Introduction

Ellu Saar, Odd Bjørn Ure and John Holford

This book is designed to provide an illuminating account of the nature of contemporary lifelong learning (LLL) in Europe. The institutional and social context to lifelong learning, as well as path-dependency of its development, is the cornerstone of the approach this book takes. The chapters also study the complex relationships between perspectives at the European level and the lifelong learning policies and practices within European countries. The book contains country chapters written by authors from the respective countries, who best know and can meaningfully explain the context. Based on prior cooperation by the authors who jointly carried out the research agenda within a European Union (EU) project that explored policy and practice in 13 countries, the book covers not only established Western EU member states (Austria, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Ireland), but a spectrum of newer EU member states of post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia) as well as non-members of the EU (Norway, Russia). Different political, economic and cultural backgrounds of the participating countries allowed the research teams to compare various concepts and practices of lifelong learning adopted in these countries.

As the research was carried out between 2005 and 2011, the chapters in this book are all based on up-to-date empirical investigations. Largely, the chapters address lifelong learning policies, the participation of adults in formal learning, their access to learning, perceived obstacles to participation and perceived individual demand for learning opportunities.

The first section in this introductory chapter explores the importance of a formal education system in lifelong learning. The second section describes the research project LLL2010 and the data on which the book draws. The third section describes the structure of the book. The remaining sections discuss the themes and theoretical perspectives developed throughout the chapters written by various country teams.

LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

The 'life-wide' dimension of LLL refers to the fact that learning takes place in a variety of environments and is not only confined to the formal education system (Green 2002). As the EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning from 2000 mentioned, 'the "life-wide" dimension brings the complementarity of formal, non-formal and informal learning into sharper focus' (CEC 2000). The lifelong aspect raises questions about the structure and interrelationship between different sectors of the education system. A crucial prerequisite for lifelong education is a system that promotes smooth progression with no dead ends. Mechanisms for transition from school to work, and repeated later transitions between work and education, are highlighted.

During the implementation of the EU 'Education and Training 2010' work programme, now replaced by the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), several European Commission interim reports (e.g. CEC 2003) on the follow-up of the objectives in the member states, pointed to a situation in which efforts are made in all the European countries to adapt the education and training systems to the knowledge-driven society and economy. However, the reforms undertaken are not up to the challenges and their current pace will not enable the EU to attain the objectives. As in national policy-making, there is a tendency to formulate objectives to the point of displaying optimistic visions. The present book reveals some structural constraints in reaching policy objectives, such as the fact that the qualities people need to develop through learning are changing. Learning to learn, critical thinking and self-management have been traditionally the focus of higher education but not of secondary or basic education (Jarvis 2001). The rapid changes in the qualification demands of the labour market cannot be met unless basic qualifications as a minimum are available. This furthermore may lead to social exclusion of those with less basic skills. There is evidence that a higher level of initial education leads to greater participation in training.

Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey indicated that employers seldom contribute to the general education of workers with limited literacy skills (OECD 2000b). Thus, the public sector has the task of providing the foundation for lifelong learning for a large segment of the adult population. The challenge posed to the formal education system by lifelong learning lies primarily in giving individuals a stable foundation for lifelong learning. Lifelong learning presupposes that compulsory schooling achieves the goal of individuals developing their own unique

characteristics and, in this context, refers to the broadening of upper secondary education. In addition, the education system has the important task of promoting equality through the recruitment and participation of everyone in lifelong learning, and in making the importance of social background less dominant. Adult education is one way of reducing existing education gaps.

Many adults have not had any possibility to enter secondary or higher education earlier in their lives, or they have dropped out, but yet are capable as adults to continue their studies in the education system. Despite much greater recognition that the education system is fundamental to lifelong learning, rather than a separate set of provisions that precedes it, there is as yet little evidence that schools now fundamentally rethink their role in meeting this challenge. However the contribution from the formal education system in implementing lifelong learning is important for several reasons.

Firstly, age matters in the sense that adults' propensity to engage in systematic learning activities diminishes over the years (OECD 2001). Enrolment rates in formal education of those aged 30 years and over are rather limited and vary significantly from country to country. One issue this raises is how well education systems respond to the population shrinkage of younger generations and the commensurate expansion of the older generations. This fact highlights the importance of adult education as the focus of policies, particularly in the fight against low levels of adult literacy, which represents a major hurdle to the successful achievement of lifelong learning. The International Adult Literacy Survey found that from one-quarter to over one-half of the adult population do not have the suitable minimum skills level deemed necessary for coping with the demands of modern life and work (OECD 2000b).

