Lifelong Learning Book Series 24

Andreas Fejes
Erik Nylander *Editors*

Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning

Springer

Lifelong Learning Book Series

Volume 24

Aims & Scope

Competing visions and paradigms for lifelong learning co-exist at national as well as international levels. The fact that one 'official' discourse may be dominant at any one time does not mean that other ways of thinking about learning throughout the life course have disappeared. They are alive and well in a range of critical traditions and perspectives that retain their power to engage and persuade.

In this series, contributors critically analyse issues in lifelong learning that have important implications for policy and practice in different parts of the world. Evidence, ideas and the polity can mobilise political thinking in new directions, as policy makers search for the new 'big idea'. In turbulent times, ideas for better connecting system worlds and life worlds in the pursuit of broader and more just forms of meritocracy can focus compellingly on learning as a lifelong process which links, rather than separates, the older and younger generations and incorporates the realities of working lives.

The series aims to engage scholars, practitioners, policy-makers and professionals with contemporary research and practice, and to provoke fresh thinking and innovation in lifelong learning. Each volume is firmly based on high quality scholarship and a keen awareness of both emergent and enduring issues in practice and policy. We welcome work from a range of disciplines and, in particular, inter- and multi-disciplinary research which approaches contemporary and emerging global and local challenges in innovative ways. Through advocacy of broad, diverse and inclusive approaches to learning throughout the life course, the series aspires to be a leading resource for researchers and practitioners who seek to rethink lifelong learning to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/6227

Andreas Fejes • Erik Nylander
Editors

Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning

Springer

Editors
Andreas Fejes
Department of Behavioural
Sciences & Learning
Linköping University
Linköping, Sweden

Erik Nylander
Department of Behavioural
Sciences & Learning
Linköping University
Linköping, Sweden

Lifelong Learning Book Series
ISBN 978-3-030-10945-5 ISBN 978-3-030-10946-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2

Series Editors' Note

The Lifelong Learning Book Series was launched in 2004 and, by 2018, had published 23 volumes on topics of international significance. In this latest phase in the life of the series, we aim to engage our expanding, international readership in 'Rethinking Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century'. Lifelong learning debates are refreshed and renewed when scholars bring fresh perspectives and critical analyses of emergent and enduring issues in lifelong learning that have important implications for policy and practice around the globe.

In selecting books for the Lifelong Learning Book Series, we recognise that competing visions and paradigms for lifelong learning co-exist at national as well as international levels. The fact that one 'official' discourse may be dominant at any one time does not mean that other ways of thinking about learning throughout the life course have disappeared. They are alive and well in a range of critical traditions and perspectives that retain their power to engage and persuade. Evidence, ideas and the polity can mobilise political thinking in new directions, as policy-makers search for the new 'big idea'. In turbulent times, ideas for better connecting system worlds and life worlds can focus compellingly on learning as a lifelong process which links, rather than separates, the older and younger generations and incorporates the realities of working lives.

In *Mapping Out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, the contributors bring critical perspectives to questions of what is shaping the map and how adult education research and scholarship contribute to international learning debates. The book explores, from a variety of theoretical and historical perspectives, how knowledge about adult education and learning is produced and communicated internationally. The detailed analyses reveal biases in communication across leading journals and research networks and highlight the extent to which the field is dependent on the cognate disciplines of sociology, social psychology and organisational studies. As the debate is progressively deepened to address power relations in the positioning of individual scholars and information flows across national boundaries, the biases and unevenness of the playing field for international scholarly recognition become clear.

The editors and authors thus generate a set of challenges for those who are engaged in refreshment and renewal of the field, if the research field of adult education and learning is to become genuinely, and inclusively, international. As research development is inextricably linked with contemporary policies and evolving practices, these questions are significant not only for researchers and scholars but also for professionals, practitioners and policy-makers worldwide.

UCL Institute of Education, London, UK Karen Evans
Lifelong Learning Book Series Editors Andrew Brown
January 2019

Contents

Part I
Introducing and Historicizing the Field

Chapter 1
Introduction: Mapping the Research Field on Adult Education and Learning

Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander

1.1 Introduction

If the framing and composition of research fields are never fully fixed or saturated (Abbott 1995; Gieryn 1983), this is a particularly salient feature of the research field that deals with the education and learning of adults. Not only is the research question of adult education and learning approached from a multitude of academic disciplines – such as sociology, psychology and education – the very concepts that are used to denote this field have also undergone important changes. Such conceptual changes are visible, for instance, in the recent development whereby the model of adult education and *Bildung* came to be partly replaced by the notion of lifelong learning. In Europe, lifelong learning gained prominence in the policy area with the year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 and then the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, published by the European Commission (2001), which positions lifelong learning as a central policy concept in the realisation of the Commission's strategies. As a policy preoccupation, lifelong learning supersedes concepts of adult education (Lindeman 1926) and lifelong education (Faure 1972). The shift from focusing on education to speaking about learning is important to address in research, because it marks out a new way of conceptualising the education and learning of adults in terms of the why, the how, the what, the when and the where questions. These policy changes can also be identified within research and, particularly, in how the research field on the education and learning of adults is defined and delimited (see Chaps. 2 and 3). Thus, while it is clear that the research field of adult education and learning undergoes changes over time and is quite diverse in terms of the current choice of theories, research objects, methodologies and so on, little is known empirically

A. Fejes (✉) · E. Nylander
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: andreas.fejes@liu.se

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_1

about its current "state of affairs" and how it can be mapped out and characterised scientifically.

This book maps out what the research field of adult education and learning looks like, how it has emerged historically and how it has transformed through contemporary policy and research practice. The book consists of 13 chapters written by leading scholars in the research field of adult education and learning who, in different ways, have engaged in questions pertaining to how this field is shaped and constituted today as well as historically. The contributions are written from a broad range of theoretical positions and include both historical accounts as well as more contemporary forms of analysis. The questions that are addressed in the different chapters include what kinds of research traditions, theories and methodologies have come to dominate the field, how it has changed over time and who is attributed international scholarly recognition. The more contemporary accounts of the field draw, to a large extent, on large-scale bibliometric and bibliographic data to unravel the 'invisible colleges' active in research on adult education and learning. As such, the book also reads as a case study within the sociology of science that can be compared and juxtaposed against accounts of other research fields within social science and humanities.

Before introducing the different contributions to this book, let us first provide a brief historical account of how this field has come to emerge in Europe and the dominant Anglo-Saxon countries. More specifically, we will highlight some formative debates and discussions that have already dealt with the constitution of the field and its main characteristics.

1.2 A Brief History of Adult Education Research

Adult education as a field of research has emerged largely out of a concern for the practice of adult education. However, this development is in and of itself very diverse, not least if we focus on the European continent, a geographical region with numerous countries with different educational systems as well as languages spoken. The linguistic and organisational variations tend to create parallel universes with regards to research. For example, the sheer number of academics speaking the same language makes it possible to be more or less self-sustained in terms of journals in one's own language (Heilbron and Gingras 2018).

The diversity is also evident in the way adult education has been institutionalised and is organised across Europe as of today. In some countries, such as those in Scandinavia and that eventually became Germany, there are long historical traditions of institutionalised adult education going back to the mid-1800s (see e.g. Korsgaard 2010; Laginder et al. 2013; Zeuner 2010; see also Chap. 3), while in other countries educational institutions for adults came into existence much later. Of central importance for the research field to emerge as a specific and specialised knowledge area was the instalment of professorships in adult education. Such instalments were often connected to possibilities to develop research as well as university

programmes. In some countries there has never been any professorship in adult education, while in others, such as Germany, there are currently more than 40 chairs/professorships in the field (Chap. 3). However, the first professorship in adult education was created at the University of Nottingham in England back in 1922, followed by the instalment of professors in several European countries in the decades to come. However, the time when such installments occurred greatly differs. In Finland, for example, the first chair was installed in 1946 (Aaltonen 2010), in Germany this was in the late 1950s (see Chap. 3), while Sweden did not get a chair dedicated to adult education until 1983 (Fejes 2013). The way these chairs are labelled also differs between countries. In international conferences on adult education professors in andragogy (from former Yugoslavia, Poland or the Netherlands) could meet professors of adult education (from Finland, Germany or Sweden) alongside other professors that had an interest in this area based on other disciplinary backgrounds (Sociology, History, Education, Organizational studies etc).

In North America, adult education as a field of research emerged partly due to the development of university programmes in adult education, the first of which was created at Columbia University in 1930. It was focused on developing knowledge in order to define and advance a research field that, at the time, was not very mature (Jensen et al. 1964). Even though US was fairly early in having university programmes specialising in adult education, there were a limited number of professors active in the field for a long time. For example, in 1955 the organisers of a North American adult education conference could only find 28 professors in adult education in the whole of North America, many of whom only worked part-time (Houle 1991). Much effort and research was directed at developing programmes and instructional methods during this time. Such preoccupation is illustrated by Long and Agyekum's (1974) analysis of articles that were published in *Adult Education Quarterly* (then named Adult Education). They found that during the period 1964–1973 more than half of the articles (55%) concerned one of the three following areas: programme planning and administration, instructional material and methods and adult learning. Rubenson (1982, p. 62) notes that American branches of psychology and methodological empiricism heavily influenced the field of adult education before the 1980s, and argues that that this was partly due to the dominating idea at that time that instruction could be derived "linearly from research". There was, thus, a general lack of research on sociological aspects of adult education, which might help explain why questions of power did not come to the forefront of the field until fairly late.

The emergence of a research tradition in adult education and learning has sometimes been attributed to a conceptual separation of the adult learner from the child that appeared from the 1960s in many European countries. 'Andragogy' as the science of teaching and learning of adults was distinguished from pedagogy in the work of Alexander Kapp (1833) in Germany in 1833. In the 1920s this idea was taken up in the United States by Lindeman and Anderson (Lindeman 1926) and became known in some quarters through the work of Malcolm Knowles in the 1970s and 1980s. However, there are at least two different meanings of andragogy. In the US, through Knowles (1973, 1980), andragogy addressed the practice of adult

education as resting on normative models of curriculum design, while in some parts of Europe the concept came to carry a much wider meaning, opening up for all kinds of theoretical and empirical research on adult education. In the first decade of this century, the concept is reported as used in Bosnia, Croatia, Poland, Slovenia and, to some extent, in Germany and the US (Bron 2006; Holmes and Abington-Cooper 2000).

1.3 A Qualitative and Heterodox Turn

The theoretical interests and methodological expertise that have come to dominate adult education research connect with wider trends within the social sciences and humanities in large. Much of what has come to dominate this field in recent times appears related to broader currents in the post-war era. For instance, in the 1950s, there was an increase in public spending on education in countries such as Germany, Sweden, the US and the UK. One of the effects of these political reforms and growth of public expenditure on education was a growing need to find means to evaluate and administer the population in the educational realm. Partly connected to these developments, many countries established governmental authorities and research institutes that were meant to monitor and survey what was happening in the educational field (see Chap. 3 for elaborative discussion on the case of Germany).

The increase in large-scale surveys and statistical data analyses based on micro- and census data after the world wars can, in part, be seen as a means for politicians to have researchers provide results deemed useful for policymaking and steering (Husén 1983). The ascent of a quantitative research paradigm in educational research during 'the golden years of Welfare capitalism' in the West was driven, to a large extent, by expectations that funding of such research would increase efficiency and productivity of education.[1] However, there are still to this day some lingering differences between how researchers in Europe and the US relate to the State. Whereas adult education research in Europe still often focuses on the role of the State and explicitly relates to policy issues, in the US these topics are more seldom brought up, while the individual learner and their attitudes tend to be more emphasised. According to Rubenson (2000, p. 5) the general lack of focus on the State and policy issues in the US could partly be explained due to a "decentralized political and economic system and individual emphasis on social mobility, [which] promotes a research focus on the individual" (see also Chap. 2).

[1] In Sweden, this was seen, for example, in the vast number of studies exploring the phenomena of 'reserve of talent' ("begåvningsreserven"), which referred to those who had not been given the opportunity to reach the level of education which their 'talent' foresaw or corresponded to. Measuring talent was, at that time, strongly linked to the performances of certain IQ tests that had been systematically used within military reviews (Härnqvist 1958; Husén 1956). These studies paved the way for an increase in public spending on adult education in Sweden as it became apparent that many citizens lacked the educational opportunities that the measurements of 'talent' predicted they were suited for.

Yet the dominance of large-scale quantitative research would come to change in the later part of the twentieth century. In the 1960s and 1970s, alongside the rapid growth of the whole university sector, influx of new students' groups and the political radicalisation of these students, the domination of psychological and empirically-oriented research was questioned by the increased use of hermeneutic, phenomenological and critical perspectives. This development also paved the way for qualitative research methods that did not have much legitimacy and scientific status from the start (see e.g. Husén 1983, 1988; Larsson 2006). These more general trends within the social sciences and educational science had repercussions for the field of adult education research. We will mention three such noteworthy repercussions here.

Firstly, there was a gradual increase in qualitative studies that eventually came to overtake the quantitative research paradigm. Even though adult educational research in the US still, to some extent, lingers on a psychological research tradition, previous research indicates that there has been a decline in empirically oriented research in the US (Rubenson 2000) as well as quantitative studies more broadly (Taylor 2001; see also Chaps. 7 and 8). Thus, the pendulum appears to have taken a full swing over the course of the twentieth century and researchers have, as of late, started to raise concerns with adult educational scholars being methodologically one-sided (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Boeren 2018, Daley et al. 2018; see also Chaps. 7, 8 and 9).

Secondly, theorisations in the field of adult education came to focus on issues of power to a large extent. For example, the work of Freire (1972) became influential for many adult education scholars during the 1970s, not only in Latin America but also in Europe and among the former colonisers (cf. Kane 2013). Freire was also picked up in the US, most notably through the work of Henry Giroux (1983), and is still today an important reference in American adult education research (see Chap. 5). The writings of critical pedagogues such as Freire and Giroux provided critiques of oppressive relations and inspiration for how to design educational practices that might be mobilised to counter oppression. At the same time, intellectual movements that later became known under the label of 'post-structuralism' emerged. These theories abandoned the quest for essence, truth and causality, offering new ways to conceptualise power, class, gender and the making of social scientific knowledge (see e.g. Usher and Edwards 1994). Much of the post-sixties research on adult education can – directly or indirectly – be placed in relation to these overarching traditions and the various tensions between them.

The third and final repercussion that we want to draw attention to is that the debates about the sovereign epistemological status of the field have almost disappeared. Previously, there were discussions and debates on the status of the field, where some argued that adult education should develop its own theories and methodologies (see e.g. Boys and Apps 1980; Bright 1989). However, as of today this discussion seems rather obsolete as most scholars suggest the field is inherently interdisciplinary and pluralistic (see e.g. Fejes and Salling Olesen 2010; Hake 1992; Rubenson 2000). This heterogeneous character of the field of adult education and learning seems here to stay judging by the results presented in this book. On the

other hand, such openness and inherent interdisciplinarity should not exclude possibilities for specialised adult education and learning research that builds on research within the same specialised field; otherwise, the risk is that the research field becomes a subservient sub-discipline without any inertia.

Although much has been said about the plurality and segmentation that the field is characterised by, relatively few efforts have been made to gather systematic and authoritative investigations about the research field as such. This book contains 13 chapters divided into four parts that in different ways turn attention towards the way the field of adult education and learning research has been shaped and what the current "state-of-the-art" consists of.

1.4 Introducing the Chapters

The first part of the book further elaborates on the historical developments of the adult education and learning research field. In Chap. 2, Kjell Rubenson and Maren Elfert examine how the configuration of adult education research has evolved, particularly over the last decade. Their analysis draws on a two-pronged approach: a reading of four seminal articles written by adult education scholars who have conducted bibliometric analyses of selected adult education journals; as well as our own review of 75 articles, covering a one-year period (2012–2013), in five adult education journals that were chosen to provide a greater variety of the field of adult education in terms of their thematic orientation and geographical scope than has been the case in previous reviews. Their findings suggest that the field is facing two main challenges. First, the fragmentation of the map of the territory that was noticed at the end of the 1990s has continued and appears to have intensified. Second, not only practitioners but also the policy community voice their disappointment with adult education research, and note a disconnect between academic adult education research and policy-related research. The authors end their chapter by providing some speculations as to the future map of adult education as a field of study and point to the danger of shifting the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights.

In Chap. 3, Christine Zeuner looks back on one hundred years of history of research on adult education in Germany. She illustrates how such research was first undertaken by adult educators who wanted to know more about their participants and conditions, under which adult education should ideally be provided and taught. Later on, with the scientific expansion of the field in the 1970s, such research developed in a multi-layered fashion, with quite diverse approaches and research questions. The chapter is framed by two dimensions, which have always played an important role in characterising adult education research in Germany. The first is the question of whether we are talking about *Bildung* when looking at the aim of adult education or considering learning or competence. Whereas the first notion looks at personal development and enrichment of the subject in order for her or him to live a fulfilled life according to her or his abilities and aspirations, learning and

acquiring competencies aim instead at fulfilling external expectations. The second dimension deals with how underlying theoretical frameworks are influencing research, whether they are relevant only for the theoretical perspective of the researcher, or whether they influence research itself and to what means and outcomes. The chapter illustrates how adult educational research requires interaction between researchers and practitioners, between theory and practice, between the individual and society.

The second part of the book consists of three chapters focused on the contemporary field of adult education and learning research as defined by publications and citations in English speaking peer-review journals. These chapters use bibliometric methods, and draw on the largest data sample to date, in analysing adult education and learning as a research field. In other words, they partly draw on the same data, but unravel different dimensions of bibliometric impact and scholarly recognition in the field. In Chap. 4, Erik Nylander, Lovisa Österlund and Andreas Fejes report on findings from a large-scale bibliographic study conducted based on the citation practices within the field of research on adult learning. Their data consist of 151,261 citation links between more than 33,000 different authors whose papers were published in five leading international journals in the field of adult learning during the time period 2006–2014. By analysing the composition of the dominating citation clusters, they construct a telescopic view of the research field based on an accumulation of citations. The results consist of two parts. First, they go through the dominating players and research traditions active in the field, their positions and mutual relations. Secondly, they derive two main structural oppositions inherent in the citation networks, one connected to the research object (studying education or work) and the second to the level of analysis (cognition or policy). Their result indicates, amongst other things, how the most dominating tradition within adult learning in the last few decades – sociocultural perspectives on learning – occupies a very central position in the space of citations during this time frame, balancing between these opposing poles. By becoming the mainstream, scholars drawing on sociocultural perspectives also appear more capable of overcoming the strong national and institutional constraints that permeate within the field.

In Chap. 5, Staffan Larsson, Lovisa Österlund, Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander use the same data and bibliometric method to further analyse the social composition of the top one hundred cited names and outline the citation practices in five leading academic journals. Based on the concept of invisible colleges, the authors critically examining the collective biography of the top-cited authors. They show how the citations practices differ greatly between the indexed journals and how scientific and administrative capital is conveyed and reproduced in peer-reviewed citations. Three factors that have particular importance in shaping and influencing international scholarly recognition within this field are: (i) the geographical position of the author (ii) the gender of the author and (iii) the gatekeeping function of being an editor. The authors conclude that the policy idea that these ‘international’ journals represent ‘quality’ in research, regardless of geography, gender, language and research, is incorrect.

In Chap. 6, Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander further develop the investigation on the current publication and citation regime and how it more or less forces scholars in many locations to publish their work in their second or third language (English) in journals indexed by the main databases (Web of science and Scopus). Thus, journals indexed in such locations are positioned as gatekeepers who are not only gatekeeping the 'field' they see themselves representing; the journals are also gatekeepers in terms of career tracks and promotions in locations elsewhere on the globe. Thus, the question pursued in the chapter is who is published in those journals deemed most central in adult education within the current publication regime, and who is being picked up and cited in articles published in these journals. Specific attention in this chapter is directed at country comparisons. Comparing the first authorship of articles in three leading journals during the period 2005–2018 reveals a clear dominance of authors from one of four anglophone countries: US, Canada, UK and Australia. At the same time, the results illustrate how the US adult education scholars appear surprisingly provincial and peripheral in adult education compared to other social scientific research fields, tendencies that seem further reinforced during the last decade.

The third part of the book focuses, more specifically, on developments of the field in terms of research approaches and research objects. In Chap. 7, Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander critically examine the assumption that the field of adult education and learning is pluralistic, and in what respect. Drawing on bibliometric data of the top cited articles in three main adult education journals between 2005 and 2012, they illustrate how the citation patterns have tendencies towards uniformity when it comes to the geographical country of authorship, as well as the research methods adopted, since qualitative approaches have near total dominance. They elaborate on the reasons for why this is the case and raise a concern that the field would benefit from more plurality in terms of research methods. Furthermore, they illustrate how there is a tendency to adopt similar theoretical approaches, since sociocultural perspectives, critical pedagogy and post-structuralism represent more than half the articles in their sample. At the same time, their results indicate signs of scholarly pluralism, for instance, in terms of authorship, since both early career researchers and established researchers are represented among the top cited publications. They conclude the chapter by arguing that empirical analysis of publication and citation patterns is important to further the development of reflexivity within the field, not least for early career researchers and researchers in more peripheral academic institutions who might benefit from knowledge about what has been recognised among peers as worth citing.

In Chap. 8, Ellen Boeren discusses the strengths and weaknesses of working with quantitative research methods, with a specific focus on the opportunities it can bring to the field of adult education and learning research. The author distinguishes between working with primary and secondary data and provides examples of validated data collection tools used in quantitative research as published in leading international adult education journals. She critically discusses existing secondary data sets, including the Eurostat Adult Education Survey and PIAAC's Survey of Adult Skills, and explores the opportunities of working with these data as a way to

advance knowledge in the field of adult education. While these data sets are primarily produced for policy-oriented reasons by international organisations such as the European Commission and the OECD, they have, Boeren argues, potential for academic research as well. The entire discussion in the chapter is guided by possible reasons explaining the qualitative nature of the field of adult education and provides some suggestions to readers on how to increase attention for quantitative studies in the future.

In Chap. 9, Bernd Käpplinger focuses on what patterns can be identified in adult education research as represented by what is published in proceedings from the triennial research conferences of the European Society for the Research on Adults (ESREA) between 1994 and 2013. Drawing on the concept rhizome and a programme analysis perspective, he identifies who is publishing, what research objects are treated, theories and methods used as well as who is being cited. By focusing on conference proceedings, Käpplinger provides a partly different picture than what becomes visible in other chapters in this book, where foremost peer-reviewed journal articles have been analysed. There are, for example, a high degree of citations to scholars within the field, as well as a high degree of key cited scholars coming from locations where English is not the first language.

The fourth and final part of the book consists of an academic discussion and debate between the authors of Chap. 10, John Field, Klaus Künzel and Michael Schemmann, and Chap. 11, Marcella Milana. It starts with a historical account by Field and his colleagues, reintroducing a famous pioneer in comparative education, Marc-Antoine Jullien (1775–1848). Following the reintroduction of this historical perspective, the authors propose a model of the different phases that helps explain the development of comparative adult education research in modern times, followed by a critical discussion on the current challenges we face. The authors end the text by asking if the chapter of comparative adult education has now been fully closed.

Chapter 11, written by Marcella Milana, is an extended discussion of the questions raised by Field, Künzel and Schemmann, examining and debating, in particular and in detail, the notion of international and comparative adult education as well as their conceptual framework. Milana also argues for improving the qualitative methodologies to investigate adult education policy through country comparisons and warns that current policy-oriented research can hinder and hamper such approaches. Chapter 12 is a rejoinder by John Field, Klaus Künzel and Michael Schemmann, written as a response to Marcella Milana.

In the concluding chapter, the editors of the book summarise the main findings and elaborate on wider issues concerning the field, as well as those concerning the limitations of the book, such as what is included and what has been left out. They argue that the meta-reflections of the research field provided in the various chapters is vital for scientific reflexivity and that, despite its inherent limitations, bibliometric data constitute a valuable resource in making the “invisible colleges” more visible. They hope that this book will inspire further empirical investigations and debates about the field, and bring into visibility the diversity and richness of scholarship on adult education and learning.

References

Aaltonen, R. (2010). Sivistyksellistä syvämuokkausta – oma yhdistys kokosi voimat. *Aikuiskasvatus, 30*(40), 244–246.

Abbott, A. (1995). Things of boundaries. *Social Research, 62*, 857–882.

Boeren, E. (2018). The methodological underdog: A review of quantitative research in the key adult education journals. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*, 63. 0741713617739347.

Boys, R. D., & Apps, J. W. (Eds.). (1980). *Redefining the discipline of adult education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bright, B. P. (Ed.). (1989). *Theory and practice in the study of adult education: The epistemological debate*. London: Routledge.

Bron, A. (2006). Vuxenpedagogik som vetenskaplig disciplin. In L. Borgström & P. Gougoulakis (Eds.), *Vuxenantologin: En grundbok om vuxnas lärande* (pp. 53–72). Stockholm: Atlas Akademi.

Daley, B. J., Martin, L. G., & Roessger, K. M. (2018). A call for methodological plurality: Reconsidering research approaches in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*(2), 157–169.

EU Commission. (2001). *Memorandum on lifelong learning*. Brussels: EU.

Faure, E. (1972). *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow*. Paris: UNESCO.

Fejes, A. (2013). Vuxenpedagogik som forskningsfält. In A. Fejes (Ed.), *Lärandets mångfald: Vuxenpedagogik och folkbildning* (pp. 19–34). Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2015). How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 103–123.

Fejes, A., & Salling Olesen, H. (2010). Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 7–16.

Freire, P. (1972). *The pedagogy of the oppressed*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Gieryn, T. F. (1983). Boundary-work and the demarcation of science from non-science: Strains and interests in professional ideologies of scientists. *American Sociological Review, 48*, 781–795.

Giroux H (1983) *Theory and resistance in education: A pedagogy for the opposition*. Bergin and Garvey, Hadley.

Hake, B. J. (1992). Remaking the study of adult education: The relevance of recent developments in the Netherlands for the search for disciplinary identity. *Adult Education Quarterly, 42*(2), 63.

Härnqvist, K. (1958). *Reserverna för högre utbildning: Beräkningar och metoddiskussion* [The reserves for higher education: Calculations and a discussion on method] SOU 1958:11. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.

Heilbron, J., & Gingras, Y. (2018). The globalization of European research in the social sciences and humanities (1980–2014): A bibliometric study. In J. Heilbron, G. Sora & T. Boncourt (Eds.), *The social and human sciences in global power relations* (pp. 29–58). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holmes, G., & Abington-Cooper, M. (2000). Pedagogy vs. andragogy: A false dichotomy? *The Journal of Technology Studies, 26*(2), 50.

Houle, C. (1991). Foreword. In J. M. Peters & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *Evolution and achievements in a developing field of study appeared*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass publishers.

Husén, T. (1956). *En försummad begåvningsreserv* [A forgotten reserve of talent]. Tiden 5.

Husén, T. (1983). Educational research and the making of policy in education: An international perspective. *Minerva, 21*(1), 81–100.

Husén, T. (1988). Research paradigm in education. *Interchange, 19*(1), 2–13.

Jensen, G., Liveright, A. A., & Hallenbeck, W. (Eds.). (1964). *Adult education: Outlines of an emerging field of university study*. Washington, DC: American association for adult education.

Kane, L. (2013). Comparing 'popular' and 'state' education in Latin America and Europe. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 4*(1), 81–96.

Kapp, A. (1833). *Die Andragogik ober Bildung im mannlichen Alter*. Platons Erziehungslehre, als Padagogik fur die Einzelnen und als Staatspadagogik. Minden und Leipzig.
Knowles, M. (1973). *The adult learner: A neglected species*. Houston: Gulf.
Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education*. Cambridge/New York: The Adult Education Company.
Korsgaard, O. (2010). Den rene hojskole som ideal. Den urene som praxis. In A. Nilsson & F. Lundh Nilsson (Eds.), *Två sidor av samma mynt? Folkbildning och yrkesutbildning vid de nordiska folkhögskolorna*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.
Laginder, A.-M., Nordvall, H., & Crowther, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Popular education, power and democracy: Swedish experiences and contributions*. London: NIACE.
Larsson, S. (2006). Ethnography in action: How ethnography was established in Swedish educational research. *Ethnography and Education, 1*(2), 177–195.
Lindeman, E. C. (1926). Andragogik: The method of teaching adults. *Workers' Education, 4*(3), 8.
Long, H. B., & Agyekum, S. K. (1974). Adult Education 1964–1973: Reflections of a changing discipline. *Adult Education, 24*(2), 99–120.
Rubenson, K. (1982). Adult education research: In quest of a map of the territory. *Adult Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 57–74.
Rubenson, K. (2000). *Revisiting the map of the territory*. Paper presented at the American adult education research conference.
Taylor, E. (2001). Adult education quarterly from 1989–1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.
Usher, R., & Edwards, R. (1994). *Postmodernism and education*. London: Routledge.
Zeuner, C. (2010). Vuxenutbildningens början i Schleswig-Holstein. In A. Nilsson & F. Lundh Nilsson (Eds.), *Två sidor av samma mynt? Folkbildning och yrkesutbildning vid de nordiska folkhögskolorna*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Chapter 2
Examining the "Weak Field" of Adult Education

Kjell Rubenson and Maren Elfert

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the state of adult education as a scientific field.[1] This topic seems timely against the background of ongoing and current debates about the field of adult education and international and comparative adult education research (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Field et al. 2016; Nylander et al. 2018; Schemmann 2017, see also the other chapters in this book) and a sense of crisis that is prevailing in the field (Käpplinger and Elfert 2018). Methodologically, our discussion is based on a review of previous articles of a similar nature. Theoretically and conceptually, it builds on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical understanding of a scientific field (e.g. Bourdieu 1984, 2004; Camic 2011). A field is shaped by agents (individuals, groups of actors or institutions) who aim to maximize their position. Their success will depend on the extent to which they possess of the capital by which power and status are conferred within the field. Bourdieu was concerned with the degrees of autonomy of scientific fields, that is the extent to which they can generate their own values and definitions of success free from economic and political influences. Maton (2005), drawing on Bourdieu's study of the field of higher education in France, highlights a second role of autonomy focusing on competing principles of hierarchization. Bourdieu distinguished between an autonomous principle looking

[1] This chapter builds on Rubenson and Elfert (2015). Adult education research: Exploring an increasingly fragmented map. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 125–138.

K. Rubenson (✉)
Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada
e-mail: kjell.rubenson@ubc.ca

M. Elfert
School of Education, Communication & Society, King's College London, London, UK

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_2

inwards to the disinterested activities of the field (such as knowledge for its own sake) and a heteronomous principle looking beyond the field's specific activities and towards economic and political success (such as generating research income or wielding administrative power). Bourdieu (1984) showed how French higher education is being structured by the struggle between agents who are high in scholastic capital (scientific prestige) and academic capital (institutional control over funding and appointments) (Maton 2005, p. 690). Thus to understand the field of adult education one would have to look at two (interrelated) forms of autonomy, the extent to which adult education is free from direct influences from the two dominant fields in society, the economic field and political power, and secondly how the competition between those with scientific prestige and those with administrative power impacts on adult education. In a similar vein, Camic (2011, p. 281) notes that understanding the production and use of knowledge within a specific scientific field requires looking not only at the field as such, but also at its relation to other fields, disciplines and groups such as practitioners and policy makers.

Although not having completed a full field analysis we will argue in this chapter that adult education is a weak field. Drawing on Vauchez (2011), we define a weak field as "deeply interwoven with neighboring fields and rather undifferentiated internally" (p. 342). As a sub-field of education (which is a weak field in itself), the legitimacy of the field of adult education has long been contested for several reasons. The question whether the adult learner actually exists as a specific "species" of learner is still being debated (Bowl 2017, p. 8). The field has a weak disciplinary core. Although the American Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE) has set standards for adult education as a field of study, these standards are not well known even in North America and not followed in the conception of adult education university programs, which speaks to the lack of a disciplinary tradition and rigour of the field (Sonstrom et al. 2012; Tisdell et al. 2016, p. 87). The question asked by Abbot Kaplan in the first meeting of the Commission of Professors of Adult Education in 1957, "What is the content, the essential ingredient of adult education, that marks it off from other fields or disciplines?" (cited in Hansman and Rose 2018, p. 1) haunts the field to this day. Adult education programs are embedded in a variety of departments and a "jumble of program names and the assortment of organizational settings, embeddings, and affiliations" (Sonstrom et al. 2012, p. 157), which speaks to the heterogeneity of the field and its particular susceptibility to institutional politics. In other words, those with administrative capital will be strong while those who are high in adult education scientific capital will be marginalized. Many scholars have argued that the field has been weakenend by the shift from adult education to lifelong learning (Edwards 1997). A further indicator of the field's weakness is its regional fragmentation. We will discuss these issues in more detail below.

2.2 The Social World of Adult Education Research

The Bourdieusian perspective suggests that the evolving configuration of adult education research is directly impacted by changes to the internal structures of the field as well as by changes to the social context of the field. The latter refers to the social and economic role awarded to adult learning and education by the policy community. It is therefore important to note that as adult learning and education has come to the forefront of public policy two interrelated areas of adult education research, participation and its economic benefits, are of vital interest to the broader policy community (see e.g., European Commission 2011; OECD 2003). The emergent discussions in policy circles on the relevance of adult education research is part of a broader movement, partly driven by supranational organizations like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU), to build a tradition of evidence-based policy making anchored in research findings. The central role afforded to the PISA and the PIAAC[2] programs should be seen as reflections of this shift. The call for policy relevant educational research is driven by data, benchmarks and indicators and new data-collecting agencies such as the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) (in addition to older ones such as Eurostat and Eurydice) (Grek and Lawn 2009). The drive for evidence-based policies induced countries to introduce changes to their educational research and development (R&D) system. For example, in England the government has changed the balance between pure basic research and pure applied research through creating what is being labelled "use-inspired basic research" that is carried out at dedicated research centres such as the Centre for Wider Benefits of Learning (OECD and CERI 2002). The same ambition has been driving the EU's Sixth and Seventh Framework Programme research agendas, as well as the most recent Eighth agenda, titled *Horizon 2020*. The European Union's *Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning*, outlining the EU's vision for adult learning from 2015–2020, states: "Evidence-based policy-making in the field of adult learning calls for comprehensive and comparable data on all key aspects of adult learning, for effective monitoring systems and cooperation between the different agencies, as well as for high-quality research activities" (Official Journal of the European Union 2011, p. C 372/2). The EU's report *In-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe* calls for "hard evidence" as "a key ingredient in policymaking… about what does and does not work to achieve specific policy goals" (European Commission 2015, p. 157).

As policy-making relies more heavily on "big data", driven predominantly by supra-national organizations, in particular the OECD, a tension is notable in the field between the policy community and the academic research community in terms of what research is deemed relevant (Desjardins and Rubenson 2009). Research money, as in the case of the EU, is contingent on policy relevance. At the same time,

[2] PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment; PIAAC for Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

policy relevant research is lacking, as has been pointed out in the national reports submitted by developing and developed countries in preparation for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) and in the reports submitted for the CONFINTEA VI midterm review carried out in 2017 (UIL 2017a, p. 63; UIL 2017b, p. 41; UIL 2017c, pp. 36–37). This apparent disconnect between the academic research community and the policy community speaks to adult educators distancing themselves from policy relevant research. It also means that existing research is considered irrelevant to the policy community. From a Bourdieusian point of view, we see a paradoxical situation. On the one hand there is a certain autonomy of the field, in that adult education researchers carry out research irrespective of the policy realm, but at the same time we are likely to see a greater marginalization of the field as funding is increasingly tied to policy relevance.

There has been a long-standing criticism of the limited relevance of the research enterprise for the practice of adult education. Sork and Caffarella (1989) suggested that the gap between research and practice was widening rather than shrinking. This could be an outcome of the calls during the late 1970s for the field to become more theoretically sophisticated so that it might gain more respect in the scholarly world (Rubenson 2011). Thus, in a response to this call university departments of adult education tried to affect the institutional structure of the field by recruiting new faculty into adult education who often had less connection to the field of practice than the outgoing faculty. Field et al. (2016) make the point that adult educators used to be scholars as well as practitioners, but that this is no longer the case. The merit system for academics was increasingly focused on academic merits (articles in preferably refereed journals, acquiring research grants, etc.), while practice-related, developmental work was less honoured by the university system. The situation is not deemed to have improved since the Sork & Cafarella article. Amy Rose (2011), reflecting on the *2010 Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (Kasworm et al. 2010), of which she was one of the co-editors, notes: "Adult educators have a vibrant and impassioned calling, yet the researchers fail the field." She sees this partly as a result of the fact that researchers "have not been able to move beyond a critique of power and oppression" (p. 44). Her harsh conclusion is that "adult education has eschewed any attempt to bring its research into areas that have implications for the actual practice of the field" (p. 44). Looking at the development from a Bourdieusian perspective the changes to the composition of faculty would suggest that the more recent faculty have their roots in surrounding academic fields rather than the field of adult education. In their struggle to amass scientific capital outside of adult education they may have lost the kind of capital that made earlier faculty members more relevant to the field (see also Chap. 3). Furthermore, some might argue that we are seeing a "scholarly" exit from finding solutions to real-life problems as a consequence of the post-structuralist turn of the field that we will refer to below.

2.3 The Scientific Field of Adult Education

Turning to the maturity and evolution of the field, Rubenson (2011) suggests that since adult education began to emerge as a field of study in the late 1920s, it has undergone three quite distinctive phases. He notes that these phases are most noticeable in the United States but also discernable in parts of Europe. When looking at the developments in the US and Europe it is important to note that until the 1990s US scholars gave substantially more attention to adult education as a field of study than their European counterparts.

The first phase starting in the 1920s was a response to the beginning professionalization of adult education. With a small but growing number of adult education programs, faculty started to focus on how to generate a body of knowledge that would help in the growth of the evolving field. In 1961, the Commission of Professors of Adult Education had two dozen members. By 1972 that number had grown to 156. While in 1963 86 adult education dissertations were reported, that number increased to 173 by 1969 (Long and Agyekum 1974, p. 100). Long and Agyekum (1974) observed an "increasing sophistication in adult education research" (p. 106) between 1964 and 1973. Some European countries, particularly the UK and Germany, saw a similar development although it came a decade or two later.

Guided by funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Commission of Professors of Adult Education in the US set out to define the conceptual foundations of adult education (Jensen et al. 1964). Officially titled *Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study*, this book is popularly called the "Black Book". The "Black Book" can be seen as ushering in the second phase of adult education. We can understand this development as a process by which a field of study begins to emerge as a direct response to the needs emerging in adult education as a field of practice. With the faculty in the newly created units of adult education being closely connected to the practice of adult education there were no or only small conflicts during this period between the field and the profession regarding values and markers of scientific achievement. Seeking solutions to primarily teaching and learning issues the emerging field was closely embedded in the field of educational psychology and strongly connected to external professional organisations. What is noticeable in the "Black Book" is the almost total lack of attention to work done outside of North America. As pointed out by Hansman and Rose (2018), "the North American field limited itself to North American interests" (p. 1).

Between the release of the Black Book and the publication of its follow up, *Adult Education: Evolution and Achievements in a Developing Field of Study* (Peters and Jarvis 1991), the number of adult education graduate programs in the US and Europe increased rapidly, yearly scholarly conferences were initiated and research journals were launched. Thus, this gradually maturing process of the field of study reflects and is affected by internal shifts of the field, primarily with regard to its location and presence in the broader university structure and are less a result of external forces. The Peters and Jarvis book, co-edited by a British and an American

scholar, noticed some work done outside of the US and the Anglo-Saxon sphere, but also keeps a quite insular orientation.

The 1991 review painted a very positive picture and ended on an optimistic outlook and with expectations of continuous growth and solidifying of the field of adult education over the coming 25 years. While there does not exist any comprehensive review of what has happened since the 1991 book, there are several indications that the field of study has not progressed as anticipated and that it has entered into a new phase, the third, in its development. In North America and those parts of Europe where the field had expanded and matured during the second phase, the last two decades have not seen a continuing growth in specialized adult education departments. Instead, the trend has been to amalgamate adult education programs with other fields into larger departments or in some instances to close them down. In a Bourdieusian perspective this could be taken as an indication that the field of study has lost some of its academic capital and thus its legitimation within the university structure.

Outside North America and parts of Europe the process of developing adult education as a field of study began later. This is the case in several African and Latin American countries. In some instances, like in Brazil, there is an acceleration of programs and departments specializing in adult education (Torres 2009, p. 29). In China, the first MA program in adult education was launched at East China Normal University in 1993; a PhD program followed in 2004. The number of universities with graduate programs of adult education has increased from seven in 2003 to 23 in 2008 (Huang and Shi 2008, p. 505). In 2008, China reported to have some 100 specialized institutions for adult education research (Chinese National Commission for UNESCO and Chinese Adult Education Association 2008, p. 23). A somewhat similar development can be noted for the Republic of Korea (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the National Institute for Lifelong Education 2009, p. 72ff.).

2.4 Previous Findings Regarding Adult Education as a Scientific Field

Numerous articles examining the scholarly field of adult education have appeared since the 1960s, employing content analysis of adult education journals (Dickinson and Rusnell 1971; Long and Agyekum 1974), country comparisons (Brookfield 1982), and citation analysis (Boshier and Pickard 1979). Some articles looked at subdisciplines such as adult basic education (Fisher and Martin 1987) or specific aspects such as the impact of feminism on adult education (Hayes 1992). Rubenson (1982), among other things, found that there was an overwhelming influence of psychology with the consequence that the territory of adult education research was defined primarily through assumptions of the characteristics of the learner and, thus, teaching was reduced to learning; empiricism and research methodology was

emphasized in order to build a discipline of adult education; there was strong skepticism against borrowing from other disciplines and fields of study; and North American scholars dominated the landscape with little international exchange. The lack of international exchange is supported by Zeuner (Chap. 3) in her chapter about the development of the field of adult education in Germany without any clear influences from the US. A book about the field of adult education in Germany, *Adult Education in the Federal Republic of Germany: Scholarly Approaches and Professional Practice* (Mader 1992) does not make any references to scholarship in US-Anglo-Saxon or Nordic countries, which corroborates Zeuner's point. However, for several European scholars the North American field of adult education constituted an important reference point at the time. For example, the majority of works cited by Husén (1958) were American, including only two references from Germany. In a similar vein, Knoll (1989), looking back at the 1970s, deplored that "the discussion about professionalization in the Federal Republic of Germany would certainly have developed differently if work had been based on material from England, the USA and Canada available at that time" (p. 146). Roby Kidd, one of the leading Canadian adult educators, tried to interest his American colleagues in internationalizing the field of adult education in the US in the 1960s and 1970s, but "became disillusioned" (Hansman and Rose 2018, p. 2) and focused his efforts on Canada and his work with UNESCO. This speaks to the development of different regional maps.

In a second study, revisiting the previous one, Rubenson (2000) noticed, not surprisingly, that the map was changing in accordance with the general drift of the social sciences. More specifically he noted a shift to more articles invoking a poststructural tradition with its emphasis on gender and critical race theories and a major impact of the new economic paradigm with a rapidly increasing number of articles focusing on workplace learning which resulted in a broadening of the conceptualisation of learning in adult education. He further noticed a major change in the attitude towards borrowing from other disciplines and that policy-oriented studies were less predominant in North American journals than European. The former might suggest that the field was becoming more porous and less able to define its own criteria for what counts as successful scholarship. His second observation could result in a more autonomous situation for the north American scholars. The dominance of North American scholars by the sheer numbers of their publications was seen to be less obvious than it was two decades earlier as European scholars were gaining more visibility in the journals, books and conference proceedings analyzed by Rubenson.

In two previous papers Rubenson and Elfert (2014, 2015) analyzed the changing characteristics of the map of adult education research based on a two-pronged approach: a reading of four seminal articles written by adult education scholars who have conducted bibliometric analyses of selected adult education journals: Taylor 2001; St. Clair 2011; Fejes and Nylander 2014; Larsson 2010; and to some extent, Mulenga et al. (2006); and their own review of 75 articles, covering a one year period (2012–2013) in five adult education journals: *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), the *International Journal of Continuing Education & Lifelong*

Learning (IJCELL), which is published out of Hong Kong, the *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (IJLE), the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (RELA), and the *International Review of Education* (IRE). In relation to the two Rubenson (1982, 2000) articles discussed above, the authors focused their analysis on the categories of authorship, research focus, research methodology and theoretical orientation. Their findings suggested that adult education research is increasingly being governed by a set of regional maps. As Mulenga et al. (2006, p. 82) and Fejes and Nylander (2014) observed, there continues to be a tendency for authors to publish articles in a journal of their home country. Taylor (2001) found that the submissions in AEQ during the 1990s originated almost exclusively from North America, and predominantly from the US, but a slight increase of articles from Western European countries could be noticed. The 2012–2013 review showed that out of fifteen articles published in AEQ during that period ten were by Americans and one by a Canadian. Similarly, St. Clair (2011) noted a very strong dominance of Canadian scholars publishing in the Canadian journal. Given the pattern of "home grown publishing" it is not surprising that a vast majority of authors in the AEQ, IJLE and SICE, all hosted in Anglo Saxon countries, were from those parts of the world (Fejes and Nylander 2014). Similarly, Larsson (2010), Mulenga et al. (2006) and Fejes and Nylander (2014) pointed to the overwhelming dominance in the core adult education journals of scholars from the Anglo-Saxon world. An interesting finding in Larsson's review is that not only do the authors predominantly come from Australia, Canada, UK and the US but in their work they almost exclusively cite other authors from one of these countries. Moreover he noted that well over half of the references in the AEQ, the only adult education journal that was indexed by ISI at that time, are from articles published in the AEQ, which from a Bourdieusian perspective highlights the reproduction of the dominance of Anglo-American scholars. This pattern also shows that research coming from outside universities is not being cited.

Rubenson and Elfert (2014, 2015) found that almost half of the authors in the five reviewed journals came from European countries and about a third from North America. Of the European authors 12 originated from the UK, only two from Eastern Europe (Bulgaria and Russia) and 11 from Scandinavian countries. Portugal was the most represented country from Mediterranean Europe with four articles. Seven authors were from Asian countries, which tend to publish for the most part in the Hong Kong-based IJCELL. Only three articles came from Australian scholars who tend to publish in their own journal, which was not included in the review. Looking at differences between the five journals the study found that authorship in the IJCELL, the IJLE and the RELA is by majority European, with the IJCELL having a higher proportion of articles coming out of Asia, especially China. Only the IRE shows a more balanced geographical distribution of articles although with a strong dominance of authors from Europe and North America.

Another finding in this work that it is worth drawing attention to is that not only are the authors publishing in local or regional journals but the scope in the majority of the articles in the AEQ, the IJLE and the IJCELL is national. Similarly, Fejes and

Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) characterize these journals as "rather national/regional" (p. 119). Rubenson and Elfert (2014, 2015) have defined articles as national when they focus on national or local issues or when the database on which they draw was collected in the country they originate from. In accordance with Mulenga et al. (2006, p. 83), the authors found that few articles qualified as international in that the research and used data involved more than one country. Only a couple of articles were co-authored by researchers originating from two different countries. These findings are supported by recent research on the situation in higher education. Thus, although research studies on international higher education have grown considerably, "networks among researchers of higher education continue to operate largely within national borders and are still dominated by a few Western countries[…]only 11.3% of articles were authored by researchers from at least two countries" (Kuzhabekova et al. 2015, pp. 878–879).

In terms of the research focus Elfert and Rubenson found a clear dominance of articles addressing adult learning with 60% of the articles in the AEQ and more than 40% in the RELA dealing with learning. Surprisingly, very few – four – articles focused on teaching, one each in all journals analyzed except for RELA. This may be an indication of a change from Taylor's (2001) review which had found that teaching and curriculum was among the major topics in the AEQ. With workplace learning evolving as a separate scholarly field it may not be that surprising that relatively few articles reported on work- and skills-related research.

With regard to the research methodology and theoretical orientation, for the period 1989–1999 Taylor (2001) observed a sharp increase in the share of articles that employed some form of qualitative methods and a corresponding decrease in work using a quantitative methodology. This finding is echoed in all of the more recent reviews as well as Boeren (Chap. 8). Presently adult education scholars are almost exclusively relying on qualitative methodologies, with a few using a mixed method and an almost total absence of pure quantitative research (Fejes and Nylander 2014, 2015; see also Chaps. 6 and 7; Rubenson and Elfert 2014, 2015).

In Chap. 7, Fejes and Nylander report that the three most common theoretical perspectives are socio-cultural (23%), critical pedagogy (17.5%) and post-structuralism (15.5%). Looking at the disciplinary base, Rubenson and Elfert (2014, 2015) classified about 40% of the reviewed articles in the five journals as broadly sociological and about 33% as psychological. There were noticeable differences between journals with the majority of the articles in the IJLE, the RELA and the IRE being sociological, whereas the AEQ had a strong psychological orientation. This speaks to the strong psychological tradition of adult education in the United States that has been noted by Rubenson (2000) and is being reiterated by Fejes and Nylander (2015, p. 106).

Rubenson (2000) had noted an increase of post-structural research, a trend that seems to be supported by the review by Fejes and Nylander (2015). It is noteworthy that the post-structural turn was mostly absent in articles published in IJCELL which includes a large number of authors from Asia as well as a greater number of non-academic authors who are less likely to employ a post-structuralist perspective.

2.5 Discussion

Overall the findings suggest that the scientific field of adult education finds itself in a precarious situation. This is reflected in a continuing regional fragmentation of the field, an accelerating hollowing out of the field and what can be labelled as a relevance deficit. By this we refer to a seeming inability of the field to respond to the needs of adult education practitioners and the policy community. Below we will discuss these findings in more detail.

2.5.1 Regional Fragmentation of the Field

As noted, the move to develop adult education into a field of study accelerated in the US in the 1950s but by the mid-1990s it had become at least as vibrant in the Northern part of Europe as in North America. Our findings indicate that this shift has resulted in the creation of two quite distinguishable regional maps, one US or North American map and one European. While the AEQ remains the bastion of North American scholarship in adult education all the other journals are dominated by European authors. Scholars keep publishing in their local or regional journals without trying to engage with each other in a discussion of the regional differences. This seems to suggest that adult education does not possess one authoritative map of its territory, a finding confirmed by Larsson (2010, p. 109). Several developments in Europe suggest that Europe is overtaking the US as an authority for adult education. The European Society for Research in the Education of Adults (ESREA), founded in 1991, and especially the creation of its journal, the *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults* (RELA), which published its first issue in 2010, have greatly contributed to forging a European identity of adult educators (see also Field et al. 2016, p. 124; see also Chap. 10) and stimulating debates among European adult educators. International cooperation is stronger in Europe as the "funding programmes of the European Union encourage transnational projects, exchange of best practices and capacity-building" (UIL 2017d, p. 25). In the US, it is much more difficult to obtain research funds for adult education. These developments seem to contribute to the decline and isolation of the US on the map of the territory of adult education research.

The differences in maps should be understood in the larger context of differences in social and cultural traditions and the impact of these on research practices (Popkewitz 1984). The US (and Canada, although to a lesser extent) with their decentralized political and economic systems and emphasis on social mobility promote a research focus on the individual. The strong focus on psychologically-oriented perspectives by American adult education researchers, as noted in the review, is in accordance with the dominant tradition in educational research in general. To use Kuhn's (1962/1996) concept of paradigm at the meta-level the tradition within adult education research is part of the dominant "Weltanschauung". As

Brookfield noted already back in 1982, the North American literature draws "a clear distinction between an audience interested in research and theory, and one interested in practice" (p. 157), which is why it tends to identify practitioners, instructors and/or administrators as the usual target groups. Consequently, the process by which adult education has become a specialized field of study in North America has been linked to the professionalization of adult education.

In Europe, a different "Weltanschauung" governs the research tradition. While European research has also been affected by the professionalization of adult education, it has been more influenced by the broader policy realm, as Rubenson observed in his 2000 review. Thus, the differences in topic and theoretical orientation that we observed between the publications in AEQ and RELA speak to differences in what Bourdieu has labelled the "social cosmos" (Camic 2013, p. 186) of the field. Similarly, the articles in IJCELL suggest the beginning of a newly evolving map that emphasizes a technical-practical perspective and the promotion of adult learning as a tool to adapt to a changing economic and technological environment in the context of free market capitalism. This map reflects yet another social cosmos affecting the specific regional field of adult education in Asia. The regionalisation of the field suggests a lack of maturity where, in Bourdieu's words, the scientific universe of the field of adult education is rather weak and as a consequence it becomes strongly influenced by the social cosmos in which it is embedded.

2.5.2 Hollowing Out of the Field

Two current processes work in tandem to weaken the field, a fragmentation of adult education research and the changes to the institutional structure of research. Returning to our observation regarding the absence of workplace- and skills-related research, which is unexpected given the dominance of the skills discourse in the policy realm (Elfert and Rubenson 2013), this absence suggests a fragmentation of the field into subdisciplines, which have become fields of study in of themselves. The trend might be most obvious in the area of workplace learning which has started its own scholarly conferences and research journals, e.g. the *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Areas formerly associated with management and business studies are being subsumed under adult education, such as human resource development (HRD) and career development, in particular in the US, where numerous professorships combine adult education and HRD. This development has also been observed in other regions of the world, e.g. China (Boshier 2018). Several academic journals serve the field of HRD such as the *Human Resource Development Quarterly* (HRDQ). The lists of members of the editorial board of the HRDQ contains many adult educators. The overlap between adult education and HRD is noteworthy, as these constitute fields that are based on different logics. HRD has a strong focus on organizational and managerial performance and employee training. It is rooted in somewhat different theoretical foundations (Yang 2004) and has less of a critical tradition than adult education (Fenwick 2004). Fragmentation is also apparent in

other traditional core areas of adult education like adult literacy. These subfields that struggle for their own legitimacy are challenging the field of adult education which increasingly finds it difficult to be guided by its own values and criteria.

The general restructuring of university departments into larger structures or closing down of adult education graduate programs in some countries, especially in the US but also in Australia and some European countries, further hampers the building of a field of adult education. Milton et al.'s (2003) study shows that adult education departments in the US undergo a changing of perspective, often reflected by name changes indicating a broader perspective of lifelong learning. Butterwick et al. (2018) describe the merging and diluting of the adult education program at the University of British Columbia in Canada. Field (2005) confirms this trend for the UK, where the "coherent and bounded field of adult education is being displaced by the more open and decentred domain of lifelong learning" (p. 207). This development is in line with our finding that only one third of the authors worked out of adult education departments. As Field et al. (2016; see also Chap. 10) state, drawing on Edwards (1997), "the shift from the 'field' of adult education to the 'moorland' of lifelong learning is clearly an obstacle to [a] tidy categorial approach" (p. 129). Consequently adult education has been losing much of the administrative capital it had gained over the previous decades.

2.5.3 Relevance Deficit

Earlier in the chapter we alluded to the "policy relevance" of adult education research. Our findings point to a disconnect between the policy discourse and academic adult education research. So for example, the outcome-based perspective that is being promoted by supranational organisations such as OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank is largely absent in the core adult education journals. The lack of statistically sophisticated empirical research in adult education (see e.g. Boeren 2018) further contributes to its perceived "irrelevance" to the policy community.

The issue of the "policy relevance" of adult education research is contested. On the one hand are those adult educators who believe we should aspire to influence policies. As Boeren (2018; see also Chap. 8) argues, "in times where our field…is dominated by a focus on 'big data' and the use of benchmarks and indicators, both by the European Commission, the OECD and UNESCO, it would be a pity if our field would miss this boat" (p. 75). On the other hand, many adult education scholars resist the dominance of the "big data" such as the PIAAC study. Field et al. (2016; see also Chap. 10) point to the "clear limitations" of these large-scale surveys, "such as their inherent tendency to focus on a small number of measurable benchmarks" (p. 130). More importantly many in the adult education field feel like Mudge and Vauchez (2012), when they – referring to the weak field of EU studies – argue that the field is weak because it is entangled with European politics and therefore not autonomous as a discipline in the Bourdieusian sense.

A related concern is that when adult education researchers become involved in contract research, which usually contributes directly to policy formation for specific operating agencies, such policy research activities generally do not contribute greatly to the growth of generalizable knowledge. This position is rooted in an instrumental position on policy research which underlies much of this kind of research. However, it is important to note that there are also other approaches to policy research, such as the "conceptual position" developed as a criticism against the narrow interpretation of instrumentalism (Weiss 1977). According to this school of policy research the role of research is not primarily seen as coming up with a solution and/or answer to a specific issue but rather helps develop a broader understanding of the underlying problem. This involves widening the debate, reformulating the problem, clarifying goals, and analyzing eventual conflicts between multiple goals. Instead of being of direct instrumental use, the primary function of research is conceptual. What distinguishes this kind of policy-oriented research from "free" or basic research is not its theoretical sophistication or contribution to theory but that it has been initiated in the policy arena and addresses an issue that society has defined as being of relevance. The conceptual approach involves a shift from shorter R&D projects in adult education to long-term university based research programs giving emphasis to the relations between adult education and society as a whole not only the more narrow issue of its effect on the economy. For this kind of policy research to happen financial resources would have to be available, which as we know is rarely the case. However, it should be noted that most adult education research in Sweden up until quite recently constituted conceptually oriented policy research carried out in university departments that come to shape adult education as a field of study. As Offe (1984) notes, it is only a "secure state" that is willing to behave in this way. Thus, it is the logic of the dominant welfare state regime that will shape the conditions for policy research. While it is true that under most conditions economic and political forces may threaten the autonomy of the field of adult education, the Swedish case shows that this does not always have to be the case.

2.6 Concluding Note

It is always dangerous to speculate about the contours of the future map of adult education as a field of study, but we dare to provide a couple of speculations. The first is that the new subdisciplines will jeopardize the traditional field of adult education as they have more "capital" given that they are more in line with the policy discourse and therefore in a better position to obtain funding. The second is that there are no indications that the fragmentation process will come to a halt. On the contrary, it is more likely that it will intensify. One reason is that an Asian map might start to emerge. Our analysis of the IJCELL (Rubenson and Elfert 2015), which represents to some extent the developments in Asia with its specific characteristics, already points in this direction. This is by itself not a negative development but it is more likely to increase the number of maps than to contribute to the

development of an integrated map. Another reason is that we might see the European map becoming even more dominant due to the institutional changes in the US that further weaken American knowledge production in adult education. The strong emphasis in the EU on the economic and social role of adult learning in combination with the stress on evidence-based policy will fuel research activities within the EU while there are fewer opportunities for this kind of research in the US. This development in European adult education research carries with it some obvious risks. Thus, while the policy-related interest in adult education research may provide some new opportunities for the development of major research programs, something that has been lacking in the field, it also contributes to a weakening of the field in the Bourdieusian sense. This weakness entails a danger of moving the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights and forcing the researchers to focus on a narrow politically-defined instrumental research agenda. In this perspective the struggle is to find opportunities for research that can critically examine democratically taken decisions.

References

Boeren, E. (2018). The methodological underdog: A review of quantitative research in the key adult education journals. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*(1), 63–79.

Boshier, R. (2018). China: Adult education and learning from Mao to now. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 587–607). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boshier, R., & Pickard, L. (1979). Citations patterns of articles published in adult education 1968–1977. *Adult Education, 30*(1), 34–51.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Homo Academicus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). *Science of science and reflexivity*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Bowl, M. (2017). *Adult education in neoliberal times. Policies, philosophies and professionalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brookfield, S. (1982). Adult education research: A comparison of North American and British theory and practice. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 1*(2), 157–167.

Butterwick, S., Elfert, M., & Sork, T. (2018). Displacement, dilution and demise: The history and fate of the Coolie Verner Memorial Reading room at the University of British Columbia. In B. Käpplinger & M. Elfert (Eds.), *Verlassene Orte der Erwachsenenbildung/Abandoned places of adult education* (*Studies in pedagogy, andragogy and gerontagogy*). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Camic, C. (2011). Bourdieu's cleft sociology of science. *Minerva, 49*, 275–293.

Camic, C. (2013). Bourdieu's two sociologies of knowledge. In P. S. Gorski (Ed.), *Bourdieu and historical analysis* (pp. 183–211). Durham: Duke University Press.

Chinese National Commission for UNESCO & Chinese Adult Education Association. (2008, July 30). *National report. Adult education and learning in China: Development and present situation*. Retrieved from https://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/multimedia/uil/confintea/pdf/National_Reports/Asia%20-%20Pacific/China.pdf

Desjardins, R., & Rubenson, K. (2009). Research of vs. research for education policy in an era of trans-national policy-making: An introduction. In R. Desjardins & K. Rubenson (Eds.), *Research of vs. research for education policy in an era of trans-national policy-making*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

Dickinson, G., & Rusnell, D. (1971). A content analysis of adult education. *Adult Education, 21*(3), 177–185.

Edwards, R. (1997). *Changing places? Flexibility, lifelong learning and a learning society*. London: Routledge.

Elfert, M., & Rubenson, K. (2013). Adult education policies in Canada: Skills without humanity. In T. Nesbit, N. Taber, S. Brigham, & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 238–248). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

European Commission. (2011). *Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning*. Retrieved from http://www.basicskills.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Council-Resolution.pdf

European Commission. (2015, July). *An in-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe*. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Prepared by ICF Consulting Services Limited. Brussels: European Commission. Available from https://ec.europa.eu/epale/sites/epale/files/all_in-depth_analysis_of_adult_learning_policies_and_their_effectiveness_in_europe_12.11.2015_pdf.pdf

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2014). The Anglophone International(e): A bibliometric analysis of three adult education journals, 2005–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(3), 222.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2015). How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6(2)*, 103–123.

Fenwick, T. (2004). Toward a critical HRD in theory and practice. *Adult Education Quarterly, 54*(3), 193–209.

Field, J. (2005). Bologna and an established system of Bachelor's/Master's degrees: The example of adult education in Britain. *Bildung und Erziehung, 58*(2), 207–220.

Field, J., Künzel, K., & Schemmann, M. (2016). International comparative adult education research. Reflections on theory, methodology and future developments. *International Yearbook of Education, 39*, 109–133.

Fisher, J. C., & Martin, L. G. (1987). An analysis of research contributions to the adult basic education literature 1976–1986. In *Proceedings of the 28th annual adult education research conference* (pp. 84–89). Laramie: University of Wyoming.

