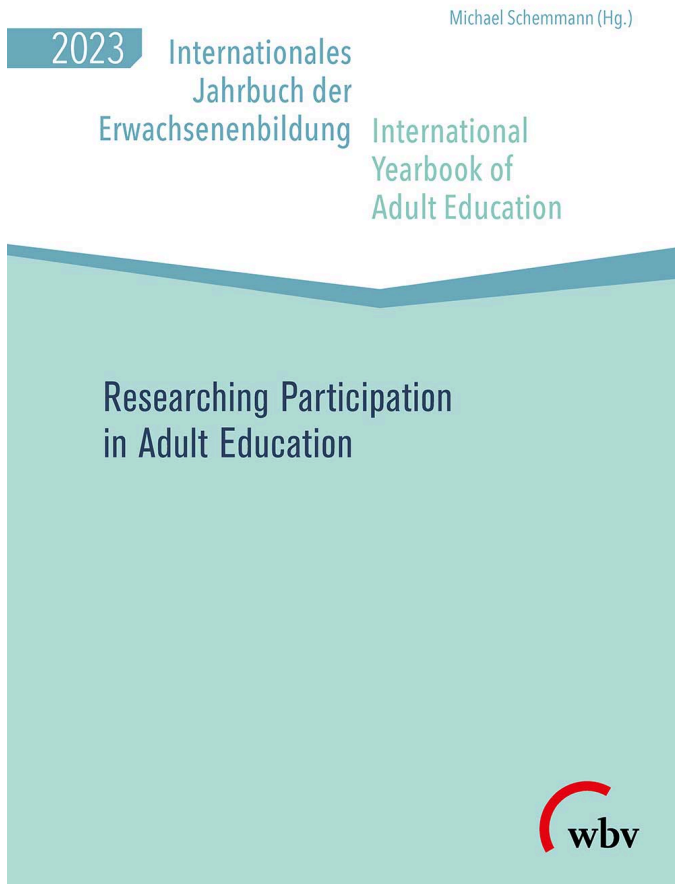


Die Einleitung bietet einen Überblick über die Forschung zur Teilhabe in der Erwachsenenbildung. Das Konzept des diesjährigen Bandes und die Beiträge werden vorgestellt. Der Beitrag schließt mit einigen Bemerkungen des Herausgebers.

This introductory article first reviews the development on participation in adult education. It then introduces the concept of this year's volume and the contributions. The article concludes with some remarks by the editor.

Schlagworte: Erwachsenenbildung; Forschung; lebenslanges Lernen; Teilhabe; Participation; Wissenschaft
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Researching Participation in Adult Education. An Introduction to the Topic

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Volume 46 of the International Yearbook of Adult Education is dedicated to researching participation in adult education. Participation is one of the long-standing research areas in adult education and also a long-standing central topic of adult education policies.

Within the German-speaking context it can be traced back to the university extension movement in Vienna where Ludo Hartmann gathered basic data about participants in the lectures in a statistical data set (Wittpoth 2018, 1150). Shortly after, these kinds of surveys were extended by data on sex, age and occupation and were also carried out in other cities. Originally designed to justify the university extension activities, the statistics were theoretically based, methodologically improved and used for researching participation. It is remarkable that first steps towards qualitative studies on participation were already taken in the 1920s by Gertrud Hermes in order to understand participation motives of workers (Faulstich & Zeuner 2011).

Adult education research, practice and policy has never settled for meeting the demands of groups who are willing to participate but has always aimed at awakening the needs of groups that are more distanced to participation (Siebert 2001). Thus, the focus on participation in adult education is complemented by the focus on non-participation. In 1964, Tietgens published a study which asked the question why workers in industry do not participate in adult evening institute courses (Tietgens 1978). A provocative reply asking why workers should participate in adult evening institute courses was not seriously discussed, but rather strategies on how to identify and activate target groups of adult education were developed (Siebert 2001, 295).

But despite all efforts ever since to widen learning opportunities, to address new target groups and to institutionalize adult education a large share of adults still does not participate in adult education. It is mostly adults with better educational background and higher social status who participate in adult education activities, whereas those who Tietgens might have seen as more in need when asking about the workers do not participate.

However, explaining participation is not that simple. It is rather a complex decision-making process influenced by interacting internal and external factors that are found on the individual, organizational and societal level. To better understand this decision-making process for participation and non-participation is one reason why researching participation in adult education is still an ongoing endeavor.

