

Monika Staab

**International
Teaching and
Learning Settings
in the Academic
Professionalisation
of Adult Education**

An International and Comparative Study

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgement	XI
Abstract	XIII
Zusammenfassung	XV
Sintesi	XVII
List of Figures	XIX
List of Tables	XXI
List of Abbreviations	XXIII
Chapter 1	
Introduction	1
PART I	
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
Chapter 2	
Internationalisation of Higher Education	11
2.1 Internationalisation – A Conceptual Approach	12
2.1.1 Internationality and Interculturality	13
2.1.2 Internationalisation in the Context of Higher Education	15
2.1.3 Internationalisation – Globalisation – Europeanisation	17

2.2	Development Process of Internationalisation in Higher Education	19
2.3	Actors in the Internationalisation of Higher Education	23
2.3.1	Actors at Macro Level	26
2.3.2	Actors at Meso Level	27
2.3.3	Actors at Micro Level	28
2.4	Rationales and Goals of Internationalisation of Higher Education	29
2.4.1	Academic Rationales	30
2.4.2	Political Rationales	31
2.4.3	Economic Rationales	31
2.4.4	Social-cultural Rationales	33
2.5	Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings	34
2.5.1	Cross-border Teaching and Learning Settings	36
2.5.2	International Teaching and Learning Settings at Home	39
2.6	Participation in International Teaching and Learning Settings	40
2.6.1	Obstacles to and Reasons for Participation in International Teaching and Learning Settings	40
2.6.2	Impact of International Teaching and Learning Settings for Students	43
2.7	Internationalisation of Higher Education at the National Level	47
2.7.1	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Germany	48
2.7.2	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Serbia	49
2.7.3	Internationalisation of Higher Education in Italy	51
2.7.4	Internationalisation and Europeanisation of National Higher Education Systems	52
2.8	Heuristic Model of the Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning	53
Chapter 3		
	Professionalisation in the Field of Adult Education	59
3.1	The Triad of Profession, Professionalisation, and Professionalism	60
3.1.1	Profession as a Temporary Phenomenon in Adult Education	61
3.1.2	Professionalisation in Adult Education	62
3.1.3	Professionalism and Professional Action in Adult Education	64
3.2	Adult Education as an Occupational Field	69
3.2.1	Development of the Occupational Field in Germany, Serbia, and Italy	70
3.2.2	Structures of the Occupational Field in Germany, Serbia, and Italy	74
3.3	Academic Professionalisation in Adult Education	79
3.3.1	Academic Professionalisation as a Subject of Research	80
3.3.2	Degree Programmes in Adult Education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy	82
3.3.3	Development of Professionalism in Studies in Adult Education	87
3.4	Heuristic Model of the Development of Professionalism in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings in Master's Programmes in Adult Education	94

PART II
RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter 4

Qualitative, International, and Comparative Study in Adult Education	101
4.1 International and Comparative Research in Adult Education	101
4.1.1 International and Comparative Perspectives of the Study	102
4.1.2 Reasons for an International and Comparative Study	105
4.2 Research Fields and Research Contexts	106
4.2.1 Research Fields	106
4.2.2 Research Contexts	113
4.3 Data Collection	116
4.3.1 Focus Group Interviews	117
4.3.2 Guided Interviews	121
4.4 Data Analysis	126
4.4.1 Data Analysis within the Framework of the Content- structuring Qualitative Content Analysis	126
4.4.2 Analysis within the Framework of the Three-stage International Comparative Research Model	130
4.5 Reflection on the Research Process	131

PART III
INTERNATIONAL TEACHING AND LEARNING SETTINGS IN MASTER'S
PROGRAMMES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Chapter 5

Provision of International Teaching and Learning Settings in Master's Programmes in Adult Education	137
5.1 Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings	138
5.1.1 Forms of Cross-border Teaching and Learning Settings	138
5.1.2 Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings at Home	151
5.1.3 Interim Summary	162
5.2 Framework Conditions of International Teaching and Learning Settings	172
5.2.1 Political-strategic Framework Conditions	172
5.2.2 Organisational Framework Conditions	176
5.2.3 Framework Conditions of the Academic Unit	179
5.2.4 Cooperation of the Academic Unit	183
5.2.5 Subjective Factors of the Students	187
5.2.6 Interim Summary	189
5.3 Goals of International Teaching and Learning Settings	198
5.3.1 Promotion of Higher Education	199
5.3.2 Promotion of Social Interaction in Society	203

5.3.3 Promotion of Students' Qualification in the Field of Adult Education	206
5.3.4 Promotion of Students' Personal Development	208
5.3.5 Promotion of Students' Foreign Language Skills	210
5.3.6 Interim Summary	210
5.4 Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning in Master's Programmes in Adult Education	218
Chapter 6	
Relevance of International Teaching and Learning Settings for the Development of Professionalism in Adult Education	227
6.1 Development of Professionalism in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings	228
6.1.1 Acquisition of Academic Knowledge	228
6.1.2 Acquisition of Knowledge Relevant to Pedagogical Practice	239
6.1.3 Development of Reflective Skills	245
6.1.4 Development of a Professional Self-concept	247
6.1.5 Personal Development	252
6.1.6 Development of Foreign Language Skills	262
6.1.7 Interim Summary	264
6.2 Supporting Factors of International Teaching and Learning Settings for the Development of Professionalism in Master's Programmes in Adult Education	280
PART IV	
CONCLUSION	
Chapter 7	
Summary and Outlook	291
7.1 Internationalisation of Master's Programmes in Adult Education – between Internationalisation of Higher Education and Internationalisation of Adult Education	292
7.2 Professionalism Development and Experiences of Diversity in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings	296
7.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education during COVID-19	298
References	301

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Abstract

Academic education is seen as an important place for the development of professionalism of (future) adult educators. Since adult education academia, research, and practice is closely intertwined with global and international developments, there is a need for adult education programmes to prepare their students for these interconnections. This can be examined in the context of international teaching and learning settings that integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning and are part of the internationalisation efforts of higher education. The focus of this international and comparative study is on how international teaching and learning settings contribute to the academic professionalisation in adult education in three master's programmes with a focus on adult education at the University of Würzburg (Germany), University of Belgrade (Serbia) and University of Florence (Italy).

International teaching and learning settings are examined on the structural and individual level of academic professionalisation. The aim is to explore the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes on the one hand, and to analyse the contribution of international teaching and learning settings to the development of students' professionalism on the other. For this purpose, three focus group interviews with programme heads, (academic) staff, and students as well as 22 guided interviews with graduates of the three master's programmes at the three university locations are collected and analysed in an international and comparative study design.

The study reveals similarities and differences in the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings between the three master's programmes. Overarching contexts that guide the internationali-

sation of the master's programmes become apparent (e.g. education and higher education policy, internationalisation of the university, programme structure). The triangulation of the interview data of the graduates shows that the international environment, the structural arrangement, and the practical relevance of the international teaching and learning settings support the development of the graduates' professionalism. The results underline the relevance of international teaching and learning settings for the development of professionalism in adult education and point to the requirement for a systematic and comprehensive internationalisation of adult education programmes.

Zusammenfassung

Die akademische Ausbildung wird als ein wichtiger Ort für die Professionalitätsentwicklung von (zukünftigen) Erwachsenenbildner*innen angesehen. Da Wissenschaft, Forschung und Praxis der Erwachsenenbildung eng mit globalen und internationalen Entwicklungen verflochten sind, lässt sich an Studiengänge der Erwachsenenbildung der Bedarf herantragen, ihre Studierenden auf diese Verflechtungen vorzubereiten. Dies kann im Kontext internationaler Lehr- und Lernsettings untersucht werden, die internationale, interkulturelle oder globale Perspektiven in Lehre und Lernen integrieren und Teil der Internationalisierungsbemühungen der Hochschulbildung sind. Im Fokus dieser internationalen und vergleichenden Studie steht die Frage, wie internationale Lehr- und Lernsettings zur akademischen Professionalisierung in der Erwachsenenbildung in drei Masterstudiengängen mit Schwerpunkt Erwachsenenbildung an der Universität Würzburg (Deutschland), der Universität Belgrad (Serbien) und der Universität Florenz (Italien) beitragen.

Es werden internationale Lehr- und Lernsettings auf der strukturellen und der individuellen Ebene akademischer Professionalisierung untersucht. Ziel ist die Eruierung der Bereitstellung von internationalen Lehr- und Lernsettings in den Masterstudiengängen einerseits, sowie die Analyse des Beitrags internationaler Lehr- und Lernsettings zur Professionalitätsentwicklung von Studierenden andererseits. Hierzu werden drei Fokusgruppeninterviews mit Studiengangsleitenden, (akademischem) Personal und Studierenden sowie 22 Leitfadenterviews mit Absolvent*innen an den drei Hochschulstandorten erhoben und in einem internationalen und vergleichenden Studiendesign analysiert.

Die Studie zeigt Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede in den Formen, Rahmenbedingungen und Zielen internationaler Lehr- und Lernsettings zwischen den drei Masterstudiengängen auf. Es werden übergreifende Kontexte erkennbar, die die Internationalisierung der Masterstudiengänge leiten (z.B. Bildungs- und Hochschulpolitik, Internationalisierung der Universität, Programmstruktur). Die Triangulation der Interviewdaten der Absolvent*innen zeigt, dass das internationale Umfeld, das strukturelle Arrangement und der Praxisbezug der internationalen Lehr- und Lernsettings die ProfessionalitätSENTWICKLUNG der Absolvent*innen unterstützen. Die Ergebnisse unterstreichen die Relevanz internationaler Lehr- und Lernsettings für die ProfessionalitätSENTWICKLUNG in der Erwachsenenbildung und verweisen auf die Anforderung an eine systematische und umfassende Internationalisierung von Studiengängen der Erwachsenenbildung.

Sintesi

L'educazione accademica è considerata un luogo importante per lo sviluppo della professionalità dei (futuri) educatori degli adulti. Poiché il mondo accademico, la ricerca e la pratica dell'educazione degli adulti sono strettamente interconnessi con gli sviluppi globali e internazionali, è necessario che i programmi di educazione degli adulti preparino i loro studenti a queste interconnessioni. Questo può essere esaminato nei contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento che integrano prospettive internazionali, interculturali o globali nell'insegnamento e nell'apprendimento e fanno parte dell'impegno di internazionalizzazione dell'istruzione superiore. Questo studio internazionale e comparativo si concentra sul modo in cui i contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento contribuiscono alla professionalizzazione accademica nell'educazione degli adulti in tre programmi di master incentrati sull'educazione degli adulti presso l'Università di Würzburg (Germania), l'Università di Belgrado (Serbia) e l'Università di Firenze (Italia).

I contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento sono esaminati a livello strutturale e individuale della professionalizzazione accademica. L'obiettivo è esplorare l'offerta di contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento nei programmi di master, da un lato, e analizzare il contributo dei contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento allo sviluppo della professionalità degli studenti, dall'altro. A tal fine, sono state raccolte e analizzate tre focus group con responsabili di programma, personale (accademico) e studenti, nonché 22 interviste guidate a laureati nelle tre sedi universitarie, secondo un disegno di studio internazionale e comparativo.

Lo studio rivela somiglianze e differenze nelle forme, nelle condizioni quadro e negli obiettivi dei contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento tra i tre programmi di master. I contesti generali che guidano l'internazionalizzazione dei programmi di master diventano evidenti (ad esempio, la politica dell'istruzione e dell'istruzione superiore, l'internazionalizzazione dell'università, la struttura del programma). La triangolazione dei dati delle interviste con i laureati mostra che l'ambiente internazionale, l'assetto strutturale e la rilevanza pratica dei contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento sostengono lo sviluppo della professionalità dei laureati. I risultati sottolineano l'importanza dei contesti internazionali di insegnamento e apprendimento per lo sviluppo della professionalità nell'educazione degli adulti e indicano la necessità di un'internazionalizzazione sistematica e completa dei programmi di educazione degli adulti.

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Research questions of the study	5
Figure 2 – Cohesion-oriented understanding of interculturality	15
Figure 3 – Globalisation, internationalisation, and Europeanisation in higher education	19
Figure 4 – Heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning	54
Figure 5 – Dimensions of professionalisation in adult education	62
Figure 6 – Dimensions of academic professionalisation in adult education	80
Figure 7 – Influencing factors on the development of students’ professionalism in academic education	81
Figure 8 – Development of professionalism in degree programmes in adult education	95
Figure 9 – Heuristic model of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master’s programmes	96
Figure 10 – Linking of the international and comparative perspectives with the research questions	103
Figure 11 – Research fields of the study	106
Figure 12 – Overview of the programme structure of the Educational Science master’s programme at the University of Würzburg	108
Figure 13 – Overview of the programme structure of the Andragogy master’s programme at the University of Belgrade	110
Figure 14 – Overview of the programme structure of the Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences master’s programme at the University of Florence	111

Figure 15 – Allocation of the survey methods to the level of academic professionalisation	117
Figure 16 – Content-structuring qualitative content analysis process	127
Figure 17 – Application of different analytical methods related to the research questions	129
Figure 18 – Empirical model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning in adult education master’s programmes	220
Figure 19 – Development of professionalism in graduates in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master’s programmes	281
Figure 20 – Empirical model of the supporting factors of international teaching and learning settings for the development of professionalism in adult education master’s programmes	283

List of Tables

Table 1 – Structure of the specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education	109
Table 2 – Courses offered for the specialisation in Adult Education in the Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences master’s programme, 2019-20	112
Table 3 – Sample of the focus group interviews	120
Table 4 – Sample of the guided interviews at a glance	123
Table 5 – Detailed information on the sample of the guided interviews	125

List of Abbreviations

COMPALL	Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning
CPIA	Provincial Centres for Adult Education (Centri Provinciali per l'Istruzione degli Adulti)
CTP	Permanent Territorial Centres for Adult Education (Centri Territoriali Permanenti)
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst)
DZHW	Centre for Higher Education and Science Research (Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ESRALE	European Study and Research in Adult Learning and Education
EUA	European University Association
GSiK	Global Systems and Intercultural Competence (Globale Systeme und Interkulturelle Kompetenz)
HRK	German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz)

IAU	International Association of Universities
INTALL	International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Introduction

Adult education regards itself as being closely intertwined with global and international developments in society, such as climate change, digitalisation, and migration (Egetenmeyer 2017, 2022; Schmidt-Lauff and Dust 2020)¹. This means that phenomena specific to adult education can only be understood in international contexts (Egetenmeyer 2017, 129). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a clearer understanding of how global developments can influence various social spheres and of the impact these developments can have on adult education. For instance, global restrictions on in-person meetings necessitated a rapid, comprehensive switch to digital teaching and learning formats and digital networking strategies in adult education practice. Such developments imposed new demands and challenges on adult education providers, staff, and participants². Consequently, in order to be able to comprehend developments and identify (future) possibilities for shaping them, adult education in academia, research, and

¹ The present work is based on a broad understanding of education and adult education, which interprets 'adult education' as a generic term for the field of general adult education as well as continuing vocational education. This interpretation also encompasses the term 'andragogy', as used in Serbian discourse. Andragogy can be understood as the science of the education and learning of adults. It refers to adult education as an academic discipline distinct from practice (Savičević 1999; Reischmann 2008a).

² The example of adult education centres in Georgia illustrates how the COVID-19 pandemic created new challenges and demands for adult education organisations. This example also shows how adult education centres found creative and pragmatic solutions to continue their activities in spite of the restrictions (Stein, Staab, and Egetenmeyer 2021).

practice must be understood as being embedded in larger global and international contexts (Egetenmeyer 2017, 129). International developments can constitute «learning objects, reflection foil, framework conditions, environment to be shaped and much more» (Egetenmeyer 2022, 27)³. However, we must also take into account the historical developments of the respective national and regional contexts, based on the interconnectedness of adult education with global and international social developments (Nuissl 2010b, 128).

At the same time, there is a growing need to understand adult education in an increasingly multidimensional way, using cultural theoretical approaches detached from territorial thinking, as is the case in the concept of Transnational Adult Education (Schreiber-Barsch 2020). A transnational perspective views adult education multidimensionally and across borders, while the distinction between local, national, international (interstate), supranational (above the state level), and global (worldwide) enables a contextualisation of adult education. In this context, international comparative research approaches help researchers avoid being confined to a one-dimensional approach and to identify transnational similarities between local, national, and global contexts, which, according to Egetenmeyer and Lechner (2016, 31), can be considered to be ‘multidimensional interspaces’.

With the increasing interconnection of different social contexts, those working in adult education have to interact in a field of practice characterised by heterogeneity and diversity. The internationalisation of society (e.g. through refugee movements and migration) contributes to an increasingly diverse target group, which adult educators have to address (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130). Furthermore, international and European education policies are increasingly influencing structures and measures at national and local level (Egetenmeyer 2017, 129-30). This can result in new demands and challenges in the occupational field. This is evident, for example, in increased project structures and project funds, and an orientation towards quality management standards. In addition, an international continuing education market is emerging that creates new employment opportunities (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130-31). In other words, different developments can be identified that point to increasing internationalisation in adult education, which is reflected in the «growing interconnectedness, cooperation and mutual influence beyond national and cultural borders» (Schmidt-Lauff and Egetenmeyer 2015, 272). Alongside these developments, questions of the qualification, education, and training of (future) adult educators come to the fore: How can adult educators be prepared for this increasingly globally and internationally interconnected field? What knowledge and skills are required? How should initial and further training be designed in order to ensure that adult educators are able to deal appropriately with the increasing heterogeneity and diversity in the field?

Such questions, concerning the qualification and training of adult educators, are discussed in the discourse on professionalisation in adult education.

³ Unless otherwise stated, translations are by the author.

Against the backdrop of the heterogeneous occupational field in particular, which varies not only in fields of activities and tasks, but also in access to the field at regional, national, and international level (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008; Nuissl 2010b), it has become crucial to reflect on (professional) activity in adult education. Academic education is believed to play an important role in this context. Studying adult education can lay the foundation for the development of professionalism in the field as it enables the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 2014a; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). In this context, the term ‘academic professionalisation’ is used to refer to the process of developing professionalism in academic education and academic continuing education. In addition to this individual level, it is possible to look at the structural level of academic professionalisation, which refers to the academic qualifications on offer (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 2014b). The global and international interconnectedness of adult education would appear to make a critical examination of educational processes in academic adult education necessary. This makes it possible for us to reflect on academic qualification offers in view of changing requirements and challenges and point out areas for further development. This, in turn, can ensure that academic education is tailored to the needs of the academic and practice field in adult education and addresses global, international, and transnational aspects of adult education.

Like adult education, the European higher education landscape is increasingly intertwined with global and international developments. The internationalisation of higher education has become a central political, economic, social, and academic issue over the past thirty years (Teichler 2018; de Wit 2019; Rumbley et al. 2022). A variety of rationales and goals as well as approaches, strategies, and programmes shape the internationalisation of higher education (J. Knight 2008; J. Knight and de Wit 2018). In academic education, the developments are evident in a variety of international teaching and learning settings that integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning. According to Ludwig (2012), teaching and learning settings can be understood as intentionally created situations or frameworks that have a mediating intention, a didactic arrangement, and eventually enable learning. International teaching and learning settings can be divided into cross-border formats (e.g. semester abroad, seasonal school) and activities at the home university (e.g. presence of international guest lecturers and exchange students), in the sense of internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015). Numerous student and graduate surveys at national and international level (e.g. Egetenmeyer 2012; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Amendola and Restaino 2017; Özişik 2017; European Commission 2019; INTALL 2021) reinforce the internationalisation efforts of higher education institutions by pointing to their positive impact on students’ personal, linguistic, academic, and career development.

With reference to empirical studies and academic contributions in the field of adult education, a positive correlation can be assumed between participation in international teaching and learning settings in adult education degree pro-

grammes and the development of professionalism among students (Egetenmeyer and Lattke 2009; Egetenmeyer 2012; COMPALL 2018; Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; Staab et al. 2020; INTALL 2021). However, some of these studies have a more evaluative function with regard to individual international teaching and learning settings. In addition, there are few academic contributions that examine the curricular structures of degree programmes in adult education at the national level and provide information on the integration of international and transnational topics into teaching and learning (Lattke 2007; Pejatović 2010; Walber and Lobe 2018). It should be noted that the data is occasionally lacking in topicality. Other academic contributions provide an international comparative perspective on degree programmes and curricular structures, but no reference is made to international or transnational aspects in the programmes (Lattke 2012; Boffo et al. 2016; Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016; Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017). There is no comprehensive empirical study focusing on the variety of international teaching and learning settings in adult education programmes. There is a shortage of empirical studies on the international orientation of adult education programmes and their contribution to the development of students' professionalism that go beyond isolated single formats. This is despite the previously highlighted need for (future) adult educators who (will) increasingly have to operate in a globally and internationally intertwined adult education field.

In view of the internationalisation of adult education and higher education, this international and comparative study is dedicated to examining the contribution of international teaching and learning settings to academic professionalisation in adult education in Europe. The study takes up the research desideratum that has been outlined and focuses on the variety of international teaching and learning settings in adult education programmes. The research fields cover a total of three master's programmes with a focus on adult education: one at the University of Würzburg (Germany), one at the University of Belgrade (Serbia), and one at the University of Florence (Italy). These programmes have a reputation for being internationally oriented. The international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes are focused on both the structural level and the individual level of academic professionalisation in adult education. The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes is examined at the structural level, while the relevance of international teaching and learning settings in terms of the development of professionalism of students is examined at the individual level. The study addresses the following research questions along both levels of academic professionalisation presented in Fig. 1:

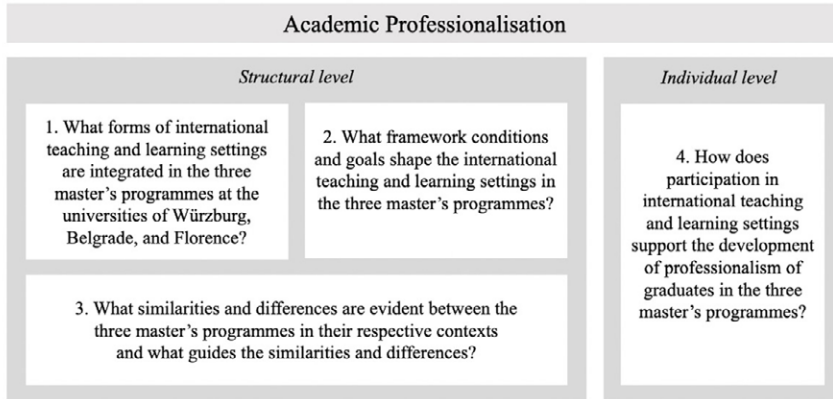


Figure 1 – Research questions of the study. Source: own representation.

The *first research question* focuses on the forms of international teaching and learning settings in the three selected master's programmes in adult education. Conducting focus group interviews with persons (programme heads, [academic] staff, and students) involved in the master's programmes makes it possible to obtain an overview of the different forms of international teaching and learning settings that are integrated in the master's programmes. The focus group interviews also provide an opportunity to explore the framework conditions and goals of international teaching and learning settings, which are the focus of the *second research question*. This can provide in-depth insights into the internationalisation of the three master's programmes. The *third research question* enables a comparative perspective on the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings identified in the master's programmes. The question explores the similarities and differences between the three selected master's programmes in adult education and the reasons for these similarities and differences. The international comparative research approach provides the opportunity to take different perspectives on the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes and to identify contextual influences by comparing the research fields. This makes it possible to draw conclusions about pan-European and transnational developments (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 141-42), which are discussed and interpreted against the background of the increased internationalisation of adult education and the internationalisation of higher education. Likewise, the comparison contributes to an improved understanding of one's own local and national contexts (Slowey 2016, 10).

The *fourth research question* focuses on the individual level of academic professionalisation. It examines how the international teaching and learning settings can support the development of professionalism of (former) students of the master's programmes. In guided interviews, graduates of the three master's programmes reflect on the totality of their international experiences during their studies. This enables an analysis of the development of professionalism in

the context of different international teaching and learning settings. These results can be discussed and interpreted with reference to the discourse on professionalisation in adult education. By focusing on the structural factors of the development of graduates' professionalism (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018), supporting factors in the international teaching and learning settings can be identified. These factors point to the role that international teaching and learning settings can play in the development of students' professionalism in adult education programmes.

The underlying research questions are addressed in four parts. **Part I** provides the theoretical framework for the research questions by reviewing relevant academic discourse and linking them to the subsequent empirical study. In order to understand how internationalisation is shaped in the master's programmes (research questions 1 to 3), the various developments, actors, rationales, and goals of the internationalisation of higher education are outlined and different forms of international teaching and learning settings are presented (Chap. 2). An insight into the internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy enables the research-relevant contexts of the study to be mapped. The theoretical considerations are then compiled into a heuristic model for investigating the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three selected master's programmes in adult education.

With regard to the development of professionalism of graduates in the master's programmes in adult education (research question 4), a theoretical examination of the discourse on professionalisation in adult education is required (Chap. 3). In this context, the focus is mainly on the German-speaking discourse on professionalisation in adult education. First, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by professionalism and (academic) professionalisation in adult education. It can be theoretically examined how the development of professionalism is evolving in the context of degree programmes in adult education. Insights into the professionalisation of adult education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy make it possible to analyse the research question in the respective contexts. A second heuristic model, which is derived from the theoretical assumptions, forms the basis for investigating the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes.

Following the theoretical framework, **Part II** presents the research design of this qualitative, international, and comparative research study (Chap. 4). This contributes to the «intersubjective comprehensibility» (Steinke 2017, 324) of the research process. The study is oriented towards the international comparative research approach developed by Egetenmeyer (2016c, 2020). In this context, it is important to take a closer look at the research fields and the relevant research contexts. Since the study focuses on the structural as well as individual level of academic professionalisation, the data collection follows a two-stage procedure. The structural level is examined on the basis of focus group interviews with people involved in the master's programme (programme heads, [academic] staff, and students). For examining the individual level, guided interviews with graduates of the master's programmes were determined as a suitable survey method. The

analysis of the collected data is based on the content-structuring qualitative content analysis outlined by Kuckartz (2018). The analysis process is carried out at specific levels and across levels according to the underlying research questions. Finally, the research process is critically analysed, and limitations are identified.

Part III of the thesis analyses and discusses the results of the study. It first examines the structural level of academic professionalisation, i.e. the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes (Chap. 5). For this purpose, the forms of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes are analysed. In this step, the guided interviews with the graduates can reveal complementary perspectives on the forms of international teaching and learning settings integrated in the master's programmes. Triangulating the data (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b), provides a multi-perspective view of the forms of international teaching and learning settings. There then follows an examination of the framework conditions and goals of the international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes at the structural level. The identified forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings are analysed and interpreted from an international comparative perspective. To ensure a systematic comparison of the research fields, the comparison is oriented towards the three-stage model of international comparative research developed by Egetenmeyer (2020). The comparative perspective allows the identification of overarching contexts that guide the internationalisation of teaching and learning in the master's programmes.

Subsequently, the individual level of academic professionalisation is analysed (Chap. 6) by examining the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings. Focusing on the structural factors of the development of professionalism reveals supporting structures in the international teaching and learning settings. These demonstrate how the international teaching and learning settings can support the development of professionalism in adult education programmes.

Part IV, which includes the conclusion and outlook (Chap. 7), summarises and discusses the findings at the structural and individual level of academic professionalisation and interprets them with reference to the academic discourse. Connecting both levels (Flick 2011b, 2018) can reveal additional perspectives on the underlying research desiderata. Further desiderata and areas for further development are derived from the final considerations. Some concluding thoughts are formulated against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a far-reaching influence on many areas of life, including the fields of adult education and higher education.

PART I

Theoretical Framework

Internationalisation of Higher Education

As previously stated, the internationalisation of higher education has become a central political, social, and academic concern over the past three decades. In academia, this is reflected in the high volume of publications critically addressing the internationalisation of higher education and higher education institutions (e.g. J. Knight 2008; Mihut, Altbach, and de Wit 2017; Teichler 2017; de Wit 2019; Deardorff et al. 2022). At both the national and European level, a variety of education policy documents express the importance and necessity of the internationalisation of higher education. In this context, different meanings and functions are attributed to the internationalisation of higher education. On the one hand, internationalisation is emphasised as a suitable means of meeting current demands on the labour market and social challenges, such as the shortage of highly qualified workers, polarised social structures, and the prevailing mistrust in democratic structures. On the other hand, internationalisation is associated with academic excellence and the enhancement of quality and international reputation in the European Higher Education Area (Crăciun 2022; Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022). In the process of internationalisation, individual higher education institutions act as a driving force of developments. In a globalised knowledge society, they act in a local and national context (Kovács and Tarrósy 2017) and are significantly involved in the introduction and implementation of various programmes and measures at the organisational level. In addition to student mobility abroad, which is traditionally associated with the internationalisation of higher education, there are also increasing efforts to in-

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ternationalise the curriculum (Leask 2015) and internationalise at home (Beelen and Jones 2015). These efforts are becoming increasingly relevant, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Brewer and Leask 2022; Rumbley et al. 2022). In this way, international and intercultural experiences in higher education are no longer the reserve of a small, elite group of internationally mobile students, but accessible to all students, regardless of their mobility.

The following chapters provide insights into the internationalisation of higher education in the European area in order to understand how internationalisation is shaped in degree programmes in adult education. A differentiated understanding of the research area requires a theoretical examination of the concept of internationalisation and related terminology (Chap. 2.1). Looking at the developments of the past thirty years (Chap. 2.2), it is possible to understand the significance and function of internationalisation in higher education in general. The process of internationalisation can only be understood if the actors (Chap. 2.3) as well as the rationales and goals (Chap. 2.4) behind the internationalisation of higher education are examined in more detail. This reveals the complex interplay of actors, rationales, and goals, resulting in different forms of international teaching and learning settings in higher education (Chap. 2.6). Using different empirical studies in the research field can provide insights into student participation in international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 2.7) and highlight obstacles to and reasons for participation in international teaching and learning settings as well as the expected impact. In order to define the contexts of the study, it is necessary to address the internationalisation of higher education at the national level (Chap. 2.8). This enables an overview of different national developments and internationalisation strategies in Germany, Serbia, and Italy. Finally, the theoretical considerations are transferred into a heuristic model which outlines a framework for the internationalisation of teaching and learning in degree programmes (Chap. 2.9). The heuristic model forms the basis for researching academic professionalisation on the structural level (Research Question 1 to 3).

The following sections do not discuss the internationalisation of higher education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the available empirical data mainly relates to the period before the pandemic, the theoretical focus is on the internationalisation of higher education prior to the pandemic. A separate chapter at the end of this thesis is devoted to the internationalisation of higher education in the context of COVID-19 (Chap. 7.3).

2.1 Internationalisation – A Conceptual Approach

In academic and higher education policy discourse, as well as in everyday language usage, there is a blurred and inconsistent understanding of internationalisation in the context of the internationalisation of higher education. This needs to be clarified to address the research questions. To this end, it is necessary to define the concepts of ‘internationality’ and ‘interculturality’ based on current international and global developments (Chap. 2.1.1). Consequently, inter-

nationalisation can be defined in more detail in the context of higher education (Chap. 2.1.2) and examined in distinction to the phenomena of globalisation and Europeanisation (Chap. 2.1.3). In addition to the academic discourse on higher education, the theoretical discussion draws on central globalisation and internationalisation theories as well as cultural theory approaches. Reference is also made to the adult education discourse where appropriate.

2.1.1 Internationality and Interculturality

The word ‘international’ can be understood in both a narrow and a broad sense. According to a narrow understanding, international means between two or more states. International is a territorial concept, based on the organisation of nation states as the fundamental organisational units of modernity. From the perspective of cultural theory, nation states are not natural, but socially constructed, political entities (Schreiber-Barsch 2020, 11), or state geographies (Welsch 2020, 11). Thus, ‘international’ is distinct from the terms ‘national’ (nation-state), ‘supranational’ (above the state level), ‘transnational’ (below the state level), and ‘global’ (worldwide), which are also conceived in territorial terms. Such a territorially conceived examination of education and higher education becomes clear in international (comparative) research approaches in country studies or country comparisons in which two or more countries (nation states) are chosen as the unit of analysis (Adick 2005; Reischmann 2008b). A large number of such country comparisons can be identified in higher education research. These deal with national higher education systems from a quantitative-structural point of view by comparing different features of national higher education systems (Teichler 2020).

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, in its broader meaning, the term «international» refers not only to the state level, but also describes trade or travel between two or more countries; people, organisations, companies from another country; issues and concerns common to, affecting, or shared by several countries; something that transcends national borders (Oxford English Dictionary 2022). In adult education, internationality means, according to Nuissl, «that a subject or issue is addressed, developed or influenced beyond national boundaries» (2010a, 162). Therefore, the term international also includes supranational (above the state level) and transnational (below the state level) perspectives (Egetenmeyer 2022). Internationality refers not only to the nation-state level, but also to issues and concerns emanating from non-state actors in two or more countries. In the context of higher education, we often talk about international students or the international mobility of individuals, with the term here being used in its broader sense. In the present study, internationality is used in this broad sense. At the same time, the term is also to be understood in distinction to the term global in the sense of worldwide, world-encompassing, or universal.

The fact that education and higher education has been predominantly viewed from national perspectives in the past can be explained by the fact that, in the past, education and research usually organised within the context of the nation

state (Adick 2005, 244). Public education systems developed in the process of the constitution of nation states and were primarily organised on a nation-state basis. The development of public education systems was intended to contribute to cultural homogenisation and to the formation of a nation, in the sense of national societies (Adick 2005, 244). This was accompanied by the idea of Herder (1967) that every nation has a fixed culture. According to Herder's spherical model, cultures are understood as homogeneous spheres that separate themselves from other cultures. Reference is also made to so-called «container cultures», which can be clearly demarcated from other cultures (Moosmüller 2009, 26). In view of today's social structures, however, such an understanding of culture is no longer justifiable. In modern societies, cultural differences can be identified vertically along lifestyles within a certain region, group, or scene (e.g. in a working-class neighbourhood) as well as horizontally between different groups or orientations (e.g. between different genders) (Welsch 2020, 5-6). The German philosopher Welsch (2020, 6) speaks of a hybridisation of cultures in the course of the increasing globalisation and expansion of capitalism, which leads to the blurring of the contours of one's own and foreign cultures¹. Global networking, the worldwide exchange of information through the spread of the internet, and the worldwide mobility of people and goods are some of the factors that have contributed to this development.

It becomes clear that it is no longer possible to speak of 'one' German or Italian culture – although in everyday language, we often still speak of cultures as territorially limited societies. In contrast, according to Rathje (2006), culture can be described as the collectively shared knowledge, the common, the familiar, that creates cohesion within a culture through a sense of normality. This normality ultimately includes a knowledge of differences. At the same time, interculturality is «characterised by unfamiliarity, or by the foreignness of differences» (Rathje 2006, 17). Intercultural competence can consequently «be seen as the ability to transform the 'fleeting' intercultural characterised by foreignness into culture by generating cohesion through normality» (Rathje 2006, 17). According to this cohesion-oriented understanding of interculturality (Fig. 2), there is no need for a third space in which cultures are negotiated and mixed. This understanding is prevalent in postcolonial discourse, such as in the case of Bhabha (2004). On the other hand, culture itself can be re-produced (i.e. changed or newly produced) in intercultural interaction, whereby individuals do not only possess one culture. Individuals can have a so-called 'multiple identity'. According to Bolten (2020, 100) this multiple cultural belonging leads to moments of interculturality (foreignness/strangeness) as well as culturality (familiarity/normality) being experienced in a relationship or interaction between two people.

¹ According to Beck (2007) and Giddens (1991), globalisation describes a multidimensional process that contributes to the increased global interconnectedness of economic, political, cultural, and technological spheres. For further details, see Chap. 2.1.3.

In addition to Rathje's understanding of interculturality, other understandings of culture and interculturality can be found, which can represent a more structural or process-oriented definition of interculturality, multiculturalism, and transculturality (Bolten 2020, 97). In contrast to interculturality, the concept of transculturality, which is shaped by Welsch (2010, 2020) in the German-speaking world, focuses on the increased mixing and interpenetration of cultures. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, emphasises the coexistence of cultural groups (Bolten 2020, 97). However, multiculturalism is accused of perpetuating the homogenisation of cultures (Rathje 2009).

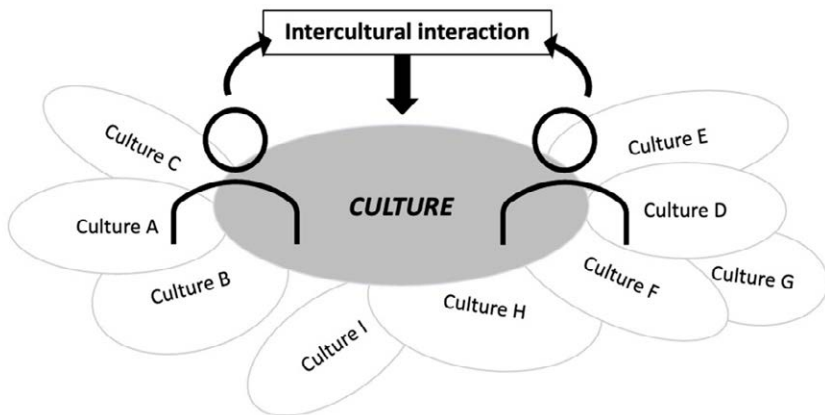


Figure 2 – Cohesion-oriented understanding of interculturality. Source: own representation based on Rathje (2006, 18).

In this paper, culture and interculturality are understood according to the cohesion approach of Rathje (2006). Culture represents an intersubjectively shared understanding or knowledge that is not static but is produced, adapted, or supplemented in interaction with others through the production of normality. In this way, individuals can not only perceive and identify themselves with collective attributions in society, but also oppose them and create new cultures and identities.

2.1.2 Internationalisation in the Context of Higher Education

The term 'internationalisation' can be used to describe the process of increasing internationality. According to the cultural scientist Otten, it «refers in general to social, political, economic and cultural processes of change that extend beyond the national level of reference and are reflected differently in institutional structures and processes in different societies and cultures» (2006, 7). As a concept and strategy in the context of higher education, internationalisation originates from a predominantly Western, Anglo-Saxon discourse (de Wit 2019, 10). Although there is no uniform understanding of internationalisation

in academic discourse, however, the definition of the Canadian higher education researcher Knight is widely accepted (e.g. Beelen and Jones 2015; Boffo and Gioli 2017; Teichler 2017; Varghese 2017).

Internationalization at the national/sector/institutional levels is the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national levels: (J. Knight 2008, 21).

According to J. Knight (2004, 2008), internationalisation is understood as the ongoing process of integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the strategic orientation, different tasks², and specific programmes in higher education at the organisational and national level. By differentiating between international, intercultural, or global perspectives, Knight attempts to cover the depth and breadth of internationalisation in her definition (J. Knight 2008, 22). By «international», Knight refers to the relationship between and among individual nations, cultures, and countries, while by «intercultural», she refers to the diversity of cultures within a country, a society, or a higher education institution (J. Knight 2008, 21-22). Although Knight does not elaborate on how she understands culture, it is clear that she does not understand culture in the sense of coherent culture but starts from cultural diversity. Finally, the reference to «global» in the definition reinforces the worldwide or global perspective (J. Knight 2008, 22).

Knight's widely accepted definition was updated in 2015 by de Wit and other figures in the academic higher education discourse to include further aspects which are highlighted in italics below. Internationalisation is now:

the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (de Wit and Hunter 2015, 3).

The updated definition aims at internationalisation being thought of and designed as an increasingly inclusive and less elitist process. Not only an internationally mobile minority, but all people should be able to benefit from the internationalisation of higher education, with the aim of achieving a higher quality of education and research, and fulfilling the social responsibility of higher education (de Wit and Hunter 2015, 3). Thereby, referring to de Wit (2017, 12), the understanding of internationalisation as a process is of particular importance. He outlines: If internationalisation is understood as a specific goal, the efforts would remain ad hoc and marginal, and internationalisation would be reduced to a supply-oriented, instrumental understanding, as can be seen in higher education systems.

² These not only refer to the area of teaching and learning, but also to research as well as areas at the operational level of higher education institutions, such as administration and other services. In this study, the focus is on the area of teaching and learning.

This study is based on the processual and broadly defined understanding of internationalisation according to de Wit and Hunter (2015) based on J. Knight (2004, 2008). The study distances itself from an instrumental understanding of the term, instead understanding internationalisation as the planned process of integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the area of teaching and learning, in accordance with the underlying research interest. The further explanations, however, can also concern other areas (e.g. the internationalisation of research). The broad definition is particularly suitable for international comparative research projects, as its openness allows it to be applied in a variety of contexts (J. Knight 2008, 21).

2.1.3 Internationalisation – Globalisation – Europeanisation

For a differentiated understanding, the process of internationalisation is to be understood as distinct from the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation (Fig. 3). However, internationalisation, globalisation, and Europeanisation and their relationship to each other are often used interchangeably in the academic and higher education policy discourse.

According to sociologists Beck (2007) and Giddens (1991), globalisation describes a multidimensional process that leads to an increasingly global interconnectedness of economic, political, cultural, and technological spheres, which has an impact on many areas of life (including education) (Torres 2013, 14). In various globalisation theories, the changing role and function of nation states is discussed, ranging from a decline or erosion of nation states to the importance of nation states staying constant, or even increasing. Likewise, an intermediate position can be identified that recognises a transformation of the global order while at the same time preserving old patterns (Schemmann 2007, 50). In his study of the educational policy of inter- and supranational organisations, Schemmann (2007) points to the increasing influence of supranational organisations (e.g. the European Union, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]) and international organisations (e.g. the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]) in the field of adult education, without the nation state losing its influence in the education sector. Similar observations have been made in the discourse surrounding higher education. In addition to nation-state actors, an increased number of actors at supra- and international level are involved, in areas such as, in policy-making, funding, and guidance (Knight 2008, p. 10)³. Globalisation is discussed in relation to a decline of national features in higher education systems and a shift towards a global perspective. Globalisation is «associated with market control, transnational offers of study programmes and with commercial knowledge transfer» (Teichler 2007a, 52). On the other hand, globalisation is

³ Chap. 2.3 takes a closer look at the different actors in the internationalisation of higher education.

linked not only to economic trends, but also to cultural, technological, and scientific trends that have an impact on higher education (van der Wende 2001, 253; Altbach 2004, 5; J. Knight 2008, 6)⁴.

We define globalization as the reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language, and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions. (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley 2009, iv)

Globalisation and internationalisation are seen as related processes. Due to the increasing interconnectedness of different economic, cultural, political, and technological spheres in the context of globalisation, the internationalisation of higher education is gaining importance and simultaneously changing (J. Knight 2004, 8). Internationalisation is seen as a response to the globalisation of its environment (J. Knight 2004, 2017; Kovács and Tarrósy 2017; Rumbley et al. 2022). Although the influence of the nation state has changed in the context of globalisation, national education and higher education policy continues to play a significant role in the higher education sector (van der Wende 2001, 253) and its internationalisation (de Wit and Altbach 2021; Crăciun 2022).

Europeanisation can in turn be understood as the «regional version of internationalisation or globalisation» (Teichler 2007a, 52). Again, a broad and narrow understanding can be defined here. According to the broad understanding, Europeanisation is understood as part of globalisation, beyond European borders (Dagen et al. 2019, 654). In contrast, the narrow understanding focuses on Europeanisation as the process of internationalisation based on the political orientation and the political measures of European higher education policy (Dagen et al. 2019, 654). In this context, Europeanisation is characterised by cooperation and mobility as well as integration and harmonisation of organisational structures and content of teaching and learning (Simoleit 2016, 394). The term 'regionalisation' can also be found when making reference to the supranational cooperation of other regions of the world (e.g. the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022). The present study is based on the narrow understanding of Europeanisation.

Globalisation, internationalisation, and Europeanisation thus refer to different processes in the field of higher education that can complement and influence each other. Fig. 3 illustrates the previous explanations.

⁴ J. Knight (2008, 6) identifies five key elements of globalisation that have an impact on the international dimension of higher education: knowledge society, information and communication technologies, market economy, trade liberalisation, governance.

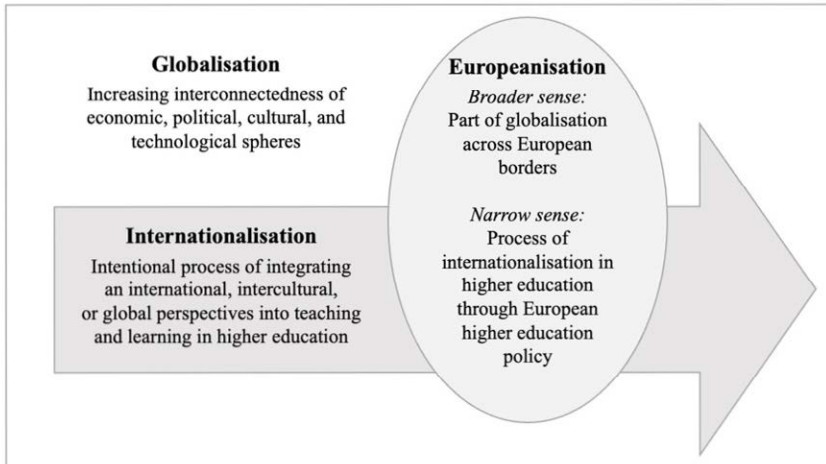


Figure 3 – Globalisation, internationalisation, and Europeanisation in higher education. Source: own representation, based on Dagen et al. (2019, 655).

2.2 Development Process of Internationalisation in Higher Education

Although it is claimed that science is international in nature, the higher education system has remained national in its structures for a long time. International perspectives have always been present in many disciplines and higher education institutions have strived for international recognition, mobility, and cooperation. The first movements of students and professors within Europe can be identified as early as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 29). Nevertheless, institutions, in particular universities, many of which were founded in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, remained predominantly nationally oriented. Students were primarily educated for the respective national systems, and teaching and learning methods originated from national theories and practice (Teichler 2007c, 24; de Wit and Altbach 2021, 30). At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the end of World War I, international cooperation and exchange became of increasing political importance, with the aim of securing peace and promoting mutual understanding. However, it was not until the Cold War that an increasingly strategic internationalisation through the organisation of international education programmes in the higher education sector became apparent (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 30). In Europe, the internationalisation of higher education has been accorded increasing relevance with the establishment of the Erasmus programme in the 1980s (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 30). The last thirty to forty years has seen the internationalisation of higher education finally become something which is available to the wider public and is no longer an elitist privilege. On the other hand, the internationalisation of higher education institutions has become a central necessity (Teichler 2007a, 53), in order

to remain competitive with other higher education institutions and to gain an international reputation. In retrospect, the internationalisation of higher education has evolved from being focused primarily on international cooperation with the aim of securing peace and promoting mutual understanding to being a universal concern linked to international competition. According to de Wit (2019), a paradigm shift from cooperation to competition, from marginalisation to general mainstream, can be discerned. This shift has been widely observed in the higher education discourse (e.g. van der Wende 2001; de Wit, Deca, and Hunter 2015; de Wit 2019; de Wit and Altbach 2021).

The shift in focus is related to diverse global, technological, social, political, economic, cultural, and regional changes as well as changes within the European higher education landscape (Curaj, Deca, and Pricopie 2018, 3; de Wit 2019, 11-12; de Wit and Altbach 2021, 33-34)⁵. An intensification of internationalisation in higher education is particularly evident in the context of globalisation. This development is motivated by economic interests and benefits, the aim being to improve the employability of graduates, the increasing cultural diversification of society, and English as the language of global communication (Varghese 2017, 24)⁶. In these changing contexts, de Wit (2019) differentiates three key changes in higher education which are related to its internationalisation:

- 1) The 'massification' of higher education has led to an increase in enrolment in emerging economies such as China, India, and Latin America. In turn, countries with already high enrolments are experiencing a saturation in demand. In the United States of America, the United Kingdom, continental Europe, South Korea, and Japan (among others), there is an oversupply of places due to demographic change and other reasons. Consequently, higher education institutions are relying on international students and scholars to fill their vacancies (de Wit 2019, 10-11). This can lead to <brain drain> (de Wit 2019, 11), i.e. the emigration of qualified academics from developing and emerging countries, which must be critically assessed;
- 2) Furthermore, research-intensive higher education institutions play an important role in the 'global knowledge economy'. This is summarised by de Wit as <the increasingly technology and science based globalized set of economic relations that requires high levels of knowledge, skills, and

⁵ These include the following developments, among others: digitalisation, demographic change, increasing political extremism, doubts in democratic structures, migration, and refugee movements.

⁶ Employability can be understood following the holistic understanding of Yorke and P.T. Knight (2006, 3). In this context, employability describes «a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy». In the development of curricular and higher education didactics, the employability concept can function as a guiding category according to which teaching and learning processes are aligned.

sophisticated international relations» (2019, 11). Of great importance to these higher education institutions are international partnerships with (higher education) institutions worldwide, the mobility of students and academics as well as English as the global language of research and science (de Wit 2019, 11). International cooperation and exchange seem essential against the background of a global knowledge society and globalised economy;

- 3) The internationalisation efforts of higher education institutions are also strongly driven by the competition for 'reputation and rankings'. In order to perform well in global, national, and regional rankings, higher education institutions must present quantitative key figures on international students and academics as well as international co-authorships. Higher education institutions are required to promote mobility strategies and international research projects in order to remain competitive with other institutions (de Wit 2019, 11-12). However, this way of understanding internationalisation merely in terms of quantitative figures is viewed critically in the academic discourse. On the one hand, it negates the basic idea of internationalisation, which is «based on cooperation, partnership, exchange, mutual benefit and capacity building» (J. Knight 2017, 15). On the other hand, it regards internationalisation as a goal and pushes back its processual understanding (de Wit 2017; J. Knight 2017). In other words, we can see a largely instrumental understanding of internationalisation in the higher education sector, which equates internationalisation with the mobility of students and academics.

These developments are also connected to the increasing privatisation and marketisation of higher education, a changed understanding of teaching and learning (including the teaching of soft skills and the integration of experience-based learning), and the increased integration of communication technologies in teaching and learning (Rumbley et al. 2022).

In the European context, the internationalisation of higher education can be understood in the context of the development of the Erasmus programme, which started in 1987, and the creation of a common European Higher Education Area. The latter dates to the Sorbonne Conference and Declaration in 1998, and the Bologna Declaration in 1999⁷. At further conferences, the areas of focus and structures of the European Higher Education Area developed further in the so-called "Bologna Process" (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2020, 13-14). In addition to a series of strategy papers and benchmarks, numerous funding programmes and quality standards have been introduced over the past years, including programmes such as Erasmus, Tempus, Erasmus mundus,

⁷ The Bologna Declaration was initiated by the participating European states in 1999 and comprises common goals (e.g. the comparability of degrees, the promotion of student and teacher mobility), with the aim of creating a common European Higher Education Area (European Ministers of Education 1999).

Erasmus+, Marie Curie, and Horizon 2020. These programmes have the specific aim of promoting the international mobility of students and academics, as well as innovation and cooperation in the field of research. According to Simoleit (2016, 396), the Erasmus programme can be identified as a catalyst for further measures and as an important, worthwhile funding opportunity at higher education institutions. However, due to the European Union's open method of coordination, the guidelines and programmes of the European Union are not binding. Rather, the policy decisions of the European Union can be understood as a «compulsory option» (Nóvoa 2010, 271) for the member states. This means that member states are basically free to decide whether to follow the recommendations of the European Union or not, although they may feel compelled to do so in order to obtain funding or keep pace with other countries. This loose obligation on the side of the member states, however, also explains why the participating countries show different levels of progress in the implementation of the Bologna Process (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 2020).

Despite criticism regarding the implementation of the Bologna Process and different mobility programmes, the contribution that the Bologna Process is making, or has already made, to the internationalisation of higher education is clear to see (Allemann-Ghionda 2014; de Wit et al. 2015). Allemann-Ghionda (2014, 669) acknowledges that the introduction of the bachelor's and master's degree system is a key prerequisite for the realisation of further aspects of internationalisation. This facilitates the compatibility of study systems and thus contributes, among other things, to the mobility of students within Europe.

Looking at the past years, according to de Wit, Deca, and Hunter (2015, 5), the internationalisation of higher education has developed as an actively generated mainstream, characterised by competition, marketing, and different forms of international perspectives and programmes. The original partnership-based efforts underlying the internationalisation of higher education are contrary to the competitive orientation of many higher education institutions (e.g. through university rankings). In addition, social trends such as nationalism, racism and radicalism, climate change, and restrictions on international mobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which may pose challenges for internationalisation in the present and future, are coming to the fore (J. Knight and de Wit 2018; Rumbley et al. 2022). In this context, the concepts of internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask 2015) and internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015) seem to be increasingly important. These concepts enable the sustainable integration of international, intercultural, and global perspectives into the structures of higher education institutions and make them available to all, and not just a small elite of internationally mobile students⁸. Although increased attention is being paid to the demands and efforts of comprehensive internationalisation, de Wit (2019) points to prevailing competitive structures that focus on mobility figures, international publications, and English as the language of research.

⁸ Both concepts are explained in more detail in Chap. 2.5.

These structures neglect a comprehensive internationalisation for all. In his opinion, the demands remain rhetorical and lack widespread implementation.

There is pressure of revenue generation, competition for talents, and branding and reputation (rankings). There is pressure to focus on international research and publication, on recruitment of international students and scholars, and on the use of English as language of research and instruction. These challenges and pressures conflict with a more inclusive and less elitist approach to internationalization, building on the needs and opportunities of own students and staff. In other words, there are tensions between a short term neoliberal approach to internationalization, focusing primarily on mobility and research, and a long term comprehensive quality approach, global learning for all (de Wit 2019, 15).

In order to sustainably promote the internationalisation of higher education institutions, according to Rumbley there is a need for «intelligent internationalisation» (2015, 16), which caters for the complexity of internationalisation in a national and global context. This requires partnerships between practitioners, researchers, leaders, and decision-makers who pool their knowledge and ideas on issues and problems surrounding the internationalisation of higher education in order to sustainably steer future developments in the volatile and complex higher education system. Another approach is evident in the concept of Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society (Brandenburg et al. 2020). In this context, it is a matter of no longer perceiving internationalisation of higher education institutions as an end in itself. Instead, social engagement, which has always been an integral part of higher education institutions, should be systematically linked to internationalisation and utilised in order to be able to make a meaningful contribution to society beyond the higher education landscape (Brandenburg et al. 2020).

It can be seen that the internationalisation of higher education is a process that is influenced by different political, economic, social, and technological developments at the global, national, regional, and organisational levels. Internationalisation is to be understood as embedded in different contexts. Over the past few years, internationalisation has developed into a complex phenomenon (Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022), in which different rationales and goals, strategies, as well as actors and programmes, can be distinguished against the backdrop of ever-changing contexts (J. Knight and de Wit 2018, 2). The following chapters are intended to provide insights into the complex interplay of actors, rationales, goals, and forms of provision, without claiming to be exhaustive. Rather, the discussion aims to illustrate the complexity of internationalisation in higher education.

2.3 Actors in the Internationalisation of Higher Education

In order to understand the process of internationalisation of higher education, it is necessary to become aware of governance dynamics in higher education.

For this purpose, it is useful to refer to governance models that are discussed in the higher education discourse (Schimank 2007; Zechlin 2007; Wilkesmann 2011; Simoleit 2016). In the following, the term «governance» according to Schimank (2007) is chosen as analytical perspective⁹. It is briefly introduced below.

In this context, we can differentiate between corporate, collective, and individual actors. Corporate actors include higher education institutions as organisations¹⁰. According to the institutional concept of organisation as outlined by Göhlich (2014, 72), organisations represent social constructs. Organisations are characterised by cooperation and interaction of their members and a division of labour. They are goal-oriented, have set boundaries, and their own culture. According to this understanding, higher education institutions can be assigned actions that are carried out by their members on their behalf. Furthermore, as organisations, higher education institutions have a symbiotic relationship with their environment (Schimank 2007; Schöpf 2018). Collective actors, on the other hand, can be understood as units of individuals who act according to common goals, have their own method of communication, internal structure, and group identity, and are connected to each other in time and space. In contrast to corporate actors, their goals are not set from above, but they coordinate their actions themselves. Collective actors (in the sense of groups or teams) can represent an interface between individual and organisation (Fahrenwald 2018). In this study, collective actors include faculties, institutes, departments, schools, chairs as well as student representatives, as these can act as predominantly independent units of higher education institutions. Individual actors are individuals who can be observed and analysed separately from a unit. At higher education institutions, this includes university rectors, professors, and academic and administrative staff who act as part of a larger unit and take part in democratic decision-making processes.

According to the governance perspective of Schimank the following actors interact in the higher education system: «higher education institutions as organisations; academics as members of the academic profession; and state actors as

⁹ The governance perspective according to Schimank (2007) takes a look at the constellation of different actors in order to trace patterns in the way actors deal with interdependencies. From an actor-theoretical perspective, Schimank understands governance as a particular form of goal-oriented action, whereby the actor can not only achieve the desired state directly through his/her own actions but can also indirectly induce other actors to take action by shaping the structural context (Schimank 2007, 233-34).

¹⁰ According to Simoleit (2016), the understanding of higher education institutions as organisations can be considered to be a relatively contemporary development. Originally, higher education institutions were understood “as *collegial* associations with shared values and consensual decision-making, as *loosely coupled systems* or as *organised anarchy*” (Simoleit 2016, 68). However, based on the increased complexity of higher education institutions and their environment, higher education institutions are now acting more like actors that are capable of their own actions and decision-making. They have a mission statement and profile with their own objectives, a hierarchical decision-making structure, and an increasingly differentiated and specialised administration (Krücken, Blümel, and Kloke 2010).

well as state-licensed counterparts of higher education institutions» (2007, 240). Together, the actors act along five governance mechanisms (Schimank 2007, 238; see also Wilkesmann 2011; Simoleit 2016) which can be summarised as:

- state regulation of higher education institutions;
- state control of higher education institutions by the state and other external actors;
- academic self-organisation within higher education institutions;
- hierarchical self-control within higher education institutions;
- and competitive pressure or competition within and between higher education institutions.

Consequently, governance takes place at the macro level in the relationship between the state and higher education institutions, at the meso level in the decision-making processes within the higher education institutions, and at the micro level in the decision-making processes at the level of the faculties (also departments, schools, chairs) as well as at the level of the individual academics (Wilkesmann 2011, 307). According to Simoleit (2016), intra-organisational networks (communication channels within higher education institutions) and inter-organisational networks (contacts between individual actors and further organisations or higher education institutions) need to be considered as well. These networks provide a link between the micro and meso levels.

Looking back at the developments in European higher education in recent years, higher education institutions have gained increasing autonomy (e.g. hierarchical self-control by university management, rectors, and deans) and exhibit entrepreneurial thinking shaped by competition. In this context, the state has an influence on the higher education institutions through targets, performance-oriented fund allocation, and modes of cooperation (Teichler 2007a; Wilkesmann 2011; Simoleit 2016). Teichler refers to a «*system of more open requirements, incentives and competition*» (2018, 518), whereby the relationship between state and higher education institution varies between countries. The higher education institutions act as organisations through hierarchical self-direction. They can constitute their organisation from top to bottom through persons at the management level such as rectors and deans (Schimank 2007, 241-42). At the micro level, individual actors (professors and academic staff) act at different levels of decision-making and action. They can absorb external impulses at the political level, which allows them to align and justify their actions (Simoleit 2016, 85). Academic self-organisation is significantly shaped by disciplines. Within a higher education institution, professors can have the right of co-decision in their own subject, whereby internal evaluations can take on a testing function (Hahn 2004). Across organisational boundaries, the discipline as an academic community can affect the academic orientation (Schimank 2007).

The three levels of governance described above can be applied to the internationalisation of higher education and help to obtain an overview of the actors involved, whereby mutual influences between the levels can be identified.

2.3.1 Actors at Macro Level

At the macro level, beside the state governments, academic organisations (e.g. German Academic Exchange Service [DAAD]), European University Association [EUA]) as well as supra- and international organisations (e.g. European Union, OECD, UNESCO) steer the internationalisation of higher education (Bode 2012). Over the past few years, actors at supranational level in particular have gained in importance, as can be seen from the influence of the European Union on higher education policy. It has been said that the political guidelines, strategies, and financing structures of the European Union have contributed to a noticeable Europeanisation of the higher education system (Simoleit 2016; Dagen et al. 2019). In this context, the establishment of the European Higher Education Area in 2012 within the framework of the Bologna Process is considered to have played an important role (Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022, 80). This called on the countries in the European Higher Education Area to adopt national strategies for internationalisation and mobility with the Mobility Strategy 2020 for the European Higher Education Area (European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference 2012). In the following year, higher education institutions were requested to adopt a comprehensive internationalisation strategy encompassing all institution areas (European Commission 2013a). The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018 shows that internationalisation strategies have since been adopted in almost all countries of the European Higher Education Area, although the content of the strategies varies¹¹. Internationalisation can be anchored in stand-alone documents or in the overall national strategy for higher education (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 242-43). After a global analysis of national internationalisation strategies for higher education, Crăciun (2022, 100) concludes that strategic internationalisation is a relatively new phenomenon, even though the extensive research into higher education internationalisation suggests otherwise. The global analysis shows that only 20% of all countries worldwide have an internationalisation strategy or mention internationalisation in their national higher education strategy. Moreover, it can be seen that strategic approach to internationalisation are predominantly found in economically developed countries, mostly in Europe (Crăciun 2022, 100-101).

On the national level, ministries of education play the key role in the internationalisation processes, but sectors from business, labour, foreign policy, culture, and migration, among others, may also have an interest in the internationalisation of higher education (J. Knight 2004, 8; Crăciun 2022, 102). Internationali-

¹¹ The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018 has been conducted by the European Commission, the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), and Eurydice to monitor the implementation of the Bologna Process. It is based on qualitative information and statistical data collected in the beginning of 2017. It shows that 32 EU member states had adopted a national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education by 2016-17 (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 242).

sation can be an explicit goal, related to a specific activity or linked to broader policy goals at the national level (Helms and Rumbley 2016, 10). In the higher education discourse, it is highlighted that the successful implementation of the strategies depends on various external and internal factors, with funding playing a major role (Helms and Rumbley 2016, 11; Crăciun 2022, 102).

Altogether it becomes clear that the (internationalisation) strategies, programmes, and measures adopted within the framework of supranational, international, and national education and higher education policy can create overarching regulatory framework conditions for the internationalisation of higher education. However, due to the extensive autonomy of higher education institutions, the direct influence on the institutions is limited.

2.3.2 Actors at Meso Level

At the meso level, higher education institutions are to be taken into account. They regulate the internationalisation of higher education largely autonomously and therefore have their own instruments, room for decision-making and action to define strategies, structures, and programmes (Simoleit 2016, 385-86). According to the fifth Global Survey of the International Association of Universities (IAU), internationalisation seems to be steered primarily by the management level and the international office¹². The most significant external influencing factors include demands from business and industry or from foreign higher education institutions as well as national policies (Marinoni 2019, 26). National and international rankings also play an important role in the strategic orientation of higher education institutions (Surssock 2015, 27; Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022, 91). Hunter et al. (2022) use four case studies to argue that, in addition to external (e.g. higher education policy) and internal contextual factors (e.g. strategic goals of higher education institutions), the internationalisation of higher education institutions depends on the organisational culture, reflective conversations within the higher education institution, the context, and four essential enablers (leadership, engagement, policies, resources). In other words, the internationalisation of higher education institutions varies greatly depending on a variety of contexts and preconditions.

With reference to the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018, it can be seen that the number of higher education institutions that have adopted their own internationalisation strategy varies greatly not only between countries, but also within individual countries (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 244). J. Knight and de Wit (2018, 3) critically emphasise that internationalisation at many higher education institutions is determined by a

¹² The IAU regularly surveys higher education institutions worldwide on various aspects and developments in the internationalisation of higher education. The results of the 5th IAU Global Survey are based on responses from 907 higher education institutions from 126 countries (Marinoni 2019, 24).

collection of partial and unconnected activities, although there are increasing calls for a comprehensive, inclusive internationalisation of higher education in the academic field (Leask 2015; Rumbley 2015; J. Knight and de Wit 2018; de Wit 2019; Brewer and Leask 2022).

2.3.3 Actors at Micro Level

At the micro level, the integration of international perspectives into teaching and learning takes place at the level of faculties, departments, chairs, schools, etc. through individual actors (e.g. professors, research assistants). Simoleit (2016, 390) emphasises that, at the lowest level of decision-making, individuals or groups play a central role in the development and implementation of innovation and reforms in relation to internationalisation. On the basis of expert interviews at three European universities, she observed that the structures and strategies of the universities give the individuals room for action. On the one hand, the structures and institutional strategies can determine the decisions of the individuals. On the other hand, individual decisions can also shape the structures and strategies of institutions (Simoleit 2016, 394). In her study, the internationally engaged professors experienced support and recognition at the management level in particular (e.g. through international departments, administrative staff). Less support was observed at the faculty level (Simoleit 2016, 392). Moreover, Simoleit (2016, 364-65) found that individual actors receive support within intra-organisational networks through other departments, central institutions, and the rectorate of one's own university, as well as within inter-organisational networks through non-academic organisations and partner universities. The networks helped individual actors establish new alliances within their universities or obtain European funding. Moreover, it can be noted that the conclusion of partner agreements within the framework of the Erasmus programme takes place primarily through the personal and professional contacts of the professors (Restaino, Vitale, and Primerano 2020). There are also indications that international students can shape the sustainable development of partnerships and cooperation with other institutions (Reis, Röwert, and Brandenburg 2014, 89).

In addition, there is evidence that the intrinsic motivation of individual actors can also play an important role in the internationalisation of higher education institutions (Simoleit 2016, 391-92). Furthermore, the first strategic attempts have been made to actively involve students in the development process of internationalising the curriculum (Green and Baxter 2022). The involvement of former mobile students in the advisory process on international mobility and a supportive attitude of professors and staff at higher education institutions are perceived as effective strategies for promoting the Erasmus programme (Egetenmeyer 2010a, 6). Overall, it is apparent that individual actors such as professors or students can help to actively shape higher education internationalisation.

2.4 Rationales and Goals of Internationalisation of Higher Education

In the discussion of different actors at the macro, meso, and micro level, it was possible to show how these can both enable and restrict the internationalisation of higher education. In this context, internationalisation does not take place randomly and haphazardly, but is justified by different rationales. The reasons why internationalisation occurs can vary widely, just as the reasons can differ between the individual actors (de Wit 2002). Closely linked to the 'why' of internationalisation are the intended goals – 'what for' – that are associated with the internationalisation of higher education. The rationales and goals of internationalisation are therefore presented together below.

In the academic discourse, various attempts have been made to systematise different rationales of internationalisation (J. Knight 1999, 2004, 2008; de Wit 2002). A basic distinction can be made between academic, political, economic, and social-cultural rationales (J. Knight 1999; de Wit 2002). This distinction is developed further by J. Knight (2004, 2008). She distinguishes between national and institutional rationales. She argues that the previous rationales are becoming increasingly interconnected and that a systematisation according to national and institutional levels seems more appropriate. Knight places those 'old' rationales below the two new rationales and links them. However, different academic contributions make it clear that the distinction between academic, political, economic, and social-cultural rationales has not lost its relevance. They are still used to explain higher education internationalisation (de Wit et al. 2015; de Wit 2019; de Wit and Altbach 2021; Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022). At the same time, it becomes apparent that the rationales are to be considered embedded in a larger context. The rationales can be influenced by a country's economic, political, cultural, and geographical situation, the quality of the respective higher education system, the global significance of the official national language, and the policy developments to date in the internationalisation of higher education (Teichler 2007c, 35). Consequently, the contexts in which internationalisation takes place can produce different internationalisation rationales and goals.

Below, various rationales and goals of higher education internationalisation are differentiated along the four overarching rationales (academic, political, economic, social-cultural). This differentiation is used to illustrate why and for what purpose the internationalisation of teaching and learning in higher education takes place. However, it is not always possible to make clear distinctions between the individual rationales and goals. In addition, at various points, a distinction is made between rationales at the supranational, national, and organisational level. The four categories are explicated based on different academic contributions and education policy strategy papers in the European Higher Education Area.

