for the empirical findings and further research is necessary.

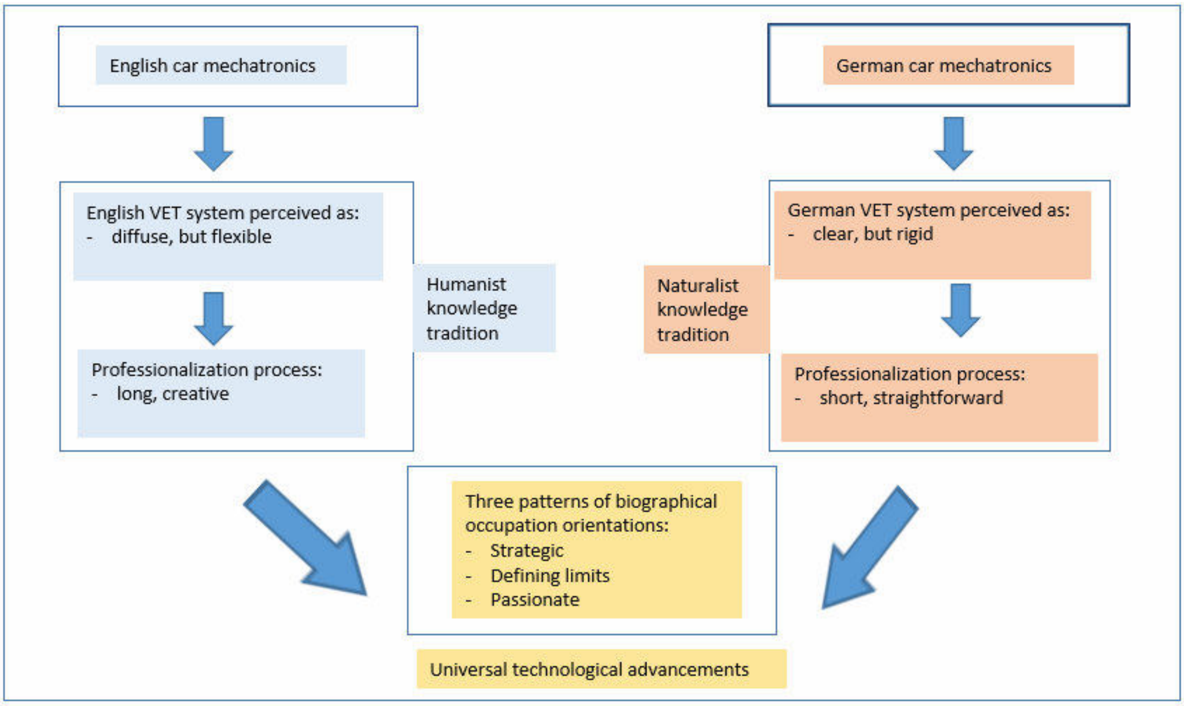

Figure 3 overview empirical findings with explanations for differences and similarities

3. Conclusion

This paper was used to present some empirical finding of the international comparative study *Biographical occupation orientations of car mechatronics in Germany and England*. The starting point of the study was the question to what extent do the structures of VET systems affect the individual learner and his professionalisation process? The empirical findings show that the structures of the English and German VET system affect the duration and straightforwardness of the professionalisation process of English and German car mechatronics, but it does not affect their professional self-understanding itself (as they share the same three reconstructed patterns of biographical occupation orientations). In addition, as it was attempted to explain similarities and differences of the English and German empirical findings, the issue of knowledge traditions came to the foreground. The way how young adults get prepared for making a career choice, how their vocational VET system is set up and the social recognition of VET and vocational qualification are cultural issues and need to be taken into consideration not only when dealing with micro topics such as the didactic mediation of the syllabus but also when dealing with macro topics such as the development and implementation of VET policies and with.

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Comparing Global Documents, Recommendations, and Commitments on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: Communalities, Similarities and Differences

Introduction

A historical and comparative view on the development of adult education, its changes in terminology, concepts, policies, and practices during the last decades provides a number of interesting findings relevant for the study of comparative adult education. However, practice, policy, and theory of adult education and lifelong learning are moving targets which need to be reviewed regularly for the development of the profession and for comparative studies also. And this is gaining even more importance in ever growing complexities of contexts and faster processes of globalization and digitalization.

ISCAE has contributed significantly to develop a common understanding on methods and terms to be used in comparative adult education, especially through the two volumes *Comparative Adult Education 1998. The Contribution of ISCAE to an Emerging Field of Study* (Reischmann, Bron, Jelenc), as well as *Comparative Adult Education 2008. Experiences and Examples* (Reischmann, Bron). Both followed on presentations and discussions of previous conferences, and are guiding our reflections today.

This presentation at the 6th ISCAE Conference in 2017 has an adult education and lifelong learning orientation and looks at the major documents and outcomes of those processes abbreviated as CONFINTEA, EFA, SDG, RALE, and RTVET (explanations to follow) in order to identify areas they have in common, where they are aiming at similar objectives, and where because of certain circumstances offer different perspectives. This will include comparing goals, targets and indicators. Additionally, important aspects of knowledge, competencies and skills as well as attitudes and values in these documents will be analyzed. Governance mechanisms and structures in respect to policy, legislation and financing could also be compared further.

We can call this "work in progress". As Honorary Fellow of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) I try to keep concerned and involved with its priorities and activities. One of my current researches is to look deeper into these four documents, and this will not really stop for the moment as after the end of the World Education Forum the process of identifying and agreeing on indicators is still going on. Another area is what is featured quite prominently as 'Global Citizenship Education', originating as a slogan from the UN Secretary General GEFI (Global Education First Initiative) in 2012 This is now taken forward in a variety of forms as an important component of all educational levels – when it comes to tackle an ever growing imbalanced world, full of war and conflict, inequalities and injustice, environmental destruction and still accelerating impact of climate change.

It should not be taken as a surprise that the presentation will have a personal touch also as it is closely related to my professional biography. During the four decades of being involved in local, national and global adult education, especially with leading positions in DVV International, I have kept an interest in global policy making as well as comparative studies for international cooperation in adult education and development. This started 1975 with my participation in a UNESCO supported *International Seminar on Comparative Structures of Adult Education in Developing Countries* in Kenya, during my doctoral thesis on *Adult Education and Development in Tanzania*, later teaching and researching at so many universities, and for a final round as Regional Director of DVV International for South- and Southeast Asia based in Laos. In between I was a member of UN Literacy Decade Expert Group, the CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group, and on the German Delegation for the World Education Forum in 2000 as well as 2015. Additionally I served civil society as a Vice-President for the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), and the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA).

Four Processes and Documents

There are four main documents chosen for the purpose of this presentation and discussion which derive from recent processes in which UNESCO has played a key role, either directly, or via the UIL, or within the architecture of the wider UN family. They are:

- **CONFINTEA, the International Conferences on Adult Education** are excellent opportunities to inform and meet at regular intervals of twelve years to take stock of achievements and lessons learned. The first was in Helsingoer in 1949, CONFINTEA III in Tokyo in 1972 was most important for adult education in its attempt to become more of a profession. CONFINTEA V in Hamburg 1997 was a milestone for the development of adult education within lifelong learning. (Knoll, 2014) CONFINTEA VI in December 2009 came up with the *Belem Framework for Action (BFA)* which is a guiding and binding document for the international adult education community today (UIL, 2010; Ireland, Spezia, 2014).
- **SDG4-Education 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals** are the most recent culmination of a longer and overarching process. Education for All (EFA) was proclaimed by the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000. To achieve Universal Primary Education was included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which was proclaimed by the UN. Both had as a time lime the years 2000 – 2015. A process of post 2015 looking at achievements and challenges for the future finally led to the *Education 2030 Agenda* of the World Education Forum in Incheon, which in turn was fully integrated as Goal 4 into the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 as *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. The other globally agreed SDGs are related to all areas of development, such as poverty, health, gender, inequality, water, energy, work, climate, cities, peace and partnerships, and aiming at people, planet and prosperity. (UNESCO, 2015a)
- **RALE, the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education** was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 2015. Actually, this was called for during CONFINTEA VI, as a task in the BFA “to review and update, by 2012, the *Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education* adopted in Nairobi (1976). RALE points at the “significant

role of adult learning and education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", acknowledges the Incheon Declaration, and enumerates the last three CONFINTEA conferences as important arenas to look at achievements since 1976. In the Preamble of RALE, the RTVET is explicitly mentioned in order to underline "the relevance of improving technical and vocational education and training … which contains specific provisions for continuing training and professional development". (UNESCO, 2015b, 1)

- **RTVET, the Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training**, looking at work and life also in a lifelong learning perspective, was adopted in the same UNESCO General Conference in 1975. It had a predecessor with the 2001 Revised Recommendation for Technical and Vocational Education. RTVET reflects findings from the 2004 Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship, and Sustainability" and recommendations from the Third International Congress in Shanghai on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 'Transforming TVET: Building Skills for Work and Life". The expanded concept, much beyond a limited earlier view on vocational skills runs like a thread through the RTVET: "Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET." (UNESCO, 2015c, 2)

Themes and Issues for Comparison

There are so many aspects that could be taken, and often, on a second thought, the category may not be singled out correctly. In simplified wording we look at communalities, similarities, and differences, knowing that much more in-depth analysis will be needed to identify the causes for being similar or different, and even more so when trying to identify reasons why something is so different. Therefore we have to be careful in our judgment with only limited and selective insights, and as I argued that this is 'work in progress' more will be found later. Some seven have been taken up for this presentation and discussion. They can be further analyzed in the steadily growing number and availability of official documents, monitoring reports, and statistical data that are in reach via specialized institutions and available via internet.

- **Literacy and lifelong learning:** Outstanding as something in common is the paradigm shift toward lifelong learning, strongly advocated by all of the above named UNESCO documents. Literacy is taken as the foundational skill for all other education, and many other learning processes outside the formal sectors. "Lifelong literacy" is a serious attempt to capture the current debate which sees much more a continuum and diversity of literacies rather than a dichotomy and great divide between the literate and illiterate. (Hanemann 2015) To bring the different strands together, and to provide sufficient background and a common understanding for the post 2015 process within a lifelong learning perspective, UIL provided a paper *Towards an operational definition of lifelong learning* which proposes: "Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It covers learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults and older adults) in all life-wide contexts (families, schools, communities, workplaces, etc.) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems that promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels of education in order to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals.” (UIL, 2015, 1) How it is implemented in different country contexts can also be found on the UIL website where they have a special section with examples of lifelong learning strategies and systems from a variety of countries.

The BFA explicitly mentions and calls for “from cradle to grave”, and as member of the Drafting Group I recall statements on how important good early childhood education is for successful adult education, and vice versa the importance of adult learning education for children as parents, teachers, and the majority of society are adults. This paradigm shift to ‘lifelong, lifewide, and lifedeep’ was then even reflected in a name change: The UNESCO Institute for Education became the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Numerous documents by UIL followed, like the contributions to a Special Issue: The Future of Lifelong Learning (Carlsen, Haddad 2013), inviting also Jacques Delors to reflect on *The treasure within*, fifteen years after.

- **Frameworks and systems:** Let us look at this from two angels. On the one hand, the international frameworks for action are developed and decided by UN member states following a process of preparation and negotiation on a regional and global level. How later to translate the recommendations and commitments into national level systems and implementation is a process which needs full support and attention by the diversity of country stakeholders involved. However it seems that it works best where already in the preparatory processes, in the membership of delegations, in consultations with civil society and in broader public-private-partnerships representations of the broader spectrum of the education system are in place.

  Both documents, RALE and RTVET, have in common that they were drafted in a longer consultative processes of concerned institutions and stakeholders, based on the review and revision of earlier documents. Both were then taken to the authoritative body of UNESCO, the General Conference, where all member states are represented, and then adopted as the new recommendations, replacing the former ones. CONFINTEA and the earlier EFA and now SDG processes have in common that they are following certain timelines for 12 or 15 years respectively, culminating in a world conference. They set targets that should be achieved, and remind the education and development communities how far they have reached, and at the same time they mobilize to continue.

- **Policy, legislation, financing:** This is almost like a golden triangle, and only if all three are receiving the same attention it will work. Too often in the past there have been policy papers which are not more than policy on paper without any relevance and commitment for implementation. This is even more so for our sector of adult learning and education, often heavily under-financed, and without legal provision. Legislation for schools and universities are a common practice, but for the adult education sector we have been reading again and again – not needed, too complicated, too diverse, too much non-government. In this respect the new documents are stronger, at least in words.

  The situation of education financing is far away from where it should be.

The BFA called for 6% f the GDP for investing into education, which is hardly reached anywhere, and the share for adult learning and education is nowhere sufficient. International support for education is either lacking, or at least too small. The EFA GMR 2015 even states: “The Dakar pledge that no country should be thwarted in achieving the EFA goals due to lack of resources has been one of the biggest failures of the EFA period.” (UNESCO, 2015, 279) There is no indication that the BFA, nor the SDG4-Education 2030, has a better future in respect to international financial backing.

- **Knowledge, skills, and competencies:** What are the skills needed for the 21st century? This question was frequently asked and combined with issues related to skills-gap and skills-mismatch in a fast changing environment. Similar points could be raised when looking at knowledge and competencies. The documents and reports discuss and reflect were we are now, and point to the future which is unknown. It is a welcome feature that additionally the required attitudes and values are more often mentioned, even more so when it comes to join activities towards sustainable development.

  The SDG4-Education 2030 goal has 7 targets covering the full sector of education with early childhood, schooling, university, technical training – and all of this in a lifelong learning perspective. Special attention is given to “4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”
- **Formal, non-formal, and informal:** The definition of lifelong learning calls these three different modalities, all of them needed, and actually areas where boundaries are fluid. Often adult education is put into the non-formal education corner, but actually it is more as there are also many aspects that are usually seen as formal, like certificates in testing levels of language proficiency or master degrees in adult education at universities. No doubt, it seems that the growing availability of learning opportunities via the internet due to processes of digitalization will increase the importance of informal education, and at the same time foster integration and building bridges between them.

  Knowing More, Doing Better. Challenges for CONFINTEA VI from Monitoring EFA in Non-formal Youth and Adult Education was an attempt to do a secondary analysis of national EFA reports that had featured non-formal education prominently, at a time when CONFINTEA VI was approaching. (Duke, Hinzen, 2008)
- **Recognition, validation, and accreditation:** ‘Recognition of prior learning’ has almost become a statement which needs no further argument. However, on the implementation stage it is almost ‘back to square one’, unless there are strong institutions and their stakeholders that have at the same time created mechanisms for validation and accreditation of courses, programs, tests, certificates, and all what is around qualification frameworks. Fortunately there are good examples on national level, and the *UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning* (UIL, 2012) were a big step forward; the DVV

International Office in Vientiane helped translating them into Lao and Khmer language.

- **Monitoring and indicators:** How difficult it can be to develop a set of indicators that fit well to agreed targets and an overarching goal could be seen in the post 2015 process. During the last few years those institutions who were in the lead like the UNESCO Institute of Statistics as well as those responsible for regular monitoring like the GEM (Global Education Monitoring Report), those with special thematic interests, or those with education watch functions, they all got involved in an attempt to agree on indicators, which then got annexed into the SDG4-Education 2030 document. But no decision yet of what finally will be the global, regional, national, and thematic indicators, especially as it is argued that for many of them in most countries there are no robust baseline data.

  The most recent attempt to monitor the BFA is the *3rd GRALE (Global Report on Adult Learning and Education)*, published in 2016 under the title *The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-Being; Employment and the Labor Market; and Social, Civic and Community Life.* It is of highest importance as it is based on 139 monitoring surveys from UNESCO member states as a commitment made at CONFINTEA VI in the BFA. As a side note: All these monitoring reports are available on the UIL website, a rich resource for further comparative analysis. Similarly, but on a much broader (all aspects of education), and as often as yearly, an EFA Global Monitoring Report was published which looked each time at a specific theme (like Gender, 2003; Literacy, 2006; Marginalization, 2010; Skills, 2012) and at the overall accomplishments and failures so far. Again as a side note: The website of EFA GMR is a rich database with all national reports, waiting for further comparative analysis.

Clearly, UIL was part of the process of all the four documents taken up here, but in different ways. UIL has the lead in the CONFINTEA process, and was the major institution preparing RALE. UIL may have had a strong part in bringing in lifelong learning into RTVET as well as into the SDG4-Agenda 2030 process and its outcomes. With GRALE it has created an instrument to monitor and periodically pay focused attention to important achievements and at the same point to areas that much more support.

Other Important Reports

It should be noted that additionally there were major reports supported by UNESCO that were reviewing the global situation of education, and turned out to be landmarks in their substance of information and reflection. All of them were and still are, at least in the background, important for the process and documents analyzed as they were looking at education as a human right from a lifelong learning for all perspective. They covered many of the themes in the selected documents, but discussed them in a deep, broad and reflective way beyond the need to provide the consensus that final declarations or recommendations of UN member state meetings require:

- *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*, in short the Faure Report from 1972, brought together living and learning: “If learning involves all of one’s life, in the sense of both life-span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of 'educational systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society." (Faure, Preamble, quoted in Carlsen, Haddad 2013, 312)

- *Learning: the treasure within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century,* in short the Delors Report from 1996, which came up with the four pillars of learning as learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. The Delors Report was based on a wide consultation of stakeholders, including ICAE, and I recall working on its submission titled *Adult education and lifelong learning: Issues, concerns and recommendations* for the International Commission which even included the following statement: "The code of conduct of our profession asks for a lifelong perspective in the training of trainers, teachers, and organizers involved in adult education. They have to update their knowledge, to improve and broaden their skills, and learn to cope with frustrations on the job long before burn-out occurs." (ICAE, 1994, 421)
- *Rethinking Education. Towards a global common good?* was published by UNESCO in 2015 and written in a parallel process 'from EFA 2000 to SDG4-Education 2030'. It is a concise and concerned text that reflects a number of issues in current global, national and local development, especially related to the right to education beyond the basic level as a common good, and the growing privatization of education. "This discussion, inspired by a central concern for sustainable human and social development, outlines the trends, tensions and contradictions in global social transformation, as well as the new knowledge horizons offered. It highlights the importance of exploring alternative approaches to human well-being and the diversity of worldviews and knowledge systems, and the need to sustain them. It reaffirms a humanistic education, which calls for an integrated approach based on renewed ethical and moral foundations. It points towards an educational process that is inclusive and does not simply reproduce inequalities: a process in which fairness and accountability are ensured. It emphasizes that the role of teachers and other educators remains central to foster critical thinking and independent judgment, instead of unreflective conformity." (UNESCO, 2015d, 83)

UIL started with his first GRALE, the *Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education* in 2009, analyzing all the 154 country reports from UNESCO member states in preparation of CONFINTEA VI. GRALE 2 in 2012 looked especially at the situation of literacy to capture the magnitude of what still has to be done to create a literate world. For our study the 3rd GRALE, mentioned already above, is of highest importance. It is also seen as a most relevant document in analyzing potential contributions that adult learning education can made towards the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030.

One more report should be mentioned as it influenced those who in the seventies and eighties, like Alexander Charters or Roby Kidd, started to work on comparative adult education as a field of study. For us in adult education it was John Lowe, at that time working for OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) who provided a first attempt to capture the field in a wider dimension with *The Education of Adults: a Worldwide Perspective*, indirectly a comparative study on the global situation of adult education as it emerged, and where it reached at that moment in time. (Lowe, 1982)

Outlook

Let me end by throwing the net for the discussion of this presentation a little wider. RALE, RTVET, CONFINTEA, EFA, and SDG4-Education Agenda documents have an orientation and even special sections on international cooperation, partnership and solidarity. They are taken as inherent to global aspects of education and lifelong learning for sustainable development by backing national initiatives and structures appropriately.

At the same time there are studies that analyze the aid architecture in the past, and as we are aiming to the future with those commitments and recommendations, we need to know what works better, especially if we have a critical view of what might not have had the quality and quantity to make a difference. In this respect the following statement looking at globalization and digitalization may be helpful in planning. “The globalization process, coupled with the revolution in information technology, has facilitated the replicability of policy innovations across different contexts.” (Nini-Zarazu, Miguel, 7)

The GEM report as the most substantial global instrument to yearly look at current realities in education, and providing some prognostic perspective for the future, claims as a neglect and a potential force two things: “As schooling receives most of the attention for achieving the SDGs, behavior change and the critical role of adult education and learning have been overlooked”, and at the same time fosters our view and earlier arguments of “lifelong learning as a factor contributing across the SDG” (UNESCO, 2016, GEM, 373)

It is therefore hoped that this brief comparative study will help us in ISCAE and the variety of stakeholders involved in such processes and documents, like Governments, agencies, NGOs and other non-state actors, international and intergovernmental organizations, professional institutions, universities and funding agencies to better understand and improve their engagement and support to adult education and learning in development cooperation. At the same time it is an attempt for all in international and comparative adult education to add this dimension to the purpose of what we should be doing.

This would be close to what Karen Mundy, President of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) titled in her 2015 Presidential Address as *“Leaning in” on Education for All.* There she describes her personal “engagement as a scholar, activist, evaluator, and practitioner within the EFA movement” over the past decades, and then states: ”Not only does CIES bring together scholars, policy makers, and practitioners; it also attracts members who want to move between the two worlds of scholarship and practice – and who relish interactions across them.” (Mundy, 2016, 19) Maybe we could strengthen something similar for ISCAE, now and if possible even more so in the future.

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Disciplinary traditions and interdisciplinary developing paths: Exploring the potential of interdisciplinary approaches to stimulate international comparative adult education research

Abstract

International comparative adult education research provides important insights in describing adult education systems and their embeddedness in national and international geopolitical, cultural and economic conditions, in explaining barriers and participation in adult education, in analyzing programs and curriculum development as well as investigating the professionalization of adult educators. However, international comparative research has generally not been explored to its full potential in the area of adult and continuing education. Against this background, we explore the potential of interdisciplinary approaches to stimulate international comparative adult education research drawing on two examples: the first provides an interdisciplinary model to explain participation in adult education (Boeren, 2016); the second constructs a theoretical interdisciplinary framework for describing the institutional structure of adult education providers to explain heterogeneous "opportunities to learn" (Schrader, 2017).

Introduction

At the close of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century the interest in international comparisons of education systems has greatly increased. Socio-economic developments such as globalization, migration and an influx of refugees, demographic trends and technological advances, the consequences of the expansion and perhaps imminent implosion of the European Union challenge national education systems and contribute to the growing interest in comparative knowledge of educational phenomena.

Parallel to these developments, the work of international organizations such as the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and especially the Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have increased the interest in international-comparative data on education and promoted the methodological change in comparative education research. These organizations have influenced the development of comparative education research in a crucial way, because they systematically accumulate comparable statistical data on selected aspects of educational systems (e.g. structure of the education system, expenditure, staff, and level of education achievement). Yet, since the early 2000s and the research carried out through large-scale international comparative assessment studies by the OECD, it is almost impossible to imagine comparative education research without "big data'" and (global) league tables. Issues related to "the political economy of educational research" (Crossley, 2014, p.16) and the manifested prioritization of large scale quantitative research as a new golden standard has been given much attention in recent years (Crossley ibid; Auld & Morris, 2013).

Crossley argues that this research paradigm draws “legitimacy from the predominance of economic discourse in contemporary society, from a quest to measure and evaluate performance in all walks of life” (2014, p. 20).

With the expansion and the growing significance of international educational comparisons an increasing number of researchers, also in the field of adult education, address both methodological and conceptual issues for comparative research (Knox, 1997; Knoll, 2000; Jütte, 1999; Reischmann & Bron, 2008; Bron, 2008; Zeuner, 2010; Egetenmeyer, 2014; Nuissl & Schrader, 2014).

Comparative studies on certain aspects of adult education systems (e.g. Siebert, 1970; Haberzeth et al., 2013; Kraus & Schmid, 2014; Jütte & Lattke, 2014), on political programmes (e.g. Jelenc, 1998; Hake, 2008; Bonna et al., 2014; Knauber & Ioannidou, 2016; Gonon et al., 2016), on programme analysis and curriculum development (e.g. Gieseke & Kargul, 2005; Käpplinger & Sork, 2014) as well as on the influence of inter- and supranational organizations on national adult education policies and practices (e.g. Knoll, 1998; Schemmann, 2007; Ioannidou, 2007; 2010a; Singh et al., 2016) have been conducted for several decades. Recently, surveys such as the Adult Education Survey (AES) (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2015) and the PIAAC study (OECD, 2013; OECD, 2016a) enable us further to explore not only commonalities and differences in, for example, participation patterns or in skills distribution, but also to ask for the conditions for country-specific variations in participation and skills outcomes. Significantly, recent research on these issues has applied theories and methods from neighbouring disciplines blurring disciplinary boundaries (Green, 2006; Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009; Boeren et al., 2010; Saar et al., 2013; Kaufmann et al., 2014).

It is not surprising that economists and sociologists have, in many ways, applied their methodological and theoretical expertise when it comes to the (re-)analysis of international data sets (e.g. Hanushek & Wößmann, 2015; Blossfeld et al., 2014). These analyses are, in most cases, based on human capital theory and explore, for instance, the interrelation between educational outcomes and economic growth. Meanwhile, comparative research into welfare state has begun to incorporate educational issues, focusing on skills-formation systems (see Allmendinger & Leibfried, 2003; Busemeyer, 2015). The most prominent theoretical approaches which have growing significance for comparative adult education research can be found in Esping-Andersen´s Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (1990) as well as in the Varieties of Capitalism by Hall & Soskice (2001).

Against this background this text will first discuss methodological aspects in comparative adult education research. Next, the potential of interdisciplinary approaches to stimulate international comparative adult education research is explored, drawing on two examples: firstly, an interdisciplinary model of participation in adult education; and secondly, an attempt to provide a generic description for the institutional structure of different types of adult education providers Finally, we discuss the challenges and perspectives deriving from an interdisciplinary approach for comparative adult education research.

International comparative adult education research: "Servant of many masters"

The reasons for the interest in international comparisons in educational sciences were, at the beginning, of a practical nature. The motive of many early scholars was to learn from the experiences of other countries for the purpose of practical application in the own country or for a reform-oriented policy advice (Gonon, 1998; Seitter; 2000). These different foci are reflected in different types of international comparative adult education research (Reischmann & Bron, 2008, p. 24ff).

According to Schriewer, the introduction of the methodological comparison marked the transition "from pre-modern to modern science" (1994, p. 430). Looking back at the history of international comparative adult education research, the name of Jullien de Paris is often associated with the origins of comparative education as an academic discipline (Field et al., 2016). Jullien de Paris with his 'Esquisse d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée', published in 1817, laid the foundations for comparing educational institutions across Europe, aiming at using the findings to inform policy and improve educational practice in his country. Despite his practical interest, Jullien was convinced that education science should follow the model of natural sciences and identify the laws that lay behind educational phenomena. In his "Rules of Sociological Method" (1895) Emile Durkheim postulated that complex phenomena can be tapped only comparatively and that the comparative method in social science should take the place of the experiment in the natural sciences. This analogy has been maintained until the present day.

Thus, it can be argued that the driving motives and main functions of comparative studies were already described in the 19th century: practical vs theoretical interest and idiographic vs nomothetic function[1].

The question about the driving interests and functions of comparison in comparative educational research has been systematically taken up by Hörner (2004, p. 234ff.). Hörner identifies four functions of comparisons and locates them along two dimensions: particularity vs universality and practical vs theoretical interest (see Table 1).

Table 1: Functions of comparison according to Hörner (2004, p. 243)

	Particularity	*Universality*
Theoretical interest	idiographic	experimental
Practical interest	meliorating	evolutionary

[1] The term "idiographic" comes from the Greek word "idios" meaning "individual" or" private". Scientists interested in this aspect seek to discover what makes a case unique. The term "nomothetic" comes also from the Greek word "nomos" meaning "law". Scientists who adopt this approach are mainly concerned with discovering and establishing laws or generalizations. See also Parreira do Amaral, 2015.

Idiographic comparisons search for the specific nature of an educational phenomenon, and describe and explain it with reference to its uniqueness. The quantity of comparative work focusing on the specificity and uniqueness of national educational systems, or aspects of them, indicates that this is an important function of comparisons. The meliorating function looks for best practices or best models in other countries and is highly relevant for both education practice and policy advice. The experimental function of comparison is associated with Emile Durkheim and his statement that the comparative method in social sciences is the equivalent to the experimental situation in the natural sciences. Finally, the evolutionary function is interested in global trends and the dynamics of development. It focuses on the discovery of universal rules for general trends, which also implies normative expectations on a (hidden) development scale (Hörner, 2004).

It is evident that all four functions of comparison can be identified in comparative adult education studies. Naturally, the different historical periods of international comparative adult education research[2] brought up varying priorities not only in the research topics but also in the interests and objectives pursued and consequently, in the theories and methods applied.

Whereas the driving forces and the functions of comparison are more or less applicable in every comparative discipline, a definition provided by Charters & Hilton (1989) should enable us to frame comparative studies within the field of adult education:

> "A study in comparative international adult education ... must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions. Comparative study is not the mere placing side by side of data ... such juxtaposition is only the prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study ... The real value of comparative study emerges only from ... the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination ..." (Charters & Hilton 1989, cited in Charters 2008, p. 52).

Emphasis is placed in this definition in *identifying similarities and differences,* as well as in *understanding them and their significance* in a given context. As mentioned before, the main motive of many early scholars was to improve their own practices and national systems. Consequently, they were particularly engaged in describing the uniqueness of national education systems and in understanding phenomena such as, for example, participation in adult education, adult education provision, professionalisation of the staff etc., which seemed to be contingent on cultural, historical, socio-economic and geopolitical conditions[3].

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2 According to Field et al. (2016) there are five historical periods: Jullien de Paris as an ancestor of international comparative adult education research in the 19th century; The Pre-Foundation or 'Bridging' Period 1900 to 1930; The Foundation Period after World War II; The Phase of Institutionalisation following the publication of the Exeter Papers; Comparison as an instrument of governance since the 1990s.

3 This tradition is still present in "country studies". See for example the book series published by the German Institute of Adult Education (DIE) which gives a quick access and initial orientation regarding the characteristics and features of adult education systems in European countries. Since 2014 five country studies have been published: for Austria (Gruber & Lenz, 2016), Norway (Bjerkaker, 2016), France (Schreiber-Barsch, 2015), Switzerland (Schläfli & Sgier, 2015) and Cyprus (Gravani & Ioannidou, 2014).

Early scholars´ comparative tradition stemmed from their academic roots in philosophy and history. This explains to a certain extent, in line with the early idiographic interest and the emphasis placed on understanding educational phenomena, the prioritization of qualitative, hermeneutical methods (case studies, ethnographic studies, grounded theory studies), which stress the role of the researcher as an instrument of data collection. However, the increasing interest in comparative education as a policy instrument has shifted the focus in the use of big data and quantitative methods, which seemed better suited to serve the new agenda of evidence based policy emerging in the 1990s (Wiseman, 2010; Ioannidou 2010b). Even though comparative educational studies have being used from the very beginning for policy advice and as political tools to legitimise educational policy positioning, nowadays this particular function of comparative studies has become highly prevalent.

Wiseman & Matherly (2016, p. 46) assume that the rise of the positivistic approach and the extensive use of social science methods in the field of international comparative education "were perhaps an inevitable evolution from the predominantly historical and philosophical approaches of earlier comparative educators."

The emphasis placed on describing and explaining similarities and differences and the consequent efforts to contextualize and understand them are logically integrated in the tradition of qualitative, inductive, flexible research design (e.g. Knauber & Ioannidou 2016; Egetenmeyer & Schüßler, 2016). The availability of big data from international surveys and large-scale assessment studies gave way to the introduction of new methodological approaches (Schrader 2015). Researchers are now increasingly concerned with investigating causal relations in the tradition of positivist, deductive, hypothesis-testing research with the purpose to describe, explain, and predict (e.g. Dämmrich et al., 2014; Martin & Rüber, 2016). Nowadays, panel surveys, item response theory, and multilevel analysis have their justification and application in comparative adult education research, along with historical studies, literature reviews, case studies, ethnographic studies, and grounded theory studies.

To conclude, international comparative adult education research seems to be „servant of many masters": science, policy, and educational practice. Every master has its own logic and asks for specific services; these are often incompatible with one another[4]. Moreover, international comparative adult education research - like other comparative social sciences- wants to be idiographic, i.e. to enquire unique phenomena and, at the same time, is eager to be nomothetic, that is to identify recurrent incidents and to describe generally applicable principles, rules or processes.

Therefore, the question which is the most suitable research design for comparative studies cannot be answered once and for all - for logical reasons. It depends on the question, the research objectives, the recipients of the research, and also on the available data and resources. Mixed-methods or multi-strategy designs which have increasingly been applied in comparative projects provide a more complete and holistic understanding of the analysed phenomena.

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4 For the relationship between comparative education and education policy see for example Mitter, 2015

How can interdisciplinary approaches stimulate international comparative adult education research? Two examples

For comparative scholars it is self-evident that comparative education research has always been interdisciplinary. Diverse theoretical perspectives emanating from social sciences, political sciences, economy, philosophy and historical sociology were firmly aligned with comparative education research: critical theory, post-structuralism, post-modernism, constructivism, feminist theories, Marxism, Governance theories, rational choice theory, world system theory, and neo-institutionalism to name only a few that have been used for international comparisons in the past (Amos, 2015). The same is true for international comparative adult education research. There is a close link between historical eras, contemporary trends, and upturns and downturns of certain theories and methods. Equally important seem to be the academic background of the researcher and his/her research aspirations for the prioritization of the one or the other theory or method. Additionally, young scholars entering the field tend to engage with new, and sometimes competing, theories and methods.

In this paper we explore the potential of interdisciplinary theoretical models to stimulate international comparative adult education research. We understand interdisciplinarity as an attempt to overcome a fragmented and limited understanding of a phenomenon caused by specific disciplinary lenses, and as an approach which enables us (or forces us) to integrate diverse theories in order to better understand and explain phenomena. Whereas multidisciplinarity has a long history in international comparative adult education research, interdisciplinarity in the notion of targeted integration of theories from other disciplines is rather a new phenomenon. We demonstrate this notion of interdisciplinarity using two examples which we consider to be particularly important as research topics for comparative adult education research. The first provides "an interdisciplinary theory to model participation in adult lifelong learning" and aims at explaining patterns of inequality in participation (Boeren et al., 2010; Boeren, 2016). The second example refers to the institutional structure of adult education system and attempts "to describe the diversity of different types of adult education providers in an exhaustive and distinct way" (Schrader, 2011; 2017).

Example 1: Comparative research on participation in adult education

Comparative research on participation in adult education is a good example of the kind of interdisciplinary approach described above. The importance of participation in lifelong learning has been addressed by international and supranational organizations as a key issue for individual, societal and economic development and has been monitored in various surveys and publications (OECD, 2016b; European Commission, 2016; UNESCO, 2015). International comparative studies have repeatedly pointed out that *within* all countries, there is a clear relationship between adults' socio-economic status and their willingness to participate in learning activities. At the same time, the strength of this relationship sometimes varies substantially *between* countries. The gap between countries with high participation in adult education and countries with low participation seems to be widening rather than narrowing. These findings point to composition effects between the macro, meso and micro levels of adult education systems, effects for which convincing explanations have to be found.

The investigation of enabling and inhibiting factors as well as trends and barriers in participation in adult education is a well-known topic in adult education research. However, the evidence in this field is fragmented, as are the theoretical explanations for this phenomenon. From a sociological point of view is important to investigate socio-economic background, age, gender, labour market status, social mobility or reproduction, social and cultural capital as influential factors. Economists tend to highlight human capital; the decision for or against participation is seen as being based on a cost-benefit analysis as underlined in rational choice theory. Psychologists investigate motivation, attitudes, self-efficacy and confidence of (non-)participants applying theories from cognitive, developmental and behavioural psychology. Finally, political scientists consider institutional patterns such as the type of the welfare state, the type of skills formation system or country-specific characteristics to be the most significant.

Boeren (2016) defines the problem of participation in adult lifelong learning as an interplay between structure and agency and provides an integrative model for explaining lifelong participation which takes into account a) the individual level (micro level), b) the level of adult learning providers (meso level) and, c) the level of country characteristics (macro level) (see fig. 1)

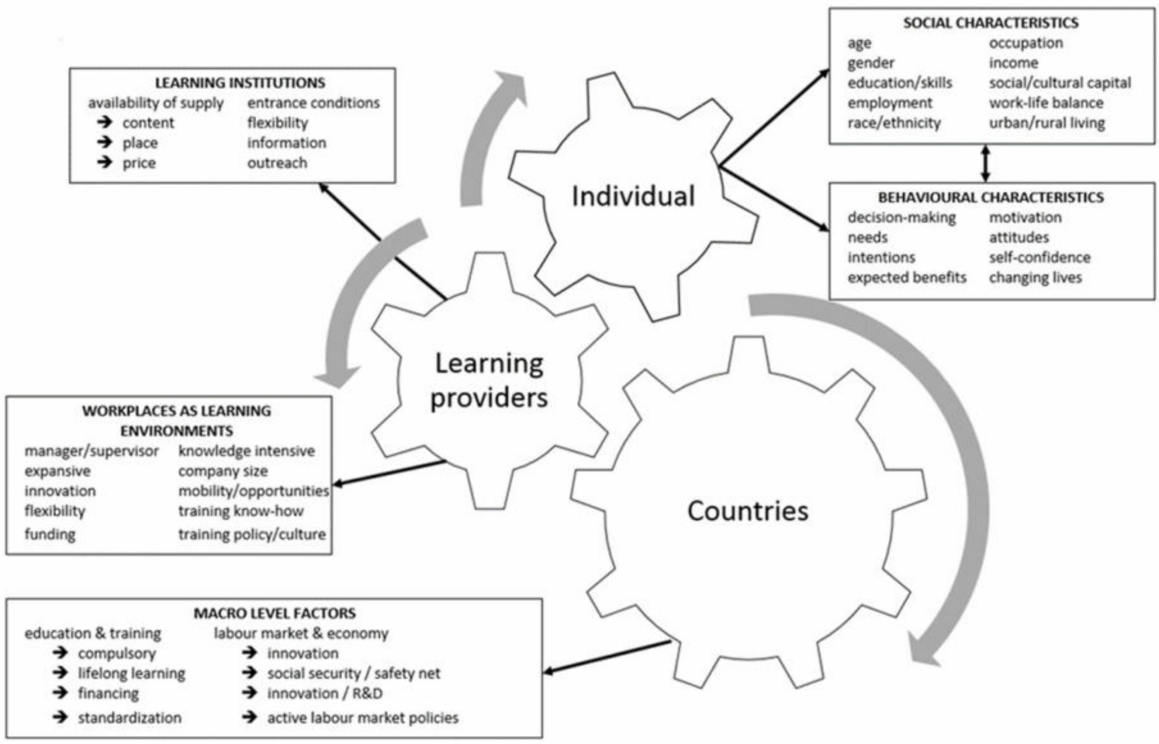

Fig. 1. Integrative lifelong learning participation model after Boeren, 2016, p. 147

In this model the interplay between micro, meso and macro level can be seen. The decision for or against participation depends on a variety of factors at three levels. For the micro level, the influence of traditional socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics seems to be well-analysed; determinants such as age, education, employment, attitudes, and motivation have proven to be important in many empirical studies. In particular, the level of initial educational attainment has been proven to have the highest predictive power in all comparative studies so far. Although participation in adult education is not an individual matter, the primary factors influencing participation seem to be institutional. Specific characteristics of adult learning providers play an important role in meeting needs and attracting adult learners. Factors such as the accessibility of adult learning providers, flexibility of curriculum, funding, learning methods etc. are also important for shaping a decision for or against participation. Furthermore, determinants on the country level such as labour market policies, education policies, social security issues, innovation, and financing seem to have a decisive influence on the decision for participation. The decision to participate according to Boeren is established through a successful interaction between the individual level, the level of the learning provider and country-level characteristics.

Although every single variable presented in this model has been established as a determinant for participation, the added value of this model is that it enables us to broaden the scope by *integrating* variables of different nature and forces us to adopt *an interdisciplinary approach*. The empirical operationalisation of this model is clearly a great challenge due to the multifaceted nature of participation presented here. The empirical evaluation of the model´s consistency as well as evidence are still pending.

Example 2: Comparative research on adult education provision

The level of learning providers (the meso level) plays an important role in shaping the provision of adult education and subsequent levels of participation. However, unlike research on participation, which is a familiar field for international comparisons, research regarding adult education providers is relatively limited. One reason for this situation lies in the lack of valid data. The field of adult education providers is heterogeneous and also volatile; in an open and competitive market, providers are continually opening and closing. Additionally, there is no systematic monitoring of adult education providers in most countries which could provide an overview of the field[5]. Studies on adult education providers that may so far claim plausibility in this context have been carried out only at regional level. Another reason for the limited research on adult education provision lies in a lack of theoretical foundations for the comparison of adult education systems. Schrader (2011; 2017) proposes a model to analyse the structure of adult education systems predicated upon modernization theories as well as neo-institutionalism.

The approach proposed by Schrader aims at framing the meso level theoretically in such a way that it can be clearly distinguished from the macro and micro levels. Furthermore, it attempts to describe in an exhaustive and distinct way the diversity of different types of adult education providers. To do so, the approach needs to empirically operationalize the meso level and define indicators as generally as possible so that they can be identified in all modern countries. The proposed model is based on the question: which kind of conditions enable adult education providers to permanently reproduce themselves? The model is linked to social science modernization theories as well as to neo-institutional theories and identifies four contexts of reproduction of adult education providers:

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5 An exception can be found in Germany, where considerable efforts have been made in the past to attain a systematic monitoring of adult education providers (see for example Ambos et al., 2015)

communities, state, firms and market. Figure 2 illustrates considerations referring to the positioning of exemplary organizations.

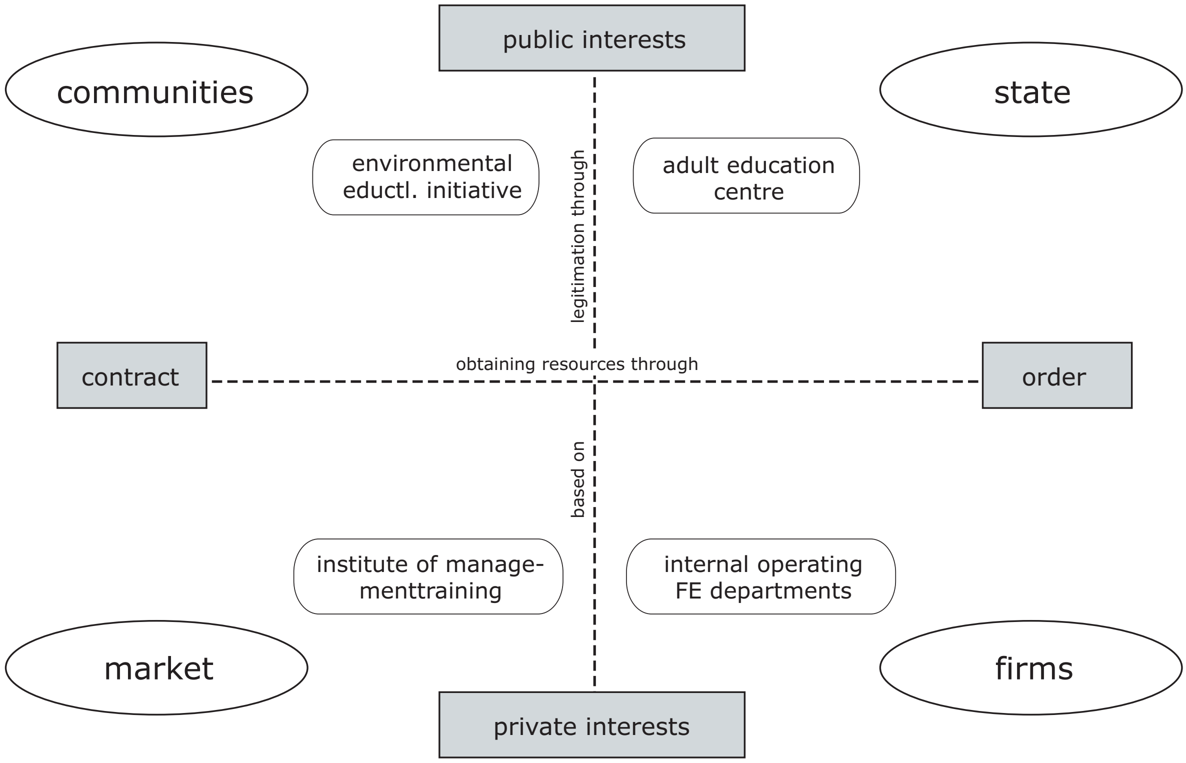

Fig. 2. Reproduction contexts after Schrader – location of exemplary adult education providers

The model of 'reproduction contexts' of adult education providers has already been empirically confirmed in a synchronic and diachronic analysis of structural changes of the adult education system in Germany (Schrader, 2011). The model offers certain advantages for international comparative research on adult education providers. It provides the basis for a theoretically distinct and exhaustive system of classification of adult education providers as well as indicators that are quite general for an empirical operationalisation in different countries. The latter, however, is still pending.

Conclusions

The two examples presented in the previous section aimed at demonstrating the potential hidden in an interdisciplinary approach for international comparative adult education research. Models have a theoretical and abstract character; they are meant to describe already known models and theories in an integrated way (Boeren) or to create a new theoretical concept (Schrader). Both models have a descriptive and, to a certain degree, explanatory function for the phenomena they intend to research, namely participation in and provision of adult education. However, empirical evaluation of the consistency of the proposed models, as well as empirical evidence on the scope of each model, are still pending. Application of the models in different countries could provide us with empirical results that would validate the theoretical models and contribute in refining and developing them into models with an ideally predictive value.