Grek, S., & Lawn, M. (2009). A short history of europeanizing education. *European Education, 41*(1), 32–54.

Hansman, C., & Rose, A. D. (2018, June 7–10). Narrowing interests: North American adult educators' discussions on internationalization in the 1960s. In *Proceedings of the Adult Education Research Conference, University of Victoria*.

Hayes, E. (1992). The impact of feminism on adult education publications: An analysis of British and American journals. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 11*(2), 125–138.

Huang, J., & Shi, W. (2008). Policies and practices of lifelong learning in China. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 27*(5), 499–508.

Husén, T. (1958). *Vuxna lär: Förutsättningar och metoder i vuxenundervisningen.* Stockholm: Ehlins.

Jensen, G., Liveright, A. A., & Hallenbeck, W. C. (Eds.). (1964). *Adult education: Outlines of an emerging field of university study*. Washington, DC: Adult Education Association of the United States.

Käpplinger, B., & Elfert, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Verlassene Orte der Erwachsenenbildung/Abandoned places of adult education* (Studies in pedagogy, andragogy and gerontagogy). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Kasworm, C. E., Rose, A., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2010). *Handbook of adult and continuing education*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Knoll, J. (1989). Comparative adult education from Nordborg (1972) until today. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 8*(2), 139–149.

Kuhn, T. (1996). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (3rd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Kuzhabekova, A., Hendel, D. D., & Chapman, D. W. (2015). Mapping global research on international higher education. *Research in Higher Education, 56*(8), 861–882.

Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 97–112.

Long, H. B., & Agyekum, S. K. (1974). Adult education 1964–1973: Reflections of a changing discipline. *Adult Education Quarterly, XXIV*(2), 99–120.

Mader, W. (Ed.). (1992). *Adult education in the Federal Republic of Germany: Scholarly approaches and professional practice* (M. G. Haindorff, Trans.). Vancouver: Centre for Continuing Education, The University of British Columbia in cooperation with The International Council for Adult Education.

Maton, K. (2005). A question of autonomy: Bourdieu's field approach and higher education policy. *Journal of Education Policy, 20*(6), 687–704.

Milton, J., Watkins, K. E., Spears Studdard, S., & Burch, M. (2003). The ever widening gyre: Factors affecting change in adult education graduate programs in the United States. *Adult Education Quarterly, 54*(1), 23–41.

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the National Institute for Lifelong Education. (2009, May). *National report on the development and state of the art of adult learning and education. Report for UNESCO. Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA). Republic of Korea.*

Mudge, S. L., & Vauchez, A. (2012). Building Europe on a weak field: Law, economics and scholarly avatars in transnational politics. *American Journal of Sociology, 188*(2), 449–492.

Mulenga, D., Al-Harthi, A. S., & Carr-Chellman, D. (2006). Comparative and international adult education: A content analysis of some major adult education journals. *Convergence, 39*(1), 77–89.

Nylander, E., Österlund, L., & Fejes, A. (2018). Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom. *Vocations and Learning, 11*(1), 113–131.

Offe, C. (1984). *Contradictions of the welfare state*. London: Heinemann.

Official Journal of the European Union. (2011). *Council resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01)*. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011G1220(01)&from=EN

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) & Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). (2002). *Educational Research and Development in England*. Paris: OECD.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2003). *Beyond rhetoric: Adult learning policies and practices*. Paris: OECD.

Peters, J. M., & Jarvis, P. (Eds.). (1991). *Adult education: Evolution and achievements in a developing field of study*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Popkewitz, T. S. (1984). *Paradigm and ideology in education research*. London: The Falmer Press.

Rose, A. D. (2011). Perspectives on adult education: Reflections on the 2010 Handbook of Adult and continuing Education. *Adult Learning, 22*(2), 43–44.

Rubenson, K. (1982). Adult education research: In quest of a map of the territory. *Adult Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 57–74.

Rubenson, K. (2000). Revisiting the map of the territory. In *Conference Proceedings of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), 2000.*

Rubenson, K. (2011). Adult education overview. In K. Rubenson (Ed.), *Adult learning and education* (pp. 1–11). Oxford: Elsevier.

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2014). Changing configurations of adult education research: Exploring a fragmented map. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times* (Studies in Pedagogy, Andragogy and Gerontagogy) (pp. 25–39). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2015). Adult education research: Exploring an increasingly fragmented map. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 125–138.

Schemmann, M. (Ed.). (2017). *International comparative adult education research*. International yearbook of adult education/Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung, 40. Köln: Böhlau Verlag.

Sonstrom, W. J., Rachal, J. R., & Mohn, R. S. (2012). The commission of professors of adult education 2008 standards as evidenced in the curricula of doctoral education in North America. *Adult Education Quarterly, 63*(2), 147–164.

Sork, T., & Caffarella, R. S. (1989). Planning programs for adults. In S. B. Merriam & P. M. Cunningham (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp. 233–245). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

St. Clair, R. (2011). Writing ourselves into being: A review of the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 23*(2), 27–44.

Taylor, E. W. (2001). *Adult education quarterly* from 1989 to 1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.

Tisdell, E. J., Wright, R. R., & Taylor, E. (2016). Adult education faculty and programs in North America: Faculty background, work and satisfaction. *Adult Education Quarterly, 66*(1), 76–95.

Torres, R. M. (2009). *From literacy to lifelong learning: Trends, issues and challenges in youth and adult education in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional synthesis report. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001829/182928e.pdf

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2017a). In R. Govinda (Ed.), *The status of adult learning and education in Asia and the Pacific* (Regional report. CONFINTEA IV Midterm review 2017). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2017b). In J. Aitchison (Ed.), *The status of adult learning and education in sub-Saharan Africa* (Regional report. CONFINTEA IV Midterm review 2017). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2017c). In A. Kozyra, R. Motschilnig, & G. Ebner (Eds.), *The status of adult learning and education in Europe and North America* (Regional report. CONFINTEA IV Midterm review 2017). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2017d). *Progress, challenges and opportunities: The status of adult learning and education* (Summary of the regional reports. CONFINTEA IV Midterm review 2017). Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Vauchez, A. (2011). Introducing a weak field approach to the study of transnational settings. *International Political Sociology, 5*(3), 340–345.

Weiss, C. H. (Ed.). (1977). *Using social research in public policy making*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Yang, B. (2004). Can adult learning theory provide a foundation for human resource development? *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 6*(2), 129–145.

Chapter 3
Adult Education Research in Germany: Approaches and Developments

Christine Zeuner

3.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to give an overview regarding the historical and recent developments in adult education research in Germany, looking back over more than 100 years. At first, the research was undertaken by the adult educators themselves, who wanted to know more about the practice of adult education, the participants and the conditions under which adult education should ideally be provided and taught. As a result of the scientific expansion in the 1970s, a pluralistic and diverse research landscape has emerged using a wide variety of methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks, resulting in a fragmented field.

The aim of adult education has always been to provide opportunities for adults to learn – for individual intellectual, cultural or political development, for career advancement and, regarding society, for political and social change. The conflicts of interest and objectives, which are related to the diverse individual and collective points of view, are reflected in the debates concerning adult education. However, the relationship between adult education practice and theory has always been close, because they are mutually dependent. Adult education practice provides the field for theory and research and asks questions concerning improvements in practice. Nevertheless, the relationship between theory and practice could also be ambivalent, because neither side is sure of what to expect and how to gain from each other. Experience has shown that the results from theory and research are not easily transferred into practice, but often need adjustments.

In order to explain the current state of adult education research in Germany, the first part of the chapter addresses the question of how underlying theoretical

C. Zeuner (✉)
Fakultät für Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, Helmut-Schmidt-Universität, Hamburg, Germany
e-mail: zeuner@hsu-hh.de

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_3

frameworks influence research. I will discuss whether they are only relevant to the theoretical perspective of the researcher or whether they influence the research itself and to what means and outcomes.

The second part of the chapter argues for the concept of 'Bildung' as the aim of adult education. Over the last 20 years, this notion has been overshadowed by aspects such as learning or acquiring competences, being considered the main objective of adult education. Whereas the first notion looks at the personal development and enrichment of subjects in order for them to lead fulfilled lives according to their abilities and aspirations, learning and acquiring competences are rather aimed at fulfilling external expectations. This seems to have influenced both the research questions and the research methods.

Following these introductory remarks, I will then look at the historical development of adult education research in Germany and its current state. The presentation of the historical developments will focus on the main topics and on the methodological approaches and concepts. They indicate a continuum of research questions, as well as an expansion of the methodological designs.

I will write the article from a critical-theoretical-pragmatistic point of view in order to stress the fact that this perspective on adult education research abandons the illusion that individual learning or education processes can be induced from 'from the outside'. It thus exceeds an instrumental interest in knowledge and combines it with hermeneutic or practical research intentions. In this way, it creates a break with an object's immediacy and becomes critical empiricism. Because the results of research are related to the interpretations and points of view of the researchers, they are not fixed. Therefore, this article on adult education research in Germany cannot provide thorough lexical knowledge. It rather aims at giving an overview of the research questions and topics, the methodological approaches, the discussions and the experiences which open up new horizons. Empirical research – both as historical-genetic and as methodological-experience-led access to a subject area – can be seen as a learning process in which the apparently self-evident becomes uncertain, and new answers are sought (Zeuner and Faulstich 2009, p. 11).

3.2 Adult Education Research in Germany: Theoretical Frameworks

Adult education research in Germany is situated in the tradition of social scientific research, on the one hand, and in the tradition of humanistic approaches to pedagogy, on the other hand. Traditionally, adult education research has had a close relationship to adult education practice. Ideally, the practice of adult education provides a field for adult education research to develop topics and questions, with the results being fed back into practice.

Until some years ago, the field was built around this common ground, albeit sometimes rather ambivalently, i.e. on the reciprocal relationship between the field

of adult education research and practice. More recently, researchers in adult education have started to contest this view. Due to the increasingly competitive nature of research funding, questions concerning adequate topics and methodological approaches have gained momentum, as well as expectations for so-called 'evidenced based' research. These collegial discussions are ongoing, resulting in the effect that adult education research seems to have become an even more fragmented field (Nuissl 2010, p. 406).

Adult education practice presents itself as multi-layered and diverse – in its organised forms ranging from popular and cultural approaches to citizenship education, from basic education to higher education, and from basic vocational training to further vocational training. In addition, different learning-settings have come into view, ranging from autodidactic learning to self-directed learning, to organised and formalised learning, and so on. Adult education, in its multidimensional practice, provides the background and framework for adult education research. Therefore, not surprisingly, the theoretical as well as scientific references of adult education research are similarly pluralistic.

Other disciplines such as educational science, sociology, psychology, economics, history, and economics, to name the most relevant, are often referred to when it comes to defining the methodological approaches or research interests. In addition, researchers from these disciplines also conduct studies in adult education/continuing education, and their results influence the scientific discourse and practice of adult education. Consequently, adult education presents itself as a rather diffuse and fragmented field.

Adult education research draws on a wide range of theoretical approaches, partly corresponding to the dominant theoretical currents which are prevalent in the related disciplines. But even though certain theoretical positions may be favoured at certain times, multiple positions can appear simultaneously. There has been an ongoing debate in German adult education research about the significance of theoretical frameworks for the explanation and development of science and their functions with regard to 'Bildung'.

A theory is defined as 'a system of intersubjectively verifiable, methodically obtained and in a consistent context formulated statement about a defined subject area' (Dewe et al. 1988, p. 15). Theories are the results of science, which is seen as an 'organized process of understanding natural and/or social realities. The aim of science is to describe and structure closely defined fields as realistically as possible' (Dewe et al. 1988, p. 14).

Horst Siebert (2011), in his book on adult education theory, focuses on the relationship between theory and practice in order to define the special characteristics of adult education theory. According to Siebert, adult education theories are not basic theories which attempt to describe social reality (or utopias) in their entirety. In relation to professional action in adult education, they rather address partial aspects of the field and make them accessible to reflection: 'Adult pedagogical theories of medium reach are oriented towards concepts and tasks of institutional educational practice, attempting to explain and discuss problems by means of scientific findings and thus to stimulate and justify educational practice' (Siebert 2011, p. 18).

The prevalent (philosophical) theoretical positions to which adult education has referred since the Second World War are the following: positivism, symbolic interactionism (referring to the interpretative paradigm), critical theory, social constructivism, and pragmatism. In recent times, the milieu and habitus theory proposed by Pierre Bourdieu has also become more important. In addition, over the last 20 years, psychological learning theories (behaviourism, cognitivism, action regulation theory, subject-oriented learning theory, transformative learning) have been discussed and used as frameworks for research. For most of these theoretical frameworks, it is possible to identify the typical methodological approaches which support and mirror specific research interests (Zeuner and Faulstich 2009, pp. 15–2615ff).

Applied to adult education, each of these theoretical approaches is based on its own understanding of how to determine the role of education in society and the role of the individual. In addition, some of the approaches are based on specific concepts with regard to the socio-theoretical framework (what kind of society is favoured and which role adult education assumes therein), e.g. the anthropological framework (according to which the human image forms the basis of the approach) and the psychological framework (regarding the individual image of the learner).

Looking more closely at the development of adult education research since the 1990s, the role that a researcher accounts to the individual learner has become more and more crucial. Whereas approaches such as critical theory, pragmatism or that of Bourdieu see the individual in relation to and in connection with society, approaches favouring the interpretative paradigm rather look at the individual learner. In the interpretative paradigm, the major interest lies in the lifeworld of individuals, their everyday knowledge and their lifelong learning processes, whereas the perception of the reciprocal effects between the learner and society seems to be rather limited. This kind of research has been criticised as being shortsighted. Aspects influencing the individual learning process such as social background, learning experience, school experience, and so on also need to be considered in order to understand the participation and effects of adult education (Zeuner and Faulstich 2009, p. 21).

Methodologically speaking, adult education research covers a wide range of approaches. Based on the theoretical framework applied, different ones will be used. Typically, it is differentiated between empirical-quantitative or qualitative methods. Quantitative methods are usually employed in large-scale assessments, which is a rather recent approach induced by international policy agencies such as the OECD or the European Union, or by the German government. Qualitative methods rather refer to the interpretative paradigm, within which explorative, biographical and historical approaches, case-studies, ethnography and other methods are used (Dörner and Schäffer 2011, p. 244).

The so-called ‘interpretative paradigm’ is based on the social constitution of the research topic, in which the respondents are regarded as ‘experts of their own life world’. In order to understand this, researchers need to involve themselves in close interactions with their respondents in order to become able to adequately interpret the collected data (Kade 1999, p. 342). I would argue that a clear distinction should be made between the interpretative paradigm of the research and the normative paradigm in the research, which is based on theoretically founded research hypotheses that are verified or falsified by empirical evidence. Followers of the interpretative

paradigm reject the idea of hypothesis-guided questions, because in their view, they restrict the possible interpretations and restrict the openness of the research process itself. Therefore, in the interpretative paradigm, the explication and interpretation of data seem to be more flexible and changeable (Kade 1999, p. 342).

Although certain methods have had primacy in adult education research at certain times, they are selected according to the objectives and interests of the research and on the basis of practical considerations, such as time, money, access to the field, etc. Adult education research therefore presents itself as a multifaceted field, ranging from small-scale individual research for qualification purposes, such as a doctoral thesis, to funded research projects and large-scale (often quantitative) research networks (Nuissl 2010, p. 406).

One characteristic of adult education research in Germany has always been a broad scope of orientations, ranging from pure basic research to an applied research orientation. Typical approaches to adult education research are the following:

1. Theoretical research that exists independently of practice (pure basic research).
2. Theoretical research aiming at practical application (use inspired basic research)
3. Scientific research resulting from practical requirements (applied research).

Most of the research on adult education can be assigned to the latter two areas (Zeuner and Faulstich 2009, p. 28). Related to this systematisation, topics of adult education research can be assigned to the following different strands:

1. Discussions on the theoretical foundations of adult education: humanities-hermeneutical, empirical-analytical, critical-theoretical, critical-pragmatistic, constructivist, ecological, interactionist and other approaches.
2. Research on the practice of adult education: teaching and learning; adult education institutions including questions on organisation and structure, staff and personnel, progammes and programme-planning; on participants and addressees; system and structure.
3. The programmatic objectives of adult education: emancipation and democratisation; learning and self-organisation; education politics and policy; economisation.

However, typically, ‘mixed approaches’ are used, i.e., one usually finds neither a solely pure basic research nor a solely applied research. Depending on the objectives of the research and the methods applied, the relationship between theory and practice to which I referred earlier is prevalent and influences the research. However, the topics, themes, research interests and theoretical positions are also subject to the apparent ‘trends’ and are therefore subject to change.

3.3 ‘Learning’ or ‘Bildung?’ The Aims of Adult Education

The core interests of adult education research and its aims have been widely discussed. Different issues have been prevalent at different times. However, two topics have always been prominent in adult education practice and research. The first

concerns the question of whether adult education mainly provides opportunities for learning or whether the overall aim should be 'Bildung'.

Hans Tietgens (1922–2009), the long-term director of the Institute for Didactic of Adult Education,[1] stated in 1991 that the main task of adult education should be the initiation of teaching-learning processes. Accordingly, adult education 'can only be understood as a process, as a product of interaction. Adult education […] only exists, when learning processes take place' (Tietgens 1991, p. 46).

'Bildung' becomes the ultimate objective of adult education when referring to its emancipatory, democratic tradition. 'Bildung' has no appropriate English translation, and it emerged from a critical theoretical tradition that ultimately aims at (self-) enlightenment. This involves the development of individual identity, the appropriation of culture and the development of the person, as well as the development of a collective social identity. According to the educational scientist Wolfgang Klafki (1927–2016), education with regard to (self-)enlightenment processes can be defined as follows: 'self-determination, freedom, emancipation, autonomy, maturity, reason, self-activity' (Klafki 1996, p. 19). This, for him, includes the 'freedom of one's own thinking and one's own moral decision. It is precisely for this reason that *self-activity* is the central form of implementation of the educational process' (Klafki 1996, p. 19, emphasis in the original). From this point of view, Bildung should not only serve the purpose of self-education and individual self-fulfillment, it should also aim at solidarity, cooperation and responsibility in order to become capable of shaping the future of a democratic society.

Regardless of whether the focus of adult education is on learning or Bildung, adult education, as part of the educational system, is always embedded in macro-, meso- and microstructures. They provide the essential framework for learning or Bildung and are therefore the subject of research, justifying the pluralistic field of adult education research. Whereas the macrostructure concerns adult education politics, policy and the law, the mesostructure mostly looks at the institutions and organisation of adult education, including questions concerning the professional action of its protagonists and participation. The microstructure concerns actual learning and teaching processes, and therefore, in the long run, also the question of whether these processes lead to Bildung.

3.4 Adult Education Research: A Short Historical Overview

The following overview will outline the historical development of adult education research in Germany from its beginnings at the turn of the twentieth century to the turn of the twenty-first century. It indicates a strong tradition of mutual influence between the theory and practice of adult education, and – in the late twentieth

[1] Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle des Deutschen Volkshochschulverbandes (PAS) renamed in 1997 in "Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung" (DIE; German Institute for Adult Education).

century – the attempts of some researchers to prove that adult education research is pure basic research in its own right.

3.4.1 The Beginnings: 1900–1933

As mentioned earlier, adult education research developed out of the needs of practitioners. One of the first surveys, which concerned participants of extension classes at the University of Vienna was conducted by its secretary, Ludo Moritz Hartmann (Hartmann and Penck 1904). From the beginning of the lectures in 1885, he collected data on significant events and participants. The participants were analysed regarding age, gender and social background. On the one hand, Hartmann used the results of his survey to plan the extension programme according to the motives and interests of the participants. On the other hand, the survey served to legitimise the extension service of the university and was used to ask for public funding. Hartmann's survey was exemplary, and its structure concerning participant research was later replicated and extended.

Research concerning participants became the first strand of adult education research that German-speaking countries conducted in different institutions and organisations which offered learning opportunities for adults such as adult education centres and public libraries.

During the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), adult education research reached its first peak, mainly due to two developments, the first being an enormous expansion of the practice of adult education. Different types of adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*) were founded (Zeuner 2010), and workers' education institutions were constructed by trade unions and political parties. Churches, farmer movements, as well as universities became interested in adult education and founded their own institutions or offered classes.

The second development was more or less reciprocal: The increase in adult education institutions and organisations led to a higher demand for adult educators. Traditionally, they were schoolteachers, clergy or specialists in certain fields, giving lectures in the tradition of the 'extensive' teaching approach of popular education. However, this was a highly contested field. Around 1910, a discussion about the 'extensive' or 'intensive' approach of popular education started among practitioners of adult education. It was revived in the beginning of the 1920s, when different kinds of institutions for adult education were founded. The need for more and better educated practitioners led to a professionalisation of the field, wherein universities started to teach adult educators (Friedenthal-Haase 1991).

The professionalisation process influenced not only the practice of adult education but also research. Interested scholars from different backgrounds institutionalised research networks such as the *Hohenrodter Bund*, which initiated the *Deutsche Schule für Volksforschung* (*German Institute for Folk Research*), and the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (*Institute for Social Research*) at the University of Cologne was founded by Paul Honigsheim and Leopold von Wiese. In 1926, Gertrud Hermes

founded the *Institut für freies Volksbildungswesen* (*Institute for Popular Education*) at the University of Leipzig.

Through these institutions, the first major empirically oriented studies using qualitative and quantitative methods were carried out in the following fields:

- overviews concerning adult education practice
- research concerning target groups and participants
- research concerning adult education institutions
- professionalisation processes
- international-comparative research.

However, this highly prolific period of adult education practice and research came to an immediate end with the assumption of power by the National Socialist Workers' Party in 1933. The independent and pluralistic adult education system of the Weimar Republic was prohibited. The protagonists either left Germany, or were arrested by the Nazi-regime and sent to concentration camps. Some of them did survive, but were suspended by the new regime (Feidel-Merz 1999).

3.4.2 Adult Education Research in the Federal Republic of Germany 1949–2000

The revival period of adult education research took place in the late 1950s. At that point, adult education practice was re-established and even intensified compared to the time before 1933. In the period of occupation, 1945 until the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the Western Allies, mainly the British and the Americans, saw adult education as a means for the democratisation of the adult population and supported the re-introduction of a pluralistic system of adult education. Their main interest was to re-establish and expand the adult education centres, but other organisations, such as churches, trade unions, employers and employer organisations were also encouraged to establish their own institutions. In the 1950s, the system was expanded further. Private investors entered the scene, laying the groundwork for the diverse publicly and privately funded adult education system, which still exists today (Zeuner 2015).

Whereas the adult education system was established step-by-step by different players, mirroring different aims and objectives, adult education science and research took additional time to be re-established. It was only at the end of the 1950s that the first chair of adult education, specialising in education for democracy, was established at the Freie Universität Berlin. Following the expansion of the educational system in the late 1960s, newly founded universities (such as Bochum, Essen and Bremen) and colleges of education (Hannover, Flensburg) incorporated adult education in their curricula for education science and therefore established chairs for adult education. This was also true for traditional universities such as Münster, Trier, Cologne, and Hamburg. There were more to follow, and in the

1990s, about 40 chairs of adult education existed in the Federal Republic of Germany, at least one in each of the federal provinces. In different ways, these chairs of adult education have shaped the research of adult education since the 1970s.

Before this took place, other developments influenced the evolution of adult education research: The *Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband,* DVV (*German Adult Education Association*) established in 1953 founded the *Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle des Deutschen Volkshochschulverbands*, PAS (*Institute for Didactics of Adult Education*; in 1994, renamed *Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung*) in 1957. The first two long-standing directors of the PAS, Willy Strzelewicz (1905–1986) and Hans Tietgens (1922–2009), actively initiated research in adult education in the 1950s and 1960s. Through their work at the PAS, which collaborated closely with practitioners at the adult education centres, they were confronted first hand with a series of emerging problems.

One of the most urgent questions addressed, which is still a pressing issue, concerns the exclusion of certain target groups. In the 1950s and 1960s, these groups were identified as workers and women. The first study concerning participation in adult education was published by Wolfgang Schulenberg in 1957: *Ansatz und Wirksamkeit der Erwachsenenbildung*. He discussed the contradictions between the favourable opinion about education and the actual participation rates. In the study, 63 groups of 1039 people were asked about their educational awareness and attitudes. The groups represented the social stratification of the population to some extent (Schulenberg 1957, pp. 10–11). The prevalent reasons given for non-participation were work-overload, insufficient previous education or lack of money. Also, a discrepancy between the appreciation of education and individual behaviour was detected.

This study was followed by the study *Bildung und gesellschaftliches Bewusstsein*, published in 1966 by Willy Strzelewicz, Hans-Dietrich Raapke and Wolfgang Schulenberg. In the so-called 'Göttingen Study', a three-stage study was presented which included a representative survey of 1850 people, 34 group discussions and 38 individual interviews. The aim was to work out individual educational concepts and attitudes towards education and possible differences according to the social situation. The researchers wanted to know 'what ideas the general public associates with the concept of education, what the population believes belongs to education, what it helps to achieve, what distinguishes a person who is thought to be educated' (Strzelewicz et al. 1966, p. 39). The authors found a 'social-differentiating syndrome' of education and a 'person-differentiating syndrome'. The former referred to individuals coming from a lower social status, characterised by attributes such as lower formal qualifications, social positions and prior knowledge. The latter referred to individuals coming from an upper social status, characterised by a higher educational background and income.

These two studies were ground-breaking in outlining both the research interests and methodological approaches. Up until this point, systematic reflections on the reciprocal influences of attitudes towards education and the social and educational background of the respondents had been scarce. The studies were later labelled

'core studies' because they set the standards for data collection and interpretation, as well as for grounding it in a sociological understanding of adult education. The studies showed that the social embeddedness of adults is crucial for their learning and educational experiences and should therefore be considered as a framework for adult education practice (Schlutz 1992). Other studies followed suit, like the 'Oldenburg Study' (Schulenberg et al. 1978). After the turn of the century, research concerning participation in adult education became increasingly important, and often, the Göttingen study was referred to as having been a forerunner (Barz and Tippelt 2007; Bremer 2007).

In the 1970s, another strand of research emerged, which was later described as 'core studies' (Schlutz 1992, pp. 45). Two of these studies became particularly prominent. The so-called 'Hannover-Study' analysed teaching and learning processes in adult education classes (Siebert and Gerl 1975). The so-called 'BUVEP-Study' *Bildungsurlaubs-Versuchs- und Entwicklungsprogramm*, *BUVEP* (*Evaluation programme on paid educational leave*) looked at the learning processes of participants during courses of paid educational leave (Kejcz et al. 1979).

While Siebert first aimed at investigating the outcome of teaching-learning processes in a positivist sense, i.e. decomposing the learning process into observable behavioural units and individual responses, he later recognised that questions about the social context of learners needed to be tackled. In the course of the study, the project developed from a quantifying analytical model to a qualitatively interpretive approach (Zeuner and Faulstich 2009, p. 64).

The BUVEP-study was supported by the government as a so-called 'model project'. They aimed at developing educational policy guidelines for a further introduction of educational leave in order to create the conditions for individuals to receive an education corresponding to their talents, abilities and willingness to learn (Kejcz et al. 1979, p. 20).

These important empirical studies were always supplemented by a vast number of smaller studies, often PhD dissertations, supervised at universities and often supported by the PAS. So, by the end of the 1960s, a pluralistic scene of adult education research was set, but it was by no means systematically expanded or even regulated.

3.4.3 The Role of the Scientific Community

In 1971, the professors in the newly established chairs of adult education and related fields founded the 'Division Adult Education' of the German Educational Research Association (GERA) (Schmidt-Lauff 2014). Its members aimed at supporting research in adult education, furthering discussions and scientific co-operation, and strengthening the identity of the emerging research field. Starting in 1971, the division organised regular annual conferences.[2]

[2] See Division of Adult Education 2018 for a list of topics.

At the turn of the century, representatives of the division published the so-called *Forschungsmemorandum zur Erwachsenenbildung* (*Memorandum concerning research in adult education*) (Arnold et al. 2000). The memorandum came into being at a time when questions about lifelong learning were being intensively discussed, especially at the level of education policy. Adult education – which, in Germany, in contrast to other countries, has been equated with lifelong learning for many years – suddenly found itself in competition with education-specific approaches to different age groups, such as early childhood, adolescence or older adults. The objective of the memorandum was 'to identify, classify and name priorities and necessary questions in an increasingly important area of educational research' (Arnold et al. 2000, p. 4) in order make this field of research more visible within the scientific community, as well as for potential sponsors.

The memorandum refers to the following research fields and topics:

- Learning of adults
- Knowledge structures and competence requirements
- Staff in adult education
- Institutionalisation
- System and politics.

It concludes with recommendations for the implementation of the research strategies. Considering the topics of the so-called 'core studies', it is interesting to note that questions concerning participation and participants are not mentioned explicitly. They can be tackled in each of the topics, but the crucial question of who is participating and why – and why not – is somewhat hidden behind the scene.

Two years later, the *Memorandum zur historischen Erwachsenenbildung sforschung* (*Memorandum on historical adult education research*) was published (Ciupke et al. 2002). It highlights that the relevance of historical research in adult education studies is '… to expand the adult education space of experience in a diachronic perspective and thus to confront contemporary practice with other possibilities which were historically realized' (Ciupke et al. 2002, p. 9). First describing the state of historical adult education research, the authors then go on to discuss further perspectives and questions according to the structure developed in the memorandum of 2000, supplemented by the 'history of science' field. The memorandum points out the future tasks and focal points of historical adult education research and reflects on topics, as well as on recommendations for research funding.

Both memoranda are thus guidelines, looking at research perspectives and strategies. However, they should not be read as a review of the current state of research or as a comprehensive overview. This kind of work is still pending, with the exception of Born's book (Born 1991), and in terms of current research up to 2008, of Zeuner and Faulstich's study from 2009. The *Handbook of Qualitative Research on Adult and Further Education* by Dörner and Schäffer (2012) focuses on questions regarding the theoretical frameworks of adult education research and on the methodological approaches. In section D of the book, several topics of adult education research

concerning profession, milieu, gender, generation, counseling, management, learning (various topics), time and emotions are tackled in articles by different authors.

3.5 Trends and Topics in Adult Education Research Since 2000

Over the last 20 years, adult education research in Germany has been influenced by different trends. On the one hand, small-scale, individual research still represents the larger proportion of research (Nuissl 2010, p. 406). It can be systemised according to the research fields in the memorandum of adult education research (Arnold et al. 2000) and the outline developed by Zeuner and Faulstich in 2009. On the other hand, international educational policies initiated by supranational agencies such as the UNESCO, the OECD, the World Bank and, on the European level, the European Commission, have influenced adult education research directly and indirectly. Also, mostly reacting to international developments such as the ongoing discussion on lifelong learning, educational policy and educational politics in Germany have become more influential regarding national research agendas since the turn of the century (Schreiber-Barsch and Zeuner 2018, p. 27).

3.5.1 Topics of Adult Education Research

Within the scope of this article, it is impossible to summarise the results of adult education research from the last 20 years. Such an attempt was made by Zeuner and Faulstich (2009) up to the year 2008, and recent developments can be seen in the so-called 'research map' of the German Institute for Adult Education (DIE 2018; Ludwig and Baldauf-Bergmann 2010).

The difference lies in the categorisation of the research topics. Whereas the research map used the systematic approach of the research memorandum of 2000 (Arnold et al. 2000), Zeuner and Faulstich (2009) developed their own systematic approach. In the following, I will outline their findings. They decided to differentiate the following main categories and sub-categories:

1. Learning and teaching:
   - Learning research concerning empirical approaches, subject-oriented approaches, informal learning, resistance towards learning, neurophysiological research
   - Teaching research concerning methodological approaches, development of didactical concepts, self-organised and self-directed learning, the role of the media
   - Programme-planning and course-development

2. Learners: addressees, target groups, participants
   - 'Core studies' concerning addressees and milieu-oriented research according to Pierre Bourdieu
   - Target groups according to their consideration from the historical perspective: workers, women, unemployed people, migrants, older adults, educationally disadvantaged people
   - Research concerning participants
   - Biographical and socialisation research
3. Institutions, cooperation, support-structures
   - Adult education providers and institutions: historical and current developments, organisational learning
   - Networks and co-operation in adult education
   - Organisation, marketing and management in adult education
   - Support structures for further training
4. Contents/topics of adult education
   - Further vocational education and training
   - General adult education including programme-analysis and topics
   - Education for democracy/citizenship education
   - Cultural adult education
5. Staff in adult education
   - Training of adult educators including research on professional development
   - Professional areas of adult educators including full-time and part-time staff
   - Staff in further vocational training
   - Biographical research on the professional development of adult educators
6. Development of the adult education system
   - Politics, economy and law and their influence on adult education
   - Resources for adult education, financial support
   - International and comparative adult education research: methodology and results
7. Historical research in adult education
   - Objectives of historical adult education research and summery of results
   - Fields of historical research: Historical research of ideas, social-historical research, historical developments concerning institutions and organisations of adult education, history of continuing vocational training
   - History of adult education in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)
   - Results of historical international-comparative research in adult education

This systematisation and the studies examined more closely mirror the fact that most adult education research is oriented towards better understanding and more effectively explaining the practice of adult education. It essentially included studies

by researchers who are closely affiliated with adult education as a discipline. However, other relevant disciplines include psychology, which tackles questions around the learning processes of adults; history, which studies the historic development of adult education; political science, which researches within the field of citizenship education and migration, and sociology, which investigates questions concerning social background and education. However, they do not seem to be as prominent in the discussion as Rubenson and Elfert (Chap. 2) suggest for the development of adult education research elsewhere.

Most of the studies examined depict the problems and questions arising on the three practice levels of adult education: the micro-level, concerning learning and teaching-processes; the meso-level, concerning the institutions, organisations, and providers of adult education, the different stakeholders (staff, participants), as well as the topics and programmes; the macrolevel, concerning politics, policy, and adult education law and the economic conditions and influences. This systematisation is derived from the German arrangement of adult education, which is embedded in the educational system and therefore at least in part supported by the government. Certain characteristics and features may be common in other countries, but some may be unique.

3.6 Discussion

In this chapter, I intended to give an overview of the development of adult education research in Germany from its beginning to the present day. From my point of view, the following basic conditions are important in order to understand the developments: First, adult education research usually refers to adult education practice when developing research questions and interests. Up to the 1970s, its main objective was to support and improve the practice. The topics mainly concerned participation in adult education, the learning processes of adults, the professionalisation of the staff, and the micro- and meso-levels of adult education. The overall question has been how to encourage more adults to participate in adult education.

A more recent development in German adult education research is policy-induced studies as a reaction to national and international developments and trends. Nationally, policies concerning adult education gradually emerged in the 1970s, after the so-called ‘Deutscher Bildungsrat’ (German Education Council 1966–1975) published the ‘Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen’ (‘Structural plan for education’) in 1970. It stated the importance of adult education concerning questions such political participation and the employability of the workforce. For the first time in the Federal Republic of Germany, adult education was recognised as the fourth pillar of the educational system, along with the primary education and secondary education provided by schools, vocational training and higher education (Zeuner 2015, pp. 11–12).

The expansion of the educational system, which took place in the 1970s, also affected adult education at different levels and dimensions: Several federal states (*Bundesländer*) passed laws on adult education which regulated the provision of

and access to adult education and tackled questions such as the quality of courses, the professionalisation of the staff, the expansion of the necessary infrastructure, and so on. At the same time, chairs of adult education were established at several universities, stressing the need for research. Following the first report on adult education, others were published, some of which were policy papers. Because it became clear that adult education was a fragmented field, and that at the same time, there was something like a 'black box' regarding its overall performance within the educational system, it was placed on the political agenda for the first time. Beginning in the 1980s, the federal Ministry of Education began to support such research and has continued to do so.

Two strands are prevalent today: On the one hand, evaluations and policy research have been supported by the national and regional ministries of education concerning topics such as participation in adult education, infrastructure and networks for lifelong learning, counseling and support and, more recently, literacy. On the other hand, after the turn of the century, international educational policy began to be more impactful, mainly due to international developments on the European, as well as the global level. Within the scope of the international lifelong learning discourse, the German government started national research programmes. They mirrored and supplemented the policy agendas of the European Union, on the one hand, and of the UNESCO and the OECD, on the other.

Initially, the adult education research initiated by the German government aimed at gaining knowledge concerning participation in adult education, as this was considered to be an important asset in view of economic competition. Later, aspects such as educational governing came into view, and educational policy gained momentum through international benchmarking. Therefore, adult education research became more important. However, the question arises of whether this kind of research is still being conducted independently or if it solely serves the needs of the government.

Comparing the development of adult education research in Germany with the international findings presented by Rubenson and Elfert (Chap. 2), I see parallels as well as discrepancies. The authors stress two facts concerning the development of adult education research from an international point of view:

First, they consider adult education research to be an increasingly fragmented field. Referring to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of scientific fields which are highly independent and at the same time 'are impacted by social structure and institutional power' (Rubenson and Elfert 2015, pp. 125–126), they consider adult education research as being effected by both 'the broad social world in which the field is embedded and the scientific field itself, with its own rules of functioning' (Rubenson and Elfert 2015, p. 126). This twofold structure influences the development of research topics, questions, interests, and methodological approaches alike.

An examination of adult education research in Germany reveals that the same findings are applicable. The topics and questions are manifold, as they have multiplied over the last 20 years. Certain topics, such as workplace education and further training, are investigated by researchers from scientific fields other than adult education research. Therefore, it could be useful to consider the 'hollowing out of the

field' (Rubenson and Elfert 2015, p. 135), i.e. to challenge the field of adult education compared with other scientific fields, which are co-opting its topics. For example, research regarding learning processes is now dominated by psychological research.

Concerning the research methods, they range from the small-scale, qualitative approaches used in dissertations or smaller, individual research projects to the policy-induced, quantitative, large-scale assessments which are regularly financed by the government. This kind of research has increased considerably since the turn of the century.

Concerning the focus of adult education research, Rubenson and Elfert (Chap. 2) state that the following five categories seem to be the most relevant: adult learning, participation, gender/diversity, adult education as a movement, and the analysis of publication patterns. Compared to the findings of Zeuner and Faulstich (2009), the first two topics have traditionally been very important in adult education research in Germany, whereas the other three have been tackled less often. Gender, mainly looking at women as participants in adult education, was an important topic in the 1990s. Questions concerning diversity have become more relevant in recent times with the increase of migration, with a focus on the questions of inclusion and exclusion. Adult education as a movement has primarily been examined from a historical point of view, focusing on the workers' educational movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and – although less commonly – on increasing disciplinary identity as well as legitimation. The analysis of publication patterns using discourse analysis seem to be rather marginalised. One exception is the analysis of the lifelong-learning discourse (Schreiber-Barsch and Zeuner 2018). However, these impressions need to be verified further: An analysis of the research map published by the German Institute for Adult Education (2018) could be a starting point.

According to the second finding of Rubenson and Elfert (Chap. 2), the results of adult education research are increasingly being criticised as not useful for practitioners, 'but also the policy community voice their disappointment with adult education research, and we note a disconnect between academic adult research and policy-related research' (p. 121). It is difficult to decide whether this observation is also true for adult education research in Germany. As I stated earlier, since the beginning, there has been a close relationship between adult education research and practice. The research questions have been drawn from practice, and this has influenced and shaped the scientific field for a long time. Most of the time, both sides have been aware of the fact that the findings and the results of research need to be reflected and 'translated' in order for them to become available for practice. Perhaps the mutual expectations were rather realistic. When it comes to policy-induced or evaluation research, the expectations concerning its applicability and usefulness may be higher. I cannot say whether they have been met or not.

However, another aspect that Rubenson and Elfert (Chap. 2) discuss towards the end of their article also seems to apply to German adult education research: The scientific field is inclined to do more policy-related research in order to obtain more funding, and therefore, seemingly, to become more important as a scientific field.

However, I agree with Rubenson's and Elfert's (Rubenson and Elfert 2015 and Chap. 2) warning concerning the risks this poses:

> Thus, while the policy-related interest in adult education research may provide some new opportunities for the development of more major research programs, something that has been lacking in the field, it also provides a danger of moving the research agenda away from classical adult education concerns about democracy and social rights and 'forcing' the researchers to focus on a narrow politically-defined research agenda (p. 136).

The developments in Germany are similar to those Wildermeersch and Olesen (2012) describe on an international level. They state that beginning in the 1980s, and increasingly in the 1990s and later, the research has been aimed primarily at questions of how to improve the learning processes of adults in order to increase their chances in the labour market. Employability, combined with topics such as qualifications and competences, became paramount. Wildermeersch and Olesen's (2012) statement that the objectives of adult education have changed from emancipation (the 'redistribution of opportunities on a collective level') to empowerment (the 'responsibility of one's own self-development') has also become valid for Germany, which has influenced both adult education practice and research (pp. 98–99).

From my point of view, this mirrors the long-standing debate about whether learning or Bildung should be the main priority of adult education. As a reaction to the national and international discussions concerning learning outcomes and their relevance for the labour market, the notion of learning has become prevalent over the last 15 years. Learning outcomes are seen as a means of individual empowerment and are mostly the responsibility of the individual. Therefore, the research has focused on, inter alia, questions of individual learning competences, self-directed learning processes, informal learning, and learning en-passant.

However, due to political and social developments characterised by an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the decrease of the social welfare state resulting in increasing competition between different social milieus, and growing migration and the need for integration and inclusion, adult education is facing new and different challenges. This has also led to a re-awakening of the discussions concerning Bildung as defined by critical theory as a means of individual and collective emancipation. Adult education research is again starting to investigate educational processes from this point of view, focusing, on the one hand, on its biographical impact. On the other hand, action research approaches are increasingly being used to examine collective educational processes concerning questions regarding community development, collective political initiatives, and so on.

References

Arnold, R., Faulstich, P., Mader, W., Nuissl von Rein, E., & Schlutz, E. (2000). *Forschungsmemorandum für die Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung.* Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung. Retrieved April 2, 2018, from https://www.die-bonn.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-2000/arnold00_01.pdf

Barz, H., & Tippelt, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Weiterbildung und soziale Milieus in Deutschland* (Vol. Vol. 2, 2nd ed.). Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Verlag.

Born, A. (1991). *Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildungsforschung. Eine historisch-systematische Rekonstruktion der empirischen Forschungsprogramme*. Bad Heilbrunn Obb: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.

Bremer, H. (2007). *Soziale Milieus, Habitus und Lernen. Zur sozialen Selektivität des Bildungswesens am Beispiel der Weiterbildung*. Weinheim: Juventa.

Ciupke, P., Gierke, W., Hof, C., Jelich, F.-J., Seitter, W., Tietgens, H., & Zeuner, C. (2002). *Memorandum zur historischen Erwachsenenbildungsforschung*. Bonn: DIE. Retrieved April 2, 2018, from https://www.die-bonn.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-2002/ciupke02_01.pdf

Deutscher Bildungsrat. (1970). *Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen. Empfehlungen der Bildungskommission*. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett.

Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung. (2018). *Forschungslandkarte*. Retrieved April 2, 2018, https://www.die-bonn.de/weiterbildung/forschungslandkarte/recherche.aspx

Dewe, B., Günter, F., & Huge, W. (1988). *Theorien der Erwachsenenbildung. Ein Handbuch*. München: Max Hueber Verlag.

Division Adult Education of the German Educational Research Association (GERA). (2018). *Topics of workshops since 1971*. Retrieved April 2, 2018, from http://www.dgfe.de/en/sections-commissions/division-9-adult-education/tagungen.html

Dörner, O., & Schäffer, B. (2011). Neuere Entwicklungen in der qualitativen Erwachsenenbildungsforschung. In R. Tippelt & A. von Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (5th ed., pp. 243–261). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Dörner, O., & Schäffer, B. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbuch Qualitative Erwachsenenbildungs- und Weiterbildungsforschung*. Opladen: Budrich.

Feidel-Merz, H. (1999). Erwachsenenbildung im Nationalsozialismus. In R. Tippelt (Ed.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (2nd ed., pp. 42–50). Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Friedenthal-Haase, M. (1991). *Erwachsenenbildung im Prozeß der Akademisierung. Der staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Beitrag zur Entstehung eines Fachgebiets an den Universitäten der Weimarer Republik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Beispiel Kölns*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Hartmann, L. M., & Penck, A. (1904). Antworten auf die vom Wiener Ausschuss für volkstümliche Universitätsvorträge veranstaltete Nutzen der Universitätskurse. *Zentralblatt für Volksbildungswesen, 4*, 81–102.

Kade, S. (1999). Qualitative Erwachsenenbildungsforschung – Methoden und Erkenntnisse. In R. Tippelt (Ed.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (2nd ed., pp. 240–359). Opladen: leske+budrich.

Kejcz, Y., Monshausen, K., Nuissl, E., Paatsch, H., & Schenk, P. (1979). *Das Bildungsurlaubsversuchs- und Entwicklungsprogramm. BUVEP-Endbericht* (Vol. 1–8). Heidelberg: esprint.

Klafki, W. (1996). *Neue Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik. Zeitgemäße Allgemeinbildung und kritisch-konstruktive Didaktik* (5th ed.). Weinheim: Beltz.

Ludwig, J., & Baldauf-Bergmann, K. (2010). Profilbildungsprobleme in der Erwachsenenbildungsforschung. *Report. Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung, 33*(1), 65–76. Retrieved April 26, 2018, from https://www.die-bonn.de/doks/ludwig1001.pdf

Nuissl, E. (2010). Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung. In R. Tippelt & B. Schmidt (Eds.), *Handbuch Bildungsforschung* (3rd ed., pp. 405–420). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2015). Adult education research: Exploring an increasingly fragmented map. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 125–138.

Schlutz, E. (1992). Leitstudien der Erwachsenenbildung. In W. Gieseke, E. Meueler, & E. Nuissl (Eds.), *Beiheft zum Report. Empirische Forschung zur Bildung Erwachsener. Dokumentation der Jahrestagung 1991 der Kommission Erwachsenenbildung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft* (pp. 39–55). Frankfurt am Main: Arbeitsstelle des Deutschen Volkshochschulverbandes.

Schmidt-Lauff, S. (Ed.). (2014). *Vergangenheit als Gegenwart – Zum 40-jährigen Bestehen der Sektion Erwachsenenbildung der DGfE*. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Schreiber-Barsch, S., & Zeuner, C. (2018). Lebenslanges Lernen: Positionen, Konzepte, Programmatiken, Befunde. In C. Zeuner (Ed.), *Enzyklopädie Erziehungswissenschaft Online.* Fachgebiet: Erwachsenenbildung. Weinheim und München: Beltz Juventa. Retrieved April 26, 2018, from https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/erziehungs_und_sozialwissenschaften/enzyklopaedie_erziehungswissenschaft_online_eeo.html?tx_beltz_educationencyclopedia%5Barticle%5D=38683&tx_beltz_educationencyclopedia%5Baction%5D=article&tx_beltz_educationencyclopedia%5Bcontroller%5D=EducationEncyclopedia&cHash=5459196bca2a5be31b3a45d950391273

Schulenberg, W. (1957). *Ansatz und Wirksamkeit der Erwachsenenbildung*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Schulenberg, W., Loeber, H.-D., Loeber-Pautsch, U., & Pöhler, S. (1978). *Soziale Faktoren der Bildungsbereitschaft Erwachsener. Materialien zur Erwachsenenbildung*. Stuttgart: Klett.

Siebert, H. (2011). *Theorien für die Praxis* (3rd ed.). Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

Siebert, H., & Gerl, H. (1975). *Lehr- und Lernverhalten Erwachsener*. Braunschweig: Westermann Taschenbuch.

Strzelewicz, W., Raapke, H.-D., & Schulenberg, W. (1966). *Bildung und gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein*. Stuttgart: Enke.

Tietgens, H. (1991). Ansätze zu einer Theoriebildung. (Diskussions- und Erkenntnisschritte der Sektion Erwachsenenbildung der DGfE). In W. Mader (Ed.), *Zehn Jahre Erwachsenenbildungswissenschaft* (pp. 45–69). Bad Heilbrunn Obb: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt.

Wildermeersch, D., & Olesen, H. S. (2012). Editorial: The effects of policies for the education and learning of adults – From 'adult education' to 'lifelong learning', from 'emancipation' to 'empowerment'. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 3*(2), 97–101.

Zeuner, C. (2010). Vuxenutbildningens början i Schleswig-Holstein. Folkhögskolan Rendsburg (1842–1848) mot bakgrund av danks-tysk politik. In F. L. Nilsson & A. Nilsson (Eds.), *Två sidor av samma mynt? Folkbildning och yrkesutbildning vid de nordiska folkhögskolorna* (pp. 57–79). Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Zeuner, C. (2015). Erwachsenenbildung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1970 bis 1990. In C. Zeuner (Ed.), *Enzyklopädie Erziehungswissenschaft Online.* Fachgebiet: Erwachsenenbildung. Weinheim und München: Beltz Juventa, https://doi.org/10.3262/EEO16150349. Retrieved April 2, 2018, from //www.erzwissonline.de, www.content-select.com/10.3262/EEO16150349

Zeuner, C., & Faulstich, P. (2009). *Erwachsenenbildung – Resultate der Forschung*. Weinheim: Beltz.

Part II
Invisible Colleges and International Recognition

Chapter 4
Exploring the Adult Learning Research Field by Analysing Who Cites Whom

Erik Nylander, Lovisa Österlund, and Andreas Fejes

4.1 Introduction

In recent years, researchers throughout the world have come under increased pressure to publish in English, direct their scholarly work to internationally acclaimed journals indexed in the dominating databases (i.e. Scopus and Web of Science), and render their work citable among peers in other countries. Strong political waves of managerial reforms are gradually making academic career trajectories and promotions more dependent upon what Larsson (2009) calls "an emerging economy of publication and citations". This development, as well as the standardized measurements of scientific output and evaluation on which it is reliant (number of articles, journal impact, average citations, etc.), is often criticized for giving highly inadequate or reductive images of the complex ways scholars in diverse fields relate to the question of quality (Karpik 2011; Gingras 2016).

The establishment of "what counts" as quality among scientific peers is arguably a rather opaque issue, where the valuation practices of different research fields are divergent from one another (cf. Lariviére et al. 2006; Hicks 2004; Gingras 2016; Lamont 2009). It has also been pointed out that the kind of ranking and benchmarking procedures which are often established to evaluate research, tend to trigger

This chapter has previously been published as Nylander, E., Österlund, L., & Fejes, A. (2018) Exploring the Adult Learning Research Field by Analysing Who Cites Whom. *Vocations and learning*, 11(1), 113–131.

E. Nylander (✉) · A. Fejes
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: erik.nylander@liu.se

L. Österlund
University Library, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_4

re-activation strategies among researchers as well as institutions as they try to maximize their own remuneration and climb collegial "pecking orders" (Espeland and Sauder 2007; Carruthers and Espeland 1991). Although contemporary forms of political steering have placed much weight on bibliographic data and scientometric analyses, these tools are still rather under-utilized for making more detailed accounts of the *modus operandi* of distinct research fields and for mapping out their scientific content and dominating players.

In this chapter, we will map out the position of the dominating research traditions within the field of adult learning by use of a bibliographic cartography. Our empirical material consists of a relational database of cited work in articles published between the years of 2006 and 2014 in five peer-reviewed journals pertaining to adult learning listed in Scopus: *Adult Education Quarterly*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *Studies in Continuing Education*, *Journal of Education and Work* and *Journal of Workplace Learning*. Our sample thus includes all references in the reference list of articles and reviews published in these five journals over a period of 8 years, in total 151,261 citation links between more than 33,000 different authors.

Drawing on the tradition of the sociology of science known as field analysis (Bourdieu 1988) we identify the dominating players based on the total number of citations, outline their positions in relation to one another and unravel the main epistemic traditions present in the field. Although we do *not* think that the total number of citations can be taken as a proxy for research quality, we believe that the bibliographic method we outline has a series of distinct advantages in comparison to conventional bibliometrics analysis (Hicks 2004, 2013; Persson 1991; Lariviére et al. 2006) as well as previous bibliometrics studies on the field of adult learning (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Rubenson and Elfert 2015; Käpplinger 2015; Larsson 2010; Taylor 2001; see also Chaps. 2, 6, 7 and 9). Firstly, we are able to give a synthetic and panoramic view of the research field of adult learning based on previous citation patterns by utilizing the power of big data, spanning in total 151,261 citation links between more than 33,000 different authors. Secondly, our account takes into consideration the total sum of bibliographic citations and is not limited to articles, as is often the case in more conventional bibliometric methods. Thirdly, we are able to distinguish between standard references directed towards bibliographies belonging to researchers active within the field, and references to those who are highly cited but do not engage in the field yet who are part of the positional struggle. Finally, we point to two main structural oppositions pertinent within this subfield, one connected to the research object (Education versus Work) and one that separates scholars based on the level of analysis (Cognition versus Policy). The overall aim of this exercise is to unravel the relationship between the dominating scholars in the field and thereby to foster what Bourdieu calls "epistemic reflexivity", i.e. a better understanding of the theoretical perspectives within which research is conducted and the various positions scholars engaged in the field can potentially uptake (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 40–41).

4.2 Governed by Peers

One of the fundamental traits of scientific practice since it established institutional autonomy is that the value of any given knowledge contribution is decided upon collegially among peers (Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Even if the relative autonomy of research varies over time as well as between different disciplines, most research fields are organized in ways that make corruption, nepotism and direct manipulation of knowledge difficult. One important instrument to safeguard the relative independence of research is the collegial process of peer review taking place before final publication and to ensure the legitimacy of appointments. The peer review system should, ideally at least, help protect research from the influence of external interests and pressure, as well as tendentious and flawed argumentation. Peer reviewing of articles can, at its best, help to refine the quality of the research as initiated and knowledgeable colleagues are provided with the opportunity to validate findings and provide critical feedback. At the same time, it is also the role of peer reviewers to determine what should pass as knowledge in the first place, as opposed to personal opinions, common-sense or wishful thinking. However, due to the anonymity criterion of peer reviewing these assessments are arguably marked by a kind of pseudo-neutrality where the position of the peer-reviewer tends to remain concealed throughout the evaluation processes. This intangible judgement processes of ongoing research can be quite frustrating for individual scholars who, at some point throughout their careers, will think that their work has been neglected, misconceived or illegitimately criticized.

Another difficulty with this rather opaque system of collegial valuation is that it makes it hard to get a panoramic overview of all the different researchers active in judging and evaluating what should count as knowledge, their positions in relation to one another and their accumulation of academic credentials over time. One way to analyse the formation of knowledge production in an entire research field is to gather bibliographic information from databases such as Web of Science (WoS) or Scopus. Even though we should acknowledge that bibliometric and bibliographic data is far from exhaustive and that the collegial recognition of peer-reviewed articles differs greatly between scientific disciplines, across countries and over time (Hicks 2013; Lariviére et al. 2006), we think that citations in indexed peer-reviewed journals still count among the basic signs of collegial recognition. Furthermore, by using bibliometric measurements, drawing on large-scale databases, it is possible to analyse citation patterns within different sub-fields in the social sciences as well as to span a great number of publications.

One of the major problems with using conventional bibliometric measurements within research fields of the social sciences and humanities, is that the culture of referencing within these research branches differs greatly from, say, natural science or medicine (Lariviére et al. 2006; Gingras 2016). For instance, references in the social sciences are often made to other forms of publications than articles; something that is rarely accounted for in standard versions of bibliometrics. If one does not take into account knowledge contributions made available in other publication

formats than articles, one risks excluding theoretical and methodological inspirations available in the format of books, as well as contributions made available in other forums for societal debate, philosophy etc., all of which have been proven to be of particular importance to many of the research fields pertaining to the social sciences and the humanities (Hicks 2013; Lariviére et al. 2006). When one, as in our case, takes a specific research field as the object of enquiry, one should therefore, besides more conventional analysis of articles and citations, also try to include analysis of" impact" of other forms of publication such as books, book chapters, and texts written for a wider audience, in terms of the formation of the specific research fields as well as citation practices. For instance, conducting bibliometric research within the educational sciences makes referencing to didactical and pedagogical literature paramount – publications that sometimes but certainly not always come in the form of peer-reviewed articles.

4.3 Previous Research

This study connects with earlier research in three different domains. Firstly, it connects with the sociological tradition of Bourdieu and, more specifically, the analytic model of exploring knowledge production relationally. Secondly, it seeks to contribute to methodological developments in bibliometric research, especially so in constructing large-scale bibliographic images of connections between scholars and between epistemological research traditions. Lastly, it adds to our understanding of the present day shape and composition of the research field on adult learning. Before presenting the details around our study, a brief note on some of the previous research conducted in each of these three domains is necessary.

Aside from Bourdieu's work on science (1988, 2004), numerous scholars have used the concept and methodological insight of studying fields in order to analyse and better understand knowledge production. Such work includes that of Heilbron (2015) who recently focused on the emergence and transformation of French sociology, or Broady's (1991) work that dealt with the reception of Bourdieu's sociology throughout the Western world by means of a bibliometric analysis. One of the traits of this research tradition is the aim of unravelling the structural oppositions inherent in any scientific field and interpreting the position and weight of distinct scholars or traditions relationally; that is to say in relation to the position one another. From Bourdieu's own work on "the science of science" (2004), we know that social science at large holds a rather ambiguous position in the academic landscapes to begin with, on the one hand not really at home within the humanities faculties (philosophy, history, language), yet on the other hand far from the exact sciences of natural science or medicine.

There have also been some previous bibliometrical studies analysing publication and citation patterns within the field of adult learning more specifically. These have mainly focused on identifying issues pertaining to who is publishing in terms

of geography, gender, as well as in terms of academic position, and what kind of research is being published in terms of content, such as the object of research, theory, and method. Some of these studies focus on a single journal only and its development over time (e.g. Harris and Morrison 2011; St. Clair 2011; Taylor 2001), while others focus on identifying issues of authorship and content across several journals (Fejes and Nylander 2014; Larsson 2009, 2010; Rubenson and Elfert 2015; see also Chaps. 2, 5 and 6) and yet some focus on conference publications (Käpplinger 2015). In short, these studies identify the following characteristics of adult learning as a research field: authors located at universities in the UK, US, Australia or Canada dominate the field in contribution as well as collegial impact; female authors render more publications than men do, while male authors still dominate the field in terms of scientific recognition and impact (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Taylor 2001). Methodologically, research tends to be conducted within the qualitative paradigm, with interviews, sometimes in combination with observations, as the main method of generating data (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Käpplinger 2015; see also Chaps. 7, 8 and 9). Theoretically, sociocultural perspectives on learning dominate and topic-wise, adult learning has been found to be the most common thematic (Fejes and Nylander 2015; Rubenson and Elfert 2015; see also Chaps. 2 and 7).

The above studies provide valuable insights into how the field of adult learning research is being shaped. However, what is lacking is an analysis of the field in terms of its emergence based on who is being recognized by peers through the practice of citation. Even though Larsson (2009) and Fejes and Nylander (2015) draw on citation data in their analyses, their data sources has either been very limited in size (Larsson 2009), or mainly focusing the issue of geography of authorship and institutional affiliation (Fejes and Nylander 2014, 2017). Thus, this chapter will contribute a more all-encompassing analysis of how the field of adult learning emerges through citations, and of the position that dominating traditions and scholars have within it.

4.4 To Understand Research Through Citations: Theory and Method

As indicated earlier, this chapter draws inspiration from a research tradition within the sociology of science that map out the structures of any given research field relationally (Bourdieu 1988) as well as explorative methods in bibliometrics (Gingras 2016; Bastian et al. 2009). Building on Bourdieu's work we conceive a research field as a relationally structured space with its own rules of entry and within which agents compete about scientific recognition (Bourdieu 1988; Sapiro 2010). Arguably, symbolic forms of recognition is particularly pertinent within social fields that has established a certain degree of autonomy to the surrounding world, such as a scientific field of academics or the cultural field of jazz musicians

(Nylander 2014a, b).[1] Even though much of the political usage of bibliometric measurement has gone awry, citations still hold as an important sign of collegial recognition that can be explored empirically. Bibliometrical measurement is especially useful for exploring bibliographic links and research networks, what the bibliometrican Yves Gingras calls "descriptive cartographies" (Gingras 2016, 75).

The number of citations and citations links obtained by other colleagues is obviously just *one* of many possible signs of such scholarly recognition, although it is a measurement that has come to be more salient in research policy in the last few decades, following largely on a series of managerial reforms (cf. King 1987; Larsson 2009; Gingras 2014). Yet, instead of a critical denunciation of the politics that led to the efforts to reduce scientific excellence to standardized evaluation measurements, our aim with this text is to use the bibliographic data made available to us though acclaimed databases, to understand relations among the researchers dominating the research field. More particularly, we will seek to demonstrate what kinds of epistemological objects, academic traditions and research themes have been cited and have thus acquired a dominating position in the research field on adult learning in recent years. Although a much debated issue we assume that adult learning can be seen as an academic field in its own right within which symbolic forms of recognition are simultaneously sought after and agreed upon through research practices (Bourdieu 1985, 1996, 2004; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).[2] Our first research question concerns whom in the field is attributed scholarly value based on the number of citations, and what position he or she occupies in the space of citations. The second research question focuses more on the structural opposition that permeates this particular research field, i.e. regardless of what individual bibliographies happen to embody the most central positions. Since our aim here is to provide a birds-eye view of the research field through recent citations practices, we will have to leave aside bigger questions of the historical emergence of adult educational research as such as well as its political legitimacy.

4.4.1 Method, Data and Analysis

We have selected five journals in the broader adult learning field for further analysis. These were selected, firstly, based on the journals representing different areas of research within the wider field of adult learning; adult education, continuing education, lifelong education, and workplace learning. Secondly, the journals were selected based on a criterion of publishing within the field for a longer period of

[1] However, Broady (1991) argues that symbolic capital can be seen as the most generic concept in Bourdieu's toolbox, one that permeates to the three forms of capital his work is normally associated with, i.e. cultural, social, and economic capital.

