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'You have to run it like a company': The marketisation of adult learning and education in Germany and Slovenia

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Abstract

This paper identifies some of the key characteristics of the marketisation of adult learning and education (ALE) and analyses the effects in the contexts of Germany (focusing on Bavaria) and Slovenia. ALE policies and institutional practices are analysed through the method of document analysis and interviews. Policy models of ALE proposed by Lima and Guimarães—the democratic–emancipatory model, the modernisation and state control model, and the human resources management model—are used as an analytical framework. Our findings indicate that the latter model prevails in the analysed policies, while the market forces are introduced on the organisational level of ALE from 'below' through the increased influence of the market demand coming from the learners/customers, and from 'above' through calls for tenders that shape the 'quasi-market' in which the ALE organisations compete for funding. However, signs of resistance to the marketisation of ALE practices are also identified.

Keywords: Adult learning and education organisations, adult learning and education policy, Germany, marketisation of adult learning and education, Slovenia

Introduction

The marketisation of adult learning and education (ALE) that represents a kind of 'new common-sense about education', in which the economic effects substantially influence the educational aims and educational policymaking, has been growing over the last three decades (Holford, 2016, p. 180). In line with such views, individuals need to adapt to the economy through learning and education, and education systems need to become flexible and adaptable, achieved by introducing new approaches in public management, the retreat

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of the state, and the privatisation, commercialisation and marketisation of education (Holford, 2016; Lima & Guimarães, 2011). Accordingly, the contributions of education to social justice and equality are diminishing, and the dominant conception of education is changing (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019).

In this paper, we primarily explore those forces of capitalism that lead to the marketisation of ALE. However, as ALE can also play an important part in the resisting and re-construction process (cf. Käpplinger, 2019; Tett & Hamilton, 2019), we shortly reflect on resistance to the marketisation forces arising from our data as well. Having said that, the main aim of this paper is to identify some of the key characteristics of the marketisation of ALE, and to examine to what extent these are reflected (or not) in the national (regional) ALE policies and chosen public institutions in two different contexts—in Germany (Bavaria) and Slovenia. As in Germany, where the governance of ALE is divided between the federal and state (*Länder*) levels, we acknowledge a regional focus as well by concentrating on the state of Bavaria, which we considered as a state-like unit of analysis due to the role of *Länder* in shaping ALE policies and provision.

In what follows, we first discuss the characteristics of the marketisation of education and ALE, outline our methodological approach, and then analyse selected Slovenian and German ALE policies and institutional practices in line with the paper's aim. In the final section, we discuss the main findings and emphasise the characteristics, similarities and differences of the marketisation of ALE shaping national (regional) policies and institutional practices.

Marketisation of education and ALE

Simons, Lundahl and Serpieri (2013, p. 419) describe the marketisation of education as the process of organising market forces (e.g. school choice, competition) in education 'instead of hierarchical (bureaucratic) modes of coordination and provision by local or national governments'. Among the elements that contribute to the marketisation of education, Helgøy and Homme (2016, p. 53) include contractual relationships, public-private partnerships, subcontracting, decentralisation, competition, output control, and the privatisation of public services. The latter is often understood as a prerequisite for the commercialisation of education, 'a process where private, for-profit agencies and commercial transactions have an impact on or become part of the scene of education' (Simons et al., 2013, p. 420). To add further conceptual clarity to the marketisation of education, which is often used as a 'popular phrase' in (adult) education research, we adopted a three-way frame through which marketisation influences educational practice as proposed by Käpplinger (2019): (1) marketisation by ideas and words, (2) marketisation by instruments and methods, and (3) marketisation by resources and finances.

Marketisation by ideas and words

This manner of marketisation is supported by 'ideas, concepts, rhetoric or discourses' (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 4) that primarily consider ALE as markets, as these are acknowledged to be more efficient than the state. Marketisation by ideas and words is strongly influenced by *neoliberalism*, which is characterised by its 'maximalist' attitude towards capitalism (the drive towards increased capital accumulation in all areas of social life). Neoliberalism is an ideology and political project of capitalist globalisation that encourages the implementation of basic market principles in all spheres of society

(Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2016; Lynch, 2006), and is most often related to thinkers such as Friedrich Von Hayek, Milton Friedman, James Buchanan and other collaborators at the Chicago School of Economics (Biebricher, 2020; Olssen & Peters, 2005). Although neoliberalism is commonly associated with an Anglo-Saxon approach related to Thatcher and Reagan reforms at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, its eminence is built on earlier examples of ordoliberalism found in Germany, and authoritarian varieties of neoliberalism of Latin America (Chile) (Biebricher, 2020). Neoliberalism has spread globally, but influenced countries to varying degrees (Desjardins, 2013, p. 184).