With this volume, we want to contribute to this debate. This introductory article will start off by briefly focusing on the development of the international policy initiatives as well as the research activities on participation in adult education. Next, the con-

cept of this year's volume and articles will be presented. The article concludes with some remarks on our own account.

1 Participation in Adult Education in Policy and Research

As regards international adult education policy, the interest in participation goes back to the promotion of the concept of Lifelong Education in the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, the Faure Report, which captured and analyzed educational reform tendencies worldwide and drew conclusions from it, brought the idea of learning as a lifelong process to the fore:

“We should no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life – learn to be“ (Faure et al. 1972, vi). But next to the Faure Report there were numerous other approaches to lifelong learning and the learning society which contributed to the development of the concept of lifelong education and thus the demand of participation in adult education (e. g. Dave 1973; Dave 1976).

A particular focus was again put on lifelong learning as an educational policy concept as of the 1990s. Compared to the concept development of the 1970s, there were significant differences as regards e. g. the goals and means, but the general demand of a necessarily high participation in adult education was kept up (Rubenson 1996). What is more, several other international organizations like the European Union, the OECD and also the World Bank joined in and promoted lifelong learning policies as well (Schemmann 2007).

Yet, the political demand of lifelong participation in learning is still present in contemporary documents. The seventh international conference on adult education by UNESCO (CONFINTEA VII) adopted the so-called “Marrakech Framework for Action” in which the prominent role of participation was confirmed. It states:

“We reaffirm that ALE is a key component of lifelong learning, noting that ALE policies and practices apply to a wide range of ages, education levels, learning spaces and modalities, and recognizing that lifelong learning is the major engine of the learning society at different levels, involving individuals, families, organizations, workplaces, neighbourhoods, cities, and regions” (UNESCO 2022).

As mentioned above, research on participation in adult education is one of the research strands in adult education with a long tradition. Furthermore, studies on participation and participants are often of outstanding importance for adult education research. As Zeuner (2019) points out for the German context, the so-called “Göttingen Study” carried out during the 1960s in Germany had a tremendous impact on research in adult education in Germany and is still considered as a “core study” today. Research on participation in adult education was also at the core of the discipline in general and in other countries. As such, a journal analysis of *Adult Education Quarterly* carried out by Taylor (2001) for the years 1989 to 1999 presented as one of the major findings that the

research field was not as broad and pluralistic as assumed. More than two thirds of the submission could be subsumed under only five out of twelve categories. Needless to say that “participation” was one of those five. In addition, other analyses of a similar type (St. Clair 2011, Rubenson & Elfert 2014) saw research on participation as one of the central areas, too.

Another important development regarding research is the establishment of international or national studies which provide surveys with large data sets that can be used for analysis. As Boeren points out, these studies like PIACC, AES, the European Social Survey, the Adult Education program and Learner Survey in the US and many more are carried out all over the world (Boeren 2016, 42–54). Even though especially the international studies might also be seen as instruments of governance (Field, Künzel & Schemmann 2019), they still provide an enormous amount of data open for research. Consequently, the analysis of influential factors is becoming more sophisticated and our understanding of the determinants and of the complex phenomenon of participation in adult education is getting better and better.

2 On the Concept and the Individual Contributions

Designing the content structure for volume 46 of the International Yearbook of Adult Education is driven by three main goals. The intention is to make a contribution to methodical questions of research on participation in adult education by firstly displaying articles which discuss the currently dominant research paradigm and the high rated data from large scale studies such as PIACC, IALS and the Adult Education Survey as well as articles employing qualitative methods to analyze participation. Secondly, the phenomenon participation is to be analyzed in an international comparative or cross-national approach as well as on a national level as in a country study. And thirdly, the volume is also meant to cover and stimulate reflections on current research trends in participation and future needs on a theoretical level, also discussing cornerstones of a prospective research program.

In detail, volume 46 of the International Yearbook of Adult Education comprises the following articles:

Ellen Boeren’s article “Conceptualizing Lifelong Learning Participation – Theoretical Perspectives and Integrated Approaches” brings to the fore the long-lasting research tradition on participation in adult education research. What is more, the article focuses on theoretical perspectives which were employed in this long period. As such, psychological and behavioral perspectives as well as sociological theories are discussed. Focusing on adult education organizations and the workplace, theoretical perspectives on the organizational level are taken up as well as structural theories. The paper also presents an integrated model that can guide and systematize research and finishes with recommendations to address current limitations of participation research.

