

## **Navigating individually, as a collectivity: second chance learners' pathways into and within the German system of lifelong learning.**

---

### **Abstract**

The paper debates the heterogeneous group of second chance learners who navigate individually into and within the German system of lifelong learning—hereby constituting a social collectivity. The formation of the latter has been strongly nurtured by the European and national policy agenda on access to vocational and tertiary education. The reciprocity between, on the one hand, the subject's handling and interpretations of the infrastructures of lifelong learning and, on the other hand, the biographical impact on (re)producing and, eventually, transforming exactly these infrastructures becomes apparent. Against this backdrop, we aim to discuss practices of 'doing biography' (Dausien, 2004) as individuals, yet as part of a social collectivity—and within a contested political and societal regime of lifelong learning. For this, we link the findings of three arenas of qualitative research projects in order to propose follow-up questions and a framework for a joint research agenda.

### **1. Introduction**

This paper highlights adults navigating into and within national systems of lifelong learning, exemplarily analyzed by the German system. How to suitably label these adults (as *second chance learners*, *returners*, *lifelong learners*, *non-traditional learners* or the like) remains an open question and points to a wide range of concepts and terminologies used in both national and international discourse (see e.g. Schuetze & Slowey, 2002). However, in this paper, we draw on the following differentiation, which enables us not only to focus on different arenas within the system of lifelong learning, but also to elicit their overarching commonalities.

Seen from an anthropological perspective, every human being represents a lifelong learner; living is learning, and, learning is living. Seen from an adult education and learning perspective and the European debate over the past decades, the conceptual frameworks given the terminology *lifelong learning* stand for somehow modern understandings of teaching and learning in comparison to traditional ones (see e.g. Field, 2013). This fundamental shift to the idea and terminology of lifelong learning rests on pedagogical beliefs of a temporal expansion of learning (throughout life), a spatial expansion of learning (teaching and learning in diverse forms and at diverse places) and a content-related expansion (beyond a fixed, canonical body of knowledge) (Hof, 2009, 56-57).

The juxtaposition given by Schuetze and Slowey (2002) between a traditional learner and a lifelong learner makes sense to point to the core features of this shift (see table 1):

Traditional learner	Lifelong learner
Restricted access	Flexible access
For young people only	For all, young people, adults and the elderly
Full-time non- / formal education	Full-time and part-time learning and education
Campus / classroom based, on-site studies – according to the needs of institutions and the education system	On-site but also off-campus / distance studies, self-learning – according to the needs of the learners
Linear studies with final examinations	Module-based curriculum, credit system, recurrent studies
Discipline-oriented, curriculum-centered organization of studies / learning	Problem(-solving) and competence-oriented learning, learner-centered organization
Degree studies	Degree and non-degree studies

Table 1: Shift from the traditional learner to the lifelong learner (Illustration by the authors, based on Schuetze & Slowey, 2002, 324)

Such an understanding of a lifelong learner strengthens the idea that neither the institution's nor the system's needs are given priority, but the learner's needs are prioritized in order to enable the learner to fully exercise and exploit the possibilities and options in today's knowledge societies. In acknowledging this, we, however, focus on specific sub-groups of the overall amount of lifelong learners. This is why we make use of the terminology *second chance learners*, because these are learners who are navigating into and within the system of lifelong learning on non-traditional, mostly alternative pathways and this often on a second chance basis later in life (see also Slowey & Schuetze, 2012, 39). In our empirical research, we refer to *three examples* of second chance learners: (a) Adult learners entering higher education via the *third educational route* (meaning with vocational qualifications instead of traditional entry qualifications). (b) *Informal learners* (Rogers, 2014) lacking formal degrees and / or skills for different reasons (low-skilled workers, migrants, refugees) and depending on regulations and infrastructures for the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning (VPL). And, finally, (c) *returners* who were forced to interrupt formal learning pathways due to, in this case, adolescent parenthood.