Contrary to the *Keynesian* perspective that argues in favour of the welfare state, i.e. the state that promotes social welfare and economic policies for the well-being of citizens, and macro-economic policy tools (fiscal and monetary policy), neoliberalism rejects the idea that the state should play a sigificant roles in steering development and emphasises the role of the market in steering economic, political and social development, while the individual (and not the state) is responsible for their well-being (Desjardins, 2013). However, although neoliberalism downplayed the role of the state and government, neoliberals were very involved in policymaking and also worked closely with authoritarian governments like in Chile (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 4), while contemporary examples of right-wing populist (or authoritarian) parties in Italy, Austria, Germany, Hungary or the USA call 'for a strong state and the espousal of authoritarian *neo*liberalism' (Biebricher, 2020, p. 15, italics in original). Therefore, while authoritarian neoliberalism with strong government control is achievable, this does not mean that neoliberalism is necessarily authoritarian or that variations of neoliberalism with 'radical decentralization of state sovereignty' (Biebricher, 2020, p. 15) do not exist. Thus, the role of the state is in the developing and maintaining of economic order - by legal and repressive means - based on competition.

The main defining features of neoliberalism, i.e. free markets, private property rights, free trade, privatisation, deregulations, and a reconfigured state that promotes marketisation, all influence ALE; education and lifelong learning (LLL) are seen as economic tools that play a crucial role in maintaining (inter)national competitiveness (Desjardins, 2013, p. 183; Tett & Hamilton, 2019, pp. 1-2). Knowledge is promoted as the cornerstone of competitiveness, economic growth and the improvement of living standards and, consequently, competitiveness becomes the main aim of education that governments and individuals need to follow (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019; Desjardins, 2013). ALE programmes that address labour market needs have been prioritised over programmes with less direct economic value (Mikulec & Jelenc Krašovec, 2016), as well as activities of recognition of prior learning (RPL) leading to qualifications (Lima & Guimarães, 2016). Additionally, due to the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism in some countries, ALE might also be used in citizenship education to 'form obedient patriotic citizens' (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 9).

Marketisation by instruments and methods

Besides ideas, marketisation is supported by 'instruments, tools and practices', such as '[c]ontrolling, cost-benefit-analysis, management by objectives, benchmarking or quality assurance' (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 5). In line with these, educational systems shaped by marketisation emphasise cost reduction, and also view the educational institutions and facilitators as commodities that are easily replaceable (Fejes & Holmqvist, 2019). Educational provision is directly subjected to market exchanges, meaning it is consequently regulated and financed under the market principles of supply and demand (Fejes & Salling Olesen, 2016). Furthermore, educational institutions and facilitators

become the producers of commodities and the learners become the consumers (Holford et al., 2014). Consequently, the competitiveness between educational institutions increases (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019), which makes it difficult for them to plan their long-term strategies (Fejes & Holmqvist, 2019), while public ALE institutions are cooperating with private organisations to a greater extent (Helgøy & Homme, 2016; Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

At the same time, the pursuit of performance indicators and quality assurance measures is becoming increasingly important as the ascertaining of measurable educational outcomes gains significance (Olssen & Peters, 2005). This makes learning outcomes easier to manage while, at the same time, increasing the risk of education being too focused on measurable educational outcomes (Desjardins, 2013). The introduction of accountability, standards and measurements 'is seen as a solution for balancing the need for a more decentralised market-oriented approach while at the same time allowing for greater centralised control over quality and cost efficiency' (Desjardins, 2013, p. 190; cf. Tett & Hamilton, 2019, p. 2). Market forces have expanded into the public sector in a manner that follows private sector principles (Olssen & Peters, 2005), therefore, becoming an instrument of its improvement. Additionally, marketisation changes the way that institutions are managed and the role of the institutions' leader can become more similar to that of a company CEO than a pedagogical leader (Fejes & Holmqvist, 2019).

Marketisation by resources and finances

Finally, marketisation is shaped also by resources, meaning that 'the sources have changed, but also that the ways and how the resources are spent have changed' (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 6). In line with marketisation ideology, customers (learners) have to pay if they want to learn in an organised way, while providers make profit. Therefore, marketisation means that 'the learners have to spend more privately', while the 'state subsidies and support are reduced' (p. 6). Similarly, Helgøy and Homme (2016) and Milana (2012) argued that increasing funds obtained through participants' fees and decreases in public funding and governments' influence is a sign of marketisation, while Fejes and Holmqvist (2019) added to the latter by also focusing on the decreasing of financial stability.

However, what is also important to observe is the shift in the ways that finances are spent. If in the past, financial resources were distributed according to the legal basis and given directly to the ALE providers that enjoyed a high degree of professional autonomy, then currently the regulation is much higher and linked to project funding, with projects having clearly defined goals, indicators and timetables that are observed and measured by different agencies working outside the educational field, which also have consequences for the de-professionalization of ALE (Käpplinger, 2019, p. 8). Moreover, as national funds for ALE have declined in some European Union (EU) countries, these are increasingly dependent on the project funding provided by the European Social Fund (ESF)—the instrument the EU uses for the policy transfer of ideas and best practices that also shape the marketisation of education (Mikulec & Jelenc Krašovec, 2016)—while project work also increases the precarity of professionals (cf. Finnegan, Valadas, O'Neill, Fragoso, & Paulos, 2019, p. 165). The expansion of project work and financing is, therefore, a clear sign of marketisation (Fejes & Holmqvist, 2019; Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

Methodology

In line with the aim of the paper, the following research questions were formulated: (1) To what extent is the marketisation of ideas and instruments promoted in ALE policies in Germany and Slovenia, and (2) To what extent do the marketisation by ideas, instruments and resources influence chosen public ALE institutions in selected countries?