[2] For other discussions on the status of adult learnig as a research field see e.g. Bright (1989), Larsson (2010); Rubenson and Elfert (2015), Fejes and Nylander (2017).

time.[3] Thirdly, we sought to construct a sample of journals where the editorial work was carried out in different geographical locations and distributed by different scholarly publishers. All the selected journals has also acquired an indexation status in Scopus, and is thus categorised as "international" in contexts where an international publication is encouraged through different methods of measuring quality. The reason for not selecting journals indexed in WoS is that only a very few journals in the adult learning field were indexed there at the time of our enquiry. The five selected journals from Scopus thus provide a wider empirical basis for comparison and analysis. The five journals selected were:

- *Adult Education Quarterly* (Published in the USA)
- *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (Published in the UK)
- *Journal of Education and Work*[4] (Published in the UK)
- *Journal of Workplace Learning* (Published in Europe)
- *Studies in Continuing Education* (Published in Australia)

The empirical sample from these journals includes all articles and reviews published between 2006 and 2014, in total 1219 publications. Other document types than articles or reviews often do not include reference lists in Scopus and was therefore excluded.

Rather than only focusing on who are publishing as well as being cited most, we chose to analyse the relationships between different actors in the field based on direct citation relations, i.e. to analyse *who cited whom*. We started to create the database by downloading all 1219 articles and reviews from Scopus as a csv file. To generate the citation links between the citing and cited authors a Visual Basic script was written to separate authors in the author column and the authors from individual references in the reference column. This was done based on last name and initials.[5] While the author column was rather easily isolated, the reference column often contained both author and editor names which required further identification procedures. After running the script, a manual extraction of author names from the reference column was carried out. Names of organizations and government authorities were ignored since the focus of the study is on individual authors, traditions and field positions. Furthermore, all variants of citing and cited author names were gathered for a manual cleaning process. Of the 33,932 names, 862 name variants were identified and corrected among the most frequently occurring names.[6] The corrections were replaced in the direct citation links.

[3] Thus, other newer journals such as, e.g. *Vocations and Learning*, or *The European journal for research on the education and learning of adults*, were not part of our sample.

[4] This journal publishes papers which concerns adults learning as well as the learning of youths in the regular school system. Since the journal is one important publication outlet for adult learning scholars interested in relations between education and work in was included in our sample even tough it has a slightly wider scope.

[5] Please note that Scopus includes a maximum of eight authors per reference – the seven first ones and the last. In the field of adult learning this is a minor limitation as few publications contains more than eight authors.

[6] All author subjects with more than ten citations and the 100 most cited authors were double checked by two researchers independently.

Individual self-citations were also excluded, though citations from co-authors of previous works were still counted. In order to avoid the pitfall of portraying authors with inflated citation figures by having been cited by publications having multiple authors a fractionalization approach was used based on the number of citing authors. However, fractionalization based on the number of cited authors was *not* used, meaning that a cited author would get as much credit for being a single author as for being part of a group of authors. The main reason for not fractionalizing the cited authors here has been our empirical focus on the relationship among scholars currently active in the field. If the chief focus would have been on citation counting as such this method might seem problematic as it boosts the weight given to actors with a track record of numerous well-cited co-authored publications. However, as our interest concern the relational position of the most cited scholars and the main epistemological traditions they work within this fractionalization approach and bibliographical method seem less hazardous.[7]

For the creation of the collective map of citations the visualization tool Gephi was utilized (Bastian et al. 2009).[8] The script generated two network files: a node file and an edge file. The node file contained all citing and cited authors. The edge file contained the direct citation links, edges, between the nodes (authors). To generate the weight of each edge all citation links from one author to another were added up. We also added some additional information to the node files about the authors' current positions on editorial/advisory boards for the journals, before import to Gephi. This supplementary information did not affect the creation of the field positions, but has been helpful in the interpretation and analysis.

Although we claim that this approach is useful for exploring bibliographic cartographies based on citations it also have some limitations. First of all we rely entirely on one type of publication outlet (journal articles and reviews) from a fairly limited time period (2006–2014) in order to construct the space of citations. If other journals would be included in our sample, if we included a longer time horizon or other forms of publications was added on to the citation data base, we do believe that our results could be somewhat altered. Another possible limitation has to do with the way we chose to fractionalize or give weight to the different bibliographical entries. By equalizing citation weight given to individual and multiple authorship, we can potentially help exaggerate the perceived importance of the most productive and most collaborative scholars in the field. One last limitation worth considering has to do with the rather narrow empirical focus on five journals within adult education and workplace learning. As some leading researchers in the field contribute and give priority to all-together different publications – may this be in rivalling academic fields with more scientific status or other publication venues or

[7] A scientometric alternative used to analyse the relation between researchers is co-citation analysis (cf. Small 1973; Persson 1991; Åström et al. 2009).

[8] The networks were visualized in 2D using the ForceAtlas2 algorithm, which is a force-directed algorithm. For more on Gephi see Bastian et al. (2009).

languages – our map can be accused of bringing forth scholars more limited in focus, contributing specifically to the relatively small subfield of adult learning.

4.5 The Space of Citations: A Telescopic and Bibliographic View

In the following, we introduce our results by presenting a figure including citations from all five journals. Each individual node in the full space of citations is representing one author, and a line between nodes illustrates citations in the direction of the arrow. The thickness of the line illustrates the number of citations between authors, and the size of the node, as well as the size of the font, illustrates the total number of citations for the specific bibliography regardless of whether books, articles or conference papers are being cited. The location and centrality of the authors in the figure, relative to each other, thus reflects the overall citation patterns. Authors who are often cited together or who often cite the same author(s) tend to be placed more closely together.

We have filtered out the dominating players in order to make the structure of the field comprehensible.[9] The filtering is based on the total number of incoming citations to each author, and thus excludes a great number of less cited scholars in greater proximity to each name. The figure therefore zooms in on the central players in the field, measured based on the number of citations and the connections between these agents (Fig. 4.1).

Figure 4.1 illustrates the entire research field on adult learning based on citations in the five journals. Several central sub-clusters of authorship nodes can be observed. The most central, and arguably the strongest, cluster is created by the citation bibliographies in the sociocultural theoretical traditions, focusing particularly on learning in work life. Authors such as Etienne Wenger, Jean Lave, Stephen Billett, Yrjö Engeström, David Boud and Phil Hodkinson, represent key bibliographies in this citation cluster. It is worth noting that two of these citation bibliographies, that of Wenger and that of Lave, do not themselves contribute to the building of the field by publishing in the selected journals, even though they occupy such central positions. Instead these names represent "standard" references called upon as external authorities by researchers contributing to these particular journals. Furthermore, authors representing the most central positions in this cluster are situated in anglophone countries such as USA (Lave, Wenger), the UK (Hodkinson) and Australia (Billett, Boud). Engeström's citation bibliography, although currently situated in Finland, could also be seen as anglophone due to the fact that his career trajectory has involved long-term employment at a North American university.

Another central network of scholars in the field, clearly connected to the one above through citation practices, is found among the bibliographies of authors

[9] After generating the network the most cited authors were filtered out. A cut-off rate of 50 fractionalized citations was chosen as the best alternative for level of detail versus readability.

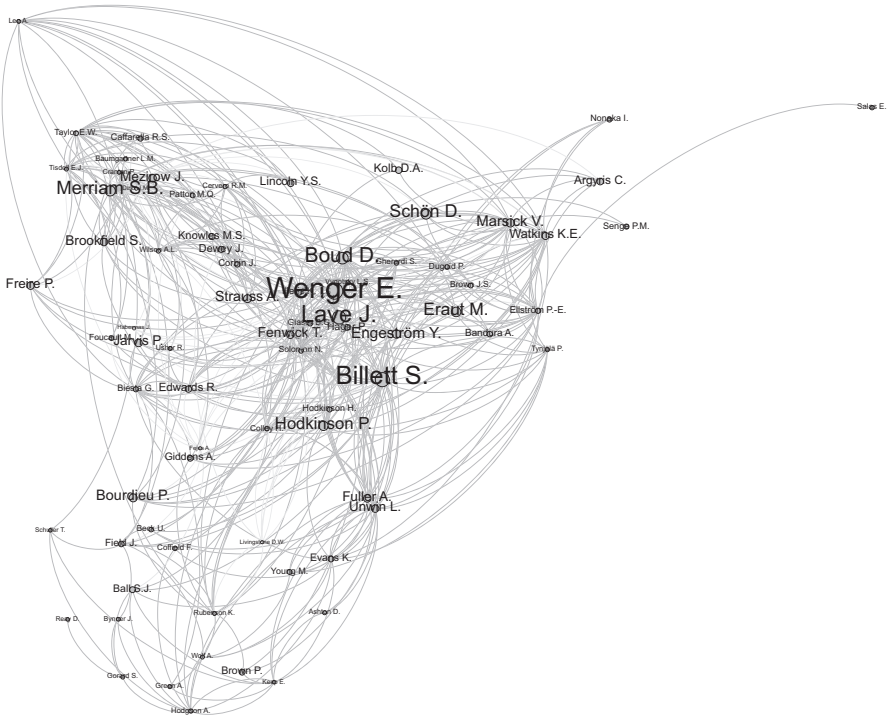

Fig. 4.1 The space of citations based on accumulated number of citations in five journals on adult learning, 2006–2014

located in the UK, such as Tara Fenwick, Lorna Unwin and Alison Fuller. This group all engage in research into relations between education and work life (professional education, vocational education etc.). Fuller and Unwin are linked further with colleagues at their own institution, (The Institute of Education in London)[10] such as Karen Evans, Michael Young and Stephen Ball, while Fenwick, whose bibliography is even more centrally located, connects to several scholars who are working at the same institution as her (University of Stirling), such as Richard Edwards, John Field, and Gert Biesta. The centrality of Fenwicks bibliography has to do with the transnational linkages to the sociocultural cluster, a sociomaterial cluster as well as to a North American cluster in the top left of the figure. The latter could possibly be explained by her former employment at universities in Canada.

More generally it is interesting to note how these mainly European/Australian clusters have a rather weak scholarly connection to North American researchers, whom in this field seem to operate pretty much in isolation from the rest. However, two North American clusters of citation bibliographies are visible at the top of the

[10] A researcher that is absent from the list of top fifty leading citation bibliographies between 2006 and 2014, but nevertheless seem influential in giving shape to the bibliographies in the more sociologically oriented part of the map, is former IOE Professor Barsil Bernstein (1924–2000).

figure, although they seem surprisingly peripheral, especially compared to the sociocultural cluster. In the northwest corner, there are citation bibliographies of Jack Mezirow, Sharan Merriam, Stephen Brookfield, and Edward Taylor, all of whom are located in the US. The connections between their bibliographies create two interrelated subgroups, one where transformative learning theory is central (Mezirow and Taylor), and one where critical pedagogy with a Marxist orientation is central (Brookfield and Freire).[11] A second North American cluster is visible in the northeast corner. Here, we find citation bibliographies of Karen E. Marsick and Victoria Watkins, illustrating a cluster more oriented towards organizational and management issues. The citation patterns of this group connect up with those of Chris Argyris as well as the Swedish scholar Per-Erik Ellström. In the same space of citations we find some key references to "classics" such as Donald Schön and David Kolb.

West/southwest in the space of citations we find an aggregation of more philosophically and sociologically oriented scholars. One of these clusters consists of bibliographies of authors who are working with poststructural theories such as Richard Edwards (UK), Robin Usher (Australia), and Gert Biesta (UK). In conjunction with these citation bibliographies we find another external reference considered key among some colleagues in the field, that of Michel Foucault (France). In the southwest corner we find another cluster of bibliographies where John Fields (UK) name appear to be central. The more critical sociological tradition is also given weight by external references to seminal work from Pierre Bourdieu (France) as well as Ulrich Beck (Germany). If scholars working in the US tend to dominate the northern side of the space of citations, the southern areas predominantly consists of scholars affiliated to institutions in the UK, with Australian scholars and some scholars that has worked at both sides of the Atlantic (e.g. Fenwick, Engeström), mediating between the two.

Though it is well beyond the scope of our chapter to investigate what has brought these bibliographies to the centre of the citation practices in research on adult learning, we note that many of these authors currently hold, or have held, positions as editors and advisories to the examined journals. The editorial positions often seem to have a direct link to the field of adult learning, such as for Stephen Billett who currently operates as the editor of *Vocations and Learning*; David Boud and Nicky Solomon, currently editing *Studies in Continuing Education*; Edward Taylor, Patricia Cranton, Elisabeth Tisdell, Sharan Merriam, Ronald Cervero, and Arthur Wilson previously editors for *Adult Education Quarterly*; Phil Hodkinson, currently editor for *Journal of Education and Work*; Peter Jarvis, previously editor for *International journal of Lifelong Education*; Alison Fuller, current editor and Lorna Unwin, former editor for the *Journal of vocational education and training*; and Richard Edwards, previously editor for *Studies in the Education of Adults.*

[11] The influence of Paulo Freire's work seem particularly strong within American adult learning research, although Freire uphold an outlier position in the full space of citations, perhaps due to the fact that he never contributed to the field as such, wrote much of his work a long time ago and in Spanish.

So far, we have described our results from the descriptive cartographic exploration. In the next section, we will turn to our interpretation of these results.

4.6 Moving Across the Field

If we read Fig. 4.1 as a map of the research field, we can see how movements from west to east, as well as from south to north provide interesting analytical and epistemological structures. Our interpretation of this map is presented in Fig. 4.2 below.

Moving from the west to east spans citation bibliographies of authors working with education and educational systems (e.g. Jarvis, Biesta, Brookfield, Edwards, Field, Ball) and bibliographies who primarily study workplace learning (e.g. Schön, Ellström, Eraut, Watkins, Marsick, Unwin). Another perhaps less obvious result

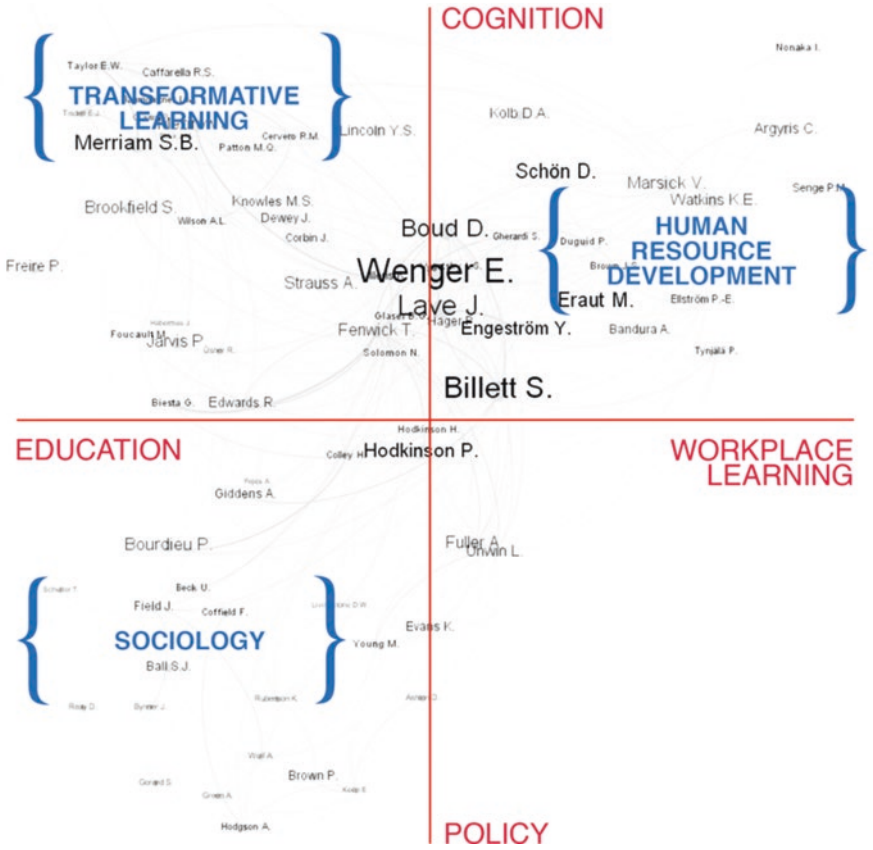

Fig. 4.2 Structural interpretation of the space of citations in research on adult learning, 2006–2014

discernible from the global map of citations is that bibliographies with more critical perspectives can be found to the west, while more descriptive scholars can be found to the east. The critical impetus on adult learning thus unites otherwise rather diverse scholars such as those working on transformative learning, and those drawing on sociological theory or poststructuralist thought, whereas the more descriptive research tradition seems stronger in workplace learning and among scholars related to human resource development (HRD).

Looking instead at the vertical dimension from south to north, we see how authors well-cited in the south tend to focus on issues pertaining to social structures, policy or transitions from education to work (e.g. Ball, Brown, Evans, Field, Rubenson, Hodkinson), while dominating scholars to the north tend to deal more closely with processes of human cognition and the prospect of transformative learning processes (e.g. Taylor, Kolb, Merriam, Schön, Mezirow). Although these scholars themselves are likely to object, it is tempting to interpret this cleavage as one separating more macro-oriented research in the south from researchers who deal with learning as a micro-process in the north.

In the middle of the figure we find bibliographies related to the most dominating tradition within adult learning over the last few decades – sociocultural perspectives on learning (e.g. Lave, Wenger, Billett, Engeström, Boud) as well as what seems to have emerged as a popular research tradition more recently, namely that of practice theory (e.g. Hager, Gherardi, Fenwick). The bibliographies in the middle seem to be citable by authors from both west and east, as well as south and north, thus illustrating the possible generic traits of sociocultural as well as practice theory.

4.7 Concluding Remarks: A Bibliographic Field Analysis of Research on Adult Learning

In the following we will conclude by considering our results in relation to previous studies on the field of adult learning, as well as in relation to our bibliometrical method. Some of our findings relate quite specifically to adult learning as a research field, whereas we also believe that it could be read as a case of how research practices can be studied based on bibliographical and citation data.

In relation to adult learning as a research field our analysis has provided more detailed insights into how "standard references" emerge through citation practices and how individual scholars obtain cogent collegial positions in relation to one another. Although our analysis confirms previous studies as regards to the dominance of anglophone scholars (e.g. Fejes and Nylander 2014, 2017; Larsson 2010) and sociocultural theories (e.g. Fejes and Nylander 2015), we have been able to provide further insight into the relation between dominating players and as well as outlined a structural interpretation of the different epistemic camps active within the field. Broadly conceived one such structural opposition cuts between those researchers primarily studying education or educational systems (e.g. Jarvis, Biesta,

Brookfield, Edwards, Field, Ball) and those who primarily study workplace learning (e.g. Ellström, Eraut, Watkins, Marsick, Unwin). The second opposition separates those scholars that are more sociologically oriented and that tend to focus on social structures, policy or transitions from education to work (e.g. Ball, Field, Brown, Evans, Rubensson, Hodkinson) and those that deal more closely with processes of human cognition and the prospect of transformative learning (e.g. Taylor, Kolb, Merriam, Schön, Mezirow). We also found that most dominating tradition within adult learning in the last few decades – sociocultural perspectives on learning (Lave & Wenger, Billett, Engeström, Boud) and, more recently, practice theory (e.g. Fenwick, Hager, Gherardi, Edwards) – occupy a central mediating position in the space of citations, balancing between the opposing poles of education and work, policy and cognition. We can summarize these findings to five points.

Firstly, by analysing citation patterns in the field between 2006 and 2014, we can see how those bibliographies representing sociocultural theoretical traditions seem to maintain a strong position due to their ability to be rendered citable by scholars from a range of different theoretical domains, scholars interested in analysing educational practices as well as those focusing on learning in the workplace. This might be taken to illustrate the generic qualities of the perspective, i.e. sociocultural theory speaks to a wide audience regardless of what research object is being studied or what objective the particular scholar ultimately has in mind. More crudely put, our results can also be seen as illustrating how sociocultural theory has become the mainstream perspective adopted in the research on adult learning.

Secondly, the centrality of the position occupied by sociocultural theories on learning also seems to build on the perspectives ability to transgress institutional and geographical boundaries, as these scholars have successfully mediated research between scholars located in the US, Europe and Australia. As previous studies have illustrated (e.g. Fejes and Nylander 2014; Larsson 2010), and what our study also seems to confirm, is that there is surprisingly little interaction between scholars located in different continents. With the mediating role of sociocultural theory – simultaneously the most mainstream and generic position within the field – scholars have potentially reached a readership that spans continents and scholastic divides.

Thirdly, the centrality of the bibliographies occupied by scholars from four Anglophone countries – the UK, USA, Canada and Australia and the striking absence of bibliographies of scholars from other countries – illustrate a geopolitical bias in the field in terms of what is picked up and construed as citable. There are many factors that could be raised to help explain such an outcome; not least how English speaking journals have increasingly become those deemed as "international" across the globe (Archambault et al. 2006; Gingras 2016, 54–57). However, and perhaps more surprisingly, biographies of Australian authors are those who become positioned as among the most central ones in our cartography on adult learning (e.g. Billett, Boud, Solomon, Hager). These authors, representing sociocultural as well as practice theoretical traditions, has thus managed to establish themselves as mediators between intellectual traditions and scholars located in different countries. Such position might be explained by their need to be intellectually mobile. That is, by living in a rather sparsely populated country (Australia), there is a need

to engage with a wider literature and academic debates than that available in one's own country. Or rather, the academic community of adult learning researchers in Australia could be seen as rather small in comparison to other dominant countries (US, UK), which pushes these scholars to engage with scholars more broadly. In doing so they are, consciously or unconsciously, assigned the role as citable mediators in this diverse and rather pluralistic research field.[12]

Fourthly, by focusing on the full citation bibliographies, we have been able to identify the positions taken by scholars who are editing journals in the field under scrutiny. Although we cannot say anything about the causality between being a gatekeeping editor and attracting citations, we can conclude that editors of journals in the field, to a large extent, are representing key citation bibliographies that are symbolically recognized by other colleagues. Thus one might argue that our results have confirmed that editors are selected as editors due to being centrally positioned in the field or that editors of leading journals tend to gather more citations based on their gatekeeping position.

Fifthly, it is important to note how the selection of these specific journals influence the way the field is shaped. Even though the journals have been selected as representative of the wider field of adult learning research, they do themselves have specific profiles through what is published and cited within the journals. Although analysis of each specific journal is outside of the scope of this chapter, we could note, for example, that the reason for human resource development research emerging as a central cluster in our results is due to us having included the *Journal of Workplace learning* in our sample. The journal is published in the US, it is dominated by bibliographies of US scholars, and HRD is one key theoretical terrain in workplace learning research in the US. Another example is our selection of the *Adult Education Quarterly*, which help generate another North American cluster, here around bibliographies of researchers on transformative learning research, and those more influenced by the reception of the Marxist tradition in the US. Without *Adult Education Quarterly* in our sample, transformative learning theory would not have emerged in our presentation of the results.

[12] However, please bear in mind that the way we chose to fractionalize citations (see section "Method, Data and Analysis") favours the most productive and collaborative scholars that are being cited in the field. In so far that Australian scholars are producing more collaborative articles that is being picked-up and cited among colleagues, our research method is thus helping translating that graphically into the central area of the space of citations. Another reservation for interpreting the centrality of Australian scholars in the field in terms of scholastic excellence or research quality, has to do with the political steering mechanisms for academic production in which Australia have had a rather extreme policy based on journal publication alone. Butler (2003) has shown how this has resulted in increased publication activity paired with a decline in general impact.

4.7.1 Some Notes on Bibliometrics and Suggestions for Future Research

Our research might also be deemed relevant to scholars outside of the research field of adult learning, in particular bibliometricians and scholars interested in ways to study the fabrication and recognition of knowledge through publications (Gingras 2016; Hicks 2013). By drawing on all citations in the reference list of all chaps published in the journals, we have been able to identify the citation bibliographies that are positioned as the most central ones in a specific research field. Usually, such analyses are conducted with a focus only on those publications cited that are indexed in one of the indexing databases. Thus, only journal articles tend to be included. The merit of including more material than the journal articles when measuring and analysing the impact of research within the social sciences is far from a new discovery. For instance, Boyack and Klavans (2014) showed the importance, especially for the social sciences, of including non-source items in science maps. Similar arguments have been made by bibliometricians when comparing different branches of research by means of citation and publication practices (cf. Lariviére et al. 2006; Hicks 2004, 2013; Gingras 2016).

However, we have not come across a similar method as our own operationalized for dissecting the positionality of scholars in a specific scientific subfield. In our study, we have methodically included all kinds of academic publications possible, i.e. everything deemed relevant and cited from a specific author. Thus, we provide knowledge about those citation bibliographies that are most centrally positioned, but which are not necessarily bibliographies shaped through journal publications as such. Such knowledge is important to the field of adult learning (as well as other social sciences fields) where many of the conventional citations are related to publications in other forms than journal articles and external authorities for social science more widely (cf. Budd 1990; Budd and Magnuson 2010; Lariviére et al. 2006).

For future research it would be of interest to include references from other publication types than journal articles in the construction of an author citation network and dig deeper in the kind of symbolic assets the dominating players in the field have at their disposal. One difficulty with extending the analysis to include the citation practices in books and book series is the lack of digitalized data of these publications as compared to Scopus or WoS. It would also be relevant to further trace the transformations of adult learning as a research field over time. For instance, why is the corner of the map that orients towards bibliographies engaged in policy analysis and workplace learning so empty? How did sociocultural perspectives come to render such a dominant position within this field? How come most North American scholars' uptake such a distant and relatively peripheral position in the space of citations in relation to European and other English-speaking collages? However, all this is quite a difficult endeavor due to the time it would take to aggregate historical data on the emergence of these citation practices, construct a relational database and perform a rigorous scientific analysis.

References

Archambault, É., Vignola-Gagné, É., Côté Larivière, V., & Gingras, Y. (2006). Benchmarking scientific output in the social sciences and humanities: The limits of existing databases. *Scientometrics, 68*(3), 329–342.

Åström, F. et.al. (2009). *Celebrating scholarly communication studies: A festschrift for Olle Persson*. Published by ISSI. Vol. 05-S June 2009. International Society for Scientometrics and Informetrics: Link 2016-09-05: http://issi-society.org/ollepersson60/ollepersson60.pdf

Bastian, M., Heymann, S., & Jacomy, M. (2009). *Gephi: An open source software for exploring and manipulating networks*. International AAAI conference on weblogs and social media.

Bourdieu, P. (1985). The market of symbolic goods. *Poetics, 14*(1), 13–44.

Bourdieu, P. (1988). *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The rules of art. Genesis and structure of the literary field*. Palo Alto: Stanford University press.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). *Science of science and reflexivity*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boyack, K. W., & Klavans, R. (2014). Including cited non-source items in a large-scale map of science: What difference does it make? *Journal of Informetrics, 8*(3), 569–580.

Bright, B. P. (Ed.). (1989). *Theory and practice in the study of adult education: The epistemological debate*. London: Routledge.

Broady, D. (1991) *Sociologi och epistemologi: om Pierre Bourdieus författarskap och den historiska epistemologin.* Dissertation. Stockholm: HLS.

Budd, J. M. (1990). Higher education literature: Characteristics of citation patterns. *The Journal of Higher Education, 61*(1), 84–97.

Budd, J. M., & Magnuson, L. (2010). Higher education literature revisited: Citation patterns examined. *Research in Higher Education, 51*, 294–304.

Butler, L. (2003). Explaining Australia's increased share of ISI publications – The effects of a funding formula based on publication counts. *Research Policy, 32*(1), 143–155.

Carruthers, B., & Espeland, W. N. (1991). Accounting for rationality: Double-entry bookkeeping and the rhetoric of economic rationality. *The American Journal of Sociology., 97*(1), 31–69.

Espeland, W. N., & Sauder, M. (2007). Rankings and reactivity: How public measures recreate social worlds. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(1), 1–40.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2014). The anglophone international(e): A bibliometrical analysis of three adult education journals, 2005–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(3), 222–239.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2015). How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6(2)*, 103–124.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2017). Adult education research: Publication strategies and collegial recognition. In M. Milana et al. (Eds.), *Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning*. London: Palgrave. ISBN 978-1-137-55782-7.

Gingras, Y. (2014). Criteria for evaluating indicators. In B. Cronin & C. R. Sugimoto (Eds.), *Beyond bibliometrics: Harnessing multidimensional indicators of scholarly impact*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Gingras, Y. (2016). *Bibliometrics and research evaluation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Harris, R., & Morrison, A. (2011). Through the looking glass: Adult education through the lens of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning over fifty years. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 51*, 17–52.

Heilbron, J. (2015). *French sociology*. Cornell: Cornell University Press.

Hicks, D. (2004). The four literatures of social sciences. In H. Moed, W. Glänzel, & U. Schmoch (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative science and technology research* (pp. 473–496). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Hicks, D. (2013). One size doesn't fit all: On the co-evolution of national evaluation systems and social science publishing. *Confero: Essays on Education, Philosophy and Politics, 1(1)*, 67–90.
Käpplinger, B. (2015). Adult education research between field and rhizome: A bibliometrical analysis of conference programs of ESREA. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 139–157.
Karpik, L. (2011). What is the price of a scientific paper? In J. Beckert & P. Aspers (Eds.), *The worth of goods: Valuation and pricing in the economy* (pp. 63–85). New York: Oxford University Press.
King, J. (1987). A review of bibliometric and other science indicators and their role in research evaluation. *Journal of Information Science, 13*, 261–276.
Lamont, M. (2009). *How professors think: Inside the curious world of academic judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Lariviére, V., Archambault, É., Gingras, Y., & Vignola-Gagné, É. (2006). The place of serials in referencing practices: Comparing natural sciences and engineering with social science and humanities. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 57*(8), 997–1004.
Larsson, S. (2009). An emerging economy of publications and citations. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 29*, 34–52.
Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Research, 1*(1–2), 97–112.
Nylander, E. (2014a). Mastering the jazz standard. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology, 2*(1), 66–97.
Nylander, E. (2014b). The rites of jazz institutions: Uncertainty and valuation in music auditions. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology, 2*(2), 266–276.
Nylander, E., Österlund, L., & Fejes, A. (2018). Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom. *Vocations and Learning, 11*(1), 113–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-017-9181-z.
Persson, O. (1991). *Forskning i bibliometrisk belysning*. Umeå: INUM.
Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2015). Adult education research: Exploring an increasingly fragmented map. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 125–138.
Sapiro, G. (2010). Introduction. I Gisèle Sapiro (red). Sociology is a martial art: political writings by Pierre Bourdieu. New York: New Press.
Small, H. G. (1973). Co-citation in the scientific literature. *Journal of the American Society for Intformation Science, 24*(4), 265–269.
St.Clair, R. (2011). Writing ourselves into being: A review of the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 23*(2), 27–44.
Taylor, E. (2001). *Adult Education Quarterly* from 1989–1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.

Chapter 5
Invisible Colleges in Research on Adult Learning: A Bibliometric Study on International Scholarly Recognition

Staffan Larsson, Andreas Fejes, Lovisa Österlund, and Erik Nylander

5.1 Introduction

Researchers are often personally dedicated to their work and normally very keen to understand the issues they are exploring.[1] They struggle with their research questions and to produce scholarly content in the form of books, reports and peer-reviewed articles. However, the joy and despair of writing is only the beginning of a longer process (Larsson 2004). Researchers also aim for their work to be recognised and read by colleagues. In this process, researchers also strive toward recognition within specific communities, particularly other colleagues. What is valued by researchers has been found to vary greatly across the various fields and disciplines (Lamont 2009).

Another side of researchers' work is that they strive to be recognised in the "economy of publications and citations", i.e. recognition in specific measurement devices such as the acknowledged databases of Web of Science (WoS) or Scopus (Larsson 2009). Such recognition is increasingly expected of us by the rulers within the current university system. The allocation of resources to research groups as well as individual researchers can, in the worst cases, depend directly on these stan-

[1] This chapter draws on arguments first presented by Larsson (2010) "Invisible colleges in the adult education research world", and uses the same method and material as the article "Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom" (Nylander et al. 2018).

S. Larsson (✉) · A. Fejes · E. Nylander
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: staffan.larsson@liu.se

L. Österlund
University Library, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_5

dardised valuation tools (Espeland and Sauder 2016; Gingras 2016; Larsson 2009).[2] The calculative form that publications and citations get within these measurement devices is akin to a "currency", i.e. they have similar properties to money, by which each researcher's "capital" can be defined and compared to that of others. It can also be an example of what Giddens (1990, pp. 21–22) calls "disembedded symbolic tokens", i.e. units disembedded from context, which can then be calculated – typically for modernity. Examples include not only money, but also school grades (Andersson 2000).

When citations become "symbolic tokens", these can be used to measure and compare individual scholars or research groups, but also entire universities. They will then work as an objective for university management to assimilate the view that quality is measured in units of citations, since their universities' reputations are at stake and external research resources are sometimes allocated based on such calculations.[3] The economy of citations forms an integral part of contemporary society's digital surveillance, and is therefore crucial for the ruling of academia. Thus, these "engines of anxiety" also seem capable of affecting the very *modus operandi* of contemporary universities, including the possibility to recruit new talent and the status of research areas within university system itself (cf. Espeland and Sauder 2016; Gingras 2016).

The pretence, as emerging in the current economy of publications and citations, of WoS and Scopus as indicators of quality is that they would be unbiased in relation to geography, language, research areas, etc. However, they actually only include a limited number of sources – primarily articles in a selection of journals. They exclude most journals and almost all books, and seem to have a heavy language bias towards Anglophone journals, judging from previous research (cf. Archambault et al. 2006; Heilbron and Gingras 2018, Chap. 4). Consequently, the geopolitical aspects of this economy appear to be worth exploring further: What is meant by "international" scholarly recognition in these databases? Which scholars are recognised as being worth citing, and how does this differ across the indexed journals? Which regions and countries can make their way into the dominant few?

In this chapter, we analyse citations in five of the leading journals within the field of adult education and learning. The journals were selected by us based on what was available in Scopus for the full period 2006–2014. The study can therefore be read as a bibliometric case study on the consequences of adopting Scopus-indexed journals as a measurement device within the economy of publications and citations in social sciences. Our examination deals with the consequences of utilising Scopus as measurement device as a quality indicator. Is the pretence that Scopus measures

[2] The political backdrop to these developments was the new way of governing the public sector with "quality indicators" – often referred to in the literature as an integral part of "New Public Management" – where, simply put, a business perspective is expanded to all sectors of society, including higher education (Elzinga 2010).

[3] See, for instance, the so-called "Shanghai list" that in part builds on performance indicators of WoS. If the list has global ambitions, WoS, in many scientific areas, has very limited reach (Liedman http://www.confero.ep.liu.se/issues/2013/v1/i1/121015/confero13v1i1a1.pdf; Gingras 2016).

quality in an unbiased way substantiated? Our presentation focuses on (i) the geographical position of the most cited authors, (ii) the gender of these authors (iii) and the effects of editorial power positions.

The journals chosen for further scrutiny were Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ), International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE), Journal of Education and Work (JEW), Journal of Workplace Learning (JWL), and Studies in Continuing Education (SICE). First, we outline the 100 dominant scholars in terms of the number of citations received in all five journals combined. Second, we perform a network analysis of the citations in each of these journals separately. Throughout the text, we engage in a critical discussion on what characterises the group of scholars that are assigned collegial recognition and draw attention to the factors and functions that help to establish such a dominant position.

5.2 Invisible Colleges

The notion of communication and collaboration between colleagues as creating "invisible colleges" was launched by de Solla Price (1986, pp. 56 ff), whom many consider the founder of scientometrics. He pointed to the early correspondence between scientists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They wrote letters, since it was not easy to meet, but through these letters they were like colleagues at the same college, albeit an invisible one. These invisible colleges were often international. For example, botanists in the eighteenth century kept in close contact across borders through letters (Wallenquist 2007). Academic journals later became a supplement to these "private" links that built communication networks.

Nowadays, researchers keep in touch with each other in various ways, through e-mail, at conferences and by reading each other's articles in journals. Such links can be used within the invisible colleges of our time, whereby ideas grow and results are communicated within networks. We might view these networks of citations as "invisible colleges" in the sense that they include and exclude; they create demarcations between the texts which will be recognised, and the texts which do not deserve to be mentioned. Invisible colleges, in this respect, are not about direct contacts between researchers as in the early letters and correspondences, but rather a digitally distributed contact network between texts.

Since the birth of modern scientometric methods and the notion of invisible colleges was introduced by de Solla Price (1986), various research traditions have emerged to explore invisible colleges and these have been made "more visible" by the development of bibliometric methods (Gingras 2016, 2017). One influential tradition within contemporary literature on the sociology of science is actor network theory (ANT) or science and technology studies (STS). This is a tradition that emphasises how relationships between actors – human or non-human – produce effects. Research networks are, in this perspective, not only bridges between researchers who appreciate each other's contributions to collective knowledge; these "citations" are also capable of producing certain effects, for instance executing

and symbolising academic power (Larsson 2006, 2010). The citations and the connections they represent – the invisible colleges – thus simultaneously affect struggles in the academic world and are part of this very struggle.

The perspective of actor networks also highlights the importance of scholarly locations: the place where something is done or the space where something is moving. Geography and space thus become a key category in analysing invisible colleges in this tradition (cf. Latour and Woolgar 1986; Edwards and Usher 2000; Edwards 2003). For instance, in the case of academic journals, editors select texts written in specific places, which refer to other texts, written in other places. When published, these texts are referred to in other texts. Consequently, networks are created that connect texts, references, and researchers across a particular space. Such networks include and exclude researchers, who are involved in struggles for positions of power and recognition. This facet of invisible colleges is part and parcel of academic work, whatever the intention of researchers may be.

Another influential tradition in the sociology of science during the last few decades is field theory (Bourdieu 1996, 1997, 2004; Gingras 2017; Heilbron and Gingras 2018). Here, too, the research focus lies on the relations between scholars and their quest for recognition. Bourdieu (1997) famously distinguished between two distinctive types of assets that build scientific power over time: institutionalised capital and scientific capital. Institutionalised capital consists of positions and titles within the academic community (such as the title of a professor, laboratory leader, editor, and member of an important institute or committee) as well as having power over the means of reproduction (by the distribution of money, positions, contracts, career prospects, etc.). Scientific capital, on the other hand, relies on the personal reputation and the assigned value that a scholar is given by his or her colleagues and peers. These two forms of capital are typically intertwined in social sciences and humanities, but could also be seen as relatively independent from one another. In fact, according to Bourdieu (2004), the more mature and autonomous a scientific field is, the more independent these forms of academic assets are from one another.

Within this tradition, Heilbron and Gingras (2018) more recently shed light on how the struggle for international scholarly recognition has played out in the social sciences and humanities over the last few decades. They show, amongst other things, that there has been a strong wave of transnational collaboration in the last three decades (1980–2014), but that few structural changes have occurred in terms of geopolitical power relations. From their study, the global power relations in social sciences can be characterised as a *duopolistic system* with a Euro-American core and some semi-central and semi-peripheral countries (smaller European and larger Asian countries), followed by a much larger pool of peripheral countries with very weak connections to the Euro-American core. Among the dominating group of countries, the US is found to be by far the most powerful nation with some (but surprisingly little) alteration, depending on the research field. In terms of language use, no language is found to be able to compete with English, which holds a near monopolistic position in the current "marketplace" of ideas. With the emergence of an economy of publications and citations, language domination creates various advantages for researchers in places where English is the *local lingua* (Larsson 2009, Chap. 3).

The theme of academic power and research being unevenly distributed over the world is far from new (Altbach 1995; Sinha-Kerkhoff and Alatas 2010; Mosbah-Natanson and Gingras 2014). There are a few obvious reasons for the skewed pattern that tends to emerge when looking at social scientific production from the perspective of the north-south divide. One such explanation is the inequalities in material resources between regions of the world (Altbach 1995). Poor universities simply cannot afford good libraries. Related to this are the concrete conditions within the distribution systems of books, journals and reports, which make existing research available to researchers.[4] Aside from the material resources being very unevenly distributed, there are also more symbolic assets and resources that help reproduce the current playing field and that seem to affect the current struggles for international scholarly recognition.

Pivotal to the current production system in Western academia is the oligopolistic status that two databases – WoS and Scopus – hold in validating and indexing certain knowledge as valuable. However, the content of these databases has itself been criticised for being heavily biased towards Anglo-American research. For instance, an empirical investigation into several scientific disciplines, using data from WoS, concluded that, "the vast majority of the highly cited papers in a specialty is in fact domestic" (Persson 2010, p. 398). Most of these highly-cited papers were from the US and were cited by others both within and outside the American research community. Persson's (2010) findings suggest that while smaller countries have to be more truly "international", Anglo-American scholars can continue to be domestically oriented while still passing as "international" in the current publication regime. Similarly, Basu (2010) shows that the number of journals included in Scopus[5] from a particular country explains 80% of the variance of citations from that same country. If the four dominant countries are excluded, it explains 87% of the variance. This finding demonstrates the importance of geography. In order to be cited, one has to have one's own country's journals in the databases. An investigation of Spanish universities showed that the research of a large proportion of scholars, who were considered prestigious in Spain, did not appear in WoS or Scopus at all (Extebarria and Gomez-Uranga 2010). Thus, by focusing on the notion of invisible colleges, the geographical aspect of research production and citations seems to be of particular importance.

Even though there are studies emerging on the specific bibliometric networks that carry out research in the field of adult education and learning (see Chaps. 4 and

[4] One might assume that the growing phenomenon of open access that is now gaining momentum will lessen the exclusion of universities and researchers in poor countries from accessing and contributing to the knowledge production in the global north. However, we are yet to see if this is materialising or merely a wishful hypothesis.

[5] Elsevier's bibliometric database Scopus is arguably the second most influential database after WoS (Archambault et al. 2006, 2009). Since articles in adult education, on the whole, will end up in journals classified as education or educational research, empirical data on WoS-indexed journals and how citations are distributed by country are of significance for this issue (see Larsson 2010; Fejes and Nylander 2014; Chaps. 4 and 6 of this book). Almost all journals in the field of education and educational research, which is indexed in WoS, are British or North American.

6 in this book), this universe is still relatively unexplored. How do the leading journals in the field indexed in the dominant databases relate to previous research on the transnational relationships between scholars in different countries? Are the citation practices in international journals on adult education and learning similar to each other? And what social structures are of relevance in the reproduction of dominant bibliographies within this field?

5.3 The Study: Invisible Colleges in Research on Adult Learning

We have selected five journals in the broader adult education and learning field for further analysis. These were selected, primarily, based on these journals having acquired an indexation status in Scopus during the period 2006–2014.[6] Such selection facilitates the analysis of the knowledge content because the data has been sorted out and organised, while at the same time journals indexed in Scopus during the period 2006–2014 can be seen as tools in the economy of publications and citations as indicated above. The five journals are edited from different geographical locations, although most of them stem from Anglo-Saxon countries. All in all, the five selected journals provide a wide empirical basis for comparison and analysis. They include:[7]

- *Adult Education Quarterly (USA)*
- *International Journal of Lifelong Education (UK)*
- *Journal of Education and Work*[8] *(UK)*
- *Journal of Workplace Learning (Europe)*
- *Studies in Continuing Education (Australia)*

The empirical sample from these journals includes all articles and reviews published between 2006 and 2014, totalling 151 261 direct citation links between more than 33 000 different authors in 1 219 distinct publications. In gathering references, we included all these 1 219 articles and reviews from Scopus and downloaded them as a .csv file. Even though references were gathered exclusively from journals, we did not discriminate between citations from books, didactical material and other enlightenment literature and those written in the form of peer-reviewed articles.[9] Including citations to books is particularly important in the social sciences and

[6] The reason for not selecting journals indexed in WoS is that only a very few journals in the adult learning field were indexed there at the time of our enquiry.

[7] Other journals such as Vocations and Learning, or the European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA), were not part of our sample because they had not been indexed in Scopus for long enough to make a full-scale bibliometric analysis meaningful.

[8] This journal publishes articles which concern adults' learning as well as the learning of young people in the regular school system. Since the journal is an important publication outlet for adult learning scholars interested in relationships between education and work, it was included in our sample even though it has a slightly wider scope.

[9] Document types other than articles or reviews often do not include reference lists in Scopus and were therefore excluded.

humanities, which to a large extent build on knowledge that is not included in Scopus or WoS in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles (Hicks 2012; Larivière et al. 2006).

In the first step of the analysis, we analysed the top 100 cited scholars in the field based on all five journals combined. Aside from the geographical position of the institution where each scholar works, one can also imagine that the invisible colleges are affected by the professional function and social characteristics of the scholar. Of special relevance here is information about who has been the editor of these journals over time, as that might represent administrative power.[10] We have also looked at gender, which in this case we constructed as a dichotomous variable (man or woman) and attributed to each top-cited scholar based on internet searches.

As the second step in the analysis, we looked at each journal in greater detail. Here, we sought a more concrete representation of the invisible colleges in adult education and learning. A Visual Basic script (a bibliometric algorithm) was used to deal with the complexity of the many citation links (151 261) that make up this large database and to strip it down to individual names. This was done based on last name and initials, under which we assembled each author's full cited bibliography.[11] As a final step we fractionalised the weight of each author so that multiple authorship should not be disproportionately rewarded. For example, if the author received a citation based on a study with multiple authors, he or she received a slightly lower score than if the article had been written alone. For more information about the method and fractionalisation approach used, see Chap. 4.[12]

5.4 The Top 100 Cited Authors

Let us now turn to the results from the first part of the analysis, where all the 100 top-cited names are listed based on the 5 journals combined. (Table 5.1)

[10] Editorial membership was gathered by contacting the editorial boards of each journal. All editors up until 2014 were registered. However, editors of journals outside the sample period were not taken into consideration.

[11] While the author column was quite easily isolated, the reference column often contained both author and editor names which required further identification procedures. After running the script, a manual extraction of author names from the reference column was carried out. Also, note that Scopus includes a maximum of eight authors per reference – the seven first ones and the last. In the field of adult education and learning this is not a serious limitation as very few publications contain more than eight authors.

[12] The names of organisations and government authorities were ignored since the focus of this study is on individual authors, traditions and field positions. Furthermore, all variants of citing and cited author names were gathered for a manual cleaning process. Of the 33 932 names, 862 name variants were identified and corrected among the most frequently occurring names. These corrections were replaced in the direct citation links. All author subjects with more than ten citations and the 100 most cited authors were double checked by two researchers independently.

Table 5.1 Hierarchical list of the top 100 cited names in adult education and learning based on accumulated citation in five learning journals combined, 2006–2014

Name	Sum of citations: fractionalised	Number of articles in sample (n)	Editor	Country of institutional affiliation	Gender
Wenger E.	355	0	No	USA	Man
Billett S.	343	8	No	Australia	Man
Lave J.	243	0	No	USA	Woman
Engeström Y.	242	0	No	Finland	Man
Mezirow J.	241	0	No	USA	Man
Merriam S.B.	229	4	Yes	USA	Woman
Boud D.	198	7	Yes	Australia	Man
Hodkinson P.	185	0	Yes	Great Britain	Man
Unwin L.	182	3	No	Great Britain	Woman
Bourdieu P.	179	0	No	France	Man
Fuller A.	178	2	No	Great Britain	Woman
Freire P.	174	0	No	Brazil	Man
Eraut M.	163	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Schön D.	151	0	No	USA	Man
Fenwick T.	142	7	No	Great Britain	Woman
Edwards R.	141	2	No	Great Britain	Man
Brookfield S.	134	2	No	USA	Man
Marsick V.	133	2	No	USA	Woman
Jarvis P.	133	0	Yes	Great Britain	Man
Foucault M.	122	0	No	France	Man
Taylor E.W.	112	5	Yes	USA	Man
Brown P.	112	0	Yes	Great Britain	Man
Strauss A.	111	0	No	USA	Man
Watkins K.E.	104	1	No	USA	Woman
Giddens A.	102	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Dewey J.	96	0	No	USA	Man
Field J.	96	1	No	Great Britain	Man
Ball S.J.	94	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Biesta G.	92	2	No	Great Britain	Man
Knowles M.S.	91	0	No	USA	Man
Gherardi S.	86	1	No	Italy	Woman
Hager P.	85	3	No	Australia	Man
Tisdell E.J.	83	4	Yes	USA	Woman
Kolb D.A.	83	0	No	USA	Man
Argyris C.	82	0	No	USA	Man
Ellström P-E.	78	4	No	Sweden	Man
Wilson A.L.	77	1	Yes	USA	Man
Young M.	75	3	Yes	Great Britain	Man
Usher R.	74	0	No	Australia	Man

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Name	Sum of citations: fractionalised	Number of articles in sample (n)	Editor	Country of institutional affiliation	Gender
Beck U.	71	0	No	Germany	Man
Cranton P.	70	2	Yes	USA	Woman
Cervero R.M.	69	2	Yes	USA	Man
Keep E.	67	1	No	Great Britain	Man
Lincoln Y.S.	67	0	No	USA	Woman
Evans K.	67	1	No	Great Britain	Woman
Solomon N.	66	3	Yes	Australia	Woman
Bandura A.	66	0	No	USA	Man
Dirkx J.M.	60	2	Yes	USA	Man
Brown J.S.	59	0	No	USA	Man
Duguid P.	59	0	No	USA	Man
Tynjälä, P.	58	1	No	Finland	Woman
Glaser B.G.	57	0	No	USA	Man
Colley H.	56	1	No	Great Britain	Woman
Hodkinson H.	56	1	No	Great Britain	Woman
Illeris K.	56	3	No	Denmark	Man
Ashton D.N	56	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Senge P.M.	56	0	No	USA	Man
Salas E.	56	0	No	USA	Man
Green A.	55	1	No	Great Britain	Man
Reay D.	55	0	No	Great Britain	Woman
Rubenson K.	55	2	No	Canada	Man
Hodgson A.	54	3	No	Great Britain	Woman
Coffield F.	54	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Corbin J.	54	0	No	USA	Woman
Bynner J.	54	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Livingstone D.W.	54	3	No	Canada	Man
Fejes A.	54	6	No	Sweden	Man
Vygotsky L.S.	53	0	No	Soviet Union	Man
Lee A.	53	3	No	Australia	Woman
Patton M.Q.	52	0	No	USA	Man
Habermas J.	52	0	No	Germany	Man
Gorard S.	51	3	No	Great Britain	Man
Wolf A.	51	0	No	USA	Woman
Caffarella R.S.	51	0	No	USA	Woman
Baumgartner L.M.	51	0	Yes	USA	Woman
Nonaka I.	51	0	No	Japan	Man
Schuller T.	50	1	No	Great Britain	Man

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Name	Sum of citations: fractionalised	Number of articles in sample (n)	Editor	Country of institutional affiliation	Gender
Rainbird H.	49	0	No	Great Britain	Woman
Andersson P.	49	4	No	Sweden	Man
Spours K.	48	3	No	Great Britain	Man
Sandlin J.A.	47	5	No	USA	Woman
Schatzki T.	47	0	No	USA	Man
Bauman Z.	47	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Tett L.	47	4	No	Great Britain	Woman
Felstead A.	47	1	No	Great Britain	Man
Sawchuk P.	47	2	No	Canada	Man
Furlong A.	46	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Law J.	46	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Hesketh A.	46	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Marton F.	46	0	No	Sweden	Man
Denzin N.K.	46	0	No	USA	Man
Boshier R.	45	6	No	Canada	Man
Guba E.G.	45	0	No	USA	Man
Hammond C.	45	1	No	Great Britain	Woman
Lauder H.	44	1	Yes	Great Britain	Man
Becker G.S.	44	0	No	USA	Man
Barnett R.	44	0	No	Great Britain	Man
Welton M.R.	44	1	No	Canada	Man
English L.M.	43	5	No	USA	Woman
Yin R.K.	42	0	No	USA	Man

5.4.1 The Dominant Duo: UK and US

Let us first focus on the countries where the scholars that receive most citations work. Out the 100 most cited researchers in the five journals, 38 were working at universities in the USA whereas 36 are from institutions in the UK. If we add other primarily English-speaking countries, such as Canada and Australia, 85 of the 100 most cited researchers are from these four Anglophone core countries. Of the 15 remaining scholars, seven are from three small Northern European countries – Finland, Sweden and Denmark – all of them oriented towards the Anglophone research world. The remaining eight scholars are from other European countries (6), and only two from South America (1) and Asia (1). Only one of these latter eight individuals have published an article in any of the five journals included in the sample. Instead, they constitute a group of social scientific "gurus" (Bourdieu, Habermas, Foucault, etc.).

The pattern of dominance here is quite clear. However, it is worth reminding ourselves that the journals offering the data material here are limited to the bibliometric resources provided by Scopus. As such, four out of five of these journals are

published and edited in the US, the UK and Australia. As seen from the empirical data, there seems to be little interest from those journals in research published from scholars outside the dominant countries.

The domestic focus in the indexed journals seems to suggest that the pretence, as emerging within the current publication economy, of Scopus measuring international academic research in an unbiased way is false. It is international in the sense that researchers in some of the dominant regions sometimes cite each other accross borders, but that is a very limited understanding of what the word "international" could entail as the rest of the world's research is on the whole excluded. Language is certainly a very heavy reason. For instance, it is easy to check on Google Scholar (which does not discriminate by language as much) that key adult education researchers writing in German are totally absent from Anglo-American discussion while being frequently cited in German texts. More generally, scholars from regions and countries where the language is spoken by many and that sustain research systems that are big enough to support a domestic academic market seem to have little reason to publish in these Anglophone journals, and if even if they did their chances of becoming recognised seem pretty slim as the most cited content has such a strong national character and impetus.

This may not necessarily constitute a problem, since these journals might see themselves as serving academia in their own countries. Educational and work-life research are heavily contextualised and embedded within political, historical and administrative frames. Adult education is therefore not the same regardless of where it is played out, nor is work-life and its conditions for learning. However, one might argue that research *should* be international. One of the potential problems with a narrow domestic focus on what researchers read and cite is that they miss opportunities to encounter valuable knowledge, conceptual tools and solutions to problems that others have already tackled, etc. Furthermore, comparing one's domestic study object with similar objects in systems located elsewhere might further one's understanding of domestic practices and systems.

However, it is not easy to accomplish a truly international discourse within a research field, especially since the disciplinary openness of adult learning makes the conceptual toolbox and theoretical underpinning rather varied (cf. Chap. 7). Presently there are few alternatives to English as a language to be used when scholars want to reach a global audience, particularly as English is adopted as the first or second language by scholars in emerging economies such as China and India. The problems for researchers outside the Anglophone world are partly about workload, having to publish the same things for a domestic audience as well as for the international scene. Another side of this is the role of collegial networks and ties, which in themselves are nationally and regionally embedded.

5.4.2 The Male Domination

One of the great changes in academia during the last half century is increased gender equality in terms of share of academic staff. This development has been a consistent and gradual change. How is this mirrored in the citation database we are

investigating? It turns out that 72 of the 100 most cited researchers in this sample are men. This means that less than one third of the top-cited names in the field of adult learning are women. Such a lack of balance between genders is certainly provocative. It shows that gender equality has not reached the academic elite as construed within our sample. During at least the last decade, women have had a higher share of participation in higher education in general than men in a growing number of countries. This has been particularly pronounced in the realm of education and adult education. The consequences of this pattern are not mirrored in our findings which, at first glance, are heavily male dominated.

Looking more closely at these results reveals more details about these patriarchal tendencies. Among the 100 most cited names, 46 of the men and only seven of the women had *not* contributed to these journals themselves (during the studied time period). In more relative terms, this amounts to roughly 25% of the women compared to some 64% of the men. This indicates that, to a large extent, the patriarchal pattern among the top-cited names is built up of "standard references" to scholars *outside the field*. Hence, it seems to be the abundance of references to major social scientific figures serving the field with methodological and theoretical inspiration that lies behind these findings. Another way to put it is that in order to qualify for the list of the top 100 cited scholars in adult education and learning research, women have to contribute to the field themselves to a much higher degree than men do, with men sometimes "becoming a name" even though they do not participate in the specialised knowledge production.[13]

5.5 The Journal-Specific Citation Networks

Let us now turn to each of the journals dominating citation networks and provide some impressions on their scholarly profile based on the names of the scholars who appear most prominently in each publication outlet. Each image of these networks is structured by two factors: firstly, the volume of citations directed to the work from other authors. This factor determines the size of each name. Secondly, the relative centrality that each of the authors has in relation to the other scholars publishing in that journal. This factor is determined by the citation links that each of the authors obtain within the network of individuals which lies behind their location. To facilitate the interpretation of relationships, lines are drawn to symbolise direct citation links and the colour green has been used to illustrate the positions of current and former editors in each journal. The citation networks were visualised using Gephi with the ForceAtlas2 algorithm (Bastian et al. 2009).

In Fig. 5.1 (below), we see the citation practices from AEQ between 2006 and 2014. There is a near total dominance of authors located in North America, especially

[13] However, male scholars who identify with the field (i.e. not the "gurus" from outside the field) might also need to publish a lot within the field in order to attract scholarly recognition. This is especially the case for scholars from non-Anglophone countries.

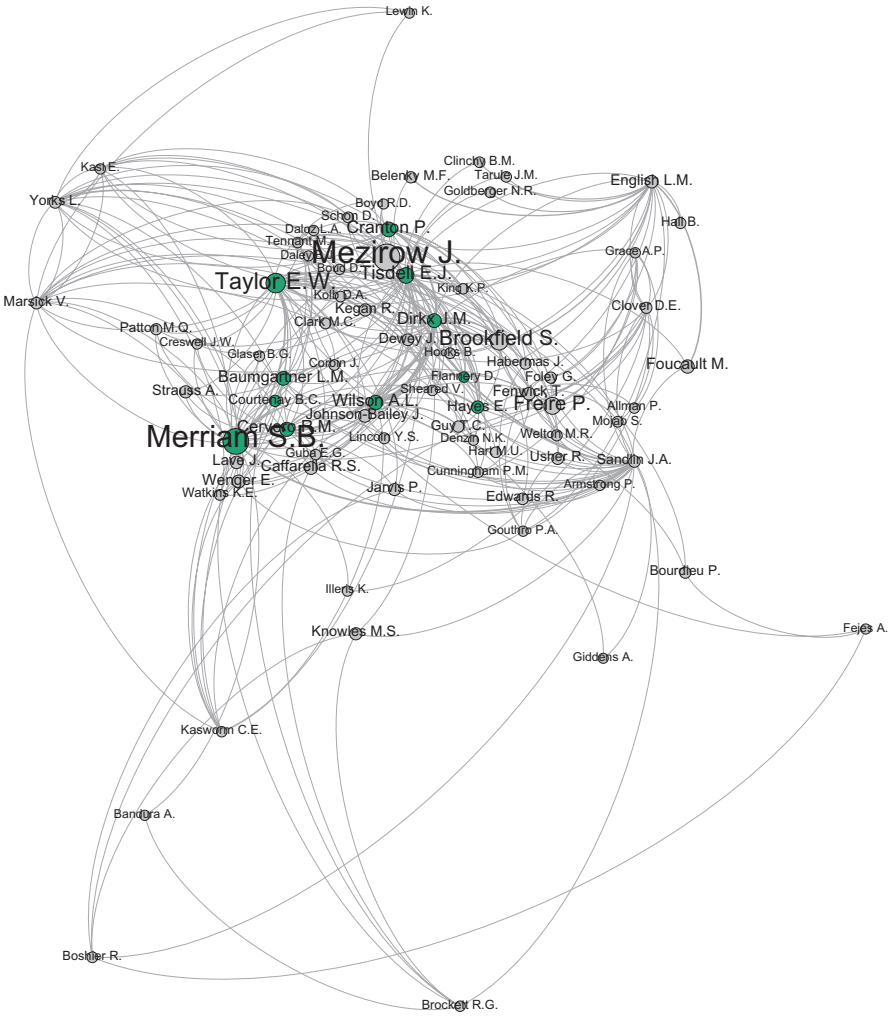

Fig. 5.1 The space of citations in AEQ 2006–2014, fractionalised and accumulated as a direct citation network

the US. Centrally located are people working with transformative learning theories (Taylor, Mezirow, Cranton), those who work with critical theories (Brookfield, Wilson) and those who have authored some of the key American textbooks in the field (Merriam, Baumgartner). Canadian scholars are also fairly well represented in AEQ citations (English, Grace, Butterwick, Gouthro). However, these scholars are not very centrally localised in the network, nor are they as well cited as the bibliographies from the US.

Focusing on the location of the bibliographies of those 17 people who have acted as editors for the journal anywhere between 1989 and 2014, 11 of them can be

located in the figure. Some of these are key nodes building up the core of the citation network (Merriam, Wilson, Baumgartner, Dirkx, Tisdell, Taylor, Cranton). Hence, citations here correspond to a fairly large extent to academic power in the form of editorial functions. Women are present among the larger citation clusters and do not take a subservient role. However, among the external references that are given weight within this citation network, most standard references are directed to men (Freire, Foucault, Knowles, Schön, Habermas, etc.).

In Fig. 5.2 we can see how the *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* citations play out in the period 2006–2014. At the centre of this space of citations there are, on the one hand, male social scientists with very wide impact across a range of different disciplines (Bourdieu, Foucault, Giddens, Habermas, Fairclough, Bauman) and, on the other hand, researchers in the field of adult education and learning working with such sociological and critical theories (Edwards, Jarvis, Usher, Welton). One influential group is positioned in the top left corner, where most scholars tend to work with sociological theories related to policy (Field, Schuller, Preston, Brynner, Ball, Rubenson). These scholars are on the opposite end of another influential group oriented towards sociocultural perspectives (Wenger, Lave, Billett, Engeström) located at the bottom of the figure. Intertwined with this we find a few bibliographies originating from the US (Mezirow, Knowles, Merriam, Tisdell). Close to this north-American camp we find a node built up by references to Paulo Freire who has not contributed to any of these journals himself, but who still has an important role as standard reference in both *Adult Education Quarterly* and *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. The women that appear to be influential within these journals are all located in the US (Merriam, Tisdell, Lave).

Of the eight individuals who been editors of *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* from its start up until 2014, two of them are visible in the figure. Most centrally located and well-cited among them is the founding editor, Peter Jarvis. Less centrally located as of the period 2006–2014 is one of its current editors, John Holford.

In *Journal of Education and Work* (Fig. 5.3) we find a dominance of scholars situated in the UK. Centrally located are authors who work with sociological theories with a focus on the relationship between education and work (Brown, Lauder, Hodgson, Spours, Hesketh, Keep, Ashton). South of this centre we find scholars who have studied vocational education and training (Fuller, Unwin), and another group who all work with sociocultural perspectives on learning (Wenger, Lave, Engeström).