Secondly, informal as well as formal learning tends to concentrate on adults who are already qualified and enjoy relatively high professional status. Individuals who acquire more schooling are also more likely to receive post-school training, while those with minimal education find it extremely difficult to make up this deficiency in human capital once they enter the labour market. The strong link between education level and the level of training suggests that the strategy for strengthening schooling is a potent means of encouraging participation in lifelong learning. This underlines the more general challenge of establishing effective systems of basic educational preparation for all. Without integrating schooling fully within a lifelong strategy, recurrent education would stumble over these critical intra-generational inequalities.

Thirdly, with the main exception of the Scandinavian countries, general education tends to be conspicuously absent from the much-expanded adult

education and training programmes, whether public or enterprise-based. Adult education almost became synonymous with continuing professional or vocational education. Already in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *Human Resources in the New Economy: Challenges and Opportunities for Education and Training* (OECD 2000a), it was mentioned that 'the traditional concept of an occupation with its clear set of technical skills is rapidly losing currency. Workers need a broad mix of technical and general skills, which will enable them to change direction or specialise as the need arises'.

Fourthly, formal adult education has an institutionalized social character (Meyer 1970), which involves transitions, not only from work to school and back to work, but also between institutionalized categories of personnel (Hefler 2012, p. 17).

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

This book is based on the results of the research project 'Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: The Contribution of the Education System' (Lifelong Learning 2010, or LLL2010), that the team of researchers across 13 countries carried out during 2005–2011 with co-funding from the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme. The project focuses on the contribution of the education systems to the process of making lifelong learning a reality and its role as a potential agency of social integration.

The project's innovative approach of multilevel institutional analysis had the following three principal points of departure. Firstly, we assumed that lifelong learning is functioning within the broader economic, social and cultural systems in which it is embedded. Country-specific and historically developed institutional systems shape the opportunities as well as the incentives for lifelong learning, and therefore it is likely that there is no universal lifelong learning system across the countries. Secondly, all subsystems strongly interact. This means that the differences between lifelong learning systems are systematic. The systems could therefore be classified along a number of dimensions of institutional variation, and may be grouped into types of systems with common characteristics. Thirdly, these institutional 'packages' and subsystems yield strikingly different outcomes of analogous political reforms and thus become the main mechanisms for promotion of the so-called Europeanization of the societies and their country-specific policies. This in turn means that solutions are path-dependent and changes are institutionally bounded.

Following the outlined basic principles, the key questions about partici-

pation in lifelong learning have been approached in this project as being subject to influence from three analytical levels: national policies on the macro level; institutional factors and actors on the meso level; and strategies of relevant individual actors on the micro level. Given the novelty of such a systematic approach in cross-country comparisons, there was a clear lack of any data that could enable the team to answer the questions of relevance to this type of approach.

During the project, the team designed and carried out a number of innovative empirical studies with regard to macro, meso and micro levels. These studies enabled the project to systematically take into account, and compare, the macro-structural factors and national policies, as well as meso-level institutional factors and actors' motivation and actions at the micro level. All of these were considered to influence the role that educational systems have in promoting lifelong learning. The project was structured into five subprojects, which were arranged on the basis of the specific research questions each addressed, and which thus helped to achieve the objectives of the whole project. There were four original research projects initiated by the research consortium to collect comparable data. Subproject 1 comprised policy analysis of lifelong learning policies (LLP) at the national as well as EU level, based on data collected in 2006. Subproject 3, in 2007, consisted of a survey of adult learners in formal education (ALiFE), which covered both learners and the formal education institutions they were engaged in. Subproject 4, in 2008, consisted of case studies on formal learning practices in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME-LLL) that shape access to lifelong learning of the employees. Subproject 5, in 2009, collected interviews with other stakeholders in adult education (SAE). Additionally, the team analysed representative lifelong learning. Subproject 2 comprised analyses of data from Eurostat's 2007 Adult Education Survey (AES) and an ad hoc module on lifelong learning within the 2003 European Labour Force Survey (LFS), which sought to answer specific research questions deriving from the team's novel conceptual approach.