Selection of country cases

For the comparative empirical analysis, we have chosen Germany and Slovenia, both of which are Central European countries and EU member states, but which have different histories and governance structures. After World War II, German history becomes related to post-Nazi developments and the reunification of 'East' and 'West' Germany in 1990, while Slovenia's is related to the establishment of a socialistic state—this being part of Yugoslavia until Slovenia declared its independence in 1991. Germany is a federal parliamentary democratic republic with 16 federal states that have their own state constitution and enjoy a high degree of autonomy, while Slovenia is a parliamentary democratic republic with a high degree of centralised governance. However, observing both countries from the welfare state regimes first introduced by Esping-Andersen, which originally distinguished between three regimes of state-market relations (see Roosmaaa & Saar, 2017, p. 262)—liberal, with minimal state intervention within the market; conservative, based on social-insurance schemes related to labour market status that retain status differences among citizens; and social democratic, promoting social equality and universal benefits to all citizens—both mainly represent conservative welfare regimes. These regimes typically invest in 'firm-specific and industry-specific skills, they favour skilled workers and largely ignore the interests of low-skilled and semi-skilled workers' (Roosmaaa & Saar, 2017, p. 263). While it is well known that neoliberalism has been most prominent in Anglo-Saxon states, and that some countries, such as most of the Nordic ones (except Sweden; see Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2019; Lundahl, 2016), have been less affected by neoliberal reforms and, to a larger degree, remained within social democratic welfare regimes (Desjadrins, 2013, pp. 193-184), it is less known, especially within the ALE field, to what degree countries from conservative welfare regimes have been affected by neoliberal and marketisation forces, and to what extent are these shaping or not shaping ALE policies and provision. Furthermore, as EU members, both countries' ALE policies are to a certain extent shaped by European ALE policy and its instruments (Holford, Milana, & Mohorčič Špolar, 2014). While the latter is conceptualised instrumentally and is primarily based on economic (market) objectives and vocational perspectives of LLL, as many researchers argued (Holford, 2016; Mikulec, 2018; Milana, 2012), it might be important to explore to what extent European ALE policy and its instruments influence ALE policies in 'old-large' (Germany) and 'new-small' (Slovenia) member states as important power imbalances between the two exist (Sabour, 2009).

Historically speaking, both countries have long traditions in institutionalised forms of ALE; for example, in 2019, many ALE centres in Germany (*Volkshochschulen*) celebrated their 100th anniversary (Field, 2019), while in Slovenia the *Association of Folk Universities of Slovenia* celebrated its 60th anniversary, while the first folk school (ALE centre) started to operate in 1921. Today, the main focus of the ALE system in both countries is predominantly on vocational education and training (VET), while a variety of state, market or civil society organisations provide ALE in both countries. However, countries differ in the governance of ALE systems: while in Germany responsibilities for the legal regulation of ALE, the public recognition of providers and their basic funding

rest mainly on the 16 federal states (*Länder*), in Slovenia the governance of ALE is mainly state based, where the ministries responsible for education and labour have the main responsibilities, but are also supported from other ministries and relevant national bodies (Desjardins, 2017; Grotlüschen & Haberzeth, 2018; Mikulec & Jelenc Krašovec, 2016).

Method and sources

Empirical data for qualitative research was gathered through the method of document analysis (Bowen, 2009) and semi-structured interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In document analysis, we focused on a thematic analysis, interpreting data by following a deductive approach through preconceived themes as presented in more detail below. Therefore, national (regional) policies were analysed in line with three analytical policy models of ALE with the four models' categories used as analytical tools (Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

On the national and federal state level, we analysed six policies: two Slovenian Resolutions on the Master Plan for Adult Education (Državni zbor, 2004, 2013), the German Vocational Training Act (Bundestag, 2005), the German Federal Government's Conceptualisation of Lifelong Learning (2008) and the Bavarian and Slovenian ALE acts – both adopted in 2018 (Bayerischer Landtag, 2018; Državni zbor, 2018). Due to the division of power in Germany between federal and state (*Länder*) levels (see Bundesministerium für Bildung und Förschung [BMBF], 2008b, p. 146), in our analysis, the German national policies and the Bavarian ALE law are treated as policies on the same level (in relation to the chosen Bavarian ALE centre), considering the ALE area they are covering. Since vocational education (outside the school sector) is the main area of ALE practice in the domain of the federal government, the policy was taken from this area to reflect the relationship between federal and state levels in the ALE policy, although other laws and policies at a federal level also shape ALE in Germany (for an overview of these see Desjardins, 2017, p. 114).