It is worth noting how several of the key bibliographies in this network are located at the *Institute of Education* in London (Young, Hodgson, Spours, Fuller, Unwin, Green, Evans, Ball).

In terms of editorial and administrative power impacting on this citation network, we see the current editor in chief, Hugh Lauder, occupying a fairly central location in the network as well as a few of the current and former associate editors (Young, Hokinson). While the editorial board of *Journal of Education and Work* has constituted a group of men (exclusively), some of the top-cited names in the journal are women from the *Institute of Education* (Fuller, Unwin, Evans). External

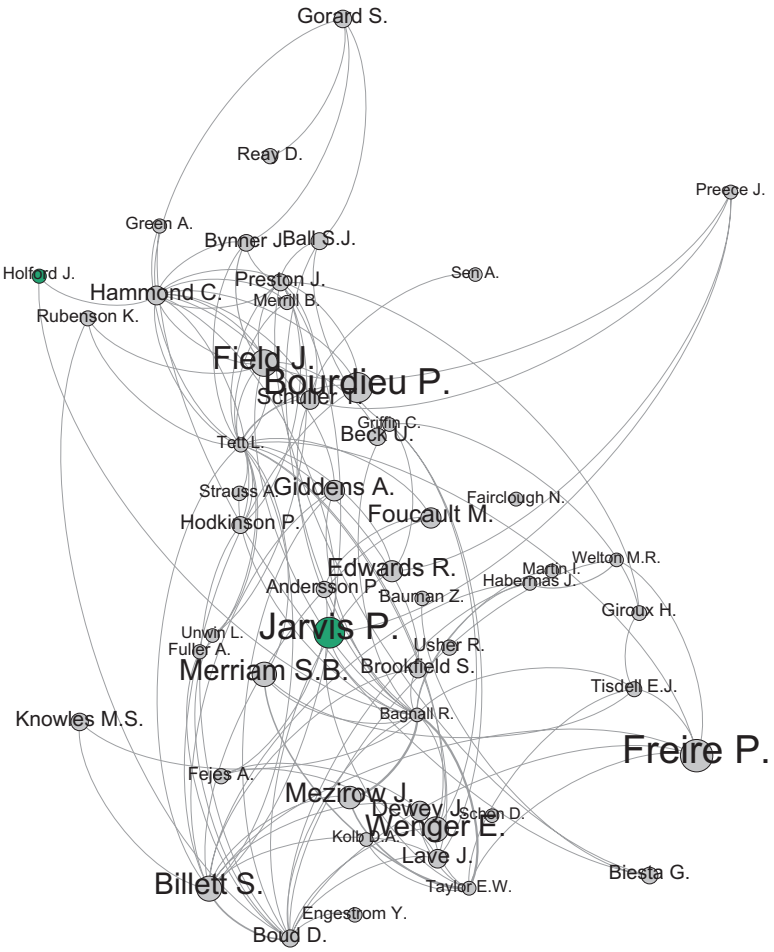

Fig. 5.2 The space of citations in *International Journal of Lifelong Learning* 2006–2014, fractionalised and accumulated as a direct citation network

referencing includes some women (Lave, Reay, Knorr-Cetina), but is clearly dominated by men.

In Fig. 5.4, we can see what *Journal of Workplace Learning* looks like when taking into consideration the key citation clusters during the period 2006–2014. Contrary to the previous journals presented, *Journal of Workplace Learning* is characterised by extremely dispersed citation practices. In geographic terms, it is somewhat more international in its referencing culture despite a certain dominance of US and UK scholars. So, on the one hand *Journal of Workplace Learning* seems to lack a strong centrifugal force in terms of standard references, while on the other hand it is more open in terms of which international scholars have received recognition for their work.

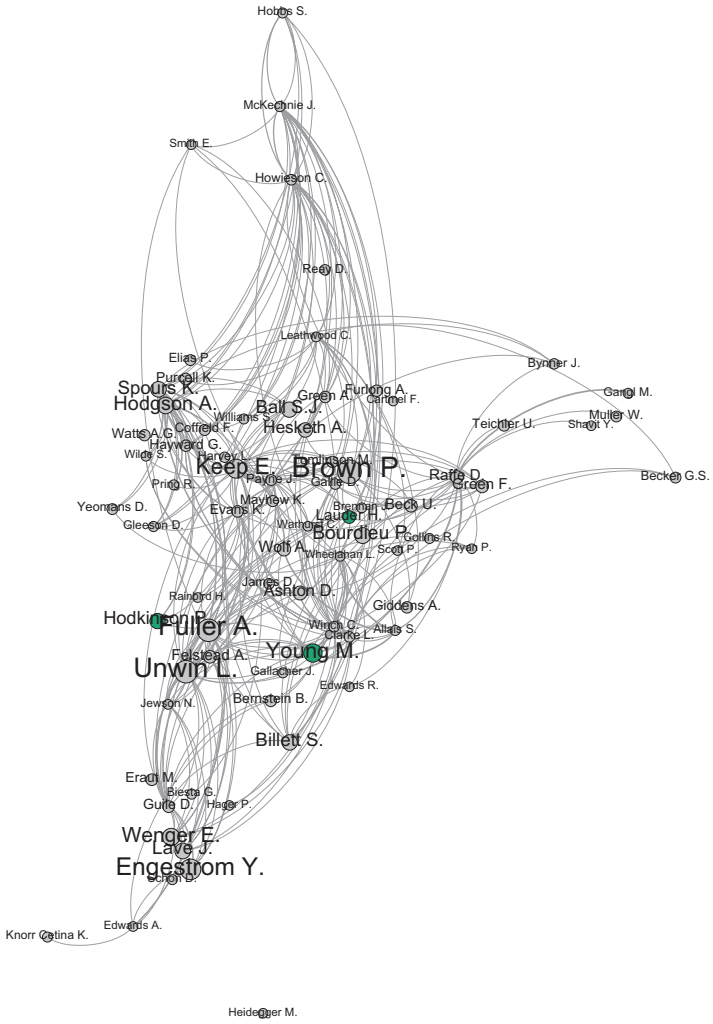

Fig. 5.3 The space of citations in *Journal of Education and Work* 2006–2014, fractionalised and accumulated as a direct citation network

At the centre of this journal we find scholars who work with sociocultural perspectives on learning, whether it be an Anglo-American interpretation of such perspectives (Wenger, Lave, Billett), or a European-continental interpretation (Engeström). In close proximity to the centre we also find scholars connected to vocational education and training research (Fuller, Unwin) as well as another group working within human resource development more broadly (Watkins, Marsick, Ellinger). Quite a number of the key bibliographies in this citation network are from women (Fenwick, Lave, Fuller and Unwin, Marsick, Watkins) and oriented towards a qualitative research tradition.

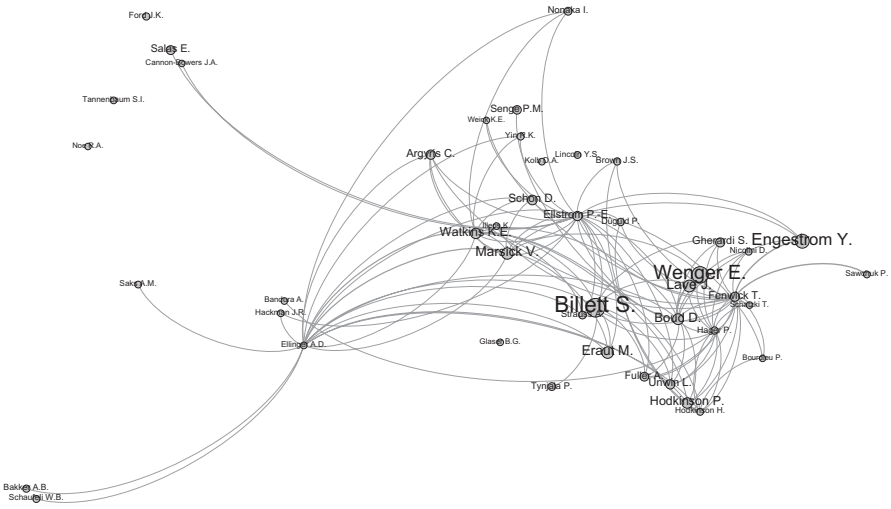

Fig. 5.4 The space of citations in *Journal of Workplace Learning* 2006–2014, fractionalised and accumulated as a direct citation network

When focusing on the location of the editors, this is the only journal where none of them can be located in the figure at all. This result is probably partly related to *Journal of Workplace Learning* being more flexible on the editorial side, where they often launch "special issues" in proximity to the *Researching Work and Learning* (RWL) conferences edited by guest editors from that particular country.[14]

In Fig. 5.5 (below), we can see how research published in *Studies in Continuing Education* share an interest in sociocultural perspectives on learning with many of the other publication outlets above, here represented both by an Anglo-American interpretation of such perspectives (Wenger, Lave, Billett) and a European interpretation (Engeström). Again, vocational education and training research emerge as central topics (Fuller, Unwin) as well as practice-oriented research approaches (Hager, Schatzki, Gherardi, Latour). Aside from being centred on socio-cultural theory, there is very strong representation of authors from Australia at the centre of this network (e.g. Billett, Boud, Hager, Solomon, Lee, Sommerville). Within the Anglophone community of scholars interested in socio-cultural theory, some of the more prominent names in this journal are women (Lave, Fuller, Unwin, Evans, Lee, Solomon), while most of the standard references here are still male authors (Boud, Billett, Engström, Hodkinson, Schon, Wenger).

On the editorial side, we can see how David Boud, who has been a co-editor throughout the entirety of the journal's publication, is one of the most centrally located citation nodes in this network. We can also see how two of the three other acting editors, up until 2014, are centrally located in the network, namely Nicky Solomon and Mark Tennant.

[14] For example, see special issue RWL9, "Work, learning and globalisation: challenges for the twenty-first century". Guest editors: Helen Bound, Yew-Jin Lee and Wei-Ying Lim (Volume 29, Issue 7/8).

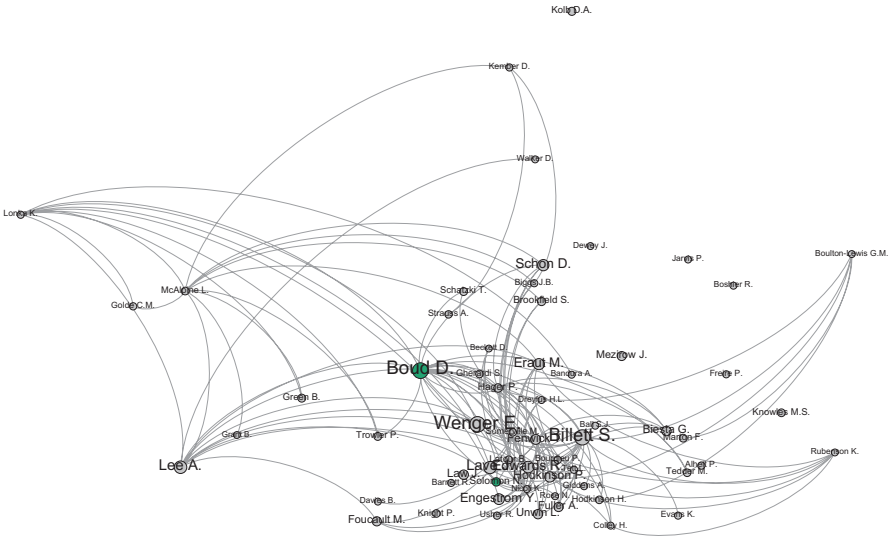

Fig. 5.5 The space of citations in *Studies in Continuing Education* 2006–2014, fractionalised and accumulated as a direct citation network

5.6 Discussion

The overarching research problem of this chapter concerns the emergence of an economy of publication and citations and the role assigned to databases like WoS and Scopus to measure the quality and impact of academic labour in an unbiased and fair way. In our case, we have looked at a selection of journals within adult learning included in Scopus and extracted all the referencing that has occurred in these journals during a period of 9 years (2006–2014). First, we outlined the hundred most cited scholars based on their full bibliographic impact in these journals. After that we performed a network analysis on the journal-specific citations and dissected distinct invisible colleges.

The analyses indicate that there are reasons to question the presumption of lack of biases in the valuation of scholarly work in the journals under scrutiny. The dominance of authors from a few countries is so extreme that there is reason to believe that it does not represent the quality of research on a more global scale. When 85 of the top 100 cited authors are from four English-speaking countries, it seems more plausible to suggest that the referencing here mirrors the assigned value of research within these four dominating countries. The quality of research in the rest of the world seems not to be taken into consideration in any serious way.[15] One

[15] From our own contacts, we know that a lot of research is published in e.g. Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese and German. One can thus suspect that there is much to be missed when research does not pay attention to international research to the extent we have shown to be the case in the field of adult education and learning. For this to change, however, it is not simply sufficient to get publishers, editors and reviewers interested in this work; one would also have to train researchers to read and acknowledge work across current borders.

reason for this may be that several journals which are included in Scopus have a domestic bias and consider themselves to be journals which primarily serve researchers and readers in a more local context. In this case, AEQ was founded by the American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, the JEW was formerly known as British Journal of Education and Work, the SICE has Australian editors, and IJLE has editors foremost from the UK. In this way, the international scope of these journal is not wholehearted. This might not be a problem, if Scopus and other indexing databases were not used in quality measurements internationally; the misrepresentation of quality is generated by the measurement tools, which exclude citations made to other journals, most books, etc., which are published in other contexts and are only available in other languages.

Relating these results to previous bibliometric research concerned with international power relations, we see that they are in line with the general *duopolistic system* presented by Heilbron and Gingras (2018), with a Euro-American core and some semi-central and semi-peripheral countries. However, the label Europe is in reality, almost exclusively, British scholars in this case. In previous bibliometric studies on social scientific disciplines, the US has also tended to hold a hegemonic position which does not seem entirely warranted looking at our results from the field of adult education and learning (cf. Heilbron and Gingras 2018). Instead of a single country having a clear-cut leadership position, our findings single out the UK and the US as a dominant duo. The results are also in line with the conclusions presented by Persson (2010) and Basu (2010) that most citations in the leading databases are, in fact, directed to domestic entries even if the pretence is that they are international in scope.[16]

The combination of a domestic focus and language policies have severe consequences. The five Scopus-selected journals are all monolinguistic and Anglophone. This means that citations in texts written in other languages are excluded, *tout court*. Furthermore, this language discrimination at the highest echelons of contemporary academia affects not only the small languages across the globe, but also languages spoken by hundreds of millions of individuals. Extebarria and Gomez-Uranga (2010) have shown that the dominant scholars within Spanish research are not present in WoS or Scopus at all. Writing in a language read by 500 million users, they also have little reason to try to do so. This is consistent with other bibliometric studies that have shown that larger countries and languages, such as Spain or Germany, tend to have more limited collaborations internationally since their own domestic market is much larger (Heilbron and Gingras 2018). However, scholars from smaller countries and language regimes are, on the one hand, more dependent on international scholarly recognition while, on the other, also being less likely to receive it.

In the current era, these measurement tools are increasingly influencing university politics on a more global level, i.e. outside Anglophone countries, and an ever

[16] Anderson-Levitt (2011) points out in a review of ethnographic education research on a global scale how different discourses are elaborated outside Anglophone academia. These excluded books and journals may elaborate other discourses and other problems, and focus on other study objects.

increasing number of researchers seem more or less forced to consider publishing in the journals that have been hallmarked as "international" by the leading databases, in spite of their domestic Anglo-American focus. However, as our analysis shows, such efforts for researchers outside the Anglo-American core countries seem to offer very limited possibilities of being rewarded within the larger community of scholars that contribute to Scopus journals, as very few "outsiders" are recognised and rewarded for their work. One might even draw the conclusion from all of this that taking part in instrumentally motivated activities in order to promote the position within the current quality-measurement-tools simply does not "pay". Is it a game for useful idiots?

In our analysis, we also scrutinised how the most cited scholars in the field relate to the representation of gender. The result was striking: male researchers are much more cited than female authors. Looking more closely at these results revealed that this patriarchal tendency was not primarily due to citations to others active in the field, but was instead built up by a rather extreme gender difference in the citations directed to scholars outside the field, i.e. authors on methodology and general theory. One might speculate that this partly constitutes a lingering effect of the previous state of academia, as most of the "standard references" are to the old canon from a time when academia was even more male dominated than it is today. Within the bibliometric research tradition, this can be related to the Matthew effect of academic work: that citations lead to more citations (de Solla Price 1986, p 226). The "old" male dominance is thus reproduced by both men and women active in the various subfields in the social sciences when they are rendered a status as "standard references" across a range of different disciplines.

The results are not entirely surprising because men also tend to be overwhelmingly overrepresented compared to women in other respects, like the proportion of full professorships. An analysis of the Swedish academic system concluded that men are more and more concentrated in the academic community higher up in the current hierarchies (Chrapowska and Wold 2004). In their study of the cohorts of graduates with a bachelor's degree in traditional faculties, men ended up being four times more likely than women to end up with a full professorship (chair). Of those who graduated with a PhD, men became professors two times more often than women did. And this is within a university system where most students, since the 1970s, have been women and in a country that prides itself on being relatively progressive in terms of gender equality.[17]

If it is true that gender discrimination forms an integral part of the citation practices in current academia, one might point to numerous underlying factors that could help sustain such a social structure. One part of this might be the gendered

[17] Another study of peer reviewing in the *Swedish Medical Research Council* concluded that peer reviewing was discriminating against women applicants in a study, which could rule out a number of alternative hypothesis: for a female applicant to receive a grant they had to produce three extra papers in Nature or Science and be 2.5 times more productive than the average male applicant (Wennerås and Wold 1997, p. 342). The conclusion was that discrimination lay behind the outcomes.

division of work, where academic teaching is carried out to a large extent by women whereas research tends to be dominated by men. Gender biases in the citation practices should, in any case, not be studied in isolation as they relate back to a lack of research resources and a lack of research opportunities, as well as academic titles and key positions.

5.6.1 The Academic Power of Editors

Another attribute that is visible in the list of top cited scholars, as well as in the journal-specific networks, is the administrative power exercised by the editors of these journals. In a Borudieusian sense, this is an example of institutionalised capital, i.e. key positions in the academic field as well as power over the means of reproduction of knowledge (Bourdieu 1997). Of the 39 historical editors of the journals that appear in the sample, some 15 are among the top-cited names. This corresponds to roughly 40% of the full list of editors, or 15% of the full list of top-cited names. Some of the other top-cited scholars and centrally located names are also, or have recently been, editors of journals not included in the sample, such as Billett who is the editor of *Vocations and Learning*, Alison Fuller and Lorna Unwin for *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, or Stephen Ball, a long-standing editor of *Journal of Educational Policy*.

It is indeed difficult to disentangle whether the value assigned to the work of editors has something to do with their gatekeeping function for a particular journal or whether it is on the basis of their scientific capital (see Bourdieu 1997), i.e. the recognition their scientific work has received from peers. However, when looking at the journal-specific network analysis, we can see how rare it is for an editor of one journal to be assigned a key role in the citations in other journals. If the editorial assignments were heavily intertwined with scientific capital in the field as a whole, then we would expect many of the editors to be centrally placed in more journals besides their "own"[18]. This issue connects to issues of the field being segmented and loose.

[18] However, we can see how two Australian scholars who are editors of journals in the field, David Boud and Stephen Billett, are relatively central figures in several of the journals under scrutiny. Such a position most likely connects to Australian scholars having a "brokering function" in the field of adult education and learning research, mediating between scholars in different countries as well as between different camps within the field (see Nylander et al. 2018, and Chap. 4 in this book).

5.6.2 The Research Field(s)

The research practices which are scrutinised here have many labels: Research on adult education, adult learning, lifelong learning, workplace learning, popular education and several other labels. As can be seen from our findings, it is definitely not a tight, international, invisible college. Instead there are multiple colleges, often with a domestic focus. However, there is also a tendency for certain approaches and perspectives to prefer specific journals. Furthermore, there are connections in terms of geography and perspectives between journals. Wittgenstein's (2009) expression "family resemblances" could be useful to denote the relationships between the journals. They are not the same, but they are not altogether different to each other. In the economy of publications and citations, such a lack of coherence is a flaw. Citations are spread out to other areas, like sociology or education, which is legitimate, but this also supports the conclusion of weak connections between researchers active in these research communities. The very pronounced domestic focus contributes to the same conclusion. The adult education and learning research is, in this sense, unclear as a sub-discipline, i.e. it is not an international actor-network which includes and excludes in a clear way. Nespor (1996), writing from an actor-network theory perspective, compared physics and management and found that they were very different, with physics being a tight actor network and management a loose actor network. The research practices we investigated seem to operate like the field of management; a loose actor-network, with few, strong connections, which is a similar conclusion to that drawn by Rubenson and Elfert in their chapter in this book (Chap. 2).

With these loose networks comes short-sightedness. One can always forge new connections and forsake old ones, not caring much about the research field and its development, since there are several actor networks, weakly connected, akin to amoebas. One consequence is that research with labels such as adult education or lifelong learning does not belong to an invisible college related to adult education. Rather, these researchers only exploit the positions and culture and some other invisible colleges in the academic journals they publish in. These invisible colleges might also become weak when there are not many journals to publish in. Researchers also have to publish elsewhere. In that sense, it would be good if there were more academic journals, since that would mean more "conversations", i.e. more research was exposed through articles and more researchers would recognise texts of relevance for their own research.

The research practices we are discussing here may not be defined and delimited in a very clear way. There may be many reasons for this, but we want to highlight two. The first has to do with the lack of a common knowledge base, i.e. what could be common knowledge among those who are doing the research. This is not very conspicuous, as is also the case with educational research in general and also areas like management, or gender studies – research areas which are defined more by their study object than by a perspective. What is more troublesome is the lack of common delimitations on what constitutes this study object: Is it adults who are taught, or is it also adults who are learning without being taught, or is the educational system

provided for adults, etc. Does higher education belong here or human resource development? The answers are provisional and shift according to the region where the research activity takes place. In relation to academic journals, this is a difficulty since various invisible colleges operate at least partly independently from each other, e.g. in higher education, human resource development and learning at workplaces.

The second problem concerns the tendency for researchers to belong to several sub-disciplines. Many of the research practices are sociological and some are developing themes which could become part of educational philosophy. Some researchers are using learning theories, which leads them to participate in conferences, where all participants are connected by such theories as a node. One might say that many belong to several invisible colleges or are at least faced with such choices. The challenge for journals trying to be more comprehensive is great, since rival subdisciplines offer better rewards, e.g. have journals which are indexed in Scopus and WoS. The fact that educational research is not highly regarded by other disciplines (van Zanten 2009) might also be an influence, i.e. papers on adult education or learning will be sent to journals in subdisciplines like educational sociology. Research on higher education, for example, has more journals indexed in the WoS compared to adult education or workplace learning. This lack of concentration, i.e. the fact that researchers are often connected to several invisible colleges, has an undermining effect on the strength of adult education and learning research as a collective – it becomes a loose network, which cannot act with power.

The invisible colleges can be viewed as less volatile, slowly transforming entities. Our analysis is therefore not delimited to the indexes and their selection of journals but concerns the more general question about the invisible colleges or networks of references to texts and their location in journals. On the other hand, invisible colleges and their power also change and are to some extent dialectically related to the technology of the economy of publications, citations and similar managerial tools.

References

Altbach, P. (1995). Education and neocolonialism. In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *The post-colonial studies reader*. New York: Routledge.

Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2011). World anthropologies of education, chapter 1. In B. A. U. Levinson & M. Pollock (Eds.), *A companion to the anthropology of education*. Bognor Regis: Wiley Online Library.

Andersson, P. (2000). *Att studera och bli bedömd. Empiriska och teoretiska perspektiv på gymnasie- och vuxenstuderandes sätt att erfara studier och bedömningar*. Linköping: Linköping studies in Education and Psychology.

Archambault, É., Vignola-Gagné, É., Côté, G., Larivire, V., & Gingrasb, Y. (2006). Benchmarking scientific output in the social sciences and humanities: The limits of existing databases. *Scientometrics, 68*(3), 329–342.

Archambault, É., Campbell, D., Gingras, Y., & Larivière, V. (2009). Comparing bibliometric statistics obtained from the Web of Science and Scopus. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 60*(7), 1320–1326.

Bastian, M., Heymann, S., Jacomy, M. (2009). Gephi: An open source software for exploring and manipulating networks. International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media

Basu, A. (2010). Does a country's scientific productivity depend critically on the number of journals indexed? *Scientometrics, 82*, 507–516.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The rules of art. Genesis and structure of the literary field*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Les Usages Sociaux* de la *Science*: *Pour* une *Sociologie Clinique du Champ Scientifique*: Une Conférence-Débat. Paris: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). *Science of science and reflexivity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Chrapowska, C., & Wold, A. (2004). "Kvinnor slås ut i universitetskarriären" Manliga studenter har fyra gånger större chans att bli professor, visar ny undersökning. DN debatt 20040318.

de Solla Price, D. (1986). *Little science, big science… and beyond*. New York: Columbia University Press.

DSF. (2010). http://www.fi.dk/raad-og-udvalg/det-strategiske-forskningsraad/om-raadet – downloaded 20100508.

Edwards, R. (2003). Ordering subjects: Actor-networks and intellectual technologies in lifelong learning. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 35*(1), 54–67.

Edwards, R., & Usher, R. (2000). *Globalisation and pedagogy. Space, place and identity*. London/New York: Routledge.

Elzinga, A. (2010). Globalisation, new public management and traditional university values. A key-note address at the 1st Workshop of the Nordic Network for International Research Policy Analysis (NIRPA) organised by the Swedish Research Council (VR), Stockholm 7–8 April at the Swedish Royal Academy of engineering Sciences (IVA).

Espeland, W. N., & Sauder, M. (2016). *Engines of anxiety: Academic rankings, reputation, and accountability*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Ethnologue. (2010). http://www.ethnologue.com/web.asp, downloaded 20100209.

Extebarria, G., & Gomez-Uranga, M. (2010). Use of Scopus and Google Scholar to measure social science production in four major Spanish universities. *Scientometrics, 82*, 333–349.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2014). The Anglophone International(e). A bibliometric analysis of three adult education journals, 2015–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(3), 222–239.

Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gingras, Y. (2016). *Bibliometrics and research evaluation: Uses and abuses*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gingras, Y. (2017). *Sociologie des sciences: Ğ Que sais-je? ğ n° 3950*. Presses universitaires de France.

Heilbron, J., & Gingras, Y. (2018). The globalization of European research in the social sciences and humanities (1980–2014): A bibliometric study. In *The social and human sciences in global power relations* (pp. 29–58). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hicks, D. (2012). Performance-based university funding systems. *Research Policy, 41*(2), 251–261.

Lamont, M. (2009). *How professors think: Inside the curious world of academic judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Larivière, V., Archambault, É., Gingras, Y., & Vignola-Gagné, É. (2006). The place of serials in referencing practices: Comparing natural sciences and engineering with social sciences and humanities. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 57*(8), 997–1004.

Larsson, S. (2004). Joy and despair in writing. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 24*, 97–112.

Larsson, S. (2006). Ethnography in Action. How ethnography was established in Swedish educational research. *Ethnography and Education, 1*(2), 177–197.

Larsson, S. (2009). The emerging economy of publications and citations. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 29*(1), 34–52.

Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1-2), 97–112.

Latour, B., & Woolgar, S. (1986). *Laboratory life. The construction of scientific facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mosbah-Natanson, S., & Gingras, Y. (2014). The globalization of social sciences? Evidence from a quantitative analysis of 30 years of production, collaboration and citations in the social sciences (1980–2009). *Current Sociology, 62*(5), 626–646.

Nespor, J. (1996). *Knowledge in motion: Space, time and curriculum in undergarduate physics and management*. London: Falmer Press.

Nylander, E., Österlund, L., & Fejes, A. (2018). Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom. *Vocations and Learning, 11*(1), 113–131.

OECD. (2010). http://www.oecdilibrary.org/oecd/content/tablecollection/2075843x downloaded 20100509.

Persson, O. (2010). Are highly cited papers more international? *Scientometrics, 83*, 397–401.

Sinha-Kerkhoff, K., & Alatas, S. F. (Eds.). (2010). *Academic dependency in the social sciences. Structural reality and intellectual challenges*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Statskontoret (2009). Bilaga 5 till rapport 2009:1. Förtroendet för myndigheter, rapport från SOM-institutet. http://www.statskontoret.se/upload/publikationer/2009/200901_bilaga5.pdf. Downloaded 20100524.

van Zanten, A. (2009). From critical intellectuals to "idea brokers"? *Nordisk Pedagogik, 29*, 53–60.

Wallenquist, A. (2007). *Carl von Linnés lärljungar i Östergötland. Idé och Handling*. Linköping: Linköpings stadsbibliotek.

Wennerås, C., & Wold, A. (1997). Nepotism and sexism in peer-review. *Nature, 387*, 341–343.

Wittgenstein, L. (2009). *Philosophical investigations* (4th ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Chapter 6
The Politics of Publications and Citations: A Cross Country Comparison

Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander

6.1 Introduction

Since the heyday of scientrometrics, when de Solla Price's (1965, 1975) and Merton's (1973) wrote their seminal accounts of the reward systems of scientific communities, bibliometric measurement has been dragged into the highly controversial and political debate of how the modern day reward system of the university should be set up and function. What will be the basis of 'quality' assessments of universities? How will money and merit be distributed fairly across the different disciplines? Lacking other comparative measurements, and in the wake of the intensification of "new public management" within universities, governments and management boards across a large part of the world have begun to turn towards the standardized outputs of publications and citations. For example, the new research excellence framework (REF) in the UK drew on citation analyses (impact of research) as part of the evaluation of research quality. Such analyses influence decisions on the distribution of research funding to higher education institutions (see www.ref.ac.uk). A similar system has already been enacted in Sweden, where the government divides a share of its research funding to higher education institutions directly based on citation analyses (Ministry of Education 2007). At the time of de Solla Price's (1965) and Merton's (1973) analysis, citation and publications were seen as signs of *internal* recognition and scientific production among colleagues,

This article is an updated (new data) and revised version of a previous publication: Fejes, A. & Nylander, E. (2014) The Anglophone International(e) – A Bibliometric analyses of three adult education journals, 2005–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 64(3), 222–239.

A. Fejes (✉) · E. Nylander
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: andreas.fejes@liu.se

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_6

whereas citations and publications have now increasingly emerge as an *external* tools to manage and hierarchically order scientific production.

The emergence of a publication regime in which the measuring of scientific quality is conducted in terms of publications and citations, also contains a series of questionable assumptions. One of its core assumptions is that the value of research can be estimated fairly by ranking the place in which it is published, as well as how often a publication is cited there (Karpik 2011). Because research funding is distributed partly based on how much you publish in what are construed as top-ranked journals and on how often other articles in those journals cite your articles, the publication regime is also likely to produce a new behaviour among researchers. Publishing in these journals may become more important than publishing in journals that are a better fit for the specific research area. Or, rather than choosing a publication format based on the research question and content or based on the tradition of the scientific field, the rationality behind scientific publications can be skewed towards the publication and citation game (cf. Hicks 2012; Hasselberg 2013; Liedman 2013). Due to considerable national, regional, and scholarly differences in the history of science, this potential reactivation among scholars is obviously going to look different depending on what they make of this 'publication regime', what kind of field they are in, and how much autonomy the field has against value criteria enforced by external actors.

This chapter aims to provide an empirical account of the current 'publication regime' in research on adult education. More specifically, we look at three formative dimensions of the research field: (i) indexation, (ii) publications and (iii) citations. By outlining how the field is constituted by practices related to these dimensions we hope to stimulate discussion on who is given recognition as a scholar and get a better understanding of the tacit rules within the current publication regime. This is not least important for international researchers that has a more peripheral position to the leading journals and institutions in the field, for whom the playing field might appear rather opaque and unclear.[1]

We do so by studying bibliographic data related to publications and citations and how these dimensions have changed over time, particularly with regards to the geography of authorship. We base this study on data from publications and citations in three core journals: Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ), International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE), and Studies in Continuing Education (SICE). By gathering and comparing aggregated statistics based on publications in these journals during two periods of time, 2005–2012, and 2012–2018, we scrutinize what extent indexing, authorship and citations are geographically bounded. This is done in four ways. First, we identify the output of all educational journal that has been indexed in the dominating database Web of science (WoS). This is done by mapping out publication location of these journals as well as the language policies for publication. Secondly, we identify the geographical location of editorial board members by

[1] Researchers in semi-peripheral and peripheral countries has been found to be more dependent on international scholarly recognition, then researchers working in central and more dominant countries (Heilbron and Gingras 2018)

institutional affiliation. Thirdly, we compare the total share of articles published from a specific country to the share of top-cited articles originating from that specific country. Finally, we scrutinize those countries with the highest share of publications, particularly with regard to their relationship between country and a specific publication outlet (journal), thus making visible the (trans)national flow of publications across the dominating countries.

In sum our analysis provide results on three formative dimensions of the research field: (i) indexation, (ii) publications and (iii) citations. We address the politics of indexing as well as who contributes and is given recognition within the research field on adult education and lifelong learning. The results will also help characterize the national characteristic of the few top publishing countries. In doing so, we aim to provide basis for critical discussion on who are the winners and losers in the current publication regime.

6.2 Methodology, Data, and Analysis

We have conducted a bibliometric analysis focused on three critical aspects in structuring the relationship between adult education scholars: indexation, publication and citation. Our data consists firstly of the indexing lists of all education journals indexed in the main indexing database for science at the time of writing, the Web of science (WoS). Drawing on such data we map out the geographical location and language policies of all educational journals. Secondly, we draw on all articles published in: *AEQ, IJLE*, and *SICE* between 2005–2018. The bibliometric overview provides a comparison between the full body of publications appearing in these journals between the years 2005 and 2012, as well as between 2012 and 2018, and those publications that have gathered most citations within each journal.

Our focus on academic journals in this chapter is centred on the premise that academic publishing provides *one* important knowledge base for any discipline or field of research. A research journal represents a publication output where papers that have been refereed and deemed to have reached a certain level of rigour and quality are published (cf. Buboltz et al. 1999; Tseng and Tsay 2013). This is in contrast to book chapters and books that are less likely to have to go through such a rigorous collegial peer-review process (although they sometimes are). In other words, publishers play a major role in the dissemination of knowledge and academic communities tend to regard refereed journals as important publication channels, a propensity that is further emphasized through a series of current political reforms.

A second important reason for our choice of using journal publications as our unit of analysis is that many journals are indexed in databases that provide a basis for generating bibliometric data. Our main data has been generated through the database Scopus. Besides being one of the main indexing databases in the academic community – partly because it uses certain quality procedures when including journals – the reason for choosing this database is foremost pragmatic. First, the three

journals selected to represent the field—*AEQ* (United States), *IJLE* (United Kingdom), and *SICE* (Australia)—are all listed in Scopus, whereas only two of them, *AEQ* and *SICE,* are listed in the Web of Science. Second, these three journals represent three different geographical locations, in terms of both country and continent and could provide some differences in terms of geographical affiliations of authors as well as present the opportunity to identify the academic flow of publications across national borders.

We use the notion of "Anglophone countries" throughout this paper acknowledging that it is a complex category as there are decisive cultural, economic and ethnic diversity within English speaking countries. However, our findings illustrate the need for such broad and admittingly heterogeneous linguistic category to illustrate how countries with English as their first language have certain dominating characteristics within the current publication regime in terms of publication and citations as compared to countries where primarily other languages are spoken.

6.2.1 Limitations of the Study

There are, as always, some important limitations to the study and research design. Our description excludes a range of publications which could be of interest and which could be deemed to be of high importance in shaping the field of research (other journals, non-indexed books and book chapters). Hicks (2013) argues that within social science, what is included in indexed journals often does not concur with similar analyses of national publication patterns or analyses of citations in relation to books. Another limitation is that other journals active in the field might obtain a position and profile within the field that should be taken into consideration when dissecting the empirical findings of our analysis. For example, excluding the new journal *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, which aims to include a broad geographical range of peer-reviewed articles, might provide mean that the geographical distribution of authors might look more shewed geographically then would otherwise be the case.[2] Further, by focusing only on English-language journals, we obviously exclude much of what is happening in parts of Europe and other parts of the world that is not published in English.[3] Another potential limitation is that because of the delay effect between when a paper is published and when it is cited, the sample of the most highly cited articles is biased towards publications in the earlier period of the study. Yet another limitation is that when identifying the location of journals indexed in the Web of Science within education and educational research, we focused on where the publisher is

[2] As previously stated, the reason for not including other journals was simply that they were not indexed in Scopus at the moment of our inquiry.

[3] In Chap. 9 in this book, Bernd Käpplinger, who draw on conference proceedings from European conferences, have partly different results as compared to what we have in this analysis of journal articles. For a full historical account on adult education in Germany see Chap. 3.

located rather than where the editorial work is conducted. The latter would probably provide a more nuanced picture.

Bearing this in mind, we are not claiming that our analysis is fully generalizable in its findings in relation to the field as a whole, especially because other modes of publications and publication languages are completely left out. Furthermore, the study is not to be read as a full-fledged 'field-analysis' in Bourdieu's very ambitious sense (Bourdieu 1988). Our analysis centers on the question of who is attributed international scholarly value, but is limited to saying something about the research community on the education and learning of adults as shaped through these three key journals, and the articles within these.

6.3 Result

In the following, we present the result from our analysis. Firstly, we focus on the publication location and language policies of indexed education journals. Secondly, we focus on the geographical distribution of editorial board members in the three adult education journals. And thirdly, we introduce the comparative analysis of bibliographic data based on the locus of enunciation.

6.3.1 The Politics of Indexation

The database that, in the current publication regime, is positioned as the most important one is arguably Web of Science (WoS). WoS was until recently by the private company Thomson Reuters and then sold to Clarivate analytics which in itself is owned by private equity firms. Bibliometric studies have confirmed that the content of Web of Science and the second most important database in the current system, Scopus, is very similar (Archambault et al. 2009). Here, rather than focusing on these databases on a general level, we focus on the educational field more specifically.

Turning to WoS, we can begin to look at the geographical location of the journals, their publication language(s) and how its changed in recent time. We specifically focus on journals indexed in the category "education and educational research" as per the listing for the year 2016. We then compare the outcome of this benchmarking procedures to the listing of educational journals for the year 2012, i order to identify any changes in recent time. In total there are 235 articles indexed in the category of education and educational research for the year 2016, whereas a total 216 journals was included for 2012. Geographical distribution of journals for 2016 and 2012 is illustrated in Table 6.1.

The outcome illustrate that there is a clear dominance of two countries in terms of publication location, the US and the UK. Altogether, 75–76% of all journals in the category education and educational research is published in any of these two

Table 6.1 Publishers indexed in the categories Education and Educational research included in Web of Science 2012 and 2016 by Country, Frequency and Percentages

Country of publisher	Freq. 2016	Percentage 2016	Freq. 2012	Percentage 2012
UK:	92	39%	81	38%
USA:	87	37%	80	37%
Netherlands:	18	8%	15	7%
Australia:	8	3%	7	3%
Spain:	6	3%	8	4%
Germany:	5	2%	4	2%
New Zealand:	4	2%	4	2%
Turkey:	3	1%	3	1%
South Africa:	2	1%	2	1%
South Korea:	2	1%	2	1%
Mexico:	1	0%	1	0%
Philippines:	1	0%	1	0%
Lithuania:	1	0%	1	0%
Belgium:	1	0%	1	0%
Brazil:	1	0%	1	0%
Croatia:	1	0%	2	1%
Italy:	1	0%	1	0%
Canada:	1	0%	1	0%
Poland:	0	0%	1	0%
Total	**235**	**100%**	**216**	**100%**

countries. Adding all journals published in a location where english is the first language (New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Africa), we end up with a total percentage of 81–82% of all journals. We can also see how there has been a slight *increase* of indexed journals in this category, from 216 journals in 2012 to 235 journals in 2016. In more relative terms the anglophone dominance seems rather steady. Thus, the WoS benchmark of leading journals in education and educational research has not become more "international" over time. However, we also need to take into account that the editorial work is not necessarily be conducted in the same country as where the publisher is located. Thus, there might be a wider regional distribution of the journals as indicated above, at least in terms of editorship.

A journal can also be shaped as international based on its language policies. Educational journals could potentially include multiple languages and have a more cosmopolitan characteristic then the publication location illustrated. But neither in such sense is the WoS indexing of journals in the category education and educational research, international. It even seems to have become less international over time (Table 6.2).

As these results indicate, English is, not surprisingly, the hegemonic language of publication in the education research field as represented through journals indexed in the WoS. This position as the modern day latin or lingua franca of research has been strengthened over the course of recent years, as the share of multi-lingual and

Table 6.2 Indexed journals in the categories Education and Educational research included in Web of Science 2012 and 2016 by language in frequency and percentage

Language of journal	Freq. 2016	Percent 2016	Freq. 2012	Percent 2012
English:	219	93%	194	90%
Spanish:	5	2%	7	3%
German:	3	1%	3	1%
Multi-lingual:	3	1%	3	1%
Turkish:	1	0%	4	2%
Portuguese:	1	0%	1	0%
Dutch:	1	0%	1	0%
Croatian:	1	0%	2	1%
Italian:	1	0%	1	0%
Total	**235**	**100%**	**216**	**100%**

non-english journals have decreased further. Interesting to note, as well, is how several of the journals published in locations where english is not the first language, also publish their journals in english. This is partly due to big publishers, such as Springer, is located in a specific country even though most of their journals are predominantly english speaking.

6.3.2 Politics of Scholarly Gatekeeping

Because the three journals under scrutiny have emerged in different geographical locations and are shaped in relation to different historical and social practices, it is necessary to provide some descriptions of them. In common for all investigated journals is that they have a relatively long history of publishing within the field of adult education, and thus make up a strong group of agents controlling the scientific influx of scholarly knowledge.

Adult Education Quarterly was launched in 1950, is published in association with the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE). Four issues are published each year. The editorial work of the journal circulates at certain intervals between different universities within the United States, and in 2018 there where four editors, 3 from the US and 1 from Canada.

In 2018 there were 85 persons listed as consulting editors with the following geographical distribution. In parenthesis are the numbers from 2013 (see Fejes and Nylander 2014): United States 61 (81); Canada 9 (11); United Kingdom 2 (8); Australia 2 (1), Belgium 2 (0), Austria 1 (0), Botswana 1 (1), China 1 (1) Ireland 1 (0), Malta 1 (0), New Zealand 1 (0), Nigeria 1 (1), Portugal 1 (0), Sweden 1 (0). In 2013 one consulting editor was also located in South Korea. Including the editors, the AEQ have a representation of universities located in 14 countries. In sum, the distribution of editors and consulting editors, together with the connection to the

AAACE, gives the impression of a journal strongly focused on the North American continent. However, since 2013, more countries have become represented among the consulting editors.

Studies in Continuing Education is located in Australia and was originally created in 1978 by researchers at the University of Adelaide as an Australian journal. However, after a few years, they no longer published the journal. In 1988, researchers at the University of Technology in Sydney (UTS) took over the name and relaunched the journal as an international one.[4] The journal was in 2018 still edited by the original editor-in-chief together with another colleague at UTS. *SICE* does not have any formal connection to any research association. *SICE* publishes three issues each year and is indexed in Scopus as well as the Web of Science.[5] The editorial board comprised 21 persons in 2018 distributed geographically in the following way. In parenthesis are the numbers from 2013 (see Fejes and Nylander 2014): United States 6 (6); United Kingdom 5 (6); Canada 3 (3); Australia 1 (4); Belgium 1 (1); Finland 1 (1); Norway 1 (0); Singapore 1 (1); South Africa 1 (1); Sweden 1 (0). Including the editors, SICE currently have a representation of universities located in 10 countries. In sum, the editorial board include a vast majority of researchers located at a university in an Anglophone country. The only significant change since 2013 is the decrease of board members from Australia.

The International Journal of Lifelong Education is located in the United Kingdom and was initiated by scholars at the University of Nottingham, where the editorial work is currently located. There is no formal relation to any research association. The first issue was published in 1982. *IJLE* publishes six issues each year and is indexed in Scopus. In 2018 there were four editors, two from the United Kingdom and one each from Australia and Italy. The editorial board comprised 36 persons in 2018 distributed geographically in the following way. In parenthesis are the numbers from 2013 (see Fejes and Nylander 2014): United Kingdom 9 (6); Canada 4 (3); United States 4 (7); Australia 3 (2); China 2 (0); Hong Kong 2 (1); South Africa 2 (2); Belgium 1 (1), Botswana 1 (1); Brazil 1 (0); Bulgaria 1 (1); Denmark 1 (1); Japan 1 (1) New Zealand 1 (0); Malta 1 (1); South Korea 1 (2); Sweden 1 (1). Including the editors, IJLE have a representation of universities located in 18 different countries. In 2013 there was also one board member from France. IJLE is currently, as are the two other journals, Anglophone dominated in terms of editors and editorial board members. However, compared to AEQ and SICE, IJLE is in terms of geography of editors the most balanced journal.

[4] Personal correspondence between one of the authors and the editor-in-chief, UTS professor David Boud.

[5] *SICE* was included in the Web of Science in 2011.

6.3.3 *Politics of Publication and Citations*

We will now turn to the results of our analysis concerning the question of who is publishing in these three journals, and who is picked up and cited the most? We will here compare the period 2005–2012 to the period 2012–2018 in order to identify potential changes to the pattern. Figure 6.1 below illustrates the geographical distribution of first authorship among all articles published in the three journals 2005–2012, as well as the share of the most cited articles, while Fig. 6.2 does the same for the period 2012–2018.

Let us first look at Fig. 6.1. Here, the blue bar represents the share (in percentages) of the total number of published articles across all three journals. The red bar represents the share of first authorship among the most cited articles in the journals.

Turning to Fig. 6.2, the blue bar represents the share (in percentages) of the total number of published articles across all three journals. The red and brown bar

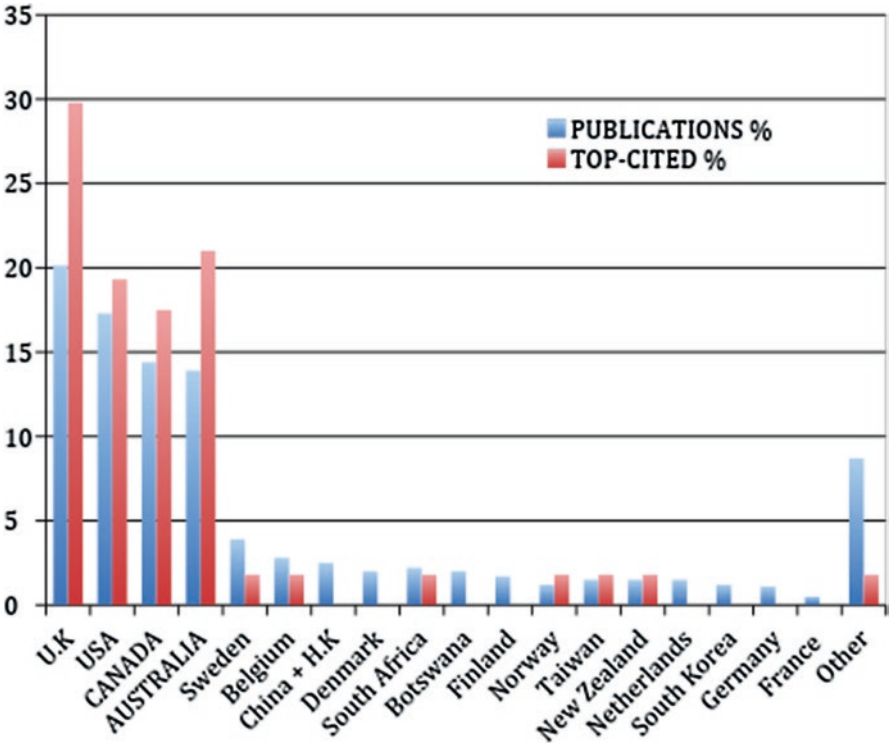

Fig. 6.1 Geographical distribution of affiliated first authorship among all articles published and most cited in three adult educational journals, 2005–2012

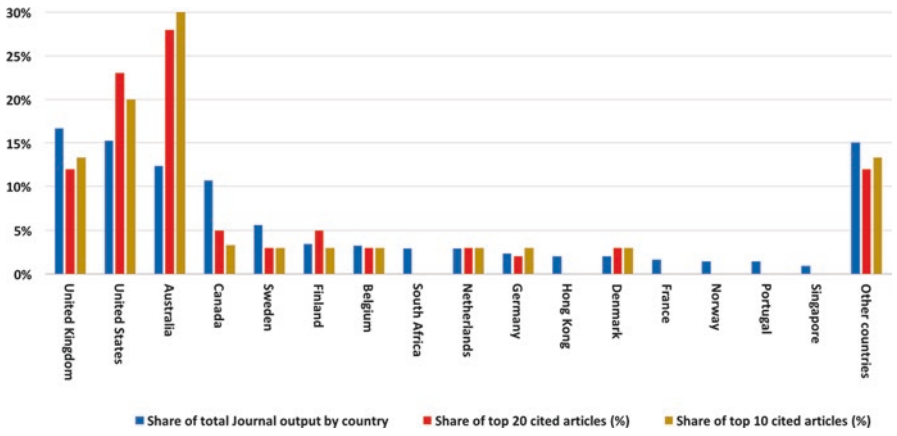

Fig. 6.2 Geographical distribution of affiliated first authorship among all articles published and most cited in three adult educational journals, 2012-February 2018

represents the share of first authorship among the most cited articles in the journals.[6]

The results illustrate how the vast majority of all articles have a first author from one of the four Anglophone countries: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia. However, not all Anglophone countries are part of the pattern of dominance, e.g. New Zealand, South Africa and Botswana. We can also see how, despite the dominance of first authorship, there has been a slight decrease in such dominance during the last few years. 2005–2012 the aforementioned anglophone countries represented a total share of 66%, while during the latter period, the total for these countries were 56%.

When focusing on the share of most cited articles, we can see how authors from the four mentioned countries together have an astonishing dominance, although this has decreased slightly between periods. In the first period, authors from these countries represented 87.8% of the top-cited articles while during the latter period representing 66–67% of the top cited articles.

Comparing the share of published articles with the share of those with highest citations, we can see how UK and Australian authors had the highest revenues in the field during the first period—that is, they had the highest share of highly cited articles compared to their share of the total number of publications. However, in the latter period, it is rather the Australian and the US authors who hold the most domi-

[6] Please note that we have improved the selection process between the two periods. In the first period, the share of the most cited articles are based on a total of 57 articles (the 19 most cited article in each journal). For the second period, the most cited articles were calculated based on the highest cited ones across the three journals. Importantly, the citation numbers for the articles are only calculated based on citations from sources that are also indexed in Scopus. Another limitation concern the sample size across the journals. For example, IJLE publish twice the number of papers per year as compared to SICE. This probably influence the citation patterns.

Table 6.3 Publication patterns of four major Anglophone countries in relation to three adult educational journals, 2005–2012. Majority stated in bold

	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
First Authors' Geographical Affiliation	SICE (AUS)	AEQ (US)	IJLE (UK)	TOT.
United Kingdom	25% (32)	6% (8)	**69%** (90)	100% (130)
United States	7% (8)	**62%** (69)	31%(35)	100% (112)
Canada	17% (16)	39% (36)	**44% (41)**	100% (93)
Australia	**54%** (49)	7% (6)	39% (35)	100% (90)
				N = 425

Table 6.4 Publication patterns of four major Anglophone countries in relation to three adult educational journals, 2012–2018. Majority stated in bold

	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
First Authors' Geographical Affiliation	SICE (AUS)	AEQ (US)	IJLE (UK)	TOT.
United Kingdom	29% (27)	10% (9)	**61% (56)**	100% (92)
United States	7% (6)	**66% (55)**	27% (23)	100% (84)
Canada	22% (13)	25% (15)	**53% (31)**	100% (59)
Australia	40% (27)	10% (7)	**50% (34)**	100% (68)
				N = 303

nating position in terms of revenue. We can also see how the Canadian scholars have lost some ground in terms of ratio between published and most cited articles.

In order to further elaborate the dominance of these countries, we also directed interest towards identifying how common it was for authors in these countries to publish their articles in their "own" journal geographically wise, as compared to the other two journals. Or rather, in what ways are these researchers mobile in terms of where they publish? The result for 2005–2012 is illustrated in Table 6.3, and for the period 2012–2018 in Table 6.4.

The results presented in Tables 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate how authors from the four Anglophone countries to a large extent, publish their articles in the journal that originates from the same geographical location. UK authors publish 69% of their articles in the UK-based journal *IJLE* in the first period and 61% in the second period, US authors publish 62% of their articles in the US-based journal *AEQ* in the first period and 66% in the second period, and the Australian authors publish 54% of their articles in the Australian-based journal *SICE* in the first period and 40% in the second period. Canadians somewhat diverge from this pattern, however, by publishing 44% of their articles in *IJLE* during the first period and 53% during the second period, and 'only' 39% in *AEQ* in the first period and 25% in the second period, the journal with the closest geographical proximity.

The tables illustrate how the transnational flow of publications across continents is surprisingly low. For example, the *AEQ* is a common outlet for US authors (62–70%) and partly for Canadian authors (25–39%), while Australian authors publish only a small share (7–10%) of their articles in *AEQ*. Further, US authors publish their work to a very small extent (6–7%) in the Australian-based *SICE,* while the

Canadians publish to a little higher extent (17–22%). The results thus seem to suggest that North American and Australian scholars within adult education do not tend to disseminate their scientific findings across the two continents.

The flow of publications between North America and Europe is also relatively low. UK authors publish only some 6–10% of their articles in *AEQ*. However the flow of publications seem slightly higher in the other direction where US authors publish 27–31% of their articles in *IJLE,* and for the Canadians, as much as 44–53%. Finally, the flow of publications between Australia and the United Kingdom is more pronounced. This goes in both directions: UK authors publish 25–29% of their articles in *SICE,* and Australian authors publish 39–50% of their articles in *IJLE*.

The most striking results, comparing the two periods, is how AEQ seem to have become more US oriented, where Canadians publish there to a lesser extent than previously. Canadians rather seem to have become more oriented towards the British journal IJLE. Similar patterns can be identified regarding the Australians, who to a lesser extent publish their work in their own journal.

6.4 Discussion

Within the present publication regime, scholars in many countries are forced to publish their work in journals that 'count' in their evaluation systems. As we have argued, indexing databases are used increasingly as devices to rank knowledge and distribute resources. Against this backdrop, we have sought to unravel how publications and citations of three key journals in the field of adult education relate to the geographical location of the article's first author.

The findings presented above are relatively consistent with prior research findings in one aspect: there is "Anglophone dominance" in the field of adult education. In our analysis, authors from four countries dominate the field: the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia (see Fejes and Nylander 2014; Larsson 2010; Taylor 2001; St. Clair 2011; Harris and Morrison 2011).

Our analysis also allows us to compare the revenues of these publications in terms of citation output. These results clearly illustrate that Anglophone authors are those who have the highest revenue in terms of citations (67% of the top-cited article in the later period and 88% in the former period as compared to 56% of all articles published during the later period and 66% in the former period). Why do these three journals publish articles primarily from authors from four countries that have English as their first language? This question is not the least important as resources become tied to publications and citations, based on the indexicality of English-oriented databases such as that of Scopus. Governments and university administrations across Europe are increasingly calling for their researchers to publish their work in what is commonly held as "international journals", and in several countries research excellence is *defined* along these highly standardized, and arguably reductionistic measurements (Hicks 2012; Larsson 2009; Tseng and Tsay 2013). Against this backdrop, one can expect an increase of submissions from

researchers who do not have English as a native tongue, which to some degree has been the case over the two time periods under scrutiny in this chapter. Despite, this, the question becomes even more urgent: why are there such low numbers of published articles from non-Anglophone authors in these three journals, and why is there an even lower number of highly cited non-Anglophone articles at a time when politicians assess scientific quality based on publications and citations?

One possible answer to such a question can be found in our analysis of how authors from the four dominating countries publish across these different journals. What becomes obvious is how authors in these countries most often publish their work in the journal that has its location in the same country or region (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4), even though Canadian and Australian scholars have become more Europe oriented over the time periods. Thus, publication patterns in the field of adult education are largely to be understood not as international but rather as *national* ones. Authors in these countries participate in provincial and regional discussions and the system of symbolic recognition assured through journal publishing has not expanded beyond these realms.

When investigating the extent to which authors from these countries publish in any of the other journals, we see how the flow of papers across geographical space is surprisingly low. Very few Australians and UK authors publish in the US-based journal, and likewise, very few US authors publish in the Australian-based journal. However, there seems to be some flow of papers from North America (Canada and the United States) to the UK-based journal. This picture is reflected in both the aim and scope of these journals as well as in the geographical distribution of members of the editorial boards. As has been illustrated, there is a clear dominance of Anglophone scholars on the editorial boards of the journals. Further, the *AEQ*, with its connection to the AAACE, has a clear national concentration, one that might become the means of reinforcing its provincial and regional publication basis.

A second answer to the question might be that practices of adult education vary greatly between countries; there are great differences in the intellectual traditions as well (Fejes and Salling Olesen 2010). For example, adult education in Sweden has a long history with formal adult-education institutions dating back to the mid-1800s, while in some other countries, institutional adult education practices are either a recent phenomenon or non-existent. Additionally, the language of adult education in Sweden is framed within a continental intellectual tradition, with keywords such as *bildning* (from the German *bildung*), *pedagogik* (with no English equivalent), and so forth. Translating such concepts and such intellectual heritage into the English language, to an English-speaking audience, might be problematic. Thus, the practices of adult education as well as the language of adult education might encourage national publication outputs. That is, it might be more inviting and easy to connect to a nation's own adult education and their research practices, as researchers there share the implicit knowledge of institutional arrangements, academic jargon and previous work published in the field. A question worth pursuing would be to see how well authors from different countries, publishing in the three journals, frame and contextualize their research: who is asked to contextualize what?

In providing a summary of our research findings in relation to the current publication regime, the following can be said: first, we venture the suggestion that authors in the four dominating countries do not need to publish elsewhere as the journals they have available in their own countries are categorized as 'international' and because they are published in English (or at least categorized as those you should publish in to be acknowledged by your employer and colleagues). *AEQ* and *SICE* are both included in the Web of Science, and thus classified as 'worthy' within those administrative systems of assessing research quality and excellence that have gained prominence.

Second, if a journal is shaped through its publication pattern as a national output for research—as our results on authorship and membership on editorial boards indicate—certain contextual rules for what can be included and excluded can be expected to emerge. Thus, a journal that has emerged in a certain geographical location and that includes a bulk of articles from that same location, articulated in the first language of that specific location, are likely to gain advantages to publications produced elsewhere. Papers originating from elsewhere might use research practices that are deemed too different, draw on literature that is not from the same geographical location as the journal, connect with discussions that are taking place faraway, and so forth. As scholars from the host country of the journal often review the manuscripts, *the monolingualism of adult educational research* is, as a consequence, often tacitly encouraged. This is a particularly relevant point to make in relation to the field of the education and learning of adults, which differs both in terms of practice and intellectual traditions across countries and regions (cf. Fejes and Salling Olesen 2010).

6.5 Conclusions

By designing a comparison between the bulk of publications and the top-cited strata within a specific research field, we have been able to problematize how scientific quality is fabricated. This chapter contributes new and somewhat surprising results compared to previous research interested in characterizing the field of research on the education and learning of adults. Our results indicate that:

- Authors from Anglophone countries, especially the Australia and the US during the period 2012–2018, have the highest revenue regarding their share of highly cited articles as compared to their share of published articles.
- Authors from the Anglophone countries publish a high share of their articles in journals from their own geographical location, which can be interpreted as a national rather that international publication output.
- Our results also, to some extent, confirm trends identified in prior studies, that is, a dominance of Anglophone authors and a marginalization of non-Anglophone authors.

- However, by comparing the changes over time periods, we have also identified some changes. First, the dominance of the four Anglophone countries are to some extent weakened. Secondly, UK authors have been replaced by US and Australian authors as those having the highest revenues in citations compared to the total publication output. Thirdly, the Canadians and Australians have to a greater extent turned their interest towards Europe in terms of publication. Thus, the AE Q has become even more US oriented.

If one is a scholar in a non-Anglophone country or at a university where the publication regime have become dominating, chances are that the logic of rewards shifts in favour of a bilingual publication strategy where English unfolds as the second language. Such development has been going on in some academic disciplines for a long time, and it is not a very controversial issue in some scientific fields, particularly within more cumulative oriented natural science (Altbach 2006; Sörlin 1994; Salö 2010). In the field of the education and learning of adults, however, foreign-language publication might be more contestable. For example, when non-Anglophone adult education researchers publish in English, will practitioners or people in those countries who might not be fluent in English be able to take part in the ongoing research in the field? Will the hegemony of English language allow research on adult education in non-Anglophone countries to be conceptualized in the best possible way? Or will non-Anglophone adult education researchers have to conduct research that is interesting foremost to the Anglophone world, rather than producing research of value to policymakers, practitioners, and the research debate that is taking place in the home country of the researcher?

For researchers, the publication strategy aimed at monolingual English journals such as *AEQ* and *SICE* might become a necessity if they wish to 'stay' in the field and accumulate measurable academic rewards. However, it seems to be a problem for non-Anglophone authors to be cited and published in the investigated journals. We have illustrated the problem of being cited, and we know that in order to empirically illustrate if non-Anglophone authors have a problem publishing in these journals we would have to look at both submission as well as publication patterns (see e.g. Taylor 2001). However, within the framing of the current publication and citation regime, we argue that the problem publishing in these journals is a plausible conclusion. So why is this the case? Might this be because the research from other countries lacks relevance for those assessing the quality of the papers? Or does it relate to national citation cultures? Or might non-Anglophone-language articles—based on the 'strangeness' of the context, the level of English, or the challenge of transferring intellectual traditions into English—be confused with bad research? The irony of the developments and patterns illustrated in this chapter is that non-English native speakers actively engage in a game that underscores their own subordination. As non-Anglophone authors do not cite each other when entering an English-speaking regime of publications, but rather import the standard references for the Anglophone academic worlds where they now seek recognition, they are ultimately contributing to the further marginalization of their own peripheral positions.

