Regulation and Financing of Continuing Higher Education in England and Spain: A Comparison of Adult Education Governance Structures in National Contexts

Diana Trevino-Eberhard, Katrin Kaufmann-Kuchta

Abstract

Continuing Higher Education (CHE) as a central part of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) is designed differently in countries. When regarded as a multi-level system, the governance of CHE involves actors on different levels and may be located within Higher Education (HE), ACE or even vocational training. Generally, interrelations between these levels is a central research desideratum, in both national and international perspectives. This article applies document analyses to identify relations between the national legal and financial regulations and the provider structures of CHE in England and Spain. Results show that CHE in both countries is primarily regulated within HE and ACE, whereas each country shows strong differences in governance-related competencies and authorities. This is the first step of an in-depth theory-guided description and comparison of national frameworks and provider structures of CHE in two European countries.

Keywords: Continuing higher education, governance, document analysis, international comparison

1 Introduction

UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.3 calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning (LLL) opportunities for all (Owens 2017). Strengthening the provision of continuing higher education (CHE) – understood to mean adult continuing education (ACE) provided by higher education institutions (HEIs) – contributes to the fulfilment of this goal (e. g., Saar, Täht & Roosalu 2014).

While CHE has been one of the first subsections of organized adult learning in many industrialized western countries (e. g., Schemmann 2014; Nesbit & Holford 2012) its institutional embedding, conceptualisations and provider structures vary significantly between countries (Dollhausen et al. 2013; Knust & Hanft 2009; Nesbit & Holford 2012). There are, for example, diverse concepts of non-traditional students (NTS), who are often referred to as the typical target group of CHE, which itself is

again subject to country specific differences (Wolter 2011). Furthermore, earlier research showed that European legislative frameworks for CHE in the context of higher education (HE) policies vary in terms of the general aim to widen access to HE for adults (Dollhausen et al. 2013; Slowey & Schuetze 2012). CHE may also be regulated in both the context of HE policy (and legislation) and also within the field of ACE or vocational training (Knust & Hanft 2009).

CHE, ACE and HE are generally hybrid fields of governance (e. g., Capano & Pritoni 2019). Their educational provision results from actions between the national and organizational level. However, their interrelation is a central research desideratum, in national and international perspectives (Rees 2013). Therefore, this article investigates relations between the national legal and financial regulations and the provider structures of CHE in England and Spain and provides a comprehensive comparative description of the institutional anchoring of CHE in two European countries (England and Spain) on the basis of uniform, theoretically founded categories. The two countries serve as a good analytical base because they differ with respect to central governance features (e. g. welfare state regulation) while sharing common major characteristics concerning European HE policies (e. g. "Bologna"). This article identifies the actors and basic structures of CHE governance concerning regulations between the macro- (national legal and financial regulation) and meso-level (providers) in England and Spain.

Based on the educational governance perspective and the multi-level system approach, a document analysis of national legal texts and policy papers on financing CHE resp. HE (and partly ACE) is performed to identify central actors and their constellations involved in regulating CHE. Aspects of educational policy analysis are covered which usually specify the institutional dimension (polity), the content related dimension (policy) and the processual dimension (politics) (Reuter 2016). In contrast to a comprehensive policy analysis, this paper deals with the polity and the policy dimension (i. e. the institutional framework for the implementation of education policy decisions as well as education policy programmes and objectives) in order to identify the basis of CHE regulation.

Based on earlier research, the following section maps out the main characteristics of CHE in these countries. The theoretical frameworks are presented in Section 3. Then Section 4 contains our selection criteria for national documents and the analytical strategy. Empirical results of the document analysis are presented in comparison in Section 5. The article ends with reflections on the methodological approach and suggests potential research topics in Section 6.

2 Characteristics of CHE in England and Spain

Literature covering England and Spain embeds CHE mainly in the HE sector (e. g., Geldermann & Schade 2009; Osborne & Houston 2012; Mora 2001), but some contributions point to relevant regulations from ACE (Fraser & Harman 2019; Sánchez-

Martínez & Sáez 2016). Drawing on previous research, the following chapter presents central characteristics of CHE in England and Spain regarding the historical embedding, concepts, regulations, target groups, and provider structures of CHE.

2.1 England

In England, HEIs[1] have a long tradition in offering CHE courses for adults (e. g., Osborne & Houston 2012; Nesbit & Holford 2012). Until the mid-1970s, the tradition of liberal ACE dominated, jointly organized by universities and the Workers' Educational Organization Association (WEA) and directly funded by national government (Nesbit & Holford 2012; Osborne & Houston 2012). Reforms in the 1970s and 1990s fundamentally changed CHE financial governance. Funding was then subject to general university funding which led to a shift away from liberal ACE focus and to the closure of many extra mural departments that had offered CHE (Nesbit & Holford 2012). With CHE subsumed under general university funding, the individual universities are currently responsible for the design of CHE in England.

Terminologies for CHE vary (e. g., Geldermann & Schade 2009). Under different terms, public and private universities offer CHE programmes mainly through short- and long-term units and part-time continuing professional development courses; mainly addressing mature or part-time students (Callender & Thompson 2018). The Open University, a HE distance-learning provider, offers CHE qualifications (postgraduate degrees and smaller continuing education programmes (Tait 2018)). At some universities the tradition of CHE as liberal education and in the form of non-accredited courses continues, sometimes even being offered in extra-mural departments (e. g. University of Leeds or Birkbeck University of London). But these are single examples (e. g., Fraser & Harman 2019).

Generally, boundaries between CHE and initial HE are blurred, as Geldermann & Schade (2009, p. 221) state: "It is not possible to draw a clear distinction between continuing higher education and basic initial education." The above-mentioned changes in CHE funding and the movement away from the liberal ACE tradition towards more accredited courses were accompanied by general changes in HE policy, focusing on the inclusion of disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in HE. Within these "widening participation strategies" (WPS), adults were among the initial target group (Osborne & Houston 2012). Currently, however, WPS mainly focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and other under-represented groups (ibid.; Fraser & Harman 2019). Since CHE is so strongly bound to HE regulation, the English HE system should now be characterised.

Currently, HE in England describes qualifications from Level 4–8 within the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) (Eurydice 2019a) and is provided by HEIs, alternative providers and further education colleges (FEC) (Eurydice 2019b). The latter often focus on mature or part-time learners. Due to their local anchoring,

1 In England, "Higher education institution [...] currently means any provider which is one or more of the following: a UK university; a higher education corporation; an institution designated as eligible to receive support from funds administered by the Office for Students (OfS), aside from a further education college." (Eurydice 2019a)

FEC play a relevant role for reaching adult learners with family or job commitments (Fraser & Harman 2019).

Generally, marketized processes and forms of neoliberal public management characterize the English HE system (Lucas 2019). HEIs are autonomously acting bodies, even though they are directly funded by the government. The state monitors HEIs in order to allocate performance-based funding, according to research and teaching performance. Jungblut & Vukasovic (2018) distinguished types of marketized HE systems and describe England as an austerity market, referring to funding cuts in HE implemented in England within the last decade. Aiming to increase efficiency, universities were (among other things) allowed to pass costs for the provision of their services to students by lifting the fees cap, resulting in increasing tuition fees between 2006 and 2012 (Callender & Thompson 2018). Additionally, in that period student funding changed from grants to loans funding (Augar 2019). Even though students need only pay student fees/loans after graduation and after a certain income, the decline of part-time students by over half within the last decade and the decrease of older age groups in HE are both related to these funding changes (ibid.). These developments contrast with policies like WPS, aiming to include NTS into HE (Osborne & Houston 2012).

