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Why do adults learn? Developing a motivational typology across 12 European countries

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Participation in adult education is today generally considered an individual responsibility. However, participation is the result of a complex bounded agency between individuals, educational institutions and regulating governments. This paper explores the motives of 12,000 European adult learners in formal adult education in 12 European countries. Analysis shows consistent patterns comparable to welfare state typologies. Further exploration demonstrates that motives to participate in adult education courses can be interpreted in relation to the labour market, education and social policy in the country of participation.

Keywords: adult education; participation; motives; country typologies; welfare states

1. Introduction

This paper starts from the assumption that motivating and stimulating adults to learn throughout life is one of the main preconditions for realising a lifelong learning society and that participation is shaped in a bounded agency between the individual and education policy and practice (Boeren, Nicaise, and Baert 2010; Smith and Spurling 2001). Adult learning is today seen as a highly important lever for increasing economic performance, developing social cohesion and encouraging active citizenship. To this end, increased participation in lifelong learning activities has been seen as essential (European Commission 2000). Having reached 2010 however, we have to conclude that the Lisbon strategy has failed in many European regions (Eurostat 2009). Achieving participation rates of 12.5% appears to have been overambitious in almost all countries, with Scandinavia and the United Kingdom as the exceptions. While participation *targets* are set through the policy process in

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most of the EU member states, effective participation decisions are made by individuals. Motivating and stimulating adults to learn is indispensable, but how can this be done? Previous studies have demonstrated that awareness of the relevance of learning for one's own life is a necessary condition for highly motivated adult learners (Keller 1987). Moreover, when people themselves choose to participate, this leads to better learning outcomes, stronger well-being, more persistence and less drop-out (Deci and Ryan 2000). Social control – putting pressure on individuals to learn – is less effective. There is now strong evidence that motivation is malleable and can be influenced by environmental conditions and support. As stated in Lewin's Field Theory, behaviour is the result of an interaction between the person's individual characteristics and his environment (Lewin 1951). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) argue that a decision to participate in a learning activity takes place in an interaction between the overall environments provided by welfare state regimes and individual players within these countries and contexts. The motivation to participate is thus the result of bounded agency and should be seen as a shared responsibility among different players.

Even if motivation is generally seen as a necessary input in order to achieve (successful) participation, data are scarce which describe adult learners' motivational patterns, or which allow analysis of differences between countries (to take the influential supportive governmental level into account) (Smith and Spurling 2001). Boeren, Nicaise, and Baert (2010) developed a new conceptual framework arguing that participation in adult education courses is shaped as a match between (potential) learners, educational institutions and the broader structural country level. They designed their model to explore participation issues empirically based on a theoretical overview of different factors and their inter-relationship. Until now, while it has been accepted that different national contexts affect participation levels, we have had less insight into the relation between the experiences of actual participants who found their way into the system and these country level structures (Rubenson and Desjardins 2009).

By providing an up-to-date comparative analysis, this paper aims to meet this need. It starts from the assumption that motivation is indeed an individual construct which can be influenced by broader environmental structures. The main research questions we address are: *whether motivational patterns to participate in formal adult education differ between 12 European countries and whether we can relate these different patterns to broader overall environments in the form of existing welfare state typologies*. We seek to contribute to developing typologies of lifelong learning policies and practices, to look critically at various lifelong learning models across Europe and to gain further insights into the potential role of broader institutional contexts as influencers of motivation. This paper sees lifelong learning as an element of social policy, playing a role in building a strong European social model, with

better working and living conditions for everyone and a steady economic growth (Holford et al. 2008). Motivated adult learners are key agents in this.

The paper begins by reviewing definitions of motivation as used in the international literature. Next, we give an overview of our research methodology and data collection. In a third section, we compare 18 motivational statements in 12 European countries by means of Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) and search for overall country patterns of motivation, based on cluster analysis. In our search for explanations of the variances, we refer to existing welfare and lifelong learning country typologies. The paper concludes by contrasting the empirical outcomes with the aims of current European lifelong learning policy and by making a number of recommendations.

2. Defining motivation

Motivation is derived from the Latin word ‘movere’ and indicates the power to move towards a goal (Coon and Mitterer 2008). An adult learner can be said to be ‘motivated’ if he or she has the intention to put some effort into his or her learning activities and to undertake actions in order to reach learning goals. In motivational psychology, we find two main research streams explaining how motivation is realised (Martens and Boekaerts 2007). First, self determination theory makes a distinction between autonomous and controlled motivation (Deci and Ryan 2000). Autonomous motivation is self-determined and a free choice at the level of the individual; controlled motivation results from pressure and/or the need to comply with external requirements. Research has shown that autonomous motivation is preferable and that teachers achieve better results if they try to create an autonomy-supporting environment in their classrooms (Connell and Wellborn 1991; Reeve 2002; Soenens and Vansteenkiste 2005; Vansteenkiste et al. 2009). This can be done by engaging with the personal interests of the learners and nurturing their personal needs. Second, expectancy value theory starts from the assumption that motivation is the result of the interaction between the value one attaches to a learning activity and how far this activity fulfils expectancies (Vroom 1964). This can be compared with cost-benefit analysis: individuals will only make efforts if the costs do not exceed the benefits of their behaviour. Keller (1987) created his ARCS model based on this expectancy value theory. Gaining attention and a positive attitude (A) towards learning, together with recognising the relevance (R) of learning for one’s own life are key elements of value. Having confidence (C) in one’s own abilities and in completing the course successfully is related to the expected outcomes. Finally, if satisfaction (S) in a learning process is lacking, motivation will decrease. As in self-determination theory, motivation can be influenced by teachers and the broader learning environment (such as affinities between students, student support arrangements, the overall organisation and clarity of the course and its responsiveness to student influence) (O’Fathaigh 1997).