On an organisational level, we gathered data through the institutions' webpages and their publicly available documents, observations of their learning spaces, and by conducting two semi-structured in-depth interviews with leaders of selected ALE institutions. The interview guide was prepared beforehand. The interviews were conducted in June 2019 and each lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, while interview data was manually coded and analysed by following an inductive approach through the open coding and formulation of categories and themes.

Two comparable ALE centres (*Volkshochschulen*)—Slovenian and Bavarian, which we had the opportunity to visit a few times—were selected for analysis. Both are the main public ALE providers in their local areas. The chosen German institution (DEI) was founded by its municipality about 70 years ago. It mainly offers ALE programmes to residents of 32 Bavarian municipalities with a total population of 250,000. It fully employs 30 people (11 of them being ALE professionals) as well as over 500 lecturers as freelancers. The chosen Slovenian institution (SII) was founded by its municipality around 60 years ago. It mainly offers its programmes to residents of 26 municipalities with a total population of half a million (about a quarter of Slovenia's population). It fully employs 32 people (15 of them being ALE professionals) as well as 150 lecturers as freelancers. The chosen ALE institutions were compared within four selected comparative categories related to three different ways through which marketisation influences educational practice (Käpplinger, 2019): (1) educational provision, (2) participants (related to marketisation by ideas and words), (3) competitive activities

(related to marketisation by instruments and methods), and (4) public management and funding (related to marketisation by resources and finances).

Analytical policy models of adult learning and education

For the analysis of national (regional) ALE policies, we used an analytical framework developed by Lima and Guimarães (2011). The authors developed three models for analysing ALE policies that can, in turn, be used for an analysis of ALE policies at different levels (cf. Doutor & Guimarães, 2019). The three models are: *the democratic-emancipatory model* (DEM), *the modernisation and state control model* (MSC) and *the human resources management model* (HRM). The models were developed as 'ideal types' on a continuum since policies usually combine elements of different models.

(1) DEM views education as a fundamental social right that should contribute to social (as well as economic, cultural and political) development, social justice and cosmopolitan citizenship. Basic and non-formal education programmes emphasise the values of solidarity and the common good. The political priority of education is to build a democratic and participatory society. Policy-making processes are decentralised (stressing 'bottom-up' dynamics). (2) MSC values education primarily as a contribution to social and economic modernisation shaped through interactions of democracy and economics. ALE is largely reduced to formal literacy programmes, school-type vocational trainings and academic learning. The education of vulnerable groups is important for social justice. The governments independently formulate policies and also have all the means to achieve them ('top-down' approach). (3) HRM perceives education and training as instruments of human capital and adaptation to the needs of the economy. The main role is played by the market, civil society, and individuals (market logic and individual choice)—the demand-side primarily shapes ALE, with public bodies having limited capacity for intervention. Education remains an important political issue, but more responsibility for learning and education is placed on individuals, who also contribute more funds to ALE. The focus is on useful learning outcomes. There is still some public funding of ALE, but the market principles are also followed in this respect and the public institutions compete for financing with private organisations (Doutor & Guimarães, 2019; Lima & Guimarães, 2011).

By presenting different models, it can be acknowledged that HRM—which is related to the crisis of the welfare state and the 'emergence of the neo-liberal state' (Lima & Guimarães, 2011, p. 28)—most clearly resonates with marketisation by ideas (neoliberalism), instruments and resources (Käpplinger, 2019), while MSC is related to conservative welfare state regimes and DEM to social democratic ones.

The three described analytical models can be differentiated further by four sub-categories (Lima & Guimarães, 2011): (a) *political-administrative orientations* (the laws, rules, and norms that allow for the adoption of the policy, as well as the necessary means and established conditions for policy formulation and implementation, (b) *political priorities* (the role and focus of ALE policy, target groups, projected funding), (c) *organisational and administrative dimensions* (the process of adopting a policy through (de)centralised structures and the technical procedures for carrying out ALE activities), and (d) *conceptual elements* (the underlying theoretical perspectives of the policy implementation processes as well as ALE aims and methods).

Results

In this section, the main characteristics of the Slovenian and German ALE policies are first analysed through presented analytical models. Secondly, the main characteristics of the chosen ALE institutions are identified and compared within four selected categories. ALE policies and institutions are presented in separate sections due to analytical purposes (addressing macro and meso levels), although we are aware that, in practice, links between ALE policies and provision are inseparable. Our results indicate that: HRM dominates ALE policies in Slovenia and Germany, flexible provision and competitiveness between organisations has increased in ALE institutions, participants' fees and project funding are current realities, while care for the education of vulnerable groups remains present.