2.2 Spain

Since the 1970s, Spain has a strong tradition of distance learning for adults in universities (Dollhausen et al. 2013). Additionally, CHE and its provision by universities are historically shaped by EU policy-recommendations, including to align universities as providers of Lifelong Learning (LLL) (e. g., Belando-Montoro 2017). This led to the implementation of new curricula and content concepts for graduates or those with substantial professional experience (Mora 2001). Universities use various terms but LLL is the umbrella term.

In the wake of the economic crisis in 2008, Spanish CHE programmes expanded their target group to NTS, with a strong focus on fostering employability (González-Monteagudo, Padilla-Carmona & Liñán 2015). But it is not clear to what extent CHE offerings respond to the profiles of NTS types (working students; older students; older and working students) (Sanchez-Gelabert & Andreu 2017). Principle providers of CHE are public and private universities and the National Distance University (UNED). Programmes are covered by officially accredited undergraduate and postgraduate trainings, including in-house degrees like postgraduate diplomas, short-term and university extension courses. Besides that, universities sometimes cooperate with non-accredited companies aimed at graduates or experienced professionals (Sánchez-Martínez & Sáez 2016).

Generally, Spanish CHE is embedded in university governance and the HE provided by public universities covers Levels 5–8 of the RQF (Delgado 2017). Since 1985, the HE system has been continuously decentralized. HE governance is currently shared between the central state and regional authorities (Gavara de Cara 2018). Regulative powers of the central government and the regional entities relate to HE poli-

cies, expenditures and course contents. In 2012, Spanish legislation increased the independence of the Autonomous Communities (ACs) on funding public universities, including a decentralized pricing system. Thereby, regional governance modes characterize public HE funding. For example, funding can be performance-oriented or based on discretional criteria (de la Torre & Perez-Esparrells 2019; Delgado 2017). The performance-oriented funding mode includes the allocation of annual student fees and is implemented through the national government, which defines the price range to the ACs (Delgado 2017). Compared to England, fees are much lower (European Commission 2018) and impacts of fees on access to HE resp. CHE have warranted little research.

Even though CHE provision is mainly regulated within HE, research literature indicates overlaps between universities and ACE providers on the level of CHE offerings. UNED primarily provides ACE programmes through flexible and distance learning. ACE centres provide basic ACE or courses in order to facilitate access to HE (Sánchez-Martínez & Sáez 2016; Dollhausen et al. 2013).

In summary, CHE in England and Spain are primarily regulated within HE, but research indicates overlaps with ACE in the institutional anchoring (polity dimension). Furthermore, on the policy dimension, concepts and target groups of CHE are not completely identical to those of HE in general. Therefore, it is necessary to identify those overlaps and to provide a comparative overview of the institutional anchoring, applied concepts and the basic structures of CHE governance (as a specific part of ACE).

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Educational governance and HE governance models

To better understand how legal and funding regulations shape the institutional embedding of CHE and to compare the selected countries, we refer to the educational governance perspective as a basic analytical framework, complemented by models of HE governance. The analytical perspective of educational governance is particularly suitable for describing actors, actor constellations and coordination processes in multi-level education systems (Altrichter 2015), such as CHE. Educational governance has been widely used to analyse the governance of HE (e. g., Clark 1983; Olsen 2007; Dobbins & Knill 2016; Capano & Pritoni 2019) and that of school systems (e. g., Kussau & Brüsemeister 2007). ACE has recently been the focus of the governance perspective (e. g., Schemmann 2014; Schrader 2011), also in an international comparative perspective focusing on the influence of inter- and supranational actors (e. g., Ioannidou 2010). Institution-based or organization-related theories could be alternative frameworks to analyse and describe governance related questions within multi-level systems (e. g., Austin & Jones 2016). Still, the broad theoretical categories of the educational governance perspective, the CHE multi-level system approach and refer-

ences to HE governance models adequately identify the basic idea of CHE regulation based on national regulations between the macro- and the meso-levels.

In the context of multi-level systems, both governance and coordination of action are complex and non-linear actions, accounting for the independent rationality of different actors. Educational governance involves the influence of actors – the state, markets and civil society; actor-constellations and their interactions are of central importance. Further relevant categories are interdependencies between the actors, who have specific resources to reach their goals (norms and skills) and usually have alternatives for action. To describe and explain observable phenomena within multi-level systems, institutionalized, complex forms of action coordination are analytically distinguished, e. g. hierarchy, market, community and networks (Kussau & Brüsemeister 2007). Generally, governance within multi-level systems manifests itself in hybrid forms and processes of control (Altrichter 2015). Any description of these forms, considering their overall context (national, cultural and historical), would then result in temporally and locally restricted 'governance regimes' (Kussau & Brüsemeister 2007, pp. 41–44).

Since the logics of CHE action coordination are primarily defined by HE regulations in England and Spain, we additionally refer to HE governance models. Generally, HE governance models aim to reduce the complexity of governance modes to enable system-comparisons. Ideal-types distinguish the model of academic self-rule, the state-centred model and the marketized model; England represents the marketized model and Spain represents the state-centred model (Clark 1983; Olsen 2007). In the marketized model, the funding system of universities is characterized by fierce competition for state and non-state funds whereas in the state-centred model the state maintains control over funding and universities highly depend on state funds. For Spain, recent studies identify a shift towards a marketized system within state-centred arrangements, showing tendencies towards performance-based financing of HEIs and cost sharing policies between the state and regional entities (Dobbins & Knill 2016; de la Torre & Perez-Esparrells 2019). Identifying hybrid governance modes, Capano and Pritoni (2019) characterized HE governance in England as performance-based showing mixes of public funding, based on research assessment and teaching performance, external funding and high student fees. These HE governance types help to understand governance modes of CHE within the broader context of HE governance systems.

3.2 CHE as multi-level system

In accordance with assumptions of the governance perspective, Schrader's (2011) framework model of regulation in ACE offers a useful illustration of the levels involved (including relevant actors) and has been coherently applied to outline the specific constellation of CHE resp. UCE[2] (Schemmann 2014, figure 1).

2 Schemmann (2014) refers to the term UCE and compares governance of UCE in the UK and Germany. For the UK he identifies pre- mid 1970s UCE governance to be characterized by the dominant form of coordination by community and supplemented by the coordination via hierarchy. Currently, UCE governance in the UK is characterized as coordination by market and hierarchy (Schemmann 2014) – similar to HE governance modes.