The proposed methodology enabled the team to address different dimensions of the subject of research. The research covered three levels as well as different aspects:

1. Macro level:
   - Macro-structural aspect, to describe how country-specific institutions influence the supply and demand for lifelong learning.
   - Policy aspect, to describe different lifelong learning concepts fixed at the EU level as well as national policy documents, to analyse national policy measures focusing on lifelong learning policies, to identify the barriers to a coordinated focus across

different policy fields, and the concrete initiatives and public sector policies implemented at each level of the education system.

2. Meso level:
   - Schools and universities, to analyse the role of schools in meeting the lifelong learning challenge, to promote the access of adults to the education system.
   - Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to analyse the more fruitful approaches to improving the financial incentives for SMEs to invest in adult general education, and the demand of SMEs for more educated employees.

3. Micro level:
   - Adult population, to analyse participation and access of adults to formal learning. We analysed the data of Eurostat's Adult Education Survey and an ad hoc module on lifelong learning of the European Labour Force Survey.
   - Adult learners, to analyse the motivation of adults participating in formal learning, the expectations and attitudes towards LLL, obstacles to access and support received, determinants of choice behaviour, evaluation of ongoing training, and so on. We carried out a survey of adults studying in the formal education system (at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels).

The project's general methodology presented many important characteristics. Firstly, an international comparison. The research included European countries at different points of the continuum in relation to the access of adults to formal education. Some countries (mostly post-socialist countries) are very much at the starting point of the continuum with very few adults participating in formal education; while in other countries, such as Norway and the United Kingdom (UK), full adult participation in education – certainly in further education institutions – is the norm. Some countries, therefore, have a lot of catching up to do if they are to make lifelong learning in formal education a possibility. The countries of comparison were selected for the purpose of having a well-presented range of institutional settings.

Secondly, the project employed an approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis: the project combined large-scale statistical and sociological studies, documentary and policy studies and qualitative studies (interviews and focus group interviews). And thirdly, it had a multidisciplinary approach: the teams involved in the project comprised of researchers from many disciplines (sociology, economics, political sciences, history, psychology, the educational sciences).

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

As mentioned above, the point of departure for the research project in this book was to scrutinize formal adult education within a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective. The team realized very quickly that the notions of adult education, as well as formal education and their antonym, non-formal education, had to be profoundly revisited – and even revised. Likewise, the notion of lifelong learning and the extent to which national education and training systems have embarked on lifelong learning trajectories instead of only paying tribute to LLL slogans, became a critical issue. Chapter 1 starts with an investigation of national LLL policies from the European perspective, in which the EU policy framework is at the centre.

Chapter 2 follows by discussing typologies of LLL systems along the wide range of education and training practices, which for good or perhaps opportunistic reasons are assigned to lifelong learning. The third chapter in Part I of the book proposes a comparative framework of formal adult education based on a typology particularly emphasizing the composition of the organizational populations providing one type of formal adult education. This composition encompasses organizations belonging to different organizational fields, notably liberal adult education, management training, trade unions and initial vocational education. The proposed framework partly builds on observations accruing from the Adult Education Survey carried out at a national and cross-national level. Subsequently, the notion of organizational fields is applied to the Austrian educational system in one of the 12 country chapters constituting the second part of the book. In Part II, the national teams sum up key findings from their domestic research carried out during the five-year project period.

EU AND NATIONAL-LEVEL POLICIES: HUMAN CAPITAL VERSUS SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVES

In the policies of the European Union, lifelong learning has been a means of achieving both competitiveness and social cohesion in an increasingly knowledge-based and globalized economy. The concept and practice of lifelong learning in Europe has developed in close connection with wider political, economic and social forces. This is true at both EU and national levels. Early research on this topic strongly suggested that Europe's diversity was deeply important, and 'a single model of lifelong learning' across the EU was unlikely to be achieved (Holford et al. 2008).

In lifelong learning, economic and social concerns have often been in tension (Holford 2006). Lifelong education as conceptualized in the 1970s

had a strong humanistic dimension; when lifelong learning re-emerged in the 1990s, the emphasis was firmly on economic performance, individual and societal (Field 2006). The EU's approach to lifelong learning after 2000 evolved in many ways along lines set in the 1990s. The key themes continued to be competitiveness and social inclusion. Two themes emerge clearly in both Lisbon and Europ. 2020 strategies: on the one hand, competitiveness and growth; on the other, social cohesion and inclusion, strongly linked to employment. Europe's policies for lifelong learning over the past decade have been formulated within this context. As widely noted, the emphasis of lifelong learning policies internationally has been strongly 'economistic' since their emergence in the early 1990s.