In the wake of these realities and potentialities of lifelong learning in today's societies, the education policy agendas at the level of the European Union (EU), as well as on national levels, have been accordingly transformed and adjusted. With regard to the three sub-groups mentioned above, a range of dynamics and measures can be identified:

In the higher education context, the policy agenda of increasing and widening participation in higher education in the context of the BOLOGNA process and the Europe 2020 strategy is prominent (EUROSTAT, 2014). It seeks to enhance permeability of the higher education institutions and, moreover, demands a quantitative increase in students and a qualitative widening of the traditional student body via alternative access routes into higher education (see e.g. European Commission/ EACEA P9 / Eurydice, 2012; Orr & Hovdhaugen, 2014).

According to this, one of the European-wide benchmarks within the Europe 2020 strategy claims an increase in the share of persons completing tertiary education from 37% in 2013 to at least 40% of the EU28 population by 2020 (EUROSTAT, 2014).

Concerning systematic efforts for validation and recognition of learning, a first milestone was passed by initiating the installment of a European Qualification Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning in 2008. By focusing on the issues of knowledge, skills and competence, rather than on formal qualifications, the EQF puts priority from an input-orientation to learning outcomes. Known as part of the COPENHAGEN process, the European Council furthermore passed a conclusion in 2009 that defined a strategic framework for the cooperation of EU member states in education and vocational education and training (European Commission, 2009). There, lifelong learning is defined to serve as a fundamental principle also beyond formal learning, such as learning taking place in non-formal and informal contexts. Within this, the validation and recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (VPL) is a priority. The aim is to strengthen the flexibility of learning pathways to increase labor market inclusion and mobility across Europe. Key objectives are to enhance employability, labor market opportunities and educational chances for so-called disadvantaged individuals, such as low skilled and/ or unemployed persons, migrant workers, refugees and individuals with restricted labor market and learning opportunities (Cedefop, 2015). As a follow-up to 2009, another recommendation was passed on the validation of non-formal and informal learning in 2012, requiring all EU member states to implement validation procedures in accordance with their national systems by 2018 (European Commission, 2012). This provides individuals across all EU member states with the opportunity to receive validation for their competences, skills and abilities gained through non-formal and informal learning. Furthermore, this validation has to be the basis for a full or partial recognition of a qualification.

In the case of re-/ integration of adolescent parents into the (vocational) education system, an overall European policy agenda has (not yet) evolved. Rather, national regulations and efforts can be identified—not least due to the fact that a relatively small group of persons are concerned (in Germany in 2015, less than 5% of all mothers were younger than 21 years of age, only 0.4 % below the age of 18; Destatis, 2017). If adolescents give birth, the majority of them has not yet finished school or vocational training, and, mostly, they interrupt their educational pathway. For them (and other persons with family duties), a legislative change was installed in 2005 in § 8 in the German Vocational Training Act (BBiG) in order to render possible the completion of vocational education and training in part-time. However, there still seems to be a range of barriers preventing adolescent parents from completing their vocational education and training even in the part-time model, e.g. financial and temporal limitations in the legislative framework or gender-related imbalances in economy and the labor market (e.g. Anslinger 2009, 2016; Frieze 2008, 2010).

All in all, different dynamics and measures are at work, nevertheless, a corresponding logic of these transformations becomes apparent. Under the auspices of the lifelong learning policy agenda, leitmotifs of social justice, cohesion and sustainability are also brought forward, but it is primarily the economic-related objective to maximize the full potential of the population that unfolds the highest potency. It argues, e.g. in the context of access to higher education,

“that no talent should be left behind” and that “all those who have a capacity to follow higher education studies would be provided with the opportunity to do so, regardless of their prior formal learning achievements” (European Commission/ EACEA P9 / Eurydice, 2012, 83).

However, empirical evidence demonstrates that the legal granting of formal rights is a necessary, but not a sufficient criterion to ensure a widening of the access of adult learners to education. In this sense, formal rights remain “a half-open door” (Watson, Hagel, & Chesters, 2013) that might widen the bottleneck to lifelong learning opportunities, but not necessarily transform the underlying logics and relevant infrastructures, as we would like to put forward in the following.