Slovenian ALE policies: The dominance of HRM with the presence of MSC and elements of DEM

Table 1: The prevailing analytical models of the analysed Slovenian policies

	political-administrative orientations	*political priorities*	*organisational and administrative dimensions*	*conceptual elements*
Resolution on the Master Plan […] until 2010	HRM	MSC & HRM	HRM	MSC & HRM
Resolution on the Master Plan […] for 2013–2020	HRM	MSC & HRM	HRM prevails	MSC & HRM
Adult Education Act	MSC	DEM & MSC	MSC & HRM	MSC prevails

Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia until 2010 (Državni zbor, 2004), which was accepted the year Slovenia entered the EU, emphasises the global changes that require 'accelerated human resource development' (HRM). This stresses the importance of following EU policy, the promotion of public-private partnerships, individual responsibility, RPL, and ALE as a constant adaptation to the needs of the labour market (HRM). The resolution states that education 'is not an end in itself, but is in the function of active inclusion in social life, and the latter is today measured primarily by its ability to actively integrate into the labour market' (p. 8,582). Social inclusion and active citizenship are promoted (possibly DEM), as well as access to ALE, raising the levels of educational attainment and providing opportunities for the acquisition of basic skills (MSC). The described state's role is mainly in the coordination of ALE providers (HRM), while encouraging local communities to develop ALE (DEM if it means supporting local initiatives and democratising ALE—encouraging a bottom-up approach in such a way).

The Resolution […] until 2010 (Državni zbor, 2004) was succeeded by the *Resolution on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia for 2013–2020* (Državni zbor, 2013), which promotes formal ALE, second-chance ALE, raising levels of educational attainment and literacy (MSC), increasing employability,

RPL, the development of human capital for the needs of the labour market (HRM) and ALE for active citizenship, environment protection and cultural development (DEM). It also reiterates the pursuit of the EU policies' objectives and aims to address demographic, socio-economic and technological developments, as well as the needs of the labour market through ALE (HRM). The resolution highlights various state partnerships and its contribution to increase the demand for ALE and to monitor the implementation of ALE programmes (HRM).

The resolutions determine the public interest in ALE, while the *Adult Education Act* (Državni zbor, 2018) regulates it. However, the act regulates only non-formal and basic formal ALE. In accordance with the act, the basic ALE programme, together with ALE counselling, forms a public service in the field of ALE, which is provided to all citizens and is fully publicly funded (MSC). The act emphasises the inclusion of vulnerable groups in ALE, raising the levels of literacy and basic skills, improving educational attainment, including non-formal ALE in the public education system with systemic connections to informal learning as well (MSC), enhancing critical thinking, community learning and empowerment for democratic participation and active citizenship (DEM). The role of the state still incorporates the coordination of ALE providers, stimulating demand and removing ALE barriers (HRM), although stronger control and bureaucratic procedures than in the previous policies are evident (MSC). At the same time, suitable private organisations can compete with public institutions for the funding of certain ALE programmes (HRM). Because of the presence of such strong features of all three analytical policy models, the ALE act is the policy (out of the analysed Slovenian policies) in which most tensions between the three models were identified. For example, it emphasises the wide accessibility of quality ALE to be ensured by the state (MSC), while defining the coordinating role of the government and including private organisations in the process (HRM). It also emphasises the freedom and autonomy of educational approaches, contents and methods as among the key principles of public ALE (DEM), despite defining areas of public ALE, pre-determining the components of educational programmes in calls for tenders and implementing them according to bureaucratic processes (MSC, HRM).

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that HRM is the dominant model in both Resolutions on the Master Plan for Adult Education in the Republic of Slovenia, while this is not the case with the ALE act. The act is formulated from the standpoint of regularly providing ALE rather than addressing the current demand. Its organisational and administrative dimensions are also the most centralised (involving the largest state role) and its educational programmes the least focused on contributing to the labour market. The main reason for this more diverse orientation is likely the fact that the act does not regulate the entire field of ALE, but only those programmes that should already be the least focused on the needs of the labour market (basic and non-formal AE).

German ALE policies: The dominance of HRM with elements of MSC on a national level and MSC with elements of DEM on a federal state level

Table 2: The prevailing analytical models of the analysed German (and Bavarian) policies

	political-administrative orientations	*political priorities*	*organisational and administrative dimensions*	*conceptual elements*
Vocational Training Act	MSC	HRM prevails	MSC & HRM	HRM
Federal Government's Conceptualization of Lifelong Learning	HRM	HRM	HRM	HRM
Bavarian Adult Education Act	MSC	MSC	DEM & HRM	DEM & MSC

In Germany, the federal government's *Vocational Training Act* (Bundestag, 2005) regulates training in vocational schools, as well as continuing training. The act establishes the centralised management of the vocational training system with specific conditions, under which the participants can acquire vocational qualifications (MSC). It also establishes cooperation with private organisations and retraining (HRM). There is considerable control over VET in public institutions (MSC), however, the state's coordinator role is seen here as well (HRM). At the same time, the main focus of the act is on the development of human resources for labour market participation and on skills updating through retraining (HRM).