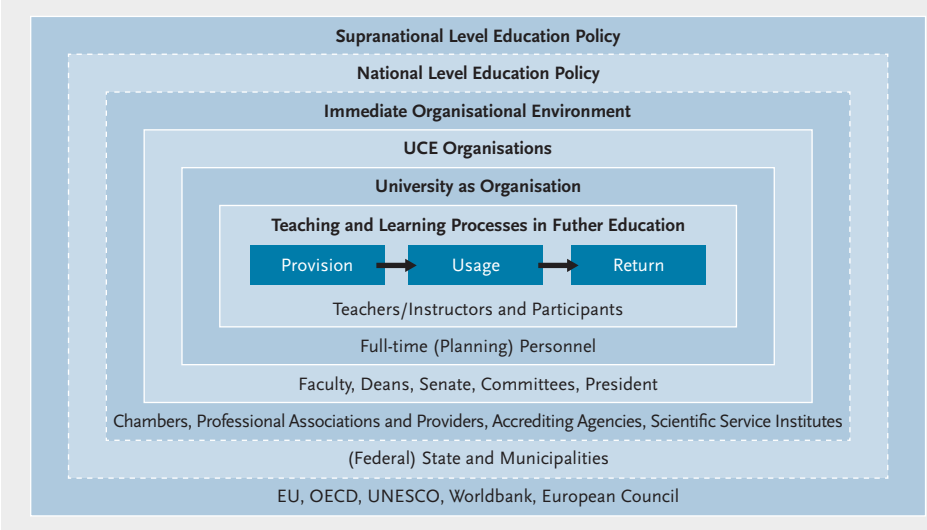

Figure 1: University Continuing Education as a multi-level system (Schemmann 2014, p. 64)

Roughly, the model distinguishes micro-, meso- and macro levels. Since regulations at the higher levels are usually designed to influence teaching and learning processes at the micro-level, this level represents the core of the model (Schrader 2011; Schemmann 2014). Regarding governance, the meso- and macro-level come into focus. The meso-level covers organizations that organize UCE – universities, units within universities and independent organizations. Actors of the organizational environment of UCE can be partly interchangeable with those of the university, like agencies for accreditation, but partly they differ, since UCE also refers to actors like advocative bodies (Schemmann 2014). The macro-level comprises national and supranational education policy. The national level frames the national legal und funding regulations. Relevant actors include (federal) states and municipalities; their influences depend on the general structure of a country's education system. On the inter- and supranational level, actors (e. g. the EU) influence national strategies or implement international reforms (e. g. "Bologna").

Focusing on the relations between the macro- and the meso-level, this framework model in combination with the categories derived from the educational governance perspective and the broad assumptions of HE governance models, allows one to comparatively describe central actors and their constellations of CHE.

4 Methodological approach

Contrastive case study design

A qualitative, contrastive case study design serves as the overarching research design. Case studies are suitable for analysing phenomena within different contexts in

their full scope and for identifying typical characteristics (Bartlett & Vavrus 2017). England and Spain represent contrastive cases in terms of welfare state regimes, economic regulations, labour market features and education system characteristics. In this regard, England represents a liberal welfare state and liberal market economy with a decentralized education system following the general idea of a liberal competitive quasi market. Spain represents a conservative/familistic welfare state and a 'Mediterranean country', showing characteristics of both liberal and coordinated market economies with a rather centralized education system (Esping-Andersen 1990; Estevez-Abé, Iversen & Soskice 2001; Green 2006). As shown in Section 3.1, these countries also differ in their HE systems.

Comparable features are also required to compare cases. Both western industrialized nations are members of the OECD and (until recently) the EU, and were involved in the Bologna reform process; the latter being especially relevant for implementing comparable measures in HE, including CHE.

With reference to categories of the educational governance perspective, this analysis aims to juxtapose institutional CHE characteristics by focusing on the relations between national legal and financial frameworks (macro-level) and the provision of CHE (meso-level). Document analysis of legal texts and policy papers on financing of CHE resp. HE offers a suitable initial methodological access as documents can be regarded as "institutionalised traces" (Wolff 2004, p. 284). This allows conclusions about activities, intentions and considerations of their authors or the actors named in the documents.

Data selection and analytical strategy

Documents dealing with legal frameworks and financing elements of ACE, HE and CHE were identified by references in the research literature, supplemented by extensive research on ministerial websites.[3] These documents have been collected by date, ministerial author and significance for the research focus. Besides legal texts and financial plans, strategies and policy papers from regulating bodies and ministries of the HE resp. CHE and ACE sector were included. However, only legal texts and financial plans were included in the document analysis. Legal texts provide information about the ministries and further relevant actors of CHE. Financial reports from official bodies specified target groups of CHE and the processes of resource distribution for CHE providers. National education policy documents and guidelines on HE, ACE and CHE supplemented these contents by giving context information on the conceptual orientation and policy priorities of CHE. Such context information of CHE governance structures and additional information from the remaining literature were included in standardized country profiles for both countries.

The documents collected for England amount to 4 national acts and 10 policy papers on financing. For Spain, we identified 5 national laws, 4 royal decrees, 1 order and 6 policy papers on financing. However, it cannot be guaranteed that all relevant documents were identified by the searches.

3 Language barriers for Spanish document analysis were avoided, as one of the authors is a native speaker.

Documents contents were analysed according to the method of structured content analysis (Kuckartz 2012). Data is structured along deductive (derived from theory) and inductive (derived from empirical data) categories. Table 1 lists the category system and the meaning of each category.

Table 1: Category system of document analysis

Category	Subcategory	Meaning
Metainformation		Information on the context in which the document (law / funding paper) was created, including information on the number of amendments to the law, and context of origin; references to other documents (laws, funding paper)
Actors		State actors and their power regulation; can be also actors from the market or civil society involved in regulating, funding or providing CHE
Interdependencies/ Constellations of Actors		Interrelations of the different actors, mutual dependencies of the different actors This is a superordinate category, based on the following subordinate categories
	Rights of disposal/ resources	Institutionalized rules (norms), material resources and skills that actors have in respect to regulating, funding, researching or providing CHE
	Funding mechanisms	Types of provision of public funds from different sources and responsibilities of actors; descriptions of different sources of income and allocation methods for providers of CHE
Coordination of actions		Simple forms of action coordination like unilateral action, negotiation, majority decision, hybrid forms; descriptions of complex forms of action coordination, like coordination via hierarchy, market, community or networks
Multi-level system	**Regulation between different levels**	Levels at which the different actors are located and by whom decisions are made
	Regulation of national and regional competences	Specific shared regulation and devolution arrangements between national actors and regional entities

5 Results: Actors and actor constellations of CHE

5.1 England

Supranational level

Due to Brexit, the EU is losing influence on the HE sector in England. But even in the current laws, no reference is made to EU proposals.

National level

Generally, CHE is regulated on the national level within the laws and funding mechanisms of HE. The legal framework for HE and CHE is established by the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017. Aiming to open HE to a stronger market regulated system, the HERA 2017 manifests the institutional autonomy of universities and gives selected national actors scope to regulate the HE system in England. Figure 2 visualizes the central actors and their relations.