Summing up the main arguments of this paper, we claimed that international comparative adult education research has always been inspired by other disciplines. Depending on the academic background of the researcher, as well as on contemporary trends, certain theories and methods have been given priority during the historical phases of international comparative adult education research. Yet the relation between adult education and other disciplines has not been without tension. It seems clear that 'theory borrowing' can be problematic. It is pertinent to remember that for a long time there has been a controversial debate about 'disciplinary identity' and the difficulty to build such one without sui generis theories. Our intention was to demonstrate how theoretical models like those presented challenge the forms of simplistic or uncritical theory borrowing and can be proven useful for examining sui generis international comparative adult education research topics such as participation or provision. Yet, when it comes to applying these models in different countries there are great "challenges of contextual comparison" (Steiner-Khamsi 2015, p. 49) expected.

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Review of adult literacy financing mechanisms in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda

Introduction

Despite the numerous global education declarations from the 1946 UDHR's article 26 to the 2000 EFA regime up to the 2015 Millennium Development dream, 781 million youth and adults do not have any literacy skill. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of the world's non-literates is more than 1.5ml. The new SDG's 4.6 target to ensure all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030 is clearly haunted by historical failures which largely stem from insufficient financial resources.

Limited financing and its impact on efforts to help the entire world's population of non-literate youths and adults to develop and use literacy is a topical issue. It is a permanent feature in global education conferences notably CONFINTEAs and follow-up meetings. Finding money for adult literacy is terribly elusive; and as the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring report confirms, adult literacy education remains underfunded.

While the wanting nature of adult literacy financing is generally acknowledged, a more in-depth understanding of structural and contextual influences is scanty. The dearth of data and limited knowledge base continues to undercut the adult literacy financing discourse, particularly in Africa. Already as observed by the 2007 African regional conference in support of global literacy, there is little research on cost, calculations and sources of funding for adult literacy promotion. This paper is a direct contribution to narrowing existing knowledge gap on adult literacy financing in Eastern Africa.

The paper explores the financing of adult literacy in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. In the context of the overall purposes of adult literacy in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, the paper attempts to address three questions namely

i) What are the official aims of public financing for adult literacy in the three countries?
ii) How is financing for adult literacy in the three countries organized and managed?
iii) What are the noticeable adult literacy financing opportunities and challenges across the three countries?

The paper is based on a review of related literature, policy documents, plans, reports and key informants interviews with 12 stakeholders from the three countries as well as the practical knowledge of the author. The author is a Ugandan adult educator with more than 15 years of practical knowledge in the field of adult education. He takes contextual perspective to the adult literacy financing conversation in Eastern Africa. The review is within a framework of a CONFINTEA VI Fellowship undertaken in 2013 at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Background

The three countries, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda are among the many which failed to reach the Dakar target of halving illiteracy by 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). None of the countries has ever delivered on the recommendation by Belem Framework for Action and the Bonn Declaration on financing adult education for development which implores national governments to allocate 6 percent of the education budget to adult education from which the adult literacy subsector would get its share (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2010). Ethiopia's 4th Education Sector Development Plan (2011-2015) envisaged investing 8.8 percent of the education budget to adult education. The end of plan review report indicates that the regions did not allocate the required budget. Key informants in Kenya said that the country's Sessional Paper No.14 of 2012 on Education and Training proposed to allocate 3 percent of the education budget to adult education but by 2013, the subsector was receiving less than 1 percent. While it is difficult to provide statistical evidence to illustrate Uganda's failure to accord the subsector the recommended share, it is quite obvious that the country is not any better. Moreover, adult literacy education is not within Uganda's mainstream education financing.

With a total population of 78 million people, **Ethiopia** has one of the lowest literacy rates in the World (Shenkut, M. K., 2005; Federal Ministry of Education, 2010). The country's non-literate adult population increased from 25 million in 2004 to over 28 million in 2009. Since the 1960s, Ethiopia has implemented three large scale literacy programmes namely the 5 Year Work Oriented Adult Literacy Programme in 1968 to 1973, the National Literacy Campaign (NLC) between 1979 and 1983. NLC was considered a success and it won several international awards including UNESCO's NOMA Literacy Prize (Shenkut, M. K, 2005).

In Ethiopia, adult Literacy is embedded in the Integrated Functional Adult Education Programme (IFAE) which is part of the Education Sector Development Programmes coordinated by the Ministry for Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2010). The Ministry of Finance disburses part of the education funds for national-based expenditures to the Ministry of Education; and the rest to self governing Regional Bureaus which in turn work in partnership with Zonal Education Offices and Woredas (district bureaus). Ethiopia has quite a progressive adult education policy and institutional framework which include Education and Training Policy of 1994, National Adult Education Strategy of 2008, Master Plan for Adult Education as well as the 5th Education Sector Development Programme. It has a National Adult Education Board established through a Memorandum of Understanding involving the Ministry of Education and five federal line ministries (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011). There is a proposal to upgrade the Adult and Non-formal Education Unit to an Adult Education Directorate in the Federal Ministry for Education.

Kenya had a total of 38.6 million people by 2009 according to the last national census (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2014). The 2007 National Literacy Survey indicated that 7.8 million Kenyans were functionally illiterate. Kenya implemented national literacy campaigns in the 1960s and 70s, and a post literacy programme from 1996 to 2002 (International Institute for Educational Planning, 1991; Bunyi, 2006). The country's policy and institutional framework for adult education and literacy is anchored in two ministries, one in charge of Education and the other for Gender, Sports and Culture. The Special Board of Adult and Continuing Education (SBACE) created in 2011 is mandated to advise on matters related to coordination and regulation of all adult and continuing education providers in the country (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2014). The Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education provides leadership and professional guidance. Unlike in Uganda but similar in Ethiopia, Adult Education is incorporated into the country's Education Sector Development Programmes. The Ministry of Finance disburses adult education funds to the Ministry of Education, and to local authorities at county and sub county levels.

Uganda's population stands at 34.9 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The country's non-literate adult population is estimated to be 7 million (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2015). Uganda has had four relatively large adult literacy programmes namely National Mass Literacy Campaign in 1964, the Integrated Non-Formal Basic Education Pilot Project (INFOBEPP) in 1992, the 5-Year National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan (NALSIP) in 2000, and now the National Action for Adult Literacy (NAPAL) 2012-2016 (Okech et al, 2001; Okech & Zaaly'embikke, 2007). Uganda's adult education and literacy policy and institutional framework is located outside mainstream education planning and management. The Functional Adult Literacy Programme which is the only officially labelled adult education intervention is coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. In 2013, the Ministry enacted the Uganda National Adult Literacy Policy. The Ministry of finance disburses funds for national level adult literacy education expenses to the Ministry of Gender, and the rest to local governments at City, Municipal and District levels.

Theoretical perspectives

Aware of the continuing theorization of literacy and its meaning in different contexts, this paper is no attempt to engage in the same. The paper takes an open-minded approach to understand the three country specific conceptions of literacy and their implication for financing policies and practices. This discussion is informed the broadened understanding of literacy. Literacy is not any more understood just as a set of technical skills developed through one-off learning experience at a particular developmental stage to be applied in the entire life span of individuals. As observed by Hanemann (2015), literacy is now perceived as a learning continuum of different proficiency levels (p.295). Literacy is not only a social process but a social practice which is contingent on a diversity of social, political and cultural contexts (McCaffery, Merrifield & Millican, 2007; Street, 2005; Papen, 2005). Increasingly, it is not enough to talk about literacy skills and practices in isolation of the notion of a literate environment. As articulated by the EFA Global Monitoring report, a literate environment encourages and enables literacy activities and practices to occur (UNESCO, 2006).

From the 1960s, an investment paradigm anchored in a human capital theory together with a shift from a cognitive teaching approach triggered the debate to focus on the question of 'why literacy'. Naturally, this is an attractive quest for economic growth-leaning theorists and practitioners. Pragmatic concepts such as functional adult literacy which capture and legitimize the social and economic returns on investment in adult literacy became part of the discourse (UNESCO, 1965). The fit with economics of education as a field concerned with how scarce resources such as money and time are allocated in producing competences; and how the competences are allocated and used in further production processes is obvious.

Financing adult literacy is ideally concerned with finding and managing resources to deliver quality services for yielding learning outcomes and capabilities. The resources range from physical, emotional and intellectual investment by the learner to monies needed to procure all sorts of requirements for effective learning and teaching. The sources are multiple as are the approaches of how to make the money produce the required learning outcomes. The approaches include supply-side and demand-side (Dohmen & Timmerman, 2010; Nafukho, Wawire & Lam, 2010). The supply-side approach entails disbursing finances to the providers of teaching-learning services. Demand-side financing puts financial means directly into the hands and responsibility of the learner (Dohmen, 2012). Supply-side financing targets the institutions; and often helps to maintain the legitimacy and credibility of education and training as a public good for all. Demand-side financing instruments are credited for empowering the learner to make choices, and to demand value for money (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2013).

The behavior of financing mechanisms is dependent on the development paradigms of domestic and foreign financiers. The choices to fund adult literacy never escape the judgment whether it is for consumption or investment. Each of these two dimensions derives its legitimacy from philosophical foundations which underpin the purpose of education including the value to, and of the adult learner. Development paradigms which are embedded in the human capital theory focus on economic returns of education whether at the level of individual learner, community or national economy (Becker, 1994). The social justice and human rights dimensions as embedded in the contemporary capability approach mainly focus on enlarging learning choices and other freedoms as well as functionings for all (Sen, 1999; 2003).

The official aim of adult literacy public financing

The ideas which decision makers hold about 'what literacy is' often shapes not only the curriculum and pedagogy but the financing choices of a country as well (McCaffery, Merrifield & Millican, 2007). Public decision making outcomes are potentially reflective of how theory influences practice and the reverse. The review sought to understand the official meaning of adult literacy in the three countries, and to link the same with the aim of public financing of the subsector. Across the board, literacy is funded as an economic investment to yield socio-economic returns. Ethiopia and Kenya is inclined to adult literacy as an education service while Uganda perceives it more as a community mobilization function within its social sector development framework.

According to the CONFINTEA VI national progress reports, none of the three countries has an official definition of literacy. With regard to understandings of adult literacy, the national progress reports as well as policies and plans are indicative of a widened and broadened perception. There is a noticeable shift from *literacy as skills to literacy as tasks* across the three countries. The traditional cognitive literacy teaching models of the 1960s gave way to functional approaches in the 1970s through the 1990s.

Ethiopian's 4th Education Sector Development Programme (2011-2015) identifies Functional Adult Literacy as a key focus of the country's adult education interventions. The country's Integrated Functional Adult Education

(IFAE) is described *not merely as a basic literacy program aimed at reading and writing only, but also acquiring basic literacy skills and application….helping learners understand the realities around them, acquiring practical knowledge and skills, change in attitude and motivation for problem solving by building on what they have acquired in life* (Federal Ministry of Education, 2011).

Kenya's Literacy Campaign from 1963 to 1974 was predominately literacy as skills. This was succeeded by the Experimental World Literacy Programme which introduced the concept of functional literacy in the late 1970s (Bunyi, 2006). The country's 2016 CONFINTEA VI national progress report indicate the *eradication of illiteracy among adults and out-of-school youths; promotion of functional approaches to literacy to ensure that the beneficiaries immediately apply the skills acquired to improve their social and economic well-being as the key points of the country's policy approach to literacy and basic skills*.

Uganda's first post-independence efforts to *eradicate adult illiteracy* were through a National Literacy Campaign in 1964. From the 1990s, the country has implemented a couple of literacy programmes which are built on the principles of functional adult literacy approach.

Adult literacy education programmes in the three countries aim at attaining national social and economic outcomes. Adult literacy is largely perceived from its instrumental value. Ethiopia's target is to become a middle income country by 2025; and the Federal Ministry of Education stresses that without a significant increase in the adult literacy rate, the country will not be able to achieve a middle-level income status within a foreseeable time.

Kenya's Education Strategic Plan envisions a medium term adult literacy increase to 80 percent to match the Country's Vision 2030. Adult literacy education is expected to contribute to the development of requisite manpower required to drive the country to middle income status (Ministry of Education, 2008). Uganda's National Action Plan for Adult Literacy is aligned to the Country's national development frameworks on the strengths of adult literacy education's assumed contribution to increasing household incomes and promoting equality; increasing access to quality social services and enhancing human capital development (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2011). The country's national literacy target of 95 percent is within the framework of its vision of a middle income country by 2025 (National Planning Authority, 2013).

Generally, the three countries' public adult literacy financing policies and practices are naturally inclined to *literacy as tasks* viewed as a strategic investment to meet mainly societal and economic outcomes for poverty reduction. The aims as derived from globally determined goals by multilateral and multilateral agencies. The little financing that there is, aims at building competencies and skills of non-literate youths and adult to work for improved productivity and ensuring quantifiable social development returns relating to health, children's education, among others. The review of public policy documents and plans does not find evidence on public financing of adult literacy education for pleasure or personal development. While the Ethiopian Education Sector Development Plan raises the social justice-based argument for literacy but emancipatory, consumption and human rights based aims of adult literacy education are largely muted.

This phenomenon is in no way accidental. The three countries are historically linked to, and driven by development paradigm anchored in a human capital theoretical orientation. Moreover 50 years ago, the conference of African states on educational development declared that a literate population is essential to the economic development of emerging states, clearly signaling the tendency to take literacy from its instrumental value (Economic Commission for Africa / UNESCO, 1961). As indicated in the next section of this paper, literature and key informants in the three countries speak of the influence of the Ministries of finance which are known for adopting and implementing economic prescriptions by bilateral agencies and the powerful Bretton Woods Institutions especially the IMF and World Bank. Line ministries and government departments in charge of adult literacy are also known for working within the framework global goals and targets set by donors and development partners, majority of which are inclined to measuring adult literacy on the basis of its quantitative outcomes.

Sources of public financing for adult literacy

We can infer from the experience of adult education financing to derive a theoretical sense of how funds for adult literacy would be generated. It is generally agreeable that just like general education; publicly financed adult education largely survives on taxes. Developed economies often have the systems to collect a variety of revenues including educational levy systems in addition to general taxes.

The review reveals weak education and training financing patterns in the three countries. The little public funds for adult literacy work in the three countries are generated through traditional taxation and foreign aid. The key informants confirmed that national governments raise public funds for general education from traditional revenue sources especially income tax, property tax and value added tax. There are no ear-marked taxes such as payroll levies, training levies or education credits from which a portion for adult literacy could be appropriated. Even Ethiopia which is reported to have evolved a system of special taxation for financing education during the 1920s and 70s is now implementing a general taxation policy. There is no evidence to indicate that local governments in the three countries raise any local tax for adult literacy work. Needless to say that, taxation in the three countries is a macro function under the mandate of finance ministries.

There is a history of some small-scale multilateral and bilateral financing arrangements for adult literacy in the three counties. These take the form of project-oriented (off-budget) financing mainly by bilateral, multilateral agencies and NGOs from Europe and North America. These are largely one-off support for targeted funding of capacity building interventions. **Ethiopia's** share of multilateral and bilateral support can be traced from the national literacy campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. Development agencies such as the World Bank and USAID provided support to adult and non-formal education but the accurate share for adult literacy is of course difficult to delineate.

Kenya's experience includes a grant of 200 motorbikes and staff training by the British Government in 1979 (Bunyi, 2006). The Department for International Development (DFID) is reported to have supported the monitoring and evaluation of Kenya's Adult Basic Education Programme in 2008. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) supported the country's Post Literacy Project in 1997 to 2002. UNESCO and other bilateral agencies such as CIDA provided financial support to the country's national literacy surveys.

In **Uganda**, some bilateral and multilateral sources of financial resources to public adult literacy education programmes are traceable from the 1990s when UNICEF and dvv international supported the country's functional adult literacy programme in eight pilot districts. Between 1999 and 2002, the World Bank supported two studies to review the process and outcome of adult literacy education programme in Uganda (Okech, et al., 2001; Oxenham, et al., 2002). Iceland's Agency for International Cooperation (ICEIDA) provided financial support to functional adult literacy programme in the fisher communities of Lake Victoria from 2004 to 2013.

One can hardly find nationwide foreign funded adult literacy education programmes in the three countries. However, there are a few development projects featuring adult literacy as one of the intervention strategies. The Ethiopian Poverty Reduction and Capacity Building through Livelihood Skills Training (EXPRO) in the year 2000 as well as the Integrated Women's Empowerment Program in 2006 afford a good example of this scenario. Both projects whose flag titles are silent about adult literacy were implemented through a partnership involving dvv international and the Ethiopia Federal Ministry of Education, Regional Education Bureaus and Woredas (district).

In general terms, as many studies and assessments increasingly reveal, public adult literacy financing in the three countries is wanting (though Ethiopia is comparatively better off). This is not surprising given the market-led economic path being pursued by the three countries with the strong influence of Bretton Woods Institutions and other neo-liberal leaning supranational agencies. Adult literacy is not known for being a favourite of the fiscal policies of these institutions. For instance, the World Bank financed almost no adult literacy in the 1980s and continued a cautious approach in the 1990s (Abadzi, 2003 p.vi). For over 20 years since 1991 until 2010, adult literacy's share of the Bank annual education lending never exceeded 1.5 percent in a year (World Bank, 2011).

Budgeting and disbursement of public adult literacy money

Implicit adult literacy budgeting and allocation practices are not uncommon in Kenya and Ethiopia. In both countries, national financing data do not differentiate adult literacy and adult education. The 2012 CONFINTEA national progress reporting template for **Kenya** separately indicates the same annual budget figure (U$972.214) in respect of government financial contribution to adult education and adult literacy education spending during the years 2009 and 2010. While Ethiopia's template data cells for financial contribution of national government to adult education and adult literacy are blank, documentary evidence and key informants confirm the practice of lumping of financial estimates and allocations under the umbrella integrated functional adult education (IFAE) programme.

Uganda's 2012 CONFINEA VI national progress reporting template, key informants and other data sources point to some history of explicit adult literacy budgeting, allocation and disbursement practice. Until 2014, adult literacy budget lines were, for instance, clearly indicated right from the National Budget Framework Paper coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2006).

The bulk of public adult literacy budgeting in the three countries takes place at the macro and meso levels. The powerful ministries of finance coordinate with line ministries to determine the annual indicative figures and broad expenditure patterns. In Kenya, the Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education within the Ministry of Education manages the sub vote through which adult literacy money is managed. For the case of Uganda, the Department of Community Development and Literacy in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development takes responsibility for initiating the national budget for adult literacy. The Federal Ministry of Education in Ethiopia serves as a facilitator between the Ministry of finance and the regional governments; and regional education bureaus. Integrated functional adult education (IFAE) is the official vote from which a portion for adult literacy is secured.

In the three countries, the ministries of finance disburse a portion of the allocated funds to the line ministry to undertake relevant management functions at that level. In Kenya and Uganda, the rest of the funds are directly transferred to the accounts of local governments at districts; and counties for the case of Kenya. In both countries, the funds to the districts are supposed to be expended within a particular framework stipulated by the finance ministry. For Ethiopia, the funds are transferred to regional bureaus which in turn disburse to zonal education offices and woredas which expend the funds according to their priorities. There are claims that the Federal Ministry of Education in Ethiopia receives a small budget for its overall supervisory role. The biggest portion of the budget for Integrated Functional Adult Education is managed by regional bureaus.

The adult literacy sub-sector finances do not enjoy statutory protection from reallocation at the different levels of government structures. In the late 1990s when debit swaps for education and poverty eradication interventions were introduced, adult literacy education got a temporary relief. For instance adult literacy was included in Uganda's revised poverty eradication action plan; and consequently the subsector accessed the so-called Poverty Action Funds (PAF) from 2002 (Okech & Zaaly'embikke, 2007). Vulnerability to cuts by central government, regional and local authorities mirrors the risks associated with implicit budgeting.

Key informants corroborate documentary evidence on the discretional powers of finance and administrative decision makers to switch, de-prioritize and divert adult literacy budgeted finances. Since 2014 when Uganda's functional adult literacy budget lines were dropped from the Public Investment Plan by the Ministry of Finance, allocations for annual programme activities at the headquarters of the line ministry fell to US$8.571 from US$114,286. In Kenya, a key informant said that apparently in three years from 2010, no form of government grant had been disbursed to adult education centres. Key informants in Ethiopia mentioned that actual spending on adult literacy varies from region to regions depending on the commitment of the regions; and in any case regions are not necessarily required to report their allocations to adult literacy education. All key informants indicated that too often the promised allocations are not fully released; while the allocations are dwindling so are the releases.

As indicated above, external financing to public adult literacy work in the three countries are largely off-budget, and therefore not included in mainstream national budgeting frameworks. Development agencies cooperate with departments or ministries concerned with provision of adult literacy education through memoranda of understanding and other implementation tools such as work plans and cash flow projections.

Flow of public adult literacy money to service delivery points

Unlike formal basic education which takes place in recognized institutions or schools, adult literacy classes in the three countries are largely not institutionalized. It follows, as indicated above, that the state financing machinery disburses funds to departments in charge of community development or education at regional, district, county and other lower levels of government. Even in cases, where adult literacy institutions or organizations do exist, there is no evidence of direct disbursements to such institutions. All the key informants spoke of endemic complaints by actors at local governments regarding limited and irregular flow of funds for adult literacy education services at micro delivery points. One key informant in Kenya said that the last disbursements to adult education centres were made in 2010.

The review sought to understand whether the little available funds are indeed ultimately spent to meet the costs of services and supplies at adult literacy education delivery points. Apart from personnel costs and the occasional stipends for literacy tutors which are paid at the discretion of decision makers at regional, county and district levels, public expenditure is inclined to management and administration costs. Labour costs for literacy tutors, transport, communication and essential facilities for effective service delivery are largely not part of mainstream public adult literacy financing. Adult literacy education actions at micro levels suffer the greatest brunt of meager public financing. Apparently, service delivery points receive far less than what they deserve which greatly undermines overall performance and quality.

Ensuring value for money and optimal use of available funds for real adult literacy education work is not explicit. There are no explicit policies and guidelines to promote accountability and prudent adult literacy financial reporting. The Kenyan key informants, for instance, cited a number of generic public resource management instruments such as the public procurement and disposal act as some of the existing arrangements to ensure effective use of adult literacy funds. A review of Uganda’s Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development implementation guidelines reveals an emphasis on other input processes other than money. Evidence from the three countries, points to general performance and outcome assessments of adult literacy education programmes to establish enrollment, transition and completion rates.

Financing by local CSOs, private sector and adult literacy learners

Literature and key informants indicate that thousands of CBOs, NGOs and FBOs undertake diverse small scale adult literacy interventions in the three countries. Kenya and Uganda are reported to have a relatively huge presence of these non-state actors than Ethiopia. These not-for-profit institutions undertake routine fundraising by approaching donors and development partners. In Ethiopia, the Adult and Non-formal Education Association (ANFEAE) is reported to have received funds for adult literacy related activities from Oxfam, Save the Children, Pact, USAID and Action Aid International. Literature and key informants indicate that rarely do mainstream donors and development partners make explicit calls for adult literacy proposals.

Aware of this constraint, NGOs and other actors are increasingly fundraising through making adult literacy-embedded development interventions. For instance, in 2010, dvv international in partnership with Uganda Adult Education Network (UGAADEN) secured funding from the European Union for a 5-year project for skills training and non-formal education for poverty eradication in Uganda. The project had a functional adult literacy component in addition to vocational skills development and income generation.

Private sector financing of adult literacy education services is reported to be very scanty. Occasional financial investment driven by social responsibility and labour productivity aims are more evident in Kenya and Uganda. For instance, in Kenya, literature mentions some direct financial support for production of learning materials and supply of equipment by SAFARICOM limited and Magadi Soda Company. Nile Breweries Ltd in Uganda contracted Adult Education Centre (a local NGO) for 10 months in 2006 to develop literacy competencies of employees in the company’s brewing and packaging departments. The company made a consolidated pay of around US$15 per learners for every 32 hours spread in a calendar month.

Self-financing by adult literacy learners is not part of the known history of adult literacy education finances in the three countries apart from the in-kind contribution and occasional gifts to appreciate volunteer tutors. In-kind and unpaid labour by local promoters and communities are the mainstay of adult literacy education service delivery by majority micro-level non-state actors. Adult literacy tutors often provide their labour free of charge. The opportunity cost as adult learners forego productive work to engage in learning; writing materials; and the occasional non-mandatory gifts all constitute a significant portion of the resources invested in adult literacy education work. In all the three countries, there are reports indicating that local leaders and institutions provide physical infrastructure for adult literacy classes.

There are scanty stories of learners who pay or make a token contribution for adult literacy education services consumed. Some NGOs and private literacy providers charge a fee for the services rendered. Adult learners who pursue literacy and language skills development in English or other powerful foreign lingua in Ethiopia and Uganda were reported to be keener to pay. DIFRA Language Services, a private-for-profit drop in centre in Uganda’s capital city charges a minimum of US$50 per 20 hours spread in a calendar month for urban dwellers who wish to develop Basic English Language and Literacy competencies.

ANFEAE in Ethiopia, Kenya Adult Learners’ Association (KALA) and Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) in Uganda are examples of the few not-for-profit organizations which generate income from providing consultancy services and hiring property. On occasions, LABE and ANFEAE have been engaged to provide paid professional services in capacity building and material development in the field of literacy and education for children and adults. KALA collects rent and other property fees on a building, which the association constructed with the financial support of the Japanese Embassy in Kenya. A Kenyan key informant said that KALA uses the proceeds from their property to pay adult literacy tutors’ allowances of US$34 per month, as well as meeting other crucial expenses including stationery and electricity.

Literature and key informants speak of increasing threat to NGOs’ freedom to generate income from contracted services and foreign funding. Already in Ethiopia, the new law requires Ethiopian-registered NGOs or charities to fundraise no more than 10 percent of its income from foreign donors. In Kenya, similar draft legislation which is intended to restrict the functioning of NGOs was reported to be in the offing. The Uganda Government increasingly perceives NGOs as security threats. A political culture grounded on state control and poor democratic conduct of public business characterized by weak accountability and transparency practices is largely responsible for the restrictive policy environment imposed on civil society organizations in the three countries.

Conclusion

In general terms, the review is indicative of a range of opportunities and challenges in the way financial resources for adult literacy education are generated, disbursed and utilized. *First, partnerships for adult literacy education financing can be enriched for better service delivery*. Adult literacy learners and communities in the three countries are reported to be quite cooperative. They offer all sorts of in-kind contributions within their means; and learners often appreciate their literacy tutors with occasional gifts. Myriad CBOs, NGOs and FBOs are engaged in the provision of adult literacy education services using resources from local and foreign sources. Financial contributions by some corporate companies in their remote form are signals of interest and support.

The review reveals opportunities and possibilities for better and productive partnerships for innovative adult literacy financing mechanisms. For instance, communities and beneficiaries through their CBOs, NGOs and other civil society institutions could be empowered or contracted to deliver services on behalf of government. This worthy attempting variant of a supply-side approach would help to put financial resources directly into the hands of adult literacy teaching and learning groups and institutions. Equally, customized monitoring systems and data collection tools to capture adult literacy financing patterns and practices can be developed and used through this network of stakeholders.

The stronger decentralization of education financing in Ethiopia once enriched through a clear check and balance system to safeguard rational and commensurate spending patterns for adult literacy is a replicable experience for Kenya and Uganda. The Ethiopian inter-ministerial cooperation model established through a Memorandum of Understanding is another opportune example and can be a source of inspiration for state actors in the three countries and elsewhere to deepen and widen the much needed multi-stakeholder and sector-wide adult literacy financial resource mobilization. Moreover, a broadened understanding of adult literacy demands exactly that.

Second and relatedly, apparent mismatch between adult literacy conception and public policy distorts financing and leadership. While public policy documents and plans are inclined to functional adult literacy as both an economic and socio investment, financing commitments and governance set up are far below expectations. The functional literacy approach presupposes partnerships with a range of ministries and departments within a country to ensure complementary not only in terms of finances but professional leadership through a vibrant intersectionality perspective. This necessitates examining the financing implications of a broadened definition of adult literacy and adoption of a functional approach. Qualified and motivated adult literacy personnel at different levels, which are in short supply in the three countries, would support public decision makers to develop a firm grasp of these implications.

Further, the emancipatory and social justice versus economic benefits of adult literacy debate is, as elsewhere, unresolved. Whether adult literacy education is indeed an economic investment, an education service or a community development strategy influences the decision regarding which ministry or department takes the administrative mandate for the sub-sector. All these define budgeting, allocation, disbursement, utilization and accounting policies and practices. The review confirms how the market driven public policies of the ministries of finance in the three countries overwhelm public adult literacy financing.

Third, state inclination to rhetoric and low sense of accountability mirrors a weakened civil society. Across the three countries, the tendency to set very ambitious targets to cover all districts, sub-counties, villages; and to serve almost all non-literate youths and adults without a commensurate financing mechanism is not uncommon. This leads to meager resources being spread too wide with inconsequential disbursement of funds to adult literacy service delivery points. Of course this poor governance practice is not peculiar to adult literacy policy planning and financing. Government and public institutions in the three countries are rather used to a weakened civil society without the required civic competence to demand for accountability. It is common for governments to make public pronouncements without real political and financial commitments.

Forth, precarious public adult literacy financing practices are evident. Public financing of adult literacy relies on traditional taxation and off-budget bilateral and multilateral aid. While funds from public coffers are vulnerable to cuts because there are no ear-marked sources, project-oriented foreign aid is not sustainable. This poses a huge threat to efforts to establish long-term financing mechanisms for adult literacy education. Moreover, there are no signals towards widening and diversifying public financing within and beyond the traditional revenue sources.

Fifth, the bulk of available meager resources is spent on traditional state bureaucracy with less and less on critical micro-level expenses such as payment of adult literacy tutors. Evidence confirms relatively heavy spending on planning, monitoring, supervision, material development and training of personnel which is typical of public use of adult literacy financial resources. Current financing practices do not offer hope for creating permanent local infrastructure with professional paid tutors, and appropriate venues with up-to-date learning equipment / furniture for quality adult literacy service delivery as recommended by several declarations including the 1961 Conference of African states on the development of education in Africa.

Sixth, adult literacy financing mechanisms in the three countries are not comparable to mainstream education financing paradigms which are based on the global north knowledge systems. In developed economies, the mechanisms for drawing funds from public coffers, financial markets and employers are noticeable. In addition to payroll taxes, employers in these economies make diverse contributions such as tuition subsidies, fees for workers, study grants and time off from work for learning.

In the three countries, just like elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, public adult literacy financing is implicit and highly discretional. Youth and adults drawing from own income to pay for adult literacy education is unusual though the review confirms in-kind contributions and occasional gifts to tutors. Limited effective demand for adult literacy education owing to stressful financial life of non-literate populations largely accounts for the subsector's less monetary nature in comparison to main financing models. This has far-reaching implications for adult literacy resource mobilization, organization and management.

Review encounter reflective note

Pursuing the review purpose to contribute to a better understanding of adult literacy financing in the three countries involved dealing with difficulties related to limited primary data sources which undercut attempts to fully uncover the socio-economic, political and cultural forces which underpin the similarities and differences.

The review relied heavily on secondary sources some of which contained analyses and interpretations with indistinct pointers to adult literacy financing. Adult literacy being a less institutionalized service, especially for the case of Kenya and Uganda, leads to blurred data and information on finances and financing. Some of the key informants were too busy to dig up all the available data on adult literacy finances in its distinct form.

Reliance on a network of colleagues and friends who provided unpublished reports, plans and other documents helped to narrow the data gap. However, their contribution to the review was voluntary, personal, discretional and unpaid; and they could not be engaged as partners for the review owing to logistical and financial limitations.

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An International Comparison of Adult Basic Education Policies: Reflections on the Method 'Expert Interview' with Policy Actors

1. Introduction

Research in international-comparative adult education offers valuable insights in different educational fields through the systematically comparison of educational aspects in different countries or regions. The description and analysis of the origins of divergent or similar developments and situations in different cases (Parreira do Amaral 2015, p. 108) delivers a bigger explanatory benefit than just looking at a single case. The international comparison of (adult) education is not only used in research but also by actors in society and politics, which is evident in the different surveys conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal (2003, p. 429) call comparison a "mode of governance" leading to "a logic of *perpetual comparison*", which emphasis the need to carefully observe comparison in political and educational debates.

At the beginning of an international-comparative research project the question arises, which methodological approach is appropriate in order to collect data for answering specific research questions, or which already existing data requires a re-analysis. For some research questions participatory observation or systematic quantitative surveys may be the method of choice, even though they might be time-consuming and expensive.

For other research questions, qualitative expert interviews can be the more efficient and concentrated method of gathering data. The study presented in this paper is based on expert interviews using research questions on literacy and basic education policy. Expert interviews allow a direct access to the country-specific expert knowledge in the particular field of interest and can thus shorten time-consuming data gathering processes. Looking at education policy, numerous official documents, reports and evaluations are available. Nevertheless, it is difficult or even impossible to gain access to some aspects of education policy with the exception of talking to experts in the field who carry the specific knowledge of interest. Additionally, experts do not only have specific knowledge but also key positions in the field of interest, which allows for the expert to serve as a bridge to access the field (Bogner, Littig & Menz 2009, p. 2).

Even though the method of expert interviews offers many advantages, it is also important to reflect on its limitations and restrictions especially in an international-comparative context, for example when it comes to translation difficulties. Therefore, the following paper reflects on the method of expert interviews in the light of the international-comparative research project "EU-Alpha". The paper is structured as follows: First, an introduction to the research topic is given, followed by a description of its methodological and theoretical approach, as well as a short overview of the most important results of the project. In a next step, the methodological approach of the study is reflected followed by a short résumé.

2. Adult literacy and basic education – The study "EU-Alpha"

Adult literacy and basic education has become a topic of national and international education debates, especially since the publication and wide dissemination of the first results of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Similarly to previous international-comparative large scale studies, such as the Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) or the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL) Survey, PIAAC assessed the proficiency of adults in basic competencies. The findings of the first PIAAC round, surveying adults aged 16 to 65 across 24 countries and sub-national regions, indicate that a considerable number of adults in developed economies lack basic skills, like literacy and numeracy, but also reveal significant country-to-country differences in the "low achievers" group (OCED 2013, p. 257).

International efforts attempt to tackle the challenge of low literacy in the population. In June 2016, the European Commission adopted a New Skills Agenda with several actions and the aim to "to improve the teaching […] from basic to higher skills" (European Commission 2016). Yet, the main task to improve basic skills and particularly literacy performance in the population is in the responsibility of individual countries with regard to legislation, content, and financing.

Quantitative surveys such as PIAAC do not and cannot explain are the political background and foundations of basic education in the individual countries, e.g. legislation, political campaigns, policy actors and their interaction, inclusion of non-state actors in processes and decisions, as well as the implementation of adult basic education policy. From a comparative adult education perspective, it is important to ask which kind of basic education policies countries implement to address the problem of adults with low literacy skills. Even though there have been some overviews and reviews on policies for literacy and basic education (Aschemann 2015, ELINET 2015), there is no systematic, cross-country comparison on adult basic education policies yet.

The German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning has conducted on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research the international-comparative project on literacy and basic education "EU-Alpha" with a qualitative research approach. This project aimed to describe, analyse and compare policies and governance structures of basic education (especially literacy) in six countries (Austria, Denmark, England, France, the Netherlands and Turkey) with regard to key actors in the field of adult basic education policy, their resources to achieve specific outcomes, their institutional settings, and their understanding of literacy and basic education on a policy level.

3. Methodological approach

According to Parreira do Amaral (2015, p. 127), there are essential questions for comparative research to narrow down the topic and objective of the comparison, e.g. the unities of the study (e.g. countries), type of data collection (one-time, longitudinal), parameter of comparison, function, and interest of the study.

To compare governance structures and policies on literacy and basic education, empirical findings based on data from case studies in Austria, Denmark, England[1], France, the Netherlands, and Turkey are taken into consideration.

The countries were selected based on structural features, i.e. the type of governance in education, as well as on the basis of quantitative indicators (including level of literacy skills according to PIAAC). To identify the mode of educational regulation and governance, the typology by Green, Wolf & Leney (1999, p. 79) was used. The typology identifies four primary models of educational regulation and governance to which countries can be assigned: Centralised systems, regional systems, systems with local control and systems with institutional control in a quasi-market. The centralised system exhibits strong central control and educational governance, as well as homogeneous institutional and administrative structures. Green et al. assign France and Austria to the centralised model. The regional system, typified by Germany, locates educational control in the regional states, the "Länder", situated between the federal state government and the municipalities. However this system also has limited federal responsibilities. The Scandinavian countries (in our sample represented by Denmark) are classified as local systems. The regulation control in this model lies with the municipalities, within a framework of central regulation. The fourth model, the quasi market system, is associated by Green et al. with the Netherlands and the UK. It represents high institutional autonomy with a simultaneous decrease in central regulation. Although the typology by Green et al. mainly refers to the regulation of formal education and vocational training in adult education, the typology shows a spectrum of regulation – from centralised regulation to market control – which one can presume for the literacy and basic education sector as well. Literacy and basic education offerings can be embedded in various sectors of the educational system; in general and vocational education for young people as well as in further education for adults. For this reason, it can be expected that the models of regulation and governance described above are also applicable to the field of literacy and basic education.

Methodologically, the EU-Alpha project is based on both qualitative data from expert interviews and document analysis and on a re-analysis of quantitative data from PIAAC. As the results presented in this article only present the findings from the qualitative data analysis, the methodology of quantitative data will not be explained in further detail.

As an adequate instrument to gather data on policies in literacy and basic education from their formulation to implementation, the project used a specific type of interview, the expert interview. Experts are individuals showing active participation in a certain area of interest (with regard to the project literacy and basic education policy) and have a special knowledge acquired by carrying out such functions in the subject matter. Special knowledge is acquired through their activity and privileged access to information and not necessarily through their training (Meuser & Nagel 2009, p. 24). Since the focus was on the expert knowledge based on experience and an exclusive position in a relevant actor institution/organization, systemising expert interviews were used for the study. Expert interviews were conducted in order to gain information, which was not accessible through documents, reports or other literature.

The expert interviews were conducted with key actors in the field and

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1 The data refers to England without Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales.

therefore included state (mostly policy administration at ministerial level) and non-state actors, e.g. national associations for adult and basic education, trade unions, and educational researchers in each relevant country. The expert interviews were non-standardised and semi-structured (Gläser und Laudel 2010) in order to ensure cross-national comparability. The interview guideline was developed in the light of a comprehensive literature and document review of each respective country. The experts were contacted via mail or phone with a detailed explanation of objectives, content, function of the research project, and the need of interview data from field experts. This procedure resulted in a high return rate: Almost all the requested interview partners were available for an interview. The interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed between October 2014 and March 2015. The interviews were mainly conducted at the experts' organisation/institution; in a few cases only telephone interviews were possible due to scheduling problems. In the transcription, all spoken text was transcribed. Non-verbal communication (as it was not documented with a video recording) as well as articulated pauses (with filler words like "huh", "uh", "erm", "um", "well" etc.) were not taken into account to keep the text readable. Between five and seven interviews were conducted in each country. The average interview duration was 66 minutes. After transcription, the content was analysed with the qualitative content analysis method (Mayring 2015) and with the software programme MAXQDA (Kuckartz 2007). Therefore, data was first structured and coded mainly along deductive categories deviated from theory (issues, actors, political levels), but also inductive categories deviated from the data directly to include important impulses from the experts. The analysis followed on a country level (commonalities and divergences, conflicting positions/opinions) and then in the form of an inter-country comparison (comparison of categories). To support the contextualisation and validation of the expert views, education policy documents (e.g. programmatic texts, memoranda, guidelines, recommendations, reports, conference papers and legal acts) were reviewed and analysed alongside the qualitative content analysis. Three objectives were pursued: The manifestation of the political discourse, the revelation of culture-specific semantic traditions, and the identification of development patterns.

4. Educational governance and actor-centred institutionalism

To address the objectives of the research project, an interdisciplinary approach was used between comparative educational research and comparative political science (Reuter 2002, p. 169). As a theoretical framework, the study refers to the approaches of educational governance and actor-centred institutionalism (Mayntz and Scharpf 1995, Scharpf 1997, Scharpf 2006), both emanating from political science. The actor-centred institutionalism allows to include actors, their resources/capabilities, cognitive and normative orientations and their interaction in the analysis.

The concept of governance overlaps with action theories, notably with the actor-centred institutionalism, concerning central analytical categories, like actors and actor constellations, multi-level system, interdependence, type of coordination etc. (Scharpf 2006, pp. 73-94). Furthermore, the concept, which includes actions and actors beyond the nation state and therefore a variety of (relatively) autonomous actors on different levels (local, regional, national, international), is suitable for the description and analysis of education policy. Education policy is not only regulated by governmental but also by international and non-state (profit and non-profit) actors following certain interests. The term educational governance emphasises this plurality of actors and variety of their interaction. The theorem of actor-centred institutionalism complements our research perspective as education policy, or more specific literacy and basic education policy, can be considered as the outcome of interactions among intentional actors - individual, collective, or corporate actors. However, these interactions are structured and their outcomes are shaped by the characteristics of the institutional settings in which they occur (Scharpf 2006, p. 17). According to Scharpf, actors are characterised by their specific orientations (perceptions and preferences) and by their specific capabilities, i.e. their material and immaterial resources such as money, privileged access to information, competencies and jurisdictions, participation and veto rights (Scharpf 1997, pp. 43-44). The modes of interaction within this framework are classified under hierarchical direction, unilateral action, negotiated agreement and majority vote (Scharpf 1997, pp. 46-47). The theorem of actor-centred institutionalism is thus crucial to analyse policy making and identify key actors (concerning content, financing and implementation of basic education policy), their action orientations, their capabilities, and their modes of interaction within institutional settings.

In the following chapter, the most important results of the study are summarised.

5. Exemplary results[2]

The study "EU-Alpha" aimed to describe, analyse and compare policies and governance structures in basic education and literacy. The following paragraphs deal with the questions: How are literacy and basic education defined and understood at the policy level? Who are central actors? How can the governance structures be described? The short summary of the results presented below refer, due to the limitation of the article's length, only to Turkey, Austria, the Netherlands and England, which represent two typology types of educational regulation and governance by Green et al (1999): The centralised system (Turkey, Austria), and the system with institutional control in a quasi-market (the Netherlands, England).

When presenting empirical findings from the EU-Alpha project, we distinguish, for systematic reasons, between the content (policy); the form or institutional order (polity) defining content, financing and implementation; and the process (politics) (Schmidt 2004, pp. 535-538).[3] All findings listed below originate from the analysis of the expert interviews.

Regarding the **content definition** (policy) of basic education by state actors in all four countries, basic education is defined beyond mere literacy and also includes mathematics and ICT in Austria, the Netherlands and England. However,

[2] This chapter contains text parts and results which were published before in: Knauber, C., & Ioannidou, A. (2016). Politiken der Grundbildung im internationalen Vergleich: Von der Politikformulierung zur Implementierung. *Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung – Report*, *39* (2), 131-148.

[3] In the English speaking world, politics, policy and polity are an undividable three-point term, allowing to focus on one dimension of the complex policy term in order to describe and analyse it in greater detail.

a difference between the countries can be found in the understanding of the role of basic education and basic competencies. In England, state actors primarily emphasise the benefits for the labour market. In the Netherlands, Austria and Turkey political education and participation play a more dominant role. However, a differentiation is necessary between the extensive understanding of this role in Turkey and more moderate understanding of the role in the Netherlands and Austria. A link between school education and basic education is particularly evident in Turkey, but to a certain extend also in Austria. In policy measures on basic education, a close link between basic education and school and vocational education policy can be found in England, whereas in Austria, the Netherlands and Turkey those political topics are dealt more independently.

Regarding the question of which central actors are responsible for the **content** of basic education policy and within which institutional rules and actions they operate (polity), it was found that mainly state actors and only in subordinate role (and only in the Netherlands, Austria and England) non-state actors are responsible in the selected countries. Concerning state actors, in Austria and the Netherlands different levels of government are responsible for content-related decisions, depending on the governance-structures (please see next paragraph). The **funding** of basic education is in the hands of state actors in all of the selected countries. However, different government levels are responsible for financing decisions (Turkey and England: central state, Austria: federal state and federal states governments, the Netherlands: several local labour market regions). The **implementation** of basic education and literacy policies are in the hands of various (state, non-state) educational institutions and providers in the selected countries. In Turkey, adult education and training institutions, under the control and financing of the Lifelong Learning Directorate of the Turkish Ministry of Education, are responsible for carrying out adult literacy. In Austria, only non-profit providers can apply for funding of basic and literacy programmes. The implementation is therefore characterised by non-state non-profit providers. In England, and since 2015 also in the Netherlands, the implementation is carried out by non-state non-profit and profit providers, who have to compete for public funding.

Concerning **governance-structures** (politics) in literacy and basic education policy, the findings show that the typology of Green et al. (1999), which was originally constructed for regulation of formal education and vocational training in adult education policy, cannot be transferred to literacy and basic education policy without adaptation as assumed before. In the case of Austria and the Netherlands, it is necessary to assign these countries to other regulation types. In Austria, several governmental levels (federal state level and the nine federal states) are involved in the regulation. Therefore, Austria is a hybrid between the two types centralised and the regional model. Turkey can clearly be attributed to the centralised model with central state control. England is evidently attributed to the "quasi-market system" model with very limited state influence. The Netherlands also shows elements of the "quasi-market system" model (like promotion of competition between education providers), but additionally fits into the model of local control with a national framework as local labour market regions are mainly responsible for regulation.