Keller shows that a learning process will lead to efficiency and effectiveness if appropriately adapted learning and management strategies are implemented.

To date, researchers have focused on mapping relations between individual learning experiences or learning results and the activities of educational institutions (Darkenwald and Valentine 1986; Mortimore 1998; Townsend 2007). Empirical research focusing on the impact of broader social and policy environments on individual motivation is largely lacking. There are theoretical reflections on 'individualisation' such as the Third Way ('no rights without responsibilities') and the idea of the 'risk society' (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991). There is a broad range of empirical studies relating to motivational issues, but mainly within the field of compulsory education (see the reference section of Vansteenkiste et al. 2009 for an accurate overview) and not in the adult education field, a field in which participation is mostly non-compulsory (at least in legal terms). The present study focuses on formal learning activities in the formal education system – on-the-job training and courses in firms for employees are therefore excluded.

One study of adult education and the broader structural environment (Smith and Spurling 2001) undertook qualitative research on broader environments which nurture personal motivation, including the role of employers, the broader institutional learning context, the characteristics of the initial education system and the family. They argued that these interact with the governmental level. They based their findings on literature reviews and workshops with practitioners in lifelong learning, but they also emphasised the need for more data-gathering on motivational issues among adult learners themselves. Furthermore, they suggest that employment-related, community-related, family-related and individual-related motives to learn can differ.

In his pioneering research on motives to participate in adult learning, based on 22 in-depth interviews, Cyril Houle (1961) distinguished between goal-oriented, learning-oriented and activity-oriented learners. Most work undertaken after Houle grew out of his typology. For his large-scale empirical testing of Houle's work, Boshier (1973) developed an 'Education Participation Scale' of 48 item scale statements, surveying 60,000 adult learners in New Zealand. Morstain and Smart (1974) used the scale for a large-scale survey in the United States. Others have used the scale in a slightly adapted or reduced form (Baert 2010; Dia et al. 2005; Doerbecker and Hake 1979; Garst and Ried 1999; Norton 2007; O'Connor 1979). The main outcome of all this work is a partial confirmation of the Houle typology, but with the caveat that these three reasons for participation – goal-oriented, activity-oriented and learning-oriented – are too broad and that sub-dimensions are required. For example, an activity-oriented learner can participate because he or she enjoys social contacts, but also to escape from boredom at home. Overall, this work has served to clarify the different motives of adult learners, but focuses overmuch on the psychological side (Boeren, Nicaise, and Baert 2010). Interactions with broader educational and governmental institutional environments are mostly

absent. This is another reason to explore the Smith and Spurling (2001) model in greater detail using motivational data. With its long history, the Education Participation Scale is a reliable and valid measurement instrument; we use it in a shortened form. Based on previous data reduction of the scale, we use three items for each dimension (Garst and Ried 1999): competency-related curiosity, interpersonal relations, community service, escape from routine, professional advancement and compliance with external influence.

Our methodological framework is set out below; in the light of this, we provide a cross-national analysis which tests the following hypotheses:

- Scores on motivational statements differ by country.
- Different scores on motivational statements by countries can be explained by characteristics of the broader social and economic context. Specifically, we explore the following concrete hypotheses relating to economic, labour market-oriented, educational and familial structures:
 - Countries with a lower GDP will score more highly on extrinsic motivation as they need to improve their overall economic level;
 - Eastern European countries will score more highly on extrinsic motivation because of the transitions in their labour markets during the past 20 years and their need to catch up with the Western European countries;
 - Countries with a more highly educated sample will score lower on extrinsic motivation as the sample is already relatively better off;
 - Countries with an older sample will score lower on extrinsic motivation as their labour market perspectives are shorter;
 - Countries with poorer living conditions (e.g. housing) will score higher on extrinsic motivation as they want to improve their overall quality of life.

3. Methodology

We make use of a database gathered within the project 'Towards a Lifelong Learning Society in Europe: the Contribution of the Education System' (LLL2010). This large-scale study covered Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia. The project aimed to analyse patterns of lifelong learning in Europe and focused in particular on the role of lifelong learning as a tool to reduce social inequalities. The overall project was divided into five subprojects. In this paper, we concentrate mainly on the third subproject: a survey of 1000 participants in formal adult education in each participating country. A review of policy documents and the development of a European lifelong learning typology, to which we will refer in the results section, were the outcomes of the first subproject (Holford et al. 2008).

In the survey we used stratified quota sampling. Each participating country had to survey 1000 participants in formal adult education divided by four different levels of the current course: 250 participants at ISCED 1 and 2 level (primary and lower secondary education), 250 participants at ISCED 3 level (upper secondary education), 250 participants at ISCED 4 level (post-secondary but non-tertiary education) and 250 participants at ISCED 5 level (bachelor and master). Within each stratum, a random sample was drawn. Adult learners were defined as individuals who have had at least two years' break from education after they left initial education. Although we had good arguments for this sampling strategy, it had some weaknesses. Most surveys of participation in adult education (e.g., the Labour Force Survey and the Adult Education Survey) include only adults between 25 and 64 years old. Our sample included individuals below age 25 and above age 64 who had left compulsory education for at least two years. We opted for this strategy based on the principle of lifelong learning, because a strict 25–64 age limit may exclude many adult learners. On the other hand, it makes comparison with major surveys difficult. Furthermore, the oversampling of the lower ISCED levels in our sample – such as literacy and second chance education – should enable us to draw conclusions on hard-to-reach groups (Thyer 2001).

The questionnaire contained closed questions, focusing on motivational aspects of participation, the experience of the classroom environment, the struggle with barriers and characteristics of the course such as enrolment conditions, pedagogical methods and financial costs. Questions were also asked about previous learning experiences and attitudes as well as a set of typical socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Learners at ISCED levels 1 and 2 completed the questionnaire in a face-to-face environment with an interviewer. In most countries, learners at ISCED levels 3 and 4 courses completed the questionnaire individually within the classroom, enabling them to ask for clarification. Participants at ISCED level 5 mostly completed the questionnaire at home and returned the form by post.