As in EU policies, there is a general trend across the countries of lifelong learning policies focusing on labour market issues. Several country chapters report biased policies because LLL is predominantly following a narrow employability agenda. Chapter 4 on Scotland investigates these two perspectives by looking into the LLL discourses from the angle of social inclusion. Recent policies are moving away from LLL as a means of achieving social capital in terms of personal development and social inclusion. Young people are increasingly targeted because they are – from a human capital perspective – more salvageable in a labour market context. The redistribution discourse is therefore evident in Scotland, although the target groups for this redistribution continue to be under consideration, while there is a shift away from older people, who are generally more reluctant learners but who stand to gain if provided with learning in a nurturing environment. The authors find no evidence for the moral underclass discourse, meaning that the individual is expected to take responsibility for engaging in learning, with the assumption that such personal initiative would encourage norms and values conducive to social inclusion. The social integrationist discourse considers LLL to have a vital role in terms of upskilling, reskilling and in providing essential skills for entering the labour market. This discourse is present in Scotland and now centres on the working-age adult population. The country team points out that the three discourses are not mutually exclusive: the redistribution of the opportunity to participate in learning may, for example, enable an individual to achieve a qualification for entry into the labour market.

POLICY LEARNING AND BORROWING

One diagnosis in Chapter 1 on national LLL policies in the European perspective is that lifelong learning strategies are often exercises in policy learning. Those countries borrowing tools and concepts for domestic

policy-making are not only the new member states trying to learn to catch up with 'best practices' heralded by the EU. The old member states also have, albeit often reluctantly, plunged into exercises of mutual policy learning and the open method of policy coordination.

In Chapter 10, judging from the available data on developments in adult education, the country team argues that during the preparation period before becoming an EU member, Slovenia benefited from EU policies in the field of lifelong learning and employment. Good practices from some European countries also contributed to the development of more coherent systems, which facilitated participation in formal and non-formal adult education. At a declarative level, Slovenia has adopted the concept of lifelong learning as defined by the EU. However, lifelong learning is understood narrowly, as education of adults – predominantly the non-formal part. One sign of this is that education of adults is not treated as complementary to youth education, with its own requirements. Also, structures and institutions of the education system directly affecting participation in adult education have not experienced changes which could ease the access of adults to formal education. This particularly applies to the most deprived groups.

Chapter 14 on Lithuania looks back at the first years after independence from the Soviet system and concludes that the education system evolved from a highly ideological and domestic, to a more open 'internationalizing' system, culminating in EU membership in 2004. In the early 1990s, during Lithuania's 'Singing Revolution' movement for independence, education reform was subject to public debate, which could sustain the nation-building process as well as fostering economic and political stability. By mid-1992, the Lithuanian government announced that 'the education system is based on European cultural values', and set out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. A next step was the discussions in mid-2001 on the EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, introducing new terms and concepts in Lithuanian policy documents and into the general academic discourse. Following the gradual implementation of these education policies and strategies, a system of formal and non-formal adult education providers was formed, with shared responsibilities between the main organizers. The Lithuanian country team concludes that the efforts to improve participation in lifelong learning have so far proven to be insufficient, mainly because too little importance is attached to adults' access to higher education.

Whilst Bulgaria after 2007 was extremely sensitive to all initiatives coming from international and especially European organizations, the assimilation of these initiatives has often assumed the character not of learning and harmonization, but of borrowing, imitation and copying

(see Chapter 12). In this way, certain elements quite distant in nature from Bulgarian post-communist reality were introduced and artificially implanted, thereby generating distorted and ineffective social practices. The Bulgarian country team holds that contemporary LLL policy is subordinated to employment policy and LLL is predominantly subsumed under vocational education and training.

TYPOLOGIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The macro-level structural and institutional environment can only be captured if we take account of the wide definition of LLL: both as a realm of policy-making with its subsectors, and also accounting for LLL as a social field subject to scientific enquiry. The authors of the chapter 'Lifelong learning systems: overview and extension of different typologies' (Chapter 2) approach LLL from these two angles by discussing typologies being produced to analyse welfare state systems, skill formation systems and theories on varieties of capitalism.