6. Critically reflection of the method of expert interviews: Limitations and restrictions

This chapter critically reflects aspects of the expert interview method with regard to the international-comparative project "EU-Alpha" and the research on literacy and basic education policy.

As mentioned before, semi-structured expert interviews were conducted for the study. The literature research on the method of expert interviews revealed that only a few articles and books are available, mainly from scientists from German-speaking countries e.g. Gläser & Laudel (2010), Meuser & Nagel (2009) and Bogner, Littig & Menz (2009). The term "expert interview" does not appear to be very common in English qualitative research on education. However, numerous scientific literature on interviewing in qualitative research and also on semi-structured interviews is available (for an overview see: Bryman 2012, Fontana & Frey 2000). In international-comparative (adult) education research, qualitative designs and the use of the method of qualitative interviews is known and used (e.g. Ioannidou 2014, Webb et al. 2004, Diamantopoulou 2006), as well as in international-comparative political science (Pickel & Pickel 2009).

Expert interviews are a specific interview category mainly conducted in a semi-structured interview form with an expert interviewee. As described in chapter *3. Methodological approach*, experts are individuals showing active participation in a certain area of interest (in regard of the project: literacy and basic education policy), have special knowledge acquired through this activity, and privileged access to information (Meuser & Nagel 2009, p. 24). The interviews focused on this exclusive expert knowledge on literacy and basic education policy. For this project, expert interviews provided an opportunity to gain information which was not accessible through the review of documents, reports or other literature.

Bogner & Menz (2009) differentiate expert knowledge in three dimensions: Technical knowledge, process knowledge, and interpretative knowledge. Technical knowledge represents specific knowledge of the field and details such as laws, processes, power-relations etc. Process knowledge covers interactions and routines. Interpretative knowledge represents subjective interpretations of status-quo, relevance and ideas/plans but also the experts' description and explanation of his or her own work, routines, and influence (Bogner & Menz 2009, pp. 52-53). Expert's knowledge is essential for various study objectives. In this project, all dimensions of expert knowledge were crucial to gather additional information about the organisation/institution (actor) represented by the expert (objectives, resources). Additionally, the expert was expected to provide insight into other relevant actors (objectives, role in terms of influence on the policy, resources), power-relations, and governance-structures.

The expert interview also provided a way to structure the research topic "literacy and basic education policy" according to the process of policy analysis (Dunn 2016, pp. 2-22) into policy performance, observed/expected/preferred policy output and outcome. Therefore the interviewee took different roles in the interview: The role of monitoring (outputs/outcomes), evaluation (performance), forecasting (expected results), and the role of recommending (preferred future output/outcome).

Even though the expert interview method offers many advantages, it is important to take limitations and restrictions of the method into consideration. The following paragraphs therefore reflect on certain exemplarily points which were especially relevant for this study.[4]

Limitation of experts interviews and restriction of the informative value of the data

The informative data value from expert interviews is subject to different limitations. Five of those limitation are exemplarily presented in the following paragraphs. The first three limitations generally occur when conducting expert interviews in qualitative research, the last two are limitations which specifically arise in or are intensified by international-comparative use of expert interviews. All limitations might also be labelled as restrictions of data reliability. Reliability in this context is not understood in a strictly quantitative way in the sense of the consistency of the measure or if it repeatedly produces similar results under consistent conditions. Kirk & Miller (1986) reject this claim of reliability for qualitative research as it (like our study) deals most often with changing “objects” of research. They suggest reliability as a way to refer the degree to which other researchers are able to perform similar observation in the field and in the analysis of the data. Reliability can be increased by reflecting and documenting the data collection and analysis. The following paragraphs of the five limitations also show, how the challenge of increasing reliability in this research project was tackled.

As a **first** aspect, the selection of the experts is questioned. Experts were chosen after an elaborate literature and document review and the selection was adjusted when interviewed experts gave well-founded hints to include additional experts in the sample. The selection followed specific criteria, e.g. responsible representatives of the political level (ministerial level) were included as well as representatives from relevant non-state actors and research. Nevertheless, it is possible that other researchers might have had another expert combination in the sample, depending on their access to the field and the willingness of experts to give interviews. The definition and documentation of selection criteria for the experts allow to understand and reconstruct our sample. For our study it was important to conduct interviews with the most important actors in the field of literacy and basic education policy. We succeeded in this aim according to our own research and the feedback from interviewed experts.

A **second** aspect is the period of time in which the interviews in one country were conducted (mostly in one week), but also in which all interviews of the sample countries were conducted (between October 2014 and March 2015). The interviews represent statements for this specific time period only. As we can see in the case of England, major political changes occurred after the survey. The re-election of the Cameron-led government, the referendum about leaving or staying in the European Union, and eventually the upcoming “Brexit” had an important influence on the field of actors in literacy and basic education policy (e.g. the organisations of two English experts no longer exist). Therefore, a later interview period might possibly have changed the selection of experts in England as well as

[4] Qualitative interview studies might have many more limitations and restrictions which need to be reflected. Nevertheless, due to the limitation the length of this article, only those were picked exemplarily which were especially relevant for this study.

the views of some interviewed experts. Nevertheless, this restriction of the informative value of the interview data is known and can only partly be solved by continual data collection, which is connected with high expenses and not always necessary depending on the research objective. In our specific study, the enormous effect of the general election 2015 the United Kingdom was not predictable. The study's objective was to find underlying policies and governance structures concerning literacy and basic education policy. This aim was reached, even though the results have a limited "lifetime", especially in countries with fundamental political changes.

A **third** aspect is the interview conduction. The procedure of doing a semi-structured interview is – as the name suggests – not standardised and reproducible as it also depends on the interviewer and interviewee, their interaction and impulses, but also time, place, empathy, and sympathy of the interviewer. Still, in the semi-structured interview, the guideline documents the most important topics but gives the interviewer a great amount of leeway not to follow exactly the guideline or to ask questions not included in the original guideline (Bryman 2012, p. 471). This was especially important for our study in order to discuss unexpected but important impulses from the expert in detail or ask additional questions for the understanding of the complex political processes. Additionally, this format offered a great overlap of the topics in the various interviews and enabled us compare interview results in one country and across different countries.

As a **fourth** aspect, the difficulties of conducting interviews and giving interviews in a language different to the mother tongue need to be stressed, or – in other words – the linguistic discrepancy between "what I said" and "what I meant" in mother and foreign tongue. The interviews were conducted in German in some countries as well as in English in other countries (see *Table 1*). In Turkey, questions and answers were translated from Turkish to German and German to Turkish during the interviews by a translator. The translation of specific terms, which a crucial for the content of the interview, can be problematic.

Table 5: Overview of language differences between interviewer and interviewee(s)

Country	*Language of the interview*	*Mother tongue of the interviewee(s)*	*Mother tongue of the interviewer*
Austria	German	German	German
Denmark	English	Danish	German
England	English	English	German
France	French	French	German
The Netherlands	English	Dutch	German
Turkey	German/Turkish[5]	Turkish	German

Jütte (1999) summarised this problematic as follows: "The problematic nature of translation only becomes apparent when the transfer of meaning obviously fails and communication is prevented." (1999, p. 261). The author is mainly referring to the specific terminology of "adult education", which differs throughout the

5 The interviews in Turkey were translated from Turkish to German and German to Turkish by a translator.

countries depending on the countries individual educational-historic background. Finding respective functional equivalents in a foreign language can be challenging (Jütte 1999, pp. 263-264, see also Reischmann, 2008, p. 30, Bron, 2008, p. 65). In this study, we tried to address the problem before and at the beginning of the interview with an expert, as the issue of this study "literacy and basic education policy" is not self-explanatory. In an initial email to the expert, a first description of the study, definition of the topic, and possible questions of the interview were included. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer also explained what was meant by the term "Grundbildung", "basic education" or "l'éducation de base" to the interviewee to find a mutual base for the following interview. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that translating still "represents a process of problem solving in which there is a great variety of possible interpretations." (Jütte 1999, p. 264). However, translation difficulties is a normal part of international-comparative research. At one point in the process of comparison, a translation is necessary to permit comparison in general.

A **fifth** and final aspect of this chapter is the challenge of interpreting expert interviews. In this study, experts were interviewed as representatives of their institutions/organisations, which were assessed as relevant actors in the field of literacy and basic education policy. However, discrepancy between the personal opinion of an expert and the organisational/institutional point of view exists. From a constructivist viewpoint, an expert constructs a reality for the interviewer, which may be somewhere between the personal and organisational view. Additionally, the expert provides an expert knowledge in the interview, which is influenced by a plurality of different spheres. According to Meuser & Nagel (2009, p. 26) this includes knowledge from the professional sphere, but also knowledge acquired beyond and independent of the scientific-professional and economic spheres like from personal life experience as a private person. The authors recommend also to include the expert's private person relevance to the topic when judging the expert knowledge. A quite similar point is addressed by Trinczek (2009, p. 204), who points out that the interviewee has specific and subjective allocations of meaning for the individual daily routine and processes. When answering questions, interviewees judge questions with a background of personal knowledge and relevance, and answer according to their subjective interpretation. The international perspective of our study adds the problem that the expert knowledge is probably influenced by country-specific perceptions of our research topic. In our specific study, (most) experts are part of the political process (with direct or indirect decisional power), which was supposed to be described and analysed with this research project. This situation adds another layer to the challenge of interpretation of constructed reality: The expert's field is not a "neutral" standpoint but also characterised by power relations, which might influence answers given in the interview (political and social desirability).

In order to respond to the challenge of judging expert knowledge and opinion, our interview guideline started with some personal question concerning the experts' qualification, duration of work in the organisation/institution and tasks as well as relation to the research topic. In addition, the interview data was compared and complemented by results from document analysis and literature review. Nevertheless, the interpretation of answers still contains some uncertainty. However, this disadvantage was by far outweighed by the advantages of expert interviews in order to collect specific knowledge, from specific actors in a short period of time which made the method adequate for our study.

7. Résumé

Expert interviews, described in this paper as semi-structured qualitative interviews with a specific group of people providing expert knowledge, have to be seen with regard to the qualitative research idea: The accurate description of social phenomena (individual cases), the interpretation of data, the perception of the information carrier, and the well-founded generalisation (Mayring 2002, pp. 19-39).

As described in the reflection chapter, expert interviews offer access to a research field and to three dimensions of expert knowledge, the technical knowledge, process knowledge, and interpretative knowledge. Furthermore, expert interviews can be closely connected to the process of policy analysis, when structuring the interview and the (often large amount) collected data of different cases into policy performance, observed/expected/preferred policy output and outcome. The method is thus suitable for international-comparative research on education policy.

At the same time, the method can be criticised for several reasons like high subjectivity, difficulties with comparability and high heterogeneity of the investigation "objects". In international-comparative research, expert interviews face additional problems related to the language differences between interviewer and interviewee, translation difficulties, transferability of country specific terminology, and manifestation of country differences in the construction of expert knowledge. Nevertheless, the quality criterion reliability can be increased by careful reflection and documentation of the data collection and analysis, as shown in the last chapter. The expert interview seems in some cases, to be without alternative in order to get access to the field and specific information and knowledge, especially when collecting data on questions concerning policy, polity and politics. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the researcher to reflect on limitations and obstacles accompanying this method and to include this reflection in the analysis and interpretation of the research results.

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Adaptability and information processing capacity of further training systems: A comparative analysis of French and German coordination mechanisms

Preliminary version – please do not quote!

1. Introduction: Relevance of further training

The development of western economies into so-called knowledge-economies came along with an increased recognition of adult education or life-long learning as important ingredients for (socio-) economic development (Borrás & Edquist, 2015). Specifically, further professional training is considered important for the functioning of labour markets and for constant skill-development among the working-age population but also for of innovation performance (Bosch and Charest, 2008). Nevertheless, little is known about differences in further training systems' effectiveness despite increasing interest in comparative adult education (see, e.g., Oni, 2005).

While many cross-country studies by now tried to assess education systems in terms of institutional contexts and their effectiveness (see e.g. Markowitsch, Käpplinger, & Hefler 2013), direct comparisons of different national systems' effectiveness are difficult because adult education is intimately linked to other institutional, social or economic characteristics (Siddiqui, 1993). While this dependence on the institutional environment holds certainly true for nation-level differences (Brockmann, Clarke, & Winch, 2011), further training may also be understood as service system that has to adapt to differences on the sub-national local level as well. Demand for further training depends on local determinants like industry structure, firm structure, labour market conditions, employee's skill-level, and productivity and income. Moreover, due to constant changes in technologies and management requirements, the content and form of further education offers have to be constantly adapted as well. Therefore, further education supply requires local coordination with locally specific demands. This situation has been conceptualized by service science that stresses the relevance of suppliers' and customers' service co-production and value co-creation (Lusch & Vargo, 2006), In this perspective a service system can be described as "a value coproduction configuration of people, technology, internal and external service systems connected via value propositions, and shared information" (Maglio & Spohrer, 2008).

If preferences are seen as exogenous and external effects are neglected, the results from pure market coordination might be accepted as efficient. Nevertheless, with the assumed part for co-production of further education services neither suppliers nor customers might know in advance the value of the new service for their business, while the existence of positive external effects

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might result in an undersupply of further education from a societal point of view. As we therefore do not know the optimal level and quality of supply of further training, in the following we judge the systems' effectiveness by the quality of processes rather than outcomes.

Against this background, we ask, which coordination mechanisms support the required adaption between supply and demand in the further training system and in how far adaption and optimal coordination mechanisms depend on the institutional framework and on specific local conditions. Our research rests on an analysis of the mechanisms that govern information diffusion between local agents and their coordination of demand and supply in selected case study regions in France and Germany. Germany and France differ markedly in their policies for further training in terms of degree of regulation, formal coordination and involvement of public institutions. We assume that these national differences as well as differences in sub-national regional economies require local actors of further training to develop different strategies in how to coordinate supply and demand of further training.

2. Hypotheses on institutional determinants of coordination mechanisms

For our analysis we differentiate between coordination by hierarchies, networks, and markets (Powell, 1990). While this differentiation presents a highly stylized and simplified scheme, the resulting conceptual clarity allows for a meaningful comparison of local coordination between supply and demand in two institutionally distinct contexts as in France and Germany. Whether coordination by markets, hierarchies or networks dominates, largely depends on the institutional environment. Yet, specifically the existence and effectiveness of networks is also conditioned by local factors.

Hierarchy: Hierarchies typically characterise coordination within organisations, but in the public sphere of policy and administration bureaucratic mechanisms often also prevail in the coordination between organisations. While hierarchical or bureaucratic coordination was traditionally mainly associated with guidance by rules and routines with little tolerance, reforms in the public sectors of many European countries have attempted to raise bureaucrats' discretion under the headword "New Public Management" (Osborne & Plastrik, 1999) by more market-like techniques. In the German labour agencies, for example, the prescription of certain routines has in the past decade increasingly been replaced by pre-setting of certain target values that have to be realized, i.e., prescription of means has partly been replaced by prescription of ends. Private for-profit and non-profit organisations have similarly refined their management in the past decades in order to replace restrictive institutions by more individual responsibility-encouraging management practices. Thereby, organisations' members might gain the ability to get involved in networks, for example, and organisations themselves might gain flexibility.

H1: In nations with strongly regulated further education systems hierarchical coordination has higher relevance than in nations with less regulated systems.

H2: High public sector influence hampers the further education system's ability to adapt to locally specific demand.

H3: The introduction of more market-like incentives and the adoption of more market- and demand oriented management systems in public and private organisations supports more customized further training offers.

Markets: The observed changes in management practices have not least been forced upon private organisations by increasing competition and marked pressure in many service industries. Accordingly, the marked is an important agent of change and coordination mechanism for further training offers. Specifically, competition might have contributed to the development of increasingly modularized offers in further training like in other service industries (Bask, Lipponen, Rajahonka, & Tinnilä, 2011). Nevertheless, the market's ability to effectively coordinate the possibly required co-production of services and co-creation of value by suppliers and clients is arguable as it pre-supposes personal interaction between both.

H4: Competition and functioning markets push on the adaption of new management practices and thereby support more customized further training offers.

H5: Competition and functioning markets enforce increasing efficiency and push on the development of more modularized offers.

H6: Long-term relationships between further training suppliers and clients in regions with less competition support co-production of services and co-creation of value.

Networks: In the market-based perspective, long-term relationships either undermine competition or are disturbed by it. Dyadic relationships in the co-creation and co-production of services and service values might create mutual dependence and restricted information flows. Moreover, often there are many interrelated (potential) customers and many interrelated suppliers of further training. Therefore, dyadic relations might not suffice for the production of a service that is optimally adapted to local demand; instead, the interaction between provider and customer might rather be of a network- or "many-to-many" type (Gummesson, 2006). On the other side, networks often are transaction cost intensive and susceptible to collusion. Therefore, if local co-production of services is not of high relevance and competition is in place, the market might be the more efficient superior coordination mechanism.

H7: Coordination by networks is most relevant in low-competition markets.

H8: Networks support the recognition of complementarities and synergies and thereby help to develop further training offers that are well adapted to local demand.

H9: Coordination by networks is a supplement for markets but no substitute if judged by efficiency and quality of service offers.

Apparently, the preferable coordination mechanism depends on local conditions like the attractiveness of the market for further education but it also depends on the national institutional framework and regulations.

3. Legal and institutional frameworks in France and Germany

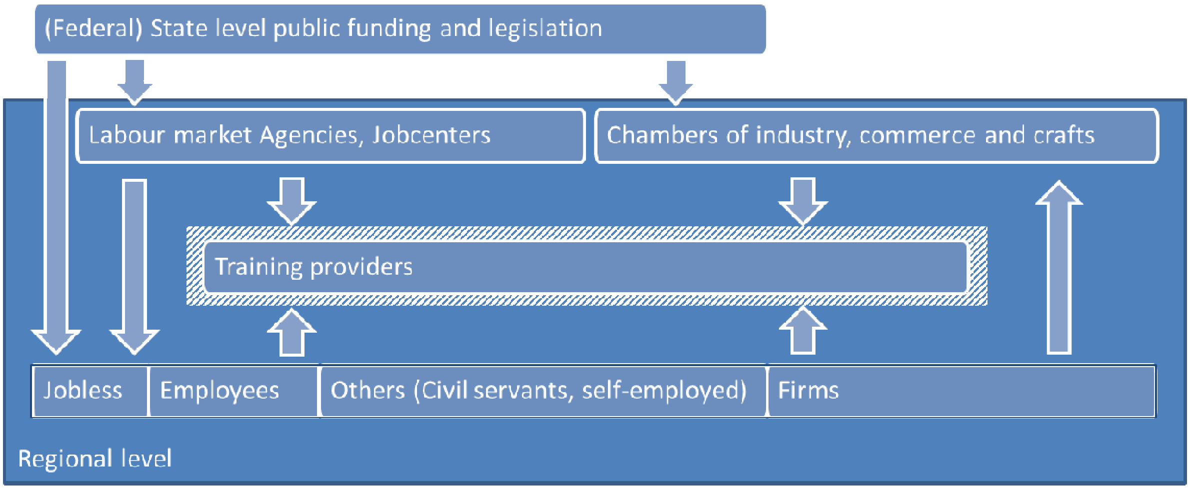
General administrative systems: France and Germany differ markedly in their political and administrative vertical organisation. While there is constitutionally guaranteed local self-government in both countries, local agencies have much more autonomy in Germany, where local agencies are the "most important implementing agents" while French agencies are "functionally weak" and work under the "strict supervision" of the government administration (Kuhlmann, 2006). Moreover, administrative regions in France are characterised by territorial fragmentation. From a public management perspective, Germany has been ascribed a "government" or administrative model, while France is sometimes assumed to follow the "governance" approach, i.e. "multiple actor structures, contractual relations, and negotiations are typical" (Kuhlmann, 2006).

General vocational training systems: France and Germany also "differ sharply in major characteristics of their educational system and the organization of work in the employment system" (Brauns, Steinmann, Kieffer, & Marry, 1997: 1). Differences in further training systems can hardly be understood and interpreted correctly, if differences in primary vocational training systems are being neglected (Schömann & Becker, 1995). Internal firm-specific training is of high relevance where apprenticeship training is of low relevance as in France (Brauns et al., 1997). Here, firms have to build up own training systems. Occupations are of lower relevance here and firm-intern mobility tends to be higher throughout work-life than in the German system with its strong dual system that contributes to standardised occupations with well-defined task and skill profiles (Bosch, 2014).

German further training system: In Germany the federal states hold the main jurisdictional competencies in educational matters. Nevertheless, there are several federal norms targeting further training like the Third Social Security Code (SSC III / SGB III) and the Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz BBiG). Vertically oriented further training measures are specified and regulated by the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and German Craft Code (HwO). Horizontally oriented further training is not regulated by the government; therefore training providers and firms are flexible concerning the content of further training, since there is no government regulation. However, in spite of the lack of government regulation there are certain further training courses whose content is standardized due to industry initiatives. In these cases, standardisation is accomplished by certification by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK). For some industries, there are collective labour agreements on continuing vocational training.

In summary one can say that "[c]ompared to other European systems, the German system of continuing vocational training is characterized by its market led approach to provision" (Büchter & Gramlinger, 2005). Therefore, the arrows in Figure 1 that presents a highly simplified graphical representations of important stakeholders of Germany's further training system usually do not describe binding rules and legislations but rather incentives and information flows.

Figure 1: Stylised representation of the German further training system

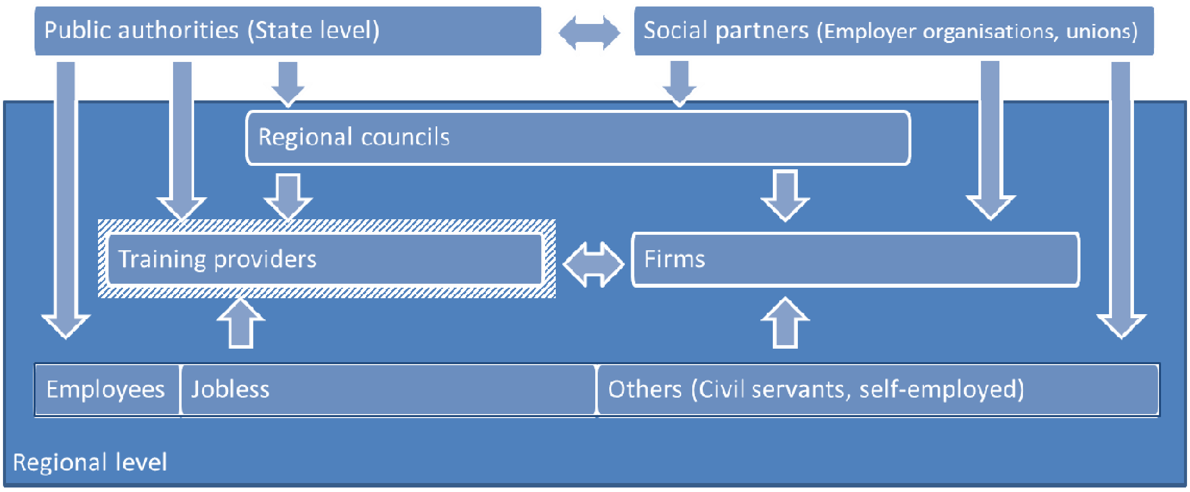


Source: Own figure

French further training system: In France, continuing vocational education is much more institutionalised than in Germany. It is subject of a distinct body of national labour law, while each region can implement its own policies. Divers stakeholders are involved in the further training policies design: The State, regional and local authorities, but also firms, public and private training organisations, professional organisations and unions. Since the decentralisation laws of early 1980s, the process of territorialisation of the labour policies in general and of the further training system in particular is engaged in France. Thus, since 1983 the role of newly created Regional Councils have been increasing and the area of their authority with regard to the vocational training have been progressively enlarged during the 1990s, leading to its establishment as a central actor of the system in the 2000s (Figure 2).

There are many collective labour agreements on further training and often they are incorporated in legislation: The social partners negotiate collective labour agreements on continuing vocational training at the national level as well as at the sectoral level whereas agreements at the national level are interpreted through detailed sectoral agreements (Trampusch, 2010). There are also more further training obligations for French firms than for German firms: Further training is considered as working time and has to be financed by firms and there is a duty for enterprises to pay money for further training, either in a fund or as internal firm investment (Trampusch, 2010). This fund system has some drawbacks, as in the 1990s several funds were criticized of not considering the employees' interests because they were managed by employers only. Therefore, the social partners and the state reformed the framework of the funds (Trampusch, 2010).

Figure 2: Stylised representation of the French further training system



Source: Own figure with changes based on Centre Inffo, 2015

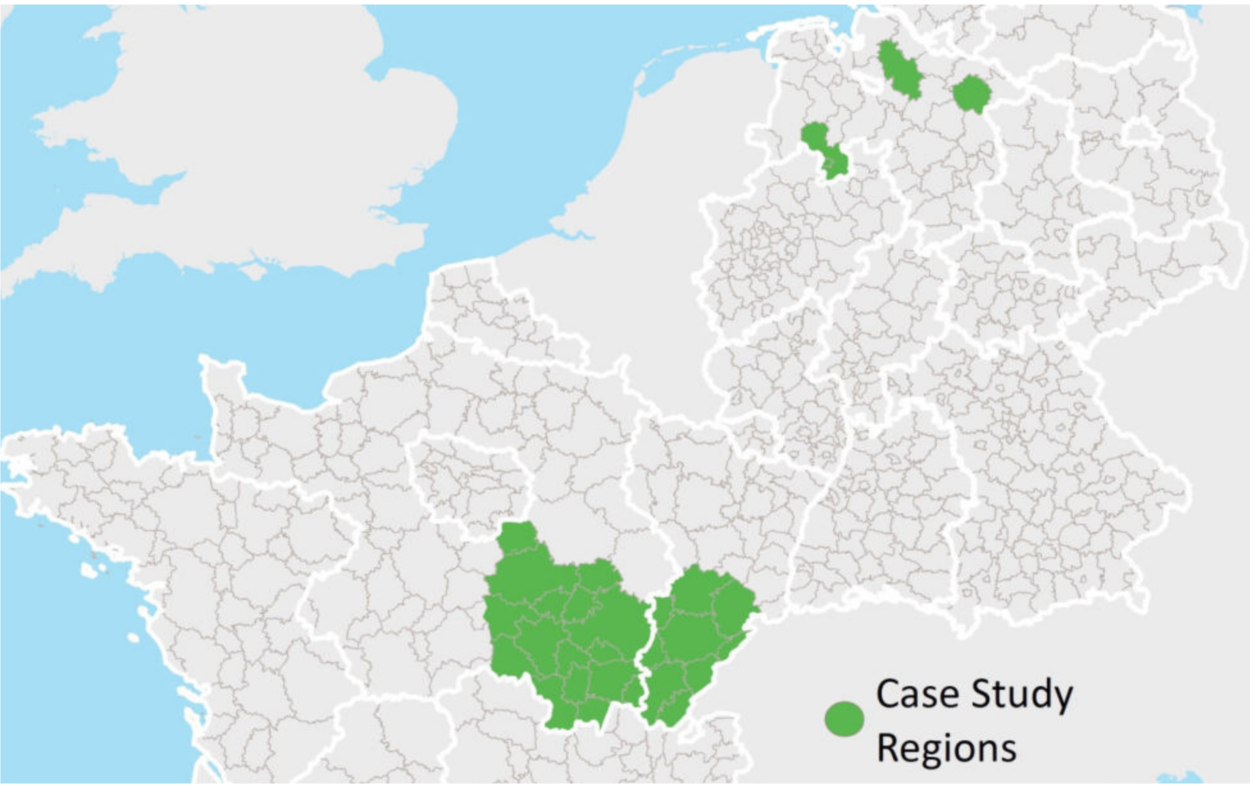
To address the system's problems a new law was brought forward in 2014 that established the Personal Training Account (compte personnel de formation, CPF), which ensures to each professionally active person 24 hours of training per year, being cumulative up to 150 hours in 7 years. The training is free of charge for beneficiaries, because it is financed by companies (at least 0.2% of their gross annual wedges) through joint registered collecting agencies (Organismes paritaires collecteurs agréés, OPCA).

Comparative assessment: While it has been criticised with respect to the German further training system that its development is left "to different powers in society and exhorts all those involved in the sector of continuing education to show public responsibility" (Büchter & Gramlinger, 2005), the French further training system has been judged as too complex, too bureaucratic and to have tenuous connection to the initial education system (Dubar, 2015).

4. Empirical strategy: Interview-design and analysis

In order to answer its research questions the paper draws primarily on qualitative data derived from coordinated experts interviews, using interview guidelines, with main regional actors of the further training landscape in German and French case study regions (Figure 3). The French case study region Bourgogne-Franche-Comté is with 48 thousand square kilometres about the size of the German federal state Lower-Saxony. Nevertheless, Lower-Saxony with its 7.8 million inhabitants is considerable larger than Bourgogne-Franche-Comté with 2.8 million inhabitants. Therefore and because due to the German institutional conditions districts rather than federal states seem to be the adequate level of analysis, the German case study regions were defined as two rather urban districts, Osnabrück city (OS-city) and Osnabrück county (OS-land), and two rather rural districts, Rotenburg (Wümme) (ROW) and Uelzen (UE). Neither in the French, nor in the German case is the activity space of stakeholders restricted to the case study regions, a circumstance that has to be taken onto account in the analysis of interview contents.

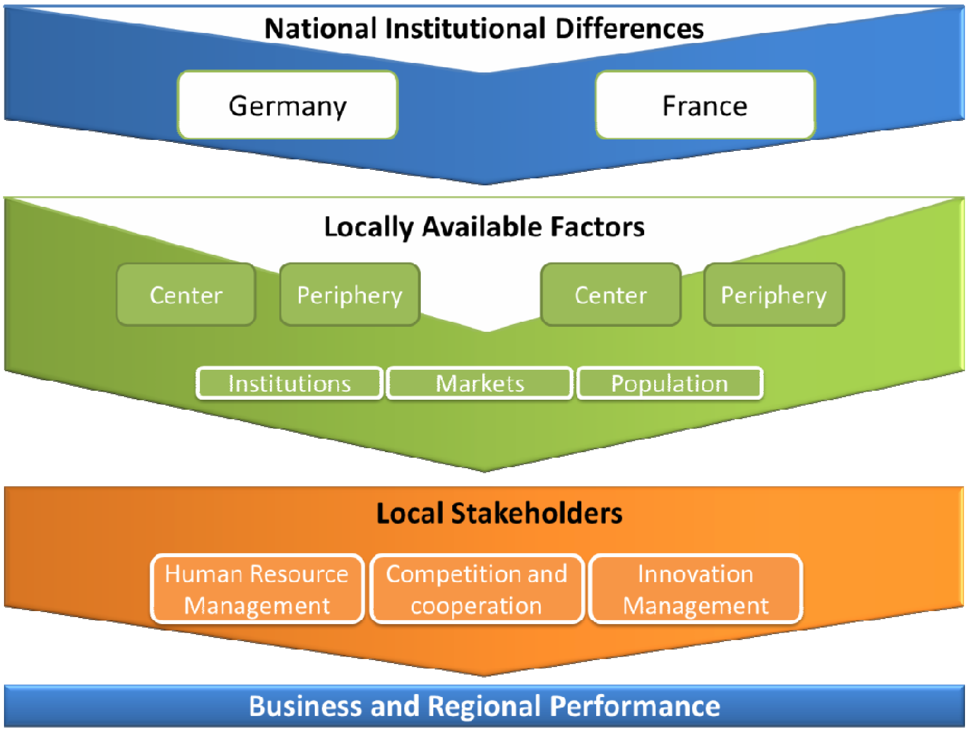
Figure 3: Case study regions in France and Germany



Source: Own figure

Research in the selected regions was supposed to allow for comparisons on different levels of observation (Figure 4). Mechanisms were to be compared on the nation level as well as between different types of regions within nations and for different firms as well as other labour market organizations on the micro level. This design is expected to deliver results on the multi-level determinants of local strategies for economic development.

Figure 4: Case study design and different levels of comparison



Source: Own Figure

Among the local key agents that were interviewed in the case-study regions are labour agencies and chambers of commerce for Germany and regional authorities and funds collecting and managing bodies like OPCA, as well as professional organisations of employers and employees for France. Important in both countries are public, semi-public and private training providers. The interviews concentrated specifically on the flexibility and information processing capacity of respondents' organizations and their ability to interfere with and react to other agents in their immediate environment.

The interviews included the following items and were analysed by means of qualitative content analysis (aided by the program MaxQDA) according to the following scheme (see box):

Structure

Hierarchy / organisation: field of activity, market size, relevance of further training, management structure, staff, budget, public support, decision criteria and routines and rules, assessment of certifying system, partner organisations from the same organisation family

Market: Decision criteria and aims, assessment of further education demand and competition, content and quality of further training offers, market strategy, promotion for further education, adaption to clients' demands

Network: Cooperation in common offers, coordination with local … labour market agencies, … certifying agencies, … chambers of trade and chambers of crafts, … (other) suppliers, … employers and firms, … others, lacking partners, responsibility and opportunity for communication and coordination, instigators

Activities

Supply: Online offers, relevance of vertical and horizontal further training and retraining, relevance of further training, decision criteria for support and supply, specialisation, support of firms and firm specific offers, certificates, further training advisory service, spatial representation, customer groups and financers

Planning: Coordination and cooperation in planning, adapting offers, assessment of client specific demands, planning processes and routines, information sources, planning objectives and success criteria, responsibilities, regional differentiation

Development: Development activities, circumstances and trigger for new developments, instigators, routines and responsibilities, existing modules

The interview finishes with a question on interviewee's final assessment of their and their organisation's discretion and course of action.

The comparative analysis on the level of organisations, regions and nations is preceded by analytical steps of case reconstruction:

- This first step serves the development of a detailed characterisation of stake-holders by reference to the above categories and items.
- This characterisation of stakeholders prepares the characterisation of regions, which mainly refers to stakeholders' local strategies and to the coordination between local stakeholders.
- Comparison of regions rests on the prior characterisation of regions.
- Comparisons between nations integrate knowledge concerning national institutions, regional characteristics, characteristics of stakeholders and coordination mechanisms.

5. Results: Coordinating mechanisms and systems' adaptability

The content analysis of our expert interviews seems to confirm the notion that further training is under-demanded from a social perspective because specifically for individuals and small firms it is expensive. Moreover, from the observers' perspective, there even seems to be under-demand from a private perspective as small firms with evident deficits in management capabilities because of their lacking capacities are rarely involved in further training. In France, newer concepts like block-release training, i.e., alternated training and apprenticeship that reminds of the German dual Training system, struggle to be adapted by firms. Perception of under-demand from a social and private perspective applies for France with its "carrot and stick" system with subsidies and obligations just as much as for Germany, where further training providers report to be willing to adapt their courses to the specific demand of small firms for shorter and more concentrated courses.

Hierarchy: Rules and routines evidently are among the dominating coordination devices in France on the system level. Nevertheless, all involved organisations in both countries show a relatively high supra-regional institutional embeddedness as they either act supra-regionally themselves or are tied to partner-organisations outside the region. Accordingly, hierarchical coordination has a large role to play in further training systems of both countries and not only in France with its highly regulated system (partly rejection of H1).

As far as providers are concerned, the high relevance of supra-regional organisations is connected to the necessity to realise positive effects of scale. Therefore, courses or at least course modules and training standards are usually developed on a supra-regional level. This necessity hampers providers' ability for a co-production of further training services with local clients. A vivid example is the case of e-learning in virtual classrooms that is of low relevance in Germany's urban but of high relevance in the most peripheral case study region with its unattractive further training market. In this case, not even the lecturer is locally present and the class consists from a wide variety of further training students from all places. Therefore, in this peripheral region standardised further training offers are predefined in the suppliers' headquarters and delivered as such in local branches with minimal staff.

Higher local demand and more involvement of clients in further training would reduce the necessity for the realisation of positive scale effects by the supra-local development of standardised or modularised further training offers. Therefore, it is rather hierarchical organisation in general that hampers the further education system's ability to adapt to locally specific demand and less so public sector involvement. The latter's effect on adaptability is ambiguous (partly rejection of H2). Nevertheless, the rigidity and complexity of public system-level regulation in France causes high transaction costs and demands individual agents' specific capabilities and flexibility to keep the system going (partly support of H2).

Finally, the introduction of market-like mechanisms and incentives in systems of hierarchical coordination do not necessarily imply a better fit between supply and demand in every respect. Specifically, we observe in Germany that private providers concentrate on the profitable market of jobless customers financed by the labour agencies and jobcentre, while the labour administration has strong incentives due to their internal new public management system to prefer small and standardised trainings, which promise quick entry into the labour market at minimal cost. Thereby, the market-like mechanisms seem to support efficiency rather than qualitative common development of providers, firms, and labour (partly rejection of H3).

Market: Nevertheless, it also became evident that high economic pressure and competition, which has been observed in German urban districts but less so in rural districts, promotes competition on quality and thereby the development of less standardised and more modularised further training programs (partly support of H3; support of H5). On the other side, firms as customers often find their services in the chambers of trade and chambers of crafts that are therefore perceived as competitors by private suppliers despite their stated will not to intervene into the free market as agents with public mandate. This latent conflict of interests is the more problematic as firms are perceived as valuable market segment, where, quite in contrast to the regulated market for the jobless, price premiums can be realised for customised high quality offers.

Unsubsidised individual non-firm clients in Germany often find affordable offers in subsidised adult education centres (Table 1) that sometimes sacrifice quality for affordable prices, while the remaining market is small and rather unattractive (partly rejection of H4). The problem of restricted market capacity becomes evident from the observation that permanent employment in further training suppliers contributes to high quality due to continuity in employee development and due to developing social capital (network-ties), but remains rather the exception than the rule everywhere in Germany and specifically in adult education centres that mainly serve private individual clients (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of interviewees' description of clients' relevance (German regions) – reconstruction of cases on stakeholder-level

Region		Group	Permanent employees	Non-permanent employees	Private individual clients	Jobless clients	Firm clients	Other clients
OS	city	Chamber of crafts	130	170	positive	positive	intermediate	
UE, ROW	land		370	350	positive	intermediate	positive	
OS	city	Chamber of industry & trade	75	150	positive	negative	positive	
ROW	land		25	110	positive	negative	positive	
UE	land				positive	negative	positive	negative
OS, ROW		Private provider	350	50	intermediate	positive	intermediate	positive
OScity	city		800	1200	intermediate	positive	intermediate	positive
OSland	city	Adult education centre	90	600	positive	intermediate	positive	
OScity	city		18	500	positive	negative	positive	
ROW	land		5	125	positive	negative	intermediate	
UE	land		10	250	positive	negative	positive	positive

Source: Own data

The French experience shows that competition can still be of high influence even in regulated markets. More specifically, public intervention and support in the case of further training seems to create those interesting markets that attract competitors. This can be shown for the case of the subsidised training for jobless in Germany and by the existence of specific agro-food oriented training in France that is seldom offered in Germany at all. In Germany, industry specific further training is often restricted to vertical further training specifically in non-technical occupations. In the French case the relevant providers for occupation specific training for example in the agro-food industries report that they have to adapt training to the local demand if they want to attract clients. Actually, French providers seem to actively counteract the rigidities of the highly regulated further education system by seeking close contact to firms in order to develop well-adapted customised offers. Nevertheless, as said before, these providers, too, often act on a supra-regional or even national scale in quite specific markets.

Networks: It could be observed that cooperation and cooperative coordination in Germany took only very restrictedly place in the urban region with strong competition (Table 2). Nevertheless, the higher cooperative coordination in those districts with lower competition did not really overcome the pressure for standardisation from the hierarchical and the market system; it mainly served the horizontal coordination between providers (partly rejection of H6).

Table 2: Summary of interviewees' description of cooperation (German regions) – reconstruction of cases on region-level

Stakeholder per region	Competition	Chamber of crafts	Chamber of trade	Labour agency	Jobcenter	(Other) Providers
		Matrix of contacts; underlined: mutual positive relations				
ROW (rural district 1)	**Low**					
Chamber of crafts			positive	positive		positive
Chamber of industry & trade	Low			negative		intermediate
Labour agency	Low	negative	positive			positive
Adult education centre	intermediate	negative	negative			
Private provider	High	intermediate	positive	negative		positive
UE (rural district 2)	**intermediate**			**positive**		**positive**
Chamber of crafts			positive	positive		positive
Chamber of industry & trade	intermediate			negative	negative	intermediate
Labour agency	intermediate	positive	positive			positive
Jobcenter	intermediate	positive				positive
Adult education centre	intermediate	intermediate	intermediate	positive	positive	positive
OS-county (urban district 1)	**intermediate**	**positive**			**positive**	**positive**
Chamber of crafts				positive	positive	positive
Chamber of industry & trade						positive
Labour agency	intermediate	positive	positive			positive
Jobcenter	intermediate	positive	positive			positive
Adult education centre	intermediate	intermediate	positive	negative	positive	negative
Private provider	High	intermediate	positive	negative		positive
OS-city (urban district 2)	**High**					
Chamber of crafts				positive	positive	positive
Chamber of industry & trade						positive
Labour agency		positive	positive			positive
Jobcenter	High	intermediate				positive
Adult education centre	High		intermediate	intermediate	positive	intermediate
Private provider	High	intermediate	positive	negative		positive
Private provider	High	negative	negative	negative		

Source: Own data

Nevertheless, the German chambers of trade and chambers of crafts due to their strong role in the dual vocational training system have proven to be potentially important for vertical mediation between firms' and employees demand on one side and further training supply on the other. The chambers' high potential as information broker is hampered by three aspects: The chambers act rather centralised within sometimes quite large areas (1), therefore and due to the obligatory membership of firms the perceived distance between chamber and firm is often large (2), and finally, the conflict of interests of the chamber between its public charge and its additional further training activities within a difficult market hinder its role as neutral broker (3). Accordingly, in Germany, networks are mainly used to support horizontal coordination in sparse markets. The precondition for this complement to market coordination is the existence of further training providers with sufficient resources for network maintenance, which does not apply in the most peripheral case study region (ROW).

In the French case networks were in the first place necessary in order to deal with the complex and challenging further training system itself. Here, facilitating organisations like OPCA are required in guiding individuals and firms towards possible solutions for example concerning available financing schemes. Moreover, direct coordination with firms seems to be required in order to create satisfactory further training offers despite the system's rigidities. Together these observations for Germany and France seem to confirm, even though for different reasons the hypotheses that networks are most relevant in low-competition respectively in highly regulated markets (H7). At the same time, in both countries it becomes evident that coordination by networks requires resources, which small firms and further training suppliers often do not have at their disposal. In France, this problem might be even more sever as larger firms' access and contact to facilitators like OPCA within the regulated system is often better.

Nevertheless, it became also evident that the quality of networks has to be taken into account. In the French case, highly specialised brokers and fragmented networks could be observed due to the required specific knowledge and the multiplicity of mediators. The strong relevance of intermediating instances implies in both countries that firms, which should be highly relevant information sources, are rarely directly involved into the further training related networks (partly contradicts H8).

6. Conclusion

While engagement of small firms and their employees with further training is perceived to be low in France and Germany alike, the results do not generally imply that low demand results from policy- or market-failures and dysfunctional markets, organisations or networks (table 3). In fact, while there seems to be a case for the stronger support of individual firms' and employees' further training efforts by specialised institutions in France, which helps to create larger and more attractive markets, this system obviously also comes at high transaction- and coordination costs. Similarly, in Germany, rather informal networks are able to complement horizontal supply-side coordination between local providers and other stake-holders in sparse markets but come at the cost of restricted competition.

Table 3: Summary of hypotheses and their assessment in comparative analysis

Hypothesis	Assessment	
Hierarchy		
H1: In nations with strongly regulated further education systems hierarchical coordination has higher relevance than in nations with less regulated systems.	0	Not necessarily true due to relevance of hierarchies in large private organisations.
H2: High public sector influence hampers the further education system's ability to adapt to locally specific demand.	0	Not necessarily true as public support may create interesting markets.
H3: The introduction of more market-like incentives and the adoption of more market- and demand oriented management systems in public and private organisations supports more customized further training.	0	Not necessarily true as mechanisms might rather support low-cost than high-quality offers.
Market		
H4: Competition and functioning markets push on the adaption of new management practices and thereby support more customized further training.	(+)	Yes, but competition is low and distorted by public subsidies in small and unattractive markets.
H5: Competition and functioning markets enforce increasing efficiency and push on the development of more modularized offers.	+	Yes, because modularisation provides a compromise between efficiency and quality.
H6: Long-term relationships between further training suppliers and clients in regions with less competition support co-production of services and co-creation of value.	–	No. Mainly horizontal supply-side coordination.
Network		
H7: Coordination by networks is most relevant in low-competition markets.	(+)	Yes, but local providers required and networks also relevant in highly regulated markets.
H8: Networks support the recognition of complementarities and synergies and thereby help to develop further training offers that are well adapted to local demand.	–	No, because vertical coordination requires unavailable resources on client side and networks are fragmented.
H9: Coordination by networks is a supplement for markets but no substitute if judged by efficiency and quality of service offers.	+	Yes

Source: Own figure

Neither system overcomes the main problem of lacking vertical coordination between clients and providers, which requires resources that are scarce on the side of individual small firms and individual employees. This problem has neither been solved by the market-led system in Germany, nor by the policy-led French system, while the German market-led approach tends to create more problems for peripheral regions with sparse markets.

