

# Perspectives and challenges of research into adult education

February, 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
16.30-17.00

**DwB-Training Course: Working with data from official statistics in Europe particularly the Adult Education Survey (2011) Athens (Greece), February 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015, hosted by National Centre for Social Research (EKKE)**

# Research on Adult Education and Training in international comparison

**Participation patterns in AET**

**Participation rates**

**Determinants of participation**

**Difficulties in access / barriers for AET**

**Different types of AET**

**Theoretical approaches explaining participation in AET**

**Employer-sponsored AET**  
**FED, NFE**

# Participation rates – geographical differences

## LifeLong Learning – Benchmarks & equal access to education

- economic growth, social cohesion, employability, competitiveness, cultural & democratic development



e.g. Rubenson 2006;  
Green 2006;  
Rubenson/Desjardins 2009;  
Boateng 2009;  
Roosmaa/Saar 2010, 2012

# State of research – Participation in AET

- general participation pattern homogenous
  - extent of inequality in access to adult education heterogeneous
- complex interplay of characteristics influence participation  
(e.g. Desjardins, Rubenson & Milana 2006; Rubenson 2006; Dieckhoff et al. 2007; Rubenson/Desjardins 2009; Roosmaa & Saar, 2010, 2012)
    - individual characteristics [*demand*]
    - socio-demographic & personal-/psychological related measures
    - situational, dispositional & institutional barriers
    - structurally determined conditions [*supply & demand*]
  - meso level characteristics
    - providers (social partners; education institutions, employers)
    - Programmes
    - Employment-related characteristics (professional status, firm size, branch)
  - macro level characteristics
    - skill formation system, labour market structures, qualification structure of society

# Theoretical approaches explaining adult education participation

- Human capital theory (Becker (1993 [1964]))
- Segmented labour market approach (Lutz/Sengenberger 1974; Sengenberger 1987)
- Segmented market of further education (Friebel 1993)

→ *Differentiation of forms of job related further education by finance structures*

- Bounded Agency (Rubenson/Desjardins 2009)
- Supply & Demand for Adult Education and Training (Boeren et al. 2010)

→ *AET as a result of a match of supply & demand factors*

→ *AET embedded in (nation) specific contexts*

- **Welfare state regimes** (Esping-Andersen 1990)
- **Varieties of capitalism approach** (Hall/Soskice 2001; Estevez-Abé et al. 2001)

# Macro level characteristics influencing adult education participation

## Political Systems / Welfare State Models

- Sociodemocratic
- Liberal
- Corporatistic
- [Family-orientated] (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990; Rubenson 2006; Green 2006)

## Labour market structures & policies

- Internal vs. occupational labour markets
- Active / passive labour market policies (e.g. Doeringer/Piore 1971; Lutz/Sengenberger 1974; Müller/Shavit 1998;

## Education & training systems

- highly vs. weakly stratified
- central vs. decentralised (e.g. Allmendinger 1989; Gangl 2003)

## Economy coordinaton models

- liberal market economy (LME)
- coordinated market economy (CME)
- dependent market economy (DME) (e.g. Estevez-Abé et al. 2001; Hall/Soskice 2001; Roosmaa/Saar 2012)

**Variety of typologies for clustering countries**



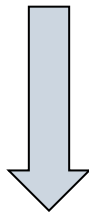
**‘Institutional Packages’**

(Blossfeld 2003; Saar/Roosalu 2011; Saar/Ure 2013)

# International comparative analyses on adult education participation

## ‘Institutional Packages’

(Blossfeld 2003; Saar/Roosalu 2011; Saar/Ure 2013)



Theoretically often referred to; not always empirically modelled

- participation patterns being contrasted & interpreted with reference to theory (e.g. Rubenson 2006; Rubenson/Desjardins 2009; Desjardins/Rubenson 2013; Markowitsch et al. 2013)
- multilevel analyses explicitly analysing influence of macrolevel indicators (e.g. Brunello et al. 2007; Dieckhoff et al. 2007; Roosmaa/Saar 2010, 2012; Dämmrich et al. 2014)