Existing analyses clearly demonstrate large differences in how institutional factors impact participation in LLL across European countries (Saar and Helemäe 2008; Roosmaa and Saar 2010). In countries with different skill formation systems, the same combination of labour market institutions and education systems yields divergent patterns of participation in LLL. This means that variations in links between education systems, labour market institutions and participation opportunities reflect the embeddedness of LLL in 'packages' of mutually interdependent and coherent institutions.

The authors claim that typologies help researchers and policy-makers in escaping from assumptions of a single economic trajectory for market economies and for their LLL systems. Furthermore, as with the much more widespread conceptualization of education systems, researchers need to look for demarcations of those institutions that constitute emerging or already established LLL systems. Bearing in mind that the constituting subsystems of LLL are analysed as societal fields in this book, the work of typologization becomes more than a neat dissection of these fields into smaller parts. Instead, the efforts reflect transformations of Europe's educational systems.

Existing typologies are often developed from particular educational and labour market perspectives. The varieties of capitalism typologies are more complex because they use the unique skill sets distinctive of national economies to provide an explanation of the relationship between skill formation, adult learning, the labour market and the nature of the welfare

state. These typologies need revision however. The authors demonstrate this by particularly looking into post-socialist countries, where the structural and public policy frameworks can only be captured by more finely tuned analytical tools, such as the additional distinction 'dependent market economies'.

TYPOLOGY OF POST-SOVIET VERSUS POST-SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

The additional typology emerges from the presence of Lithuania, Estonia and Russia among the country chapters. The possibility of comparing these post-Soviet countries with other post-socialist countries, such as Bulgaria, Slovenia and Hungary, have nurtured thoughts on whether the centralized Soviet education system ironed out specific conditions for the transformation of adult education practices into something that fed into the European LLL discourse that all countries later were offered. This is discussed in the chapter on Estonia (Chapter 15), which points out that the country's changes came within the framework of the dissolution of not only the socialist system but also the Soviet state.

The chapter on Russia (Chapter 13) delves more into the Soviet heritage, while pointing out that the formal education system remains a product of the Soviet plan system and is unable to adapt to and meet the demands of the nascent capitalist labour market. Recent reforms to modernize formal education have mainly touched upon the formal aspect, while the core problems persist. Examples are the lack of available funds hampering a modernization of education programmes and equipment. There is also a deficiency of qualified and motivated teaching staff, especially in vocational education. The Russian country team maintains that the largest obstacle in bridging the gap between the formal education system and the labour market is the inability to effectively use the positive heritage of the Soviet education system. Below, we will return to this danger of eradicating too many educational institutions during the transition to more democratic systems.

TRIAD OF FORMAL, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

By the mid-1970s, the 'formal, non-formal and informal' triad of learning was firmly established. Informal education was defined as the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills,

attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment. Formal education is often relegated to the highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured 'education system'. Non-formal education is understood as any organized, systematic, educational activity carried out externally to the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population (Coombs and Ahmed 1974, p. 8). These two authors point out that there are no definitive or clear-cut boundaries between these three modes of education. They are overlapping, and interactions between them occur. Moreover, the offer and inclusiveness of non-formal education affect the field of formal adult education and lifelong learning in any given society. The authors therefore point out that elements from formal, non-formal and informal education should be synthesized and strong links developed between them, in order for systems of lifelong education to evolve.

Chapter 6 on Ireland makes the theoretical point that LLL should encompass both socio-personal and institutional processes. One approach is to forge links between the sectors of community education, primary, secondary, further and higher education in order to enable individuals who have experienced educational disadvantage to continue their education. In this context, the significance of non-formal education is that when it is present in the local community, it can reach out to those who had to leave school early and who have been marginalized by the mainstream education system. The institutional form of such non-formal education can be community LLL centres. During the last decade community building has been one of six priority areas of the Irish state's educational policies, but has been confronted with several constraints, notably inadequate resourcing, isolation from other educational sectors and lack of research support. Theoretically, community LLL centres represent what the Irish country team calls 'community capital'; in other words a combination of cultural and social capital embodying collective resources for the entire community. This brings us back to the human capital perspective versus social capital perspective evoked above.

In contemporary Russia (Chapter 13), non-formal and informal learning is basically split from the further education system. LLL is understood as the interconnection between the labour market and adult education, be it formal or non-formal. There are few interfaces between the system of education and the labour market by means of graduate placements in enterprises, patronage of enterprises over educational institutions or internship systems. Overall, non-formal educational experiences are not recognized by formal education institutions and the Russian government hesitates in strengthening the legal basis of adult education. There is thus

a clear need for moving towards building bridges between the formal and non-formal learning settings.