## **2. Navigating into and within the system of lifelong learning: theoretical and methodological approach**

In this paper, we take the learner’s perspective as the primary lens of research. Against this backdrop, we understand the term *navigating* as a multi-faceted activity of adult learners that refers to the individual processes of moving and orienting within transitions in the wider context of learning biographies. As part of these navigating activities, learning is more than a passive tool of individually adapting to external requirements or changing conditions. As Field (2013) had pointed out, learning “becomes an active enabler of change” (ibid., 388) and of subjectively making sense (Walther & Stauber, 2013, 31). Moreover, navigating cannot be reduced to selective moments of clearly distinguishable decisions or responsibilities, but stands for a holistic approach. Milburn (2012) has rightly argued that ‘access’, in this case to higher education, is not only the formal procedure of entering, but consists of ‘getting ready’, ‘getting in’, ‘staying in’ and ‘getting on’. Thus, also our understanding of navigating into and within the system of lifelong learning refers to a range of interconnected personal, institutional and societal features that lead, in consequence, to varying pathways, which we would like to elicit by means of our empirical findings.

Our theoretical point of departure links to biographical research following the works of Alheit and Dausien (2000), Truschkat (2013) or also of Field, Merrill and West (2012). It aims to analyze the navigating activities of second chance learners, their decisions made at biographical turning points or transitional periods in their learning biographies and the meanings or relevance given to those by them. Looking through this biographical lens, we are interested in the adult learner’s activities of handling and coping with the challenge of transition. Ultimately, whether coping is successful, is, according to our understanding, less an outcome of an externally given normative concept of failure or success, but rather to be understood as an impetus of individual motivation and activity to (re-)establish the ability to act within the life-course. It is the practices of ‘doing biography’ (Dausien, 2004) as individuals, yet as part of a social collectivity, that we would like to bring to the fore.

In contrast to conceptions that explore institutional life-stages in a linear temporal sequence, we agree with Welzer’s (1993) work. According to Welzer, transitions are non-linear, they are often initiated by unexpected, profound events or experiences (e.g. illness, unemployment, life-course dynamics contrary to ‘usual’ sequences such as an adolescent parenthood) and are

more likely to be 'zones of uncertainty and vulnerability' (Walther & Stauber 2013, 29). Thus, they demand orientation, guidance or also institutional support in being able to cope. Hence, with regard to the issue of lifelong learning, it is the individual's task to learn how to successfully navigate in and within such transitional phases of the life-course.

Correspondingly, we shall argue that 'doing biography' (Dausien, 2004) in transitions is deeply anchored in the interdependency of personal, institutional and societal factors. This means the overall social fabric; normative rules, demands and expectations according to both, learning and learners; the existing institutional infrastructures; and, highly relevant, the individual's meanings attached to this. The latter could be interpretations of 'doing biography' in the sense of dis-/continuity, of disruptions or also of coping and managing change. Hence, exploring significant turning points in the lifelong learning system promises to provide insight into mechanism of social inclusion / exclusion that are of a momentous impact for learner biographies. For this objective, *we link the individual perspective of specific sub-groups of second chance learners with the corresponding policy framework and its translation via institutional infrastructures of the lifelong learning system.*

In order to illuminate these linkages by means of our empirical findings, we make use of conceptions on gate-keeping. This allows demonstrating that the individual learners do not navigate in a free-floating manner within the system of lifelong learning. Rather, they move and need to orientate themselves in institutional settings and, hence, in a social space of a pre-structured framework of experience (Truschkat, 2013). That shows the biographically momentous power and influence of decisions made by representatives of such institutions of the lifelong learning system. Struck (2001) illustrates this fabric by differentiating between the personal-related process of *coping with transitions*, an overall *system of transition* (institutional frameworks) and the *politics of transition*. The latter refer to institutions and, more precisely, to concrete gate-keepers who generate, as representatives of an institution, possibilities or risks for individual learners by exercising their authority in making decisions, in (re-)producing directives and in opening, limiting or closing access. This leads to the concluding point. In our research, we have chosen to take the individual's perspective on transitions during the life-course of a learning biography. However, at the same moment, second chance learners *constitute a collectivity by sharing a specific collaborative social space of a pre-structured framework of experience* (Truschkat, 2013)—be that a third educational route, validation processes or an adolescent parenthood.