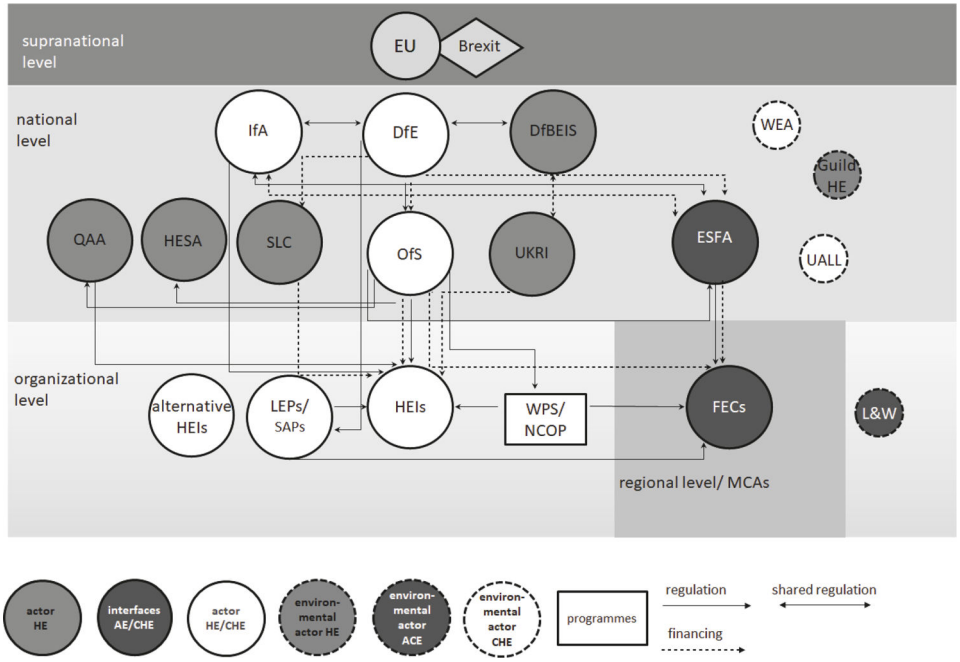

Figure 2: Chart of central actors and actor constellations of CHE in England

The act designates the Department for Education (DfE) as competent ministry and the Secretary of State for education as chief minister responsible for HE and further education (FE) policy (HERA 2017). The DfE cooperates with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DfBIS) and together they develop national strategies for HE. The DfBIS provides research funding for HEIs through UK Research and

Innovation (UKRI) (DfBIS 2016). Specific student funding is sponsored by the DfE and administered by Student Loans Company (SLC) (Student Loans Company 2018). Further, the DfE works with executive non-departmental public bodies like the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) and the Office for Students (OfS) (GOV.UK 2020). In general, the DfE provides public budgets to the non-departmental bodies and has regulative powers for guiding them. The law introduces the OfS as central regulating body, responsible for controlling funding, transparency and quality standards for HE. The OfS and UKRI cooperate on the implementation and development of funding mechanisms (HERA 2017). Further, the OfS is in charge of the registration of HEIs following a risk-based, quality-rating system. Depending on the registered category, HEIs receive degree awarding powers, the title of university and annual access to public funding by means of grants and student support loan funding. In addition, the OfS defines course fee restrictions for qualification courses, sets registration conditions for access and participation strategies and defines quality assurance recommendations for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), an OfS designated body (Office for Students 2019a). The QAA is the executive body for evaluation and has no regulatory powers over HEIs. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) primarily provides data to inform the OfS on current developments within the HE sector (HERA 2017).

Organizational level

Concerning CHE provision, the OfS ensures that HEIs integrate access and widening participation strategies (WPS) for underrepresented groups in their HE courses (Office for Students 2019a). The WPS of the OfS includes subsequent programmes like civic university agreements and the National Collaborative Outreach Program (NCOP). These aim to enhance partnerships between universities, FEC, local authorities, employers and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) (Office for Students 2019a). As part of the LEP, Skills Advisory Panels (SAP) address skills gaps on the local level. So, the WPS is linked to the aim of enhancing collaboration between the HE and FE sector, local ACE providers and labour market needs (ibid.). However, the documents do not explicitly mention the influence of actors of the organizational environment of HE resp. CHE providers (including advocative bodies (e. g. UALL, Guild HE, WEA)) and the Learning & Work Institute (L&W).

Since 2012, student funding changed from grants to loans funding and public teaching funds shrank. Now, only cost-intensive study subjects are publicly funded, but to a much lesser degree than before (Augar 2019). The fees cap was lifted up to £9000 p. a.; now near all full-time degrees courses approach this amount (ibid.). Research funds for HEIs, allocated by UKRI, are primarily based on a performance-based mode (HERA 2017). Furthermore, public funds also depend on the effectiveness of HEIs WPS (Office for Students 2019a).

Outside the regulative frameworks of HE, the Further Education and Training Act (FETA) 2007, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCLA) 2009, and the Technical and Further Education Act (TFEA) 2017 are important laws.

They build the main regulative framework of FEC. Sponsored by the DfE, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is the national funding body of FE. In Combined Authorities (CA: the current regional entities in England), the ESFA is responsible for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to FEC and their provision outside HE. In Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA), the local authorities are responsible for the devolution of the AEB to FEC (Augar 2019). HE offered by FEC is funded by the OfS: in such cases the funding bodies closely cooperate, e. g. monitoring the financial viability of FEC that deliver HE (Office for Students 2019b). The ESFA grants a FEC powers to award degrees when in partnership with a HEI that has degree awarding powers (Office for Students 2018). Recent regulations from the apprenticeships sector become relevant for HEIs and FEC (ASCLA 2009), since apprenticeships now cover higher levels of qualifications. HEIs and FEC represent (among others) providers of those higher degree apprenticeships (Augar 2019). The IfA is responsible for the quality assurance of apprenticeships and advises the DfE on future funding provision. For this, IfA and ESFA jointly monitor concrete policies and apprenticeship delivery (TFEA 2017). The ESFA primarily coordinates apprenticeships funding, as FEC are the main providers of apprenticeships (Department for Education 2020).

Summary

The range of legal texts and strategies for financing CHE or HE provides transparency on national policies and actors regulating and financing the providers of CHE, which can be HEIs, FEC and private training providers. Primarily, CHE is regulated within HE. There are overlaps between HE and FE as well as between HE and the apprenticeship sector when providers offer both HE / HE access courses as well as apprenticeships on HE level, which is particularly true for FEC.

Since boundaries are blurred between initial HE and CHE across England, terminologies for CHE in England vary. Even though the University Association of Lifelong Learning (UALL) is involved in defining and advocating CHE policy development (Jones & Butcher 2019), the laws do not specify its regulatory scope. In general, CHE courses are increasingly related to degrees within the RQF: courses offered from level 4 are regarded as HE, regardless of the form of study (part-/full time), student age or prior qualifications.

Both the HE and FE sectors have been frequently reformed over the past 10–15 years. Nevertheless, the basic course of governance can be confirmed, as shown by research literature for England. National legal and financial arrangements promote the autonomy of individual HEIs and competition between them; all monitored by the OfS (central regulator). By this, the central characteristics of a marketized model (Dobbins & Knill 2016) can be identified, but with a strong, state-related, regulating actor. Additionally, financing can be characterized as a performance-based mode (Capano & Pritoni 2019). CHE offerings are attached to the WPS, by which the government aims to include more disadvantaged groups into HE, including adults. Public HEI funding is partly dependent on the effectiveness of WPS strategies. Therefore,

HEIs have an incentive to provide courses for specific target groups, including adults. But, according to Fraser & Harman (2019), the WPS still mainly focus on younger students, not so much on mature students. This could be explained by the fact that part-time course provision is more complex than for full-time study courses and is correspondingly less valued in the effectiveness balance of a university (Callender & Thompson 2018). So, based on the documents included and with regard to the educational governance perspective, the primary form of action coordination of CHE in England can be described as coordination via market and hierarchy, as also revealed by Schemmann (2014).

However, there is little transparency as to how national strategies are implemented on the regional level. Tangible strategies like the WPS or cooperative arrangements of HEIs, FEC and SAPs are reflected in specific local arrangements. Subsequent programmes of the national WPS aim toward locally oriented cooperation between universities, FECs, local authorities and employers. However, the FE and apprenticeship sector are much more decentralized than the HE sector and are strongly market-based. Whether these regulations lead to competition or cooperation between CHE providers (or even have a unifying effect on the form of CHE offerings of HEIs and FEC) cannot be answered at this point and needs to be the subject of further inquiry.