Chapter 7 on Flanders (in Belgium) shows that non-formal education per se is not a panacea for social inclusion in adult education, because vulnerable groups of learners participate less in non-formal than in formal learning. The relatively low propensity of adults to attend learning activities may come from the discouraging effect on low achievers of a stratified initial education system. The traditional inequalities in participation by gender, age, citizenship, labour market status and level of education are stronger in non-formal than in formal education. Non-formal education is dominated by vocational aspects. Highly educated adults therefore participate more in non-formal courses, mostly organized in the private sector and focused on job skills or in-company training. Unemployed adults have the highest participation rates in formal adult education. The Flemish government has taken these trends seriously and recent legislation has aimed to streamline and strengthen formal adult education, while stimulating 'life-wide' learning and the socio-cultural development of the population. This does not, however, rule out that the Flemish lifelong learning policy also aims at a smoother functioning of the labour market.

ADULT FORMAL LEARNING

By the mid-1970s, non-formal education was ideologically constructed as an alternative to formal education. Formal adult education remained the underdefined counterpart of the newly introduced, broadly discussed concept of non-formal adult education (see Colletta 1996; Tuijnman and Boström 2002). Representatives of new institutionalism, such as Richard Scott and John W. Meyer (1994), put formal and non-formal education on the same level, comparing them for their particularities instead of taking non-formal as a remedy for the shortcomings of formal education.

The authors of Chapter 3, 'Seven types of formal adult education and their organizational fields: Towards a comparative framework', contribute to a theoretical foundation of formal adult education by applying arguments developed within organizational institutionalism on institutional effects of education (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 2006; Meyer 1977). They argue that formal adult education has an institutionalized social charter (Meyer 1970), which promises that 'taking steps' on the educational ladder results in eligibility to move up on established career ladder (see also Hefler 2012). According to them, formal adult education imitates initial education's categories, symbolic and belief systems and demonstrates cognitive isomorphism, but it also expands the scope of education as an institution

by providing social categories, symbolic orders and beliefs not available within initial education (Hefler 2012, p. 60). The concept of formal adult education provides a new bracket, which summarizes various educational activities under a new heading. Institutionally separated fields of education are addressed as a new (at least statistical) unity of analysis.

Moving then to the typologization of formal learning, Chapter 9 on Austria offers a typology focusing on the adult population. According to a diversification of formal education into seven organizational fields, varying from basic skills programmes to continuing professional training, the authors call for a transgression of traditional 'demarcation lines', allowing to take account of formal adult education, non-formal firm-based training, liberal and civic adult education. This perspective enables an analysis of institutional logics and ongoing processes of importance in the development of a national qualifications framework in Austria. The chapter highlights the social acceptance of educational programmes and their resulting qualifications, instead of the traditional approach of grouping actors along institutional similarities or grouping of qualifications along types of programmes. One consequence of the present restricted view is that adult-education providers still play a minor role in part-time *Fachhochschule* degree courses or university training courses, not yet perceived as adult education by relevant administrators, policy-makers, the participants and the wider public.

PATH-DEPENDENCY, THE POWER OF STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONAL AGENCY

A central theme in social sciences is individual and institutional agency, including the influence of institutional structures on policy and practice. Several chapters in this book analyse the interaction between structural factors and individuals' dispositions in the field of LLL. These analyses provide insight into agency mechanisms, for example how various actors – such as interest groups – promote or resist transformations of education and training systems, possibly in the direction of a nascent national framework for LLL.

This process in Norway (Chapter 8) leads to educational practices gradually forming patterns pointing towards the existence of building blocks of a lifelong learning system. A low level of stratification of students, and a low degree of compartmentalization between education trajectories, are proof of attempts to install practices that fall under an LLL paradigm. Departing from the assumption that LLL can be understood as an 'organizational field', composed of actors with their identities and roles,

the chapter on Norway discusses the role that institutions exercise within this field. The analysis reveals LLL practices that partly fall into patterns pointing to systemic elements, embracing institutional and motivational aspects mediated through institutional strategies. The institutions exercise a certain freedom in defining their own LLL strategies, for example in terms of recruiting students from backgrounds of social exclusion. However, this leeway is less frequently used in higher education institutions, which are more independent from the local or central government, than in institutions at the upper secondary level. It therefore turns out that institutional strategies, being more ambitious than mirroring minimum requirements and mainstream public policy, do matter.