In his early methodological work on focus group interviews, Mangold (1960) has brought this point to the fore. Members of groups brought together in the context of qualitative research do not necessarily need to personally know one another to constitute a group. Constituting a group might proceed as well through the fact of sharing structurally identical experiences, which deeply influence the members' thoughts, decisions and activities and, in consequence, allow them to articulate a supra-individual, meaning: a collaborative, opinion as a group. Mangold uses here the term of *informal group opinions*. Such opinions, based on the collaborative portfolio of structurally identical experiences, might serve as a kind of catalyst in reproducing social reality by their enduring articulation (ibid., 63) or also in enforcing their internalization in the group member's individual mind-sets and patterns of behavior.

This contested arena of navigating will be illuminated by our findings.

### 3. Empirical findings: Pathways of second chance learners

The previously identified three sub-groups of second chance learners navigate in varying forms into and within the German system of lifelong learning due to their different arena of transition. According to their specific angle of access to the lifelong learning system, they tackle different legislative regulations and politics of transition (Struck, 2001), which are 'translated' and exercised by institutional gate-keepers. However, commonalities in these navigating procedures throughout the empirical research arenas become apparent:

- *Legislative regulations*: For all three sub-groups, there exist legislative regulations with the aim of (more or less) establishing and ensuring non-traditional pathways. And these lead to higher education (mostly federal-state-bound, like the Hamburg Higher Education Law), to the labor market (Recognition Law [*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen*]) or to the vocational system (Vocational Training Act [*Berufsbildungsgesetz*] § 8).
- *Preparing access* ('getting ready'): The arenas of transition under scrutiny have in common that the activities needed for a priori preparing access to the lifelong learning system rely first and foremost on the commitment of the individual second chance learners themselves, because institutionally provided guidance and information is ensured only in rare cases (Meyer, 2014). Information, on e.g. access criteria or entitlement to benefits, often needs to be searched for individually in a tedious process. Moreover, advisory services frequently work with rather general, less case-specific expertise and they depend to a high degree on the respective person being the institutional gate-keeper.
- *Entering the institutional system of lifelong learning* ('getting in'): In spite of the existing regulations, empirical research clearly shows that the institutional bottleneck and the politics of transition result in only small amounts of successful second chance learners in comparison to first chance learners: Vocational qualified students at universities represent 0.8 % of all students (Dahm & Kerst, 2013, 35). In 2015, about 20,000 migrants applied for the recognition of their foreign vocational degree (BMBF, 2017), 12,666 persons succeeded in a full recognition. Concerning vocational education and training, only 0.4 % of all those undertake this in a part-time model (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, 2016, 130).

Following this, we would like to briefly outline the findings of the research projects.

#### 3.1 Adult learners entering higher education via the third educational route

The so-called third educational route points to the significance of access to higher education for adults holding VET qualifications and awards, but lacking the traditional entry qualification (see e.g. Wolter, 2012; Orr & Hovdhaugen, 2014). In Germany, the *Abitur*

represents a still strong humanistic academic tradition of gate-keeping the entrance to higher education by means of this traditional entry qualification as it is commonly seen to provide prospective students with a somewhat 'ability to study'.