5.2 Spain

Supranational level

Spanish national HE priorities and ACE objectives are often built on EU frameworks and concepts (e. g., Ministerio de Educación 2011; REUPEP 2019). EU Commitments, especially Bologna reforms, were incorporated in Spanish legislation and form the basis for structural changes of HE governance (LOMLOU 2007). This strong influence is also apparent in references to EU concepts of LLL, used in policy papers for both HE and ACE (e. g., Consejo de Universidades 2010).

National level

Similarly to England, CHE is primarily embedded in the field of HE. The current national university code includes all legal standards for the field of public HE and shows that almost all actors of HE governance and their competences are regulated by law (University Code 2020). The implementation of the national HE framework is enacted by separate HE laws in the ACs of Spain. Figure 3 shows the central actors and their relations.

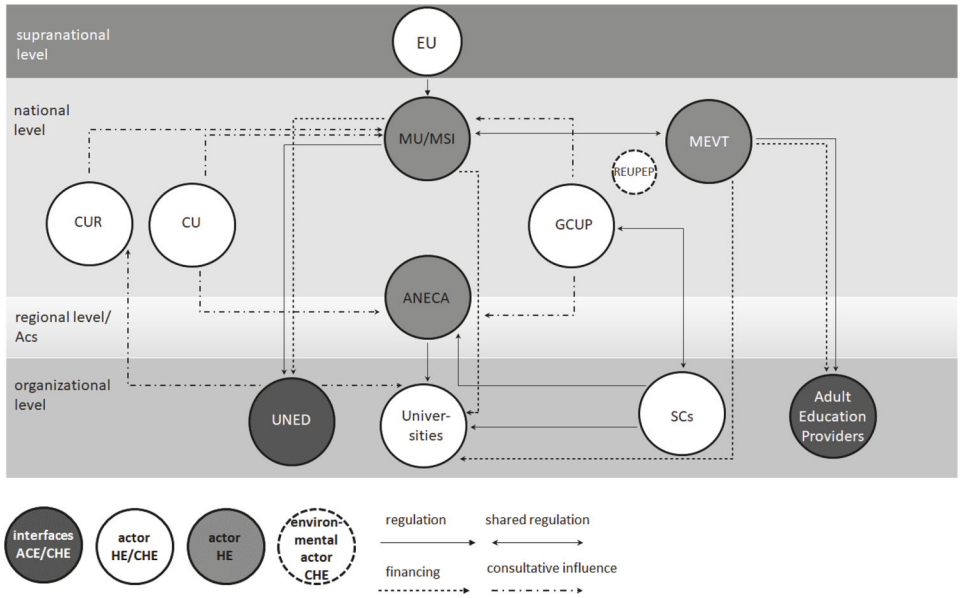

Figure 3: Chart of central actors and actor constellations of CHE in Spain

The LOMLOU 2007 is relevant to CHE because it establishes academic coordinating and consulting bodies like the General Conference on University Policy (GCUP) and the Council of Universities (CU) under the aegis of the Ministry of Universities (MU), which is currently combined with the Ministry for Science and Innovation (MSI) (LOMLOU 2007). The MU, the MSI and the associated bodies, with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEVT) are responsible for the academic coordination, cooperation, public funding on the national level. They also have the overall regulatory policy powers in Spanish university matters. The CU and the GCUP are consultative bodies and responsible for the coordination of all forms of nationally accredited HE offerings. Especially the Conference of University Rectors (CUR) acts as a consultative voice between the national ministries and universities (University Code 2020). The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) represents an autonomous quality assurance body and follows the criteria established by the CU for the recognition of official titles into a national register (Royal Decree 1112/2015). Thereby, the ANECA and its regional quality agencies in the ACs examine university offers and set the basis for whether a university offer is registered or not. Registered providers have access to public financial support through regional education authorities (Royal Decree 1393/2007). However, the concrete regulation of such offerings is subject to specific university laws of the ACs (University Code 2020).

Current financial regulation actors of the ACs and universities are the MSI, the MEVT, the GCUP, the CU, ANECA and the Social Councils (SCs). In 2010 the CU and GCUP agreed on a basic formula funding system for public prices according to

the number of matriculated students per university, including the establishment for the price range of tuition fees (Consejo de Universidades & Conferencia General de Política Universitaria 2010). Furthermore, the MEVT funds the ACs through student grants and loans and is responsible for the distribution of European funds, whereas the MSI is responsible for funding specific research programmes (CRUE 2019). Generally, funding from the Spanish government and regulations from the relevant bodies like GCUP and CU only represent vague distribution rules to provide public funding to the ACs. Only the National Distance Learning University (UNED) is subject to more concrete financial regulations from the central government; however, its concrete funding mode is not specified in law (LOMLOU 2007). UNED also offers (alongside accredited HE courses) basic ACE to give adults over 25 access to Spanish universities. It is regulated within a separate national order of HE (Order 1663/2016).

Organizational level

As the state transfers only basic funding to the ACs, these then establish annual university budgets in their own legislation (Royal Decree 14/2012). Each AC is assigned one SC that is responsible for the supervision of all economic activities of universities. Jointly, ACs and SCs develop multiannual funding models that set out resource allocation criteria for their universities and jointly report to ANECA (Conferencia de Consejos Sociales 2015). Additionally, the GCUP is involved in monitoring universities (LOMLOU 2007). GCUP and SCs report to ANECA on the university funding system and make proposals to improve its quality and efficiency. Specific laws of the ACs often include aspects of teaching, research and innovation activity and the number of students matriculated in each university to allocate public funds (CRUE 2019). However, strong regional differences exist.

CHE in Spain can be characterized by courses offered by public and private universities, mainly through post-graduation masters and continuing education programmes which do not necessarily lead to degrees certified in the national qualification framework. As an advocative body, the university network for postgraduate studies and continuing education (REUPEP) is involved in creating a common national understanding of CHE (the term used is LLL at universities). REUPEP defines recommendations for all CHE courses by referring to CU statements.

The legislation of ACE regulates the provision of basic ACE, enabling access to HE. In general, ACE regulation is part of the educational legislation of Spain and is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MEVT) (Ministerio de Educación 2011). The Law for Education (LOE) 2006 and the Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE) 2013 specify ACE objectives to give all persons over the age of 18 the opportunity to improve professional qualifications and skills, and social participation. The framework curriculum of basic ACE courses is nationally regulated (Order ECD/651/2017) and implemented by the MEVT. Within the LOMCE 2013 the responsibility for the provision of basic ACE is assigned to the ACs. Also, UNED offers basic ACE to enable access to Spanish universities.

Summary

In Spain, CHE is also regulated within HE, but in contrast to England several national regulating bodies are involved, without a central regulating body like the OfS in England. Forms of CHE are region-specific because the Spanish HE system is largely formalized through legislative regulations on the national level, yet substantiated in ACs specific legislative regulation. Nevertheless, basic regulation structures are the same in all ACs, with the SCs and GCUP being responsible for monitoring and reporting on the economic activities of universities to ANECA. The mixture of legislative initiatives between national actors and the ACs shown in this analysis reflects a strongly regulated system and thus affirms with state-centred governance modes of HE (Dobbins & Knill 2016). Likewise, funding structures of public universities are hierarchical, divided in national and regional funding regulations, but with certain characteristics of a marketized model. Generally, funding regulations from the Spanish government only represent vague distribution of performance-based rules to provide public funding to the ACs. National HE bodies seem to mainly set public fees for official accredited degrees of students. To a certain extent, ACs can vary the amount of tuition for each course, and define own policies for specific target groups (de la Torre & Perez-Esparells 2019). Presumably, non-accredited studies or continuing education trainings at universities are solely funded by student fees (Reunión de Defensores Universitarios 2015), since the documents only describe public funding for officially accredited studies.