The *Federal Government's Conceptualisation of Lifelong Learning* (BMBF, 2008a) addresses the 2007 federal government's decision to make workforce qualifications and competences a priority ALE area (HRM). Dealing with the effects of demographic changes on the economy is defined as a key objective of learning (HRM), while learning for active citizenship and personal development is also mentioned (possibly DEM). Emphasis is placed on access to learning opportunities for vulnerable groups (MSC), on the easier acquisition of vocational qualifications for people with special needs, on increasing the participation of low-qualified people in ALE, on improving in-company (re)training opportunities, promoting RPL and on the greater adjustment of educational provision to meet demand (HRM). A significant governmental role is described, but mainly in a supporting manner with the provision being left to market demand (HRM).

In accordance with the division of political responsibility between the German federal and state governments, the *Bavarian Adult Education Act* (Bayerischer Landtag, 2018) entered into force in Bavaria in January 2019. The act establishes ALE's diverse aims and areas and highlights the right of every individual to education (MSC). It defines four areas of cofunding ALE—sustaining existing and developing new learning opportunities, providing and developing accessible needs-based ALE, fostering citizens' equal learning conditions, and supporting basic and voluntary ALE activities (MSC)—of which the recipients are non-profit associations recognised by the Bavarian government that deal exclusively with ALE. These associations then divide the funds among their members who must also follow certain regulations. With this system, the state's coordinator role is partially present (HRM), while at the same time the development and control of ALE are decentralised and local initiatives supported (DEM). The act also

promotes the adaptation of ALE to local areas, ALE for reducing discrimination (DEM), ALE for better understanding the social and political processes (MSC, possibly DEM), as well as the personal responsibility of learners and their contribution to state efficiency (HRM, possibly MSC). In line with these different policy orientations, it is also among the German-analysed policies that the ALE act shows the most tensions among different analytical models. One such tension is the mentioned coordinating role of the federal state that encompasess elements of both DEM and HRM and could, depending on the policy implementation, lean either way. At the same time, the described role also includes the moderate centralised influence of the federal state with determination of the general areas and conditions for (co)funding the ALE programmes (MSC). Furthermore, the public insurance of different educational opportunities for everyone is emphasised (MSC), while the participants' fees are necessary and project funding introduced (HRM).

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that both German national policies express many more HRM elements than the federal state policy. The Vocational Training Act focuses on human resources development (HRM) with the federal government's conceptualisation of LLL having a similar focus. The Bavarian ALE Act is the most difficult to place into a particular analytical model because of its scarcity of data, however, we have identified it as closest to the MSC. The main reason for the difference of predominant models on national and federal state level is most likely in their division of political responsibilities. The national government being primarily responsible for vocational ALE and the federal state government for general ALE (BMBF, 2008b) results in the dominance of HRM in the national ALE policy and a less neoliberal orientation on a federal state level. Nevertheless, the coordinating role of the government in ALE is present on both levels.

Slovenian and German ALE organisations

Flexible provision following demand on the rise, while interest in vulnerable groups is maintained.

In regard to educational provision, DEI and SII share some similarities. They both provide basic and upper secondary ALE programmes, vocational training, programmes for immigrants, ALE in prisons, and different one-time educational events. In none of the institutions does the vocational training (yet) represent the majority of total provision, although it is increasing significantly in both institutions, as they are making their provision more flexible and following the demand to attract participants and secure funding. At the same time, neither is currently reducing any major ALE programmes that do not directly contribute to the needs of the labour market. They are only expanding their existing provision and have increased employee numbers in the last 10 years for this reason.

However, there are also significant differences between institutions' provisions. An important part of SII's offer is career counselling and providing support for entrepreneurs in developing their business, while this is not present in DEI, which provides counselling only for immigrants. SII also provides more opportunities for individual learning activities than DEI. SII's leader describes a constant shift related to the need to contribute to participants' employability: 'We are definitely developing into an extended arm of the human resources development services. That being said, our focus is on employees, less educated, over the age of 45.' In comparison, DEI has been less flexible in its past provision but is now facing a 'wave of changes', as described by DEI's leader, in order to ensure sufficient funding. In the future, DEI intends to strengthen vocational

training, programmes for the elderly, and youth programmes. In line with the German 'decade of literacy', they will also offer more literacy programmes. The near-future provision of SII is more unpredictable, as it mainly depends on public funding—however, this is related to ESF (see Mikulec & Jelenc Krašovec, 2016, pp. 164–165)—and so is dependent on the areas of EU and national funding of ALE until 2030. In regard to the modest stable funding and the unpredictability of sufficient financing through different projects, the SII's leader points out that 'even though we are a public institution, you have to run it like a company'.