2.4.1 Academic Rationales

Academic rationales can be seen in connection with the international nature of science and with the longstanding international orientation of higher education in general (Chap. 2.2). The increasing internationalisation of higher education over the past thirty years has been pursued with the aim of improving the quality of higher education provision and integrating an international dimension in teaching and learning. The focus is not only on the international mobility of individuals and programmes, but also on internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015; Beelen and Leask 2011) and internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask 2015; Brewer and Leask 2022). In the higher education discourse, there is the call for a more holistic, cross-disciplinary, and inclusive process of internationalisation that enables learning for all (Robson and Wihlborg 2017; de Wit 2019).

In European higher education policy, internationalisation at home is also seen as a way to improve the quality of teaching and learning (European Commission 2013a). At the same time, the modernisation and enhancement of quality in the European higher education system is closely linked to political, economic, and social-cultural rationales¹³. In different strategy papers, the improvement of quality in teaching and learning aims, among other things, to contribute to the economic competitiveness of the European higher education system and to improve social inclusion and engagement (Council of the European Union 2010, 2014; European Commission 2013a, 2017a).

The integration of an international dimension in teaching and learning is essentially linked to the increasing globalisation of economic, political, cultural, and technological spheres, which calls for a deeper understanding and knowledge of the world. Especially against the background of an increasingly international and globally connected society and economy, higher education institutions are seen as having a responsibility to prepare their students for current and emerging global, international, and national challenges in society (de Wit 2002, 96). This demand goes hand in hand with social, cultural, and economic rationales.

In addition, the internationalisation of higher education is also aimed at increasing networks of higher education institutions, faculties, and academics, which are expected to add value for students, academics, and disciplines. For example, the formation of strategic alliances at higher education institutions can support the development of joint curricula and cooperation in research projects (J. Knight 2008, 30).

Overall, academic rationales are aimed at improving and ensuring the quality of higher education provision, integrating international perspectives into teaching and learning, and supporting international academic networking. The academic rationales are linked to political, economic, and social-cultural rationales, which are explained below.

¹³ See Chap. 2.4.2, 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.

2.4.2 Political Rationales

Political rationales can be found at the national or regional levels in connection with the domestic and foreign policy goals of individual states or regions. Through the internationalisation of higher education, the development of strategic alliances can be focused on building and strengthening bilateral or regional cooperation (J. Knight 2008, 26). Educational cooperation can be seen as a diplomatic means of entering into a mutual dialogue, especially in tense foreign policy relations with other states (Wächter, Ollikainen, and Hasewend 1999, 19). International cooperation in the higher education system appears to assist international and national security and peace-building and contribute to strengthening human rights and democratic values in society (Wächter, Ollikainen, and Hasewend 1999, 20; de Wit 2002, 86-87).

At the European level, political rationales are expressed in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, which states: «The importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount, the more so in view of the situation in South East Europe» (European Ministers of Education 1999, n.p.)¹⁴. In the statement, educational cooperation is clearly expressed as being of political importance in the strengthening of democratic structures. It can be assumed that this also includes international educational cooperation.

Closely linked to social-cultural rationales, the internationalisation of higher education can also function as a political tool to build and strengthen national and regional identities. This is particularly the case when countries fear de-nationalisation or westernisation (e.g. fear of homogenisation of cultures) due to the increasing globalisation of the economy and other areas of society (J. Knight 1999, 18; de Wit 2002, 88-89). European education and higher education policy state that education and culture can contribute to the strengthening of a common European identity (European Commission 2017b).

Consequently, political rationales are found at regional and national level. They aim to secure and establish (global) peace and political dialogue, promote democratic structures, increase national prestige, and foster the formation of national and regional identities. The political goals are in turn closely linked to economic and social-cultural rationales.

2.4.3 Economic Rationales

Economic rationales have become increasingly important in the internationalisation of higher education over the past few years (de Wit 2002, 2019; Robson and Wihlborg 2017; Varghese 2017). They are linked to the promotion of economic power and competition at the regional, national, and organisational

¹⁴ The European Ministers of Education refer to the situation in Southeastern Europe as a result of the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s.

levels. The aim of increasing economic power is discussed in relation to labour market-related rationales (de Wit 2002, 90).

In European education policy, the internationalisation of higher education is aimed at meeting the needs of a knowledge-based economy in order to generate economic growth and individual prosperity in Europe as well as to prevent skills mismatches and prepare graduates for the global labour market (Council of the European Union 2014; European Commission 2013a, 2017a). It becomes clear that higher education plays a key role for European economic power. In accordance with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, the European Union aims «*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*» (European Council 2000, n.p.). According to Ritzen and Marconi (2011), it is therefore a question of meeting the demands of the European labour market and strengthening the innovation capacity of the European economy.

In addition, the internationalisation of higher education is also seen as a suitable means of promoting and attracting highly qualified workers, so-called ‘brain power’, at the national level. This is due to demographic change, the knowledge-based economy, and the increase in international mobility and digitalisation on the labour market. The recruitment of highly qualified students can contribute to the economic (as well as academic and technological) competitiveness of a country (J. Knight 2008, 26).

At the organisational level, internationalisation is often linked to financial incentives for higher education institutions, for example through the export of education or through the generation of income from international students (de Wit 2002, 91-92; J. Knight 2008, 29; Varghese 2017, 22)¹⁵. English-language degree programmes can also be used as an important indicator of the internationalisation of higher education institutions or as a marketing tool (Rösch 2015, 20-21). This can contribute to the reputation and competitiveness of the institution and is also linked to the performance of higher education institutions in national, regional, or global rankings (de Wit 2019, 12).

Economic rationales are linked with goals of economic competitiveness, capacity building, and income generation at the regional, national, and organisational levels. Economic rationales can be identified as the main drivers of higher education internationalisation in supranational, national, and organisational internationalisation strategies (Marinoni 2019; Crăciun 2022; Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022).

¹⁵ The term ‘transnational education’ is used in connection with the export of education. Transnational education refers to degree programmes that are offered by a provider in a country other than the country of its participants or where the provider cannot be assigned to a specific country (Teichler 2007b, 276). Transnational forms of provision are either facilitated by a collaborative arrangement of two providers of higher education from different countries (e.g. through the franchising of study programmes) or a higher education provider of a non-collaborative arrangement being present in another country through a branch office (e.g. in the form of off-shore institutions, branch campuses). The export of degree programmes can be associated with income generation for the providers, although this may not always be the case (Teichler 2007b, 277-80).

2.4.4 Social-cultural Rationales

Social-cultural rationales concern the social responsibility of higher education and higher education institutions. A social-cultural rationale is found in the assumption that internationalisation is a suitable means of developing global citizenship, which is becoming increasingly important in the context of global conflicts and terrorism¹⁶. In this context, global citizenship strives to achieve «a deeper understanding of emerging international inter-connections, a higher level of social responsibility, comparable skills and global competencies, and increased civic engagement» (Varghese 2017, 22). The topic of active citizenship is also addressed in strategy papers of the Council of the European Union (2010, 2014) and the European Commission (2017a, 2017b). In the European Commission's Communication on a renewed EU agenda for higher education, the mission of higher education is evident, for example, in the promotion of active participation in society as well as the promotion of social inclusion and mobility. These efforts are important in counteracting the polarisation of society and growing distrust in democratic institutions (European Commission 2017a, 2).

In the academic discourse, in view of diverse social developments such as radicalism, racism, and climate change, as well as persistent inequalities, an appeal is made to the social mission and social responsibility of higher education institutions (e.g. Brandenburg et al. 2020; Brewer and Leask 2022; Rumbley et al. 2022). Brandenburg et al. (2020) identify a lack of systematic focus on social-cultural rationales in the internationalisation of higher education institutions, even though the results of their study indicate that the internationalisation of higher education can make an important contribution to society, the local environment, and global well-being.

Another social-cultural rationale can be identified at national level with the aim of developing a national cultural identity and promoting intercultural understanding (J. Knight 2008, 27). In this context, the understanding of culture and interculturality which underlies these intentions must be critically analysed¹⁷. Internationalisation is also claimed to convey common values – including tolerance, freedom of expression, and cultural diversity (Wissenschaftsrat 2018).

Furthermore, the development of intercultural understanding and intercultural competence at higher education institutions is particularly focused on efforts concerning internationalisation of the curriculum and internationalisation

¹⁶ In the higher education discourse, the understanding of the concept of global citizenship (education) is inconsistent, with it being associated with different goals and approaches (Lilley, Barker, and Harris 2017; Horey et al. 2018; Pashby et al. 2020). Pashby et al. (2020) distinguish between a neoliberal, liberal and critical orientation of global citizenship, which in turn has interfaces between the individual orientations (e.g. neoliberal-liberal or liberal-critical). The present understanding is based on a predominantly liberal orientation, which focuses on common humanity, universal values, and democratic structures.

¹⁷ As outlined in Chap. 2.1.1, perceptions can vary between a predominantly traditional, coherent understanding of culture and a more recent, cohesion-oriented understanding of culture and interculturality.

at home, whereby the understandings and concepts of intercultural competence can vary (Deardorff and Jones 2022)¹⁸. In particular, with increased global conflicts and cultural differences in the workplace and in society, it is claimed that students and staff at higher education institutions should be supported in developing international and intercultural understanding and skills (J. Knight 2008, 29). Promoting intercultural encounters in teaching and learning can help reduce false assumptions and prejudices towards foreign cultures, and one's own culture, as well as support mutual understanding.

On the basis of social-cultural rationales, the internationalisation of higher education aims to encourage active citizenship (global citizenship), inclusive and equitable social structures, and the promotion of intercultural understanding within society. Therefore, the internationalisation of higher education can support existing and emerging social challenges.

The rationales outlined in the previous chapters illustrate why and for what purpose the internationalisation of higher education takes place at the regional, national, and organisational levels. The importance of the rationales differs for different actors. However, when comparing the four rationales, it can be observed that political and economic rationales are increasingly used to justify internationalisation efforts, while social-cultural and academic rationales are less relevant (Teichler 2017; Varghese 2017; de Wit 2018; J. Knight and de Wit 2018). Internationalisation is thus becoming a noticeably market-driven process in which education is traded as a commodity between countries (Varghese 2017, 24) and internationalisation is increasingly thought of in competitive terms (see Chap. 2.2).

2.5 Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings

The efforts at the international, national, and organisational levels to integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning can result in different forms of international teaching and learning settings. In this study, teaching and learning settings are defined, in accordance with Ludwig (2012), as organised and planned didactic arrangements which integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning. International teaching and learning settings can include both curricular and extracurricular activities.

¹⁸ Intercultural competence can be understood as a set of attitudes (respect, openness, and tolerance of ambiguity), knowledge and skills (including cultural knowledge, cultural self-awareness, and communication skills) that enable an individual to communicate and interact effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations. The development of intercultural competence is an ongoing process that is never fully completed. The disposition and formation of specific attitudes and behavioural competence of the individual promotes his or her own reflective capacity (including awareness and perception of difference, empathy, flexibility) in order to be able to act adequately in situations of intercultural interaction (Deardorff 2006; Hiller 2010). According to Rathje (2006), intercultural competence can help establish cohesion in unfamiliar and foreign situations through the creation of normality.

In higher education research, a distinction can be made between two types of international teaching and learning setting. On the one hand, there are cross-border teaching and learning settings that involve the international mobility of individuals (e.g. study abroad) or concern degree programmes and other study-related activities that are carried out between two or more higher education institutions or other institutions/organisations from different countries. These can involve both in-person and virtual teaching and learning. On the other hand, there are international teaching and learning settings at home that integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives in teaching and learning at a student's home institution of higher education. These teaching and learning settings aim to offer non-mobile students the opportunity to gain international and intercultural experience, in the sense of internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015).

Internationalization at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments (Beelen and Jones 2015, 69).

According to Beelen and Jones, internationalisation at home is not to be understood as an independent goal or didactic concept, but offers tools and opportunities to integrate international elements into the formal and informal curriculum at the home institution (Beelen and Jones 2015; Beelen and Leask 2011).

In the higher education discourse, the intentional and sustained integration of both directions (cross-border and at home) in teaching and learning is in turn subsumed under internationalisation of the curriculum, which can be understood as a concept and a process at the same time (Brewer and Leask 2022). In the academic discourse, the following definition of Leask (2015) is widely accepted.

Internationalization of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, intercultural, and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods, and support services of a program of study (Leask 2015, 9).

Leask's interpretation of the term 'curriculum' includes a formal, informal, and hidden curriculum (Leask 2015, 8)¹⁹. Consequently, the aim is for students to encounter international, intercultural, or global perspectives in different places in the course of their studies and for them to be able to deal with them reflectively in order to acquire intercultural and international skills and differentiated and

¹⁹ The 'formal curriculum' includes programmes and activities that are part of the curriculum of a degree programme and that students must complete in order to graduate. The term 'informal curriculum' covers all programmes and activities that are outside the curriculum and are not included in student assessment, although they support the students' learning. Associated with the 'hidden curriculum' are unintended, hidden messages which are sent to the students through programmes and activities at the higher education institutions, e.g. through the choice of literature (Leask 2015, 8).

reflected knowledge, as well as to develop an understanding of an increasingly globalised society. These intentions require the perception and acknowledgement of diversity in higher education institutions and in the local community, and the strategic utilisation of this diversity for teaching and learning purposes (Leask 2015). The internationalisation of the curriculum involves a holistic approach that focuses on students, their development, and their experiences as a whole, as well as their relationship to others (Brewer and Leask 2022, 245). This means that prior international and intercultural experiences are actively integrated into teaching and learning processes. The internationalisation of the curriculum requires a long-term, active commitment from the university management, faculties, staff, and students as well as other local, international, and global actors in the process (Brewer and Leask 2022, 260).

The two types of international teaching and learning setting (cross-border and at home) are explained in more detail below. Different forms of international teaching and learning settings are presented, regardless of whether they are part of the formal, informal, or hidden curriculum.

2.5.1 Cross-border Teaching and Learning Settings

Cross-border teaching and learning settings are traditionally associated with study abroad. In relation to student mobility, a distinction must be made between degree mobility, credit mobility, and certificate mobility. Degree mobility describes long-term mobility, in which students enrol for a full course of study at a foreign higher education institution in order to complete their degree abroad. Credit mobility involves short-term mobility, where students go to a foreign higher education institution for a limited period of time in order to gain credits which can be transferred to the higher education institution of origin (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 38). This can take place in the context of a semester abroad or an internship abroad. Certificate mobility concerns short-term stays aimed at promoting specific skills (e.g. language skills) but not leading to a degree or the acquisition of credit points (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 38). Furthermore, a distinction can be made between vertical and horizontal mobility. Vertical mobility describes mobility to a higher education institution in the country of origin which has a superior academic reputation to the student's original higher education institution. The aim is to obtain a better academic qualification. Horizontal mobility is when the quality at the home institution is comparable to or lower than at the institution of higher education abroad. Students are not seeking an increase in academic quality, but rather hope to gain new experiences at the receiving institution and/or in the present social and cultural context (Teichler 2017, 191-92). It should be noted that vertical mobility often takes the form of degree mobility from countries outside the European Union to the European Union, while horizontal mobility often takes the form of short-term mobility between countries of the European Union (Teichler 2017, 192). Short-term mobility (in the form of study abroad at a partner institution of higher education or an intern-

ship at a company abroad during the study phase) is eligible for funding under the Erasmus+ Programme in Programme Countries and Partner Countries²⁰.

Similarly, joint programmes, also referred to as collaborative degree programmes, can facilitate cross-border teaching and learning settings. Joint programmes describe degree programmes that are jointly delivered by different partner institutions and can take place between two or more institutions at the national level, international level, or online. Joint programmes may aim to award a joint degree, a double degree, or a multiple degree. The difference is that joint degree programmes lead to a degree jointly awarded by the partner institutions, whereas students receive two or more degrees in double or multiple degree programmes. International joint, double, or multiple-degree programmes are mostly found at master's level and build on existing partnerships (J. Knight 2015; Sursock 2015). Basically, international joint, double, or multiple degree programmes have «a jointly developed and integrated curriculum, as well as a clear agreement on credit recognition» (Obst and Kuder 2012, 3). The development and implementation of the programmes can be understood as an effective means for higher education institutions to recruit international students, which, among other things, contributes to income generation (Mihut and Ziguras 2015, 21). In addition, an international joint, double, or multiple degree programme can be associated with academic benefits and an increase in the research cooperation, internationalisation, international visibility, and prestige of the higher education institution (Obst and Kuder 2012, 4; J. Knight and Lee 2022, 421). In Europe, the European Commission acts as an important promoter and funder of international joint, double, or multiple degree programmes under different funding schemes, such as Erasmus Mundus (J. Knight 2015, 18-19; Mihut and Ziguras 2015, 21). The different international joint, double, or multiple degree programmes funded by the European Commission are seen as an efficient means of «quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications; to attract talent and deepen partnerships; and to enhance the international experience, intercultural competence and employability of graduates» (2013a, 10). The programmes are intended to support the harmonisation agenda of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area (Mihut and Ziguras 2015, 21). For this reason, the ministers of the European Higher Education Area adopted the common quality assurance procedure “European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes” in the Yerevan Ministerial Conference Communiqué (2015) to facilitate the implementation of international joint, double, and mul-

²⁰ The Erasmus programme distinguishes between Programme Countries and Partner Countries. There are currently 33 Programme Countries (as of October 2022), consisting of the member states of the European Union and neighbouring countries such as Norway, Turkey, Serbia, etc. These countries can participate fully in all parts of the programme. Partner Countries are all other countries in the world; these can only partially participate in the programme (European Commission n.d.).

multiple degree programmes²¹. However, despite the common approach, the procedure is not recognised in some European countries, especially those that have implemented programme-level accreditation. Serbia and Italy are among those countries that do not legally recognise the procedure (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2020, 78-79). Consequently, different traditions and legal requirements between the partners can make it difficult to award joint, double, or multiple degrees. Likewise, the recognition of degrees may be questioned (J. Knight and Lee 2022, 417-18). Other challenges include funding (also beyond the European Commission), sustainability of the programmes, legislative gaps, compatibility of higher education systems, and grading (Obst and Kuder 2012, 2; Mihut and Ziguras 2015, 21). Nevertheless, international joint, double, or multiple degree programmes within the European Union have developed with increasing tendency in recent years, whereby the frequency of the programmes and the awarding of joint, double, or multiple degrees varies nationally (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 247). With reference to the results of the fifth IAU Global Survey, more double or multiple degree programmes are offered than joint degree programmes (Marinoni 2019, 29), something which can be attributed to the fact that they involve fewer legal and administrative challenges (J. Knight and Lee 2022, 422).

Language courses, field trips, and seasonal schools can be cited as further cross-border offers. Seasonal schools (e.g. winter schools, summer schools) are short-term programmes that take place at an institution abroad or in cooperation with international partners and participants at the home institution. Seasonal schools can be linked to a virtual learning phase in addition to an attendance phase at the host institution, as is clearly illustrated by the example of the Adult Education Academy, formerly Winter School “Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” in Würzburg, Germany (Staab and Egetenmeyer 2019). This seasonal school is an example of a blended learning programme that combines virtual learning with a joint attendance phase.

If a course, seasonal school, or internship is offered online by an external higher education institution, it is also referred to as virtual mobility or virtual Erasmus (Ehlers 2017, 51). These activities can be recognised in the student’s degree programme, promote a more flexible and varied study design, and support students’ ability to organise themselves (Ehlers 2017, 50). Even though the learning takes place at the home institution and does not require travel abroad, this type of teaching and learning can be understood as «virtual border-crossing» (Teichler 2017, 183). According to de Wit and Altbach, the term «collaborative online international learning» (2021, 42) can be used instead of virtual mobility. This concept was developed by the State University of New York and describes an interactive teaching and learning setting in which lecturers from

²¹ The European Commission uses the term ‘joint programmes’ as a comprehensive term. It includes not only international joint programmes, but also double and multiple degree programmes.

partner institutions enter an exchange with their own students. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, these forms of virtual mobility are becoming increasingly important. Virtual mobilities make it possible to have cross-border experiences even without actual physical mobility. However, it remains to be seen what role these formats will play in the future.

Freely accessible, web-based educational courses (Massive Open Online Courses [MOOC]) or distance learning can also offer virtual cross-border opportunities, although these forms are less likely to be seen as part of internationalisation (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 41).

2.5.2 International Teaching and Learning Settings at Home

Due to the one-sided focus on student mobility in recent years, which was and continues to be accessible only to a small elite of students, the need to increasingly integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning at the home institution has been emphasised (Beelen and Leask 2011; Beelen and Jones 2015). Internationalisation at home should also bring non-mobile students into contact with international, intercultural, or global topics and perspectives. This is becoming increasingly important against the backdrop of a global knowledge society (de Wit and Altbach 2021, 42). International teaching and learning settings at home include guest lectures and seminars by teachers and academics from abroad, the presence of foreign students, the use of international literature and international case studies as well as degree programmes in English. However, Rösch (2015, 19) notes critically that internationalisation at home is primarily associated with English-language teaching and the presence of foreign students and academic staff. On the other hand, content-related aspects that integrate international perspectives in teaching content are considered less. Thus, according to Beelen and Jones (2015, 64), teaching in the English language does not automatically lead to internationalisation at home. This is because the use of English does not automatically make teaching international. Instead, international, intercultural, or global perspectives must be integrated in addition to the linguistic aspect. Moreover, the one-sided use of English as 'lingua franca' can be viewed critically and associated with the loss of academic multilingualism (Rösch 2015). However, Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh (2017, 11) note that communicating in a foreign language can also make it possible for the students to adopt new perspectives. This is promoted by the fact that translating from one language into another can lead to the (re)interpretation of one's own ways of thinking and understanding. Communicating in a common language can also support the shaping of a common terminology and promote networking in an international academic community. In addition, students can acquire new ways of understanding through moments of non-understanding.

Although internationalisation at home has been an area of increased focus and discussion in the academic and higher education policy discourse over the past few years, only fragments of internationalisation at home can be discerned at the level of higher education institutions, faculties, and degree programmes.

Greene (2020) notes that the lack of systematic implementation of internationalisation at home in curricula and higher education institutions is due to the lack of a joint approach to curriculum development among professors, faculties, and higher education institutions. There is, therefore, a need for a common approach to a more systematic and comprehensive internationalisation at higher education institutions.

2.6 Participation in International Teaching and Learning Settings

When researching internationalisation in higher education, it is important to look not only at the provision of international teaching and learning settings but also at how this is received by students. Data on student participation in international teaching and learning settings is primarily available in relation to cross-border teaching and learning settings. Student mobility is a frequent subject of statistics and empirical studies in the field. However, according to Teichler (2018, 532), the figures provided by bodies such as UNESCO, the OCED, and Eurostat are to be viewed critically²². For example, there is often no differentiation between foreign nationality and international mobility for study purposes, which can be further divided into short-term and long-term mobility. Nor can a consistent distinction be made between levels of study. In recent years, student numbers prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 do indicate a global increase of internationally mobile students in terms of degree and credit mobility (UIS.Stat 2021). However, according to Teichler (2017, 186), it must be taken into account that the total number of students has also increased over the years.

Referring to obstacles to and reasons for students' participation in international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 2.6.1), it is possible to point to the accessibility of international, intercultural, or global perspectives in teaching and learning. Furthermore, being aware of obstacles to and reasons for participation helps institutions to systematically address them when planning and implementing these offers. Studies highlighting the impact of student participation in international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 2.6.2) can be used to legitimise and underpin internationalisation efforts. They are therefore addressed in the following.

2.6.1 Obstacles to and Reasons for Participation in International Teaching and Learning Settings

In international comparison, inequalities in access to and returns from international mobility can be identified, which can be attributed to the geographical origin of the students (European Commission 2019). An increase in international mobility can be seen primarily in economically advanced countries (Teichler

²² Eurostat is the statistical office of the European Union.

2017, 195). In addition, the lack of recognition of internationally acquired higher education qualifications and international experience on the national labour market or in the educational system, as well as the employment situation in a country, are factors that can influence the returns from international mobility (Bilecen and van Mol 2017). In addition to geographical origin, attention must be paid to the educational background of students. Thus, with reference to the 21st Social Survey of the German Student Union on the economic and social situation of students in Germany, it can be stated that the educational origin of students correlates with participation in international mobility²³. In the German context, it can be seen that students from families with a lower level of education go abroad for study purposes less often than those from families with a higher educational background (Middendorff et al. 2017, 20). In addition, differences can be seen between the study levels and fields of study. Students of natural sciences, economics, or law seem to be more internationally mobile than students of education or health (OECD 2021, 217). Inequalities are also evident with regard to gender distribution. Female students participate in Erasmus mobility schemes more often than their male counterparts (Böttcher et al. 2016). In addition to family reasons and separation from one's own social environment, financial obstacles (e.g. additional financial burden, loss of study-related income) as well as organisational obstacles (e.g. lack of information, time-consuming preparation, possible delay in graduation, expected difficulties in the recognition of achievements) are further obstacles to international mobility (European Commission 2019, 73; Middendorff et al. 2017, 21-22; Woisch and Willige 2015, 94-95).

Access to and outcomes of international academic mobility are structured by disparities in the way labour markets, nation-state regulations, discourses, higher education systems, and institutions are organised as well as by individual characteristics such as gender, age, class, career stage, and cultural background (Bilecen and van Mol 2017, 1250).

According to Bilecen and van Mol (2017), different contexts influence access to and returns from international mobility. The employment situation and (educational) policy regulations at national level as well as the structural conditions in higher education institutions and subjective factors of the student (e.g. age, field of study, socio-economic background, family situation) must be taken into account.

In contrast to the family-related, personal, financial, and organisational factors that can hinder international mobility, a range of reasons for participating in

²³ The characteristics of the school/vocational education of both the father and mother of the students are summarised under the term 'educational origin'. According to the 21st Social Survey of the German Student Union, a low educational origin exists if one parent has no school/vocational qualification or has only completed lower secondary or intermediate school, while the second parent has a higher education entrance qualification, a completed apprenticeship, or vocational specialist qualification. A high educational origin exists if both parents have an academic university degree (DZHW 2017, 9).

international teaching and learning settings can be identified. In empirical studies, the focus is mainly on the motives for student mobility abroad, while there is a lack of studies that focus on international teaching and learning settings at home²⁴. In the DAAD/DZHW Mobility Study 2015, Woisch and Willige (2015, 73) summarise five key areas to which the students' motives for participating in a mobility period abroad (e.g. study abroad, internship, seasonal school) can be assigned: personality development, occupation and career, academic education, experience, language, and social recognition²⁵. The main reasons given by the German students surveyed were to have a fun time, to experiencing something special, and to have the opportunity to get to know new cultures (Woisch and Willige 2015, 71)²⁶. In further studies, motives included acquiring and expanding foreign language skills, expanding the social network, improving career opportunities, strengthening one's personality, expanding subject-related knowledge, acquiring skills, and the opportunity to live abroad (Amendola and Restaino 2017, 532; European Commission 2019, 74; Woisch and Willige 2015, 73). Since the motives for participation vary greatly from person to person, the aspects mentioned are merely exemplary and should not be regarded as complete. This is also reflected in the results of the DAAD/DZHW Mobility Study 2013, which illustrate a connection between the biographical profile and the willingness of students to participate in international mobility. Students who experience a positive attitude towards international mobility in their family and school and/or who have had their first international experiences abroad in the form of school exchanges, language trips, internships, etc. are more likely to participate in mobility abroad period during their studies (Heublein et al. 2015, 39-40). It was also observed that a positive self-assessment of the students with regard to their study performance and the feasibility of the study requirements leads to a higher willingness to participate in mobility abroad (Heublein et al. 2015, 34-36). It can therefore be assumed that high-achieving students as well

²⁴ With reference to the field of psychology of learning, motives can be understood as the «relatively stable (dispositional, latent) readiness to be activated to act in certain situations. The activated state in a certain situation is called *motivation*» (Edelmann and Wittmann 2019, 214). In addition to motives, situational circumstances, in the form of incentives, regulate motivation (Edelmann and Wittmann 2019). Consequently, students' motivation to participate results from individual motives and situational incentives that interact with each other. According to Petrow (2013), several motives usually play a role in the decision to participate in international mobility. The incentives support pre-existing dispositions and increase the students' willingness, and therefore motivation, to participate in international activities.

²⁵ The DAAD/DZHW Mobility Study 2015 was conducted on behalf of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). It is the fifth online survey of German students on study-related international mobility that was conducted based on the HISBUS online access panel (Woisch and Willige 2015, 3). Using this online panel, the German Centre for Higher Education and Science Research (DZHW) conducted online surveys on various topics related to higher education between the years 2000-20 (DZHW n.d.).

²⁶ In the study, it is not specified what is meant by 'something special'.

as students with previous international experience show an increased interest in international experience during their studies. In other words, biographical profiling also influences the motivation to participate. In addition, in her study on the willingness of German social work students to participate in international activities (transnational mobility and internationalisation at home), Petrow (2013) illustrates that the motivation to participate depends also on the field of study. The results suggest that an awareness of the international aspects in a future job profile can have an influence on the students' willingness to participate.

2.6.2 Impact of International Teaching and Learning Settings for Students

Numerous student and graduate surveys on international and national level (e.g. Egetenmeyer 2012; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Amendola and Restaino 2017; Özışık 2017; European Commission 2019; INTALL 2021) point to the positive impact of international teaching and learning settings on students' foreign language proficiency, personal development, academic education, and career path. The results of the studies, which are presented in the following sections, highlight the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students were able to develop through their participation²⁷. However, due to the individuality of learning (Dinkelaker 2015; Siebert 1999), the impact identified in the studies should be viewed with caution as it may vary from individual to individual. In addition, international teaching and learning settings may not only offer opportunities for learning but can also produce obstacles which can limit or even hinder learning. Therefore, negative impacts are possible as well as positive ones²⁸.

Furthermore, it should be noted that no clear and generalised assumptions can be drawn from the studies in the research field (de Wit 2017; Teichler 2017). The comparability, validity, and breadth of the results are limited, among other things, by the fact that international and national studies focus on different dimensions or are only designed as small case studies (Teichler 2017). The studies may also only refer to specific international teaching and learning settings (e.g. Erasmus mobility) or focus on a specific national or organisational context (e.g. Amendola and Restaino 2017; Özışık 2017). Moreover, the studies can either be limited to a specific field of study (e.g. Egetenmeyer 2012; Petrow 2013) or take all fields of study into account (e.g. Woisch and Willige 2015; European Commission 2019). Particular attention is paid in the research field to student mobility abroad, including study abroad and internship abroad, while the investigation of international teaching and learning settings at home remains marginal. This presents a research desideratum, although similar results can be assumed (Jones 2017).

²⁷ The presented impact is supplemented by studies on the long-term effects of international youth movements.

²⁸ Although the following comments focus on the positive impact of international teaching and learning settings, this does not mean that obstacles or opposite effects cannot occur.

For this reason, the following results also mainly refer to cross-border teaching and learning settings and largely concern students of all study fields. According to Teichler (2017), besides differences in the size of the studies and in the dimensions investigated, a different understanding of terminology complicates the comparability of the data. Moreover, surveys of transnational and political actors must be used with reservations as to objectivity. According to Singh (2017), these studies are often politically motivated and aim at the implementation and creation of political guidelines.

2.6.2.1 Foreign Language Proficiency

Learning another language and improving foreign language skills is not only a frequently mentioned motive for participating in international teaching and learning settings (Woisch and Willige 2015, 73-74; European Commission 2019, 74) but it is also apparent that students' participation can impact their foreign language proficiency. Various studies indicate that participating in a stay abroad (for studies or an internship) may contribute to the development of foreign language skills (Egetenmeyer 2012; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Amendola and Restaino 2017; European Commission 2019). The improvement of English language skills can be seen as beneficial for students' employment in the labour market (Bracht et al. 2006; NA and DAAD 2020; INTALL 2021).

2.6.2.2 Personal Development

A positive correlation between international experiences and the personal development of students is clear from a variety of studies (Perl and Heese 2008; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Zimmermann et al. 2015; European Commission 2019). For example, studies indicate that participation in a mobility period abroad may contribute to the promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem (Woisch and Willige 2015, 79; European Commission 2019, 118)²⁹. Likewise, studying abroad may promote the ability of students to organise themselves, whereby this ability should already exist to a certain degree before going abroad (Egetenmeyer 2012, 163). In the context of two extensive longitudinal studies on the international mobility of adolescents and young adults in Germany, it is also pointed out that the basic personality traits of mobile adolescents and young adults differ from those of their peers even before they go abroad³⁰. The further development of personality traits could be observed during the stay abroad, in particular through making international contacts and social integration in the host country (Zimmermann et al. 2015). Similar results are shown by the Erasmus+ Impact Study 2019, according to which personality

²⁹ Self-esteem can be understood as becoming aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses.

³⁰ The following 'Big Five' traits are examined: extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness (Zimmermann et al. 2015, 204).

dispositions, attitudes, and behaviours differ between mobile and non-mobile students even before they start their period abroad³¹. Participation in mobility abroad ultimately reinforces the development of the personality traits of students (European Commission 2019, 113).

Furthermore, student surveys indicate that international experiences in higher education provide opportunities for the acquisition of intercultural and international competences (Wolff 2017; DAAD 2019; European Commission 2019; INTALL 2021). However, a terminological blurring can be observed, as different understandings of intercultural competence are present. In the Erasmus Impact Study 2019, over 90% of students surveyed who had participated in an Erasmus mobility programme (study or traineeship) said they had acquired knowledge about another country, its culture, people, and economy, and had developed the ability to deal with people from other backgrounds and cultures (European Commission 2019, 84). The latter ability is referred to in the DAAD Impact Study as multicultural self-efficacy (DAAD 2019, 4)³². In addition, the study refers to the reduction of intergroup anxiety (one's own feelings of anxiety that arise in contact with other foreign cultures) and the development of intercultural empathy (the ability to put oneself in the position of other cultures) in the context of study abroad. The quality of the contacts with people in the host country and other international students is considered a central factor in this context (DAAD 2019, 4-5)³³. Other studies further emphasise the possibility of developing (inter)cultural understanding and knowledge in the context of mobility abroad (van Mol 2014; Amendola and Restaino 2017; Özışık 2017). In this context, Teichler ascribes an important role to «learning from contrast» (2017, 207), through which an understanding of different perspectives as well as reflective skills can be developed.

In addition to the promotion of intercultural competence, numerous studies also point to an impact on students' social competence (including problem-solving skills, adaptability, teamwork, communication skills, cooperation skills) (Janson, Schomburg, and Teichler 2009; European Commission 2019). The results of the Erasmus Impact Study 2019 illustrate that participation in an Erasmus mobility programme gives students, among other things, skills in dealing with new situations (91%) and communication skills (89%) (European Commission

³¹ The Erasmus+ Impact Study 2019 was conducted on behalf of the European Commission. It analysed the impact of Erasmus+ mobilities for students, staff, and higher education institutions in the period from January 2017 until April 2019 (European Commission 2019, 1). The measurement is based on four memo© factors: self-confidence, goal orientation, cultural openness, social openness (European Commission 2019, 229).

³² In the DAAD Impact Study, currently mobile students, future mobile students, and non-mobile students were surveyed on topics related to study-related international mobility. The data was collected at two measuring points in the academic year 2017/2018 (DAAD 2019, 3). Multicultural self-efficacy describes students' assessment of their ability to interact with people from other cultures (DAAD 2019, 4).

³³ The quality of the contacts is measured by the degree to which the contacts were «experienced as equitable, voluntary, intense, pleasant and cooperative» (DAAD 2019, 5).

2019, 84). Further analyses suggest that the acquisition of social skills has a direct or indirect impact on the application and selection process for future employment and thus on students' opportunities to find employment (Bracht et al. 2006; Janson, Schomburg, and Teichler 2009). On the German labour market, for example, communication skills, willingness to adapt, and independence are named as key requirements for academic career starters (NA and DAAD 2020).

2.6.2.3 Academic Education

With regard to students' academic education, international mobility may provide students access to new academic knowledge and subject-related perspectives, although student surveys generally rank the academic benefit lower than the personal benefit of an experience abroad (van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; European Commission 2019). Study abroad can enable students to gain insights into other educational systems and higher education institutions, where similarities and differences may be experienced. Students may come to critically analyse their own educational system and study experiences (Brodnicke 2007; Egetenmeyer 2012). In this context, «learning from contrast» (Teichler 2017, 207) can also be assigned significance for the students' academic education. In the context of a mobility period abroad, it may also be possible to get to know and try out new teaching and learning methods (European Commission 2019, 76). This can be of particular importance for students of adult education as they are not only encouraged to reflect on their own learning but also to expand their experiences and knowledge in different teaching and learning methods (Egetenmeyer 2012, 158).

Student surveys show that international experiences can affect the further course of studies (COMPALL 2018; European Commission 2019; INTALL 2021). International experiences can give students opportunities for re-orientation in their course of studies or for continuation of their studies at a higher level (COMPALL 2018; European Commission 2019, 79-80; INTALL 2021). Students might also integrate international perspectives in their final theses due to their international experiences (COMPALL 2018; INTALL 2021). According to a survey of staff at higher education institutions in Germany, students are encouraged by the presence of international students to study abroad themselves (Reis, Röwert, and Brandenburg 2014, 91-92).

2.6.2.4 Career Path

Various studies examine the skills and knowledge acquired during a period abroad in relation to work-related opportunities and employment after graduation (Wiers-Jenssen and Try 2005; Bracht et al. 2006; Janson, Schomburg, and Teichler 2009; Amendola and Restaino 2017; Teichler 2017; European Commission 2019; NA and DAAD 2020). However, there is no consistent picture across the studies that shows a clear advantage on the labour market among students who are mobile during their studies compared to students who are not

mobile (Teichler 2017). Due the heterogeneity of students (e.g. in relation to study fields, international experience) and that of the global labour market, it does not seem possible to make generalised statements. However, different studies show that students who have had international experience during their studies believe such international experience to have helped in their careers to a certain degree (Bracht et al. 2006; Woisch and Willige 2015; European Commission 2019). According to the Erasmus+ Impact Study 2019, this is particularly the case for former students from programme countries in Southern and Eastern Europe and partner countries (European Commission 2019, 89). These results suggest a link between students' geographical origin and the impact on their career path. In addition, studies show that employers may include international experience during studies as a selection criterion or take international experience into account in application and selection processes, with the importance varying depending on the sector (Molony, Sowter, and Potts 2011; DAAD and IW 2016; NA and DAAD 2020). However, according to Bilecen and van Mol (2017, 1245), international mobility can also lead to disadvantages on the labour market, as students' local networks, which can give them access to the local labour market, might be weakened during their time abroad. Additionally, employers might prefer graduates who are familiar with local structures. This could result in the creation of new inequalities and reinforcement of existing inequalities.

In addition to international mobility, it is evident that participation in blended mobility can also offer opportunities to increase students' employability, develop their interest in working in the international labour market, and build up a professional network (INTALL 2021). Further studies indicate that future and currently mobile students are more likely than non-mobile students to live and work abroad, or to take up a job in an international context after graduation (Bracht et al. 2006; Parey and Waldinger 2011; van Mol 2014; European Commission 2019, 95). These students, however, often already have an aspiration to live and/or work abroad prior to their mobility abroad. Consequently, their decision to stay abroad and later take up employment in an international context can be attributed to their own goals and life plans (Findlay et al. 2012; van Mol 2014). International experiences gained during study abroad can rather be seen as «a usable extra qualification» (Heublein, Hutzsch, and Lörz 2008, 438) or as «a successful 'door-opener'» (Janson, Schomburg, and Teichler 2009, 165) for the national and international labour market.

2.7 Internationalisation of Higher Education at the National Level

Based on the previous explanations, it is clear that the internationalisation of higher education varies greatly at the national level. Among other things, the role of the state, the actors involved, the focus of national education policy, and the rationales and goals of internationalisation can vary. Likewise, national differences may be evident in the promotion of specific international programmes and activities in higher education and student participation in international teaching and learning settings. In accordance with the present research interest, it is

therefore worthwhile to look at internationalisation of higher education at the national level in the countries studied. This allows the empirical data collected to be analysed in an overarching context.

The following comments on the internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Italy, and Serbia refer to different developments in education and higher education policy in the respective countries. Reference is made to various national policy strategies as well as important political actors and programmes involved in the internationalisation of higher education. The explanations provide an overview of the political developments and the role of internationalisation at the national level, without taking a critical or evaluative stance.

2.7.1 Internationalisation of Higher Education in Germany

An increased interest in the internationalisation of higher education can be seen in German higher education policy over the past two decades. According to Daniel (2018, 18), this is partially due to the Bologna Process, in which Germany has been involved since the beginning, other European Union programmes, and Germany's desire to compete in a global knowledge economy. The political importance attached to the internationalisation of higher education is particularly evident in the internationalisation strategies adopted at the national level. Following the European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference Mobility Strategy in 2012 (European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference 2012), the science ministers of Germany's federal and state governments adopted a joint national internationalisation strategy for German higher education institutions in 2013. The strategy comprises nine fields of action, which aim, among other things, to support higher education institutions in developing their own internationalisation strategies and to improve the legal framework for internationalisation, to establish international campuses at higher education institutions, to increase the international mobility of students and the attractiveness of Germany as a location for higher education, as well as to establish opportunities for transnational higher education (GWK 2013). In addition to the strategy of the federal and state governments, the internationalisation of higher education is a key priority of the Internationalisation Strategy for Education, Science, and Research, which was adopted by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in 2016. Under the guiding principal «International Cooperation: interconnected and innovative» (BMBF 2016, 4) the strategy aims to effectively and sustainably advance international cooperation in education, science, and research. The strategy's aims include strengthening scientific excellence through global cooperation by increasing the international mobility of students (BMBF 2016, 31).

Due to Germany's federal structure, the individual federal states ('Länder') manage the internationalisation of higher education at the state level. Internationalisation is mainly promoted by the education ministries of the federal states. This is often done through performance agreements that are related to the funding of higher education institutions. More recent legislation has established general frameworks for the internationalisation of higher education

institutions (Pekšen and Leišytė 2021, 16)³⁴. Overall, the goals of the higher education policy strategies at the national and state level point to a competitive striving as well as an interest in promoting academic excellence. Increasing international mobility is just one of many goals.

The implementation of the objectives and measures of the internationalisation strategies is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the Federal Foreign Office, as well as the respective ministries at the state level. They cooperate with funding organisations such as the DAAD to implement and fund initiatives and programmes related to internationalisation. Other bodies such as the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and the German Science and Humanities Council have advisory functions in the internationalisation of higher education institutions.

In the national environment defined by the federal and state governments, the higher education institutions adopt their own internationalisation strategies. Therefore, the higher education institutions manage their own internationalisation. They decide, among other things, which national, European, or further programmes and initiatives they would like to participate in and how the funding is to be provided (Daniel 2018, 18). The HRK programme "HK-EXPERTISE Internationalisierung" provides support to higher education institutions for developing and implementing their own internationalisation strategies, programmes, and initiatives. This programme includes the HRK Audit, which aims to support higher education institutions in the establishment and further development of an institutional internationalisation strategy. The first HRK Audit was conducted in 2009 as part of a one-year pilot phase. Since then, more than 90 higher education institutions in Germany have been audited by the HRK and thus have their own internationalisation strategy. The audit was state funded by the Ministry of Education and Research until the end of 2016. Since 2017, it has been carried out on a self-funded basis (HRK n.d.).

2.7.2 Internationalisation of Higher Education in Serbia

The internationalisation of higher education in Serbia is to be analysed against the background of the political and social changes that have taken place in Serbia over the past twenty to thirty years. In 2000, the higher education system in Serbia was strongly influenced by the political regime change following the Yugoslav wars and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. After years of political neglect of the Serbian education system, the new millennium brought significant reforms aimed at renewing the education system (Spasenović, Hebib, and Ljujić 2014, 47-48). The higher education policy reforms in Serbia were based on the principles of the Bologna Declaration and led to the signing of the Bologna Declaration

³⁴ In Rhineland-Palatinate, for example, a new law aims at establishing a Higher Education Forum to promote cooperation in internationalisation between the state and higher education institutions (Pekšen and Leišytė 2021, 16).

in 2003. In the same year, the Bologna objectives, which include the introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), were officially adopted in the Law on Higher Education, which was revised several times in the following years (Despotović 2011, 45). The reforms in the Serbian higher education system set the course for Serbia's official accession to the European Higher Education Area. However, according to Despotović (2011, 46-47), this was not without its problems. Referring to the several amendments to the Law on Higher Education (in 2007, 2008 and 2010), he points to the premature, insufficiently thought-out implementation of the reforms, which did not take into account the specific features of higher education landscape in Serbia. Furthermore, he criticises the lack of strategic framing of the reforms, which he attributes to a lack of political will, a lack of consensus on reforms and objectives, and a lack of state funding (Despotović 2011, 47-48). With reference to the current situation of the Serbian higher education system, numerous deficiencies can still be identified, including the inadequate alignment of the education and higher education system to the needs of Serbia's society and economy (Manić 2019, 362). With regard to the internationalisation of the Serbian higher education system, Manić (2019, 366) postulates that the internationalisation processes are still at an early stage, which she attributes to factors such as the low mobility of academic staff and the low number of incoming and outgoing mobile students.

In Serbia, there is no dedicated internationalisation strategy at the national level. Instead, internationalisation is part of a broad higher education strategy (Manić 2019, 358). The Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020, which was adopted in 2013, focuses on goals such as the internationalisation of higher education institutions, and the increase in student mobility and joint degrees (DAAD 2018, 33). According to the DAAD (2018, 34), in conjunction with the associated action plan, internationalisation strategies and various measures, e.g. ECTS recognition procedures and mobility phases, have been developed at the higher education institutions. Another education policy document which is relevant to the internationalisation of higher education is the Strategy on Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2020. The aim of this initiative is to improve the quality of education and Serbia's links to international higher education. The new goals, to be achieved by 2030, are set out in the Science and Education Strategy (DAAD 2020, 2).

It should be noted that, in Serbia, the state can only set a legal framework with regard to internationalisation, while the higher education institutions and the individual faculties are responsible for implementation. Due to the high degree of autonomy of faculties in Serbia, state and university reforms are difficult to achieve³⁵. Great differences may even exist between faculties of the same

³⁵ In Serbia, the individual faculties of higher education institutions have a high degree of autonomy (e.g. in regard to funding, development of curricula, recruitment of staff). The management level of the higher education institutions is rather of administrative relevance (DAAD 2018, 12).

higher education institution (DAAD 2020, 2). With regard to Serbia's participation in the Erasmus programme, Serbia was a partner country in the Erasmus programme from 2015 and 2018 and has been a programme country since 2019 (DAAD 2018, 5). This means it is possible to participate in all areas of the Erasmus programme.

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development is responsible for higher education. Other key institutions in the Serbian higher education system include the National Council for Higher Education and the Conference of the Universities of Serbia. The project "SIPUS – Strengthening of Internationalisation Policies at Universities in Serbia" saw the country take further steps between 2013 and 2016 towards the internationalisation of higher education at the national level and the level of the higher education institutions (SIPUS 2017). Foundation Tempus plays a leading role in the promotion and implementation of the Erasmus programme and other European Union programmes (including Erasmus Mundus and Jean Monnet). It acts as the national agency for the Erasmus programme.

2.7.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education in Italy

After many years without effective higher education policy reform due to economic and political instability as well as academic resistance, various European policies and programmes as well as the Bologna Process helped bring about comprehensive changes in the Italian higher education system (Hunter 2015b, 117). Along with Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, Italy was one of the signatories of the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998, on which the Bologna Declaration was based a year later (Toens 2007, 37). Although the implementation of the Bologna Process reforms in Italy was not without obstacles, the Bologna Process can be seen as an important foundation for further national efforts in the internationalisation of higher education. The Italian government has initiated further measures to promote mobility and internationalisation and passed laws to modernise the higher education sector which are based on European standards and objectives (e.g. in the Europe 2020 Strategy) (Hunter 2015b, 119-20). The policies and initiatives adopted regarding the internationalisation of higher education focus in particular on student mobility and the aim of expanding higher education capacity and enhancing its international reputation (OECD and European Union 2019, 110). In addition to the focus on international incoming and outgoing student mobility, joint and double degrees have been expanded over the past few years thanks to increased state funding (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 248; OECD and European Union 2019, 111).

Although the internationalisation of higher education plays an increasing role in political strategies at the national level, according to the OECD Skills Studies, the internationalisation of higher education in Italy is only partially inclusive and comprehensive. On the other hand, it is evident that a predominantly instrumental understanding of internationalisation prevails in Italy. This is based on academic as well as economic rationales, including a revenue-gener-

ating focus (OECD and European Union 2019, 110-11). Based on the strategies and initiatives adopted by the state for the internationalisation of higher education, it should also be emphasised that the state only sets legal foundations, recommendations, and incentives for internationalisation, while the higher education institutions steer internationalisation largely autonomously (OECD and European Union 2019, 117).

In terms of the internationalisation of higher education, the Ministry for Education, University, and Research has a leading role, especially in legislation. Furthermore, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is involved in promoting internationalisation. It promotes international cooperation between Italian and foreign universities and provides financial support. The Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence, founded in 1984, documents bilateral agreements and provides information on the recognition of qualifications and other topics related to the Italian higher education system (CIMEA n.d.). With the aim of promoting Italian higher education and mobility of foreign students and scholars, the association Uni-Italia, which is the centre for the academic promotion and orientation of study in Italy, was founded in 2010 by the Ministry of Universities and Research, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Ministry of the Interior (Uni-Italia n.d.). Uni-Italia is intended to fulfil the role of a coordinating body comparable to the DAAD in Germany (OECD and European Union 2019, 110). In addition, initiatives are being identified at the regional level and on the part of the General Confederation of Italian Industry that contribute to the promotion of internationalisation (Hunter 2015b, 122). The national agency for the Erasmus programme in the field of school education, higher education, and adult education is the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation, and Educational Research. In addition, the Conference of Italian University Rectors plays a role in the internationalisation of higher education by, for example, providing information on internationalisation.

2.7.4 Internationalisation and Europeanisation of National Higher Education Systems

In the educational and higher education policy developments at the national level outlined above, it becomes clear that the internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy is developing in close connection with the education and higher education policy of the European Union. The influence of European guidelines, strategies, funding structures, and programmes on the internationalisation of higher education at the national level is evident, although the power to act in the area of education policy remains at the national level. The internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy can be interpreted in relation to European education programmes (e.g. Erasmus, Jean Monnet), the Bologna Process, and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Despite recognisable differences in the internationalisation of these countries, it is possible to point to a Europeanisation of higher education in the narrow sense (Simoleit 2016; Dagen et al. 2019).

In Germany, Serbia, and Italy, the internationalisation of higher education is being pushed through various strategies which can be traced back to the education ministries as well as further ministries of the countries. Likewise, various science organisations can be identified that are involved in internationalisation at national level. These organisations can play a more advisory role or provide support in the coordination and promotion of international programmes and activities. Although differences can be discerned in the rationales and objectives of internationalisation strategies at the national level, a predominantly competitive understanding of internationalisation is evident, which is oriented towards reputation and rankings (de Wit 2019). In this context, the promotion of international mobility can be regarded as one of the central measures or instruments of the internationalisation. As Helms and Rumbley (2016, 10) have already shown, the promotion of student mobility is the most frequently targeted objective in national strategies worldwide. With reference to the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018, Germany, Serbia, and Italy have also set concrete targets for outgoing and incoming student mobility in their national strategies or as central action (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 249-50).

Consequently, in Germany, Serbia, and Italy, with the start of the Erasmus programme in 1987 and the Bologna Declaration in 1999, it is possible to speak of an increasing internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education, although the implementation of internationalisation is largely the responsibility of higher education institutions³⁶. While national strategies can provide important regulations, the internationalisation of teaching and learning in higher education institutions ultimately depends on the institutions themselves. The internationalisation of the universities in which the master's programmes of this study are embedded will therefore be addressed in a separate chapter later on (Chap. 4.2.2).

2.8 Heuristic Model of the Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning

This paper understands internationalisation as the planned, ongoing process of integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning (J. Knight 2004, 2008; de Wit and Hunter 2015). Students can encounter international, intercultural, or global perspectives in the context of cross-border international teaching and learning settings that require physical or virtual mobility or take place at their own higher education institution in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home. The international teaching and learning settings can be understood as the result of the internationalisation process, which represents a complex interplay of different actors, rationales, and goals. Based on different actors at the macro, meso, and micro levels, different underlying framework conditions may arise that shape

³⁶ The opening of the higher education system in Serbia started later, after the end of the Yugoslav wars in 2000.

the international teaching and learning settings in the degree programmes. The integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning is not a random process. On the contrary, different rationales and goals of internationalisation can be identified that underlie internationalisation efforts. Consequently, the analysis of the interplay of these different factors can allow us to understand the development of international teaching and learning settings in degree programmes. Different global, regional, national, and local processes of change that shape internationalisation must also be taken into account.

The following heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Fig. 4) can accommodate the complexity presented. The model can guide the subsequent empirical study to investigate the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings in the three selected master's programmes in adult education. The model is presented in detail below.

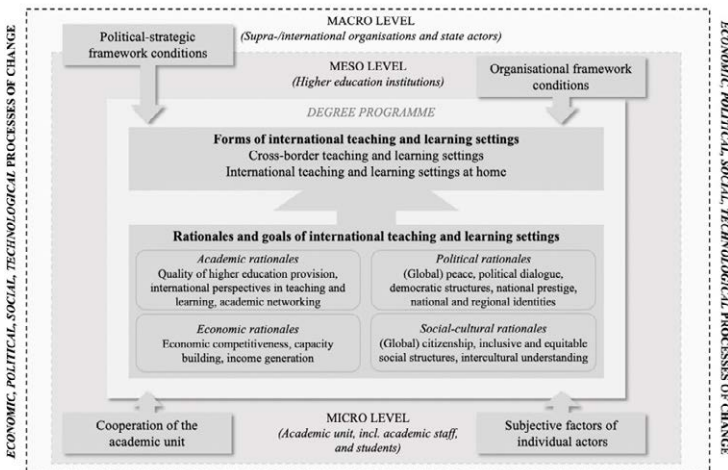


Figure 4 – Heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning. Source: own representation.

As shown in the heuristic model, the framework of international teaching and learning settings is determined by different actors on the macro, meso, or micro level, and different underlying framework conditions and determining factors that can have an impact on the international teaching and learning settings.

At the macro level, supra- and international organisations, as well as state actors, have a guiding influence on the internationalisation of higher education through policy papers and programmes. They shape political-strategic framework conditions. European education policy can be considered to play a key role in the European context (Simoleit 2016) as it provides important financial resources for the international mobility of students and academic staff (e.g. through the Erasmus+ programme). The Bologna Process and various funding measures of the European Union can also influence the national infrastructure, the strate-

gic orientation of higher education institutions, and the degree programmes offered (Bechtel, Lattke, and Nuissl 2005, 75-76). Although an increasing Europeanisation of higher education is evident (Simoleit 2016; Dagen et al. 2019), the internationalisation of higher education varies greatly at the national level. Therefore, Chap. 2.7 examined educational and higher education policy developments in relation to the internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy. This brought together a range of actors and highlighted different policy regulations and financial terms.

At the meso level, higher education institutions steer the internationalisation of teaching and learning by means of internal processes, alongside the areas of research and administration. Higher education institutions adopt internationalisation strategies and set up units that are responsible for international affairs (e.g. International Office). According to Kovács and Tarrósy, every higher education institution «belongs to a region that has its own characteristic system of institutions, processes, and culture, which reflect its particular history and the actual functional division of labour» (2017, 39). Therefore, the higher education institutions need to be examined with regard to their organisational environment and structures. Different organisational framework conditions can influence the provision of international teaching and learning settings. In order to map the organisational structures of the three selected universities of this study, an insight into the internationalisation of the universities is provided in Chap. 4.2.2.

At the micro level, the academic unit, including academic staff and students, can contribute to the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives in teaching and learning³⁷. Thereby, subjective factors of individual actors, such as intrinsic motivation (Simoleit 2016, 391-92), have to be considered. However, the influence of students on the internationalisation of teaching and learning is only marginally apparent in the higher education discourse. Furthermore, the cooperation of the academic unit, such as in partnerships abroad, supports the different initiatives and can have a lasting impact on the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Simoleit 2016). Basically, it can be said that the internationalisation of teaching and learning is promoted in particular at the individual and organisational level (Simoleit 2016), while national strategies are less comprehensive, and less structured, and less stringent (Rumbley 2015; de Wit 2019).

Considering the different actors, a variety of rationales and goals of international teaching and learning settings can be identified that are related to the internationalisation of teaching and learning. In the academic discourse, a distinction can be made between academic, political, economic, and social-cultural rationales (J. Knight 1999; de Wit 2002), from which different strategic goals and objectives can be derived. Among academic rationales, the following goals

³⁷ In this study, the term 'academic unit' is used in a generalised sense for department, school, chair, or professorship. It describes a unit within a faculty which is responsible for teaching and/or doing research in a concrete subject area.

can be distinguished: improving the quality of higher education provision, integrating international perspectives in teaching and learning, and supporting international academic networking. Among the political rationales are securing and promoting (global) peace, supporting political dialogue and democratic structures, enhancing national prestige, and building national and regional identities. Economic rationales focus on increasing economic competitiveness, capacity building, and income generation. Again, social-cultural rationales aim to promote (global) citizenship, develop inclusive and equitable social structures, and promote intercultural understanding. The goals presented, which may be strategically anchored at the national and organisational level, are often accompanied by verifiable indicators and key figures. However, the focus on quantitative indicators in the higher education sector reveals a competitive mindset among higher education institutions, which is geared towards rankings and global reputation and therefore needs to be critically examined (de Wit 2019).

The efforts of the various actors towards internationalisation ultimately manifest in different forms of international teaching and learning settings. A distinction can be made between cross-border teaching and learning settings and international teaching and learning settings at home, which can take different forms (e.g. study abroad, teaching of international lecturers). The students' participation in these international teaching and learning settings can vary depending on the different structural conditions and individual prerequisites, which may be obstacles to or reasons for participation. With reference to various student and graduate surveys, it may be possible to show who is reached with the offers and who is not, and where there is potential for development. Moreover, the studies emphasise the impact of participating in international teaching and learning settings on the students' linguistic, personal, academic, and career development. Awareness of the impact of students' participation in international teaching and learning settings can, in turn, enable the internationalisation efforts of individual actors to be justified and supported. However, the research available primarily provides a basis for statements on the effects of student mobility abroad (i.e. study abroad or internship abroad).

In order to fully grasp the interplay of actors, underlying conditions, rationales, and goals as well as different forms of international teaching and learning settings, the different factors need to be understood against the background of economic, political, social, and technological processes of change in the context of globalisation. In the academic discourse on higher education, the internationalisation of higher education is understood as a response to increasing globalisation (J. Knight 2004, 2017; Kovács and Tarrósy 2017; Rumbley et al. 2022). For example, rationales and goals of internationalisation are based on the increasing importance of a global knowledge society and the increasingly diverse composition of society. Likewise, new developments in information and communication technologies as well as an increased market orientation of higher education institutions may have an impact on the internationalisation of higher education (J. Knight 2008, 6). The increased importance of technologies in relation to teaching and learning can be seen in particular with regard

to the COVID-19 pandemic (Rumbley et al. 2022). At the same time, opposing social trends (e.g. nationalism, racism, climate change) are emerging that pose challenges to the internationalisation of higher education (J. Knight and de Wit 2018; Rumbley et al. 2022).

Furthermore, the influence of the disciplines on the internationalisation of teaching and learning (de Wit and Leask 2017, 347) as well as the subject area and structure of the individual degree programmes must be considered.

Internationalisation strategies are shaped at the programme level by the different relationship these programmes have to market and society. An internationalisation strategy can be substantially different for a teacher training programme than for a school of dentistry or a business school. And internationalisation strategies may be different by level: PhD, master and bachelor (de Wit, Deca, and Hunter 2015, 6-7).

According to de Wit, Deca, and Hunter (2015), the internationalisation of teaching and learning varies depending on the type of the degree programme (e.g. study level, subject) and its relevance to the labour market and society. Insights into the academic and practice field of adult education may therefore help us analyse the provision of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes in adult education.

Professionalisation in the Field of Adult Education

Research on professionalisation in adult education is concerned with the development of adult education as an occupational field as well as with the development of staff working in adult education. Over the past three decades, there has been an increased interest in the topics of professionalisation and professionalism in adult education in the academic discourse, which is reflected in numerous academic anthologies dealing with professionalisation in adult education (e.g. Nuissl and Lattke 2008; Egetenmeyer and Nuissl 2010; Medić, Ebner, and Popović 2010; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012a; Sgier and Lattke 2012; Lattke and Jütte 2014; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, and Boffo 2017). This increased level of attention is also evident in the establishment of international research networks and associations dealing with professionalisation in adult education (e.g. European Society for Research on the Education of Adults in 1991, International Council for Adult Education in 1973). In addition, there is a growing interest in education policy. In the European context, since the Lisbon strategy (European Council 2000) and the adoption of the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (European Commission 2000), there have been education policy demands concerned with initial and continuing education, and the training of staff working in adult education as well as their qualifications. Egetenmeyer and Schüßler (2014c, 175) argue in relation to the German context that these political demands of the European Union have had a structuring effect on the field of adult education at the national level. This can be discerned, for example, in the competence and output orientation of qualification measures for staff.

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With a focus on the qualification of (future) staff in adult education in the context of academic education, a differentiated look at the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education is required. Based on the theoretical clarification of the triad of profession, professionalisation, and professionalism (Chap. 3.1), which is oriented towards the sociology of professions, a conceptual understanding of professionalism and professional action in adult education can be developed. The development of professionalism in adult education is to be understood in connection with the development (Chap. 3.2.1) and structures (Chap. 3.2.2) of the occupational field. In this context, the occupational field is to be outlined in the respective national contexts of the three given research fields. With focus on the development of graduates' professionalism in master's programmes in adult education, academic professionalisation as a subject of research (Chap. 3.3.1) is of particular interest. On the structural level, degree programmes in the field of adult education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy can be examined, whereby similarities and differences can be observed (Chap. 3.3.2). On the individual level, the development of professionalism in academic adult education can be examined by drawing on academic contributions and empirical studies (Chap. 3.3.3). The theoretical assumptions are transferred into a heuristic model (Chap. 3.4), which guides the research on the individual level of academic professionalisation in adult education (Research Question 4).

3.1 The Triad of Profession, Professionalisation, and Professionalism

In the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education, different concepts serve as theoretical reference points to guide the focus of observations and investigations. A distinction can be drawn between the terms: profession, professionalisation, and professionalism. The concept of profession goes back to the academic discourse of the sociology of professions, where different professional theories must be differentiated. These include, among others, the structural-theoretical, interactionist, power-theoretical, knowledge-sociological, and difference-theoretical approach¹. These approaches are adopted by other disciplines (Dick 2016), such as the field of pedagogy (Combe and Helsper 1996; Helsper and Tippelt 2011; Helsper 2021). The different terms are discussed below in relation to the field of adult education based on the sociological discourse on professions. In this context, a shift from the term of profession (Chap. 3.1.1) towards professionalisation (Chap. 3.1.2) and professionalism (Chap. 3.1.3) is evident. Drawing on the German academic discourse, an understanding of professionalism and professional action in adult education can be outlined, which is fundamental for the subsequent empirical investigation of this study.

¹ A systematic overview of different professional theories is provided by Helsper (2021).

3.1.1 Profession as a Temporary Phenomenon in Adult Education

According to the traditional understanding of the sociology of professions, professions are understood as occupational groups that are characterised by «power, prestige and a certain degree of self-determination compared to other occupational groups» (Mieg 2016, 27)². According to the traditional understanding of professions, the “classic” professions comprise medicine, law, and theology. In order to distinguish professions from other occupational groups and to be able to define them more precisely, attributive-oriented approaches have developed that define specific characteristics of professions. These may include autonomy, abstractness, altruism, and authority (Mieg 2016, 28)³. The orientation towards a common good is emphasised as a central feature of professions in structural-functional theories (Parsons 1937, 1939). Professions therefore serve a central social value. In addition, authors refer to the particularities of the interaction situation and interaction context between professionals and clients (Oevermann 1996; Schütze 1996). The different professional theories can deal with questions related to the social significance of professions and their inherent power and dominance structures. They can address the relationship between professions and organisations and the relationship between professionals and clients (Helsper 2021).

In the adult education discourse, an orientation towards the traditional professional theories (in particular attributive-oriented approaches) can be discerned in the development of adult education as an occupational field (e.g. by focusing on the academisation, institutionalisation, and juridification of adult education) in the second half of the twentieth century (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018, 8). However, fundamental differences to traditional professional theories are revealed with regard to the question of whether adult education is a profession or not (Gieseke 2002; Jarvis 2010; Egetenmeyer 2016a; Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018). For example, with reference to attributive-oriented approaches, neither a specialised field of knowledge nor a controlled access to the field of work can be identified (Egetenmeyer 2016a, 19).

Representatives of newer professional theories (Noordegraaf 2007; Evetts 2011) distance themselves from the search for unique and structural characteristics of professions, as can be seen in traditional professional theories. They argue that professions find themselves increasingly determined by bureaucratic structures, standardisation, quality control, and the influence of the market.

² Based on the understanding of professions as a specialist form of occupations, the terms ‘profession’ and ‘occupation’ are used in a distinctive way. However, ‘occupation’ and the associated adjective ‘occupational’ are often used synonymously with ‘profession’ and ‘professional’ in the English language.

³ Autonomy refers to the fact that professions have a monopoly position in their field, which they organise and regulate independently. Abstractness refers to the abstract academic knowledge base on which professions are based. Altruism refers to the orientation of professions towards a common good. Authority refers to the fact that professions have a social mandate for their area of responsibility, are superior to other professional groups, and structure themselves by means of associations (Mieg 2016, 28).

Professions are moving away from the notion of autonomy. They are to be seen as dependent on other functional systems in society. In adult education, even in its beginnings, a link to other functional systems in society is apparent. It can be found «in state contexts (e.g. basic education for adults, remedial education for adults), in market contexts (e.g. professional continuing development and education, human resource development, commercial continuing education centers) and in the third sector (e.g. adult education of interest groups, churches)» (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018, 9). Moreover, it is argued that in the modern knowledge society, leading professions are losing importance as new functional systems (e.g. sport, tourism) are increasingly emerging that have no underlying leading profession (Kurtz 2005; Nittel 2011b, 43). The simplified access to knowledge through digitalisation and the fast-moving nature of knowledge are similarly changing the position of the classic professions. Modifications in the monopoly position and specialised knowledge base of classic professions are evident (Schnell 2017, 3). Consequently, a paradigm shift is discernible, which is less about differentiating and examining the structures of individual professions than about the development of professionalism in the process of professionalisation (Mieg and Evetts 2018). It is not the formal characteristics of a profession that are the subject of research, but the professional activity of its members.

3.1.2 Professionalisation in Adult Education

The term professionalisation can be considered on a collective and individual level as illustrated in Figure 5. Different meanings can be identified depending on which theoretical understanding the terms are based on. With reference to Mieg (2016, 30), collective professionalisation can be understood as the development process of a profession or an occupational field. Individual professionalisation encompasses, in turn, the process of transferring an activity into professional work based on the specific standards and values of the field.

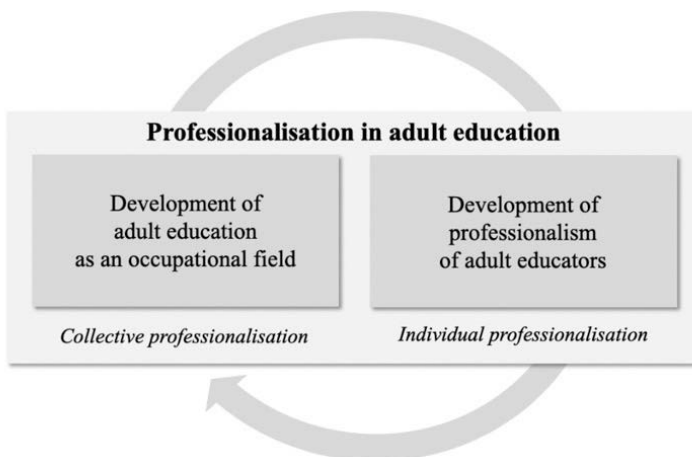


Figure 5 – Dimensions of professionalisation in adult education. Source: own representation.