Although specific examples of AC regulations are not included in this analysis, overall results of the document analysis confirm previous HE governance studies characterizing the Spanish HE sector as a marketized system within state-centred arrangements. Regarding governance, CHE can be described as primarily coordinated through hierarchy, with shares of market-oriented control (Dobbins & Knill 2016).

In contrast to England, the conceptualization of CHE in Spain is less degree-related and is overall influenced by the EU concept of LLL, which follows a broad understanding of further education. Generally, CHE provision by universities is linked to labour market needs and aims to enhance professional development of adults, but usually not leading to degrees within the RQF. Whereas, ACE providers tend to enable adults to catch up with school-leaving qualifications and offer courses that lead to certificates to get access to HE.

Similarly to England, overlaps with ACE exist, since ACE centres offer HE access courses for adults. Regulations for these courses follow a similar mixture of national regulations and regional rules. ACE providers and UNED offer this basic ACE. Overall, ACs specific funding models and supply structures of CHE can be assumed.

5.3 Comparison

The following table gives a comparative overview of the most important and previously described results of the document analysis (Sections 5.1., 5.2.), supplemented by information on the state of research that covers central features of CHE.

Table 2: Comparative overview of CHE characteristics in England and Spain

Characteristics of CHE	England	Spain
Historical embedding	Traditionally part of liberal ACE provided by extramural university departments	Traditionally part of ACE distance learning programmes by universities; strong orientation towards the European concept of LLL
Definition and concept	Currently, variety of terms used; strong focus on formal degrees for disadvantaged groups	Currently, common term but also subordinated terms used; focus on formal and non-formal degrees for professional qualifications and labour market needs
Target groups	NTS covering adult students in HE	NTS targets older and working students in HE
Governance model	Marketized model including performance-based funding mode	Developments towards marketized model in ACs with tendencies towards performance-based funding mode
Governance mode	Governance via hierarchy and market by strong forms of neoliberal public management processes	Governance primarily via hierarchy and strong regional specifications
National regulation	National legal framework and policies of HE, but strong autonomy of HEIs for implementation	National legal framework for HE, but strong autonomy of ACs for implementation in universities
Financing	National public HE funding for teaching (by study subject and performance-oriented) supplemented by student fees within a state-regulated and state-supported student loan system. HEIs set own tuition fees within government-defined upper limits. Decentralized ACE funding	National public HE funding for teaching and research (by definition of global budgets) and region-specific student grant support system, based on discretional criteria or performance-oriented. Tuition fees are set within government-defined price-ranges for ACs. Centralized and decentralized ACE funding
Regional regulation	Soft regional regulation, WPS and NCOP promote local arrangements between HEIs in regional entities (CAs, MCAs)	Strong regional regulation, AC legislation leads to different forms of university governance in regional entities (ACs)
Regulation of providers of HE/ACE	Depending on the type of offering (HE, FE or apprenticeship), providers are regulated by HE, ACE and apprenticeships regulations	Depending on the type of offering (HE or ACE), providers are regulated by HE and ACE regulations
Providers	HEIs, FECs, Open University, alternative providers	Universities, UNED, ACE providers

6 Conclusion

This article provides a comparative description of the diverse institutional anchoring of CHE in England and Spain on the basis of uniform theoretically founded categories, by means of identifying actors and basic governance structures between the national and financial regulation and providers. Categories derived from the educational governance perspective and heuristics of CHE as multi-level system have proven helpful to structure and describe comparatively actor constellations and their interrelations involved in CHE governance. As CHE is primarily regulated within HE in both countries, models of HE governance mostly correspond with findings on CHE regulations and financing. Furthermore, overlaps with ACE regulations exist in both England and Spain, primarily regarding non HEI providers offering HE courses or HE access courses. Therefore, a separate and focused consideration of CHE beyond HE is important to identify basic structures of CHE governance.

Compiling the central characteristics of CHE (including the primary governance modes) provides a reduction of complexity, which enables a comparison of heterogeneous system characteristics and still leaves scope for a broad picture of how CHE is defined and regulated. Since certain parts of ACE – like CHE – are always influenced by other sectors of education, it is necessary to consider the respective regulations of overlapping areas of education, in order to analyse how framework regulations shape governance structures.

Reflecting on the methodological approach, the limitations of a nation-wide perspective become evident. This is apparent for Spain, where regional regulations play a crucial role for HE governance and consequently for CHE. The same applies to England, where national regulations provide a clear framework, while empowering individual universities.

Further, the nature of the data does not allow one to cover actors and interactions that are not formally addressed, but may nevertheless impact CHE provision. Thus, actors characterized as organizational environment of providers offering HE resp. CHE and their informal role within the macro- and meso-level are not considered in this analysis, even though these are necessary to better understand the interrelations between different actors of state, market and civil society. Regarding action coordination between providers of CHE, this is particularly evident when studying WPS implementation in England.

Thus, fully understanding and identifying complex forms of hierarchical, competitive or cooperative forms of action coordination between different CHE providers would require interviews with national experts on the different levels of the multi-level system, including the analysis of provider structures within regional contexts. For this one should consult national experts from both the HE and ACE sectors, competent authorities on national and regional level as well as representatives of providers with a special focus on organizational environment. Such expert knowledge can reveal less formal aspects of action coordination between different CHE providers (e. g. advocative bodies) as well as on specific regional features of CHE. This would allow conclusions as to what extent the formal description is sufficient or

needs to be supplemented with informal and regional knowledge and inform an approach to the indicator-based description and comparison of national ACE resp. CHE systems.

Finally, the analysis does not cover CHE related specific characteristics on the level of programmes and access regulations. Future research would therefore need to investigate whether these categories could also describe CHE system characteristics. In addition, further countries would need to be considered that differ from the central system characteristics of England or Spain, e. g. a Scandinavian, East-European or Non-European Country.

In summary, document analyses of national legal and funding regulations provided a starting point towards a comprehensive picture of action coordination between CHE actors in different countries. The application of theory-based categories to the empirically retrieved country-specific information allows the comparison of basic system structures and characteristics for a specific field of ACE. By combining the current state of research and the empirical results, this paper offers an analytical heuristic for the comparison of country specific CHE governance mechanisms. In this regard, the findings could inform education policy on how to systematically compare CHE systems, as a first step towards a deeper understanding of governance dynamics between the macro- and meso-level of one subsection of ACE.

References

Altrichter, H. (2015). Governance – Steuerung und Handlungskoordination bei der Transformation von Bildungssystemen. Brüsemeister, T., Schemmann, M., & Wissinger, J. (Hrsg.): *Educational governance*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, Vol. 26. pp. 21–63. DOI:10.1007/978-3-658-06523-2

ASCLA 2009. House of Parliament (2009). *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Chapter 22.* Norwich: The Stationery Office. URL:<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/pdfs/ukpga_20090022_en.pdf>

Augar, P. (2019). *Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding.* London: Department for Education. URL:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805127/Review_of_post_18_education_and_funding.pdf>

Austin, I. & Jones, G. A. (2016). *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices*. New York, New York: Routledge.

Bartlett, L. & Vavrus, F. K. (2017). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. New York, London: Routledge.