Generally, the research shows the high relevance of all three coordination mechanisms hierarchy, market and networks in both systems and the complementarities between them, but it also shows the difficulties that arise in these mixed systems. The German case shows that a mix of market and public administration can work pretty well as long as there are strong organizations in the system's centre that provide incentives and clear rules for their potential partners like in the case of further training for the jobless. More complex politically guided designs like in France in contrast might come along with considerable transaction costs and bureaucratic inefficiencies. In fact, even in this system spontaneous coordination often circumvents defined routines. Spontaneous coordination in both cases depends on agents' networking capacities, which are locally conditioned. Presently, the dyadic market-relationship between further training provider and firm-client seems to be the one mechanism that best serves the development of customised, client- and demand- tailored further training. It works reliable in dense and attractive markets. Provision of clients with the ability for value co-creation or even service co-production is the most important remaining desideratum in both systems.

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Exploring the shift towards the outcome dimension of European adult education policy: establishing national qualifications frameworks and learning outcomes based qualifications in Denmark and Slovenia

Introduction

In this paper we explore the influence of European adult education policy (Holford & Milana, 2014) – oriented towards lifelong learning and the outcome dimension of learning (Milana, 2013) – on developing national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and the shift to learning outcomes based qualifications (in formal and non-formal education settings) in the comparative context of two countries: Denmark and Slovenia.

> NQF = national qualifications framework

The European Union (EU) has devoted particular attention to adult education and learning over the last decade and has contributed significantly to bringing the field of adult education from its formerly relatively marginal position to its current position as one of the more important areas of European education policy (see, for example, Mikulec, 2015). However, although the commitment to lifelong learning has on the one hand "improved" the status, importance and visibility of adult education in the EU, it has on the other strengthened above all the economic objectives of adult education, in the sense that adult education is conceptualised as a direct response to the processes of economic and technological globalisation, or as a response to current socio-economic changes in the EU (economic crisis, unemployment, ageing population) (English & Mayo, 2012; Milana, 2012; Rasmussen, 2014). Furthermore, by creating a European policy space, the EU has also established itself as one of the key global players striving to promote precisely defined norms and to transform the education systems of member states in a desired direction, although their formal competences are limited (Klerides, Kotthoff, & Pereyra, 2014).

The establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) (European Parliament and Council, 2008), which is based on the concepts of the NQF and learning outcomes deriving from the dominant Anglo-Saxon countries (Cort, 2010; Méhaut and Winch, 2012), could be understand as one of the processes supporting the shift in education policy towards the greater deregulation, marketisation and commodification of adult education and knowledge (Allais, 2014; Brockmann, Clark, & Winch, 2009). The establishment of the NQF and shift to the learning outcomes based qualifications are part of a broader European education policy; however, they can be clearly identified in all documents formulating common European adult education policy and as such are central to the European lifelong learning policy (see Mikulec, 2015). With this in mind, we explore (a) how far European reform ideas and ideologies from the EQF have been translated to the national level through the development of NQFs in Denmark and Slovenia and (b) whether the NQFs in these two countries represent

> EQF = European qualifications framework

a neoliberal tool for the commodification of knowledge and the marketisation of adult education.

In the first part of the paper, the general features of the EQF, NQFs and learning outcomes are shortly presented; in the second part, a comparative analysis is provided on the impact of the EQF on Danish and Slovenian NQFs; and in third and final part, cross-case discussion and final conclusions are drawn.

Rationale and methodology

To understand the context in which NQFs developed in Europe, the general features of the EQF and its main concept will be shortly presented. In 2008, the European Parliament and Council issued the EQF recommendation and recommended that member states: use the EQF as a "reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems", while respecting the diversity of education systems; and to "use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications" (European Parliament and Council, 2008, p. 3). Two officially recognised goals of the EQF are to promote the mobility of citizens between European countries and to facilitate lifelong learning by enabling qualifications to be compared across Europe. Today the EQF is actually a key European policy instrument for lifelong learning (Elken, 2015). Prior to the adoption of the EQF, only Anglo-Saxon countries and France were familiar with NQFs in Europe. However, as soon as the EQF was in the adoption process, European countries rapidly started developing their NQFs in line with the EQF's recommendations – despite their non-binding nature. By the end of 2015, a total of 39 European countries either had established or were in the process of establishing an NQF (CEDEFOP, 2016).

However, the EQF is not a neutral European policy tool but a tool for the "transfer of policies from the ideologically dominating Anglo-Saxon countries" (Cort, 2010, p. 312). Although each European country defines learning outcomes, competences and skills differently, the EQF adopted the Anglo-Saxon definitions of knowledge, skills and competence used as indicators of learning outcomes, without consideration of the meanings of these in different national contexts (Brockmann et al., 2009). The EQF is therefore based on the Anglo-Saxon idea of learning outcomes, i.e. the idea that one can specify educational outcomes independently of the curricular processes, independently of learning pathways and education programmes, which was "initiated by England in 1986 with the launch of National Vocational Qualifications" (Méhaut & Winch, 2012, p. 372). The common aim of outcome-based NQFs in Anglo-Saxon countries has been to reduce the autonomy of educational institutions and improve their efficiency by encouraging them to compete with each other. Advocates of the learning outcomes approach at that time claimed that "once qualification outcomes were 'freed' from the institutions through which the outcomes were achieved, education systems would become more flexible" (Young & Allais, 2011, p. 3) and qualifications would become more transparent and transferable. As a consequence, institution-based education became just one of many ways to become qualified. This idea is linked to the emergence of neo-liberal economic policies of the 1980s and early 1990s (Young & Allais, 2011).

By presenting the background context of the NQFs and EQF development in Europe, the extent to which "informal" rules and norms have been translated from the European education policy to the national level in Denmark and Slovenia, from the EQF to their NQFs, is of interest here. However, the scope of changes in member states can vary greatly. Hall (1993), for example, differentiates between three orders of change: the first corresponds to the adoption of existing policy instruments, the second refers to the development of new instruments and the third relates to the fundamental change in ideology and ideas. Following Hall's notion of policy change, the scope of changes that the EQF has brought about in Denmark and Slovenia will be evaluated. Furthermore, the scope of changes is also highly dependent on the "normative resonance" (Sedelmeier, 2011, p. 16) between EU demands and domestic rules in the field of education, i.e. the cultural and historical match between the normative ideas that the EQF represents and the educational traditions in which the NQFs have been developed.

For the first part, the effects of European pressure at the domestic level shall be examined as well as the way in which Denmark and Slovenia adopt EU rules and implement EU policy, i.e. how they develop the NQFs through the use of "soft law' (EQF recommendation) and under the subsidiarity rule applicable in the field of adult education. This will be achieved through (1) an analysis of the context, purpose and scope of NQFs and (2) an analysis of NQF structure in the comparative analysis. Here, the extent to which particular ideas from the EQF regarding the goals, structure and categories used in the NQFs selected will be explored. For the second part, attention will be devoted to the discursive and normative aspects of the EQF, i.e. its role in spreading and disseminating specific European reform ideas and ideologies – the commodification of knowledge and the marketisation of adult education – and how these are being translated in Denmark and Slovenia through the NQF. This will be carried out in the comparative analysis through (3) an analysis of the role that NQFs and the learning outcomes of qualifications play in the education and training system by exploring whether they are structured as "stand-alone elements", i.e. independent from learning pathways, educational institutions and programmes, as envisaged by the EQF.

Methodologically speaking, comparative analysis is based on the analysis of a policy documents, namely the "EQF referencing reports" prepared by Denmark and Slovenia. These reports represent the official outcome of the EQF referencing process and may be considered evidence that basic criteria of documentary source analysis have been fulfilled: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Scott, 1990, p. 6). They provide valuable data for identifying and analysing the extent to which particular ideas from the EQF can be found in NQFs. Furthermore, we draw also on the existing research literature available in the countries selected. The countries included in the analysis were selected on the basis of two criteria: the model of (vocational) education or prevailing skills regime; and whether the EQF has influenced the development of the NQF. Using these criteria, we strived to encompass two different traditions in the European education – Denmark belonging to the Scandinavian (or Nordic) education model and Slovenia to the education model in post-communist countries (Lundahl, 2016; Mohorčič Špolar, Holford, & Milana, 2014) – and evaluate the influence of the EQF on NQFs in both Denmark and Slovenia.

Comparative analysis

Context, purpose and scope of NQFs

Selected NQFs originate from countries with different national, political, cultural and educational traditions. We will address these briefly below.

In post-war Denmark, education played an important role in establishing its social democratic welfare system since this was perceived as being the main tool to not only achieve social justice and security, but also provide equal educational opportunities for all citizens, and strengthen society and democratic ideals. Under the influence of the neoliberal ideas of decentralisation, school choice and new public management, Denmark and the other Nordic countries moved towards a more market focused form of education and away from a welfare state to a "competitive state" during the 1990s and early 2000s. PISA results also encouraged the reform of basic and secondary education in Denmark based on learning outcomes and accountability measures (testing and examinations). Although today's educational system still supports social justice and equality for all, with equal provision of education at all levels remaining high, these neoliberal measures (decentralisation, effectiveness and competitiveness) undermined the foundations of the Nordic model (Imsen, Blossing, & Moos, 2016; Lundahl, 2016).

From World War II until 1991 Slovenia was part of the Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was based on common ownership and self-management. Education was conceived as public and was harmonized through common curricular guidelines and assessment criteria in federal state. After independence in 1991, Slovenia reformed its entire education system (1993–1996) based on principles of human rights and justice, student and teacher autonomy and quality with education being an important part of the welfare system, providing equal educational opportunities for all. Slovenia acceded to the EU in 2004 (with other "post-communist" countries), which had significant effect on the education system, especially vocational education and training and higher education, due to the extensive financial support received from the European funds. In vocational education and training, a new decentralised curricula and teachers' role were introduced and in higher education, where Bologna reform was implemented, the economised purpose prevailed and tendencies toward decentralisation and privatisation of higher education emerged (Ermenc, 2011; Klemenčič and Zgaga, 2014).

Although the political and educational traditions of both countries are rather different, they started developing their NQFs on the basis of the 2005 EQF consultation process and its formal adoption in 2008 (Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje [CPI], 2014, p. 27; Danish Evaluation Institute [DEI], 2011, p. 12). In Denmark, the idea of an NQF was also raised in the context of a national globalisation strategy, which included a lifelong learning strategy linked to reforms in vocational education and training (DEI, 2011, p. 12). The Danish NQF was adopted in 2009 and the Slovene in 2011. Both countries developed comprehensive frameworks, which meant that the NQFs included qualifications from general, vocational, higher and adult/continuing education. Slovene NQF includes also qualifications gained from the validation of non-formal and informal learning system that lead to national vocational qualifications (CPI, 2014, p. 34).

Both NQFs are non-regulatory frameworks, which means that the NQF does not prescribe a uniform structure or predefined standardised criteria for the description and structure of qualifications in order to be included in the NQF. According to Raffe (2013), both NQFs can be typologically classified as “communication frameworks” because they explain qualifications systems and try to make them more transparent. However, the Danish NQF can also be classified as “reform framework” because NQF reform vocational education and training. The NQFs’ common objectives are to support the transparency of qualifications systems, mobility and lifelong learning strategies and to aid recognition of their qualifications in different European countries and vice versa. Slovene NQF is intended to contribute to improving the standard of the education/qualifications system in a country and the integration of general, vocational and higher education as well as education and training systems (CPI, 2014, p. 30; DEI, 2011, p. 13).

NQFs Structure

The Danish NQF adopted an eight-level structure (as is the case with the EQF), which rises gradually from levels 1 to 8, whereas the Slovene NQF has a ten-level structure, which rises gradually from levels 1 to 10, reflecting its historical educational tradition (CPI, 2014, pp. 30-31). Both NQFs adopted level descriptors based on learning outcomes; Danish and Slovene descriptors are designed broadly to reflect the “different types of learning outcomes, from the more theoretical to the more practical” (DEI, 2011, p. 16). The level descriptors of the Danish and Slovene NQFs adopted the categories of knowledge, skills and competence as the EQF. However, although the Danish and Slovene NQFs followed EQF categories when describing level descriptors, their level descriptors or categories are further subdivided and “broader” than their EQF counterparts. In the Danish NQF, emphasis is devoted to complexity of knowledge and understanding, problem solving skills, communications skills, cooperation and learning (DEI, 2011, pp. 17-18), whereas critical thinking and reflection are the focus of the knowledge category in Slovene NQF (CPI, 2014, p. 32). In both countries, competence is defined in broad holistic terms as the ability to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes in educational, professional and personal situations. The NQF structures of both countries are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. NQF Structure

Country	Levels	Level descriptors	Learning outcomes
Denmark	8 levels	Knowledge	Type and complexity Understanding
		Skills	Type (practical, cognitive, creative, communicative) Problem solving Communication (message
		complexity)	
		Competence	Space for action (degree of unpredictability) Cooperation and
		responsibility	
			Learning
Slovenia	10 levels	Knowledge Skills	Depth and breadth Cognitive (logical, intuitive, creative) and practical (use of materials, tools)
		Competences	Autonomy and
	responsibility, and vocational)		(generic

NQF and learning outcomes in the education and training system

The learning outcomes are defined very similarly to the EQF definition in both NQFs: they represent a statement of what the learner knows (understands) or is able (and ready) to do as a result (or on completion) of a learning process (CPI, 2014, p. 84; DEI, 2011, p. 17). The learning outcomes of a qualification means what a person with a given qualification "is expected to know and be able to do" (CPI, 2014, p. 48; DEI, 2011, p. 17) and are tested through (external) examination procedures. In general education in Denmark, learning outcomes are described as competence objectives, while in Slovenia learning outcomes are described in basic education as general and operational objectives and standards of knowledge (basic and minimum) and in general upper secondary education as general objectives and key competences, operational objectives and intended learning outcomes (CPI, 2014, p. 48). In vocational education and training in Denmark, learning outcomes are described as competence goals and competences (academic, personal and social) and in Slovenia as operational objectives and occupational competences, prepared on the basis of occupational standards (CPI, 2014, p. 48). The competences in Slovenia defined in the occupational standards also serve as the basis for the validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults. In the Danish higher education system, there is an obligation for the learning outcomes of programmes to be described in the terminology of knowledge, skills and competence (DEI, 2011, p. 48), while in Slovenia, the learning outcomes are described in terms of (general, subject-specific) competences (CPI, 2014, p. 48).

By summarising learning outcomes in education and training settings, we can highlight: (i) that learning outcomes are described differently in the education and training subsystems in each country and between countries – either as competence objectives, knowledge standards, (key) competences or outcome targets, or as statements of knowledge, skills and competence – and do not necessarily follow the learning-outcome categories used in NQFs descriptors; (ii) that learning outcomes are usually defined and understood as competences; and (iii) that they represent an integral part of general, vocational, higher and adult education subsystems, educational/study programmes and curricula.

Discussion

By examining the influence of European adult education policy at the domestic (adult) education level in Denmark and Slovenia using NQFs as an example and following Hall's (1993) notion of policy change, we can identify the first and second order changes the EQF has brought about. Although the subsidiarity rule applies in the field of adult education and the field is governed by "soft law", Denmark and Slovenia – as well as other European countries (CEDEFOP, 2016) – have established an NQF under the influence of the EQF. The EQF has significantly influenced the establishment of their NQFs, their common objectives and structure and how the learning outcomes are defined in NQFs. In this respect, it is interesting that, although both countries use the holistic and non-functional performance-based notion of "competence" in their education and training systems, they both accept the EQF categories of knowledge, skills and competence.

However, the NQFs in both countries analysed are not related to Hall's (1993) notion of third order policy change, which implies a paradigmatic policy shift based on a fundamental change in ideology and ideas. Denmark and Slovenia developed their NQFs under the influence of the EQF, but they differ considerably from the NQFs in Anglo-Saxon and developing countries around the world (Allais, 2014): (i) both NQFs support the European comparability of qualifications; (ii) they are mainly "communicative frameworks", although the Danish NQF can also be partly described as 'reform framework'; (iii) they are both comprehensive frameworks that include qualifications from general, vocational, higher and adult/continuing education; (iv) they are intended to support national lifelong learning strategies, i.e. to build bridges between sub-systems and pathways (Ermenc, 2012; Helms Jørgensen, 2013), and address the needs of education systems and institutions to a greater extent than the needs of the labour market and economy; (v) they are non-regulatory frameworks in which learning outcomes are not prescribed uniformly; and (vi) they are "outcome-referenced" and not "outcome-led" frameworks (Raffe, 2013). In both countries, "trust" in qualifications is not placed in NQF, but there is a strong focus devoted to educational principles, institutionalisation and the regulation of education and training system through laws in which the teaching/training strategies, teacher qualifications, content, duration, examination, etc. are prescribed (Cort, 2010).

Moreover, the learning outcomes in both countries education systems are understood as embedded elements in educational programmes and institutions and not as stand-alone elements; they are specified as targets and associated with a specific education programme leading to a qualification; they are placed in the wider context of educational inputs and are not specified independently from educational programmes and curricula. In the Slovene context, Ermenc (2012, p. 45) highlighted that "many stakeholders agree that educational programmes and learning outcomes should not be separated" and explains that the NQF combines input, i.e. the allocation of qualifications to a certain level is based on "regulative acts and curricula, which determine the function and nature of each education programme and qualification" (Ermenc, 2012. p. 42), and output (EQF) approaches. There is therefore a clear distinction between the EQF's Anglo-Saxon "employer-, performance- and task-based understanding of learning outcomes" and the "educational, social-partner- and occupational-based VET systems" (Clarke & Winch, 2015, p. 600) of Denmark and Slovenia.

Last but not least, the level descriptors and (sub)categories used in both NQFs (but especially the Danish) are set broadly so they can support different conceptions of knowledge, from those closer to the labour market to those closer to humanistic, critical or transformative conceptions (see, for example, Mezirow, 1991), as well as different educational purposes, from the more vocational to those closer to civic and liberal purposes (Brockmann et al., 2009).

Having said that, we believe that the NQFs structured in this manner in the Denmark and Slovenia differ considerably from the NQFs in the Anglo-Saxon and developing countries around the globe (Allais, 2014) and do not in themselves represent strong neoliberal tools which lead to the deregulation, marketization and commodification of adult education and knowledge. They can instead be seen as a country's response to a European (adult) education policy agenda which facilitates learner/worker mobility to ensure access to a common European labour market, although there is no evidence yet to suggest that this is an achievable goal for European NQFs (Raffe, 2013). In addition, following the case of NQFs in Denmark and Slovenia, we can also highlight that European (adult) education policy does not have a direct impact on national education policy and practice as it crosses through local histories and national political, cultural and educational traditions, generating different impacts and even reformulating original concepts; both countries interpreted and reformulated the Anglo-Saxon concepts to be implemented with the EQF through their own political and cultural lenses and educational models.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have analysed the NQFs of two European countries, Denmark and Slovenia, which were developed under the influence of the EQF, one of the main European policy instruments of lifelong learning for achieving greater employability and worker mobility as well as improving the comparability and recognition of qualifications in Europe. We have demonstrated that the impact of the EQF in Denmark and Slovenia, as well in wider Europe, was sufficiently influential to prompt the majority of countries to start developing their own NQFs, which followed the structure and categories used in the EQF, and encouraged a "shift to learning outcomes" in all subsystems of education and training, as recommended by European (adult) education policy. However, the data gathered through comparative analysis also revealed that the impact of the EQF is rather limited as the core concept and philosophy of learning outcomes from the vocational education and training policy of Anglo-Saxon dominant educational model did not result in the fulfilment of the neoliberal objective to separate educational outcomes from the educational institutions and programmes lying beneath them. The learning outcomes in both countries analysed are well embedded in educational institutions and programmes, are not "free" from learning pathways and education institutions, and are not implemented as stand-alone elements. Following Hall's (1993) notion of three order policy change, it can be argued that the NQFs implemented in Denmark and Slovenia and their "shift to learning outcomes" are best understood as first and second order policy changes which do not result in a fundamental change to the ideas on which non-Anglo-Saxon educational models are based. Therefore, the normative resonance (Sedelmeier, 2011) between EQF (Anglo-Saxon) ideas and established NQFs in Scandinavian and Post-communistic contexts remains rather low.

Considering the comparative analysis of the NQFs in Denmark and Slovenia, we can conclude that NQFs in both countries do not represent a neoliberal tool for the deregulation, marketisation and commodification of adult education and knowledge nowadays. It appears that European adult education policy concepts do not have a direct causal impact on national education policy and practice; instead, they cross through local and national histories and have intended and unintended impacts on the concepts and practices of adult education.

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Learning Cities and Regions as Unit/Subject of Comparison for Adult Education Research Work

Abstract

This paper will analyse the impact of the evolution and development of learning cities and regions in adult education research work. Comparative Adult Education Research has got a great potential to investigate concrete mechanism of learning city-region constructions, analyse the changing nature and structures of learning city-region models.

This paper, therefore, tries to underline choices for and limitations to comparative adult education research work since it is important to put questions around how learning city-region collaborations at local-regional levels may enhance both participation and performance in learning of adults, but also, the learning of other age groups and affecting intergenerational dimensions of learning and that of community development. At the same time, this paper will signal the need for interdisciplinary approaches and positions in comparative research work upon local and regional citizens' participation in learning programmes.

The Appearance and the Evolution of Learning Cities and Regions

The birth of learning cities and regions can be routed back to 1972, when the OECD initiated a seven city project which it called Educating Cities. Vienna, Edinburgh, Kakegawa, Pittsburgh, Edmonton, Adelaide and Gothenburg put education into the focus of their strategies and policies in order to develop economic performance. And that experience was turned into an example model for other cities around the world. There have been many positive impacts from that project but perhaps it's a fate of all projects, or perhaps it's the effect of politics, that, in the 1990s, only in Gothenburg did stakeholders remembered their original aims and project-based results.

It really took until the 1990s that things started to develop in a much broader dimension (Longworth, 1999). Longworth labelled this period as the age of innocence – when researchers considered that something was afoot but not quite what it was. Two conferences took place in the first half of the decade to gear up the initiative, both of them helping to push back the limits of knowledge and action. The Gothenburg gathering in 1992, also sponsored by OECD, was a follow-up event to succeed the Educating Cities project. It initiated, consequently, the international association of educating cities, currently based in Barcelona, and now with a membership of more than 370 cities world-wide.

The Rome conference itself was proposed and organised by the European Lifelong Learning Initiative and the American Council for Education in 1996 and this, in its turn, generated the World Initiative on Lifelong Learning. Today, both ELLI and WILL are not existing, but they promoted directly the advancement of learning city knowledge during the 1990s.

ELLI was basically offered guidance to developing some of the early charters for learning regions – charters that demonstrated the commitment of a city-region to improving learning opportunities and methodologies for all its inhabitants. It resembled this – the grounds for a wides dialogue on promoting the local culture of learning. Cities as far apart as Adelaide, Halifax in Canada, Espoo in Finland and Dublin applied this charter formula and exploited it for their own goals to develop lifelong learning in their communities and neighbourhood regions.

And then the middle of the decade could experience the realisation of the European year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 – it was taken very seriously by ELLI and relatively many universities – as there was a funding initiative and programme contacted to it – yet, its value was unfortunately forgotten by many of the organisations that matter - cities, regions and schools and business and industry and most people of the newly established European Union. In spite of this, there is no doubt that the cornerstones of today's work on learning cities and regions are based in the early works on adult and lifelong learning given an impetus by the European Year. And 1996 did result in a renewed awareness of the impact of education and learning, more particularly to the scope that a world of rapid political, economic, technological and environmental change in turn takes rather quick steps both in the practice of learning and in the provision of education.

Consequently, a huge number of quality initiatives were either marginalised or ignored, the process still emerged on to the age of experimentation into the late 1990s when National Learning City networks began to raise – firstly in the United Kingdom and joined by those later in Finland and Sweden. Therefore, North European approach signalled very much 'the centre of gravity' of lifelong learning and learning city focuses.

With several distinguished exceptions, Southern, Central and Eastern Europe have taken much longer to realise the direct reward of creating learning cities and regions. In this new age of experimentation, Learning City-Region projects began to be financially supported – one of them 'TELS - Towards a European Learning Society' delivered what it called a Learning Cities Audit Tool and analysed the performance of 80 European municipalities. Unsurprisingly, it reflected that the words 'Learning City and learning Region were almost unknown, indeed, in more than two thirds of those 80 cities, they were completely missing. At this time too, there were several conferences and learning city launches – places like Liverpool, Espoo, Edinburgh and Glasgow and many others. Learning Festivals celebrated the joy of learning in Glasgow and in Sapporo, Japan.

At the time when Europe stepped towards the new millennium, the age of advance accelerated mainly by the European Commission's Lisbon agenda, which put lifelong learning at the forefront of European policy. The development of learning cities and regions was one key strategy of that policy – and so the European policy paper on the local and regional dimension of lifelong learning was published in 2002. This important document was built on the results of TELS and written by Norman Longworth. The document clearly stated that 'Cities and regions in a globalized world cannot afford not to become learning cities and regions. It is a matter of prosperity, stability, employability and the personal development of all citizens' (EC, 2001).

They were clear and forward looking words indeed, and a striking challenge to every local and regional authority that has read – them – which, because of the nature of information transmission, is unfortunately, very few.

The OECD also geared up the process in 2001 with its learning regions project in 5 European regions – Jena in Germany, Oresund in Sweden and Denmark, Vienne in France, Kent in UK and Andalusia. Among its findings was the perhaps surprising statement that secondary education appears to be the most important for regional development and the more predictable one that there is a need to encourage creativity at all levels of education. And that's a theme that crops up time and time again in learning region folklore – creativity, innovation, vision at all levels of education.

And despite the fact that many cities and regions are still well behind the mark, in the new millennium the movement to create learning cities and regions threatened to become an avalanche – as a couple of examples among many, Germany established around 76 learning regions, while every city, town and municipality in Victoria Australia became a learning entity. moreover, the Chinese government has now decreed that every large city in China should become a learning city by 2010 and beyond. Not too late from this, the IDEOPOLIS was born, described by Tom Cannon and his collaborators as ' A City or Region whose economy is driven by the creative search for, and the application of, new ideas, thinking and knowledge, and which is firmly rooted to the creative transfer of ideas, to opportunities, to innovation, and eventually to production.'

There are those words again – creative, innovation, new ideas and thinking. These initiatives moved most researchers into what might be called the age of understanding – and many of them finally thought they got it – or knew, or thought they knew - what being a learning region entails and, simultaneously, the number of European projects increased. From every part of the Commission – Learning Cities and Regions are now included in the Framework research programmes and a lifelong learning element now has to be included in the vast majority of the Commission's Social and development Funding. There became a great need for tools and materials that would help cities and regions to get that understanding. Therefore, particular Socrates projects developed those learning tools for city and regional management and learning materials to help them propagate the message to others. And yet the OECD would have you believe that all regions seek to sustain economic activity through various combinations of lifelong learning, innovation and creative uses of information and communication technologies. (OECD, Learning Regions project – 2003).

UNESCO's Recent Global Learning City Initiative

Almost ten years after the OECD's Learning Regions project, the UNESCO, another inter-governmental organisation (IGO) initiated a new plan to realise a global learning city networking to be based on the mere fact that more than a thousand cities in the world have developed into or are building Learning/Educating cities. This obviously shows that the building of cities which put learning at the forefront of their policies and strategies has become a significant world-wide phenomenon.

Cities rarely work in isolation and practical examples have reflected that those cities that are members of a dynamic network of local authorities at national, regional and international levels, have accelerated their growth and competitiveness as learning cities. Most of these national, regional and international networks, while playing important roles in spreading the concept of learning cities, also have need of expertise networks or research organizations involved in developing tools and materials promoting and expanding the concept, and in establishing creative on-going working links between cities.

There are also many cities still unaware or uncertain of the benefits that a truly global network of learning cities can bring to the development of lifelong learning and the learning society. For these reasons and more this initiative is timely. As UNESCO's centre of excellence for promoting lifelong learning, and in response to Member States' call to adopt a more pragmatic and instrumental approach to building a learning society, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) has recently proposed the establishment of the *UNESCO Global Learning Cities Network (UNESCO GLCN)* to enhance and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world's conurbations.

The overall aim of the establishment of the UNESCO GLCN is to create a global platform to mobilise cities and demonstrate how to use their resources effectively in every sector to develop and enrich all their human potential for fostering lifelong personal growth, for developing equality and social justice, for maintaining harmonious social cohesion, and for creating sustainable prosperity. The UNESCO GLCN is intended to be a timely and innovative initiative to offer appropriate means by which cities can develop themselves into learning cities and create better environment – for themselves and for their citizens. (UNESCO, 2013)

Local Responses to Global Initiatives with the Aim of Community Development: The Pécs Learning City-Region Forum

Based on a decade-old international project partnership, to deal with the Learning City-Region model in cooperation with PASCAL Observatory, UNESCO Institute for LLL, the University of Pécs and its Faculty of Adult Education and HRD initiated, in 2013, the establishment of the Pécs Learning City Region Forum in order to develop a direct tool in certain areas of pedagogical/andragogical work targeting training trainers, educators and facilitators of learning. The project was incorporated into the project of the University of Pécs financed by the Hungarian Government's Social Renewal Operative Programme (TÁMOP 4.1.2.B – Developing Teachers-Educators/Pedagógusfejlesztés) focusing on the Development of Teachers. Its so called K4 project sub-group decided to develop structural models for collecting and sharing good knowledge and experience for teachers, trainers, mentors and facilitators engaged in the promotion of quality learning and skills-development in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Therefore, the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum started its activities in the Fall of 2014 in three majors fields by accelerating partnerships and dialogues:

- *Atypical/Non-formal Learning platform* (This platform tries to help cultural organisers, curators, managers be more successful with their educational programmes organised for adults and also for school-teachers engaged in the development of cultural programmes for children) Such a collaborative frame involves more than 8 organisation/institutions and their representatives in order to identify innovative learning methods, tools, methodologies with atypical contexts.
- *School and Environment platform* (This platform supports dialogue amongst professionals developing specific environment-oriented programmes for local youth and their parents so as to become Nature-friendly, and conscious in protecting their environment. There is a specific

focus to help school-teachers as adult learners building such orientations in the classroom and use available sources, programmes and curricula, etc. to achieve that goal based on collected best practises) Around nine member organisations/institutions work actively in the Forum through delegates, professional experts by providing platform-based exchange of ideas upon bringing closer school –pupils, their families to environment and environment-friendly, green thinking, actions and change-management with attention to interdisciplinary thinking and human behaviour.
- *Inclusion and Handicapped Situations platform*(This platform helps teachers to engage in collaborative actions providing dialogue to understand problems emerging from working with young children with learning difficulties, e.g. autists)

The three dimensions of the Forum’s platforms have enabled us to recognise *some key barriers to collect and share good practices* upon particular development works of partner organisations and institutions, which are:
- low levels of culture of mutual partnerships and collaborative actions to share experience and to develop professional skills, competence of educators/teachers, trainers and facilitators;
- limited time available for educators/teachers, trainers and facilitators to develop skills and share exchange knowledge, experience.
- small resources to constrain participation in programmes of the forum and, at the same time, heavy working load dominating majority of working time.

Choices for the development of learning in a learning city-region model:
- Growing interest amongst decision-makers and stakeholders so as to develop and maintain new and effective ways and methods for useful and problem-based knowledge transfer amongst institutions/organisations in the school sector, labour market, cultural organisations and institutions and other respected informal learning grounds and environments.
- European funds available through the European Social Fund for collaborative actions amongst educational, cultural and environmental organisations for raising participation and providing counselling for better performance in learning.
- Need for Common Identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for learning city-region development.
- Necessary improvement of learning conditions and collaborative spaces for young people with learning difficulties through inclusive learning environment.

Recently, the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum has become a member of PASCAL Observatory’s Learning Cities Networks (LCN), more precisely, that of *Harnessing Cultural Policies in Building Sustainable Learning Cities* in order to continue its ties to this international platform which was formally established in 2006 when Pécs hosted PASCAL’s annual international conference on learning city-regions.

Cork Learning City: Development of a Community Wide Learning Environment

It was the Cork Learning City Forum and its representation of wide range of stakeholders which established the Cork Learning Festival in 2004. This programme constantly grew into an annual week-long festival of around five-hundred activities offered by different types of providers. Opposite to the case of the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum, the scale of participation is rather high and the project reached up to the grounds of framework to get together local innovations practices and engagement with global networks of cities.

The Cork Learning City development is based on a special learning environment to represent four circles of learning embedded into a community model. This model reflects a community with strong local resonance and global reaches through UNESCO learning cities network and that of PASCAL International Exchange (PIE). Those circles of the learning environment demonstrate certain dimensions of a learning city which overlap with each other, yet signal some specific aspects at the same time. They are the Cork Learning Festival, the UNESCO Learning City Award and Growing Lifelong Learning in Cork, Learning Neighbourhoods as a pilot project of UNESCO in partnerships with PIE and, finally, EcCoWell, to reflect that learning cities should include environmental, economic, health, well-being and lifelong learning in order to reach for good societies.

The Lifelong Learning Festival of Cork has got deep community routes and has been devoted to participatory actions with intercultural and intergenerational aspirations. In this respect adult and lifelong learning plays an important role in the making of its programmes and depends on the focus to raising participation in events, gatherings and local discoveries through collecting and sharing good knowledge and experience amongst members of the community based on learning. Moreover, the Festival connects ten Community Education Networks which were established upon the 2000 governmental paper, called as *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education.* (White Paper, 2000.) These networks offer actions and programmes as parts of the Festival and have their special approach to some special groups of the community, for example, disadvantaged groups. Distinguished stakeholder groups play an important role in the planning and achievement of their programmes.

It must be added here that various forms and ways of communication are used to reach out for the attention to different kinds of people, therefore, not only modern and electronic communication, but also traditional poster and brochures are used to capture the contact of potential visitors and participants. One has to point out that there is a significant free citizen engagement in the Festival based on the principles of equality and inclusion so as to provide and opportunity to participate in learning (Neylon and Barrett, 2013). In. this regard, inclusiveness, free entry and open access to all are ongoing themes of the festival (Keane, Lane, Neylone and Osborne 2013).

The UNESCO Learning City initiative has also played a significant role in the development of the Cork Learning City developments. Both the establishment of the Cork Learning City Forum and the initiation of the Lifelong Learning Festival provided significant forces to realise the vision of people behind the original plans to make Cork a learning city and community. The attention of PASCAL towards learning city developments and innovative approaches made PASCAL to get Cork be involved in its networking. That step brought Cork close to international partnerships which soon accelerated engagement with UNESCO agenda on learning cities in 2012. The example of Cork also reflects outstanding partnerships with wide stakeholder groups so as to engage them with the mission and goals of the project.

The Learning Neighbourhoods initiative signalled a serious focus on local people especially in concentrated on the needs of districts of the city and people living those municipal areas of Cork with specific social, economic and cultural conditions and aspirations.

There have been several impacts and challenges to the Cork Learning City initiative and project. But collective actions of the communities of the city strengthened alliances amongst participants and brought higher level institutions into contact with marginalised groups. UNESCO interest may also help the renewal f the commitment of politicians and stakeholders to the initiative.

Cork may provide a good lesson for Pécs and for other cities which are right at the step to expand their initiatives into a wider public project and movement: start small and build up systematically, keep participation voluntary, ask all your participants to publicize their events to provide a special ownership and belongingness to the programmes and networking, make sure that the kinds of learning showcased are as broad as possible, do not restrict participation to the state sector, publicly recognise and thank all those who organise events and, finally, never forget that it is a festival – fun and celebration are a powerful means of changing attitudes to learning (Neylon, 2016).

Some Aspects for Comparison in Adult Education Research

While we try to underline here that learning cities and regions are worth be included into comparative adult education research, our explanation to the topic comes from the mere realities that learning cities today demonstrate a social, political and economic alliance to balance diverse needs through learning that may bring about and support the development of open and inclusive societies opposite to closed and exclusive communities.

Humanitarian and sustainable communities have to recognise and support learning and learning to live regardless to age, sex and social status.

Similarities and differences in the two city-based cases

Pécs and Cork are similar cities regarding not being capital cities. They were both cultural capitals of Europe during the Lisbon-decade, Cork at the beginning and Pécs right at the very end of that decade.

Pécs and Cork have all made use of the particular values of their communities, traditions and cultural activities, institutions and other respected formations so as to reconceptualise their visions and mission through learning. Pécs and Cork have built on the voluntary work and participation of their citizens to celebrate learning through a Learning Festival. Cork has already achieved several festivals, but Pécs is just heading for planning and organising its own learning festival for September, 2017.

Both Pécs and Cork have opened to international partnerships and networking in learning city-region developments and innovations through PASCAL Observatory, but Cork joined the PIE network, while Pécs was invited to the LCN platform and its cultural network of PASCAL. Both Pécs and Cork have focused dominantly upon the participatory aspect of learning city innovations, therefore, favoured the involvement of adult and lifelong learners into their programmes and events.

Finally, both Pécs and Cork have made use of their former cultural capital status to aspire for a learning city title and, consequently, to apply for being selected as an UNESCO Global Learning City and potentially be recognised with a special *Global Learning City Award.*

As for the differences, Pécs is small town of one-hundred and fifty-thousand inhabitants, while Cork is a little larger with around two-hundred thousand inhabitants.

Cork has got a rather developed and balanced structure of adult education institutions and associations, while adult learning and education in Pécs has got a deformed structure to mainly focus upon VET and labour market trainings with state monopolies. Cultural institutions and organisations, in this respect, have special roles and functions to provide spaces for atypical forms of learning.

Conclusions

It is obvious that learning cities and regions can be investigated as frames and special structures, on the one hand, to provide adult learning and education and, on the other, to incorporate informal learnings of adults and/or intergenerational/tandem learnings.

This paper tries to emphasize that researchers in adult and lifelong learning have always been close or even active participants of this initiative in many places of Europe and in other continents. Moreover, UNESCO, for many reasons, connected adult and lifelong learning to learning city developments. May we propose that further developments are needed in this frame through concentrated actions of comparative studies.

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Global policy Agenda and Local societal dynamics Adult Education and Modernization

Danish adult education has an old and rich tradition, and has also been fundamentally reconstructed and differentiated during second half of the 20th century. The aim of this article is to provide an input for a discussion about the situation of a Danish (Nordic) model of adult education in the context of European policy as well as globalization. The article will seek to conceptualize the tension between adult education which is founded in and aiming at local participants and contexts and a globalization process which redefines the cultural environment and presents a new and challenging agenda for adult learning. I will apply a rather general framework of historical analysis of adult education which is derived from and related to European modernization (Salling Olesen 2009) on the history of Danish adult education and the possible contemporary impacts of this history (Salling Olesen 1985;1989). It looks at the societal nature of adult learning and hence the societal functions of adult education, and emphasizes the historical dimension in the sense of linking adult education to local socioeconomic, political, and cultural dynamics. Having done that I will return to the question about how we can see adult education in the context of globalization.

Institutional education increasingly appears to be the normal context of learning in modern life. Adult education has been seen as just the logical complement to this history of institutionalization - changing its task to align with the historical development of institutional organization of learning in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. Much research as well as policy interest has been concerned with this compensating function, under the assumption that (formal) education is a common good or a necessity and this is increasingly also the case for adult learning. This model of thinking is justified to some extent by the speed of the growth in institutional schooling, but it also reproduces a tendency to see the education system in isolation from other learning and learning contexts. In this article I will, rather than focusing on the relation to the institutional education system alone, instead see adult learning in relation to societal needs and functions that may be fulfilled in different forms of informal learning or in formal education depending on specific historical circumstances. I will look at the Danish example with attention to the relation between homogenizing forces of European history and the specific local history – and will seek to point out the theoretical and epistemological perspectives in this tension. Historically adult education has primarily been organized by social and cultural movements or local communities, partly providing an alternative to the institutional schooling, and with a particular cultural or political overall agenda (political, religious, cultural), and this is still the situation in many countries within Europe. The boundaries between educational institutions and organizations whose main purpose were something different have often been quite blurred. This is especially clear for work related learning but also here a lot of work related learning is increasingly being organized in the form of formal training and full educational programs in addition to existing education which have been the basis of professions and trades. Work related training is probably the fastest growing area of adult education and training, but is very difficult to map correctly - and also less easy to influence, and may be for this reason often downplayed or neglected in analysis of adult education and policy agendas.

Adult Education and Modernization

Much of the recent discussion in adult education appears as a clash between educational cultures. On the one hand, there is a humanistic focus on personal and political self-articulation, which seems to be inherited from the traditional functions of community learning and liberal adult education. On the other hand, there is the instrumental perspective on lifelong learning for work and economic competitiveness, theoretically underpinned by human capital theory and similar frameworks of understanding. These ideological struggles refer to different historical experiences and are triggered by a major transformation in the contemporary importance of adult learning.

The theoretical notion of modernization seems to be a productive backbone in understanding the multiple institutional realities, conceptual meanings, and historical changes of adult education and learning in the context of societal functions of adult learning. Modernization, here, refers to the economic, social, and cultural changes which have taken place in the last 300–500 years, comprising the inclusion of feudal dynasties and independent city republics in the melting pot of European nation-state building, as well as the imperial inclusion of cultures and countries in the Third and Fourth World that had been living separate from dynamic centers right until the great discoveries or later.

Capitalist economy has been the main motor in this modernization process, where traditional, self-sustaining local communities were included in larger societies, affecting all aspects of political, social, and cultural relations. The development of institutional (formal) education, replacing informal education and learning, is just one of these effects.

Adult learning develops complementarily to this broader history of modernization, enabling individuals to deal with new societal realities. The very notions of adulthood and subjectivity result from this history in a complex process constituting the individual as a reflective and conscious agent in society, replacing the definition of adulthood by ceremonial inauguration.

There is a built-in risk in using the theoretical perspective of modernization framework. Seen from the dominant center of a global, modernized world, it may seem that adult education and learning is right at hand to enable modernization, harmonize the levels of learning between generations, and live up to the accelerating needs for individuals to change. In other words a certain functionalism may produce a local truth of an occidental modernization, where the efficiency and speed of knowledge transmission seems to be secured by institutional education. In the second place such an understanding may be projected into a global convergence. In order to avoid such a narrow functionalist perspective we must study adult learning and education history with the perspective of discovering the local dynamics and the multiple and infinite nature of the modernization process. I will do this by means of examples from the history Danish adult education.

We can distinguish three main types of adult education that have developed as educational traditions in their own right, related to particular areas of learning:

- Basic literacy education, such as reading and writing, numeracy and lately increasingly computer skills and foreign language
- Community and popular education, learning within, from and for a community or a social movement
- Education and training for work, such as continuing education, retraining, upskilling.

This is not an exhaustive list. But each of these three types of adult education can be found in all modern societies – but in very different forms and at different stages in modernizations processes. I will use them to illustrate the link between adult education and modernization – and as an exemplary case the specificity of their development in the Danish case.

Literacy Education: Enabling Modern Societies

The original and most widespread understanding of literacy is related to reading and writing. Prototype literacy education has been engaged in making developing societies literate or in compensating for lack of adequate schooling in modern societies. If we look at it from a societal perspective, literacy is a precondition for citizenship and socioeconomic participation. Across Europe, literacy has been closely related to the building of nation states. The development of secular education activities and the emergence of literature in national languages were instrumental in the building of nation states, and thereby – in Europe – the modernization of societies in the 18th and 19th century. Today, literacy has become a political issue in the multi-cultural societies emerging in modern Europe, and in some cases, instrumental for minorities to establish home rule or new states. The question about language remains a field of tension in cases where the nation state is not based in language unity in several cases even today. The Belgian case is well known – Catalunyan, Basque, Galician and Andalusian remain separate, functioning languages which at least in Catalunya are closely connected with the claim for splitting the state of Spain into its cultural/linguistic regions. In Norway a separate written language was developed on the basis of dialects from the regions far away from colonial center Oslo so that Norway now has two clearly different languages, historically one local/peripheral and one postcolonial (closer to Danish).

In Denmark language learning developed in a compromise between religion, enlightenment intentions and the need for child labor in agriculture. Denmark was a rural country, controlled by a small lower nobility and royal court detached from the rural population (actually mostly speaking French), and the kings were part of the shifting German feudal system, most of them also ruling some northern regions of later Germany. There was no bourgeois revolution in Denmark but an agricultural reform in the second half of 18. Century, a modernization of agriculture from below, for reasons of economic efficiency facilitated by an alliance of progressive landowners and the royal court, which led to a structure of many small family owned agricultural units and a general modernization of agriculture. This had also implications for education and literacy.

A general school legislation was passed in 1814 which also included training in Danish language but already the Protestant intention of making the bible readable in local language influenced different preceding forms of schooling which included reading Danish. Basic schooling remained very limited in rural areas. An elite high school system, called Latin Schools, represented the highest level of general education.

But in the time of European political liberation, with revolutions in Germany in the middle of the 19th century a romantic popular culture developed and spread among the Self-owning peasants. In opposition to the urban Latin and Central European culture it took up a Nordic shared mythology and emphasized the connection between language, locality (soil) and culture, not unlike later Nazi ideology, but with a clear ideology of freedom and self reliance of the peasant class. The material basis of this was obviously the agricultural reforms of the previous century, and became important for the first democratic reform movement in Denmark which led to a constitution in 1849.