When looking at collective professionalisation from an international perspective, with reference to McClelland (1990, 107), the development of professions can be observed from different functional systems. While in the Anglo-American region, professions tend to develop ‘from within’, as a group successfully places itself on the market, in Central Europe professions mainly develop ‘from above’, through regulation and recognition by external forces, particularly the state. However, it is argued that with the changing role of the state and its orientation towards the logic of the market, the responsibility is increasingly being handed over to the individuals (Breitschwerdt 2022, 105).

For adult education, it is less a matter of conforming with the traditional sociological understanding of a profession than looking at the state of the development of adult education as an occupational field with the aim of advancing the quality of the field (Schütz 2009, 86). According to Nittel (2018, 31-32), the development of adult education as an occupational field can be summarised along five process levels (see also Nittel and Seltrecht 2008, 132-33):

- 1) The ‘academisation’ of adult education, which is associated with the introduction of degree courses and academic continuing education;
- 2) The ‘occupationalisation’ of adult education, as an increase in the number of main occupations in the field, the formation of occupational associations;
- 3) The ‘legalisation’ of adult education, which is associated with the introduction of laws regulating adult education and is geared towards the social recognition of adult education at national/regional level;
- 4) The ‘institutionalisation’ of adult education, in the sense of a differentiation and increase in institutions and organisations in the field;
- 5) The ‘scientification’, which means the expansion of academic knowledge and the development of an independent field of research.

Collective professionalisation focuses therefore on the structural preconditions and specific structures of adult education as an occupational field. Individual professionalisation, in contrast, focuses on the individual actors. Professionalisation on the individual level captures the individual and ongoing «educational and maturing process» (Nittel and Seltrecht 2008, 134) that leads to the acquisition of specialist knowledge and an occupational status. The process of individual professionalisation is geared towards enabling professionalism and professional action in the occupational practice. However, professionalism is merely «a fleeting aggregate state» (Nittel 2011b, 48) that has to be constantly re-established (see further Chap. 3.1.3). The individual professionalisation of staff working in adult education can vary greatly depending on their individual (work-related) biographies. This occurs in academic and non-academic contexts, which offer a variety of qualification opportunities, including in informal learning settings (e.g. on the job).

However, the individual professionalisation cannot be understood separately from the collective professionalisation of the field as both levels develop in

a relationship with each other (Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022, 1046). According to Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner (2018), professionalisation in adult education is to be understood as an interaction of personnel, organisation, and society. They argue from a multi-level analytical perspective:

[...] to broaden research on professionalisation in adult and continuing education from a limited perspective on the personnel (e.g. its qualification, salary and individual or collective performance) to a multi-level perspective. Professionalisation in adult and continuing education is fundamentally influenced by the working conditions, fields and possibilities provided by adult and continuing education organisations. Furthermore, the societal and institutional contexts (e.g. policies, regulations, governance, educational demands) influence professionalisation in adult and continuing education massively (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018, 14).

3.1.3 Professionalism and Professional Action in Adult Education

Professionalism refers to the level of action. It describes a specific way or «particular quality» (Nittel 2011b, 32) of occupational activity which, in the field of adult education, is oriented towards the facilitation of educational and learning processes for adults. In the sociological discourse, Freidson (2001) identifies professionalism as a third logic, distinct from the logic of the market and the logic of bureaucracy. Professionalism is based on specific knowledge, skills, and qualifications. In contrast to economic and bureaucratic action, professional action follows its own logic, which Mieg, referring to Freidson, describes as «performing an activity with dedication to the cause and an appreciation of professional quality» (2016, 30). However, with reference to newer professionalisation theories, the three logics of action are increasingly interwoven, implying a hybrid and multifunctional understanding of professionalism (Noordegraaf 2007). Professionalism in today's society also requires dealing with organisational and social demands and challenges (Noordegraaf 2007; Evetts 2011). According to Dick (2016, 21), professionals also need to increasingly cooperate across disciplines. This is due to the increased complexity of employment and living conditions driven by, for example, new technologies and worldwide networking. Professionalism is to be understood as a continuous process in the course of one's occupational biography, in the context of academic education and further training, and in the work context. It is developed in the process of individual professionalisation. Professionalism means the continuous efforts of an individual to become professional without ever fully achieving it (Nittel 2000, 2011b; Noordegraaf 2007; Nittel and Dellori 2014).

In the professionalisation discourse in adult education, a distinction can be drawn between competence-theoretical approaches and action-theoretical approaches, which take different perspectives on professionalism and professional action, as well as on the development of professionalism in the field of adult education. From a competence-theoretical perspective, professionalism can be

defined in terms of specific competences and knowledge areas, which are determined on the basis of empirical research as necessary prerequisites for working in the field of adult education. Numerous attempts to formulate competence models and profiles have aimed to define and recognise the necessary competences and knowledge areas (in Germany e.g. Fuhr 1991; Strauch et al. 2019). Increased efforts to define a minimum set of competences for those working in the field of adult education can be observed in parallel with, and as partly being driven by, the growing political attention of European education policy on the professionalisation of adult education at the beginning of the 2000s (Lattke 2016). Key studies at the European level include the “ALPINE – Adult Learning Professions in Europe” (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008), the study on “Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals” (Buiskool et al. 2010) as well as a study on the “Core Competences of Adult Learning Facilitators in Europe” within the framework of the Qualified to Teach project (Bernhardsson and Lattke 2011). According to Bernhardsson and Lattke (2012, 260), competence catalogues developed by these studies can serve as orientation for the design of professionalisation measures. However, due to the multitude and diversity of the available models at national and European level, as well as the heterogeneity of the occupational field, defining a uniform reference model on which the qualification measures of staff working in adult education can be based is a difficult task⁴.

While competence-theoretical approaches attribute professionalism to the available competences and knowledge of adult educators, action-theoretical approaches focus on situational action in moments of uncertainty. Professional action in adult education is characterised by acting in unique, non-recurring situations in which there is not only one right way to act. It differs from standardised and technological processes in which the outcome of one’s own actions can be predicted (Egetenmeyer and K apflinger 2011). From the sociological perspective, the specificity of professionalism results from a so-called «inference» (Abbott 1988, 49)⁵. Professional action is characterised by the incompatibility of theory and practice which requires a high level of reflectivity. Therefore, professional action is rather an attempt to act appropriately in concrete situations, whereby the action is associated with moments of uncertainty (Helsper 2021). Therefore, professionalism can be understood as «a state that has to be produced and sustained interactively and that requires a high degree of reflectivity and justifiability» (Nittel 2011b, 48) on the side of the adult educator.

According to Tietgens, who first introduced the term professionalism to German adult education in the 1980s, professional action requires a «situational

⁴ In Chap. 3.2.2, the heterogeneous structures of the occupational field are discussed in more detail.

⁵ Inference captures the bridging of the ambivalent relationship between theory and practice. It occurs in the relationship between diagnosis and treatment. Dick (2016, 18) identifies three levels at which inference takes place: a) in decision-making in situations of practice that are characterised by uncertainty; b) in the reflection of past actions and decisions; c) in the generation of new knowledge.

competence» (1988, 37) to deal with concrete practice situations. This situational competence enables practitioners to transfer generalised knowledge to the individual case and to be able to use it appropriately in the concrete situation (Tietgens 1988, 37). Subsequently, Gieseke summarises professionalism in adult education as:

the differentiated handling of research findings from the discipline, with interdisciplinary knowledge for the interpretation of action situations with claim to action in a specific field of practice. Professionalism thus includes the competent, flexible application of knowledge in the field, as well as diagnostic and flexible networked action (2018, 1056).

In other words, professionalism is constituted in the interrelation of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and the requirements of the concrete practice situation. It is achieved by reflective and hermeneutic processes of understanding on the part of the adult educator. According to Egetenmeyer and Schüßler, it is only possible to speak of successful professionalism when «this ambivalence between academic demands and everyday decision-making pressure has been balanced and transferred into *competent action*» (2014b, 31).

From an epistemological perspective, according to Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke (1992), the interrelation of theory and practice involves drawing connections between academic knowledge and practical action knowledge. Academic knowledge refers to the knowledge of explanation and interpretation, which is empirically proven and anchored in academic discourse (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992; Gieseke 2018). Practical action knowledge comprises experiential and orientational knowledge, which is acquired in the field of practice and oriented towards decision-making or problem-solving in a specific practice situation (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992). Professional action does not take place by simply contrasting these two forms of knowledge but requires a process of interrelating academic knowledge and practical action knowledge. By creating relationships between theory and practice, these two forms of knowledge can finally be transformed into professional knowledge, which «stands as an independent area between practical action knowledge, with which it shares the permanent pressure to make decisions, and systematic academic knowledge, with which it is subject to an increased pressure to justify itself» (Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992, 81).

Furthermore, from a difference-theoretical perspective, professionals working in adult education have to deal with contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies in the field of practice (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011). According to Nittel (2000, 2004), professional actions are characterised by the irresolvable tension between the dimensions of knowledge and skills, since the context of origin of academic knowledge differs from the context of its application in the field of practice. Therefore, it is not possible to apply standardised knowledge in practice situations in a technical manner (Nittel 2004, 351). Contradictions can be identified and managed at the level of action (between the need to justify and the pressure to decide), the level of knowledge (between

academic knowledge and everyday knowledge), and the level of relationship (between adult educator and learner) (Nittel 2000, 2011a). Von Hippel (2011), with reference to Helsper (2002, 2021), distinguishes between antinomies and paradoxes that characterise professional action in adult education. Antinomies represent orientations in professional action that are simultaneously valid and cannot be resolved, and therefore require a reflective approach. Antinomies include, for example, the pressure to make decisions and the simultaneous need to justify actions in practice (as referred to by Nittel at the level of action). These constitutive antinomies can lead to so-called professional dilemmas in practical interaction. Particularly tense conflicting situations and problems in action, which result from the antinomies, are recognised as paradoxes. In order to be able to deal with these emerging contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies in professional action, a high degree of reflectivity is required on the part of the adult educator. For this reason, (self-)reflective competences are considered to play a central role in professional action (Pachner 2013, 2018).

The demands on those working in adult education are intensified by the fact that social, political, and organisational expectations and requirements (e.g. through laws on adult education or the financial viability of offers) have an effect on the (professional) action and are mutually dependent on each other (Buschle and Tippelt 2015; Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018). Changes in the system of lifelong learning, such as the increased importance of informal learning, digitalisation, and demographic change, as well as diffusion in the transitions of educational biographies, further influence the complexity of acting professionally in the field of adult education (Tippelt and Lindemann 2018, 83-84). Consequently, professionalism and professional action in adult education are characterised by dealing with contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies which can be reflected against the background of the respective context.

Furthermore, professionalism depends on (professional) self-concept on the part of the adult educator. An understanding of one's own role, tasks, and functions as well as an ethical attitude can be considered a central prerequisite for adult educators working in the field (Schmidt-Lauff and Gieseke 2014; Benz-Gydat 2017). Straß (2018) refers to the need for professional personalities who can place their knowledge in a comprehensive context (e.g. the workplace) in a way that is meaningful and ethically grounded. In this context, the self-reflective examination of one's own actions is of central importance (Pachner 2013, 2018). In this way, adult educators can legitimise their actions and distinguish their actions from those of a layperson (Hartig 2009, 225). Professional action is consequently linked to a specific attitude and logic in action, anchored in the self-concept of the adult educator.

In the German context, Hartig (2009) identified various self-description logics of adult educators in a qualitative study that can be differentiated along three axes, enabling conclusions to be drawn on the self-concept of adult educators. However, in the national and international discourse on adult education, it is not possible to identify a common identity or ethics of adult educators (A. Bron and Jarvis 2008; Hartig 2009; Kraft, Seitter, and Kollwe 2009; Fuchs

2011; Bernhardsson and Fuhr 2014). This can be attributed to the fact that the field of practice is broad and heterogenous. Rather, the professional self-concept of adult educators can be grasped in an ongoing, biographically shaped process, in which academic education can be assigned an important profile-forming function through the examination and reflection of relevant knowledge and research in the field (Schmidt-Lauff and Gieseke 2014, 533). Likewise, researchers (Bremer, Pape, and Schlitt 2020) distance themselves from a common habitus in the sense of a «shared professional culture» (Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992, 87)⁶. Rather, habitus-specific patterns can be identified in the professional action of adult educators, which are shaped both by the demands of the occupational field and by the biographical and milieu-specific background of the individuals (Bremer, Pape, and Schlitt 2020)⁷.

In summary, based on action-theoretical approaches, professionalism and professional action in adult education are to be understood as the skilful handling of academic knowledge and practical action knowledge in the concrete practice situation, based on the professional attitude and logic on the part of the adult educator. According to Tietgens (1988) and Gieseke (2010, 2018), the academic foundation is considered a central necessity of professionalism in adult education. This is why particular importance can be attributed to academic education and academic continuing education in adult education (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018)⁸. Due to the very nature of acting in the field of adult education, which differs from standardised processes and is characterised by uncertainties (Helsper 2021), contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011), the reflective approach to academic knowledge proves to be a central prerequisite. Through reflective and hermeneutic processes, adult educators are able to systematically relate academic knowledge to the requirements of the concrete practice situation and deal adequately with contradictions in action.

Professional action is characterised by the fact that academic knowledge cannot be applied directly. Rather, it serves as hermeneutic interpretive knowledge for the interpretation of practice situations and as reflective knowledge for one's own attitude, self-concept, and professional identity – ultimately for the justification

⁶ On the concept of habitus, see Bourdieu (2018).

⁷ In the study of Bremer, Pape, and Schlitt (2020), three habitus-specific patterns among people working in the field of adult education in Germany are distinguished: 1. pedagogical-egalitarian (focus on a varied, free, and creative activity; intensions are on emancipation and equal opportunities; particularly pronounced participant orientation); 2. pedagogical-distinctive (visible in leadership positions; varied, conceptual, and independent activity; either more oriented towards experiencing meaning in work or more oriented towards career and status); 3. pedagogical-administrative (mainly associated with organisational, structuring activities; desire for regulated processes; often a strong identification with the organisation where adult educators are employed).

⁸ More detailed explanations as to how the development of professionalism can be supported through academic education follow in Chap. 3.3.

of professional action in changing institutional contexts. These reasons are important in order to be able to professionally confront contradictions, paradoxes and antinomies of adult education practice situations: (Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022, 1051-52).

The academic foundation consequently serves the interpretation of concrete situations in the field of adult education by enabling the observation and understanding of social phenomena. In addition, academic knowledge enables reflection on one's own actions as well as reflection on one's own professional self-concept.

3.2 Adult Education as an Occupational Field

The individual professionalisation of staff working in adult education is shaped by the process of collective professionalisation – the development of adult education as an occupational field. According to Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner (2018), to analyse professionalisation, it is important to be aware of individual as well as social and organisational contexts. The professionalisation of adult educators is not only shaped by the personnel itself but also by developments and structures at the policy, social, and institutional levels, by the internal structures of organisations and what they provide (Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018, 14). This understanding seems to be of great importance when looking at the development of professionalism of staff working in adult education from an international and comparative perspective. In the European context, the field of adult education is characterised by heterogeneous and diverse structures, which can be seen across institutions and organisations in adult education, target groups, legal requirements, fields of activity, employment situations as well as qualification measures and strategies of staff (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008; Buiskool et al. 2010; Jütte and Lattke 2014)⁹. This heterogeneity and diversity is intensified by the fact that political and social developments, as well as the orientation and social mission of adult education, vary between countries and regions depending on historical developments and the current social context (Nuissl 2010b, 128).

To this end, the following sections provide a systematic overview of the field of adult education with reference to the national contexts of Germany, Serbia,

⁹ With reference to the institutional concept of organisation by Göhlich (2014), a distinction is made between 'institution' and 'organisation' although the terms are often used interchangeably in academic discourse and in everyday life. According to Göhlich, 'institutions' are systems of rules with social validity, which are embedded in society. In turn, 'organisations' are social constructs created to pursue a specific purpose. They are characterised by the interaction of their members, a division of labour, set boundaries, and an own organisational culture. Organisations can incorporate institutions but also generate new patterns of activity which can in turn become institutionalised (2014, 72). In the following, the term institution is used to refer to universities, chambers, legal and funding bodies, and associations. In contrast, organisations are single providers which plan (and conduct) teaching and learning offers.

and Italy. The focus is on both the development (Chap. 3.2.1) and the structures (Chap. 3.2.2) of the occupational field of adult education. This facilitates an understanding of the national contexts of this study.

3.2.1 Development of the Occupational Field in Germany, Serbia, and Italy

The development of adult education as an occupational field in Germany, Serbia, and Italy is outlined in relation to the process levels of collective professionalisation according to Nittel (2018). Different developments in legislation, institutionalisation, occupationalisation, academisation, and scientification of adult education can be traced at a national level. Subsequently, these developments can be contrasted between countries and complemented by developments in the professionalisation of adult education at the European level. Academic structures in adult education are examined in further depth in Chap. 3.3.2.

3.2.1.1 Development of the Occupational Field in Germany

In the German context, the beginnings of adult education as an occupational field can be traced back to the late 1960s, with the introduction of state laws on adult and continuing education of the so-called 'Länder' coming in the 1970s. While adult education was perceived merely as a mission for which one's own life experience was considered sufficient in the decades beforehand, adult education was now increasingly becoming a permanent task of society (Egetenmeyer 2016a, 19-20). With the legalisation and recognition of adult education as the fourth pillar of the German educational system (Deutscher Bildungsrat 1970), one can speak of the beginning of the occupationalisation of adult education in Germany. This is demonstrated, for example, by the increase in full-time positions at German Adult Education Centres ('Volkshochschulen') where the main task of the full-time staff at that time was programme development and planning (Egetenmeyer 2010b, 35). At the same time, the German Adult Education Association, and other associations as well as churches, ascribed importance to the professionalisation and qualification of staff working in adult education. As a result, materials for self-study and concepts for practice-oriented continuing education were developed (Gieseke 2018, 1062).

The academisation of adult education in Germany began at the end of the 1960s with the development of degree programmes (diploma studies) in educational science in the study field of adult and continuing education by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. In the following years of the 1970s and 1980s, numerous degree programmes in educational science with a focus on adult education were established at various German universities. This saw the first chairs and professorships in adult education come into being (Lobe and Walber 2020, 17). These were able to contribute to research and theory formation in adult education (Egloff 2020, 9). The establishment of university and non-university research facilities have contributed to a high density of academic publications (Nittel 2018, 41).

Moreover, due to the developments at the beginning of the 1970s, a further increase and differentiation of institutions and organisations in adult education can be observed (Nittel and Seltrecht 2008, 132), which have contributed to the institutional expansion and development of adult education as an occupational field in Germany.

3.2.1.2 Development of the Occupational Field in Serbia

In Serbia, the beginnings of the development of adult education as an occupational field can be traced back to the period of the formation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-41) after the First World War. In this period, adult education changed from being a free, minimally systematised activity to being an integral part of society. The first adult education providers developed in this period, aiming to implement and achieve political goals, and the first attempts were made in the systematic training of staff (Samolovčev 1985, 41-43). After the Second World War, institutional expansion followed, first in the formal education sector and after 1950 also in the non-formal sector (Krajnc 1985, 64). The 1950s can be seen as a «time of organizational, institutional, and theoretical consolidation of adult education, as well as its dynamic growth and expansion» (Samolovčev 1985, 50) in Yugoslavia that contributed to the professionalisation of adult education in science and practice.

An academisation of adult education began to emerge in the mid-1930s in the early days of the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade in the first systematic lectures on popular education and learning (Medić, Popović, and Milanović 2009, 33). In 1962, topics on the field of adult education were integrated into the curriculum of Pedagogy at the Department of Pedagogy for the first time. From 1979 onwards, two separate study groups (Pedagogy and Andragogy) were formed at the University of Belgrade, leading to first degrees in andragogy (Medić, Popović, and Milanović 2009, 34-35). In addition, adult education is included as a study field in two further universities in Serbia (Ovesni 2018, 29). With the establishment of the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Belgrade in 1983, there has also been an increase in research and international academic cooperation in the field of adult education in Serbia (Savićević 2010, 19-21).

With the armed conflicts and the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, several problems arose in the Serbian education system, which led, among other things, to a decline in financial and material resources. The change of political power at the turn of the millennium finally led to comprehensive political reform of the Serbian educational system (Spasenović, Hebib, and Ljujić 2014, 47-48). In this context, with the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System in 2003, the focus returned to the education and training of staff, which had been severely neglected for some time. The subsequent Strategy of Adult Education Development in the Republic of Serbia (2006) focuses on the development of education and training standards for teaching staff in adult education in order to contribute to improving the performance and quality of adult education. Fi-

nally, in 2014, the *Law on Adult Education (Zakon O Obrazovanju Odraslih)* 2013 was enacted, which, with Article 49-54, is oriented even more heavily towards staff in adult education, their activities, and qualifications. It also differentiates between three different profiles of adult educators, which are described in more detail in Chap. 3.2.2.2.

3.2.1.3 Development of the Occupational Field in Italy

In Italy, the beginnings of adult education as an occupational field can be identified with the end of the Second World War, when literacy and democratic education gained importance (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 122; Terzaroli 2017, 80). Adult educators in 1947 were considered important actors in informal learning contexts, such as in associations and religious settings (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 122). In the 1970s, with the legal recognition of (further) education and qualification of workers in Italy, adult education gained increasing importance (Terzaroli 2017, 80) until finally, in 1997, the occupational profile of an adult educator was legally recognised (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 122).

An important milestone for adult education as an occupational field in Italy can also be seen with the establishment of local adult education centres, so-called Permanent Territorial Centres for Adult Education (CTP – Centri Territoriali Permanenti), in 1997. A ministerial decree also defined qualifications for staff working in adult education (Terzaroli 2017, 82). The CTPs offered «training and guidance services, primary and functional literacy, foreign languages, and computer courses» (Daniele, Franzosi, and Nobili 2017, 13). In 2012, the CTPs were renamed as Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIA – Centri Provinciali per l’Istruzione degli Adulti) and became the main adult education providers in the public sector.

In the same period, at the turn of the century, one can speak of an academisation and scientification of adult education in Italy. In addition to adult education becoming a field of action, systematic theories were formulated and adult education became a field of study at Italian universities. As a result, adult education is established as a distinct discipline (Federighi 2000, 28). Today, bachelor’s and master’s programmes are offered at various universities in the country which include the study field of adult education (Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016).

Looking at the historical developments, it can be seen that it is only since the end of the 1990s that one can speak of there being a broad legal and political framework for adult education in Italy. However, Terzaroli (2017, 85) indicates that the recognition of and attention to adult education in Italy is still rather low.

3.2.1.4 Adult Education under the Influence of European Education Policy

Looking at the previous sections, it can be seen that adult education as an occupational field developed in all three countries particularly in a phase in which adult education moved from a non-professional social activity to a permanent

social task, meaning that questions about the qualification of those working in adult education come to the fore (Egetenmeyer 2016a, 19). The surge in professionalisation that can be seen in the countries in the 1960s and 1970s can also be interpreted against the background of the international discourse on Lifelong Education (Savićević 1985, 237; Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022, 1044).

In terms of academisation and scientification, Germany and Serbia can point to a fairly long-standing academic tradition of adult education, with Serbia having its own degree in adult education at an early stage. In Italy, on the other hand, adult education only developed as a distinct study field around the turn of the millennium. It becomes clear that, in contrast to the other countries, adult education has come into being as a disciplinary field relatively late in Italy. It is also striking that a high degree of legal regulation of adult education has emerged in Serbia over the last two decades, indicating that politics has a strong role in professionalisation, as can be found in many former socialist countries (Kleisz 2013, 418). In Germany and Italy, by contrast, state regulation has been shown to be lighter and less systematic.

With the turn of the millennium, one can also observe an increased influence of European education policy on professionalisation in adult education. The beginnings of this political focus can be traced back to the Lisbon goals (European Council 2000) and the adoption of the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning in 2000 (European Commission 2000), which emphasised the importance of initial and continuing teacher training for the development of effective teaching and learning methods and contexts. The European Commission's Communication "Adult Learning: It Is never too late to Learn" (European Commission 2006) and the Action Plan on "Action Plan on Adult Learning: It Is always a Good Time to Learn" (European Commission 2007) saw the first precise definition of adult education in European education policy, with qualifications of adult education staff becoming increasingly important¹⁰. In this context, the qualification of staff is seen as an important component in ensuring quality in adult education (Council of the European Union 2011, 2016; European Commission 2006, 2007). This is also reflected in various studies commissioned by the European Commission to research the situation of people working in adult education (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008) and to investigate and define the relevant qualifications and competences in the field (Buiskool et al. 2010; Bernhardsson and Lattke 2011). The latter are based on a competence-theoretical understanding of professionalism and professionalisation. The «competence, output and quality (management) orientation» (Egetenmeyer and Schübler 2012b, 30) of European education policy also influences the qualification and further training of those working in adult education at the national level, as can be seen in the German context. An increased tendency towards «validation, recognition and certification of competences acquired formally, non-formally

¹⁰ According to this definition, adult learning encompasses «*all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training, however far this process may have gone (e.g., including tertiary education)*» (European Commission 2006, 2).

or informally» (Egetenmeyer and Schübler 2012b, 30) is evident. At the same time, the heterogeneity between the countries which is evident in the structures of the educational systems, the educational and professional theoretical understandings, the legal foundations, and the qualification of staff, complicates the efforts to align and coordinate European education policy (Egetenmeyer and Schübler 2012b, 31).

3.2.2 Structures of the Occupational Field in Germany, Serbia, and Italy

In adult education practice, the heterogeneity and diversity of the occupational field makes it difficult, for example, to obtain a systematic overview of the fields of activities and tasks as well as the personnel situation in adult education. In most cases, however, a distinction can be made between activities in general or liberal adult education, and activities in vocational training and education (Nuissl 2010b, 128). Further perspectives of systematisation arise in the analysis of providers in adult education or from the differentiation between formal, non-formal, and informal forms of learning (Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer 2022, 140). Although country reports (e.g. country reports by the European Association for the Education of Adults¹¹, or the German Institute for Adult Education¹²) provide systematic insights into the structures of adult education in different countries in Europe, the data available is only partially up-to-date and not all countries are represented in the reports. In addition, current comparative studies on the individual professionalisation of staff working in adult education remain selective. It is therefore only possible to provide a limited insight into the current structures of the occupational field in adult education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy.

3.2.2.1 Structures of the Occupational Field in Germany

In the German context, it is possible to distinguish between activities in general adult education (cultural adult education, compensatory adult education, health education, political adult education, personal adult education), and activities in vocational continuing education and in-company continuing education (Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer 2022, 134). Likewise, the occupational field can be systematised according to providers in adult education. In this context, one can observe a diverse spectrum of providers in which adult educators can work: from commercial and non-profit organisations, to in-company training departments, business-related organisations (e.g. chambers), adult education centres, vocational schools, (technical) colleges, churches, political parties,

¹¹ Country reports of the European Association for the Education of Adults are available at the following link: <<https://eaea.org/our-work/influencing-policy/eaea-country-reports/>> (2023-09-01).

¹² Country reports of the German Institute for Adult Education are available at the following link: <<https://www.die-bonn.de/id/11866/about/html>> (2023-09-01).

trade unions, foundations, and others (Christ et al. 2021, 44). In these organisations, adult education staff can work full-time, part-time, or on a voluntary basis, whereby a great number of freelancers can be identified in the German context, who are mostly active in the area of teaching or working in projects on a fee basis (Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer 2022, 145). According to Wittpoth (2013, 180), four roles of adult educators can be differentiated:

- Full-time leaders who are mainly involved in management, marketing, and public relations;
- Full-time pedagogical staff who are involved in planning activities. They mainly take care of programme planning (i.e. needs assessment, recruitment of lecturers, counselling, programme evaluation);
- Full-time teachers who are entrusted with the delivery of teaching. They can be employed on a permanent basis or work freelance or independently;
- Part-time or honorary teachers who are also active in the field of teaching but do not carry out their teaching activities full-time.

This classification, however, is not exclusive; rather, there can be overlaps between the different roles of adult educators or working fields. For example, a full-time leader of a smaller adult education organisation may also be responsible for programme planning at the same time (Kraft 2018, 1114).

Consequently, in the German context, the occupational field of adult education is characterised by heterogeneous structures, which also becomes clear when looking at the different job titles (e.g. trainer, coach, pedagogical staff, facilitator). Likewise, there are different ways of accessing the occupational field. Usually, the recruitment of staff is the responsibility of the adult education provider or organisation. This is due to the lack of legal requirements (Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer 2022, 143-44). Finally, this means that the organisations can set their own recruitment criteria. A degree in adult education is not a prerequisite for working in the field.

3.2.2.2 Structures of the Occupational Field in Serbia

In Serbia, the occupational field can be divided into activities in the formal and non-formal education sector, where different providers can be found. In the area of formal education, there are elementary schools for adults responsible for basic education, schools at the secondary level, and higher education institutions, although the participation rate of working students and adults is rather low. In the area of non-formal education, providers include Open and People's universities (e.g. foreign language and ICT courses), cultural organisations (e.g. museums, libraries), non-governmental organisations, vocational training providers (e.g. National Employment Service), companies (e.g. human resource development), professional associations, and private education providers (Medić, Popović, and Milanović 2009, 21-25; EAEA 2011b, 7-10). With the adoption of

the Law on Adult Education in 2013, it appears that adult education as an occupational field is increasingly being regulated by the state. Three different profiles of staff working in adult education are defined:

- The ‘professional associate’ or ‘andragogue’ performs a wide range of tasks, from the development of training and educational programmes to programme planning, evaluation, and monitoring measures, and research activities. The occupation of an andragogue has been officially listed in the national nomenclature of occupations since 1990. This indicates a high social and political recognition of the job profile in the labour market. Access is gained through a university degree in andragogy (Pejatović 2016, 369);
- An ‘associate’ works in adult education programmes at a so-called publicly recognised activity organiser¹³. These state-approved organisations are in the field of non-formal education. As an associate, subject-specific competences must be acquired through special training programmes. A degree in andragogy is not mandatory (Pejatović 2016, 371);
- The ‘andragogical assistant’ is responsible for the implementation of functional elementary adult education and works in elementary schools for adults¹⁴. This position can be held by teachers, or professional associates who have a degree in andragogy, or persons who have successfully participated in a training programme for andragogical assistants (Pejatović 2016, 369-70).

The three job profiles illustrate the legally regulated access to the occupational field of adult education in Serbia. Adult educators must have either a university degree in adult education, further professional training as an andragogical assistant, or relevant skills training that qualifies them to work with adults (Pejatović 2016). Types of employment can include full- or part-time, freelance, self-employed, or voluntary (Medić, Popović, and Milanović 2009, 37).

¹³ Organisations wishing to work in the field of non-formal adult education may obtain the status of a publicly recognised activity organiser. The accreditation of the organisations is regulated by the *Rulebook on Precise Conditions Regarding the Program, Staff, Space, Equipment and Teaching Aids for Obtaining the Status of a Publicly Recognized Adult Education Activity Organizer (Pravilnik O Bližim Uslovima U Pogledu Programa, Kadra, Prostora, Opreme I Nastavnih Sredstava Za Sticanje Statusa Javno Priznatog Organizatora Aktivnosti Obrazovanja Odraslih)* 2015. The Rulebook also defines the required qualifications of staff working in these organisations (Pejatović 2016, 371).

¹⁴ Functional elementary adult education was developed within the framework of the project “Second chance - System development of functional elementary adult education in Serbia” (2009-13) and describes a three-year school education programme that, in addition to basic elementary education, also teaches vocational skills for later employment. The vocational education is oriented towards the official occupational standards as well as the needs and requirements of the labour market, and of the participants (Pejatović 2014, 43).

3.2.2.3 Structures of the Occupational Field in Italy

In Italy, the occupational field of adult educators can be differentiated in the public sector and the private sector. In the public sector, adult educators can work in the CPIA provincial adult education centres. CPIA centres are adult education providers which focus on basic education and issue compulsory education certificates. They also offer language courses for migrants. In addition, there are evening courses that mainly focus on obtaining a secondary education diploma (Daniele, Franzosi, and Nobili 2017, 5). This area of activities belongs to the formal education sector. The introduction of the CPIA in 2012 and the replacement of the CTP, which were introduced in 1997 to offer educational and counselling services, basic skills courses, language courses, and IT courses, marks a paradigm shift in adult education in Italy. Terzaroli speaks of a shift from «adult 'education' to 'schooling'», which indicates a shift from a broad understanding of adult education «towards a fixation on schooling, equating adult learning to that of school pupils» (2017, 83). One could argue that adult education is predominantly pushed into the formal sector. This observation is reinforced with reference to the regulated access to adult education centres, where the profile of adult educators is equated with the profile of teachers in primary and secondary schools (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 123).

In the private sector, further distinction can be made between activities with employed workers and non-employed workers. These activities are to be assigned to the non-formal education sector. In the field of continuing education and training of employed workers, various providers can be found (e.g. in-company training departments, different training agencies, trade unions, religious institutions). In their work with unemployed adults, the providers are usually socially or politically motivated (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 123). Likewise, various non-governmental organisations can be identified that can be assigned to non-formal adult education (EAEA 2011a, 6-7).

At the different providers described above, adult educators can pursue different activities and tasks. Federighi (2021, 35-37) presents a typology of the functions of adult educators, whereby adult educators can have not only one but also different functions:

- Training planners, i.e. professionals involved in translating training strategies and policies into general implementation plans in larger public or private organisations;
- Programme planners at territorial or organisational level;
- Leaders of adult education organisations;
- Staff in human resources management and development;
- Employees in the management of adult education organisations;
- Developers of training products acting on instructions at the planning and management level;
- Evaluators responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of activities (e.g. accreditation, certification, quality control);

- Teachers specialised in various pedagogical fields (e.g. methodology, organisation, planning);
- Teachers in a specific subject area with a specialisation in teaching;
- Tutors specialised in the management of training processes and the delivery of educational programmes;
- Tutors for individualised educational offers or experts for information, counselling, recognition, certification, placement;
- Tutors for teaching situations and organisations supporting individual training courses and responsible for the logistical management of training activities (e.g. setting up venues, organising materials);
- Technical staff responsible for the technical support of the educational services.

The pathways into adult education and training and further education opportunities are just as diverse as the functions of adult educators in Italy (Federighi 2021, 38-39). At the same time, there appears to be little awareness among employers in the private sector that graduates of adult education can be considered as qualified candidates for a job in the private sector. This is despite the fact that there are numerous job opportunities for adult educators in the private sector (Terzaroli 2017, 85-86). In certain sector-specific fields of activity, e.g. health education, additional qualifications may be required (Boffo, Kaleja, and Fernandes 2016, 123).

3.2.2.4 Adult Education as a Heterogeneous and Diverse Occupational Field

As confirmed by the previous explanations, the occupational field of adult education is characterised by heterogeneous and diverse structures. This can be seen, for example, in the range of adult education providers in Germany, Serbia, and Italy, which indicates different fields of activities and tasks. Nuissl (2010b, 130) provides an overarching systematisation of the fields of activities of adult educators in Europe. He distinguishes between teaching, management, counselling and guidance, media, programme planning, and support. A similar systematisation can be seen in the ALPINE Study “Adult Learning Professions in Europe”, which examines the activities of non-vocational adult education in the European context (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008).

Regarding the pathways into employment, there is a strong legal regulation of job profiles and pathways into the field of adult education in Serbia. In Germany and Italy, on the other hand, the job profiles and pathways into adult education appear to be less regulated. In Germany, the selection of personnel is dependent on the requirements of the adult education providers. In Italy, regulation of access can only be discerned in relation to the public sector, whereby the conceptual change from adult education to school education can be critically emphasised (Terzaroli 2017). In Italy, the profile of an adult educator in the formal education sector is now equated with the profile of a primary and second-

ary school teacher. This may imply a decline in the importance and recognition of the role and qualifications of adult educators.

Despite differences regarding the regulation of adult education (e.g. by laws, providers) in Germany, Serbia, and Italy, the structures in the field of adult education can be regarded as less rigid and less regulated than other areas of the educational system (e.g. school sector). The resulting flexibility of the field of adult education can be seen as an opportunity, as it enables adult education to address emerging needs and problems in society more quickly. However, this can lead to a further differentiation and variety of tasks, target groups, providers, funding structures, etc. (Jütte and Lattke 2014, 7).

Based on the rather weak regulation of access into the field of adult education, as evident in the context of Germany and Italy, the personnel situation in large parts of Europe is characterised by non-linear professional biographies and different pathways. Those working in adult education usually have different qualifications, which can be acquired through a higher education degree in the field of adult education, through continuing vocational training measures, or informal learning contexts (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012b, 17). Likewise, heterogeneous employment situations can be assumed. Here, a distinction can be made between full-time, part-time, and voluntary activities, among others (Research voor Beleid and Plato 2008, 110-11; Breitschwerdt and Egetenmeyer 2022, 145).

3.3 Academic Professionalisation in Adult Education

The term academic professionalisation can be understood in different ways in the international context. While the term usually refers to qualification measures in academic education and academic continuing education in the Anglo-American world (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1072), in the German context, academic professionalisation is associated not only with a structural understanding, but also with a subjective perspective. According to Egetenmeyer and Schüßler (2012c, 2014b), as a subject of research, academic professionalisation can be focused on a structural level that covers diverse qualification offers at higher education institutions, and on an individual level that focuses on the development of professionalism of (future) adult educators (Chap. 3.3.1). With regard to the structural level of academic professionalisation, the focus of this study is on pre-vocational degree programmes in adult education (bachelor's and master's degree), which are studied consecutively. These can vary between universities at national level (Chap. 3.3.2). Higher-qualification and academic continuing education programmes aimed at people who are already working in the field are not considered. Focussing on the individual level, the academic study of adult education is seen as an important stage in the professionalism development of adult educators (Chap. 3.3.3). Academic education can lay an important foundation for the development of professionalism in adult education (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c).

3.3.1 Academic Professionalisation as a Subject of Research

Academic professionalisation in adult education has been the focus of numerous scholars in the German-speaking world (e.g. Fuhr 1991; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012a, 2014b; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018) as well as in the international context (e.g. Lattke 2012; Liszt, Toko, and Yan 2016; Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016; Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017; Gravani, Zarifis, and Jögi 2020). As subject of research, in accordance with Egetenmeyer and Schüßler (2014b), academic professionalisation provides two different perspectives (Fig. 6).

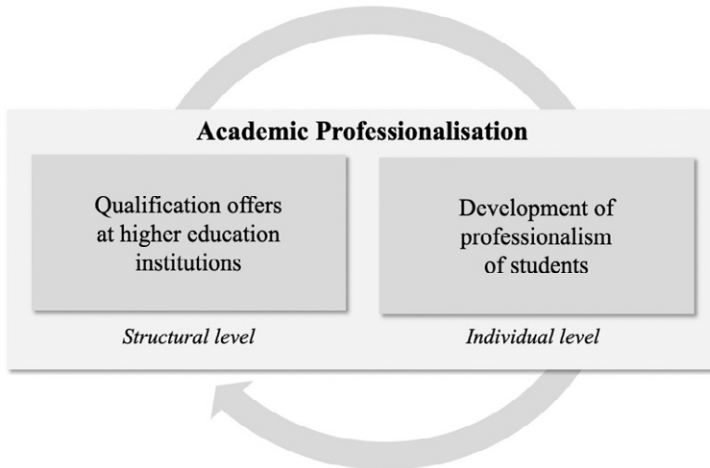


Figure 6 – Dimensions of academic professionalisation in adult education. Source: own representation.

On the structural level, the academic qualification offers in the field of adult education are taken into account. The qualification opportunities at the higher education institutions can be examined by questioning suitable curricular and didactic structures, for example. On the individual level, the focus is on the development of students' professionalism within the framework of academic education. Here, it can be examined how the development of professionalism takes place in adult education programmes and which qualification offers have a supporting effect. The two perspectives cannot be considered separately but are mutually opposed. On the structural level, the qualification offers can open up opportunities for students to acquire academic knowledge and develop skills and attitudes, which at the same time must be oriented towards the needs and requirements of the students. Again, on the individual level, the development of students' professionalism is not only dependent on the qualification offers available, but can also take place in self-organised, informal learning contexts.

When examining the individual level of academic professionalisation, different factors must be considered in this process (Fig. 7). The development of

students' professionalism is characterised by structural as well as subjective and social factors that are interrelated (Schübler and Egetenmeyer 2018).

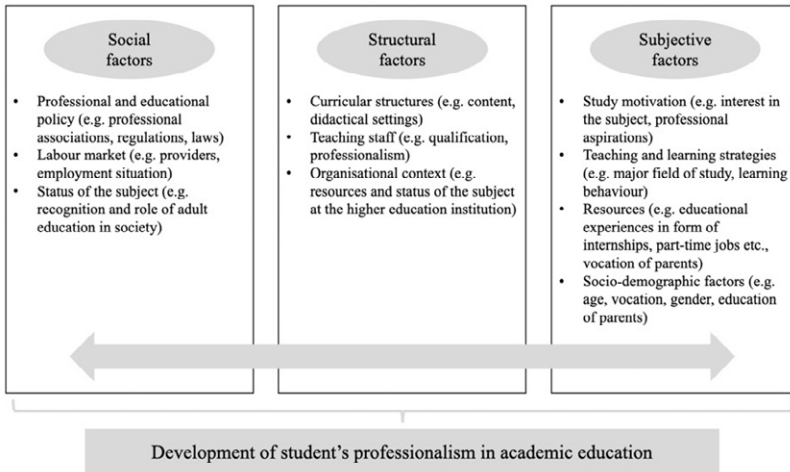


Figure 7 – Influencing factors on the development of students' professionalism in academic education. Source: own representation, based on Egetenmeyer and Schübler (2014a, 99) and Schübler and Egetenmeyer (2018, 1074).

Social factors concern the social framework that embeds the structural and individual factors in an overarching context. Social factors include the professional and educational policy context as well as the labour market and the status of the subject (Schübler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). The Bologna Reform can be thought of as a prominent example here, illustrating the influence of education policy measures on academic education. The Bologna Reform led to the introduction of the three-cycle study system that has significantly changed the structures of degree programmes in adult education (Walber and Lobe 2018). At the same time, new teaching and learning settings have developed through the introduction of the Erasmus programme (e.g. semester abroad, internship abroad) that can support the development of students' professionalism (Egetenmeyer 2012).

Structural factors concern the curricular structures, the teaching staff, and the organisational context of the degree programmes in adult education (Schübler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). Comparative studies focusing on curricular structures of degree programmes in adult education reveal differences in the structures and topics as well as the developments of the degree programmes both within a country (in Germany: Walber and Lobe 2018; Lobe and Walber 2020) and between countries (Boffo et al. 2016; Liszt, Toko, and Yan 2016; Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016; Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017). Due to the heterogeneous curricular structures, differences in the content and didactical settings must be taken into account. In addition, educational offers in the degree programmes vary depending on the individual teachers or result from the specific structural requirements at the higher education institutions (Egetenmeyer and Schübler 2014b, 35).

Subjective factors include the students' motivation to study, their individual teaching and learning strategies, their educational experiences as resources, and socio-demographic factors (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). Researching the development of professionalism means taking into account earlier socialisation processes, students' biographies, and living conditions (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009, 2018). The subjective factors capture the individual study behaviour in their entirety. This also includes temporal aspects and the students' commitment to their studies. Study behaviour can be understood «as the active use of formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities in studies and at the university» (Behr and Hof 2020, 222).

As a subject of research, academic professionalisation consequently focuses on both the academic education and continuing education offered at the higher education institutions (structural level) and the development of students' professionalism (individual level). In the latter, the interplay of subjective, structural, and social factors must be taken into account.

3.3.2 Degree Programmes in Adult Education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy

Based on differences in the academisation of adult education at national level (Chap. 3.2.1), different developments and qualification offers in adult education can be mapped in the countries studied. With the insights into the national structures, structural differences as well as similarities in academic professionalisation can be highlighted at the structural level.

3.3.2.1 Degree Programmes in Adult Education in Germany

The foundation of academic education in adult education in Germany can be traced back to the resolution of the Conference of Ministers of Education for the diploma examination in educational science in 1969, which contributed to the establishment of the study field of adult and continuing education as a sub-discipline of educational science (Lobe and Walber 2020, 17)¹⁵. With the transition of former diploma degree programmes in Germany as part of the Bologna Process, a variety of bachelor's and master's programmes can be identified that deal with topics of adult education.

In 2015, there were 195 degree programmes in Germany which included adult education as a field of study. These include 67 degree programmes leading to a bachelor's degree and 110 leading to a master's degree (Witt and Müller 2015). When comparing the degree programmes, it can be seen that the programmes include topics in adult education to different extents. Degree programmes usually include topics in adult education only to a small extent at the bachelor's

¹⁵ In Germany, the academic discipline distinguishes between general adult education (e.g. cultural, compensatory, political adult education) and continuing education (e.g. vocational and in-company continuing education). In the following, however, we will only refer to adult education.

level (approx. 20% of the full programme), while at the master's level, degree programmes contain adult education topics to a greater extent (approx. 50% of the full programme) (Walber and Lobe 2018, 66-67; Lobe and Walber 2020, 18-19). In this context, differences in the titles of the programmes are also evident. In the bachelor's degree, adult education as study field is mostly found under educational science titles (e.g. educational science, pedagogy). In the master's programme, on the other hand, there are also titles that refer to specific areas of the field of adult education (e.g. organisational development, media education) (Lobe and Walber 2020, 19-20).

Overall, the observations point to the fact that bachelor's programmes are primarily geared towards imparting basic knowledge in adult education. Thus, the bachelor's programmes are attributed a rather generalising character (Lobe and Walber 2020, 23). In academic discourse, therefore, critical reference is made to a marginalisation of adult education at the bachelor's level (Faulstich, Graeßner, and Walber 2011). In the master's programmes in adult education, on the other hand, there is an increased focus on topics in adult education. In this way, the master's programmes support the students in developing a disciplinary profile. Lobe and Walber (2020, 23) criticise, however, that due to the short duration of the master's programme, the development of students' professionalism is limited. For example, practical experiences that contribute to the development of students' professionalism can only be integrated to a certain extent. Lobe and Walber therefore point to a shift in academic professionalisation towards academic continuing education programmes, which are gaining in importance.

In 2006, the Division for Adult Education of the German Educational Research Association developed a core curriculum of adult education for consecutive bachelor's and master's programmes with a main focus of educational science. The core curriculum recommends a minimum level of adult education content to be included in the modularisation of degree programmes focusing on adult education (DGfE 2006). It aims to facilitate the comparability of the degree programmes and the mobility of students between programmes and provides a common basis for working in the field (DGfE 2006, 1). One of the foundations for the introduction of the core curriculum is the demand that the growing occupational field requires a common academic foundation that is rooted in the diverse traditions of the academic field (Faulstich and Zeuner 2005, 35). According to Schüßler and Egetenmeyer, the core curriculum can also be understood as a «framework of the professional knowledge in adult education» (2018, 1081) that is to be covered in degree programmes. With reference to the teaching and learning contents of the core curriculum, the bachelor's programme is focused on teaching the basics of adult education¹⁶, while the subsequent master's programme

¹⁶ In the bachelor's programme, the following study units are assigned to the field of adult education: 1. Historical and theoretical foundations of adult education/continuing education; 2. Professional competences and fields of work in adult education/continuing education – foundations (DGfE 2006, 5).

is intended to deepen these topics¹⁷. In other words, the bachelor's programme provides a basic professional qualification with a focus on general, educational science topics, whereas the master's programme focuses more in-depth on topics in adult education, which are supplemented by insights into the practice field.

All in all, the academic landscape in Germany indicates that adult education is largely integrated into the studies in educational science as a sub-discipline. Since adult education is generally given less importance at the bachelor's level, it can be assumed that the development of students' professionalism is mainly outsourced to the master's level. This assumption is supported by the results of a student survey conducted at a university of education in Germany, in which bachelor's and diploma students were questioned in two survey waves with the help of a questionnaire in order to examine the development of professionalism in degree programmes in educational science with a specialisation in adult education. The results of this study indicate that the continuation of a master's programme is required to deepen and consolidate the development of professionalism that is initiated in the bachelor's programme (Schüßler 2012, 130).

3.3.2.2 Degree Programmes in Adult Education in Serbia

Since 1979, it has been possible to study adult education as a four-year, basic degree programme in andragogy at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. After further changes and reforms to the programme, it was accredited at the national level in 2008 (Pejatović 2010, 171). The degree programme in andragogy is currently offered at the University of Belgrade at three consecutive levels - a four-year bachelor's degree, a one-year master's degree, and a three-year doctoral degree¹⁸. The University of Belgrade is the only university in Serbia that offers such specialised degree programmes in adult education. In addition, at the University of Novi Sad, courses in the field of adult education can be studied as part of a bachelor's and master's degree in pedagogy. At the University of Niš, topics in adult education are only included at bachelor's level as part of the degree programme in pedagogy (Ovesni 2018, 29).

Since 1 January 2014, the Law on Adult Education has regulated access to the occupational field and has defined the job profiles of those working in adult education in Serbia. Within this framework, the degree programme in andragogy qualifies a student to work as a professional associate, also called andragogue (see Chap. 3.2.2.2). In distinction to an associate or pedagogical and andragogical

¹⁷ In the master's programme, the following study units are assigned to the field of adult education: 1. Theory, research, and framework conditions of adult education/further education; 2. Professional competences in adult education/continuing education – deepening (DGfE 2006, 6).

¹⁸ In accordance with the framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, a bachelor's programme (first cycle) accrues 180-240 ECTS points and can have a duration of three to four years. A master's programme (second cycle) can accrue 60-120 ECTS points and can have a duration of one to two years (European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference 2018).

assistant, the role of an andragogue represents the highest possible qualification in the field of adult education (Pejatović 2016, 369). The degree programme in andragogy is designed to qualify students for the wide-ranging activity profile of an andragogue. To this end, specific knowledge, skills and competences are imparted and support is provided in the acquisition of certain personality traits (Pejatović 2016, 368). At the University of Belgrade, specific learning objectives are associated with the different levels of study. These define which competences students should possess at the end of their studies. Comparing the different study levels, it becomes apparent that there is an increased research orientation at the master's level (Pejatović 2016, 367-68).

In summary, adult education is offered at three universities in Serbia and is geared towards a specific job profile. At the University of Belgrade, the field of adult education can be studied as part of a full programme in andragogy.

3.3.2.3 Degree Programmes in Adult Education in Italy

In Italy, adult education has only been a distinct field of study since the end of the twentieth century (Federighi 2000, 28). Degree programmes in the field of adult education have developed in connection with the developments under the Bologna Reforms. As part of Italy's initial higher education reforms, a university network in adult education was founded in 1999 to lay the curricular structures for degree programmes in adult education (Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016, 136). Since then, a variety of degree programmes in adult education have formed in Italy.

In the Italian higher education system, according to the Ministerial Decrees of the Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca (Ministry of Universities and Research) of 2000 and 2007, degree programmes are assigned to different 'classes' at bachelor's and master's level. The classes concern a specific subject and summarise the objectives and basic contents of the subject, which are to be included in the degree programmes assigned to this class. At the bachelor's level, adult education is allocated as a field of study to the class of general educational science "L-19 Scienze dell'Educazione e della Formazione" (Sciences of Education and Training). At the master's level, adult education is classified in a distinct class "LM-57 Scienze dell'Educazione degli Adulti, della Formazione Continua e Scienze Pedagogiche" (Sciences of Adult and Continuing Education and Sciences of Pedagogy).

In the academic year 2020-21, 51 degree programmes can be found at five universities which are categorised under the class of science of education and formation (L-19) at bachelor's level. This also includes degree programmes that do not deal with any topics in adult education. At the master's level, eight degree programmes at eight universities are assigned to the class of science of adult education and continuing training (LM-57)¹⁹. Among these classes, the names of

¹⁹ The information is taken from the online portal *UniversItaly*, available at the following link: <<https://www.universitaly.it/cerca-corsi>> (2023-09-01).

the degree programmes may vary from university to university but are similar to the previously mentioned designations. The classification system regulates the structure and content orientation for all degree programmes and formulates competences that are to be acquired within the framework of the degree programmes. It specifies a minimum level of content and credit points and can therefore be regarded as a core curriculum. Despite the legal requirements, a high degree of diversity can be seen between the degree programmes at the different universities in Italy, which can be attributed to the high degree of autonomy of the universities (Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017, 94-95).

Comparing the two study levels, the bachelor's degree in Italy has the task of imparting basic competences that are subsequently deepened in the master's degree (Boffo et al. 2016). The master's degree qualifies individuals to enter both the public sector as a teacher in secondary schools and the private sector for work in various adult education providers (Boffo et al. 2016, 106; Terzaroli 2017, 82-84). In the bachelor's programme, adult education is integrated into basic studies of educational science. Only at the master's level can adult education be studied specifically. The master's programme is aimed at training those working in adult education, whereby the programme is expanded to include content from neighbouring disciplines.

3.3.2.4 Structural Similarities and Differences in Degree Programmes in Adult Education

Referring to the previous sections, it is evident that degree programmes in adult education differ not only between countries but also within countries. As shown in other international comparative studies on academic professionalisation in adult education (Boffo et al. 2016; Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017), despite differences, the curricular structures in Germany and Italy demonstrate some similarities. In both Germany and Italy, adult education is primarily integrated into degree programmes in educational science, whereby only basic knowledge of adult education is taught in the three-year bachelor's programme. In contrast, the two-year master's programme enables a more in-depth study of adult education topics. In Germany and Italy, it can therefore be argued that the development of students' professionalism merely takes place when attending a master's programme. Furthermore, a rather pluralistic field of degree programmes in adult education can be identified in Germany and Italy, as higher education institutions have a certain autonomy in defining the content and curricular structures of the degree programmes. This is true despite the fact that a core curriculum exists in both countries. In this context, a stronger regulation by state authorities can be found in Italy, whereas the German core curriculum developed on the basis of an academic network, and consequently more strongly from within the discipline (Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017, 97-98).

In Serbia, on the other hand, studies in the field of adult education are only offered at three universities. As a result, we can state that the academic field is

smaller. A key reason for this could be the fact that Serbia has a much smaller population in contrast to Germany and Italy (Statista 2022). What stands out, however, is that the University of Belgrade offers a specialised degree programme at both bachelor's and master's level that is exclusively focused on the field of adult education. Since the bachelor's programme is designed to last four years, students can already work with a variety of subject-related topics at bachelor's level. Consequently, it can be assumed that the development of students' professionalism can take place at an earlier stage than can be expected in degree programmes in Germany and Italy.

It becomes clear that the differences in the structures of degree programmes in Germany, Serbia, and Italy (e.g. in their different names or scopes of adult education as a field of study) reflect different structural preconditions for the development of professionalism of students in the field of adult education.

3.3.3 Development of Professionalism in Studies in Adult Education

The study of adult education is considered to provide a foundation for the formation of professionalism in adult education (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 2014a; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). In this context, degree programmes do not only serve to impart academic knowledge, but also aim to enable students to relate this knowledge to the requirements of the specific practice situation, even in situations when they are under pressure to make decisions. According to von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff, degree programmes in adult education form «places and time periods» in which the students can become familiarised with the discipline, which leads to the formation of so-called «knowledge islands» (2012, 84). The knowledge they acquire enables them to deal appropriately and confidently with antinomies and contradictions in adult education practice. The development of professionalism in the context of academic education is to be understood as a process that lasts over time. It can be shaped very differently by biography and living conditions, previous socialisation processes, individual resources, and abilities (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009, 2018; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). Motives, interests, attitudes, and knowledge about the field can be reconsidered, revised, and concretised over the course of study, as students acquire knowledge, skills, and an understanding of adult education practice and are confronted with contradictions and areas of tension in the occupational field (von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff 2012).

Consequently, degree programmes in adult education facilitate individual educational and learning processes that take place over the course of study. The development of professionalism of students can be supported by linking theory and practice (Chap. 3.3.3.1), promoting a professional self-concept (Chap. 3.3.3.2), and preparing them for the transition from study to work (Chap. 3.3.3.3). Empirical studies can be used to reflect on the development of professionalism in the context of selected international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 3.3.3.4).

3.3.3.1 Creating a Link between Theory and Practice

The core of academic education is the acquisition of academic knowledge. In contributions to the discourse on academic professionalisation in adult education, academic knowledge is highlighted as a central resource for acting professionally in the field of adult education (Fuhr 1991; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Benz-Gydat 2017; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). It allows students to justify their professional actions theoretically and to legitimise them in practice. It enables the understanding of social phenomena, the reflection of organisationally anchored patterns of action established in educational practice, and the explanation of adult educational action, whereby irritations are possible when the theoretical presuppositions are questioned (Dewe 2002, 25; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1080; Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022, 1051-52).

Academic knowledge and the associated conceptual tools support the description, explanation and also the understanding of social phenomena and adult educational action (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1080).

Due to the discrepancy between theory and practice, however, academic knowledge only takes on an action-guiding function and not an action-determining one. The focus of academic education must therefore be on mediating processes «between discipline/theory on the one hand and profession/practice on the other» (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1079-80). This also requires developing practical action knowledge, which is understood as experiential and orientational knowledge acquired in practice. It is oriented towards decision-making in a specific practice situation (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992). Consequently, degree programmes have to create space for practical experiences where students are able to gain initial experience in the field of adult education practice. By systematically relating academic knowledge and practical action knowledge, patterns of interpretation can ultimately be developed, which can be transformed into professional knowledge (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 12). Consequently, adult education studies are given the further task of training the «ability to *deal reflectively* with (academic) knowledge» (Dewe 2002, 26). In this way, it is possible not to understand academia and professional practice as being side by side, but to link both functional systems in hermeneutic processes (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 12).

Consequently, the theory-practice linkage in adult education degree programmes can be interpreted as a central prerequisite and necessity for the development of students' professionalism. Practical observations and practical experiences (e.g. through internships, practical lectures) must be systematically integrated into curricula in order to enable students to gain practical experience in the field of adult education and to be able to develop reflective and hermeneutic skills. Based on various empirical studies, an important role can be attributed to study-related internships (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009; Egloff and Männle 2012). They represent an important interface between theory and practice and can be understood as «a separate space of (pre-)vocational socialisation» (Männle

2009, 167). The internships promote the development of competences to enable participants to act appropriately in the occupational field. They support the development of a participant's own (professional) identity, as well as processes of reflection on theory and practice, and experiences of all kinds (Egloff 2002). In this regard, the preparation and follow-up of practical experiences is of central importance. This helps students to reflect on their practical activities and relate them to academic knowledge (Schüßler 2012, 136-37; Männle 2018, 208-9). The integration of reflective practice elements can also facilitate the development of hermeneutic skills for understanding individual cases in adult education practice (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1081).

Furthermore, in the survey study of Schüßler (2012, 118-19), where bachelor's and diploma students in adult education in Germany were questioned, it can be seen that employment in the pedagogical field during the students' studies can provide further informal learning opportunities, which support linking theory and practice. In addition, degree programmes can be understood as a personal «form of adult pedagogical practice» (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1073). For example, different didactic settings in the degree programmes can be critically analysed against the background of the theoretical knowledge on didactics in adult education (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1073). Adult education studies can therefore provide further opportunities for linking theoretical perspectives with the academic practice field.

Moreover, the integration of practical experiences in adult education studies can contribute to the experience of contradictions and antinomies in the field of practice. According to von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff the aim of degree programmes in adult education should be to develop «attitudes, values and knowledge» (2012, 85) in order to deal with contradictions in the later field of practice. In this context, according to Pachner (2013, 2018), self-reflection competence is important for dealing with contradictory demands. The ability to self-reflect «enables adult educators not to remain stuck in the knowledge of their practical professional experience, but to repeatedly demonstrate situationally appropriate, innovative teaching behaviour – all the more so when it comes to dealing with open, divergent situations» (Pachner 2013, 7). According to Schüßler (2012, 124), dealing with contradictions and contingency can also be trained through self-study and the students' responsibility to organise their studies. This requires students to navigate unstructured phases that can be accompanied by unpredictable moments.

3.3.3.2 Promoting the Development of a Professional Self-concept

The (self-)reflective engagement with contradictory and ambivalent practice situations in adult education also means dealing with one's own self-concept. Reflective engagement with one's own ideas and understandings of education and adult education, as well as the engagement with one's own role and future tasks in the field of practice, can contribute to the development of a (professional) self-concept. Schüßler and Egetenmeyer (2018, 1084) understand the

promotion of a pedagogical self-concept, which they locate in a commonly shared humanistic understanding of humanity, as being a part of academic professionalisation. Based on the results of a survey of graduates from the field of educational science with a focus on adult education at a university of education in Germany, it is shown that the degree programmes can promote the development of a fundamental understanding of action in pedagogical practice, which graduates transfer into practice (Schüßler 2012, 138). By means of a qualitative interview study with students of the pedagogical field in Germany, it can also be pointed out that specific pedagogical patterns of thought and reflection can develop in the course of studies, which are described as *«pedagogical gaze»* (Männle 2018, 205).

Justen (2015) attributes an important role to the integration of biography-oriented learning in adult education programmes for the development of a professional self-concept. This can help students deal with their own learning biography as well as with biographically shaped concepts of values and norms. According to Karu and Jögi (2014), self-reflective exercises should be integrated into the degree programme in order for participants to perceive themselves as both learners and adult educators. The learning processes stimulated in the degree programme can influence the students' own perception, understanding, and attitudes and consequently develop into a self-concept. A common understanding of values and professionally relevant knowledge and skills in adult education can also be promoted through dialogue between students and practitioners in adult education, as can be seen in a blended learning module on comparative studies in adult education and lifelong learning (Staab et al. 2020, 46). The integration of practical experiences, e.g. in the context of field visits, practical lectures, and internships can also serve to provide professional orientation and analysis of one's own career choices and aptitude (Fuhr 1991, 148). This can be considered beneficial as it helps foster an understanding of one's own role and function in the occupational field and for identifying oneself as an adult educator.

Concluding, referring to Jögi and Karu, it can be argued that:

[...] formation of a professional identity is contextual and a relational learning process, which includes structural and processual components of professional identity. Structural components like comprehensions of learning and the learning self, self-representations which are processual, contextual and temporal qualities, are the underlying assumptions for professional identity formation (2020, 158).

3.3.3.3 Preparing for the Transition from Study to Work

Furthermore, academic education has the task of preparing students for the transition from study to work. For this purpose, relevance is attributed to the development of personal competences and skills, as can be seen from an interview study with adult education graduates starting their careers in Germany. In her study, Benz-Gydat (2017) outlines the transition from study to work as a period of crisis. At the beginning of their careers, graduates are confronted with

demands, tasks, and contradictions that are unfamiliar to them and which can lead to excessive demands and reveal a discrepancy between the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies and the demands of the field of work. Benz-Gydat emphasises that, during the transition phase, particular extracurricular skills can contribute to coping with moments of crises successfully. Transitional skills (the ability to get involved in an unfamiliar institutionalised context), general skills such as the ability to work in a team, and the ability to cooperate and communicate appear to be essential. In addition, the self-organisation and self-guidance required during a course of study can help students familiarise themselves with unknown topics (Benz-Gydat 2017, 236-37). A longitudinal study conducted at the University of Florence that looked at the transition of students in three master's programmes into the workplace in Italy and Germany also points to the fact that the development of transversal skills is of particular importance in the transition into the world of work. In this context, creating a link between studies and occupational field is emphasised as advantageous for a successful transition to work (Boffo 2018, 125). Based on the results of the student survey by Schüßler (2012, 124), it can be emphasised that organising their studies independently can help students to develop organisational skills and the ability for self-directed learning, which are all relevant in the transition from study to work.

In addition, the results show that the transition from study to work can be facilitated by networks that students have built up during their studies in the context of employment or an internship (Schüßler 2012, 134-35). The development of networks can basically be understood as a «self-referential professionalisation task» (Franz and Feld 2015, 117)²⁰. Networks of people working in adult education can enable the exchange of knowledge and experience and can offer mutual support in coping with demands for action. In the networks, common values and norms may emerge and opportunities for individual development arise (Jütte 2006). Furthermore, networking captures a specific mode of action, as found for example in continuing education management (Robak 2015). According to Jütte (2006), the ability and willingness to establish and maintain networks and cooperation in the field of adult education can take on a supporting function in the development of students' professionalism.

3.3.3.4 Integrating International, Intercultural, and Global Perspectives

In view of the increasingly diverse target group in adult education, Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann (2014, 191-92) consider dealing with (cultural) diversity as a cross-cutting task of academic professionalisation²¹. They argue that the de-

²⁰ The concept of networks is also discussed in adult education in relation to networking and cooperation between organisations (Brödel 2004; J. Schwarz and Weber 2010; Alke and Jütte 2018).

²¹ The term 'diversity' captures social differentiations and, at the same time, recognises the individuality of people based on their different biographies. Differentiations are recognised

gree programmes are not only given the task of imparting knowledge about different communication patterns and cultures, but also the creation of space for reflection and experience in which the students can enter into a dialogical and self-reflective process. In terms of the approach of diversity education, there is a need for «initiating reflective processes of learning and change, recognising and optimally promoting an appropriate way of handling diversity in educational processes, as well as exploiting the respective potentials while critically taking into account given social hierarchies and the construction and deconstruction of power claims» (Robak, Sievers, and Hauenschild 2013, 24)²². For degree programmes, this means creating opportunities for a critical examination of categories of differences (e.g. gender, age, religion) and inequality relationships, and power structures associated with them, which can develop into an attitude of appreciation of diversity and difference. According to Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann, this critical examination can not only be facilitated by experiencing diversity, but, in their words, «difference begins fundamentally by confronting individual life concepts, educational needs, forms of perception, etc.» (2014, 191).

Based on the increasingly diverse target group in adult education as well as the interconnectedness of adult education with global and international developments, Staab and Egetenmeyer (2019, 280) consider intercultural understanding and intercultural competences as important basic prerequisites for professional action in adult education. This can be developed within the framework of a blended learning module on international comparative studies in adult education and lifelong learning (Staab and Egetenmeyer 2019, 287). Participating in this blended learning module, which includes attending a two-week seasonal school, allows students of different countries to continue to gain international and national insights into adult education that can contribute to a deeper understanding of their own local context (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018, 151-52). Participation in the module can support students to better understand their own cultural and social contexts and, based on this, reflect on and justify their own actions (Staab et al. 2020, 45). In addition, the module supports the development of a common understanding of adult education as well as a systematic reflection of knowledge and practice through the integration of practical experiences (e.g. field visits) (Staab et al. 2020, 43). Schmidt-

along socio-demographic and socio-economic categories, such as age, nationality, income, as well as other factors. These include «the ethnic and religious affiliation, communicative competence, integration into social networks and contexts of experience, cultural orientation and gender orientation as well as the physical, emotional and intellectual constitution of individuals» (Dollhausen and Muders 2016, 13).

²² The approach of diversity education deals with diversity and difference in educational processes. In the German-speaking region, the approach of diversity education builds on discourse in sociology and economics (e.g. intersectionality, diversity management) as well as related approaches in education and educational sciences (e.g. pedagogy of diversity, intercultural pedagogy) (Robak et al. 2013; Kuhlen, 2021).

Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer also indicate that the module has the potential to address international comparative perspectives, which are often omitted from adult education curricula, although comparative skills and a differentiated knowledge are considered important for working in international academic and practice field of adult education (2018, 147-48). Furthermore, the blended learning module is perceived as a place where transversal competences and the development of international networks among participants can be promoted (Lattke and Egetenmeyer 2017; COMPALL 2018; Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; INTALL 2021).

With reference to additional forms of international teaching and learning settings, which form the focus of this study, further professionalisation opportunities in adult education studies can be highlighted. Based on an interview survey of educational science students with a specialisation in adult education at German universities, it is shown that participating in a semester abroad provides academic learning potential. During a semester abroad, students can reflect on and expand their own understanding of adult education against the backdrop of the adult education practice in the host country on the one hand and through the examination of inter- and transnational topics in adult education at the receiving higher education institution on the other (Egetenmeyer 2012, 164-65). In addition, a semester abroad can enable students to create their own learning environment, in which they can, for example, come into contact with international students, gain insights into other teaching and learning cultures, or try out new forms of teaching and learning, which harbours further learning potentials with regard to the development of students' professionalism (Egetenmeyer 2012, 165-66)²³. Similarly, within the framework of a European Master's Programme in Adult Education, it is possible to point to opportunities to learn about transnational topics and intercultural competences as well as to develop international networks (Egetenmeyer and Lattke 2009, 12)²⁴.

Consequently, the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives in degree programmes in adult education provides various opportunities for the development of students' professionalism. It is suggested that international teaching and learning settings, and mainly cross-border interna-

²³ According to Schüßler and Thurnes (2005), teaching and learning cultures are understood as individually and collectively shared images of the understanding of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning cultures are socially constructed images of teaching and learning, which are shaped by institutions and social conditions. They can give individuals orientation for their own teaching or learning actions. In this context, it should be noted that there are many different teaching and learning cultures within certain learning environments and subject areas as well as along different institutions and organisations. This is why the term is used in the plural.

²⁴ In 2004, the European Master's in Adult Education was developed as a transnational degree programme in adult education by eight universities from seven European countries and the German Institute for Adult Education. However, due to lack of funds for the coordination and further development of the degree programme, it was not possible to establish the programme in the long term at the European universities involved (Egetenmeyer and Lattke 2009).

tional teaching and learning settings (e.g. seasonal school, study abroad), enable a trans- and international perspective on adult education and can contribute to a deeper understanding of students' own national contexts. However, studies that focus on the development of students' professionalism in the context of further forms of international teaching and learning settings (cross-border: e.g. internships abroad; at home: e.g. lectures by international guest lecturers) or that capture the entirety of students' international experiences are lacking. For this reason, the present study aims to investigate the contribution of international teaching and learning settings to the development of students' professionalism in adult education.

As the state of research shows, it can be stated that academic education is an important phase in the professionalism development of (future) adult educators. In addition to imparting academic knowledge, the degree programmes represent an important field of social experience in which students can acquire «common world views and problem views, normative orientations and performance standards - and thus a common habitus» (Horstkemper and Tillmann 2015, 299) within their discipline. In particular, the integration of reflective practice elements enables students to become familiar with the occupational field. This offers students the opportunity to practice a reflective approach to knowledge, and to develop the ability to understand individual cases in practice. In addition to the opportunities embedded in the formal curriculum (e.g. lectures, compulsory internships), students can create their own learning spaces during their studies (e.g. semester abroad, employment), which can contribute to the development of students' professionalism and facilitate their transition from study to work.

3.4 Heuristic Model of the Development of Professionalism in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings in Master's Programmes in Adult Education

Acting in adult education is characterised by tensions between theory and practice. It can be associated with moments of uncertainty (Helsper 2021), with contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011) and finds itself in a field of tension of changing demands and expectations on a social, political, organisational, and individual level (Buschle and Tippelt 2015; Egetenmeyer, Breitschwerdt, and Lechner 2018; Tippelt and Lindemann 2018). Based on a professional theoretical understanding, professionalism is understood as an interpretative performance that must be constantly renewed. It varies depending on the concrete practice situation and context. Consequently, the development of professionalism is an ongoing process that can never be fully completed and takes place over the lifetime of the adult educator. Nevertheless, an important phase can be attributed to academic education, in which the foundations of professionalism are laid (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c, 2014a; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018).

From a professional theoretical perspective, degree programmes in adult education can represent a first, significant step in the development of the pro-

fessionalism of (future) adult educators. With reference to the professionalisation discourse and empirical studies on the academic professionalisation in adult education, it can be emphasised that degree programmes in adult education can contribute to the development of professionalism. Students can acquire different forms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes during their studies (Fig. 8).

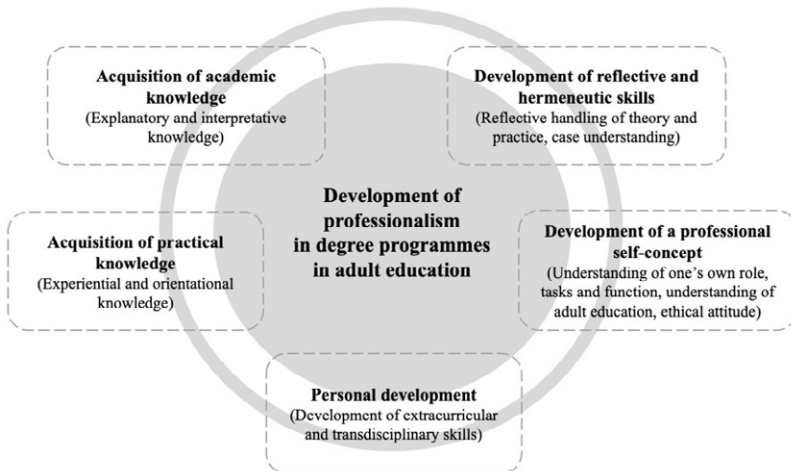


Figure 8 – Development of professionalism in degree programmes in adult education. Source: own representation.

On the one hand, adult education studies can support the acquisition of academic knowledge. This is understood as empirically consolidated explanatory and interpretative knowledge anchored in the academic discourse (Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992; Gieseke 2018). It provides the academic foundation and represents an important resource for professional action in adult education (Fuhr 1991; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Benz-Gydat 2017; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). On the other hand, degree programmes in adult education can promote the acquisition of practical action knowledge. This is defined as experiential and orientational knowledge, which is acquired in practice and is oriented towards handling concrete situations in practice (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992). To this end, it is necessary to integrate practical experiences (e.g. in form of internships) into the degree programmes. A systematic link between theory and practice can also support the development of reflective and hermeneutic skills. These skills enable students to engage reflectively with theory and practice and to understand individual cases from practice (Dewe 2002; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Pachner 2013, 2018). Furthermore, degree programmes can contribute to the development of a professional self-concept by examining one's own role, tasks, and functions in the occupational field, one's own understanding of adult education as well as developing an ethical attitude (Benz-Gydat 2017; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). In addition, degree programmes can be assigned the task of students' personal development,

as extracurricular and transdisciplinary skills are shown to be significant in the transition from study to work (Benz-Gydat 2017; Boffo 2018). The personal development of students is also emphasised as a key study objective of higher education (Hoidn 2015; Leiber 2016).

Based on the assumption that studying adult education can open up important «places and time spaces» (von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff 2012, 84) for the development of students' professionalism, the focus of the present study is on the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings. Empirical studies and academic contributions provide initial indications on the development of students' professionalism in adult education in the context of single forms of international teaching and learning settings (Egetenmeyer and Lattke 2009; Egetenmeyer 2012; COMPALL 2018; Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; Staab et al. 2020; INTALL 2021). This study focuses on international teaching and learning settings in a broad scope, comprising cross-border teaching and learning settings and international teaching and learning settings at home. The theoretical assumptions are presented in Fig. 9 with regard to the present research interest.

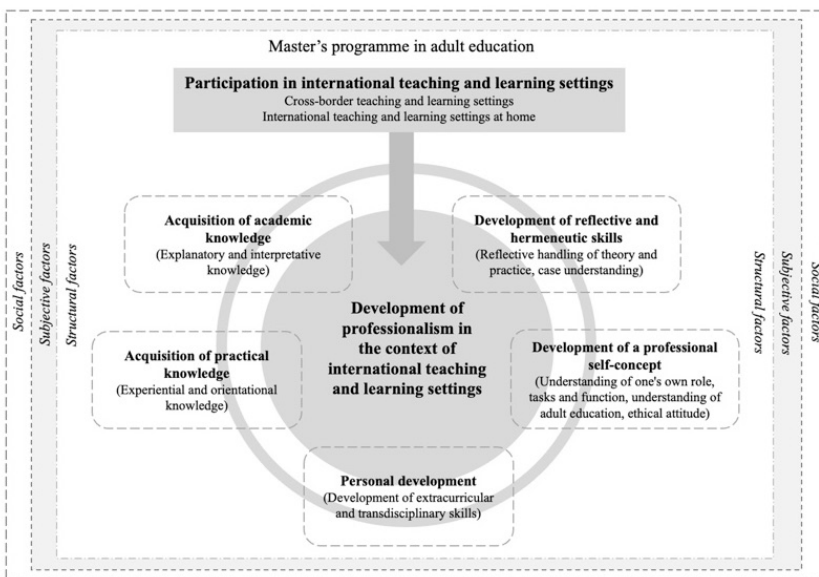


Figure 9 – Heuristic model of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master's programmes. Source: own representation.

As shown in the heuristic model, the intent is to examine in more detail how participation both in cross-border teaching and learning settings and in international teaching and learning settings at home can contribute to the development of professionalism. Specifically, this means investigating how participation in international teaching and learning settings can support the acquisition of

academic knowledge, the acquisition of practical action knowledge, the development of reflective and hermeneutic skills, the development of a professional self-concept, and the personal development of students. The focus is less on learning outcomes than on the process of the development of professionalism and to be analysed in relation to structural, subjective, and social factors. Structural factors relate to the curricular structures, teaching staff, and organisational context, while subjective factors are shaped by biography and living conditions, as well as previous socialisation processes of the students (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009, 2018; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). In addition, social factors refer to the structures of the occupational field and the educational policy context (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). The development of students' professionalism in adult education studies is consequently to be understood as a complex interplay of different factors, which may vary greatly from person to person.

With reference to degree programmes in adult education in Germany and Italy (Chap. 3.3.2), it can be assumed that the development of professionalism takes place primarily at the master's level and is only partially initiated at the bachelor's level. This assumption is supported by the results of a student survey in Germany, which argues that the development of professionalism mainly takes place at the master's level (Schüßler 2012). Therefore, this study focuses on the investigation of the development of professionalism in the context of master's programmes in adult education.

PART II

Research Design

Qualitative, International, and Comparative Study in Adult Education

The present study is in the field of international and comparative adult education research and ties in with the international comparative research approach developed by Egetenmeyer (2016c, 2020). It adopts both a more comparative and more international perspective (Chap. 4.1). The research fields of the study are three selected master's programmes with a focus on adult education at the University of Würzburg (Germany), University of Belgrade (Serbia), and University of Florence (Italy). The three research fields are set in different research contexts (Chap. 4.2). The research comprises the structural as well as the individual level of academic professionalisation. The two-stage data collection process (Chap. 4.3) is followed by an analysis process that is both level-specific and cross-level (Chap. 4.4). By reflecting on the research process (Chap. 4.5), a critical reflection on the role of the researcher is undertaken and limitations of the study are pointed out.

4.1 International and Comparative Research in Adult Education

International and comparative research approaches in adult education have gained in importance in recent years, as can be seen in disciplinary and educational policy contexts (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 141). However, in the disciplinary context, especially in German adult education research, a lack of continuity and theoretical foundation have been points of criticism (Reischmann 2000, 2008; Schreiber-Barsch 2010). This is reflected in the smaller number of comparative

studies in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2016c, 93). An increase in international comparative studies in adult education as well as a further development of research methodological approaches to international comparative adult education can be seen as a consequence of the Adult Education Academy “Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning”¹, which has been held annually since 2014 (Egetenmeyer 2020)².

The research design of the study is oriented towards the approach to international comparative research in adult education which has been developed by Egetenmeyer (2016c, 2020). In line with the guiding research questions, a stronger international comparative approach and international orientation can be identified, as will be explained in more detail below (Chap. 4.1.1). The decision to opt for an international and comparative research design enables insight into different transnational developments and influencing factors in the academic professionalisation of adult education (Chap. 4.1.2).

4.1.1 International and Comparative Perspectives of the Study

In adult education research, a terminological and conceptual differentiation is made between ‘international’ and ‘comparative’. One speaks of ‘international and comparative’, ‘international comparative’ as well as ‘international, comparative’ research (Reischmann 2000; Schreiber-Barsch 2010). The terms ‘international’ and ‘comparative’ serve, according to Schreiber-Barsch (2010, 22-23), to subdivide the field of international and comparative adult education. By combining the two terms, the reciprocity and simultaneity of international and comparative perspectives in research projects is emphasised (Egetenmeyer 2014, 17). In this context, it should be noted that this study is based on a broad understanding of the term ‘international’, which includes supra- and transnational perspectives (see Chap. 2.1.1).

As an international *and* comparative study in adult education, this study includes both perspectives. With the choice of the research fields, three master’s programmes from three different national contexts are studied (in more detail Chap. 4.2.1). With reference to the guiding research questions, an international

¹ The Adult Education Academy “International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” was first held in Würzburg in 2014. Until 2020, the Adult Education Academy (AEA) was known as the International Winter School “International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning”. The Adult Education Academy deals with international comparative research in adult education and lifelong learning and is designed as a blended learning module. The University of Würzburg is involved in the development and implementation of the Adult Education Academy with partner universities and adult education associations worldwide. More detailed information on the programme structure will follow in the context of the data analysis in Chap. 5.1.

² Since 2015, anthologies comprising international comparative studies of adult education have been published annually as a result of the Adult Education Academy. An overview of the publications can be found at the following link: <<https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/results/publications/>> (2023-09-01).

comparative perspective is adopted at the structural level of academic professionalisation (research questions 1 to 3), while an international perspective is found at the individual level of academic professionalisation (research question 4). The allocation of the international and comparative perspectives in illustrated in Fig. 10.

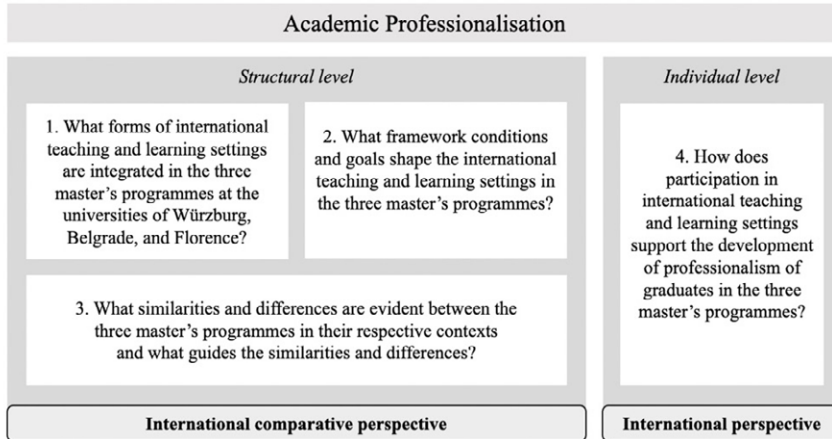


Figure 10 – Linking of the international and comparative perspectives with the research questions. Source: own representation.

At the structural level of academic professionalisation, the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings in the three selected master's programmes in adult education are examined. Similarities and differences are examined, as are the reasons for their occurrence. This is based on a narrow understanding of an international comparison as found in comparative studies (Egetenmeyer 2014; Reischmann 2008b; Schreiber-Barsch 2010)³. In this context, the definition by Charters and Hilton (1989) is widely used. According to their definition, an international comparison in adult education can be summarised as follows:

A study in comparative international adult education [...] must include one or more aspects of adult education in two or more countries or regions. Comparative study is not the mere placing side by side of data [...]. Such juxtaposition is only a prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage one attempt to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study [...]. The real value of comparative study emerges only from [...] the attempt to understand

³ In the research discourse, a distinction is made between types of international and comparative adult education research. These include country reports and country studies, programme studies, juxtapositions, comparative studies, cultural-theoretical studies, reports by international organisations, and intra-disciplinary methodological contributions (Reischmann 2008b; Schreiber-Barsch 2010; Egetenmeyer 2014).

why the differences and similarities occur and what their significance is for adult education in the countries under examination [...] (Charters and Hilton 1989, 3).

Consequently, a comparison only exists if, in addition to the identification of similarities and differences, the reasons for these are investigated. The understanding of Charters and Hilton implies that the similarities and differences between two or more countries are exclusively based on the influences of individual countries or regions. Due to globalisation and internationalisation as well as the development of a European education area, however, a national perspective is inadequate. In contrast, a transnational perspective that understands the research object as embedded in various contexts seems appropriate (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 2016c, 2020). Consequently, the three master's programmes are not only to be considered and understood in their national context, but also to be examined in relation to inter- and supranational actors, the labour market, the social context, etc. This study therefore considers not only the national framework of the research fields, but also other contexts which are addressed in Chap. 4.2.2.

At the individual level of academic professionalisation, the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings is examined across the three master's programmes. Here, only an international perspective is taken and not a comparative one. This is due to the fact that the development of professionalism of graduates is to be understood in a complex interplay of social, structural, and subjective factors (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). To enable a comparison in the narrow sense, a sufficient understanding of the different factors is needed to facilitate the interpretation of the similarities and differences that may arise. However, the heterogeneity of the graduates' participation experiences in international teaching and learning settings (see Chap. 4.3.2) makes it difficult compare the data collected. Furthermore, due to the individuality of learning, which is biographically shaped (Dinkelaker 2015; Siebert 1999), a comparison of the graduates' individual educational and learning processes is possible only to a limited extent. In order to contribute to the underlying research question, the perspectives of graduates from the master's programmes are therefore interwoven, in the sense of a data triangulation (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b)⁴. In this way, it is possible

⁴ In qualitative research, triangulation is discussed both as an explicit research strategy and as a principle inherent to qualitative research (Kondratjuk and Leinhos 2019). Triangulation can generally be described as the interweaving of different (e.g. theoretical, methodological) perspectives while taking into account the appropriateness of the research object. According to Denzin (1970), different types of triangulation can be distinguished: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and method triangulation. With reference to Flick (2011b, 20-21), one can also speak of a systematic perspective triangulation when different perspectives on the research object are deliberately triangulated with each other. As an explicit research strategy, triangulation is increasingly being emphasised as an independent quality criterion of qualitative research because «the use of complementary methods, theories, data or researchers [...] is intended to compensate for biases or distortions inherent in a method, theory, database or individual researcher» (Steinke 2017, 320).

to focus on the structural factors in the development of professionalism and to draw conclusions about how international teaching and learning settings support the development of graduates' professionalism in the three selected master's programmes.

4.1.2 Reasons for an International and Comparative Study

Due to the convergence of the European education area, international and comparative research approaches can enable the understanding of pan-European developments in adult education, for which qualitative approaches are suitable (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 141-42). The comparative perspective of this study enables us to examine transnational developments and influences in adult education, as well as local and national ones (Jean-Francois 2020; Schreiber-Barsch 2020). Moreover, a comparative research approach enables people to learn with and from each other. On the one hand, ideas and experiences regarding common problems can be shared and possible solutions can be explored (Jütte and Lattke 2014, 10; Slowey 2016, 10). On the other hand, international comparison can help people to better perceive and critically question their own (unconscious) ways of thinking and see through confrontation with new perspectives (Jütte and Lattke 2014, 10). This can contribute to a better understanding of one's own national and regional contexts (Slowey 2016, 10).

With regard to academic professionalisation in adult education, the international and comparative perspective of the study offers the opportunity to capture different developments and influencing factors in the internationalisation of the three master's programmes at the structural level. The aim is not to generate comprehensive explanations, rather, to gain a deeper understanding of one's own contexts and perspectives through comparison with other contexts and perspectives (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 2020). Regarding the individual level of academic professionalisation, structural similarities in international teaching and learning settings become visible through the triangulation of the available data of the three research fields (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b). This leads to a broad and differentiated understanding on how international teaching and learning settings support the development of professionalism in master's programmes in adult education. The triangulation supports the expansion and deepening of the results as well as their validity (Steinke 2017, 320).

In the research process, the triangulation of different data, as well as methods and theories, supports the adoption of a multi-perspective view of research objects, meaning that the generalisability of the results can be increased (Kuckartz 2018, 218). Contrasting and comparing the three master's programmes can thus make the studies' findings more generalisable. The use of qualitative research methods makes it possible to reconstruct structural developments and personal experiences through the medium of language (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014).

4.2 Research Fields and Research Contexts

The following sections provide deeper insights into the three selected master's programmes in adult education, which represent the research fields of the study (Chap. 4.2.1). Similarities and differences in programme structure and content can be identified between the programmes. In turn, the three master's programmes are to be understood as embedded in different organisational contexts. In relation to the research interest, the way internationalisation is shaped at the three universities where the master's programmes are offered is particularly relevant (Chap. 4.2.2). The organisational context represents a relevant research context alongside other contexts that have already been outlined in the theoretical foundations of this study. These comprise the supranational context, national context, and social context, as well as the labour market situation in the field of adult education.

4.2.1 Research Fields

The research fields of the study comprise three master's programmes at universities in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence which include adult education as field of study (Fig. 11). The research field 'master's programme' refers to the curricular structures (e.g. content, study structure), the responsible academic unit (programme heads, [academic] staff), and the students.



Figure 11 – Research fields of the study. Source: own representation.

The starting point for the choice of research fields lies in the present research interest, whereby at least two research fields are to be chosen for an international comparative approach (Egetenmeyer 2020, 21). The selection of the three research fields is based on the fact that the selected master's programmes can provide a differentiated picture of the research objects. The degree programmes represent contrasting cases within the European Higher Education Area, as they are located in two countries of the European Union and one country that is not part of the European Union.

Referring to the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education, it can be assumed that the development of students' professionalism primarily

takes place during the master's degree (see Chap. 3.4). The programmes were therefore chosen because of their specialisation in the field of adult education at the master's level. In order to examine international teaching and learning settings in academic professionalisation in adult education, the internationality of the degree programmes constituted another essential selection criterion. Based on the researcher's own experiences as a student and research assistant at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg, the master's programme in Würzburg was chosen as a suitable research field as diverse international offerings could be identified in the programme. The master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence were selected as suitable international perspectives, as an active Erasmus partnership (regular student and staff mobility in both directions) was identified between the master's programme in Würzburg and these two programmes. The academic units associated with the three master's programmes also cooperate within the framework of various international cooperation projects. These include the Erasmus Multilateral Project "European Study and Research in Adult Learning and Education" (ESRALE, 2013-16) and the two Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" (COMPALL, 2015-18) and "International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" (INTALL, 2018-21). In addition, active student participation is evident in the joint two-week Adult Education Academy "International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning", which has taken place annually since 2014. This has ensured that international teaching and learning settings are not only available in the master's programmes but are also actively used. With the master's programme in Florence, which offers the possibility of completing an international double degree programme, another international offer format is integrated into the study. Finally, selecting the three master's programmes made it possible to include a broad spectrum of international offerings in the study.

For a more in-depth presentation of the research fields, the programme structure and content of the three master's programmes are described below.

4.2.1.1 The Educational Science Master's Programme at the University of Würzburg

The Educational Science master's programme at the University of Würzburg comprises 120 ECTS. The normal programme length is two years (4 semesters) (Fig. 12). It focuses on working fields in the areas of elementary education, youth education, adult education, and education for the elderly. It aims to promote academic thinking and research and to enable students' ability to critically reflect on and develop educational concepts. For this purpose, «analytical, planning, judgement and organisational skills» (Institut für Pädagogik n.d.b) are promoted. The master's programme includes a compulsory unit of 60 ECTS, which includes courses in the fields of educational science and educational research. Students can choose between two additional fields of study: cultural pedago-

gy or adult and continuing education. Students can choose to specialise in one of these fields for a further 20 ECTS. Choosing a specialisation has only been possible since an amendment in 2017. Prior to this year, adult and continuing education was a fixed field of study in the master's programme. In addition, the master's programme includes an internship worth 10 ECTS and the master's thesis worth 30 ECTS.

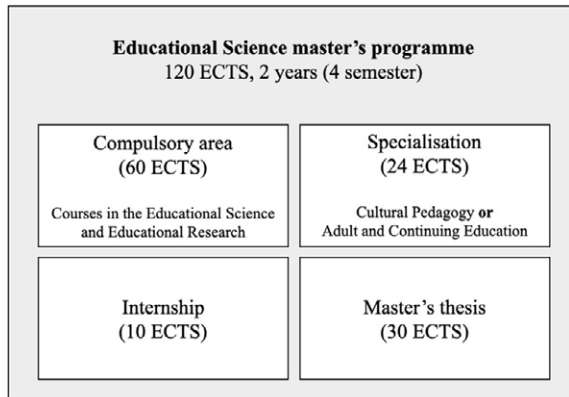


Figure 12 – Overview of the programme structure of the Educational Science master's programme at the University of Würzburg. Source: own representation.

The specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education comes under the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education, which is part of the Institute of Education in the Faculty of Human Sciences at the University of Würzburg. The specialisation is planned for the first year of the programme, in the first and second semester. It is divided into three modules, as can be seen in Tab. 1. The “Adult and Continuing Education” Module consists of four seminars and aims to convey theoretical basics in the field of adult education. The “Educational Management” Module is composed of two seminars and covers topics of personnel and organisational development as well as education, guidance, and competence development. Optionally, the module can be replaced or supplemented by participation in the Adult Education Academy. Since 2019, the Adult Education Academy has been recognised in an independent Module “International-Comparative Adult and Continuing Education” worth 12 ECTS. If the module is taken in addition to the other two modules, the total number of ECTS of the specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education increases from 20 to 24 ECTS. The Adult Education Academy deals with comparative studies of adult education and lifelong learning. It includes a fourteen-day attendance phase at the University of Würzburg with students and academics from universities from different countries as well as practitioners from adult education providers. In addition, it includes a virtual preparatory seminar during the semester, which is accompanied by preparatory and follow-up work in self-study.

Table 1 – Structure of the specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education. Source: own representation, based on Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education (n.d.g).

Winter semester (1st semester)	Summer semester (2nd semester)
Module: Adult and Continuing Education (14 ECTS)	
(1) Theoretical foundations, history, and social conditions of adult and continuing education	(2) Professional action in adult and continuing education (3) Institutions and fields of action in adult and continuing education (4) Research fields and perspectives of adult and continuing education
Module: Educational Management (6 ECTS)	And/Or:
(1) Personnel and organisational development (2) Education, guidance, and competence development	
(1) Module: International-Comparative Adult and Continuing Education (12 ECTS) (2) Adult Education Academy: International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning Preparatory seminar for the Adult Education Academy	
Total: min. 20 ECTS (max. 32 ECTS)	

4.2.1.2 The Andragogy Master's Programme at the University of Belgrade

The Andragogy master's programme at the University of Belgrade comprises 60 ECTS. The normal programme length is one year (2 semesters). The aim of the programme is to provide «general and specific knowledge and skills in the area of Andragogy, obtaining abilities necessary for satisfying professional responsibilities and conducting individual and independent work within educational systems and programs concerning education of adults» (Filozofski Fakultet n.d.a). The master's programme is offered by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy in the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade. Admission to the master's programme requires the completion of the four-year Andragogy bachelor's programme (240 ECTS), which is also offered at the University of Belgrade (Filozofski Fakultet n.d.a). Compared to the bachelor's programme, the master's programme offers a higher qualification with a pronounced research orientation. The students must select the topic of their master's thesis and find a

supervisor during the application process for the programme (Filozofski Fakultet n.d.c). As shown in Fig. 13, the master's programme consists of four modules, which are further differentiated in terms of content.

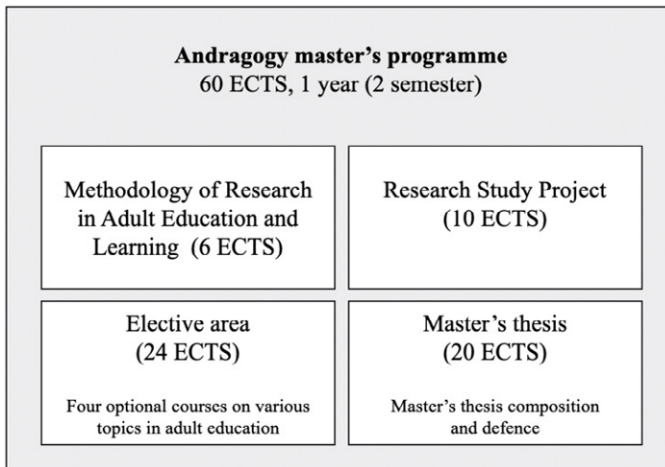


Figure 13 – Overview of the programme structure of the Andragogy master's programme at the University of Belgrade. Source: own representation, based on Filozofski Fakultet (n.d.b).

In the course of study, the first semester focuses on teaching methodological and theoretical content. The first semester includes the Module “Methodology of Research in Adult Education and Learning”, which is worth 6 ECTS, and another module consisting of four freely selectable courses worth a total of 24 ECTS. These optional courses can be chosen in connection with the topic of the master's thesis. Course topics include, for example, personnel development, knowledge management, communication and media in adult education, curriculum development in adult education, and adult education and leisure. The second semester focuses more on the writing and finalisation of the master's thesis. It includes a discussion-based examination of the developed research project (Research Study Project) worth a total of 10 ECTS. The finalisation and defence of the master's thesis is worth a total of 20 ECTS.

4.2.1.3 The Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences Master's Programme at the University of Florence

The master's degree in Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Florence comprises 120 ECTS. The normal programme length is two years (4 semesters). The master's programme is located at the School of Humanities and Education of the University of Florence. The aim of the programme is to train students to work for local adult education and continuing education providers, to coordinate child, youth, and family education and social services, to work as experts for teaching and learning processes, and to

work as secondary school teachers (Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione n.d.b)⁵. The master’s programme can be completed as an international double degree programme with Masaryk University of Brno, Czech Republic. A maximum of 10 students are admitted to the double degree programme each year. Students must spend a period of time studying at the University of Brno to complete the double degree (Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione 2018).

The programme comprises two fields of study: adult education and educational science. In Fig. 14, courses assigned to both fields of study are designated as the compulsory area. These make up a total of 60 ECTS. In addition, there is an internship, worth 3 ECTS, which can be extended by another internship of 6 ECTS. The programme also includes an elective area with 12 ECTS, in which students can choose courses from other subject areas. In the second year of the master’s programme, students can choose one of the respective fields of study. This specialisation comprises 24 ECTS. The master’s programme is completed with the master’s thesis, worth 12 ECTS.

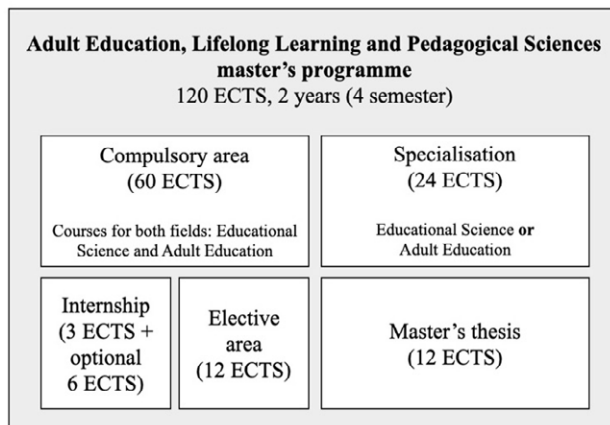


Figure 14 – Overview of the programme structure of the Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences master’s programme at the University of Florence. Source: own representation.

The specialisation in Adult Education bears a total of 24 ECTS and includes four courses that are integrated into the second year. The following Tab. 2 gives an insight into the courses that are attended when choosing the study field of adult education. The course selection corresponds to the courses offered in the academic year 2019-20.

⁵ In a conversation with Professor Vanna Boffo (University of Florence, 23 November 2021), who was head of the master’s programme at that time, it was mentioned that students of the programme are mainly trained to be teachers for secondary school education. Students taking up employment in the field of adult education after the completion of the programme seemed to be rather rare.

Table 2 – Courses offered for the specialisation in Adult Education in the Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences master's programme, 2019-20. Source: own representation, based on Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione (n.d.a).

Second Year (3rd + 4th semester)	
Social Pedagogy of Human Development and International Cooperation	6 ECTS
Pedagogy on Innovation	6 ECTS
Psychology of the Life Cycle	6 ECTS
European Union Law	6 ECTS
Total:	24 ECTS

4.2.1.4 Similarities and Differences in the Programme Structures of the Master's Programmes

As can be seen in the presentation of the master's programmes, the programme structures differ in the length of study and the extent to which they include adult education as a field of study. While the Andragogy master's programme in Belgrade has a normal programme length of one year (2 semesters), the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence last two years (4 semesters). This results in differences in the maximum number of credits that can be achieved, with the number of credits being 90 ECTS in Belgrade and 120 ECTS in Würzburg and Florence. Furthermore, the master's programme in Belgrade focuses exclusively on the field of adult education. In Würzburg and Florence, in contrast, adult education is part of an educational science degree programme. In Würzburg, 20 to 32 ECTS out of a total of 120 ECTS are assigned to the specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education. In Florence, 24 ECTS out of a total of 120 ECTS are assigned to the specialisation in Adult Education.

Another difference is that the master's programme in Belgrade is preceded by a four-year Andragogy bachelor's programme, which is a prerequisite for admission to the master's programme. Since students can already acquire a differentiated knowledge and understanding of adult education at bachelor's level, the master's programme does not have to teach as much subject-specific content but has a stronger research orientation. In contrast, in Würzburg and Florence, the programmes focus more on teaching basic knowledge in the field of adult education. This is due to the fact that admission to the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence does not require knowledge of adult education (Institut für Pädagogik n.d.a; Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.e).

Consequently, it becomes clear that the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence are more similar in structure and content, while there are more differences when compared with the master's programme in Belgrade.

4.2.2 Research Contexts

The three master's programmes are set in different contexts, which can constitute supportive as well as non-supportive framework conditions in relation to the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2020, 22). Being aware of and engaging with the relevant contexts makes it possible to interpret the similarities and differences between master's programmes beyond the national level. This is particularly relevant for examining the structural level of academic professionalisation. In order to arrive at a comparison in the narrow understanding (Charters and Hilton 1989; Reischmann 2008b), transnational contexts must be taken into account (Egetenmeyer 2016c, 2020), which «exist beyond and alongside local and country influences» (Egetenmeyer 2020, 22).

Based on the theoretical assumptions, relevant contexts could be identified to investigate the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the selected master's programmes. These contexts are reflected in the heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Fig. 4). They include social trends (including globalisation and internationalisation), the education and higher education policy at supranational and national level, and organisational framework conditions. With regard to the discourse on professionalisation in adult education (Chap. 3), further contexts are taken into account, such as the structures of the occupational field in adult education in the national and international labour market, and the structures of the academic field in adult education on a national level.

The following sections focus on the strategic efforts of the universities in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence with regard to the internationalisation of teaching and learning. The international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes can then be analysed in relation to the internationalisation efforts of the respective universities.

4.2.2.1 Internationalisation at the University of Würzburg

The internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg focuses on competitiveness and the promotion of excellence. Internationalisation aims at strengthening research and teaching and gaining new perspectives, not only for the university itself but also for the region (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 2). The internationalisation strategy is aligned to four fields of action: research, study and teaching, advice and support, and cross-departmental measures (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016). Sub-goals and measures are defined for each field of action, which are continuously monitored in their implementation by a quality management system. The Commission for Internationalisation, which is headed by the Vice President for Internationalisation, and the University Management are responsible for the internationalisation strategy's coordination (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 3). In the area of teaching and learning, internationalisation focuses on «attracting

motivated and high-achieving international students» and on the «promotion of exchange programmes for students, lecturers and staff» (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 5). Measures to achieve these goals include the expansion of courses and degree programmes offered in foreign languages, the development of seasonal schools, and the increase in international mobility (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 5-6).

Different actors are involved in the area of teaching and learning. The International Affairs Service Centre is responsible for advising and supporting international students arriving at the University of Würzburg. International students are also accompanied in their university life by international tutors and a student working group. In addition, the Service Centre is responsible for counselling and supervising students at the University of Würzburg who want to go abroad during their studies. At the faculty and institute level, further units are entrusted with the coordination and support of incoming and outgoing students. Further services are provided by the Centre for Languages and the inter-faculty project Global Systems and Intercultural Competence (GSiK) for the promotion of intercultural competences (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 5).

Moreover, the University of Würzburg has bilateral agreements with universities all over the world and is active in international networks, including the Coimbra Group, the DAAD, and Gate Germany (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg n.d.).

4.2.2.2 Internationalisation at the University of Belgrade

An internationalisation strategy has also been adopted at the University of Belgrade. The strategy is divided into general goals and specific goals. The general goals focus on the university's participation in academic cooperation at the regional, European, and international level and on creating a favourable environment for students to prepare them for dealing with other cultures and new environments (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014, 1). The specific goals concern the facilitation of staff and student mobility as well as the employment of international academics, in order to integrate international perspectives into the area of teaching and learning, the strengthening of contacts with former students living abroad through alumni networks, and the training of internationally competent students (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014, 2). Furthermore, the internationalisation strategy includes concrete measures to achieve these goals.

The Rectorate of the University of Belgrade and its service units are responsible for coordinating and overseeing internationalisation efforts. The individual faculties and institutes of the University of Belgrade carry out individual, international cooperation programmes, which are coordinated in cooperation with the Rectorate and the other units (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014, 4). Among the service units is the International Relations Office, which is responsible for coordinating student and staff mobility at the University of Belgrade. At the faculty level, branches of the International Relations Office are responsible for coordinating international affairs at the individual faculties.

The University of Belgrade maintains bilateral agreements with universities worldwide. The University is also represented in international networks, including the EUA, UNESCO, DAAD, and regional networks. The university also cooperates with foundations in Japan and Belgium (University of Belgrade n.d.).

4.2.2.3 Internationalisation at the University of Florence

At the University of Florence, the official statute of the university highlights the importance of internationalisation (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018). Specific goals for internationalisation can be found in the University's strategic plan – reference is made here to the strategic plan of 2019-21 (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a). The strategic plan includes six main strategic goals, one of which concerns internationalisation. At the University of Florence, internationalisation aims to promote international competitiveness and strengthen international cooperation, and to strengthen the international dimension in teaching (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a, 26). Subgoals, indicators, key figures, and target values are defined in relation to these two goals. In the area of teaching and learning, the internationalisation of degree programmes is promoted by increasing the number of foreign-language courses and international joint and double degrees. An additional focus is on the mobility of students, lecturers, and administrative staff, with incoming mobility and outgoing mobility being areas of focus (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a, 27).

The Vice-Rector for International Relations, the Vice-Rector for Innovation in Teaching, the Vice-Rector for National and International Scientific Research, and the Delegate for Doctoral Studies are some of the individuals responsible for internationalisation at the University of Florence (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a, 26). The International Desk is responsible for students outside of the European Union or the European Economic Area. Students inside the European Union are supervised by the respective Student Administration Office of the faculties in charge (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.b)⁶.

The University of Florence has international cooperation agreements with universities all over the world (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.c). Since 1999, the University of Florence has also been recognised as a Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence for its specialisation in European Studies. It hosts the Confucius Institute as a centre for the teaching of Chinese in cooperation with Tongji University Shanghai. The University of Florence is part of the Tuscany University Network, which aims to internationalise universities in the Tuscany region (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.c). Together with six other European universities, the University of Florence is part of the European University for Well-Being (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.a).

⁶ The term faculty is translated from the Italian term 'scuola' for school. A 'scuola' is responsible for teaching and learning and includes two or more departments ('dipartimenti') (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.f).

4.2.2.4 Internationalisation as Part of the Strategic Orientation of the Universities

With regard to the internationalisation of higher education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy (see Chap. 2.8), it is evident that internationalisation of teaching and learning is a task that is performed largely autonomously by the universities. Internationalisation strategies, service units, funding structures, as well as programmes and measures, differ from university to university within the national contexts. At the three universities in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, it is clear that internationalisation is a part of their strategic orientation. The universities of Würzburg and Belgrade have adopted their own internationalisation strategies with concrete goals and measures (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016). At the University of Florence, the strategic goals of internationalisation are anchored in the university's strategic plan, which includes indicators, key figures, and target values (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a). The level of measurability in the strategic plan of the University of Florence is more detailed than in the internationalisation strategies of the other universities. Looking at the strategic goals of the three universities, it becomes clear that they intend to contribute to increasing the universities' competitiveness and promoting excellence. In terms of the strategic orientation, common goals in the area of teaching and learning lie, for example, in the promotion of the mobility of students, lecturers, and staff, as well as the expansion of international degree programmes.

At all three universities, internationalisation is coordinated by the university management and selected staff and service units. For the supervision of international mobility, the universities have a university-wide international office and coordinating offices at faculty level. The universities also maintain partnerships with international universities and are part of international networks that extend beyond the European area.

The strategies, service units, and international cooperation presented make it clear that internationalisation is a priority for the universities of Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence. The international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes are to be understood as embedded in these contexts.

4.3 Data Collection

Since the present research project focuses on both the structural level and the individual level of academic professionalisation in adult education, the data collection follows a two-stage procedure. The structural level of academic professionalisation is investigated by means of focus group interviews with programme heads, (academic) staff, and students involved in the master's programmes (Chap. 4.3.1). The focus group interviews concentrate on the first, second, and third research questions (Fig. 15). The individual level of academic professionalisation is researched using guided interviews with graduates of the three selected master's programmes (Chap. 4.3.2). These guided interviews focus on the fourth research question.

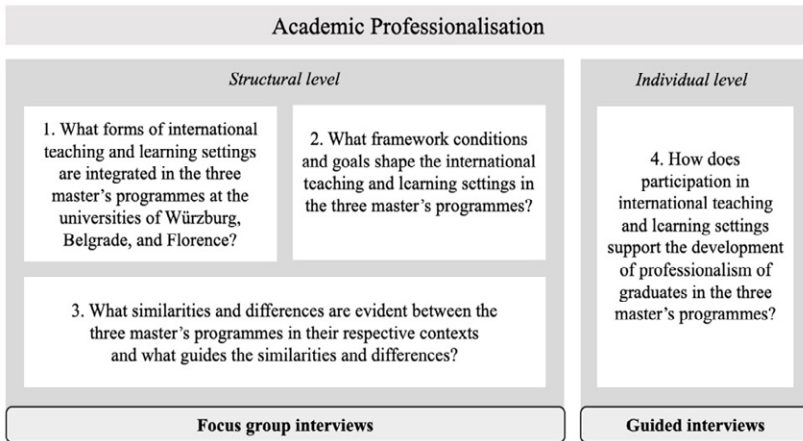


Figure 15–Allocation of the survey methods to the level of academic professionalisation. Source: own representation.

4.3.1 Focus Group Interviews

The choice of focus group interviews as a survey method is accompanied by research theory considerations for investigating the structural level of academic professionalisation (Chap. 4.3.1.1), which were implemented by means of an interview guide (Chap. 4.3.1.2). The sample includes one focus group interview per research field (Chap. 4.3.1.3). After the focus group interviews were conducted, the collected data was transcribed and anonymised (Chap. 4.3.1.4).

4.3.1.1 Focus Group Interviews as a Survey Method

With the aim of examining the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes, the focus group interview was determined as a suitable survey method. In order to generate knowledge about the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes, this knowledge is gathered by persons involved in the programmes. As «a moderated discourse procedure in which a small group is stimulated by an information input to discuss a specific topic» (Schulz 2012, 9), the focus group interview offers the advantage of generating insights that would have remained isolated or unspoken in individual conversations (Schulz 2012). The use of focus group interviews is applied to investigate the «research question in a target group-oriented, practical, descriptive and resource-saving manner» (Schulz, Mack, and Renn 2012b, 7).

The focus group interview is suitable for investigating international teaching and learning settings at the structural level of academic professionalisation as it allows the exploration of the research questions through specific and focused

questions guided by the group moderator (Morgan and K. Hoffman 2010, 404). In accordance with the research interest of the present study, the focus group interview method is preferred to the qualitative method of group discussion. The latter focuses primarily on group dynamics and interaction between the participants (Bohnsack and Przyborski 2009; Flick 2011a). Instead, the thematic focus of focus group interviews ensures that the underlying research questions can be addressed in a targeted manner. The collection of thematically focused data through a structured interview guide is particularly important for the international comparative approach of this study. In this way, it is possible to compare the research fields along concrete categories, which goes beyond the mere comparison of similarities and differences and makes it possible to give reasons for the occurrence of these (Egetenmeyer 2020).

The qualitative interview form provides insight into the development processes and framework conditions that come into play in the provision of international teaching and learning settings. In addition, recourse to programme regulations, course catalogues, and other documents provides selective support for the data collection.

4.3.1.2 Interview Guide for the Focus Group Interviews

The extent to which the focus group interviews are structured is determined by the interview guide. The interview guide was created using a funnel format, which «begins with a set of broad, exploratory questions before shifting to a more tightly focused set of questions» (Morgan and K. Hoffman 2010, 404). Following this procedure, the guide was developed with open, explorative questions as well as with focused questions in order to provide precise answers to the underlying research questions. The guideline is based on the theoretically developed heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Fig. 4). The questions were formulated without theory-guiding terminology in order to allow the participants to respond in as unbiased a manner as possible on matters regarding the international perspectives in the master's programme and to avoid loaded questions.

Before the focus group interviews were conducted, the guideline was discussed and further developed in a doctoral colloquium by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg. After the revision of the German version of the interview guide, it was translated into English. The English guide was used in the focus groups in Belgrade and Florence, while the German version was used in the focus group in Würzburg.

The interview guide is structured as follows:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Programmes;
- 3) Rationales;
- 4) Aims;
- 5) Closing.

In the 1) *introduction*, an introductory question is used to initiate the overall topic of the focus group (Froschauer and Lueger 2020, 78). The participants are asked to talk freely about how the master's programme is structured and can point out international references in the programme. This is to address the first forms of international teaching and learning settings at the beginning of the focus group interview in order to specifically focus on them under 2) *programmes*. Here, the participants are asked to present different international perspectives in the master's programme and explain how these are organised. As a result, concrete forms of international teaching and learning settings are identified. In order to gain further insights into the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme, 3) *rationales* for the internationalisation of the programme are examined. In this way, information on the different actors involved, influencing factors, and other relevant contexts shall be addressed in order to analyse the framework conditions of the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. In this context, further questions are asked about the 4) *aims* of internationalisation. In this way, the goals of international teaching and learning settings are to be identified. At the 5) *closing* of the interview, the participants are given the opportunity to look back on the course of the discussion and add any missing or insufficiently addressed aspects, as well as to formulate concluding thoughts.

4.3.1.3 Sampling of the Focus Group Interviews

A focus group of four to five people was formed for each master's programme. The selected participants can be assigned to the following groups of people:

- 1) Head of the programme or study field of adult education;
- 2) Staff involved in the planning and coordination of the programme;
- 3) Teaching staff;
- 4) Students of the programme.

The composition of the focus groups was coordinated with the lead professors of the three master's programmes and was based on the relevance of the persons with regard to the overall topic of the focus group interviews (Morgan and K. Hoffman 2010, 403). By including different groups of people, the intention was for the participants to complement each other in the course of the conversation and to each bring in new and different perspectives on the topic (Froschauer and Lueger 2020, 63).

The following table gives an overview of the sample (Tab. 3). The table also shows the date of the survey, the duration of the focus group interviews, and the language used.

Table 3 – Sample of the focus group interviews. Source: own representation.

	Focus group Würzburg (UNIWUE)	Focus group Belgrade (UNIBEL)	Focus group Florence (UNIFI)
Number of participants	4	5	5
Composition of participants	1x Professor 3x Research assistant	2x Professor 1x Research assistant 1x Staff member 1x Master's student	2x Professor 1x Research assistant 1x Master's student
Date	29/05/2019	18/06/2019	27/09/2019
Duration	01:04:58	00:53:46	00:59:32
Language	German	English	English

4.3.1.4 Focus Group Interview Process and Data Processing

The focus group interviews were conducted between May and September 2019 (Tab. 3) and took place on site at the three universities. As a consequence, the data refers to the international teaching and learning settings offered at the three master's programmes at the time of data collection (2019). The development process of the international teaching and learning settings was also covered.

During the focus group interviews in Belgrade and Florence, there were linguistic barriers in the course of the conversation, as English is not the mother tongue of any of the interview participants. However, further inquiries and mutual support among the focus group participants helped to reduce ambiguities and problems as much as possible. The researcher critically reflected on biases during the research process (see Chap. 4.5).

The focus group interviews were recorded with a recording device and transcribed by the researcher using the transcription programme F4, taking into account a transcription system developed according to Dresing and Pehl (2018) and Kuckartz (2016). The transcription was verbatim, not phonetic, or summarised. Slurring, stuttering, punctuation, reception signals, and simple grammatical errors of the interviewees were smoothed out in favour of readability. Pauses, breaks in conversation, speaker overlaps, tonal emphasis, non-verbal statements, and incomprehensible words were marked accordingly. All personal data was anonymised after transcription, where necessary, by aggregating information (Meyermann and Porzelt 2014) without distorting the overall context. Anonymisation was standardised in English across the three research fields. The participants signed consent forms for participation and the use of personal data.

4.3.2 Guided Interviews

In a second step, a total of 22 guided interviews were conducted. These included 20 interviews with graduates of the three master's programmes and two interviews with students who were still enrolled at the end of their master's programme⁷. The decision to select the guided interview is based on the underlying research interest regarding the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 4.3.2.1). The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide (Chap. 4.3.2.2) on the sample of a total of 22 graduates of the three master's programmes (Chap. 4.3.2.3). The interviews were conducted both in person and by telephone. The data collected was processed afterwards (Chap. 4.3.2.4).

4.3.2.1 Guided Interviews as a Survey Method

The study pursues a specific research interest with its aim of investigating the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings. The open-ended guided interview is a suitable survey method for investigating such clearly defined research questions, in which «descriptive and argumentative modes of presentation are in the foreground» (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 127). By partially structuring the interview with the help of an interview guide, the characteristics of the development of professionalism in master's programmes in adult education identified in the theoretical discourse can be queried in a targeted manner. This can be done whilst retaining the openness of the interview (Friebertshäuser and Langer 2013, 439).

The guided interview helps to obtain thematically focused data in the individual interviews, which can be merged in the subsequent data analysis (Friebertshäuser and Langer 2013, 439). The pre-structuring of the interviews makes it possible to generate data that can be analysed and interpreted according to the research interest despite its heterogeneity. The heterogeneity of the data is due to the fact that graduates from three different master's programmes from different year groups were interviewed (for the sample, see Chap. 4.3.2.3).

Selecting the open-ended guided interview as a qualitative survey method (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 126) contributes to analysing how the international teaching and learning settings support the development of graduates' professionalism in the three master's programmes from a retrospective perspective. Comprehensive findings on the development of professionalism in master's programme in adult education can be gained by triangulating the interview data from the three research fields (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b).

⁷ For reasons of clarity and readability, we will only refer to 'graduates' in the following. These also include the two interviewed students who are still enrolled.

4.3.2.2 Interview Guide for the Guided Interviews

The structure of the interview guide is based on the principle «from the general to the specific» (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 129). Open, narrative-oriented questions were formulated first, which could be further explored through specific follow-up questions. Through this process, the interviewer can gather «facts in their situational embedding and in their social, personal and institutional context» (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 129).

The thematic areas and questions of the interview guide are based on the theoretical considerations and the heuristic model of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master's programmes (Fig. 9). The latter was revised after data collection on the basis of the data gathered. At the time of data collection, there was a further interest in the relevance of international teaching and learning settings for the graduates' occupational activity in the field of adult education. Therefore, additional questions were formulated in the interview guide. When reviewing the data material, it became apparent that the data collected was not sufficiently representative, which is why a data cut was made for the data analysis and the additional research interest was excluded. This is due to the fact that not all of the graduates interviewed were working in the field of adult education at the time of data collection. Likewise, some interviewees had not yet completed their master's programme and could therefore not refer to an occupational activity in the field (for information on the sample, see Chap. 4.3.2.3). Furthermore, the scope of this study required a theoretical and empirical narrowing that only emerged in the course of the research process.

The guideline was reconsidered and further developed in a doctoral colloquium at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg. When formulating the questions, care was taken not to use central, theory-based terminology. This was done to avoid biases and difficulties in understanding. In a pre-test interview, the guide was checked for the completeness and comprehensibility of the questions (Friebertshäuser and Langer 2013, 439-40). Since the pre-test interview already provided relevant data in relation to the underlying research question, it was also included in the sample and is considered in the data analysis. For the graduates of the master's programme in Würzburg, the guide was used in German, while it was translated into English for the interviews with the graduates of the master's programmes in Florence and Belgrade.

The interview guide is divided into the following sections:

- 1) Thematic introduction;
- 2) International teaching and learning settings;
- 3) Professional activity;
- 4) End of the interview.

In the 1) *thematic introduction*, a narrative stimulus is set to encourage graduates to recall their participation in international teaching and learning settings during their master's studies (Froschauer and Lueger 2020, 78). The graduates are asked to report openly about their international experiences. To gain deeper insights, more specific questions about their participation follow in 2) *international teaching and learning settings*. In this context, questions are raised about the reasons and motives for participating in the international teaching and learning settings. However, these were not considered further in the written analysis of the data, as they are only of secondary relevance to the research question. This is followed by an open, narrative-oriented question about the added value that the graduates see in their international experiences during their master's studies. This is intended to explore the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings. If necessary, more specific follow-up questions are posed about the acquired knowledge and skills. The next part of the interview guide 3) *professional activity* aims to elicit the relevance of the international experiences from the master's studies for the current occupational activity of the graduates in the field of adult education. As already explained, this initial research interest was not considered further in the following research. At the 4) *end of the interview*, the graduates are asked to give an overall assessment of their international experiences with regard to their occupational careers (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 129). This allows the graduates to reflect on their international experience once again in order to summarise the most important experiences and make additions where necessary.

4.3.2.3 Sampling of the Guided Interviews

A total of 22 graduates from the three master's programmes were interviewed. Eight graduates participate in each of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade and six graduates participate in the master's programme in Florence. The interviews were initially planned to be held in person on site, but with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, they were conducted almost exclusively by telephone (Tab. 4).

Table 4 – Sample of the guided interviews at a glance. Source: own representation.

	Master's programme in Würzburg	Master's programme in Belgrade	Master's programme in Florence
Number of interviewees	8	8	6
Language	German	English	English
Type of interview	Face-to-face or Telephone	Telephone	Telephone

The sample was selected in accordance with the present research interest (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 127) and compiled according to the following criteria:

- 1) Completion of one of the three master's programmes;
- 2) Participation in international activities during studies⁸;
- 3) Career entry in the first one to two years after graduation;
- 4) Occupation in the field of adult education.

The sampling along the specific, predefined criteria was supplemented by the so-called snowball sampling procedure (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 184-85). In this process, the lead professors of the three master's programmes were able to recommend relevant interview partners. In addition, the researcher was able to draw on her own international network of professors, lecturers, and students from her student and later academic work at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. This network was activated through a call for participation published in German and English on various social media channels by the researcher. In addition, the researcher was able to use personal contacts that existed from her own master's degree in the field of adult education at the University of Würzburg from 2015-18. All of this saw selected people were approached in a targeted manner.

With the aim of integrating a high contrast of cases into the sample (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014, 186-87), the sample was limited to the number of interviews available. In the course of the sampling process, however, some of the fixed criteria had to be adjusted. For example, interviews were also conducted with people who were at the end of their master's degree or who were not working in the field of adult education. Likewise, it was possible that graduates had completed their master's degree more than one to two years ago. Furthermore, it should be noted that, in one case, participation in a study abroad in the fourth year of the Andragogy bachelor's programme at the University of Belgrade is also included in the data analysis. Since the length of the Andragogy master's programme in Belgrade only comprises one year (see Chap. 4.2.1.2), the fourth and final year of the bachelor's programme was assessed as comparable to the first year of the master's programme in Würzburg and Florence and therefore included in the analysis.

A short questionnaire was handed out to the graduates with the interviews, which served to query the following demographic data: age, gender, title of the bachelor's degree programme, reference to content of adult education in the bachelor's degree programme, title of the master's programme, month and year of completing the master's degree, name of the occupation, and the start of the occupational activity with month and year. The following table (Tab. 5) presents some of this data and also provides information on the time, place, and duration of the interviews.

⁸ It did not matter which international activities the person participated in and how long or how often.

Table 5 – Detailed information on the sample of the guided interviews. Source: own representation.

No.	Gender	Master's degree since	Date	Duration	Place
Master's degree in Educational Sciences with a specialisation in Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg					
1.1	F	03/2018	13/02/2020	00:50:36	Telephone
1.2	F	07/2018	17/02/2020	00:41:38	Face-to-face
1.3	F	02/2018	18/02/2020	00:36:17	Telephone
1.4	F	05/2018	19/02/2020	00:35:30	Face-to-face
1.5	F	09/2018	06/03/2020	00:49:33	Face-to-face
1.6	F	01/2018	12/03/2020	00:54:23	Telephone
1.7	F	01/2016	20/03/2020	01:04:45	Telephone
1.8	F	Pending	21/01/2020	00:33:15	Face-to-face
Master's degree in Andragogy at the University of Belgrade					
2.1	F	06/2017	19/03/2020	00:56:05	Telephone
2.2	F	05/2017	01/05/2020	00:27:52	Telephone
2.3	F	Pending	16/05/2020	00:46:10	Telephone
2.4	F	09/2019	16/05/2020	01:03:23	Telephone
2.5	F	09/2019	20/05/2020	00:46:38	Telephone
2.6	F	Pending	19/05/2020	01:00:16	Telephone
2.7	M	10/2017	01/06/2020	00:43:00	Telephone
2.8	M	2015	07/06/2020	00:49:17	Telephone
Master's degree in Adult Education, Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Sciences with a specialisation in Adult Education at the University of Florence					
3.1	F	10/2018	27/02/2020	01:02:52	Telephone
3.2	M	11/2017	06/03/2020	00:55:21	Telephone
3.3	F	04/2019	11/03/2020	01:02:11	Telephone
3.4	F	07/2019	19/03/2020	00:52:51 + 00:02:11	Telephone
3.5	F	11/2019	23/04/2020	01:02:05	Telephone
3.6	F	10/2019	09/07/2020	00:51:41	Telephone

4.3.2.4 Guided Interview Process and Data Processing

The guided interviews with graduates of the master's programmes were conducted between February and July 2020 (Tab. 5). Since the graduates come from different year groups of the master's programmes, it should be taken into account that they referred to different international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In addition, some of the mentioned international teaching

and learning settings may have changed over the years. The earliest graduation from the master's programme among the interviewees was in 2015.

The guided interviews were recorded in person and by telephone using a recording device. During the telephone interviews, there were major technical difficulties, especially during the telephone calls with graduates from the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence. Connection difficulties occurred, which led to short interruptions, strong noise, or interruptions of the telephone conversation. Short-term solutions were sought individually (e.g. change of location of the graduates) in order to be able to continue the interviews with as little disruption as possible.

The transcription of the interviews with the graduates of the master's programme in Würzburg was carried out by the researcher with the transcription programme F4, taking into account the transcription system developed on the basis of Dresing and Pehl (2018) and Kuckartz (2016). It is the same system as for the transcription of the focus groups. The interviews with the graduates from Belgrade and Florence were transcribed by an external transcription company using the existing transcription system. The transcribed interviews were then edited by the researcher. All interviews were anonymised where necessary to make personal data unidentifiable. Anonymisation was done by aggregating information (Meyermann and Porzelt 2014) using the same anonymisation key as for the focus groups. In this way, consistent anonymisation is provided across the entire data material of the present study. The consent for participation and the use of personal data were signed by all respondents.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the available qualitative data is oriented towards the research questions and the principles and procedure of the content-structuring qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz (2018) (Chap. 4.4.1). In order to support a systematic comparison of the three selected research fields at the structural level of academic professionalisation, the comparative procedure is based on the three-stage model of international comparative research by Egetenmeyer (2020) (Chap. 4.4.2).

4.4.1 Data Analysis within the Framework of the Content-structuring Qualitative Content Analysis

In accordance with the research interest, the content-structuring qualitative content analysis according to Kuckartz (2018) was determined as the basic method of analysis. The content-structured procedure makes it possible to identify, form, and systematically present specific content-related aspects in the data material (Schreier 2014, paragraph 8). The structured and systematic processing of the data proves to be particularly important for the subsequent international comparative analysis of the data at the structural level of academic professionalisation. Likewise, the rule-based procedure supports the investigation of the

individual level of academic professionalisation by first structuring the data material thematically and then differentiating it in terms of content (Kuckartz 2018). According to Mayring (2015, 99-100), the thematic structuring can be described as formal structuring, resulting in a structuring of the material in terms of content. The structuring of the content makes it possible to organise and summarise the available material on the specific topics (Mayring 2015, 103). In the present study, the thematic formal structuring is done by means of formal categories that lay a thematic structure. The formal structure is filled with content within the framework of material categories (Reinhoffer 2008, 131). The process of category formation follows a deductive-inductive approach (Kuckartz 2018, 95-96). This means that the categories are developed both on the basis of the theoretical foundations and on the basis of the data material. In this way, the deductively derived categories can be refined and adapted to the data material, and new aspects not covered by the theory can be taken into account.

The content-structuring qualitative content analysis is based on Kuckartz (2018) and comprises six steps, which are presented in Fig. 16. The analysis process is not to be understood as a rigid sequence, but it is possible and sometimes necessary to go back one or more steps in the process again and again to ensure the fit of the categories developed. The six steps of the analysis process are oriented towards the underlying research questions in order to ensure that the evaluation is linked to the research interest of the individual questions. The data was analysed with a computer, using MAXQDA software.

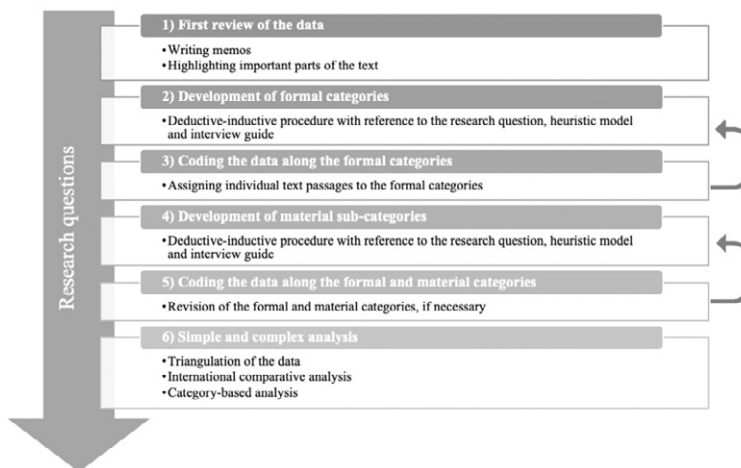


Figure 16 – Content-structuring qualitative content analysis process. Source: own representation based on Kuckartz (2018, 100).

Steps one to five proceed in a level-specific manner. This means that the analysis of the data from the focus group interviews, which is oriented towards research questions one to three, is carried out separately from the analysis of the data from the guided interviews, which focuses on the fourth research question.

It is not until step six of the simple and complex analyses that the two levels of academic professionalisation are intertwined. The individual steps are explained in more detail below.

The *first step* of the analysis process involves sifting through the data material by writing memos on text passages relevant to the content and marking important text passages against the background of the research questions at hand. The initiating text work makes it possible to gain an understanding of the data material by taking into account both content-related and formal aspects (Kuckartz 2018, 56-57). Review of the material enabled ideas for the thematic structuring of the data to be developed. These were taken up in the subsequent development of the formal categories.

In the *second step*, the formal categories were developed deductively from the theoretical foundations (research question, heuristic model) and the present interview guide. In addition, the review of the material revealed additional structural aspects that contributed to the formal structuring of the data. The development of the formal categories was only carried out on some of the available data in order to check whether the categories matched the empirical material (Kuckartz 2018, 102). In the analysis of focus group interviews, the formal categories were initially developed on the basis of only one focus group interview. In the analysis of the guided interviews, about 25% of the data material was used.

In the subsequent *third step*, the entire data material was coded according to the formal categories developed up to that point. Previously established definitions enabled a reliable allocation of further text passages (Kuckartz 2018, 102). With the coding of the remaining data material, the previously developed formal categories could be adapted, specified, and supplemented. This was done by repeatedly checking the match of the categories to the empirical material at hand.

In *step four*, the data material assigned to the formal categories was differentiated in terms of content by forming material categories that fill the formal categories in terms of content. The material categories were again developed in a deductive-inductive procedure along the underlying research questions. In this step, definitions for the material subcategories were formulated and anchor examples determined (Kuckartz 2018, 106). The definitions and anchor examples of the material categories were written down together with the formal categories in a category system. This creates a system that supports the comparability of the material (Möller 2012, 382). A separate category system was developed for each data set (focus groups, guided interviews).

Subsequently, in *step five*, all material was examined again in accordance with the developed formal and material categories with the help of the category system. During the final run through the material, the categories were refined and adjusted. The multiple examination of the material enhances the reliability of the categories (Kuckartz 2018, 110). The coding was usually done in thematic units, which can consist of several sentences and were marked with a paragraph. A thematic unit can be assigned to several codes. Double coding is particularly evident in the analysis of the guided interviews. There, the material categories that are assigned to the formal category "Participation in international teach-

ing and learning settings” are also allocated to material codes of the formal category “Development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings”. The double coding makes it possible to analyse the development of graduates’ professionalism in the context of specific forms of international teaching and learning settings. In the written analysis in Chap. 6.1, the form of international teaching and learning settings to which the respective graduate is referring is indicated in the signature of the quotations.

After the coding has been completed, the *sixth step* involves the simple and complex analyses and the writing up of the results. The chosen analytical procedures, which include the triangulation of data (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b), the international comparison (Egetenmeyer 2020) and the category-based analysis (Kuckartz 2018) are presented below (Fig. 17).

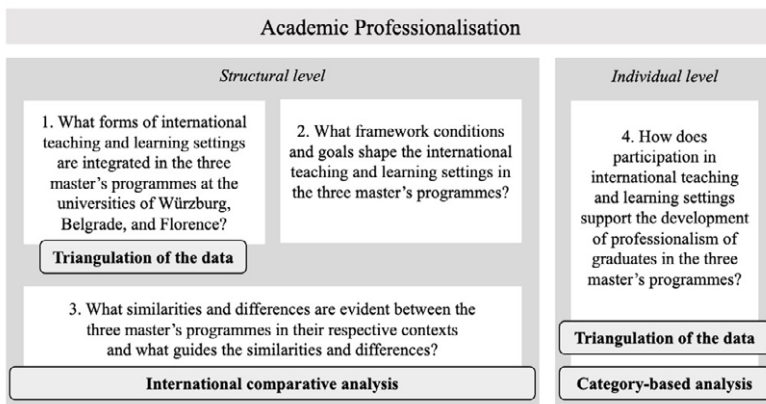


Figure 17 – Application of different analytical methods related to the research questions. Source: own representation.

With regard to the first research question, a triangulation of the data collected from the focus group interviews and the guided interviews is carried out (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b). This makes it possible to obtain a multi-perspective view on the forms of international teaching and learning settings integrated in the master’s programmes. Based on the perspectives of different groups of people (including programme heads, [academic] staff, students, graduates), a comprehensive and broad picture of the forms of international teaching and learning settings in the three master’s programmes is gained. The interweaving of the different perspectives can contribute to a broadening of the findings (Flick 2011b, 12).

Focusing on the second research question, the framework conditions and goals of international teaching and learning settings are analysed along the developed categories in a comparative manner. With recourse to the three-stage model of international comparative research according to Egetenmeyer (2020), it is possible to systematically compare the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings in master’s programmes in

adult education. This contributes to the third research question. The international comparative analysis process is described in more detail in Chap. 4.4.2.

The analysis of the individual level of academic professionalisation, in the context of the fourth research question, also involves data triangulation (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b). Here, the perspectives of the graduates from the three master's programmes are systematically intertwined. This helps provide a deeper understanding of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings. The analysis follows a category-based approach based on Kuckartz (2018). First, the results are presented in accordance with the main categories, before connections between the subcategories and then between the main categories are highlighted.

Finally, the insights gained at the structural level and individual level of academic professionalisation are interrelated in Chap. 7 "Summary and Outlook". By systematically combining the two levels, complementary results and perspectives are gained (Flick 2011b, 2018). This offers a comprehensive view of international teaching and learning settings in the academic professionalisation of adult education.

4.4.2 Analysis within the Framework of the Three-stage International Comparative Research Model

The evaluation of the focus group interviews is based on the three-stage model of international comparative research developed by Egetenmeyer (2020) in order to adopt a comparative perspective on the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes in adult education. The three-stage approach makes it possible not only to ask about similarities and differences between the master's programmes, but also to analyse underlying reasons for the occurrence of these similarities and differences. With the analysis of the reasons for the occurring similarities and differences and their significance for adult education, a comparison in the narrow sense takes place (Charters and Hilton 1989; Reischmann 2008b).

The definition of comparative categories, which are originally conceived as 'tertium comparationis' in the field of international comparative research, is essential for the comparative analysis of the three research fields. The comparative categories are oriented towards the research object and the research fields (Egetenmeyer 2020, 23). The characteristics of the internationalisation of teaching and learning operationalised in the heuristic model (Fig. 4) were determined as comparative categories. They are grounded in the theoretical assumptions and show relevance with regard to the investigation of the research object. This supports the validity of the research results (Egetenmeyer 2020, 28). The comparison of the three master's programmes is carried out according to the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings.

The three-stage model of international comparative research according to Egetenmeyer (2020) is divided into the following steps:

- 1) Descriptive juxtaposition;
- 2) Analytical juxtaposition;
- 3) Analytical interpretation.

In the *first step*, the descriptive juxtaposition, the available data material is compiled with regard to the developed comparative categories and compared descriptively (Egetenmeyer 2020, 26). The comparative categories were determined as 1. forms of international teaching and learning settings, 2. framework conditions of international teaching and learning settings, and 3. goals of international teaching and learning settings. These are subdivided into further formal and material categories (Chap. 4.4.1). The comparative categories support an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data and prevent superficial comparisons. By contrasting the categories between the research fields, a so-called juxtaposition is possible (Egetenmeyer 2020, 26).

Following the descriptive comparison, the *second step* is the analytical juxtaposition. In this step, the underlying reasons in the individual research fields are investigated. The aim is to grasp the inner logic and the contextual background of the research fields (Egetenmeyer 2020, 26-27). The analytical juxtaposition is expressed in the subsequent presentation of results in the interim summaries (Chap. 5.1.3, Chap. 5.2.6, Chap. 5.3.6), which follow the descriptive comparison of the data. In doing so, initial indications of the presence of similarities and differences are presented against the background of the present research fields and research contexts.

The *third step* is summarised by Egetenmeyer (2020, 27) as the core of the comparison. The analytical interpretation aims to formulate assumptions for the reasons for similarities and differences identified between the research fields by referring to the research contexts. This enables the underlying research questions to be answered by capturing overarching contexts behind the similarities and differences. The analytical interpretation is outlined in Chap. 5.4, where the results are discussed against the background of the theoretical assumptions and the heuristic model and are finally transferred into an empirical model.

4.5 Reflection on the Research Process

Critical reflection on the role of the researcher meets the quality criterion of the intersubjective comprehensibility and transparency of qualitative research (Steinke 2017; Kuckartz 2018). Particularly in the context of qualitative, international comparative research, role reflection is of particular importance, since the international comparison, as well as the choice of the research object and research fields, are essentially subject to the influence of the researcher. Biographical background, (prior) knowledge, and (theoretical) perspectives shape different approaches and perspectives (Egetenmeyer 2020, 27). The international comparison is also characterised by linguistic, personal, or local restrictions with regard to access to academic discourse and the field of practice (Reischmann

2008b, 29-31; Egetenmeyer 2020, 28). Consequently, limitations can be identified in the present study which are outlined in the following.

The research process was accompanied by continuous critical reflections in order to verify the relevance of the theoretical considerations and the process of data collection and data analysis with regard to the underlying research questions of the study. The reflections were supported by regular, joint discussion of the research design and initial results in supervision meetings and in the context of a doctoral colloquium. In this way, the research process complies with the external quality criteria of qualitative research, which increase the «generalisability and transferability of the results» (Kuckartz 2018, 217). In addition, the research design and initial results of the data analysis were presented at academic conferences and workshops and were critically discussed in the academic community. Such discussions in turn contribute to the «establishment of intersubjectivity and comprehensibility» (Steinke 2017, 326).

The research interest in conducting the present study can be traced back to the researcher's master's degree (2015-18) in adult education at the University of Würzburg. Based on her own international experiences during her studies, the researcher developed an interest in researching international teaching and learning settings in adult education programmes. This was reinforced by her student and academic work at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg. Here, the researcher was involved in various international projects (e.g. Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships, Erasmus+ mobilities) and in personal contact with students, lecturers, and professors from partner universities, including the Universities of Florence and Belgrade.

The relationship of proximity and distance of the researcher to the research fields must therefore be critically reflected. The researcher's personal experience and professional experience at the University of Würzburg resulted in subjective (pre-)assumptions that had to be critically questioned in the process. The researcher was not only in close contact with the University of Würzburg, but gained deeper insights into the two further research fields and contexts by spending several months studying and researching at the universities in Belgrade and Florence before and during the research process. The researcher was also supported by discussions with experts on site. This helped to reduce emerging gaps in understanding in the course of the research. Nevertheless, it is evident that the researcher brings a deeper understanding of the master's programme in Würzburg to the study, which is based on her longstanding experience in this context. Throughout the research process, it was therefore necessary for the researcher to constantly critically examine her own presuppositions and perspectives. However, the international and comparative approach of the present study simultaneously offers the opportunity to promote mutual understanding and raise awareness of perspectives by contrasting different perspectives (Egetenmeyer 2020, 28).

Although the researcher's close contact with the research fields helped to gain deep personal insights that could contribute to the investigation of the research questions, the personal proximity has to be seen critically. The closeness may

have contributed to overlooking certain aspects or taking a one-sided perspective. Furthermore, the fact that this work was to be examined at the universities of Würzburg and Florence may have led to bias.

Personal proximity is also evident between the researcher and some of the participants of the focus group interviews and guided interviews. Due to the researcher's occupational activity at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Würzburg, personal contacts already existed before the interviews were conducted. On the one hand, this contributed to an open, trusting atmosphere with a flat hierarchy during the interviews (Steinke 2017, 320). On the other hand, the fact that these contacts were personal required constant role reflection on the part of the researcher in order to adopt as unbiased an attitude as possible in the data collection and analysis phase. In this regard, it must be taken into account that due to the researcher's work as a research assistant at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education, the statements of the interviewees in the focus groups and guided interviews may imply a social desirability of the responses. A small social distance between the interviewer and the interviewee can contribute to the interviewees formulating their answers in such a way that they correspond to what is supposedly expected of the interviewee as an answer (Bogner and Landrock 2015, 2). The data obtained was therefore checked for social desirability and marked accordingly in the data material with memos. In the focus group interviews, critical points may have been left out to avoid reflecting badly on the universities and academic units. In addition, it should be noted that the statements of the interviewees are merely constructions of their subjective perceptions, which are reconstructed in the study (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2014). The statements of the interviewees can therefore not be determined as objective truths. They had to be reflected in the analysis process against the background of its subjects and their environment.

The present work has limitations with regard to linguistic aspects. On the one hand, the relevant academic discourse was processed primarily on the basis of German-language and English-language literature. Language barriers and local restrictions made access to relevant literature difficult in some cases. Consequently, the theoretical foundations are largely based on German-language academic discourse, although international perspectives have been incorporated where possible. On the other hand, language barriers became apparent during the data collection and analysis phase. Since English is not the first language of either the researcher or the interviewees of the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, major linguistic difficulties in understanding arose in some cases during the interviews. The researcher tried to clarify ambiguities and misunderstandings during the interviews by repeatedly asking questions in a simple language. The researcher also provided linguistic assistance. In exceptional cases, when graduates of the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence were already known to have a very low level of English prior to the interview, the superordinate questions of the interview guide were sent to the relevant graduates. This was intended to give the graduates in question the opportunity to prepare

themselves linguistically in advance for the overarching topics of the interview. By only sending selected, open questions to the graduates, it was possible to counteract distortions in the data. Moreover, serious technical connection problems in the guided interviews also made the documentation and comprehensibility of the interviews difficult. For this reason, contradictory subjective statements in the data material were not coded and taken into account in the data analysis for reasons of comprehensibility.

Finally, it should be noted that this thesis was initially written in German and only translated into English in a subsequent step with the help of a translation software. Linguistic distortions that may have resulted from the translation of specialised terms have been minimised to the greatest extent possible. A qualified translation editing service ensured the linguistic accuracy and comprehensibility of the work after the translation process, which was carried out by the researcher. In this context, linguistic difficulties could be addressed and corrected. The quotations from the focus group interviews and guided interviews of the master's programme in Würzburg were also translated from German into English. The German quotations are included in the footnotes for comprehensibility.

PART III

International Teaching and Learning Settings
in Master's Programmes in Adult Education

Provision of International Teaching and Learning Settings in Master's Programmes in Adult Education

The analysis of the available data from the focus group interviews focuses on the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three selected master's programmes in adult education at the universities of Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence. The focus is on the structural level of academic professionalisation. The analysis is based on the heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Fig. 4) and is carried out in the following chapters according to the three deductively developed comparative categories:

- Chap. 5.1 Forms of international teaching and learning settings;
- Chap. 5.2 Framework conditions of international teaching and learning settings;
- Chap. 5.3 Goals of international teaching and learning settings.

An international comparative perspective on the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings reveals similarities and differences between the three master's programmes. These are analysed against the background of the respective contexts in the interim summary of each chapter. Based on the analytical juxtapositions, overarching contexts are derived in relation to the theoretical findings, which are subsequently transferred into an empirical model (Chap. 5.4).

5.1 Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings

The three selected master's programmes offer a broad range of international teaching and learning settings that can integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning. Based on the heuristics (Chap. 2.8), the international teaching and learning settings are differentiated in two directions:

- Chap. 5.1.1 Forms of cross-border teaching and learning settings;
- Chap. 5.1.2 Forms of international teaching and learning settings at home.

To obtain a comprehensive and differentiated picture of the various international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in adult education, the statements of the focus group interviews are triangulated with the graduates' participation experiences. Furthermore, reference is made to additional documents (e.g. guidelines, information brochures, websites) that provide supplementary information on specific forms of international teaching and learning settings.

5.1.1 Forms of Cross-border Teaching and Learning Settings

In the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, cross-border teaching and learning settings are detected that involve physical (or virtual) mobility between at least two universities or institutions or organisations from different countries. The following cross-border teaching and learning settings are identified in the three master's programmes.

- a) *Study abroad;*
- b) *Internship abroad;*
- c) *Seasonal school;*
- d) *International double degree programme;*
- e) *International conferences or workshops abroad;*
- f) *Assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad.*

a) *Study abroad*

In the master's programme in Würzburg, students have the opportunity to study abroad within the framework of the Erasmus programme or in a mobility programme of the DAAD¹. The study abroad takes place at the partner universities of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education.

¹ A German-Indian partnership was in place from 2016-20, supported by the DAAD with funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Within the framework of this partnership, it was possible to financially support mobility periods abroad in India (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.f).

[...] I was also abroad in Erasmus for one semester and then also took seminars there again [...] (I 1.8, 20)².

[...] also applied for a programme in exchange with India [...] spent three and a half months there. [...] in a research stay as part of my master's thesis [...] (I 1.1, 20).

As the graduates outline in relation to their participation, studying abroad can vary in terms of the funding programme as well as the duration of the stay. Moreover, the organisation of the content of the study abroad can vary. For example, a study abroad can be organised as a research stay for the upcoming master's thesis. In this context, the existing cooperation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education can ensure the subject-related compatibility of the study abroad, as expressed in the following.

And it is the case that [...] of at least half [...] of our partner universities, one of them comes to us once a year. [...] So that means that the students also have contact persons there [...] So we have practically coordinated this from a subject-related point of view beforehand [...]. Often it also happens [...] that you can also clarify individual needs. That people write their dissertation or their master's thesis [...]. And don't have to do it according to a scheme F. [...] (UNIWUE 58).

The cooperation makes it possible for the students of the master's programme to get in touch with the partner universities before their period abroad and to tailor the programme to the individual needs of the students. This ensures that the study abroad is relevant to the students' field of study. The established cooperation with the partner universities has also led to the development of recognition procedures for credits earned abroad as part of the master's programme.

[...] We have developed [...] how we do the crediting. And now we simply have the experience that it works and with that you can also convey security to the students, rather than 'Yes, I'll try and do everything.' It's different from saying that in ninety percent of the cases it has always gone very well so far. So then you also radiate a completely different sense of security yourself (UNIWUE 57).

The transfer of credits from abroad is organised and regulated in the master's programme. This can support the development of a trusting relationship with the students. With regard to the application process at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education, it becomes apparent that the support is closely oriented towards the students. This is possible because the study abroad is not only coordinated with the partner universities, but the offer is deliberately organised so that barriers to access are low.

² The information following the interview quotes refers to the interview identification code (see Tab. 3 for focus group interviews and Tab. 5 for guided interviews) and the line number in the interview transcript.

[...] And the way I experience the professorship and the study programme here, [studying abroad; author's note] is offered to you on a tray, so to speak. [...] I have the impression that it is turn out to be very, VERY simple here. [...] (UNIWUE 32).

As is pointed out, the application process for a study abroad seems to be characterised by a particularly low threshold. In other words, it is designed to be accessible for the students. This is symbolised by a metaphor – serving the semester abroad on a ‘tray’. The metaphor is used in the further course of the focus group interview by talking about a ‘silver tray’ on which the possibility for a study abroad is offered. This metaphor is also applicable with regard to the application process in the master’s programme, which is low-threshold and makes it easy for the students to participate in a study abroad.

R4: [...] I think this low hurdle or the silver tray is also clearly communicated. Whoever wants to go, we will find something that fits [...] So I think this silver tray is expressed by the fact that it is handled very flexibly and is also accessible [...].

R2: Yes, and I think it is also tailor-made for the people. So they know exactly that there is someone sitting at the Professorship for Adult Education, who has various universities on offer [...]. So I think the inhibitions are much, much lower to just go and ask. [...] (UNIWUE 43-44).

The accessibility of the study abroad is evident in the way students are approached. In the application process, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education acts as contact and mediator for the available spots at the partner universities, taking care of the students’ needs. In addition, it is communicated to the students that there are sufficient places available at the partner universities where they can go and study. This is intended to reduce possible obstacles that students may face when applying to study abroad.

In the master’s programme in Belgrade, students can also participate in a study abroad organised within the framework of the Erasmus programme.

[...] I spent one semester in Würzburg in Germany. And that was like Erasmus mobility. So I was more than six months in Würzburg. [...] And after that, I wrote my thesis in Belgrade and that was a combination of German/Serbian master’s. [...] I had like five different subjects (I 2.4, 20).

With reference to the experiences of a graduate of the master’s programme, it is shown that the study abroad can be carried out in connection with the upcoming master’s thesis by finding thematic links. Moreover, it is evident that students can gain additional international, intercultural, or global perspectives during their studies abroad by attending courses of international lecturers at the host university.

[...] And when I came there [...] from October on, I started my subjects at the university. And I had very good professors. They were international professors [...] (I 2.1, 21).

As one graduate of the master's programme explains, courses can be attended not only by lecturers from the host university, but also by international guest lecturers. However, depending on the host university, it has to be seen whether international lecturers are integrated into the teaching. In addition, it is indicated that the courses completed during the study abroad can be recognised in the master's programme.

And when our students go on Erasmus exchange from their master studies, [...] they just have to pass here two obligatory courses, so and to compensate these three with courses they attended and exams they passed abroad (UNIBEL 28).

In Belgrade, there is a regulated recognition procedure. In the master's programme, three courses can be replaced by work done at the host university. Only two other courses cannot be substituted by courses at the host university and must therefore be completed as part of the master's programme. With regard to the application process, information events are held at which interested students receive relevant information about the process of studying abroad and the partner universities. The event also offers the opportunity to exchange information with former internationally mobile students. The data confirms that the information events have developed further over the past years and have become an established part of the master's programme.

[...] after our first experience when our students start to go for example to Würzburg and after that to other universities, we organised first it was for example something like Würzburg afternoon. So we organised to drink and eat something that looks like that we are in Würzburg with presentations of students, suggestions of those who were there and so on. And with some more information how to apply, how to follow, what to appear on MobiOn (laughing) and other things. And also after that we transformed this mobilisation for mobility. [...] Also with some practical information that we expected, some exchange. [...] to ask us individually if they need something and so on (UNIBEL 79).

Information events serve to prepare students for the application process as well as for organising study abroad. As highlighted, there is also the opportunity to clarify individual needs with those responsible during the event. The title of the event "Mobilisation for Mobility" also indicates that the event aims to motivate undecided students to apply to study abroad.

In the master's programme in Florence, students also have the opportunity to study abroad as part of the Erasmus programme.

Okay, so my experience was more or less for one year, from September until July. And I did exams and also an internship in the office inside the university (I 3.6, 17).

As can be seen from one graduate, courses can be taken and examinations passed while studying abroad at the host university. In addition, the graduate completed an internship at the host university (see *b*) *Internship abroad*) in con-

nection with the study abroad. With regard to the application process, structural difficulties in the master's programme can be identified by the focus group.

[...] for the master's students it was not so easy to go into the Erasmus programme. Why? Because we are in front of two years of master's course. [...] So the period is so short. [...] (UNIFI 26).

[...] We thought that perhaps if we begin in the bachelor in a particular way, at the third year of the bachelor for entering into the master's course, but not only for entering into the master's course but for entering into the application for Erasmus. Because this depends from the rules of the University of Florence, from the Italian rules regarding the period when the students can do the Erasmus application. [...] (UNIFI 28).

The application process for studying abroad is considered difficult for students of the master's programme in Florence. This is due the admission deadlines and the fact that the master's programme lasts only two years. In view of these structural barriers, the responsible academic unit has tried to organise an early application process for the students, so that the process starts towards the end of their bachelor's programmes. However, as expressed in the interview section, the application process seems to be dependent on structural requirements on the part of the University of Florence and the Erasmus programme. The study abroad programme is advertised in the master's programme as part of an information event.

[...] We think that it [the Erasmus event] is a very important moment to explain the importance of studying in Europe, not only in Europe. It is very important for the education of our students and also for our teachers. [...] (UNIFI 45).

[...] this event will be compulsory for the students of the course of the first year (UNIFI 48).

By drawing attention to the opportunities and importance of studying abroad, the event aims to encourage students to participate in a study abroad. Participation in the event is mandatory for first-year master's students. Later in the focus group interview, it is stated that third-year bachelor's students can also participate in the event (UNIFI 56). The procedure for the recognition of credits obtained abroad is regulated in the didactic regulations of the master's programme (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.d, Art. 8) as well as in the university's didactic regulations (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019b, Art. 12).

In the data, study abroad appears as an established and structurally anchored cross-border teaching and learning setting in the three master's programmes. This becomes clear, for example, in relation to the application process and the regulated recognition of credits acquired abroad. Studying abroad offers students the opportunity to complete a study-related stay at a university abroad that is aligned with their field of study. It is also evident that studying abroad in the master's programmes is promoted, particularly through the Erasmus programme.

b) Internship abroad

In addition to studying abroad, another cross-border teaching and learning setting is presented by the internship abroad, which can be completed in the master's programme in Würzburg.

Also the internships. Now a master's student is going/doing an internship in Vietnam. [...] (UNIWUE 164).

In the focus group, an internship abroad being completed by a student in Southeast Asia is mentioned. In addition, there are further opportunities for internships abroad in the master's programme within the framework of Erasmus+ KA107 partnerships through the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. The selected internships abroad within the framework of the Erasmus partnerships are available to both bachelor's and master's students (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.i).

In the master's programme in Belgrade, there are no opportunities for an internship abroad organised by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. However, an internship abroad is reported among the graduates of the master's programme.

Well, my internship lasted for three months from September till December [...] I was working there in the field of administration more or less. But I had an opportunity to be present at some meetings with the sector of adult education and adult learning [...] (I 2.1, 38).

[...] I worked with a lot of different people. I think just maybe a few of them are actually Germans. All of them are all over around the world. When we talked, we counted 24 different countries in @IGO@ at that moment. [...] (I 2.1, 40).

The described internship abroad takes place at an international governmental organisation and includes administrative tasks as well as further activities in the field of adult education. The internship is characterised by the fact that people from different countries work together in the organisation. Thus, the internship can not only provide international and intercultural experiences because it takes place in another country, but international, intercultural, or global perspectives can also be provided by the international environment within the organisation. The described internship abroad is arranged following a field visit to the organisation as part of a course during the graduate's study abroad.

[...] Because we had one lecture. It was @Professor U from India@ [...] during my exchange and he organised the trip to Hamburg to visit @IGO@. And when we went there, when I saw what are they working on, and the surrounding and the city and everything, I thought, 'Oh, I have to come here just for, I don't know, a few months or whatever.' And I applied and they got me an internship [...] (I 2.1, 36).

As explained, the graduate's interest in applying for an internship abroad was aroused during the field visit to the organisation. This indicates that the intern-

ship was initiated by the interviewee herself. It is strengthened by the fact that the data material does not reveal any organised provision of internships abroad at the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy.

In the master's programme in Florence, students can also complete an internship abroad, as becomes apparent from the graduates.

Okay, so my experience was more or less for one year [...]. And I did exams and also an internship in the office inside the university (I 3.6, 17).

[...] I did this internship at @NGO A@ in Brussels. [...] five months [...] I worked at the policy level, so I wrote one of the main publication of the association, that is the country reports (I 3.5, 26).

The internships abroad described take place in different contexts. While the first interview is conducted within the framework of a study abroad (see *a*) *Study abroad*) at the host university, the second interview is organised at a non-governmental organisation in the field of adult education. As both graduates outline further, their activities during the internships include international perspectives

[...] I worked on more of the international aspect and for example, about the Winter School. [...] (I 3.6, 63).

[...] I have the opportunity also to make lots of interviews at the association that works in adult education in other countries [...] and to collect a lot of data about adult education in all countries of Europe. [...] (I 3.5, 27).

One graduate is assisting in the organisation of a seasonal school as part of the internship. The other graduate's work includes writing country reports, in which insights into adult education in different countries is gained. The experiences of the graduates reveal that not only does the stay in the host country contribute to the examination of international and intercultural perspectives, but also that the field of activity can include international aspects. However, difficulties are highlighted in arranging the internships abroad, which are attributed to the heterogeneity of the occupational field of adult education.

Or another point could be to have traineeships in other countries because this point is difficult. I worked a lot on this point for the primary teacher-training course but in that case, it is easier because we are in front of the comparison with a similar labour market. [...] For example, two students from our courses, master's degree courses, were in Brussels on the @NGO A@ office. In this moment, there is one student of six-month traineeship but it is very difficult to create this situation. It is very, very difficult. [...] it is easier to create the link with the school [...] But on the labour market, for example of the companies, for example of the cooperatives, it is so difficult. It is very difficult. So in this sense it could be necessary to have a stronger link with the universities, but not for studying, [...] but for working (UNIFI 157).

As critically empathised in the focus group interview, the heterogeneous structures in the occupational field of adult education are perceived as an obstacle to establishing cooperation with suitable internship providers. This is different to the arrangement of internships for students in the field of primary school education where cooperation is easier to establish. It is therefore considered necessary to strengthen international cooperation between the university and adult education providers. Nevertheless, there is pre-existing partnership with an internship provider in Belgium where students of the master's programme can complete their internship abroad.

Besides studying abroad, internships abroad can also be completed in the three master's programmes. It is clear from the data that internships abroad are organised by the corresponding academic units only in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence. In the master's programme in Belgrade, on the other hand, the presented internship abroad came about as a result of the graduate's own initiative.

c) Seasonal school

In the master's programme in Würzburg, various seasonal schools are offered which are organised by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education and the corresponding academic unit, together with international partners. The Adult Education Academy "International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" – formerly Winter School "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" – is such a programme, which is organised in cooperation with partner universities and adult education associations at the University of Würzburg. Although participating in this seasonal school does not involve any physical mobility for the graduates of the Würzburg master's programme, a virtual preparation and follow-up phase can create cross-border experiences that enable international encounters between students and lecturers (Staab and Egetenmeyer 2019; Staab et al. 2020).

Then there was the Winter School. [...] there were selected universities with which we worked together, and selected students also came together to Würzburg. Partly with their professors [...] from the respective universities. And that was then a ten-day event where they simply talked about various topics from adult education. There were various workshops on the topics. There were also [...] practice visits [...], where you went directly into further education institutions in and around Würzburg [...]. It was also the case that you worked on a topic together with other international students in group work within these ten days, which you then presented at the end in a kind of World Café. [...] (I 1.3, 18).

The two-week seasonal school described above enables participants to engage in an intensive exchange with students and professors from different countries. Participation in the seasonal school includes various activities focusing on topics in adult education and lifelong learning. The programme includes workshops, field visits to adult education providers, and comparative group work with a presentation of the results.

So the first thing I think of is the Winter School. Of course, as a fixed, perceived institution in the degree programme and the offer (I 1.6, 17).

The seasonal school in Würzburg is perceived by the graduates as a well-established aspect of the master's programme. The students seem to be aware of the seasonal school and regard it as a part of their studies. This can be attributed to the fact that the seasonal school is recognised in the master's programme as an independent study module.

And due to organisational changes, structural changes [...] we have now had the opportunity [...] to offer the Winter School, which we do, as a separate module [...] and have now included it independently, so to speak, with 12 ECTS. Whereas, up to now, we simply did not have the possibility and therefore the module with educational management, which, I think, only comprised 6 ECTS, could be recognised, so to speak, within the framework of the Winter School (UNIWUE 15).

However, as highlighted in the interview section, the recognition of the seasonal school in the master's programme has only developed over recent years. The curricular integration of the seasonal school can be traced back to the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership "Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" (COMPALL 2015-18), which had the aim of sustainably integrating the seasonal school as part of a joint module on international comparative research in adult education and lifelong learning into the degree programmes of the project partners (Egetenmeyer 2017). The University of Würzburg was actively involved in the project as a project coordinator and is also responsible for the organisation of the follow-up project "International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning" (INTALL 2018-21) and further initiatives (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.a). In addition, further seasonal schools can be identified in the master's programme which are available to the students.

And/or the Summer School in Nigeria, the Autumn School in Delhi. There, you can also experience internationality in a short form [...] (UNIWUE 62).

The different seasonal schools offered in the master's programme in Würzburg enable students to be internationally mobile for a limited period. The seasonal schools in India and Nigeria are organised within the framework of two DAAD third-party funded projects (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.h).

Different seasonal schools can also be identified in the master's programme in Belgrade.

But when I think, for example, for our master's studies, we had also opportunity to participate in different winter schools and summer academies and we always opened that aspect for mostly master's and PhD students. [...] it can be

considered at some part even of a programme as short course or something like that. [...] (UNIBEL 43).

The seasonal schools in which the students of the Belgrade master's programme can participate, are recognised as cross-border teaching and learning settings that are limited in time. One of the different seasonal schools that can be attended in the master's programme is the seasonal school in Würzburg, which has already been described in more detail in the context of the master's programme in Würzburg. The Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Belgrade is involved as an associate partner in the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL, which contributed to the development of this seasonal school (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.a).

And also, one of the most interesting part of my international experience was definitely the Winter School. It was one more step of my international experience where I met a lot of people from different cultures and countries from all over the world (I 2.4, 21).

The seasonal school in Würzburg is experienced by the graduates as a place where students can interact and communicate with people from different countries. Thus, it is not only the content of the programme and the associated mobility abroad that seem to contribute to the internationality of the seasonal school. International, intercultural, or global perspectives can also be promoted through the international exchange of the participants. As further expressed, there is an interest on the part of the students to participate in seasonal schools during the master's programme.

Well, they are additional opportunity for students but I think it is used and recognised by students. So, some sort of additional elective courses maybe. [...] (UNIBEL 46).

Student participation is voluntary. The seasonal schools can therefore not be identified as a compulsory part of the degree programme. However, students can participate in the seasonal schools within the framework of so-called 'elective courses' in the master's programme.

There are similar seasonal schools available to students of the master's programme in Florence.

[...] when I arrived in the master's degree [...] I went two times to Würzburg. The first time for a summer school. So, I took part in two workshops. And then the second time I went to winter school [...] (UNIFI 111).

Yes. I joined an ERAMUS call at the University of Florence to join the Winter School in Würzburg [...] (I 3.3, 21).

In the data, different seasonal schools are mentioned that are held at the University of Würzburg. This also includes the so-called "Winter School", which has already been referred to in the master's programme in Würzburg and Belgrade.

Over the past few years, the master's programme saw students actively participate in the joint seasonal school in Würzburg.

More or less 40 students participated to the COMPALL, INTALL project during these last years. [...] (UNIFI 37).

In the interview section, it is mentioned that the seasonal school is offered within the framework of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL, of which the University of Florence is a project partner. In connection with the two Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships, it can be added that the recognition of the students' participation in the seasonal school is regulated in the Florence master's programme. As already noted with regard to the Würzburg master's programme, the seasonal school is integrated into the curricula of the partner universities of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships as part of a joint module.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, different seasonal schools are integrated into the degree programmes, which can enable students to access international, intercultural, or global perspectives. In the data, a joint programme is evident in which students from the three master's programmes can participate. The joint seasonal school stems from cooperation among the academic units of the three universities within the framework of two Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships. In this context, structures have developed for the recognition of students' participation in the seasonal school.

d) International double degree programme

An international double degree programme represents another cross-border teaching and learning setting. It is expressed in the context of the master's programme in Florence. There, a double degree can be optionally completed by the students.

[...] Another point very important is this course is a double degree with Czech Republic (UNIFI 97).

According to an information brochure of the master's programme, it can be added that since the academic year 2017-18, there has been the option of pursuing a Double Degree in "Adult Education, Pedagogical Sciences and Education" within the master's programme. The double degree programme is offered in cooperation with Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic (Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione 2018).

[...] This is a double degree because there are differences between double and joint. Double degree is more easy from legislation point of view respect the joint degree. So, we worked a lot, a lot, a lot, more three years ago, three and a half years ago. [...] (UNIFI 108).

Until now the double degree hasn't life in a certain way. Why? Because on the other side Czech Republic stopped the double degree. But not officially, but in the fact. So, for example, we had students that are coming from Czech Republic [...]

But just this semester it was possible for our students to go to Czech Republic. So, in this moment there are two students in Brno, Masaryk University. But after three and a half/ three years I am not sure about the evolution of this double degree. [...] This is a very big problem for the internationalisation [...] (UNIFI 109).

However, as highlighted, embarking on the international double degree programme is not without obstacles, although the implementation of an international double degree programme is considered to be easier to regulate than a joint degree programme. Since the international double degree programme was introduced, only a few students from the University of Florence seem to have started the international double degree programme. At the time of data collection in September 2019, it is said that the first two students from Florence are present at the partner university in the Czech Republic. This is despite the fact that this study abroad period is compulsory for the completion of the double degree programme (Scuola di Studi Umanistici e della Formazione 2018). The delayed launch of the programme highlights difficulties in the implementation of the international double degree programme at the organisational level.

As can be seen in the data, only in the master's programme in Florence is there the possibility of completing an international double degree programme. However, in this context, attention is drawn to difficulties in the implementation of the programme. In Würzburg and Belgrade, on the other hand, it is not possible for the students to obtain an international double degree.

e) International conferences or workshops abroad

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, participation in international conferences or workshops abroad can be identified as a further cross-border teaching and learning setting. In the master's programme in Würzburg, participation in an international workshop abroad is expressed by a graduate.

And for example, I was also in Holland [...] and took part in a quality management course (I 1.6, 20).

[...] It was two days. And it was about what quality or quality management might look like. Whereby, in my understanding, it was about thinking about how courses can be designed. [...] (I 1.6, 22).

The international workshop abroad in which the graduate participated lasts two days and focuses on methodological-didactic topics in adult education, with a focus on aspects of quality management.

[...] And there I was the only female student in the master's programme [...] (I 1.6, 30).

The interviewed graduate is the only student taking part in the event as part of the master's programme, which indicates that the participation in the workshop cannot be considered as a regular part of the master's programme. This

assumption is confirmed by the fact that there are no further references to international conferences or workshops abroad in the data.

In the master's programme in Belgrade, students can also participate in an international conference abroad, as reported by graduates.

[...] And then presenting the part of my master's thesis in also @NGO C@ conference in Slovenia [...]. And also participating in some lectures and workshops within this conference. Yes, this was a regular scientific conference with some additional activities [...] I had opportunity to meet with colleagues who provide me enough information for research and with whom I did interviews and all of this research for master's degree (I 2.8, 25).

As the interviewed graduate describes, participation in the described conference abroad takes place in connection with the research project of his master's thesis. During the event, he presents parts of his research, conducts interviews, and obtains information relevant to the research. This suggests that the conference content overlaps with the research topic of the graduate's master's thesis and is attended for this reason. Since the available data does not confirm that participation in the international conference is part of the curriculum of the master's programme, it can be assumed that the graduate's participation in the conference is based on his own research interest.

As can be seen from the data, international conferences or workshops abroad do not seem to be a regular part of the master's programmes. On the contrary, it shows that graduates of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade participate in international conferences and workshops abroad because of their personal interest in the content of the programmes, which may be related to their master's thesis. Similar experiences of graduates of the master's programme in Florence are not evident.

f) Assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad

In the master's programme in Belgrade, the experience of one graduate highlights a further cross-border teaching and learning setting. The graduate is assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad during her studies.

And the second one [winter school] at the end of my exchange, I was like, let's say, I was helping one professor from Germany in his class. [...] First week, it was the lectures and the second week was the comparative groups. And I was teaching at one of the comparative groups with a professor from Germany (I 2.1, 29).

As the text passage indicates, a graduate of the master's programme in Belgrade is involved in teaching at a seasonal school abroad. The graduate assists in the seasonal school at the end of her study abroad when attending the seasonal school for the second time. The graduate supports the teaching activities of another lecturer in the second week of the programme, when the comparative group work is conducted.

In the data, assisting in international teaching and learning settings abroad can be considered another cross-border teaching and learning setting, although this is to be regarded as an exceptional case in the present study. There are no further statements in the three master's programmes that draw attention to the possibility of assisting in international teaching and learning settings abroad during the master's programme. As a result, this opportunity seems to appear less frequently in the context of the three master's programmes.

5.1.2 Forms of International Teaching and Learning Settings at Home

International teaching and learning settings at home integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning at the home university. They do not require physical or virtual mobility in the sense of internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015). Based on the available data, the following international teaching and learning settings at home are differentiated for the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence.

- a) *Teaching of international guest lecturers;*
- b) *Presence of international students in teaching;*
- c) *International topics in teaching;*
- d) *Compulsory courses in English;*
- e) *International literature in teaching;*
- f) *Internationally oriented certificate;*
- g) *International conferences or workshops at the home university;*
- h) *Internship with international orientation;*
- i) *Assisting in an international teaching and learning setting at the home university.*

a) *Teaching of international guest lecturers*

In the Würzburg master's programme, students can come into contact with the teaching of international guest lecturers in different ways.

Well, on the one hand we have guest lectures by guest lecturers and then I was present at the lectures from time to time. [...] Sometimes they were already integrated in the degree programme, in the module. So you automatically heard the lecturers in the seminar. And otherwise our degree programme is structured in such a way that we have to attend four different seminars in order to complete the adult education module [...]. And then I attended [...] three courses [...] by guest lecturers. And they were also completely in English. Yes, with various topics that we perhaps don't have as much in the normal courses, that [...] are offered by the lecturers of the Professorship and that are also very country-specific in some cases [...] (I 1.8, 19).

As reported on the part of the graduates, it is possible for students to attend lectures offered by international guest lecturers during their master's studies. The lectures may already be integrated into the seminars of the master's pro-

gramme, so that students inevitably attend these in the course of their studies. The guest lectures offered by the international guest lecturers at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education are, however, open to all students, regardless of whether they are pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.b). In addition, the international guest lecturers can offer full seminars, which are integrated into the different study modules of the master's programme. Consequently, the seminars of the international guest lecturers can be taken regularly as part of the formal curriculum. The seminars are held in English and can integrate international topics and perspectives into the degree programme that are different to the seminars taught by lecturers at the University of Würzburg:

[...] there are many seminars by guest lecturers that are simply offered [...] here in the modules. [...] Where the master's students can then decide. Most of the time they can also choose between an English and a German seminar. [...] (UNIWUE 37).

It should be noted that students are, however, free to choose whether to attend the English-language seminars of the visiting lecturers or a German-language alternative in order to complete the study modules of the master's degree.

International guest lecturers are also integrated into the teaching of the master's programme in Belgrade.

[...] and the other part are foreign international professors coming and international students and professionals but mostly students and teachers coming to the department, giving lectures [...] (UNIBEL 40).

The international guest lecturers who are involved in teaching at the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy seem to be more likely to give lectures or short courses in the master's programme, as is indicated by the expression 'giving lectures'.

In the master's programme in Florence, international guest lecturers are also involved in teaching.

Yes, in the course of the last year, there were three visiting professors. [...] So we have many colleagues from English language fields and Spanish language fields. [...] (UNIFI 119).

[...] some professor from other countries come to our university and then they take some lessons in English. [...] (I 3.3, 49).

As the text passages indicate, a number of international guest lecturers are involved each year in courses of the master's programme in Florence, which can be offered in different languages. It appears that the international guest lecturers are involved in individual courses of the master's programme, as reference is only made to 'some lessons'.

In the three master's programmes, international guest lecturers are involved in the teaching, whereby international, intercultural, or global perspectives are integrated into the programmes. As can be seen in the data, international guest

lecturers in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence tend to be involved in individual courses or lectures in the programme, while in the master's programme in Würzburg, the international guest lecturers can also conduct entire seminars that are recognised in the study modules of the formal curriculum.

b) Presence of international students in teaching

In the Würzburg master's programme, international students can participate in the courses of the programme, which may integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives in the studies.

[...] there were also some international students. So it wasn't just the people from the master's programme, but also quite a few others who had done a semester abroad in Germany with us in Würzburg and came into contact with them and got to know other perspectives on adult education (I 1.4, 25).

International students may attend the master's programme courses in addition to the regularly enrolled master's students as part of their study abroad at the University of Würzburg. As experienced by a graduate of the master's programme, the presence of international students can enable exchange among students and contribute to the integration of new topics on adult education into the degree programme.

Exchange students come, I think, only a little bit at a time. So that the Würzburg German master's students are actually studying with internationals was now more like two, three people maybe once per semester. [...] So now from my perspective, when I started here, there were maybe two and now there are four, so it has doubled. [...] (UNIWUE 38).

A participant of the focus group has seen an increase in international students present in teaching in the master's programme over the past few years. This allows the master's students to come into increased contact with international students. The increase in international students can be analysed in connection with the courses offered in English by the international guest lecturers in the master's programme. They may be an incentive for the international students to complete their study abroad at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education in Würzburg.

[...] So, I think a very important part is that we now really manage to offer 30 ECTS in English every semester, which is something that almost no university in adult education in Europe manages. This means that we are becoming a university for many students in Europe who want to study adult education in English, which is simply interesting and attractive. [...] So the fact that the guest lecturers are coming attracts the international students. And because the international students are there, it becomes more interesting again, so to speak, for our students to go abroad [...] (UNIWUE 60).

Due to the seminars offered by international guest lecturers, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is able to organise a course programme in English every semester, which enables international students to complete their

study abroad in English. This opportunity is considered exceptional and distinctive compared to other degree programmes in adult education in Europe. It is assumed that the English-language course programme particularly appeals to students who want to complete their study abroad exclusively in English. The presence of international students may in turn encourage students on the master's programme in Würzburg to participate in mobility abroad.

In the Belgrade master's programme, international students can also be present in teaching. Students of the master's programme can encounter them during their studies.

[...] international experience is actually also like meeting [...] other people who came from Germany to here, because even if it's in our country and I didn't go somewhere, [...] it's also international experience. [...] (I 2.5, 69).

I think that most people from abroad, I actually met on the faculty and most of them actually came to our department for study. [...] Because andragogy at our faculty [...] it's like a small group when you count all the professors and all the students, so I think that information really travels fast and then you really have opportunity to meet everybody who come there (I 2.5, 71).

The contact with international students studying abroad at the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy is perceived by the graduates as a further international experience. Due to the small size of the department, it seems very easy to establish contacts and exchange with international students during studies. Having international students in the classroom is also highlighted as part of the internationalisation efforts of the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy.

[...] I think for our internationalisation is important also that foreign students come here also. Because we also for each of them we have to organise ourselves. Which five courses will we offer? From bachelor's studies or for MA studies we always like to take care about the interests of this person. Then who of us will be in charge for this person, for the first contacts, to organise the meetings with other professors, to make a connection with our/ other students. [...] and I was always very pleased when I noticed that they are by themselves in contact. [...] (UNIBEL 78).

Since international students attend the master's programme, the Department has to make organisational arrangements for the students' visits (e.g. designation of a contact person). The international students are systematically integrated into the courses offered at the Department. To this end, the individual needs of the students are taken into account. In addition, networking is initiated among the international students and regular students of the master's programme. In the master's programme in Belgrade, a systematic integration and regulated supervision of international students is emphasised.

In Florence, international students can also be present in courses of the master's programme.

[...] for example, we have many students that are coming from other countries, not only from Europe but for example //from China.// (UNIFI 71).

R2: And I see that this year there are a lot of Erasmus students.

R5: Yes.

R2: When we were in our master's degree there were only few students. But now I am really happy about this [...] (UNIFI 173-75).

International students can come to the University of Florence from European partner countries as well as from countries outside the European Union. In the focus group, an increase in the number of students from European partner countries studying in Florence is noted within the framework of the Erasmus programme.

In the three master's programmes, international students can participate in degree programme courses. As is clear, the presence of international students can facilitate an (academic) exchange with the master's students on site. In this way, international, intercultural, or global perspectives can be integrated into teaching and learning. In the data, an increase in international students in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence can be observed over the past years.

c) *International topics in teaching*

In the Würzburg master's programme, lecturers at the University of Würzburg can integrate international topics into courses taught in the programme.

[...] in the area of adult education, [...] I have one or two seminars that were actually in English. They were taught by a German lecturer or professor [...]. That was, I would say, not international in the sense that there were necessarily international participants or lecturers, but it was mainly about the English language, [...] but also about international adult education in terms of content, so to speak (I 1.3, 17).

One master's graduate reports that it was possible to attend courses taught by a lecturer from the University of Würzburg during her master's programme. These courses dealt with topics in international adult education and were held in English. Another graduate refers to a course taught by a visiting professor from Germany who had a teaching assignment at the University of Würzburg.

Yes, simply also these international relations, how are different organisations connected. So I'm mainly aiming at this seminar with @Professor S from Germany@. He asked a lot of political questions or also about, yes, international trade relations and yes, how do people from other countries see certain topics in Germany. [...] (I 1.1, 54).

The visiting professor also integrates international topics into the lessons. However, since there are only isolated statements on international topics in courses taught by lecturers from the University of Würzburg or lecturers from

the national context, it can be assumed that the integration of international topics is rather dependent on individual lecturers and not embedded in the formal curriculum.

On contrary, it can be seen that in the master's programme in Belgrade, international topics are integrated into the formal curriculum of the degree programme as part of elective courses.

And I don't know, maybe if we can refer to some subjects? Because I know that there are also, for example, elective subjects which are dealing with, for example multicultural education and similar things [...] (UNIBEL 44).

In the master's programme, students can choose courses that enable them to deal with international and intercultural topics. The courses do not seem to be taught by international guest lecturers, but by lecturers from the University of Belgrade. The hesitance to refer to international topics in teaching, which is evident in the text passage, indicates an unclear understanding of what can be understood by internationalisation. It seems that, at first, there is some uncertainty as to whether international topics in teaching can also contribute to the internationalisation of the degree programme and can be considered an international experience for the students.

[...] usually our students on MA level came from bachelor's studies of andragogy. So, there are not beginners. For them they are fifth year of studying. And so as obligatory course on basic studies they have comparative andragogy and some other also courses when they are, I think, well prepared through history of adult education, comparative andragogy. They learn about different concepts, different cases of good practice through history and from different countries in area, of course, adult education. And this is also one way how they are prepared to go somewhere (UNIBEL 50).

As is further discussed, however, international topics can also be found in the bachelor's programme in Andragogy. There, the integration of international topics into teaching and learning is considered part of the internationalisation of the degree programme. Consequently, the master's students already have prior knowledge of international aspects in adult education from the preceding four-year bachelor's programme. In particular, the examination of comparative adult education and the introduction to adult education in different countries in the bachelor's programme is understood as preparation for later mobility abroad.

Another international teaching and learning setting at home is evident in the integration of international topics in teaching, which are integrated independently of international guest lecturer teaching. In the data, it can be discerned that international topics are integrated into the master's programme in Belgrade and to a lesser extent into the master's programme in Würzburg. In the master's programme in Florence, there is no information on international topics being integrated into teaching by lecturers from the University of Florence. Here, it seems that international topics are rather integrated by international guest lecturers.

d) Compulsory courses in English

In the master's programme in Florence, students have to attend compulsory courses in English, which can be identified as another international teaching and learning setting at home.

And so for example, another point interesting for the course, master's degree course, is reaching credits in English language, in each of our course. Like you, must do a week only on English, using English language. [...] And it is compulsory for us on our course programme to put the English language like an indicator. English language, for example, on 12 credits, pedagogy of the work is 12 credits long, 2 credits in English language (UNIFI 69).

In the master's programme in Florence, students must achieve a certain number of credit points through courses taught in English. Therefore, English-language courses are integrated into the formal curriculum in the master's programme. The integration of English-language courses into the master's programme is attributed to requirements of the University of Florence, where English is considered an indicator of the quality of the degree programme.

Among the three master's programmes, compulsory courses in English are only evident in the master's programme in Florence. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, there is no indication that a certain number of credit points must be completed in English. In Würzburg and Belgrade, it seems that teaching courses in English is linked to teaching by international guest lecturers or the integration of international topics into teaching.

e) International literature in teaching

The integration of international literature into teaching can constitute another international teaching and learning setting at home, which is reflected in the master's programme in Belgrade.

[...] It's when we look at working materials and literature for the exams, for example, for preparing exams [...] there is more of foreign literature and references which is not so important for basic studies. They're usually working on mother tongue. But then if you want to really pass the exams on master's studies, you're really encouraged to read on different languages [...] (UNIBEL 58).

In the Belgrade master's programme, students are required to work with international literature. This means publications by researchers and academics from other countries that are written in a foreign language. Working with international literature is seen as a prerequisite for taking examinations in the degree programme. This requirement differs from the requirements in the bachelor's programme, where reading international literature is less relevant, as students work primarily in Serbian. Dealing with international literature can be recognised as a compulsory requirement in the master's programme in Belgrade.

The fact that this is a compulsory requirement is also reflected in the data. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, in contrast, there is no evidence in the available data that international literature is included in

the teaching. This is despite the fact that it is to be expected that students engage with international literature through the teaching of international guest lecturers. Furthermore, the didactic regulations of the master's programme in Florence refer to the integration of English-language teaching materials in the programme (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.d, Art. 2). Overall, it can be assumed that the integration of international literature is a further possibility of bringing international perspectives on adult education into the programmes.

f) Internationally oriented certificate

The possibility of acquiring an internationally oriented certificate that requires students to deal with international, intercultural, or global perspectives as part of their studies exists in the master's programme in Würzburg. Here, students can complete two different internationally oriented certificates that certify their international and intercultural experiences during their master's programme.

[...] There is also a certificate for having done international things. There is also a certificate [...] for having attended international adult education courses, whether seminars, winter schools and so on (UNIWUE 167).

So maybe [...] between five and ten [master's students] a year, I would say (UNIWUE 174).

On the one hand, students can complete the "International Adult Education" Certificate at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. For this, students must attend courses from international guest lecturers as well as a seasonal school. In addition, an oral part and a written paper must be completed (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.c). At the time of data collection, it is indicated that about five to ten master's students per year applied for the certificate, which could correspond to about one third of the master's students (UNIWUE 172).

On the other hand, students of the master's programme can attend events that are recognised as part of the "Global Systems and Intercultural Competence" certificate of the GSiK project.

Or also the GSiK certificate, this Global Systems and Intercultural Competence [...] (UNIWUE 30).

The GSiK project has existed at the University of Würzburg since 2008 and comprises an interdisciplinary teaching programme that deals with diverse global, international, and intercultural topics and is open to students from all faculties and degree programmes (GSiK n.d.).

Yes, you could acquire the GSiK certificate at university by attending various seminars and lectures. It wasn't always in English, but simply on various cultural topics [...] And I was able to get credit for the seminars that I attended from the adult education chair and then other lectures where you went voluntarily. [...] (I 1.4, 133).

As described by a graduate, participants must attend various seminars and lectures in order to obtain the certificate. Some of the seminars and lectures are organised by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. The Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education has been a GSiK project partner since the 2014-15 winter semester and offers seminars and guest lectures every semester as part of the GSiK certificate (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.d).

R4: And most of our students do also the GSiK, don't they?

R1: Yes, a lot of them do. Yes (UNIWUE 177-78).

With regard to the number of master's students participating in the GSiK certificate, strong demand for the certificate is mentioned in the course of the discussion, without concrete figures being given.

Among the three master's programmes, internationally oriented certificates are only found in the Würzburg master's programme. Here, students can participate in a university-wide certificate programme as well as acquire an international certificate at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, there are no internationally oriented certificates that can be identified as part of the programme.

g) International conferences or workshops at the home university

In the master's programme in Belgrade, students can participate in international conferences and workshops at the University of Belgrade.

I mean I attended some conference here in Serbia. I mean internationally, in a sense that people from other countries were in Belgrade [...] (I 2.3, 31).

Especially during the master's studies, I participated in several like workshops and conferences. [...] (I 2.8, 18).

As some graduates report, there are various international conferences and workshops which can be attended during the master's programme and which allow them to get in contact with people from other countries. The international conferences are seen as another important component of the internationalisation efforts in the master's degree as expressed on the part of focus group.

[...] for example international conference. For me it's also one more aspect or element of internationalisation [...] it is also important to have all these people here for several days (UNIBEL 111).

[...] So they also can participate not just like communication with professors but listening to very session and everything. [...] (UNIBEL 124).

The international conferences, hosted by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade, allow students to meet and exchange with international participants as well as attend different sessions of the conferences.

In the master's programme in Florence, international conferences are also considered another international teaching and learning setting at home.

R2: And also a lot of international conferences that the department in the past organised. [...]

R1: Yes. I was participating in these international conferences about adult education with the master's degree (UNIFI 125-26).

In the focus group interview, a large number of international conferences organised at the School of Humanities and Education at the University of Florence are mentioned. The students of the master's programme are able to attend those conferences.

Another international teaching and learning setting at home can be identified in the form of international conferences or workshops at the home university. The international conferences and workshops allow students to interact with international participants and to take part in the thematic sessions. In addition to the international conferences and workshops at the universities in Belgrade and Florence, which are reflected in the data material, it can be added that international workshops are also offered in the Würzburg Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education in the context of the presence of international guest lecturers (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.e). In this way, students of the master's programme in Würzburg can also participate in international workshops without having to go abroad.

h) Internship with international orientation

In the context of the Würzburg master's programme, one graduate interviewed refers to an internship with international orientation. This internship takes place in one's own local or national context and includes international, intercultural, or global perspectives. Participation does not require mobility abroad.

It also turned out that I was able to do a five-month internship at the @ Professional Chamber in Germany@ because of the international experience I had gained during my master's degree. And that was specifically a project in continuing education [...] on the topic of 'International Manager Training'. [...] I helped to supervise two delegations and also participated in the preparation and follow-up. They each spent four weeks in Germany [...] (I 1.1, 44).

The five-month internship of the interviewed graduate takes place in an adult education provider in Germany and includes an international field of activity and tasks. The international orientation of the activity is evident in the supervision of delegations from abroad. As described, the previous international experiences from the master's programme supported the graduate in her application for the internship. The graduate's participation cannot be traced back to an offer organised within the framework of the master's programme but seems to have been organised by the graduate herself.

With regard to the experience of one graduate of the master's programme in Würzburg, an internship with an international orientation can be identified as

another international teaching and learning setting at home. The data indicates that this international teaching and learning setting has so far received little attention in the three master's programmes.

i) Assisting in an international teaching and learning settings at the home university

In addition to assisting in international teaching and learning settings abroad, graduates of the master's programme in Würzburg are also assisting in international teaching and learning settings at the University of Würzburg.

[...] I also had the opportunity to work as a student assistant at the @Academic unit at the University of Würzburg@ and was also involved in this Winter School project. Among other things, I looked after visiting professors from different countries and also students. And yes, I was also involved in the implementation of the programme [...] (I 1.1, 23).

And then I [...] started working at the @Academic unit at the University of Würzburg@ as a student assistant. And then it continued with the international contacts. So I supervised guest lecturers. I attended their lectures. [...] I also worked on the Winter School. [...] (I 1.7, 22).

Graduates of the master's programme in Würzburg can participate in various international teaching and learning settings as part of a student assistant position. The interviewees work on the organisation of seasonal schools at the University of Würzburg or provide general support in the supervision of international guest lecturers. These activities enable contact and cooperation with international guest lecturers and students, which contribute to an international and intercultural exchange.

In addition to attending international conferences, students in the master's programme in Belgrade can also assist in the organisation of international conferences at the university.

[...] But also volunteering at conferences we are organising. Our students are really active in that field. [...] It can also be considered as one learning context because you are working somehow, organising something, which is for like people from all around the world and like dealing with session, listening to that, which is something strongly vocational. [...] (UNIBEL 124).

Being actively involved in the organisation of international conferences can open up opportunities for students to gain work experience in an international context. This can present another opportunity to integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the master's programme.

In the data, opportunities for students to assist in selected international teaching and learning settings during their studies become clear in the context of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade. By assisting in international teaching and learning settings at their home university, students can gain international and intercultural experiences during their studies. In the master's programme in Florence, the available data does not reveal any opportunities in this regard.

5.1.3 Interim Summary

The available data shows a broad spectrum of different forms of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence. They can be differentiated into cross-border teaching and learning settings and international teaching and learning settings at home. By looking at the forms of international teaching and learning settings from an international comparative perspective, it is possible to point to different contextual backgrounds that are linked to the similarities and differences that have become apparent between the master's programmes.

On Chap. 5.1.1 – Forms of cross-border teaching and learning settings

A well-known example of a cross-border teaching and learning setting is *study abroad*. In the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, study abroad seems to be a well-established international offering. It mainly takes place within the framework of the Erasmus programme, which suggests that the Erasmus programmes plays an important role in supporting student mobility (Laitinen 2022, 81). In the master's programme in Würzburg, there is additional national funding available through a programme of the DAAD, which enables further possibilities for study abroad. In addition, the data shows that the study abroad can be used differently by the students. Students can, for instance, use their study abroad for research purposes for their master's thesis, as graduates in Würzburg and Belgrade indicate. In this context, it is essential that coordination processes take place between the responsible academic units at the home and host university and the students to ensure the subject-specific relevance of the study abroad. Well-established cooperation with partner universities can have a supportive effect, as seen in the master's programme in Würzburg. In addition, the partnerships seem to facilitate the recognition of credits completed abroad. In the three master's programmes, it can also be emphasised that studying abroad is explicitly advertised and communicated among the students. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, information events have been established to motivate students to study abroad and to provide information on the application process. For this purpose, former mobile students are included in the information event in Belgrade, which can support the successful implementation of international student mobility (Egetenmeyer 2010a, 17). In the master's programme in Florence, master's students are obliged to take part in the information events. This can be attributed to the fact that early and timely application is important due to the short duration of the master's programme. In this context, structural requirements on the part of the University of Florence and the Erasmus programme seem to have an effect on the application process. In the master's programme in Würzburg, it is apparent that students receive particularly close support by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. Study abroad is deliberately organised in a low-threshold manner and in coordination with partner universities. It can be assumed that the targeted and needs-oriented approach to students is of great importance in the master's programmes, since

students from the field of education are generally less internationally mobile according to the OECD report *Education at a Glance 2021* (OECD 2021, 217). In addition, a lack of organisational support and available information are just some of the factors that could lead to non-participation in international mobility (Woisch and Willige 2015, 94-95; Middendorff et al. 2017, 21-22; European Commission 2019, 73). With a view to the internationalisation strategies of the universities, it also becomes apparent that there is a higher education policy interest in the implementation of study-related international mobility in all three universities. Student mobility is regarded as an important strategic instrument for the internationalisation of the universities and is promoted through various measures, facilities, and programmes (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016; Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018, 2019a). Consequently, it can be assumed that offering study abroad is of importance to the universities.

The *internship abroad* is another cross-border teaching and learning setting which exists in the master's programmes. It is evident in the data that the internship abroad can not only be considered an international teaching and learning setting because of the fact that it takes place in another country but that the field of activity and the staff of the internship provider can further contribute to the experience of international, intercultural, or global perspectives. Consequently, one may suppose that the international orientation of the internship provider can contribute to the students' increased exposure to international, intercultural, or global perspectives. It is evident among the master's programmes that internships abroad are organised and supported by the academic units in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence. In the master's programme in Belgrade, on the other hand, there is no indication of internships abroad being organised by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. Here, internships abroad seem to be rather self-organised by the students, as can be seen from the experience of one graduate. These findings can be interpreted against the background of Serbia's involvement as a partner country in the Erasmus programme until the end of 2018, which meant there was no financial support for internships abroad through the Erasmus programme. As a result, it may have been difficult to offer funded internships abroad during that time. Although Serbia is an Erasmus programme country at the time of data collection in July 2019, the data does not provide information on the provision of internships abroad by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. This could be due to the fact that the new Erasmus programme features need time to be established in the organisational structures. In addition, these assumptions may imply that the Erasmus programme is the main funding source related to internships abroad in European universities. Moreover, difficulties in establishing cooperation with internship providers abroad are pointed out in the master's programme in Florence. It is highlighted that, due to the heterogeneity of the occupational field of adult education, there is a low level of international networking between university and adult education providers. This could suggest increased efforts in establishing international cooperation. A stronger link between academia and practice

is particularly important when it comes to discourse on professionalisation in adult education. In the discourse, study-related internships are understood as important experiences for the development of students' professionalism (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009; Egloff and Männle 2012). Furthermore, in contrast to the well-established possibilities for study abroad in the three master's programmes, it can be seen from the data that internships abroad play a rather secondary role in the internationalisation of the programmes. This is also reflected in the overall number of students participating in an Erasmus internship in Germany and Italy. It can be seen that, in both countries, only about 20-30 percent of students participate in internships abroad (European Commission 2020a, 2020b). In this context, organisational obstacles, such as a lack of or insufficient financial support, could presumably influence the supply of and demand for study-related internships abroad (Woisch and Willige 2015, 94-95; Middendorff et al. 2017, 21-22; European Commission 2019, 73).

In the three master's programmes, the *seasonal school* constitutes another cross-border teaching and learning setting that, in contrast to study abroad or an internship abroad, enables students to spend a shorter period of time abroad. In this context, the opportunity to meet and interact with participants from different countries is emphasised by the graduates. In the three master's programmes, a joint seasonal school can be identified which can be traced back to the international cooperation of the respective academic units. Within the framework of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership COMPALL and the follow-up project INTALL, in which the academic units are involved, the Adult Education Academy "International and Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning", formerly Winter School, was integrated into the structures of the master's programmes and further developed to enable recognition. In the master's programme in Würzburg, the joint seasonal school is perceived by the graduates to be an established international offering. This is due to its integration into the curricular structures of the programme. A similar impression emerges in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, where most graduates report attending the joint seasonal school. In addition, there are references to other seasonal schools in which students of the three master's programmes can participate. In the Würzburg master's programme, there are seasonal schools that stem from cooperation projects of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education with universities in India and Nigeria. They are financed from national funding (Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education n.d.h). This indicates that additional national funding schemes are available to support the development of seasonal schools.

The possibility of completing an *international double degree programme* exists only in the master's programme in Florence. There, an international double degree programme is offered together with Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. In this context, however, difficulties seem to arise in the implementation of the double degree programme. The academic discourse suggests that differences in legal requirements and traditions of countries and universities are likely to lead to difficulties in the implementation of joint, double, or multiple degree programmes (Obst and Kuder 2012; Mihut and Ziguras 2015; J. Knight and

Lee 2022). In Italy, there is a policy interest in the implementation of joint and double degree programmes. According to the OECD Skills Studies, the range of joint and double degree programmes in the Italian higher education system has expanded in recent years due to state funding (OECD and European Union 2019, 111). According to the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018, it can be estimated that between 76% and 100% of all higher education institutions in Italy now offer international joint, double, or multiple programmes³. In comparison, only 26-50% of all higher education institutions in Germany and 11-25% of all higher education institutions in Serbia offer international joint, double, or multiple programmes (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2018, 247). Finally, a similar picture can be discerned with regard to the master's programmes examined. While participation in an international double degree programme is possible in Florence, students in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade do not have the opportunity to obtain a double degree as part of their studies. This difference can also be interpreted against the disciplinary background. The academic discourse points out that international joint and double degree programmes are increasingly offered in the fields of economics and engineering, which are generally assigned a greater international orientation (J. Knight and Lee 2022, 423).

The data reveals another cross-border teaching and learning setting in *international conferences or workshops abroad*, although these are not integrated into the formal structures of the master's programmes. Instead, the master's students seem to participate in the conferences or workshops because of their own subject-related interest. As expressed by graduates of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, they participate in international conferences or workshops because they are, for example, related to the topic of their master's thesis. The fact that international conferences or workshops abroad are not integrated into master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade reinforces the impression that the graduates' participation represents an extracurricular activity that is associated with an academic added value. It can also be assumed that students have to finance their participation themselves, as funding opportunities for international conferences or workshops are not available within the framework of the Erasmus programme and no further funding schemes are mentioned. Therefore, the data indicates that participation in international conferences or workshops abroad is rather sporadic, depending on subjective factors in the master's programme in Würzburg and Belgrade. This could also explain why no international conferences or workshops abroad can be identified from the data in the context of the master's programme in Florence.

An additional cross-border teaching and learning setting can be identified in the master's programmes in *assisting in an international teaching and learning*

³ The figures refer to the years 2016-17. There is no more specific information provided on the number of higher education institutions offering one or more joint, double, or multiple degree programmes.

setting abroad. However, this form of cross-border teaching and learning setting is only taken up by one graduate of the master's programme in Belgrade, who supports the teaching of a professor in a seasonal school abroad. Although assisting in international teaching and learning settings abroad is another way of integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives into one's studies, this possibility again appears to be rather sporadic, depending on subjective factors and particular situational circumstances. This could also explain why there are no further comments on the part of the academic units and graduates of the three master's programmes.

Overall, in the three master's programmes, different forms of cross-border teaching and learning settings can be distinguished, which vary between the programmes. The similarities and differences presented are interpreted against the background of different contextual influences. These include higher education policy, the Erasmus programme, the strategic orientation of the universities, the cooperation of the academic units, and the student body. By adding the experiences of the graduates of the master's programmes, two additional forms of cross-border teaching and learning settings are evident, namely: international conferences or workshops abroad, assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad. It can be assumed that these forms are only perceived sporadically among master's students and depend on subjective factors (e.g. topic of the master's thesis).

On Chap. 5.1.2 – Forms of international teaching and learning settings at home

One of the international teaching and learning settings at home, at the own university, is the *teaching of international guest lecturers*. In the three master's programmes, international guest lecturers can be involved in various courses. The available data shows that in the Würzburg master's programme, international guest lecturers are not only involved in the programme in the form of lectures, but also offer entire seminars that are integrated into the study modules of the master's programme. This could presumably allow students to enter into a close academic exchange with the international guest lecturers, by providing more time and space to address different international, intercultural, or global perspectives. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, international guest lecturers tend to be involved in lectures or shorter courses. This could indicate differences in the programme structures as well as differences between the programmes in the personnel and financial resources of the academic units. With reference to the strategic orientation of the universities, a higher education policy interest in hosting international guest lecturers can be discerned in all three universities (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016; Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a). Based on the strategic goals of the universities, it can be assumed that the integration of international guest lecturers into the master's programmes is promoted and supported at the organisational level.

In addition, the *presence of international students in teaching* can present another international teaching and learning setting at home in the three master's

programmes. In the master's programme in Belgrade, it is evident that master's students can easily encounter international students due to the small size of the academic unit. The supervision of international students in the academic unit is individually tailored to the incoming students, which could be due to the fact that there are no available courses in English in the Belgrade master's programme. In contrast, the Würzburg master's programme offers courses in English through the teaching of international guest lecturers, which enables international students to complete their studies abroad in English. This may be an advantage in attracting international students with no or little language skills in German. In addition, an increase in international students can be observed in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, which is also reflected in the overall student numbers in Germany and Italy. Between 2014 and 2019, according to UNESCO data, an increase in students coming from abroad can be observed in both countries (UIS.Stat 2021). These findings can be interpreted against the background of the recruitment of international students being part of the universities' efforts to compete with other universities (de Wit 2019). The increase in international students in the master's programmes can thus be interpreted in connection with the higher education policy interest in recruiting international students, which is reflected in the strategies of the three universities (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016; Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018, 2019a). The data also suggests that the presence of international students can help encourage master's students to take up their own international mobility. This impression is also confirmed by an empirical study in which staff at university level observed that international students can create incentives for their own students to participate in international mobility (Reis, Rówert, and Brandenburg 2014, 91-92). Therefore, the presence of international students in teaching may support the master's students in their decision to go abroad and participate in further international teaching and learning settings.

International topics in teaching, which are integrated into the master's programmes regardless of the presence of international guest lecturers, are evident in the master's programmes in Belgrade. This is also reflected in the master's programme in Würzburg, albeit to a lesser extent. Here, the integration of international topics into teaching seems to depend on the teachers. At the University of Belgrade, international and intercultural topics are also evident in the preceding bachelor's programme in Andragogy, which can be assigned an important role for the professionalisation of its students due to the one-year duration of the master's programme (see Chap. 4.2.1.4). In the master's programme in Florence, on the other hand, international topics only seem to be integrated into the area of teaching through international guest lecturers. Differences in the integration of international topics into teaching can be interpreted against the background of the respective national and local contexts of adult education. In this context, it can be argued that the importance of internationalisation in adult education varies according to the degree of institutionalisation and academisation in the countries. In Germany, for example, with the increasing institutionalisation and

academisation of adult education, a decline in the international focus was initially recorded (Schmidt-Lauff and Egetenmeyer 2015, 277), which could still be reflected in the degree programmes today. With reference to an analysis of programme structures and curricula in Germany, it can be pointed out that international topics are still rather rarely integrated into the formal curricula of adult education programmes (Walber and Lobe 2018). A similar situation can also be seen in Italy (Lattke 2007). However, due to the lack of up-to-date data, it is not possible to say whether the situation has changed. On the other hand, scholars point out that with fewer academic positions as well as a low tradition and weak political foundation of adult education at the national level, an increased international orientation in the academic field can be identified (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 12; Lima and Guimarães 2011). In this context, a rather small number of academic positions in the field of adult education can be spoken of in Serbia, which are limited to three universities (Ovesni 2018, 29). Moreover, a report from the EAEA (2018, 52) reveals a rather low political interest in adult education on the part of the state government. Consequently, in Serbia, the academic field could have a stronger international orientation, which is likely to be noticeable in the master's programme. Furthermore, the rather small size of the Serbian-speaking area could lead to an increase of English-language literature in the academic discourse, which goes hand in hand with an increase in international perspectives in the master's programme. Looking at the programme structures, it can be further assumed that the master's programme in Belgrade offers more time and opportunities for the inclusion of international topics in teaching. This becomes clear from the fact that the Andragogy master's programme and the preceding bachelor's programme only focus on topics in adult education. In Würzburg and Florence, in contrast, adult education is only integrated as a sub-area in an educational science-oriented degree programme. Due to the smaller scope of courses and ECTS points in the area of adult education, there might be fewer opportunities to integrate international topics into teaching in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence. These arguments prove that the degree of international focus of the academic and research field in adult education at the national level as well as the structure of the degree programmes may lead to differences in the international focus of the master's programmes.

Compulsory courses in English can only be identified in the context of the master's programme in Florence. These courses seem to be a result of university-wide requirements and point to a higher education policy interest on the part of the University of Florence. Although the increase in foreign-language courses is anchored in the strategic plan of the University of Florence (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a, 27), there is no evidence of university-wide regulations for all degree programmes at the University of Florence that specify the exact number of credits a degree programme should offer in English. With reference to the didactic regulations of the master's programme in Florence, the integration of courses in English is planned with the aim of increasing the students' communication skills and promoting access to the international labour market.

Courses in English are particularly prevalent in the areas of fundamentals of adult and continuing education, philosophy of education, and methodology of basic and applied educational research (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.d, Art. 2). At the universities of Würzburg and Belgrade, such obligatory requirements cannot be identified, even though English language plays a strategic role in the internationalisation of the universities (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016). With reference to the academic discourse, however, it should be critically reflected that offering courses in English alone does not contribute to the internationalisation of teaching and learning. This also requires the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives (Beelen and Jones 2015, 64). Further international teaching and learning settings, such as the integration of international topics in teaching or the presence of international students, should therefore be combined with English-language courses.

The inclusion of *international literature in teaching* is evident from the data in the master's programme in Belgrade. Here, reading international literature is explicitly required of the master's students. In connection with the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, the data does not provide direct indications of the integration of international literature into teaching. However, it can be expected that international literature is integrated into the degree programmes by international guest lecturers. In the master's programme in Florence, the didactic regulations show that teaching material in English is integrated along with the compulsory courses in English (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.d, Art. 2). Furthermore, against the background of the size of the Serbian-speaking area, it could be assumed that greater relevance is attributed to the integration of international literature in the master's programme in Belgrade. There could be a greater need to make use of international literature in teaching in order to provide relevant subject-specific content. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, on the other hand, due to the German- and Italian-speaking areas being larger, it could be less vital to include international literature into teaching. Likewise, the rather low international orientation of the academic field in Germany and Italy, as is suggested in the previous explanations, could lead to a greater national focus in the master's programmes, also in regard to literature. This could possibly explain why the inclusion of international literature is considered less important.

An *internationally oriented certificate* is offered in the master's programme in Würzburg. Here, students can attend a university-wide certificate programme as well as an international certificate organised by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. Both certificates require students to participate in various international or intercultural courses, some of which are already integrated in the formal curriculum of the master's programme. In this way, students can already take part in some of the required courses for the acquisition of the certificates through their regular studies. With reference to the internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg, it can be stated that joint certificates should make programmes more attractive to students (Julius-

Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 5). According to Käßlinger (2007, 14) certificates can enhance the image of the certifying institutions, so that university-wide certificates, such as the GSiK certificate, could aim to have an external effect. Therefore, the offer of internationally oriented certificates at the University of Würzburg could be linked to a higher education policy interest. Furthermore, the certificates could represent an additional incentive for students to participate in international courses as part of their studies as they can serve as proof of the students' international and intercultural experiences. In view of the increasing internationalisation of adult education practice (e.g. due to an increasingly diverse target group) (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 12), the certificates might be relevant for students' employability and be linked to advantages on the labour market. The data does not provide any information on internationally oriented certificates in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence. This difference may imply that the recognition of international and intercultural experiences is shifted more into the degree programmes, for example by the diploma supplement.

In the three master's programmes, *international conferences or workshops at the home university* are another international teaching and learning setting at home. The organisation of international conferences or workshops at the universities can, for instance, support information processing and networking in the academic community and play a role in the internationalisation of universities and academic disciplines. According to Hauss (2018, 314), academic conferences constitute places of information processing that go hand in hand with an expansion of knowledge, as well as social places that can contribute to the establishment and expansion of networks. International conferences can thus be seen as part of internationalisation efforts in the field of science, although the role of conferences in the internationalisation of science remains to be explored. In the three master's programmes, the international conferences or workshops at universities are considered a further way of providing students with international, intercultural, or global perspectives in their studies.

In addition to the possibility of completing an internship abroad, a graduate of the master's programme in Würzburg refers to an *internship with international orientation* in her own national context. This draws attention to an additional opportunity for students to gain international and intercultural experience as part of their studies. Particularly against the backdrop of the internationalisation of the field of practice in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017), it can be assumed that adult education as an occupational field is increasingly embedded in global and international contexts, which can be made accessible within the framework of study-related internships at the national and local level. At the same time, the lack of further explanations on the possibility of organising internships with international orientation in the master's programmes seems to indicate that this form of international teaching and learning setting at home has so far received little attention. The graduate's decision to complete the internship thus seems to be based more on subjective reasons, with her previous international experiences highlighted as a decisive factor for participation.

Assisting in an international teaching and learning settings at the home university can represent another international teaching and learning setting at home, which is evident in the context of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade. In the Würzburg master's programme, graduates assist in a part-time student activity in organising and implementing seasonal schools at the University of Würzburg as well as supervising international guest lecturers. In the master's programme in Belgrade, students can assist in the organisation of international conferences at the university. Consequently, assisting in an international teaching and learning setting is limited to specific activities at the universities but may provide students opportunities for work-related experience. With reference to the discourse on professionalisation in adult education, work-related experiences during studies can be emphasised as conducive to the development of students' professionalism (Schüßler 2012, 142). In the Florence master's programme, there do not seem to be any opportunities for students to assist in international teaching and learning settings at the university. This might be taken to suggest differences in the underlying organisational structures of the academic units.

Looking at international teaching and learning settings at home, a number of different forms can be recognised that vary between the master's programmes. This can be attributed to differences in the internationalisation of the universities, the national context of adult education, and the structures of the respective master's programmes. An additional form is expressed in an internship with international orientation, which seems to be particularly dependent on a graduate's subjective factors.

With the comparative analysis of both cross-border teaching and learning settings and international teaching and learning settings at home in the three master's programmes, it becomes apparent that these hold different opportunities for integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning. As can be seen from the data, the international teaching and learning settings can be integrated into the curricula of the master's programme, are attended by students voluntarily, or are a supplement to the regular course of study. It also shows that the same form of an international teaching and learning setting may differ to some extent between programmes. In this context, it can be observed that international teaching and learning settings depend on factors such as funding (primarily through the Erasmus programme) and the strategic orientation of the universities. It can be assumed that funding programmes play an important role in enabling and financing international mobility, especially for cross-border international teaching and learning settings. Similarities and differences in the teaching and learning settings can also be traced back to the national and local context of adult education, such as the degree of institutionalisation and academisation or the size of the language area. In addition, international teaching and learning settings seem to be shaped by the programme structure, especially the scope of adult education in the programmes. Depending on subjective factors of the graduates (e.g. specific research interest), supplementary forms are found that were not expressed on the part of the academic units. The student body is also emphasised with regard to participation and non-

participation in specific forms of international teaching and learning settings. In summary, the similarities and differences between the three master's programmes outlined above point to different framework conditions and contexts, which will be analysed and discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

5.2 Framework Conditions of International Teaching and Learning Settings

Based on the underlying heuristics (Chap. 2.8), different framework conditions are identified that have an influence on the international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes. In addition to the deductively formed categories, the data also reveals framework conditions of the academic unit and subjective factors of the students. Due to the abundance of available data, the framework conditions are further differentiated, providing a closer look at how the international teaching and learning settings are shaped in the master's programmes.

- Chap. 5.2.1 Political-strategic framework conditions;
- Chap. 5.2.2 Organisational framework conditions;
- Chap. 5.2.3 Framework conditions of the academic unit;
- Chap. 5.2.4 Cooperation of the academic unit;
- Chap. 5.2.5 Subjective factors of the students.

5.2.1 Political-strategic Framework Conditions

Political-strategic framework conditions refer to steering processes by supra- or international organisations as well as state actors that have a guiding effect on the internationalisation of teaching and learning. In the master's programmes, different political-strategic framework conditions are evident that shape international teaching and learning settings. The following political-strategic framework conditions are differentiated in the data:

- a) *Performance agreements between state actors and the university;*
 - b) *International orientation of national higher education policy;*
 - c) *Higher education policy reforms within the framework of the Bologna Process;*
 - d) *Involvement of countries in the Erasmus programme.*
- a) *Performance agreements between state actors and the university*

In the master's programme in Würzburg, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is characterised by performance agreements of higher education policy at the state level.

[...] There are always such framework and target agreements between the higher education institution and the ministry. And there, internationality was a very important point. [...] So this, why do you do internationality. That also has something to do with how a Ministry of Education interprets society, where do we have to go and what incentives does a Ministry of Education set so that the higher education institutions go in these directions. [...] (UNIWUE 99).

Based on the federal structure of Germany, the Free State of Bavaria jointly establishes performance agreements with the Bavarian universities that define common priorities and goals for the internationalisation of the universities. The agreements provide guidance for the direction in which the internationalisation of higher education is heading. Consequently, the performance agreements between the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science, and the Arts and the University of Würzburg create overarching framework conditions for the internationalisation of higher education that can influence the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

Performance agreements between state actors and the university, as discussed for the Würzburg master's programme, cannot be identified for the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence. At the universities in Belgrade and Florence, no performance agreements influencing the internationalisation of the master's programmes can be discerned on the basis of the available data.

b) International orientation of national higher education policy

In the Belgrade master's programme, looking back over the past twenty to thirty years, it can be seen that the international orientation of Serbia's higher education policy has had a lasting impact on the range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

[...] As you probably know, Serbia was isolated for many, many years. So there was no, at least no formal systematic exchange of universities, professors, students. There were even no ways to order books or journals and so on. So this whole scientific and research cooperation was stopped for a while. And of course, it did harm us quiet a lot. So after the political changes started with 2000 and now even more and more dynamic, we are trying to catch up with what we have missed in these difficult years. Because of this political and international isolation and nature of tyrannical regime [...]. So this is a part of these efforts and of course it's a part of our incorporation process to European Union because you know, Serbia is a candidate country. [...] (UNIBEL 56).

Regarding Serbia's historical background, the period before the turn of the millennium can be defined as a phase of isolation for the Serbian higher education system. Academic exchange, international cooperation, and foreign mobility were not possible. The internationalisation of the master's programme was consequently accompanied by political and legal challenges. Following the political upheavals after 2000, with the end of the Yugoslav wars, the Serbian higher education system opened up internationally, which also enabled international cooperation. The international orientation of higher education policy can also be seen as part of Serbia's accession to the European Union⁴. At the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Belgrade, the political upheav-

⁴ After submitting its application to join the European Union in 2009, Serbia has officially been held the status of an accession country since 2012 (Council of the European Union 2021).

als described above led to a renewal of its international relations, which are now on the subject of increased focus. The international teaching and learning in the master's programme can therefore be traced back to the Department's internationalisation efforts, which were promoted by the international opening of the higher education system. In summary, the growing international orientation of the higher education policy in Serbia seems to have contributed to the increase in international activities in the master's programme in Belgrade.

While the international orientation of national higher education policy is assigned an important role for the internationalisation of the master's programme in Belgrade, this is not the case for the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence. In contrast, the international orientation of higher education policy in Germany and Italy, which can be increasingly observed since the introduction of the Erasmus programme and the Bologna Process (see Chap. 2.7), might be perceived as a widely acknowledged fact among the participants of the focus groups. Less attention may be paid to this aspect as a result.

c) Higher education policy reforms within the framework of the Bologna Process

The range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Belgrade is shaped by higher education policy reforms in the Serbian higher education system within the framework of the Bologna Process.

The master's study of this kind was introduced after the Bologna recommendations were adapted. [...] After the Bologna recommendations were adapted, we changed to the model four-plus-one [...] we had to and wanted to adapt to other universities and to European system (UNIBEL 21).

Of course, one of the positive aspects of introducing this kind of master studies that enabled international cooperation. We are [...] using it quite a lot and I really see it as an enrichment of the programme (UNIBEL 23).

Following the Bologna Process, Serbia has introduced the three-cycle system (bachelor's, master's, doctoral), which supports the convergence of the national degree structures with the European Higher Education Area. The one-year Andragogy master's programme, which builds on the four-year Andragogy bachelor's programme, was launched in this context. As highlighted, the introduction of the master's programme has had a supportive effect on the development of international cooperation in the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. International cooperation is perceived as an added value for the degree programme and seems to be linked to the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

As stated above, the higher education reforms within the framework of the Bologna Process play a significant role for the master's programme in Belgrade in enabling international teaching and learning settings. This can be interpreted in connection with the *b) international orientation of national higher education policy*, by which the Serbian higher education system is increasingly opening up to international cooperation and exchange. Since Germany and Italy have

already been involved in higher education policy reforms since the beginning of the Bologna Process (see Chap. 2.7), it can be assumed that the structural changes within the framework of the Bologna Process have already been established to such an extent that they may not receive the same attention in the focus group interviews in Würzburg and Florence.

d) Involvement of countries in the Erasmus programme

In the master's programme in Belgrade, Serbia's involvement in the Erasmus programme, which began in 2014, is recorded as an important milestone for the integration of international perspectives into the programme.

So that international perspective [cooperation with European universities – students and staff exchange] became very important for us since Erasmus+ was open for Serbia. Some four years ago, I think. [...] (UNIBEL 38).

I could add that this is probably one of the best aspects of our master study, this internationalisation. And of course, thanks to Erasmus programme we can do it in a more structured and systematic way (UNIBEL 47).

As explained, Serbia's participation in the Erasmus programme supports the integration of international perspectives into the master's programme by creating an organised framework for international cooperation and exchange between universities in the European Higher Education Area. The measures and activities of the Erasmus programme (e.g. student and staff mobility) have a lasting impact on the range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Belgrade and appear to be an important prerequisite for the internationalisation of the programme.

In the master's programme in Florence, reference is also made to Italy's involvement in the Erasmus programme.

[...] for entering into the application for Erasmus. Because this depends from the rules of the University of Florence, from the Italian rules regarding the period when the students can do the Erasmus application. [...] (UNIFI 28).

Attention is drawn to certain requirements of the Erasmus programme, which influence the application process in the master's programme for a study abroad (Chap. 5.1.1). These requirements are passed on and represented at national level by the national agency of the Erasmus programme, the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation, and Educational Research. The national agency in turn passes on the requirements of the Erasmus programme to the universities, where those regulations are enforced.

In the Belgrade master's programme, Serbia's involvement in the Erasmus programme is seen as beneficial for its internationalisation. In the Florence master's programme, reference is made to the fact that the requirements of the Erasmus programme at the national level have an influence on the international teaching and learning settings in the programme. In the Würzburg master's programme, it is not explicitly mentioned that the national involvement in the Erasmus pro-

gramme shapes the international teaching and learning settings. However, with reference to Chap. 5.1, it can be stated that the Erasmus programme promotes the international mobility of students and thus plays an important role in the internationalisation of all master's programmes.

5.2.2 Organisational Framework Conditions

Organisational framework conditions concern the structures and processes at the universities which can have a guiding influence on the internationalisation of teaching and learning. In the master's programmes, different organisational framework conditions are identified that shape the international teaching and learning settings.

- a) *Organisational requirements for internationalisation;*
- b) *Organisational challenges in internationalisation;*
- c) *Conducive organisational framework conditions.*

a) *Organisational requirements for internationalisation*

In the Florence master's programme, organisational requirements for the internationalisation of the programme shape the provision of international teaching and learning settings.

[...] And it is compulsory for us on our course programme to put the English language like an indicator [...] (UNIFI 69).

[...] Or it is compulsory for us to put our programme in English language, not only in Italian language. [...] it's an indicator of the quality level of the courses into the department. [...] For us it is compulsory to write in English the programme, to translate for diploma supplement. But not only for diploma supplement but for the presence of the course on the website for Europe (UNIFI 70).

Based on requirements at the organisational level, it is emphasised that it is obligatory to include courses taught in English in the master's programme (Chap. 5.1.2). In addition, it is required to provide the diploma supplement in English and support the international visibility of the programme on the internet. As expressed in the text passage, the requirements of the University of Florence seem to serve as a quality indicator for the master's programme. In the course of the conversation, reference is repeatedly made to organisational requirements that are related to the internationalisation of the master's programme.

I: I have one question regarding what you have told us or me right now. So is there some regulation from the university above, which tells you to include international //aspects in the//

R4: //Yes, absolutely.//

I: And they're, like, checking on it?

R4: Yes, of course.

R5: [...] We have a delegator [...] of the school because our university has put a lot of money, a lot of strength into the internationalisation (UNIFI 88-92).

The repeated reference reinforces the fact that organisational guidelines of the University of Florence frame the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. The internationalisation of the programme is monitored and controlled at the organisational level and delegated by one person at the School of Humanities and Education.

[...] for entering into the application for Erasmus. Because this depends from the rules of the University of Florence, from the Italian rules regarding the period when the students can do the Erasmus application. [...] (UNIFI 28).

Furthermore, with reference to the application process for studying abroad (Chap. 5.1.1), reference can be made to organisational requirements regarding the Erasmus programme. These in turn can be traced back to the regulations of the Erasmus programme, which are represented at national level by the responsible national agency (Chap. 5.2.1).

At the University of Florence, it is evident that organisational requirements for the internationalisation of teaching and learning have an influence on the range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, no obligatory requirements at the organisational level can be identified that are attributed relevance in relation to the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the programmes. In regard to the universities' internationalisation strategies, however, it can be assumed that certain requirements exist at organisational level that have an impact on the internationalisation of the master's programmes.

b) Organisational challenges in internationalisation

In the Florence master's programme, attention is drawn to underlying challenges in the internationalisation of higher education, which are related to the implementation of the international double degree programme offered (Chap. 5.1.1).

[...] one thing is to talk about internationalisation in general. The visit, the exchange visit, the welcome of the students, welcome of the teachers [...] The European space is a unique space in higher education from the research, from the didactic. So we must know that [...] we have some particular problems that depends from the deep culture of the country, of the universities. I like to explain these things, otherwise we arrive until one point and it's not possible to push up. In a certain way, it's like for the women the crystal ceiling. It's the same. There is a point over that it's not possible to go. In a certain sense, in which way we can explain the problem of internationalisation. [...] (UNIFI 109).

With regard to the internationalisation of teaching and learning, it is pointed out that difficulties can arise in the practical implementation of the internationalisation efforts. These difficulties are attributed to the different traditions of the

countries and universities. The metaphor of the glass ceiling is used to illustrate that limits can arise in the internationalisation process that prevent the process from moving forward. Consequently, legal issues and inconsistencies seem to lead to challenges in the practical implementation of internationalisation efforts at the organisational level. This is illustrated in relation to the international double degree programme offered in the framework of the master's programme.

Until now the double degree has not lived in a certain way. Why? Because on the other side Czech Republic stopped the double degree. But not officially but in the fact. So, for example, we had students that are coming from Czech Republic, University of Brno, Masaryk University. And we worked with the students a lot, a lot. But just this semester it was possible for our students to go to Czech Republic. [...] (UNIFI 109).

As outlined, difficulties at the organisational level can hinder the practical implementation of the international double degree programme. In this example, the international mobility of students, which is a compulsory part of the double degree programme, is initially stopped by the partner university, even though the double degree programme has officially continued. Consequently, the explanations make it clear that organisational challenges emerge in the master's programme in Florence that influence the implementation of the international double degree programme.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, the data does not reveal any organisational challenges that limit the development or implementation of international teaching and learning settings. The organisational challenges expressed seem to relate in particular to the international double degree programme, which is only offered as part of the master's programme in Florence.

c) Conducive organisational framework conditions

In the Würzburg master's programme, conducive organisational framework conditions that support the international teaching and learning settings in the programme are mentioned.

Well, we all developed it together. [...] There are always such framework and target agreements between the higher education institution and the ministry. And there, internationality was a very important point. [...] And accordingly, there were of course also framework conditions here that made it possible that they supported everything, so to speak (UNIWUE 99).

Performance agreements between the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science, and the Arts and the University of Würzburg result in internationalisation efforts at the organisational level which promote the internationalisation of teaching and learning at the level of the degree programme (Chap. 5.2.1). The University of Würzburg supports the international activities in the master's programme by creating an appropriate framework. The organisational support is exemplified by the development of seasonal schools in the master's programme.

And the other thing was that I was at a university that said, 'It's an advantage for us to do winter schools here. And what do you need [...] so that you can do that in the future?' (UNIWUE 107).

[...] And then we got a lot of support from @Staff member A from Würzburg@, who then managed that we got the room [...] So at some point everything worked out. [...] (UNIWUE 114).

In exchange with the management level of the University of Würzburg, the academic unit coordinates the development and implementation of seasonal schools in the master's programme. In this context, a university policy interest in the implementation of seasonal schools is communicated at the organisational level, which supports the organisation and implementation of seasonal schools in the master's programme. The support of the university is evident in areas such as the provision of necessary resources, including premises and personnel.

Consequently, the University of Würzburg promotes the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Würzburg through conducive organisational framework conditions. With regard to the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, no conducive framework conditions at the organisational level can be identified in the data material. However, due to the universities' interest in higher education policy, which is evident from their respective internationalisation strategies, it can be assumed that internationalisation is also promoted at the organisational level.

5.2.3 Framework Conditions of the Academic Unit

The framework conditions of the academic unit relate to the structures and processes of the respective academic units (e.g. department, school, professorship) that guide the internationalisation of the associated degree programmes. The following framework conditions can influence the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

- a) *International orientation of the academic unit;*
- b) *International commitment of the academic unit.*

a) *International orientation of the academic unit*

The international orientation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education shapes the range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

[...] and I think also a reason why other people come here to study the Master, precisely the international perspective. [...] (UNIWUE 31).

And also in cooperation with the other chairs [...] we carry the lion's share of what happens in the master's in terms of international focus. [...] (UNIWUE 35).

As is highlighted, the international perspectives in the master's programme are mainly covered by the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education. The international orientation of the Professorship is thereby perceived as an incentive for students to enrol in the master's programme at the University of Würzburg. Moreover, the international orientation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is gaining visibility and recognition in the international context of adult education.

Yes, when I was in Prague, I noticed that we were already relatively well known to everyone. [...] who then also said 'Ah yes, I got the programme somehow and then I thought about applying' [...] (UNIWUE 133).

[...] because it's already known. A lot of people send their people there, send their students there and so on (UNIWUE 137).

As demonstrated, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education offers international formats that are also requested by students and other people in the international context. Therefore, the international teaching and learning settings seem also to attract attention from outside the University of Würzburg. This indicates that the international orientation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education contributes to a high level of participation in the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme, as these are not only demanded by students at the University of Würzburg, but also by people in the field of adult education in an international context.

The international orientation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education in Würzburg, as captured in the data, points to the role that the academic unit plays in enabling and supporting international perspectives in the master's programme. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the supportive role of the academic unit is expressed through its international commitment, as discussed below.

b) International commitment of the academic unit

In addition to its international orientation, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education demonstrates a clear international commitment, which is related to the international teaching and learning settings offered in the master's programme in Würzburg.

[...] We are not only perceived internally as a unit that does a lot of international work, but we are also perceived as a unit with competence in this area and there are consultations on many questions. So whether it's about how do I get a visa [...] (UNIWUE 183).

Or I don't know how many conversations @Research Assistant C from Würzburg@ has had about how to do an international Winter School. [...] And there are also requests from various colleagues to participate in projects, actions, applications and so on. [...] (UNIWUE 185).

The Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is approached by other facilities, units, and staff within the University of Würzburg to provide support in international matters due to its experience in the field of international affairs. The Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education thus contributes to the internationalisation in other areas at the university by providing support. Similarly, the Professorship can also benefit from these collaborations by receiving requests for cooperation projects and further programmes, which in turn can shape its own offering of international teaching and learning settings. The international commitment is therefore evident in the openness and willingness to cooperate with others and to promote internationalisation within the university.

In Belgrade, the international commitment of the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy is also emphasised with regard to the international teaching and learning settings offered in the master's programme.

But I would say that the Department of Adult Education is leading when it comes to Erasmus+ exchanges of students [...] you are always an example to other departments. Because somehow it's very well structured here at the department [...] (UNIBEL 39).

The Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy is perceived as particularly committed to organising semesters abroad within the framework of the Erasmus programme and stands out from other academic units in this respect. The international commitment is attributed to the Department's long-standing international interest and international cooperation, as is further explained.

[...] there were some difficulties since we have one year master programme and many other universities they have two years, so this comparability and combination of the courses. But we managed to overcome and I think one of the reasons is [...] why we are kind of leading in that because it was quiet typical for our department that we were always very internationally opened and there was always cooperation. Even in difficult times [...] when there was no Erasmus and this kind of things, we were working on that. So somehow, Erasmus came as a natural continuation of these efforts that we were having at our department. [...] (UNIBEL 48).

Through the Department's international commitment, it has been possible to continuously advance the internationalisation of the degree programme and to counteract structural challenges (e.g. in the comparability and recognition of courses from abroad). Even before participating in the Erasmus programme, the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy was described as internationally active and internationally networked, which in turn promoted the inclusion of the Department in the Erasmus programme. In retrospect and against the background of the political-strategic developments in Serbia (Chap. 5.2.1), the international commitment of the department is once again given particularly emphasis.

[...] Nineties in Serbia it was an awful decade, really awful. And that was the period where [...] we were isolated. [...] So all the contacts, exchanges we had,

they were based on the individual contacts. [...] So after 2000 this was this important year [...] when the country started to open up and started with international cooperation. [...] there was plenty of difficulties. But we were really, you know, [...] keen on that pushing. And it's not a surprise [...] that we improved our status within the Erasmus programme. First that we entered Erasmus and then improved our status. And I really see it as a result of our long-term efforts in opening up for European experiences and exchanges. And to internationalise our study and our work here. So somehow, for me it's a natural process [...] it's really reflecting the character of our department and our work here (UNIBEL 66).

The internationalisation of the degree programme was initially limited by the political situation in Serbia in the 1990s, when it was only occasionally possible to exchange internationally. After that time, despite the precarious starting conditions, the Department's commitment has contributed to the establishment of international cooperation and the integration of international perspectives into the master's programme, as well as participation in the Erasmus programme. The internationalisation of the master's programme is regarded as being the result of the continuous internationalisation efforts of the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy. This suggests that the Department's consistent international interest and engagement has particularly contributed to the internationalisation of the master's programme and the provision of international teaching and learning settings (especially within the framework of the Erasmus programme).

In Florence, the international commitment of the School of Humanities and Education is evident in the fact that distinct language requirements have been introduced in the master's programme.

[...] Because as president of the master's degree course, I put a point, compulsory point for entering. Before to enter, it is necessary to reach the level of B2. B2, not B1 in European languages. [...] But this is not the same rule of the other master's degrees in the university. [...] Our rules are saying it is necessary to reach the B2 in a European language for reaching the certificate of the master's degree. [...] I changed the rules and I put this compulsory rule before to enter into the master's and this is a point for the internationalisation. Because in this sense, I reached a better level of the English language. [...] (UNIFI 136).

As outlined, students have to demonstrate the language level B2 in a selectable foreign language (English, French, or Spanish) for enrolment in the master's programme⁵. The School of Humanities and Education has intentionally changed these language requirements over the years and the requirements now differ from the requirements of other master's programmes at the University of Florence. With the introduction of distinct language requirements, an increased level of proficiency in English is recognised in the degree programme.

⁵ The language examination is carried out by the language centre at the University of Florence, called 'Centro Linguistico di Ateneo' (Centro Linguistico di Ateneo 2022).

The change in language requirements is in turn seen as part of the internationalisation efforts of the academic unit. Consequently, it can be seen that, due to the international commitment of the School of Humanities and Education, changes in the master's programme have been achieved that support the internationalisation of the programme.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, the international commitment of the respective academic units points to the important role the academic units play in internationalisation and the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the degree programmes. This is similar to what has already become clear with regard to the *a) international orientation of the academic unit*.

5.2.4 Cooperation of the Academic Unit

The academic unit can work together with other higher education institutions and organisations to support the development and implementation of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In the three master's programmes, different types of cooperation of the academic units are identified that shape the international teaching and learning settings offered in the programmes.

- a) *Cooperation in international university partnerships;*
- b) *Cooperation in international cooperation projects.*

a) Cooperation in international university partnerships

In Würzburg, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education cooperates with universities from different countries in international partnerships that shape the international teaching and learning settings offered in the master's programme. The cooperation with the universities abroad is largely based on established collaborations, as illustrated.

[...] You have usually made the agreement because you know each other, because you have been working together for a long time. Then it is of course easier to somehow find suitable access, for example for students who are interested in adult education, to also know that the university offers something similar. [...] (UNIWUE 49).

And I think it's also important for trust. If I were a student now, I would rather go somewhere where I know that my contact person knows the people there. [...] That's why it's [...] important in the internationalisation of degree programmes that you have a reliable contact person at the university [...] (UNIWUE 55).

The existing partnerships of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education are based on long-standing collaborations with universities abroad with which there is personal contact. The cooperative partnerships help ensure the compatibility of the students' study abroad and create a trusting relation-

ship in counselling and support processes of the students. As already mentioned in Chap. 5.1.1 with regard to study abroad, personal and close contact with the partner universities is particularly beneficial to the organisation of study abroad in the master's programme. Moreover, a trusting cooperation with the partner universities is seen as an important component for a successful partnership.

[...] I think the main work is the work of trust. That you choose partners [...] Simply to believe that there is a reason why they react this way and to try to understand why they react this way. So that is, I think, totally important (UNIWUE 129).

Building trust with partner universities is emphasised as a central aspect in joint cooperation as it can promote mutual understanding between the partners. Overall, it becomes clear that cooperation with international partner universities is an important prerequisite for offering international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Würzburg. For example, established university partnerships can facilitate studies abroad which are relevant to the students' field of study and interest. In addition, the partnerships can build trust and convey security to the students in counselling and support processes.

At the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy in Belgrade, cooperation in international university partnerships also plays an important role in facilitating international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

[...] I would say that the programme is very well connected with more than ten, I would say, different European universities. And that with some of them we have very, I mean, very well-established cooperation, such University of Würzburg, where our students and profe/ teachers and administrative staff is going very frequently to teach or learn new practices or to establish cooperation. [...] (UNIBEL 37).

[...] bilateral cooperation. For example, it took us some time but at the end we established it with Florence which was very important for us and since for us it's very hard to cooperate whether it comes to administrative procedures but we did it in the end. [...] (UNIBEL 41).

Cooperation between the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy and the European partner universities enables the mobility of students and staff in the master's programme. Established collaborations exist, for example, with the University of Würzburg and the University of Florence, although administrative obstacles can arise when concluding partner agreements.

[...] you mentioned at the beginning some difficulties [...] of administrative kind with the University of Florence. But it's showing [...] how important it is that all actors in this process, in the context of international cooperation are really committed. [...] understanding the deeper meaning of international cooperation, knowing it's advantages. [...] And then I think, then all the administrative obstacles that we sometimes do have, could then be solved. [...] (UNIBEL 102).

In order to overcome emerging difficulties and obstacles in establishing university partnerships, it is considered important that the partners involved pursue common goals and approach international cooperation in an appreciative manner. Through the commitment of the partners, problems that arise can be tackled effectively. This is highlighted in relation to administrative obstacles to the conclusion of the partner agreement with the University of Florence. Common goals and the commitment of the partners appear to be central factors for establishing international cooperation.

Regarding the master's programme in Florence, there is also cooperation in international university partnerships at the School of Humanities and Education that shape the international teaching and learning settings in the programme.

And we have many, many partners, not only in Europe, also outside of Europe and we have many exchanges during the year between students, teachers. [...] (UNIFI 20).

As mentioned, the School of Humanities and Education has numerous partnerships with universities in and outside Europe that enable student and staff mobility. The university partnerships thus represent an important prerequisite for facilitating international teaching and learning settings, which can include study abroad or teaching by international guest lecturers.

As can be seen in the three master's programmes, the cooperation of the academic unit in university partnerships plays an important role in enabling international mobility. The data indicates established and trusting collaborations between the academic units and their partner universities abroad. In particular, partnerships between the respective academic units at the universities of Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence are evident.

b) Cooperation in international cooperation projects

Besides cooperation in international university partnerships, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is engaged in international cooperation projects that are linked to the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. With reference to Chap. 5.1.1, the following interview excerpts refer to the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL. Within the framework of these international cooperation projects, a joint seasonal school is conducted at the University of Würzburg in cooperation with the project partners.

Also with the Winter School [...] That we simply knit this network and know who we can trust where, because then the work becomes much easier. So I think building trust is very, very, very important, isn't it? [...] (UNIWUE 130).

[...] It was always important for me to have people with me [...] whom I can have a basic trust. And that has also turned out to be very good [...] (UNIWUE 124).

Expressed as a rhetorical question, a trusting relationship between the project partners is highlighted as supportive in terms of cooperation. Mutual trust

can thus be considered an important prerequisite for good cooperation in international cooperation projects. In addition to the trusting relationship of the project partners, joint commitment is also emphasised.

[...] And that was really the exciting thing about it, that's why it [with the Winter School] worked so wonderfully, we practically had a group of international universities that wanted to make a teaching offer together. [...] (UNIWUE 106).

As noted, common goals and the commitment of all project partners can support the organisation of joint international teaching and learning settings, as is expressed in relation to the joint seasonal school (see Chap. 5.1.1). It becomes clear that a mutual, trusting, and committed relationship between the project partners can support the organisation and implementation of joint international teaching and learning settings.

In Belgrade, the involvement of the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy in international cooperation projects also influences the international teaching and learning settings offered.

[...] one line of this project, it was connected to establish our cooperation. And first we established with Würzburg [...]. Then this cultural agreement with Florence. [...] So I think also, yes, the projects also opened us this cooperation and this type of contacts. Not just opened, make it wider and also learn us how to make them official really. [...] (UNIBEL 67).

[...] when there is a good cooperation, you know, several contacts already established, good experiences, you can move and broaden up. [...] (UNIBEL 70).

As is pointed out, based on its cooperation in international cooperation projects, the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy was able to establish new contacts and partnerships with other universities with which a partner agreement has been concluded (see *a*) *Cooperation in university partnerships*). The international cooperation projects can therefore be considered a starting point for further international cooperation in university partnerships, which in turn are a prerequisite for the international mobility of students and lecturers.

The School of Humanities and Education at the University of Florence also participates in international cooperation projects that contribute to the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

[...] Because @Professor M from Florence@ founded a group in Europe in 2004 into the European project where these groups of researchers thought to the curriculum in adult education and lifelong learning [...] And now regarding the internationalisation we are linked a lot, for example with the University of Würzburg [...] we are very linked with a specific programme, like COMPALL and INTALL (UNIFI 36).

[...] Because the double degree was a task very important for another European project named ESRALE. We reached the signature of the double degree. [...] (UNIFI 108).

With the development of a European cooperation project at the School of Humanities and Education, it is evident that new contacts with different universities have been established as a result of the project. These contacts are continued in university partnerships and further cooperation projects as exemplified by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL. These international cooperation projects have contributed to a joint seasonal school (Chap. 5.1.1). Furthermore, the international cooperation project ESRALE has supported the development of an international double degree programme with one of the project partners. It becomes clear that the international cooperation projects of the School of Humanities and Education support the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

In the three master's programmes, it is evident that the cooperation of the academic unit in international cooperation projects supports the provision of international teaching and learning settings. The international cooperation projects can often constitute the starting point for further cooperation in university partnerships or cooperation projects. Moreover, reference can be made to joint international cooperation projects between the three academic units, e.g. the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL. Furthermore, a trusting relationship among the project partners and their international commitment are emphasised as important prerequisites for good collaboration.

5.2.5 Subjective Factors of the Students

In addition to the framework conditions outlined above, the data shows that different subjective factors of the students can also have an effect on the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

- a) *Self-concept of the students;*
- b) *International experiences of the students.*

a) *Self-concept of the students*

In the Würzburg master's programme, it is expressed that the international teaching and learning settings are shaped by the students' self-concept, which includes self-related knowledge about one's self, one's abilities, and one's identity. In the master's programme, reference is made to the low participation rate of students in studies abroad. This is attributed to the students' self-concept that is characterised by an insecure and reserved nature with regard to international experiences.

[...] actually no one has ever been anywhere. [...] But you can also see in the statistics that the pedagogy students are relatively few abroad [...] (UNIWUE 28).

And then we have to deal with different students here in pedagogy than in psychology or economics [...]. We have students here who on average don't have a 1.0 Abitur⁶ [...] and also on average have a self-image of 'Well, now I'm just going to study. Whether I can really do it, I don't really know.' And those, so to speak, where I have the impression that I have to work incredibly on the self-esteem of these young women, so that they also feel capable of doing something like this. [...] And where [...] this dynamic of 'I am the most excellent' is simply not there, but is dealt with much, much more carefully and self-critically. [...] Exactly, and there we simply have a completely different target group [...] where I think it is much more important to give people courage, to show them 'Hey, you are capable of something'. [...] And that's why I think all this confidence-building, yes, in internationality, is actually our main work. [...] (UNIWUE 73).

As is explained, in the master's programme in Würzburg, the academic unit has to deal with students who show little confidence in international terms and fundamentally show less confidence in their own abilities, as perceived in contrast to students from other subject areas. By explicitly addressing «young women», it can be assumed that reference is made to the high number of female students in the field of educational science⁷. In the master's programme, thinking about the self-concept of the students when planning international activities is considered key. Consequently, sensitivity and confidence-building play an important role in advising and supervising students in the organisation and implementation of international teaching and learning settings. Furthermore, master's students tend to have reservations about the use of English language in their studies, which must be taken into account.

R1: [...] in one semester there were then relatively many students who [...] had approached you that it was not so much in their interest to do an English seminar and that they would like to have a German one because they [...] probably didn't dare to do it or had fears of contact [...].

R3: [...] Yes, and the fear and the lack of confidence is extreme again this year [...] That's why we now offer both in German and English in the winter semester, to simply ensure that [...] (UNIWUE 77-78).

Students in the master's programme show reluctance to participate in English-language courses. This has resulted in the programme now being offered in both German and English based on the students' feedback. The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme seems to be shaped by the students' knowledge of and confidence in their own abili-

⁶ «Abitur» describes the general higher education entrance qualification in Germany. The grade 1.0 is one of the highest qualifications that can be achieved.

⁷ According to the Federal Statistical Office, female students studying educational science (or pedagogy) in the winter semester 2019-20 in Germany represent approx. 77% of all students in the subject (Destatis 2020).

ties. For this reason, the students' self-concept as well as their individual needs must be taken into account when organising different international teaching and learning settings.

In view of the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the data provides no information on the influence of students' self-concept on the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the programmes. This may suggest that less reticence and uncertainty are perceived among the students of the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence with regard to international experiences.

b) International experiences of the students

In the Belgrade master's programme, student experiences gained in an international context can also shape the international teaching and learning settings. By sharing their international experiences, the students can encourage their fellow students to participate in international activities in the master's programme.

If I can add, I think that it is constantly developing because of the students. Because they communicate between themselves, especially at this smaller group and if they perceive 'Okay, my peers did it.' [...] They see it as something that they can achieve and they share that between each other. So this is also an important aspect to have someone who is interested in internationalisation who will be user of that. So I think that communication between them is really important for promoting and like for evolving (UNIBEL 71).

In the master's programme in Belgrade, it is observed that former internationally active students can arouse interest in the international teaching and learning settings among their fellow students by reporting on their own international experiences and demonstrating that others can also have this kind of experience. The exchange of experiences between the students can influence the motivation and willingness of students who have not yet been mobile. Therefore, the experiences of students who have already been internationally active can be perceived as a resource for the further development of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, with reference to the presence of international students in teaching (Chap. 5.1.2), it can also be seen that students' international experiences represent an important resource for the implementation of international mobility. Master's students can be encouraged to go abroad themselves by exchanging with international students. It can therefore be assumed that the exchange of international experiences between students can also support students' participation in international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, although this is not explicitly reflected in the data.

5.2.6 Interim Summary

As has been shown, different framework conditions shape the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Würzburg,

Belgrade, and Florence. From an international comparative perspective, the similarities and differences between the master's programmes can be analysed against the background of the respective contexts.

On Chap. 5.2.1 – Political-strategic framework conditions

Political-strategic framework conditions have an influence on the international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes. In the Würzburg master's programme, *performance agreements between state actors and the university* are evident, which shape the internationalisation of the University of Würzburg and consequently have an impact on the internationalisation of the programme. Due to the federal structure in Germany, the education ministries of the different federal states steer the internationalisation of the universities. In Bavaria, this is done through performance agreements between the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science, and the Arts and the universities, which are linked to the funding of the universities (Pekşen and Leişytė 2021, 16). Presumably, the performance agreements at the University of Würzburg are accompanied by financial incentives and other conditions. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the data does not indicate any performance agreements between state actors and the universities. However, it is possible to identify various strategy papers and legal regulations in the internationalisation of higher education in Serbia and Italy (DAAD 2018, 2020; OECD and European Union 2019) which indicate a certain degree of state control. Since higher education institutions in Germany, Serbia, and Italy enjoy a high degree of autonomy (DAAD 2018, 12; Daniel 2018, 18; OECD and European Union 2019, 117), it can be assumed that internationalisation at the universities of Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence is largely autonomous.

Looking at the master's programme in Belgrade, the international teaching and learning settings in the programme are shown to be influenced by the *international orientation of national higher education policy*. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the associated political upheavals at the turn of the millennium, higher education policy in Serbia is opening up internationally and adopting an international orientation, which contributes to the increasing internationalisation of the higher education system and the master's programme. The international orientation is reinforced by Serbia's status as a candidate country for the European Union (Council of the European Union 2021). In this context, the *higher education policy reforms within the framework of the Bologna Process* and the *involvement of countries in the Erasmus programme* also shape the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. With reference to Despotović (2011, 44-45), Serbia's rapprochement with the European Higher Education Area began in 2001 with a national higher education reform in line with the principles of the Bologna Process. In 2003, Serbia finally signed the Bologna Declaration and officially joined the European Higher Education Area. This was done in conjunction with the adoption of a higher education act, which saw the introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) as well as the introduction of ECTS. Finally, through the Bologna Pro-

cess and the Erasmus programme, it was possible to increase the development of international cooperation and support a consistent and organised integration of international perspectives in the master's programme in Belgrade. The introduction of the bachelor's and master's programme can be seen as an «indispensable structural basis» (Allemann-Ghionda 2014, 669) for enabling further aspects of internationalisation (including student mobility). The activities of the Erasmus programme tend to act as a «catalyst for further measures and initiatives» (Simoleit 2016, 396). The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Belgrade thus appears to be shaped by political developments at the national level as well as by Serbia's accession to the European Higher Education Area. This reveals a noticeable Europeanisation (Simoleit 2016; Dagen et al. 2019) of the Serbian higher education system. The influence of the Bologna reform and the European Higher Education Area on the internationalisation of higher education can also be highlighted in Germany and Italy (Hunter 2015a; Daniel 2018), whereby both countries, as member states of the European Union, have been involved in the development of European higher education cooperation since the 1970s (Alesi and Kehm 2010, 13). Moreover, in contrast to Serbia's inclusion in the Erasmus programme in 2014, Germany and Italy have been involved as programme countries since the beginning of the Erasmus programme in 1987. Serbia, on the other hand, initially participated in the Erasmus programme only as a partner country (from 2014-18) and has held programme country status since 2019 (DAAD 2018, 5). These differences may appear to imply that the educational and higher education policy structures of the European Union have been established to a greater extent at the national and organisational level in Germany and Italy. As a result, these structures could be regarded as a natural and fundamental prerequisite for the internationalisation of the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, as they are only partially addressed in the data. Nevertheless, in the master's programme in Florence, certain requirements of the Erasmus programme can be detected that are communicated at the national level. These requirements relate to the application process for study abroad. With reference to Chap. 5.1, it can also be assumed that in the Würzburg master's programme, the international teaching and learning settings are influenced by the requirements of the Erasmus programme as it represents an important funding scheme for international activities in the programme. Consequently, the Erasmus programme sets certain requirements that can shape the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

In summary, it can be concluded that the educational and higher education policy context has a role in enabling the provision of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes. In addition to policies at national level, European higher education policy seems to have a particular influence on the internationalisation of higher education, as can be seen in the example of the master's programme in Belgrade. The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area can be said to have significant influence on the internationalisation of higher education, although internationalisation at national

and university level continues to vary widely (de Wit 2018; Wihlborg 2019). Similarly, it is evident that the political structures can not only enable but also restrict the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. This is illustrated by the example of the master's programme in Belgrade, where the internationalisation efforts of the academic unit were restricted by the political orientation of Serbian higher education policy before the turn of the millennium.

On Chap. 5.2.2 – Organisational framework conditions

Furthermore, organisational framework conditions can influence the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In the master's programme in Florence, *organisational requirements for internationalisation* can be identified. On the one hand, requirements are mentioned in relation to the Erasmus programme which have an influence on the organisation of study abroad. On the other hand, it is outlined that the University of Florence requires courses to be offered in English and the curriculum and diploma supplement to be published in English. With the latter, it could be assumed that the international visibility of the degree programme is intended to attract international students. Both requirements can be linked to the Strategic Plan of the University of Florence, which aims to increase the number of courses offered in foreign languages and to promote degree programmes abroad (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2019a, 27). The inclusion of courses and teaching material in English is anchored in the didactic regulations of the master's programme in order to increase the students' ability to communicate and enable access to the international labour market (Università degli Studi di Firenze n.d.d, Art. 2). Based on the organisational requirements, it could be cautiously concluded that the academic unit of the master's programme feels called upon by the university's management to orientate its programme internationally in order to be able to meet the internationalisation requirements of the university. However, it should be noted that no explicit university-wide regulations can be found indicating that the use of the English language is considered a quality criterion for the degree programme⁸. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, the data does not outline any organisational requirements for the internationalisation of the degree programmes. However, English and the recruitment of international students also play a strategic role in the internationalisation of the universities (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016). This could indicate that there are certain requirements in place at the organisational level in Würzburg and Belgrade, although the impact could be less pronounced. With regard to the University of Belgrade, due to the high degree of autonomy of the faculties in the Serbian higher education system (DAAD 2018, 12), it could also be assumed that the internationali-

⁸ Special thanks go to Prof. Fabio Togni of the University of Florence, who provided support in this regard and insights into various university-wide regulations.

sation of the degree programme is controlled more strongly at the faculty level and therefore less influence is visible at the organisational level.

In addition, *organisational challenges in internationalisation* can complicate the implementation of international teaching and learning settings, as illustrated in the master's programme in Florence with regard to the international double degree programme offered. In the academic discourse, challenges of international joint, double, and multiple degree programmes are also recognised at the organisational level (e.g. through differences in legal requirements and programme structures, problems in recognition), whereby financial aspects and difficulties at the political level can pose additional challenges to implementation (Obst and Kuder 2012; Mihut and Ziguras 2015; J. Knight and Lee 2022). At European level, the European Commission has developed a common quality assurance procedure, which aims to facilitate the implementation of international joint, double, and multiple degree programmes. However, this procedure is not legally recognised in Italy (European Commission, EACEA, and Eurydice 2020, 78-79), which may have led to legal obstacles at national level. This could in turn pose challenges for the partner universities in the practical implementation of the international double degree programme. Therefore, the challenges outlined at the organisational level are to be interpreted in the context of legal conditions. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, where no international double degree programmes are offered, the data does not reveal any organisational challenges in internationalisation. This may suggest that the implementation of an international double degree programme facing increasing challenges.

At the University of Würzburg, *conducive organisational framework conditions* can be identified that support the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. The data suggests that specific international teaching and learning settings are particularly supported by the strategic orientation of the University of Würzburg. For example, it becomes clear that seasonal schools are strategically promoted in the internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg, with the aim of attracting international students. In this context, international students are seen as playing a multiplier role and are expected to contribute to strengthening the international visibility of the university (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 6). In this way, the University of Würzburg shows a policy interest in promoting seasonal schools, which could have led to conducive framework conditions that support the organisation and implementation of seasonal schools in the master's programme. At the University of Belgrade and the University of Florence, different (internationalisation) strategies (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014; Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018; 2019a) also point to a policy interest in the internationalisation of teaching and learning. It can be assumed that the strategic orientation of both universities also supports the internationalisation efforts of the master's programmes. This can be exemplified by service units and further facilities at the universities that are involved in the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Chap. 4.2.2.2 and Chap. 4.2.2.3).

The arguments given above illustrate that, based on the strategic orientation of the universities, relevant organisational framework conditions can be created that shape the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. Thereby, the influence of the universities can vary. The international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes can be either promoted or restricted. For example, in the Florence master's programme, it is possible to point to rather restrictive organisational requirements and challenges, while in the Würzburg master's programme, it is possible to identify more conducive organisational framework conditions. In view of the Belgrade master's programme, it can be assumed that the organisational influence is less pronounced due to the high autonomy of the faculties.

On Chap. 5.2.3 – Framework conditions of the academic unit

The actual integration of the international teaching and learning settings into the master's programmes takes place at the level of the academic units. As can be seen in the data, the international teaching and learning settings are shaped by the *international orientation of the academic unit*. In the Würzburg master's programme, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education seems to be primarily responsible for offering international teaching and learning settings in the programme. It is evident that the international orientation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education provides incentives for students in the master's programme as well as for students and persons in the international context to participate in the international teaching and learning settings offered. This may indicate the importance of the academic unit for the provision of international teaching and learning settings. In the academic discourse, Simoleit (2016) also points to the central role of individual actors and groups at degree programme level in shaping the internationalisation of teaching and learning. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the international orientation of the academic unit is not explicitly expressed but becomes clear with regard to the international commitment of the academic units which is outlined in the next paragraph.

On the other hand, the *international commitment of the academic unit* plays a significant role in the provision of international teaching and learning settings, as is shown in the three master's programmes. In Würzburg, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is actively involved in international affairs at the organisational level. It supports mutual exchange and cooperation with other facilities, academic units, and staff at the University of Würzburg. At the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy in Belgrade, despite difficult political circumstances in previous years, the integration of international perspectives into teaching and learning has been supported by the continuous international commitment of the academic unit. The ongoing engagement of the academic unit has also helped to address further challenges in internationalisation and to organise international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. At the School of Humanities and Education in Florence, the international commitment of the academic unit is exemplified by the introduction of

distinct language requirements in the master's programme, which differ from the requirements in other programmes at the University of Florence. The need to change the language requirements for entry to the master's programme can be interpreted against the background that the level of English in Italy is considered to be rather low compared to other countries in Europe, even though this remains difficult to prove. A study by the global language training company Education First shares a similar assumption. It finds that the level of English of Italian participants surveyed was below the European average (Education First 2021, 18). This may suggest that the introduction of distinct language requirements is an attempt to raise the level of English proficiency in the master's programme in order to facilitate students' active participation in international teaching and learning settings in the programme (e.g. for participation in seasonal schools).

Overall, the findings indicate a high level of interest and commitment on the part of the academic units in the internationalisation of the three master's programmes. It is evident that the academic units can promote the internationalisation of the master's programmes and thereby impact the provision of international teaching and learning settings. As can be seen, for example, in the master's programme in Belgrade, this is even possible in the face of structural difficulties. The data points to the central role of the academic units in enabling and organising international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes.

On Chap. 5.2.4 – Cooperation of the academic unit

The data indicates that the cooperation of the academic unit plays an important role in enabling international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. Of particular relevance is the *cooperation in international university partnerships*, which contributes to the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. This is especially true for student and staff mobility. It can be seen that there are cooperation agreements with various universities primarily within the framework of the Erasmus programme, which can enable students to be internationally mobile (Chap. 5.1). This also applies to partnerships between the respective academic units of the master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence. In the three master's programmes, it is apparent that the university partnerships involve personal and established contacts. This can be attributed to the fact that the academic units are actively involved in the international academic community, where they have been able to establish personal contacts and partnerships over the years. With reference to the master's programme in Würzburg, the role of partner universities in organising study abroad is emphasised. As already indicated in Chap. 5.1.1, well-developed partnerships abroad mean that counselling and support processes are based on trust and that study abroad is organised in line with the students' field of study. Therefore, it can be assumed that, in the master's programme in Belgrade and Florence, the academic units also work in close cooperation with partner universities to support international mobility. Furthermore, a trusting relationship with the partner universities and the partner's international

commitment are seen as important prerequisites for cooperation in the master's programmes. This helps develop mutual understanding among the partners in a way that helps overcome emerging challenges in partnerships, as discussed in regard to the master's programme in Belgrade.

In addition, the data demonstrates that *cooperation in international cooperation projects* can enable the establishment of new international contacts and partnerships if the cooperation is perceived as pleasant and beneficial by the academic unit. In relation to the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence in particular, the international cooperation projects are seen as a starting point for the establishment of further university partnerships. Likewise, the international cooperation projects support the development and organisation of joint international teaching and learning settings. This can be seen in a joint seasonal school (Chap. 5.1.1), which was further developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships COMPALL and INTALL. The involvement of the academic units of the three master's programmes in these international cooperation projects originates from long-standing collaborations between individual academics and earlier cooperation projects in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 127-28). The cooperation projects once again underline the close cooperation between the academic units of the three master's programmes. In addition, the ESRALE cooperation project seems to have supported the development of the international double degree programme offered in the master's programme in Florence. Furthermore, in Würzburg, it is emphasised that a trusting relationship between the projects partners as well as the partners' international commitment are important prerequisites for joint cooperation projects.

In summary, it can be said that the cooperation of the academic units in university partnerships and international cooperation projects plays an important role in the internationalisation of the three master's programmes. The academic units can draw on well-established partnerships and cooperation projects that underline the international orientation and international commitment of the three academic units. Building trust with the partners and the commitment of the partners involved can be regarded as fundamental prerequisites for successful cooperation.

On Chap. 5.2.5 – Subjective factors of the students

In the master's programmes, it is also evident that students' subjective factors can shape the range of international teaching and learning settings. In the master's programme in Würzburg, it becomes clear that the *self-concept of the students* must be taken into account when organising international teaching and learning settings. For example, students' reticence and uncertainty in relation to international experiences must be addressed. This can be interpreted against the background that, in Germany, degree programmes in the field of educational science have lower entry requirements than other study programmes, such as medicine or psychology. As a result, students may assess their own performance less highly and could therefore show reticence and insecurity towards

international experiences in their studies. It is also emphasised that students in the master's programme in Würzburg are reluctant to use English in teaching, which led to students being given the option of taking courses in English or German. This could be attributed to the fact that, in Germany, adult education is predominantly situated in a German-language discourse and degree programmes in adult education may lack an international dimension (Walber and Lobe 2018). As a result, master's students may have encountered few international perspectives during their bachelor's degree and may therefore be reticent about international experiences and the use of English in their subsequent master's degree. These arguments could also explain why studies abroad are intentionally given a low threshold in the master's programme in Würzburg (Chap. 5.1.1). Consequently, organising «transparent counselling structures and processes» (Egetenmeyer 2010a, 6) can help open up participation in study abroad to all students, including those students who are initially reluctant and uncertain. With regard to the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, it is not possible to point to a connection between the students' self-concept and the international teaching and learning settings in the degree programmes. However, when comparing internationally, one can generally point to a rather low level of participation in international mobility among students in the field of education (OECD 2021, 217). In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, this could imply that students require additional incentives to participate in international mobility, as expressed in the two information events for study abroad (Chap. 5.1.1). Consequently, it can be assumed that the willingness as well as the commitment of the students with regard to their own international experiences can influence their participation in international teaching and learning settings and thus shape the international offer.

In the master's programme in Belgrade, drawing on the *international experiences of the students* seems to be an important component in promoting and developing international teaching and learning settings. Through the exchange of experiences, students can encourage each other to take advantage of international opportunities in their studies. According to Egetenmeyer (2010a, 6), the promotion of international mobility among students can generally be considered an effective strategy in the development of student exchange. Consequently, it can be assumed that networking among students can support participation in international teaching and learning settings. In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, this assumption is supported by the presence of international students in teaching (Chap. 5.1.2). In this context, it was emphasised that international students can provide incentives for master's students to participate in international mobility. Consequently, it can be concluded that the international experiences of the students can constitute a resource for the promotion and further development of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

Based on the previous explanations, it becomes clear that students can also have an impact on the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. The willingness and commitment of the students

to participate in international teaching and learning settings as well as the networking of students, which allows them to exchange international experiences, appear to be central.

The international comparative analysis of the framework conditions reveals that political-strategic and organisational framework conditions create overarching structures for the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. They can have a conducive or obstructive effect on the organisation and implementation of international teaching and learning settings at the level of the degree programmes. Education and higher education policy as well as financial aspects must be taken into account. As Simoleit (2016, 394) observed in her study of three European universities, universities provide a certain degree of room for manoeuvre, which determines action at the individual level and at the level of the academic unit, but which can also be actively changed by them. With regard to the three academic units, a high level of international commitment and interest is evident. This supports the development and organisation of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In this context, well-developed networking structures of the academic units with international universities in partnerships or cooperation projects prove to be helpful. Likewise, the willingness and international interest of the students and the networking among students appear to shape international teaching and learning settings. In summary, education and higher education policy at the European and national level, the strategic orientation of the universities, the international commitment and networking of the academic units, and the international commitment and networking of the students can influence the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

5.3 Goals of International Teaching and Learning Settings

The international teaching and learning settings outlined in Chap. 5.1 are associated with different goals in the master's programmes. Based on the heuristics (Chap. 2.8) and the available data, overarching goals are formulated, which are differentiated into sub-goals. The goals expressed by programme heads, (academic) staff, and students participating in the focus groups can refer to a single teaching and learning setting or the entire range of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

- Chap. 5.3.1 Promotion of higher education;
- Chap. 5.3.2 Promotion of social interaction in society;
- Chap. 5.3.3 Promotion of students' qualification in the field of adult education;
- Chap. 5.3.4 Promotion of students' personal development;
- Chap. 5.3.5 Promotion of students' foreign language skills.

5.3.1 Promotion of Higher Education

In the three master's programmes, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to promote higher education. Associated with this is the improvement of teaching and learning at the universities in general and specifically in the area of academic adult education. In this context, the following sub-goals are identified, which further differentiate the overall goal.

- a) *Enabling international perspectives in teaching and learning;*
- b) *Further development of teaching;*
- c) *Further development of international offerings at the university;*
- d) *Strengthening the discipline of adult education.*

a) *Enabling international perspectives in teaching and learning*

In the master's programme in Würzburg, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is intended to contribute to enabling international perspectives in teaching and learning.

I always have to say that one of the biggest motivations for me when I came here, there was a student assistant. [...] who said '@Professor A from Würzburg@, why should we go abroad? It's so nice in Würzburg'. [...] I found that a very honest answer [...], which helped me tremendously to understand how the students here think, yes. And where I then thought to myself 'Okay, if you don't come abroad, then we'll bring the people here'. [...] (UNIWUE 59).

The provision of international teaching and learning settings at home, such as integrating international guest lecturers and international students in teaching, is intended to open up international perspectives for students in the master's programme. As is pointed out, this is particularly intended for those students who do not want to go abroad. In this way, non-mobile students can also encounter international perspectives in their studies, which supports internationalisation at home.

In the master's programme in Florence, international teaching and learning settings are also recognised as an opportunity to integrate international perspectives into teaching and learning.

R2: I think that it should be a good opportunity for students from University of Florence to see Erasmus students incoming and maybe they will be in Erasmus

I: In the future?

R2: In the future, yes (UNIFI 176-78).

With reference to the interview excerpt, it can be assumed that the international students are seen as a way of integrating international perspectives into the master's programme. Through the presence of international students in teaching, the students of the master's programme should be encouraged to participate in Erasmus mobility abroad themselves. Furthermore, the suggestion is made to make international experiences a compulsory part of the master's programme. This seems to already be the case in the doctoral programme.

Another point could be to have an international experience for every student. [...] It is compulsory for a doctoral student to have six months of international experience. [...] This is not compulsory for a master student. From my point of view, it could be important to have, not the amount of six month, but for example, Winter School, [...] two intensive week programme. [...] (UNIFI 152).

As outlined above, by making participation in a seasonal school compulsory, all students should have the opportunity to participate in at least one cross-border teaching and learning setting during their studies. This could eventually lead to all students being exposed to international perspectives as part of their studies and contribute to the promotion of teaching and learning.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, it is evident that international perspectives in teaching and learning should contribute to the advancement of higher education. By integrating international perspectives into teaching and learning at the home university, non-mobile students in particular are supported in gaining international experiences during their studies. In the master's programme in Belgrade, the data does not indicate this goal. However, with the provision of various international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Belgrade (Chap. 5.1), it can be assumed that these also aim to integrate international perspectives into teaching and learning.

b) Further development of teaching

In the Belgrade master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is linked to the further development of teaching:

[...] when we meet either going somewhere to Germany or Italy or having students coming from these countries, it makes us always [...] reflect our own teaching paradigm or learning and teaching practices, the ways we are doing things and so on. And I think, this is, well, a kind of self-learning and something that helps also to enrich our own practice through this exchange and meeting the others. [...] (UNIBEL 80).

[...] it is also important for us as professors when we are going abroad to deliver lectures. [...] You can have a lot of experience in this but each time when you go somewhere, you receive something new. [...] And so it is really very important also for us as professors to receive some new information, new ideas, [...] to compare students from different countries (UNIBEL 110).

The international mobility of lecturers and the presence of international students in teaching are perceived as an opportunity for the further development of teaching in the master's programme. The international context can enable lecturers in the programme to reflect on different teaching and learning methods, gain new teaching experience, and broaden their own (subject-related) perspectives. This indicates that the international teaching and learning settings are intended to contribute to the enhancement of teaching by encouraging lecturers to improve their own teaching practice.

In the master's programme in Florence, the international teaching and learning settings are also perceived as an opportunity to contribute to the further development of teaching.

[...] we have many exchanges during the year between students, teachers. And this is very important because we know new models, not only theoretical models, but also practical models to teach [...] (UNIFI 20).

The exchange with students and lecturers from different countries is considered important for the further development of the teaching practice of lecturers in the programme. The international exchange can open up new perspectives on methodology and didactics that support the further development of teaching in the master's programme.

The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence is linked to the goal of further developing teaching. This is supported by the fact that lecturers can receive new methodical and didactic perspectives in the international teaching and learning settings. In the context of the master's programme in Würzburg, this aspect is not explicitly outlined. Due to the presence of international students in the master's programme (Chap. 5.1.2), however, it can be assumed that this also enables lecturers at the University of Würzburg to gain new perspectives on teaching and learning.

c) Further development of international offerings at the university

In the Würzburg master's programme, international teaching and learning settings are intended to contribute to the further development of international offerings at the university.

[...] It's not just that we somehow develop fancy things for our degree programme and our students, but [...] we also develop framework conditions for the higher education institution. [...] We are always seen as [...] good practice for how to do exchanges, Erasmus exchanges? How do you write KA 107 applications (laughter)? How do you do winter schools, yes?! How do you do guest lecturers? (UNIWUE 180).

As expressed, the international teaching and learning settings offered at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education should also support other university facilities and units to organise international offerings at the university. In exchange with other areas of the university, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education can share its experience in organising international teaching and learning settings in the degree programme. The cooperation of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education with other facilities, units, and staff within the University of Würzburg has already been highlighted in Chap. 5.2.3 and is reinforced by the stated goal.

[...] So I think it's important that we don't just convey that we're pushing a lot of people through here, yes. But that we are perceived as a unit that does this with high quality, that has expertise and professional competence and that is

also open to any kind of consultation. Because that has a changing effect, so to speak, on the one hand into the university, but on the other hand also into the discipline (UNIWUE 187).

To ensure that other areas of the university can also benefit from the international teaching and learning settings, the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education shows a willingness and commitment to cooperate with other university facilities and units. It seems that the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education sees itself as being responsible for contributing to the further development of international offerings throughout the university by offering international teaching and learning settings in the degree programme. This could contribute to the university-wide improvement of academic education.

In the Würzburg master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is intended not only to promote teaching and learning in the master's programme, but also to support the further development of international offerings in other parts of the university. This is supported by the international commitment and collaboration of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education within the university. With reference to Chap. 5.2.3, this may suggest that the international commitment of the academic units in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence may also contribute to the development of international offerings at the universities. However, this goal is not explicitly mentioned in the data.

d) Strengthening the discipline of adult education

As could already be indicated in the previous quotation, the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the Würzburg master's programme should also contribute to strengthening the discipline of adult education.

[...] That was also important to me, that we are not such a closed, elitist circle where someone gets paid for a plane ticket, but that we also influence the discipline. And also strengthen each other. I think that is also very important to say again. Through these cooperations, we also strengthen adult education at all locations. In Florence, in Serbia, in Pécs, with us (UNIWUE 192).

The international exchange and international cooperation in the master's programme are meant to strengthen the adult education discipline at universities in other countries as well. As outlined, the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme are intended to contribute to the entire academic field.

In the Würzburg master's programme, it is emphasised that the provision of international teaching and learning settings should not only add academic value to the programme, but also have an impact on the academic discipline. Although this goal is not expressed in the data in relation to the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, it could be assumed that the international cooperation of the academic units (Chap. 5.2.4) also contributes to strengthening the discipline in the international context.

5.3.2 Promotion of Social Interaction in Society

In the master's programmes, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is linked with the aim of promoting social interaction in society. The following sub-goals, which are geared towards promoting social interaction, are differentiated in the data.

- a) *Promoting democratic awareness;*
- b) *Promoting intercultural understanding.*

a) *Promoting democratic awareness*

In the Würzburg master's programme, the international teaching and learning settings should contribute to the promotion of democratic awareness. In this study, democratic awareness is defined as the understanding of the fundamental principles, goals, and values of democracy, which include solidarity, freedom and justice, human rights, and the democratic constitution (Lange and Himmelmann 2007).

And this encounter and this dialogue, I also have the impression that people grow from it. Of course, we all have the examples of the Indian students in mind who [...], once they have experienced in Germany that as a woman they are perceived as a human being, that you are listened to and so on, that you can really make a contribution to democratisation in this world and to humane education [...] (UNIWUE 83).

[...] That we also support people, so to speak, [...] to assert important human rights in their home country. Simply by finding an academic home here (UNIWUE 197).

As expressed in the text passages, the formulated goal refers primarily to international students who come to the University of Würzburg. It is outlined that, in the international exchange, the international students may experience what rights they are entitled to, and they may reflect on these against the backdrop of their own context. It is thus expected that students may develop a greater democratic awareness by participating in international teaching and learning settings. This should ultimately strengthen democratic structures in society.

In the master's programme in Belgrade, the aim of promoting democratic awareness is also linked to the provision of international teaching and learning settings.

Serbia is still very fragile democracy or extreme fragile democracy. And you know, meeting with other cultures, speaking with other cultures and regions and learning about different education practices or whatever, still have a very, I would say, political dimension which is still very important. Those people are also ambassadors or, you know, a connection or a link between cultures, between Serbia and Germany or Brazil or Italy or whatever. So I see it as a potential for this country for its democratisation in the future, hopefully (UNIBEL 57).

Against the backdrop of Serbian history, international interaction and communication in the master's programme should contribute to strengthening democratic awareness both among students and in society. In view of the still unstable democratic structures in Serbia, the promotion of democratic awareness in Serbian society is attributed particular importance. In addition, the internationalisation of the master's programme is intended to strengthen democratic structures in Europe, as highlighted below.

To add you know a broader framework and higher vision why we do internationalisation, especially in Europe. We do believe in, well, Europe as a learning community and European citizenship in terms of, you know, region without nationalism and racism, when different cultures, religions and different people meet and exchange and live in peace and in tolerance. So internationalisation at the universities is one of the small aspects but an important one in this mosaic. [...] That's how we contribute to this future that we would like to see in Europe. Which is jeopardised at the moment because of all those right-wing movements and racism and you know all those things. [...] But this is an additional reason to intensify that [...] (UNIBEL 126).

The internationalisation of higher education is associated with the fundamental idea of Europe as a community with shared values and the promotion of active citizenship. However, due to current political and social movements, such as right-wing radicalism and the spread of racism, Europe sees its values threatened. The internationalisation of teaching and learning is therefore intended to foster social responsibility for a respectful and peaceful coexistence in Europe. Consequently, the internationalisation efforts in the master's programme are also oriented towards the larger European context. In sum, the master's programme in Belgrade is intended to promote democratic awareness both in Serbian and European society.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to strengthen democratic awareness among students, which supports social interaction in society. In the master's programme in Belgrade, this goal is particularly important in light of the political situation in Serbia. In the master's programme in Florence, the data does not indicate this goal.

b) Promoting intercultural understanding

In the Belgrade master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to contribute to the promotion of intercultural understanding. In this context, intercultural understanding means perceiving and acknowledging foreignness and becoming aware of differences between and within cultures. The intent here is to contribute to social interaction in society.

You know how Germans say that nothing goes over a personal experience and of course, we can teach, you know, tolerance, interculturalism and so on, put people in teaching rooms, you know, and within one culture teach them that. It will fail and there are plenty of experiences, plenty of examples for that in the

history. So having a personal experience in that, that's much more valuable and effective than any other method and that's why we do this. [...] (UNIBEL 127).

In the master's programme, the international teaching and learning settings are intended to enable direct and personal contact with people from different countries in order to promote the ability to deal with experiences of foreignness and to develop an understanding for differences. Personal experiences are seen as an essential prerequisite in this context.

In the master's programme in Florence, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is also linked to the goal of developing intercultural understanding.

[...] it's very important the internationalisation because in a global world it is not possible to stay without to see the others. But also at the same time, it's very important because the internationalisation processes are creating a way of the others and the habits of others, the other visions, the other culture, the other way to live. And especially in our world now, it is very, very important because in this moment in Europe it exists a movement where the individualism perspective is very strong. [...] And in this sense the internationalisation [...] different type of actions can help to reach the vision of the others. [...] And from my point of view, it's the most difficult thing to learn or to teach. It is so, SO difficult to teach what is the others. [...] (UNIFI 129).

So the implementation of this type of opportunity is very, very important because without to have an experience abroad, it is not possible to speak of abroad Europe countries or abroad culture or so on. It is necessary to have experience. Learning by doing. [...] Doing: Go into the other country (laughing) with other languages. To catch a flight, to catch a train (UNIFI 154).

Against the backdrop of a globalised society, the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme should contribute to building an understanding for other ways of thinking, seeing, and acting in society. In view of today's strongly individualistic social structures, this goal is considered to be of particular social relevance. As emphasised, personal contacts and exchange are needed in this regard. This understanding is expressed in concrete terms with the phrase «learning by doing», whereby «doing» is equated with international mobility. In order to promote intercultural understanding, personal experiences are considered helpful. These experiences are to be supported by offering international mobility in the master's programme.

Because I think that the Erasmus sentence 'Change life in order to change mind', it is perfect to explain this. Because only if we go abroad, only if we study abroad and we live in a different city, we can change our mind and change our life. [...] (UNIFI 159).

[...] The world is very big and we have to collect a lot of experience in order to see other cultures. [...] (UNIFI 161).

In line with a slogan of the Erasmus programme, which in the original reads «Changing lives, opening minds» (European Commission 2013b), it is once again emphasised that personal experiences are necessary to reflect on one's own and others' ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. As it becomes clear, international, especially cross-border, teaching and learning settings are grasped as a prerequisite for creating personal interaction and communication in the master's programme in Florence. These personal experiences in turn can help to deal with foreignness and develop an understanding for differences.

In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, international teaching and learning settings are said to contribute to the promotion of intercultural understanding. It seems striking that personal experiences in this context are given a central role. In the master's programme in Würzburg, reference is made to diverse social structures in the following chapter with the aim of *b) Promoting the handling of diversity in the field of adult education* (Chap. 5.3.3). At this point, the promotion of intercultural understanding becomes relevant to the field of adult education.

5.3.3 Promotion of Students' Qualification in the Field of Adult Education

In the master's programmes, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to provide students with qualifications in the field of adult education. This is divided into two sub-goals.

- a) *Broadening perspectives in the field of adult education;*
- b) *Promoting the handling of diversity in the field of adult education.*

a) *Broadening perspectives in the field of adult education*

The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the Würzburg master's programme aims to broaden students' perspectives in the field of adult education.

So also for [...] professionalisation. That they have had the experience [in the Winter School], also occupationally, of having a cultural, intercultural, international exchange in their studies, so to speak, where the subject-related reference is. Yes, I mean, you can also have that through internships abroad, but I just think that the subject matter is somehow also important, that you also get to see a bit of different perspectives and so on (UNIWUE 76).

The intention is for master's students get to know different perspectives on adult education by attending seasonal schools. Interacting with lecturers and students from other countries is perceived as an opportunity to become aware of new and different perspectives on the field of adult education. This is perceived as relevant for students' subject-related qualification.

In the master's programme in Belgrade, participation in international teaching and learning settings is also intended to contribute to broadening students' perspectives in the field of adult education.

[...] You have the theory like the core idea. Then you go to another place and you like 'Okay, this is different but I notice some similarities. Okay, what are these similarities?' [...] you go to another country and you are like 'Okay, I don't remember seeing this thing here but here it is.' And you get a big picture [...] (UNIBEL 60).

As outlined, participation in mobility abroad can enable students to contrast their own subject-related perspectives with those experienced in the host country. In this context, students may identify similarities and differences that can ultimately result in a broader understanding and knowledge of adult education.

[...] for example elective subjects which are dealing with, for example multicultural education and similar things which provide students that wider perspective on [...] (UNIBEL 44).

[...] you're really encouraged to read on different languages. And maybe that's something that can also widen perspectives. You know, to see, okay, how different authors from different countries are thinking [...] (UNIBEL 58).

In addition, international teaching and learning settings at home (by integrating international topics and international literature into teaching) can open up further opportunities to engage with new topics and perspectives in the field. This should help students broaden their perspectives on adult education, which in turn can contribute to their qualification in the field of adult education.

In the Florence master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is also linked to the goal of broadening students' perspectives in the field of adult education.

And also a lot of international conferences that the department in the past organised. So it's another opportunity to see a European perspective about adult education (UNIFI 125).

With regard to students' participation in international conferences at the University of Florence, it is emphasised that this gives students the opportunity to encounter new perspectives in the field of adult education in the European context. This can broaden their perspectives in the field.

In all the three master's programmes, it is evident that the provision of international teaching and learning settings is intended to contribute to broaden students' perspectives in the field of adult education and therefore promote students' qualification in the field.

b) Promoting the handling of diversity in the field of adult education

In the Würzburg master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to provide students with the opportunity to practice how to handle diversity in the field of adult education.

[...] Our society is becoming more heterogeneous and as a result [...] the participants in continuing education events are also becoming more heterogeneous, and not only in terms of migration background, but also in terms of age structures, in terms of the social milieus or groups they come from, in terms of the goals they have, in terms of their own educational biography. [...] That's why it's not just chic to travel somewhere or chick to do an English seminar [...] So I think we are anticipating fundamental structural changes in adult education and continuing education. Yes, and that we train people well so that they can provide an answer to this and deal with it pedagogically [...] (UNIWUE 96).

With increasing diversity in society (e.g. through migration), it is possible to identify a more diverse group of participants in the field of adult education practice. By participating in international teaching and learning settings, students should therefore be supported in acquiring knowledge and skills in handling diversity in the later occupational activity. The ultimate goal here is that students can reflectively meet the requirements and challenges in adult education practice. This perspective is reaffirmed by the following statement.

Yes, and the people in the positions who manage integration courses or continuing training programmes offered by companies, they also have to make decisions on how to design a course for people in order to somehow impart diversity competence to them and so that they can acquire it. And you have to have that, I think, or it would be very helpful if you had some experience yourself, because otherwise you don't really know (UNIWUE 88).

As mentioned above, the international teaching and learning settings are intended to support students in gaining personal experiences in handling diversity. These experiences may give them confidence in handling diversity in their future work, for example when a course is to be tailored to a diverse target group. To this end, the international teaching and learning settings seem to function as a field of practice where experiences can be gained in handling diversity. In this way, the international teaching and learning settings aim to contribute to the qualification of students in the field of adult education.

In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the promotion of handling diversity in the field of adult education is argued from an overall societal perspective rather than for subject-specific reasons. Here, the international teaching and learning settings are intended to contribute to the promotion of intercultural understanding against the background of diverse social structures (see Chap. 5.3.2 *Promotion of international encounters – b) Promotion of intercultural understanding*).

5.3.4 Promotion of Students' Personal Development

The international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes can be linked to the goal of promoting students' personal development. In the master's programme in Würzburg, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is intended to support students in their personal development.

[...] when people come here, like at the Winter School. I have already observed a lot. Even with fellow students back then or now with students you've known for a long time, how they open up to other cultures and that they build friendships and stay in contact with people from Winter Schools for a long time [...]. And that is already an added value, I think (UNIWUE 75).

[...] I find it highly interesting when our students come back [...] how much more independent they are, how much more self-confident they are (UNIWUE 84).

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, it is observed that students can gain openness towards people from other countries and can increase their self-confidence during their international experiences. It is clear from the text passages that international teaching and learning settings are recognised as a way to support students' personal development.

So in relation to the master's programmes, from my own experience and my own international study experiences in the master's, there I also had a few international aspects, you also become more flexible. So [...] during the further course of studies, you become more flexible in adapting to new learning environments, I had the feeling. [...] and then [...] during your studies you already have an added value that you somehow become a bit more flexible (UNIWUE 89).

Here, an interviewee draws on their own international experiences during their master's studies to state that students may also gain more flexibility by taking part in international teaching and learning settings. International experiences are seen as an opportunity for students to develop the ability to deal with new, unknown situations more effectively. This is considered beneficial for the students' further course of studies.

In the master's programme in Belgrade, the international teaching and learning settings also aim to promote the personal development of students.

[...] I would say this [Erasmus exchange] is a kind of transformative learning experience. [...] Meeting other culture, meeting other students from/ For example, this winter school it's not only Germany and master study at Würzburg but SO many countries, not only Europe but around the globe. So it's a unique experience. Really unique. And I think at the moment it's one of the best thing we can offer to our students to broaden the horizons, to enrich the experience, to have this transformation of learning experience (UNIBEL 49).

It is believed that cross-border teaching and learning settings offer students transformative learning experiences that can help them to reflect on and expand their own attitudes and personal beliefs. Since the transformative learning experiences are not related to any subject-specific aspects in the text passage, it can be assumed that the students' personal development is referred to. Consequently, cross-border teaching and learning settings are intended to contribute to the promotion of the students' personal development.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, it is emphasised that the provision of international teaching and learning settings is expected to contribute to students' personal development. In Florence, the data does not show evidence of this goal.

5.3.5 Promotion of Students' Foreign Language Skills

The promotion of students' foreign language skills is identified as another goal of the international teaching and learning settings. In the master's programme in Florence, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is intended to support students to (further) develop their foreign language skills.

I suppose the evolution of the situation could be a better level of English. A better level of English for every student not just for ten, twenty, thirty (UNIFI 151).

R2: I think that it should be a good opportunity for students from University of Florence to see Erasmus students incoming [...].
[...]

R1: Also for learning English.

R2: Yes (UNIFI 176-80).

The international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme are intended to support students in improving their English language skills in particular. As expressed, the presence of international students in the master's programme can be seen as a way to promote the students' foreign language skills.

In the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, this goal is not explicitly mentioned in the data. The promotion of foreign language skills could be therefore of particular importance for the students of the master's programme in Florence.

5.3.6 Interim Summary

In the data, different goals are associated with the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. The goals can vary between the master's programmes and within the master's programmes from one international teaching and learning setting to another. It is also apparent that some goals cannot be clearly assigned to a specific form of international teaching and learning setting, but are rather seen as an overarching goal of the internationalisation of the master's programme. With an international comparative view of the goals presented, reasons for the occurrence of similarities and differences between the master's programmes can be analysed. In the following, the goals are also analysed with regard to their contribution to academic professionalisation in adult education.

On Chap. 5.3.1 – Promotion of higher education

The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes is intended to contribute to the promotion of higher education, which points to an academic argumentation of internationalisation (J. Knight 1999, 2008; de Wit 2002). The data shows that international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence should contribute to *enabling international perspectives in teaching and learning*. It is intended that internationally mobile as well as non-mobile students are exposed to international perspectives during their studies and encouraged to participate in further international teaching and learning settings. This goal can be analysed in connection with the strategic orientations of the universities in Würzburg and Florence, which focus on the integration of international perspectives in the area of teaching and learning (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016; Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018, 2019a). Moreover, the goal is related to demands in higher education discourse for internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask 2015) and internationalisation at home (Beelen and Jones 2015). These demands call for a sustainable integration of international, intercultural, and global perspectives into teaching and learning, open to all students. Drawing on inequalities in access to study abroad (Bilecen and van Mol 2017), the integration of international teaching and learning settings at home may consequently counteract the disadvantage of non-mobile students. Referring to the academic discourse in adult education, the integration of international perspectives in the master's programmes can also be seen as important with regard to the internationalisation of adult education in discipline and practice (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 12). The internationalisation of adult education practice may require graduates who are familiar with international developments and perspectives in the field. Moreover, it could be argued that in Germany and Italy, where international perspectives are presumably less present in adult education programmes (Latke 2007; Walber and Lobe 2018), the integration of international perspectives in the master's programme might be particularly required. In contrast, in the master's programme in Belgrade, where this goal is not reflected in the data, the integration of international perspectives might be considered less important. This could be due to the fact that the academic field in Serbia may show a stronger international focus (Chap. 5.1.3). This could lead to international perspectives being more strongly anchored in the master's programme in Belgrade from the very beginning. In addition, the structure of the master's programme in Belgrade may offer more time and space for integrating international topics into the curriculum, as it focuses only on adult education as a field of study. This is in contrast to the master's programme in Würzburg and Florence, where adult education is part of an educational science-oriented degree programme. Therefore, the goal of enabling international perspectives in teaching and learning could be more strongly pursued in the context of the master's programme in Würzburg and Florence.

In addition, the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence are linked to the *further development of*

teaching. The international exchange of students and lecturers is considered an opportunity to further develop the teaching practice of lecturers in the programme. This appears to be significant against the background of increased international demands on teaching, both in adult education practice and higher education (Staab et al. 2020, 43). For example, teaching in higher education must take into account an increasingly diverse composition of students (Allemann-Ghionda 2014). The international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes can therefore be understood as places for reflection and further development of teaching practice. This might support the professionalisation of university teaching staff and consequently promote quality in higher education. Furthermore, this goal can also be based on requirements at the organisational level. This is evident in the internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg, although this goal is not explicitly addressed in relation to the master's programme in Würzburg. With reference to the internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg, internationalisation aims to promote teaching through the mobility of students and lecturers alongside other factors (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016). In addition, it can be assumed that, for example, through the presence of international students in teaching (Chap. 5.1), the lecturers of the master's programmes might also be encouraged to reflect on and further develop their teaching practice.

In the Würzburg master's programme, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is also intended to support the *further development of international offerings at the university*. In this way, other bodies and units at the University of Würzburg that cooperate with the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education should benefit from the international teaching and learning settings in the programme. Referring to J. Knight (2008, 30), networks within universities can form alliances that support the internationalisation of the university and can follow academic rationales. In this regard, it can be expected that the international commitment of the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education (Chap. 5.2.3) supports building up networks within the university. In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, although the academic units are internationally active, the further development of international offerings at the universities is not mentioned in the data. This may appear to imply that there is less interaction and cooperation between the academic units and other facilities and units at the universities. This could indicate differences in the organisational structures that lead to varying degrees of networking within the universities. However, it can be assumed that cooperation within the universities can contribute to the further development of international offerings at the university and thus support the internationalisation of higher education.

The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme in Würzburg is also aimed at *strengthening the discipline of adult education*. The international cooperation at the Professorship for Adult and Continuing Education is intended to strengthen the adult education discipline at other locations. With reference to Zeuner (2018, 672-73), it can be stated that international adult education still receives too little attention in the academic com-

munity. In a globalised world, this proves contrary to the need to engage with international perspectives in order to promote mutual understanding as well as to enable the further development of national structures and perspectives in the field. International teaching and learning settings can therefore support academic exchange among researchers, lecturers, and students in adult education in order to contribute to the academic discipline. In this context, it is expected that international cooperation of the academic unit (see Chap. 5.2.4) can promote academic exchange within the framework of joint teaching and learning settings. Although this goal is not explicitly expressed in the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, it can be assumed that the international cooperation of the two respective academic units also contributes to strengthening the discipline by promoting international exchange in the context of international teaching and learning settings. This may support the development of the academic field.

With reference to the previous explanations, the goal of promoting higher education is linked to different sub-goals, which are based on different contexts. The goals outlined can be related to the internationalisation strategies of the universities, to the programme structures as well as to the international commitment and cooperation of the academic units. Likewise, the increasing diversity at the universities and the internationalisation of adult education seem to represent patterns that explain the internationalisation of the master's programmes.

On Chap. 5.3.2 – Promotion of social interaction in society

The provision of international teaching and learning settings is linked in the three master's programmes to the goal of promoting social interaction in society, revealing a social-cultural argumentation of internationalisation (J. Knight 2008; Varghese 2017; Brandenburg et al. 2020; Deardorff and Jones 2022). The goal of *promoting democratic awareness* communicated in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade is also related to political rationales of internationalisation (Wächter, Ollikainen, and Hasewend 1999; de Wit 2002; J. Knight 2008). In the Würzburg master's programme, international exchange is seen as having the potential to strengthen democratic awareness among students in society. In the master's programme in Belgrade, this goal is partly rooted in Serbia's political history. Since Serbia has only been a democracy since the year 2000, the democratic structures in the country appear to remain unstable. The international teaching and learning settings therefore aim to promote international interaction and communication in order to contribute to the democratisation of society. On the other hand, in view of overall, contrary political and social trends in society, such as right-wing radicalism and racism, internationalisation should also strengthen democratic awareness in the European context. The goal of promoting democratic awareness refers to the political and social mission of adult education, which is expressed, for example, in political adult education or the concept of civic education or citizenship education⁹. Furthermore, the goal can be anchored at the organisational level. At the University of Würzburg, the

⁹ See on this, among others Popović and Despotović (2018).

goal is linked to its social mission. In its internationalisation strategy, the University of Würzburg commits itself to the global responsibility «towards societal concerns and ethical values» (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 8). Moreover, the goal can be traced back to EU policy demands, which focus on strengthening democratic participation and common values in the European society. These themes are pursued by the Erasmus+ programme and are also included in the new 2021-27 phase of the Erasmus programme (Körner 2021, 31). At the University of Florence, no social-cultural and political argumentation of internationalisation seems to be evident in the strategic papers (Università degli Studi di Firenze 2018, 2019a). Likewise, according to the OECD Skills Studies, hardly any political rationales can be found in the internationalisation of universities in Italy (OECD and European Union 2019, 112). The promotion of democratic awareness could therefore hold a lower strategic priority in the Italian higher education system.

In the master's programmes in Belgrade and Florence, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is also linked to *promoting intercultural understanding*, which contributes to social interaction in society. Here, a central role is assigned to personal encounters and personal experiences. In the master's programme in Florence, this is argued in accordance with the experiential learning theories of Dewey (1998) and Kolb (2015), in which personal experience represents the starting point of all learning. Both in Florence and Belgrade, it is emphasised that direct, personal interaction and communication with people from other countries are needed to build an understanding of one's own and others' ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. In this way, it is possible to perceive and acknowledge foreignness and become aware of differences between and within cultures. The need for intercultural understanding is justified in Florence by the increasingly globalised society. In Belgrade, the goal can be linked to the internationalisation strategy of the University of Belgrade, in which the internationalisation of teaching and learning is intended to enable students to acquire skills to interact with other cultures and environments (Senate of the University of Belgrade 2014, 1). With regard to adult education practice, it is also possible to point to a field that is becoming increasingly diverse, for example in terms of target groups (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130). Therefore, intercultural understanding and intercultural competences can be considered as basic prerequisites for the working professionally in the field of adult education (Staab and Egetenmeyer 2019, 280). In addition, Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann (2014, 191) consider handling diversity as a cross-sectional task in academic professionalisation. In addition to acquiring knowledge about, e.g., different communication patterns, there is a need to provide space for reflection and experience during studies to train students in handling (cultural) diversity in adult education practice. This can be achieved by offering international teaching and learning settings in the degree programmes. Consequently, it can be seen that the promotion of intercultural understanding not only fulfils an overall social necessity but can also contribute to the development of students' professionalism. In Würzburg, a similar argumentation can be grasped with regard to the *promotion of students' qualifica-*

tion in the field of adult education and more precisely with the goal of *promoting the handling of diversity in the field of adult education* (see below).

With regard to the overarching goal of promoting social interaction in society, different sub-goals are identified, which can be traced back to different contexts in the previous explanations. On the one hand, the goals are based on higher education policy justifications at the regional and organisational level. On the other hand, social-cultural and partly political rationales appear to be relevant against the background of the political situation of a country and overall social developments. In addition, there are subject-specific rationales that can be interpreted with reference to the internationalisation of adult education and professionalisation requirements in the field.

On Chap. 5.3.3 – Promotion of students’ qualification in the field of adult education

Furthermore, the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three master’s programmes is intended to support students’ qualification in the field of adult education. In the master’s programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, it is expected that international teaching and learning settings can contribute to *broadening perspectives in the field of adult education*, as the students encounter new topics and perspectives of adult education. With reference to the discourse of professionalisation in adult education, it has been suggested that examining international perspectives in adult education studies can support the development of students’ professionalism (Egetenmeyer 2012; Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; Staab et al. 2020). By learning about international perspectives, students can expand their knowledge and understanding of adult education, laying an important foundation for professional action (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). Moreover, students can gain a better understanding of their own national contexts (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018, 152). This points to the fact that the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master’s programmes can promote the development of students’ professionalism. This assumption appears to be recognised in the master’s programmes as well. The integration of international teaching and learning settings into the degree programme can thus be traced back to reasons specific to the field of adult education.

In addition, the international teaching and learning settings in the master’s programme in Würzburg should contribute to *promoting the handling of diversity in the field of adult education*. Since heterogeneous and diverse structures are characteristic of the field of practice in adult education, the master’s programme can create opportunities to prepare students for the requirements and challenges in the field (von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff 2012, 84). With regard to target groups in adult education, it is possible to speak of an increasingly diverse composition (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130), which requires an adequate approach to the individual needs and backgrounds of the participants. By experiencing diversity in the context of international teaching and learning settings, these settings can support students in gaining experiences in handling diversity for their later work in the field of adult education. Looking at the master’s programmes

in Belgrade and Florence, this goal can be linked to the goal of *promoting intercultural understanding* (Chap. 5.3.2). Although this goal initially reveals a social-cultural argumentation, it can be argued that intercultural understanding can be helpful in handling diversity in the field of adult education. In the master's programmes, this reflects the fact that international teaching and learning settings can provide suitable places to practice the handling of diversity in society and in the field of adult education.

It is clear that the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes aims to develop students' qualification in the field of adult education. With reference to the academic discourse, it is evident that the international teaching and learning settings provide opportunities for the development of students' professionalism. The internationalisation of the master's programme is based on reasons specific to the field of adult education that are considered to be relevant against the background of the internationalisation of adult education and of society.

On Chap. 5.3.4 – Promotion of students' personal development

The international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade aim also to promote students' personal development. Students should develop characteristics such as openness towards people from other countries, self-confidence, and flexibility by participating in the different international teaching and learning settings, whereby reference is made primarily to cross-border teaching and learning settings. In Würzburg, the promotion of students' personal development is also addressed at the organisational level, as can be seen with reference to the internationalisation strategy of the University of Würzburg (Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg 2016, 5). In the master's programme in Florence, there is no evidence of a strategic pursuit of this goal either at the programme or organisational level. However, numerous student surveys point to a connection between international mobility and the personal development of students (Perl and Heese 2008; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Zimmermann et al. 2015; European Commission 2019), confirming that international teaching and learning settings can have an impact on students' personal development. With regard to the professionalisation discourse in adult education, extracurricular and transdisciplinary skills (including transitional competence, teamwork) are attributed particular importance in the transitional phase from study to work (Benz-Gydat 2017; Boffo 2018). This suggests that the promotion of students' personal development in the context of international teaching and learning settings can also contribute the development of students' professionalism.

In summary, the goal of promoting students' personal development can, on the one hand, be pursued strategically at the universities. On the other hand, the goal can be based on reasons specific to the field of adult education that emphasise the development of extracurricular skills with regard to the development of students' professionalism.

On Chap. 5.3.5 – Promotion of students' foreign language skills

In the master's programme in Florence, the provision of international teaching and learning settings aims to promote students' foreign language skills, with a particular focus on improving English language skills. This goal can be interpreted against the background that people in Italy presumably have a low level of English compared to the European average (Education First 2021, 18). This could result in an increased need to promote students' language skills. On the other hand, this leads to the conclusion that the promotion of English language skills could be less relevant in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Belgrade, as a higher level of English language skills can be assumed. Numerous student surveys confirm that students can improve their foreign language skills through mobility abroad (Egetenmeyer 2012; van Mol 2014; Woisch and Willige 2015; Amendola and Restaino 2017; European Commission 2019). Improved language skills can in turn be associated with better career opportunities on the labour market (Bracht et al. 2006; NA and DAAD 2020; INTALL 2021). According to the OECD Skill Strategy 2019, the employment rate in the Italian labour market is below average compared to other OECD countries and low literacy and numeracy skills are identified among graduates. In this context, the recommendation is formulated, among other things, to align the required qualifications more closely with social and economic needs (OECD 2019). A mismatch between the qualifications required and the skills acquired can in turn make the transition of graduates into the labour market more difficult (Boffo 2018). Good foreign language skills, especially English, could therefore be considered an important requirement in view of an increasingly globalised and internationalised labour market. Consequently, the goal could possibly be linked to job-related aspects. In addition, referring to *organisational framework conditions* (Chap. 5.2.2) it can be assumed that the promotion of English is a key requirement of the University of Florence. These findings might be taken to imply that the goal is pursued on the basis of a higher education policy interest at the organisational level.

The provision of international teaching and learning settings can consequently be geared towards the development of students' foreign language skills, whereby the goal can be interpreted in particular against the background of labour market-related developments. Likewise, there seems to be a link to higher education policy interests at the organisational level.

By comparing the goals of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes, it becomes apparent that the provision of international teaching and learning settings is based on academic, social-cultural, and political rationales of internationalisation, which are differentiated in the academic higher education discourse (J. Knight 1999, 2008; de Wit 2002). The goals presented by programme heads, (academic) staff, and master's students participating in the focus groups can be interpreted against the background of different contexts. At the national and regional level, the political situation of a country, the labour market, and social structures can underlie the goals. At the organisational level, the goals can be analysed in connection with the internationalisation

tion strategies of the universities. This illustrates that the international teaching and learning settings may also reflect a higher education policy interest of the universities. Moreover, the findings outline that the international commitment and cooperation of the academic units represent another influencing context. At the same time, the goals are to be interpreted in the context of the academic and practice field of adult education and therefore point to subject-specific rationales. The arguments given above emphasise that the provision of international teaching and learning settings is related to the development of students' professionalism in adult education. In particular, due to the increasing interconnect- edness of adult education with international perspectives, it requires graduates who possess differentiated knowledge as well as international and intercultural skills. The provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes can therefore be discussed in light of the internationalisation of adult education.

5.4 Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning in Master's Programmes in Adult Education

The previous chapters have examined the structural level of academic professionalisation in adult education. Focusing on the three underlying research questions provided insights into the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes in adult education in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence. In this context, similarities and differences between the three master's programmes were identified and analysed in relation to the respective research fields and contexts.

With regard to the first research question, it was possible to identify different forms of international teaching and learning settings that are integrated into the three master's programmes in adult education.

1. What forms of international teaching and learning settings are integrated in the three master's programmes at the universities of Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence?

The international teaching and learning settings identified can be divided into forms of cross-border teaching and learning settings and forms of international teaching and learning settings at home. They support the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives in teaching and learning (J. Knight 2004, 2008; de Wit and Hunter 2015) and reflect the internationalisation of the master's programmes. The identified international teaching and learning settings are only partially integrated into the formal curriculum of the master's programmes. Rather, the international teaching and learning settings tend to be complementary to the teaching and learning settings regularly anchored in the master's programmes. Students are therefore largely free to decide whether they would like to participate in international teaching and learning settings

and in which ones. They can create their own space of experience, which allows them to explore international, intercultural, or global perspectives. At the same time, this means that participation in international teaching and learning settings depends to a large extent on the motivation of the individual students as well as other preconditions that can both enable and block their participation (see Chap. 2.7).

With regard to the second research question, framework conditions and goals of international teaching and learning settings were identified that shape the international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes.

2. What framework conditions and goals shape the international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes?

The goals of international teaching and learning settings expressed by programme heads, (academic) staff, and master's students illustrate why teaching and learning are being internationalised in the master's programmes. The international teaching and learning settings aim at the promotion of higher education, the promotion of social interaction in society, the promotion of students' qualification in the field of adult education, the promotion of students' personal development, and the promotion of students' foreign language skills. With reference to the academic discourse on higher education, these goals can in turn be traced back to academic, social-cultural, and political rationales of internationalisation (J. Knight 1999; de Wit 2002), whereby subject-specific rationales are also evident. The forms and goals of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes are themselves embedded in specific framework conditions. In this context, with reference to the findings of Simoleit (2016) on the internationalisation of three European universities, it can be emphasised that political-strategic framework conditions and organisational framework conditions can create overarching structures for the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In turn, the development and implementation of international teaching and learning settings is mainly carried out by the academic unit of the master's programmes. The framework conditions of the academic unit and the cooperation of the academic unit are therefore directly related to the provision of international teaching and learning settings, whereby subjective factors of the students must also be taken into account when organising international teaching and learning settings. However, the active involvement of students in the development process of internationalisation seems to be a marginal topic in the academic discourse on higher education and has rarely been addressed (Green and Baxter 2022). This is despite the fact that the involvement of former mobile students can be seen as playing an important role in the promotion of international mobility (Egetenmeyer 2010a, 6).

Based on the international comparative analysis of the similarities and differences in the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings, it is possible to derive overarching contexts that guide

the internationalisation of the master’s programmes at the structural level. The overarching contexts complement the heuristic model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Fig. 4) and help answer the third research question.

3. What similarities and differences are evident between the three master’s programmes in their respective contexts and what guides the similarities and differences?

Together with the identified forms, frameworks conditions, and goals of the international teaching and learning settings in the master’s programmes, the overarching contexts are captured in an empirical model (Fig. 18). This model illustrates the internationalisation of teaching and learning in the master’s programmes in adult education. The empirical model takes up the structure of the heuristic model and represents the interplay of the forms, framework conditions, and goals of international teaching and learning settings. Complementing the heuristic model, this interplay is embedded in a larger context by highlighting pan-European and transnational developments (Egetenmeyer 2016b, 141-42) that influence the similarities and differences between the master’s programmes. These contexts are explained and discussed with reference to the theoretical assumptions below.

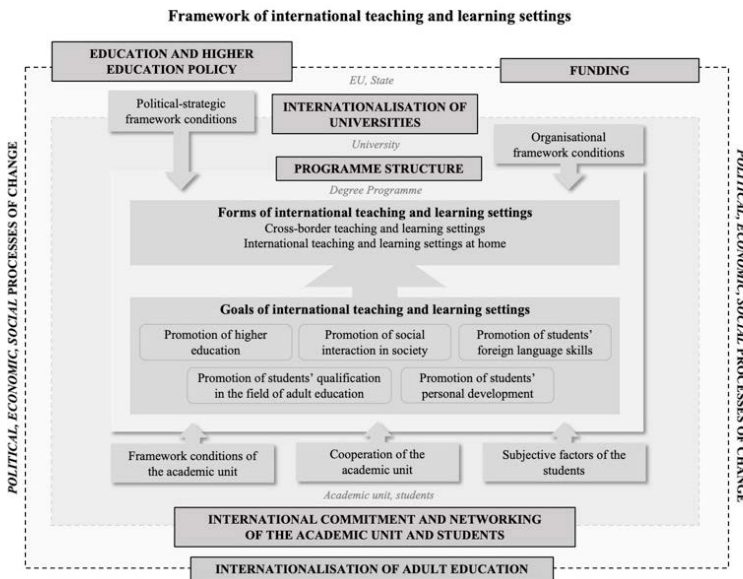


Figure 18 – Empirical model of the internationalisation of teaching and learning in adult education master’s programmes. Source: own representation.

At European and national level, **education and higher education policy** is significant for the internationalisation of the master's programmes. Here, being part of the European Higher Education Area appears to be essential. As highlighted in the master's programme in Belgrade, after the Serbian higher education system had been neglected and internationally isolated for some time, its orientation towards Europe has contributed to the internationalisation of the master's programme. With Serbia signing the Bologna Declaration in 2003 and introducing the three-cycle system (bachelor's, master's, doctorate) as well as joining the Erasmus programme, it appears that internationalisation in the master's programme takes place in a more systematic and structured way¹⁰. According to Allemann-Ghionda (2014), this suggests that the Bologna Process and its establishment of the European Higher Education Area are laying fundamental structures for the internationalisation of the master's programmes. This facilitates the compatibility of higher education systems and mobility within Europe. At the national level, the provision of international teaching and learning settings can also be shaped by the influence of education and higher education policy strategies and structures, whereby national differences can be referred to in this context (Chap. 2.7). As is evident at the University of Würzburg, performance agreements between the university and the educational ministry can have a guiding effect on the international orientation of the University of Würzburg, which in turn is reflected in the international teaching and learning settings offered in the master's programme. At the same time, national higher education policy can also restrain internationalisation, as can be seen in the context of the master's programme in Belgrade before the international orientation of the higher education policy in Serbia. Overall, it can be concluded that education and higher education policy at European and national level can have both an enabling and limiting effect on the internationalisation of the master's programmes.

Furthermore, the importance of **funding** at European and national level can be highlighted in the master's programmes. It can be argued that a large number of international teaching and learning settings (e.g. study abroad, seasonal schools, teaching of international guest lecturers) rely on financial support from the Erasmus programme and additional national funding programmes. These contribute to enabling student and staff mobility in and outside Europe. When comparing the three master's programmes, differences in the range of international teaching and learning settings become apparent (Chap. 5.1), which can be traced back to the affiliation of the countries and universities to the Erasmus programme. Using the example of internships abroad, it can be assumed that Serbia's participation in the Erasmus programme has prevented internships abroad from being organised in the master's programme in Belgrade. Serbia was only involved in the Erasmus programme as a partner country from 2015-19 and could therefore not make full use of all funding. In contrast, Germany

¹⁰ Germany and Italy were among the countries that conceived the idea of a European Higher Education Area and were among the first signatories of the Bologna Declaration in 1999.

and Italy have participated fully in all Erasmus funding schemes since its inception in 1987. This indicates that the Erasmus programme provides important funding for student and staff mobility in the master's programmes. According to Simoleit (2016), the Erasmus programme can be regarded as a standard feature of European universities. This impression is also conveyed in the three master's programmes. Funding from the Erasmus programme can be determined as a fundamental prerequisite for the organisation and implementation of different forms of international teaching and learning settings (e.g. study abroad, seasonal schools, presence of international students in teaching). Furthermore, national funds can also be utilised. In the master's programme in Würzburg, it is possible to refer to additional funding from the DAAD at the national level.

At the organisational level, the provision of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes is linked to the **internationalisation of universities**. The strategic orientation of the universities is simultaneously shaped by education and higher education policy and funding at European and national level (Marinoni 2019, 26; Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022, 91). The influence of national higher education policy on organisational structures can be illustrated, among other things, by performance agreements between the University of Würzburg and the Bavarian State Ministry of Education, Science, and the Arts, as referred to in the context of the master's programme in Würzburg. The findings also demonstrate that the forms and goals of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes can be interpreted against the background of the respective (internationalisation) strategies of the three universities. In this context, a higher education policy interest in specific international teaching and learning settings, in particular in the mobility of students, can be discerned. This may appear to imply a competition-oriented, economically driven understanding of internationalisation at the universities (de Wit 2019). The influence of the universities on the provision of international teaching and learning settings can in turn be perceived differently at the level of master's programmes. While the organisational framework conditions in Würzburg tend to be experienced as supportive, in Florence they are associated with obligatory requirements and challenges. This becomes clear, for instance, in the example of the international double degree programme offered in the master's programme in Florence. This may suggest that the provision of international teaching and learning settings at the organisational level can be constrained by certain factors. The internationalisation efforts of the universities seem to form an overarching framework for the internationalisation of the master's programmes through different regulations and resources (including personnel, funding).

At the level of the responsible academic units and students, the **international commitment and networking of the academic unit and students** characterise the internationalisation of master's programmes. With reference to the higher education discourse, the academic units and their networks are significantly involved in the internationalisation of teaching and learning (Simoleit 2016). This is also evident in each of the three master's programmes. The provision of international teaching and learning settings is decisively shaped by

the international commitment and networking of the academic units involved. This can be exemplified by the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Belgrade. Despite political challenges in the past, the Department has succeeded in continuously orienting itself internationally and thus promoting internationalisation in the master's programme. In addition, a high level of international cooperation can be identified in the three academic units. They actively cooperate within the framework of international university partnerships and international cooperation projects. The established networks of the academic units are perceived as beneficial and supportive with regard to the provision of international teaching and learning settings. For example, they facilitate the organisation of study abroad. In this context, personal and trusting contacts seem to exist between the academic units and the international cooperation partners. These contacts can be traced back to the long-standing and active participation of the academic units in the international academic community of adult education. In addition, it can be seen that the self-concept of students may have an effect on the international teaching and learning settings. As is evident in the master's programme in Würzburg, the international teaching and learning settings are orientated towards the needs and background of the students. This seems to be of particular importance, as students in the field of education show a rather reserved attitude towards international experience. This assumption can be supported by overall mobility figures of students in the field of education (OECD 2021, 217). In addition, it becomes apparent that student networking can help to promote international teaching and learning settings in the master's programme. As can be observed in the Belgrade master's programme, students are actively engaged in the application process for study abroad in order to share their international experience. This can be considered an effective strategy for developing student exchange (Egetenmeyer 2010a, 6). Consequently, a favourable and interested attitude of the students towards internationalisation seem to have a positive effect on the internationalisation of the master's programmes.

Furthermore, the internationalisation of master's programmes is to be understood against the background of the respective **programme structure**. Following the discourse on the internationalisation of higher education, differences in the internationalisation of teaching and learning need to be analysed against the background of the degree programmes, including the study field and study level (de Wit, Deca, and Hunter 2015, 6-7). When comparing the three master's programmes, it becomes clear that the integration of international perspectives into teaching and learning can vary depending on the scope of adult education in the programme. In the master's programme in Belgrade, it can be assumed that it is easier to include international topics and literature in the programme because there is more time and opportunity available. This is due to the fact that the master's programme in Belgrade focuses entirely on adult education. In contrast, it can be assumed that in the master's programmes in Würzburg and Florence, there is less time and opportunity available for the integration of international topics. This is because adult education is only a part of the master's

programme in the field of educational science. The smaller scope of courses and ECTS points related to adult education might hinder the integration of international topics into the master's programmes.

The **internationalisation of adult education** in academia, research, and practice represents another frame of reference for the internationalisation of the master's programmes. Based on the comparative analysis of the master's programmes, it can be assumed that with an increasing international orientation of the academic and research field of adult education, international and transnational topics are increasingly integrated into teaching and learning. This might be reflected in the master's programme in Belgrade where international topics and literature are embedded in the formal curriculum. In contrast, this would imply that a low international orientation in the academic and research field could lead to fewer international and transnational topics in the programmes. This relationship becomes clear when looking at adult education programmes in Germany. The institutionalisation and academisation of adult education has led to a decline in international perspectives in the academic field in Germany (Schmidt-Lauff and Egetenmeyer 2015, 277), which may still be reflected in today's programmes (Walber and Lobe 2018). At the same time, the data suggests that due to the fact that the Serbian-speaking area is relatively small, there is a greater need to include international literature in the master's programme. In contrast, because the German-speaking and Italian-speaking areas are larger, there might be more relevant literature available in the students' own language. These arguments illustrate that the subject discipline must also be considered in the internationalisation of teaching and learning (de Wit and Leask 2017, 347). Moreover, in view of the increasing interconnection of adult education with global and international developments, professionalisation requirements in adult education can be identified in the master's programmes. They are reflected in the goals of the international teaching and learning settings presented in Chap. 5.3. The international teaching and learning settings are intended, for instance, to contribute to broadening the students' perspectives and understanding of adult education. In addition, the internationalisation of the practice field has resulted in new demands on (future) adult educators, which require an adequate approach to the increasingly diverse target group in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130). Consequently, the provision of international teaching and learning settings is associated with professionalisation opportunities that are geared towards the development of students' professionalism and professionalisation in the field. In addition, the heterogeneity and diversity of the field of practice points to difficulties in organising internships abroad, as expressed in the context of the master's programme in Florence. The heterogeneity of adult education providers seems to make it difficult to find suitable internship providers abroad. Therefore, a stronger link between academia and practice may be sought in the international context.

Embedded in a larger context, the internationalisation of the master's programmes is also influenced by **political processes of change**. This is particularly evident with the master's programme in Belgrade. With the dissolution of

Yugoslavia, higher education policy in Serbia has been increasingly open to international and European contexts since 2000. The political upheavals are noticeable in the internationalisation of the master's programme. This indicates that the political situation of a country can have an effect on the internationalisation of degree programmes.

Likewise, the **economic situation** of a country with regard to the labour market can represent another influencing context. In the Italian labour market, for example, a low employment rate and mismatch between the qualifications required and the actual skills acquired by graduates can be observed (Boffo 2018; OECD 2019). The goal of promoting the foreign language skills of students in the master's programme in Florence could therefore be linked to the labour market situation in Italy.

Social processes of change are reflected in the increasingly diverse composition of society (e.g. due to migration, refugee movements). On the one hand, this development leads to an increasingly diverse composition of target groups in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130), which results in professionalisation requirements for adult educators (see above). On the other hand, an increasingly diverse composition of students in higher education can be observed (Allemann-Ghionda 2014), which places new demands on higher education teaching. Both developments are reflected in social-cultural and academic rationales for internationalisation.

In summary, it can be seen that the internationalisation of the three master's programmes develops in a complex interplay of different contexts. The complexity can be considered characteristic of the internationalisation of higher education (Egron-Polak and Marinoni 2022). In the three master's programmes, a diverse range of international teaching and learning settings is evident, which is shaped on the basis of education and higher education policy, funding, internationalisation of universities, international commitment and networking of academic unit and students, programme structures, and the internationalisation of adult education. These contexts are in turn embedded in a larger framework of political, economic, and social change processes. However, technological change processes (e.g. increased use of digital teaching and learning tools) that may be related to the internationalisation of teaching and learning (J. Knight 2008; Rumbley et al. 2022) are not referred to in the master's programme. This might have changed with the COVID-19 pandemic (for this, see Chap. 7.3). Finally, with the internationalisation of teaching and learning in the master's programmes, opportunities for the development of students' professionalism are highlighted. In the following, different possibilities for developing professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings are analysed from the perspective of graduates of the master's programmes.

Relevance of International Teaching and Learning Settings for the Development of Professionalism in Adult Education

Based on the previous explanations, it could already be pointed out at this stage that international teaching and learning settings can provide opportunities for the development of professionalism in adult education programmes. This is indicated both by the discourse on professionalisation in adult education and by the goals associated with the international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes (see Chap. 5.3). With the analysis of the interview data of the graduates of the three master's programmes, the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings is examined more closely. It is analysed how the international teaching and learning settings can support the development of graduates' professionalism. The focus of the analysis is on the individual level of academic professionalisation. It builds on the relevant heuristic model of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master's programmes (Fig. 9) developed in line with the theoretical assumptions. By interweaving the perspectives of the graduates of the three master's programmes, different ways of developing professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings are identified (Chap. 6.1). Focusing on the structural factors of the development of professionalism, it is possible to determine overarching factors in the international teaching and learning settings that support the development of graduates' professionalism (Chap. 6.2).

6.1 Development of Professionalism in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings

Following the heuristics (Chap. 3.4), different characteristics of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings can be distinguished. With reference to the available data, the characteristics could be used and adapted according to the perspectives of the graduates:

- Chap. 6.1.1 Acquisition of academic knowledge;
- Chap. 6.1.2 Acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice;
- Chap. 6.1.3 Development of reflective skills;
- Chap. 6.1.4 Development of a professional self-concept;
- Chap. 6.1.5 Personal development;
- Chap. 6.1.6 Development of foreign language skills.

In the three master's programmes, the participation of graduates in international teaching and learning settings reveals different ways of acquiring and developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The data illustrates how the development of graduates' professionalism unfolds in the context of international teaching and learning settings.

6.1.1 Acquisition of Academic Knowledge

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, different ways are identified that can contribute to the acquisition of academic knowledge. Academic knowledge is understood as empirically consolidated explanatory and interpretative knowledge anchored in the academic discourse (Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992; Gieseke 2018).

- a) *Dealing with new content in adult education;*
- b) *Dealing with education and adult education in different countries;*
- c) *Examining different perspectives on adult education;*
- d) *Addressing international comparative issues in adult education;*
- e) *Dealing with specific research methods;*
- f) *Dealing with one's own research topics;*
- g) *Dealing with one's own prior knowledge.*

a) *Dealing with new content in adult education*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates of the master's programmes can deal with new content in adult education.

I think it was the Erasmus stay that gave me [...] theoretical foundations. Who has already said something about deconstruction or deconstruction theories. [...] Because here in our [...] degree programme, there was not so much on offer in that direction thematically. That was definitely a very good addition (I 1.8, 78; study abroad).

[...] The topics were different. And that was for me really good because I could stand for another perspective, you know, and another topic and it was very interesting for me. And it really helped me a lot for my research that I did after [...] (I 2.1, 19; study abroad).

In the context of study abroad, the graduates attend courses at their host university that enable them to deal with new content in adult education. These contents differ from the content of their previous studies and complement the topics covered in their regular curriculum. The graduates can thus acquire academic knowledge, which leads to an expansion of their subject-specific knowledge. As outlined, this can open up additional theoretical perspectives on a topic relevant to the graduate's master's thesis.

Similar experiences are also highlighted in the context of a seasonal school.

[...] I had the possibility to learn about some topic on adult education that my university didn't teach me. So for example, we didn't have a course on sustainable and development goals. So this was a really good opportunity to learn about it (I 3.4, 29; seasonal school).

By participating in a seasonal school, the graduate deals with content in adult education that is not addressed in her studies at the home university. Encountering new content helps the graduate to broaden her academic foundation in adult education.

New subject-specific content becomes accessible to another graduate through courses taught by international guest lecturers.

[...] Well, I knew all the lecturers in Würzburg [...] and then to hear new perspectives. Because you often teach the same things in a different way in the master's programme, but you still touch on the same topics again. And because lecturers from other universities were there, you had the opportunity to learn something new [...] (I 1.4, 48; teaching of international guest lecturers).

The graduate experiences that the teaching of international guest lecturers enables the examination of new content in adult education which differs from the content taught by her own lecturers at the university. In this way, the graduate is able to expand her academic knowledge.

Furthermore, interaction with international students can provide possibilities to deal with initially unknown content in adult education.

[...] a lot of times when me, @Student B from Belgrade@ and you sit together [...] If I talk with you about what are you doing for your PhD and what I'm doing, that's a learning process. I'm really learning about what you're doing and then you can open my interest for different topics. [...] every conversation between three of us, [...] is the example of that andragogy learning process [...] (I 2.5, 84; presence of international students in teaching).

The direct approach of 'You' in the text excerpt addresses the researcher, who herself completed a stay abroad as a master's student at the University of

Belgrade. In this situation, the interviewed graduate of the master's programme in Belgrade refers to the academic exchange between herself and the researcher and other students at the University of Belgrade, which led to an examination of new content of adult education.

As the data shows, both in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings and in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home, graduates can encounter new subject-specific content that differs from the content already known from their previous studies. In summary, the confrontation with new content in adult education can enable graduates to acquire academic knowledge that complements their existing body of knowledge.

b) Dealing with education and adult education in different countries

In the master's programmes, graduates can deal with education and adult education in different countries in the context of international teaching and learning settings.

There, we talked about, for example, what the education systems are like in the learning groups. [...] And that was actually always quite exciting to see how it is with them, how it is somehow handled in other countries, the education system for example (I 1.8, 25; study abroad).

So I know that I found it exciting the exchange, how school systems [...] and learning takes place and looks like in other countries. That was [...] a big part of the Winter School. [...] To get that in direct exchange with the people from the respective country than perhaps only [...] to hear it in a lecture from a German professor or lecturer. It's quite different, yes, to get an impression through reports from the other countries (I 1.6, 59; seasonal school).

During a study abroad and a seasonal school, graduates interact with people from other countries about different aspects of education and adult education in the respective countries. The personal interaction and communication with people are perceived to be an essential prerequisite in both teaching and learning settings. In this way, the graduates can acquire knowledge about education and adult education in other countries as the international exchange enables them to gain first-hand insights. This would only be possible to a limited extent through teaching by lecturers from their own university.

In addition, participation in an internship abroad offers the opportunity to take a closer look at adult education in other countries.

[...] I have the opportunity also to make lots of interviews at the association that works in adult education in other countries, in all countries of Europe, and to collect a lot of data about adult education in all countries of Europe. [...] I understand that [...] there are some countries that had, for example, a very important law that helps adult education [...] (I 3.5, 27; internship abroad).

The interviewed graduate gains in-depth insights into different national structures of adult education by conducting interviews and collecting data during her

internship abroad. The specific activity during her internship seems to enable the graduate to deal with different aspects of adult education in other countries. This supports the graduate to acquire academic knowledge.

In addition, insights into the structures of education and adult education in other countries can be gained through the teaching of international guest lecturers.

[...] There were various Indian guest professors who gave lectures on important topics. For example, on the topic of women's education in India, on the topic of lifelong learning in India. So you got an overview even before you went into the country. What are the current trends and, yes, how is it going with women's education, the role of women in India. What is lifelong learning in India (I 1.1, 58; teaching of international guest lecturers).

During her studies, guest lecturers from India introduce the graduate to topics related to education and adult education in India. In view of the graduate's stay abroad in India, this is experienced as conducive as the graduate becomes familiar with relevant topics in advance. The teaching of the international guest lecturers therefore supports the acquisition of a basic knowledge about education and adult education in the respective country.

Furthermore, the data reveals that the presence of international students in teaching can further contribute to dealing with education and adult learning in other countries.

[...] I think then you can learn a lot about, for example, in andragogy in Germany. What is it that you are doing? What are the opportunities there? [...] where you are on some like popular topics in our sphere. [...] you really have insight into some different educational system into some different country, which you can't get without actually meeting people from there (I 2.5, 74; presence of international students in teaching).

When interacting with international students at the home university, the graduate gains insights into the academic and practice field of adult education in other countries. These insights would remain closed without this personal contact. Therefore, it is apparent that interaction and communication with international students can offer opportunities to deal with education and adult education in other countries, which can ultimately lead to the acquisition of associated knowledge.

The data shows that graduates of the three master's programmes are able to engage with education and adult education in other countries in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings as well as international teaching and learning settings at home. In these, the graduates can acquire academic knowledge in relation to education and adult education in other countries. In the data, personal interaction and communication with people from the respective countries are highlighted as being particularly beneficial.

c) *Examining different perspectives on adult education*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates of the master's programmes can examine different perspectives on adult education, which contribute to an expansion of their academic knowledge.

[...] I got a lot of different perspectives on the field of adult education. [...] Because we are here in Serbia [...] we are really specified just [...] for andragogy, not for adult education actually. [...] I think it's a bit broader, the perspective that I learned in Germany [...] (I 2.1, 48; study abroad).

The interviewed graduate becomes acquainted with different perspectives on adult education during her study abroad. By examining different perspectives, she records differences in the basic understanding of adult education across countries. This supports the graduate's acquisition of a differentiated knowledge on adult education.

By participating in seasonal schools, graduates can also learn about different perspectives on adult education topics.

[...] as far as the topic of terminology is concerned. It came out relatively early and quickly that it is difficult to translate many terms from adult education in such a way that they are understandable for everyone. [...] And it quickly became clear that at the beginning we first had to clarify the terms or discuss them a bit, agree on what we are actually talking about, do we all have the same views on the topic, on the term [...] (I 1.3, 28; seasonal school).

It was a great, let's say, example, a great way to understand a bit more about the educational field from this different point of view and with different point of view, I mean from the perspective of guys from other countries (I 3.2, 35; seasonal school).

Through the academic exchange with participants of the seasonal schools, the graduates deal with different perspectives on subject-related topics that were previously unknown to them. In addition, the participants can enter into a process of understanding differently used terminology, which can contribute to developing knowledge about different conceptual understandings in adult education. As becomes clear, encountering different perspectives in the framework of seasonal schools enables the expansion of the graduates' academic foundation and support the formation of a differentiated knowledge of adult education.

In addition, different perspectives on adult education can be examined in the context of teaching by international guest lecturers.

R: [...] as in every seminar, it simply helped me to think deeply about a topic and to look at it from different perspectives. [...] to realise that things are not what they seem at first glance. But when I look at them from different perspectives, more and more facets are added. [...]

[...]

I: The international seminars or all seminars in general?

R: Generally all seminars, I would say. Maybe more so in the international area [...] when you really only have one topic and you look at it from different, let's say, cultural glasses, you see more of this effect, 'Wow, we're all talking about the same topic, but somehow we're not.' Yes (I 1.5, 132-36; teaching of international guest lecturers).

By participating in courses taught by international guest lecturers, described here as 'international seminars', the graduate explores different ways of seeing and thinking about a subject. While it is mentioned that courses that are not taught by international guest lecturers can also provide this opportunity, the internationally oriented courses seem to increase the diversity of perspectives. This statement, however, is to be viewed with reservation. It may be assumed that the graduate feels prompted in the context of the interview to emphasise that the courses of international guest lecturers have a stronger impact than the regularly attended courses of her studies. The graduate's statement could indicate social desirability.

Furthermore, graduates report exploring different perspectives related to the integration of international topics into teaching.

[...] I'm mainly aiming at this seminar with @Professor S from Germany@. He asked a lot of political questions or also about, yes, international trade relations and yes, how do people from other countries see certain topics in Germany. Exactly, so that already supported me, this background knowledge simply supported me in approaching people with the right tact (I 1.1, 54; international topics in teaching).

The graduate of the University of Würzburg refers to a course taught by a German guest lecturer. In the course, the lecturer encourages students to take different perspectives on international topics. This contributes to the formation of academic knowledge, which the graduate experiences as useful in practice when interacting with people.

In addition, participation in international conferences and workshops can contribute to gaining different perspectives and views on certain topics in adult education. This is supported by academic exchange with participants in international conferences and workshops.

[...] I was working at NGO at the same time during my master's studies. And for that, I used my international experience a lot because I deal with adult learning festivals. And every time when I was on some conferences or some workshops, I met with people who had experience or have some knowledge about adult learning festivals from different countries. [...] I can learn from experiences or get some information how they overcome some challenges [...] (I 2.8, 66; international conferences or workshops abroad/at home university).

Without elaborating on whether the international conferences took place abroad or at the home university, it becomes clear that the graduate's participation contributed to developing differentiated knowledge on a concrete topic.

For the interviewed graduate, encountering different perspectives on adult education took on particular relevance for his occupational work during the master's programme. Interaction with conference participants revealed different perspectives and experiences on some concrete, vocationally relevant topics.

With the participation of graduates in international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home), it is evident that international encounters with lecturers, students, and other participants in the programmes can contribute to a deeper engagement with different perspectives and understandings in relation to adult education. These international exchanges can lead to an expansion of academic knowledge among graduates. As it is evident from the data, graduates can particularly become aware of terminological differences in the context of seasonal schools.

d) Addressing international comparative issues in adult education

By participating in international teaching and learning settings, graduates can not only gain insights into adult education in other countries and get to know different perspectives on adult education, but also deal with topics of adult education in an international comparative way.

[...] I understand that, for example, there are some countries that had, for example, a very important law that helps adult education. [...] And so I had the opportunity to look at the differences that there are, for example, for Norway or Sweden that spent a lot for adult education, and other country, like for example, Italy, Greece, that spent not a lot for (laughing) adult education [...] (I 3.5, 27; internship abroad).

In the context of an internship abroad, besides dealing with education and adult education in different countries (see. Chap. 6.1.1-b.), the graduate addresses these topics by way of international comparison. This seems to be stimulated again by the specific activity of the graduate during her internship. By comparing the different country perspectives, the graduate identifies differences between the countries, which enable a broader view and knowledge regarding adult education. The accuracy of the acquired knowledge expressed in the text passage is not questioned at this point.

Among the graduates, an international comparative examination of adult education is also evident in the context of seasonal schools.

And of course the comparison is also very exciting, professionally, because you can also see what is going well in Germany, for example, on the topic of adult education. I was in a group that was specifically concerned with learning festivals [...] and there were already more initiatives in other European countries than in Germany. [...] it was simply exciting to see and hear about best practice examples (I 1.1, 38; seasonal school).

The participation in the described seasonal school enables the graduate to deal with topics of adult education by way of international comparison. The participants of the seasonal schools are instructed in group work to adopt an

international comparative perspective on topics in adult education. Using the example of the topic 'learning festivals', it is described that within the framework of the group work, similarities and differences between the countries could be identified, which made it possible to learn additional perspectives on the topic. Another graduate emphasises that the comparative examination of topics in adult education is supported by self-directed learning processes in the seasonal school.

[...] the groups had its own topic [...] and it was up to us who were there from different countries to get our each country's approach on the topic. [...] So it was up to me to begin the topic, to find my own materials, to form my own opinions on the matter, pros and cons. Then to the discussion with other people and other people's countries. [...] So I find that type of learning very strong. Because [...] you have to generate it yourself. [...] Then each time you're confronted with someone else's country, you come up with the differences and similarities [...]. It just makes it easier to remember [...] because you have a live example to connect to it. For example, I still remember the learning library from Hungary because I had two people from Hungary talking about it [...] It's like [...] a live learning basically [...] (I 2.6, 49; seasonal school).

The comparative group work during the seasonal school requires the participants to familiarise themselves with the underlying topic in a self-directed and planned manner. This is perceived by the graduate as a very effective form of learning. Subsequently, the topics worked on are compared across other countries. The international comparative approach is experienced as a practical way of learning, described here as «live learning», because people from the respective countries are involved in the comparison. This seems to particularly support the acquisition of knowledge about adult education in other countries.

In the context of teaching by international guest lecturers at the home university, graduates can also address international comparative issues in adult education.

[...] two or three occasions in which one professor from another country illustrated to us the [...] study programme of their country in adult education. And we take to [...] discover the difference between the two programmes (I 3.3, 57; teaching of international guest lecturers).

[...] we discuss only about adult education, the programme of their courses, and about some books we had read for the exam. And we discussed about these books. And we tried [...] to discover the difference of the programme. Perhaps, we had read one title and one writer and they instead not [...] (I 3.3, 63; teaching of international guest lecturers).

As described in the text passages, the interviewed graduate compares the content and academic literature of her own master's programme with the content and literature of programmes presented by international guest lecturers. Through the international comparative perspective of the lectures, differences

in the field of academic adult education can be established, whereby new perspectives on adult education can be developed. This may result in the acquisition of academic knowledge.

In the context of different international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home), graduates of the master's programmes can deal with topics of adult education in an international comparative way. The international comparative perspective can support graduates in broadening and deepening their academic foundations in adult education. As can be seen from the experiences of the graduates, the specific teaching and learning content, the didactic setting, and the interaction with people from the respective countries seem to contribute to the international comparative examination in the context of the international teaching and learning settings.

e) Dealing with specific research methods

In the context of seasonal schools, graduates can deal with specific research methods.

In any case, how [...] this ensemble from different universities compares. [...] it is about comparative adult education and [...] to what extent the concept that these universities [...] have worked out is understood and can be applied. And that [...] you don't just have it in theory and read a text on comparative adult education, but that you can also apply it immediately with the various steps [...] (I 1.8, 54; seasonal school).

The graduate engages with an international comparative research approach in adult education, which is taught in a seasonal school. By taking part in the programme, the approach of international comparative research in adult education can not only be learned theoretically, but also tested practically. This seems to support developing a deeper understanding and knowledge of the use and application of international comparative research in adult education. Similar experiences can be observed in relation to another seasonal school.

[...] an adult educator needs to know how to manage a focus group. So during the Summer School, I learned in the workshop how to manage it [...] (I 3.4, 37).

As described, the graduate participates in a seasonal school which offers workshops on organising and conducting focus groups. As indicated by the expression «how to manage it», it can be assumed that the seasonal school not only enables theoretical discussion but also practical experiences. This might support the learning process. Knowledge on the use of focus groups is considered by the graduate to be relevant for working in the field of adult education.

In the context of different seasonal schools, graduates can deal with specific research methods. This enables the graduates to acquire knowledge of research methods in educational and social research. From the data, it becomes clear that the content of the seasonal schools, which includes practise elements, contributes to graduates' engagement with research methods.

f) Dealing with one's own research topics

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can deal with their own research topics.

R: Yes, in general I am a bit active in the field of critical adult education [...]. And I found the modules and the events I attended very important and enlightening [...]. Yes, because I think that they are topics that are perhaps also relevant for me, because I am now or will be in research.

I: How relevant?

R: That I already know what is going on in the research field, what topics the researchers are also dealing with internationally. That you don't somehow stay in your citation circle but have already got to know another circle [...] (I 1.8, 38-40; study abroad).

Participating in study abroad allows the graduate to gain new perspectives on topics relevant to her own research interest. The graduate can expand her existing academic knowledge on the research relevant topics through thematically appropriate courses, which allow her to include international perspectives. This results in a deeper understanding of the research field. As emphasised by the graduate, a differentiated knowledge of her research interest can be seen as particularly relevant for a (future) research activity in the academic field.

Participation in an internship abroad can also support dealing with one's own research topics, which contributes to broadening the graduates' academic foundation.

[...] when I came back and when I started to work on my thesis, I actually really started to change a perspective and to try to think about things on a different way and trying to take into account a lot of different aspects. [...] My topic was Quality in, let's say, Vocational Education and Training for the Adults [...] I also met one lady from India that was just for the topic of quality in adult education which was for me, perfect. She gave me a lot of information and a lot of books [...] My actions really helped me a lot to change my perspective and to change my theoretical part of the research [...] (I 2.1, 62; internship abroad).

In the context of an internship abroad, the interviewed graduate comes into contact with a person who brings expertise in the research topic the graduate is working on as part of her master's thesis. This provides the graduate with complementary theoretical perspectives and recommendations for literature relevant to her research. In this way, she can engage more deeply with the topic of her master's thesis, which is seen as conducive.

Another graduate outlines that he explores subject-relevant content and perspectives for his own master's thesis at an international conference abroad.

But for my master, I do research, comparative research about adult learning festivals [...]. And then present the part of my master's thesis in [...] conference in Slovenia about community learning in Ljubljana. And also participating in some lectures and workshops within this conference. Yes, this was a regular

scientific conference with some additional activities [...] organised visits to community-based learning actions or communities or groups who worked with this. [...] I had opportunity to meet with colleagues who provide me enough information for research and with whom I did interviews and all of this research for master's degree (I 2.8, 25; international conferences or workshops abroad).

The graduate is actively involved in a conference abroad with his own contribution. In addition, he engages with content and perspectives relevant to his research by attending various parts of the conference programme and exchanging ideas with participants. In this way, the graduate is able to deal intensively with his own research topics and expand his academic knowledge in his research field.

The data shows that graduates can engage with their own research topics in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings. This presupposes that the teaching and learning content in the international teaching and learning settings correspond to the graduates' own research interest. Dealing with one's own research topics can contribute to a broadening and deepening of the academic foundations. This may be relevant for the graduates' research in the context of their master's thesis.

g) Dealing with one's own prior knowledge

For another graduate, participation in study abroad can facilitate dealing with her own prior knowledge. This helps to deepen her academic foundations.

[...] what I also found quite nice was that you can also apply what you learned in the master's and bachelor's programmes here in Würzburg and that some of the theories [...] overlap and you can also support each other [...] (I 1.8, 26; study abroad).

And in the other module [...] it was also about a theory that we already had in Würzburg, about disturbances and subversive action [...] And then we had a session about it and then I could try out or apply my knowledge again in English and also explain again somehow in a group what I already know [...] (I 1.8, 36; study abroad).

As the text passages make clear, in the context of studying abroad, the interviewed graduate is encouraged to regain awareness and understanding of the academic knowledge acquired during her own studies. By interacting with the students on site, she can once again deal with her own knowledge and pass on existing knowledge in English to the other students of the study abroad. Through the repetition and translation of the prior knowledge into another context, it is possible for the graduate to re-engage with her existing academic knowledge. This can contribute to a consolidation of knowledge.

The data indicates that appropriate framework conditions must be in place to enable students to engage with their prior knowledge. These can be identified in the existing academic knowledge on the part of the graduate as well as in the corresponding didactic setting of the attended courses during the study

abroad, which promote dialogue and exchange among students. The confrontation with one's own prior knowledge can ultimately contribute to a consolidation and deepening of academic knowledge.

6.1.2 Acquisition of Knowledge Relevant to Pedagogical Practice

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can acquire knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice. This knowledge is not empirically anchored but based on graduates' experiences from their studies. It is geared towards working in pedagogical practice and serves as experiential and orientational knowledge. In contrast to practical action knowledge (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992), which has been operationalised on the basis of the academic discourse in relation to the development of professionalism, it is not acquired directly in practical action. Likewise, it is less strongly oriented towards coping with concrete demands for action in the field of practice. In the data, the following ways of acquiring knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice are distinguished.

- a) *Engaging with different teaching and learning methods;*
- b) *Engaging with different patterns of communication and interaction between teachers and learners;*
- c) *Engaging with (adult) education practice in other countries;*
- d) *Engaging with the field of teaching;*
- e) *Engaging with international project work.*

a) *Engaging with different teaching and learning methods*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates of the master's programmes can engage with different teaching and learning methods.

[...] Classes in Serbia work that way. You come to class [...]. You have a topic for that day. And you would listen to your professor. [...] It's very, very, very analytical [...] Whereas in Würzburg [...] we were taught by @Professor K from Denmark@ [...] he had that way of putting us into little discussion groups. And it was interesting to me to see the approach that students would discuss the subject with one another [...]. But later on, I felt like it's not giving me something. [...] It's just for me, individually, I don't think it was the right thing for me. [...] It's very, very hard guiding a class where you have people who love group work and where you have people who are, say, loners when they approach learning. [...] To be a really good teacher, it takes to sense when you can do group work, where you should let people to do their own thing [...] (I2.3, 62; study abroad).

During her studies abroad, the graduate experiences a methodological-didactic approach when taught by an international guest lecturer, which differs from the approaches she is used to at her home university. Based on the experienced differences in teaching and learning methods, the graduate enters into a self-reflective discussion regarding the possibilities and limits of using different

methods in teaching and learning processes. Based on her own experiences, the graduate recognises the difficulty of aligning the use of teaching and learning methods with the preferences and learning types of the participants. This suggests that the graduate acquires practice-related knowledge on different teaching and learning methods and their application in teaching and learning settings.

It is also emphasised that graduates engage with different teaching and learning methods in the context of seasonal schools.

[...] the very first take-away from this Winter School was the fact that there I understood that there aren't just frontal lessons but very different methodology of teaching and learning. Because, you know, here in Italy, [...] we just do frontal lessons, in general. And so I [...] watched so many kind of them [...] (I 3.2, 41; seasonal school).

But also understand that my point of view on methodology of education are just connected with my culture. And every different culture has its own way. I remember how lessons were with dance. It was from guys from Africa. Or also have other more structured [...] my main take-aways maybe are not just about notion, principles, theory but [...] the methodology or some reflection about what I've done there, what I've seen and listened to (I 3.2, 46; seasonal school).

By taking part in a seasonal school, the interviewed graduate is confronted with teaching and learning methods that differ from the teaching and learning methods known from his regular studies at the home university. This enables the graduate to acquire knowledge of different teaching and learning methods. In addition, the international context of the seasonal school makes it possible to reflect on and learn to understand the use of teaching and learning methods against the different backgrounds of teachers and students. This can also facilitate awareness of one's own learning cultural experiences. As a result, the graduate acquires practice-related knowledge regarding methodology and didactics in adult education.

In addition, the teaching of international guest lecturers can provide possibilities to engage with different teaching and learning methods.

R: [...] So in the form of presentations, a lecture, a performance, I think that was a regular part of my studies, but I actively involve a group using methods and activate participants, not only with a discussion, but through other methods, be it perhaps also an activation exercise, etcetera, that is what I experienced there very much.

I: Do you remember a more concrete example?

R: So on the subject of a really physically activating method, I know that we did a movement exercise as an activator after a possible break. [...] How do I get people involved [...] without maybe [...]. That it's now just such a pretending, imitating and maybe you don't feel comfortable [...] (I 1.6, 47-49; teaching of international guest lecturers).

In the course described, activating methods that are less familiar to the graduate from her previous studies are integrated into the course in addition to the teaching and learning methods she is familiar with. The graduate considers the activating methods as relevant for teaching situations in which the participation of the group is to be increased. By dealing with the teaching and learning methods experienced in the course, the graduate is able to acquire knowledge about different activating teaching and learning methods and their possible applications.

The data shows that, in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings as well as in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home, graduates are able to engage with a range of teaching and learning methods that differ from previous experiences during their studies. The international context of the teaching and learning settings seems to contribute in particular to reflecting on the use of teaching and learning methods against the background of the participants. This enable the graduates to acquire knowledge regarding didactic and methodological issues in adult education that is relevant for the pedagogical practice.

b) Engaging with different patterns of communication and interaction between teachers and learners

Participation in international teaching and learning settings enables graduates to engage with different patterns of communication and interaction between teachers and learners.

