



***Participation in Adult Education as a Layered Process:
Reconsidering the Effects of Social Origin and Innovation***

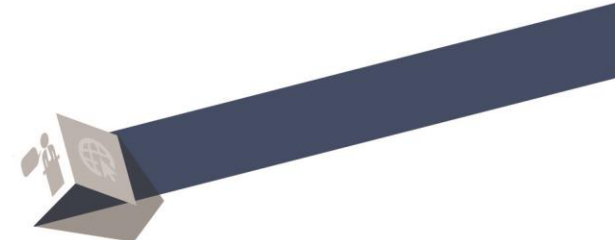
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Introduction (1)

Background

- Recently, a number of studies have argued for the need for an integrated approach to participation in lifelong learning and adult education, which incorporates the influence of factors at different levels - micro, meso and macro (e.g. Boeren, 2017; Lee, 2018; Lee & Desjardins, 2019).
- The effects of both social origin and innovation on participation in adult education are well documented (eg. Groenez, Desmedt, & Nicaise, 2007; Blossfeld et al., 2014).

However,

to the best of our knowledge, there is a lack of empirical research on cross-national patterns of inequality in adult education participation caused by socioeconomic background as a micro-level factor and its association with level of innovation as a macro-level factor. Furthermore, there is a lack of differentiated analyses, which take into account the heterogeneous nature of adult education.

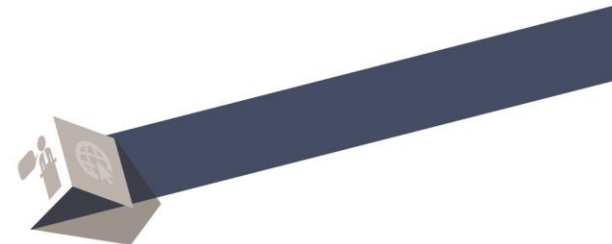




Introduction (2)

Research question:

Can socioeconomic background's (dis)advantages in participation in adult formal and non-formal education be mitigated by the country's level of innovation?

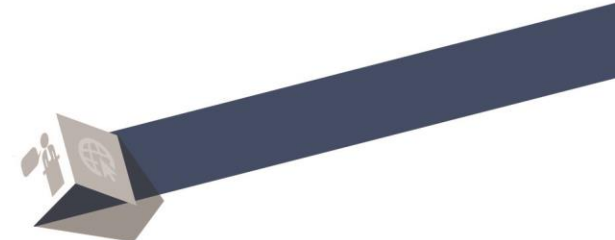




Theoretical considerations and previous research (1)

There is rich literature, which explores the determinants of participation in adult education. We could distinguish **three bodies of research** within this literature:

1) focuses on factors at individual level

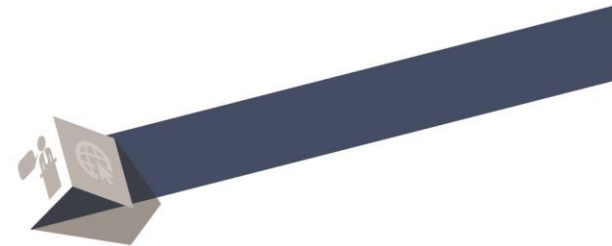
- It includes theoretical perspectives from various disciplines: economics, sociology and psychology, such as the human capital theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1993), rational choice theories (Boudon, 1974; Gambetta, 1987), the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) and the psychosocial interaction model (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).
 - In general, these studies assume that the participants act as rational agents regarding their decisions whether to participate in adult education.
- 



Theoretical considerations and previous research (2)

2) focuses on the factors at country-level (e.g. Brunello, 2001; Wolbers, 2005; Groenez et al., 2007). In one of these studies a comprehensive scheme of system characteristics that can be expected to contribute to explaining country-level variations in participation in adult education was developed (Groenez et al., 2007). Other studies have also explored the influence of the welfare regimes on the participation in adult education (e.g. Dämmrich et al., 2014; Roosmaa & Saar, 2016).

3) focuses on the influence of factors at individual and country-level (e.g. Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009; Kilpi-Jakonen et al., 2015; Lee, 2018), Boeren (2016, 2017) proposes the so-called ‘Integrative Lifelong Learning Participation Model’ which considers factors at three layers: micro (individuals), meso (learning providers), and macro (countries). To the best of our knowledge, this model has not yet been empirically tested to the different types of adult education.





Theoretical considerations and previous research (3)

- ❑ Building namely on such an integrated approach, Lee and Desjardins (2019) empirically examine the cross-national patterns of inequality in adult learning participation caused by social origin as a micro-level factor and its association with social inequality as a macro-level factor in 19 OECD countries. Their study uses parental education as a proxy for social origin.
- ❑ Overall, this review of previous research has shown that although there are many studies which take into account that participation in adult education may be influenced by factors at different levels, only a few of them have explored the interactions between factors at different levels (e.g. Dämmrich et al., 2014; Lee & Desjardins, 2019).
- ❑ As an attempt to enrich this body of literature and by synthesizing ideas from the capability approach and the embeddedness perspective, Boyadjieva and Ilieva-Trichkova (2021) have proposed a model, which also considers the interactions between factors at different levels.





Multiple interacting levels model of participation in adult education (1)

The capability approach

- ❑ is based on a view of living seen as a combination of various ‘doings and beings’ (called ‘functionings’), with quality of life to be assessed in terms of the capability to achieve valuable functionings (Sen 1993, p. 31). Whereas the concept of ‘functionings’ reflects the various things that a person may value being or doing person’s ‘capability’ refers to the alternative combinations that are feasible for a person to achieve.
- ❑ We aware that the capability approach fails to fully capture the interactive relationship between individual capabilities and social structures (Ibrahim 2006) and it “is unclear how the conversion factors combine with each other” (Chiappero et al. 2018, pp. 231–232).

Given this, we think that **there is a need to further strengthen**, both theoretically and empirically, **this embeddedness aspect of the capability approach** – crucial as it is in the analysis of participation in adult education.





Multiple interacting levels model of participation in adult education (2)

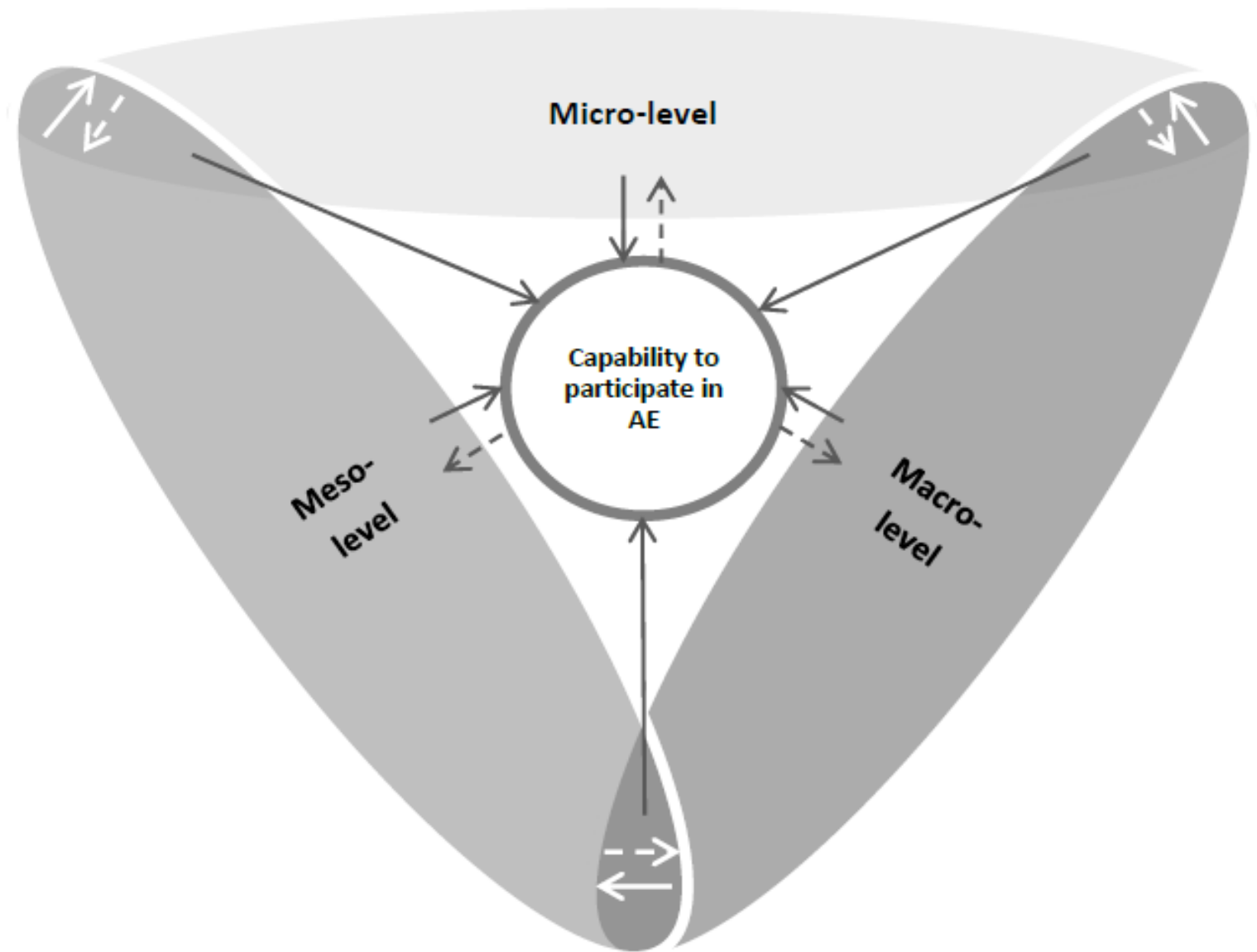
The embeddedness approach


- ❑ assumes that all human actions are socially situated and human actors do not act as atomised entities.
- ❑ goes beyond the ‘structure vs. agency’ opposition and provides a framework to account for both the constraining and enabling effects of social environments on different phenomena situated within them.
- ❑ points to the social determination of the way education as an individual action and outcome or as a social institution is realised – through the social relations and structures from which it has emerged and in which it is situated (Granovetter 1985, 1992)

We define ***the capability to participate in adult education as a person’s freedom to be involved in adult education that s/he has reason to value.***



Multiple interacting levels model of participation in adult education (3)





Multiple interacting levels model of participation in adult education (4)

- ❑ The present paper builds on this model and further empirically tests it. We will focus on the interactions between socioeconomic background (as a micro factor) and the level of innovation (as a macro factor).
- ❑ More concretely, we will study the relationship between socioeconomic background's advantages in participation in adult education and level of innovation and will try to reveal if increases in the level of innovation strengthen or decrease advantages associated with socioeconomic background.
- ❑ Taking into account the heterogeneity of adult education, the analysis will be carried out for both formal and non-formal adult education.





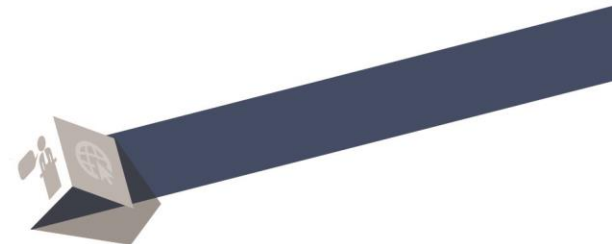
Data and methodology (1)

Data

- ❑ Adult Education Survey 2016
- ❑ Macro-level data from European Innovation Scoreboard 2017 report (European Union 2017) and from the Eurostat and the UNESCO websites. These data are as of 2015.

Limitations

- ❑ 29 countries: 27 EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), Norway, and Switzerland.
- ❑ Adults (25-64 years old).





Data and methodology (2)

Variables

Dependent variables

- whether people have participated in at least one non-formal education or training activity during the last 12 months (1) or not (0).
- whether people have participated in at least one formal educational activity during the last 12 months (1) or not (0).

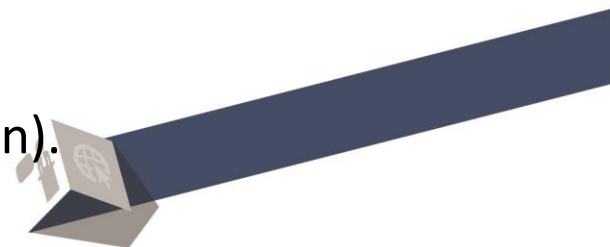
Independent variables at individual level

To measure socioeconomic background in our analyses we use:

- Parents' education (1=having low education – ISCED 2011 0-4), and
- Net monthly household income (ref. category fifth quintile [Q5], which represents the highest income group).

Independent variables at country level

- Innovation index (as an indicator of level of innovation).





Data and methodology (3)

Control variables at individual level

- gender (1=female),
- level of education (ref. category: low education [ISCED 2011 0-2],
- age (continuous),
- current labour market status (ref. category full-time employed), and
- marital status (1= living in a consensual union).

Control variables at country-level

- economic growth as real GDP growth rate (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> Data code: tec00115, and
- vocational prevalence as the percentage of all students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes (<http://data.uis.unesco.org>).

Method

- multilevel modelling technique





Influence of different measures of social origin and country's level of innovation on participation in formal and non-formal education and training (Odds ratio)

	Formal education			Non-formal education		
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 3a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 3b
Parents' education Low vs High	0.754** (0.021)	0.719** (0.022)	0.756** (0.021)	0.843** (0.014)	0.848** (0.015)	0.843** (0.014)
Net monthly household income Q4 vs. Q5 (highest Q3 vs. Q5)	0.927* (0.033)	0.932+ (0.034)	0.921* (0.034)	0.816** (0.015)	0.816** (0.015)	0.816** (0.015)
Q2 vs. Q5	0.839** (0.032)	0.843** (0.032)	0.817** (0.032)	0.662** (0.012)	0.661** (0.012)	0.661** (0.012)
Q1 (lowest) vs. Q5	0.852** (0.034)	0.857** (0.035)	0.819** (0.035)	0.573** (0.011)	0.573** (0.011)	0.573** (0.011)
Innovation index	0.881** (0.038)	0.888** (0.038)	0.795** (0.037)	0.482** (0.011)	0.481** (0.011)	0.477** (0.011)
Innovation index X Parents' Low education	1.609** (0.156)	1.502** (0.149)	1.467** (0.144)	1.802** (0.186)	1.832** (0.191)	1.776** (0.185)
Innovation index X Q4		1.109** (0.029)			0.979 (0.016)	
Innovation index X Q3			1.041 (0.037)			1.012 (0.020)
Innovation index X Q2			1.111** (0.041)			1.022 (0.021)
Innovation index X Q1			1.141** (0.043)			1.005 (0.021)
			1.299** (0.052)			1.051* (0.024)



Results

- ❑ Having low parents' education and lower household income are associated with lower participation in both formal and non-formal education.
- ❑ The level of innovation is positively associated with participation in both formal and non-formal education, as this association tends to be stronger in the case of non-formal education.
- ❑ Although adults with low parents' education are less likely to participate in formal education than their counterparts with high parents' education, if they live in countries with high levels of innovation their likelihood to participate in formal education increases.
- ❑ Although adults with lower levels of household income are less likely to participate in formal education than their more economically-advantaged counterparts, when they live in countries with high level of innovation their likelihood to participate in formal education become higher. Such relationship is also found between the level of innovation and the lowest household income group in the case of non-formal education.





Discussion and conclusion (1)

Our paper demonstrates that the influence of individual characteristics on participation in adult education is embedded in the wider social context.

The analysis contributes to the literature by:

- ❑ enriching the multiple interacting levels model of participation in adult education;
- ❑ revealing that increases in the level of innovation increase advantages associated with low socioeconomic background in relation to participation in formal adult education; and
- ❑ demonstrating that formal and non-formal adult education have their own specificity which should always be taken into account in both research and policy development.





Discussion and conclusion (2)

- ❑ In their study, Lee and Desjardins (2019) discuss the relationship between social origins' advantages in participation in adult education and social inequality.
- ❑ The present paper provides new empirical evidence of the thesis that social origins' effects on participation in adult education can be strengthened or lessened, depending on macro-level characteristics (Lee, 2018).

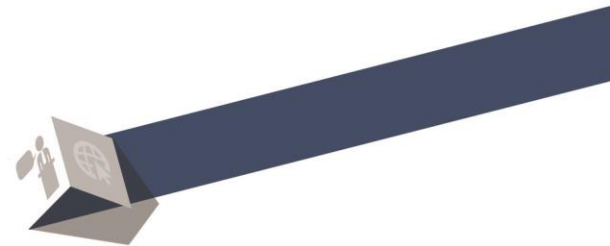




Discussion and conclusion (3)

We suggest two possible explanations of the finding that increases in the level of innovation increase advantages associated with low socioeconomic background in relation to participation in formal adult education:

- ❑ highly innovative societies need constant updating and skills improvement;
- ❑ highly innovative societies are likely to more highly value the capabilities of everyone, irrespective of her/his social background.

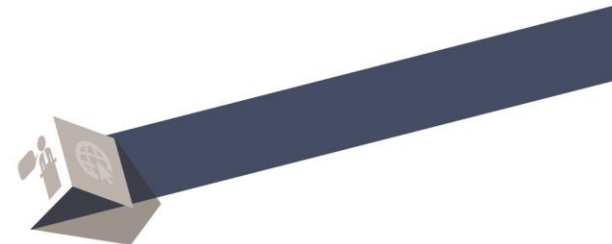




Discussion and conclusion (4)

Further research

- ❑ to deepen the analysis regarding non-formal education in order to better understand the (lack of) association between the level of innovation and the low socioeconomic background in relation to participation in non-formal adult education;
- ❑ to analyse if and how other characteristics of the wider social context (e.g. democracy regime, cultural values) can moderate the influence on participation in adult education of different individual factors and the (dis)advantages associated with them.

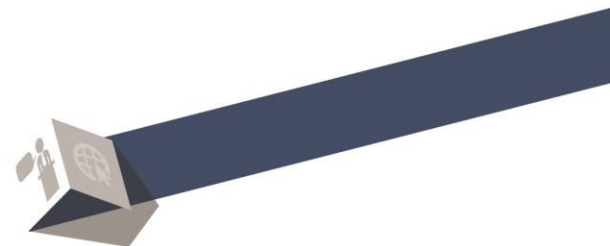




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<https://justedu2020.eu/>





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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