Actually, when an urban elite first emerged in Copenhagen it also turned out nationalistic-romantic. At the time the kingdom still united the present Denmark and the duchies of the present Northern Germany – South Sweden and Norway had been lost earlier. The romantic nationalism was a good deal of the reason for the wars in the second half of 19th century with the new greater power Prussia – and the Danish national state thereby got rid of the partly German-speaking parts of the kingdom in the second half of 19th century. Whereas other European nation states were united on linguistic unity the Danish state finally became a nation state by splitting off, paving the way for the myth of a thousand years of unbroken identity between people, monarchy and language that nowadays rampant Danish politics. With a relatively good school and later mass media even dialects and sociolects have become eroded, the literacy question sunk under the radar until the last 2-3 decades of 20th century when it popped up in several versions: First because homogenous population was enriched with work immigrants, but also as a matter of functional literacy – the competence to actually read and write in everyday life. Today's industrial worker must be literate in order to fulfill simple work tasks because logistics and communication are built into every single task on the shop floor, and the trade unions of unskilled workers were first to point out the de facto literacy failure. The new concern about cultural techniques based in economic rationales hits an egalitarian society from behind. The surprising results of IALS, PISA and PIAAC studies question the assumed efficacy of formal schooling.

Literacy as a cultural technique is necessary and empowering for the individual, but when we see it as an essential aspect of cultural integration it also entails submission. In the cases of colonial modernization we can see derivates of the great colonial empires, some united and enabled as modern societies by t he colonial language, and all are to some extent influenced and shaped by colonial rule. A parallel but also different phenomenon can be observed in relation to the present Chinese development. A strong and well established Chinese culture adopts economic and social models of occidental culture as an accompanying aspect of global capitalism, but actually had its own literacy issue in which the command of mandarin was a tool for maintaining a centralized power – more similar to the Roman church and Latin – and the construction of a simplified written language helped to transform imperial China into the Peoples Republic China. Brazilian Paolo Freire answered the colonial contradiction with a notion of political literacy he called conscientization, or learning to reflect the social reality and power relations involved in it. You may see Freire's ideas as congenial with mainstream modernist pedagogy, related to the political learning process of those who are the victims and beneficiaries of a modernization coming to them from outside. You might criticize the notion of "conscientization" as an arrogant "besserwissen". This is probably too simplistic – romanticizing the indigenous culture – but it raises the question about the relation between a "conscientization" rooted in Portuguese and all the knowledge and experience of everyday life which is embedded in the indigenous (mostly Indian) languages. In a Danish context such questions seem less relevant – right until the children of the former Yugoslavian and Turkish worker migrant come to school.

The research on first and second language seems to indicate that the strong development of the mother tongue is the best individual resource for learning the majority language (Skuttnab-Kangas & Dunbar, 2010) – suggesting that the experience embedded in mother tongue are the necessary condition for the learning and knowing capability of individuals. This specific insight in relation between first and second language is in line with a general theoretical understanding of language and socialization. Language is a medium for the individual sensual experience, as well as, for elaborating cultural experiences historically. Hence the mother tongue is essential for basic socialization, even when the medium in the wider society is a second language (Salling Olesen & Weber, 2012).

Literacy is (mainly) related to reading and writing – which is already different from oral language. Written language is a key competence in modern societies enabling communication and knowledge transfer across time and space. Societalization creates a fundamental tension between immediate (local, situated) and mediated human experience, which requires reading and writing competences for the individual. When printing technology created the industrial basis of the literate modernity, it reinforced this duality. The modern experience of the world was mainly a language-mediated experience.

In the meantime new cultural techniques are added, for example "numeracy" – handling numbers and mathematical modeling (Johansen&Wedege, 2002), computer skills and foreign language. Information and communication technology necessitates new reading and writing skills in order to be a competent member of society, but may also relativize the importance of traditional written language skills. Digital technology is probably proclaiming a new and more radical version of the same – or possibly a qualitative new relation to reality, an extended version of sensual access. Whereas literacy has in the history of Europe been the key to the establishment of modern societies in the form of nation states, it is already transformed into the function of providing heterogeneity and coherence in a more functional sense. And it seems appropriate to see literacy as a privileged element within a wider notion of cultural techniques (Salling Olesen 2004). Although complicating and enhancing the question about literacy and language it emphasizes the basic historical experience that literacy is a key to the establishment of modern societies, and therefore also to understanding societalization in the sense of integrating limited and local communities in a wider society in the future of globalization. This brings us to the question of community education.

Community Education and Popular Education: Struggles about the Societal Atmosphere

All the different types of community and popular education are based in a community of people defined by location, religion, cultural values, or political assumption, and often have a perspective of social, cultural, and political self-articulation. The Danish early history of adult education is an example of a proactive social initiative in which the peasants' class developed their own schools, their own world view and life perspective referring to the Nordic popular cultural heritage and also pre-Christian religious mythology. The first folk High Schools were established from 1844. Their precondition was obviously the agricultural reforms of late 18th century, and the development of a class of independent farmers. They were used by young maidens and farm hands in the quiet seasons of agriculture. It seems that these schools did not only nurture an emerging cultural self confidence of the peasants but also contributed to technical knowledge exchange which enabled a high productivity in the agriculture in spite of the small farms, and to the development of an advanced cooperative organization of the food production (village freezers, dairies, slaughter houses). It lay the foundation to an early development of food production which has had long lines of impact in food industry (export brands like "Lurpak") and in global export of 3rd and 4th level derivates of agriculture (turn-key dairies and breweries, bio-technological research). The most interesting in this context, however, is that the movementbased in popular culture, became one of the leading forces in Danish democracy.

When a labor movement emerged from the 1880'es based in craft and a limited industry and gained strength with industry in the beginning of the new century the two class movements secured the implementation of the constitution. The dominant stream in the labor movement was social democratic, mainly focused on social security for urban working class, and in alliance with social liberal fraction of small peasants they promoted a new version of popular policy of equality and protection of vulnerable individuals. In spite of harsh political struggles during the crisis in 1930'es between self-owning peasants and working class a kind of class consensus about education was established during World War II. A committee which drafted a new framework of adult education synthesized the education traditions of folk high schools and working class evening classes in a national ideology of "popular education". Practically it should be implemented in the form of state subsidy for community and social movement based education – but in turn it became a basic ideology of educational policies at all. There was of course also a more class struggle oriented idea of education in the labor movement, but it was put to the background by the construction of "popular education", and by its later implementation in an egalitarian school system, in Danish also named "the Popular School".

Community education is based in pockets of social and cultural life that provide a productive space for self-articulation, and is often perceived as a free space for learning that is relatively independent of societal conditions and constraints. However, many typical cases of community and popular education are based on resistance against some of the influences of modernization, for example in minority and peripheral communities that are marginalized and/or impoverished by capitalist modernization and centralization. Independent of whether these communities see learning as explicitly political or not, learning is part of an attempt to create a public sphere of their own or set the cultural framework of understanding on a societal level. Paradoxically, out of the dynamics in closed communities and popular education based on specific socioeconomic and cultural circumstances may – sometimes - grow a contribution a strong civil society - structural characteristic of modernity. In spite of the fact that the independent Danish folk high school education was based on an anti-modern, romantic ideology, it produced the experience of popular self-regulation and self-organization, which also in later developments contributed strongly to establishing a modern democracy in Denmark. (Korsgaard, 2008; Olesen, 1989). Together with the universalistic approach in the labor movement (the popular rather than class oriented position) it enabled a basically anti-academic, informal notion of education, uniting egalitarian and liberal principles, which has had a very durable influence in Education policy in the rest of the century.

The dialectic between particularistic communities or social movements and universalistic aspirations is particularly pointed in relation to work and workers' learning. Since the main driving force of modernization has been capitalist industrialization, the most important popular education activity in Europe in the previous century was the one of the labor movement and trade unions. Industry formed the life conditions in (urban) communities, and the labor movement in most countries organized working-class culture and its learning institutions, first as a resistance solidarity movement, then gradually as a more proactive cultural self-articulation and political movement. In Denmark and the Nordic countries the labor movement became the most important organizer of liberal adult education, leisure learning activities etc. You can see this development as a successful result of the engagement of the state and the municipalities in the support of free adult education. In most other countries the labor movement is less influential on the state level. But then, in some cases, community education is connected with, and underpinned by alternatives to the dominant capitalist economy – in the form of cooperative economies – prominently in the Basque country and also at a smaller scale in some of the most developed capitalist countries (e.g. Canada, Italy).

It is obvious that labor movement education activities are in one sense a product of an active resistance against some of the effects of modernization, similar to the culture of many communities that have been marginalized or impoverished by modernization. It is a clearly partial culture defined by political and trade union action, or at least by a general class perspective. Unlike many local and minority communities, however, labor movement education activities in some countries has developed an universalistic perspective, challenging individualistic liberalism with ideas about equality and solidarity on behalf of the whole population. The political struggles between different types of Socialism can be seen as different versions of an universalistic aspiration – communist, social democratic, anarchist, and syndicalist – that each carry in them more or less ambitious aspirations of social justice and a new level of democracy beyond capitalism. The real histories of different countries have provided a variety of working-class cultures and not just labor movement experiences, as well as some in which universalistic aspirations turned into totalitarian power. In Denmark a relatively limited working class movement to a substantial extent allied with the peasant and small entrepreneurs, and in social affairs with the "social-liberal" fraction of small peasants who broke off from the bigger farmers on the political scene as early as 1905. This alliance accounted for a general social security concern for the poor and week population and formed a center-left backbone in parliamentary politics that has been virulent through most of the 20th century.

Seen in a societal perspective, popular education comes out of rural and urban communities generated by modernization itself. They are formed by the specific histories of modernization and they take advantage of one of the effects of modernization, namely the existence of a space for non-coerced social organization, what we in modernization theory call civil society. The societalization – from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft in the notions of the classical sociologists – eradicates or restructures communities at the same time as political struggles extend the space of relatively free cultural activity. The juridical basic rights and economic affluence in modernized parts of the world create the societal basis of this civil society. Many single-cause movements and actions have a similar profile as community action of resistance or opposition though not necessarily founded in a community. But it seems that contemporary popular education must have its potential base in the organization of citizenship to deal with societal issues on a level and with an outlook adequate for contemporary society as a whole.

The bourgeois public sphere as the communicative framework of civil society in Europe corresponds largely with the nation-state and ideas of formal (state) democracy. At the same time, global capitalism has in several ways bypassed this structure. Structurally, by its international operation and concentrations of power and capital in organizations larger than many states, creating a democratic deficit. Culturally, by the media and consumer cultures which take active part in the shaping of desires, fantasies, and preferences. There is no real international civil society because its development depends on shared language and means of communication. One may see international labor organizations and forms of organizations like World Social Forum as – very fragile – civil society responses to this situation. And may be the development of internet and social fora as potential trans-national communication forms.

Learning for Work, or Human Resource Development for unlimited employability

In traditional societies, intergenerational transfer of knowledge and competences enables the reproduction of the labor force. Modernization has brought basic school education and some specialized institutions for academic and professional education – generally serving as basic, lifelong qualifications in the initial career. In some countries – mostly in Central and North Europe – there has been an early institutional apprenticeship system, especially in the traditional crafts, under the control of Guilds or similar associative organization. In Denmark the trade unions have from the beginning been structured around the crafts and the apprenticeships have been overlooked by a tri-partite organization of unions, employers and the state. In advanced capitalist societies, when changes in work processes and labor market happen faster than the generational turnover in the labor force, this mode of transfer has increasingly come under pressure.

Vocational education and training in adult life has in most countries been left to employers and the individual worker. The consequences have typically been a general market failure (i.e., underinvestment) and a very unequal distribution of training resources. Big industrial employers have in some cases been able to secure up-skilling of their own employees, but not mobility across sectors and competence levels. When the relatively late Danish industry development accelerated post World War II the apprenticeship system for some years was able to deliver labor that was trained for work, but were employed in different trades than their original apprenticeship. In Nordic countries, training of workers became part of welfare state policies. In Denmark, with its late development of an industrial economy urban industries needed skilled workers. There was a growing surplus of labor in agriculture, rural workers needed skills and socialization for industry. A separate new strand in adult education developed to support a rapid migration from rural to urban life, from agriculture to industry. In order to facilitate the transition from agriculture to urban employments a whole new adult education and training system was established, with a tri-partite governance and mainly funded by the state. From around 1960 this system facilitated workers not only to move but to become skilled workers in urban trades like metal industry, construction, shipbuilding. What became later known as the flexicurity model (Jørgensen and Madsen, 2007) consisted mainly of adult education and training together with relatively good unemployment benefits. This combination enabled a flexible labor market and a less conservative/defensive policy from trade unions and employees than in a number of European countries in periods of economic growth. In the period of crisis and stagflation in the 1970s, continuing education was redirected/enhanced to take care of more long-term competence development for the more vulnerable segments of the labor force (e.g., women, young people without vocational qualification, and others), and also developed high quality education in new employment areas like logistics, industrial construction techniques, process industry (food and drugs), plastic – and more.

Needless to say, these policies provide a high degree of integration in the work force, and were especially for unskilled workers a way of obtaining education on reasonable conditions that would otherwise not have been realistic. Like other Nordic countries Denmark has very high scores in adult participation in learning. Moreover, the adult vocational training programs have better than any other adult education system been able to engage those adult learners who are generally regarded the least motivated - unskilled workers, especially male (Kondrup, 2013). In the period of neo-liberal politics the funding programs have been substantially changed, and the activity has gone down. At the same time the "hangover" of a crafts based structure of vocational education has become critical in spite of several attempts to reform the basic apprenticeship system for youth. Denmark faces a challenge of reconstructing the basic and continuing vocational education and training so that they provide up-to-date key competences. In the neoliberal policy agenda the focus is on "employability" under all circumstances – but there is little positive idea about what this would entail. On the other hand it seems clear that the crafts based skills are becoming obsolete – for a long time the traditional VET education has survived more on their basic work socialization than on their specific competence profile.

Recently, adult learning seems to have assumed a more universal or all-embracing nature in all the advanced capitalist countries. As long as the development of work takes the form of strong division of labor based on mass unskilled wage labor, societal needs remain limited to training and retraining specialists and highly skilled craftspeople. However, with the development of postindustrial forms of work organization, a need for broader adult education emerges. The societal demand for knowledge economy has changed to include what were mostly called soft skills (e.g. communicative and collaborative skills, quality consciousness, professional attitudes, and self-confidence) as well as literacy and new cultural techniques (e.g. numeracy and mathematic understanding, and computer literacy). Work-related learning seems to become broader and deeper and increasingly interferes with personal needs and identity (Olesen, 2005; 2013). It seems obvious that the Danish adult education and training experience is relatively well prepared to meet these new needs. This is due to the combination of a long lasting and comprehensive influence of the free adult education – based in popular education and liberal school pedagogy – and the welfare security systems which are necessary to support a "quality social demand" in a capitalist labor market, i.e. a social demand not linked to very narrow employer interests and limited by workers' immediate livelihood needs. Nevertheless, it is obvious in the rhetoric of life-long learning that economic concerns and the focus on employment and work are determining factors. This can be seen as a very local view on global development. The most developed economies can hope to maintain their relative competitive advantage in a division of labor where they take care of knowledge-based, complex work and the service work for themselves, whereas developing countries deliver raw materials and build up low-tech industrial production.

The political consensus about lifelong learning of competences may not be so easy to maintain in this narrow key. Rather, the focus on work and human resource development may raise issues of control and the quality of work. The ideas of a knowledge-based economy have been criticized from several perspectives. One applies a wider, ecological perspective on work and learning, questioning the inward colonialism of human life without boundaries (Hochschild, 1997) and its cultural consequences (Sennett, 1998; Negt, 1984). The requirements on human flexibility and adaptation may erode the conditions of socialization and subjectivity, that is, the human resources on the whole. Another perspective emphasizes the direct political aspect of learning in which labor movements should take the opportunity to advance a politicization of work, including environmental questions, ownership, and use value of production, drawing on vanguard experiences of cooperative enterprises (e.g. The Mondragon cooperative – Antoni and Campbell, 1983), projects for conversion of production (Lucas Aerospace and others), and a vision of self-regulated work (Forrester, 2007). The dramatic emergence of the climate crisis and the fragility of the capitalist world economy underscore the need for more comprehensive perspectives on work and learning.

The highest probability seems to outline a neoliberal scenario of an individualized competence market, which will be subsumed into a global labor market. However, it also seems likely that this competence market will show an unprecedented example of market failure – and it will definitely have extreme effects in terms of inequality and the colonization of human labor. The question is whether there is another scenario in which the actual significance of the labor force as a subjective factor in the economy can be turned into individual and collective self-regulation of work and learning. This seems to be the open question that places the discussion about learning for work and the workers' role in the development of work as a central issue in global politics. In the present phase the key questions seems to be the organization of workers to match the global capitalism, especially in the growing economies. Education and learning will play an absolute key role in maturing ideas of self regulation – both in terms of political engagement, and in terms of obtaining necessary key competences for a viable alternative work life arrangement.

The resources for any alternative to neoliberal global capitalism must to some extent be found in institutional practices, embodied experiences of the past, social organizations, and experiences of trade unions and other cultural organizations. They are present in the forms and levels of education, expectations, and preferences of young people as well as adults, but they do not form a simple and coherent alternative. While the new discourses of lifelong learning are international, Anglophone, and relatively homogenous, adult-education traditions have many names: popular education, community education, **educação** popular, politische bildung, liberal education, folkeoplysning, folkbildning, formation des adultes, formazione popular, volksbildung, and citizenship education to name a few. In adult education discussions, these many names give rise to translation problems – they do not have the same meaning because meaning is related to societal and cultural context. In this way the nuances are a key to better understanding the contexts and resources in each of these different traditions.

Functions of Adult Learning in the globalizing Context

The exploration of the historical function of adult learning by means of the notion of modernization may be a take-off for an open discussion of the very concept of modernization itself. The main types of adult education form strands of historical functionality over long periods of time, and in this sense confirm a societal function analysis. Analyzing them in terms of modernization may however present a simplistic scheme: literacy enables modernization by enabling the participation of the general population in communication independent of time and space; popular education advances the cultural reproduction of communities to cultural construction and self-articulation, eventually to a level of collective self-assertion and political activism; and continuing education and training for work aligns individual competence-building cycles with an accelerated and distributed organization of societal work in global capitalism. The local examples reveal a greater complexity.

The reference to the specific Danish history highlights two points: The first is that modernization is a broader homogenizing process but is also produced by local forces and resources that are not necessarily preoccupied with societal modernization – actually often resisting its effects on the local level. The Danish process of modernization, although linked with the major European history from Protestantism to the constitution of a German nation state is also related to very local social and cultural circumstances – and in the last 100+ years together with the other Nordic countries forming an exceptional case of social democrat welfare societies even though these countries have very different geographical and economic conditions. The societal function of adult education must be studied in concrete contexts, regarding the interplay with socioeconomic, political, and cultural history, as well as institutional developments. When and what type of adult education contributes to modernization (the level of general schooling and the influence on school by church and class movements), and political circumstances, may form very specific conditions and challenges (e.g. the Entnazifizierung as a (conquerors') project for political education in Germany after World War II, or the role of Comissiones Obreras and Barrio-organization in Spain under a long-lasting dictatorship).

The second is the point of specificity. Epistemologically this point of specificity can be transferred to the globalization process: In order to understand the inner contradictions and open opportunities of the process we need to look at the material and cultural contradictions in specific (local) processes which together make up “globalization” – and of course also not neglect the relations of dominance involved. It is a mistake to see the globalization process as one process inferred from outside and washing away local history and difference. And furthermore: This way of analyzing excludes the possibility to identify experiences and desires which could between a global integration process and the real (material) dynamics specificities of different local versions of it. Today, on a global scale, we may ask whether modernization is just one process.

In a broader and more analytical key, questions have been raised about “peripheral modernization”, that is: what are the specific characteristics and conditions of modernization in countries and regions that have had a modernization process pushed and influenced, but not entirely determined by colonial rule (e.g. Brazil).

In postcolonial theory and political discussion, the emphasis on difference and multiple histories serves to demonstrate the overcoming of the modernist tale or vision of a rational evolution toward a better society. Sometimes the argument that modernization should not be seen as a continuous progress gets confused with the assumption that there was and is no modernization process at all. In a generalized discussion of global capitalism one may at the same time observe a pessimistic view of one culturally homogenized world (McDonaldization) and much more relativistic postcolonial theory. Both fail to grasp the complexity of the globalizing process because they look at it as one process that must be put on a formula – or may be even, unintentedly, try to put a formula on to the process. If we instead – insist on a materialist perspective also on globalization and an assumption of endogeneity we can investigate a number of processes, based in local and specific histories but increasingly interfering.

Having said that, what is the role of learning in the globalization processes? Learning, and not least adult learning, is a necessary component of societal development because individuals have to discover and define themselves in an ever changing environment. But learning is also the distinctive factor which determines which globalization we get. It is essential to maintain that the possible futures of late modernity or postmodernity are a matter of social agency and hence also of learning processes taking place now. “Lifelong learning” implies a new discourse that brings learning beyond institutional education and into social reality. However, the lifelong learning discourse has been heavily influenced by neoliberal politics and human capital theory, and the world is relatively short of alternative ideas that can embrace the critique of educational institutions without accepting the neoliberal economic rationale. The options available are societally and subjectively conditioned by experiences and resources of the past. I have here drawn the attention to a long-lasting influence of the popular education tradition in my own country, which formed the ideological basis for a relatively democratic and liberal provision of formal and higher education, as well as adult education, in a “social democrat” welfare state environment. Others must be sought in Latin America, South Africa, China, and other particular pathways of modernization.

Modernization is still an uncompleted development even in its original centers. While it seems that globalization brings forward further homogeneity, there are also factors that tend to enable a multicentered and polyphonic global world. The fact that China has had its own almost independent cultural and social pathway, which is now – forcefully – joining global capitalism, forms an exciting experiment for the relation between human socialization and societal development. Oskar Negt calls it ''the greatest social experiment in our time'' (Negt, 1988/2007) in his discussion of the modernization(s) in China in the perspective of European modernization since the European Renaissance. We may most productively see modernization as an infinite process that is still dependent on human efforts and choices on individual, as well as on global level.

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Participation in Adult Education in Kyrgyzstan – Exploring an uncharted territory with familiar methods (?)

1. Kyrgyzstan: a widely uncharted territory in comparative Adult Education

Kyrgyzstan is a Central Asian country; which was transformed radically after becoming independent from the Soviet Union, and ranked 120th in the Human Development Index Global Human Development Report by UNDP (2015) in 2014.

The country is a widely „uncharted territory" with regard to comparative Adult Education. One of the few reports about Adult Education is the national report to the CONFINTEA VI conference delivered by the country's Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008). In this report, the authors claim that "…Kyrgyzstan needs a cardinal renewal of the adult education system" (Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008, p. 9), with the purpose of offering learning opportunities for everybody, to reduce social inequalities, and to support employment. It is further described that non-formal learning1 is not widely recognised neither by learners nor by employers, as certificates are not common or do not signal a quality learning outcome (Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008, p. 31). Another, more recent report about skills in the Kyrgyz Republic was published in 2014 by the World Bank (Ajwad et al., 2014). This report emphasises the role of cognitive and non-cognitive skills for labour market success and describes current skills gap and skills mismatches in the labour market that stem from insufficiencies of the formal education system.

With this background, the DVV International, a German NGO, which works internationally with a focus on Adult Education, is active with lobbying and developmental projects in the country. In order to stimulate the discussion and raise awareness of the issue of Adult Learning, DVV International launched a project for monitoring Adult Learning participation in Kyrgyzstan. In the typology of international comparative work that Reischmann (2008, pp. 25–28) outlines, this study is somewhat in between a country report and a topic-oriented report, with a few elements of juxtaposition; the topic is not the system of Kyrgyz Adult Education as a whole, but the participation in different forms of lifelong learning. There is also a parallel to the type of reports from international organisations, even if in this case, the initiative came from an NGO that adopted a survey framework common to such reports from e.g., the OCED or here, the European Union.

The aim of this paper is twofold: First, I will describe the project steps and share experiences and describe how the methodology of the European Adult Education Survey was adopted for the project. Part of this is also a short overview

[1] In the report, it is labeled as „informal learning", but from the context of argumentation it becomes clear that this refer to a formalised form of learning in courses etc. that in European terminology is called „non-formal" (see section 2; supposedly this mixup stems from the original Russian text where the term „informal" is common).

over the statistical results regarding Adult Education participation in Kyrgyzstan. Second, I will reflect on some selected methodological issues that are immanent in this project and discuss the handling of difficulties, obstacles and potential pitfalls. Finally, I will give a short outlook on the policy relevance of this report and draw perspectives for further work in reporting and research.

2. Background and implementation steps of the study

In education policies, there is a growing demand to build political decisions on evidence (Burns & Schuller, 2007). Evidence is to be generated by monitoring activities, as outlined in the seminal document by the European Commission "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality":

> "Comparable information and statistical measures are *essential* to the development and implementation of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies. Statistics and indicators already form an essential part of existing initiatives in the field of lifelong learning with a view to monitoring progress both in achieving identified targets and in implementing policy objectives" (European Commission, 2001, p. 23; highlight, E.R.).

Within the strategic framework, benchmarks are set for several key indicators that are to be met within the period of reference (European Council, 2003). For lifelong learning, the benchmark is defined as being 12.5 % of the population to have participated in education or training aged 25-64 years in the 4 weeks prior to the survey (European Council, 2003, C134/4), by 2010 and is now in the renewed strategy, set at 15%). As this measure is based on the European Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Adult Education Survey was designed as a more specific survey on Lifelong Learning. Its measures are to complement information based on the LFS (European Council, 2009, C 119/7).

The DVV international, international institute of the German umbrella organisation of Adult Education centres (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband – DVV) is an NGO that seeks to promote Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in developing countries all around the world. DVV international works in different focus areas, among these, literacy and basic education, vocational training, environmental education and democracy education.[2] For advocacy of Adult Education in Central Asia, DVV international felt the necessity to provide empirical evidence on Lifelong Learning participation in the countries of the region. The objective was to collect data for evidence-based policies and policy recommendations. Therefore, a quantitative, representative study on Lifelong Learning participation was planned, in cooperation with the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE), as the scientific mentor, with the national office in Kyrgysztan and the regional office in Taschkent, and the Kyrgyz institute PIL Research, which conducted the study. Kyrgysztan was chosen as a pilot among the Central Asian countries, as it is regarded to be the most open and liberal country in the region. For comparability of the results and to benefit from an existing questionnaire, a representative survey was planned based on the European Adult Education Survey (AES) methodology (version of 2011).

The project: "Adult Education in Kyrgyzstan" proceeded in the following steps.

1. Establishment of a project group, consisting of DVV International's

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[2] See DVV international's website: https://www.dvv-international.de/en/dvv-international/profile/ last update: 2016/11/22.

representatives (international, regional, and national), DIE, and national survey institute (PIL Research)
2. Workshop about questionnaire design and methodological study aspects (sampling, weighting, etc.)
3. Preparation of questionnaire versions in Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek
4. Pilot test of the questionnaire and subsequent modification of questions
5. Field phase, application of the questionnaire to a nationally representative sample
6. Data editing, weighting, production of preliminary results
7. Focus group workshop with experts from the country, to discuss preliminary results
8. Preparation of final report (still in process)
9. Publication of the report in English, Russian and Kyrgyz language (dvv international, DIE, & PIL, 2017, forthcoming)

During each step, single topics were discussed and communicated intensively to ensure that each of the perspectives (country nationals and experts, NGO, and scientific aspects) could be adequately considered.

3. The AES methodology and its adaptation to the Kyrgyz context

The study in Kyrgyzstan was based upon the methodology of the European Adult Education Survey (AES) from 2011. This survey was conducted on behalf of the European Commission in all EU member states but Croatia and some candidate and associated countries (European Parliament & European Council, 2008). The core sample is the working-age population from 25-64 years. There is a broad range of measurements of different learning activities and related information, covering a reference period of 12 months before the survey, turning it into the most elaborate survey on Lifelong Learning. As the AES is supposed to be repeated on a regular basis, it seemed to be a good reference for the design of the Kyrgyz questionnaire as it provides comparative measurements of lifelong learning participation with Europe. Meanwhile, the AES 2016 is implemented in EU member states and beyond (European Commission - Eurostat, 2016).

AES = Adult Education Survey

Regarding the regulation, “the aim of this survey shall be to provide *comparable* data on participation and non-participation of adults in lifelong learning” (European Parliament & European Council, 2008, p. 6; highlight, E.R.). However, the survey is not conducted by Eurostat itself. National authorities in the member and other participating countries collect data or oversee the process of data collection by tendered bodies. As a tool to ensure comparability of the national surveys, a manual with several annexes is issued, which outlines where interview and survey guidelines along with requirements for precision and recommendations for all methodological aspects (European Commission - Eurostat, 2013).

At the core of European monitoring about Adult Education is the distinction of three forms of education and learning: 1) formal education; 2) non-formal education; and 3) informal learning. These are defined in the Classification of Learning Activities (CLA) issued by the European Commission (2006).

CLA = Classification of Learning Activities

According to the CLA, **formal learning** is defined as

> "…education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous "ladder" of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age of fi ve to seven and continuing up to 20 or25 years old. In some countries, the upper parts of this "ladder" are organised programmes of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system: such programmes have come to be known as the "dual system" or equivalent terms in these countries." (European Commission, 2006, p. 13).

The category of **non-formal learning** include

> "any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above defi nition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the "ladder" system, and may have a differing duration." (European Commission, 2006, p. 13)

Finally, **informal learning** is defined as

> "…intentional, but it is less organised and less structured ….and may include for example learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the work place, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis" (European Commission, 2006, p. 13).

The main indicator for participation in LLL applied in European benchmarking is the participation in education and training, which means all kinds of formalised learning activities (formal and non-formal learning together). Among these formalised forms of learning, non-formal learning is more prominent in adult age. E.g., the participation rate measured by the AES in Europe is about 6 % for formal, but nearly 37 % for non-formal learning (see Figure 1 below). Informal learning is regarded as an important tool to meet educational needs, which might be the result of low initial education or of changes in jobs and labour markets. However, due to its soft nature, it is difficult to measure and somewhat different definitions were used during the data collection in the different countries (European Commission, 2012, p. 48), so it is less prominent in indicator sets.

Already in the preparatory phase of the project, it was a challenge to transfer the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal learning to the Kyrgyz context. While there were preoccupations that the distinction between formal and non-formal learning was not clear for interviewers and respondents, informal learning was even more difficult to understand as being a form of learning that was to be measured. Further, non-vocational learning, that is, learning not for job purposes, seemed not a common idea and difficult to ventilate within the framework of a quantitative survey.

Apart from these central concepts, other questions and items that are applied in the European standard questionnaire seemed difficult to process in the Kyrgyz context:

- **Household type of the respondent.** The European standard questionnaire uses a typology of two-generational households with one or two adults and the presence or non-presence of children, and only leaves the opportunity to specify "other" type of household (European Council, 2014, p. 11). As it turned out in the discussion, Kyrgyz households are much more complex, usually include more than two generations, and a range of adults with differing degrees of kinship. Therefore, in the questionnaire open answers were allowed for the “other”-category that were coded afterwards. Among these, household constellations of adult children living together with their parents in a household were the most frequent category, different from households in more industrialised countries.

- **Migration status**. While the European standard questionnaire asks respondents whether they were born in the actual country or in another country, it was deemed important by the project group to learn about internal migration within Kyrgyzstan, as there are large infrastructural differences between parts of the country (administrative units: “oblasts”) and between city and countryside.
- **Legal marital status**. In addition to the standard categories (never married; married (including registered partnership); widowed; divorced) an extra category was implemented “married and not registered officially” that aimed at marriages that were religiously binding.
- **Highest level of education**. The ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) of 1997 (Unesco, 2006) implemented in the European Standard Questionnaire had not been transferred yet to match Kyrgyz qualification and diplomas. It was agreed to consult the National Ministry of Education to find the best possible match between the six ISCED categories and Kyrgyz levels.
- **Procedure of recognition of skills and competences**: As this discussion is quite new to Kyrgyzstan, the question provoked doubt already at the level of designing the questionnaire, as to the choice of adequate examples of such procedures. E.g., there is a standardised university entrance exam that is mandatory for everybody who wishes to study, additionally to the formal university entrance qualification from secondary school. This was classified as non-comparable to procedures outlined in the European guidelines (Cedefop, 2015). However, this example was the first that came to mind to Kyrgyz nationals when discussing the issue. In order to avoid false connotations of this exam, this question was tackled by asking generally about such procedures and then, after a filter, selecting the persons who had taken university entrance exams.
- **Current labour status and professional status**. As the Kyrgyz economy is still an economy in transition, the categories proposed in the European Standard Questionnaire do not fully apply to the situation in the country. In Kyrgyzstan, there is more work in the informal economic sector (Ajwad et al., 2014, p. 11), and there are types of family-based economy that do not match the classical European understanding of “housewives”. Two special features had to be considered: First, a significant number of workers in Kyrgyzstan work seasonally, mainly in agriculture. Depending of the moment of the interview, these individuals either count as employed or as not employed. Therefore, an additional question was implemented to identify seasonal workers. Second, there is the phenomenon of “non-formal contracts”, even in public service. These are non-written contracts, however with regular payment of wage. Furthermore, the notion of “unemployment” was less clear than in Europe were it is defined around the receipt of unemployment benefits.

- **Parental education**. Additionally to the European Standard Questionnaire, an extra question was added to capture the fact whether the respondents' parents had been involved in further training.
- **Fields of formal and non-formal education**. To capture prevalent fields in the Kyrgyz context, two field were added to the standard list: democracy and citizenship (delivered by (foreign/developmental) NGOs) and religion and faith (delivered by churches or religious associations).
- **Providers of non-formal education**: to match the Kyrgyz context, extra categories for religious providers (see above) and "international organization/institutions" were added.
- **Informal learning**. Although not intended in the European Standard Questionnaire, it was decided to support the respondents' memory of any informal learning activities by mentioning potential sources of informal learning (e.g., by literature, by using the internet, by learning from a friend, family member or colleague).

Furthermore, some questions were completely eliminated from the questionnaire as they did not appear necessary for reporting and analysis within the project context.

To sum up, adaptation of the questionnaire was limited to obvious gaps in the answering categories that needed to be filled to reflect the Kyrgyz context. Emphasis was set on maintaining the instrument as fully as possible, in order to achieve maximum comparability.

4. Selected statistical results

Overall, the participation rate of the 25-64 year-old population in Kyrgyzstan in non-formal education (NFE) was measured at 5.2%, participation in formal education at 1.1%. As the indicator refers to the 12 months prior to the survey, this means that five out of hundred individuals in this age frame had participated in either a course, seminar, training at the workplace or private lesson in 2014 or the first months of 2015 (the field phase took in March/April 2015). From that mere number, it is difficult to tell whether this is a high or a low number.

European results are available from the last Adult Education survey 2011. The following graph illustrates participation rates in Eastern European countries (countries that share a communist past with Kyrgyzstan) and the EU as a whole.

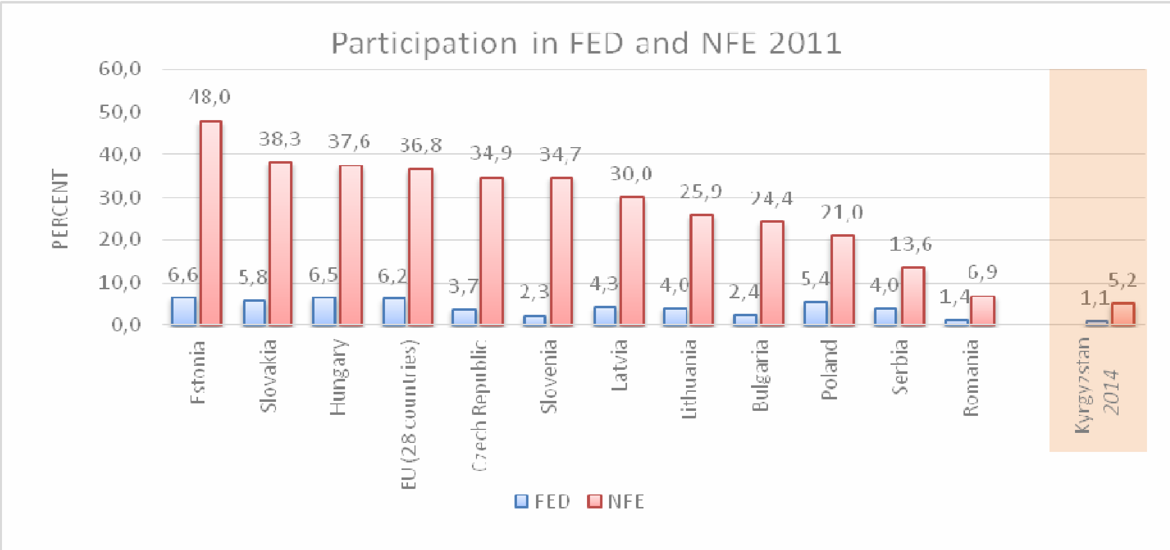

Figure 1: Participation rates in formal (FED) and non-formal education (NFE) by country during 12 months preceding the survey, 25-64-year-old population

Source: data from Eurostat, EU Adult Education Survey, 20113 and own calculations with data from Adult Education Survey Kyrgyzstan, 2014

From this juxtaposition, it appears that participation in Adult Education in Kyrgyzstan is closest to that in Romania and Serbia, but far away from the levels reached in the three other former Soviet countries, the three Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Without additional information about the economic and political frameworks, about educational and labour market infrastructure, it is difficult to tell about differential preconditions of participation in adult education for individuals. However, this numbers might serve as a first illustration of country differences.

In the following, I will give two examples of differential participation levels amongst different groups of the Kyrgyz population, namely, differences by region of residence and differences by level of initial education.

Kyrgyzstan is administratively structured into seven oblasts and two cities. In the cities Bishkek (capital) and Osh are centres where higher-level workplaces, services and infrastructure are concentrated. Figure 2 illustrates the participation rates of the 25-64-year old population in non-formal education during the 12 months preceding the survey.

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3 Data retrieved on 10.08.2015 from: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database. All the country respective information presented in graphs corresponds to surveys conducted in 2011.The responsibility for all conclusions drawn from the data lies entirely with the author.

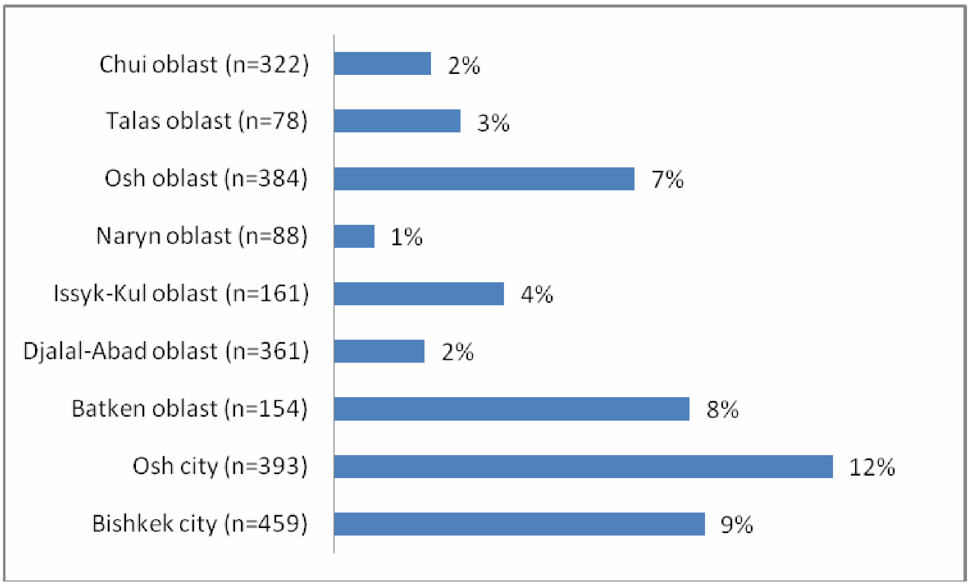

Figure 2: Participation in non-formal education by regions of Kyrgyzstan
Base: All respondents
Source: DVV International et al. (2017, forthcoming, p. 17)

The results show that there are regional differences in participation, both between the oblasts and between the cities of Bishkek and Osh and the seven oblasts. Somewhat surprising to an external observer is the result that participation in Osh is higher than in the capital of the country, Bishkek. An explanation for this given in the project discussions was that from 2010 on, there were ethnic disturbances in the Osh region where the minority of Uzbek population is living. As a consequence, peace trainings and similar activities were offered by different NGOs which might have led to an increased participation in the years that followed and still in 2014, the main reference year of the survey.

Figure 3 displays the participation rates in non-formal education by the respondents' educational background (Kyrgyz categories). Especially individuals with professional and higher education participate in non-formal education. Equally, respondents whose parents had already participated in Adult Education were more prone to participate themselves. These results illustrate the well-known "Matthew effect" which points to the cumulative effect of educational participation and social inheritance of educational status. These inequalities are also visible when differentiating the educational levels by the ISCED 1997 classification.

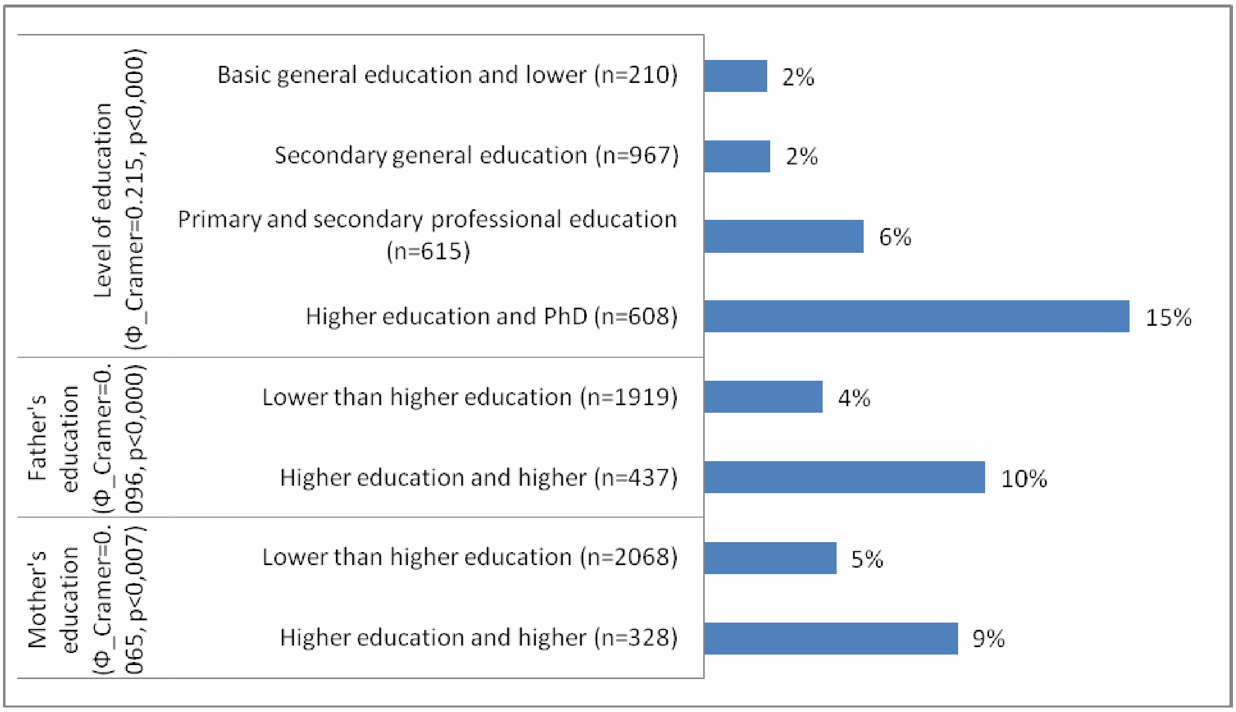

Figure 3: Participation in non-formal education by educational background
Base: All respondents
Source: DVV International et al. (2017, forthcoming, p. 19)

Also with regard to other social inequalities, there are similar patterns to those known in other, e.g. Eastern European, countries: young and employed individuals participate to a greater extent than older and non-employed persons. Regarding gender, we find a higher participation for women (6%) than for men (4%). While internationally, evidence on gender is mixed, this difference deserves to be studied in more detail but is out of scope for this paper.

5. Difficulties, obstacles and pitfalls of comparative study in this project

I will reflect on the comparability of the results from this survey, drawing on the three types of problems in comparative inquiry as outlined by Michal Bron (2008). He differentiates between difficulties, obstacles and pitfalls that potentially challenge the validity and reliability of results from comparative studies. While he considers difficulties and obstacles as "normal" or, in other words, to a certain extent inherent, to comparative research, pitfalls are "self-styled dangers" that arise from odd specifications of research questions, methodology, or application of methods to a specific research topic (Bron, 2008, pp. 65–66).

Difficulties refer to the methodological challenges common in all quantitative surveys: e.g. adequate sampling, reliability and validity of the instrument, or response rates. In the course of the survey "AES in Kyrgyzstan", such problems were present in many ways. While the application of a tested survey instrument promised reliability, it turned out to be difficult to achieve a representative sample of the Kyrgyz population, which was balanced between the administrative regions (so-called "oblasts") and the two cities of Bishkek (the capital) and Osh. Further, it was an issue how to plan the survey according to seasonal conditions that might make distant regions unreachable at certain times and rhythms of work of the semi-nomadic parts of the population that would not be available for questioning when wandering with their livestock. Early spring (March) seemed an adequate timeframe for the interviews. Also, as there are three main ethnicities (Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek) living in the country and also a great urban-rural divide, it seemed necessary to arrange the sample in the way to oversample population in the cities, in order to be able to run separate analyses for this group. In the same way, it appeared helpful to oversample Uzbek population as well. National census data, even if not very recent, were available for the sampling frame and calculation of the weight, which was constructed along the variables of region and education. All in all, the methodological approach to the study was as scientific as possible under the given circumstances.