When the vast majority of indexed journals are published in the Anglophone world, the issue of language becomes a challenge. Almost all journals within education indexed in the Web of Science are published in English (96%). Hence this distribution of indexed journals force researchers in countries, where the current publication regime is prevalent, to publish their research in English, a language which is often not their native tongue. On the one hand, such a trend may be considered positive if it allows researchers in linguistic and geographic peripheries to be plugged into strong academic communities of the Anglophone world and render their research available to a much broader audience. On the other hand, it is also problematic in that it creates research that is neither fully understandable nor easily accessible in some of the countries that contribute. As Hicks (2013) and Hasselberg (2012) argue, social scientists in smaller countries might, in order to be "internationally recognized", choose topics for research that interest foreign academics. Arguably, such tendency towards marketable scholarly work is reinforced when university evaluation systems are based on international publications indexed in the Web of Science. The conditions for contributing to scientific debates and discoveries have also been shown to be stratified (cf. Alatas 2003; Arunachalam and Manorama 1989): those who have English as a native tongue possess a great advantage in being able to formulate their arguments in their own language as well as publishing in journals that originate from their own country, with collegial connections to editors and advisors in the editorial boards and so on. This is rarely the case for researchers situated elsewhere.

References

Adult Education Quarterly. (2013, July 30). *Editorial Policy*. Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.com/journals/Journal200765/title#tabview=aimsAndScope

Alatas, S. F. (2003). Academic dependency and the global division of labour in the social sciences. *Current Sociology, 51*(6), 599–613.

Altbach, P. (2006). Globalization and the university: Realities in an unequal world. In *International handbook of higher education* (pp. 121–139). Rotterdam: Springer.

Archambault, E., Campbell, D., Gingras, Y., & Lariviere, V. (2009). Comparing bibliometric studies obtained from Web of Science and Scopus. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 60*(7), 1320–1326.

Arunachalam, S., & Manorama, K. (1989). Are citationbased quantitative technics adequate for measuring science on the periphery? *Scientometrics, 15*(5–6), 393–408.

Bourdieu, P. (1988). *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Buboltz, W. C., Miller, M., & Williams, D. J. (1999). Content analysis of research in the 'Journal of Counseling Psychology'. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46*(4), 496–503.

de Solla Price, D. J. (1965). Networks of scientific papers. *Science, 149*(3683), 510–515.

de Solla Price, D. J. (1975). *Science since Babylon*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fejes, A., & Salling Olesen, H. (2010). Editorial: Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 7–16.

Harris, R., & Morrison, A. (2011). Through the looking glass: Adult education through the lens of the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* over fifty years. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 51*, 17–52.

Hasselberg, Y. (2012). Demand or discretion? The market model applied to science and its core values and institutions. *Inter-research Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics, 12*(1), 35–51.

Hasselberg, Y. (2013). Drowning by numbers: On reading, writing and bibliometrics. *Confero: Essays on Education Philosophy and Politics, 1*(1), 19–44.

Heilbron, J., & Gingras, Y. (2018). The globalization of European research in the social sciences and humanities (1980–2014): A bibliometric study. In J. Heilbron, G. Sora, & T. Boncourt (Eds.), *The social and human sciences global power relations* (pp. 29–58). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hicks, D. (2012). Performance-based university research funding systems. *Research Policy, 41*(2), 251–261.

Hicks, D. (2013). One size doesn't fit all: On the co-evolution of national evaluation systems and social science publishing. *Confero: Essays on Education, Philosophy and Politics, 1*(1), 67–90.

International Journal of Lifelong Education. (2013, July 30). *Aims & Scope*. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=tled20#.UhcJWxZanGw

Karpik, L. (2011). What is the price of a scientific paper? In J. Beckert & P. Aspers (Eds.), *The worth of goods: Valuation and pricing in the economy* (pp. 63–85). New York: Oxford University Press.

Larsson, S. (2009). An emerging economy of publications and citations. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 29*(1), 34–52.

Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Research, 1*(1–2), 97–112.

Liedman, S.-E. (2013). Pseudo-quantities, new public management and human judgement. *Confero: Essays on Education, Philosophy and Politics, 1*(1), 45–66.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Resurser för kvalitet*. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.

Merton, R. (1973). *The sociology of science: Theoretical and empirical investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Salö, L. (2010). *Engelska eller svenska? En kartläggning av språksituationen inom högre utbildning och forskning, Rapporter från Språkrådet*. Stockholm: Språkrådet.

Sörlin, S. (1994). *De lärdas republik. Om vetenskapens internationella tendenser*. Malmö: Liber-Hermods.

St. Clair, R. (2011). Writing ourselves into being: A review of the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 23*(2), 27–44.

Studies in Continuing Education. (2013, July 30). *Aims & Scope*. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=csce20#.UhcH8xZanGw

Taylor, E. (2001). *Adult Education Quarterly* from 1989–1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.

Tseng, Y.-H., & Tsay, M.-Y. (2013). Journal clustering of library and information science for subfield delineation using the bibliometric analysis toolkit: CATAR. *Scientometrics, 95*(2), 503–528.

Part III
Research Approaches and Research Objects

Chapter 7
Adult Education and Learning: A Pluralistic Research Field?

Andreas Fejes and Erik Nylander

7.1 Introduction

What the "field" of adult education research is and how it can be described has, as illustrated in the introductory chapter of this book, been a debated issue over the decades. In the 1970s and 1980s the debates were to a large extent of a philosophical character, focusing on issues of epistemology, i.e. the status of adult education as a discipline or as a unique field of knowledge (cf. Hirst 1974; Bright 1989). Such debates seem to have declined in the 1990s and, entering the 2000s, these debates had almost disappeared (Rubenson 2000). Today, there seems to be a consensus concerning the epistemological status of adult education, since scholars construe this "field" as inherently interdisciplinary, borrowing theories and methodologies from a range of disciplines (cf. Fejes and Salling Olesen 2010; Hake 1992; Larsson 2010; Rubenson 2000, see also Chap. 3). Openness to the inclusion of scholars from diverse disciplines with different methodological and theoretical inclinations is thus arguably an important part of the self-image of scholars active in the field. However, whether or not adult education research is characterized by methodological and theoretical pluralism, could also be treated as a research question, open to inquiry and contestation. In what ways is the field characterized by scientific practices that are heterogeneous and pluralistic? Is this interdisciplinary and institutionalized pluralism reflected in the most cited contributions in some of the main adult education journals in the field?

This chapter is a revised version of a previously published article: Fejes, A. & Nylander, E. (2015) How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 6(2), 103–123.

A. Fejes (✉) · E. Nylander
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: andreas.fejes@liu.se

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_7

In this chapter we use bibliometric data to give a synthetic image of the research field where knowledge about adult education and learning is produced. We believe that bibliometric measurement and content analysis might prove helpful in identifying what is promoted and valued within the field and, as such, may provide a pertinent basis for scientific reflexivity as the modus operandi of the field is outlined (Bourdieu 1988, p. xii). Similar approaches have previously provided fruitful knowledge in terms of the who, what and how questions in this particular field. By aggregating bibliographic data on what is being produced in adult educational journals, one could, for instance, specify the demographic backdrop such as the relative numbers of women and men among authors (Hayes 1992; Taylor 2001; Harris and Morrison 2011) or the institutional affiliation of authors in terms of geography (Taylor 2001; Harris and Morrison 2011; St. Clair 2011). Both Taylor's (2001) and Harris and Morrison's (2011) analyses indicate that the research field has gone through a change from a dominance of male authors to female authors. They have also confirmed that there is a clear dominance of anglophone authors in the Adult Education Quarterly and the Australian Journal for Adult Learning. On the same topic, Larsson (2010) has stressed that publication patterns in the research field of adult education and learning are clearly related to specific geographic sites of enunciation and different language regimes. Building on Larsson's (2010) arguments, Fejes and Nylander (2014) have shown how anglophone authors are not only more prone to contribute to the English-speaking journals in the field, they have also a much better conversion on their publications than non-anglophone scholars in terms of who is considered worth citing.

Apart from identifying who it is that contributes to the scientific journals in the field, this line of research has also provided some answers as to what kind of research is being published, i.e. it answers the what and how questions. For instance, Taylor (2001) and St. Clair (2011) have noted an increasing trend for qualitative studies in the field and a simultaneous decrease in the number of quantitative studies. Taylor (2001) found that the most common subject treated in the articles of AEQ between 1989 and 1999 was 'adults learning', a finding supported by Harris and Morrison (2011) who, from the analysis of the Australian Journal for Adult Learning, added 'teachers/educators/teaching' as common themes. Some of these results might appear self-evident in the eyes of someone whom has worked in the field for a long time, yet given the historical changes discussed on in the introductory chapter of the book, it should not be taken for granted that these circumstances will not change further as time goes by.

One of the limitations of previous bibliometric studies and content analyses of journal publications in the field is that they tend to map out one journal at the time. As the different journals might uphold positions that are, hypothetically at least, complementary to one another, it seems more reasonable to study the research field with a sample that includes multiple journals published in different geographical locations.[1] Therefore for our analysis we have chosen three different journals to represent the field published in three different geographical locations: Adult

[1] See also the contribution from Boren, Chap. 8

Education Quarterly (AEQ) (USA), International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE) (UK) and Studies in Continuing Education (SICE) (Australia). Analysing these journals will, based on those articles recognized by scholars in the field through the highest rates of citations, provide the basis for answering our questions about how this research field is structured in relation to bibliographies and content.

7.2 Categories and Principle of Classification

We have conducted an analysis of the content and authorship based on a sample of the most cited articles published in three leading journals in the field between 2005 and 2012. Our analysis aims to provide a broad description of how the field has been shaped in terms of authorship and content in recent years. We have therefore focused our exercise on ten different categories that are of particular interest to us. These categories correspond to a set of how and what questions – in terms of research method, theory, context and object. A second set of questions deal with the question of who – in terms of authorship. Under this heading we have included variables on department affiliation, geographic site of enunciation, academic title, gender, number of authors, as well as number of citations (Table 7.1).

In order to identify how the most cited articles relate to the questions above, we have used data available in the Scopus database as related to the three journals mentioned above. In selecting and classifying the data for our analysis, we have adopted the principle of dominance. First, we narrow down the sample of our analysis to the top cited articles published in each of the three journals. The reason for focusing on the most highly cited articles is the collegial recognition ascribed to them by either relating, opposing or building on their arguments. Altogether, this means that we have carried out a detailed analysis of 57 articles, all of which appeared in the journals throughout the period of 2005 to 2012, which amounts to the 19 most cited articles in each journal until the year of 2012. As our focus here is on recognition among peers, all self-citations have been excluded from the statistics. The Scopus data is also limited to citations registered in Scopus itself which means that, for this particular analysis, references to books and enlightenment literature is to a large extent excluded.

Table 7.1 The bibliometric analysis divided up by content and authorship

Content (How and What)	Authorship (Who)
Method used	Department
Theory used	Academic title
Context of research object	Country of institutional affiliation
Main object of research	Citation numbers
	Gender
	Number of authors

To reach a more reliable result of the content and themes in each article that received considerable attention during the time-period each of the contributing authors separately read the articles and categorised them in relation to the above-mentioned questions. Throughout these readings we sought to construct broader thematic categories that could allow for quantifiable descriptions, for example the object of study being either students, teachers, workers, or research. Since the quantitative approach requires a reduction of the number of possible themes or subcategories than it is possible to account for, we grouped the articles based on the dominance criteria. When these recurring themes had been classified individually, we compared our categorisations. Those subcategories that were sizeable enough to form their own category were listed as such, whereas smaller unconventional units were lumped together as broader categories or placed among the leftovers classified as 'Other'. In those instances that the two researchers categorized articles differently from each other – which amounted to approximately 20% of the total sample – we read the articles again and came to a joint conclusion about the most appropriate way to label them (cf. Taylor 2001). This method can be seen as a strategy to increase the reliability of the categorisation process, as the nomenclature effects are controlled for by collegial means.

There are some obvious limitations to this study, in terms of our selection of only journal articles, journals published in English, as well as in certain geographical locations. However, we do not claim that our analysis is fully generalizable in its findings in relation to the field as a whole, especially since other modes of publication (that are not journals) and other publication languages (that are not English) are left out. This limitation is, for example, visible in comparing our results with that of Käpplinger (see Chap. 9), who focuses instead on conference proceedings which renders other images of the field than this content analysis does. However, by selecting journals positioned as key ones within the field from three different continents and picking out those articles that have been most cited between 2005 and 2012, we hope that our analysis will provide a description that, to some extent, could be generalizable to the field.

7.3 Findings: Content Analysis and Bibliographics Based on Citations

In the following section, we present the results from our analysis of the 57 most cited articles by drawing from the questions raised under the two overarching areas of interest sketched above. Firstly, we will address the issues pertaining to the content of these articles. Secondly, we will direct attention to the social and institutional structures of the contributing authors, i.e. the bibliographics of the most cited authors in the field. The findings will be divided into two different tables, after which we will embark on a discussion of what we see as our most interesting results.

Table 7.2 Content of the top-cited articles in three adult education journals, 2005–2012

	SICE (n)	AEQ (n)	IJLE (n)	Tot. (n)	Tot. (%)
Method (how?)					
Qualitative interviews	4	7	4	15	**26.3**
Interviews + participation	6	1	4	11	**19.3**
Other qualitative	5	1	3	9	**15.8**
Quantitative	0	3	1	4	**7**
Mixed methods	1	1	1	3	**5.3**
Total	19	19	19	57	**100**
Theory (how?)					
Socio-cultural theory	7	1	4	12	**21.1**
Critical pedagogy	3	4	3	10	**17.5**
Post-structuralism	4	2	3	9	**15.8**
Other	1	4	2	7	**12.3**
Other learning theories	3	2	1	6	**10.5**
Research reviews	1	3	1	5	**8.8**
Transformative learning	0	3	1	4	**7**
Lifecourse & transition perspectives	0	0	4	4	**7**
Total	19	19	19	57	**100**
Research context (where?)					
School & University	7	4	6	17	**29.9**
Workplace & Workplace transitions	5	0	5	10	**17.5**
E-learning, ICT & IT	5	3	1	9	**15.8**
Nonformal education (NGO's, home, etc)	0	7	1	8	**14**
Educational systems	0	2	4	6	**10.5**
Overviews	1	2	2	5	**8.8**
Policy	1	1	0	2	**3.5**
Total	19	19	19	57	**100**
Research object (who?)					
Student & Practitioners	9	7	7	23	**40.4**
Research	3	5	5	13	**22.8**
Teachers & educators	2	6	3	11	**19.3**
Workers & professionals	5	1	4	10	**17.5**
Total	19	19	19	57	**100**

Table 7.2 provides data on how the top-cited research was carried out related to content. As for the method deployed, qualitative research clearly dominates, representing 62% of the sample. If we also include purely conceptual papers and theoretically oriented research reviews the domination of the qualitative paradigm becomes even more pronounced (88%) (see also Chap. 8). That means that only 12% (n = 7) of the top-cited articles used quantitative methods or mixed methods to reach their conclusions. Four of these studies used quantitative approaches, while three of them drew on mixed-method approaches. Three out of the four quantitative articles were published in the AEQ, perhaps indicating that this publication outlet is

the major one for quantitative research within the three journals studied. Looking closer at these three articles, we see that the first one is based on an attitudinal survey of traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students' motivation and interest (Bye et al. 2007), the second is a comparative survey of institutional barriers to participation in adult education in various countries (Rubenson and Desjardin 2009) and the third is a study of the educational effects of online instruction for police officers (Donavant 2009). The fourth quantitative study that made it into our sample was published in IJLE and focuses on older learners' motivation for participation in online learning (Mulenaga and Liang 2008). Taken together, these articles represent a small number of quantitative contributions to the field that have been given recognition based on citation measurements. Whether this is due to the relative lack of quantitative articles submitted, the profile of the journals, or the limited impact of those quantitative studies carried out, is a question beyond the scope of this study.

Looking more closely at the vast number of qualitative studies, we can see how interviews and interviews in combination with observations dominate, together representing almost half (46%) of the top-cited articles. For example, English (2006) published an interview study in AEQ focusing on learning within feminist organizations. Another interview study published in SICE used a combination of interviews and observations to study recognition of prior learning practices (Breier 2005). Lastly, we can see how 27% of all top-cited articles are conceptual papers or review articles. As an example of this sub-genre we can mention an argumentative paper calling for a social transformation approach to lifelong learning published in IJLE where the author draws on a plenitude of scholars to make her point (Rogers 2006). The research reviews were typically qualitative in nature, but we separated these from the other research methods as they amounted to a rather sizeable and distinguishable research strategy of their own.

Continuing with the how-question of research and what theories are mobilised in these articles, we can see how three theoretical perspectives dominate and represent more than half (54%) of all the top-cited articles: critical pedagogy, post-structuralism and socio-cultural theory. Our working definition of socio-cultural theory includes authors who focus on activity theory, socio-cognitive or situated perspectives on learning. For example, in an article in SICE, Mason (2006), draws on her own experiences as a tutor in online master's courses and on literature on adult learning when discussing three technologies used in online teaching (blogging, learning object and e-portfolios). References to Wenger and social learning theories are one part of the argument pursued. In another article, published in AEQ, O'Donnell and Tobbell (2007) analyse adult students' transition to higher education. Drawing on Wenger's community of practice concept, in combination with other theories, they focus on adults' transition in terms of participation, learning and identity.

In mapping out the articles within the critical pedagogy paradigm, we have included contributions that draw from Marxism, critical theory, feminism, social movement learning, and post-colonial perspectives. Looking more closely at some of the articles, Tisdell and Thompson (2007) study adult educators' consumption of media, drawing on critical media literacy to problematize educational equity with

the aim of creating transformative learning processes and alternative counter-hegemonic narratives. In another article, published in SICE, Forrester (2005) argues for a reshaping of learning within the trade unions in the UK, a movement he argues has to move from an 'employability framework' to one informed by virtues of 'democratic citizenship'.

As for the category labelled post-structuralism, we include a series of articles that draw on Foucault, actor-network theory, science and technology studies and post-structuralist feminism. Although these articles sometimes share certain features with critical pedagogy, they also differ in important regards. Normative claims are here much less conspicuously outlined. Often the author avoids them altogether as any search for essence, and causality and foundational norms are looked upon with suspicion. One example is an article in AEQ where St. Pierre (2006) critically addresses the concept of scientific research and how it has emerged as a policy term as of late. The author draws from various other authors associated with post-structuralism such as Butler, Spivak and Foucault in order to conclude that it is impossible to separate methodology from epistemology, which is why, she says, adult education researchers need to engage with epistemologies that are not their own.

Focusing instead on the where question, the context of research, we find that schools and universities represent the most common empirical location (30%), while work and workplaces are the second most common (17.5%). ICT (16%) as well as non-formal education locations (14%) are also quite common.

To sum up our findings so far, we have found that only a small share of the top-cited articles in recent years have been using quantitative research methods. Instead, the methodological strategies adopted by leading adult education scholars seem heavily tilted towards qualitative research approaches in general, and interview studies, in particular. Theoretically, we have found that the field is dominated by three overarching approaches which share certain internal family-resemblances. These were grouped as socio-cultural theory, critical pedagogy and post-structuralism. Schools and universities as well as workplaces and ICT are the most common empirical locations.

In order to deepen our understanding of who produces this knowledge and who has managed to reach our sample of the most cited scholars in the three journals, we will turn to the bibliographic data on institutional affiliations, academic position, as well as demographic variables such as gender and country of origin.

7.4 Authorship

Table 7.3 provides bibliographic and institutional data on the authors that contributed to the 57 most cited articles within the rather limited time-frame of our study. The results show a distinctive pattern when it comes to the geographical aspects, which is a topic that has been dealt with in our previous publications (see also Chaps. 4, 5 and 6). Suffice to say here, among the top-cited scholars the anglophone

Table 7.3 Authorship in top-cited articles in three adult education journals, 2005–2012

	SICE (n)	AEQ (n)	IJLE (n)	Tot. (n)	Tot. (%)
Authorship (Department)					
Adult education & lifelong learning	**5**	**9**	**10**	**24**	**42.1**
Education	**3**	**5**	**2**	**10**	**17.5**
Other social science	**2**	**2**	**5**	**9**	**15.8**
Higher education	**5**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**12.3**
Educational technology	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**7.0**
Sciences	**0**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**5.3**
Total	**19**	**19**	**19**	**57**	**100**
Authorship (Position)					
Professor	**10**	**5**	**4**	**19**	**33.3**
Associate professor	**0**	**4**	**7**	**11**	**19.3**
Assistent professor	**0**	**6**	**1**	**7**	**12.3**
Senior lecturer	**3**	**0**	**4**	**7**	**12.3**
Lecturer	**2**	**2**	**2**	**6**	**10.5**
Researcher/Ph.D.	**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**7.0**
PhD-student/non-Ph.D.	**0**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**5.3**
Total	**19**	**19**	**19**	**57**	**100**
Authorship (Country)					
United Kingdom	**7**	**2**	**8**	**17**	**29.9**
Austraila	**8**	**1**	**3**	**12**	**21.1**
USA	**0**	**9**	**2**	**11**	**19.3**
Cananda	**3**	**6**	**1**	**10**	**17.5**
Other country	**1**	**1**	**5**	**7**	**12.2**
Total	**19**	**19**	**19**	**57**	**100**
Authorship (Gender)					
Woman	**11**	**13**	**13**	**37**	**64.9**
Man	**8**	**6**	**6**	**20**	**35.1**
Total	**19**	**19**	**19**	**57**	**100**
Authorship (Number)					
Single	**11**	**11**	**7**	**29**	**50.9**
Multitple	**8**	**8**	**12**	**28**	**49.1**
Total	**19**	**19**	**19**	**57**	**100**

world dominates within the research field, representing 88% of all top-cited articles (authors from the USA, UK, Canada and Australia), while the rest of the world represents as few as 12%. Between the major anglophone countries we find that United Kingdom has most of the well-cited contributions, with 30% of all top-citations, followed by researchers with institutional affiliations with Australia, the USA and Canada, which each assembled around 20% of the total share. The rest of the world has a modest share in this 'league-table' of adult education citations, amounting to no more than 12%, largely due to some well-cited contributions in IJLE.

Beyond geopolitical patterns of dominance, we find that the well-cited authors in this period are placed predominantly in departments and research units specializing in adult education and lifelong learning (42%). Apart from departments that could be immediately connected to adult education specialties, there were another 37% of researchers listed in education departments of various sorts. Among these, most had unspecified positions with regards to education departments, whereas others belonged to units focusing on research in higher education or educational technology. This illustrates that those who publish in the field, but who are not in an adult education department, are affiliated with departments or units quite close to adult education. Some of these departments might have research groups in adult education, but without these being described as such. Only one out of five (21%) of the top-cited contributions had a first author from another scientific discipline (social scientific fields, 12.3%, and more rarely the 'hard sciences', 5.3%). Thus, it seems that even though the adult education research field is commonly viewed as particularly heterodox and pluralistic, the majority of first authors belong to an adult education department or a department with close proximity to adult education.

Furthermore, we find that although most of the top-cited authors were established researchers at the time of their research some of these contributions were made by lecturers and PhD-students. In fact, within our sample, only one third (33%) of the top-cited contributions were written by full professors, while a substantial number of papers were written by associate professors (19.2%), assistant professors (12.3%), senior lecturers (12.3%), lecturers (10.5%) and other researchers (7%). Five percent of the top-cited papers (n = 3) had even been written by PhD students and other authors without a PhD.

Yet, looking at the most cited papers in our sample, the authors are mainly more established researchers. The most cited paper in our sample is a review of transformative learning theory, single-authored by the US male scholar Edward Taylor (2007), associate professor in adult education, published in IJLE. Taylor's contribution has an outstanding citation frequency as compared to all the other publications. The second most cited paper is one on the future of e-learning, single-authored by a male Australian scholar John Hedberg (2006), professor in educational technology, published in SICE. In an article published in AEQ, female Canadian scholar Dorothea Bye (Bye et al. 2007), PhD student in psychology (co-authored with professors), analyses motivation among non-traditional students in higher education. Male Australian scholar Stephen Billet (Billett and Pavlova 2005), professor in vocational and adult education, with a colleague, analyses workers' development of the notion of self. In another article published in IJLE by male UK scholar Mark Olssen (2006), professor in political theory and education policy, the focus is on discourses on neoliberalism and lifelong learning.

On the overall, gender patterns of the authors contributing to all the top-cited articles in each journal, we see a slight dominance of female authors. Taken together, the female authors represent 65% of all top-cited articles as compared to 35% for their male counterparts. In terms of number of authors, we see a relatively equal distribution between single and multiple authorship, with 51% of the articles single-authored and 49% with multiple authors.

7.5 Bibliometric Trends in the Field of Adult Education Research

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse to what extent the field of adult education can be characterized as heterogeneous or homogeneous based on the most cited publications in some of the leading journals in the field. As our results show, the field can be seen as pluralistic or heterogeneous only in certain aspects, while being homogenous and rather monolithic in others. In terms of content, a clear pattern relating to method emerged, which was almost entirely qualitative in nature. Within the near total dominance of qualitative research among the top-cited articles, research based on interviews was the most popular method chosen. The field is theoretically construed as partly heterogeneous in terms of the wide array of theories and concepts used. At the same time, however, three theoretical perspectives dominate, representing more than half of the articles in the sample. Focusing on authorship, the field seems rather homogeneous on the basis of measurements of geographic site of enunciation, with a clear dominance of anglophone authors prevail. Heterogeneity, on the other hand, is visible in relation to the academic position of the authors, with a mixture of early career researchers and professors represented in our sample. In the following, we will discuss our main findings further. We will consider the dominance of qualitative studies, the dominance of three theoretical perspectives, as well as questions about authorship.

7.5.1 A Qualitative Research Paradigm

With regards the research methods used, our results illustrate how there has been a near total dominance of qualitative research methods within the top-cited contributions in adult education research journals in recent years. Only four articles in our sample can be categorised as solely drawing on quantitative methods. Such results are partly in concordance with earlier research (Harris and Morrison 2011; St. Clair 2011; Taylor 2001) insofar as these previous studies found that qualitative research has become more common and quantitative research less common over the years. However, despite the decrease in quantitative research, previous studies indicate that it is still quite common. Taylor (2001) for example, illustrates how quantitative and qualitative research were equally common at the end of the 1990s (see also argument by Groen and Kawalilak 2013). A focus on the top-cited articles in this sample, however, indicates that quantitative research methods are more endangered than previous review descriptions have been able to convey.

The difference in results might be due to our focus on a wider range and on slightly different journals compared to previous studies, or because we considered a later time-period than in Taylor's (2001) study. Another possible reason for the decline in quantitative papers may be that our focus has been on those articles that have been picked up and cited by others, whereas previous reviews in the field have

grasped the full research output in specific journals (Taylor 2001; Harris and Morrison 2011). It might be that numerous quantitative studies have been published with low citation rates, and that it is the quality of these papers or the numerical (il) literacy of scholars in the field that prevents them from being cited. Regardless of the reason, our results show how qualitative research has gained a dominant role in the field. In fact, our findings suggest that not only should research be framed within a qualitative paradigm in order to be picked up and cited extensively by peers, it should also preferably focus on individuals and their narrations elaborated through interviews (46%), sometimes in combination with observations. Having all possible research strategies in mind, this is quite a remarkable outcome that calls for further discussion.

One possible explanation regarding the dominance of qualitative research might be found in the historical trends as elaborated in the introductory chapter of this book. Firstly, those adult education scholars who currently hold positions as professors have, to a large extent, shaped their academic careers during a time when qualitative research was emerging and establishing itself as a dominating trend within the field. It can be argued that there is a risk that these leading professors, who often fought hard to make qualitative research legitimate, had focused on providing more doctoral courses and supervision within the frames of a qualitative research paradigm. Thus, it could be hard for doctoral students interested in conducting quantitative studies to find suitable supervision at their institutions or receive meaningful feedback at adult educational conferences.

Secondly, quantitative methods have been important, and previously dominated adult education research in the US. Our results seem to indicate that, even though the volume of quantitative research seems to have drastically declined in the last few decades, such research is still to be found, but predominantly so in the adult education journal in the US. Three out of four of the quantitative articles in our sample are published in AEQ, and three out of four of the main authors of these articles are from North American institutions. The fourth of the main authors is from an institution in Zambia, but is affiliated with a North American university. Thus, one could argue that adult education scholars who draw on quantitative methods seem to have benefited from being located and published in North America.[2]

Another explanation of our results might be found in the question of recruitment to doctoral studies in the field. There is a long-standing tradition in the field of recruiting students who themselves have been engaged in practices of adult education, as teachers, activists or community workers. From a life-course perspective, it is logical to assume that these students bring with them interests that relate to prior experiences of their vocational and political practices. The propensity to use qualitative research methods and to construct research objects that are intuitively recognizable (students' motivations, transformative learning experiences, pedagogic and political strategies, etc.) might therefore, at least in part, depend on the recruitment to the doctoral level. It could also be connected to a wish to produce the kind of

[2] See also the subsequent debate on AEQ with contributions from Boeren (2018) and Daley et al. (2018)

knowledge demanded in educational and teaching programs which, according to Taylor's (2001, p. 336) diplomatic observation, has led to 'less debate about its [qualitative methods] validity as a research method'.

Another important lead in explaining the qualitative dominance might be found by reading about the aims and scopes of the three investigated journals. As the sample builds on research journals within adult education that stress the relation between theory and practice as especially important, ambitions to publish research that is deemed useful to practitioners, might also render the journals more inclined towards qualitative approaches, in which the connection to those working in the field appears more straightforward. Provided that one would like to contribute to an increase in quantitative studies, there would be a need to develop the competence to carry out such studies, either by fostering the appropriate skills within the field or by bringing in such competence from other departments or disciplines. This latter dimension seems more visible in our material, where a researcher in psychology, and another one from a department specializing in criminal justice, conducted two of the four quantitative studies in our sample.

Teamwork between scholars who are competent within different areas of conducting social scientific research is not rare and almost half of the top-cited articles in our sample were collaborative projects that involved more than one researcher. Yet, in order to be able to carry out large-scale quantitative studies empirically, there is a need for researchers active in the field to attract larger research grants. As our results clearly illustrate, very few studies are quantitative, and the qualitative studies are, to a large extent, small-scale interview studies in terms of the empirical material. One possible explanation for this finding is that adult education researchers are not very successful in attracting funding for large-scale research projects in which mixed method approaches and quantitative research form an integral part. However, the lack of quantitative studies might also indicate that adult education research is not highly esteemed among research funders, or that adult education, which is often a very minor part of the educational or public system, has been ignored during this particular time period, i.e. the early 2000s.

7.5.2 Three Theoretical Perspectives

Our results illustrate that, even though a wide array of theoretical perspectives are used among the top-cited articles, three perspectives dominate the field: sociocultural perspectives, critical pedagogy and post-structural perspectives. This pattern indicates that broad conceptual pathways are open for the conduct of adult education research. So how come these three perspectives dominate the field?

One explanation could be related to the methodological observation that almost all articles in the sample draw on qualitative research methods. These theories are often mobilized to help explain and problematize qualitative data of various sorts, and thus authors deem these theories appropriate in relation to the choice of method. Secondly, as the bibliographic variable on institutional affiliations of the authors

illustrates, the dominance of these three theoretical perspectives should probably be seen as tied to specific sites of enunciation, e.g. adult education research as it is practiced in the USA, UK, Canada and Australia. But what happens outside this anglophone world of publications, say in Korea, Germany, China, or France? Such a question can also be raised in relation to our own sample and its internal relationship. For example, the three dominating perspectives are most clearly represented in IJLE (n = 10) and SICE (n = 14), while they are less represented in AEQ (n = 7). This could indicate that adult education research in North America, to a large extent, is still influenced by psychology, with a stronger focus on the individual rather than on sociological questions and issues of power (cf. Rubenson 2000). Such an explanation is partly supported by our sample, since three of the articles in AEQ drew on transformative learning theory, while only one of the papers in the other two journals focused on this theory (authored by a US scholar). Transformative learning theory was developed in the US, and is very much focused on the individual and her/his cognitive habits and dispositions.

Thirdly, the dominance of these perspectives could be related back to the history of the field. With the emergence of critical pedagogy in the 1970s, not least through the writing of Freire, issues of power came to the fore in much of the adult education research. Critical pedagogues are brought together by a 'preoccupation…with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations' (Burbules and Berk 1999, p. 47). The critical inclination typically comes from researchers identifying themselves with a social cause or movement, which leads them to take on the role of spokespersons or judges who unveil the destructive disparity between the ideal and reality, between how the world really 'is' and how it ought to be (Boltanski 2011). Critical pedagogy could thus be expected to appeal to adult education scholars who themselves come from the adult education field, bringing along a wish to conduct research that might help improve practice by focusing on issues of power. As already argued, previous practitioners and activists have been a common source of recruitment to PhD programs in adult education.

Socio-cultural perspectives, rather than being critical or focusing on issues of power, could be viewed as descriptive. Generally, their focus is on describing how learning occurs in relation to and within socio-cultural practices, through the appropriation of language, rules, tools, etc. (cf. Wenger 1998; Vygotsky 1978). Such perspectives were most commonly used in our sample (see also Chaps. 4 and 5). Firstly, the popularity of socio-cultural perspectives could be explained by wider tendencies within educational research, since socio-cultural perspectives on learning have taken an dominant position in terms of how to understand learning, at least in a European context (often through rather simplistic comparisons to 'cognitive perspectives' or 'behaviouristic perspectives' on learning) (cf. Säljö 2013). Secondly, by looking in a cross-sectional way at our results, the dominance of socio-cultural perspectives can be related to the research contexts that are most common in these studies. Out of thirteen articles that we grouped as belonging to the socio-cultural perspective, five focused on the workplace, four on e-learning and four on a specific educational group of people. Thus, some of the top-cited articles focused on two

contexts that have emerged as important in policymaking on lifelong learning during the last decade (e-learning and workplaces).

Arguably, the continuing success of socio-cultural perspectives has benefited from, and contributed to, a change in emphasis from education to learning. As argued by Fejes (2006) and Nicoll and Fejes (2011), there seems to have been a shift in adult education research from lifelong education to lifelong learning – where the focus on lifelong learning account for other learning processes than those associated with educational institutions. Thus, the increasing emphasis on workplace learning within adult education seems to have resulted in well-cited articles that extend the domains in which knowledge is seen to be acquired, reflected for instance in workplaces amounting to no less than 21% of the most cited articles as compared to the 10% that focused on the transformations of entire educational systems. With the spread of research on workplace learning, socio-cultural perspectives have been able to gain or sustain momentum during the last decade (cf. Fenwick 2010). Yet another explanation to the dominant pattern described might be that sociocultural perspectives are very generic and broad, framed within a social constructive theoretical terrain, thus making it attractive for being taken up in a range of different versions, and contexts, offering tools for many adult education researchers in the mainstream.

7.5.3 Authorship

In terms of authorship, the top cited contributions to the field are homogeneous with regard to the dominance of anglophone authors. There is also a majority of authors in the sample that come from an adult education department or from a department closely related to such expertise. Furthermore, established researchers have authored most of the highly cited articles. However, there is also diversity in terms of academic titles among first authors, since both early career researchers as well as well-established researchers are represented among the sample. How can we explain such results?

The first issue regarding the anglophone dominance and inherent provincialism in the field has been illustrated by several contributions in previous research (Larsson 2010; Taylor 2001; Harris and Morrison 2011; see also Chaps. 4, 5 and 6), and we have in another publication (Fejes and Nylander 2014) ourselves extensively elaborated on possible explanations. In short, the three journals included in our sample, especially AEQ and SICE, are edited by anglophone scholars, and also have a majority of anglophone scholars on the editorial boards. Furthermore, the aim and scope of the journals do not indicate that they are 'international', although one of them has the word 'International' in its title (IJLE). Thus, even though scholars in many locations, through the economy of publication and citations, are forced to publish in journals indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus, the journals in our sample (especially AEQ and SICE) are not clearly defined as international journals, i.e. they are rather national/regional journals and thus might not encourage

submissions from other locations. Furthermore, as the journals publish in English, those with English as a first language are at a great advantage, as non-native speakers have to reconceptualise their research in another language, as well as to another audience.

The result that most authors are located in adult education departments or departments closely related to adult education might not be considered as very surprising, as we have focused primarily on the contributions from three adult education journals that have been picked up and cited by peers. However, it might be important to stress this finding anyhow. Firstly, this result indicates that the field is rather institutionalised as for its organisational embeddedness, i.e. the majority of contributions come from within the field, rather than from altogether other departments. This might cast doubt on the claim that the field is inherently transdisciplinary or pluralistic. Secondly, the finding suggests that the most cited authors often rely on a university infrastructure in which the topic of adult education and lifelong learning has become an institutionalized research speciality. To a fairly large extent the field is dominated by scholars who are embedded in research units and departments where seminars, graduate schools and teacher training programs all point towards proficiency in adult education or lifelong learning.

We have illustrated how a majority of the highest cited articles have a female as first author. This is hardly surprising given that the overall contributions to these journals during these years consist of more female authors then male. However, comparing these results with the findings in Chap. 5, we see a difference in the citation practices once books and full bibliographies is taken into consideration. So the pattern of female dominance here, seems only to be valid for the rather limited time period we studied and looking exclusively at those citations registered in Scopus. Once the full range of citations is taken into consideration the pattern of male dominance re-occur.

There is wide representation of authors in different stages of their career among the sample, thus indicating that the top cited contributions to this field are not clearly correlated to the researchers' hierarchical position within academia. One could even speculate that the chances of attracting high number of citations are more dependent on the authors' site of enunciation rather than academic title. However, turning to those five papers that have attracted the most citations within our sample, only one of them is authored by a junior faculty and then together with more established authors, and all of them are authored by anglophone scholars, indicating that there might be a rather intricate correlation between site of enunciation, title and citations. Another common denominator among these five articles is that they were all published in the early phase of our study (2005–2007) which is hardly surprising as the aggregated cition life within education more broadly, is 8.3 years (Larsson 2009). Thus, it takes several years before a paper can have been expected to attract a large number of citations.

One of the five papers (Taylor 2007) stands out, with an outstanding citation frequency. If one takes Taylors text as an example of how one could reach high citation numbers it should probably be related to several factors. Firstly, the article is a literature review and discussion about the development of transformative learning

theory, a kind of text that could be argued to increase the chances of receiving citations. Secondly, transformative learning theory is one of the more successful theories developed within the field of adult education as such. So even if Larsson (2010) illustrates that there is a low citation relation between different adult education journals, in the case of transformative learning theory, a community has emerged within the field. The theory is especially common in articles published in AEQ, probably because the theory was originally developed in the US. Thirdly, the paper is published by a US scholar in the UK journal IJLE, thus providing an opportunity to offer an adult education theory developed in the US to a wider international audience. Limiting the publication on transformative learning theory to AEQ would probably only keep the debate within North America since AEQ is construed as a national/regional journal rather than an international one (Fejes and Nylander 2014; see also Chap. 6). As citation rates between adult education journals are generally low (Larsson 2010), IJLE thus emerges as a strategic output for an overview of an adult education theory developed within the US.

7.6 Concluding Notes

In sum, our findings question all too generalized statements about the field of research on adult education and learning. Preferably, statements about the dynamics of this field need to based on empirical investigations such as the one we have just carried out. There is a risk that we, as adult education scholars who publish in adult education journals as well as read them, take our own set of assumptions of the field to be true. Even though such assumptions are important and inevitable, they need to be complemented with systematic empirical inquiries in order to further the discussions on what the field is and how it might develop.

The main concern that we have raised in this paper relates to the questions of who and what are allowed to enter and are worth citing in three leading academic journals. Our result partly concurs with Rubenson's (2000, p. 5) statement concerning the field before 2000, in that it suggests a 'preoccupation with abstract theory building'. One quarter of the articles in our sample was written in a form that is either purely conceptual or aimed at providing research reviews. Among the empirical contributions, many of them draw on a rather limited amount of data, often in the form of a few interviews.

Speculating further from our results, could it be that the chances of being published and well-cited increase if one is a professor, or at least co-writes with a professor, and/or is located at a university in either the US, UK, Canada or Australia, and/or conducts qualitative studies, preferably interviews, and/or uses socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy or post-structuralism as theoretical perspectives? If so, it raises several questions. To what extent do the three dominating theoretical traditions and the qualitative paradigm in the field enable or hinder the emergence of new knowledge? To what extent are established networks of adult education research based on proximity and familiarity with these theoretical approaches? To

what extent do relations with certain networks and/or certain scholars in the field enable or hinder entrance into these publication venues and/or affect the chances of high citation rates? These questions are important, not only in terms of reflecting upon where the field 'is', how it might develop, what is valued as worthy of citing and what might be excluded, but also for doctoral students and early career researchers in order to help them reflect on their own position in the field and on the choices they may need to make to be increase their chances to enter these publication venues. Read from a more heretical point of view, our study may also help researchers who strive to renew this research field. Arguably there is no better way to do that than to know the history and dominating relations of the field to date.

In line with our findings, a series of questions for future studies might be raised. Firstly, are there any correlations between authorship and content as we have described? For example, both our own result and previous studies (e.g. Taylor 2001) indicate a dominance of female authors contributing to the field. Does this in any way correlate with the dominance of qualitative studies and approaches that take the views and narratives of people as their starting point? Are there ways to conduct adult education research critically, while still building on statistical methods? Secondly, what would our results be if we drew on data from other geographical sites and included altogether different language regimes? Would the image of the field perhaps look entirely different if we included other sources of data in our analysis, such as books and book chapters, or conference proceedings? And to what extent do field-specific assets that authors have accumulated in their previous track records of articles, books, keynotes and editorial position, affect the propensity of other adult educational scholars to cite and make reference to their work?

References

Billett, S., & Pavlova, M. (2005). Learning through working life: Self and individuals' agentic action. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 24*(3), 195–211.

Boeren, E. (2018). The methodological underdog: A review of quantitative research in the key adult education journals. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68(1)*, 63–79.

Boltanski, L. (2011). *Pragmatisk sociologi*. En tekstsamling. Redigeret af Lars Held. Oversat af Peer F. Bundgaard. København: Hans Reitzels Forlag

Bourdieu, P. (1988). *Homo Academicus*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Breier, M. (2005). A disciplinary-specific approach to the recognition of prior informal experience in adult pedagogy: 'rpl' as opposed to 'RPL. *Studies in Continuing Education, 27*(1), 51–65.

Bright, B. P. (Ed.). (1989). *Theory and practice in the study of adult education: The epistemological debate*. London: Routledge.

Burbules, N. C., & Berk, R. (1999). Critical thinking and critical pedagogy: Relations, differences and limits. In T. S. Popkewitz & L. Fendler (Eds.), *Critical theories in education: Changing terrains of knowledge and politics* (pp. 45–65). London: Routledge.

Bye, D., Pushkar, D., & Conway, M. (2007). Motivation, interest, and positive affect in traditional and nontraditional undergraduate students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 57*(2), 141–158.

Daley, B. J., Martin, L. G., & Roessger, K. M. (2018). A call for methodological plurality: Reconsidering research approaches in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*(2), 157–169.

Donavant, B. W. (2009). The new, modern practice of adult education: Online instruction in a continuing professional education setting. *Adult Education Quarterly, 59*(3), 227–245.
English, L. M. (2006). A Foucauldian reading of learning in feminist, non-profit organizations. *Adult Education Quarterly, 56*(2), 85–101.
Fejes, A. (2006). The planetspeak discourse of lifelong learning in Sweden: What is an educable adult. *Journal of Education Policy, 21*(6), 697–716.
Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2014). The Anglophone International(e): A bibliometric analysis of three adult education journals, 2005–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(3), 222–239.
Fejes, A., & Salling Olesen, H. (2010). Envisioning future research on the education and learning of adults. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 7–16.
Fenwick, T. (2010). Workplace 'learning' and adult education: Messy objects, blurry maps, and making difference. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 79–95.
Forrester, K. (2005). Learning for revival: British trade unions and workplace learning. *Studies in Continuing Education, 27*(3), 257–270.
Groen, J., & Kawalilak, C. (2013). The tapestry of adult education research in Canada. In T. Nesbit, S. M. Brigham, N. Taber, & T. Gibb (Eds.), *Building critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada* (pp. 29–38). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.
Hake, B. J. (1992). Remaking the study of adult education: the relevance of recent developments in the Netherlands for the search for disciplinary identity. *Adult Education Quarterly, 42*(2), 63.
Harris, R., & Morrison, A. (2011). Through the looking glass: Adult education through the lens of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning over fifty years. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, 51*, 17–52.
Hayes, E. (1992). Women in adult education: An analysis of perspectives in major journals. *Adult Education Quarterly, 44*, 201–221.
Hedberg, J. (2006). E-learning futures? Speculations for a time yet to come. *Studies in Continuing Education, 28*(2), 171–183.
Hirst, P. H. (1974). *Knowledge and the curriculum: A collection of philosophical papers*. London: Routledge.
Larsson, S. (2009). An emerging economy of publications and citations. *Nordisk Pedagogik, 29*, 34–52.
Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Research, 1*(1–2), 97–112.
Mason, R. (2006). Learning technologies for adult continuing education. *Studies in Continuing Education, 28*(2), 121–133.
Mulenaga, D., & Liang, J.-S. (2008). Motivation for older adults' participation in distance education: A study of the National open University of Taiwan. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 27*(3), 289–314.
Nicoll, K., & Fejes, A. (2011). Lifelong learning: A pacification of 'know how. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 30*(4), 403–417.
O'Donnell, V., & Tobbell, J. (2007). The transition of adult students to higher education: Legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice? *Adult Education Quarterly, 57*(4), 312–328.
Olssen, M. (2006). Understanding the mechanisms of neoliberal control: Lifelong learning, flexibility and knowledge capitalism. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25*(3), 213–230.
Rogers, A. (2006). Escaping the slums of changing the slums? Lifelong learning and social transformation. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 25*(2), 125–137.
Rubenson, K. (2000). *Revisiting the map of the territory*. Paper presented at the American adult education research conference.
Rubenson, K., & Desjardin, R. (2009). The impact of welfare state regimes on barriers to participation in adult education: A bounded agency model. *Adult Education Quarterly, 59*(3), 187–207.

Säljö, R. (2013). *Lärande i praktiken: Ett sociokulturellt perspektiv* (2nd ed.). Stockholm: Nordstedts akademiska förlag.

St. Clair, R. (2011). Writing ourselves into being: A review of the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 23*(2), 27–44.

St. Pierre, E. A. (2006). Scientifically based research in education: Epistemology and ethics. *Adult Education Quarterly, 56*(4), 239–266.

Taylor, E. (2001). Adult education quarterly from 1989–1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.

Taylor, E. (2007). An update on transformative learning theory: A critical review of empirical research (1999–2005). *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 26*(2), 173–191.

Tisdell, E. J., & Thompson, P. M. (2007). Seeing from a different angle': The role of pop culture in teaching for diversity and critical media literacy in adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 26*(6), 651–673.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. London: Harvard University Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 8
Quantitative Research in Research on the Education and Learning of Adults

Ellen Boeren

8.1 Introduction

This chapter starts from the observation that there is a limited presence of quantitative research published in leading adult education journals such as *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Studies in Continuing Education* and *International Journal of Lifelong Learning*. This observation was also discussed by Fejes and Nylander (2015, see also Chap. 7). As an adult education scholar mainly working with large quantitative datasets, I aim to provide more insight on what quantitative methods have to offer to the field. I will do this through a brief discussion of the role of methodologies and methods in empirical research, but also by engaging with examples of quantitative research available in the scholarly literature, including a range of existing quantitative scales, and how these can be taken forward in new research as tools to generate the construction of new knowledge. I will first explore potential reasons why the presence of quantitative research in the leading generic adult education journals is so limited.

This chapter is a revised version of a previousely published article: Boeren, E. (2018) The Methodological Underdog: A Review of Quantitative Research in the Key Adult Education Journals. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 68(1), 63–79.

E. Boeren (✉)
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland
e-mail: ellen.boeren@ed.ac.uk

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_8

8.2 Hypotheses on the Limited Presence of Quantitative Research in the Adult Education Literature

A bibliometric analysis of top cited articles in the leading adult education journals by Fejes and Nylander in 2015 (see also Chap. 7) concluded that in relation to methods, *'qualitative approaches have near total dominance'*. In their analysis, they included the 57 most highly cited articles published in *Adult Education Quarterly, International Journal of Lifelong Education* and *Studies in Continuing Education*. Only 7 of these articles contained a quantitative component, either by being purely quantitative in nature, or being part of a mixed methods research design in which quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated. In discussing this observation, Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) put forward some hypotheses on the underlying reasons of the underrepresentation of quantitative methods. One of their arguments is that many doctoral candidates in the field of adult education tend to come from practical backgrounds with an interest in capturing the experiences of adult learners, a topic leaning more towards the adoption of qualitative methods. While quantitative methods can also be used to capture experiences of adult learners, these are more likely to generate data on 'what' learners are experiencing instead of 'why' they are going through these experiences. This is, as will be further explored below, because quantitative research is better suited to capture static facts and figures while qualitative research goes deeper into the underlying meanings (see Robson 2011). Another argument put forward by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) relates to the skill package of doctoral supervisors, with a majority been trained in a period in which qualitative methods in education blossomed as a reaction against the strong positivistic nature of quantitative research. Not only in the scholarly literature, but also when visiting adult education conferences and events, it is clear the majority of academics in the field are engaged in research drawing on qualitative methods. An additional argument put forward by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) relates to the difficult funding climate of today. Generating research income is challenging and the cost of undertaking large scale survey research or experiments leading to high quality quantitative data is high. However, as I will be discussing below, there is a wide range of datasets available to researchers to undertake secondary data analysis and further exploitation of these datasets should be encouraged in the adult education scholarly community. Before discussing these datasets and a range of other quantitative tools available for researchers as found within studies published in the leading journals in the field, I provide a brief overview on historical discussions between the role of qualitative versus quantitative methods in social sciences research.

8.3 Research Paradigms

The term paradigm, as discussed by Thomas (2009, p.72) refers to 'the technical word used to describe the ways we think about and research the world'. While paradigms can be somewhat complex in nature, traditionally, the two leading paradigms in social sciences have been labelled as 'positivism' and 'interpretivism'. A more sophisticated classification of paradigms, as published by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) integrates a wider range of paradigms, including 'positivism and postpositivism', 'interpretivism, constructivism and hermeneutics', 'feminism', 'racialised discourses', 'critical theory and Marxist models', 'cultural studies' and 'queer theory'. While Thomas's distinction between positivism and interpretivism is thus maybe narrow in scope, the underlying idea is that paradigms tell us something about the way in which researcher tend to think about the world and how these worldviews can influence methodological choices they make in carrying out their research agendas. Starting from a positivist assumption, as explained by Thomas (2009), knowledge will be produced based on facts and figures which are value-free and objective. Methods are traditionally borrowed from exact sciences and the use of numbers and statistics is dominant. Positivism often resolves around the testing of hypotheses and therefore engages in deductive and theory-testing thinking. This way of thinking is in contrast with interpretivism, which starts from the assumption that researchers are those who actively engage in constructing and interpreting the world in which we live. The focus is therefore not on the achievement of an objective reality, but on furthering the in-depth understanding of the world. This can include work to explore new areas of research and to engage in theory building in areas which lack strong frameworks. Interpretivists therefore prefer to work with qualitative methodologies. The techniques they use are often hard to replicate and are strongly interrelated with the approaches used by the specific researcher. It is thus clear that crucial differences exist between quantitative and qualitative methods. Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, there has been a lively debate on which research methodologies to use, often referred to as the 'paradigm war' (see e.g. Gage 1989; Robson 2011). Furthermore, it is also possible to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods within mixed methods research, sometimes labelled at the 'third methodological movement (see e.g. Johnson et al. 2007; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009) or as the 'pragmatic approach' (See Robson 2011). Nowadays, methodological textbooks formulate advise on choosing adequate methods best suited to answer the research questions being posed (Ercikan and Roth 2006; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). It is thus clear that traditionally, different types of research methods tend to serve different purposes but also draw on different sets of skills. For example, research interested in analytical accounts of facts and figures ask for well-developed quantitative and statistical skills. Going back to the observation made by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) that quantitative research in the leading adult education journals is underrepresented, it is also important to increase familiarity among scholars in the field what the potential of quantitative research is for our field. As such, a review of quantitative tools and datasets is being discussed below.

8.4 Review Procedure Distinguishing Between Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

In order to be able to discuss examples of quantitative research as discussed in the leading adult education journals, I obviously had to search for them. In distinguishing articles drawing on quantitative versus qualitative methods, I focussed on the distinction made by Creswell (2003, p.17). Articles containing research based on quantitative methods therefore used 'predetermined' research instruments, mainly questionnaires, although quantitative data can also be generated through experiments. Data are then being analysed using statistical techniques. Articles drawing on qualitative research tend to start from more 'flexible' research designs, for example through working with semi-structured interview schedules. Common methods include interviews, focus groups and observations, leading to data which are being analysed based on texts from transcripts. It is of course also possible than one single article reports on both quantitative and qualitative research elements, drawing on a mixed methods research design.

The review exercise presented in this chapter is based on 1323 journal articles, all published between 2000 and 2017, in some of the leading generic adult education journals. All original papers published in *Adult Education Quarterly* (AEQ), *Studies in Continuing Education* (SCE) and *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (IJLE) in the period 2000 till 2017 – have been included in the analysis (N = 1323), including more than six million words of text. The reason for selecting these three journals was to keep the selection similar to previous research undertaken by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7), as such, building further on their finding that quantitative research is underrepresented in the leading academic journals on adult and lifelong education. Furthermore, it is interesting to know that these journals are being edited from three different continents. AEQ's editorial office is located in the America, IJLE's in Europe and SCE's in Australia. The following keywords were included in the review analysis, linking back to keywords used by Creswell (2003, p.17): qualitative, quantitative, interview, focus group, participant observation, questionnaire, regression, correlation, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) (examples of common statistical analyses) and (quasi)-experimental design, as well as 'mixed methods'.

All journal articles included in the analysis were subjected to a context and text mining analysis undertaken with the help of software packages QDA Miner and WordStat, products developed by Provalis Research. QDA Miner is able to code, analyse and manage big data – in this case all papers from the three leading journals between 2000 and 2017. Further analyses can then be undertaken in WordStat, which can explore co-occurrences between keywords. The programme is thus based on a text analysis searching for sentences that use one or more of the keywords as mentioned above. Whenever a keyword had been found, it had been essential to further explore the text in order to distinguish whether it was used in relation to the empirical methods and findings of the reported research, or whether it belonged to

another section, for example in relation to previous research discussed in the literature review without dealing with the methods in itself.

8.5 Results

8.5.1 General Patterns

This results section discusses the prevalence of quantitative research in three leading adult education journals. It starts by discussing the observation that a minority of articles included in the review (16%) mentioned the use of quantitative research approaches (see Table 8.1).

The numbers reported in this table represent the number of cases (journal articles) in which one of these words has appeared, with an additional scrutinising exercise for the keywords reflecting on specific data collection methods. It does not reflect how many times these words have been mentioned in the 1323 articles. If a keyword appeared several times in one article, it was counted as one. Although this is a keyword search only, which has its limitations, it does give an impression of common methods used. Overall, it is unsurprising that qualitative methods seem more dominant, which is in fact a confirmation of review results found by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7), based on top cited papers. It is also important to underline that not all papers contain one of these keywords. For readers familiar with these journals, it is also not entirely surprising, as a range of papers have the nature of non-empirical contributions such as theoretical reviews or policy-oriented analyses.

Looking at journals articles published between 2000 and 2017, it thus remains a valid claim that quantitative research is underrepresented in adult education research. Statistical terms like regression and ANOVA do not feature commonly in papers. Experimental or quasi-experimental designs generating data for statistical analyses are nearly non-existent in the generic adult education literature. The term 'mixed methods' was also only found on a limited number of occasions, as can be seen from Table 8.1.

As an adult education scholar who mainly engages with large quantitative datasets, I want to open up a debate on the use of quantitative methods with fellow schol-

Table 8.1 Number of journal articles featuring methodological keywords

Qualitative	584	Quantitative	216
Interview	113	Questionnaire	143
Focus group	78	Regression	47
Participant observation	49	Correlation	34
Mixed methods	21	ANOVA	30
		Quasi-experimental design	3

Source: own analysis

ars. I want to do this through engaging in discussions of what types of data and quantitative tools are available for inclusion in academics' own research. In what follows, I will distinguish between two different ways of working with quantitative data. First of all, researchers can collect primary data themselves, and I will engage in a discussion on scales available to integrate in questionnaires. Secondly, I will critically discuss the potential role of secondary data analysis in adult education research, referring to some of the major datasets available for the scholarly community.

8.5.2 Primary Data in Quantitative Research

When deciding to collect your own quantitative data, it is important to understand you are likely going to work with a fixed research design. As Robson (2011) explain, research using fixed design need to have in-depth reflections on how to construct their questionnaires. Changing the research instrument once the data collection phase has started will not be possible anymore. Generally speaking, a survey methodology will be set up to undertake this type of quantitative research (Andres 2014; Bryman 2012). When designing the questionnaire, as recommended by Cohen et al. (2011), drawing on work by Sellitz et al. (1976), it is important to decide how question will be worded, and whether specific answering options will be included, for example through Likert scales, drop down lists, checklists are ratings. The way in which the questions and answers will have to be formulated will also depend on whether data will be collected through a postal, online, telephone or face-to-face survey mode (see Fink 1995). As Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) argue, clear procedures for data collection need to be put in place as surveys tend to be structured and fixed.

When designing a new survey questionnaire, one of the best starting points is too explore existing survey instruments. Where possible, it might be useful to borrow questions and scales from these existing survey questionnaire, as this is likely to increase the validity and reliability of your own research project. As mentioned above, qualitative studies tend to be harder to replicate, while existing scales can be used multiple times, e.g. in different types of contexts or with different groups of respondents.

Going back to the core aim of this chapter, it is important to provide an overview of existing survey questionnaires and quantitative scales available in the adult education literature. While it will be impossible to discuss every single questionnaire and their questions in detail within the word limits of a book chapter, it is important to increase familiarity with existing scales among the adult education readership. Despite the limited presence of quantitative research in the leading adult education journals, as discussed before, a number of standardised scales have been found. Interestingly, most of these scales collected data using Likert items (e.g. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (Likert 1929). In order to present these scales in a structured way, I decided to group them into four categories based on their content, following my own interpretation of the papers: (1) participation scales, (2) experiences scales, (3) psychometric scales and (4) learning styles scales. The scales are being presented in Table 8.2 and discussed below using the four catego-

ries. As can be seen from the overview, most of the articles using quantitative scales were published in Adult Education Quarterly. The only category in which AEQ articles are not in the majority, concerns the group on learning style scales. Deeper investigation, for example by using content analysis, might reveal whether this is the case more general, regardless the use of specific methodologies and methods.

8.5.2.1 Participation Scales

First of all, and probably the most well-known scales in adult education research related to **participation** in adult education. The following scales were found based on the analysis in QDA Miner. Boshier (1971) developed the *'Education Participation Scale'* as a further empirical testing and validation of Houle's typology of adult learners, distinguishing between goal-oriented, activity-oriented and content-oriented learners (Houle 1961). In the past 15 years, the scale has been used to discover the motivations of African American adult learners in church-based education (Isaac et al. 2001). Boshier was also involved in a project measuring the

Table 8.2 Overview of quantitative scales as found in the leading adult education journals (N = 23 articles)

Participation scales (N = 5 articles)	Experiences scales (N = 4 articles)	Psychometric scales (N = 8 articles)	Learning style scales (N = 6 articles)
Education participation scale *Isaac* et al. (2001) *AEQ* *Boshier* et al. (2006) *AEQ* *Boeren and Holford* (2016) *AEQ*	Noel-Levitz adult student priorities survey *Giancola* et al. (2008) *AEQ*	Motivated strategy for learning questionnaire *Justice and Dornan* (2001) *AEQ*	Personal responsibility orientation to self-direction in learning scale *Stockdale and Brockett* (2011) *AEQ*
Reasons for participation scale *Mulenga and Liang* (2008) *IJLE*	Power and influence tactics scale Problem solving inventory *Hendricks* (2001) *AEQ*	Abbreviated math anxiety scale Mathematics self-efficacy scale Self-description questionnaire III-math subscale *Jameson and Fusco* (2014) *AEQ*	Oddi continuing learning inventory *Harvey* et al. (2006) *AEQ*
Adult attitudes towards adult and continuing education scale *Blunt and Yang* (2002) *AEQ*	Meanings of learning in later life *Tam* (2016) *IJLE* *Tam and Chui* (2016) *SCE*	Beck anxiety inventory *Carney-Crompton and Tan* (2002) *AEQ*	Student engagement questionnaire *Lee* (2014a, b) *IJLE*

(continued)

Table 8.2 (continued)

Participation scales (N = 5 articles)	Experiences scales (N = 4 articles)	Psychometric scales (N = 8 articles)	Learning style scales (N = 6 articles)
		Academic self-efficacy scale parental self-efficacy scale Work-family balance Scale Extended satisfaction with life scale *Van Rhijn and Lero* (2014) *IJLE*	Approaches to supervision scale Supervision practices Scale Supervision outcome Scale *Lizzio* et al. (2005) *SCE*
		General self-efficacy Scale *Bath and Smith* (2009) *SCE*	Learning to learn scale *Vainikainen* et al. (2015) *IJLE*
		Self-concept and perceived problem-solving skills scales *Porras-Hernandez and Salinas-Amescua* (2012) *AEQ*	TPD@work scale *Evers* et al. (2016) *SCE*
		Borg CR-10 scale *Piirainen and Viitanen* (2010) *IJLE*	
		Self-efficiacy scale Adult learning strategies scale Self-reported engagement scale *Rothes* et al. (2017) *AEQ*	

motivation of adult learners in Shanghai, measured through his Education Participation Scale (Boshier et al. 2006). Boeren and Holford (2016) report on research undertaken in a large scale European project that undertook a survey with adult learners which included parts of the Education Participation Scale. While Mulenga and Liang (2008) refer to Boshier's scale, they used the *'Reasons for Participation Scale'* developed by Steele (1984) to measure participation of adults studying at the Open University in Taiwan. Factors discussed were 'keeping up and fulfillment', 'intellectual stimulation', 'escape and social contact' and 'adjustment'. Another scale developed to specifically predict participation behaviour in adult education is the *'Adult Attitudes towards Adult and Continuing Education Scale'* (Blunt and Yang 2002). Their scale consists of nine items relating to three factors: 'enjoyment of learning', 'importance of adult education' and 'intrinsic value'. Drawing on attitudinal work undertaken by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) to explain planned and intended behaviour, Blunt and Yang (2002) expand on the importance of positive attitudes towards learning in relation to adult education participation.