**Determinants of participation /  
Differences in inequality in access to AET  
—  
including macro-level-indicators**



# Determinants on AET, inequality of access between countries – Dieckhoff et al. 2007

Data base: European Community Household Panel (ECHP, 1994-2000)

**Macro-indicators**    trade union density in sectors

wage compression in sectors

Dependent variable

participation incidence in vocational education or training

Dieckhoff et al. 2007

## Individual characteristics

- gender
- age (25-55 – *older*)  
(*not in IE, FI, DK*)
- educational level (+ *higher*)

## Employment related characteristics

- professional status (+ *higher*)
- job tenure (+ *longer*)
- firm size (+ *higher*)
- part-/full time (+ *full-time*)  
(*not in DE, IE, ES, FI*)
- permanent/fixed term (+ *permanent*)  
(*not in F, UK, DE*)

# Determinants on AET, inequality of access between countries – Dieckhoff et al. 2007

Data base: European Community Household Panel (ECHP, 1994-2000)

**Macro-indicators** trade union density in sectors

wage compression in sectors

No evidence of systematic differences

in distribution of training opportunities

relating to differences

in production systems & employment regimes

(not in DE, IE, ES, FI)

• permanent/fixed term (+ *permanent*)

(not in F, UK, DE)

# Determinants on AET, inequality of access between countries – Brunello et al. 2007

Data base: European Community Household Panel (ECHP, 1995-2001)

**Macro-indicators** high EPL indices reduce incidence

no significance of union density

expenditures on R&D

Dependent variable

participation incidence in vocational education or training

Brunello et al. 2007

## Individual characteristics

- gender (+ *women, variation between countries*)
- age (declining with age)
- educational level (+ *higher*)

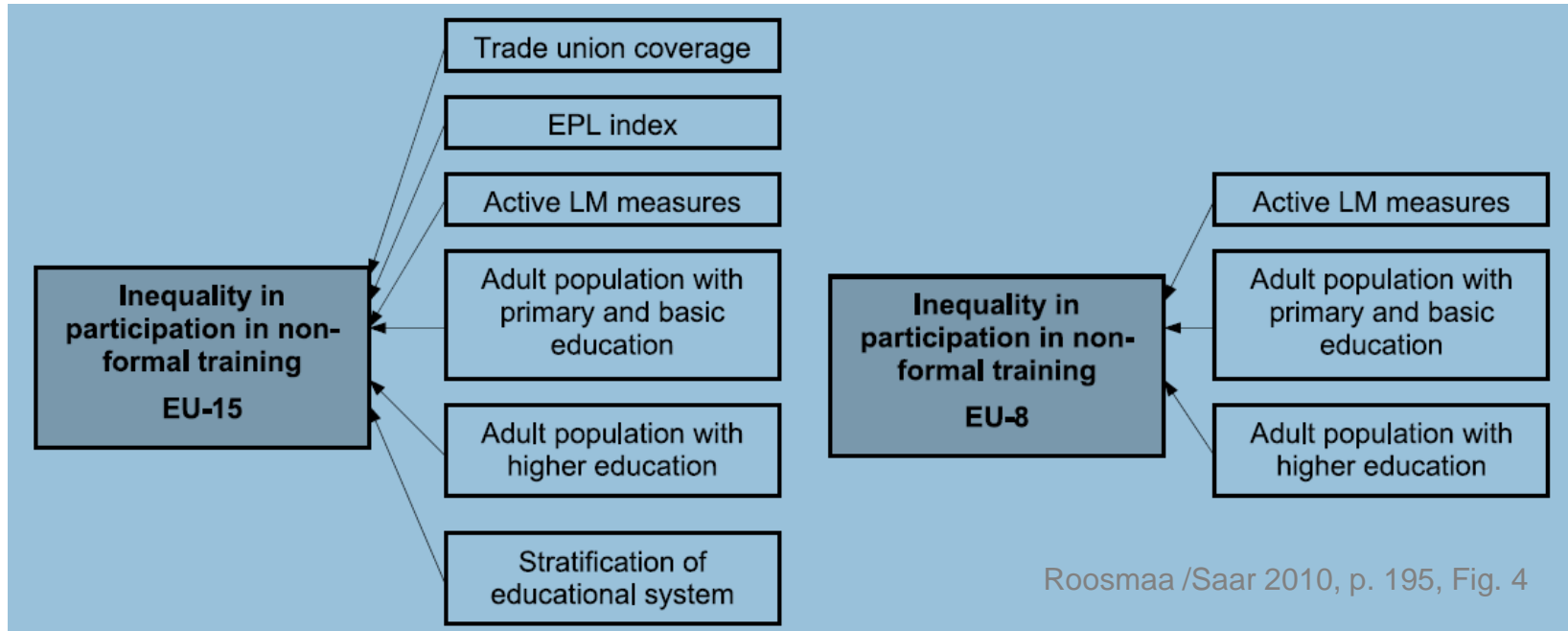
## Employment related characteristics

- skill intensity of occupation (+ *higher*)
- job tenure (+ *longer*)
- firm size (+ *higher*)
- part-/full time (+ *full-time*)
- permanent/fixed term (+ *permanent*)  
(especially in DK, UK, AT, FI)

participation in AET before

# Patterns of inequality in EU-15 and the new EU-8 member countries? Roosmaa/Saar 2010

Data base: EU-LFS (2003) – Ad-hoc-Module on LLL



Roosmaa /Saar 2010, p. 195, Fig. 4

## EU – member states – low inequality

Low stratified education & training system

High amount of population with high formal qualification

Low labour market regulation (employment security)

High trade union coverage

Low amount of population with low formal qualification

Active Labour market policy (high amount of % GDP)

# Differences in inequality in access to NFE?

Roosmaa/Saar 2012

## *Supply or demand relevant for inequality?*

**Dependent variable**

**Data base:** AES (2005-08)

index of inequality as ratio of participation of high-skilled white-collar workers against participation of low-skilled blue-collar workers

### Independent variables

- proportion (%) of managers & professionals
- proportion (%) of low-skilled workers

- proportion (%) of population with higher education
- proportion (%) of population with primary & basic education

- innovation index
- R&D expenditures
- employment in high-tech services & manufacturing

Roosmaa /Saar 2010, own diagram

# Differences in inequality in access to NFE?

## Roosmaa/Saar 2012

*Skill requirements more important than  
distribution of formal qualifications within the workforce*



Roosmaa /Saar 2012; own diagram

## Analyses on

- **Barriers associated with AET**
- **Volume of AET**

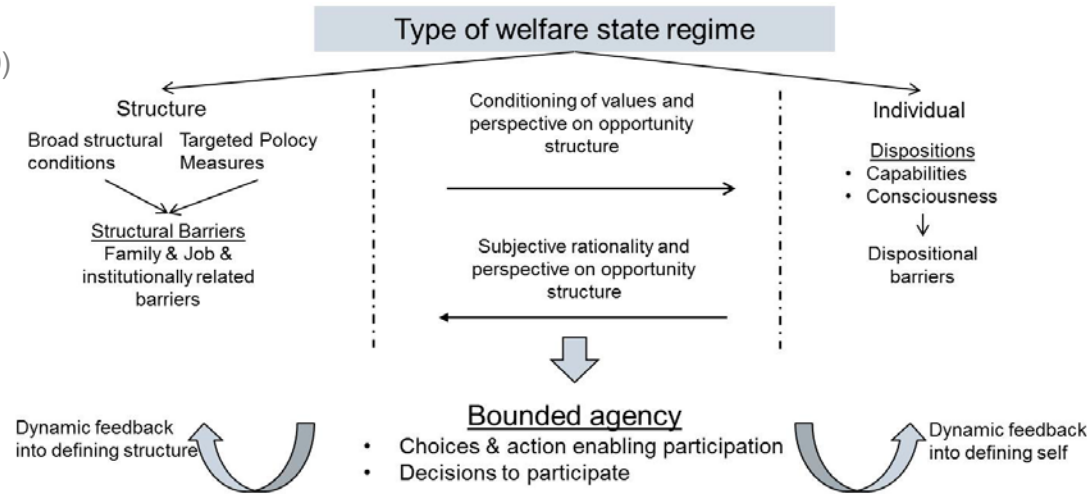
# Research on barriers to AET

(Rubenson/Desjardins 2009, Desjardins/Rubenson 2013 )

## *Bounded Agency* (Rubenson/Desjardins 2009)

### Barriers (Cross 1981)

- institutional
  - e.g. lack of money/supply of courses
- situational
  - e.g. time, family related reasons
- dispositional
  - too old, was never good at studying



Rubenson/Desjardins (2009), Fig. 1, p. 195

## Data bases: *Eurobarometer 2003 & AES (2005-08)*

- All asked for barriers – not only non-respondents
- Comparing Nordic-Countries vs. Non-Nordic Countries
  - Hardly differences in reporting barriers
  - But: Nordic Countries: more participants despite stating barriers

AES (2005-08) overall:

- countries with higher participation rates also show higher amount of barriers reported

*Generally: cultural & social practices in nations differ – will influence behavior*



# Full-time educational equivalents in AET

(Desjardins/ Rubenson 2013)

## Country differences in terms of volume of AET

- Calculation of *expected* number of full-time equivalent (FTE) years of FED and NFE undertaken by adults over their lifespan
  - = multiplying participation rate of a given age cohort by the average volume undertaken by that age cohort & summing up the results for all cohorts (from 25 to 64) (Desjardins/Rubenson 2013 p. 273)

## Results *expected* number of full-time equivalent (FTE) years of FED&NFE

- Finland, Sweden, Denmark: 2 FTE years
- Austria, Belgium, Germany, Norway and a few other countries: over 1 FTE year
- ...
- Greece & Romania: less than 1/2 FTE year

(Desjardins/Rubenson 2013)

## **Analyses on different types of AET**

- Employer-sponsored AET**

# Different types of AET: Employer-sponsored training

**Participation in further education mainly job related** (Desjardins et al. 2006; Boateng 2009)

## **Employers most common source of financial support**

(Desjardins et al. 2006; Brunello et al. 2007)

- *Definition here:* **employer-sponsored**

- if training courses are partially paid for or provided by the employer
  - at least 50 % of vocational training courses supported by employers, although cross-country variation is large (International Adult Literacy Survey, IALS)
  - similar pattern in ECHP: on average 72% of the training courses is employer-sponsored

# Determinants & patterns of employer-sponsored training

## Determinants & patterns of

- **participation in employer-sponsored vs. in training overall** (Brunello et al. 2007; Desjardins/Rubenson 2011)
- **participation in employer-sponsored vs. co-financed vs. individual financed training** (Kaufmann/Widany 2013)

### *Macro-level- characteristics – supply & demand*

#### **Employer support**

- + employees in large companies
- + men
- + young age groups
- fixed term
- part-time workers
- + high skill match
- + company size
- + Infrastructure for further education
- company size

#### **Co-financed**

- + women
- + small & medium sized firms
- + financial support
- + social capital

#### **No employer support**

- + women
- + employees in small companies
- + fixed term
- + part-time workers
- Infrastructure for further education
- + job & financial satisfaction

Brunello et al. 2007; Desjardins/Rubenson 2011; Kaufmann/Widany 2013

# Summary & conclusion

## Broad body of research

- wide range of theoretical approaches & wide range of empirical modellations
- focus on determinants, patterns of inequality, barriers, volume

## Analysing participation patterns in AET

- complex picture – micro-, meso-, macro-level indicators
- overall: rather stable patterns on micro & meso-level
  - meso-/macro: results indicate influence on intermediate level (e.g. branch specific indicators within countries)
  - → *detailed comparative analyses on adult education systems?*

## Different formats of AET

- FED, NFE; employer-sponsored  
Informal learning

} sensitive for wordings, definitions, operationalisations & nations specific understandings

e.g. Brunello et al. 2007; Kuwan/Larsson 2008; Behringer/Schönfeld (2013); Kaufmann et al. 2014

# Why AES? Potential for international comparative research

## Further research questions to be addressed

- Subjective assessment of outcomes of FED, NFE
  - *depending on source of finance, volume, ...?*
- Applying a certificate for participating in NFE / FED
  - *relevant for specific occupational groups?*
- Relation of informal learning, social & cultural activities in connection with participation in education and training
- Subjective assessment of quality of FED, NFE
- ...?

# Thank you!

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