In the category of participants, the target group that has increased the most in both institutions is that of immigrants, with the largest increases in 2014 and 2015. In both institutions, the share of children and adolescents among participants has also increased, as both have recently developed new programmes for this population. The two institutions are more alike in their programmes for the elderly, who also represent an important share of participants in both cases. Furthermore, they also want to attract different vulnerable target groups, for whom the SII offers mostly free (publicly funded) programmes and the DEI offers participation fee discounts. A similarity of the analysed institutions is also found in the increase of the working population among the participants, although this increase is higher in SII. The main target group of both institutions within the working population is lower-educated adults, whose participation in programmes for raising employability is (co)funded by the Slovenian and German governments.

Competitiveness between ALE organisations, public and private organisations increased significantly

In regard to competitive activities, the number of organisations competing with SII and DEI has increased tremendously. As SII's leader illustrates, the competition is now 'on every corner'. Both institutions experienced a large increase of competing organisations in the fields of language and sports programmes. Additionally, SII is encountering a large increase in competing organisations in relation to entrepreneurship programmes, and DEI in vocational and immigrant programmes. Both institutions compete with others in addressing demand and attracting participants, while also competing with them for the obtainment of public funding through various calls for tenders, with private organisations often being more successful, as they require less funding to implement certain programmes. On the example of the implementation of educational programmes for the Employment Service of Slovenia, the leader of SII describes that now 'private organisations get everything. We are no longer doing anything for the Employment Service because we cannot set such low prices if we want to pay the teachers properly and finance ourselves properly'. The two institutions are also similar in their increased advertising investments, with DEI being more restricted and controlled by the municipality. Both institutions have boosted their online advertising and promote their events and programmes in the public media, while making their provision increasingly more flexible to better address demand.

Participants' fees share increased and is high in DEI, EU-project funding dominates in SII, while surpluses are also used for the education of vulnerable groups

The systems of public management and financing for the two institutions are quite different. In SII, many programmes are fully publicly funded and, therefore, free of charge, while in DEI the vast majority of activities require participation fees. The

financing of Slovenian public ALE programmes follows the principle of thirds—one-third of the funds are obtained from the state, one-third from the municipalities and one-third from participants' contributions. A similar principle has also been applied in Bavaria in the past, however, current funding with participants' fees exceeds 50% of all ALE funds. Because of the increased dependency on participants' contributions, DEI's provision has become more flexible. At the same time, the number of one-time educational events in DEI has reduced as they usually represent a financial loss.

The analysed institutions are also quite different in relation to the public management under which they operate. SII is a rather autonomous institution, while DEI is administratively part of the municipal government that closely controls its finances, but does not influence the areas of educational provision. This municipal influence has increased in recent years and so have financial earnings from immigrant programmes, of which the surpluses are flowing into the municipal budget. At the same time, DEI's financial losses can be covered by the municipal budget. Contrarily, SII directs surpluses from its certain programmes to fund those that do not have sufficient public funding. SII obtains most of its funding through projects (EU funding), while this type of funding represents only a small proportion of DEI's financing. Both institutions also receive a small share of the funds through donations, which they use for the education of vulnerable groups.

The national or federal-state policy defines the general regulations and areas of public ALE (co)funding for the analysed institutions, which are, however, broad enough to allow the introduction of various learning topics and programmes. SII is more dependent on policy because it relies on ESF public project funding that follows EU and national policies. The programmes, funded in this way, are free for participants and adapt to current political orientations that may not even be (yet) articulated in national policies. This way, funding can have faster political influences than policies. The pursuit of public project funding is, to a much lesser extent, also present in DEI.

Both interviewed institutional leaders acknowledge that the marketisation of ALE poses various challenges for them, however, they both wish for their institutions to keep experiencing (partial) marketisation, as the instability of financing it brings, according to them, leads to the development of better quality educational programmes. Furthermore, they both want more autonomy in financial management and see marketisation as a good way of improving their employees' work motivation, although through different approaches. The Slovenian interviewee emphasises that an increase in employees' motivation would occur with more freedom to financially stimulate the excelling employees, while the German interviewee would fund the development of new programmes with the financial surpluses (which is already happening in SII) to bring the employees space for educational innovations and, thus, increase their motivation for work.

Discussion

In this paper, we have explored forces of capitalism leading to the marketisation of ALE by analysing the extent to which market forces are reflected in chosen ALE national (regional) policies and public institutions in Germany (Bavaria) and Slovenia.

In the ALE policies of both countries, we identified the dominance of HRM and the promotion of the marketisation of education, which is most evident in the role of the state governments that should coordinate different ALE providers instead of providing ALE themselves, (partially) payable ALE programmes, public project (co)funding of ALE

providers, strengthening of public–private partnerships, individualisation of learning responsibility, promoting RPL, focusing on working-age participants, and flexibility of educational provision in accordance with labour market needs. Lima and Guimarães (2011) describe the reduction and change in the role of the state from the provider to the coordinator, which began to be introduced at the same time as the conceptual shift from (adult) *education* to (lifelong) *learning*. Such public management of ALE increases the participants' demand and its influence on the development of educational provision and competition between ALE organisations. The latter also increases in competing to obtain the public (project) funding of ALE programmes through tenders. Therefore, we argue that the market forces shaping ALE into an economic instrument are introduced on an organisational level from two sides as a consequence of marketisation on the state level: (1) from 'below' through the increased influence of the market demand coming from the learners/customers, and (2) from 'above' through calls for tenders that shape a sort of 'quasi-market'—where the state is stimulating the market competition (cf. Hake, 2016, p. 183; Käpplinger, 2019, p. 2)—on which the ALE organisations compete for funding.