To conclude, five articles were found in relation to participation studies, four of them in Adult Education Quarterly and three of them using (parts of) Boshier's Education Participation Scale.

8.5.2.2 Scales Measuring Learning Experiences

A second group of scales found in the leading journals relates to the **experiences** of adult learners, mainly in relation to their participation in a specific setting. While 'experiences' are often perceived as ideally measured through qualitative research (e.g. Thomas 2009), quantitative scales equally attempt to capture feelings and experiences, although the presentation of the analysis will be more static and numerical, answering 'what' or 'how' people feel, instead of 'why' they feel a certain way. The following scales were identified.

Giancola et al. (2008) used the '*Noel-Levitz Adult Student Priorities Survey'* which consists of a scale with 50 items, divided into eight subscales on 'academic advising', 'academic services', 'admissions and financial aid effectiveness', 'campus climate', 'instructor effectiveness', 'registration effectiveness', 'safety and security' and 'service excellence' in order to study the differences between priorities of adult versus first generation students. Experiences in relation to program planning in adult education, from the perspectives of both students and staff members were measured through the *'Power and Influence Tactics Scale'* (POINTS) and the *'Problem Solving Inventory'* in the work of Hendricks (2001). The authors argue for a further testing of the POINTS instrument in order to enhance the reliability of the scale and to test the construct of power and influence in a wider range of settings with diverse samples. To date, no other research using POINTS has been published in one of the three leading adult education journals. Another type of research that investigates experiences of learners drawing on quantitative scales has been undertaken by Tam (Tam 2016 and Tam and Chui 2016). In her research, 6-point Likert items are used in relation to the *meaning of learning in later life*, but also the barriers to learning experienced by older adults.

In total, four articles were found to focus on learning experiences, a theme often perceived as leaning itself towards the use of qualitative methods. Two out of four articles where work by Tam.

8.5.2.3 Psychometric Scales

Scales are often used in psychological – **psychometric** – research and it is thus not surprising to see that, based on the analysis, a group of measurement instruments relate to concepts like anxiety and self-efficacy and these type of scales can be identified as a third type. The *'Motivated Strategy for Learning Questionnaire'* was used by Justice and Dornan (2001) to explore metacognitive differences between traditional and non-traditional students and focuses on factors like test anxiety, self-efficacy and self-regulation. Anxiety in relation to mathematics courses was assessed

by Jameson and Fusco (2014) using items from the *'Abbreviated Math Anxiety Scale'* as well as the *'Mathematics Self-Efficacy Scale'* and the *'Self-Description Questionnaire III-Math Subscale'*. Anxiety has also been a central feature of the work conducted by Carney-Crompton and Tan (2002). Their work investigated the academic performance and psychosocial functioning of female non-traditional students in Canada. They used the *'Beck Anxiety Inventory'* which consists of 21 anxiety items and which has, according to previous research, a strong internal consistency. Self-efficacy has also been the main variable in research conducted by Van Rhijn and Lero (2014) with Canadian student parents. They used the *'Academic Self-Efficacy Scale'* as well as the *'Parental Self-Efficacy Scale'*. Also the *'Work-Family Balance Scale'* was included in their measures. The project revealed that parent students' self-efficacy matches their satisfaction in relation to being a student and a family member, with satisfaction measured through use of the *'Extended Satisfaction with Life Scale'*. Apart from the academic and parental scales, there is also a *'General Self-Efficacy Scale'* which had been used by Bath and Smith (2009) to analyse propensities of lifelong learners. The theme of self-efficacy returns in the paper by Rothes et al. (2017), who delve deeper into the motivation of adult learners based on the *Self-Efficacy Scale*, the *Adult Learning Strategies Scale* and the *Self-Reported Engagement Scale*. In understanding the non-participation of adults, Porras-Hernandez and Salinas-Amescua (2012) worked with the *'Self-Concept and Perceived Problem-Solving Skills Scales'* and found that non-participation of poorly educated women cannot solely explained by their dispositional characteristics. A scale that is different from the previous ones but which probably best fits in the category on psychometrics is the *'Borg CR-10 scale'* used by Piirainen and Viitanen (2010) in a project on community development based on individual expertise.

With eight articles, this category on psychometric scales is the largest group. This is not entirely surprising as quantitative research using scales is not uncommen in psychological research.

8.5.2.4 Scales Measuring Learning Styles

A fourth group of scales as found in the leading journals relates to **learning styles**, some of them specifically focussing on self-directed learning. The following scales were found. Stockdale and Brockett (2011) reviewed the literature on self-directed learning and developed a new *'Personal Responsibility Orientation to Self-Direction in Learning Scale'* (PRO-SDLS), providing the scholarly community with an improved measurement instrument replacing the *'Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale'* (Guglielmino 1977). Another instrument to study self-directed learning, the *'Oddi Continuing Learning Inventory'* (OCLI) was used by Harvey et al. (2006), proposing a four factor structure based on 'learning with others', 'learner motivation/self-efficacy/autonomy', 'ability to be self-regulating' and 'reading avidity'. The development and learning of students has also been studied using a modified version of the *'Student Engagement Questionnaire'* by Lee (2014a, b) which consists of a range of items related to 'critical thinking', 'self-managed learning' 'adaptability', 'problem-solving', 'communication skills', 'interpersonal skills and

group work', 'computer literacy', 'active learning', 'teaching for understanding', 'feedback to assist learning', 'assessment', 'teacher-student relationship' and 'student-student relationship'. Within the specific context of supervision for practising psychologists, Lizzio et al. (2005) constructed the *'Approaches to Supervision Scale'* to analyse supervisees perceptions of teaching and management approaches used during the supervisory process, one in relation to themselves and one in relation to the approaches used by their supervisor. These scales were conducted together with a *'Supervision Practices Scale'* and a *'Supervision Outcome Scale'* to measure the use of supervision techniques and the effectiveness of supervision. Vainikainen et al. (2015) report on the *Learning To Learn (TLT) Scale*, an instrument they have used with a longitudinal follow-up study with more than 600 pupils in Finland and which they correlated with scores on complex problem solving. The *TPD@Work Scale* developed by Evers et al. (2016) concentrates on the further learning of teachers after graduation and contains dimensions on experimenting, reflecting and collaborating.

To recap, six articles were found to use scales in relation to the category of learning styles. As mentioned above, only two of them were published in Adult Education Quarterly, the journal which has more articles using scales compared to Studies in Continuing Education and International Journal of Lifelong Learning.

8.5.3 Secondary Data in Quantitative Research

Researchers who want to undertake quantitative research can also choose to work with existing datasets.[1] While technically speaking, every existing dataset might be labelled as a secondary data set, researchers usually refer to major datasets collected by leading international organisations or by major research projects. Smith (2008, p.37) discussed that *'secondary data analysis remains a relatively underused methodological technique in in the social sciences'*. This might, according to Smith (2008) have to do with scholars' scepticism about the quality of secondary datasets, referring to the danger of having to deal with high levels of missing values and measurement errors, or because scholars feel these datasets are too much reducing the complexities of everyday life into a spreadsheet. However, as Smith (2008) argues, a range of datasets are available for free and can be used to analyse a range of research questions. As education policies are nowadays largely driven by benchmarks and indicators, the exploitation of datasets by scholars is being encouraged in large scale projects (Holford and Mohorcic-Spolar 2012).

Currently, one of the major datasets of interest to adult education scholars is based on data from PIAAC's (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Skills) Survey of Adult Skills, organised by the OECD. PIAAC's interest is in read-

[1] Because of the word limit of this book chapter, it will be impossible to discuss each survey and its questionnaire in detail. However, both the OECD's PIAAC and the Eurostat website contain detailed documentation relating to their surveys and can be consulted for free.

ing, writing and problem-solving skills of adults, but the dataset includes relevant information in relation to a wider range of lifelong learning variables, including participation. The Survey of Adult Skills is in fact a follow-up study from The International Adult Literacy Survey, which was also organised by the OECD and was conducted in three waves between 1994 and 1998 (Desjardins et al. 2006, p.28). Desjardins et al. (2006, p.27) mention that IALS *'is one of the most complete of all surveys undertaken'*, while other OECD sources exist too, mentioned by Desjardins et al. (2006, p.28–29) as:

- 'the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)'
- 'the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL)',
- 'the Thematic Review on Adult Learning (TRAL)' and
- 'the Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies (PIAAC)'.

The OECD is not the only international organisation that produces relevant datasets for use by adult education scholars. Surveys organised at the level of the European Commission include:

- 'the European Labour Force Survey (LFS)',
- 'the Adult Education Survey (AES)',
- 'the Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS)',
- 'the European Survey on Working Conditions (ESWC)' and
- 'the Eurobarometer on lifelong learning'.

Going back to the data mining exercise, results indicate that *International Journal of Lifelong Education* had nine hits for the key term 'IALS', but has in fact only one research article that draws on data from the Survey in an aggregated form (Bathmaker 2007). *Studies in Continuing Education* has four hits for IALS, but none of the papers can be classified as an example of secondary data analysis using data from IALS. The term has thus been used within another section such as within the literature review. *Adult Education Quarterly* only shows two hits for IALS, none of them analysing data from IALS. The paper from Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) exploring the Bounded Agency Model refers to IALS but draws on data from the Eurobarometer 2003. Searching for the full key term 'International Adult Literacy Survey' instead of the acronym IALS does not increase the number of papers that can be classified as secondary data analysis papers.

The specific adult education dataset provided by the European Commission is based on the Eurostat Adult Education Survey (AES). *Adult Education Quarterly* features a paper from Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2017), exploring adult education participation. In *Studies in Continuing Education*, I found one paper (Boeren 2011) drawing on the Adult Education Survey. In *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, I found two papers that draw on aggregated data from AES. One by Broek and Hake (2012) in relation to adults' participation in higher education and one by Roosmaa and Saar (2012) on non-formal education in the old EU member states. In recent years, papers using PIAAC data have started to appear. Lavrijsen and Nicaise (2017) published about systematic obstacles to lifelong learning in

Studies in Continuing Education, and Krupar et al. (2017) drew on PIAAC data for their study on nonformal education, immigration and skills, published in *Adult Education Quarterly*.

The limited availability of research drawing on secondary data analyses in our field might indicate the limited interest or lack of skills in working with these data sources.

8.6 Limitations, Discussion and Conclusions

Research in the social sciences can be carried out using a range of methods and methodologies, as discussed earlier in this chapter. This might enhance the quality of knowledge discovery in the area, for example through combining methods or through exploring similar topics through different methodological angles (Robson 2011). A starting point of this chapter was the observation made by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) that quantitative research is underrepresented in the leading generic academic adult education journals. This finding has also been confirmed in this chapter based on my own data mining exercise.

In undertaking these types of reviews, it is important to remain critical and discuss its limitations. For example, the review only included three generic adult education journals: Adult Education Quarterly, Studies in Continuing Education and International Journal of Lifelong Education. Although they are the leading journals in the field, more specialist journals in the wider field of adult education, for example on workplace learning, were not taken into account. Much of the research undertaken by policy-oriented organisations, like the OECD and the European Commission contain lots of quantitative data and results (e.g. based on PIAAC data) are generally present within their own or commissioned research reports. However, these types of research results do usually not end up in the generic adult education journals. It would thus be interesting to undertake a similar review exercise, but with another range of journals, e.g. those that deal specifically with workplace learning and Vocational Education and Training. At this moment, it is unclear whether it would generate similar findings. This might be the case, or not, which might indicate that quantitative research tends to be published in more subfield specific journals.

A recent article in Adult Education Quarterly by Daley et al. (2018) discussed the situation of the lack of quantitative research in adult education and made the argument that the pendulum has swung too far to the side of qualitative studies. Their article, written as an AEQ Forum Discussion Paper as a reflection on an earlier version of this chapter published in AEQ (see Boeren 2016), calls for more debate on the need for a methodologically more diverse research field. They also highlight the strengths of quantitative research as it contains *'measurements that can be reliably duplicated by researchers using similar tools, methods and criteria'* (p.160). While in the past, the pendulum seem to have swung toward to quantitative side of the methodological spectrum, it is now clearly positioned at the qualitative side. I agree

with Daley et al. (2018) that it might be more healthy for the adult education research community to bring the pendulum back towards the middle, in which there is a balance between the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, or both. As seen from the review exercise, quantitative scales exist to measure concepts like learner experiences and learning styles, and do also have the potential to give a voice to the learners themselves, as often centralised in qualitative research. These areas of interest can thus be studies using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and in accordance with Daley et al. (2018) it would be good to go back to a field where choices for research methods flow from research questions instead of the other way round. Including more quantitative studies would make it possible to include larger samples and to validate each others' work. It is clear from bibliographic work that quantitative studies do tend to cite each other more, and to offer more follow-up work, building on previous findings (Fejes and Nylander 2015; see also Chap. 7). Both in Daley et al.'s and my own contribution, these suggestions are not being made to undermine qualitative research in the field of education, but as a way to call for a wider debate on the methodological imbalance we are currently seeing.

One of the aims of research, on top of the general knowledge generation, can also be to influence debates in policy and practice., It is in fact interesting that – and contradictory at the same time – so few scholars in the field engage with the large scale datasets being available to them. Big data, benchmarks and indicators and measurable goals are part of the core jargon used by the leading international organisations like the European Commission and the OECD. McFarland et al. (2016) called the increased focus on big data *'a watershed moment for the social sciences'* (p.12). The sharp expansion of big data discourses also comes with the need for researchers to use different types of analytical techniques. Examples include machine learning and other forms of Artificial Intelligence. Are researchers feeling uncomfortable in working with big data because of the strong neo-liberal and capitalist focus of current policies? And do policy-makers then not believe in the power of qualitative studies, which are often smaller in scale, to provide an evidence-base for policy changes? Whether adult education scholars like big data or not, it is a clear reality these days that 'numbers' do no not exclusively belong to the field of mathematics, but have gained significant power in influencing the work of administrations and governments (Desrosières 1998). As a research community, we need to be careful that we do not loose oversight of the newest developments in social sciences research and that we remain able to participate in interdisciplinary research projects in which these big data techniques are being used. A specific example of a project in the field of adult education in which Artificial Intelligence is being used in the Horizon 2020 project ENLIVEN: Encouraging Lifelong Learning for an Inclusive & Vibrant Europe.[2] In the call for proposals, the European Commission explicitly asked consortia to develop an Intelligent Decision Support System, underpinned by Artificial Intelligence, designed to help policy makers reach more effective and efficient policy decisions to help younger vulnerable adults to return to education or employment. While more details on this project can be

[2] See http://www.h2020enliven.org

found at the website in footnote, the realisation of this tool is worked out as an interdisciplinary approach between a team of computer scientists and social scientists. Unsurprisingly, this work has a strong quantitative nature.

As highlighted before by Fejes and Nylander (2015; see also Chap. 7) the strong focus on qualitative methods in the field means that not many new doctoral students undertake quantitative studies as most of their supervisors will be specialised in the use of qualitative methods. More skills training and specific methodological resources on how to deal with quantitative research in adult education might be needed. As suggested by Daley et al. (2018), not only in relation to postgraduate education, but also through running workshops on quantitative data methods during conferences and workshops organised by the learners societies in the field, or to pointing scholars out to existing training initiative.[3]

Last but not least, as discussed above, sound research designs tend to flow from the specific research questions we want to answer. In my view, there is no doubt that the adult education field has still important knowledge gaps to fill which would profit from the use of quantitative methods.

References

Andres, L. (2014). *Designing and doing survey research*. London: SAGE.

Bath, D., & Smith, C. (2009). The relationship between epistemological beliefs and the propensity for lifelong learning. *Studies in Continuing Education, 31*(2), 173–189.

Bathmaker, A. M. (2007). The impact of *Skills for Life* on adult basic skills in England: How should we interpret trends in participation and achievement? *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 26*(3), 295–313.

Blunt, A., & Yang, B. (2002). Factor structure of the adult attitudes toward adult and continuing education scale and its capacity to predict participation behaviour: Evidence for adoption of a revised scale. *Adult Education Quarterly, 52*(4), 299–314.

Boeren, E. (2011). Gender differences in formal, non-formal and informal adult learning. *Studies in Continuing Education, 33*(3), 333–346.

Boeren, E. (2016). *Lifelong learning participation in a changing policy context, an interdisciplinary theory*. Baskingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Boeren, E., & Holford, J. (2016). Vocationalism varies (a lot): A 12-country multivariate analysis of participation in formal adult learning. *Adult Education Quarterly, 66*(2), 120–142.

Boshier, R., Huang, Y., Song, Q., & Song, L. (2006). Market socialism meets the lost generation: Motivational orientations of adult learners in Shanghai. *Adult Education Quarterly, 56*(3), 201–222.

Boshier, R. W. (1971). Motivational orientations of adult education participants: A factor analytic exploration of Houle's typology. *Adult Education, 21*, 3–26.

Boyadjieva, P., & Ilieva-Trichkova, P. (2017). Between inclusion and fairness: Social justice perspective to participation in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 67*(2), 97–117.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2014). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. London: SAGE.

[3] For example the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis (see http://www.essex.ac.uk/summerschool/)

Broek, S., & Hake, B. (2012). Increasing participation of adults in higher education: Factors for successful policies. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 31*(4), 397–417.
Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Carney-Crompton, S., & Tan, J. (2002). Support systems, psychological functioning, and academic performance of non-traditional female students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 52*(2), 140–154.
Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. London: Routledge.
Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
Daley, B., Martin, L., & Roessger, K. (2018). A call for methodological plurality: Reconsidering research approaches in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*(2), 157–169.
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2003). *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: SAGE.
Desjardins, R., Rubenson, K., & Milana, M. (2006). *Unequal chances to participate in adult learning, international perspectives*. Paris: UNESCO.
Desrosières, A. (1998). *The politics of large numbers: A history ofstatistical reasoning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Ercikan, K., & Roth, W. (2006). What good is polarizing research into qualitative and quantitative? *Educational Researcher, 35*(5), 14–23.
Evers, A., Kreijns, K., & Van der Heijden, B. (2016). The design and validation of an instrument to measure teachers' professional development at work. *Studies in Continuing Education, 38*(2), 162–178.
Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2015). How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 103–123.
Fink, A. (1995). *How to ask survey questions, the survey kit*. London: SAGE.
Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behaviour*. Redding, MA: Addison-Wesley.
Gage, N. (1989). The paradigm wars and their aftermath. *Teachers College Record, 91*(2), 135–150.
Giancola, J., Munz, D., & Trares, S. (2008). First- versus continuing-generation adult students on college perceptions: Are differences actually because of demographic variance? *Adult Education Quarterly, 58*(3), 214–228.
Guglielmino, L. (1977). *Development of the self-directed learning readiness scale – Doctoral dissertation*. Athens: University of Georgia.
Harvey, B., Rothman, A., & Frecker, R. (2006). A confirmatory factor analysis of the Oddi Continuing Learning Inventory (OCLI). *Adult Education Quarterly, 56*(3), 188–200.
Hendricks, S. (2001). Contextual and individual factors and the use of influencing tactics in adult education program planning. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(3), 219–235.
Holford, J., & Mohorcic-Spolar, V. (2012). Neoliberal and inclusive themes in European lifelong learning policy. In S. Riddell, J. Markowitsch, & E. Weedon (Eds.), *Lifelong learning in Europe: Equity and efficiency in the balance* (pp. 39–62). Bristol: Policy Press.
Houle, C. O. (1961). *The inquiring mind*. Wisconsin-Madisson: University of Wisconsin.
Isaac, E., Guy, T., & Valentine, T. (2001). Understanding African American learners' motivations to learn in church-based adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 52*(1), 23–38.
Jameson, M., & Fusco, B. (2014). Math anxiety, math self-concept, and math self-efficacy in adult learners compared to traditional undergraduate students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(4), 306–322.
Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Turner, A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 122–133.
Justice, E., & Dornan, T. (2001). Metacognitive differences between traditional-age and non-traditional-age college students. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(3), 236–249.
Krupar, A., Horvatek, R., & Byun, S. (2017). Does nonformal education matter? Nonformal education, immigration, and skills in Canada. *Adult Education Quarterly, 67*(3), 186–208.

Lavrijsen, J., & Nicaise, I. (2017). Systemic obstacles to lifelong learning: The influence of the educational system design on learning attitudes. *Studies in Continuing Education, 39*(2), 176–196.

Lee, S. (2014a). Korean mature women students' various subjectivities in relation to their motivation for higher education: Generational differences amongst women. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(6), 791–810.

Lee, W. (2014b). Opening up a road to somewhere: Development of associate degree students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(5), 607–624.

Likert, R. (1929). *A technique for the measurement of attitudes*. New York: Columbia University.

Lizzio, A., Stokes, L., & Wilson, K. (2005). Approaches to learning in professional supervision: Supervisee perceptions of processes and outcome. *Studies in Continuing Education, 27*(3), 239–256.

McFarland, D. A., Lewis, K., & Goldberg, A. (2016). Sociology in the era of big data: The ascent of forensic social science. *The American Sociologist, 47*(12), 9291–9298.

Mulenga, D., & Liang, J.-S. (2008). Motivations for older adults' participation in distance education: A study at the National Open University of Taiwan. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 27*(3), 289–314.

Piirainen, A., & Viitanen, E. (2010). Transforming expertise from individual to regional community expertise: A four-year study of an education intervention. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 29*(5), 581–596.

Porras-Hernandez, L. H., & Salinas-Amescua, B. (2012). Nonparticipation in adult education: From self-perceptions to alternative explanations. *Adult Education Quarterly, 62*(4), 311–331.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research*. Chichester: Wiley.

Roosmaa, E. L., & Saar, E. (2012). Participation in non-formal learning in EU-15 and EU-8 countries: Demand and supply side factors. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 31*(4), 477–501.

Rothes, A., Lemos, M., & Gonçalves, T. (2017). Motivational profiles of adult learners. *Adult Education Quarterly, 67*(1), 3–29.

Rubenson, K., & Desjardins, R. (2009). The impact of welfare state regimes on constraints to participation in adult education. A bounded agency model. *Adult Education Quarterly, 59*(3), 187–207.

Sellitz, C., Wrightsman, L. S., & Cook, S. W. (1976). *Research methods in social relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Smith, E. (2008). *Using secondary data in educational and social research*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Steele, B. (1984). *The motivational orientations of persisting older learners in the university setting*. University of Arkansas. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Stockdale, S., & Brockett, R. (2011). Development of the PRO-SDLS: A measurement of self-direction in learning based on the personal responsibility orientation model. *Adult Education Quarterly, 61*(2), 161–180.

Tam, M. (2016). Later life learning experiences: Listening to the voices of Chinese elders in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 35*(5), 569–585.

Tam, M., & Chui, E. (2016). Ageing and learning: What do they mean to elders themselves? *Studies in Continuing Education, 38*(2), 195–212.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project*. London: SAGE.

Vainikainen, M., Wüstenberg, S., Kupiainen, S., Hotulainen, R., & Hautamäki, J. (2015). Development of learning to learn skills in primary school. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 34*(4), 376–392.

van Rhijn, T., & Lero, D. (2014). The influence of self-efficacy beliefs for student parents attending university. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(4), 541–555.

Chapter 9
Adult Education Research from Rhizome to Field? A Bibliometrical Analysis of Conference Programs of ESREA from 1994 to 2016

Bernd Käpplinger

9.1 Mapping Adult Education Research

There is a rich body of literature dealing with the international development of adult education research (e.g. Chang 2013; Fejes and Nicoll 2013; Fejes and Nylander 2013, 2014, 2015; Larsson 2010; Long 1983; Nicoll et al. 2014; Rubenson 1982, 2000; Rubenson and Elfert 2014; St. Clair 2011; Boeren 2017; Daley et al. 2018). It is important that fields of research define and reflect on their approaches. This is even more valid for a field like adult education research, which is nationally and internationally heterogeneous.

An analysis of articles published in journals was mostly the preferred approach by the scholars used above. The work of Taylor (2001) stands out because, in his analysis of the journal Adult Education Quarterly, he examined not only the papers published, but also those refused. The study offers the chance to learn something about selection regimes in adult education research. Each academic field has its open or hidden rules of selection, which are influenced by core people like journal editors and reviewers. Conference papers or proceedings have been analysed much less often (Long 1983). This is partly astonishing since such an analysis potentially offers a wider overview, especially when analysing conferences with rather liberal selection procedures with a low level of refusals. An analysis of peer-reviewed papers has instead to keep in mind the crucial influence of editors and reviewers. Overall, the analysis of journals or conference papers has different advantages and disadvantages. Both approaches can be considered complementary and they make different insights possible.

The status of adult education as an academic field or discipline is frequently debated (e.g. Hake 1992; Fejes and Nicoll 2013). The use of the notion ‘field’

B. Käpplinger (✉)
Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Giessen, Germany
e-mail: Bernd.Kaepplinger@erziehung.uni-giessen.de

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_9

demonstrates partly the quest (Rubenson 1982) to give adult education research a foundation. A strong academic field (like law) would be characterised by the power to enforce and to control standards autonomously in order to be as independent as possible from regulating forces from the outside (e.g. policy-makers, interest groups). Some researchers in adult education have focused on the term field as follows:

- 'We use the term 'field' of research in order to identify our object of research. A field is a socio-cultural practice which, through those actors, texts, and other kinds of material, that are part of it, makes up the field. What the field is, is a battle over truth in which we as researchers are all engaged in. Thus, the field should not be seen as fixed in any way, it rather emerges through our descriptions of it.' (Fejes and Nylander 2013, p. 1)
- 'Bourdieu sees the social universe (the society) as an ensemble of relatively autonomous (power) fields which generate their own values and regulate themselves according to their own principles.' (Wittpoth 2005, p. 26)[1]

Both quotations refer to power struggles inside and outside the field. It becomes obvious that authors as cartographers are not neutral, objective observers of a field. Instead, actors draw a map as an exercise, which also tells a story about the people active in the field, their own historical, cultural and socio-political position in time and personal goals (cf. Garfield 2013). Each scientific discipline has to draw lines in order to define boundaries. Educational research might sometimes be even more occupied with securing and reflecting on its identity because of its still often precarious position. It is a volatile discipline that is engaged in 'curing the ills of an undisciplined discipline' (Plecas and Sork 1986) and it has to identify 'centrifugal and centripetal forces' within the field (Gieseke et al. 1989). The metaphor of 'rhizome' is used in social science as well as in adult education research. It was introduced as a philosophical concept mainly by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Authors in adult education research have applied the metaphor in different ways. The online journal 'Rizoma Freireano/Rhizome Freirean' states in its 2008 editorial of the first edition[2] the journal:

> The aim is to emerge the invalidated academic and official knowledge as legitimate knowledge, based on rules of multiplicity. This will lead into new thoughts, ideas, dreams and texts which allow reflecting about the world in/with people; and about what people are in/with the world.

The journal intends to create new approaches in the knowledge production about adults' learning. The multilingual approach of the journal (Catalan, English, Portuguese) beyond using solely the lingua franca English is one expression of this. Enoch and Gieseke (2011) used the term rhizome in Germany (see also Gieseke 2010). They see a non-hierarchical, openly developing structure of educational provision, which contains elements of extension, decay and new linkages. A German Polish research team has used the term in analysing the regional provision of cultural educa-

[1] Translation of quote by author.

[2] http://www.rizoma-freireano.org/index.php/editorial/editorial-en

tion in Germany and Poland (cf. Gieseke 2014). Usher (2010) wants the 'tree to be replaced by the rhizome, the multiply connected, interpenetrating underground network of growth without any centre. Rhizomes are networks that cut across borders, linking preexisting gaps.' (Usher 2010, p. 71). He is focusing on the concept of 'lines of flight', which is part of the metaphor of a 'rhizome'. In his analysis of research on lifelong learning, he comes to the conclusion that there are contradicting developments ('vectors') and 'the research process, contrary to the model of science, can be better understood as rhizomatic rather than arborescent and powered by desire rather than objectivity.' (Usher 2010, p. 78) St. Clair (2011, pp. 37–38) used the term rhizome in analysing the Canadian adult education research association CASAE. He refers to a 'rhizomatic nature of human knowledge and human action' (St. Clair 2011, p. 37). He focuses on differences in Northern America, stressing that 'a person with a different background may read these rhizomes quite differently.' (St. Clair 2011, p. 38)

The usage of the term 'rhizome' by these different adult education researchers in different national and international contexts is interesting. It challenges partly the notion of a field since none of the authors refers to another. Already this discourse is rhizomatic. No arborescent centre or root can be found. It seems to be rather the case that different scholars in very different contexts of adult education research were intrigued by this metaphor. This demonstrates a disconnectedness of national fields of adult education research. Parallel to each other, the authors share the desire to look for new structures, to discuss new perspectives and to challenge popular assumptions of aborescent linearity and a canon of knowledge. In contrast, less differentiated historical writings often tend to describe the history of knowledge production as a logical succession of phases with key thinkers, schools and followers.

Rhizomatisation is not meant as a process where everything turns into chaos, wilderness and becomes arbitrary. It is a heuristic concept for looking for different connected and unconnected traces and their connections. Overall, the term rhizome heightens awareness of heterogeneity more than the term field does. The following discussion centers on the question of which insights in relation to homogeneity and heterogeneity in adult education research can be found when analysing the European Society for the Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) based on its triennial research conferences over time. The aim of the paper is to enhance the understanding of European research in adult education and its development in the last two decades, using the internationally rather less known method of a 'program analysis'.

9.2 Data and the Method 'Program Analysis'

9.2.1 Data: Papers of ESREA Triennial Research Conferences

The data for this program analysis are available papers of ESREA triennial research conferences. The paper here presented is an update of a previous analysis (Käpplinger 2014, 2015) partly with the inclusion of the last ESREA triennial 2016 in Maynooth.

ESREA is the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults. Nicoll et al. (2014) provide an overview of the history of this academic society with its different conferences, networks and other activities. ESREA "promotes and disseminates theoretical and empirical research on the education of adults and adult learning in Europe through research networks, conferences and publications" as stated on its homepage (www.esrea.org). It compromises a wide range of activities (e.g. publishing the journal RELA) and organizes several conferences each year through its different networks. Every third year it organizes a large, central conference called triennial research conference. Only the latter conferences form the basis of this analysis here. An analysis of all network conferences would be an even more challenging approach. ESREA triennial research conferences have so far taken place in eight countries:

Strobl (1995) in Austria: 'Adult learning and social participation'
Brussels (1998) in Belgium: 'Learning to live in the learning society'
Lisbon (2001) in Portugal: 'Wider benefits of learning: understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning'
Wroclaw (2004) in Poland: 'Between "old" and "new" worlds of adult learning'
Seville (2007) in Spain: 'Adult Learning and the challenges of social and cultural diversity: diverse lives, cultures, learnings and literacies'
Linköping (2010) in Sweden: 'Adult learning in Europe – understanding diverse meanings and contexts'
Berlin (2013) in Germany: 'Changing configurations of adult education in transitional times'.
Maynooth (2016) in Ireland: 'Imagining diverse futures for adult education: questions of power and resources of creativity'

As much as possible papers of these conferences will be analysed. One advantage of this is that ESREA conferences traditionally have a low rejection rate (Antunes 2003). Thus, the analysis gives a broader insight into adult education research and goes beyond analysing solely conference titles, call for papers and keynotes (Nicoll et al. 2014, pp. 34–41). Journals refuse many submitted papers; editors and reviewers are gatekeepers. (Taylor, 2001) The collection of the papers constituted a major challenge, since ESREA does not keep an archive of conference papers like the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) in Northern America does (see http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/). The papers could only be collected with the help of the conference hosts and other people.[3] The papers of ESREA1995 were edited in a book (Bisovsky et al. 1998) or even a series of books. This also applies to ESREA2001 and ESREA2004 (Bron et al. 2005). The papers of ESREA2004, ESREA2007, ESREA2010, ESREA2013 and ESREA2016 were acquired as electronic data directly from the conference hosts. Unfortunately, data for ESREA1998 in

[3] I am deeply thankful for the advice and support I received from Gerhard Bisovsky, Andreas Fejes, Fergal Finnegan, Barry Hake, Ewa Kurantowicz, Emilio Lucio-Villegas and Henning Salling-Olesen. Emma Fawcett was as native speaker a critical-constructive proof reader.

Table 9.1 ESREA conferences (year, location and number of papers)

	ESREA 1995 in Strobl	ESREA 2001 in Lisbon	ESREA 2004 in Wroclaw	ESREA 2007 in Seville	ESREA 2010 in Linköping	ESREA 2013 in Berlin	ESREA 2016 in Maynooth
Number of available papers	25	27	74	48	64	126	116

Source: Own analysis

Brussels could not be found despite extended efforts. The resulting sample consists of 364 papers from six conferences (Table 9.1).

All data was saved or converted into Excel, Word and SPSS files for the respective analysis. Limitations of the data refer especially to the first two ESREA conferences, where papers were only available via the publication. The analysis was not updated for all issues in relation to the last conference in Maynooth because of pragmatic limitations. It is likely that these and other conferences assembled more papers than are currently available. Overall, participant numbers at ESREA triennial conferences have increased significantly over time, which is a first expression of the liveliness of this field of research.

9.2.2 The Method Applied: Program Analysis

The data were analysed using the method of quantitative program analysis. The coding process resembles characteristics of the qualitative interpretation of documents. The method 'program analysis' refers partly to the content analysis of social sciences. It is often used in order to analyse the course offers of providers (see Gieseke 2014; Schrader 2014). Elaborate methodological discussions of this method are available (e.g. Gieseke 2000; Käpplinger 2008). The method was applied here to the analysis of conference papers. A similar approach was applied by Long (1983) for the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) in Northern America. A program analysis is a non-reactive method, which means that the material is analysed by a coding scientist or a coding team of scientists. Each paper was previously coded by a team of five people at Humboldt University[4,5] based on a code plan

[4] I am deeply thankful also for the work and support foremost of my assistant Mirko Ückert and my former research team: Erik Haberzeth, Claudia Kulmus and Nina Lichte. They contributed in different ways to the coding of papers.

[5] For each paper, all citations were counted. In a second step the number of cited policy documents – national and inter-/transnational ones – was counted. National documents meant all kind of publications which refer to national state institutions like governments, ministries, statistical offices on all federal or regional levels. Inter-/transnational documents were differentiated between various EU documents, OECD documents, UNESCO documents and a category "other documents" with miscellaneous contributions from the World Bank, International Labour Office, the Council of Europe or other agencies.

which was deductively and inductively developed with the exception of Maynooth in 2016. The coding was discussed by the team of coders, which helped to achieve so-called intercoder-reliability. The code plan consisted of these variables:

- **NAME**: Names of the authors. Papers with multiple authorships were multi-coded per each name.
- **COUNTRY**: The code was assigned according authors' workplace (institutional affiliation) and not according the country of birth.
- **TITLE**: Full title of paper.
- **METHOD**: Coded according a revised coding plan developed and used by Long (1983)
- **RESEARCH_FIELD**: Coded according to a plan originally developed by Arnold et al. (2000) and revised by Ludwig and Baldauff-Bergmann (2010)
- **NUMBER_CITATIONS**: Quantitative amount of citations in the reference lists.
- **GENDER_AUTHOR**: Gender of the authors.

The variables chosen give information about important dimensions of adult education research. For example, it is important to know with which methods adult education research is carried out and which subfields of research dominate over time. Similar variables were chosen by the authors already cited who analysed journals. Other variables could of course be chosen. More details on how the coding was carried out will be given in the following chapters.

9.3 Results of the Analysis

9.3.1 The Role of Conference Sites

Triennials have taken place at seven locations so far. Which effects are connected to these sites and to what extent are they visible? Firstly, contributions from the host country clearly flourished at the 'own' conference (Table 9.2).

Table 9.2 ESREA conferences and the share of authors from host countries

	ESREA 1995 in Strobl	ESREA 2001 in Lisbon	ESREA 2004 in Wroclaw	ESREA 2007 in Seville	ESREA 2010 in Linköping	ESREA 2013 in Berlin	ESREA 2016 in Maynooth
Share of authors from the host country in relation to all authors in the conference	12%	15%	23%	14%	19%	30%	25%

Source: Own analysis

Table 9.3 ESREA conferences and the share of papers from host countries before, during and after hosting a triennial

	Before hosting	While hosting	After hosting
Share of Austrian papers in triennials	No data since first conference	12%	1%
Share of Portuguese papers in triennials	6%	15%	9%
Share of Polish papers in triennials	3%	23%	2%
Share of Spanish papers in triennials	2%	14%	2%
Share of Swedish papers in triennials	11%	19%	11%
Share of German papers in triennials	6%	30%	12%

Source: Own analysis

Hosting a triennial is obviously a chance for the national research community to present its own work to an international conference. Pragmatically, it is also an opportunity to publish internationally without substantial travelling costs. But how does the national participation develop before and after a triennial conference? It might be reasonable to assume that participating in a conference also raises participation rates afterwards. However, this this hypothesis is not generally supported by the quantitative data (Table 9.3).

The Portuguese and German contributions were clearly higher after than before hosting an ESREA conference. The Spanish and Swedish figures were stable, while the figures of Polish participation was slightly decreasing. Thus, hosting a triennial seems to have rather modest or just different effects in relation to participation in the long run.

Nonetheless, it is interesting that the location of a conference mobilises scholars in neighboring countries. Regional patterns of increased participation can be observed in each conference. Such patterns were observed for Austria (Slovenian scholars were attracted to a high degree), Portugal (Spanish, partly French), Poland (Czech), Spain (Portuguese, partly French), Sweden (Danish, partly Norwegian) or Ireland (UK, Belgium). Overall, the location of a conference seems to make some parts of the rhizome of adult education research briefly visible.

9.3.2 The Role of Countries and Supranational/International Organisations

This map provides information about the average participation in Triennials according to country. It is measured by the average participation rate of authors from different countries in relation to the numbers of all authors contributing (Fig. 9.1).

ESREA is quantitatively influenced by the engagement of authors from a rather limited number of countries. It is not as internationally diverse as one might expect. The size of the population of a country matters, of course, but it is not a determining

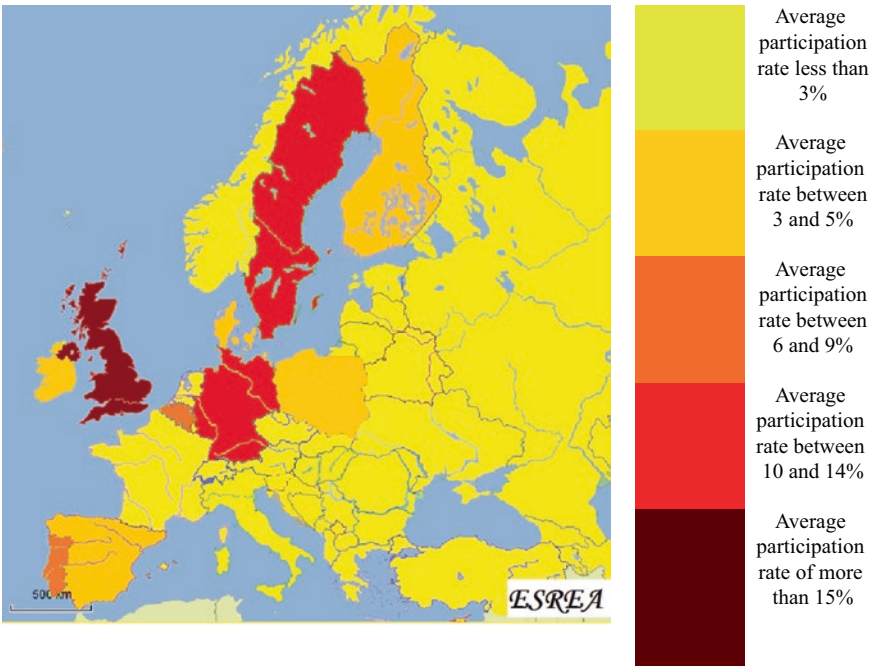

Fig. 9.1 ESREA conferences and national participation rates

factor. For example, France has a large population but a rather low engagement within ESREA so far. Russia is for example a blank spot. Authors from the UK are overall the most active. This is certainly partly due to the lingua franca English within ESREA. But the relative importance of the UK has significantly decreased over time, which might be explainable by the vanishing importance of adult education as an academic discipline even in the UK (Jones, 2014, pp. 148–152). While authors from the UK once had an impressive share of 30% (1995) or 37% (2001) in relation to all contributions in an ESREA triennial conference, the last three conferences saw a British participation rate of only 5–9%. Thus, it seems only to be a matter of time with the UK share going even more down from the the all-time average of 16%. A decreasing engagement over time is also visible for Portuguese, Polish or Slovenian authors. Contrarily, shares of Swedish, German and Irish authors have increased over time. Nonetheless, developments are not taking place only into one direction. Belgium seemed to lose shares until 2016, but then it displayed an impressive share of 10% authorship at Maynooth. Countries' representation on the map might diminish if the impact of being a host becomes less influential over time. Finnish and Danish authors are also visible at the Triennials. The many underrepresented or even blank spots in Central and Eastern Europe are challenging like the result of Italy or also Greece. Adult education research in Europe is far from being established in each country, although in academia science is in general often unevenly regionally distributed. The relatively active role of Slovenia or the Czech Republic

in the past and nowadays Poland might be an impulse to learn perhaps from these countries or some individually active scholars, how a higher engagement in Central and Eastern Europe could be supported and even more promoted. The European map of research in adult education has a North-South and a West-East bias, although this bias is shifting because of a higher engagement especially in Poland, Portugal, Spain or rather recently in Ireland and Italy. (cf. Nicoll et al. 2014, p. 71)

More than 60 papers have been co-authored by at least one researcher from outside Europe. This equals stable 11% of all papers and can be interpreted as an 'internationalization' of ESREA beyond Europe. Canada (24 papers), the USA (16) and Australia (13) are well ahead of all other non-European countries. 'Internationalization' is not as plural as one might expect. It is highly interrelated with the English-speaking countries (cf. Fejes and Nylander 2014).

Adult education has received increasing attention by national, international or transnational stakeholders. The slogan of lifelong learning is applied by policy-makers, which many scholars have commented on critically since the interest is often economically driven (e.g. Martin 2000; Gieseke 1999; Popovic 2013; Olesen 2014). Which effects can be observed at ESREA's Triennials? (Fig. 9.2).

The share of policy-related documents rose slowly from 5% in 1995 to 6% in 2007. The climax was reached in ESREA 2010 in Sweden with 10%, but even 2013 saw a further rise of 6%. The data for ESREA2016 were here not analysed out of pragmatic reasons. It is also interesting that transnational documents from agencies like the EU, the OECD or the UNESCO have altogether almost doubled their relevance between 1995 and 2013. 2013 was the first year where transnational policy documents were cited more often than national documents. Adult education research refers increasingly to international or transnational developments. This development strengthens the relevance of a society like ESREA. When looking at the international and transnational actors or agencies more closely, the following developments become visible (Fig. 9.3).

The EU has gained ground since 2007. The role of the OECD is stagnating, which is rather surprising considering OECD's high engagement in (vocational) education nowadays. This could be (partly) due to the fact that PIAAC results were not pub-

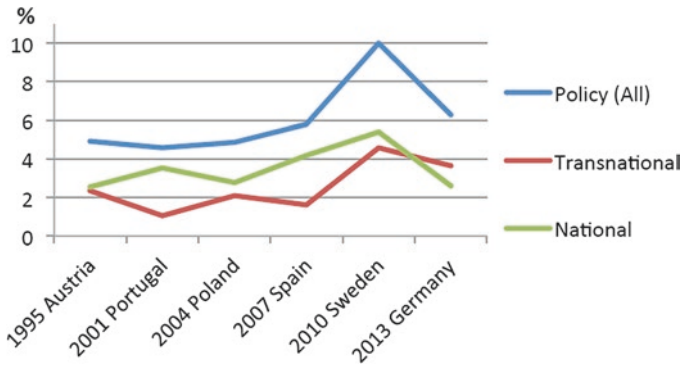

Fig. 9.2 ESREA conferences and the citation rates of different policy documents over time. (Source: Own program analysis)

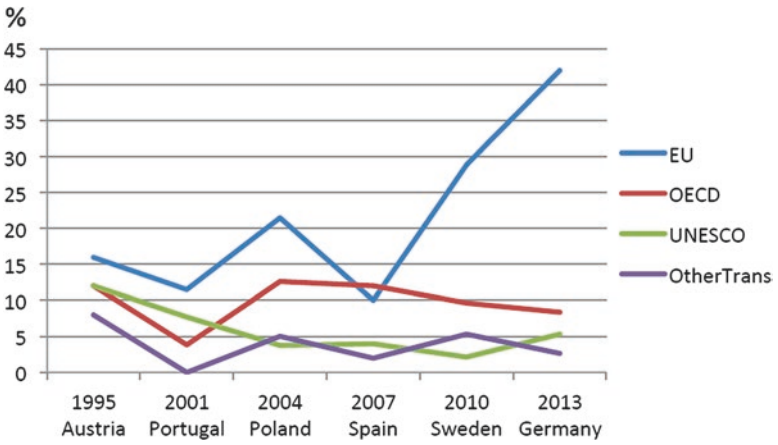

Fig. 9.3 ESREA conferences and the citation rates of different policy documents over time. (Source: Own program analysis)

lished until after the last ESREA conference in October 2013. The role of the UNESCO has decreased. Nowadays, UNESCO seems to play a rather marginal role for most European adult education researchers within ESREA. It is also important to bear in mind that ESREA authors often cite policy documents critically. Thus, the sheer increase in citations should not be equated with an affirmative and non-critical reception. It remains a task of in-depth and qualitative research in order to know better how policy documents are used in adult education research. Different lines of flight are observable. These can reach from rhetorical and rather affirmative reference to policy documents in externally funded projects, to very critical approaches in publications targeted solely at fellow scholars. Scholars might even adapt their writings to each context like a chameleon. Nonetheless, European adult education research refers a lot to policy documents. (c. Milana 2017) High shares of 59% in ESREA2010 and 50% of all papers in ESREA2013 had at least one policy related citation, while this respective share was between 22% and 35% in the other three ESREA conferences in the twenty-first century. This result might be influenced by the conference sites Sweden and Germany, since policy-oriented research is rather strong in both research communities. The share of policy related citations was, for example, 15% for Swedish authors in 2010. But this is not much above the overall average of 10% for the whole conference and thus can only partly explain the climax in 2010. Developments in the policy-orientation of adult education research should be observed in future.

9.3.3 The Most Visible Scholars

Academic societies are influenced by key persons whom are cited frequently. The following so-called tag clouds[6] serve to demonstrate the most frequent citations per conference, again with the exception of Maynooth solely out of pragmatic reasons (Fig. 9.4).

The tag clouds visualise and support a result of the last section. National policy documents were very frequently cited at every conference. EU policy documents have gained ground and are as important as national documents. The OECD is prominent, while the UNESCO is almost invisible.

When focusing on the 'big' (i.e. most cited) writers, it becomes evident that key persons such as PhD tutors or chairs, convenors or secretaries of ESREA are likely to be cited most often. Key scholars of ESREA like Alheit, Bron, Fejes, Hake, Larsson, Olesen or West are just a few to mention and are visible within these tag clouds.

North-Western and male authors dominate citations and the tag clouds. Only a few women like Bron, Merrill or Formenti are visually represented. Conversely, when looking not at the citations, but at the authors presenting at ESREA conferences, the opposite picture emerges: a female majority amongst presenters. While in 1995 female presenters in ESREA had a share of only 38%, women had shares of 62% both in Linköping (2010) and in Berlin (2013).

A dominance of English native speakers was a feature in 1995 and partly also in 2001. These conferences had the biggest attendance from the UK. Non-native English authors are also relatively prominent and their role has been increased over the years. National patterns of the host country become clear especially in 2007, where three Spanish authors belonged to the most cited ones.

It is somehow surprising that authors specialised in adult education research have a relatively strong position within ESREA. They dominate many tag clouds. One might have expected that authors like Argyris, Beck, Giddens, Habermas, Lave & Wenger or Vygotsky of related scientific disciplines would have more prominence since they deliver general links. Somehow contradicting this – but only at first glance – might be the fact that French thinkers like Foucault and Bourdieu dominate so much despite the relative absence of French scholars as researchers within ESREA. English is the working language in ESREA, but it does not lead to an

[6] The tag clouds were built and saved via the freeware program Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com).

(Therefore) the data of the citations were freed from all information other than the full last name and the initials of the first name. Some names received special treatment, because of their special spelling. Popular last names like Smith, Schmitt or Andersen were controlled in relation to the first name. Institutions/organisations were coded in categories (NationalPolicy, EUPolicy, OECD, OtherTrans). Other organisations like national research institutes were quantitatively of no relevance. Tagxedo build the clouds based on the 50 most frequently names. Persons more often cited are written bigger than persons less often cited. The tag clouds were configured visually. The changed parameters of Tagxedo were: Emphasis: 60%, Tightness: 60%. Other parameters of the algorithm were not changed. The tag clouds can thus be reproduced, although Tagxedo allows images to be saved, but not the parameters.

Fig. 9.4 ESREA conferences and the most cited authors. (Source: Own program analysis)

unbalanced dominance of English native speakers as academic reference points. But authors have to publish prominently in English like Bourdieu and Foucault in order to be cited frequently. While in 2004 and 2013 Bourdieu was cited more often, Foucault was dominant in 2007 and 2013. Giddens achieved a brief peak in 2004. Influences from non-European authors like Freire (especially in ESREA 2016, Mezirow or E. Taylor are partly also visible. Other world regions in Africa, Asia or South America are quantitatively 'terra incognitas' in the adult education research map of ESREA. Such results might encourage ESREA to reflect on its participation policy, particularly since other associations like ECER offer participants from low GDP countries reduced participation fees.

Table 9.4 ESREA conferences and the methods applied in papers

	1995	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
Theoretical-philosophical	**40%**	**30%**	**23%**	**2%**	**3%**	**12%**
Literature review	**16%**	**22%**	**10%**	**8%**	**5%**	**17%**
Historical	**0%**	**0%**	**1%**	**10%**	**6%**	**3%**
Methodological	8%	0%	4%	8%	5%	2%
Technique or Practice	0%	4%	10%	21%	8%	6%
Qualitative-emperical	12%	**26%**	**36%**	**29%**	**39%**	**31%**
Quantitative-emperical	20%	7%	10%	13%	16%	16%
Triangulative	0%	4%	7%	8%	17%	12%
Experimental and quasi-experimental	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%
Others	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Source: Own program analysis

9.3.4 The Methods and the Fields of Research

Which methods and fields of research are used by adult education researchers? Based on the revised and updated typology of Long (1983)[7,8] the following was identified (Table 9.4).

The methods and approaches used have changed considerably over time. At early ESREA conferences, it was popular to present theoretical-philosophical papers. They made up 40% in relation to all papers in 1995. In contrast, empirical papers are more popular nowadays. They are focused on qualitative research (39% in 2010). Quantitative papers and papers with triangulative approaches are frequently presented (16% and 12% respectively in 2013). Experimental and quasi-experimental papers are rather a peculiarity in adult education research, which constitutes a sharp contrast to other disciplines like psychology or economical sciences.

The category 'Technique or practice' includes papers which focus on educational procedures, projects or initiatives within the practical field (c. Long, 1983, p. 95). These papers are in a rigid sense not based on a clear separation between research and practice, but refer rather to the origin of adult education as a movement in which research is part of actions in practice. Such papers peaked in 2007, where the connections and interrelations between adult education and community education or social work were of pivotal interest for many researchers. Again, the 2007 conference was in many respects different from all other ESREA triennials. Relatively popular are literature reviews (17% in 2013), while historical research papers and methodological papers were rarely presented.

Overall, one of the striking results is that the empirical focus of papers has increased. When adding up all empirical papers, their share of all papers increased

[7] Intensive definitions and discussions on this classification can be found in Long (1983).

[8] It would be interesting to observe more closely what influence the 're-importing' of Bourdieu and Foucault had after their success in North America

Table 9.5 ESREA conferences and the subject of research in papers

	1995	2001	2004	2007	2010	2013
System and policies	**52%**	**48%**	19%	21%	25%	**32%**
Learning of adults	12%	26%	**40%**	**27%**	**34%**	25%
Professional action	8%	0%	14%	19%	8%	19%
Knowledge and competences	20%	22%	14%	15%	9%	18%
Institutions and organizations	8%	4%	14%	19%	23%	7%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Own program analysis

from 36% to 60% between 1995 and 2013. In 2010, their share of 74% was two times higher than in 1995. The qualitative paradigm is twice more prominent than the quantitative paradigm in empirical research. This point will be discussed later. (c. Boeren 2017)

The learning of adults can be viewed from various perspectives. There is a triangle between learner, teacher and content and the triangle can be contextualised by institutional and organizational environments, which are part of a wider context of systems (labour market, political systems, cultural atmospheres, etc.) and policies of state agencies and other interest groups or stakeholders. Arnold et al. (2000), (see also Ludwig and Baldauff-Bergmann 2010) refer to such a pentamerous classification when structuring the research field /the national research field. The coding of each paper based on this classification enabled this overview (Table 9.5).

There is no trend observable suggesting that any field of research is clearly increasing or decreasing over time. The wider context of systems and policies has been very prominent in the past (see ESREA1995). After a sharp drop, it gained ground continuously after 2004. In contrast to this, educational institutions and organisations are not as prominent as learners as research objects. The content of learning (knowledge and competences) has never been an interest for the majority of papers. Overall, learners, systems and policies have frequently been the focus of papers. The conclusion could be that adult education research oscillates between the individual and the societal, while intermediating institutions and professions are less prominent.

When combining both analysis of methods and of subjects, the most frequent combination is a qualitative study on the learning of adults (14% of all papers). It means mostly doing interviews with learners (Antunes 2003, p. 72). The next frequent forms (9%) are theoretical/philosophical papers on systems and policies. Literature reviews (7%) follow. Then qualitative studies on educational personal (6%) or on institutions/organizations (5%). The first quantitative combination can be found in 6th place with 5% and is focused on the learners.

9.4 Discussion of Results

9.4.1 Places Matter Immediately But Briefly

The role of places as physical meeting points for academic discourses is not intensively researched in adult education. An influence of the titles of the conferences on papers was not evidently visible despite intensive data mining. For example, the influence of six titles with 'adult learning' in the title and only two (recent) titles with 'adult education' did actually not lead to a dominance of 'learning' or 'education' in the respective conferences. Perhaps the role of such terms is not as important as one might assume (cf. Fejes and Nicoll 2013; Nicoll et al. 2014, pp. 34–41). There are a lot of analyses on the role of journals, but the sites of academic conferences are rather black spots in bibliometrics. Even analysis of conferences (cf. Long 1983; Chang 2013) do not analyse the role of the chosen locations for conferences. The analysis demonstrates that conference location seems to have a few long-lasting effects. Nonetheless, the immediate effects in terms of participation and representation are strong. Future research could focus on the role of places for the development of academic discourses.

9.4.2 The Still Fragmented European Research Rhizome of ESREA

The analysis showed that the most active countries within ESREA triennials have so far been the UK, Sweden, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Spain and Slovenia. Results are strongly influenced by the fact that almost all of these countries have hosted an ESREA conference. The hosting clearly results in increased participation. Many large countries like France or Italy are clearly underrepresented in the map so far. The whole area of South-East Europe is not very well represented in the map despite some interesting shifts towards the South and East (cf. Nicoll et al. 2014, p. 71).

Rubenson and Elfert (2014) have pointed out that different maps of adult education research exist in Northern America, Europe and Asia. Even within Europe the map of research is relatively uneven or fragmented into national maps with loose connections to other national maps. European adult education research is reminiscent of a rhizome rather than a field. Parts of the rhizome are flourishing or diminishing over time. New connections and lines of flight are established over time. The North-South and West-East division is even within Europe an observable issue. Thus, it is challenging to speak of a European map of adult education research, since quantitatively many scholars come from rather few countries.

It still remains a challenge to involve more people from different areas in Europe and even outside of Europe. A situation where previously active countries in adult education research, like the Netherlands or the UK, 'drop from the map' has to be

prevented or even reversed in future. The Netherlands, which had such a rich tradition of adult education research (Hake 1992), are nowadays almost a blank spot for adult education research within ESREA conferences.

9.4.3 *The International Actors and Policies Become More Influential in the Field*

The share of citations which refer to international agencies and to policy documents have significantly increased over time. The peak so far was reached in 2010, where 10% of all citations referred to policy documents or official papers. Adult education research is a field of research which is closely connected to policy developments on the national or supranational level. (Milana 2017) It was not an analytical issue here if the citations refer mainly to these documents in an affirmative or critical way. Within the variety of transnational agencies the European Union is the most prominent actor, while (the) UNESCO has lost ground over time. This might raise the attention of ESREA as well as the UNESCO institute of lifelong learning. The role of the OECD is stable.

In other bibliometric analyses, the focus of the supranational/international level and the role of policies was no research objective. This is a shortcoming since this subfield of research is established by now and has become increasingly important. It would be interesting to observe what exactly the connection is between adult education research and these agencies? It might be the case that there is a field of adult education research constituted by ESREA and other actors, and there is a field of research on lifelong learning with other disciplines and actors. Do these subfields exist in parallel or partially overlap? Are some researchers active (as 'chameleons') in both fields? What are the influences of these transnational and policy-driven fields on the research of ESREA? Does ESREA perhaps constitute a sub field in opposition to other sub fields? Such questions seem worthy for detailed studies in future.

9.4.4 *Citing Adult Education Researchers and Scholars Like Bourdieu and Foucault*

The authors often cited are situated within the field. This is valid despite the popular remark that adult education research borrows theories and methods from other disciplines or that the whole field is an interdisciplinary by nature. The only conference for which this did not hold true was ESREA 1995, which might indicate a change or even an improvement over time. The most frequently cited names from the field of adult education are Alheit, Antikainen, Baert, A. Bron, Fejes, J. Field, Freire, Jarvis, Larsson, Mezirow, Rubenson, Salling Olesen or West. Many of these names

were also core figures in the development of ESREA. (cf. Nicoll et al. 2014, p. 60) Other names are less prominent than one might expect, e.g. psychologists or system theorists like Luhmann. But Bourdieu and Foucault (occasionally also Giddens and Lave and Wenger), were prominently cited scholars in many ESREA triennials. English is the lingua franca within ESREA, but this does not seem to result in having the main line of thought coming predominantly from the Anglophone academic world. Challenging is the observation that except from Freire and Mezirow, almost all frequently cited scholars come from or origin in Europe. This underlines that ESREA is a European society. But it also tells something about the few connections of parts of the rhizome of adult education research between Europe and Northern America. Connections to other continents are quantitatively almost totally missing so far or are less visible. The globalization of knowledge does not lead to an equally balanced interconnectedness of all parts of the world, but rather to a visibility of some parts of the rhizome. Considering the high level of global challenges, ESREA might think about appropriate measures to encourage scholars from outside Europe and so-called "Anglo-Saxon countries" (see also Fejes and Nylander 2014) to take part in ESREA conferences.

Citation regimes are discussed in other papers. Some scholars refer to the role of some specific research institutions like St. Clair (2011). Long (1983) demonstrated that some American universities had been most cited in the AERC conferences until the 1990s. It seems worthwhile to observe the different lines of flight of adult education research more closely in future. From a disciplinary perspective, it is encouraging that adult education researchers nowadays cite authors from within the field most frequently.

9.4.5 Preferred Approach and Method of the Field: Interviewing Learners

Papers in triennials increasingly have an empirical focus. While theoretical/philosophical papers were popular in the beginning, nowadays empirical papers make up a high share. The typical form is a qualitative research design like interviewing learners. Other approaches like experiments, which are popular in other social sciences, are almost non-existent. Quantitative designs have a marginal position in relation to qualitative approaches. It might and should raise question, why this is the case. Existing research on the nature of adult education research has frequently pointed out that qualitative research dominates clearly over quantitative research. (Rubenson and Elfert 2014; Fejes and Nylander 2014; St. Clair 2011; Boeren 2017; Daley et al. 2018). This observation was partly confirmed by the data presented here, although it is not as extreme within triennials as in the journals of adult education. The share of quantitative papers at ESREA conferences was around 16% in recent years. This is not as low as might be expected if the person knows only the bibliometric analysis of journals.

It is also worth looking more closely at the data. Especially Taylor's paper (2001, p. 333) has also the challenging observation that when looking at the submissions of papers (and not only at the published papers) to a journal, the share of quantitative papers is very high. It is even higher than the submission volume for qualitative papers, but qualitative papers are accepted more often. Between 1989 and 1999, 265 quantitative papers and 170 qualitative papers were submitted, but 42 (24.9%) of the qualitative papers and only 33 (12.5%) of the quantitative papers were accepted by editors and reviewers. Similar results/figures are likely for the ESREA journal RELA (e.g. when looking at CfPs). It might be the case that the quantitative papers are generally of lower quality or less adequate. But it is more likely that the editors and reviewers of the journals follow a publishing policy which is more in favor of qualitative than of quantitative approaches. Thus, other scholars' analyses of only published papers and the conclusion that quantitative research is marginal in adult education research might partly be an artefact caused by powerful selection regimes. It is also not reasonable from my point of view that critical research, to which ESREA often refers to, can be done solely or predominantly in qualitative and not in quantitative ways.