A first research project, "Learning biographies of skilled individuals who followed alternative adult education pathways" (Anslinger & Heibült, forthcoming), implemented 38 biographical interviews with this group of second chance learners in order to shed light on the wide range of transitions involved. It elicited that learners seek to create coherence by making sense of their narrated learning experiences and life events, and, at the same time, manage barriers and support mechanisms for their pathways and for transferring work experience to academia (Anslinger & Haasler, 2016). A second project, conducted at Hamburg University, focused on those second chance learners of the third educational route who are required to participate in an additional entrance examination process (proving their 'ability to study') *before* being allowed to follow the usual application route for a study place (Schreiber-Barsch, 2014). It raised the question of how institutional gate-keeping mechanisms are perceived, appraised and translated into decision-making processes by these second chance learners. This was explored following Grounded Theory Methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Strübing, 2014) and using qualitative (focus groups, participant observation (participants of entrance examinations)) and quantitative methods (online questionnaire with institutional gate-keepers) and is currently being finalized. The findings demonstrate the internalizing effects of politics of transition and informal group opinions (Mangold, 1960) with regard to acknowledging the rightfulness and explanatory power of examining the individual's 'ability to study'.

### ***3.2 Informal learners: validation of prior non-formal and informal learning (VPL)***

The Vocational Qualifications Assessment Law (BQFG, also called "Recognition Law") was introduced in 2012. It guarantees individuals the right to get foreign qualifications recognized by a competent authority within three months, as being equal to a respective national qualification. Although the law focuses on assessing and comparing formal qualifications, also informally acquired competences and relevant work experience can be considered, when formal certificates are missing or incomplete. The recognition process is based on assessing documents such as training certificates, certificates of capability and proof of relevant work experience, acquired in a foreign country or in Germany (see *ibid.*). Complementary, competence assessment is also possible based on practical tests, proof of work and interviews. When significant skill gaps impede full recognition, a partial recognition can be awarded that can be supplemented, for example, by further training (Böse et al., 2014).

Beyond these formal rights and regulations, the project "Effectiveness of validation of prior learning (VPL) Policies and Programs for Labor Market Inclusion and Mobility" (2016-2019) (Haasler, Anslinger & Laudenbach, 2017) introduces biographical research perspectives into the arena of VPL. It targets persons in a transitional 'zone of uncertainty and vulnerability' (Walther & Stauber), meaning disadvantaged individuals such as low-skilled, unemployed persons and refugees aiming to get access to the German education system and labor market. By implementing narrative interviews, the research project highlights the individual's

perspectives on validation procedures as well as their prospective situation in the education system and labor market. Thus, it links the politics of transition and their gate-keeping mechanisms with the individual meaning attached to them.

### ***3.3 Returners: adolescent parents returning to vocational training***

Adolescent parents are in a comparable transitional ‘zone of uncertainty and vulnerability’. They navigate in an “extraordinary” (Spies, 2010) life situation compared to their peers, because they simultaneously have to cope with their roles as both teenagers and parents. At the same time, they are stigmatized due to not meeting the norms of the threefold life-course chronology (vocational training – work – starting a family) (see e.g. Anslinger, 2009; Ellis-Sloan, 2014). Offers of the lifelong learning systems in form of the so-called parental education seek to, inter alia, prepare adolescent parents returning to the labor market or to vocational training (full- or part-time), and, by this, ensuring social inclusion and adaptability to labor market requirements.

A PhD-thesis, currently being finalized (Gundlach, 2017), implements a qualitative research design, following Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Strübing, 2014) and conducting interviews and focus group discussions with adolescent parents and staff from parental education programs. The findings elaborate the reasons and gate-keeping mechanism that encourage or discourage adolescent parents from participating in parental education programs as well as their corresponding needs, interests and resources. Ultimately, it is meant to provide knowledge on custom-fit (Chamakalayil, 2010, 127) lifelong learning opportunities for this still hard-to-reach group of second chance learners.

## **4. Conclusion: ‘Doing biography’ in the contested regime of lifelong learning**

In conclusion, our research clearly illuminates that even though in all three cases of second chance learners a national or also European-wide legal framework for supporting their participation in the system of lifelong learning has been successfully installed, the politics of transition on the institutional level exercise multi-faceted mechanisms of gate-keeping. The door is kept only half-open for lifelong learners.