Institutional agency in Estonian adult education (Chapter 15) should be understood against the background of the population arriving to the 1990s transition period with a high educational level and sound labour market experiences. These assets were quite evenly distributed among the population but Estonia inherited from the Soviet period a poorly diversified formal adult education system, which only functioned when the State Power was crucial in the process of lifelong learning. Later, this low diversification, combined with marketization and liberalization of education, brought about a sharp increase in inequality of participation because individuals suddenly became responsible for their own education.

Eager to adopt the EU *acquis communautaire* in matters of education and training, Bulgarian institutional transition (Chapter 12) featured conflicts between the social agents of externally imposed modernization on the one hand and, on the other, the endogenous way of life. The outcome of these conflicts partly depends on national self-esteem and social integration in the recipient societies. As a whole, societies characterized by stronger integration and self-esteem are more likely to follow a creative pattern of modernization, while those weakly integrated and with lower self-esteem tend to follow a pattern of passive imitation and (self)-alienation, which predominates in Bulgaria and several other postsocialist countries.

CHANGE AND SOCIAL FIELDS

When analysing change and path dependency in LLL, the country teams build on earlier contributions to organizational sociology, for example Crozier and Friedberg (1977), who emphasized that change implies collective creation during which members of a collective learn together. This paves the way for new social practices of conflict and cooperation, while

allowing for forms of collective action that simultaneously create and express a new structuration of one or several social fields (Crozier and Friedberg 1977, p. 35).

Pierre Bourdieu considers education as one field among others, in the sense of being 'structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them)' (Bourdieu 1993, p. 72). Within fields, struggles take place between individuals over resources, stakes and access.

The limits of a field are defined by the limits of efficacy of a particular form of capital (Bourdieu and Wasquant 1992, p. 101). Bourdieu distinguishes between different societal fields (e.g., economy, education, arts, mass media and politics). Although these fields may both overlap and be composed of diverse subfields, they are characterized by distinct norms, values and rationalities. Bourdieu conceptualizes fields as arenas for competition with their 'rules of the game' modified by powerful actors. It is important to notice, however, that the success of actors in one field cannot easily be translated into other fields.

Institutional fields are relatively autonomous arenas, each with their own gravitational logic; in other words, zones in which particular forms of capital have efficacy in the pursuit of what is at stake in the game (Bourdieu and Wasquant 1992, pp. 97–101). The logic of a field is overwhelmingly defined by its distributive possibilities between groups of people differentially positioned within it; the stances and strategies these positions afford; and the conditions of access of these positions as well as the capitals they command. Adult learners fit easily into these theoretical categories and several country chapters deal with the distribution of access to learning possibilities, and even more systematic support structures for LLL. The fact that empirical material fits to a theoretical framework is however no guarantee of the theories' explanatory power.

This brings us to some critiques of Bourdieu; notably for grounding institutional fields primarily in the struggles of agents and groups, not the purposes of organizations. Almost all of Bourdieu's discussion of fields is pitched at the level of individual actors who find themselves in fields where they act. His concept of field thus focuses mostly on individuals gaining position and power and not on collective actors who work to build and then hold their group together in the face of struggle in a broader field (Fligstein and McAdam 2011).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) appropriate and adapt the concept of field from Bourdieu, emphasizing its relational features. Their perspective is meso-sociological. They consider organizations as being deeply shaped by other organizations. The basic units are organizational fields

and any organization is embedded in a distinct setting of organizations (Greenwood and Hinings 1996, pp. 1026–1027). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identify three forces driving organizations in fields toward similar outcomes: coercive, normative isomorphism and mimetic. Coercion results from regulatory agencies; normative isomorphism is based upon professional associations, consulting firms and educational institutions; and mimicry stems from the ongoing observations of peers, competitors and collaborators. All organizations are exposed to rather specific influences. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that fields develop alongside: increased interaction between similar organizations; the emergence of sharply defined interorganizational structures of domination and patterns of coalition; an increase in the information load with which organizations in a field must contend; and the development of mutual awareness among participants in a set of organizations.