Thus, the challenge is, which kind of mechanisms exist in the field of established adult education research, which might lead to an underrepresentation of quantitative research? Taylor's analysis of all papers submitted to Adult Education Quarterly (Taylor 2001) and the analysis of ESREA conferences here indicate that some streams of adult education research receive more or less acceptance by the current leading scholars, reviewers and editors of main journals as gatekeepers to the 'main field'. A lack of methodological openness and creativity for other methods like experiments, quasi-experiments, participant observations or video studies is even more challenging. Historical studies are also relatively rare. Is this justified by theoretical reasons, or is it a sign of a lack of methodological plurality beyond doing interviews? Which beneficial insights might other methods besides interviews generate like the 'program analysis' applied in this paper here? Other research (c. also Daley et al. 2018) supports also the interpretation that more diversity and more discussion is needed in relation to the methods applied: 'The interviewees give the impression that the research within ESREA has been methodologically on the narrow end of the spectrum with little explicit methodological discussion.' (Nicoll et al. 2014, p. 71)

9.5 Concluding Remarks: Research in ESREA Between Field and Rhizome

The paper started with a discussion of the terms field and rhizome, which have been used in reflecting on adult education research. In general, the term field presupposes a constituted area, while the term rhizome is applied when looking for diversity and fluidity. ESREA and its research can be perceived as a field or as a rhizome when

looking at the results of this analysis. There is no clear labeling as a field or as a rhizome possible from my point of view. Some lines of flight became visible. Adult education research might be not 'as pluralistic as assumed' (Rubenson and Elfert 2014, p. 31) since there are some established, unwritten methodological mainstreams and preferences clearly visible. Nonetheless, it has become clear that the development of ESREA and its triennial conferences are dynamic and diverse. The rhizome is flourishing. Simultaneously, some parts are decaying.

Using the metaphor and the concepts connected to rhizomes helps heuristically to search for the unknown, the less prominent over time. Key actors – people and organisations – within the field have become visible. There is no simple genealogy, but rather a magnitude of ups and downs. A number of developments were different than expected (e.g. the relatively low influence of scholars cited outside adult education research).

There are of course methodological limitations connected to this analysis. The classification schemes can be debated. ESREA might engage in establishing and discussing international classifications schemes or handbooks for international or even comparative adult education research. Despite the high level of internationalization nowadays, many shortfalls become visible and real comparative research in adult education research remains a challenge. The rhizome of ESREA might have to develop in order to support a better quality of research beyond national borders or transnationally. Encouraging multiple authors with bi- or even tri-national backgrounds might be one way in order to encourage more comparative research.

The focus of this paper on quantitative analysis could be criticised as a loss of meaning since the process of coding involves qualitative judgements. Additional methodological critiques could be added. Nonetheless, I hope to have given some new insights in the histories and the developments of ESREA which might intensify the debate about the character of ESREA as a research association. (cf. Nicoll et al. 2014) I could only present a glimpse of possible analysis of the data. Such an analysis is of course also affected by the person who does it (cf. Garfield 2013). I am inviting readers to contact me if they would like to work with the data collected by me and perhaps to join into a bigger research group.

References

Antunes, M. H. (2003). Comments to selection process and conference papers. In ESREA (Ed.), *Wider benefits of learning: Understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning. Triennial ESREA 2001 conference* (pp. 67–72). Lisbon: Lusófona University.

Arnold, R., et al. (2000). *Forschungsmemorandum für die Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung*. Frankfurt/Main: Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung.

Bisovsky, G., Bourgois, E., Bron, M., Chivers, G., & Larsson, S. (Eds.). (1998). *Adult learning and social participation*. Wien: Verband Wiener Volksbildung.

Boeren, E. (2017). The methodological underdog: A review of quantitative research in the key adult education journals. *Adult Education Quarterly, 68*, 63–79.

Bron, A., Kurantowicz, E., Salling Olesen, H., & West, L. (2005). *'Old' and 'New' word of adult learning*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyzszej Edukacji.

Chang, B. (2013). *Shift of adult education research*. In Proceedings of the adult education research conference 2013 (pp. 63–69). Penn State University.

Daley, B., Martin, L., & Roessger, K. (2018). A call for methodological plurality: Reconsidering research approaches in adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *69*. (Online First).

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press.

Enoch, C., & Gieseke, W. (2011). *Wissensstrukturen und Programmforschung. Programmforschung als empirischer Zugang zur Bildungsarbeit der Weiterbildungsinstitutionen.* http://www.ifbe.uni-hannover.de/fileadmin/ifbe/enoch/enoch_gieseke14_Juli2011.pdf

ESREA. (2003). *Wider benefits of learning: Understanding and monitoring the consequences of adult learning*. Triennial ESREA 2001 Conference. Lisbon: Lusófona University.

Fejes, A., & Nicoll, K. (2013). Approaches to research on the education and learning of adults. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 4*(1), 7–14.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2013). *Defining the field of research on the education and learning of adults. A bibliometrical and content analysis of three adult education journals 2005–2012.* Paper presented at the seventh ESREA triennial European research conference. Berlin: Humboldt-University Berlin, 4–7 September 2013.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2014). The Anglophone International(e) – A bibliometrical analysis of three adult education journals 2005–2012. *Adult Education Quarterly, 64*(3), 222–239.

Fejes, A., & Nylander, E. (2015). How pluralistic is the research field on adult education? Dominating bibliometrical trends, 2005–2012. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6(2)*, 103–123.

Garfield, S. (2013). *On the map – Why the world looks the way it does*. London: Profile Books.

Gieseke, W. (1999). Bildungspolitische Interpretationen und Akzentsetzung der Slogans vom lebenslangen Lernen. In R. Arnold & W. Gieseke (Eds.), *Die Weiterbildungsgesellschaft. Band 2: Bildungspolitische Konsequenzen* (pp. 93–120). Neuwied/Kriftel: Luchterhand.

Gieseke, W. (Ed.). (2000). *Programmplanung als Bildungsmanagement?* Recklinghausen: Bitter.

Gieseke, W. (2010). Professioneller Habitus und Geschichte. *Hessische Blätter für Volksbildung, 60*(2), 105–116.

Gieseke, W. (2014). Adult and continuing education: Results in the context of research. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configuration in adult education in transitional times: International perspectives in different countries* (pp. 153–174). Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

Gieseke, W., Meueler, W., & Nuissl, E. (Eds.). (1989). *Zentrifugale und zentripetale Kräfte in der Disziplin Erwachsenenbildung*. Heidelberg: Arbeitsgruppe für Empirische Bildungsforschung.

Hake, B. J. (1992). Remaking the study of adult education: The relevance of recent developments in the Netherlands to the search for disciplinary identity. *Adult Education Quarterly, 42*(2), 63–78.

Jones, W. (2014). The present and future situation of adult educators in the United Kingdom. In adult and continuing education: Results in the context of research. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configuration in adult education in transitional times: International perspectives in different countries* (pp. 139–152). Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

Käpplinger, B. (2008). Programmanalysen und ihre Bedeutung für pädagogische Forschung. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, *9*(1). http://www.qualitativeresearch.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/333

Käpplinger, B. (2014). Adult education research in Poland and Germany on the European level: Two sleeping beauties? *Rocznik Andragogiczny, 21*, 393–409.

Käpplinger, B. (2015). Adult education research seen as field or as rhizome: A bibliometrical analysis of conference programs of ESREA. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6(2)*, 139–157.

Larsson, S. (2010). Invisible colleges in the adult education research world. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 97–112.

Long, H. B. (1983). Characteristics of adult education research reported at the adult education research conference, 1971–1980. *Adult Education Quarterly, 33*(2), 79–96.

Ludwig, J., & Baldauff-Bergmann, J. (2010). Profilbildungsprobleme in der Erwachsenenbildungsforschung. *Report, 33*(1), 65–76.

Martin, I. (2000). Reconstituting the Agora: Towards an alternative politics of lifelong learning. In T. Sork, V. Chapman, & R. St. Clair (Eds.), *Proceedings of the adult education research conference 2000*. Vancouver: UBC.

Milana, M. (2017). *Global networks, local actions: Rethinking adult education policy in the 21st*. Milton Park: Routledge.

Nicoll, K., Biesta, G., & Morgan-Klein, N. (2014). *(His)story of the European Society of Research on the Education of a Adults (ESREA): A narrative history of intellectual evolution and transformation in the field of adult education in Europe*. Stirling/Luxembourg: ESREA.

Olesen, H. S. (2014). Adult education in the Danish modernization process. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configuration in adult education in transitional times: International perspectives in different countries* (pp. 39–56). Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

Plecas, D. B., & Sork, T. J. (1986). Adult education: Curing the ills of an undisciplined discipline. *Adult Education Quarterly, 37*(1), 48–62.

Popovic, K. (2013). *Adult education – Lost in a transition? Non-published key note at the 7th ESREA Triennial*. Berlin: Humboldt-University.

Rubenson, K. (1982). Adult education research: In quest of a map of the territory. *Adult Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 57–74.

Rubenson, K. (2000). *Revisiting the map of the territory*. Conference proceedings of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, 2000.

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2014). Changing configurations of adult education research: Exploring a fragmented map. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configuration in adult education in transitional times: International perspectives in different countries* (pp. 25–38). Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

Schrader, J. (2014). Strategies of modernisation and their effects on configurations of adult education. In B. Käpplinger & S. Robak (Eds.), *Changing configuration in adult education in transitional times: International perspectives in different countries* (pp. 57–71). Frankfurt/Main: Lang.

St. Clair, R. (2011). Writing ourselves into being: A review of the Canadian journal for the study of adult education. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 23*(2), 27–44.

Taylor, E. W. (2001). Adult education quarterly from 1989 to 1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 322–340.

Usher, R. (2010). Riding the lines of flight. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1–2), 67–78.

Wittpoth, J. (2005). Autonomie, Feld und Habitus. *Hessische Blätter für Volksbildung, 55*(1), 26–36.

Part IV
Debating International Comparative Adult Education Research

Chapter 10
Revisiting the Debate on International Comparative Adult Education Research: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

John Field, Klaus Künzel, and Michael Schemmann

10.1 Introduction

In 2016 and 1017 we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the beginnings of comparative education. Marc-Antoine Jullien, also known as Jullien de Paris, laid the foundation stone of comparative education as an academic discipline with the publication of a standardised questionnaire of 266 questions partly published in 1816 and 1817 in the 'Journal d'éducation'. Furthermore, the ideas of Marc-Antoine Jullien not only stimulated and influenced the development of international comparative education, but also had an impact on comparative adult education studies. In fact, Charters and Siddiqui consider the "introduction of the Jullien Plan to the Anglophone world through its publication" in 1917 to be the first key event in the development of comparative adult education studies (Charters and Siddiqui 1989, p. 20).

This double anniversary provides an opportunity to focus on and discuss the development, current state-of-the-art and future development of international comparative adult education. We take a historically-informed approach, though, not only because an anniversary provides opportunities for reflection on the past, but also to explore the ways in which we arrived at the present day situation of international and comparative research in adult education. By taking a long view, we hope

This chapter is a revised version of an article on international and comparative adult education research (Field et al. 2016) part of volume 40 of the International Yearbook of Adult Education (Schemmann 2017).

J. Field (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland, UK
e-mail: john.field@stir.ac.uk

K. Künzel · M. Schemmann
Department Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaften, Universität zu Köln, Köln, Germany

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_10

to identify ways in which comparative research was shaped by circumstances and contexts which changed over time. We then use this historical perspective as a platform for asking what comes next – and indeed, putting the question of whether things have changed so significantly that the older and still dominant approaches to comparative adult education research are reaching the end of their usefulness.

When applying this historical perspective we at the same time propose a model of phases to explain the development of comparative adult education research. This model will also structure this paper. First, we address Jullien and his ideas as an apparent ancestor of international comparative adult education research, and consider their potential as a basis for perspectives for analysis. We then consider the period after World War I, with the establishment of the 'World Association for Adult Education (WAAE)' and the 'Workers Educational Association (WEA)'. We understand this as the pre-foundation or bridging period of international comparative adult education research. We view the period after World War II, comprising UNESCO's 'World Conferences of Adult Education' in 1949 and in 1960 as well as the publication of the 'Exeter Papers' as the key document of international comparative adult education, as the foundation era. The subsequent period, following the Exeter Papers, we understand as the phase of institutionalisation. Finally, we look at the growing number of international studies over the last 10–15 years, which we argue has made a limited contribution to comparative adult education; rather than seeing the recent period as a phase of expansion, we argue that it poses the question of what is understood as comprising international comparative adult education research.

When analysing the different phases, we also focus on the same dimensions: theoretical viewpoints, epistemological interest, methods and methodology and selected findings. In his work Charters defines comparative adult education as follows:

> (a) statements about theory, principles, methodology and other topics of comparative studies related to adult education, and (b) studies comparing a topic on adult education in two or more situations. A comparative adult education study needs to extend beyond description of adult education in two or more situations and/or a juxtaposition of adult education data. There must be analysis and comparison to identify similarities and dissimilarities. An intranational study is the comparison of a topic in two or more situations within one country and an international study is the comparison of a topic in two or more countries. (Charters 1988, cited in Charters and Siddiqui 1989)

As such, studies of international comparative adult education need both an international and comparative focus at the same time. In addition, following Egetenmeyer, we also subsume studies focussing questions of supra- and transnational character under the heading of international comparative adult education (Egetenmeyer 2014a, p. 17).

10.2 Jullien de Paris as an Ancestor of International Comparative Adult Education Research

The origins of comparative educational research are often traced back to the Enlightenment scholar Jullien de Paris. Yet it is hard to find comparative studies that cite him as a specific influence; rather, he is cited in rather general ways as a precursor for the contemporary discipline. Nevertheless, Jullien's work is sufficiently interesting, at least in respect of its design, to merit a closer look, though perhaps more as a point of entry into methodological debate than as a thinker who directly shaped the comparative study of adult education. In brief, his proposal of 1816 provides us with more than just an anniversary.

Born in 1775 into an educated middle class family, Marc-Antoine Jullien was brought up in an enlightened metropolitan milieu. An avowed supporter of Robespierre and secretary of the Jacobin comité d'instruction publique, he was fortunate to escape the Thermidorian Reaction with a mere prison sentence. The enforced leisure gave him the opportunity to read and develop his plans for public education, devoting himself almost entirely after 1801 to the task of developing a 'positive' science of education, until he broke with Pestalozzi and in 1819 turned his attention to the natural sciences (Gautherin 1993).

This brief biographical sketch helps to establish the context in which Jullien produced his proposal for comparative education. The 'Esquisse d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée', published in full in 1817, set out a plan for comparing educational institutions across Europe, with a view to using the findings to improve education in France. Following the model of the natural sciences, Jullien proposed that the science of education should identify the laws that govern the observed characteristics of education. The method that he advocated was a 'comparative table of the main educational establishments existing in Europe', of the organisation of education and teaching of the 'course of studies as a whole', and of 'the methods used to form and instruct young people, the gradual improvements that have been attempted and the degree of success achieved'.

To achieve this, Jullien drafted a standardised table of 266 questions, categorised in turn according to the nature of the learners concerned and the institutions. He claimed that his work was inspired by developments in science:

> Studies on comparative anatomy have advanced the science of anatomy. In the same way, studies on comparative education will furnish new means of perfecting the science of education. (Jullien 1817, translation by the authors)

Thus, Jullien believed, education could be organised and delivered in ways which would overcome ignorance and 'the degradation of minds and hearts' which had together helped cause the upheavals in Europe.

Whether Jullien's grid was ever completed by anyone is unclear, and while it is tempting to suggest that he pushed comparative education in the direction of positivism, there is no real evidence that this is the case. His influence has been said to owe more to desires for a foundational legend than any real continuity of thought and approach (Gautherin 1993, p. 770). His approach may in some respects appear quite modern, largely because of his systematic approach to data collection and analysis, but also because of the procedure that he proposed, involving a small commission to receive the responses. Moreover, his educational optimism, though based on an analogy with anatomical science, was unquestionably shared by the founders of modern comparative education. To take one example, where Jullien believed that 'research on comparative education will furnish new means for perfecting the science of education', a committee of the 'International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)' on the development of comparative adult education took it for granted that the aim of comparative study was to inform policy and practice (ICAE 1974, p. iv).

Although Jullien planned to include some areas of non-formal education in his study, he paid little attention to learning in adult life. His influence on comparative adult education was indirect, and came with the rediscovery of his work in the twentieth century, above all with the publication of a translated version by the 'International Board of Education' (Adick 2008, pp. 16–18). A report from the International Council of Adult Education cited Jullien with approval, qualified only by regret that no one had yet found "an Indian, or a Chinese, or a Persian who lived several centuries earlier" (ICAE 1974, pp. 4–5). In many ways, the ICAE report typified subsequent reception of Jullien's work: while acknowledging his status as an ancestor of comparative adult education, it did not examine his contribution in any systematic manner (see also Keane 1985). Kidd drew briefly on Jullien's work to support his call for universally accepted techniques of comparative adult education research; but once again, we can see this more as an attempt to identify a suitable ancestor rather than as a critical engagement with Jullien's ideas (Kidd 1970).

This brings us to the question of whether the type of method that Jullien proposed has any continuing potential for the comparative study of adult education. His emphasis on the practical value of rigorous study anticipates the later concern with systematic comparison as a tool of governance. The clarity of his grid, with its systematic sets of questions and institutions, has an obvious appeal and might make some sort of sense with schools and universities, where there are at least similar sorts of institutions that are broadly shared across virtually all the inhabited world. But can the same be said of adult education, particularly since the 'turn to learning' that has steadily taken place since the 1970s? Richard Edwards argued some years ago that the shift towards lifelong learning was not simply linguistic, but was bound up with a process of change in which the bounded 'field' of adult education was giving way to a more open and diversified 'moorland' (Edwards 1997). The question then is whether the meticulous methodological approach outlined by Jullien has any continuing relevance in Edwards' moorland, characterised as it is by difference, variety, fragmentation and individualisation.

10.3 The Pre-foundation or 'Bridging' Period 1900–1930

Jullien's ambition to direct the study of education towards the modern ideal of a positive science by grounding its analytical objectives on comparisons of empirical facts left traces in at least two areas of historical development: (1) the interest in and collection of cross-national/cultural data and expertise for the purpose of administrative usage and policy guidance, and (2) implicitly, the advancement of educational research and knowledge within a process of disciplinary institutionalisation and scientific diversification.

It is suggested here that adult education as a distinctive field of study should not be seen as a direct outcome of either of these developments but rather be linked to the growing awareness that education in its entirety was a major factor of reflecting as well as determining conceptions "as to the right ordering of national life", as Michael Sadler, Director of 'Special Inquiries and Reports' (Board of Education 1902a, p. X) once put it. Educational research in its varying forms and traditions eventually became part of a complex process of intellectual, social and institutional evolution which apart from its long-term internal effects made its data available for public governance and policy foundation. Looking at the period 1900–1930, then, it is clear that the instrumental value and legitimisation of comparative approaches was most obvious in educational areas closely linked to the political agendas of states and their administrative implementation.

There are no historiographic indications that this pragmatic agenda was supported let alone induced by an institutionalised type of educational science. In pointing out two seemingly opposite motives for comparative studies – preparing society for the onslaught of rising international competition and learning lessons from exactly these competing nations – Sadler's 'Special Reports on Educational Subjects' from 1897 onwards can be partly regarded as a renaissance of Jullien's conceptual blueprint without, of course, sharing its heuristic and methodological orientation in detail. What seemed to matter most in times when ubiquitous feelings of uncertainty, cultural unrest, and the rise of international conflicts pressed for strategies of political realignment was a committed attempt to define the aims of national education and to utilise systematic 'cross-border' studies to direct and ratify the principles and course of educational improvements. It is hardly coincidental that a substantial part of Sadler's work was directed towards the comparison of educational institutions and problems in the United States, England and Germany (Board of Education 1902a, b). Among those areas most closely watched were secondary education, curricular matters and the advancement of commercial and technical training. The odd reference made to adult education may indicate that this educational branch, in spite of some international tribute being paid to university extension and the need to serve mature students, was hardly regarded as being of 'systemic' relevance and a tool capable of shaping things to come.

As indicated and with reference to the early twentieth century, the international progress made in establishing education as a recognised branch of science and higher learning was on the whole modest, to say the least. Although adult education

became a matter of intensive theoretical and programmatic deliberation after World War I, its 'academic promotion' within universities was mainly a matter of individual commitment and paid little regard to international let alone comparative aspects of the field (Friedenthal-Haase 1991). As an object of academic enquiry and theoretical pursuit, German adult education after 1918 was deeply rooted in national introspection and firmly entwined with the notion of 'Volksforschung', i.e. the study of the conditions and needs of contemporary people and society (Hohenrodter Bund 1927). Wilhelm Flitner, a prominent figure in the development of a new, post-war approach to the 'problem of adult education', told the 'World Conference on Adult Education' in 1929 that the educational credo of the time was based on a humane interpretation of democratic pluralism: "The intercourse of differently-minded men and women who must live in one and the same nation, is the chief means of adult education in a modern state" (Flitner in World Association for Adult Education (WAAE) 1930, p. 130). It can be argued that this very principle of peaceful coexistence amidst diverging interests and socio-political conflicts formed a cornerstone of the proceedings of the World Conference. By expressing a collective devotion towards the 'spirit of brotherhood', the Conference endorsed the need to reframe the study and practice of adult education towards international cooperation and cosmopolitan attitudes. However, neither did this programmatic initiative reflect academic ambitions of systematic enquiry nor did it reveal an explicit interest in the pursuit of comparative research.

To address this ambivalent situation – i.e. growing interest in the 'other' (nation, culture, tradition) without showing a corporate inclination to support this inquisitive habit with sustainable methodological effort – it might be worth taking a closer look at the objectives of the WAAE and its documented work: 93 'Quarterly Bulletins' (up to 1946), a short-lived 'International Journal of Adult Education' and a voluminous report on the World Conference on Adult Education in Cambridge 1929 which was preceded by an 'International Handbook on Adult Education' designed to inform conference members of basis structures and developments in various parts of the world (UNESCO 1949, p. 2). The WAAE's aims were twofold:

1. to assist the establishment (…) in all parts of the world, of movements and institutions for promoting adult education and to promote co-operation between them, (and)
2. to co-operate for the purpose of adult education with other movements which have for their primary object the establishment of friendly relationships throughout the world. (UNESCO 1949, p. 1)

Whereas these humane and rather unconditional terms bore the imprints of immediate post-war vigour and sentiment, the predominant spirit and intentions of most of the later 'Bulletins' and of the Conference Report can be described as being more specific and aware of the cultural and political complexities of education while still adhering to an idealistic program of good-will and mutual learning. Maybe no one could have expressed this cordial mood more adequately than the Bishop of Plymouth, J. H. B. Masterman (one of several clergymen), who reminded the conference (that)

> the quest of material things inevitably tends (…) to competition that easily develops into contest. For of material things there is a limited supply, and what one man or nation gains

> is (…) to be the loss of all the rest. But the things of the mind and the spirit obey a different law and are achieved not through competition but through co-operation. No nation has yet proposed a tariff on learning, and any nation that attempts to close its frontiers against ideas is essaying a hopeless task. So I see in the spread of adult education one of the greatest safeguards for international goodwill. A world at school would be a world at peace… (WAAE 1929, p. 52)

In his opening address however, Albert Mansbridge, founder of the Workers' Educational Association and the WAAE, warned against any unrestrained ambition to limit the exercise of learning to a mere copying of foreign models:

> As one nation contemplates the achievements of another, it must resist the temptation to imitate, but search out its own way, driving its mind, in the power of its spirit, deep into the area of the sources of its being, and then proceed through its own tradition, determined by its own environment, to the point of its own expression. (WAAE 1929, p. 26)

Analysing the proceedings of the conference with its mixture of cordiality, idealistic posture and discursive commitment to explore the principles and limits of international exchange and 'learning', one feels tempted to critically review some characteristic features and findings of the WAAE (including selected 'Bulletins') and to explore, in no more than a sketchy manner, its position in the genesis of comparative research in adult education. To assume, however, that there is sufficient historical evidence to support the construct of a definite 'role' in this development, would be most problematic as the WAAE has so far not inspired researchers to study its work and contribution in any great detail.

We therefore find it both plausible and adequate to speak of the period from 1900 to 1930 as having a 'bridging' function, i.e. overarching single episodes of intensified effort to explore the scientific and pragmatic potential of international studies in education. Sadler's work from 1896 onwards was such an 'episode', but its bridging effect reaches definitely beyond a mere chronological order of exploratory endeavours. Taking up Schriewer's functional formula of 'Überbrückung', comparative research provides a link between the description of complex, heterogeneous educational phenomena (institutions, teaching practice, norms and goals etc.) on the one hand and the inductive abstraction of regularities, guiding principles and interdependencies on the other (Schriewer 2013, p. 21). Although Sadler's approach to designing and interpreting educational surveys – of systems, institutions or questions like 'Unrest in Secondary Education in Germany and elsewhere' (Board of Education 1902a) – was neither positivistic nor did it attempt to formulate general principles of comparative methodology, it marked a significant contribution to an ideographic engagement with cultural determinants of education and intangible concepts like 'national character' and 'tradition'. In adopting a qualified idealistic standpoint, Sadler not only influenced some of comparative education's classic authors like Kandel, Hans and Schneider, but also carried his convictions and arguments into the field of adult education where they fell on fertile ground, most visibly in the WAAE Conference of 1929, where Sadler was invited to give a key address but was prohibited by poor health.

By stressing the complex nature of national education as a 'living thing' subjected to historical and philosophical forces and reflecting 'forgotten struggles and

difficulties' (Lauwerys 1971, p. 34), Sadler deserves some credit for turning our attention not only to the need for grounding comparative studies in education on interdisciplinary grounds and interpretative modes of research. Furthermore, at this early stage of disciplinary development, he can rightly claim to have drawn our attention to the concept of cultural diversity and the restrictions it imposes on any attempt to disregard the singularity or individuality of national sets of traditions, values and aspirations. Whilst this cautious attitude may limit the feasibility of theoretical abstractions, it does not disqualify resolute messages like Sadler's verdict on Germany's insistence on avoiding specialisation 'too early in life'. In this point of "fundamental importance Germany is teaching the world lessons which cannot be too often repeated" (Board of Education 1902a, p. 525).

What 'features and findings' of the WAAE should be mentioned in this brief review of its work? Do they resemble or, perhaps, anticipate some of the conceptual characteristics of later 'episodes' of comparative interest and commitment in adult education? First, let us look at the spectrum of documented work up to 1931. It contained material of different nature and functional purpose:

- *Internal communication and accountability*: Annual reports of the WAAE to its private members and affiliated institutions; information on adult education 'the world over';
- *Country portraits*: Between 1919 and 1931 some 23 national profiles were published, covering most western European countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, and the larger states overseas: China, Japan, India, Australia and the United States. Typically, these surveys were compiled by national experts from 'within' their own system. They contained statistical data as well as descriptive overviews and theoretical expositions of the aims and dynamics of what was frequently called 'movements' of or inside adult education. Perhaps it is worth noting that after 1930 the WAAE occasionally used the term 'further education' as an inclusive category of post-compulsory learning (other than higher education);
- *Cross-national reflections on specific subjects and, problems' of adult education*: This type of document was invariably the outcome of international meetings, particularly the World Conference on Adult Education, and aimed at deliberating widely shared contemporary views such as those on 'Adult Education and the Industrial Worker', 'Methods of Extensive and Intensive Adult Education', 'The Place of Radio in Adult Education' or 'The Relation of Humanistic to Technical Instruction;
- *Reports and 'itinerant' communiqués*: If the object of the enquiry was more specific and geared towards a problem or element of topical interest, the WAAE would at times send 'Travelling Tutors' abroad to accumulate descriptive figures, personal impressions and judgements coloured, of course, by the experience and cultural convictions of the observer. A most revealing example of this type of 'para-comparative' effort is Virginia Coit's report on 'Some Recent Developments in German Adult Education', published in 1932 and – apart from its paradigmatic value – one of the few contemporary insights into the teaching–/learning

> reality of contemporary adult education institutions. This report is interesting from yet another angle: referring to the personal encounters she had in these institutions and the apparent tendency of their leading personnel "(to be driven) to champion his work before the public, to point out its significance, to elucidate his methods and aims and defend his work from every possible attack (…) strikes a visitor from England alternately as astonishingly stimulating and slightly ridiculous". And, closing her preliminary remarks, she confirms the impression one cannot fail to develop, i.e. that comparing foreign motives and habits of thought and behaviour presents an opportunity to express judgments far beyond the immediate 'comparative' terms of reference: "This hyperconsciousness (…) cannot be ignored; it pervades all German activity, giving it a peculiar tang" (Coit 1932, p. 5).

It might be appropriate to end this section with a brief reference to comparative methodology. As for adult education and the period in question, the development and application of rules and criteria guiding scientific discovery and discursive patterns of thought failed to be recognised as a collective aim of engagement. However, the evidence drawn from the WAAE documents suggests that in the course of this 'bridging' period a number of motives and conceptual ideas came to light which not only characterise the spirit and educational aspirations of a certain point in time but allows us to extract, as it were, heuristic agents that might be useful for methodological advancement in comparative research.

So, are there lessons to be learnt from the (unfinished) study of the WAAE and Michael Sadler's comparative explorations? Our focus here is on the motives which brought adult education to look across national borders and explore common grounds for furthering its pragmatic and, above all, spiritual and ethical cause. Such intentions were hardly steered by academic ambition. In reaction to the social and mental conditions of the early twentieth century, especially the effects of war, and in the firm if at times naive belief in the 'reconstructive' and reconciliatory power of 'Volksbildung', adult educationists saw in their international exchanges a humane task, not a project of scientific venture. Reflections on methodological aspects were scarce, and if authors did refer to the 'technical' dimension of their 'comparative' narratives, the use of categories such as 'similarities' and 'contrasts' was most common. Typically, they would be employed in cross-national treatments of specific topics rather than in country portraits. Now and then questions would be raised as to the causes of national differences or the historical conditions under which they made their socio-cultural or political influence felt.

In all, the period 1900–1930 witnessed fundamental changes within the social and mental fabric of adult education. More than perhaps in any other branch of education the impacts of war, political conflicts and the omnipresent effects of cultural uncertainties had far-reaching consequences. While its official role and importance as part of the educational system remained modest, its rising communicative – and ideological – potential could not be overlooked. Stretching its aspirations and appeal beyond national frontiers, the mental dynamics of adult education seemed to be a timely and, hopefully, a potent instrument of international

recovery and cooperation. Under the auspices of such ideals, the genesis of an educational discipline resting on concerted actions of research and discursive cultures was not an option of immediate concern. On the other hand, it supported the discovery and establishment of comparative modes of thought in the years to come.

10.4 The Foundation Period After World War II

The foundation period of international and comparative adult education research lasts from the end of World War II to the publication of the Exeter Papers in 1968. Next to the Exeter Conference, which was held in 1966 in Exeter, New Hampshire, the World Conferences on Adult Education in 1949 in Elsinore and in 1960 in Montreal under the auspices of UNESCO can be considered as key events of this period.

The first World Conference on Adult Education in 1949 brought together 106 delegates from 27 different countries (de Maeyer 1997, p. 10). The documentation of the conference was rather incomplete, next to a working paper, a report of resolutions was prepared (Kidd 1970, p. 5). The main work of the 1949 conference was undertaken in four commissions. The first worked on the content of adult education and focussed mainly on the understanding and function of adult education:

> The function of adult education is to bring to individuals essential knowledge which will enable them to carry out their economic, social and political roles and, above all, which will allow them to participate in the life of their community and to achieve a more complete and harmonious way of living. (de Maeyer 1997, p. 12)

The second commission focussed on institutions and organisational problems. It was made clear that the state had to play a significant role, but also the cooperation with private institutions was recommended. A third commission, focussing on methods and techniques, emphasised that both depended on content, but were necessary to support learning for adults. The fourth concentrated on permanent cooperation and outlined the role that adult education as a movement could play to ensure international understanding and peace. To achieve this, the commission developed four principles:

> Adult education should try and develop a spirit of tolerance, it should work towards reconciling east and west, it should bring the people closer together and not just governments, it should recognize the need to improve the living conditions of the masses and to create situations of peace and understanding. (de Maeyer 1997, p. 14)

All in all it becomes clear that the adult education movement was seen in the context of the experiences of World War II as a means of contributing to a peaceful international community.

Similarly, the second World Conference on Adult Education in Montreal in 1960 was very much preoccupied with world peace and international understanding since it took place during the Cold War. However, next to representatives of the East and the West a third group of countries became apparent. As one participant put it: “At

Montreal we were able to get an impression of the influence that the Third World would soon exert" (de Maeyer 1997, 34). Even though the documentation of the conference was again rather fragmentary, a report of recommendations was published (Kidd 1970, p. 5). What is more, also national reports were prepared which reflect the variety of interests connected with adult education, ranging from education in civics to the education of women. These reports can be seen as the basis for first efforts in international comparisons. However, it was stressed at the conference that a more effective research in adult education and a more effective approach to the comparison of adult education in different national settings needed to be developed. In sum, "…the Montreal Conference had taken the first step towards a renewal of the functionality of adult education" (de Maeyer 1997, p. 34).

As was called for during both World Conferences, the 'International Congress of University Adult Education' (founded after the Montreal Conference) arranged the first 'International Conference on Comparative Adult Education' in 1966. In the following, a report of this Conference was published by Liveright and Haygood under the title 'The Exeter Papers' (Liveright and Haygood 1968). The Exeter Papers are generally considered to be the foundation document of comparative adult education.

The call for papers identified the purposes of the conference. As such, a conceptual framework for comparisons in adult education was to be developed as well as special areas for study. The call also proposed that the conference would make suggestions for national and international agencies and bodies to provide support and assistance in research (Liveright and Haygood 1968, 2). The conceptual framework was developed and tested in the course of the conference. Both the proceedings and the final modified approach are outlined in chapter one of the Exeter Papers. As such the following approach to a comparative study of adult education is suggested:

1. Overview: Cultural and National Background.
   Including relevant material about: history, geography, economy, demography, politics, religion, and international relations (presented in narrative form).
2. The Total Educational Enterprise.

a. Purpose, philosophy, and goals of education
b. Requirements and limitations of elementary education
c. The different levels of education
d. Economic data about education
e. Education required for different occupations
f. The overall education system (charts and diagrams)
g. Major problems confronting the educational enterprise

3. The Field of Adult Education and the Institutions Involved.

a. Official role and attitudes of various institutions concerned (series of continua about government, universities, schools).
b. Philosophy and goals for adult education (the kind of objectives to be implemented)
c. Scope and nature of adult education (kinds of programs, sponsorship, participation, and leadership of programs in the five categories of adult education).
d. Professionalization and organization of the field (professional training, professional organizations and associations, and nature and locus of research).
e. Evolving and developing patterns (major successes and problems; important recent developments and trend; projections for the future.

4. Annotated Bibliography.

a. History, demography, economy, etc.
b. Total educational scene
c. Adult education in the particular country
d. Adult Education in other countries
e. Regular journals, magazines, newsletters about adult education. (Liveright and Haygood 1968, p. 13).

The approach proposed to analyse adult education strictly in its cultural and national context as well as in the context of the whole educational system. As regards adult education itself, the organisations, philosophy and goals, programmes and participation, professionalisation and future challenges are addressed. Thus, the comparative approach presented in the Exeter Papers picks up the tradition of country portraits started in the bridging period and continued at the World Conference in 1960 by so-called country reports. But whereas both the bridging period as well as the World Conferences after World War II were preoccupied with issues of world peace, international understanding and the adult education movement, the Exeter Papers focus on the cross-cultural comparison in order to

> …undertake needed research, to suggest important hypotheses about the development, usefulness, and administration of adult education, and also to increase the effectiveness of plans and programs of action to be developed in different countries. (Liveright and Haygood 1968, p. 11)

This rationale for comparing certainly echoes Jullien's ideas, as does the approach to classification and categorisation.

10.5 The Phase of Institutionalisation

The phase following the publication of the Exeter Papers can be classified as the institutionalisation phase of international comparative adult education research. The phase is paralleled by a general trend of institutionalisation in adult education research in so far as several chairs for adult education research were established from the early 1970s. Especially in Germany the newly appointed chairs also focussed on comparative research questions, e.g. Klaus Künzel on Great Britain, Joachim Knoll and Klaus Künzel on Canada, Franz Pöggeler, Johannes Weinberg and Martha Friedenthal-Haase on Israel (Knoll 1996, p. 223).

The institutionalisation phase can also be characterised by the establishment of expert societies for international comparative adult education research. First of all, the 'International Congress of University Adult Education (ICUAE)' needs to be pointed out here. Founded already in 1960, it was constituted as a worldwide network of university professors of adult education and it played an important role in carrying out the first 'International Conference on Comparative Adult Education' in 1966. In addition, the Congress also published a journal titled 'International Journal of University Adult Education'. Knoll sees the conferences of the Congress in

1970 in Montreal and in 1975 in Ghana as the most remarkable contributions of the society to international adult and comparative adult education (Knoll 1996, p. 232).

Second, the 'International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE)' has to be mentioned. ISCAE describes itself as a network of about 200 researchers in 35 countries. Previously operating under the name 'Committee for the Study and Research in Comparative Adult Education (CSRCAE)', ISCAE was founded in 1992 at a Conference of the 'American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)'. The society gave itself a statute only in 2013 (www.iscae.org). So far the society has held five conferences, the results were published in two volumes (Reischmann et al. 1999; Reischmann and Bron 2008).

Third, the 'European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA)', established in 1991, developed into a network of European researchers, who meet in 12 networks as well as in a triennial conference of the whole society (www.esrea.org). Further, ESREA also publishes a peer reviewed open access journal titled 'European Journal for Research on Education and Learning of Adults (RELA)'. While international and comparative research is far from the raison d'etre of ESREA and its activities, it has nonetheless provided a framework for fostering international and comparative perspectives.

Next to these structural and formal developments, the phase is characterised by the multitude of studies carried out and presented. Both the evidence as well as the methodological developments in this phase are remarkable. It is not our intention to systematically explore the development and state-of-the art of research. This has been done in other publications in a comprehensive manner (Zeuner 2009; Egetenmeyer 2014a, b). However, we want to highlight three comparative studies which tend to be marginalised in overview articles. We refer to them since they also shed a light on the research carried out during this phase and thus characterise the phase of institutionalisation of international and comparative adult education research in a more detailed way.

First, the so-called 'ECLE' materials are to be focussed. The 'European Centre for Leisure and Education' in Prague published as of 1978 23 country reports as well as about 100 other items, though not solely in a comparative way. The country reports are descriptive and to be understood as a juxtaposition. What becomes clear at this point is that research during this phase is not *per se* limited by the Cold War but is focussed by the research interest of comparison.

Secondly, the so-called 'Euro-Delphi' is to be referred to. In the early 1990s 18 researchers from 13 countries carried out a 'Delphi-type comparative study'. The idea of a prognostic Delphi-type study is to explore future orientations and topics in adult education. According to Leirman the goal of the projects was as follows:

> In terms of contents, our approach was to move from the question 'What are, according to you, the major problems and challenges confronting adult persons in the society of the 1990s?' to ensuing questions about goals, educational offerings and general and specific policies of the authorities and of the major organizations, now and in the future. (Leirman 1996, p. 126)

This study offers an example of the way in which during this phase researchers developed methodologically innovative and complex designs for the comparative research of adult education.

Third, the studies presented during the phase of institutionalisation also cover all levels of the multi-level system of adult education. As such, we find studies on the level of society or system, there are studies on the organisational level as well as on the individual level and here in particular focussing on the adult educators. Field et al. (2000) presented a study which analysed the "…perceptions, aspirations and competencies of adult education professionals in respect of the ongoing process of Europeanisation" (Field et al. 2000, p. 64). The authors compared adult education professionals in Poland, Britain and Sweden. Amongst other evidence the study found that even though adult education professionals were in favour of the European dimension, they felt that their potential to contribute was limited (Field et al. 2000, p. 79). What is more, the study found that Swedish adult educators saw themselves as more skilled in European languages and thus were more likely to report that they read professionally relevant materials in other European languages (Field et al. 2000, p. 81).

Of course, the bridging period did not come to a sudden end; certain features of this period continued to shape the institutionalised forms of comparative adult education. Robert Peers, professor of adult education at the University of Nottingham and well known as Britain's first holder of a chair in the subject, produced a book on comparative adult education in 1958. However, as a contemporary reviewer put it, the book fell into two "uneasily related" parts: a historical analysis of liberal adult education in Britain on the one hand, and on the other "a rather hasty comparison and analysis of the adult education patterns in other modern states" (Powell 1959, p. 36). Equally, the period of institutionalisation did not vanish after 1990s, though it is noticeable that some developments came to a full stop; the ICUAE, for example, appears to have gone into abeyance in the early 1990s. However, the institutionalised forms of cooperation and publication for European comparative and international research seem to be well-established, and are likely to prove enduring features of the scholarly landscape.

10.6 Comparison as an Instrument of Governance

The context for adult education research changed significantly during the 1990s. As well as the discursive and substantive shift represented by the concept of lifelong learning, it is also striking that this was a period when international governmental bodies came to the fore (Field 2006; Schemmann 2007). Very briefly, the origins of this process seem to have been largely European, and can be situated in the period between the completion of the single internal market in 1992 and the 'European Year of Lifelong Learning' in 1996. The general adoption of lifelong learning, which now replaced the term 'lifelong education' in global policy discourse, also involved a turn towards the learner and his or her competences as the centre of attention.

Although many adult education researchers were rather critical of this turn, while others pursued it in ways that had limited potential for cross-national comparison (as in the more ethnographic variants of life narrative research), it was bound to have consequences for what is, after all, an applied discipline. It produced a new burst of institutionalisation; the European Society for Research in the Education of Adults, founded as a rather small organisation in 1991, grew rapidly in size from the mid-1990s, initially in northern Europe; its publications profile also developed, including a number of attempts to start a journal, which finally succeeded in 2010 (Nicoll et al. 2014). Studies of the EU's policies for lifelong learning have proliferated (e.g. Ioannidou 2007; Milana and Holford 2014), as have studies of adult learning in the member states of the EU (e.g. Holford et al. 2008; Saar et al. 2014). The EU's own agencies, notably CEDEFOP, regularly publish comparative studies of specific policies or practices. Adult education research has been stimulated by European sources of funding, most of which required cross-national partnerships. And while adult education has always been a marginal element within the European Commission's research programmes, researchers have found it possible to undertake studies in the context of other European funding streams, particularly the various programmes for educational partnerships.

Yet, if we see the continuing development of institutionalisation at the European level, the shift towards the learner had a decisive impact on the way in which policy bodies started to collect and publish their own data on adult learning. The effects have been particularly pronounced in the field of comparative adult education, where two of the international government bodies in particular – the European Commission (EC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – designed comparative instruments for measuring adult learning that, while clearly subordinate to the collection of information about initial schooling, could then be used to help drive policy.

There is a basic distinction between the two main types of survey undertaken by the OECD and the EC. The EC surveys include the quinquennial 'European Adult Education Survey (AES)', which it uses to help inform progress towards its 2020 goals for education and training (Rosenbladt 2010). For benchmarking purposes, the Commission treats the core indicator for international comparison as the proportion of the adult population (25–64) who participate in education. The EC also undertakes the 'Continuing Vocational Training Survey', also carried out on a five-yearly basis, which particularly focusses on participation in training in enterprises.

The OECD surveys, on the other hand, collect data on participation in learning and also seek to measure adults' levels of competency. The design of the initial 'International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)', conducted in 1994, represented the first attempt to assess literacy skills across entire national populations in ways that were comparable across cultures and languages; it was underpinned partly by a behavioural model of proficiency that defined skills in terms of their functionality in context (Boudard and Jones 2003) and partly by a critique of the limitations of human capital theories (Desjardins 2003). This marked a significant break from earlier OECD measurements based on human capital economics, which measured years of schooling and assessed levels of qualifications gained in order to provide

comparative data. In designing and undertaking IALS and its successor surveys, including the 'Programme of International Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC)', OECD was seeking to move beyond these somewhat rough proxy measures, which it no longer viewed as sufficient in the context of lifelong learning and the knowledge economy, towards direct measures of a bundle of competences (OECD 2013b; Schleicher 2008).

A number of writers argue that the production of comparative data for benchmarking purposes corresponds to new models of public governance, where the state is less concerned than previously with directly managing and delivering provision of public services, and more concerned with securing provision from a variety of actors, and seeking to steer it through the use of data on performance (Grek 2009; Meyer and Benavot 2013; Morgan and Volante 2016). This is particularly important in the European Union, where responsibility for education policy lies with the member states, and common policy goals are therefore pursued through the 'open method of co-ordination' (Ioannidou 2007). In this view, international government agencies, and the OECD and European Commission in particular, have exploited this development by collecting and publishing international data, giving them a 'growing cognitive and normative governance role in the global governance of education' (Morgan and Volante 2016, p. 1). As an OECD author expressed it,

> The growing focus on educational outcomes has resulted in both an explosion of evidence of different kinds and a policy thirst for the results of educational research. There is mounting preoccupation with what happens as a result of educational investments and participation, rather than the primary focus being on these inputs. (OECD 2013a, p. 117)

Explicitly, then, both the OECD and EC approaches to comparative data are intended to inform policy. This in itself does not necessarily reduce their scientific value; moreover the application of comparative adult education research to policy is hardly new. In 1975, the 'International Council for Adult Education' began a discussion paper on the subject with the bold claim that.

> The development of Comparative Studies in Adult Education will contribute significantly:
>
> - to international development and the advancement of education in the developing countries;
> - to a constructive transformation of the learning system in most countries;
> - to improved understanding of themselves and their own culture, as well as of 'foreign' cultures, by millions of individual learners. (ICAE 1974, p. 4)

We can, of course, understand such a statement as partly – or perhaps principally – motivated by a search for legitimation, as well as being an element of the institutionalisation process described above. However, although it shared a policy justification with the surveys undertaken by the OECD and EC, the approach and focus of these earlier studies was very different, and the new policy instruments for data collection and analysis showed a number of new and distinctive features.

First, the new large scale surveys are produced by the staff of international government bodies, who also undertake the design process (involving researchers both as managers and as consultants). Second, their focus is on learners rather than systems; while they can be and are used to pass judgements on adult education systems,

they do so on the basis of information about learners. Third, they involve the measurement and analysis of participation and outcomes rather than inputs. Fourth, they cover only those who are of the normal working ages, and exclude adults who are above and below those limits (usually 20–65). Fifth, although methodological and theoretical considerations are certainly involved in their design, these do not feature in the published accounts, where they are either latent or are reduced to technical issues. Finally, and most obviously, these studies are primarily quantitative, and lend themselves to 'league table' types of comparison that inevitably garner public attention and help to stimulate a wider debate about what factors promote or hinder high achievement. It is also noteworthy that they only address a limited number of countries, are characterised by a lack of methodological innovation, and in disciplinary terms they draw on psychology (both cognitive and behavioural) rather than adult education, though that is hardly new.

The collection and publication of information about adult learning as part of a wider process of using data for governance raises the question of whether such studies as PIAAC or the AES actually comprise comparative adult education research at all. Certainly they represent a very different focus and approach from the type of comparative adult education that developed during the period of institutionalisation, and which exerted influence through university teaching programmes and international conferences. Further, their explicit focus on policy means that the published reports lack any explicit conceptual or methodological discussion, and rarely place the concerns of adult education scholars at their core. The focus on outcomes and participation produces an imbalance, where adult education systems of provision are evaluated only in terms of a narrow and partial definition of their results. However, simply to reject the OECD and EC studies as irrelevant to comparative adult education would be excessive, partly because the underpinning conceptualisation and method are more interesting than may appear from the published reports; and partly because they set out to collect information that can be of value in a comparative perspective. Viewed from this perspective,

> The challenge for international comparative research in adult and continuing education is to configure itself in a disciplinary manner – that is, to use the resulting research options to critically accompany developments but also to identify comparable, substantial research objects for adult and continuing education (e.g. through a secondary analysis of existing data). (Egetenmeyer 2014b, p. 162)

Adopting such a secondary position may be somewhat unpalatable for adult education researchers. However, the role of the isolated individual researcher is questionable in the current context. The widespread internationalisation of research creates challenges of scale, while the shift towards a focus on learning across all areas of the life course creates enormous complexity. In these circumstances, empirical comparative research is shifting towards large teams of investigators with a range of methodological competences.

10.7 Discussion

We have undertaken a chronological analysis of development and change in the field of comparative adult education. As well as examining change over time, we have drawn out a number of significant features for different periods that we view as critical in the development of comparative approaches. Starting with Jullien's early nineteenth century blueprint, which set out a basic framework and purpose for undertaking comparative educational research, we have traced comparative education from its origins in international encounters between adult educators who also happened to be scholars as well as practitioners, through the bridging period between encounters and academic research, and into the phase of institutionalisation, which is now having to face up to the challenge of the major surveys that are designed as instruments of policy. This exercise brings about the question, if the chapter of comparative adult education research is closing?

There are several reasons for posing the question in this provocative way. The main unit of analysis in comparative research has been populations that gather under a particular political territory, whether the nation or a sub-national area. The value of these units is now open to question, with the diminishing importance of the nation state as a category of analytical differentiation as compared with the growing significance of supra-national agents (from intergovernmental organisations through cultural institutions to corporations). Ulrich Beck's critique of 'methodological nationalism' does not assume that national regimes have lost all relevance; but rather that in 'second modernity' they are diminishing in significance in the face of supra-national forces (corporations, climate change, terrorism) (Beck 1997). Yet traditionally comparative adult education research has been founded on the nation state as its main unit of analysis.

In addition, the turn to the learner in the policy domain has been accompanied in our field by the widespread adoption of in-depth studies of learner identities, often drawing on individual life narratives as the main source of evidence. The keywords in such research are then individual experience, subjectivity, and difference. The dominance of qualitative approaches focussed on individual learners, and emphasising the variety of ways in which people make use of learning in their lives, does not lend itself to meaningful comparison between entire populations. Also, in a number of countries the curriculum in the education of adult education professionals has shifted towards a competency base, limiting the scope for the study of comparative adult education.

These developments in turn are connected with the pronounced tendency for adult learning to become deinstitutionalised and distributed, with a marked trend towards the devolution of responsibility for re- and up-skilling, whether towards enterprises or individuals. In a number of publications, Peter Jarvis warned that the pronounced policy focus on lifelong learning carried a significant risk that adult education would become institutionalised and incorporated as a result of its perceived policy significance (Jarvis 2002). In fact, in many countries, precisely the opposite has happened, with considerable fragmentation and diversification of

provision. The traditional focus on systems (usually understood as national systems) has as a result been undermined.

We therefore feel fully justified in posing our question: has the chapter of comparative adult education now closed? And on the surface, we might conclude that the answer to our question is 'yes' – that the classical project of comparing national adult education systems has collapsed under the pressure of so many changes in the external context, in the field of practice, in the community of researchers. And our view is certainly that we are unlikely to be able to return to some sort of 'golden age' of comparative adult education (if, indeed, such a golden age ever existed). We cannot deny that the nation state has frayed and offers a less robust unit of comparison, for example, and we need to respond to that. We therefore offer our theses as a contribution to debate about the future purpose, nature and organisation of comparative adult education.

- The shift from the 'field' of adult education to the 'moorland' of lifelong learning is clearly an obstacle to the tidy categorical approach proposed initially by Marc-Antoine Jullien and subsequently developed by others.
- It appears that crises have often provided a major stimulus for comparative adult education (CAE), from the reaction to war in the 1920s and 1940s to the crisis of western competitiveness in the 1990s and 2000s. In the current context, there are already proposals for comparative studies of adult learning and refugee integration.
- Those who are promoting CAE have also changed, from social movements and adult education movements in the early years through university departments in the period of institutionalisation to international government bodies in the present.
- Research in CAE has undergone a transition in purpose, from being a means of supporting the establishment of the field of study towards a secondary role in the process of governance.
- The hopes invested in CAE and lifelong learning have not led to stronger institutionalisation but rather the reverse, and this poses a challenge to older forms of comparison.
- The erosion of the nation state as a tight 'container' requires us to rethink the units of comparison, possibly moving towards the adoption of a number of different geographical and political units depending on the focus of comparison.
- While academic professionalisation via some form of international research work is far from obsolete, the international dimension is increasingly likely to take the shape of a focus on inter-governmental policy-making.
- As an aside, we note that taken as a whole, the linguistic skills of adult education researchers have rarely if ever been stronger. However, this is largely confined to the learning of fluent international English by researchers from non-English-speaking backgrounds.
- We need to balance acknowledgement of diversity and growing interest in subjectivity and narrative in adult education research on the one hand with the

demands of comparison on the other, for example by adapting Bourdieusian understandings of different social milieu as a way of comparing populations.
- CAE is starting to move out of its established western 'comfort zone', and engage more systematically in the study of systems, practices and cultures that were largely neglected in previous periods. This appears to require different linguistic competence and contextual sensitivities from those which have typically developed in the adult education research communities of Europe and North America, and which are likely to be satisfied only through new research partnerships.
- Major surveys of adults' competences have strengths in terms of scale and their potential for secondary analysis, but they also have clear limitations, such as their inherent tendency to focus on a small number of measurable benchmarks, and to collapse difference into the deviation from the benchmark.
- CAE is faced with a core epistemological challenge. The answer to the question: 'Why bother to research CAE?' is no longer obvious. How can we move on to make a case for CAE that goes beyond learner participation and individual competences?

We published our original reflections largely as an invitation to debate. We are very much encouraged by the subsequent contributions, which show that there is considerable interest in the adult education research community in reflecting on the issues and concerns that we raised, in the same open and questioning spirit as our own comments. The challenge of redefining and developing the field of CAE research in the light of changing conditions – within the research community as within the wider world - remains an important one. Recognizing limitations and tensions is an essential part of that ongoing process.

References

Adick, C. (2008). *Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft: eine Einführung*. Stuttgart.

Beck, U. (1997). *Was ist Globalisierung?* Frankfurt: Kohlhammer Verlag.

Board of Education. (1902a). *Special reports on educational subjects, Vol. 9: Education in Germany*. London: H.M.S.O.

Board of Education. (1902b). *Special reports on educational subjects, Vol.11: Education in the United States of America*. London: H.M.S.O.

Boudard, E., & Jones, S. (2003). The IALS approach to defining and measuring literacy skills. *International Journal of Educational Research, 39*(3), 191–204.

Charters, A. N., & Siddiqui, D. A. (1989). *Comparative adult education: State of the art with annotated resource guide*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Coit, V. (1932). *Some recent developments in German adult education* (Unnumbered Bulletin) (pp. 3–29). London: Arden Pr.

De Maeyer, M. (1997). *The four first international conferences on adult education and their political, social, cultural and educational context*. Hamburg: UNESCO.

Desjardins, R. (2003). Determinants of literacy proficiency: a lifelong-lifewide learning perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research, 39*(3), 205–245.

Edwards, R. (1997). *Changing places? Flexibility, lifelong learning and a learning society*. London: Routledge.

Egetenmeyer, R. (2014a). Im Fokus: International-vergleichende Forschung in der Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung – Zwischen bildungspolitischer Steuerung und disziplinärer Konfiguration. *Report, 37*(2), 15–29.

Egetenmeyer, R. (2014b). International comparative research in adult and continuing education: Between governance and disciplinary configuration. In U. Gartenschläger & E. Hirsch (Eds.), *Adult education in an interconnected world* (pp. 155–167). Bonn: Germany DVV International.

Field, J. (2006). *Lifelong learning and the new educational order*. Stoke: Trentham.

Field, J., Grundström, L., Malewski, M., & Solarczyk-Ambrozik, E. (2000). The internationalisation of lifelong learning – a comparative study of Poland, Britain and Sweden. In A. Bron & M. Schemmann (Eds.), *Language – mobility – identity* (pp. 63–86). Hamburg/London: Münster.

Field, J., Künzel, K., & Schemmann, M. (2016). International comparative adult education. Reflections on theory, methodology and future developments. In M. Schemmann (Eds.), *Intenationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung*, *39*, 109–133.

Friedenthal-Haase, M. (1991). *Erwachsenenbildung im Prozess der Akademisierung*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang.

Gautherin, J. (1993). Marc-Antoine Jullien (Jullien de Paris). *Prospects: Quarterly Review of Comparative Education, 23*(3/4), 757–773.

Grek, S. (2009). Governing by numbers: the 'PISA effect' in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(1), 23–37.

Hohenrodter Bund. (1927). *Die Deutsche Schule für Volksforschung und Erwachsenenbildung. Das erste Jahr*. Stuttgart: Verlag Silberburg.

Holford, J., Riddell, S., Weedon, E., Litjens, J., & Hannan, G. (2008). *Patterns of lifelong learning: Policy and practice in an expanding Europe*. Wien: Lit Verlag.

International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). (1974). *Present status of comparative studies in adult education*. Paris: ICAE.

Ioannidou, J. (2007). A comparative analysis of new governance instruments in the transnational educational space: A shift to knowledge-based instruments? *European Educational Research Journal, 6*(4), 336–347.

Jarvis, P. (2002). Globalization, citizenship, and the education of adults in contemporary European Society. *Compare, 32*(1), 5–19.

Jullien, M.-A. (1817). *Esquisse et vues préliminaires d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation compare*. Paris: Chez L. Colas.

Keane, P. (1985). Internationalism in early adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 4*(3), 229–238.

Kidd, J. R. (1970). Developing a methodology for comparative studies in adult education. *Convergence, 3*(3), 12–26.

Knoll, J. H. (1996). *Internationale Weiterbildung und Erwachsenenbildung – Konzepte, Institutionen, Methoden*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Lauwerys, J. A. (1971). The philosophical approach to comparative education. In J. R. Kidd & C. Bennett (Eds.), *Comparative studies in education, Book one: History and methodology*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

Leirman, W. (1996). Euro-Delphi: a comparative study on the future of adult education in 14 countries between 1993 and 1995. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 15*(2), 125–138.

Liveright, A. A., & Haygood, N. (Eds.). (1968). *The Exeter papers: Report of the first international conference on the comparative study of adult education*. Brookline: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults.

Meyer, H. D., & Benavot, A. (Eds.). (2013). *PISA, Power and policy: The emergence of global educational governance*. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Milana, M., & Holford, J. (2014). *Adult education policy and the European Union: Theoretical and methodological perspectives*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Morgan, C., & Volante, L. (2016). A review of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's international education surveys: Governance, human capital discourses, and policy debates. *Policy Futures in Education, 14*, 775–792.

Nicoll, K., Biesta, G., & Morgan-Klein, B. (2014). *(His)story of the European Society of Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA)*. http://www.esrea.org/esrea_news/1.592233/ESREA_HISTORY_REPORT_SUBMITTED.pdf. Accessed 4 Aug 2016.

OECD. (2013a). *Education today 2013: The OECD perspective*. Paris: OECD.

OECD. (2013b). *The survey of adult skills: Reader's companion*. Paris: OECD.

Peers, R. (1958). *Adult education: A comparative study*. London: Routledge.

Powell, J. W. (1959). Adult education: A comparative study, by Robert Peers. *Comparative Education Review, 3*(2), 36–37.

Reischmann, J., & Bron, M., Jr. (Eds.). (2008). *Comparative adult education 2008: Experiences and examples*. Frankfurt am Main/New York: Peter Lang.

Reischmann, J., Bron, M., Jr., & Jelenc, Z. (Eds.). (1999). *Comparative adult education 1998: The contribution of ISCAE to an emerging field of study*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

Rosenbladt, B. V. (2010). Adult education and training in comparative perspective – Indicators of participation and country profiles. *Statistics in Transition, 11*(3), 465–502.

Saar, E., Ure, O. B., & Holford, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Lifelong learning in Europe: National patterns and challenges*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Schemmann, M. (2007). *Internationale Weiterbildungspolitik und Globalisierung: Orientierungen und Aktivitäten von OECD, EU, UNESCO und Weltbank*. Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

Schemmann, M. (2017). *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung 40*. Köln: Weimar.

Schleicher, A. (2008). PIAAC: A new strategy for assessing adult competences. *International Review of Education, 54*, 627–650.

Schriewer, J. (2013). Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft als Forschungsfeld. In M. Hummrich & S. Rademacher (Eds.), *Kulturvergleich in der qualitativen Forschung* (pp. 15–41). Wiesbaden: Springer.

UNESCO. (1949). *International conference on adult education* (Conference Paper 4/5). Paris.

World Association of Adult Education (WAAE). (1930). *World conference on adult education Cambridge 1929*. London: WAAE.

Zeuner, C. (2009). Internationale Perspektiven der Erwachsenenbildung. In R. Tippelt & A. von Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (pp. 583–599). Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag.

John Field is Emeritus Professor at the University of Stirling.

Klaus Künzel is Emeritus Professor for Education Science and Adult Education at the University of Cologne.

Michael Schemmann is Professor of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Cologne.

Chapter 11
Debating (International) Comparative Adult Education Research: Reflections on Conceptual Clarity and Methodological Challenges

Marcella Milana

11.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on the main arguments pursued by Field, Künzel and Schemmann in Chap. 10. In the first section I interrogate the ways concepts used to frame a particular research field (e.g. Comparative Adult Education) conditions how we construe a field of academic knowledge and its positioning within the adult education research landscape. In so doing, I take a point of departure in what Field, Künzel and Schemmann (see Chap. 10) term as International Comparative Adult Education versus Comparative Adult Education. This has the scope of shedding light on the complexities entrenched in pairing terms and concepts, and especially so in adult education scholarship that adopts a *comparative mind-set* (or assumptions about what 'comparative' means, and what research methods allow for valid, reliable, and significant comparative research). Such considerations contribute to wider reflections on the way research fields, in the Bourdieusian sense of social (and academic) milieus, are deliberately or accidentally construed (cf. among others: Milana et al. 2018; Nylander et al. 2018; Rubenson and Elfert 2015; Schemmann 2017). In extreme synthesis, in this section I argue that to flank one qualifier (international) with another (comparative), as in International Comparative Adult Education, raises problems that are worth attention when performing a cartography of research on the education and learning of adults. The problems with flanking or connecting qualifiers are well known in the academic field of Comparative and International Education, from which International Comparative Adult Education has historically emerged (cf. Chap. 10).