In the next part of the text, we look at the empirical results. The first section describes the sample by a few key characteristics of the adult learners. The second section reports the ANOVA in order to map differences in motivational experiences between countries. The final section contains a cluster analysis in order to gain insight into motivational patterns of adult learners across different countries of our sample.¹

4. Results

4.1. Description of the sample

Before we start the analysis of the motivational differences between countries, we want to describe our sample based on some key variables (Table 1). We

Table 1. Sample by socio-economic background.

	AU	BE	BG	CZ	EN	EE	HU	IE	LT	RU	SC	SI
Gender												
Male	44.5	33.6	53.3	54.1	32.3	35.6	45.2	27.6	33.8	43.2	28.5	45.5
Female	55.5	66.4	46.7	45.9	67.7	64.4	54.8	72.4	66.2	56.8	71.5	54.5
Age												
Younger than 25	50.4	7.2	32.8	16.4	17.7	53.4	17.5	14.9	26.8	51.5	19.3	27.1
25–44	44.3	54.0	61.9	78.5	57.7	42.2	73.1	52.9	61.3	45.7	57.2	66.2
45–64	5.0	34.0	5.2	5.1	23.6	4.4	9.4	27.5	11.9	2.8	20.5	6.7
65 and older	0.3	4.8	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
Educational attainment												
Low	35.8	16.5	50.0	1.1	15.1	48.7	46.6	48.3	50.3	48.4	14.3	34.4
Medium	56.0	32.8	38.0	82.0	54.3	37.4	42.6	34.0	42.4	42.8	58.6	61.8
High	8.1	50.7	12.0	16.9	30.6	13.9	10.8	17.6	7.3	8.8	27.1	3.8
Labour market status												
Employed	51.3	67.7	53.8	88.6	50.0	49.3	72.9	31.3	52.1	65.3	24.7	59.4
Job-seeker	12.3	9.1	16.7	3.9	3.4	3.6	11.5	9.6	19.9	6.7	3.5	32.8
Inactive	36.4	23.1	29.5	7.5	46.6	47.1	15.6	59.1	28.0	28.0	71.7	7.8

Note: Norway excluded due to data limitations.

present descriptive statistics for gender, age, educational attainment and labour market status and look for similarities and differences between countries.

Most countries have more women than men in the sample. Bulgaria and the Czech Republic are the only two exceptions. The female shares are highest in the Anglo-Celtic countries (England, Scotland and Ireland). We hypothesise that this difference may be due to the broader focus on social aspects of lifelong learning (such as active citizenship and social cohesion) in this European region (Holford et al. 2008). Previous research has found that females often have a different participation pattern than males, are less focused on labour market motives and more on leisure-oriented and other goals (Houtkoop and Van der Kamp 1992; Sargent and Tuckett 1999). We will test the hypotheses that in countries with higher female participation, the motives related to the social aspects of participation will be higher.

As regards age, few adults aged 65 and above were included in the various countries' samples. Adults aged below 25 years are more common, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries. This is important as the Adult Education Survey and other surveys do not include this age group. In Austria, Estonia and Russia, more than half of the sampled adults were below 25 years of age. Flanders and the Anglo-Celtic countries had more adults aged 45 and above. We should take this into account during the analyses as it is known that

older adults tend on average to be less labour-market-oriented in their learning goals (Bélanger 1997; Doets, Hake, and Westerhuis 2001).

Educational attainment is highest in the Flemish sample with more than half of the learners having a degree of tertiary education. Scottish and English learners in the sample are also more highly educated than those in other countries. In most Eastern European countries, half of the sample consisted of learners with a lower educational attainment, indicating that they have no upper secondary qualification. This is also the case in Ireland. Having a higher qualification usually leads to less pressure to learn, more confidence in one's own abilities and a more positive attitude towards learning (de Graaf and Wolbers 2003; Illeris 2003; Nesbit 2006). On an overall level, this results in more self-determined choices to participate.

With regard to labour market status, there were fewer employed adults within the Irish and Scottish samples. Job-seekers were more common in the Slovenian, Bulgarian and Lithuanian samples than in other countries. We have to take into account that unemployed learners cannot receive incentives from their employers; their costs of participation in learning are therefore often higher (Allingham 2002). This skewness in the sample might be related to the country context: Anglo-Celtic countries focus their lifelong learning agenda more on social aspects of learning outside the labour market, whereas countries with low GDP such as Bulgaria and Lithuania seem to prioritise training for the unemployed.

4.2. Analyses of country differences

4.2.1. Analyses of variance

In this part of the paper, we perform ANOVA, a statistical method to compare several means (Field 2009). It is used when more than two groups are available in the dataset, requiring an alternative to the *t*-test. We used a shortened version of the Education Participation Scale as constructed by Boshier (1973), and analysed it statement by statement (using Likert items 1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = totally agree). First, we looked at significant differences between the 12 countries in our sample; second, we ran Bonferroni post-hoc tests in order to gain better insight into the ranking of these country differences. The (non)significance of results between two countries is indicated by a '/' or '-'. The Bonferroni column ranks countries from high to low, but uses a '/' if differences between countries are not significant, and a '-' if differences are significant. In our overview, we also show the *F*-value of each statement, indicating the ratio of systematic versus unsystematic variance in the dataset. Furthermore, we report the intra-class correlation score (ICC) according to which we have ordered the items: the higher the ICC, the higher the variance is due to country characteristics. In a separate table (Table 2), the mean scores and standard deviation on each statement by country can be found. We start by describing the ANOVA results

Table 2. Means and standard deviations on motivational statements.