Among the common *obstacles* in comparative research are, according to Bron (2008, p. 65), issues of translation that often exist not only between languages, but also between social realities, the indirect accession to the research field, the varying quality of statistics, and so forth. I will highlight the most relevant aspects in the actual study. First of all, it was an enormous challenge to communicate the central concepts of formal and non-formal education and informal learning all the way through to the respondents of the survey. In the pilot test, it became obvious that especially in the Kyrgyz version, these concepts needed a lot of explanation as they "…are not used in daily life in Kyrgyz" (PIL, 2015, p. 3). Even if great emphasis was placed on this communication, it is not assured that via discussion in the project team with the national partners who conducted the survey, their trainings of interviewers and the actual realisation of the interviews, the concepts came all the way through in a consistent manner. An indication of this obstacle was the result of the pilot test that interviews conducted in Kyrgyz took 32 minutes and thus, on average, 6 minutes longer than in Russian (26 minutes) and 7 minutes longer than in Uzbek (PIL, 2015, p. 3). In the main survey, there remained a difference in interview duration which was significant between Kyrgyz (22.8 minutes) and Russian (21.2 minutes) and between Kyrgyz and Uzbek (20.7 minutes) (own calculations). Due to a lack of knowledge, neither of Kyrgyz everyday life nor of the languages involved, this fact remains a strong obstacle to the interpretability of results, as Jütte (1999) pointed out "The success of technical communication in an international context depends on translation" (Jütte, 1999, p. 261). In order to achieve not only a translation but the *equivalence* of concepts, he recommends to embed technical terms in the context, to emphasise differences when explaining concepts in different contexts and to perform transfer work in the way that actual examples of realisations of objects in different contexts are given (e.g., type of educational institutions) (Jütte, 1999, pp. 263–269). To the possible extent, these measures were taken in the present project, e.g. by providing examples from the Kyrgyz national context of typical formal and non-formal learning activities. In the same way, an intensive discussion about all aspects of implementation of the survey, data analysis and reporting was initiated among the project group to assure a shared understanding of the results.

Another issue that at first sight seems to be a translation issue, already falls into the category of *pitfalls* in comparative inquiry that researchers should be aware of, according to Bron (2008, 66 ff.). It concerns the question about procedures of recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competences. These procedures are at the core of the European Lifelong Learning strategy and therefore, their implementation status and frequency of usage is one important information for policy makers to be drawn from the survey. However, even if the necessity of introduction of such procedures is mentioned in the Kyrgyz CONFINTEA VI report (Ministry of education and science of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2008, p. 32), there seemed to exist no awareness of such mechanisms in Kyrgyzstan yet and also only few practical examples. Therefore, the simply translated question from the European manual caused confusion among the survey institute, the interviewers and the respondents. As described above, a filter was used to avoid the most obvious danger of "false friends" in an institutional sense, namely the university entrance exam. Due to the small importance of such procedures, the most similar was "normal" to be remembered by the respondents, which led to the danger of identifying also more procedures that might not be comparable to the understanding of the concept in Europe (Cedefop, 2015). Still, after filtering the cases of university entrance exams, there remain 3.5% of respondents who claim to have participated in such a procedure (weighted results, own calculations). Considering the examples given in the questionnaire (e.g. TOEFL), doubts remain whether this result reflects institutionalised procedures of recognition of skills.

Pitfalls in comparative studies, are in general, other than differences and obstacles, "self-styled dangers" (Bron, 2008, p. 66) that can be avoided. As outlined above, it was not the main purpose of this project to facilitate comparisons, however, a methodology was chosen that would potentially facilitate comparisons, and these were to a small extent also drawn in the project (see Figure 1). So, the "comparing incomparables" (Bron, 2008, p. 69) pitfall is touched and it has to be questioned whether a threshold country in a (from the European point of view) distant region of the world with different cultural and economic background can be compared to other, more developed countries, but follow different economical paths alone by being member (or at least candidates) of the European union. It still seems meaningful to use not any country form Europe, but countries that share some features, in this case, the communist past. The Baltic states even were, like Kyrgyzstan, members of the Soviet Union. In this context, the measured participation rate around 5% appears low and it would be even less meaningful than without any framing. Still, this result does not tell much neither about the specific framework of Adult Education in Romania and Serbia nor about Kyrgyzstan.

Another potential pitfall that applies to the actual project is the over-interpretation of the results yielded. This is close to two pitfalls named by Bron, the "mis-use of survey techniques" and the "inductivism" (Bron, 2008, 66f.), with reference to Köbben (1979). However, such techniques have their specific use to show the magnitudes of social phenomena (here: participation in adult education). Interpretation and contextualisation are necessary companions; in the actual project, the composition of the project team was chosen to achieve maximum reflectivity and different expertise from scientific, technical, practical and political perspectives and also from national and international experience and knowledge of contexts and languages.

6. Outlook: AE statistics in advocacy and political consulting

Knowing about participation rates measured in the European indicator system, what do we learn about Adult Education in Kyrgyzstan? Can the objectives be reached with regard to national policy? What is the usefulness of indicators – both for national evaluations and for international comparisons? Even if this project was not primarily planned as a comparative project, it still embarks on a methodology that is designed for comparisons, and the general intention is melioristic in the sense that the results are to be used to find solutions to problems defined in the study (see Hörner 1997 as referred to in Parreira do Amaral, 2015, 112f.). This motivation is connected to the general trend in education policy of 'governing by numbers' as outlined in Boeren (2016, 26ff.).

In this project, one of the functions of using an international indicator framework was to illustrate the situation in Kyrgyzstan by being able to frame them with results from other countries. I discussed the potential pitfalls of this approach above. However, the result might illustrate a "deficit" of Kyrgyzstan that deserves political attention.

The results can also serve as a starting point from which to explore the structures and needs for Adult Education in more depth. For such research, it is useful to rely on a theoretical model of participation that relates individuals, learning providers, and country features. One of these models is the integrative lifelong learning participation model by Boeren (2016, 146ff.). The analysis of the AES can provide information on the learners' and non-learners' profiles, their socio-demographic characteristics and the connections between different factors and participation in Adult Education. However, as Boeren puts it, "the difficulty in understanding participation in adult learning based on these types of surveys is the lack of insight at the organisational level" (Boeren, 2014, p. 284). And, one might add, the lack of insight at the national and/or regional level.

Equally, the assessment of societal needs in terms of skills of the workforce, an issue that was brought forward as urgent by the report on skills of the above-mentioned World Bank report (Ajwad et al., 2014) are not self-evident from such indicators. Policies need to be formulated based on a more profound, qualitative analysis of educational structures and skills demands, but also based on political decisions on priorities for action. Also, it might be helpful to study good-practices in other countries, but the results still need to be contextualised to the county in question.

All in all, awareness of potential threads to interpretation seems to be the key of avoiding pitfalls and reducing differences and obstacles to a minimum. It is important to know the limits of interpretability of data, but even limited evidence allows for political statements by political actors, if they are clearly labelled as such.

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The Specifics of ISCAE

Contribution to "fireside-chat: Voices from the past"

25 years ago, at the 1992 annual conference of AAACE (American Association of Adult and Continuing Education) in Anaheim/Los Angeles, the name of the society - founded by Alexander N. Charters (Reischmann 2009, p. 3) - was by my suggestion changed from "Committee for Study and Research in Comparative Adult Education (CSRCAE)" to "International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE)". This occasion led to an intense discussion: What is the specific, distinctive focus of ISCAE, and how to enhance International comparative adult education?

The agreements that were made narrowed the focus of ISCAE:

1. *Acdemic, research- and theory orientation*: With the new name the explicitly naming of "Study and Research" was lost. But it was clear to all: This is an academic oriented society, not a venture aimed to practical intercultural education.

2. *International comparison*: Both names did not narrow the comparison explicitly to *international* comparison, the comparison of two or more countries. To clarify this, one suggestion was to call the society "International Society for International Comparative Adult Education". But this seemed to be too sophisticated and would have made the name of the society long and unpractical. But unanimously it was agreed that ISCAE should be limited to countries as basis of comparison. Of course also intra-national comparison makes sense in adult education, the comparison between regions, participant-groups, or institutions, but it was decided to leave this to other organizations.

3. C*omparison, not country-reports or juxtaposition*: It was agreed that ISCAE is aimed to support the method of comparison between countries. Colin Titmus described that often "it is generally accepted that most of what is included under the rubric of comparative studies in adult education ... does not involve comparison in the strict sense" (1998, p. 36) - so for example single nation descriptions or when these descriptions are placed side by side; in this "juxtaposition it is left to the reader to carry out the comparison" (Titmus, 1998, p. 36). Comparison means more: the explicit "attempt to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study" (Charters & Hilton, 1989, p. 3).

4. *Comparing for understanding*: It was agreed that ISCAE should stimulate in projects "the attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination" (Charters & Hilton, 1989, p. 3).

5. *Reflecting on comparison process*: It belongs to ISCAE's expectation, that - in addition to comparing and explaining/understanding - the methods, strategies, and concepts used in projects of international comparison are explicitly and critically reflected - as it is usual in all scientific research.

6. *Focus: Education*: Phenomena of Adult Education can be researched from various disciplines international-comparatively. But in the end all studies should enlighten and support the understanding and improving of adult educational

issues. If contributions are offered from other disciplines (i.e. comparative sociology, politics, law etc.) then it is expected that it is asked explicitly for the consequences for adult education.

It was clearly expressed that these limitations of the focus and scope of ISCAE will limit the size of the society. There exist many international organizations in adult education (field of practice) and andragogy (scientific approach), and national associations also have task forces or divisions to deal with international topics. So papers that do not fit into these filters easily can be presented in other conferences. But the hope was expressed that these rigorous criteria for the work of ISCAE would be a chance to enhance an ambitious International comparative adult education.

Looking back from today we still see that "strictly" International comparative papers are a minority. But it also confirms that the work of ISCAE is still important. The conferences and publications of ISCAE (Reischmann/ Bron/Jelenc 1999, Reischmann/Bron 2008) offer methodological and theoretical help for newcomers and oldtimers, such becoming a valuable resource for research in International comparative adult education.

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Lisa Breyer & Michael Schemmann

Comparing Adult Education Policies on a Global Level. A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis

Introduction and Current State of Research

The engagement in research on adult education policies on national and international level has increased during the last decade. Studies in this field refer to approaches such as world polity and multi-level governance. The methods used vary from interviews to ethnomethodology and mixed method designs. Findings of studies focusing on the governance of inter- and supranational organizations show a harmonization of adult education policies between these organizations (see Jakobi 2009, Schemmann 2007) such as the EU, the OECD and the UNESCO. Especially lifelong learning plays an important role in this context since the discussion of the concept, which began in the 1970s, became revitalized in the late 1990s. Further studies show that hints to a harmonization of policies and the understanding of lifelong learning can also be determined between the education policy of the European Union and its member states (e.g. concerning Germany, Greece and Finland see Ioannidou 2010, Germany and Hungary see Óhidy 2009). However, a study which examines the extent of harmonization as well as the heterogeneity of national adult education policies in a quantitative way is still lacking.

The processes on the international level lead to a convergence of the field of adult education research and the policy field whereby the borders become blurry and questions concerning the autonomy of adult education research emerge (see Rothe 2011). The convergence is intensified by developments such as the increase of scientific policy advice (see Schrader 2015) and the monitoring of progress in the field of adult education by large scale studies like the OECD-study PIAAC and the Adult Education Survey carried out by the European Union. Furthermore, the organizations publish periodical reports like the OECD "Education at a Glance" and the UNESCO EFA-Reports. The Report focusing on Adult Education (third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education) was recently published in September 2016. It is part of the process constituted by the sixth UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) which was followed by the Belém Framework for Action promoting the central role of literacy and adult education as an element of lifelong learning.

Connecting to the desideratum of a quantitative study on harmonization and the negotiation of the significance of adult education in the CONFINTEA-process, the contribution will analyze national reports that were submitted as a preparation for CONFINTEA VI. The reports of the European countries were selected to focus on the central research question, if in an organization with a global approach there can be identified a "European" understanding of adult education and lifelong learning. The inquiry is carried out by a corpus-based discourse analysis.

After referring to the current state of research and developing the research question, the theoretical framing by the world system approach will be illustrated. This is followed by the methodological design of the corpus-based discourse analysis. The next chapter presents first empirical findings of the study and an outlook to further results. In a last step conclusions are drawn considering the research question, but also the theoretical and methodological approach.

Theoretical Framing

One of the most established approaches used to analyse global processes of policy transfer is the world polity approach which was developed and empirically supported by a number of studies. The World Polity approach can be grouped within the strand of the sociological version of neo-institutionalism. This strand analyses organisations and their structures within the context of various institutions. Institutions are understood as complexes of permanent rules, norms, interpretations, orientations and patterns of action. In everyday life people are only partly aware of them, but they function as a condition to action in general, since they provide forms and content for processes of sense making and development of expectations, goals and strategy (Türk 2004, 924).

Within this strand of neo-institutionalism three perspectives can be differentiated. Following the arguments stated by Türk the initial focus is on internal institutionalism, thereby illustrating the development of structures in organisations which then become relevant for action (Türk 2004, 925). These organisations form the core of the institutions. Secondly, the context-related institutionalism focuses on the relationship between organisations and their environment and particularly highlights the importance of the environment for structures and practices of the organisation (Türk 2004, 925).

Finally, the socio-theoretical institutionalism has to be pointed out. World polity is less concerned with actual structures than with an imaginary cultural system that borrows core principles, such as universalism, belief in progress, equality, justice and rationalism, from Western societies. In essence, world polity is underlain by a thesis of globalisation aimed at "permeating the world by Western principles" (Meyer 2005).

It is crucial to Meyer's assumptions that some structural forms are created and legitimised as part of the process of disseminating these principles worldwide, while others lose legitimacy. Accordingly, countries, organizations and individuals achieve dominance as isomorphic actors in the modern world, supplanting other structural forms such as clans and families (Krücken 2006, 143). Among the empirical evidence for the world polity approach is the huge rise in the foundation of nation-states after the Second World War and the increasing frequency with which organisations sponsor actions that have a major impact on all areas of society and hence also on the individual. These actors cannot be regarded as autonomous from the world polity perspective, but rather achieve recognition in proportion to the extent to which they behave in conformity to the external expectations of world polity (Krücken 2006).

The significance of IGOs is illustrated by Meyer and others using the example of a fictional, newly discovered island society. The authors show how the society will establish a nation-state with the help of international organisations, will train organisations and will grant individual rights to the members of society. There is a focus on the United Nations system:

> "… the United Nations system and related bodies (the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade [GATT]) established expanded agendas of concern for international society, including economic development, individual rights, and medical, scientific, and educational development. (…) The forces working to mobilise and

> standardise our island society thus gain strength through their linkage to and support by the United Nations system … ” (Meyer 1997, 163).

As a second theoretical strand we refer to linguistics as well as to discourse theory. Lexicometric analyses and corpus linguistics go back to Saussure' s Linguistic as well as to the radicalization in poststructuralism and to discourse theoretical perspectives of Foucault. The goal of the study is to analyse the constitution of meaning in text corpora. As such it is assumed that the connotative meaning of a word is decisive or as Firth put it: „You shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1957). As a definition of discourse we follow Busse and Teubert (1994, 14). They stated that a discourse comprises all texts

- which are related to the chosen topic of research, show semantic relations between each other and are to be seen in a joint context of communication,
- which meet the limitations defined by the research programme in terms of historical phase, text type, …, and
- which explicitly or implicitly refer to each other or form an intertextual coherence.

Methodological Design

To follow the research question concerning a "European" understanding of adult education and lifelong learning, the approach of a corpus-based discourse analysis is used. This method developed in linguistics facilitates a quantitative analysis of large text corpora by estimating frequencies of keywords, word clusters and collocations of commonly appearing words and working out concordances of selected words by showing their context in the whole corpus. Thereby comprehensive patterns can be identified and parts of the corpus can be compared and contrasted, e.g. concerning relevant positions and agents in the discourse (Scholz & Mattissek 2014).

The corpus was build out of national reports submitted in preparation for CONFINTEA VI. Alltogether 154 reports have been submitted, from which 42 belong to the UNESCO-region of Europe and North America. The reports available in English were selected for the analysis, so that two corpora could be arranged: An EU-corpus which contains reports of 18 EU member countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, UK) and a Non-EU-corpus which contains 11 reports (Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey). The EU-corpus contains 378911 words (corresponding to approximately 760 pages) and the Non-EU-corpus contains 200384 words (corresponding to 400 pages). The reports all follow the same predetermined structure, which includes a general overview of the country and a detailed overview of adult learning and education in the respective country aspects like policy, quality, research, literacy and future perspectives.

Using a corpus-based discourse analysis offers a possibility to extend methodical approaches in comparative adult education research. Since this method has not been used in this field thus far, an own approach combining the different procedures of analysis had to be developed. First, the two corpora were analyzed and compared concerning the frequency of words included. Word classes (e.g. conjunctions) not relevant for the analysis were removed. The 100 most frequent words were then categorized into clusters inductively and the average frequency of the category was calculated. This procedure enables to get an impression of the two corpora and work out comprehensive patterns, which show distinctions and similarities.

In a second step of analysis, terms related to adult education and lifelong learning, thus of interest for the research question, were selected out of the most frequent words and examined concerning their significance in their function as a keyword for the respective corpus. The significance test considers the observed and the expected frequency by relating the observations to the amount of words included in the whole corpus. By this procedure the findings of the first step of analysis can be substantiated. The significance test shows if the words only appear to be exceptionally frequent in one or the other corpus, or if the higher frequency actually is random.

The last procedure is an analysis of collocation that shows which words appear most frequently in the content of a selected word. For this step the 10 most significant keywords in the most frequent words of both corpora were selected to identify patterns of meaning concerning these key words.

Altogether the comparison of the two corpora in those different steps of analysis shows the negotiation of meaning of topics related to adult education and lifelong learning and facilitates to work out if there can be identified a "European" understanding of certain topics or if processes of assimilation are observable.

Empirical Findings

The following section gives an insight into first results of the analysis, which will be continued. The frequency analysis and the categorization in the first step gives a first overview of the patterns in the corpus (see table 3 and 4 in the appendix). This step of analysis shows several similarities between the two corpora. Table 1 lists the categories in the respective corpora, ranked by the average frequency of the words belonging to the category. Given the predefined structure of the reports, words belonging to the category "education" (including words like education, learning and training) are the most frequent ones. The category "society" including for example adults, social and people, is the second strongest category. While "development" and "institutionalization" are more frequent in the Non-EU-Corpus than in the EU-Corpus, the category "employment" includes more frequent words in the EU. In the EU-Corpus there can be identified an own category for "qualification" while in the Non-EU-Corpus only the word "skills" appears, which was then assigned to the category of "education".

Table 1: Inductive categories of the 100 most frequent words in the EU- and the Non-EU-Corpus (ranked by average frequency)

EU-Corpus	Non-EU-Corpus
education	education
society	society
employment	development
development	institutionalization
level	level
institutionalization	employment
qualification	state & government
state & government	

The categories hint to the stronger relevance of aspects referring to employment in the EU-countries. The expanded perspective on education by including qualification shows that the discourse concerning qualification is more present in the EU. Alltogether there are many similarities in the two corpora, which can be ascribed due to the predefined structure.

The next step of analysis includes a significance test which informs about the "keyness" of the words in the corpus by relating them to the size of the whole corpus. The revised list of the 100 most frequent words was used for the significance test. For every word in this selection there was calculated a keyness value (see tables 5 and 6 in the appendix). If the keyness is included in the analysis, it becomes apparent that some of the most frequent words in the corpora are not actually keywords (low keyness value) or show a negative keyness and therefore have to be classified as keywords of the other corpus. The analysis shows that "education", "educational" and "adult(s)" are, even considering the predefined structure of the reports, keywords only for the Non-EU-Corpus. Additionally, the average keyness of the before build categories has been calculated. Subsequently, this shows that the category "education" in the Non-EU-Corpus includes words with an average higher keyness than the category does in the EU-Corpus – where it has a negative keyness. The category "state & government" is – considering the keyness – the most relevant for the Non-EU-Corpus, while in the EU-Corpus it is the category of "qualification".

The 100 most frequent words were then brought into a new ranking that is not oriented towards the frequency, but the keyness of the words. The following 10 words show the highest keyness in the respective corpora (see table 2).

Table 2: Top 10 most significant keywords of the 100 most frequent words in the EU- and Non-EU-Corpus (ranked by keyness)

	EU-Corpus (378911 words)			Non-EU-Corpus (200384 words)		
Rank	Freq.	Word	Keyness	Freq.	Word	Keyness
1	2691	learning	205,925***	411	law	283,948***
2	661	continuing	183,809***	248	civil	241,924***
3	683	qualifications	138,307***	322	primary	204,324***
4	1366	vocational	136,964***	576	professional	193,018***
5	567	qualification	111,934***	4540	education	128,889***
6	1022	programmes	86,518***	1083	development	121,076***
7	743	courses	59,463***	262	management	118,018***
8	607	lifelong	54,691***	248	process	68,619***
9	900	people	53,056***	696	educational	53,105***
10	574	further	42,431***	242	implementation	42,648***

Chi^2, *** p<0,001.

In the EU-Corpus “learning” and “qualifications” are central keywords while in the Non-EU-Corpus “education” and “educational” appear. “Continuing” and “lifelong” and “further” in the EU-Corpus point to a broad perspective in the context of adult education. “Programmes” and “courses” refer to the institutionalization in the EU, while in the Non-EU-States a perspective of “development” (“process”, “implementation”) is more apparent. The appearance of “vocational” in the 10 most significant of the most frequent words shows the relation of the EU to topics of the field of employment. In the Non-EU-Corpus the significant word “management” attracts attention.

This selection of the keywords is the basis for the next step of the study, in which collocations are estimated. This step shows which words will appear most frequent in the context of the selected word. The collocation analysis can provide more hints to the understanding of the keywords and can lead to possibilities of connectivity considering qualitative steps of analysis.

Conclusion

Considering the research question, if there can be identified a “European” understanding of adult education and lifelong learning, following conclusions can be drawn: Due to the predefined structure of the reports there can be identified several similarities, considering the required reference to adult education. However, even in the first overview of the frequencies, a stronger tendency to the perspective of employment can be traced in the reports of the EU-Countries. The categorization showed that the category of “qualification”, which is important in the EU-Reports, is less relevant in reports of the Non-EU-Countries. The consideration of keyness strengthens this perspective by showing that “qualification” is the category including words with the hightest keyness in the EU-Corpus. Furthermore, the analysis by keyness shows that, in the context of adult education, the orientation towards state and government is very important in the countries not belonging to the EU.

Alltogether the first results of the hint to a “European” understanding of topics related to adult education by highlighting relations of the EU-Reports to characteristic concepts like employability and qualification, while in the Reports of the other countries the perspective of developing structures has a high priority. This shows, that in the context of the UNESCO-Conferences, where a certain understanding of adult education and lifelong learning (e.g. considering literacy and sustainability) is being promoted, there can be identified an internal differentiation considering a "European" understanding which is promoted by the EU.

In a methodological perspective, the study shows that corpus-based discourse analysis offers a variety of procedures to analyze a huge amount of text. The explorative approach facilitates to work out patterns of meanings that are not predefined and could in this amount of text not be carved out in a qualitative way. The different steps of analysis complement each other by offering each separate output considering other levels of the data. However, corpus-based discourse analysis meets its limits in implicit knowledge, irony and sarcasm (Dzudzek et al. 2009) and does not offer conclusions about the qualitative relationship between terms and therefore needs to be combined with qualitative steps (Mattissek 2010) like categorizing of terms. In an overall perspective, the study shows the potential of using the approach of corpus-based discourse analysis not only in disciplines like linguistics but also in adult education research, especially in the field of international comparative adult education research.

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Appendix

Table 3: EU-Corpus (378911 words)
100 most frequent words, ranked by frequency (revised by removing: articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns)

Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word
6	6914	education	45	864	institutions	74	607	lifelong
11	2885	training	46	846	higher	75	597	support
12	2862	are	47	838	not	77	582	market
13	2691	learning	48	838	school	78	575	employment
15	2560	adult	49	808	will	79	574	further
20	1792	be	50	798	schools	80	567	qualification
24	1366	vocational	51	769	programme	81	563	years
25	1324	has	52	753	more	82	558	number
26	1316	have	53	745	labour	83	543	can
28	1308	development	54	743	courses	84	519	participation
32	1162	national	55	742	other	85	515	one
34	1029	also	57	701	government	86	512	students
35	1022	programmes	60	683	qualifications	87	501	secondary
36	966	level				88	500	knowledge
37	944	system	62	661	adults	89	500	part
38	936	was	63	661	continuing	91	497	project
39	914	educational	64	655	new	93	494	activities
40	900	people	65	647	work	94	489	general
41	881	social	66	636	quality	95	485	groups
42	879	been	67	634	ministry	98	474	literacy
43	877	skills	68	631	policy	99	474	state
44	865	all	71	620	were	100	471	professional
			73	612	research			

Table 4: Non-EU-Corpus (200384 words)
100 most frequent words, ranked by frequency (revised by removing: articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns)

Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word	Rank	Freq.	Word
6	4540	education	46	411	law	72	306	one
10	2436	is	47	405	secondary	73	306	policy
12	1596	adult	48	398	level	74	306	years
13	1525	are	49	388	will	75	303	were
15	1397	training	50	378	skills	76	297	basic
16	1297	as	51	374	work	77	297	been
19	1083	development	52	370	state	78	295	programmes
22	806	learning	53	369	number	79	293	people
24	782	be	54	368	vocational	80	286	more
25	696	educational	55	366	other	81	285	schools
27	612	have	56	361	employment	82	283	well
29	578	system	57	361	new	83	279	quality
30	576	professional	58	359	macedonia	84	278	market
33	556	not	59	358	ministry	85	274	european
35	529	has	60	341	government	86	273	programme
36	502	national	61	340	higher	87	272	support
37	488	was	62	336	needs	88	270	knowledge
38	487	institutions	63	336	republic	90	262	management
39	464	programs	64	326	activities	91	260	public
41	433	social	66	322	primary	93	256	sector
42	430	adults	68	320	school	95	248	civil
43	429	an	69	313	population	96	248	process
44	416	all	71	307	students	99	243	strategy
						100	242	implementation

Table 5: EU-Corpus (378911 words)
100 most frequent words (revised) ranked by frequency – including Keyness (Chi2)

Rank	Freq.	Word	Keyness	Sign. Level ** p < 0,01 *** p < 0,001	Category	Average Freq.	Average Keyness
6	6914	education	-128,889	***	education	2222	12,252
11	2885	training	7,315	**			
13	2691	learning	205,925	***			
39	914	educational	-53,105	***			
48	838	school	24,773	***			
50	798	schools	32,778	***			
86	512	students	-3,031				
15	2560	adult	-26,682	***	society	1001	6,087
40	900	people	53,056	***			
41	881	social	1,559				
62	661	adults	-11,214	***			
84	519	participation	7,025	**			
95	485	groups	12,778	***			
24	1366	vocational	136,964	***	employment	793	32,624
65	647	work	-1,877				
78	575	employment	-6,544				
77	582	market	1,951				
28	1308	development	-121,076	***	development	760	30,396
52	753	more	22,918	***			
63	661	continuing	183,809	***			
64	655	new	-0,397				
74	607	lifelong	54,691	***			
79	574	further	42,431	***			
32	1162	national	14,386	***	level	725	7,363
36	966	level	17,658	***			
46	846	higher	18,391	***			
87	501	secondary	-40,937	***			
94	489	general	13,512	***			
73	612	research	28,607	***			
88	500	knowledge	-0,076				
35	1022	programmes	86,518	***	institutionalization	704	-0,933

37	944	system	-7,709	**			
45	864	institutions	-1,266				
51	769	programme	32,429	***			
54	743	courses	59,463	***			
66	636	quality	6,795	**			
75	597	support	4,159				
91	497	project	12,966	***			
93	494	activities	-9,669	**			
100	471	professional	-193,018	***			
43	877	skills	11,090	***	qualification	650	67,864
60	683	qualifications	138,307	***			
80	567	qualification	111,934	***			
98	474	literacy	10,125	**			
57	701	government	1,603		state & government	610	-7,434
67	634	ministry	-0,983				
68	631	policy	1,548				
99	474	state	-31,902	***			
12	2862	are	-0,057		uncategorized		
20	1792	be	20,166	***			
25	1324	has	29,905	***			
26	1316	have	6,913	**			
34	1029	also	116,626	***			
38	936	was	0,000				
42	879	been	45,302	***			
44	865	all	2,536				
47	838	not	-17,269	***			
49	808	will	2,442				
55	742	other	1,189				
71	620	were	1,268				
81	563	years	-0,149				
82	558	number	-11,142	***			
83	543	can	10,834	***			
85	515	one	-2,607				
89	500	part	1,524				

Table 6: Non-EU-Corpus (200384 words)
100 most frequent words (revised) ranked by frequency – including Keyness (Chi^2)

Rank	Freq.	Word	Keyness	**Sign. Level** ** p < 0,01 *** p < 0,001	Category	Average Freq.	Average Keyness
6	4540	education	128,889	***	education	1000	-7,337
15	1397	training	7,315	**			
22	806	learning	-205,925	***			
25	696	educational	53,105	***			
68	320	school	-24,773	***			
71	307	students	-3,031				
81	285	schools	-32,778	***			
88	270	knowledge	0,076				
50	378	skills	11,090	***			
12	1596	adult	26,682	***	society	552	42,392
42	430	adults	11,214	***			
41	433	social	1,559				
69	313	population	26,030	***			
79	293	people	-53,056	***			
95	248	civil	241,924	***			
19	1083	development	121,076	***	development	495	41,794
57	361	new	0,397				
96	248	process	68,619	***			
80	286	more	-22,918	***			
29	578	system	-7,709	**	institutionalization	358	47,254
30	576	professional	193,018	***			
38	487	institutions	1,266				
39	464	programs	335,637	***			
83	279	quality	-6,795	**			
64	326	activities	9,669	**			
78	295	programmes	-86,518	***			
86	273	programme	-32,429	***			
87	272	support	4,159				
90	262	management	118,018	***			
99	243	strategy	-3,913				
100	242	implementation	42,648	***			
47	405	secondary	40,937	***	level	327	33,285
48	398	level	-17,658	***			

66	322	primary	204,324	***			
61	340	higher	-18,391	***			
76	297	basic	18,214	***			
93	256	sector	1,408				
85	274	european	4,161				
51	374	work	-1,877		employment	345	34,920
54	368	vocational	136,964	***			
56	361	employment	6,544				
84	278	market	-1,951				
52	370	state	-31,902	***	state & government	343	141,390
59	358	ministry	0,983				
60	341	government	-1,603				
46	411	law	283,948	***			
73	306	policy	-1,548				
63	336	republic	209,828	***			
91	260	public	0,308				
58	359	macedonia	671,109	***			
10	2436	is	39,793	***	uncategorized		
13	1525	are	0,057				
16	1297	as	-1,387				
24	782	be	-20,166	***			
27	612	have	-6,913	**			
33	556	not	17,269	***			
35	529	has	-29,905	***			
37	488	was	0,000				
43	429	an	-48,629	***			
44	416	all	-2,536				
49	388	will	2,442				
53	369	number	11,142	***			
55	366	other	-1,189				
62	336	needs	26,916	***			
72	306	one	2,607				
74	306	years	-0,149				
75	303	were	1,268				
77	297	been	-45,302	***			
82	283	well	-4,481				

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Beyond the Temporal Discipline of Modernity: A Comparative Study on Time in Adult Learning between Germany and China

I. Introduction

Although, time is directly interwoven with our existence and experience, due to its invisibility, flexibility and instantiation, temporal aspects and temporalities are missing issues in adult learning and education. Mostly, time is discussed in didactical arrangements as element, which structures learning and teaching in a chronometrical way (e.g. planning minutes and hours per session, per day, during weeks resp. months, years of schooling or teaching (cf. OECD, 2011ff.) and (holiday) breaks, too). During the 16th and 17th century initial school curricula and schedules were implemented in Germany, and, the *linearity of learning*, growth and development became the idea. In China, traditionally, the ultimate goal of 'learning' for adults was to be *Sage*, an ideal model of humanity (Confucius, 497BC/2000). Learning was not disciplined by specialised frames but pervaded and manifested in everyday life. Plans for curriculum and schooling had not emerged until the western modern educational systems introduced since the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution in 1911 (Chen, 1994). It was the "new education" (Sun, 2009), inspired by progressivism, that launched a movement to disrupt the traditional education.

The myth of homogeny and synchronic learning in a classroom is often critical discussed, but the reality in pedagogical settings and political documents about the continuity of lifelong learning too, is still far away from a temporal sensitivity itself. The corresponding belief in linear progress has often been exaggerated and disappointed. Due to this the so-called biographical model of simultaneity as an order "has fallen away and the linearity of life courses has been brought into question" (Leccardi, 2013, p. 251). The modernity is highly ambivalent in temporal phenomenon, but, linear, future- and progress-orientated discourses still remaining pedagogical theories and practice. With the tendency of globalisation, no matter Germany or China, adult learning and education is implicit disciplined by an industrialised sense of time without enough intellectual critiques.

International comparative Adult Education research as transcultural approach with the idea of "analytical comparison" (Egetenmeyer, 2014, p. 17) for revealing 'social-cultural interrelations' (Schriewer, 1994, in: *ibid*. 2014, p. 16) gives much potential to start with (II.). Time is here the transcultural subject brought first into comparative reflection in contrasting nations (China and Germany). Secondly we compare temporal phenomenon interrelating to Adult and Lifelong Learning by problematizing learning-times as driving forces behind social-cultural structures (cf. Jokila *et al.*, 2015). Our focused temporal phenomena (hours of learning time; [learning-]time boundaries) are analytical working as comparative indices, as pieces of circumstantial evidence and purposes to understand transcultural effects of time in our knowledge-society and accelerative, temporal-disciplined modernity.

In order to go beyond the temporal-disciplinary state of Education and Adult Learning, the ideological, cultural, historical and individual-experiential aspects need to be taken into account (here: by contrasting China and Germany). Due to this approach, the following paper presents a pedagogical, philosophical and sociological foundation about 'time' firstly as temporal-sensitive comparison. Followed by an empirical, descriptive juxtaposition (cf. Egetenmeyer 2014) about time as chronometric factor in Adult Learning (III.). By interpreting these dataset we find temporal-similarities and -differences what could be elaborated and understood only due to the 'grand narratives about time in modernity' (IV.). The idea of going beyond modern temporal discipline can be found in the motivation to cross boundaries in and by (lifelong) learning (V.). Two findings are important: *a*. learning-time reveals an open-space for reflection and maturation in our global, accelerative world (e.g. in balancing past, present and future; by unburdened 'time-oasis'), no matter if you are learning in China or Germany; and *b.* weight falls on learning virtues as contrast to our global modernity (lifelong dedication, concentration, humility), what can be interpreted as new challenge for professionalization.

II. A temporal-sensitive comparison - an interplay between transcultural and analytical comparative adult education research

If radical dynamics in our knowledge society and incremental acceleration in every life-sphere becomes normal, short circuits, just-in-time reactions or on-demand solutions are the new ideal so "instants in succession take the place of temporal profundity" (Leccardi, 2013, p. 255). *Lifelong Learning* is here seismograph, result and emphasised solution. In case where change, transition and transformation are rather themselves become accelerative processes, the continuity of learning to maintain 'economic competitiveness', 'growth', 'development', 'optimisation of human capital' and ultimately 'progress' as the "central signification of societies today" (cf. Moutsios, 2010, p. 121) became the norm (macro-level). Individual learning over the lifespan (micro-level) emerge as part of a successful biography (for critical reflection see Schmidt-Lauff & Bergamini, 2017). Thus the programmatic of lifelong learning proves itself to be an expression of functional time interpretation worldwide (use your time sensible for future development and progress, e.g. by learning). Its concepts with normative pretensions can be critical seen as manifestations and mirror of a general temporalisation in our modernity (e.g. learning as adoption to infinite transformation).

Accordingly to the 'spatial-turn'[1] in comparative educational research and richly diverse reflections on variation of spatial issues, temporal movements in our modern society occurs with an even more striking power, but less reflection

1 In latest theoretical and methodological approaches to comparative education, it has been widely asserted that space has become a special role as a result of globalization, deterritorialisation (Jokila et al., 2015), new (social) technologies, and social resp. subjective constructed ideologies. Related to the "spatial turn" (Lefebvre, 1991), the "main focus of comparative research has changed from comparison of educational systems to comparison of educational reforms and to analysis of problematisations as driving forces behind such reforms" (Jokila et al., 2015, p. 18).

and research. Temporal phenomenon in time-ambivalences (continuity versus contingent, social versus natural etc.) and time-ambiguities (flexible, linear, acceleration, maturation etc.) pushes the lifelong educational system, providers, programs, professional actors and individual learners dramatically. We have to discuss a ‘*temporal turn*’ too.

Selecting time as an important theme for comparative research is not new: “The importance of evolutionary time was emphasized in comparative research at the early stage of the development of comparative education research” (Jokila *et al*., 2015, p. 18). But different from a broad temporal-sensitive comparison, this early stage “focused extensively on historical analysis as a way to understand factors influencing educational systems” (ibid., 2015, p. 18). And even the latest discourses about “comparing times” shows that time (instead of place) have not become a broad, principle concern for comparative analyses. Again historical approaches are discussed; now less continuum orientated and more as moments of transition. The idea of time as an “idea of transitologies” is concerned as a way to compare periods or extensions, which are, as the authors notes, “distinctive but not entirely sequential” (ibid., 2015, p. 18).

This paper is going further and offers joint Chinese and German explanations about time as ideological, socially and individually constructed phenomenon influencing Adult Learning and Education in multiple ways. This article aims to explore the way time is represented, experienced, and shaped for learning throghout the life in two different cultural contexts. Our comparative approach follows *(1) the way of a descriptive juxtaposition:* between one Western and one Eastern country, namely, Germany and China (cf. Reischmann & Bron, 2008; Egetenmeyer, 2014; Field *et al*., 2016). This international comparison includes therefore one transcultural aspect (here: time). To handle the complex aspects of time in Education (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, 2012), the comparison on this stage focuses on two indicators:

a) hours spend for learning (chronometric indicator);

b) time boundaries during adulthood (cultural indicator).

Of course, “such juxtaposition is only the prerequisite for comparison” (Charters & Hilton, 1989, p.3) so that the next stage *(2) attempts to identify temporal similarities and time-differences* in-between the two aspects. To take one finding in advance: In both countries surveyed (OECD, 2011ff.; NBS, 2010, 2015; MOE, 2015), the time obstacles for learning are transcultural described between work, family, inconvenient time offer, lack of (employer) support and unexpected things. So time in relation to adult learning becomes a global similar phenomenon. In a first methodological reflection we might say, that time has evidence as descriptive, comparative category.

The analytical stage of our comparison attempt *(3) to understand why* the temporal differences and time-similarities occur and “what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination and in other countries where the finding of the study may have relevance” (Charters & Hilton, 1989, p.3). To reach this stage of comparison we focus in this paper on some of the multiple analytical dimensions which allows further elaboration and a heuristic, inductive approach of understanding modern times in Adult Learning and Education: the future and progress orientation in policies for Adult and Lifelong Learning; and socio-cultural interrelations to past and present as temporal influences too.

This sequential way of time-comparison can be only a first step into temporal analysis in Adult Learning and Education. As a short *meta-reflection to our approach* presented in this paper (i.e. to 'reflect on comparing itself'; cf. Reischmann & Bron, 2008) we suggest, that there is a clear need for more research into the relationship between time and adult learning, between the motivation and willingness to participate and temporal constraints during adulthood. In addition to that empirical comparison there is also a clear need for heuristic approaches (cf. Egetenmeyer, 2016) to understand not only the *quantity* of temporal aspects in adult learning, but, the *qualities* as phenomenon. With other words: The relation between time and learning is much broader than a historical or chronometric comparison may show and much more complex than a chronological unit of measurement and (didactical) planning implies. We reveal transcultural qualities of learning-times due to learning virtues of dedication, concentration, and humility, etc.

III. Comparing chronometrics in adult education

The OECD survey (2011, 2012) collects data on participation in adult learning. Chinese National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) also supply some relevant indicators. This part as descriptive and analytical juxtaposition reveals comparative findings by interpreting learning-time in Germany and China. This reflects learning-contexts, including contradictory temporal trends on Adult and Lifelong Education, and, temporal implications as comparative widened contributions in the end.

1. Chronometric temporal dimension: hours spend for learning

For adults the OECD study *Education at a Glance* (2012) reports: "a participant in non-formal education[2]receives 76 hours of instruction annually. Four out of five of these hours are job related" (ibid., 2012, p. 411). The time spent attending non-formal education activities, represents an investment in the individual's skill development for both the employer and the individual (ibid., 2011, p. 367). The latest report shows that participants in non-formal education spent an average of 121 hours on non-formal education activities. And, this investment amounts to 54 hours per adult on average (ibid., 2016).

	Men		Women		Women and Men	
	hours per participant	hours per adult	hours per participant	hours per adult	hours per participant	hours per adult
OECD average	74	24	81	26	76	25
China	-	-	-	-	59	25
Germany	78	36	74	30	76	33

Table 1: The mean number of hours per participant and per adult (25-64 years of age) by purpose of non-formal education, by gender and age (2012) in comparison between China and Germany

[2] Non-formal education is defined as "an organised and sustained educational activity that (…) may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to individuals of all age. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes in adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life skills, work skills, and general culture." (OECD, 2011, p. 371).

(Source: OECD, 2012: 412; MOE, 2015; NBS, 2015; own picture)[3]

The comparison of the mean hours shows the differences between China and Germany: whilst Germany mirrors the number of the OECD average hours (per participant and per all adults), the Chinese number is lower than that of Germany. Paradoxically, the difference between "hours per participant" and "hours per adult" in China is smaller than that in Germany (OECD, 2012, p. 505). The interesting issue is that the very low participation rate (only 3%) in China results in not bad time-devotion. The phenomenon could be interpreted as a different understanding of adult education in China: Education is an enterprise which deserves respect seriously, even though it is called "non-formal". In China, thus, the non-formal education usually have strict and framed organisations influenced by the centralised political governance. [4]In this line, the learning hours could be guaranteed, but the average level is still lower than the German performance.

It is a pity that Chinese government didn't have the indicator to measure the difference between genders, which indicates the insufficient considerations on gender issues. At least, for European countries, it might be interesting to have more comparative research about the background why women in some countries spend more hours (e.g. Italy) in other countries spent less hours (e.g. Germany) in non-formal education than men.

For Germany the national Adult Education Survey (Bilger et al. 2013) presents a full chapter and diverse data about *Time for Adult Education* (*Zeit für Weiterbildung*; ibid., 2013, p. 48ff.). 2012 in general 31% of all *learning activities lasts* some days; 24% lasts only some hours and 21 % one day (ibid., 2013, p. 51). Surprising is, that even 13% of all learning activities took a number of months. But, the tendency over the last years shows that these *long lasting learning activities*[5] *are shrinking*.

A differentiation between the segments of learning activities make obvious that vocational trainings take place more often per year - but with less hours of learning time for the individual learner. The participation rate of Adults (age 18 – 64) is: 35% in vocational training; 13% in non-vocational training (ibid., 2013, p. 44). The average numbers of *hours spend on learning* is: 74 hours in vocational training; 108 hours in non-vocational training (ibid., 2013, p. 58). This difference between time spend on vocational training per year (74 hours) and on non-vocational training resp. general learning (cultural, political, health etc.) per year (108 hours) is very important – and only marginal recognized in public debates. *The average gross of annual participating in non-vocational learning is nearly*

3 China is not a member country of OECD, so we could not get the data about China from the OECD surveys. We searched the data in Chinese from the Ministry of Education and the National Bureau of Statistics. We found that "time" in adult education does not receive enough concerns in China. Considering the economic development level, the current main task of adult education for China government is to enlarge the realm and population who participates in. Lots of data about adult education in China is about the *number* of adult learners, institutions, educators, etc.

4 Non-formal education at the adult level in China includes: Postgraduate Courses, Classes run by Non-government HEIs for Students Preparing for Self-directed State-administered Examinations, College-preparatory Classes, In-service Training (For Certificates of Vocational Qualifications and For Certificates of Job-related Qualifications).

5 In Germany such activities are for example 2nd chance for vocational or professional qualification; State Certified Master Craftsmen.

1.5 times higher than the vocational training hours! This is unexpectedly because in general (non-vocational) learning activities the learners themselves have to spend their private (leisure, family, social, recreation etc.) time. Various studies in Germany show that a pronounced willingness for *temporal self-reliant interaction for learning* exists (Schmidt-Lauff, 2008). This should not, however, be equated with "time sovereignty" as part of individualisation, but rather as development towards a "personal time sensitivity" in balancing individual and collective structures and time-boundaries.

2. Time boundaries – temporal constraints for Adult Learning and Education

The *Eurostat Adult Education Survey* revealed since 2007 again and again, that the two main reasons for non-participation in lifelong learning activities were lack of time because of family responsibilities and conflicting training and work schedules (Eurostat 2007). Also CEDEFOP declares, "the main obstacles that prevents adults from participating in lifelong learning: time constraints" (ibid., 2012, p. 7). In the OECD study *Education at a Glance* 2014 the lack of time resp. temporal barriers to participation in adult learning activities are described between work, family, inconvenient time offer, lack of support and unexpected things (italic S-L; OECD, 2014, p. 395). On average "30% of the respondents cited the reason, I was *too busy at work.*" (OECD, 2014, p. 359).