Belando-Montoro, M. R. (2017). Aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida. Concepto y componentes. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación. 2017* (75). pp. 219–234. DOI:10.35362/rie7501255

Callender, C. & Thompson, J. (2018). *The Lost Part-Timers*. London: The Sutton Trust. URL:<https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/The-Lost-Part-Timers-Final.pdf >

Capano, G. & Pritoni, A. (2019). Varieties of hybrid systemic governance in European Higher Education. *Higher Education Quarterly. 73* (1). pp. 10–28. DOI:10.1111/hequ.12180

Clark, B. R. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press. DOI:10.1002/pam.4050030317

Conferencia de Consejos Sociales (2015). *Consejos Sociales y presupuestos universitarios: Guía básica*. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Conferencia de Consejos Sociales de las Universidades Espanñolas. URL:<https://ccsu.es/content/consejos-sociales-y-presupuestos-universitarios-guía-básica>

Consejo de Universidades & Conferencia General de Política Universitaria (2010). *Documento Financiación Universitaria*. Madrid. URL:<http://www.univnova.org/documentos/443.pdf>

Consejo de Universidades (2010). *Formación permanente y las universidades españolas*. Madrid. URL:<https://ccsu.es/sites/default/files/2010-formacion-permanente-universidades-espanolas-060710.pdf>

CRUE Universidades Españolas (2019). *La Universidad Española en Cifras*. Madrid. URL:<http://www.crue.org/Documentos%20compartidos/Publicaciones/Universidad%20Española%20en%20cifras/UEC%201718_FINAL_DIGITAL.pdf>

de la Torre, E. M. & Perez-Esparrells, C. (2019). Reforms in the Spanish Higher Education System Since Democracy and Future Challenges. Broucker, B., de Wit, K., Verhoeven, J. & Leisyte, L. (eds.): *Higher education system reform: An international comparison after twenty years of Bologna*. Leiden, Boston: Brill Sense, pp. 119–135.

Delgado, L. (2017). Higher Education Systems and Institutions, Spain. P. Teixeira, J. C. Shin et al. (eds.): *Encyclopedia of International Higher Education Systems and Institutions*. Springer Netherlands, pp. 1–11.

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2016). Higher Education and Research Bill: factsheet. *BIS 16*(285). URL:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543500/bis-16-285-higher-education-research-bill-summary.pdf>

Department for Education (2020). *Apprenticeship funding for employers who do not pay the levy*. URL:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856899/Apprenticeship_funding_for_employers_who_do_not_pay_the_apprenticeship_levy__reservation_of_funds_guidance__from_January_2020.pdf>

Dobbins, M. & Knill, C. (2016). Reformen der Hochschulsteuerung in Europa: Konzepte, Messung und empirische Befunde. Schmid, J., Amos, S. K. & Schrader, J. (Hrsg.): *Internationalisierte Welten der Bildung: Bildung und Bildungspolitik im globalen Vergleich*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 33–79. DOI:10.5771/9783845265186–33 DOI:10.15581/004.32.27–48

Dollhausen, K., Wolter, A., Lattke, S., Scheliga, F., Spexard, A., & Geffers, J. & Banscherus, U. (2013). *Developing the adult learning sector. Lot 3: Opening higher education to adults. Contract EAC 2012–0074. Final report*. Brüssel: Publications Office of the European Union. DOI:10.2766/65143

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Estevez-Abe, M., Iversen, T. & Soskice, D. (2001). Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State. Hall, P. A. & Sokice, D. (eds.) *Varieties of Capitalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 145–83.

European Commission (2018). *National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education – 2018/19. Eurydice – Facts and Figures*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. URL:< https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/fee_support_2018_19_report_en.pdf>

Eurydice (2019a). *United Kingdom – England: National Qualifications Framework*. Brüssel: Eurydice. URL:<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-qualifications-framework-93_en>

Eurydice (2019b). *United Kingdom – England: Types of Higher Education Institutions*. Brüssel: Eurydice. URL:<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/types-higher-education-institutions-79_en>

FETA 2007. House of Parliament (2007). *Further Education and Training Act 2007. Chapter 25*. Norwich: The Stationery Office. URL:<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/25/pdfs/ukpga_20070025_en.pdf>

Fraser, L. & Harman, K. (2019). Keeping Going in Austere Times: The Declining Spaces for Adult Widening Participation in Higher Education in England. Boeren, E. & James, N. (eds.): *Being an Adult Learner in Austere Times*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 71–95. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-97208-4

Gavara de Cara, J. C. (2018). El modelo y la forma de gobierno de la Universidad. Gavara de Cara, J. C. (eds.): *El Gobierno de la Universidad*. Barcelona: Bosch Consitutional. pp. 21–56.

Geldermann, B. & Schade, S. (2009). Continuing Higher Education in the United Kingdom. Knust, M. & Hanft, A. (eds.): *Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: An international comparative study on structures, organisation and provisions*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, pp. 215–246. DOI:10.1007/978-1-4020-9676-1

González-Monteagudo, J., Padilla-Carmona M. & Liñán, F. (2015). *Spain: Country Context on the Employability of Non- Traditional Students and Graduates (Employ Project/Erasmus Plus Programme/European Union)*. Seville: DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.2390.6007

GOV.UK (2020). *Departments, agencies and public bodies*. URL:<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations#department-for-education>

Green, A. (2006). Models of Lifelong Learning and the 'knowledge society'. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education. 36* (3). pp. 307–325. DOI:10.1080/03057920600872449

HERA 2017. House of Parliament (2017). *Higher Education and Research Act 2017. Chapter 29*. Norwich: The Stationery Office. URL:<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/pdfs/ukpga_20170029_en.pdf>

Ioannidou, A. (2010). *Steuerung im transnationalen Bildungsraum: Internationales Bildungsmonitoring zum Lebenslangen Lernen*. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Verlag. URL:<https://www.die-bonn.de/doks/2010-lebenslanges-lernen-01.pdf>

Jones, B. & Butcher, J. (2019). Editorial UALL Special Edition. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning. (21)* 1. pp. 1–7. DOI:10.5456/WPLL.21.1.1

Jungblut, J. & Vukasovic, M. (2018). Not all markets are created equal: Re-conceptualizing market elements in higher education. *Higher Education. 75* (5). pp. 855–870. DOI:10.1007/s10734-017-0174-5

Knust, M. & Hanft, A. (eds.) (2009). *Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: An international comparative study on structures, organisation and provisions.* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. DOI:10.1007/978-1-4020-9676-1

Kuckartz, U. (2012). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung.* Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Kussau, J. & Brüsemeister, T. (2007). Educational Governance: Zur Analyse der Handlungskoordination im Mehrebenensystem der Schule. Altrichter H., Brüsemeister T. & Wissinger J. (eds.): *Educational Governance*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, pp. 15–54.

LOE 2006. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2006). *Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. BOE. 2006* (106). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2006/05/03/2>

LOMCE 2013. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2013). *Ley Orgánica 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, para la mejora de la calidad educativa. BOE. 2013*(295). URL:<https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2013/BOE-A-2013-12886-consolidado.pdf>

LOMLOU 2007. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2007). *Ley Orgánica 4/2007, de 12 de abril, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 6/2001, de 21 de diciembre, de Universidades. BOE. 2007*(89). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/lo/2007/04/12/4>

Lucas, L. (2019). Intensification of Neo-liberal Reform of Higher Education in England or 'Change' as 'More of the Same'. Broucker, B., de Wit, K., Verhoeven, J. & Leisyte, L. (Eds.): *Higher education system reform: An international comparison after twenty years of Bologna*. Leiden: Brill Sense. pp. 165–177.

Ministerio de Educación (2011). *El aprendizaje permanente en España*. Madrid. URL:<https://www.aepumayores.org/sites/default/files/el-aprendizaje-permanente-en-espan.pdf>

Mora, J.-G. (2001). Lifelong Learning Policies in Spanish Universities. *European Journal of Education. 36* (3). pp. 317–327. DOI:10.1111/1467–3435.00070

Nesbit, T. & Holford, J. (2012). *University Continuing Education in Canada and the United Kingdom: A Comparison. ISCAE Conference Las Vegas 2012.* URL: <http://iscae.org/conferences/2012conf/papers/ProceedingsISCAE.pdf>

Office for Students (2019a). *Office for Students registration process and outcomes 2019–20. Key themes and analysis. OfS 2019(30)*. URL:https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1266f7d9–047c-492e-94a8–0eb6c937b983/registration-key-themes-and-analysis.pdf>

Office for Students (2019b). *Payment of annual OfS registration fees and initial fees: Technical guidance for providers. OfS 2019*(23). URL:<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/b9a13b9c-7dee-4de9–958c-e95a1a84368e/ofs-registration-fees_technical-guidance-for-providers.pdf>

Office for Students (2018). *Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England. OfS 2018*(01). URL:<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1406/ofs2018_01.pdf>

Olsen, J. P. (2007). The Institutional Dynamics of the European University. Maassen, P. & Olsen J. P. (eds.): *Higher Education Dynamics: Vol. 19. University Dynamics and European Integration*. Dordrecht, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, pp. 24–54.

Order ECD/1663/2016. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2016). *Orden ECD/1663/2016, de 11 de octubre, por la que se regulan las pruebas de acceso a la universidad de las personas mayores de 25 o de 45 años de edad, así como el acceso mediante acreditación de experiencia laboral o profesional, en el ámbito de la Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. BOE. 2016*(251). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/o/2016/10/11/ecd1663>

Order ECD/651/2017. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2017). *Orden ECD/651/2017, de 5 de julio, por la que se regula la enseñanza básica y su currículo para las personas adultas en modalidad presencial, a distancia y a distancia virtual, en el ámbito de gestión del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. BOE. 2017*(162). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/o/2017/07/05/ecd651>

Osborne, M. & Houston, M. (2012). United Kingdom: Universities and lifelong learning in the UK – adults as losers, but who are the winners? Slowey, M. & Schuetze H. G. (eds.): *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 112–132.

Owens, T. L. (2017). Higher education in the sustainable development goals framework. *European Journal of Education. 52* (4). pp. 414–420. DOI:10.1111/ejed.12237

Reuter, L. R. (2016). Politik- und rechtswissenschaftliche Bildungsforschung. Tippelt, R. Schmidth-Hertha (eds.): *Handbuch Bildungsforschung*. Wiesbaden: Springer Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. DOI:10.1007/978-3-531-19981-8

Royal Decree 1112/2015. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2015). *Real Decreto 1112/2015, de 11 de diciembre, por el que se aprueba el Estatuto del Organismo Autónomo Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación. BOE. 2015*(302). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rd/2015/12/11/1112/con>

Royal Decree 14/2012. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2012). *Real Decreto-ley 14/2012, de 20 de abril, de medidas urgentes de racionalización del gasto público en el ámbito educativo. BOE. 2012*(96). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rdl/2012/04/20/14>

Royal Decree 1393/2007. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2007). *Real Decreto 1393/2007, de 29 de octubre, por el que se establece la ordenación de las enseñanzas universitarias oficiales. BOE. 2007*(260). URL:<https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rd/2007/10/29/1393/con>

Rees, G. (2013). Comparing Adult Learning Systems: an emerging political economy. *European Journal of Education. 2013*(1). pp. 200–212. DOI:10.1111/ejed.12025

Reunión de Defensores Universitarios Grupo (2015). *Títulos propios y Defensorías Universitarias*. Madrid. URL:<https://www.unex.es/organizacion/defensor_universitario/archivos/ficheros/documentos/titulos_propios_G9.pdf>

REUPEP 2019. Red Universitaria de Estudios de Posgrado y Educacion Permanente (2019). *Más información, mejores decisiones: respuestas al Postgrado*. Valencia. URL: <https://ruepep.org/publicaciones/>

Saar, E., Täht, K. & Roosalu, T. (2014). Institutional barriers for adults' participation in higher education in thirteen European countries. *Higher Education. 68* (5). pp. 691–710. DOI:10.1007/s10734-014-9739-8

Sánchez-Gelabert, A. & Andreu Elias, M. (2017). Los estudiantes universitarios no tradicionales y el abandono de los estudios. *Estudios sobre Educación. 2017*(32). pp. 27–48. DOI: 10.15581/004.32.27–48

Sánchez-Martínez, M. & Sáez, J. (2016). Spain. Findsen, B. & Formosa, M. (eds.): *International Perspectives on Older Adult Education: Research, Policies and Practice*. Cham: Springer International Publishing Switzerland, pp. 411–420. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-24939-1

Schemmann, M. (2014). Analysis of the governance of university continuing education in the United Kingdom and Germany. M. Schemmann (eds.): *Internationales Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung 37*(1). pp. 61–71.

Schrader, J. (2011). *Struktur und Wandel der Weiterbildung*. Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG.

Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London, New York: Routledge.

Student Loans Company (2018). *The Student Loans Company Ltd: Framework Document December 2018*. SLC Framework Document. Glasgow. URL:<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/790468/slc-framework-document.pdf>

Tait, A. (2018). Education for Development: From Distance to Open Education. *Journal of Learning for Development. 5*(2). pp. 101–115. URL:<https://jl4d.org/index.php/ejl4d/article/view/294>

TFEA 2017. House of Parliament (2017). *Technical and Further Education Act 2017. Chapter 19*. Norwich: TSO. URL:<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/19/pdfs/ukpga_20170019_en.pdf>

University Code 2020. Boletín Oficial del Estado (2020). *Código de Universidades. Códigos electrónicos*. Madrid: Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado. URL:<www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/>

Wolff, S. (2004). Analysis of documents and records. Flick, U., v. Kardoff, E., Steinke, I. (eds.): *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 284–290.

Wolter, A. (2011). Die Entwicklung wissenschaftlicher Weiterbildung in Deutschland: Von der postgradualen Weiterbildung zum lebenslangen Lernen. *Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung. 33* (4). pp. 8–35.

Authors

Diana Treviño-Eberhard is a PhD student in the Junior Research Group 'Interrelations of institutional frameworks and the provision of adult education in international comparison' at the German Institute of Lifelong Learning (DIE) in Bonn. Her dissertation focuses on the institutional frameworks and the provision structures of Continuing Higher Education in three European countries.

Contact
German Institute for Adult Education
Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning
Heinemannstraße 12–14
53175 Bonn
Germany
Department System and Politics
trevino-eberhard@die-bonn.de

Dr. Katrin Kaufmann-Kuchta is a Head of the Junior Research Group 'Interrelations of institutional frameworks and the provision of adult education in international comparison' at the German Institute of Lifelong Learning (DIE) in Bonn. Her research focuses on the participation and the provider structures of Adult Continuing Education in a national and international comparative perspective.

Contact
German Institute for Adult Education
Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning
Heinemannstraße 12–14
53175 Bonn
Germany
Department System and Politics
kaufmann-kuchta@die-bonn.de