Statements	AU	BE	BG	CZ	EN	EE
1. To learn more on a subject that interests me.	3.77 (1.31)	4.39 (0.73)	4.06 (0.92)	3.84 (1.04)	4.15 (0.88)	4.16 (1.00)
2. To earn more.	3.38 (1.37)	2.45 (1.35)	3.65 (1.12)	3.89 (1.14)	3.31 (1.21)	3.67 (1.13)
3. Because my employer required me to enrol in the programme.	1.49 (1.02)	1.30 (0.65)	3.15 (1.26)	2.40 (1.42)	1.99 (1.11)	1.77 (1.13)
4. To participate in group activities.	2.39 (1.33)	2.58 (1.20)	3.22 (1.13)	2.49 (1.14)	3.06 (1.07)	2.98 (1.21)
5. To contribute more to my community.	2.49 (1.34)	2.66 (1.15)	3.65 (1.04)	2.53 (1.17)	3.11 (1.10)	2.84 (1.19)
6. To gain awareness of myself and others.	3.04 (1.44)	3.32 (1.13)	3.63 (1.12)	2.94 (1.20)	3.45 (1.07)	3.48 (1.15)
7. To get a break from the routine of home and work.	3.14 (1.44)	2.62 (1.26)	3.17 (1.26)	2.86 (1.31)	3.00 (1.16)	3.20 (1.13)
8. To do my job better.	3.51 (1.47)	2.80 (1.40)	3.78 (1.11)	3.63 (1.17)	3.09 (1.25)	3.82 (1.23)
9. Because someone advised me to do it.	2.47 (1.47)	2.15 (1.19)	2.99 (1.34)	2.83 (1.40)	2.62 (1.23)	2.65 (1.44)
10. To start up my own business.	2.64 (1.47)	1.69 (1.02)	2.94 (1.23)	2.24 (1.30)	2.13 (1.12)	2.86 (1.31)
11. Because I was bored.	1.80 (1.25)	1.61 (0.89)	2.36 (1.19)	1.90 (1.19)	2.14 (1.11)	2.15 (1.26)
12. Because I was obliged to do it, e.g. to claim benefits, to avoid redundancy.	1.54 (1.10)	1.28 (0.59)	3.48 (1.18)	1.90 (1.33)	1.67 (0.93)	1.71 (1.11)
13. To get a job.	2.47 (1.66)	1.95 (1.30)	3.75 (1.15)	2.88 (1.53)	2.86 (1.41)	2.98 (1.47)
14. To learn knowledge/skills useful in my daily life.	4.04 (1.16)	3.62 (1.16)	4.00 (0.97)	3.50 (1.17)	3.63 (1.17)	3.87 (1.15)
15. To contribute more as a citizen.	2.85 (1.43)	2.72 (1.21)	3.74 (1.06)	2.94 (1.24)	3.18 (1.14)	3.37 (1.17)
16. To meet new people.	2.89 (1.36)	3.19 (1.19)	3.71 (1.07)	3.41 (1.13)	3.35 (1.07)	3.61 (1.15)
17. To be less likely to lose my current job.	2.59 (1.56)	1.72 (1.05)	3.33 (1.28)	3.40 (1.37)	2.18 (1.17)	3.14 (1.39)
18. To obtain certificate.	3.30 (1.53)	3.25 (1.48)	4.25 (0.94)	3.90 (1.23)	4.07 (1.11)	4.35 (0.94)

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued.)

Statements	HU	IE	LT	RU	SC	SI
1. To learn more on a subject that interests me.	4.10 (0.85)	4.28 (0.76)	4.07 (0.86)	3.85 (1.08)	4.21 (0.72)	3.28 (1.17)
2. To earn more.	3.89 (1.02)	3.26 (1.22)	3.71 (1.01)	3.89 (1.12)	3.47 (1.13)	3.66 (1.16)
3. Because my employer required me to enrol in the programme.	3.28 (1.31)	1.89 (0.98)	2.33 (1.20)	2.65 (1.42)	2.15 (1.13)	2.02 (1.17)
4. To participate in group activities.	2.89 (1.23)	3.21 (1.13)	3.21 (1.03)	2.65 (1.33)	3.12 (0.99)	2.66 (1.14)
5. To contribute more to my community.	3.11 (1.22)	3.16 (1.13)	3.11 (1.06)	3.31 (1.15)	3.36 (1.00)	3.23 (1.20)
6. To gain awareness of myself and others.	2.96 (1.25)	3.80 (0.99)	3.87 (0.97)	3.56 (1.12)	3.70 (0.93)	3.64 (1.10)
7. To get a break from the routine of home and work.	2.87 (1.25)	3.13 (1.26)	2.98 (1.21)	2.80 (1.26)	3.14 (1.19)	1.90 (1.03)
8. To do my job better.	3.80 (1.15)	3.35 (1.23)	3.72 (1.11)	3.58 (1.17)	3.29 (1.15)	3.68 (1.19)
9. Because someone advised me to do it.	2.42 (1.25)	2.64 (1.22)	2.86 (1.19)	2.86 (1.25)	2.84 (1.19)	2.45 (1.20)
10. To start up my own business.	2.40 (1.24)	2.39 (1.15)	2.88 (1.17)	2.58 (1.18)	2.32 (1.11)	2.89 (1.27)
11. Because I was bored.	1.60 (0.88)	2.34 (1.21)	2.34 (1.11)	2.13 (1.10)	2.49 (1.24)	1.75 (1.01)
12. Because I was obliged to do it, e.g. to claim benefits, to avoid redundancy.	2.33 (1.35)	1.71 (0.86)	2.67 (1.31)	2.24 (1.37)	1.83 (1.00)	1.92 (1.17)
13. To get a job.	3.24 (1.39)	3.30 (1.37)	3.55 (1.25)	3.29 (1.47)	3.30 (1.27)	2.97 (1.50)
14. To learn knowledge/skills useful in my daily life.	4.01 (0.96)	4.09 (0.92)	4.17 (0.82)	4.00 (1.00)	3.87 (0.94)	3.68 (1.17)
15. To contribute more as a citizen.	3.37 (1.22)	3.45 (1.16)	3.57 (1.06)	3.58 (1.20)	3.41 (0.99)	3.19 (1.28)
16. To meet new people.	3.35 (1.21)	3.71 (1.03)	3.68 (1.02)	3.64 (1.17)	3.64 (0.98)	3.33 (1.21)
17. To be less likely to lose my current job.	3.43 (1.28)	2.06 (1.06)	3.58 (1.14)	2.66 (1.31)	2.15 (1.09)	2.51 (1.35)
18. To obtain certificate.	4.14 (0.96)	4.00 (1.08)	4.22 (0.91)	4.25 (0.94)	4.25 (0.88)	4.15 (1.08)