In China, the similar situation could be found. Most of adults thought it is tough for them to balance work and family issues, due to their limited time. In Europe, even more than 35% of the respondents cited this. A further 15% of the respondents over all cited the reason, "I *did not have time because of childcare or family* responsibilities". Thus, for 45% of the respondents, the burden of work or family seems to leave no time for (more) learning activities. Factors related to how the learning activities were organised also prevented people from taking up learning activities: ‚The course or programme was offered at an *inconvenient time* or place' (12%)" (ibid., 2014, p. 359).

In China, with the development of internet and informational technology, adult learners prefer attending to the online courses, like MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). This new platform, designed with task-centred games for example, makes learning attractive. Besides, it is more convenient for adults to learn everything in everywhere at any time (even, non-temporal boundaries are one of the great myths of virtual learning scenarios; see: Schmidt-Lauff 2004). In addition, some companies signed contracts with adult education sectors, which leads to a kind of compulsory systems for adults to involve into these adult education programmes.

IV. The grand narratives about time in modernity – an analysis of ideological and transcultural temporalities

Following with the comparison, a cross-cultural interpretation is necessary to outline the grand landscapes of modern time. In the western world, time is often defined or explained by the dualistic binary of "social" versus "natural" time, of "world" versus "subjective" time. Since the Enlightenment philosophy, time is regarded as an essential principle of all human being and action. On the one hand, time is idealistic seen as a necessary representation, lying at the foundation of all our intuitions (e.g. Kant's metaphysic[6] more than 200 years ago). As an *a priori* "element of consciousness beyond historical experience itself – it has no external reality but is an inevitably part of the way in which we come to know the world" (Colley, 2007, p. 431). On the other hand, time insists, beyond its natural observable cycles with correspondence to clocks and calendars, on the sequential nature of time as past, present, future, appears united in our minds through the interplay of memory and anticipation within changing present experiences (Husserl, 1893-1917/1985). This dualism of time in our modernity evolves ambivalent views between time as a 'natural fact', countable, measurable and therefore steerable, and, a social unit or individual fact, cultured in a 'common sense' as a cultural formation.

Contrast to the linear sense of time, Chinese philosophy views 'time' as a cyclical movement which repeats itself and infinitum. China, same as most Eastern Asian countries, traditionally relies on agriculture as its main economy. The growth cycle of crop decides the very period of (wo-)man's living rhythm. From this point of view, like Lunar Calendar (农历) and Solar Terms (节气) were created to anticipate the changes of temperature and rainfall for crop growth in a whole year (Li, 2011). Time thus is not discrete from Chinese people's life, but represented in a live way (by animals and plants) and embedded in the neo-formation of the all. The traditional Chinese temporal-sensitivity was very flexible, ambiguous, but always subjective-connected (ibid., 2011). Since the 'eastward dissemination of western learning' in the 19th century (e.g. in 1897, Chinese scholar Fu Yan translated Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*), however, Chinese people progressively formed a "modern sensitivity" (ibid., 2011) on time which is abstract, linear and totalism. Even further, the culture transformation fermented the transition of economic structure. In the past half century, the ratio of three economic sectors in China's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) has a huge transformation. In 1952, the primary (e.g. agriculture, farming), secondary (e.g. industry, manufacturing) and tertiary (e.g. services) economic sectors contributed to GDP as 50.95%, 20.88% and 28.16% respectively (NBS, 2015). However, in 2015, their contributions to GDP were 9%, 40.5% and 50.5% respectively (ibid., 2015). It shows that Chinese society has been globalising and industrialising with transiting its traditional economic structure. In other words, it is deeply westernised with its progress-oriented ambition (Osnos, 2014). Nowadays, China is more or less sharing the homogenous narratives about time with the western world.

Accordingly the modern temporal-sensitivity in Europe – and, until today nearly global - has been widely disciplined by the industrialised techniques and its consequences in modern societies. Societal structure and institutional schedules are controlling individuals' living rhythm. The understanding of time doesn't depend on natural rhythms any more but on a mainly linear conception and future orientated management (cf. Leccardi, 2013). What can be observed in modernity is that the marginalised present hinds behind the hegemony of future. Future tends to become the new core of human activity fired by the ideal to steer and manage contingent phenomenon. "The modern idea of the future we are accustomed to refer to – a dimension separate from the present and distinct from the past,

6 Cf. Kant KrV B 52, in: Lüders, M. (1995). Zeit, Subjektivität und Bildung. Weinheim: Deutscher Studienverlag.

controllable and able to be planned" (Leccardi, 2013, p. 254).

On the other side we all recognize 'relative', complex and highly ambivalent modalities of time as a relational concept that depends on a frame of references for its situational and personal experience. In terms of adult learners, temporal life-structure has eroded ("biography"), lifelong learning process has diffused while still be organised by time-regulations and the political idea of lifelong learning in continuity (Bélanger & Federighi, 2000). In fact, "the future looked like a temporal horizon that could be influenced subjectively" (Leccardi, 2013, p. 255) where learning throughout the lifespan is a bridge to handle the gap between "what can happen and what one can do" (ibid, 2013).

The - highly problematic - idea of a dirigible, controllable future is still working in teaching and learning programs. And, the practice is aroused by European policies and their ideas of progress, learning outcomes, and evidence based policy. "Progress remains the central signification of societies today … and, therefore, the main source of power" (Moutsios, 2010, p. 121). European policies and strategies in Adult Learning and Education promotes a largely common set of widespread consensus of progress: "that they should be focusing 'on competitiveness, growth and productivity and strengthening social cohesion' and that they should give 'strong emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimization of human capital'" (ibid., 2010, p.121). Similarly, China government cheers a "national dream" which encourages entrepreneurship and innovation leading to a future-oriented policy for adult education (Wei et al., 2017).

The latest European documents show a shift from education as public or state related target to the individual responsibility for (lifelong) learning – mainly driven by an economical interest of employability or being employable. Each person is now responsible in a self-organised and self-directed way to learn and gain the required skills and competencies (the "autonomous learner is central" as the Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011) states). As the representative remark of modernity said: "Time is money!" (by Benjamin Franklin), learning activities are very much disciplined at all by the modern sensitivity of a 'good' (productive) use of time, while humanistic meanings of learning as a way to *Bildung* are shrinking.

In terms of adult learning and education, although the lifelong learning process is not controlled by the fixed space (e.g. classrooms, schools), the modern time is still a kind of constrain for adults to access learning itself and balance the temporal dimensions of past, present, future. Even virtual or online-learning and digital access cannot solve this challenge.

Under the era of globalisation, Germany and China are encountering the similar issues on adult learning and education, but they have different interpretation and understandings on it. Time-sensitivity might be seen as an important task for transcultural professional adult learning figurations. The balance between the right of an individual to determine its present and future (in respective of his or her own biography), within the social claim to further higher development, to "economic growth[7]" and "social cohesion" (EU Council conclusion, 2012, p. 6) is not easy to fulfill. Modernity itself can be characterized

[7] Especially the economical perspective is stressed: "Competence and skills levels (...) need to be continuously and thoroughly adapted to the changing needs oft he economy and the labour market" (ibid., 2012, p. 6).

among hegemony of (an accelerative) *future*, shrinking of *present* and loss of *past*. De Haan establishes temporal points of reference for lifelong learning in the context of an awareness of an open future within the limitations of biological and cultural evolution (de Haan, 1996). He states "intertwining of the present and future" (ibid., 1996, p. 160), the problems related to careful consideration for the moment and the present, as well as continuity and responsibility for the future come to bear in the metaphor of "lifelong".

In China, the opinions on reforming adult education are served for the macro social and economic development in China. The upper level policy called "*Invigorating the Country through Science, Technology and Education*" since the start of the 21st century (Wei, *et al.*, 2017). The aim of "realizing the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation and the Chinese dream" is especially emphasized (ibid., 2017) as a future-oriented initiative, which activates higher ambition to learning between the past, present and future.

Moreover, the possible motivation for adult learners to cross the boundaries implies a moral dimension in China. The weight falls on the learning virtues of self-exertion, lifelong dedication, diligence, endurance of hardship, steadfast perseverance, concentration, and humility (Li & Wei, 2016). Learning activities for Chinese adults, to some extent, are not only for acquiring knowledge, but also for manifesting the fundamental goal of moral/social self-perfection as promoted by Confucianism, which is still a vital cultural-psychological ground for Chinese societies. For the process, a set of learning virtues are essential to foster in adults from a lifelong way instead of temporal actions.

Adult learning, both in China and Germany, is the expression and driver of modernisation processes, whose biography-related initiation occurs in a balancing of past, present and future. Individual learning is always experienced orientation (past), in respect to situational contexts and patterns of interpretation (present), as well as further development in (future) aspirations (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, 2016). Discourses about life-courses and transitions treats time as a "triadic phenomenon: opening up the present to split the past from the future and, doing so, allowing for ever-new becomings" (Colley, 2007, p. 431). In the end, Adult Learning and Education as a lifelong process will be concluded to find a path to break the time-boundaries in past-present-future (Schmidt-Lauff & Bergamini, 2017), go beyond the modernity and go back to cultural and subjective learning experiences. (Adult) *Learning* becomes then a nearness to the humanistic concept of *Bildung*. Bildung runs counter to an exaggerated belief in the future (meaning linear progress), and it runs counter to purely utilitarian principles. Bildung accepts the contingency of modernity as an open space of opportunity. It creates processes of latencies, conceived as practices of development (versus instrumental learning) for learning's sake. The idea of *Bildung*, here, manifests its power by linking to Confucian ideal image of *Sage* and the ultimate significance of learning for human life cross-culturally.

V. Conclusions and further discussions

Under the discourse of modernity, time is too abstract to show the flourished present and the glorious past. Our temporal-sensitivity is disciplined by schedules, boundaries, or rules in the "shrinking world" (Kirsch, 1995). According to Jessop (2001), space is collapsing and time is speeding up in absolute terms, under globalisation time is becoming relatively more critical than space. We tried to show that the idea of adult learning as a lifelong process itself is a power to cross the boundaries between the past, present and future.

This article, from a comparative perspective, proved that both Germany and China have been drawn into the stream of modernity, which has alienated and subjected our understanding of learning. Thus, it is important for us to go beyond the temporal-disciplinary of modernity, and revisit the experience and subjectivity of our own. The learning activity is not a linear progress but a multiple and diverse construction between structure and agency. Adult learning and education is ought to be transformative endeavours by which the potentiality and capability of individuals and collectives could be flourished.

Last but not least, the meta-reflexivity of authoring this article reveals a methodological view. Comparison comes from the interpretation of diverse social realities, and is also driven by the (re-)conceptualising process. In this article, "time" is viewed as a social construction to probe the cultural and societal differences (Elias, 2000) between Germany and China. Choosing a powerful conceptualisation, thus, is a possible agenda for future theoretical constructions and comparative research.

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Silke Schreiber-Barsch & Christian Bernhard

Tertium comparationis under scrutiny: Spatial entities as a starting point *and* product of comparative research

1. Introduction: comparing places–comparing regions

Comparing places represents one of the most traditional threads of comparative inquiry (for a summary see, for example, Manzon, 2007). However, international and comparative (adult) education research has so far rather focused on comparing places in the sense of territorial entities. In contrast, this paper draws on works following theoretical approaches of socio-spatiality, in particular, Benno Werlen's (1993; 2013) contribution to action-centered geography. We shall argue that this not only tackles the fundamental procedure of comparison, namely the issue of a *tertium comparationis,* but also broadens the theoretical considerations on comparing spatial entities. The *tertium comparationis,* following well-known strands of comparative research, represents the so-called third part of comparison and it establishes the generic link between different objects of research (Bereday, 1964; Hilker, 1962; Hörner, 1996; Waterkamp, 2006; Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007). Such units of comparison can be made across education policies, systems or also physical places; the latter serve as the point of departure for the paper. Thus, linking the aim of comparing places with the theoretical underpinnings of social spatiality, the question is raised in what way the procedure of comparing territorial places not only makes characteristics and individual perceptions of previously defined spatial entities visible, but also, at the very same moment, allows insight into an ongoing *(re)production* of spatial entities by the various parties involved—as yet another outcome of comparative research activities. Hence, researchers themselves represent one of those parties involved. In this paper, we aim to reflect on their role and their share in the overall process of (re)producing spatial entities.

Referencing the works on social spatiality, the paper aims to support arguments for the socially constructed quality of border lines, of inter-national demarcations or supranational classifications such as the UNESCO world regions, spatially uniting Europe and North America in its systematic (UNESCO, 2016). As Anderson (1991) has prominently brought to the fore, the emergence of modern nation states has not followed quasi-natural logics, but represents *imagined political communities* (Anderson), divided by more or less randomly-drawn inter-national border demarcations. Aggravated by the far-reaching dynamics of globalism, comparisons of and between today's global societies might need to refer not only to inter-national features of comparison, but also to pay attention to transnational as well as sub-national contexts in order to shed additional light on cross-border issues (Nuissl, 2003; Pries, 2008). For example, in Germany, the sixteen federal states are granted substantial power and autonomy in issues of education and lifelong learning (Nuissl & Pehl, 2004). This autonomy is regularly used in launching quite differing variations of national governance regulations, requirements and social state policies. Acknowledging this, cross-border regions might offer a more conclusive framework for comparison in various terms, e.g. with regard to living standards or economic, topographical conditions, than a, necessarily, more generalizing inter-national level (see e.g.

AEWB, 2016).

The paper starts out with insights into empirical research on adult education providers in two cross-border regions (Bernhard, 2017) in order to exemplarily show the reception and production of regional entities by professionals of adult education providers qua ‘doing’ adult education. This sets the scene for introducing the approach by the German-Swiss human geographer, Benno Werlen, and his theoretical framework of action-centered geography (Werlen, 2013). Against this backdrop, the paper aims to demonstrate the added value of this approach for comparing cross-border regions. Finally, in summarizing and problematizing the issues under scrutiny, we will offer some conclusions on their potential benefit for international and comparative adult education research; thus, following Novóa and Yariv-mashal’s (2007) claim for the necessity to adopt ‘*new zones of looking that are inscribed in a space delimited by frontiers of meaning, and not only by physical boundaries*’ (ibid., pp. 367-368).

2. Setting the scene: Insights into empirical research on cross-border regions

Bringing primarily the findings of empirical research into the limelight aims to inductively set the scene for elaborating on the concept of region and its socio-spatial dimensions from an organizational point of view. The findings refer to the area of program planning as part of the overall management of adult education providers in two cross-border regions at the peripheries of Germany’s territory. The research question aimed to investigate, firstly, how the category of a ‘region’ appears in the professionals’ program planning and management perspective, and, secondly, which are implicit or explicit references of these professionals to the concept of ‘region’ in their daily practices. The empirical study (Bernhard, 2017), implemented in 2013 and 2014, adopted a qualitative research design using semi-guided expert interviews with ten heads of adult education providers in two German cross-border regions. The data were analyzed using selective coding following Grounded Theory methodology in its application by Kelle and Kluge (2010) (referring to Strauss & Corbin, 1996).

The object of investigation was a contrastive sample of two cross-border regions: First of all, the Grand Region SaarLorLux was chosen as one of the very early Euroregions, having emerged in the early 1980s. Today, this cross-border region unites the whole of Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland (Germany), the whole of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, parts of Lorraine (France), and the French-speaking part of Belgium. Having its roots in the upheavals of the economic coal crisis of the 1980s, it represents today a wide range of cross-border cooperation, and, ultimately, 20% of the European Union’s labor-based, cross-border commuter traffic. Despite all of this, the everyday practices and the overall landscape of education and learning are still very much a national matter of fact. Secondly, the Euroregion Neiße-Nysa-Nisa (ERN) was chosen: a Euroregion including parts of Poland, Czech Republic and Germany. In contrast, the ERN represents a somewhat ‘young’ region, portraying an emerging neighborhood in the aftermath of the Iron Curtain. Unlike in the Grand Region, regional policy strategies emphasize the education agenda, resulting in a cross-border network in educational affairs.

In order to gain insight into the findings of the study, we will exemplarily present crucial extracts from the interviews conducted. In one of the first interviews, an interviewee refers very much to her/his activities concerning anticipated cross-border commuter traffic. The interviewee is the manager of a German adult education center, located close to the French and Luxemburgish border.

> Luxemburg, I would have talked about that anyways. We have parts of our catchment area there. We notice that a lot and being close to the border shapes our program. That means, now, as well in regular evening courses, we do provide support for the development of Luxemburgish language skills etc., so that people from over here can quite simply integrate into the Luxemburgish labor market, as much as we have courses that aim at getting started in a new job in Luxemburg. And we have also from the Luxemburgish catchment area people coming, who for example take German language classes. Or a very remarkable thing is health education [….] Health education does nearly not exist in Luxemburg, which means, if you offer courses of that kind, you will have good feedback from the Luxemburgish community and people are ready to take a little longer ride for taking those courses. (Interview 1)

The interviewee emphasizes a very strong impact of the fact of being located close to the Luxemburgish border. More precisely, s/he elucidates the impact as having effects on the course program of the adult education center, including influences on the program itself, on its preparation, and, thus, on the professional everyday routines and practices. Remarkably, in describing this impact, the German term '*prägen'* is used, meaning '*coining'*. In German, this term is closely linked to the behaviorist-inspired theory of Konrad Lorenz (1903-1989), a well-known Austrian zoologist and behavioral scientist. Following Lorenz's theoretical line of thought, once someone is coined, s/he will not be able to get rid of a certain behavior. Therefore, using the term 'coining' within the professional context of an adult education center, tends to highlight not a singular or, even, random action, but instead, supporting Reckwitz's (2004) point of view, a highly institutionalized, regularly repeated social practice.

Following this argument, we can identify two separate social practices within the organization, described by the interviewee. Each of the social practices reveals different conceptions of a relevant region. (1) First, there is the description of the regular evening courses that are aimed at people from the German side of the border, called '*people from here*'. Dragging (implicitly) this spatial line, the interviewee constitutes a border between, on the one hand, the domestic target groups and, on the other hand, people from Luxemburg, whom are declared as a somewhat special target group. In talking about these *'regular evening courses*' aimed at *'people from here*', the interviewee portrays Luxemburg not as a neighboring country or a cultural place to be explored, but, throughout the whole interview, in the sense of a relevant cross-border labor market. Such a clear and well differentiated relationship, however, cannot be reproduced with regard to the organization's second neighboring country, France. In this case, the adult education organization indeed provides French language classes, but without referring to the geographical situation (being close to the border), yet, again referring to labor market mechanisms. In conclusion, in portraying the matter of regular evening courses, the interviewee reproduces his/her individual idea of 'the region'. Within this, Luxemburg is given relevance due to its labor market, whereas any relevance is awarded to France from the region's perspective. In addition, an idea of adult learning is institutionalized by the interviewee: in this sense, cross-border adult learning activities are limited to the agenda of employability.

Against this backdrop, (2) secondly, the interview reveals another social practice by means of a different part of the organization’s program, defining that part as being beyond those *’regular evening courses*’. In this non-regular part of the course program, adults from Luxemburg indeed participate in classes, such as German language classes or, mainly, health education. By establishing this regular/non-regular divide, the interviewee articulates the idea of a quite clear regional positioning: people from here, and, people from there (Luxemburg); the latter forming a separate target group, a niche with the benefit of generating additional financial resources. Aiming to take advantage of this potential financial benefit, the adult education organization even advertises in Luxemburgish newspapers, thus, establishing a social practice of non-regularity in the case of German language classes and offers in health education.

In short, the findings point to three concepts of a ‘region’:

2.1. Region as an area of mandate

The organization’s target group of adult learners is established by the status of being inhabitant of the respective territory. The organization has a public mandate at its command and, furthermore, a legally consolidated duty to provide adult education courses for the population living on the German side of the border. Accordingly, the organization keeps to its mission by preparing its program with regard to the needs and wants of the population on the German side of the border. This mission is reproduced via its territorial grounding in the responsibilities of the local and regional authorities, not least rooted in education legislation of the federal state. Thus, the organization first and foremost reproduces a territory.

2.2. Region as an individual, qualitative interpretation

The territorial proximity to Luxemburg is perceived as relevant for the professional’s own activities and responsibilities. Describing Luxemburg mainly in the sense of a labor market, the idea of a region is given a qualitative connotation, which is grounded in assessments of needs and non-needs, in specific constructs of relevance and visions and, rather implicitly, in educationally-wise objectives as well. Other existing territorial parts of the region are not recognized as relevant, or, rather: in the perception of the interviewee, these are not part of the region. Therefore, one might argue that the interviewee subjectively constitutes an idea of the region, which is being reproduced in the organization’s course program.

2.3. Region as a catchment area or market

In this case, territorial proximity as well as distance are identified as being relevant in a sense of a market, a possible catchment area for the organization, bearing the potential of a market niche. This promises financial gain without much effort for the organization, because many people in Luxemburg speak German and, thus, can easily become participants without further (linguistic) assistance. This market mechanism relies on physical proximity, whereas long distances would necessitate additional time and financial resources, to be invested by participants. Hence, seen from a market-based view, long distances are to be considered as costs.

Finally, as a concluding remark and in contrast to the priorities on networking or cooperation in the current (policy) discourse (see section 3), the interviewee did not refer to these aspects as crucial topics in carrying out the organization's work in the region.

3. Shifting from territory and places to a concept of social spaces

The so-called *spatial turn* (Soja, 1989) in social science and humanities has brought the phenomena of space and place into the foreground since the beginnings of the 1990s. However, Crang and Thrift (2000) correctly remark that '*different disciplines do space differently'*, referring to the by-now diverse field of theories and approaches. Kessl and Reutlinger (2010) have enriched the educational discourse by adopting Martina Löws (2001; 2008) work and her concept of space, which served as a catalyst for analyses on adult education and learning through a spatial lens (see for the German discourse e.g. Stang et al., 2016, Bernhard et al., 2015). In following Giddens' (1988) conceptual underpinnings, all three authors aim to understand space as a *duality* of structural order/ing and action and they argue for a relational understanding of space, defining space as a '*relational ordering of social goods and living beings at places'* (Löw, 2001). In consequence, space is not a given, stable, and physical 'container', but a dynamic interplay of individual action, social structures and materiality.

A dynamic understanding of social spaces serves as framework for our paper as it enables analysis of the interrelatedness of social goods and human beings in specific places; thus, space is understood as more than place or territory (Löw, 2001; Werlen, 1993). It illuminates the powerful interdependency of material, social, and symbolic dimensions of space and supports the opening up of an action-perspective on learner-centered research (Faulstich and Faulstich, 2012), on adult education organizations (Bernhard, 2014; Schreiber-Barsch, 2017; Franz, 2016) or also on polity fields of research in adult education academia. In contrast, keeping the German context, national and European policies on lifelong learning have indeed aimed to foster the idea of locally embedded lifelong learning networks via the federal government's funding schemes like the so-called Learning Regions (BMBF, 2000; Schreiber-Barsch, 2007) or its successor, the Learning Locally initiative (BMBF, 2008). However, these concepts remained embedded in organizationally-driven understandings of networks (Emminghaus & Tippelt, 2009), but offered only few explicit linkage to socio-spatial approaches.

Recently, we can observe a growing interest in academia in taking social space theory into account for elaborating on conceptual underpinnings with the aim to enrich community education by regional or local categories (Schönig, 2008; Deinet, 2013; Bernhard, 2017). This broadens the horizon of the current saliency of policy-based strategies with regard to regional or local contexts and their networks, tending to leave out of consideration the individual learner's point of view or the perspective of adult education professionals in these regional entities. With regard to the topic under scrutiny, we shall link a dynamic concept of social space. This shifts the point from elaborating on the territory where an adult education provider is being active, on how this is producing social space and how pedagogical activities refer to space. In, furthermore, focusing on cross-border regions, this conceptual lens brings a more differentiated understanding to the fore. In such regions, one can observe that adult education professionals, as well as their respective organizations, might refer to very different spatial entities, yet without transcending their official mandate: Providing adult education oscillates between a national or a federal government's policy area, on the one hand, and requirements for strengthening cross-border activities on behalf of European, local or regional policy requirements, on the other hand. Accordingly, professionals might need to tackle partly contradictory demands (see also e.g. AEWB, 2016). Similar processes can take place in subject learners' life worlds: Anticipating peoples' cross-border commuter traffic between their workplace, places to spend free time and their places of living, adult education providers might need to broaden their local mandate.

4. Theorizing regions by using Benno Werlen's approach of action-centered geography

Following Kelle's and Kluge's reception of Strauss and Corbin (1996), the action-centered geography by Werlen (1993) serves in the aforementioned empirical study as a heuristic in creating a Grounded Theory. Unlike the approach by Löw (see section 3), Werlen shifts the emphasis to the category of action, away from its priority on space. In reference to Giddens' work (1988), Werlen's definition of action and social practices serves as the point of departure for a comprehensive socio-spatial theory. Action and social practices represent a complex interplay of three dimensions (2013): 1. subjective life world (knowledge, interpretations of reality and subjective theories about the world), 2. given social structures and conditions of action in the surrounding world (values, norms, 'the way we do things over here'), 3. spatial-material context (in the sense of physical space). All these three dimensions need to be taken into consideration, when analyzing an action or a social practice. Hence, Werlen declares space as only an attribute, yet a medium of action, talking no longer about social space, but about the spatiality of (pedagogical) action. He argues that material-physical context itself does not play a role in action, but it is the subject's interpretation of this physical context that is of relevance. Research, then, does not focus on space, but on subjective perception and the underlying interpretation of a spatial context that is produced and reproduced within action. Critics might point to the underlying theoretical assumption of a rather high degree of an independency of individual actions (see e.g. Freytag, Jahnke & Kramer, 2014, p. 11); however, in keeping this in mind, this paper seeks to explore the benefits of Werlen's approach for enriching current research.

The interview extracts provided above, aim to serve as an example of how research, against the presented theoretical background, might shed additional light on the issue of pedagogical action. As shown, the interviewee produces space—by referring to Luxemburg in a well-differentiated manner, based on individual knowledge (subjective life world), on his/her perception of the social framework conditions (such as the high percentage of cross-border commuter traffic in the region and the legal framework), and, on being situated in a specific physical place (close to the Luxemburgish border). His/her idea of benefitting from providing learning offers in the Luxemburgish market reveals similar processes: The interviewee is aware of this potential market niche as well as of the market's territorial proximity; equally, s/he needs to increase financial resources. Due to this, s/he starts advertising activities in Luxemburg, portraying quite strongly (throughout the interview) a vision of education and learning as a somewhat commodity to be sold. Thus, all these activities are deeply embedded in spatial assumptions and criteria.

This can further be illustrated by *comparing* regional conceptions *between* territorial regions in the landscape of adult education:

> But as I mentioned already, for me personally, chances – even if I do feel like being all alone with this thought – chances predominate for development and for the people in this cross-border region, And – to put it that way - it is our unique selling proposition to say, we are in a region where four peoples – Poles, Germans, Czechs and Sorbians […], but these are assets that this region NEEDS (very forceful) to exploit. For it will still have a chance. (Interview 9)

This extract illustrates that the interviewee, in this case from the Neiße Region, argues quite differently from the aforementioned interviewee. S/he does not talk about region as a market or as the place where the target group is living, but constitutes the region as a collective unity (the region has a chance, the region needs to exploit). All this is happening against the backdrop of a certain 'development' logic, identified as being significant for this region in the sense of a '*unique selling proposition*'. The latter term originates from marketing theory. In transferring this marketing logic to the conception of the region, means that not the adult education organization itself represents the market, but the region as such. Thus, the region needs to exploit its assets in order to successfully compete with other regions. In consequence, in this case, adult education is perceived by the interviewee not as a somewhat commodity to be sold, but as a qualification that adult learners have to acquire for the benefit of regional development. Finally, indicating that s/he feels '*all alone with this thought'* emphasizes that this adult education provider cannot rely on market mechanisms; the social framework of their activities indicates to be completely different than the one in the first example. The present provider is strongly supported by stakeholders of the regional polity level. Ultimately, adult learning is reproduced as a means of policy strategy.

By means of these examples, we shall argue that concepts of social spatiality and, in particular, the action-centered geography approach by Werlen offer an enriching perspective and a promising theoretical architecture to shed light on the question, why and how adult learning professionals do what they do in their regional context and their local area of activity—exemplifying the spatiality of (pedagogical) action. Furthermore, it allows the identification of explicit and implicit assumptions about what adult education is seen as aiming for from a professional's point of view and with regard to spatial issues, be the latter on a local, regional, national or even global scale.

5. Summarizing and problematizing: final remarks

This paper has examined how far and in what ways the aim of comparing places can be linked with the theoretical underpinnings of social spatiality, and, in this manner, has tried to challenge fundamental conceptions of comparing as a solely territorially-bound and, in this sense, a one-way exercise: Researchers as well as the objects of investigation contribute to this process and to the outcome of comparing by actively (re)producing the spatial entities under scrutiny. Thus, territorial entities might serve as a starting point for research or a geographically-wise denomination of the object taken into account, however, the provision of adult education in a cross-border region is not only primarily identified as *tertium comparationis*, but constantly and in diverse ways (re)produced by the parties involved. However, whereas the firmness and clarity of territorial entities might be doubted, this does not revoke the power of the nation's idea as such: just like adult education as part of today's global societies might be in a way globalized or Europeanized, it continues to be highly embedded in and dependent on a territorial national context. Acknowledging the impact as well as the necessity of (national) contextualization, represents one of the vital legacies of developing research in and practices of international and comparative (adult) education across its historical trajectories (see e.g. Schreiber-Barsch, 2010), and throughout its procedures of mediating meanings and terminologies (see Arthur, 2008). Furthermore, this strengthens the scope of functions for international and comparative adult education insofar as a wide range of theoretical frameworks are needed, and, yet, to be developed and adapted according to the significant features of *adult* education, supporting Egetenmeyer's (2014) or Milana's (2015) point of view. We shall argue that a range of theoretical frameworks is needed to provide analytical lenses to differentiate between the diverse legal, cultural, pedagogical, social, economic and however named roots, interdependencies and linkages that are significant and explanatory for 'doing' adult education. Taking this perspective, pedagogical action and practices become the *tertium comparationis*.

Consequently, international and comparative adult education and, in particular, its researchers will need to reflect on their respective social constructions, professional perceptions and terminological denominations of space(s) and territory/ies. Fundamentally, by choosing a specific territory, research itself constitutes territory. Just like the empirical research presented above, this research activity reproduced, and, in this sense, strengthened the territorial construct of the Grand Region and the Euroregion Neiße-Nysa-Nisa—regions, which are, as well as nations, more or less randomly drawn territories. By means of describing, evaluating, emphasizing specific contexts and frameworks of regions, nations and/or cities, research itself contributes to the respective social-space narrative. This points to the challenge, as a researcher, to be aware of and reflect on whose kind of narrative is adopted in researcher's own social practice and spatiality.

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The determinants of employer-sponsored continuing education and training in EU countries

Abstract

The quality of human capital is a key competitive asset for firms to prosper in a globalised economy and provide high-quality jobs to their employees. Continuing education and training are therefore crucial for tuning, maintaining and developing employees' skills and capabilities, especially in a fast-changing world. Given the substantial direct and indirect costs of training, employers are expected to focus training provision on employees affected by skill deficits and organisation members with the strongest potential in terms of skills development. To answer the question on employers' capability to target the employees who would most benefit from training this paper investigates whether a measure of person-job fit and a measure of employee potential are significant determinants of participation in employer-sponsored training undertaken for job-related reasons. The empirical analysis involves EU countries and is based on CEDEFOP EU Skills Survey.

Keywords: Employer-sponsored training, Continuing education and training, Person-job fit, Employee potential ; **JEL Codes**: M53, J24

1. Introduction

Recent decades have been characterised by a growing emphasis on human capital as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. If capital-intensive technologies improve productivity and speed up products and services innovation it is human skills and competences that enable the full exploitation of new technological and market opportunities and support continuous improvement and change. Along with new interest in human resource development (Merriam and Leahy, 2005), the renovated centrality of human capital has brought in also growing claims of mismatch between required and provided skills that often result in blaming the poor quality of formal education systems. However, the lack of systematic evidence connecting skill mismatch to the educational achievements of a workforce that on average spent a longer time in the labour market than in school suggests that continuing education and training are at least as important as formal education in smoothing skill mismatches and skill shortages (Cappelli, 2015).

Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers have developed multiple definitions of education and training initiatives undertaken by adult individuals. This paper adopts the definition proposed by the European Commission (2015, p.151), which identifies continuing education and training (CET) as 'education or training after initial education and training or after entry into working life, aimed at helping individuals to: improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; continue their personal or professional development'. The EC definition outlines the two main objectives of continuing education and training. First, providing underskilled or wrongly skilled

> CET = continuing education and training

individuals with the abilities and the competences required to perform successfully in their present or prospective job. Second, developing individual talent to meet changes in organisational requirements and to support personal progression along inter-organisation individual career paths.

There is large agreement on the positive impact of CET on skills (Merriam and Leahy, 2005; Carneiro *et al.*, 2010). Some authors provide direct tests of a positive relationship between CET and employees' skills and performance (see, *e.g.*, Green *et al.*, 2001; Felstead *et al.*, 2010). A larger set of studies provide indirect evidence. Tests of the positive and significant relationship between training and wages (Brunello, 2001) support of the effectiveness of training programs predicted by the theory of human capital. Training improves individual productivity (Colombo and Stanca, 2014) and firm performance (Aragón-Sánchez *et al.*, 2003), which employers acknowledge by means of an increase in employee's reward. The positive relationship between training and wages thus offers indirect evidence that CET improves the fit between employees and jobs. In addition, the positive impact of CET on the odds of remaining in the labour market in difficult times and on the probability of re-employment after job displacement (Ok and Tergeist, 2003) supports the role of training as a source of new skills and competences.

Nevertheless, some authors point out that training efforts do not always result in the expected learning outcomes (Merriam and Leahy, 2005). Sels (2002) reports poor correlation between the size of the training effort in financial terms and the quality of training programmes, whereas Felstead *et al.* (2010) stress that CET outcomes in terms of skills significantly depend on work organisation practices. The non-negligible monetary and non-monetary costs involved suggest that the effectiveness of CET initiatives may benefit from focusing training provision on employees affected by skill deficits and organisation members with the strongest potential in terms of skills development. However, clear evidence on the alignment between CET targets and selection criteria to participate in CET is still lacking.

This paper tackles the above issue by disentangling the impact of person-job fit and employee potential on participation in CET. The proposed empirical analysis tests whether synthetic measures of person-job fit and employee potential are significantly associated with the probability of receiving training. In line with other papers (Cabrales *et al.*, 2014; Bassanini *et al.*, 2007) this study includes only employer-sponsored training activities undertaken for job-related reasons. Focus on employer-sponsored training, *i.e.* on training initiatives that firms regard worthy to invest in, is expected to reflect the employer's commitment to either close possible gaps between job demands and employee abilities or develop employees' potential. At the same time the exclusion of non-job related CET centres the analysis on those training efforts most probably aimed at solving present and future skill needs actually experienced in the workplace.

The renovated interest in assessing the match between required and provided skills is supported by a growing availability of reliable and detailed datasets that answer the need for diversified measures of skill mismatch and human capital (Desjardins and Rubenson, 2011).

The proposed empirical analysis takes advantage of the European Skills and Jobs (ESJ) survey

ESJ = European Skills and Jobs survey developed by CEDEFOP developed by CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, in 2014. The survey provides a wide range of measures concerning current and past work experience, education, training, and personal background of stratified national samples of individuals in employment aged 24-65 and living in one of the 28 EU countries.

The paper includes four additional sections. The next section characterises the core constructs of this study, namely person-job fit and employee potential, as the explicit targets of CET and outlines the research hypotheses. Section 3 presents ESJ data and the empirical strategy adopted in the paper, whereas section 4 illustrates the outcomes of the empirical analyses. Section 5 summarizes the main findings of the paper and outlines some concluding remarks.

2. Person-job fit, employee potential, and research hypotheses

Past literature has shown that access to CET is by no means equally available to all participants in the labour market. In the case of employer-sponsored training there is evidence that managers select participants' characteristics in order to maximise the organisational returns to (costly) CET initiatives (Bassanini and Ok, 2004; Vignoles *et al.*, 2004). Privileged antecedents to participation in CET include higher educational attainments (Brunello 2001; Pischke, 2001; Arulampalam *et al.*, 2004) and, more generally, pre-training human capital (OECD, 2014). Also hierarchical position (Bassanini and Ok, 2004) and job complexity (Bassanini and Ok, 2004) are positively associated with participation in and intensity of CET.

The outcomes of education and learning are not uniform along the lifecycle. Age affects both individual propensity to participate in learning activities (Kubeck *et al.*, 1996) and the rate of return to investment in human capital (Carneiro *et al.*, 2010; Heckman and Mosso, 2014), as the strong complementarity between early and late investments conditions the possibility of catch up for late learners.

Employers' training policies represent an important source of labour market segmentation. Existing studies show that vulnerable groups of employees are offered lower CET opportunities that subsequently condition their careers. Due to discontinuous participation in the labour market and childcare female employees display lower participation to training initiatives[1] (Dieckhoff and Steiber, 2011) that on average last for shorter hours (Bassanini and Ok, 2004). Access to CET is harder also for part-time employees (Leuven and Oosterbeek, 1999) and temporary employees (OECD 2002; Arulampalam *et al.*, 2004; Cabrales *et al.*, 2014). In addition, CET is significantly and positively associated with establishment and firm size (Lynch and Black, 1998; Bassanini and Ok, 2004).

The brief survey of the main stylised facts about the determinants of adult education and training outlined above suggests that the antecedents of CET participation and intensity can be classified in three categories. The first group signals a misalignment between individual characteristics and organisational role. By filling up skill gaps, solving skill mismatches, or answering skill shortages CET is called to achieve person-job fit, defined "as the relationship between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work" (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005, p. 284). In particular, demands-abilities fit occurs

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1 Arulampalam *et al.* (2004) question these standard findings by showing no significant difference in training probability between male and female employees in 10 EU countries.

when an individual can provide the abilities required to meet all the challenges posed by her or his organisational role (Sekiguchi, 2004). CET drivers in this category include, for instance, measures of overskilling or underskilling and are associated with the first target outlined by the European Commission's definition of CET recalled in the previous section (*i.e.*, "improve or update […] knowledge and/or skills"). In line with the European Commission's definition of CET targets, the first research hypothesis can be detailed as follows.

Hp1: Poor person-job fit increases the probability to participate in CET.

The second set of CET antecedents outlined by the literature includes drivers that signal trainees' potential to anticipate future needs due to changes at either organisational or individual level, such as measures of pre-training human capital or personal motivation. This category concerns the second target of the European Commission's definition of CET ("acquire new skills for a career move or retraining [and] continue […] personal or professional development"). Whereas person-job fit represents a target of CET given a specific organisational and production configuration, the development of employee potential involves a dynamic dimension, which includes "the advancement of knowledge, skills, and competencies for the purpose of improving performance within an organization" (Gilley *et al.*, 2002, p.5) and addresses both individual targets (personal and career development) and organisational objectives (performance management and change management). The expected impact of employee potential on participation in CET is synthetized by the second research hypothesis.

Hp2: The probability to participate in CET increases with employee potential.

The third category of CET drives concerns employee-specific, organisation-specific, or institutional setting-specific features not immediately related with the explicit targets of training activities. For instance, employee-specific drivers include employee's age or gender. Organisation-specific drivers include firm size, which constrains the amount of monetary and non-monetary resources available for training, or organisation culture, which affects training policies towards vulnerable categories of employees. Institutions significantly affect the outcomes, the quality, and the quantity of CET programs by shaping the incentives to provide and participate in learning initiatives (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2008). Consequently, in a cross-country comparison such as that allowed by the ESJ survey the peculiarities of national institutions are expected to reflect into significantly differentiated patterns of the relationship between person-job fit, employee potential, and CET participation.

Hp3: The impact of person-job fit and the impact of employee potential on participation in CET depend on country-specific institutional systems.

An operationalisation of the constructs of person-job fit and employee potential is needed to test the proposed hypotheses. To the author's knowledge, so far no study has provided such measures, which require to account for conceptual and measurement overlapping among variables that capture different dimensions of each multi-faceted underlying construct. A possible justification to this limit is the past lack of datasets allowing for multiple measures related to the same construct, a constraint now mitigated by the availability of more detailed archives such as the CEDEFOP survey of European Skills and Jobs.

3. Data and empirical strategy

The ESJ survey offers suitable data to test to what extent individual training needs and individual potential drive employer-sponsored CET. Besides providing an appropriate measure of employer-sponsored CET undertaken for job-related reasons and characterise person-job fit and employee potential, this dataset offers information to control for employee-specific, job-specific, organisation-specific, and country-specific characteristics.

The ESJ survey, commissioned by CEDEFOP, was run by IPSOS in the 28 EU Member States between March and June 2014 (IPSOS Mori, 2014). The ESJ Survey involved national representative samples of individuals in employment aged 24-65 years, for a total of 48,431 interviews. Questionnaires were administered by means of either on-line or telephone interviews, the specific channel depending on the diffusion of ICT skills among sampled population segments and on national penetration rates of Internet connections at households and workplaces. Public use datasets were released in April 2016.

The survey questioned interviewees on their work situation, their present and past jobs, experience in adult education and training, educational path, and household background. Compared to other international inquiries focused on individual skills (e.g., the OECD PIAAC Survey, OECD 2013) the ESJ survey provides an explicit focus on employed individuals rather than adult population and pays a stronger attention to learning mechanisms and learning paths at the workplace. The interview dedicates a section to training and skill change since start of current job, whereas an additional section focuses on training experiences in the 12 months preceding the survey. In the latter case it is possible to discriminate between training undertaken for job-related reasons and for other reasons, and between employer-sponsored and non-employer sponsored training.

Table 1 and Table 2 report some comparative statistics. Maximum likelihood estimates of probit models have been carried over on weighted country samples to identify the impact of person-job fit and employee potential on participation in employer-sponsored CET undertaken for job-related reasons. Given their multi-dimensional nature, the two constructs of person-job fit and employee potential can hardly be measured by a single questionnaire item. At the same time, the use of multiple regressors to represent each construct is not viable. Besides posing interpretive problems, the inevitable correlation between the variables used to describe an articulated concept may result in biased outcomes (Bassanini and Ok, 2004). For these reasons the empirical analysis makes use of synthetic indicators of person-job fit and employee potential resulting from confirmatory factor analyses based on a range of related primitive variables.

4. Empirical results

The first paragraph of this section presents the operative measures used to identify CET needs and opportunities (*i.e.*, person-job fit and employee potential). The following paragraph tests the suitability of these variables to explain participation in CET.

4.1. Measures of person-job fit and employee potential

The ESJ survey offers a range of variables to capture the multi-dimensional constructs of person-job fit and employee potential. Since misalignment between provided abilities and role demands signals potential inadequacy of employee capabilities (Sgobbi and Suleman, 2013), the variables chosen to identify person-job fit concern educational mismatch and skill mismatch. In contrast, the variables aimed at capturing employee potential describe individual human capital and motivation to learn. In both cases the analysis benefits from information that concerns employees' traits and characteristics before participating in CET with current employer. In particular, the survey provides self-assessed measures of educational mismatch, skill mismatch, human capital, and motivation to learn when employees were first hired with their employer at the time of the interview. This feature of the ESJ dataset allows avoiding biases due to reverse causality between training and individual skills.

Table 3 reports the variables used to capture person-job fit and employee potential. Variable PastEduMismatch is calculated as the difference between provided education and required education, both measured along a 6-point scale where 1 corresponds to no formal educational qualification, 2 indicates primary education (level 1 of ISCED[2] classification), 3 signals the completion of lower secondary education (ISCED 2), 4 corresponds to upper secondary education (ISCED 3), 5 to post-secondary education including pre-vocational or vocation education but not tertiary (ISCED 4), and 6 to tertiary education[3] (ISCED 5 and 6). Variable PastEduMismatch consequently takes negative values when employees were hired despite providing an educational certificate lower than required, positive values in case of initial overqualification, and null value in case of match between required and provided education. Over half of employees in the 28 EU countries (56%) declare matching between required and provided education level when starting to work for their current employer, whereas 22.81% declare undereducation and 21.2% claim their were overeducated compared to their job needs.

> ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education

Initial overskilling with current employer (variable PastOverskilling) is identified when employees declare that their skills were higher than required by their job. Employees who declared initial overskilling were subsequently asked to rate the severity of their overskilling along a 5-point scale where 1 denotes that "skills were a little higher than required" and 5 indicates strong overskilling. Variable PastOverskilling consequently takes value 0 in case of skill match and increases with the severity of reported initial overskilling. In a similar way, variable PastUnderskilling reflects the degree of underskilling reported by employees at the beginning of their employment contract. Initial overskilling is recognised by almost 25.3% of the sample, with the highest rates declared by

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2 ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) is an international classification of education programmes and related qualifications developed by UNESCO.

3 ESJ data allow to discriminate between first level of tertiary education (ISCED 5) and advanced level of tertiary education (ISCED6). However, considering that a large share of EU university graduates completed their education before the Bologna process and the consequent harmonization of tertiary education paths, tertiary education levels were aggregated into a unique category.

British (36.7%), Austrian (36.4%), and Greece (34.5%) employees. Initial underskilling, reported by a similar share of EU employees (about 23.5%), is highest in the Baltic countries (35.9% in Latvia, 37% in Lithuania, and 40.3% in Estonia).