Other proponents of new institutionalism assumed differentiations of organized context, such as Scott and Meyer (1991) who developed the concept of societal sectors. Sectors were conceptualized as functional domains that are composed of diverse organizations as well as corresponding non-organizational features, such as meaning and belief systems or governance structures and other 'rules of the game'. Scott (1991) also emphasizes characteristic features of organizational fields. The 'field approach' is characterized by the assumption that organizational fields mediate between a single organization and broader social contexts (Hasse 2008); or in the words of McAdam and Scott:

> The concept of field identifies an arena – a system of actors, actions, and relations – whose participants take one another into account as they carry out interrelated activities. Rather than focusing on a single organization or movement, or even a single type of organization or movement (population), it allows us to view these actors in context. (McAdam and Scott 2005, 10)

Many authors have criticized the new concept of institutional field for underestimating the role of power in the structuring of fields (Fligstein 2001; Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). The questions of why, and in whose interest, fields exist are rarely addressed in institutional theory, and the power to pursue interests is insufficiently accounted for. Fligstein and McAdam (2011) therefore propose the concept of 'strategic action field', which is a meso-level social order where actors (who can be individual or collective) interact with knowledge of one another under a set of common understandings about the purpose of the field, the relationship in the field (including who has power and why), and the field's rules. They emphasize that this concept combines the new institutional field concept with underlying processes determining who gets what.

MODELS OF PARTICIPATION IN LLL

Moving to socio-psychological theories that inform research on lifelong learning, the chain-of-response model developed by Cross (1981) aimed to explain what instigates some people to participate in adult learning and others not to do it. The model starts with a person's self-perception and attitudes toward education. From this mainly psychological angle, the model moves on to more external factors such as opportunities and barriers. The next step is formed by the expectations and the values attached to participation. According to the model, factors such as life transitions, information, opportunities and barriers further influence whether or not an individual participates in adult education. In the end, the importance of barriers depends on how strong an interest the individual has in learning. The emphasis in the model is on psychological and environmental variables.

The 'expectancy-valence' of Rubenson (1976) also starts from the interaction between the individual and his environment. The valence in the model refers to the importance of the likely outcomes of participation, and the expectancy refers to the likelihood of achieving outcomes. Rubenson refers to Lewin's field theory (see Lewin 1997) and proposes components defining the life space of an individual at a given time. On a personal level previous educational experience, individual needs and personal characteristics play a role. The most important environmental factors are the individual's own welfare, the standards of a person's reference group and the availability of educational opportunities. However, according to field theory these factors should be included among the conditions creating motivation and not as a barrier at a particular moment, when motivation is already established.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) develop the psychosocial interaction model emphasizing the importance of social environment factors and of socio-economic status of the individual for later participation in adult education. The background characteristics and the social environment of the childhood strongly influence the school career and later socio-economic status. Socio-economic status has a positive effect on participation as well as on the perceived value and usefulness of participating in education. The last factor influencing participation according to this model is the barriers, which are negatively correlated with participation stimuli.

Common to these models is the importance of psychological aspects. This means that these models belong to the school of socio-psychological interactionism (see also Boeren et al. 2010; Hefler 2012). These models remain one-sided, because with emphasis on the individual, structural components are pushed into the background. Environmental factors

are often described only in relation to the individual's life situation. The factors of the educational institutions and on the broader country level are mostly absent.

Historical and organizational institutionalism approaches (Scott and Meyer 1994) have rarely been used to explain the participation of adults but instead examine cross-sectional or country differences (Hefler 2011, p. 107). Institutional approaches explain participation by the emergence of beliefs in societies that education is a means for achieving legitimate goals. This belief becomes institutionalized on coercive, normative and cognitive levels.

The bounded agency model, developed by Rubenson and Desjardins (2009), suggests that broader structural conditions and targeted policy measures impact on participation. Structural conditions play an important role in forming circumstances faced by individuals and limit the feasible alternatives to choose from. Decisions to take part in adult learning activities are affected by government measures and initiatives as well as by individual choice. Studies of participation, Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) argue, need to use a 'bounded agency' approach and include the role of various agents in society. Structural and institutional contexts can also affect individual consciousness, while the system of dispositions is a result of social experiences, collective memories and ways of thinking.

This model is helpful for modelling the interference between micro, meso and macro contexts, as it provides a theory for how to express any change on the meso and macro levels on the individual basis. Authors of several country chapters have used this model to explain participation in lifelong learning.

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