Table 3. ANOVA on motivational statements.

Statements	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	ICC	Bonferroni post hoc results
17. To be less likely to lose my current job.	236.281	0.000	0.397	LT/HU/CZ/BG/EE > RU/AU/SI > EN/SC/IE > BE
3. Because my employer required me to enrol in the programme.	256.847	0.000	0.372	HU/BG > RU > CZ/LT/SC/SI/EN/IE/ EE > AU > BE
12. Because I was obliged to do it, e.g. to claim benefits, to avoid redundancy.	264.449	0.000	0.359	BG > LT > HU/RU > SI/CZ/SC/EE/IE/EN/ AU > BE
13. To get a job.	114.852	0.000	0.235	BG/LT > SC/IE/RU/HU/EE/SI/CZ/EN > AU > BE
2. To earn more.	114.401	0.000	0.162	HU/CZ/RU/LT/EE/SI/BG/SC/AU/EN/IE > BE
10. To start up my own business.	91.310	0.000	0.142	BG/SI/LT/EE > AU/RU/HU/IE/SC/CZ/EN > BE
18. To obtain certificate.	102.995	0.000	0.131	EE/BG/SC/RU/LT/SI/HU/EN/IE/CZ > AU/BE
7. To get a break from the routine of home and work.	77.342	0.000	0.127	EE/BG/SC/AU/IE/EN/LT/HU/CZ/RU/BE > SI
5. To contribute more to my community.	88.562	0.000	0.121	BG > SC/RU/SI/IE/HU/EN/LT > EE > BE/CZ/AU
6. To gain awareness of myself and others.	75.944	0.000	0.100	LT/IE/SC/SI/BG/RU/EE/EN/BE > AU/HU/CZ
8. To do my job better.	63.105	0.000	0.098	EE/HU/BG/LT/SI/CZ/RU/AU/IE/SC > EN > BE
15. To contribute more as a citizen.	66.787	0.000	0.097	BG/RU/LT/IE/SC/HU/EE/SI/EN/CZ/AU/BE
11. Because I was bored.	71.537	0.000	0.095	SC/BG/IE/LT/EE/EN/RU/CZ/AU/SI/BE/HU
4. To participate in group activities.	63.425	0.000	0.090	BG/LT/IE/SC/EN/EE/HU > SI/RU/BE/CZ/AU
1. To learn more on a subject that interests me.	90.455	0.000	0.085	BE/IE/SC/EE/EN/HU/LT/BG > RU/CZ/AU > SI
16. To meet new people.	46.217	0.000	0.062	BG/IE/LT/RU/SC/EE/CZ/EN/HU/SI/BE > AU
9. Because someone advised me to do it.	34.155	0.000	0.058	BG/LT/RU/SC/CZ/EE/IE/EN/AU/SI/HU > BE
14. To learn knowledge/skills useful in my daily life.	39.762	0.000	0.045	LT/IE/AU/HU/RU/BG/SC/EE/SI/EN/BE/CZ
Extrinsic dimension 2 – 3 – 8 – 9 – 10 – 12 – 13 – 17	336.980	0.000	0.289	BG > LT/HU > RU/CZ > EE/SI > SC > IE/EN/ AU > BE
Social intrinsic dimension 1 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 14 – 15 – 16	58.981	0.000	0.064	IE/SC/LT/BG/EE/RU/EN/BE/HU/SI/AU/CZ

(Table 3) and continue with a cluster analysis. Later on, we analyse our research output in relation to existing country typologies and social policy regimes.

Three items of our reduced scale have an ICC higher than 0.350 and share a content in which pressure and social control are clearly present. The fear of losing one's job, together with being sent to courses by the employer or external bodies, are reported more frequently in Eastern European than Western European countries. These forms of external pressure and control are experienced least in Belgium (Flanders). Taken overall, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Hungary have the highest scores. Their mean scores on the fear of losing one's job are higher than 3, indicating that they are close to agreeing (Likert score 4) and do not disagree (Likert score 2) with the statement. The influence of the employer is strongest in Bulgaria with an average score of 3.65. Bulgaria is also the only country with a mean score higher than 3 on the influence of obligations to learn due to claiming benefits or to avoid redundancy.

The following two statements (measuring the wish to get a job and to earn more) are work-related and also selected more frequently in Eastern European countries, although getting a job seems to have been more important in Ireland and Scotland in comparison with the other Western European countries. Again, Flemish learners have the lowest mean scores on these items and following the Bonferroni post hoc tests, they significantly differ from other Western European countries. On the item 'to earn more', Flanders is the only country with a mean score below 3, indicating that Flemish learners on average disagree with the statement. On the item about getting a new job, they even score less than 2.