The variables aimed at capturing employee potential describe individual past human capital and motivation to learn. Variable RightJob assesses in an 11-point scale how much the comparison between own skills and required skills and qualifications affected the decision to accept the job held at the time of the interview. This variable does not replicate the above described measures of initial educational and skill mismatch. It rather captures an employee's conviction to have the potential to achieve employer's requirements. As a matter of fact, required skills and qualifications were regarded "Not important at all" (value 0) by 19.4% of employees who declared strong initial underskilling and by 13.1% of employees who declared strong initial overskilling, whereas 21.7% of initially strong underskilled and 24.9% of initially strong overskilled regarded the same factor as "Essential" (value 10).

Variable ExperienceOpportunity reports the importance attached to the opportunity of gaining additional experience in the decision to accept current job, while variable JobInterest captures the appeal initially attached to one's job. Both variables, measured in an 11-point scale, are assumed to reflect individual motivation to learn and develop one's potential.

A confirmatory rotated factor analysis on the six variables summarised in Table 3 run on weighted data from the 28 EU countries surveyed by ESJ identifies two components that jointly explain 53.2% of the observed variance. The loadings in Table 4 confirm that the components resulting from the factor analysis reflect the underlying constructs of person-job fit and employee potential. The first component, named Fit, is associated with educational and skill mismatch. Positive association with growing initial overeducation (PastEduMismatch) and initial overskilling and negative association with initial underskilling suggest that variable Fit is inversely connected to required skills, hence CET needs. In contrast the second component, labelled as Potential, is positively associated with all the variables expected to favour a further development of individual human capital. Low values of variable Potential discourage employer-sponsored training by signalling risky returns to investments in education and training. A negative impact of variable Fit and a positive impact of variable Potential on CET participation and CET intensity would consequently signal effective mechanisms of selection into employer-sponsored training.

Table 5 tests whether the mean values assumed by variables Fit and Potential statistically differ among employees who either experienced or di not experienced different types of CET with their current employer. The first panel of Table 5 compares Fit and Potential for non-trained employees and employees who received any type of CET in the 12 months before the interview. The second panel contrasts non-trained employees and employees who received employer-sponsored CET for job reasons in the 12 months before the interview. The third panel of Table 3 focuses on formal CET experienced since start of current job. In all cases the mean values of variables Fit and Potential are statistically different for trained and untrained employees. Variable Fit is always positive (hence higher than the mean value for the universe, given it has a standardised normal distribution) for untrained employees and negative for trained ones, suggesting that training provision focuses on individuals with initial skill needs. In contrast Variable Potential is always positive for trained employees and negative for untrained ones, revealing attention towards the development of individual talents. In addition, the absolute values displayed by trained individuals are higher in the case of employer-sponsored CET initiatives undertaken for job-related reasons. This piece of evidence provides a preliminary confirmation of employers' efforts to focus their training programmes on the employees characterised by the least adequate skills and/or the most promising capabilities.

The confirmatory factor analysis discussed above involves all the 28 EU countries. However, loadings of Fit and Potential calculated on EU data may provide a biased assessment of the impact of person-job fit and individual potential on the probability of participating in CET at the country level when the national distribution of human capital markedly differs from average EU values. For this reasons 28 separate factor analyses were run to identify components centred on the mean values of each country. In 21 cases the country-based factor analyses outlined two components that reproduce the features of variables Fit and Potential already identified for the whole sample. For these countries the correlation rates between the values calculated for variables Fit and Potential at the EU level or at the national level range between 80% and 95%. The remaining seven cases concern Luxembourg, for which the confirmatory factor analysis outlines three rather than two components, and the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, and Portugal. For the latter countries the factor analysis identifies two components, but past educational mismatch enters (with a negative sign) component Potential instead of component Fit. For these reasons all mentioned countries enter the general investigation but are excluded from country-based analyses.

4.2. Determinants of participation in employer-sponsored CET for job-related reasons

A binary variable that takes value 1 for employees who undertook employer-sponsored CET for job-related reasons in the 12 months preceding the survey provides the dependent variables to explores whether higher skill needs (*i.e.*, low values of variable Fit) and stronger individual potential to develop additional capabilities (*i.e.*, high values of variable Potential) are significant drivers of participation in CET.

Table 6 reports the marginal effects of a probit regression that tests the determinants of participation in CET with ESJ data. The regression includes binary variables to account for 1-digit ISCO occupational groups, firm size class effects, industry fixed effects, and country fixed effects. In addition, the regression controls for the interview mode adopted to run the ESJ survey by means of a binary variable that takes value 1 for telephone interviews and value 0 for Internet-based ones. The outcomes in Table 6 confirm research hypotheses 1 and 2. Person-job fit and employee potential display the expected sign (negative for variable Fit and positive for variable Potential) and are highly significant determinants of participation in CET activities. However, the quantitative impact of these variables on the probability to participate in training is comparatively small. *Ceteris paribus*, an employee whose job-fit level is one standard deviation below the sample mean has a 2.8% higher probability of participating in employer-sponsored training for job-related reasons compared to an employee in line with the sample mean[4]. As for employee potential, one standard deviation increase in variable Potential is associates with a 3.1% growth in the probability of participating in employer-sponsored CET. Despite significant these effects are offsets, for instance, by the impact of contract type.

Given the significant diversities in the social and economic structures and in the labour market institutions of EU countries the outcomes of the comprehensive analysis presented above has to be taken with some caution. Separate logit regressions on country-specific samples were consequently run to explore the impact of person-job fit and employee potential on participation in CET at national level. As explained in section 4.1, country-specific analyses were feasible only for 21 countries. With the exception of country fixed-effects, all country-specific logit regressions include the control variables used in the overall model presented in Table 6. Table 7 reports the marginal effects estimated for variables Fit and Potential at national level.

When significant, marginal effects at the country level display the same sign observed for EU as a whole (negative impact for person-job fit and positive impact for employee potential), thus supporting research hypotheses 1 and 2 also at country level. In addition, with the sole exception of Croatia, national regressions also confirm the small size of the examined effects.

However, not all coefficients are significant and, also when significant, the marginal effects of person-job fit and employee potential are not always balanced. Based on coefficients significance and on the relative size of marginal effects some patterns arise, as depicted in Figure 1. The prevailing approach to employer-sponsored CET at country level can be characterised as fit-oriented when the size of the marginal effect of variable Fit prevails over the marginal effect of variable Potential. Four of the examined countries display this behaviour. The opposite situation, characterised as potential-oriented, involves nine countries. A third group concerns cases of balanced size in the impact of person-job fit and employee potential. In six cases the probability to participate in employer-sponsored CET is significantly affected by both drivers, whereas in two cases (Denmark and Malta) no marginal effect is statistically significant.

Interestingly enough, the observed patterns do not reproduce any of the classifications proposed in the literature to characterise national economic systems (e.g., Amable, 2003; Hall and Soskice, 2001). The third research hypothesis finds only partial confirmation: the impact of person-job fit and the impact of employee potential on participation in CET vary across countries, but their connection with country-specific institutional systems is not clear.

5. Concluding remarks

The quality of human capital is a key competitive asset for EU firms to prosper in a globalised economy while providing high-quality jobs to their employees. Continuing education and training are therefore crucial for tuning, maintaining, and developing employees' skills and capabilities, especially in a fast-changing world. Given the substantial direct and indirect costs of CET, employers are expected to focus training provision on those employees that would most benefit from participation. To explore to what extent poor skills and learning potential

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4 It has to be reminded that, resulting from a factor analysis, variables Fit and Potential are normalised variables.

drive training this paper has investigated whether a measure of person-job fit and a measure of employee potential are significant determinants of CET participation.

The empirical analysis extended to the 28 EU countries and based on CEDEFOP's ESJ Survey provides mixed evidence. On the one hand, person-job fit and employee potential proved to be significant determinants of CET participation. In addition, coefficient signs reflect expectations: participation in training increases with skill deficit and development potential. On the other hand, the quantitative impact of person-job fit and employee potential on CET participation is comparatively small and in most cases the effect is offset by other job-specific or firm-specific factors.

Overall, the proposed empirical results suggest large opportunities to increase the effectiveness of CET programmes by improving employers and managers' capabilities to identify the skill needs and the development potential of their employees. More effective training require investing in the design and development of CET programmes that account for both firm skills needs, individual career development plans, and employees involvement. Accordingly, 'traditional' training measures have to go along with organisational change and human resource development plans. However, the time constraints posed by the increasing pace of technological and market changes and the financial limitations due to the recent economic crisis may hamper the exploration of new approaches to identify and solve the training needs of firms.

The proposed outcomes also show important between-country variation in the significance and the effects of person-job fit and employee potential. Nevertheless, the observed contrasts do not align with the differences among the examined countries in CET diffusion rates, CET traditions, and CET practices. Continuous education and training confirm to be complex phenomena that cannot be grasped by a simplistic opposition between 'good' or 'bad' training systems. All countries display significant opportunities to improve the effectiveness of training programmes by improving their focus on person-job fit and employee potential. Once again, the tight economic policies imposed on EU governments by the recent economic crisis risk to limit public support to training initiatives and may consequently hamper employers' efforts. However, this constraint could also represent an opportunity to re-design and rationalise CET initiatives also by re-thinking participation criteria.

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Figure 1. Prevailing approach to employer-sponsored CET by country

	Prevailing approach to CET		
Country	**Fit-oriented**	**Potential-oriented**	**Balance-oriented**
Sweden	X		
Netherlands	X		
Slovenia	X (Potential coefficient also significant)		
Romania	X (much lower marginal effect of Fit)		
Germany		X	
UK		X	
Italy		X	
Austria		X	
Spain		X (Fit coefficient non-significant)	
Bulgaria		X (Fit coefficient non-significant)	
Belgium		X (Fit coefficient non-significant)	
Hungary		X (Fit coefficient non-significant)	
Finland		X (Fit coefficient non-significant)	
France			X
Latvia			X
Ireland			X
Poland			X
Slovakia			X
Croatia			X (higher marginal effects)
Denmark			X (no coefficient significant)
Malta			X (no significant coefficient)
EU 28			*X*

Table 1. Descriptive statistics, 28 EU countries

Country	Age		Female	Native	Fixed-term	Part-time	CET*
Austria	Mean	41.81	48.4%	87.3%	11.2%	24.6%	74.3%
	Std. Dev.	9.76					
Belgium	Mean	42.50	48.5%	88.2%	11.1%	22.6%	68.6%
	Std. Dev.	10.12					
Bulgaria	Mean	41.76	49.2%	85.4%	11.8%	7.8%	53.2%
	Std. Dev.	10.60					
Croatia	Mean	42.97	47.9%	86.5%	19.9%	2.4%	67.3%
	Std. Dev.	10.33					
Cyprus	Mean	40.43	51.4%	77.6%	33.1%	16.1%	61.8%
	Std. Dev.	11.19					
Czech Republic	Mean	41.52	46.3%	93.3%	22.3%	10.2%	80.6%
	Std. Dev.	10.43					
Denmark	Mean	44.44	49.9%	90.7%	13.5%	20.9%	65.5%
	Std. Dev.	10.46					
Estonia	Mean	43.21	51.1%	86.5%	11.2%	9.6%	63.8%
	Std. Dev.	11.35					
Finland	Mean	44.16	51.1%	94.8%	18.0%	12.5%	73.9%
	Std. Dev.	10.51					
France	Mean	43.12	50.1%	88.9%	10.0%	15.9%	62.6%
	Std. Dev.	9.20					
Germany	Mean	44.10	47.4%	91.1%	12.6%	22.4%	67.3%
	Std. Dev.	10.12					
Greece	Mean	40.52	43.9%	86.3%	28.2%	17.6%	58.6%
	Std. Dev.	9.39					
Hungary	Mean	41.84	47.8%	93.9%	11.3%	9.0%	60.3%
	Std. Dev.	10.02					
Ireland	Mean	41.27	51.0%	78.6%	25.8%	21.6%	75.6%
	Std. Dev.	10.00					
Italy	Mean	42.60	45.9%	90.8%	14.6%	20.0%	64.6%
	Std. Dev.	9.03					
Latvia	Mean	42.88	52.6%	90.2%	13.4%	12.0%	68.1%
	Std. Dev.	10.95					
Lithuania	Mean	42.52	53.0%	92.9%	9.6%	10.5%	57.7%
	Std. Dev.	10.65					
Luxembourg	Mean	41.62	44.5%	94.4%	9.1%	14.0%	64.8%
	Std. Dev.	9.23					
Malta	Mean	39.13	35.2%	69.5%	33.6%	9.0%	75.8%
	Std. Dev.	10.20					
Netherlands	Mean	43.68	48.7%	92.5%	15.5%	38.3%	63.8%
	Std. Dev.	10.57					
Poland	Mean	41.15	47.0%	91.5%	31.6%	10.7%	73.5%
	Std. Dev.	10.33					
Portugal	Mean	41.77	50.1%	90.4%	23.6%	7.5%	58.5%
	Std. Dev.	10.09					
Romania	Mean	40.27	44.7%	95.3%	10.8%	5.9%	52.0%
	Std. Dev.	9.88					
Slovakia	Mean	41.06	48.2%	82.0%	21.1%	9.9%	70.5%
	Std. Dev.	10.34					
Slovenia	Mean	40.76	47.9%	88.3%	23.7%	9.4%	66.7%
	Std. Dev.	10.01					
Spain	Mean	41.93	48.1%	91.8%	22.1%	18.8%	69.5%
	Std. Dev.	9.55					
Sweden	Mean	44.52	50.1%	89.9%	14.0%	17.8%	70.6%
	Std. Dev.	10.48					
UK	Mean	43.96	49.0%	89.8%	12.9%	24.0%	72.8%
	Std. Dev.	10.00					
EU-28 countries	Mean	42.46	48.2%	89.8%	17.5%	16.4%	67.0%
	Std. Dev.	10.10					

* In the 12 months preceding the survey. Weighted observations

Table 2. Participation in CET for job-related reasons (in the 12 months preceding the survey)

Country	Participated in CET for job-related reasons [%]	Employer-sponsored CET for job-related reasons [%]	Non-employer sponsored CET for job-related reasons [%]
Austria	51.6	42.4	9.2
Belgium	58.6	45.8	12.8
Bulgaria	52.2	32.6	19.6
Croatia	54.5	39.8	14.7
Cyprus	48.9	30.8	18.1
Czech	72.2	66.2	6.0
Denmark	51.8	45.9	5.9
Estonia	57.8	46.6	11.2
Finland	65.4	56.1	9.3
France	51.4	37.8	13.6
Germany	51.5	43.2	8.3
Greece	48.8	20.0	28.8
Hungary	52.2	37.5	14.7
Ireland	62.3	44.4	17.9
Italy	58.7	42.6	16.1
Latvia	60.9	43.6	17.3
Lithuania	50.8	37.6	13.2
Luxembourg	48.9	38.3	10.6
Malta	65.1	42.5	22.6
Netherlands	54.5	47.9	6.6
Poland	67.9	52.7	15.2
Portugal	56.2	38.6	17.6
Romania	49.7	28.9	20.8
Slovakia	65.2	55.9	9.3
Slovenia	54.1	44.7	9.4
Spain	56.9	38.6	18.3
Sweden	62.4	53.3	9.1
UK	62.1	48.3	13.8
EU 28 Countries	57.4	43.3	14.1

Weighted observations

Table 3. Person-job fit and employee potential:
Descriptive statistics of variables that enter the factor analysis

Variable	Description	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
PastEduMismatch	Difference between level of provided and required education	-5	6	0.002	1.091
PastOverskilling	Self-assessed degree of overskilling when started to work with current employer	0	5	0.989	1.781
PastUnderskilling	Self-assessed degree of underskilling when started to work with current employer	0	5	0.561	1.159
RightJob	Importance of required skills and qualifications in the decision to accept current job	0	10	7.021	2.776
ExperienceOpportunity	Importance of the opportunity to gain additional experience in the decision to accept current job	0	10	6.569	3.051
JobInterest	Importance of interest in job nature in the decision to accept current job	0	10	7.439	2.749

Weighted observations on 28 EU countries

Table 4. Person-job fit and employee potential:
Rotated Component Matrix, 28 EU countries

	Components	
Variables	Fit	Potential
PastEduMismatch	0.413	-0.225
PastOverskilling	0.757	-0.122
PastUnderskilling	-0.764	-0.173
RightJob	0.037	0.816
ExperienceOpportunity	-0.135	0.709
JobInterest	-0.085	0.758

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Weighted observations. Employees only.

Table 5. Distribution of person-job fit and employee potential by CET experience, 28 EU Countries

		CET	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	t-test for equality of means t	d.f.	
Any CET in the 12 months before the interview	Fit	No	0.131	1.010	0.0090	12.772	23,269	***
		Yes	-0.005	0.990	0.0057			
	Potential	No	-0.166	1.058	0.0094	-23.682	21,507	***
		Yes	0.092	0.946	0.0054			
Employer-sponsored CET for job reasons in the 12 months before the interview	Fit	No	0.100	1.013	0.0066	15.152	41,592	***
		Yes	-0.046	0.973	0.0070			
	Potential	No	-0.056	1.029	0.0067	-16.821	42,317	***
		Yes	0.103	0.926	0.0067			
Any formal CET since start of current job	Fit	No	0.592	0.977	0.0171	33.795	3,812	***
		Yes	-0.011	0.986	0.0050			
	Potential	No	-0.494	1.185	0.0208	-25.843	3,604	***
		Yes	0.058	0.957	0.0048			

*** p< 0.01. Weighted observations. Equality of variances not assumed

Table 6. The determinants of participation in employer-sponsored CET, 28 EU countries

	dy/dx	Delta-method Std. Err.	
Fit	-0,028	0,003	***
Potential	0,031	0,003	***
Age	0,002	0,002	
SqAge	0,000	0,000	
Female	-0,012	0,006	*
Native	0,010	0,009	
High_Autonomy	-0,059	0,003	***
Fixed_term	-0,084	0,008	***
Part_time	-0,025	0,008	***
Past_SameOccupation [a]	-0,015	0,016	
Past_SimilarOccupation [a]	0,015	0,015	
Past_DifferentOccupation [a]	-0,001	0,015	
Past_Unemployed [a]	-0,053	0,016	***
Past_Student [a]	-0,013	0,016	

Logit model (Marginal effects). Dependent variable: participation in employer-sponsored CET. Regression includes a binary variable for interview mode (on-line or by telephone) and fixed-effects for 1-digit occupation, firm/establishment size class, industry, and country.

[a] Reference category: Past_NotWorking

*Statistically significant at the .10 level; ** at the .05 level; *** at the .01 level

40,338 weighted observations

Table 7. Marginal effects of Fit and Potential on participation in employer-sponsored CET, by country

	Fit			Potential		
Country	dy/dx	Delta-method std. err.		dy/dx	Delta-method std. err.	
Austria	-0.040	0.020	*	0.054	0.020	***
Belgium	-0.022	0.016		0.046	0.016	***
Bulgaria	0.025	0.016		0.056	0.017	***
Croatia	-0.099	0.020	***	0.078	0.021	***
Denmark	-0.009	0.021		0.030	0.021	
Finland	-0.013	0.012		0.030	0.013	**
France	-0.032	0.010	***	0.029	0.010	***
Germany	-0.024	0.009	***	0.063	0.009	***
Hungary	0.017	0.014		0.039	0.015	***
Ireland	-0.034	0.017	**	0.037	0.018	**
Italy	-0.022	0.011	**	0.048	0.012	***
Latvia	-0.038	0.019	**	0.032	0.021	*
Malta	0.041	0.026		0.009	0.024	
Netherlands	-0.053	0.015	***	0.023	0.017	
Poland	-0.040	0.009	***	0.034	0.010	***
Romania	-0.028	0.014	*	0.025	0.017	
Slovakia	-0.045	0.018	***	0.049	0.018	***
Slovenia	-0.056	0.022	**	0.041	0.021	*
Spain	-0.013	0.010		0.043	0.011	***
Sweden	-0.057	0.018	***	0.033	0.020	
UK	-0.021	0.009	**	0.035	0.009	***
EU28	-0.028	0.003	***	0.031	0.003	***

Weighted observations

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Transnational Comparative Studies as Sources for Research

This paper looks upon the design of comparative studies conducted by transnational actors and the use of indicators, generation of big data and categorization, benchmarking and ranking. The primary focus of the paper is to analyze in what way transnational comparative studies, their elements and their outcomes including indicators, big data reports and evidence-based policy documents based on them are relevant for scientific research. The author intends to stimulate a discussion about 'how should be the transnational comparative studies included in research in a scientific way?'

Comparative studies conducted by transnational actors using indicators and big data reports for quantifying performance of states referring to certain 'floating signifiers' are a characteristic of the contemporary era where policies are 'evidence-based.' Different transnational organizations conduct comparative studies, collect big data, prepare elaborate reports and formulate policies on the basis of 'evidence' to categorize and rank nation states and other actors. Policy interventions usually follow this. As a result, policy interventions also play a decisive role in research and influence the results of comparative studies conducted at a mega level to a great extent. Indicators are therefore constructed as policy instruments usually for funding and interventions by certain stakeholders with stakes that have linkages other than what is explicitly evident from the big data collected or arranged on the basis of these indicators rather than comparative studies embedded in social science research. They might serve as lenses through which a picture of reality seems distorted or improvised so that a space for policy interventions could be created. The way these comparative studies are designed and the objectives they tend to achieve, thereby, put their reliability as a scientific source into question. This paper focuses upon the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of transnational comparative studies (based on big data) conducted by transnational actors?
2. How to treat the elements and outcomes of these comparative studies including indicators, big data reports and evidence-based policy documents (policies as products) as sources for research?
3. What could be compared and what could not be compared using the big data on which these comparative studies are based?

Two cases are used in this paper to find out answers to the above-mentioned research questions. The first case is about the comparative study conducted by the OECD called PISA. This study is about comparative use of big data and indicators to measure outcomes of education system in participating countries. The author examines the objectives, design and outcomes of this comparative study and draws inferences that help to answer the above mentioned research questions. The second case is about the comparative studies about development made by the World Bank. The World Bank has used different indicators to quantify and measure development, using indicators that have been changed from time to time. The author examines the comparative approach used by the World Bank to understand its objectives, design and outcomes in the context of development.

The two cases are very different from each other. The OECD publication describing the PISA results is well discussed in the field of education and its outcomes have made a lot of difference across many countries. The current study also explains the importance of contexts and the relevance of comparative studies in different contexts where 'deconstruction of the context' is the basis of comparison, a well-discussed question in comparative studies. However, the OECD and PISA represent much, the reality in Europe.

The second case about development represents another picture of reality outside Europe and beyond the field of education. The study is also new and the core policy document regarding this was released only in April 2016.

Analytical Model:

The paper uses the Box Model proposed by Ehlers (Ehlers 2006: 10-11) as an analytical strategy for differentiating between scientific and non-scientific comparative studies. The author analyses the nature and design of transnational comparative studies according to this model as scientific or non-scientific.

Ehlers' Box Model presents an analogy to understand the rationality of actors at micro and macro level and distinguish between what is scientific and what is non-scientific. It explains that there is an incompatibity between what is happening in science, practice, profession and policy because the actors in these boxes cannot think completely out of the box. In a way it is similar to the concept of bounded rationality by Simon which says that decision makers have limited rationality due to barriers of limited knowledge, time and also because they want to satisfy everyone involved with the decision rather than choosing the most rational solution to a given problem (Simon 1991). Ehlers Box Model however explains that there is not 'one universal rationality' but more than one rationalities and thinking in one box is not compatible with the thinking in the other box because the rationality within a box is different than the rationality within the other box (Ehlers 2006). The emphasis of this model is on understanding the context rather optimization of benefits.

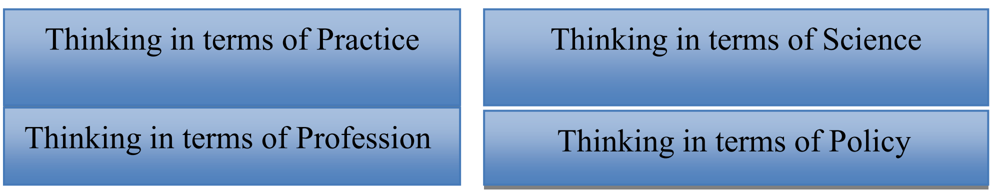

Fig 1: Ehlers' Box Model (Ehlers 2006: 10-11) Analytical tool to understand thinking of actors within boxes

The model could be used to understand the nature of comparative studies conducted by transnational actors and the methodology (using indicators to generate big data and formulate evidence-based POLICIES policy documents) used by them that they call 'scientific.'

The point of departure in this paper is that transnational comparative studies are non-scientific in nature and they cannot be treated as scientific sources in research.

Scientific Literature

Much scientific literature about current trends in policy-formulation by transnational actors conducting comparative studies based on big data reports indicates that the source of power and authority behind transnational actors like the OECD is their 'scientific approach' comprising of ranking, rating and evidence-based policy formulation (Power 1999, 2003, 2004; Strathern 2000, 2004; Davies et al. 2000; Nutley et al. 2002; Davies 2004; Martens 2007; Schuller and Burns 2007; Grek 2011). Martens suggests that the scientific element in the comparative studies conducted by the OECD transform it into a powerful transnational agent and create a space for policy intervention for it (Martens 2007:42). Commenting upon this, Grek suggests that transnational actors construct new meanings and set-up new norms and principles using this authority (derived from their scientific approach) (Grek 2011:41). Davies, Nutley, Schuller and Burns suggest that formulation of policies based on 'evidences' makes them more rational as compared to those that are not based on 'evidences' (Davies et al. 2000; Nutley et al. 2002; Davies 2004; Schuller and Burns 2007). Lawn and Lingard argue how IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey, 1994-98) drew authority because of the measurement tools it adopted (Lawn and Lingard 2002). Porter and Webb discuss how OECD has become a brand because of the scientific design that it follows in generating its reports based on the comparative studies it conducts and the big data it generates (Porter and Webb 2004).

Grek notifies that policy formulation by the European Commission in post-2000 and the post-Lisbon Treaty, 2000 period has been marked by the use of indicators and benchmarking (Grek 2011). She describes IALS as heralding a new era in international comparative studies since it attracted much confidence and authority due its measurement tools. Grek further discusses ALL (Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2002-04) following IALS and finally PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2011). She highlights the important link between these surveys (comparative studies) and setting up of the contextual framework for Lifelong Learning in Europe embedded with skills and competencies (Grek 2011). She suggests that through these comparative studies with progressive linkages among them, THE OECD was successful in creating a framework for Lifelong Learning in the European policy space. The framework was not challenged because of the scientific claims that it had and the strong 'evidence-base' on which it was standing.

Grek refers to the context in which PIAAC is carried out as the context of post-PISA success. In another article, she discusses PISA in detail and explains the linkage between OECD's success as a policy formulator and the scientific nature of PISA (Grek 2009). While Martens calls it Governance by Comparison (Martens 2007), Grek calls it Governance by Numbers (Grek 2009).

Kreiner and Christensen however, have evaluated PISA critically and have shown through a detailed statistical analysis, how unreliable the ranking of countries is, by using the example of Denmark and UK and showing how their ranking could be changed using simple manipulations (Kreiner 2011, Kreiner and Christensen 2014). Adams however points out that the arguments by Kreiner are flawed and PISA rankings represent reality (Adams 2011). Sjøberg argues that the results of PISA are unrealistic and it is not possible to compare countries that represent different cultural contexts through general indicators because the same questions mean different things in different contexts. So are the answers and therefore, a common test could not be the basis of assessment and ranking as done by the OECD using PISA results (Sjøberg 2015). Ehlers writes while explaining policies, 'context matters!' (Ehlers 2017:5). He explains that the context for the developments in the transnational policy space has been marked by integration of policies for decades - both vertical as well as horizontal (Ehlers 2017:15). Using the example of education policies in the European policy space, he suggests that education policy in Europe was kept out of integration since the beginning (signing of Treaty of Rome in 1957) but finally, integration of education policies started in 2010 (decided in 2008 by the passing of European Qualification Framework) when education became an economic policy rather than a cultural or social policy. This was backed by the comparative studies conducted by the OECD. (Ehlers 2016, personal communication).

Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal differentiate between comparative studies as a discipline (historical journey) and comparative studies as a policy (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003). Tracing the evolution of comparative studies historically, they explain how comparative studies have moved from 'Knowing the "other" (1880s)' to 'Understanding the "other" (1920s)' to 'Constructing the "other" (1960s)' and finally to 'Measuring the "other" (2000s)' (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003: 423-4). They criticize the use of comparative studies as a 'mode of governance' and the movement away from the nature of comparative studies as a 'historical study' (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003: 435). Discussing the design of education policy in the contemporary era and the context because of which a drastic change is evident in the design of policies, Ehlers has explained how the aims of education policies have become 'economic' rather than 'cultural' or 'social' and how drastic are the changes due to the a very fast movement towards transnationalization (Ehlers 2017:33-34.). Grek suggests that this significant change in the way of policy formulation by European Commission was meant to push forward, its agenda regarding economic growth and the labour market (Grek 2011). According to her, the comparative studies conducted by transnational actors followed by ranking and the open method of coordination (benchmarking and naming and shaming) is meant to bring the EU member states (participants in the comparative studies) together within a common policy framework. Ehlers calls it 'policy integration' and explains the vertical and horizontal integration of policies fuelled up by transnational actors. Using a simple model of policy integration, he sets aside all the debate about policy learning, policy borrowing and the like, and explains about how integration is taking place in the policies of the member states comprising the European Union. Ozga et. al. write that contemporary education management in Europe is guided by data and data management through comparative studies (Ozga et. al. 2011). They further elaborate that quality assurance is put in numbers through the use of indicators followed by ranking and benchmarking.

The author was not able to find much relevant scientific literature regarding World Development Indicators 2016 and the World Development Report 2016 because they have been published few months ago and World Banks' comparative studies have not been much discussed in research.

Cases and Policy Documents (Empirics)

Four policy documents have been primarily referred to, for discussing the two CASES case studies mentioned in the introductory section of this paper.

'PISA 2015 PISA Results in Focus' (OECD 2015) document has been referred in the first case regarding the OECD educational indicators since some of scientific references were available to describe it. Three documents have been primarily used to describe the second case about World Bank development indicators because relevant scientific references were not found. These documents are: 'Transforming the World: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development' (United Nations 2015), World Global Monitoring Report, 2016 (World Bank 2016) and World Development Indicators 2016 (World Bank 2016).

Case 1: OECD Education Indicators:

The comparative study by OECD explores the possibilities in the cohort ready to enter the labour market. It does not only focus on the skills and knowledge that they possess but also what they can do or cannot do with those skills and knowledge. The use of the keyword 'modern economies' points towards the considerations that serve as objectives for the comparative studies conducted by the OECD.

The OECD document showing PISA results for the year 2015 mentions:

> "The assessment does not just ascertain whether students can reproduce knowledge; it also examines how well students can extrapolate from what they have learned and can apply that knowledge in unfamiliar settings, both in and outside of school. This approach reflects the fact that modern economies reward individuals not for what they know, but for what they can do with what they know."(OECD 2015:03)

The comparative studies conducted by the OECD also show what could be achieved and what has not been achieved. The text below clearly shows HOW that the findings of OECD comparative studies are meant to provide policy inputs to the participants who have been ranked after the interpretation of collected data using indicators.

> "PISA results reveal what is possible in education by showing what students in the highest-performing and most rapidly improving education systems can do. The findings allow policy makers around the world to gauge the knowledge and skills of students in their own countries in comparison with those in other countries, set policy targets against measurable goals achieved by other education systems, and learn from policies and practices applied elsewhere. While PISA cannot identify cause-and-effect relationships between policies/practices and student outcomes, it can show educators, policy makers and the interested public how education systems are similar and different – and what that means for students"(OECD 2015: 03).

It is interesting to note that THE OECD claims de-contextualization through its comparative studies (OECD 2000: 88-89), which means that the applicability of its comparative studies extends beyond borders.

Case 2: Development Indicators (2015-30)

The adoption of Agenda 2030 in September 2015 proposed by the United Nations introduced a new set of development goals which posed a challenge not only for the so called 'developing' but also for the so called 'developed' countries. 17 goals with 169 targets to achieve presented a vivid picture of what needs to be achieved across the globe in the coming 15 years (till 2030).

The Global Monitoring Report 2015/16 highlights the demographic challenge in Europe. The Report includes two pages on ‘Monitoring Global Development Progress: A Snapshot’ showing some graphs created with the data collected from comparative studies across the globe. Some of the graphs have captions like ‘Projections show that the global poverty rate may have fallen to single digits in 2015. Yet, the number of poor remains high,’ ‘While income poverty fell rapidly during the MDG-era, a large unfinished agenda remains for the SDGs with respect to non-income goals’ and ‘Prosperity needs to be better shared with the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution, especially in high-income countries’ (World Bank 2015/16)

The World Bank Indicators 2016 document further sets up indicators according to the Agenda 2030 and the Global Monitoring Report and categorizes countries along new contours in the new context (World Bank 2016).

The findings of Project Brainpool funded by the European Union also include factsheets about 18 indicators used for different transnational comparative studies along with the policy objectives for which these indicators are formulated. Apart from that, the factsheet also mentions the name of the organization that developed the indicators and what were the expected outcomes of developing a particular indicator for a transnational comparative study (Project Brainpool 2016 online resource).

D. Discussion

1. What is the nature and design of comparative studies conducted by transnational actors?

Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal’s criticism about the current trend in policy formulation and the analysis of Martens and Grek pointing towards Governing by Comparison and Governing by Numbers, the analysis of Ozga et. al. towards benchmarking and Open Method of Coordination, and the recognition of scientific elements in the contemporary policy formulation scenario by Power, Strathern, Davies et al. 2000, Nutley et al., Davies, Martens, Schuller and Burns and Grek - all point to one direction – a discontinuity in policy formulation which Ehlers explains, is a result of policy integration guided by economic considerations. The increasing trend towards evidence-based policy making essentially emanates from the market and not science. Nóvoa and Yarvi-Marshal are not able to differentiate clearly between scientific and non-scientific comparative studies and they trace the evolution of transnational comparative studies in a mixed form. Funding for ‘knowing,’ ‘understanding’ or ‘constructing’ are policy decisions too and not science. The comparative studies that Nóvoa and Yarvi-Marshal discuss in their text mentioned in this paper have always been a policy choice. The only element that seems to be new in the current trend of policy formulation is the use of methods corresponding to scientific methods like formulation of indicators, reports based on statistical data and ranking leading to evidence based policy-formulation. The reason why comparative studies of today are different from those conducted in the past is therefore, not the scientific element present in them but:

a. Their market orientation (and thus based on outcomes and deliverables)
b. Their feasibility because of the enormous information technology system

Before discussing about the nature and design of transnational comparative studies, it is important to note that the analogical model (Ehlers' Box Model) used in this paper suggests that the consideration about what is scientific and what is non-scientific is not general, but specific to a particular case (Ehlers 2016: personal communication). The author accepts this formulation and discusses comparative studies conducted by transnational actors in which states (I would call them contexts) are compared with each other.

The decision about what is scientific and what is non-scientific depends much on objectivity. In social sciences, objectivity of perspective is difficult to maintain but still, there could be objectivity of purpose. The transnational comparative studies are lacking the objectivity of purpose also and this is what makes them non-scientific because they are designed to achieve policy objectives. The findings of Project Brainpool explain why indicators are formulated by different actors explaining the policy agenda behind each indicator and thereby highlighting, what is intended to achieve by the use of these indicators in comparative studies to collect and organize big data.

The PISA ranking is a classic example of what these comparative studies conducted by transnational actors are meant for. As Grek (and others………) suggest, the objective of conducting IALS, ALL and PISA was to push forward, the economic agenda of the OECD. However, Ehlers looks at it with a broader perspective saying that it is the rather an integration of policies. Keeping that in mind, it is evident that the nature of comparative studies is policy-oriented or political in nature. Therefore, they could not be categorized as scientific and they lie in the policy box. In other words, the nature of these comparative studies is non-scientific despite the use of some methods (like the use of indicators for measurements) that may correspond to the scientific approach. The design of transnational comparative studies could be understood as follows:

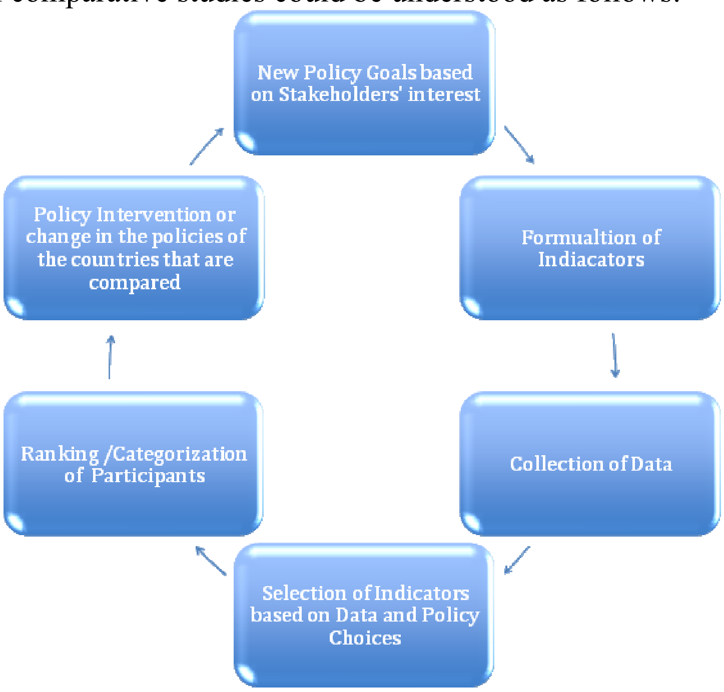

Fig 2: Comparative Studies by Transnational Actors

When a transnational actor decides on new policy goals, it formulates some categories for comparison and represents them through indicators and collects data. On the basis of data, indicators are selected and this is a political decision to include, exclude, merge or split certain indicators and form an index. Using the selected indicators, ranking of participants is done and finally, a space for policy intervention is prepared. Later on, policies are recommended by the same actor or associated actors (depending upon the stakeholder interest) and policy intervention or change in participant's policies could be seen. As a consequence, these comparative studies are not objective in nature.

In the case of comparative studies to compare the level of development, use of indicators in extensive. At present, the World Bank has 800 indicators to measure development. Transnational actors are using indicators to rank the level of development of different countries across the globe since decades. The measurement of income and economic performance of a country in the 1960s was replaced by wider criteria of economic diversity (keeping the countries from the Middle East out of the developed countries bracket in spite of their high income) in the 70s. This was followed by the introduction of the Human Development Index in the late 1980s and early 1990s followed by equality added to it (2012), and also parallely by the Millennium Development Goals from 2000 onwards. However, in 2015, a new policy agenda came up and Sustainable Development Goals became the new targets for achievement. The Global Monitoring Report 2015/16 published by the World Bank reflected this change sharply and also highlighted the crisis about demography in Europe and the heavy influx of refugees from the Middle East. Suddenly, the meaning of 'being developed' changed completely. The 'high income,' 'upper middle income,' lower middle income' and 'low income,' all countries are said to face the challenges of development now and the old world order has diffused to a more chaotic disorder. The demographic challenge owing to the ageing population and decreasing workforce in the countries that were categorized earlier as 'developed' and the enormous requirements to engage the refugee population in Europe's labour market to fuel up the economy has influenced the new ways in which development indicators are used to measure development in 2016 and probably continue to be so in the coming few years.

The indicators that were earlier showing the challenges of development in the former 'developing' countries would show now that the crisis is now in areas only where there is 'destitute poverty' like in Sub-Saharan Africa or in Europe (because of the refugees) whereas the other countries formerly categorized as 'developing' but now having a huge workforce have been able to reduce poverty much during the MDGs era (2000-15) and can be taken care of, without much aid money.

The message is clear. The need for channelizing of funds for developing the skills and competencies of the refugee population in Europe and the demographic challenge in Europe influenced the formulation of policies of transnational actors. All these decisions are political and not scientific at all. Policy choices thus, decide what would be the relevant indicators for a particular term like development. The choice of these indicators make the term, a 'floating signifier' because the elements (indicators) that represent them, keep on changing according to the policy choices by these transnational actors.

Transnational actors are non-scientific institutions and to be specific, they lie in the policy box. Comparative studies conducted by these institutions have certain objectives and therefore, the outcomes might be biased owing to certain policy orientations. The arguments of Kriener and Christensen and Adams suggest that the data collection in these transnational comparative studies might be done sometimes in a scientific way (in many cases, the data given by the governments of different countries is assumed to be accurate). However, the interpretation of the data, the choice of indicators for ranking and generation of reports that highlight the nature of current crisis and thus the need for policy interventions is non-scientific in nature. As a result, accepting or including the outcomes of these comparative studies without a critical eye could lead to non-scientific results. Indicators are used to quantify and measure the progression of an element (to be compared) but the inclusion and exclusion of indicators in reports generated to announce the results of these comparative studies is essentially non-scientific in nature.

The inference drawn from this discussion is that comparative studies conducted by transnational actors lie in the policy box and not the science box because they are politically motivated, their design is based on policy choices and their outcomes are manipulated in accordance with political objectives.

2. What could be compared and what could not be compared in terms of comparative studies in scientific research?

The arguments by Ehlers and Sjøberg highlighting the importance of context clearly indicate that the data collected during the comparative studies is not objective. The context from where data is coming from, adds another meaning to it and it is not possible to remove completely, the influence of the context. As Ehlers suggests, a data about a particular context (nation-states in this case) is useful within that context and not beyond it (Ehlers 2016: personal communication). This leads us to the understanding that data collected during these comparative studies is not relevant for comparison because comparison cannot be done using this data beyond a particular context. Deconstruction of the context might be relevant and possible in other contexts but in case of comparative studies conducted by transnational actors, Grek is justified to point out that OECD 'boasted' decontextualization through IALS. In fact, these comparative studies are meant to construct a context as desired by policy choices and the stakeholders who play a decisive role in formulating those policy choices. As Grek points out, the IALS and the ALL created the framework for Lifelong Learning so that an understanding could develop about a larger framework where the learners could be equipped with skills and competencies to work in a more productive way in life and elongate the span of working life through learning in the wake of the demographic challenge that Europe was preparing to meet. Therefore, while almost everything could be compared in the policy box, not everything can be compared in the science box. There are parameters that guide comparative studies in science and the basic requirement that at least, the elements that are being compared should be 'similar enough to be different and compared.' This means context plays an instrumental role in most of the cases and one formulation might refer to different things in different contexts. This might not be much relevant in the policy box but this is relevant in the science box if the scientific element in a transnational comparative study needs to be secured.

In case of comparative studies regarding development, the World Bank has measured the level of development using the criteria of developed and not developed (developing, under-developed, least developed, and the like) for decades and now it has decided (along with other transnational actors) that it will not measure development using the old indicators because the world has changed. This choice about which indicators should be included to measure development and which ones should be excluded and how should the interpretation of the data be done makes policy terms 'floating signifiers.' The definitions and description of these floating signifiers keep changing according to policy choices and comparative studies in the policy box make it feasible to develop an understanding about these floating signifiers in changed contexts. The design of the transnational comparative studies is thus constructed according to what the floating signifiers mean in a particular context and what images and contexts would be the indicators required to create the desired policy space.

In short, this discussion conveys that context is important and transnational comparative studies can compare contexts in the policy box but not in the science box.

3. Why are transnational comparative studies relevant in research and how to treat the elements and outcomes of these comparative studies including indicators, big data reports and evidence-based policy documents (policies as products) as sources for research?'

Comparative studies open new windows for policy formulation and enable member states to make new policies that are not traditional (Ehlers 2016:personal communication). In other words, despite the fact that comparative studies conducted by transnational actors are not so relevant in the science box (as they claim to be), they offer legitimacy for discontinuity in terms of policies to the countries that are ranked. However, it could also be the other way round. Comparative studies financed by certain actors (nation-states and strong economic players in this case) create spaces for policy interventions that are not so desired by the nation-states that are ranked and compared. However, because of rankings and the comparisons, they are bound to change their policies or face criticism transnationally, which might have other trade-offs at the sub-national, national and transnational levels. The two cases discussed in this paper point towards these two perspectives.

In case of PISA, when the results are declared, countries are usually forced to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of the education system they are having and they have ample 'evidences' that the current policies need to be changed one way or the other. PISA results provide legitimacy to them. Therefore, they get a new window opened, each time the PISA results are declared. On the contrary, there is a pressure on low-income and lower-middle income countries that are usually taking loans and are relying on external funding to match up to the standards set by certain transnational actors and follow the guidelines that are extended to them. If they fail to follow the guidelines, the funds could be channeled elsewhere. There is another linkage to this ranking and categorization. The ranking and categorization might also offer opportunities where a transnational or another actor (a state, NGO etc) can invest/channel aid depending upon the trade-offs or availability of other possibilities like raw material or markets. As a result, ranking and categorization backed by 'evidence' provides for a space for policy intervention wherever it is lucrative.

It is evident from the above discussion that transnational comparative studies are designed for creating for policy spaces, gaining legitimacy for introducing new policies and policy intervention. However, they can also serve as relevant sources for comparative studies in research as empirics rather than scientific sources because they are non-scientific in nature but convey much about the direction and orientation of policy choices.

Conclusion:

Transnational comparative studies are a characteristic of the contemporary era. They are based on indicators and big data reports and they form the basis of evidence-based policy formulation that provides legitimacy and authority to transnational actors to a great extent. The objectives, nature and design of the transnational comparative studies are guided by policy choices and therefore, are non-scientific in nature. Not everything that is compared in these transnational comparative studies using indicators and big data reports could be compared in science but the elements and outcomes of these transnational studies are useful as empirics for research.

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