Taking up this line of thought, the follow-up research agenda could tackle various aspects: (1) What are the interests of institutional gate-keepers to open, limit and / or close access (even contrary to legal frameworks)? (2) How does (re-)production of such gate-keeping regimes proceed, for example by internalizing its norms and claims through its individual members? Foucault’s (2006) works on *technologies of the self* could offer here a fruitful perspective of analysis. (3) Furthermore, we shall highlight that the usual deficit-oriented perspective on what is lacking, missing, non-traditional in learner’s biographies should be finally superseded by a resource-oriented perspective, which actually had been one of the leitmotifs of installing the EQF with its shift to learning outcomes at that time. However, the current paradigm of standardization, homogenization and comparability argues the other way. (4) This would



provide several reasons for benefitting from works on intersectional approaches that explicitly point out the accumulation and interdependency of inequalities or zones of vulnerability; be that on a structural, a personal or on a symbolic level, as Anslinger argued with regard to adolescent parents (Anslinger, 2016, 159).

Ultimately, the objective of why to undertake such a follow-up research agenda is put in a nutshell by the communiqué of the BOLOGNA governmental meetings held in Bucharest: “We will support our institutions in the education of creative, innovative, critically thinking and responsible graduates needed for economic growth and the sustainable development of our democracies” (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2012, 1).

## References

- Alheit, P., & Dausien, B. (2000). Die biographische Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit. Überlegungen zur Biographizität des Sozialen. In E. M. Hoerning (Eds.), *Biographische Sozialisation* (pp. 257-283). Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius.
- Anslinger, E. (2009). *Junge Mütter im dualen System der Berufsbildung. Potenziale und Hindernisse*. Bielefeld: wbv.
- Anslinger, E. (2016). Teilzeitberufsausbildung als Instrument zur inklusiven Gestaltung des Berufsbildungssystems? In U. Bylinski & J. Rützel (Eds.), *Inklusion als Chance und Gewinn für eine differenzierte Berufsbildung* (pp. 155–168). Bielefeld: wbv.
- Anslinger, E., & Haasler, S. (2016). Work experience, learning and self-efficacy – why it matters for individual careers. In N. James (Ed.), *Adult Education in Austere Times. Conference Proceedings 2016* (pp. 26-33). Leicester: Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning University of Leicester.
- Anslinger, E., & Heibült, J. (forthcoming). Lernbiographien Beruflich Qualifizierter am Übergang zwischen beruflicher und hochschulischer Bildung. In K. Wilber & B. Hemkes (Eds.), *Durchlässigkeit in der beruflichen Bildung*. Bielefeld: wbv.
- Böse, C., Schreiber, D., & Lewalder, A. C. (2014). Die Rolle formaler, non-formaler und informeller Lernergebnisse im Anerkennungsgesetz. In *Zeitschrift des BIBB*, 43, 30-33.
- Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (2016). *Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2016*. Bonn.
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) (2017). *Bericht zum Anerkennungsgesetz 2017*.  
[https://www.bmbf.de/pub/Bericht\\_zum\\_Anerkennungsgesetz\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bmbf.de/pub/Bericht_zum_Anerkennungsgesetz_2017.pdf) (retrieved 30.01.2018).
- Cedefop (2015). *European Guidelines for Validating Non-formal and Informal Learning*. Cedefop reference series 104. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Chamakalayil, L. (2010). Rückkehr zur "Mütherschule"? - Anforderungen an die Familienbildung angesichts der Situation einer vernachlässigten Zielgruppe. In A. Spies (Ed.), *Frühe Mutterschaft* (pp. 127–146). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag.

Dahm, G., & Kerst, C. (2013). Immer noch eine Ausnahme – nicht traditionelle Studierende an deutschen Hochschulen. In *Zeitschrift für Beratung und Studium*, 8, 2, 34-39.