Within all countries, the mean scores on starting up a business are below 3, indicating that this is not really a motive for most of our adult learners. Again, the mean is highest in Bulgaria and lowest in Flanders. The item on obtaining a certificate has one of the highest mean scores among all items in most countries. This is not surprising as the opportunity to obtain a certificate is one of the main characteristics of formal education. In 9 of the 12 countries, the mean score is higher than 4. In Austria and Belgium, this motive is less prominent than in other countries, but in comparison with the other statements, the score is rather high, so obtaining a certificate seems an important motive.

The next three statements differ from the previous statements in that they are less linked with external or work-related pressure. Escaping from routine, contributing to the community and gaining awareness of oneself and others are items in which the division between Eastern and Western European countries is less clear-cut. The need for a break from routine and from home is less prominent in Slovenia, but in other countries the response was rather neutral with an average score of around 3. In the statement on the contribution to the community, we again see a lower score for Austria and Belgium, together with the Czech Republic. The aspect of gaining awareness of the self and others has slightly higher mean scores (closer to 4) in Ireland, Scotland and Lithuania.

The statement relating to doing the job better is another example where pressure is present. Again, we see a distinction between Eastern and Western European countries. Belgium is the only country with a score lower than 3, indicating that those surveyed there disagree with the statement.

The remaining statements, with the exception of statement 9, focus more on the social aspects of learning and the search for fulfilling personal interests. The differences between countries become less significant. In comparison with the earlier items, learners in Scotland and Ireland are in between the Eastern European countries, whereas the difference remains significant between the Anglo-Celtic region on one hand, and Austria and Belgium on the other. If we perform data reduction on all 18 statements and make a distinction between external pressure and social interest, we notice that a dimension measuring external pressure shows much greater difference between countries. Country variations play a smaller role in explaining social motives.

4.2.2. Cluster analysis

Besides looking at significant effects statement by statement, we are also interested in the patterns to be found by taking all items together. Combining the Bonferroni post hoc test results with the ANOVA, we observe a basic distinction between Western and Eastern European countries. The Eastern European adult learners in our sample participated more because of external pressure, while those in Western European countries want to learn more about interesting topics. In the Anglo-Celtic countries, the social motives are stronger than in the continental countries. To make these convergences and differences more visible based on all 18 items, we performed a cluster analysis, using Ward’s method, which follows an approach quite similar to the ANOVA technique (Ward 1963). The dendrogram (Figure 1) indicates the proximity of countries based on motivational data. We make separate sub-clusters of countries that fit ‘closest’ to each other. The distance between countries is

Figure 1. Cluster analyses on motivational statements.

indicated on a scale from 0 to 25 (see horizontal line at the top in Figure 1). The smaller the distance between countries, the more similar they are.

At first sight, we do indeed notice a distinction between Western and Eastern European countries. If we chose to make just two clusters, that would be the point of separation. Looking at the vertical line under 25 (on the upper horizontal line – showing a large difference) and moving to the left, one can notice two main clusters (shown in the two main horizontal lines going to the left): Europe is divided into West and East.

In our case, we can identify further sub-clusters within those two main clusters. Among the Western European countries, we find an Anglo-Celtic cluster and a Continental cluster with Austria and Belgium (to the left of the first vertical line below 10–15 two clusters emerge: Ireland, Scotland and England on the one hand, and Austria and Belgium on the other). In our ANOVA table, we noticed that the items focusing on external pressure were less present in Austria and Belgium and that social motives were slightly more prominent in the Anglo-Celtic countries, especially Ireland and Scotland. Among the Eastern European countries, Bulgaria and Lithuania are rather distinct from the other countries in the sample (to the left of the second vertical line below 10–15, two clusters are to be found: Bulgaria and Lithuania on the one hand, and Hungary, Russia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia on the other). Based on the mean scores, we observed that external pressure and job-related obligations are the highest in these countries (Bulgaria and Lithuania). Within the cluster of other Eastern European countries, Slovenia stands somewhat on its own, but whether a separate cluster is really needed is debatable.

At this point, some critical observations on our research methodology are called for. We used a shortened version of Boshier's (1973) Education Participation Scale; we did not give respondents the opportunity to insert their own thoughts. This approach is satisfactory for searching for overall patterns as we do in this paper, but additional qualitative research methodologies might strengthen the analysis. For example, biographical research methods could emphasise individuals' subjective experiences in their social context and offer more detailed insights into the learning experiences of individuals, including their inter-relations with other parts of life (Roberts 2002).

However, limitations of time and resources meant we were unable to supplement this study with qualitative analysis.

4.3. Explanations based on welfare state typologies

In the previous parts of this results section, we looked at ANOVA and cluster analysis results. In this part of the paper, we try to explain and interpret these findings.

Overall, the results provide support for the view that broader environmental structures at country level interfere with motives to learn throughout life. As indicated in Boeren, Nicaise, and Baert (2010), participation is the outcome of the interactions between a number of different actors. In this case, the systematic differences in motivation patterns between clusters of countries suggest that matching of demand and supply is influenced by the national institutional context, as formulated in our first hypothesis. The cluster analysis presented previously revealed four distinct groups: two Western European sub-clusters and two Eastern sub-clusters. Interestingly, our clustering of countries is more or less comparable with previous country clustering based on welfare and educational indicators (Aiginger and Guger 2006; Esping-Andersen 1990; Fenger 2007; Holford et al. 2008; Titmuss 1974). Societies are structured according to patterns in family and work life and based on common national identities. Esping-Andersen (1990) clustered countries based on welfare state characteristics such as the level of decommodification and stratification. Decommodification refers to how far welfare provision diverges from a free market. In countries with a high degree of decommodification, social security is unrelated to individual positions on the labour market and social services are guaranteed to every citizen; countries with low decommodification rely more on the market. Stratification indicates the extent of social inequality between individuals. The social-democratic model (Scandinavian countries) addresses social needs with little reference to the market; the corporatist model (e.g., Belgium, Austria, France, Germany) relates social security to merit and productivity, and derives benefits from social contributions paid on labour earnings. In the liberal model (United Kingdom, Ireland), the state contributes only where the market fails to secure the social rights for the population.