This chapter is a revised version of a previous publication (Milana 2017a)

M. Milana (✉)
Department of Human Sciences, University of Verona, Verona, Italy
e-mail: marcella.milana@univr.it

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_11

Against this backdrop, I proceed by reflecting on the relation between units of analysis and research purposes, and how these are being redefined under changing environments for adult education policy developments. Such changing environments are characterised by the weakening of central governments' power and the strengthening of inter-institutional, international or multi-level governance in education, among other spheres of public interests. Scrutinising such relation provides an opportunity to reflection on the extent to which researchers capture the *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of their time, and how they fit (or do not) into the dominant set of ideas, beliefs and discourses affecting what they study, and the ways they so do. In short, in this section, I concur with Field, Künzel and Schemmann's claim about the need to rethinking the unit*s* (plural) of comparative analysis, and appreciate a number of them in Comparative Adult Education research. At the same time, I argue for territorially bound units of comparative analysis (e.g., countries) to be still relevant, for a number of reasons. In other words, I acknowledge the changing role and modes of central governments' participation in wider governance processes, but this does not necessarily point at a demise of the state, nor at territorially bound units to be dismissed in Comparative Adult Education research. Undoubtedly, the raise of policy-driven research, and the use of large-scale surveys that 'compare' education and learning systems and opportunities, and their outputs, to inform policy-making – in other words, the exploitation of comparative data for the governance of education (Gorur 2017), as Field, Künzel and Schemmann (see Chap. 10) also note, limits (if does not discharge) attention to histories, traditions, cultures, etc. Yet, the central question to me is not whether Comparative Adult Education is a "closed chapter", as they authors blatantly put it, but rather: what are the methodological challenges in carrying out Comparative Adult Education research under the current conditions?

Accordingly, in the last section of this contribution, I touch upon the relation between knowledge creation and empirical research, and point at three apparently trivial matters that constitute significant challenges, and which scholars ought to confront, when researching adult education policy *through* country comparisons today. These are: (1) the positioning of the researcher; (2) the *tertium comparationis,* or the quality that two or more countries have in common, and the criteria for country selection; and (3) the identification of secondary units of analysis that are comparable at the same time as country- and cultural-sensitive. In extreme synthesis, I suggest that the appropriateness of using territorially bound units of analysis remains a core issue, and calls for improving the qualitative methodologies to investigate adult education policy *through* country comparisons.

11.2 Adopting a Comparative Mind-Set to Researching Adult Education

Mapping the developments that a research field has experienced is a crucial step at any point in time, as further theoretical and methodological advances build on existing knowledge. However language is "a moulder of thought" (Sartori 1984, p. 16),

not a simple carrier of cumulated knowledge. For this reason assigning terms to concepts is key when engaging in mapping exercises towards a cartography of research on the education and learning of adults.

In Chap. 10, Field, Künzel and Schemmann provide a definition of International Comparative Adult Education. Such definition draws on Charters' (1988, cited in Charters and Siddiqui 1989) description of Comparative Adult Education as encompassing statements about theory, principles and methodology based on "comparative studies" about adult education; studies that compare matters related to adult education "in two or more situations" but "extend beyond description […] and/or juxtaposition […] of data" with the scope of teasing out "similarities and differences". Charters' then elucidates that the "situations" to be compared can lead to intra-national studies, when the situations being compared are found within a single country, as well as to international studies, when "a topic" is compared in two or more countries.

Building on Charters' definition of Comparative Adult Education, Field, Künzel and Schemmann state that

> As such, studies of *international comparative adult education* need both an international and comparative focus at the same time. In addition, following Egetenmeyer [2015, p. 17], we also subsume studies focussing questions of supra- and transnational character under the heading of international comparative adult education. (Chap. 10, p. 182, emphasis added)

In the above statement, the authors engage in a two-folded process of conceptual adjustment that is at the same time reductive and incremental in nature. It is reductive as intra-national comparisons are left out of the picture, whereas it is incremental as trans-national and supra-national comparisons are drawn into the picture. But, as Radaelli (2002) warns us, incremental approaches are *de facto* "conceptual stretching[s]". In the statement under consideration here, the inter-national quality of a comparative study is taken so as to account also for two additional qualities (i.e., supra-national and trans-national); qualities, however, that remain indeterminate in this statement. This two-folded conceptual adjustment brings with it some complications.

11.2.1 Conceptual Degreeism and a Qualifier's Intrinsic Features but Nonunanimous Interpretation

Firstly, the statement suffers of conceptual "degreeism" (Sartori 1991), in the sense that it no longer distinguishes between two or more qualities (i.e., inter-national, trans-national, supra-national) of comparative studies in adult education, but addresses the entire range of studies that all three qualities (taken together) cover. Two aspects, however, complicate the picture. On the one hand, terms like international, supra-national, and trans-national point at intrinsically distinctive features. On the other hand, the term inter-national, particularly, is far from being unanimously interpreted. For instance, in debating "overlap and ambiguity" between

scholarly communities that mark their field of work and/or belonging within Comparative and International Education through different labels, Bray (2010) notes that 'international' education

> has perhaps an even weaker sense of internal cohesion [when rivalled to comparative education]. Some writers […] use the term international education to describe the work of international schools and such bodies as the International Baccalaureate Organization (for example, Cambridge and Thompson 2004; Hill 2007). Others link the term to promotion of intercultural understanding through student exchanges, internationalisation of textbooks, and operation of international organisations such as United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (for example, Husén 1994). (Ibid, p. 714)

But the term inter-national can also capture the dissemination of educational ideas and institutions from one country to another.[1]

The terms 'trans-national' and 'supra-national' are equally far from building consensus in Comparative and International Education scholarship. Technically, the former refers to things that outspread or operate across national boundaries, whereas the latter captures things that have an influence or power that outdoes national boundaries or governments. Both concepts have been extensively used since the turn of the twenty-first century, especially among scholars researching the effects of globalisation processes on education policy developments, from a political-economic position, and with a strong emphasis on neo-liberal globalisation (see, for instance, Dale 2000, 2006; Dale and Robertson 2009).

A few years back, Moutsios (2010, p. 123, emphasis added) argued that "power in education policy lies in a *transnational* space of economic and political rule", further clarifying that

> […] this space is not inter-national, in the traditional sense, as major policies are no longer made in the context of clearly distinguished relations between nation states; nor is it supra-national, as policies are not made above or beyond nation states. It is a trans-national space, instituted and sustained by nation states, international organisations, inter-state entities and global corporations, and in which policies and discourses cross borders and flow in and out of the nation states' arenas of power […] (Ibid. 2010, p. 122)

In line with this way of thinking, the focus on 'trans-national' phenomena in Comparative and International Education research is mostly evident in education policy studies, and encompasses attention to the role of intergovernmental organisations and transnational corporations and/or advocacy groups. In the meantime, reference to 'supra-national' phenomena has been abandoned, also thanks to an expanded scholarship on so called global education policy (Verger et al. 2013; Ball 2012; Mundy et al. 2016; Rizvi and Lingard 2010). This fully acknowledges,

[1] See for instance, Nordvall 2018, on the spread of Nordic folk high schools in countries as diverse as Japan, US, Bangladesh and Tanzania. Here the authors showcase as the travelling of an educational idea (i.e. the Nordic folk high schools) can travel from a country to another through different dissemination patterns: (1) through migration (i.e., when migrants from a Nordic country establishes a folk high school in the new country of residence), (2) through inspiration (when indigenous people learn about the Nordic concept of folk high schools), and (3) through persuasion (when people from the Nordic countries convince indigenous people to establish in their local contexts folk high schools based on the Nordic model).

as Moutsious (2010) rightly points out, that education policy is not made *above or beyond* nation states or governments. A point I subscribe to and have recently reiterated and argued for, when it comes to both publically-funded adult education (Milana 2017b), and the privatization of much adult education and learning provision today, which results from governmental deregulation (or deliberate lack of regulation).

By contrast, reference to 'supra-national' phenomena is still popular among some adult education scholars engaging in comparative studies (and the teaching of it) (Egetenmeyer 2016; Lima and Guimarães 2011; Lima et al. 2016). Here the term is used to refer to the policy influence exerted by the institutions of the European Union (EU), as if their composition and mode of operation were above and beyond national governments. In reality, national governments are *de facto* represented, and hold differential power in each of these institutions (Klatt 2014).

11.2.2 Flacking vs. Connecting Qualifiers, and Internal Conceptual Coherence

Secondly, flanking the two qualifiers 'international' and 'comparative', instead of linking them through the conjunction 'and' in International Comparative Adult Education, brings further complication to the two-folded conceptual adjustment above mentioned. In fact, the use of 'and' as a function word (as in Comparative *and* International Education) indicates a connection between things or matters that belong to the same class, type or position. It is such recognition of sameness among research fields that allows for these to be 'commonly paired' even if holding 'overlapping identities', as it is the case with international education and comparative education (Bray 2010). Whereas the simple flanking of qualifiers, with no connecting words (e.g. International Comparative Adult Education), bears further complications in that it does not distinguishes between 'international' and 'comparative' as two idiosyncratic qualities of adult education.

Moreover, when Field, Künzel and Schemmann apply an historical perspective to propose "a model of phases to explain the development of comparative adult education research" (Chap. 10, p. 182) one is left with the impression of a double understanding of the term 'international'. One points at the promotion of reciprocal exchanges and understandings about adult education, and its institutions, in different countries, facilitated by cross-national comparisons, organisation of conferences with wide-reaching audiences, and establishment of academic and professional communities operating across national borders. Another points at the leadership of intergovernmental organizations like the EU or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in planning, designing and managing large-scale surveys, analysing data and publishing results, and, last but not least, assisting governments in the systemic reforms of their adult education systems.

Notwithstanding the above, the authors no longer speak of International Comparative Adult Education (emphasis added), but of Comparative Adult Education when they discuss the results of their historical analysis, and offer a number of these "as a contribution to debate about the future purpose, nature and organisation of comparative adult education" (Chap. 10, p. 199).

This, however, creates some ambiguity, and raises an issue of conceptual stability, for at least two reasons. Firstly, Comparative Adult Education, as captured also in Charters' definition, includes more than cross-country comparisons! Secondly, theses derived from observations about the development of International Comparative Adult Education (as framed by the authors), may only partially, if at all, hold the same validity when applied to Comparative Adult Education *tout court*.

Moreover, both the supra-national and trans-national qualities that the authors include in their definition have been only marginally considered in their full depth and breath. For the most, they limit attention to the role of two intergovernmental organisations, the EU and the OECD, in designing, coordinating and publishing results of large-scale cross-national surveys. But this, as several authors argue (e.g. Lawn and Grek 2012; Lawn and Normand 2015), points at more complex infrastructures that have being developed as the result of joint efforts by national governments and other policy actors. Such infrastructures, made of data, benchmarks, indicators and algorithms, tend towards country harmonisation in the collection and interpretation of data on education systems and their outputs, and on people's skills. All of which has the scope of supporting *domestic* or national policy reforms, and this independently on whether these countries are geographically near to each other, like in Europe, or even member states of a given intergovernmental organization (e.g. EU, OECD).

Following these conceptual clarifications, Comparative Adult Education represents an area of research that: (1) Focuses on topics of concern for adult education (but also adult learning), *but* (2) Investigates such topics through comparisons that go beyond simple descriptions and/or juxtaposition of features, thus hold analytical depth aimed at understanding, comprehending or explaining similarities and differences.

Such investigations may compare two or more "situations" (in Charters' words) between or within countries, and hence *might* identify the country, or other functional geographical, cultural or political containers, as their primary unit of analysis. However, such a definition, although faithful to its historical roots, leaves out an important research area that, investigating adult education policy and governance in adult education and learning, does not strictly engage with comparisons by-the-book, yet addresses issues and concerns that are trans-national in nature, and reflect global trends. So in the next section I bring into the debate on Comparative Adult Education also that body of work that acknowledges and researches political globalisation and its effects on adult education and learning policy, systems, provision, and learners' identities, to which I refer to as Global *and* Comparative Adult Education research (Milana 2018).

11.3 Global *and* Comparative Adult Education Research on Policy

Derived from the Latin noun *globus* (through French), 'global' refers first and foremost to a spherical or rounded object (e.g. the earth), and by abstraction to what relates to or encompasses the whole of a system (e.g. the world). Education policy researchers use the term to pinpoint at political, economic and ideological pressures on education worldwide, and this despite variation in national approaches to educational policy (Carnoy 2016). It is in this sense that I use the term. Accordingly, Global *and* Comparative Adult Education Research on policy encompass those studies of worldwide pressures on adult education policy, at times combined with comparisons "in two or more situations", but not necessarily across-countries. As such, as I argue elsewhere (Milana 2018) Global *and* Comparative Adult Education research constitutes a visible (though not well organised) corpus of scholarship that shares: (a) an interest on political decisions affecting adult education and learning; (b) an understanding that adult education and learning opportunities are intrinsically dependent from governmental regulation, deregulation or lack of regulation; and (c) a belief that changes in adult education systems and learning opportunities are moved by compound organised communities and governing systems.

In order to problematise the comparative dimension in Global *and* Comparative Adult Education research on policy, I examined the (overt or hidden) primary units of analysis and scope of 58 scholarly publications (largely articles in international peer-reviewed journals published between 2000 and 2015). A meta-analysis, based on an inductive strategy, led to the identification of four fairly consistent and logical configurations, or research patterns (Milana 2018).

Briefly said, the first pattern captures historical accounts that describe changes and evolutions along a temporal continuum, for instance in the thinking about adult education and learning by the 'big actors' in education governance, like the World Bank, UNESCO, the OECD and the EU (e.g. Lee et al. 2008; Lee and Friedrich 2011). This points at external factors that impact on normative, administrative and financial changes in adult education and learning opportunities in different contexts, but pays little attention to internal (national) factors. The second pattern engages with (horizontal) comparisons of policies by different actors, at a given point in time or through history. It often uses geographical and/or geopolitical lenses to study the complexity of national or inter-national policy, and its practical implications for adult education and learning (e.g. Storan 2010). At times, it studies political actors with a inter-national reach, examines changes in the governance of adult education and learning, assesses the working of specific policy tools, and debates the potential implications for adult education and learning opportunities (e.g. Easton and Samples 2015; Milana 2012; Németh 2015; Tuckett 2015). Such body of work engages with the complexity of global governance in adult education, and the interplay between local-global dynamics, but it has overlooked the potentials for deeper investigations

of within-country power relations, for instance, between levels of government and between state, market and civil society. The third pattern juxtaposes (vertically) policies by intergovernmental organisations with policies by member states to assess convergence and/or divergence and stresses the impact that global policy-relevant events and publications have at either national or regional levels (e.g., Milana 2016; Rubenson and Nesbit 2011). At times it focuses on a political notion introduced and/or sustained by international organizations, and how it concretises within specific national contexts (e.g., Cavaco et al. 2014; Papastamatis and Panitsidou 2009; Plant and Turner 2005). Overall it points at the raising (and falling) of political notions, and their translations into new educational models, services or provisions, yet leaving underexplored questions such as whether, and to what extent, local and national systems of governance influence the working of inter-national and global systems, etc. Finally, the fourth pattern collates contributions that draw on available body of facts or information (i.e., evidence), so as to question and provide counter-evidence for widespread political beliefs (e.g. Ahmed 2010, on the idea that lifelong learning will contrast the effects of the 2009 global financial crisis; Preece 2009, on the ideas that lifelong learning promotes country development, independently from the country's position in the world system).

What is worth noting here, is that the main unit of analysis in all of the above studies is rarely (if at all) the country, but rather *time* (pattern one), *space* (pattern two), or *systems* (pattern three) (Bray et al. 2014); whereas the background or justification for all work falling under the fourth pattern was found in *political beliefs*. Yet in those patterns that best fit the definition of Comparative Adult Education, as researchers engaged in horizontal comparisons (pattern two) or vertical juxtapositions leading to analytical results (pattern three), countries and other territorially bound entities like continents (e.g. Europe), or their sub-national divisions (e.g. administrative regions), were often retained as secondary units of analysis. This should come with no surprise, as territorially bound systems of governance, though not the solely, are still relevant containers for domestic policy developments, as also testified by recent developments in international relations. It may suffix here to consider the triggering of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on March 29, 2017 by the British government, which began the legal process for the country's formal exit (in 2-year time) from the EU.

Further, as Field, Künzel and Schemmann (Chap. 10) appropriately note, since the mid 1990s there has been an increase of large-scale surveys that 'compare' adult education and learning systems and opportunities or their outputs in terms of adult skills across countries in specific regions (e.g. the Adult Education Survey– AES in Europe), or world around (e.g. the International Adult Literacy Survey – IALS in 1994, 1996, 1998, the Adult Literacy and Life Skills -Survey – ALLS in 2003, 2006, 2008, the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Skills – PIAAC in 2008–2013, 2012–2016, 2016-ongoing). The authors now acknowledge a point I had raised in my previous response to their work (Milana 2017a), namely that adult education researchers celebrate all this as, among other reasons, it makes available a rich set of micro data, which can be further interrogated through secondary-data

analyses for different purposes. Further, availability of such sets of data for an ever-expanding number of countries, as it is the case with PIAAC, is equally celebrated for making cross-country comparisons really global, thus going beyond what could else be termed *methodological continentalism*, or research that favours empirical research and knowledge accumulation about countries within a continent (e.g. Europe). Yet, the authors underestimate the dual nature (technical insomuch as political) of large-scale cross-country surveys under the auspices of intergovernmental organisations (Gorur 2017). So, for instance, PIAAC institutionalises the practice of assessing adults' skills at country level, but what a skill is, and how it can be measured and assessed depends on the adopted operational definitions, tests, and psychometric paradigm for its design, analysis, and scoring. Moreover, through a number of techniques (e.g. comparative graphics, score boards, descriptive reports, executive summaries and so on) PIAAC mediates between values (e.g. what count as a 'skilled' adult, population, nation) and perceptions (e.g. whether an adult, population or national is high- or low-skilled).

Obviously in this kind of surveys, the main unit of comparative analysis remains the country for at least two reasons. On the one hand, national governments are those that invest money and research resources and capacities in data gathering within well-defined geographical territories. On the other hand, it is in the interest of intergovernmental organisations, under which auspices such surveys are designed and run, to advice national governments on public reforms of their national education systems insomuch as of their labour, welfare and economic systems.

Additionally, territorially bound units of analysis, even when assumed as primary units, are not necessarily to reproduce traditional systems of governance, as demonstrated by an on-going comparative study on *Policies Supporting Young People in their Life Course* (http://www.young-adulllt.eu/), where a unit of comparison across countries is the 'functional region' (FR):

> a sub-division of territories that result from the spatial differentiation and organisation of social and economic relations rather than to geographical boundaries and particularities or to historical developments […] Thus, a FR can be described as a territorial unit which may be defined as a central place and the surrounding places affected by it defined by business or economic activities […] Even though there are some incompatibilities with territorial and/or administrative regions, in most cases FRs do provide the basis for understanding regional disparities, planning and implementing labour market and economic policies […] FRs which are regarded as autonomous units can take different shapes or types and different inner patterns of interaction, since any kind of spatial flow or interaction can organize this region. (Parreira do Amaral and Kotthoff n.y., n.p.)

In short, territorially bound units of analysis (e.g. countries or any of their territorial subdivisions) still are key for Comparative Adult Education research *for* policy, such as the large-scale surveys under the auspices of intergovernmental organisations; whereas they rarely (if at all) are so for Global and Comparative Adult Education research *on* policy, as defined thus far. Nonetheless, more often than not in these kinds of studies, territorially bound units still represent secondary units of analysis.

11.4 The Challenges of Comparative Adult Education Research on Policy *Through* Country Comparisons

What I have argued thus far supports the observation by Field, Künzel and Schemmann (Chap. 10) that

> The challenge of redefining and developing the field of CAE research in the light of changing conditions – within the research community as within the wider world – remains an important one. Recognizing limitations and tensions is an essential part of that ongoing process. (Chap. 10, p. 200)

No doubt this is an important process within the adult education research community. At the same time, the appropriateness of using territorially bound units of analysis remains a core issue for Global and Comparative Adult Education research on policy, and even more so when researchers engage in empirical studies on the implications that policy developments have for adult education practice. Consequently they are forced to engage with questions such as: How can one best capture the complexities of adult education policy within and above single countries? How can one carry out comparative policy analyses across time, space and culture that recognise the various ideational, material and institutional forms that adult education entails around the world?

In spite of continuous advances in adult education scholarship to conceptualise and theorise its very object of study in terms of learning processes, educational programs, social projects, and political efforts, constant alterations of the wider socio-economic and political conditions for adult education policy developments call for equal (if not stronger) efforts to improve the qualitative methodologies to investigate adult education policy *through* country comparisons.

In fact, we live in times where evidence-based policymaking has turned into the new mantra, as also testified by the report by the European Commission, EACEA and Eurydice (2017) *Support Mechanisms for Evidence-based Policy-Making in Education*. Following Davies (1999, p. 109), the report frames evidence-based policy-making as what "helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence at the heart of policy development and implementation." Among what helps is research-based knowledge, or knowledge produced through *empirical* research – research that is done upon empirical observations or data purposely collected to answer particular questions.

The reader may be familiar with the famous quote by William Edwards Deming (often cited by Andreas Schleicher, the Director for Education and Skills at the OECD): "Without data, you're just another person with an opinion". Deming was an American engineer and statistician; so it is reasonable to assume that the data he refers to were primarily of a numerical nature. Yet, it is a misconception of much research *for* policy to equate statistical data to evidence. As a matter of fact, the term *evidence* indicates "the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid" (Oxford Dictionaries Online, n.p.). But this

does not reduce available facts or information, nor empirical observations or data, to *statistics*.

Independently from the type of data academics handle, in the social sciences knowledge production is neither neutral nor value-free; this is because knowledge production involves not only scientific and technical knowledge, but also a number of judgments and decisions that the researcher makes – either consciously or unconsciously (Flyvebjerg 2001). In either type of empirical research, quantitative as well as qualitative, many judgments and decisions are embedded in the concepts and theories the researcher employs, as well as in the heuristic models and tools s/he uses to make the data 'speak'. But more judgments and decisions are entrenched in the research architecture for the empirical study s/he carries out.

Having acknowledged this, and because of the complexities of adult education policy making today, three methodological challenges are worth special attention when one engages in empirical research on adult education policy *through* qualitative country comparisons.

11.4.1 The Researcher's Positioning

The first methodological challenge the researcher must confront is whether, and to what extent s/he is fully aware of own ontological and epistemological positioning when s/he engages with empirical investigations of adult education policy. But also to what extent s/he is effective in making her/his positioning unambiguous when communicating about her/his research findings.

Most often researchers believe that positioning the self within an acknowledged 'paradigm' (Kuhn 1962) will suffix. But, as Schwandt (2001) observes, although the notion of paradigm offers "convenient conceptual shorthand for pointing to apparently significant differences in methodologies" (Ibid., p. 183), it remains unclear in its very definition, and even more opaque when it comes to clarifying ontological and epistemological matters. In fact, even clear reference to a certain paradigm as acknowledged in the literature within a discipline or scholarly community still raises critical issues in terms of: (1) what such paradigm comprises/does not comprise; hence (2) what beliefs, assumptions, values and methods are or are not shared among researchers committed to different paradigms; and last, but not least, (3) how paradigms are socially and politically constituted (Schwandt 2001, p. 184). Let me illustrate this point with an example. Creswell (2007), likewise Guba and Lincoln (1994), identifies, for instance, socio constructivism as a paradigm. At the same time Creswell (2007) positions critical theory among interpretative communities that are distinguished from (and not clearly related to) paradigms, whereas Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify critical theory as one paradigm. In sum, 'labelling' where one stands, as a researcher, is not enough. But where one stands is key, as it is own positioning that makes the researcher accountable for what s/he does – including accountable for the validity and reliability of the methodologies s/he employs.

For instance, my own position tends towards sociological realism as I understand the real world as made of a combination of the domain of the empirical – or what human beings experience, the domain of the actual – or what happens, and the mechanisms that make things happen (Collier 2011). Yet, the social world at any given point in time, as Archer (2011, p. 67) poses it, is an emergent entity of "myrial agentical "doings" (including thinking, believing and imagining)". So it is people's strategic and intentional actions that re-elaborate past cultural and structural conditions that generate (often unintended) consequences, which produce the observable outcomes we call *facts*.

In a recent study of mine on transformations in adult education public policy (Milana 2017b), one of the observable outcomes of invisible cultural and structural elaboration was the institution of adult education as a subsystem of state education in different countries. As an emergent social reality, its features can be summarised in the existence of real sites where human beings with certain characteristics (e.g. age, educational attainment, literacy capacities) interact with others, supposedly to teach or educate them. But the properties and power of such subsystem varied in the countries under consideration (i.e., Argentina, Brazil, Italy, and the USA), and within each of them; so do the social positioning of the population whose motivation and strategic action aims towards maintenance or change of this sub-system.

In sum, at ontological and epistemological level, I argue for overcoming the impasse of getting caught into a paradigm controversy, or even a paradigm war, yet as a researcher one ought always to clarify her/his worldview of what s/he studies – alias where s/he stands, to the audiences s/he addresses. Too often this is either taken for granted, or treated as an unnecessary addendum that may as well be silenced without consequences.

11.4.2 Validating the Selection of Countries

The second methodological challenge a researcher must confront is whether, and at which conditions, are country comparisons relevant to investigate adult education policy. In other words, if one acknowledges the changing environments for adult education policy developments (as mentioned in the introduction), as characterised by the weakening of central governments power and the strengthening of inter-institutional, international or multi-level governance, what is the *tertium comparationis?*

For instance, in the above-mentioned study on transformations in public adult education policy (Milana 2017b), both Brazil and Argentina have public education systems that, at national level, recognise adult education as a distinct teaching modality across different types and levels of formal education. In Italy, even if not lawfully defined as such, only adult basic and secondary education (i.e., basic literacy and education up to secondary school levels for out-of-school youth and

adults) hold a similar status. By contrast, in the USA, where no centralised education system exists, adult education is by federal law a social service catering to certain populations. Further, when it comes to its provision, adult basic and secondary education may be under the aegis of state-run schools, like in Italy, municipal-run educational institutions, as in the USA, or both state- and municipal-run schools and a number of other educational settings, in partnerships with civil society organisations, and the workers' unions, like in Brazil and Argentina. Yet what made the policies of these countries *comparable* was the balance between, on the one hand, the degree to which these countries were similar or different, and on the one hand, the type of resemblance or discrepancy they showcased.

Now, the problem is that when one engages in multi-sited research, both qualities, namely the degree and the type of likeness and unlikeness, is what turn truly visible through comparisons, so it can be fully apprehended only *ex post*; whereas what makes this knowledge valid and worthwhile pursing precedes the analyses, because it is concerned with what the researchers decides to include (or not to include) *ex ante* in her/his study. There is a paradox here.

Further complicating the picture is that when one applies for research funding s/he ought to decide *ex ante* the countries to be included in a study, and is asked to justify in details the reasons behind such decision.

In the above-mentioned study (Milana 2017b), for instance, the *tertium comparationis* or comparable quality across countries as diverse as Argentina, Brazil, Italy, and the USA, was the state's direct intervention in adult education at the time of carrying out the study, notwithstanding the form through which it materialised, namely through funding schemes with a start and an end-date to which individual states (Brazil) or provinces (Argentina) could voluntarily partake, or state-wide massive structural reforms that left no discretionary decisions for the administrative powers operating at either regional (Italy) or urban (USA) scales. But these countries were carefully selected so as to showcase both likeness and unlikeness in relation to a number of criteria, which were consistent with my worldviews on adult education policy. Thus, for instance, I was concerned with the geopolitical positioning of a country, its level of economic development and its international recognition as a major economy; and the country's long-term membership of intergovernmental organisations that contribute to policy developments in adult education (e.g. the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the European Union, the Organisation of Ibero-American States). At the same time, I was equally concerned with the state form and administrative organisation of a country, the degree of institutionalisation of public adult education, the literacy level of the country's populations; and, in the case of Latin America, also with the country's colonial history (e.g. whether it had been under Spanish or Portuguese power).

In sum, when a researcher engages in country comparisons opportunistic reasons may at times be inescapable, but it is what constitute the *tertium comparationis*, as well as the criteria for country selection, that still allow for valid and significant research on adult education policy *through* qualitative country comparisons.

11.4.3 Comparing Country- and Cultural-Sensitive Units of Analysis

Again, if one acknowledges the changing environments for adult education policy developments, the third methodological challenge one must confront is what constitutes secondary units of analysis, and to which extent are these units 'comparable', yet in ways that preserve 'etic' connotations, namely that safeguard the cultural characterisation of the phenomena being studied (Pike 1967).

Adult education as a habitual or established practice has developed over centuries worldwide; thus, national-specific histories are inherently entangled in wider social, political and cultural phenomena, and the changes experienced by individual countries and, in some cases, entire regions. This accounts for both similarities as well as differences in pedagogical traditions that coexist within, and most evidently across, countries. However, with the quantification of facts or information that occurs when one reduces phenomenological complexity, and the obsession with 'data reduction', large and thick body of knowledge is often trivialised.

When one engages in multi-sited research both country- and culture-specific knowledge is needed for the identification of secondary units of analysis that allow 'thick' cross-country comparisons. Similarly to the country selection, however, truly valid and significant comparisons require attentiveness to country and culture-specific knowledge, which is acquired *through* research.

For example, in the above-mentioned study (Milana 2017b), and despite definitional problems, the main unit of analysis was adult basic and secondary education, although this kind of public provision is differently defined by law, it takes up different forms, and is under the aegis of different stakeholders. Hence in order to investigate adult basic and secondary education as an emergent and observable reality in each of the countries under consideration, I first had to zoom in, by assuming an etic (or insider) perspective, to discover which practice was a local (e.g. country-specific) instance of adult basic and secondary education. Only building on this knowledge it was then possible to zoom out, by assuming an emic (or outsider) perspective, that requires a certain degree of abstraction (cf. Crossley et al. 2016), but is equally essential for the identification of secondary units of analysis.

So the prospects to identifying secondary units of analysis that are comparable at the same time as country- and culture-sensitive depend on the researcher's capacity to engage in a constant dance between etic and emic perspectives; a capacity that is highly dependent on at least two factors: the researchers physical placement or displacement, and her/his degree of familiarity or unfamiliarity with indigenous knowledge.

Referring back of the above-mentioned study (Milana 2017b) as an example, my knowledge about the Argentinean, Brazilian, Northern American and Italian adult education systems, and their urban concretisations, were gained through access to formalised legal descriptors, people's oral or written accounts, on-site interactions, class observations, and field notes from the locations in which these systems materialise, an so on. However, my physical placement (or displacement)

as well as degree of familiarity (or unfamiliarity) with indigenous linguistic, historical and cultural knowledge relativised my comprehension of the facts subject to knowledge acquisition. For instance, I was born and raised in Italy, but I had been living abroad and using English as my working language for several years at the time of starting this study. Further, I mastered Spanish as a second language but had just engaged with the learning of Brazilian Portuguese. While carrying out the study, I relocated to the USA, from where I travelled time an again to Argentina and Brazil. Then I returned to Europe, and went back and forth between Denmark and Italy. All of this exposed me to different cultural and linguistic interpretations of adult education, gave me differential access to relevant scientific literature, and made me interact with diverse scientific and professional communities. Whenever possible, I discussed theories, concepts and the adult education practices I had been observing with both insiders and outsiders of the sub-systems under investigation, and with insiders and outsiders of the different geopolitical and socio-cultural territories I was constantly, literally, border crossing. Hence, I joined in and out various social worlds, with their scientific conceptualisations, languages and artefacts that (either consciously or unconsciously) have influenced both my empirical access to adult education policy and the abstractions I used to make sense of it.

Briefly put it, when one studies adult education policy *through* qualitative country comparisons, both factors (i.e. physical placement/displacement, and familiarity/unfamiliarity with indigenous knowledge) should be a matter of concern first and foremost at the time of *designing* the study. But preoccupation with both factors should never leave the researcher *throughout fieldwork*… and beyond.

11.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have argued in favour of using Comparative Adult Education to define that area of research that centres attention on topics of concern for adult education (and learning) through comparisons, which uses analytical depth to understand, comprehend or explain similarities and differences in two or more "situations", between or within countries. Thus those studies that assume the country as their main unit of comparative analysis represent a sub-area of Comparative Adult Education research, and may be better addressed as cross-country comparisons in adult education.

But, I also argued that the above definition of Comparative Adult Education does not apply well enough to all those studies that address trans-national issues and concerns, by researching policy and governance in adult education and learning, and which do not necessarily run by-the-book comparisons. Thus, I suggested that Global *and* Comparative Adult Education Research might be a most suitable label for such kind of policy studies that, although assuming a comparative mind-set, tend towards making time, space or systems (if not political beliefs) their may units of analysis.

Now, when we consider the full breath and depth of global *and* comparative adult education studies that differently acknowledge political globalisation, we are thus forced to rethinking the multiplicity of unit*s* of comparative analysis that can help such endeavour.

While the primary units of analysis may go well beyond territorially bound units like the country or any of its territorial sub-division, these remains nonetheless relevant secondary units of analysis. However, to engage in Comparative Adult Education research on policy *through* country comparisons do raise methodological challenges that need to be carefully considered rather than trivialised. In addition to territorially bound units reflecting traditional systems of governance, we are forced to think of alternative sub-divisions of the territories under consideration, so as to account also spatial relations that go beyond governmental ones, such as social and economic relations.

So, in response to Field, Künzel and Schemmann's question "has the chapter of comparative adult education now closed? (Chap. 10, p. 199) my short answer is: No. We should rather conceive the present as a 'transformation' phase, where the institutionalisation of Comparative Adult Education has substantially abandoned its 'international' dimension in favour of a trans-national one, and for this reason I suggest here Global *and* Comparative Adult Education Research as perhaps better capturing the multiplicity of research trends and traditions that co-exist today, and which:

- Adopt a comparative perspective or mind-set, yet are not confined to comparing countries (as, for instance, in the 'reductive' interpretation of cross-country large scale surveys), or consider its very object of study (adult education and learning) as what results of things that have an influence or power that outdoes national boundaries or governments (cf. my earlier critique of the term 'supra-national', when subsumed in International Comparative Adult Education research);
- Are faithful to Charters' focus on comparing "situations", yet such situations are differently conceptualised and framed so as to adapt to the study of adult education and learning as a social phenomenon, which is itself in transition.

To conclude, today Comparative Adult Education research done within the academia and by independent researchers and/or research institutes co-exists with cross-country comparisons in adult education under the aegis of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations and their statistical agencies, as well as policy concultancy firms, among other interests groups. Yet, under this condition, in response to Field, Künzel and Schemmann's final query: "How can we move on to make a case for CAE that goes beyond learner participation and individual competences?" (Chap. 10, p. 200) my answer is: By keeping advancing, both theoretically and methodologically. Yet to take advantage of such opportunities, adult education researchers shall escape the trap of either imposing or rejecting the country as their main unit of comparative analysis. Rather we shall engage in deeper considerations of what unit*s* of analysis would best serve comparative research aspirations, clarify their hierarchical order, and how they relate to each others. Moreover, both qualitative and quantitative researchers should recognise and make it recogni-

sable to other: where they stand (e.g. the researcher's positioning), why they (still) think meaningful comparing countries, and specifically the once they do compare (e.g. validating the selection of countries), and how they secure that the analysis they perform *through* country comparisons are country- and cultural-sensitive.

References

Ahmed, M. (2010). Economic dimensions of sustainable development, the fight against poverty and educational responses. *International Review of Education, 56*, 235–253.

Archer, M. S. (2011). Morphogenesis: Realism's explanatory framework. In A. Maccarini, E. Morandi, & R. Prandini (Eds.), *Sociological realism* (pp. 59–94). London: Routledge.

Ball, S. (2012). *Global Education Inc.: Policy networks and edu-business*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Bray, M. (2010). Comparative education and international education in the history of compare: Boundaries, overlaps and ambiguities. *Compare, 40*(6), 711–725.

Bray, M., Adamson, B., & Mason, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Comparative education research: Approaches and methods*. Hong Kong: Springer.

Cambridge, J., & Thompson, J. (2004). Internationalism and globalization as contexts for international education. *Compare, 34*(2), 161–175.

Carnoy, M. (2016). Educational policies in the face of globalization: Whither the nation state? In K. Mundy, A. Green, B. Lingard, & A. Verger (Eds.), *Handbook of global education policy* (pp. 27–42). Chichester/Malden: Wiley Blackwell.

Cavaco, C., Lafont, P., & Pariat, M. (2014). Policies of adult education in Portugal and France: The European Agenda of validation of non-formal and informal learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(3), 343–361.

Charters, A. N., & Siddiqui, D. A. (1989). *Comparative adult education: State of the art with annotated resource guide*. Toronto: University of British Columbia.

Collier, A. (2011). The social ontology of critical realism. In A. Maccarini, E. Morandi, & R. Prandini (Eds.), *Sociological realism* (pp. 3–20). London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Crossley, M., Arthur, L., & McNess, E. (2016). *Revisiting insider-outsider research in comparative and international education*. Oxford: Symposium Books.

Dale, R. (2000). Globalisation and education: Demonstrating a 'common world education culture' or locating a 'globally structured educational agenda. *Educational Theory, 50*(4), 427–448.

Dale, R. (2006). Policy relationships between supranational and national scales; imposition/resistance or parallel universe? In R. Rinne, J. Kallo, & J. (Eds.), *Supranational regimes and national education policies – Encountering challenge* (pp. 27–49). Finnish Educational Research Association: Turku.

Dale, R., & Robertson, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Globalisation and Europeanisation in education*. Didcot: Symposium.

Davies, P. (1999). What is evidence-based education? *British Journal of Educational Studies, 47*(2), 108–121.

Easton, P., & Samples, M. (2015). Adult education at the World Bank: Poor cousin or key stakeholder? In M. Milana & T. Nesbit (Eds.), *Global perspectives on adult education and learning policy* (pp. 194–206). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Egetenmeyer, R. (2015). International comparative research in adult and continuing education: Between governance and disciplinary configuration. In U. Gartenschlaeger & E. Hirsch (Eds.), *Adult education in an interconnected world. Cooperation in lifelong learning for sus-*

tainable development. Festschrift in honour of Heribert Hinzen (pp. 155–167). Bonn: DVV International.

Egetenmeyer, R. (Ed.). (2016). *Adult education and lifelong learning in Europe and beyond. Comparative perspectives from the 2015 Würzburg Winter School*. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice. (2017). *Support mechanisms for evidence-based policy – Making in education. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Flyvebjerg, B. (2001). *Making social science matter: Why social enquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gorur, R. (2017). Towards productive critique of large-scale comparisons in education. *Critical Studies in Education, 58*(3), 341–355.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hill, I. (2007). International education as developed by the international baccalaureate organization. In M. Hayden, J. Levy, & J. Thompson (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of research in international education* (pp. 25–37). London: Sage.

Husén, T. (1994). International education. In T. Husén & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of education* (pp. 2972–2978). Oxford: Pergamon.

Klatt, M. (2014). Understanding the European Union and its political power. In M. Milana & J. Holford (Eds.), *Adult education policy and the European Union* (pp. 53–71). Rotterdam: Sense.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawn, M., & Grek, S. (2012). *Europeanizing education: Governing a new policy space*. Oxford: Symposium.

Lawn, M., & Normand, R. (Eds.). (2015). *Shaping of European education interdisciplinary approaches*. London: Routledge.

Lee, M., & Friedrich, T. (2011). Ideologies continuously reaffirmed, subtly accommodated, obviously missing, and fallaciously contested in Unesco's lifelong learning policy. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 30*(2), 151–169.

Lee, M., Thayer, T., & Madyun, N. (2008). The evolution of the European Union's lifelong learning policies: An institutional learning perspective. *Comparative Education, 44*(4), 445–463.

Lima, L. C., & Guimarães, P. (2011). *European strategies of lifelong learning: A critical introduction*. Opladen & Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich.

Lima, L. C., Guimarães, P., & Thouma, N. (2016). Adult learning and education policies in Germany, Portugal and Sweden: An analysis of national reports to Confintea VI. In R. Egetenmeyer & R. (Eds.), *Adult education and lifelong learning in Europe and beyond – Comparative perspectives from the 2015 Würzburg Winter School* (pp. 29–66). Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang.

Milana, M. (2012). Political globalization and the shift from adult education to lifelong learning. *RELA – The European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 3*(2), 103–117.

Milana, M. (2016). Global polity in adult education and UNESCO: Landmarking, brokering, and framing policy. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 14*(2), 203–226.

Milana, M. (2017a). Global and comparative adult education research: A response to John Field, Klaus Künzel and Michael Schemmann. *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung – International Yearbook of Adult Education, 39*, 13–27.

Milana, M. (2017b). *Global networks, local actions: Rethinking adult education policy in the 21st century*. Milton Park/Abingdon: Routledge.

Milana, M. (2018). Research patterns in comparative and global policy studies on adult education. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 421–444). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Milana, M., Webb, S., Holford, J., Waller, R., & Jarvis, P. (Eds.). (2018). *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moutsios, S. (2010). Power, politics and transnational policy-making in education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 8*(1), 121–141.

Mundy, K. E., Green, A., Lingard, B., & Verger, A. (2016). *The handbook of global education policy*. Chichester/Malden: Wiley Blackwell.

Németh, B. (2015). Lifelong learning for all adults? A new concept for the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization – Limits and opportunities for a changing intergovernmental organization. In M. Milana & T. Nesbit (Eds.), *Global perspectives on adult education and learning policy* (pp. 165–178). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nordvall, H. (2018). The global spread of the Nordic folk high school idea. In M. Milana, S. Webb, J. Holford, R. Waller, & P. Jarvis (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook on adult and lifelong education and learning* (pp. 721–735). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nylander, E., Österlund, L., & Fejes, A. (2018). Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom. *Vocations and Learning, 11*(1), 113–131.

Papastamatis, A., & Panitsidou, E. (2009). The aspect of 'accessibility' in the light of European lifelong learning strategies: Adult education centres – A case study. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 28*(3), 335–351.

Parreira do Amaral, M., & Kotthoff, H.-G.. (n.y.). *Functional region*. Http://Www.Young-Adulllt.Eu/Glossary/Listview.Php?We_Objectid=196. Retrieved on 1st April 2017.

Pike, K. L. (1967). *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (2nd ed.). Boston: De Gruyter Mouton.

Plant, P., & Turner, B. (2005). Getting closer: Workplace guidance for lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 24*(2), 123–135.

Preece, J. (2009). Lifelong learning and development: A perspective from the 'South'. *Compare, 39*(5), 585–599.

Radaelli, C. (2002). The domestic impact of European Union public policy: Notes on concepts, methods, and the challenge of empirical research. *Politique Européenne, 5*(1), 105–136.

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2010). *Globalizing education policy*. New York: Routledge.

Rubenson, K., & Elfert, M. (2015). Adult education research: Exploring an increasingly fragmented map. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 6*(2), 125–138.

Rubenson, K., & Nesbit, T. (2011). Confintea VI from a Canadian perspective. *International Review of Education, 57*(1-2), 127–143.

Sartori, G. (1984). *Social science concepts: A systematic analysis*. Beverley Hills: Sage publication.

Sartori, G. (1991). Comparing and miscomparing. *Journal of Theoretical Politics, 3*(3), 243–257.

Schemmann, M. (Ed.). (2017). *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung – International yearbook of adult education* (Vol. 40). Cologne: University of Cologne.

Schwandt, T. A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Storan, J. (2010). Government's regional policy and its shaping of widening participation practice in England. In N. Longworth & M. Osborne (Eds.), *Perspectives on learning cities and regions: Policy, practice, and participation* (pp. 307–322). Leicester: NIACE.

Tuckett, A. (2015). The international council for adult education and adult learning policy – Addressing the gap between rhetoric and practice. In M. Milana & T. Nesbit (Eds.), *Global perspectives on adult education and learning policy* (pp. 221–236). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Verger, A., Novelli, M., & Altinyelken, H. K. (2013). *Global education policy and international development*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Chapter 12
A Rejoinder on the Debate on International Comparative Adult Education Research

John Field, Klaus Künzel, and Michael Schemmann

In response to our chapter in this book (Chap. 10), Marcella Milana restates the significance of country comparison in adult education research. In developing this position she highlights three aspects of her own chapter (Chap. 11), which we gladly comment on, both as a way of completing the debate within this volume, and also of filling in the picture that this debate present of the current state-of-the-art of International Comparative Adult Education Research as well of as its future tasks.

Marcella Milana's response contains much with which we agree, and we are grateful for the constructive and open way in which she engages with our chapter (Chap. 10). However, before we go on to explore the overall question of the future of International Comparative Adult Education research, we want to return briefly to our starting point. In our chapter we chose to state our central thesis in the form of a deliberately provocatively phrased question: "Is this chapter of comparative adult education research now closing?". A more understated version of our argument would be to say that international comparative research in our field is facing multiple challenges, and in these circumstances we need a healthy debate over the nature, purpose and focus of such studies.

While we find Milana's response to be helpful and thought-provoking, we are far from convinced that she has answered or contradicted our central contention. The first point Milana makes refers to the way in which the research field is framed and how it is addressed. She picks up on our terminology, pointing out that the chosen way of flanking two qualifiers as in "International Comparative Adult Education" brings about problems, especially when trying to give an overview of research in adult education. Second, she discusses the relationship between units of analysis

J. Field (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland, UK
e-mail: john.field@stir.ac.uk

K. Künzel · M. Schemmann
Department Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaften, Universität zu Köln, Köln, Germany

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_12

and the research purpose, spelling out what this means in terms of methodological challenges. Third, she refers to the relation between knowledge creation and empirical research when researching educational policy by method of country comparisons. In the following we outline and comment on each of these three points, and relate them to our discussion of the current state of international and comparative adult education research.

First, then, is the matter of terminology – though, as ever, and particularly in an international and multilingual context, language is never 'simply language'. Marcella Milana notes our use of the two related qualifiers as in "International Comparative Adult Education", and starts her argument by pointing out that – following Sartori – language is a "moulder of thought" (Sartori 1984, 16) and thus assigning terms and naming fields are not to be neglected. Our definition, she suggests, suffers from "conceptual degreeism", and rather than distinguishing international, transnational, and supra-national, with all their varying complexities and differing contributions, we have simplified and flattened the distinction; in addition, we fail to acknowledge the full gamut of intergovernmental organisations who are active in the field.

In our article, we followed the definition of Charters and Siddqui (Charters and Siddiqui 1989) who made clear that by using the term International Comparative Adult Education, studies classified under this term had to be both international and comparative at the same time. Further, we then subsumed studies of a supra- and transnational character under the same heading. Charters and Siddiqui's work, published by the International Council for Adult Education, is frequently regarded as a standard point of reference, and we intentionally cited it as such. Far from being uncritical of their approach, we treated it as a case of what we wished to problematize; perhaps we should have made it clearer that newer approaches are now required.

Be that as it may, the problem Milana identifies is that such a definition risks excluding research that investigates adult education policies and governance which are transnational in character and deflects attention from practices and frameworks that reflect global trends. In its place Milana suggests using the term "Global and Comparative Adult Education Research" as encompassing "… those studies of worldwide pressure on adult education policy, at times combined with comparison 'in two or more situations', but not necessarily across countries" (Chap. 11, p. 209).

We share her concern that such issues should be addressed, and indeed this is one reason why we wondered whether international and comparative research was reaching a turning point. Yet while Milana rightly enlarges the field of comparative adult education research and demands for more precision, the overall question that we put is not answered. We still believe that we need a vigorous discussion about the future of international comparative adult education, or rather in Milana's terms about global and comparative adult education.

Second, Milana considers the units of analysis that are or might be the appropriate focus of global and comparative adult education research. While Milana argues for rethinking the units of comparative analysis, she makes clear that territorially bound units of comparative analysis are still relevant. Even though governments and research are more and more involved in processes of governance in education,

Milana underlines that territorial units are still of importance at least for certain kind of research questions. We note, but will not develop the point at this stage, the fact that comparative research may involve territorial units that span national borders, transgress national borders, or – as with some linguistic groupings – simply do not coincide with them.

We largely share Milana's understanding of the role of international bodies in governance and in research in adult education. She has written widely on this process, and indeed we cited her research in our own chapter. The central point in this argument is the fact that research is part of governance and plays an important role in setting agendas and pushing through certain educational policies. To our mind, this in itself makes a strong case for a wider debate on the purpose of international comparative research; in particular it suggests that there should be greater clarity over the distinction between studies undertaken for different purposes. This does not, though, in itself provide an answer to our main question.

Finally, Milana asks about the relation between knowledge creation and empirical research when researching educational policy through country comparison. She brings to the fore three aspects that need consideration. As a first methodological challenge she points to the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. Secondly, she hints to the necessity to validate the selection of countries; in essence, she asks about the tertium comparationis. Finally, she asks about country- and cultural sensitive units of analysis. Basically, the question as to which extent the chosen units are comparable needs to be addressed.

We accept her suggestion that we may have underplayed the methodological and conceptual sophistication of recent intergovernmental studies of adult education. These surveys are a relatively recent phenomenon, and while some may either take them at face value or reject them out of hand, more open-minded researchers are still digesting their full significance. We welcome her agreement that we have identified key weaknesses in the current state of international (global) comparative adult education research, and it would be churlish to discount her suggestion (or hope) that rather than the closing of a chapter, what we are now seeing is a process of conceptual methodological transition, and her proposals here are constructive ones. Yet once more, while these points merit our consideration and are quality criteria for excellent international comparative studies in adult education, they do not answer our central question.

References

Charters, A., & Siddiqui, D. A. (1989). *Comparative adult education: State of the art with annotated resource guide*. Toronto: International Council for Adult Education.

Sartori, G. (1984). *Social science concepts: A systematic analysis*. Beverley Hills: Sage.

Part V
Looking Ahead

Chapter 13
The Research Field of Adult Education and Learning: Widening the Field

Erik Nylander and Andreas Fejes

13.1 Introduction

We began this book by launching a series of questions on what the adult education and learning research field looks like, how it has emerged historically and how it is transformed through contemporary policy and research practice. The chapters have, in different ways, contributed to answering these questions by case studies, as well as by looking at the transnational power relations across countries. In the debate on comparative adult education research finalising this book, Field, Künzel and Schemmann posed the rather provocative question of whether the chapter of international comparative adult education has now come to a close (see Chap. 10). We would argue that such research is still alive and possible to carry out, but that the conditions under which research is conducted also need to be taken into serious consideration. In the various contributions to this book, several chapters show how a comparative perspective on the field of research can contribute to our understanding of how knowledge about adult education and learning is produced. They also demonstrate how this knowledge is stratified across regional and national borders, as well as between individual scholars positioned in relation to one another.

This book clearly centres on the scholarship of adult education and learning that has been conducted in the dominant Northern European and North American research communities. As such, it should not be read as an effort to summon the global "state-of-the-art" within adult educational research, nor do we answer all problems raised in the book. While some questions have been addressed, others have emerged. In this final chapter of the book, we will revisit some of these issues and offer a synthesis based on what we have learned.

E. Nylander (✉) · A. Fejes
Department of Behavioural Sciences & Learning, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden
e-mail: erik.nylander@liu.se

A. Fejes, E. Nylander (eds.), *Mapping out the Research Field of Adult Education and Learning*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 24,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-10946-2_13

The various chapters of the book illustrate how the field of adult education and learning is biased in terms of who is publishing as well as who is picked up and deemed worthy to cite. These results are not entirely surprising, especially when considering the sample on which most of the analyses in this book are based. As English has established itself as the *lingua franca* of most transnationally oriented research communication – since the post-Second World War era – we have come to focus on publications in the English language, and foremost those published in research journals indexed and ordered in large-scale databases (Scopus and Web of Science). As such, much of the research in the field as it presents itself to scholars all over the world is omitted. This is probably a particularly striking feature for scholars from larger countries outside the anglophone universe, as they tend to entertain their own domestic publication systems that make them less dependent on international scholarly recognition, as compared to researchers from smaller countries (Heilbron and Gingras 2018). In a way, the dominance that English-speaking scholars from western countries exercise can be seen as a logical consequence of the current production system. They are big enough to not be incentivised to give scholarly recognition to researchers in the semi-centre or global periphery, while scholars positioned in smaller and more peripheral countries are more dependent on international scholarly recognition, which in many cases are equated with entries and citations in certain English language peer-reviewed journals.

By writing this book, choosing to focus on English language journals and concluding that it is an uneven playing field, we are in a way ourselves also contributing to further reproduce the biases that we aim to criticise. Take, for example, the content of this book. Not only have we limited the samples in our analyses to English language publication outlets, we also have a limitation in terms of who has been invited to contribute. The authors in the book mostly represent North European countries (Sweden, Germany, UK, Scotland), albeit with some contributors from Italy and Canada. In one way, this book differs from earlier publications on the research field, as they have previously been authored predominantly by scholars from the US (see Chaps. 1 and 2). However, in this book, we not only leave out US-based authors, but also authors from large parts of Europe and, not least, authors from larger continents such as Asia, Africa and Latin America.[1] In order for future endeavours that compare research on the field of adult education and learning to be 'international' in any meaningful way, we believe it is important to overcome both eurocentrism as well as the tendency to equate international scholarly recognition exclusively with British and North American publication outlets.

[1] This could partly be explained by us, as editors, selecting contributions which were already available and published in the English language, based on empirical research on how the field is constituted. Such selection is also based on who we know, i.e. research we have encountered (and thus we are limited to research published in English or any of the Scandinavian languages).

13.2 Mapping Out the Field

Mindful of these limitations, the chapters provided in this book, nevertheless, provide strong empirical evidence of how the field of adult education and learning is shaped today. Overall, what can be concluded from the chapters is that the field, in terms of scholarship, is dominated by authors from four anglophone countries: Australia, Canada, UK and US. This pattern of geopolitical domination emerges as pivotal both when investigating the share of articles published by authors from any of these countries in the main international journals, as well as when looking at who is picked up and cited by others (see Chaps. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9). There is also male dominance in the citation patterns prevalent in the field, whereby male authors, to a much higher degree than their female counterparts, are being used as "standard references" (see Chaps. 4 and 5) despite there being more contributions from female authors. In terms of methodological approaches, the field can be characterised as rather uniform, as there is near total dominance of qualitative studies (see Chaps. 2, 7, 8 and 9). Theoretically, three perspectives have gained particular prominence and traction: socio-cultural perspectives, critical pedagogy and poststructuralism.

The various analyses presented in this book also clearly illustrate how the adult education and learning research field is rather loose and weakly defined. Communication across its leading journals and national borders is scarce and research in the field is borrowing extensively from neighbouring fields and disciplines such as sociology, social psychology and organisational studies. In a bibliometric sense, this open and inclusive feature of adult education and learning as a research field also makes it quite similar to sociology in that it combines disciplinary openness with strong national ramifications. This can be put in contrast with research fields, such as physics, that have strong disciplinary closure but are much more internationally-oriented in how they publish and cite other colleagues (Heilbron and Gingras 2018; Nespor 1996).

More specifically, we can see these field characteristics embodied in the bibliographic networks of the specific journals that have been scrutinised in this book (see Chap. 5). The citation practices that are most distinguishable lead to "gurus" that do not, themselves, contribute to the field (i.e. disciplinary openness) or are directed to scholars located in the same country as the editors of that specific journal, if not to the editors themselves (i.e. provincialism). Further, these standard references are mostly authored by (dead) men outside of the field, while the few standard references to female authors are actually scholars that themselves publish within the field (see Chap. 5). Aside from gurus and domestic scholars, the largest group of authors picked up and cited by others in these journals appear to be those who work in countries with close linguistic and historical connections to the country in which the journal is published.[2] Thus, the communication in these journals is to a high

[2] This is especially the case with the North American journal, AEQ. The analysis in Chap. 6 illustrates how US scholars to, a less extent, publish in the other journals in the field (located in the UK and Australia) and how AEQ contains few publications by authors from these other two anglophone countries (or any other country for that matter). Secondly, there is little communication across the journals, not only in terms of authorship, but also in terms of citations.

extent national, to some extent transnational and to a very limited extent "international" or "global".

As educational systems and adult learning environments differ greatly across countries, the challange to develop into a more globally-oriented research field is inscribed in the very object that is studied, such as the idiosyncratic labelling of educational forms and types. However, these differences are arguably more about nomenclature than in their functions. The prominent roles that editors have in their own journals also bear witness to a "weak" scientific field in Bourdieu's (1997) sense of this term. According to his model of scientific production, if adult education and learning constituted a stronger research field, the implicit valuation procedures would not be as strongly linked to those very individuals who hold positions of administrative power and gatekeeping in each of the main journals. Instead, that collegial recognition would have been directed to those with most scientific capital – in a "purer" sense of this word. Those editors who now feel compelled to object that administrative power and scientific excellence happen to be heavily intertwined in this case would have to explain why these positions of collegial consecration are typically strongest in the particular journal they edit, while rarely recurring, with quite the same grandeur, in other journals in the field.

13.3 Widening the Field

As already noticed, the way the field of adult education and learning research is represented in this book is partly the result of the selection made in terms of what sources and empirical material we rely on. In most chapters, analyses are conducted based on article publication in journals published in the English language.[3] Thus, the way the field is formed within other kinds of publications such as books, book chapters and enlightenment literature is, for the most part, left out. Furthermore, by focusing only on English language publication, the way the field is shaped in locations where other languages dominate is not made visible. Chapter 3 can serve as example. Here, Christine Zeuner introduces us to the history of the field of adult education as it has emerged in Germany where, at present, nearly 50 full professorships[4] exist within the research realm of adult education alone. There are also dedicated journals to the field published in German as well as national conferences and collegial academic organisations that promote research within this area. The research field of adult education and learning as shaped in a German context, therefore, appears to have little connection with English-speaking research

[3] The exceptions are Chaps. 4 and 9. In Chap. 4, the citation analyses include other kinds of publication outlets such as books, book chapters and enlightenment literature. Chapter 9 includes analyses of conference proceedings.

[4] Professorship is here understood as full professors holding designated chairs in adult education research, i.e. the last and final step in the academic career structure. This should not be confused with assistant or associate professors, nor with university teachers in adult education in general.

communities that stand in the centre for the rest of the chapters in this book, not least because German scholars have largely been ignored in the specialised journals under scrutiny. The only exception to this lack of influence is the very high citation rates directed to "gurus" placed outside of the field (such as Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck), as well as some German scholars in the field who remain visible as long as one limits the study to conference proceedings in European conferences (see Chap. 9).

However, there are even larger language areas and parts of the world which are totally left out by this book: Asia, Africa and Latin America. On the one hand, research in these locations is obscured as scholars in these continents tend to be marginalised in the journals and conference proceedings analysed in the various chapters, both in terms of being authors of articles and papers published, as well as in terms of being authors of articles cited. However, despite there being surprisingly few contributions from these larger continents, the amount is increasing. As reported by Rubensson and Elfert (in Chap. 2), there were more authors from Asia, especially China, represented in the field when including an English-language journal edited from Hong Kong in the sample. On the other hand, scholars in countries where English is not the first language spoken most likely publish the majority of their work in their vernacular languages, which tends to be securely precluded from entering the English-speaking universe and instead serves other "markets" (national or regional journals, enlightenment literature, didactical books etc). This infrastructure probably still makes up the main publication system for non-anglophone authors, located in language regions with wide publication opportunities that exist in their native languages. Thus, although these scholars and their research do not become visible in the analyses presented in this book, that does not mean they do not exist.

We started this book by observing that the framing and composition of research fields are never fully fixed or saturated, and that this was a particularly salient feature of the research field that deals with the education and learning of adults. Looking ahead, we expect these constant transformations of the field to continue. Mapping out the field through publications and citations in the future will hopefully create a less parochial, provincial and nationally-constrained picture than has been the case here. In some ways, there are reasons to be hopeful. Let us end with a few examples.

One of the most highly-cited adult education scholars of all time is Paulo Freire. Freire's influence is far from limited to Brazil, although he has been an important figure in the fight for literacy across Brazil and the wider South American continent.[5] Besides a strong tradition of adult education (particularly radical popular education), there are also journals dedicated to adult education both in Latin America, e.g. *Revista Interamericana de Educación de Adultos*, as well as in Spanish, e.g.

[5] It should be noted that the success Paulo Freire had in exporting his ideas to the very heart of the "empire" of contemporary research probably lies partly on him having had multiple guest professorships in countries like the US and Switzerland during the years of military dictatorship in Brazil (see also Kane 2013).

Diálogos. In Africa, there has recently been an initiative to create an African society for research on adult education and a new journal has been launched called *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. Perhaps even more destined to change the research field that deals with the education and learning of adults in the future are the countries across the gigantic Asian continent. We can already see some signs of this development as contributions from Asian countries to English peer-reviewed journals have increased dramatically in social science at large (Gingras and Mosbah-Natanson 2010; Heilbron and Gingras 2018; Vetenskapsrådet 2018).

13.4 Final Words

Throughout this book we have gathered texts that focus on knowledge production in the research field of adult education and learning, which is vital for scientific reflexivity (Bourdieu 2004; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Such reflexivity needs to address both the epistemic underpinnings and methodological procedures based on which scholars tend to approach their object of study, as well as their institutional and geographical loci of enunciation and the conditions under which each researcher works and is evaluated. In order to avoid the many fallacies and pitfalls of social scientific labour, bibliometric data can be a valuable resource in making the 'invisible colleges' more visible than they have been previously. It is hoped this book will inspire further empirical investigations and debates about the field, and bring into visibility the diversity and richness of scholarship on adult education and learning.

References

Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Les usages sociaux de la science: Pour une sociologie clinique du champ scientifique: Une conférence-débat*. Paris: Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique.

Bourdieu, P. (2004). Science of science and reflexivity. Oxford: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gingras, Y., & Mosbah-Natanson, S. (2010). Where are social sciences produced? *Europe, 47*(43.8), 46–51.

Heilbron, J., & Gingras, Y. (2018). The globalization of European research in the social sciences and humanities (1980–2014): A bibliometric study. In: Heilbron, J. Sorá, G., Boncourt, T. (Eds.) *The social and human sciences in global power relations* (pp. 29–58). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kane, L. (2013). Comparing 'popular' and 'state' education in Latin America and Europe. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 4*(1), 81–96.

Nespor, J. (1996). *Knowledge in motion: Space, time and curriculum in undergraduate physics and management*. London: Falmer Press.

Vetenskapsrådet. (2018). *Vetenskaplig produktion: Analys av det vetenskapliga forskningssystemet*. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet.