



Why do we need program research?

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How are programs being defined?



Historical-educational definition



- A program is the result of historical, social, economic, and educational developments at a particular time and of specific professional pedagogical aspirations within diverse institutional contexts (*Gieseke/Opelt 2003*).
- Thus, we can say: a program works as a reflection of social processes

Educational-scientific definition



- Programs are conceived macro-/meso-didactically designed artefacts that provide a mixture of learning arrangements, projects, courses, discussion groups, and target group concepts.
- Every institution of adult and further education/continuing education demonstrates its way of offering education and qualification for adults via its program.

A program is the expression of a specific learning concept. It may be determined by contents, subject-related structures, everyday situations or application situations, by commercial interests, by qualification requirements of third parties within the professional context – and it may be a key factor in polyvalent contexts.

Research on programs and planning describes the process and the results of pedagogical concept development from the definition of objectives and contents to the profiling of the focal points of the offers as programs. *(Gieseke 2008)*

- Aspect: Program as expression of planning activities, demands and needs

Methodological definition



As Nolda said “Educational programs are more or less comprehensive documents (they range from book-like brochures to flyers), which primarily contain event details providing information on the respective educational offer planned [...] by a provider and on the modalities of participation.”

(Nolda 2010, p. 246)

- Aspect: Program as a public visible result of educational offers

Why does research on adult and further education have to deal with programs?



Description of the current education market



- As for lifelong learning, in Germany this phase of adult education is not organized by the state, nor is it structured by curricula or school books preparing for state-approved degrees.
- Nevertheless, it is assumed that degrees can be acquired at a later stage.
- Apart from that, the adults themselves are expected to be responsible for their own continuing education. Enterprises and organizations also have to set up programs for their employees so they are able to gain specific competencies.

- Further education is to a high degree oriented by the demands and needs of the population. Thus it is:
 - optional (to a large degree),
 - self-financed (to a large degree, otherwise state-funded or financed by the employer; a large body of institutions provided by organizations of the civil society, like the churches or the unions, are also partially public funded),
 - interest-based,
 - problem-oriented,
 - driven by general education,
 - competence-oriented and
 - it may be value-based.

subject of clarity



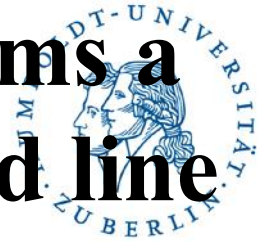
- Because of the open nature of conditions in the continuing education market one often speaks of a lack of clarity (a more innocuous term used is that of heterogeneity). Research on further education can only provide useful findings on adult and continuing education if it focuses on various programs and educational offers by diverse providers and their organizations as well as by private operators.

- In effect, program research is necessary for a better understanding of the continuing education market with its structural developments from the past 50 years and to the present. Research on programs represents the crucial challenge for the systematic investigation of education and competence profiles of diverse institutions and providers. Also for comprehending the processes of their development.
- Interesting aspects here are the different developments in various countries. Comparative analysis is advisable.

- Among public providers there is a relative independence and a relational development of the respective offers depending on topical issues and tasks. Within all providers we can discern provider-related interests that lead to specific interpretations of programs. There is always an impact by educational policy and economic interests on the development of programs.
- From an economic point of view we are dealing with a further education market with only limited state control, the conditions and forces of which have not been fully comprehended.

- In theory, due to the prevalence of market structures the rather uncoordinated growth of continuing education offers can be described as a “rhizome-like” growth that spreads in a root-like manner and not hierarchically.
- This metaphor created by Deleuze fits best and allows for a theoretical approach to these differing structures of developing educational offers.

In what way is research on programs a specifically adult-education oriented line of research?



- Contents, topics, and competence profiles are developed in relative autonomy by planners and other personnel in institutions and organizations (unlike in schools / at the secondary and primary level of education).
- It is only through program structures that an understanding of adult education can be created among the respective providers (at the secondary and primary level of education: certain statutory types of a school with specific contents).

- Program research is a genuinely adult-education oriented approach. It contributes to theory-building, which in turn helps explain where the controlling elements for program development are to be found. At present it reveals, whether market-driven factors or specific social or economic sub-goals take effect in combination with contents/competences. This research is both quantitative and qualitative in character.
- In addition to Deleuze's basic theoretical assumptions, neo-institutional theories which focus on environmental dependencies are also of interest as interdisciplinary reconnection.

Rhizome-like growth and “adjunctive education”



There is a growing body of organizations that offer courses for adult learning as “adjunctive education” (*adult education not being their core task, cf. Gieseke, 2008*)

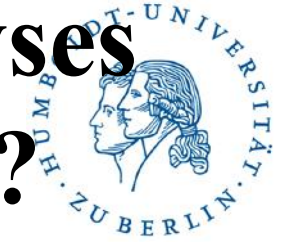
When adopting this perspective, the question arises whether program development increasingly determines organizational structures? (*see also Kuper, 2004*)

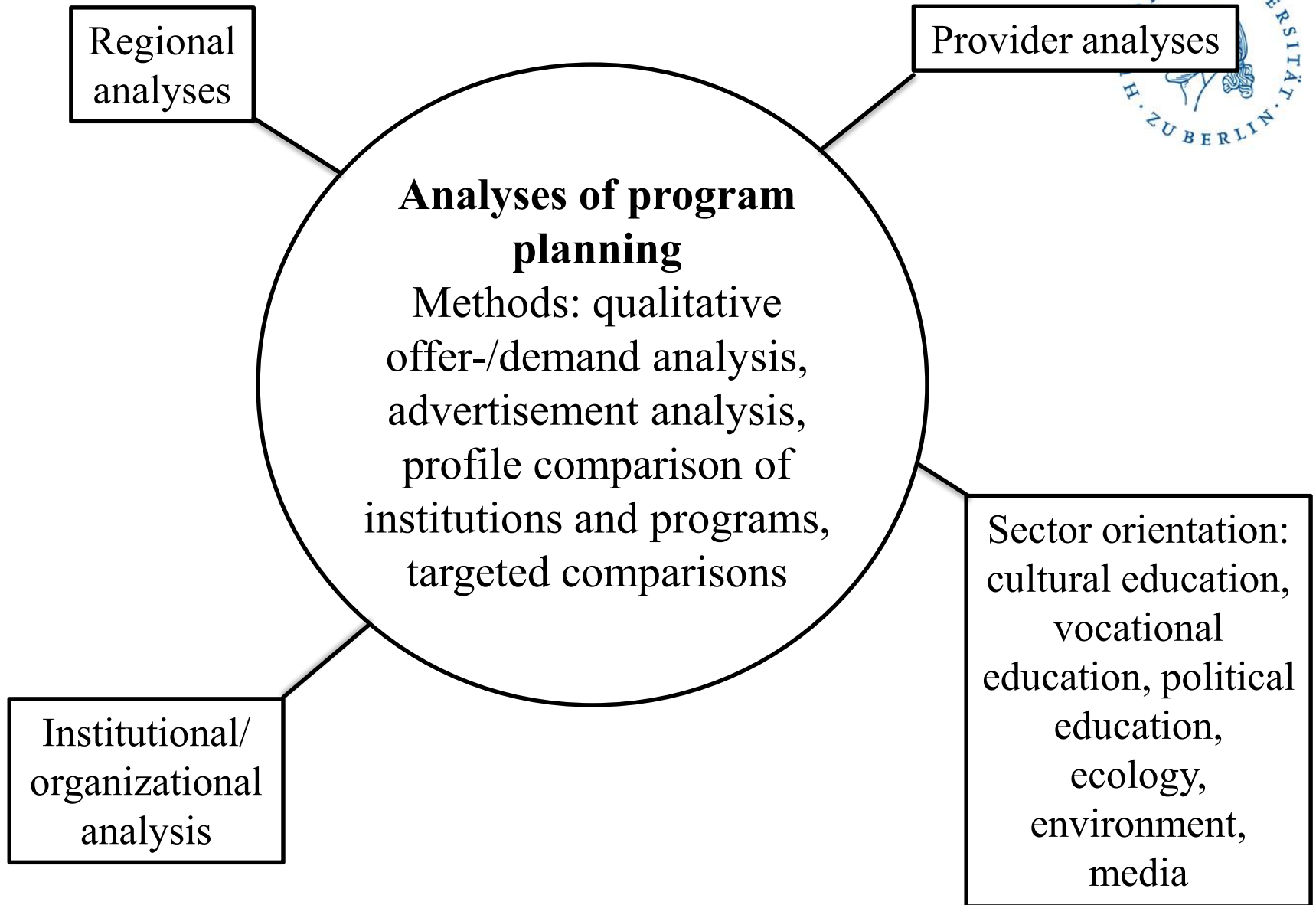
1. Many enterprises, institutions, or organizations supplement their working programs for the provision of products (with qualification and competence offers) without this leading automatically to the emergence of organizational structures (*Käpplinger/Lichte 2012; Maraall 2015*).
2. However, adjunctive education also implies that enterprises and institutions provide special organizations with open offers of education and qualification that primarily serve the providers’ objectives.
3. Compared to research on independent institutions of adult education, program research on adjunctive education has to take more strongly into consideration references to the provider’s responsibilities and has to include these in the analysis.



- At the Humboldt University Berlin, efforts are currently being undertaken to get the existing program archive on continuing education to a technically more advanced level through web- and digital long-term archiving. (*see Georgieva 2015*)

What types of program analyses have been submitted so far?





There are Examples of research diversity in Germany



- **Providing a general overview**
 - of one institution/organization
 - as cross section
 - as longitudinal section
 - e.g. *Gieseke/Opelt 2003: VHS-Dresden*
 - of an entire region
 - as cross section
 - e.g. *Körber et al. 1995: Bremen*
 - as longitudinal section
 - e.g. *Schrader 2011: multilevel model*
 - of various institutions/organizations in the region
 - e.g. *Heuer/Robak 2000: denominational providers*



- **Sector-specific survey (e.g. cultural education)**
 - creating profiles of individual institutions of adult/ continuing education (international, European)
 - directing a specific line of investigation at one sector
 - e.g. *Käpplinger 2007: certificates in adult education offers, von Hippel 2007: media in adult education offers*
 - comparing various institutions/organizations → tension between program and organization
 - e.g. *Gieseke et al. 2003: cultural education compared on the European level, on intercultural offers Fleige/Robak 2012, 2013a, 2013b, see also Robak/Rippien/Heidemann/Pohlmann 2015*
- **Concentrating on one provider, but several organizations, overlapping**
 - e.g. *Rieger-Goertz 2008: gender*

- **Utilization in combination projects**

- in connection with innovations in educational policy

- e.g. *Käpplinger 2013: continuing education vouchers*

- between research paths differing with regard to content (e.g. research on addressees)

- e.g. *Fleige/Reichart 2013: analysis of program structures and topics through statistics and program analysis*

- **On the marketing level**

- website analysis

- e.g. *Nolda 2008: comparison of WEA, ZNANIE, VÖV, DVV*

- cultural initial rituals in the program booklet

- e.g. *Nolda 2008: self-descriptions of institutions*

- **Investigating subject areas at diverse learning venues** → e.g. “*learning regions*”
 - fluid learning venues
 - constant learning venues
 - cross-linked learning venues
 - adjunctive structures
- **Qualitative analyses of contents and competences in the programs**
 - e.g. *S. Kade 1992: education for the elderly*
- **etc.**

Research on program planning action



- Educational science lacks terminology describing its actions and lacks open specific research questions concentrating, also theoretically, both practical, theoretical on the field of adult/continuing education.
- Terms and concepts from the field of psychology or economics are not a proper substitute.
- Due to the open format of programs in adult/continuing education it is necessary to clarify how the respective responsible people (program planners) achieve their results.

- The relation between questions of paradoxes and antinomies and contradictory constellations and questions of adjustment action in the context of networking should be reconsidered (*see Hippel 2011*).
- Concrete case analyses through observation and self-interpretation help yield the first results of planning actions (*Gieseke 2000*).
- Based on our findings, we speak of adjustment actions in the process of program planning.

- Interestingly, the flexibility of planning actions is based on the fact that it manifests itself as adjustment action. Therein in which various interests and new scientific insights, requirements and needs are adapted to diverse people, providers, as well as funders, and especially the executive management.

- Cooperative management between planning and executive bodies in reaction to social and economic conditions in the broadest sense, should be the goal.

- So what have we looked at today?
 1. Definitions
 2. Situation in the education market
 3. Overview of the research in Germany in this area
 4. Planning processes

- Pending issue:

Does this approach represent the process of implemented neo-liberalism through adjustment action and rhizom-like growth in the field of continuing education?



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