The article „Haben wir die falschen Instrumente?“ by Anke Grotlüschen and Klaus Buddeberg represents a critical reflection on different approaches and instru-

ments to research participation in adult education. The authors argue that the currently dominant quantitative large-scale studies mainly focus on participation in lifelong learning as a norm. Conversely, non-participation is seen as a divergence from the norm which needs to be justified. The paper argues that large-scale studies on participation dismiss certain justifications for non-participation. As such, missing benefits as a reason does not come to the fore. Accordingly, revising existing surveys and using quantitative and qualitative methods as complementing approaches might contribute to a better understanding of participation and non-participation in lifelong learning.

Şükrü Erhan Bağcı focuses on a more comprehensive understanding of participation in adult educations in his article “Documentary Method and Biographical Narrative Interview for Understanding Participation in Adult Education”. In particular, the author argues for research that helps to better understand the motives of participation as internal factors and the deterrents as external factors. In a holistic approach, he understands participation as embedded into biographical experiences of an individual accumulated during the lifespan. Consequently, he pleads for a different methodology than the current dominant one and brings the documentary method and the biographical interview to the fore as means to understand participation.

The article “Inequality in adult education participation across national contexts: is growing employer support exacerbating or mitigating inequality in participation?” by Richard Desjardins and Jungwon Kim employs a somewhat comparative approach. In a longitudinal perspective, it analyses what kind of effect growing employer support for participation in adult education has on the inequality of participation. For the analysis, the authors use data from PIACC and IALS. Their findings show that employer support for adult education might have a mitigating effect on inequality in participation.

The article “Frustration, Care Work, and the Pandemic. Reasons for Drop-out in Literacy and Adult Basic Education” by Lena Sindermann focuses on drop-out as a concept of participation. In particular, the author focuses on the reasons for drop-out in literacy and adult basic education from the perspective of teachers. The study is based on 13 semi-structured interviews with trainers and teaching staff in literacy and adult basic education which are analyzed using the method of qualitative content analysis following Kuckartz (2016). The paper shows that the reasons for drop-out in this field are manifold as are the target groups. Thus, it concludes that the phenomenon needs to be researched in a multi-dimensional way.

Finally, Jan Kalenda focuses on participation and participation inequalities in non-formal adult education in the Czech Republic. In his article, he employs a longitudinal perspective and uses data from international surveys such as IALS, PIACC and the Adult Education Survey and the CZ-ALE which is a national survey. The findings indicate a steady increase in participation between 1997 and 2016 and a sharp decline in 2020. What is more, the study also shows that participation inequality between lower and higher educated adults declined between 2011 and 2020, whereas inequality due to economic activity increased during this period. Overall, it seems that the factor employment status is of great importance regarding the likelihood of participation in non-formal adult education.

Next to the articles to the key subject section, this year's volume of the International Yearbook of Adult Education also includes one article in the section Miscellaneous.

Tim Vetter, Gwennaëlle Mulliez and Eva Bonn take the fact that systematic reviews have received more and more attention in adult research in recent years as a starting point for their article. In detail, the paper focuses on the question of how the method of systematic review, adapted from medicine, is implemented in the research field of adult education. On the basis of an integrative review, 57 reviews are evaluated, which can be attributed to the research field of adult and continuing education and which describe themselves as systematic reviews. The 57 reviews are evaluated based on overarching criteria for systematic reviews and classified in an aggregated form. The paper ends with a final reflection on consequences for adult education research.

This year's volume is completed by two reviews written by Thomas Theurer and Gwennaëlle Mulliez.

3 On our Own Account

Lastly, I would like to express gratitude to all authors of the contributions who prepared their manuscripts within the deadlines since this made sure that the Yearbook could be published in time. What is more, I am also grateful to all reviewers of the articles and to the authors of the review section.

My personal thanks go to *Eva Bonn* who runs the editorial department of the International Yearbook of Adult Education. I very much appreciate her engagement and her initiatives to improve the quality of processes which guarantee the standard of the International Yearbook of Adult Education.

Volume 47 of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education* will focus on the topic "Coordination of Action in Adult education". We welcome contributions to the key subject of this volume as well as contributions to the sections Miscellaneous and Reviews.

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