Furthermore, being EU members, both countries' ALE policies are also shaped by the EU ALE policy (Holford et al., 2014), while its economic objectives are to a greater extent reflected in Slovenian, i.e. promotion of adaptability and employability of the workforce, vocational learning and RPL, LLL and individualisation of learning responsibility, development of public–private partnerships, and new managerial mechanisms, than in German policies. The reason for this, we would argue, lies in the smaller Slovenian international political influence, this being a small and new member state, and the shorter tradition of ALE policy compared to Germany. Field (2018) describes the impacts of the EU's ALE policy as smaller in the countries with well-developed ALE systems and larger in countries with a shorter history of ALE policy. Moreover, Slovenia joined the EU in 2004 during the Lisbon Strategy period (2000–2010), when the ALE was already an important EU policy domain that, under the Europeanisation process and extensive financial ESF support contributed to the adaptation of its national ALE policy to the EU's policy (Mikulec & Jelenc Krašovec, 2016).

As previous research shows, the market orientation of the German ALE centres has been increasing since the 1980s simultaneously with the reduction of their public funding (Klemm, 2019), while the market orientation of the Slovenian ALE centres started increasing in the 1990s after Slovenia became independent (Perme, 2008). With our analysis, we identified the following effects of ALE marketisation on the analysed institutions: in both institutions, the share of the working-age population among the participants increased, cooperation with the private organisations strengthened, competitiveness between organisations and the advertising of ALE programmes increased, project work and funding became more common, and educational provision became more flexible in accordance with the (quasi-) market demand. In DEI, there is also an increase in the share of funds obtained from participants' fees and a decrease in public funding, while SII is largely dependent on EU or public project funding. Therefore, we argue that project funding through EU mechanisms is the key factor in shaping SII's provision, while DEI is changing its provision in line with the participants' demand. Marketisation is, thus, mostly introduced through the (real) market in the case of DEI and through the quasi-market in the case of SII. However, certain effects of ALE marketisation identified in previous research (cf. Helgøy & Homme, 2016) are not present in any of the analysed institutions: a reduction of the provision that has less economic value and a decline in the influence of the public authorities.

Nonetheless, in our research, we were also able to identify forces of resistance to the marketisation of ALE practices. As we have shown, both ALE institutions, although struggling for the funds, covered educational programmes for vulnerable adults with their surpluses or donations. This way, they used what they see as a benefical effect of the marketisation of ALE (institutional financial freedom) to negate what they see as a negative effect of that same process (decrease of accessible non-vocational programmes for vulnerable groups). By doing this, they were pursuing social justice goals and challenging social inequalities rather than following market principles, as well as addressing the educational gap (or Matthew effect) that is leaving behind those (vulnerable) adults who would most need ALE. By securing hope to vulnerable adults through ALE, they challenged neoliberalism as a fatalistic discourse (Tett & Hamilton, 2019), and by acknowledging and addressing adults as learners with different needs, they also challenged the formation of desirable subjectivity, i.e. subject as consumer, which global capitalism fosters (Biesta, 2006).

Finally, the limitations of our research should be identified. We analysed six Slovenian and German ALE policies based on documentation analysis, which allows for a biased choice of specific documents (Bowen, 2009) and different interpretations of their actual impact (Fejes & Olesen, 2016), while the meanings of ALE policies are not necessarily determining future ALE practices (Taylor, 2013). Although we tried to be as objective as possible, the determined predominant models of the policies in line with each of the four analytical categories are still based on our interpretation. Therefore, different argumentations and choices might also be possible in certain parts of the analysis, as there is an interplay of different analytical models' elements in each of the analysed policies. Furthermore, we formulated findings for only two selected ALE institutions—although well-established and highly recognised providers in both countries—which cannot be generalised to other (types of) ALE institutions.

Conclusion

The findings of the study should be seen as an addition to the previous studies researching the marketisation of ALE policies and practices. By analysing national (regional) ALE policies and practices in two continental European countries with conservative welfare regimes, we were able to clearly identify the effects of marketisation shaping ALE policies and practices, although the extent of those effects also varies to a certain degree as emphasised, while signs of resistance to the marketisation of ALE were identified as well. Therefore, future research should keep track of the effects of ALE marketisation, especially by uncovering capitalistic forces shaping ALE into an instrument of the economy, as well as the possibilities of resistance towards greater ALE marketisation.

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