Dausien, B. (2004). Biographieforschung: Theoretische Perspektiven und methodologische Konzepte für eine re-konstruktive Geschlechterforschung. In R. Becker & B. Kortendiek (Eds.), *Handbuch Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung. Theorie, Methoden, Empirie* (pp. 314-325). Wiesbaden: VS.

Destatis (2017). *Lebendgeborene 2015 nach dem Alter der Mutter*. Ed. by Statistisches Bundesamt. Wiesbaden. <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online/link/tabelleErgebnis/12612-0005> (retrieved 08.08.2017).

EHEA Ministerial Conference (2012). *Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area. Bucharest Communiqué*. Bucharest. [http://media.ehea.info/file/2012\\_Bucharest/67/3/Bucharest\\_Communique\\_2012\\_610673.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/2012_Bucharest/67/3/Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf) (retrieved 08.01.2018).

Ellis-Sloan, K. (2014). Teenage Mothers, Stigma and Their 'Presentations of Self'. In: *Sociological Research Online* 19, 1, 9. <http://socresonline.org.uk/19/1/9.html> (retrieved 29.01.2018).

European Commission (2009). *Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020')* No. 2009/C 119/02. [www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/education\\_benchmarks\\_2020.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/education_benchmarks_2020.pdf) (retrieved 12.05.2017).

European Commission (2012). *Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning* (2012/C 398/01) <http://eurlex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012H1222%2801%29> (retrieved 29.09.2017).

European Commission / EACEA P9 / Eurydice (2012). *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Brussels. URL: [https://media.ehea.info/file/2012\\_Bucharest/79/5/Bologna\\_Process\\_Implementation\\_Report\\_607795.pdf](https://media.ehea.info/file/2012_Bucharest/79/5/Bologna_Process_Implementation_Report_607795.pdf) (retrieved 08.01.2018).

EUROSTAT (2014). Europe 2020 education indicators in the EU28 in 2013. URL: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/5178598/3-11042014-AP-EN.PDF/4e01669e-2c2e-4c0e-a16b-487753183826> (retrieved 08.01.2018).

Field, J. (2013). Lifelong Learning and the Restructuring of the Adult Life Course. In W. Schröer, B. Stauber, A. Walther, L. Böhnisch & K. Lens (Eds.), *Handbuch Übergänge* (pp. 378-393). Weinheim & Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Field, J., Merrill, B., & West, L. (2012). Life history approaches to access and retention of non-traditional students in higher education: A cross-European approach. In *European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 3, 1, 77-89.

Foucault, M. (2006). *Geschichte der Gouvernementalität*. B. 1 & 2. Frankfurt a.M.: suhrkamp.

Friese, M. (2008). *Kompetenzentwicklung für junge Mütter. Förderansätze der beruflichen Bildung*. Assisted by E. Anslinger, I. Brenner, D. Piening, S. Pregitzer, B. Thiessen & M. Walter. Bielefeld: wbv.

- Friese, M. (2010). Doppelanforderung Familie und Beruf: Work-Life-Balance in der Ausbildung. In A. Spies (Ed.), *Frühe Mutterschaft* (pp. 101–126.). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag.
- Gundlach, H. (2017). Partizipativ entwickelte Qualitätsstandards als Orientierungen in der Familienbildung. In J. Schroeder & L.H. Seukwa (Eds.), *Soziale Bildungsarbeit mit jungen Menschen. Handlungsfelder, Konzepte, Qualitätsmerkmale* (pp. 73–95). Bielefeld: transcript.
- Haasler, S., Anslinger, E., & Laudenbach, F. (2017). Validation of Prior Learning: An Effective Means to Foster Social and Labour Market Inclusion. In G. Kong & E. Boeren (Eds.), *Adult Education for Inclusion and Diversity. Conference Proceedings 2017* (pp. 162–169). Edinburgh: Centre for Research in Education Inclusion and Diversity, University of Edinburgh.
- Hof, C. (2009). *Lebenslanges Lernen. Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer
- Mangold, W. (1960). *Gegenstand und Methode des Gruppendiskussionsverfahrens*. Frankfurt a.M.: Europäische Verlagsanstalt.
- Meyer, R. (2014). Berufsorientierung im Kontext des Lebenslangen Lernens – berufspädagogische Annäherungen an eine Leerstelle der Disziplin. In *Berufs- und Wirtschaftspädagogik*, 27, 1–21.
- Milburn, A. (2012). *University challenge: how higher education can advance social mobility: a progress report by the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty*. London: Cabinet Office.  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/80188/Higher-Education.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/80188/Higher-Education.pdf) (retrieved 08.01.2018).
- Orr, D., & Hovdhaugen, E. (2014). ‚Second chance‘ routes into higher education: Sweden, Norway and Germany compared. In *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33, 1, 45–61.
- Rogers, A. (2014). *The Base of the Iceberg. Informal Learning and its Impact on Formal and Non-formal Learning*. Opladen, Berlin & Toronto: Barbara Budrich Publishers.
- Schreiber-Barsch, S. (2014). Sustainability and widening access to adult learners in higher education. In *REPORT Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung*, 37, 4, 41–53.
- Schuetze, H.G., & Slowey, M. (2002). Participation and exclusion: A comparative analysis of non-traditional students and lifelong learners in higher education. In *Higher Education*, 44, 309–327.
- Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). All Change – No Change? In M. Slowey & H.G. Schuetze (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners* (pp. 19–49). New York: Routledge.
- Spies, A. (Ed.) (2010). *Frühe Mutterschaft*. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research – Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

Strübing, J. (2014). *Grounded Theory. Zur sozialtheoretischen und epistemologischen Fundierung eines pragmatistischen Forschungsstils*. 3.Ed. Wiesbaden: VS.

Struck, O. (2001). Gatekeeping zwischen Individuum, Organisation und Institution. Zur Bedeutung und Analyse von Gatekeeping am Beispiel von Übergängen im Lebensverlauf. In L. Leisering, R. Müller & K.F. Schumann (Eds.), *Institutionen und Lebensläufe im Wandel. Institutionelle Regulierungen von Lebensläufen* (pp. 29-54). Weinheim & München: Juventa.

Truschkat, I. (2013). Biografie und Übergang. In W. Schröer, B. Stauber, A. Walther, L. Böhnisch & K. Lens (Eds.), *Handbuch Übergänge* (pp. 44-63). Weinheim & Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Walther, A., & Stauber, B. (2013). Übergänge im Lebenslauf. In W. Schröer, B. Stauber, A. Walther, L. Böhnisch & K. Lens (Eds.), *Handbuch Übergänge* (pp. 23-43). Weinheim & Basel: Beltz Juventa.

Watson, L., Hagel, P., & Chesters, J. (2013). *A half-open door: pathways for VET award holders into Australian universities*. Adelaide: NCVER.

Welzer, H. (1993). *Transitionen. Zur Psychologie biographischer Wandlungsprozesse*. Tübingen: Edition Diskord.

Wolter, A. (2012). Germany. From Individual Talent to Institutional Permeability. In M. Slowey & H.G. Schuetze, H.G. (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners* (pp. 81-108). New York: Routledge.

## **Authors:**

**Dr. Eva Anslinger**

**University of Bremen, Germany**

Senior Researcher in the **Centre for Labour and Political Education (zap)**  
eans@uni-bremen.de

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Silke Schreiber-Barsch**

**University of Hamburg, Germany**

Asst. Prof. in Adult Education; Faculty of Education, Unit of Lifelong Learning  
silke.schreiber-barsch@uni-hamburg.de

**M.A. Franziska Laudенbach**

**University of Bremen, Germany**

Researcher/PhD student in the **Centre for Labour and Political Education (zap)**  
f.laudenbach@uni-bremen.de

**M.A. Hanna Gundlach**

**University of Hamburg/Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany**

PhD student graduate school on "Quality features of educational and social work" (University of Hamburg & University of Applied Sciences Hamburg)  
Hanna.Gundlach-2@studium.uni-hamburg.de