In this paper, we have compared learning motives in 12 countries, including 7 Eastern European countries. Esping-Andersen's 'three worlds of welfare capitalism', do not, however, include Eastern European countries and make little reference to educational indicators. We have therefore built on the work of Holford et al. (2008), who compiled a lifelong learning typology based on variables measuring human capital, social capital and fostering of personal development, and on how much participation in lifelong learning was used within active labour market policies. And in addition, it included both educational variables and a set of Eastern European countries.² Holford et al. (2008) gathered their data by using national reports produced by team members and by consultation of statistical and policy reviews by Eurostat and Eurydice. The Holford et al. typology also has the virtue of being based on the same set of countries we use in our dataset (we excluded Norway because of data limitations).

Holford et al. (2008) argued that a strong labour market focus is present in almost all national lifelong learning policies, although the interpretation varied. In the post-communist European countries, there was a stronger emphasis on enhancing economic development and decreasing the gap with other regions,

whereas in Western European countries the emphasis was mainly on maintaining the economic level and solving skills shortages. Furthermore, lifelong learning was seen as a way to integrate disadvantaged groups into society, although the labour market focus remained dominant. Sometimes, notably in Ireland, lifelong learning was seen as a promoter of culture, identity and well-being. The education system has a strong link with lifelong learning practices and changed radically in Eastern European countries after the collapse of communist rule. In Eastern European countries, specific lifelong learning policies did not exist or were little more than uncritical copies of Western European policies (Holford et al. 2008). Some other countries (such as Estonia, Slovenia and Hungary) had some recently developed policy papers on lifelong learning. In Western Europe, there was much more evidence on lifelong learning policy and the role that education policy has to play. In these older member states with longer-established market economies, National Qualification Frameworks were already more strongly developed whereas this evolution still had to start in the majority of Eastern European countries. In many Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovenia, the focus on socially disadvantaged groups mainly related to the Roma population with the aim of increasing their employment rate. In Western European countries, there was a focus on asylum seekers learning the native language of the country in which they want to live.

Based on indicators mapping economic and education progress, Holford et al. developed the following typology of lifelong learning:

- An Anglo-Celtic group (Scotland, England and Ireland): countries with relatively high GDPs but lower social welfare focus, and hence a higher risk of poverty. Here, participation in lifelong learning was rather high and focused on economic prosperity. In Irish lifelong learning policy, combating social exclusion was also an explicit concern.
- A continental group (represented by Austria and Flanders): countries with stratified education systems and strongly regulated labour markets, but less emphasis on including marginalised groups. This is also reflected in their lifelong learning systems.
- A third rather heterogeneous group ('catching up' group) comprising Eastern European countries undergoing transformation into market economies. Participation rates in lifelong learning were low and the debate focused strongly on economic growth. Combating social exclusion by means of lifelong learning was largely lacking. Of all these countries, Slovenia was most similar to the Western European countries. The authors also argued that further investigation of Eastern European lifelong learning systems might reveal deeper variations within this region.

Relating our research findings to the Holford et al. (2008) typology, some similarities clearly emerge. In Western Europe, we see an Anglo-Celtic cluster

where adult learners' motives reflect a broadly average emphasis on work-related items but a stronger focus on social aspects than within the Continental countries. This was also indicated in the Holford et al. typology and supports the available literature and indicators. In liberal regimes, adults feel more external pressure than within continental conservative regimes with stronger labour market regulations. The lack of attention to social aspects in the continental countries is also reflected in the motives of their adult learners.

Within the Eastern European countries, some interpretation is needed as to why Bulgaria and Lithuania form a separate sub-cluster. An IMF report on labour market transformations in Central and Eastern European countries showed that Bulgaria and Lithuania were progressing more slowly in transforming from centrally planned economies into market-based economies (Schiff et al. 2006). They had lower GDP, lower private investment rates, lower domestic savings and larger falls in labour market participation. Their total outputs were lower and their agriculture sectors still relatively dominant – other countries had developed more service-based economies. Besides these economic indicators, the second European Quality of Life Survey (Anderson et al. 2009) showed that, in comparison with other European countries, adults in Lithuania and Bulgaria indicate a lower overall life satisfaction, a lower overall happiness, a lower match of life circumstances to aspirations and more difficulties in concentrating at work because of family responsibilities. Although more adults own a house, especially in Bulgaria, they have fewer rooms (less living space) available and are less satisfied with the quality of their living conditions. They experience more shortage of space and fewer facilities such as separate bathrooms and indoor flushing toilets. There is more crime and violence, and poorer general levels of health and mental health. The quality of the education system is perceived as low, as is overall trust in political institutions. Taken overall, we can conclude that nearly all Eastern European countries are catching up economically and socially, but that Lithuania and Bulgaria lag furthest behind. As far as lifelong learning motives are concerned, more external and labour market-oriented pressure is experienced.

5. Discussion

In this paper, we have searched for motivational patterns among adult learners in 12 European countries. As suggested by Smith and Spurling (2001), sound motivational learning strategies led by governments are needed to achieve a lifelong learning society. As potential key agents, they refer to employers, learning institutions and families. Our analysis points to some common patterns of influence.

5.1. Labour market

Employment and labour market influences are clearly visible. The pressure to learn is highest in countries where transforming into strong market-oriented economies has been most delayed. With regard to sectors of employment, in Bulgaria and Lithuania agriculture remains dominant (Holford et al. 2008). Even in other Eastern European countries, there is on average more agricultural employment than in Western Europe. In the UK, Ireland, Austria and Belgium, service employment, market as well as non-market-oriented, is much more common. The structure of the labour market and chances to participate in lifelong learning are also reflected in our results. The continental countries (Austria and Belgium) have rather stratified structures in which having a job strongly determines access to welfare services. Curiously, it seems those who participate in formal adult education feel *less* job-related pressure and experience the opportunity to participate because of an intrinsic interest in their topic of study. This might relate to lack of on-the-job training or other work-related training courses for employees within our research study. Belgium in particular scores lower on all pressure-related and job-related statements, but half of the adult learners in the sample already had relatively high educational attainment. The reverse of the coin may be that lifelong learning has a limited impact on social inclusion. Widening access to learning and creating learning opportunities for marginalised and disadvantaged groups therefore remains a key point for attention.

5.2. Educational system

Concerning the influence of educational systems, Holford et al. (2008) argued that although in most countries lifelong learning is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education, there are close links with labour and employment departments. Although European policy on lifelong learning also focuses on personal development, social inclusion and citizenship, employment- and labour-market-oriented training predominates in practice, especially in Eastern European adult education systems. Looking at public education systems, we notice a rather strong link between the compulsory and the adult education system. In our sample, only Belgium and Austria were countries with stratified compulsory systems, characterised by early tracking and strong differentiation between academic and vocational options. In our motivational analyses, adult learners within these countries showed the least job-related motives. Perhaps, having had to make their final learning choices earlier, students in stratified systems receive more specialised education, so that adolescents entering the labour market have less urgent need for additional training (Brunello 2001). The radical changes to the education systems in Eastern European countries since their transition to the market economy also demand attention: Hantrais

(2002) warns that the new system is much more unequal, and our database includes a lot of unqualified youngsters aged below 25 years in these countries.

Looking at the length of compulsory education, Flanders was the only region in our sample where adolescents have to participate in at least part-time education until the age of 18 (Eurydice 2010). Job-related motives were mentioned least in this region. In countries with the strongest job-related motives – Lithuania, Bulgaria – compulsory education ends at age 16. Of course, compulsory education ends at age 15 or 16 in most European countries: the difference in relation to Lithuania and Bulgaria is that compulsory education only starts at age 7 (in countries such as England and Scotland it starts at age 5). Lithuanian and Bulgarian adolescents therefore spend two years fewer in education, which may increase their need for job-related training during adulthood.

However, comparing our clusters to differences in initial education between different countries is not always valid. The latest results on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) suggest that reading abilities of pupils in the fourth year of primary school are the same in Flanders and Bulgaria (both obtained a mean score of 547) (Van Damme 2008). In this research, Lithuanian pupils perform significantly better than Scottish pupils (537 versus 527). Also in TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), Lithuanian pupils score better than Scottish learners in both sciences and mathematics, at both fourth grade of primary school and second grade of secondary school (Van den Broeck et al. 2004). It is worth noting that Lithuanian pupils' results have improved considerably over the last 15 years: while the average TIMSS scores on mathematics and sciences decreased by 13 and 17 points for Flanders, the mean scores for Lithuania increased by 30 and 56 points, respectively. As with labour market changes, it may be that the quality of schooling is also adapting to Western norms. We also notice that by the end of compulsory education (at age 15), the performances of pupils in Bulgaria and Lithuania decrease more strongly compared to other European countries. These results can be consulted in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) studies (De Meyer 2007; OECD 2007).

5.3. Family structures

The Life Values Survey provides information on the influence of the family. Overall, family size is larger in Eastern Europe, but the living conditions are poorer, especially in Lithuania and Bulgaria. Perhaps lifelong learning provides a mechanism for escape. Happiness is also lower in Eastern Europe, and again especially in Bulgaria and Lithuania. Overall societal problems such as crime and violence are more prevalent there. Although lifelong learning can play a role in remedying these social problems, learning motives such as 'contributing as a citizen to the community' or 'gaining better awareness of the self and others' differ little between welfare state regimes. This suggests lifelong learning policies should pay more attention to creating new opportunities to

increase overall well-being and life happiness among the population, besides serving the economy.

In conclusion, we wish to raise the question of whether a common European lifelong learning policy is desirable. Our research has demonstrated that lifelong learning motivation emerges as ‘bounded agency’ between different countries and their individual adult learners (Rubenson and Desjardins 2009). Participation is not solely the responsibility of the learners themselves, but takes place in interaction with broader structural conditions within a country or geographical area. Western and Eastern European countries differ from a social as well as economic and educational perspective. This suggests a need for different strategies to boost the motivation of adults to learn at the separate country level – as well as at a common European level. Even within Eastern Europe, we can see different types or extents of ‘catching up’ with Western market economies (cf. Lithuania versus Slovenia). From a psychological point of view, it would be helpful to improve policy makers’ understanding of motivation, as social control and pressure may destroy self-esteem. In further analysis of the database collected in the LLL2010 project, we notice that learners in countries where there is greater pressure to participate are also less satisfied with various aspects of their courses (practical organisation, learning outcomes) than those in countries with less pressure.

The analysis suggests that countries should adapt their education systems in order to attract more motivated learners – and to keep them satisfied. More flexible enrolment conditions, strong national qualification frameworks and more accreditation of prior (experiential) learning can lower barriers and improve the success of learning. Last but not least, educational policies should focus on lifelong learning as a tool to create more human warmth and happiness, especially in those countries where adults report poorer quality of life.

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Notes

1. Unfortunately, we had to discard the Norwegian sample because it lacked data on motivation, but the sample still comprises 12,000 adult learners from Western and Eastern Europe.
2. The Holford et al. (2008) typology was also developed as part of the LLL2010 project.

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