And also, one thing that was really important for me [...] the relation that we have with the professors because in Italy [...]. There is distance between professor and students. In Germany, there is no distance between professor and students. And I think that this is really, really important because the students feel more comfortable. And I think that this is really important because the students can learn better and have more motivation. And I feel this because when I was in Germany, [...] I have a little bit more motivation to discover new aspects [...] and speak with the professor [...] (I 3.6, 47; study abroad).

During a study period abroad, the interviewed graduate experiences and differentiates between different types of communication and interaction between lecturers and students. The graduate perceives the close contact between lecturers and students, which is not familiar to her from her own studies, as pleasant and conducive to learning. From her own experience, she derives general assumptions about suitable ways of communication and interaction in teaching and learning processes. For example, the importance of a trusting, close relationship between teachers and learners is emphasised. This indicates that the graduate acquires practice-related knowledge regarding different communication and interaction patterns and their importance in teaching and learning processes in the context of studying abroad.

Different patterns of communication and interaction between lecturers and students can also be addressed in the context of a seasonal school.

[...] And the relationship between students and their lecturers is not the same everywhere. For example, I found the Hungarian somehow in terms of his moderation or the way he held his lecture, quite different from a @Professor H from Portugal@, who was very approachable to the students. And Italy is something completely different anyway (laughing). That was my impression at the Winter School. So everything seemed very, very formalised to me. [...] Much less informal than how we dealt with our lecturers. Yes (I 1.7, 40; seasonal school).

By participating in a seasonal school, the graduate perceives differences in communication and interaction between lecturers and students. This allows the graduate to conclude country-specific differences. For example, she differentiates the degree of formalisation of contact between lecturers and students between countries. However, these subjective assumptions must be viewed critically as the graduate's experience may have led to truncated conclusions.

Furthermore, with the teaching of international guest lecturers, different types of communication and interaction between lecturers and students can be experienced and differentiated, which differ from the previous experiences gained during studies.

R: [...] the different teaching approaches of the lecturers and professors. So you noticed very strongly that there is simply a bit of a divergence. [...] For example, the professor from the USA had a completely different approach to dealing with students. For example, he was on a more personal level with the students, much closer or more intimate, and accordingly structured the whole seminar differently. So that was very interactive. [...]

I: And how was that for you?

R: [...] you simply looked beyond your own plate a bit. In terms of methodology, of course, but also in terms of the interaction between professor and students. That it can also simply look different [...] (I 1.3, 41-43; teaching of international guest lecturers).

In the context of teaching of international guest lecturers, the graduate develops an understanding that interactions in teaching-learning processes can take different forms. This goes hand in hand with methodological-didactic consequences. It becomes clear that dealing with different communication and interaction patterns between teachers and learners can contribute to the development of knowledge regarding different communication and interaction patterns in teaching and learning processes. Teachers may take on different roles.

Participation in international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home) enables graduates to engage with different types of communication and interaction in the relationship between teachers and learners. This may be in contrast to the previous learning cultural experiences from their studies. As a result, graduates can acquire knowledge about different patterns of communication and interaction in teaching and learning processes which are relevant to the pedagogical practice.

c) *Engaging with (adult) education practice in other countries*

Graduates can engage with education and adult education practice in another country in the context of a study abroad.

So what I was able to take away for myself is this India competence and yes, to get an insight into this Indian culture, because I was there myself and saw how the university system works there, what are the current topics in this area [...] (I 1.1, 32; study abroad).

[...] how learning is practised in the countries is something I would perhaps take with me. [...] And yes, that is for me when I conceptualise something or when it says 'Yes, please, we now need a customised training for Indians' [...]. That I then simply know that you have to start at a different level [...] That you have simply got a feeling for it. In relation to India, for example, because I was also there, at what level can I start there [...] (I 1.1, 71; study abroad).

During her study abroad in India, the interviewed graduate gains practical insights into the field of education and adult education in India. Based on her experiences, she develops her own image and understanding of education and adult education in the Indian context. This is transferred into a practice-related knowledge of education and adult education in India, which is evident in the expression «got a feeling for it». The graduate considers this knowledge to be relevant to her future work. She outlines that, based on her prior assumptions, she is able to design teaching and learning processes which are oriented towards the participants. At this point, however, it is not expressed whether the graduate critically questions her own subjective assumptions for false conclusions and developed stereotypes.

Another graduate also reports that participating in a study abroad provides opportunities to engage with education and adult education practices in another country.

R: [...] you always hear or learn about Finnish educational system and this exchange was opportunity for me to be part of it. To be the student in that educational system, then to be a visitor of a lot of different schools. [...] I had the opportunity to feel it in the first hand.

I: What did you [...] take away from being part of the education system?

R: [...] When I was at home, we always like learned something theoretically [...] In Serbia, we are in a position to think about educational system and to see what theoretical is the best and to try to make our educational system better but you don't have opportunity to really feel those things that you're learning. When I was there, I had opportunity to actually feel it, to see it, to experience it. [...] the biggest realisation was that it's not just about system, it's about people and the social values. Because when you're talking with those people, with the Finnish people, you really see that they really see education as a value [...] (I 2.5, 38-40; study abroad).

During her study abroad, the interviewed graduate engages with the education system of the host country by experiencing the education system for herself. In addition, she gains practical insights by field visits to different institutions (e.g. schools) in the country. The practical insights and experiences help the graduate relate her theoretical knowledge acquired at the home university to the practical insights gained during her study abroad. In this way, she recognises what is special about the local education system and develops a deeper understanding of the practice field of the host country.

It can be concluded from the data that participation in study abroad can help graduates engage with the education and adult education practice of other countries. By gaining practical insights and experiences in the host country, graduates can acquire knowledge which is related to the education and adult education practice in the respective country. This knowledge is not acquired academically and is therefore based on the subjective perception of the graduates.

d) Engaging with the field of teaching

The teaching of international guest lecturers can enable graduates to engage with the field of teaching in a practical way.

[...] The seminar particularly stuck with me. [...] It was about microteaching. So we conducted small teaching units, teaching-learning units, where we had the seminar from an international professor as a block event and we were really actively asked in small groups to develop and carry out sequences. [...] we were able to get into the practical implementation and reflect on it again [...] (I 1.6, 41; teaching of international guest lecturers).

So for me the benefit is that I got an idea for the first time, ah okay, if I am perhaps in a teaching or lecturer role, which does not necessarily have to be the result of such a master's degree, but in pedagogical sequences, I think, could be in demand in every role. [...] Once from the conceptual point of view and also the implementation and then received feedback on that. Which I think gives a bit of security, a feeling of how something like this could look later on. Yes (I 1.6, 43; teaching international guest lecturer).

Within the framework of the course described above, which is delivered by an international guest lecturer, the participants of the course are invited to engage in practical trials. They can experiment in the role of a lecturer and develop and implement their own teaching units. The development and implementation of the teaching units are accompanied by reflections and feedback in the course. In this way, the course provides space for the graduate to gain initial practical experience in the field of teaching. Through the reflective examination of her practical experiences, the graduate can develop knowledge related to the development and implementation of teaching and learning processes. The graduate considers this practice-related knowledge to be significant for any pedagogical activity.

The explanations suggest that the specific content and didactic structure of the course offered by an international guest lecturer enables the interviewed

graduate to engage in the practical examination of the field of teaching. This can lead to the acquisition of practice-related knowledge about the organisation of teaching and learning processes.

e) Engaging with international project work

In a seasonal school, a graduate can engage with international project work in a practical way.

But for me, it was really great experience working with colleagues on this like final project [...]. Because we wrote something which is like [...] some proposals for future project. [...] it was really unique experience to work with international team on developing some idea from the scratch and developing some project idea through small research and collecting data, which is now I think the key competence if you are working in adult education [...] (I 2.8, 35; seasonal school).

Within the framework of the seasonal school described above, the interviewed graduate gains experience in the development and implementation of international project work. The seasonal school gives him the opportunity, for example, to practise writing project proposals. By dealing with international project work in a practical way, he can acquire practice-related knowledge regarding the application of project proposals and the development of project ideas. The knowledge developed on the basis of his own practical experience is considered by the interviewee to be an important basis for working in the field of adult education.

Based on the above, it can be assumed that the seasonal school, through its thematic focus and specific didactic structure, provides a field for practical experience, in which participants can gain experiential knowledge regarding the development and implementation of international project work.

6.1.3 Development of Reflective Skills

Graduates can acquire reflective skills in the context of international teaching and learning settings. The development of reflective skills, including self-reflective skills, supports the critical examination of theory and practice as well as the handling of contradictions in the field of practice (Dewe 2002; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Pachner 2013, 2018). The development of reflective skills is identified in the data in the following way.

a) Dealing reflectively with one's own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting

a) Dealing reflectively with one's own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can reflectively deal with their own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting.

[...] But I mean this way of thinking about [...] the cultures, of course, about Israeli or Palestinians. Which before, where I thought 'Oh, this is going to be difficult. This is this conflict.' And then I simply got to know a lot more and was able to acquire a better way of thinking. I also had a long discussion with a student who wanted to give me a lot of advice because he thought that the image is often wrong. And then I thought, well, that changes again, that you listen to different sides and, yes, somehow acquire a reflected view of the facts or so. Yes, and this, well, way of thinking is perhaps the wrong word, but that one thinks about things in a more reflective way (I 1.4, 125; study abroad).

During a semester abroad, the interviewed graduate experiences different ways of thinking and seeing in relation to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, which can be noticed at the host university. By interacting with people on site, the graduate undergoes a change of perspectives that stimulates a reflective examination of her own ways of thinking and seeing. The reflective view and attitude developed in this way also persists beyond the study abroad, as expressed by the graduate.

Furthermore, when interacting with the international participants of a seasonal school, a reflective examination of one's own and others' ways of thinking, seeing, and acting becomes clear.

[...] I also found the cultural programme or accompanying programme great. Because you simply learned to appreciate your own environment or culture by seeing how exciting it is for the other students. Also a, yes, self-reflection simply of one's own culture [...] (I 1.1, 39; seasonal school).

[...] What I take away from it is that you spend ten or fourteen days [...] in exchange, both in formal and informal situations. [...] That this exchange is good. An understanding for the other, yes, countries/ [...] That was already something exciting and thrilling, because you somehow translate all the German thoughts again, break them down, simply reflect on them (I 1.6, 73; seasonal school).

In the context of a seasonal school, the graduates experience different ways of thinking, seeing, and acting among the participants. This encourages them to reflect on their own perspectives and profiles as well as the circumstances they are used to in everyday life. This can make it possible to develop an understanding for the other participants. As a result, the graduates seem to be able to develop reflective skills by dealing reflectively with different perspectives of the participants.

In addition, assisting in international teaching and learning settings at the home university can contribute to a reflective examination of one's own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting.

It showed how much is actually not self-evident in our everyday life. [...] For us, everything here is everyday life. And then a guest lecturer asks, for example, what you can do with a broken computer. [...] Or when I picked up the Chinese

lecturer [...] from the station. [...] he was completely shocked that there are only 90-centimetre beds here [...] (I 1.7, 76; assisting in an international teaching and learning setting at the home university).

So it was precisely the Indian students who appreciated it quite differently when they received this scholarship for Germany. [...] That in turn showed me that my situation is very privileged, in which I find myself in here [...] (I 1.7, 89; assisting in an international teaching and learning setting at the home university).

As shown in the text passages, the graduate begins to critically question her own, previously unexamined interpretive structures as well as realities in everyday life through her cooperation with international guest lecturers and students. By dealing with other's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting, she comes to reflect on her own ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. This is illustrated by the graduate through various examples that she experienced during her assistant job in the context of international teaching and learning settings. The reflective confrontation ultimately points to the development of reflective skills.

In the data, it can be observed that graduates in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings and in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home can come into a reflective examination of their own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. This is facilitated by international contacts and exchange with students and lecturers and supports the development of reflective skills.

6.1.4 Development of a Professional Self-concept

The participation of graduates in international teaching and learning settings can support the development of a professional self-concept. This can be achieved by addressing one's own understanding of adult education, role, tasks, and functions, as well as professional ethics (Hartig 2009; Schmidt-Lauff and Gieseke 2014; Benz-Gydat 2017; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). The following ways of developing a professional self-concept are defined in the data:

- a) *Considering adult education in an international context;*
- b) *Becoming familiar with the occupational field of adult education;*
- c) *Reflecting on one's own subject-specific interest;*
- d) *Reflecting on one's own approach to diversity among participants.*

a) *Considering adult education in an international context*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can consider adult education in an international context.

[...] I changed my mind about one aspect [...] about the internationalization. Because when I studied before, I thought just the Italian authors and the Italian culture and Italian study [...]. But when I was back, I learned really how is

important the internationalization about your study and how it's important to know also other authors and other aspects of the formation [...] (I 3.6, 85; study abroad)¹.

[...] before, I never thought about how is important to know English and how is important to have different knowledge about [...] formation. [...] So my Erasmus influenced [...] my study, my future [...] because now I have more visual [...] how is big the formation [...] I learned really too much how is important the English also for formation [...] and also for your job. Because also if I want to do PhD, also if I want to work in the formation centre, I have to know English very well [...] (I 3.6, 99; study abroad).

By participating in study abroad, the graduate experiences that adult education is not only embedded in a national context, but also intertwined with international perspectives. As the graduate becomes familiar with international dimensions of adult education, she realises that the academic and practice field of adult education is to be understood as embedded in a larger context. This changes the graduate's view of the importance of international literature and the use of English in adult education. The latter seems important to the graduate for working in the occupational field of adult education. This change in perception can ultimately lead to a changed understanding of adult education, which can become anchored in the graduate's self-concept.

Another graduate considers adult education in an international context by participating in a seasonal school.

[...] And in Würzburg, I find a sort of community that thought about adult education in a different way. So there in Würzburg, adult education is the centre [...]. And understand also that, for example, my study program in Italy is very different from the study program of adults of the other country. [...] But I understand that we work for the same thing, that is adult education [...] (I 3.5, 63; seasonal school).

From the interaction and communication with participants from different countries, the interviewed graduate experiences that despite recognisable differences between the national contexts, the participants of the seasonal school pursue common goals and share a fundamental understanding of adult education. This seems to lead to the graduate perceiving herself as part of an international adult education community. Consequently, the seasonal school promotes the formation of a common identity in adult education.

Similar experiences are expressed by another graduate. In this case, the graduate does not only refer to his participation in seasonal schools, but to all international experiences during his studies.

¹ The interviewee uses the term 'formation' synonymously with 'education'.

And international experience during the masters [...] like summer school and winter school helped me to think out of the box and on a wider scope about adult education, which is I think the most important part when you are doing research [...] (I 2.8, 58; seasonal school).

And also [the international experiences] contribute to feeling that I'm belonging to the wider community and that I'm not alone, that adult education it's really international community, which is really open, flexible (I 2.8, 78; not specified).

Due to the international experiences during his studies, the graduate perceives adult education not only embedded in a national context, but also interwoven with international structures. For example, in the context of seasonal schools, the graduate increasingly experiences himself as part of a larger international adult education community and feels that he belongs to it. This suggests that the international experiences in the master's programme can contribute to a broader understanding of adult education and foster the development of a common identity in adult education.

It is evident from the graduates' experiences that participation in cross-border teaching and learning settings in particular enables graduates to consider adult education in an international context. As a result, graduates can perceive adult education as intertwined with international perspectives and experience themselves as part of a larger international adult education community. This can contribute to a broad understanding of adult education that may become anchored in the professional self-concept of the graduates.

b) Becoming familiar with the occupational field of adult education

Participation in international teaching and learning settings can enable graduates to become familiar with the occupational field of adult education.
[...] We had a subject [...] the concept of it was basically to learn about each organisation [...] we went to the UNESCO Institute. So we got to experience it first-hand [...] (I 2.6, 138; study abroad).

[...] You learned about this, now you get to see this institution. These are the people in charge [...] This is what you would be doing. These are the problems that these people are focusing on. This is where the money is going. [...] You get to see and talk to them. That's what I mean by a step closer to the real world, in the professional sense (I 2.6, 140; study abroad).

During a study abroad, a field visit to an adult education provider offers practical insights into the occupational field of adult education. The graduate experiences where adult educators can work and what they do. The graduate is confronted with various aspects and questions of her future working life. It can be assumed that the graduate develops an understanding of her own role and function in adult education by becoming familiar with the occupational field of adult education.

Furthermore, participation in an internship abroad can lead to familiarising oneself with the occupational field of adult education.

[...] the internship [...] I saw the work into the office. [...] when I started my master's, I started to think also what I can do later. And one of my idea was also to work in the office in the university [...]. When I started to work in the office, I saw really what you do, what you have to do, and also the topic about you can work [...]. So first, this was really important for me. [...] for the choose that I have to do in the future (I 3.6, 55; internship abroad).

In the context of an internship abroad, the interviewed graduate gains practical insights into a possible field of work in adult education after completing her master's degree. This enables her to acquire an understanding of possible activities and tasks in the field of adult education, which she considers relevant for her later career choice. The internship abroad encourages her to think about her own future activities and professional role. This is related to the development of the graduate's professional self-concept.

For another graduate, both an internship abroad and a seasonal school provide her insights into the occupational field of adult education.

They influence my job, for example, because now I know that with my degree, I can do what the other people do with the other degree that were considered more important than mine here in Italy. I understand that our community of adult educators is bigger than I was thinking. And so this give me the possibility to apply to job position that before I didn't consider. [...] I understand also that a lot of people don't know my degree, but I know that, for example in Germany, all people know this degree [...] And so I hope that in future, they appreciate our degree and our knowledge. And maybe the only way to make known our degree is to work in an important position [...] (I 3.5, 106; internship abroad, seasonal school).

In the context of both international teaching and learning settings, the graduate experiences how the occupational field of adult education is structured in other countries. Differences can be identified in the visibility and recognition of her degree as well as in the field of activity and tasks between countries. By becoming familiar with the occupational field in an international context, the graduate seems to develop a broader understanding of potential fields of activity and tasks in adult education of which she was previously unaware. This enables her to reflect on her future role and tasks in adult education more intensively.

The data shows that cross-border teaching and learning settings can help graduates to become familiar with the occupational field of adult education beyond their national context. In this way, graduates can reflect on their future role and tasks in the field of adult education. This can promote the development of a professional self-concept. It can be seen that this is due to the graduates' participation in field visits and other practical experiences in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings.

c) Reflecting on one's own subject-specific interest

As outlined by a graduate, international teaching and learning settings can also help students reflect on their own subject-specific interest, which can contribute to the development of a professional self-concept.

[...] this experience I think that also helped me to understand [...] that I was on the right path, let's say because [...] I changed from another course to this one and it let me understand that I was doing something good, [...] that all the topics were very interesting [...] (I 3.2, 20; seasonal school).

[...] after the winter school, I understood that this was a really good course, a really good [...] topic. Education was really something correlated to my/ it was my thing [...] (I 3.2, 69; seasonal school).

Participating in a seasonal school encourages the graduate to reflect more deeply on his own interest in topics of education and adult education. After changing his degree, the graduate considers the thematic focus of the seasonal school to be of interest to him. He sees himself justified in his choice of degree programme. With the participation of the graduate in the seasonal school, it can be assumed that he increasingly identifies with the field of adult education.

As can be seen, reflecting on one's own subject-specific interest can lead to an increasing identification with adult education. This can contribute to the development of a professional self-concept. In the case of the interviewed graduate, it seems that the thematic focus of the seasonal school has contributed to him reflecting on his own subject-specific interest after changing the subject of his degree programme.

d) Reflecting on one's own approach to diversity among participants

By participating in a seasonal school, another graduate is able to reflect on her approach to diversity among participants.

[...] I took away that you should always look for the bigger picture. That education, especially, is very context-bound. In some cases, it can be culture-bound. The way people treat education, the way people analyse education can differ sometimes. Context is very, very, very important. You should always keep in mind the background, where somebody is coming from, and how to put education into practice. [...] And I think for andragogist, it's very important to keep in mind all of those differences so you can give a good job later on [...]. So seeing all these people doing, let's say, things, the way they do them was very insightful for me, very valuable for me. [...] And I think what I took away the most is, as I said, to keep in mind there are differences. But those differences are a good thing because it gives you a broader picture and more to analyse [...] (I 2.3, 47; seasonal school).

I think it's very important to be aware of all the differences so you can find different approaches so that everybody will get exactly what they need. And I

think education should be focused on giving the very thing that fits the best for you in order for you to learn the best from it and to thrive from it [...] (I 2.3, S7; seasonal school).

During a seasonal school, the interviewed graduate gets to know diverse ways of thinking, seeing, and acting among the participants, who come from different countries and backgrounds. This enables her to reflect on her own approach to diversity and difference. She understands that adult education must always be understood as embedded in different contexts and must be designed according to the needs and experiences of the participants. As a result, the graduate seems to develop an understanding of education and adult education that recognises the contextual embedding of teaching and learning processes and takes into account the individuality of participants. The graduate seems to develop an attitude towards diversity that values similarities and differences between participants. Such an attitude is emphasised as a guiding principle for working in adult education.

Based on the graduate's experience, it becomes clear that the diversity of the seasonal school participants makes her reflect on her own approach to diversity in adult education. This can lead to an understanding of education and adult education as embedded in different contexts and promotes an attitude of valuing diversity. This fundamental understanding may become anchored in the professional self-concept of the graduate.

6.1.5 Personal Development

Furthermore, participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the personal development of graduates in the three master's programmes. With reference to the discourse on professionalisation, extracurricular and transdisciplinary skills can prove to be relevant for the transition from study to work (Benz-Gydat 2017; Boffo 2018). Among graduates, different ways of personal development are apparent, which support the development of graduates' professionalism in adult education.

- a) *Coping with challenging situations;*
- b) *Reflecting on one's own personality;*
- c) *Engaging with different perspectives of other people;*
- d) *Reflecting on prejudices towards other people;*
- e) *Interacting with people from different countries;*
- f) *Networking with people in the academic and practice field of adult education;*
- g) *Engaging in challenging tasks.*

a) *Coping with challenging situations*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, coping with challenging situations can support the graduates' personal development.

[...] And I also go away with the class very often and I notice how confident or [...] chilled out I can be when something doesn't work out on a trip or something.

I mean, all the previous experiences I had abroad also play a role. But I think especially in India we have grown in terms of planning, organisation in the country, and you don't let yourself get so easily upset if something doesn't work out [...] (I 1.5, 110; study abroad).

[...] it already starts when you get off the plane and don't know how to get to your accommodation. You do get [...] instructions on what to do, but [...] in our case there was no one to pick us up, instead we tried to get to our accommodation on our own and didn't know how to pronounce the street and where it was exactly and so on (I 1.5, 116; study abroad).

As one graduate explains, studying abroad can involve difficult situations. For example, when travelling to the host country a student may have to orientate themselves and find their way in new, unfamiliar situations. By coping with these new, challenging situations, the graduate shows an increase in confidence in her own abilities. She seems to be confident that she will be able to handle similarly challenging situations in the future. The graduate perceives that the experiences she has gained from her study abroad – and the self-confidence that she has gained as a result – are supportive in her work. She experiences this, for example, when planning and carrying out a trip with others. The graduate also reports on other challenging situations during her study abroad.

[...] And one thing [...] is that we got a timetable [...] and then we were there and were really disappointed when we were the only students in the room. And that happened to us a few more times in a row until we realised that the timetable there is structured more like a consultation hour in the master's programme. [...] And I would say that over time we became more relaxed and said, 'Now we'll just do what we can and try to get in touch with people and try to exchange with those who are there, even if that doesn't fit into the pattern that we had imagined'. But you simply learn or you realise at that moment that you have to apply a different strategy in order to get something out of the situation [...] (I 1.5, 49; study abroad).

At the host university, the graduate encounters different perspectives on and approaches to teaching and learning. The graduate experiences a different way of studying that does not correspond to her own ideas and therefore initially leads to resentment and dissatisfaction. However, in the course of the study abroad, the graduate develops an attitude that recognises and accepts the perspective of others. She looks for solutions for dealing with this situation, so that the negative feelings that initially arose recede. This indicates an increase in the graduate's resilience and flexibility to act appropriately in challenging situations as well as the development of an understanding for different perspectives and approaches.

Similarly, participating in an internship abroad can require managing unpleasant and unfamiliar situations.

[...] I started to trust myself more because, you know, when you face for the first time, that you need to answer for the calls on English and then the guy started

to speak on German [...] You know, like I got afraid, but then I got used to that kind of situation. And that really helped me after in my workplace and it really, really helped me a lot (I 2.1, 43; internship abroad).

In the text passage, the graduate describes a challenging situation in taking telephone calls in English during her internship abroad. By coping with this challenging situation, the graduate seems to develop greater confidence in her own abilities, which is perceived as beneficial for her later career.

In the context of a seasonal school, graduates can also be confronted with challenging situations they have to cope with.

R: In free moments I travelled to discover Würzburg and surrounding towns. And the experience [...] also for my life like a woman and left me stronger and perhaps more prepared for university and my work career. And with more confidence in my possibility.

I: Where did you learn to be stronger and more prepared as a woman?

R: Yes, because I travel alone and then I have to meet person and to face new things that arrive during this period. [...] for the first time I travel alone in a strange/ in a different country. And for me, it was a new thing [...] (I 3.3, 39-41; seasonal school).

Participation in a seasonal school requires the graduate to familiarise herself with new, unknown situations that result from situations like being in a foreign country. For the interviewed graduate, coping with these challenging situations contributes to the development of a stronger confidence in her own abilities. In the interview excerpt, her personal development is associated with both personal added value and added value to her academic education and career in adult education.

Furthermore, assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad can be accompanied by challenging situations.

[...] I was afraid of the public speech and with all this practice and everything, I got used to public speech. So it really helped me a lot. And the professor was really good because he gave me a lot of chances actually. He gave me everything, more or less, so that I could practice and do and, you know, it's really, really like a great experience for me (I 2.1, 30; assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad).

One graduate, referring to her involvement in a seasonal school, describes that her work required her to face her fear of speaking in front of other people. By overcoming this challenging situation, the graduate manages to reduce her fear of public speaking. The guidance provided by the supervising professor is experienced as supportive in this context.

In summary, it has been shown that graduates can develop personally in the context of international teaching and learning settings by coping with challenging situations. This is reflected in factors such as increased self-confidence in dealing with new, challenging situations in the future. The graduates consider

these experiences significant in their occupational context. It is striking that coping with challenging situations is particularly emphasised in connection with cross-border teaching and learning settings. This suggests that mobility abroad comes with specific challenges, such as those that may arise when travelling to a foreign country.

b) Reflecting on one's own personality

In the context of study abroad, graduates are challenged to reflect on their own personality.

I'm not an extroverted kind of guy [...]. In my friendship circle in Serbia, I would be more introverted. [...] But this kind of experience like Pécs placed me in a different position. There was no, any kind of expectation for you to behave in a certain way. This is a life-changing experience, how different expectations of you, results in different outcomes in your own behaviour. I thought that I know myself and I know what I like, but it was kind of transformational [...] (I 2.7, 30; study abroad).

[...] during the Pécs, I behaved almost like an extrovert, you know. I was always hanging out. I was organizing people, socializing a lot. [...] So when I came back, [...] I shifted a little bit towards the person that I was in Pécs [...] (I 2.7, 33; study abroad).

As is explained, the graduate finds himself in a social environment during the study abroad in which there are no expectations or presuppositions about his own personality. In this new social environment, the graduate can become acquainted with and aware of himself. Participation in study abroad can consequently provide room for self-reflection. The graduate can be detached from the social expectations of his own environment and thus acquire a changed awareness and knowledge of his own person. Similar experiences are described by another graduate in the context of a study abroad.

[...] I learned better, what I like it, what I don't like it [...] Because when I was in my country and so in my city with my friends and my family [...] sometimes you have your friends, they're doing some stuff, so you're doing with your friends this stuff and kind of that. When you are in another country and you have the relation with the people [...], you don't do the stuff that you don't like. [...] you have six months to do the Erasmus. So you know that the time for you is really important so you can do really what you like. And so I think that you learn really too much also about yourself and also your personality [...] (I 3.6, 76; study abroad).

Participating in study abroad enables the graduate to reflect on her own personality. This takes place in separation from the social pressure and expectations of her own social environment at the home university, according to which the graduate otherwise orientates herself in her everyday life. Participation in the

study abroad programme thus offers the graduate space to get to know herself better and thereby develop an awareness of her own personality, likes, and dislikes.

Participation in study abroad offers graduates the opportunity to reflect on their own personalities in the context of a new social environment. Studying abroad seems to represent a space of experience in which graduates can get to know and perceive themselves better. It can be assumed that the subjective experience and prerequisites of the graduates play an essential role in this context.

c) Engaging with different perspectives of other people

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates may have to engage with different perspectives of others.

[...] I told you my flatmate. That she has really different mood to do some things. Second [...] in the university and third [...] with my Erasmus friends, I saw this [...] I really changed a lot of my mind because I learned that sometimes we judge the people just for these ways of doing but I think that it's just the culture that sometimes the people do stuff. [...] I opened my mind about these arguments. Because I learned that sometimes [...] you have just to observe the behaviours [...] And you really can change your mind and learn really too much about also the other people and their ways of doing (I 3.6, 38; study abroad).

[...] I learned really too much to work with other people and because we did really a lot of work in group during the courses [...]. So I have one idea but I have to share also this idea and I have to hear other idea and change sometimes my mind. Because, yes, I have one idea but it's not just only this idea in the world [...] I learned really too much this [...] to change my attitude about some points or my idea (I 3.6, 24; study abroad).

As described, during her study abroad, the graduate interacts and communicates with people who share views and approaches which differ from her own perspective. By engaging with those different, and sometimes conflicting perspectives, the graduate comes to question her own perspectives as well as those of others. She acquires an open, appreciative attitude towards other people and their ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. This attitude is considered to be supportive for working in groups. This means that one's own view is not regarded as the only truth, but other views are also heard. As a result, participants can enter into a process of mutual understanding.

Engaging with different perspectives is also highlighted in the context of seasonal schools.

[...] it is always the case when you are in groups that many different perspectives come together and the Winter School was just as intensive as the Summer School. That you can simply, so to speak, train negotiation processes well, have to make compromises, make concessions and deal with them diplomatically. And I think that definitely benefits me in my work. That you don't have to or want to get your

way by hook or by crook but say 'Okay'. Even if you are really sure that what you want to do now could lead to a supposedly better result, that you still say 'Okay, no, I'll go for it now' [...] (I 1.8, 82; seasonal school).

Participation in seasonal schools requires that the graduate practise dealing with different views and approaches of participants. As emphasised, the seasonal schools offer a space of experience in which contradictions have to be accepted and endured. In addition, ways of mutual understanding can be developed. Engaging with the different perspectives in the context of seasonal schools can thus support the development of an open, appreciative attitude towards other perspectives. This attitude is seen as supportive with regard to the graduate's employment. Another graduate affirms that this openness towards other people is a fundamental prerequisite for working in the occupational field of adult education.

[...] I think that it's very important to not be really strict or have only one point of view. [...] I think that an adult educator must be an open-minded person. So this kind of possibility gives you the way to learn this (I 3.4, 84; seasonal school).

Participating in a seasonal school is seen as a way to develop such an open, appreciative attitude. Therefore, the international interaction and communication in the context of seasonal schools seem to contribute to recognising and appreciating other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting.

In addition, graduates can be exposed to other, divergent perspectives through the presence of international students in teaching.

[...] what I noticed in this international context [...] is [...] that you can't force your views on people and we are from different cultures and societies. [...] you always assume that the other person feels that way and if he doesn't feel that way, then I explain it to him and he accepts it. But maybe you also have to accept and understand that someone else simply doesn't see it that way and that their society simply doesn't offer it the way how the society, in which you grew up, does. And that's what I often noticed [...] (I 1.2, 44; presence of international students in teaching).

When speaking with international students, the graduate is confronted with different perspectives and points of view that do not match her own perspective (I 1.2, 42-46). The graduate recognises that when dealing with different perspectives in discussions with others, disagreement and ambiguity must sometimes be endured. This is due to the fact that people are from different backgrounds. The experiences of the graduate illustrate that engaging with different perspectives of other people can support the development of an open and appreciative attitude towards other, contrary opinions.

As can be seen in the data, in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings as well as international teaching and learning settings at home, graduates can engage with different perspectives of other people. What the different international teaching and learning settings seem to have in common is that they enable interaction and communication with people from different countries.

This results in graduates encountering different perspectives. In this way, graduates can acquire an open, appreciative attitude towards other ways of thinking, seeing, and acting, which is attributed relevance to their occupational activity.

d) Reflecting on prejudices towards other people

For graduates, participation in study abroad can also help them to reflect on prejudices towards other people.

[...] I think it was also through the semester abroad that you got to know new people and developed an openness, because otherwise you often have stereotypes [...] And I think I was able to acquire this openness, that I listened to more, yes, more in exchange and learned more about people and accordingly approached things openly. Or when you hear something about someone, you don't immediately say, 'Oh, that person is like that', but first look at what the person is really like and what is true about the fact of how a person should be. In other words, that you don't always believe what others tell you, but are more open yourself and experience people for yourself. I think that was also something I learned abroad, because people often said, 'That's an Israeli, he's like this and like that' and such prejudices were very present and you simply, yes, have to form your own picture (I 1.4, 104; study abroad).

During her studies abroad, the graduate encounters prejudices and stereotypes towards different groups of people, which encourage her to critically reflect on her own preconceptions. By talking to local people, she begins to question her own prejudices and to look more closely at the existing prejudices in the host country. This enables the graduate to listen to other opinions and to question existing prejudices and stereotypes. It becomes clear that she develops an openness towards other people and their ways of thinking, seeing, and acting.

The data shows that reflecting on prejudices towards other people in the context of studying abroad can contribute to the development of an open, appreciative attitude. The data suggests that the local context and interacting with local people in particular stimulate reflection on prejudices towards different groups of people in the host country.

e) Interacting with people from different countries

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can interact with people from different countries. This can also contribute to the development of an open attitude.

[...] having the opportunity to meet a lot of different people from different cultures [...] to live with them, to study with them, to travel. So it was like for five months, I was surrounded with the people from lots of different countries and it really changed me. [...] I wasn't the same person so I think that openness of a mind that you can gain when you are in the [...] international experience, such as Erasmus exchange, I think that's the most positive part of it (I 2.5, 25; study abroad).

During her studies abroad, the graduate interacts and communicates with people from different countries with whom she spends several months. When interacting with people from different countries, the graduate's openness towards new experiences and encounters grows. This is illustrated by the remark «openness of a mind».

By interacting with people from different countries, another graduate can also gain greater openness in the context of a seasonal school.

Yes, a concrete example is this openness towards cultures. [...] Or also a bit of a calmness [...] in approaching people from other cultures. So okay, in the Winter School I already talked to people from Korea, from Africa, from India, from Indonesia. That means that when I meet someone from China or Africa in my everyday work here, I think 'Ah hey, I've already spoken to someone from this country.' Then you are immediately a bit more open [...] (I 1.1, 69; seasonal school).

By participating in a seasonal school, the graduate interacts and communicates with people from different countries. She expresses an increased openness towards people from other countries, which she sees as beneficial for her later work. It makes it easier for the graduate to approach people from other countries and exchange ideas with them.

The experiences of the graduates indicate that interacting with people from different countries in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings can enable the development of an open attitude towards people from different countries. Personal interaction and communication are shown to play a central role in this. The increased openness of the graduates is considered conducive to working in the field of adult education.

f) Networking with people in the academic and practice field of adult education

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can network with people in the academic and practice field of adult education. This can support the graduates' ability to build, maintain, and make use of networks in their careers, as the following observations demonstrate.

And I got also some connections. I'm now linked with one girl from @IGO@ and we are always on the phone and like exchanging knowledge and experiences [...] (I 2.1, 44; internship abroad).

As briefly described, the graduate was able to establish contacts with staff of the receiving organisation during her internship abroad. These contacts continue beyond the internship and enable her to exchange knowledge and experience in her occupational activity. The text passage suggests that the graduate sees the established network as relevant for her occupational activity.

A similar observation is possible with reference to participation in seasonal schools.

Mainly these contacts and networking with a bit of students and also with the professors. [...] I got some recommendations for future studies or for application for some projects from international professors [...] (I 2.8, 42; seasonal school).

[...] So the relationship [...] that I had from this Winter School with the people that I didn't know when I arrived in Würzburg and even for the people that are with me from Florence to Würzburg. [...] it's important because you have a person that you can contact and exchange information about something that you learned in adult education for work. [...] they are people that exchange information with me and I give information to them about new changes in the adult education field in Italy, new changes in the adult education in Europe [...] (I 3.1, 58; seasonal school).

In the text passages, the graduates express that they were able to establish contacts with people in adult education during their participation in the seasonal schools. These contacts exist beyond their participation and are experienced as supportive for working in the field of adult education. For example, these networks serve the exchange of knowledge and experience in the field. This also indicates that the graduates are able to actively use and maintain their networks, which they have built up in the context of seasonal schools, during their careers.

The development of the graduates' ability to build, maintain, and make use of networks is particularly evident in the context of international conferences.

[...] it was like the conferences, the staying in contact with the people with whom I met on some summer schools and winter schools, and to try to continue working on some projects or some papers which we can present together, or even to exchange some ideas when we met on some conferences. Conferences for me its like something to keep in touch and to stay updated about novelties in the area in the field (I 2.8, 46; international conferences or workshops abroad/at home university).

For the graduate, participating in international conferences represents an opportunity to deepen the contacts in his networks, which he could establish during his participation in different seasonal schools. In addition, he outlines that he uses the networks for cooperation in joint projects and for exchanging knowledge and experience. In the text passage, it becomes evident that the graduate is not only building networks but also developing skills to actively shape and use these networks for his career.

The importance attributed to building networks with people in the academic and practice field of adult education is also expressed in relation to the presence of international students at the home university.

[...] So I think that it's really great when you meet people from your sphere, from your job sector, which is like education of adults. Because now, I think that in this job as junior researcher, that international contacts that I have are really great source for doing mutual jobs. Writing some papers together, having like person who I can talk from different country [...]. So I think that [...] when

people come to my country [...], it's really also valuable international experience (I 2.5, 69; presence of international students in teaching).

Another graduate recognises an opportunity to establish international networks with people in the field of adult education in the presence of international students at her home university. The graduate sees these networks as beneficial for her career in the academic field. It can be assumed that, in this context, the graduate can also develop skills for building and maintaining networks relevant for her future work.

With reference to the available data, it can be argued that participation in international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home) can help graduates to develop skills in building, maintaining, and using networks in the field of adult education. The graduates experience these networks as beneficial for their further careers. It is apparent that the international contact with professors, students, and other people from the field of adult education particularly supports the development of networks in the academic and practice field of adult education.

g) Engaging in challenging tasks

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can engage in challenging tasks.

[...] when I was in @IGO@, I worked three things at the same time. And that was the first time in my life that I did the job like that. Because we had a lot of jobs. So I needed to work on three different topics, let's say, at the same time. And that really helps me a lot now because on my workplace [...] I mean, I'm the type of person, when I have one thing, I will do just that one thing to be perfect. But now, when I pass this exchange and my internship and everything, then I changed the perspective a bit and I started to see like, 'Okay. I can do things not to be perfect, but to be really close to perfect, but to do more things at the same time' (I 2.1, 94; internship abroad).

During an internship abroad, the graduate is asked to complete a variety of tasks at the same time, something which she perceives as challenging. As a result, the graduate develops the ability to take on a multitude of tasks at the same time and to work on them in a structured way. This ability is perceived as supportive in her later occupational work, where several tasks have to be dealt with at the same time. By dealing with challenging tasks, the graduate also learns to detach herself from the idea of having to complete every task perfectly.

Engaging in challenging tasks can also be observed in the context of seasonal schools.

It is simply a matter of [...] dealing with topics that are also more difficult to familiarise oneself with. That's something I notice in my professional life, pedagogues can familiarise themselves very quickly with very many different topics. And that applies even more, of course, because in the context of the Winter School I learned to deal with a topic in English [...] which I had not dealt with at all [...] (I 1.7, 131; seasonal school).

By participating in a seasonal school, the graduate is required to familiarise herself with topics in a foreign language that she is not familiar with. The seasonal school thus represents a practice field for dealing with new tasks and unknown topics in a structured way. After engaging in challenging tasks during the seasonal school, the graduate seems to find it easier to familiarise herself with complex topics. This is perceived as a being supportive in her daily work.

Among the graduates, cross-border international teaching and learning settings can be regarded as a field of practice for engaging in challenging tasks. This seems to be due to the work involved during an internship abroad on the one hand and the content and didactic setting of the seasonal school on the other.

6.1.6 Development of Foreign Language Skills

Participation in international teaching and learning settings can support the development of graduates' foreign language skills. These, in turn, can contribute to the development of graduates' professionalism, as shown in the data. The following ways of developing foreign language skills are identified.

- a) *Using a foreign language;*
- b) *Working with academic literature in English.*

a) *Using a foreign language*

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, the development of foreign language skills is supported by using a foreign language.

[...] it's really perfect to be somewhere where [...] you can't actually speak your own language and you need to practice English. [...] it's really a big gain because if you don't know English now, it's really hard to survive in the job market and everywhere. I think that was the best opportunity to learn it because it's not classes, it's not fake, let's say, atmosphere to learn it, it's really the natural environment where you really practice. And people don't look at you like you're bad because you don't know it. They really give you opportunity to practice and to be better [...] (I 2.5, 29; study abroad).

Studying abroad can be seen as a suitable practice field for developing English language skills, as English is the language of communication with other participants. Here, the development of language skills takes place in everyday situations, detached from arranged practice situations, as is the case with language courses. The graduate experiences this as an advantage, as she is really called upon to communicate in English during her study abroad. The graduate considers English language skills to be an important prerequisite for employment in the labour market. This indicates that foreign language skills can be important for the development of graduates' professionalism.

[...] Maybe I got more confident speaking in another language [...] because I used to be shy like four or five years, I would never speak another language with anybody. [...] And my experience in Germany changed that completely. [...] I

was predominantly speaking English, which has gotten better with it with time. And spoken German, of course, a little bit during class because I had the German class as well for a month intensive course. [...] It made me feel more comfortable and confident speaking another language [...] (I 2.3, 98; study abroad).

In addition to improving English language skills, participating in study abroad can also enable the acquisition of further foreign language skills, as described by another graduate. It is outlined that using a foreign language can help to gain confidence in communicating in that language.

Furthermore, participation in a seasonal school can enable graduates to use a foreign language.

[...] I mean, maybe there were a lot of, let's say, knowledge stuff that I learned [...] the language exchange, I mean, train the English and so on (I 3.2, 45; seasonal school).

As briefly explained, the seasonal school can also be seen as a practice field for improving graduates' English language skills.

The experiences of another graduate, who refers to all international experiences in her studies, emphasises the importance of foreign language skills for the development of graduates' professionalism in adult education.

[...] Linguistically, of course, it was a great experience because we actually, yes, communicated in English all the time. I don't need it so much in everyday school life, but I was just in Amsterdam with my students and realised that it's great how I can communicate. Even if I come across an English text when I'm researching teaching materials, it's not really a problem, because English accompanied me in my master's degree because of the international focus [...] (I 1.5, 120; not specified).

The graduate feels that her English language skills have been strengthened by participating in international teaching and learning settings during her studies. By using English, she has gained practice and confidence in communicating and understanding in English. The improved English language skills are seen as beneficial in the occupational context. For example, they support the graduate in preparing English literature for her own teaching.

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can improve their foreign language skills by using a foreign language. The data shows that graduates refer mainly to the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings. These seem to particularly support practising a foreign language. Furthermore, the graduates primarily refer to the use of English, to which they attach importance in the work context.

b) Working with academic literature in English

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates may be required to work with academic literature in English.

R: [...] the topic of international literature, which of course you were also confronted with in the various seminars and also in the Winter School. Where you [...] had to deal with scientific literature in the English language. Which was not really the case before, for example in the bachelor's programme. And that is, I think, also an added value that you take with you. [...]

I: What exactly is the added value?

R: Well, I think I'll just call it 'getting practice' as an umbrella term. Because it is simply unusual to read through English literary texts or scientific texts [...] So I think it's simply this topic, I've had contact with it before. I have perhaps a bit of practice in it and have simply read up on it for later on, for example, for the master's thesis, where you may also be need English literature (I 1.3, 61-63; seasonal school, teaching of international guest lecturers).

The graduate outlines that by attending a seasonal school and courses taught by international guest lecturers, she has gained practice in working with academic literature in English. In her previous studies, dealing with English-language literature had not been required to a large extent. However, the graduate perceives the ability to work with academic, English-language literature as beneficial for the further course of her studies. For example, it is expected that after certain familiarity with English literature, it is easier to prepare academic literature in English for the master's thesis.

In the context of both cross-border teaching and learning settings and international teaching and learning settings at home, the graduate can improve her English language skills by gaining practice in working with academic literature in English. This seems to be of particular importance if little academic literature in English has been included in the previous course of study.

6.1.7 Interim Summary

In the previous sections, it was possible to trace different ways of developing professionalism both in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings and in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home. The development of graduates' professionalism is to be understood against the background of a complex interplay of subjective, structural, and social factors (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). With the focus on the structural factors, different supporting factors in the international teaching and learning settings can be identified. These illustrate how the international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of graduates' professionalism in the three master's programmes. As a result, subjective and social factors recede into the background. From the analysis of the supporting factors, overarching structural factors can subsequently be derived that support the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings (Chap. 6.2).

On Chap. 6.1.1 – Acquisition of academic knowledge

In the data, different ways of acquiring academic knowledge are evident in the context of international teaching and learning settings. On the one hand,

graduates of the three master's programmes can acquire academic knowledge in *dealing with new content in adult education*. This is shown in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school) and in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home (teaching of international guest lecturers, presence of international students in teaching). In these contexts, the graduates are confronted with new content in adult education, which differs from the content of their previous studies. This indicates that the acquisition of academic knowledge is based on the teaching and learning content integrated in the international teaching and learning settings. In this regard, the diversity of curricular structures of adult education programmes that can be observed in national and international comparisons (Boffo et al. 2016; Semrau, Vieira, and Guida 2016; Kuhlen, Singh, and Tomei 2017) could be considered as conducive to the acquisition of academic knowledge. The different thematic focus at the host university seem to provide graduates the opportunity to engage with new academic content in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings. In addition, the mobility of lecturers and students, who can possess different academic expertise, seems to integrate new perspectives on adult education in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home. For example, international guest lecturers can integrate a different thematic focus into their teaching at the graduates' home university. With regard to the development of graduates' professionalism in adult education, a differentiated academic basis represents an important resource for (professional) action in the field of practice. Academic knowledge enables graduates to interpret concrete practice situations in adult education and supports the reflection and justification of professional action (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018; Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022)

On the other hand, *dealing with education and adult education in different countries* can support graduates in acquiring academic knowledge in the context of international teaching and learning settings. This refers to cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, internship abroad, seasonal school) and international teaching and learning settings at home (teaching of international guest lecturers, presence of international students in teaching). Through the academic exchange between students, lecturers, and other persons in these contexts, graduates can interact with education and adult education in different countries. Therefore, international interaction and communication with people from different countries appear crucial. In addition, the integration of specific teaching and learning content, e.g. in the teaching of international guest lecturers, can stimulate an examination of education and adult education in different countries. The data also shows that, in the context of an internship abroad, the specific focus of the graduate's activity contributes to the engagement with education and adult education in different countries. The thematic insights gained in different international teaching and learning settings can ultimately support the acquisition of academic knowledge about education and adult education in other countries. Against the background of the internationalisation of the field of practice and an increasingly diverse target group in adult education (Egetenmeyer

2017, 130), this can be considered beneficial for the development of graduates' professionalism. Especially in the context of migration, knowledge about education and adult education in other countries could prove helpful. With a basic knowledge and understanding of the educational system in the participants' countries, graduates might be able to better tailor educational programmes to the participants' previous educational experiences and aspirations.

In addition, *examining different perspectives on adult education* in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school, international conferences and workshops abroad) and international teaching and learning settings at home (teaching of international guest lecturers, international topics in teaching, international conferences and workshops at the home university) is related to the acquisition of academic knowledge. In the academic exchange with lecturers and students from different countries, graduates are confronted with different perspectives on topics in adult education. In the context of seasonal schools, it is particularly emphasised that the academic cooperation between the international participants reveals different perspectives on certain terminologies in adult education. This requires a conceptual understanding among the participants. In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates can consequently experience and learn to understand which different perspectives and understandings exist in the international context of adult education. Interaction and communication with students, lecturers, and other participants from different countries seems to play a significant role in this, as it reveals a particularly wide variety of perspectives. With regard to the development of graduates' professionalism, it can be concluded that the exposure to different perspectives of adult education enables graduates to broaden their academic knowledge. Graduates can reflect on their already existing knowledge and adapt it if necessary. As a result, a comprehensive and differentiated knowledge in adult education can be developed. In addition, it can be assumed that the development of an understanding of diverse perspectives in adult education supports a reflective handling of academic knowledge and terminology in adult education.

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, *addressing international comparative issues in adult education* can also contribute to the acquisition of academic knowledge. On the one hand, participation in a seasonal school which focuses on international comparative studies in adult education and lifelong learning can enable graduates to engage with topics in adult education from an international comparative perspective. In this context, working with people from different countries is perceived as a very practice-oriented form of comparison. Personal interaction and communication seem to be of particular importance. In addition, the thematic focus and didactic arrangement of the outlined seasonal school support the international comparative examination of certain issues in adult education. In particular, self-directed learning processes are seen as beneficial. On the other hand, graduates can engage with adult education from an international comparative perspective in the context of international teaching and learning settings at home. During an internship

abroad, the activity carried out by the graduate, through which insights have been gained into adult education in different countries, enables an international comparative view on issues in adult education. In the teaching of international guest lecturers, the specific thematic focus of the lecture seems to support an international comparative perspective. However, in these contexts, it remains unclear whether the graduates go beyond the mere identification of similarities and differences and develop a deeper understanding of the reasons for the occurrence of similarities and differences, which forms the core of an international comparison (Charters and Hilton 1989; Reischmann 2008b). International comparative research can support the acquisition of knowledge about different developments and functioning of adult education in different countries (Jütte and Lattke 2014, 9-10). It can promote the development of an understanding of foreign and own national/regional contexts (Slowey 2016, 10). Consequently, graduates can develop a differentiated knowledge of adult education, which is considered relevant for working in the academic and practice field of adult education. In addition, it can be assumed that graduates may develop comparative skills, which can also be attributed significance when acting in the international field of adult education (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018, 148).

Furthermore, the data shows that participation in seasonal schools facilitates *dealing with specific research methods*. This is evident when seasonal schools focus on specific research methods in terms of content. The seasonal schools described by the graduates not only enable a theoretical examination of the research methods, but also their practical application. This is perceived as supportive by the graduates. Consequently, it suggests that the teaching and learning content, as well as the didactic setting of the seasonal schools, contribute to the engagement with specific research methods. This enables graduates to acquire knowledge about the application and implementation of specific research methods in educational and social research. The international context of the seasonal school seems to be of importance, especially for the examination of international comparative research approaches in adult education. With reference to the previous paragraph, it can be assumed that the international cooperation of students, researchers, and practitioners in the seasonal school facilitates the international comparative examination of research topics. The acquisition of knowledge about different research methods can be seen as beneficial with regard to the development of graduates' professionalism. Research methodological competences are considered to be a necessary prerequisite for the analysis of practice situations (Schübler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1083). Research-based activities may support taking a critical and reflective view of practice (Palmieri, Galimberti, and Gambacorti-Passerini 2020). They can also be regarded as an important prerequisite for graduates remaining in the academic field.

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, *dealing with one's own research topics* can further support the acquisition of academic knowledge. This is evident in the context of study abroad, internships abroad, and international conferences or workshops abroad. In these contexts, graduates gain deeper insights into topics related to their own research interest. For example,

participation in study abroad enables graduates to attend courses on research-relevant topics at the host university. In this context, differences in the thematic focus of adult education programmes offered at the universities can again prove to be supportive. This enables graduates to engage with new subject-specific perspectives. In addition, making contacts with people who have expertise on the research topic, and having access to supplementary literature can open up new perspectives. This is expressed in terms of participation in an internship abroad and in an international conference abroad. The deepening of one's own research interest can in turn lead to the expansion of academic knowledge. On the one hand, this can be seen as helpful with regard to the graduate's master's thesis. On the other hand, the graduates perceive an in-depth knowledge as conducive for remaining in the academic field. Overall, it becomes clear that the acquisition of academic knowledge is due to the thematic fit of the teaching and learning content and the international contacts in the international teaching and learning settings, as well as the graduates' subjective interest in a particular topic of adult education.

It can also be seen that participation in a study abroad can contribute to *dealing with one's own prior knowledge*. By re-engaging with one's own knowledge, graduates can deepen and consolidate their existing academic knowledge. It can be assumed that this requires a sufficient academic basis on the part of the graduate that is consistent with the topics covered in the study abroad courses. Furthermore, the data suggests that a didactic setting that allows students to be actively engaged in the course can particularly promote their engagement with their own prior knowledge. With the promotion of active academic exchange in an international context, it can be assumed that this requires graduates to translate their own prior knowledge into another language. With the translation of their knowledge, there may be moments of non-understanding on the part of the graduates. According to Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh (2017, 10-11), this can contribute to graduates questioning their own understanding and perspectives. In this way, graduates may be encouraged to reflect on, structure, and deepen their own knowledge. With reference to the discourse of professionalisation in adult education, a solid academic basis is in turn considered an important resource for professional activity in adult education, as explained above (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018; Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022).

From the previous sections, different ways of acquiring academic knowledge in the context of international teaching and learning settings become clear. For the graduates, academic knowledge represents an important resource for acting professionally in the field of adult education. It enables interpretations of adult education practice as well as reflection and justification of professional action (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018; Egetenmeyer and Schmidt-Lauff 2022). It is apparent that the acquisition of academic knowledge can be supported, on the one hand, by the teaching and learning content and the didactic setting of the international teaching and learning settings. On the other hand, importance can be attributed to the interaction

and communication with students, lecturers, and other people from different countries. In addition, subjective factors of the graduates (e.g. prior knowledge, research interest) were identified that can have an impact on the acquisition of academic knowledge. Overall, the international teaching and learning settings seem to be able to add international perspectives to graduates' academic knowledge. This could prove beneficial against the background of the increasing interconnectedness of adult education with global and international developments.

On Chap. 6.1.2 – Acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice

Furthermore, participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice. This can be promoted by *engaging with different teaching and learning methods*. With reference to the context of cross-border international teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school) and international teaching and learning settings at home (teaching of international guest lecturers), graduates of the master's programmes are exposed to different teaching and learning methods than in their own study context. The differences in teaching and learning methods can be attributed, for example, to different teaching and learning cultures at the universities. For example, the integration of interactive teaching and learning methods can be a new experience for graduates who mainly experience the use of frontal lessons at their home university. The international teaching and learning settings can thus provide space for practical experience in which graduates are not only confronted with academic content but can also become acquainted with different teaching and learning methods. In this way, the master's programme can be experienced as a personal form of pedagogical practice (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1073). Graduates can experience being participants in teaching and learning processes and reflect on ways of using and implementing teaching and learning methods. The international context in particular seems to stimulate reflection, as the teaching and learning methods can be discussed against the diverse backgrounds of the participants. This can also enable reflection on one's own learning cultures and stimulate an examination of one's own understanding of teaching and learning. Participation in international teaching and learning settings can consequently help graduates acquire knowledge on methodological and didactic issues in adult education. This practice-related knowledge could be particularly significant in practice situations in which teaching and learning methods have to be adapted to the given context, implemented, and reflected upon. With reference to the professionalisation discourse in adult education, it can be stated that the integration of guided, preparatory, or follow-up reflections on the use of teaching and learning methods can play an important role in the development of professionalism of students (Schüßler 2012, 136-37; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1081). In the data, however, reflective processes seem to be less systematically integrated into the master's programmes. Rather, they appear to be initiated by the graduates themselves. These assumptions might be taken to suggest that the integration of reflective processes – in preparation and follow-up – could increasingly pro-

mote the acquisition of methodological and didactic knowledge in the context of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes. In addition, this might promote a reflective approach to the acquired knowledge.

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, *engaging with different patterns of communication and interaction between teachers and learners* can also enable graduates to acquire knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice. By participating in international teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school, teaching of international guest lecturers), graduates can experience different types of communication and interaction between students and lecturers that they are not familiar with from their own university context. The differences and contradictions experienced by the graduates can again be traced back to the different teaching and learning cultures that can become visible in the context of international teaching and learning settings. It suggests that the subjective learning-cultural profiles shape the graduates' perception of differences in the relationship between teachers and learners. By distinguishing differences in communication and interaction between teachers and learners, graduates can acquire knowledge about different patterns of communication and interaction and their effect in teaching and learning processes. This practice-oriented knowledge could prove important in practical situations where participants with different learning cultural experiences come together. It could help to identify, question, and resolve emerging misunderstandings and contradictions. In addition, experiencing different patterns of communication and interaction between teachers and learners could stimulate on the examination of one's own understanding of teaching and learning. This may lead to reflection on one's own role as an adult educator. Questions may be raised as to how to communicate and interact appropriately with participants. These considerations could contribute to the development of a professional self-concept, and support the development of self-reflective skills. However, this is not evident in the data.

For the graduates of the master's programmes, studying abroad can contribute to *engaging with (adult) education practice in other countries*. As seen in the data, graduates can perceive themselves as part of the education system of the host country while studying abroad. By gaining practical experience on site, knowledge can be acquired about the education and adult education practice in the host country. This seems to be due to the graduates' mobility abroad. It can be assumed that staying abroad for several month enables deeper insights into the field of practice in the host country. Field visits to various organisations in the country are likely to be beneficial in this regard. In this context, attention should be drawn to the danger that graduates' subjective perceptions could lead to the development of stereotypes and false assumptions about the host country if the experiences are one-sided and not critically reflected upon. Regardless of this, graduates can also be encouraged to reflect on and critically analyse their own national education context on the basis of the experiences gained abroad, as one graduate indicates. This enables graduates to better understand their own structures and contexts, and to learn from possible examples of good practice. Furthermore, knowing about the (adult) education practice of a country can be seen as

conducive for arranging teaching and learning processes in occupational practice, as expressed by another graduate. Drawing on one's own practice-related knowledge and learning-cultural experiences in the host country could have a supportive effect in orienting teaching and learning processes more strongly towards the needs and learning-cultural profiles of the participants. However, subconscious, subjective presuppositions and stereotypes must be critically examined.

In the present data, *engaging with the field of teaching* can support the acquisition of practice-related knowledge about the development and implementation of teaching and learning processes. This is illustrated by the example of a course taught by an international guest lecturer. In this course, a graduate can gain initial practical experience in relation to the development and implementation of teaching units and can experiment in the role of a teacher. The thematic focus and the specific didactic setting on which the course is based seem to contribute to creating a theory-practice linkage. This supports the acquisition of knowledge concerning the arrangement of teaching and learning processes. As these practical experiences are accompanied by reflective processes, it can be assumed that the course supports the systematic linking of theory and practice. This could contribute to the development of reflective skills, although this cannot be clearly confirmed in the data. With regard to the academic discourse, the integration of reflective practices in degree programmes is also seen as important for the development of professionalism in adult education (Schüßler 2012, 136-37; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1081). It becomes clear that the course described, based on its thematic focus and didactic setting, creates a practice-oriented field, which enables the development of knowledge related to pedagogical practice. This can be seen as important for working in the field of teaching. However, the international context of the course seems less relevant.

In addition, *engaging with international project work* can contribute to the acquisition of practice-related knowledge about the application and development of international projects. This can be observed in the context of a seasonal school, which is described by one graduate. The seasonal school offers the participants opportunities to develop and advance project ideas together. The specific thematic focus and the didactic setting of the seasonal school seem to contribute to a practice-oriented field, where the participants can gain practical experience in international project work. With regard to the funding structures of adult education in the European context, it can be emphasised that the practice field of adult education is dependent on project funds, obtained primarily through funding from the European Union. Project acquisition and project financing can thus be defined as professionally relevant fields of activity in adult education (Buiskool and Broek 2012, 95). Knowledge about the development of projects and the acquisition of project funds, which can be developed within the framework of the seasonal school described, can consequently be regarded as fundamental for working in the field of adult education. The seasonal school appears to respond to the need to prepare (future) adult educators for the development and implementation of international projects in the field.

Based on the previous explanations, it becomes clear that the international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice. This knowledge can be related to the acquisition of practical action knowledge (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992), which is considered relevant for the development of professionalism in the academic discourse in adult education. However, practical action knowledge is acquired in action in the field of practice and geared towards coping with concrete demands in (professional) action. In contrast, the data reveals that graduates acquire a broader practice-related knowledge that is less orientated towards dealing with concrete practice situations. In addition, this knowledge is not acquired by acting in the field of practice, but rather study itself is experienced as pedagogical practice. In this context, graduates can experience themselves both as participants or learners and as teachers or adult educators. As a result, graduates gain practical experiences which are seen as beneficial for their later work. Overall, it is evident that the specific teaching and learning content, the didactic setting, and the teaching and learning cultures have a supporting effect on the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice in the context of teaching and learning settings. Furthermore, mobility abroad can enable in-depth insights into the education and adult education practice in the host country.

On Chap. 6.1.3 – Development of reflective skills

Participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of reflective skills among graduates of the master's programmes. This can be supported by *dealing reflectively with one's own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting* in the context of different international teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school, assisting in an international teaching and learning setting at the home university). In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates may find themselves confronted with diverse ways of thinking, seeing, and acting that appear unfamiliar to them and do not always correspond to their own ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. These differences seem to be promoted by the international interaction and communication with students, lecturers, and other people from different countries. It can be assumed that the possible ambivalence resulting from these contacts persuades the graduates to take a different perspective. In this way, they can try to understand the perspectives of the others and resolve the tensions they experience. Moreover, graduates can come to question and reflect on their own, partly unconscious ways of thinking, seeing, and acting. The reflective engagement can ultimately contribute to the development of (self-)reflective skills and a reflective attitude. According to the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education, professional action in the field of adult education is supported by reflective skills, as they particularly promote dealing with contradictions in the field of practice (Pachner 2013, 2018). Contradictions can be found on the relationship level between adult educators and learners as well as on the action and knowledge level (Nittel 2000, 2011a). Reflective skills are also seen as important for handling diversity and difference in adult education as

this enables individuals to critically engage with socially constructed categories of differences and resulting inequalities (Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann 2014; Kuhlen 2021; Kuhlen and Egetenmeyer 2022). Furthermore, it can be assumed that the reflective examination of other ways of thinking, seeing, and acting can stimulate reflection on one's own perception and values. This in turn could have an impact on the development of the professional self-concept of graduates, although this connection cannot be explicitly captured with the data.

In summary, participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of reflective skills. On the one hand, reflective skills can enable graduates to carefully examine theory and practice (Dewe 2002; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c). On the other hand, (self-)reflective skills can support the graduates in acting appropriately in open, contradictory situations in practice. According to Pachner (2013, 2018), (self-)reflective skills can be defined as an important prerequisite for professional action in adult education. The data reveals that interaction and communication with people from other countries seems to make a significant contribution to reflections on one's own and other people's ways of thinking, seeing, and acting.

On Chap. 6.1.4 – Development of a professional self-concept

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, graduates of the master's programmes can be supported in developing a professional self-concept. On the one hand, this is promoted by *considering adult education in an international context*, expressed in the context of cross-border international teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school). While studying abroad, a graduate becomes increasingly aware of adult education as being embedded in an international context. It seems that the graduate has had little contact with international dimensions in adult education in her studies so far. This could possibly be due to the rather national orientation of the graduate's previous studies, which can be interpreted against the background of the international orientation of the academic field (see Chap. 5.1.3). The study abroad seems to encourage the graduate to consider adult education in an international context, which leads to a changed understanding of adult education. In the context of seasonal schools, graduates can be encouraged to perceive themselves as part of an international adult education community, as they come into contact with people in the field of adult education from other countries. Seasonal schools create spaces where networking and exchange takes place, promoting a common socialisation in adult education by creating shared values and understandings. In the academic discourse, similar assumptions are discussed in relation to seasonal schools (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; Staab et al. 2020; INTALL 2021). Overall, it can be seen that international interaction and communication with people from the academic and practice field of adult education, as well as the integration of international teaching and learning content into the master's programmes, can contribute to graduates' perception of themselves as being integrated into a larger international community of adult

educators. International teaching and learning settings (especially seasonal schools) can therefore constitute places that may support the development of a common identity in the field.

On the other hand, it has been shown that *becoming familiar with the occupational field of adult education* can contribute to the development of a professional self-concept among graduates. This refers to the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, internship abroad, seasonal school). Through field visits in the context of study abroad and seasonal schools, graduates can gain insights into the field of adult education practice. Practical experiences can also be gained by completing an internship abroad. The international context of the cross-border teaching and learning settings can reveal fields of activity and tasks to the graduates that they are not familiar with from their own national context. This encourages graduates to rethink and expand their ideas and expectations of their future work. By seeing where adult education graduates find work in other countries, graduates can find a range of future career opportunities in the field of adult education. This enables them to reconsider their own ideas and expectations and, if necessary, to redirect their focus in the further course of their studies. Consequently, it becomes clear that practical experiences in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings can enable graduates to become familiar with the occupational field of adult education. This is facilitated by giving graduates an idea of possible fields of activity and tasks as well as different roles of adult educators in an international context.

Among the graduates, it is also outlined that participation in a seasonal school can contribute to *reflecting on one's own subject-specific interest*. This is expressed by one graduate referring to his change of degree programme. The thematic focus of the seasonal school, which deals with issues of adult education and lifelong learning, seems to encourage the graduate to reflect on his own subject-specific interest. By feeling justified in his change of subject, it can be assumed that he identifies himself more strongly with the field of adult education. This might contribute to his professional self-concept. It becomes apparent that these observations are mainly due to subjective factors – the graduate's change of subject. In addition, the teaching and learning content of the seasonal school seem to strengthen the graduate's interest in adult education topics. Engaging with adult education in a two-week programme together with other participants from different countries could presumably promote deeper reflection of one's own subject-specific interest as the seasonal school provides time and space for intensive academic exchange. As outlined in the previous sections, participation in a seasonal school may support a common socialisation in adult education.

In the context of a seasonal school, *reflecting on one's own approach to diversity among participants* can also support the development of a professional self-concept. Diverse ways of thinking, seeing, and acting can be experienced when interacting and communicating with the international participants of a seasonal school. By reflecting on the diversity experienced, graduates can develop an understanding that education and adult education are to be understood as embedded in different contexts. Moreover, experiencing diversity through international

interaction and communication can also strengthen the graduates' understanding of orienting adult education teaching and learning processes towards the needs and background of the participants. In view of an increasingly diverse target group in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130), the development of an appreciative attitude towards diversity can be seen as an important foundation and attitude of graduates for professional action in the field (Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann 2014). This means that any similarities or differences between participants are not perceived as obstacles, but rather as a starting point for a participant-oriented design of teaching and learning processes. With reference to programme planning activities of adult educators, Kuhlen and Egetenmeyer (2022) critically note that dealing with differences should be understood less as a 'management' of differences, but requires a constant critical reflection on categories of differences. International interaction and communication in the context of seasonal schools seems to support a reflective approach to diversity, whereby guided reflections could presumably strengthen the graduates' critical engagement with the experienced diversity and difference.

The data shows that international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of a professional self-concept, which is understood to be an important prerequisite for working in the field of adult education (Schmidt-Lauff and Gieseke 2014; Benz-Gydat 2017). In this way, graduates can increasingly identify themselves with the field of adult education and develop a fundamental understanding of education and adult education which may be transferred into their professional action. It appears striking that the graduates only refer to cross-border international teaching and learning settings in this regard. In these contexts, in addition to the teaching and learning content, the international interaction and communication with students, lecturers, and other people in the field of adult education seems to have a particularly supportive effect. Furthermore, insights into the practice of adult education can be gained that reveal differences to students' own national context. Consequently, it can be assumed that cross-border teaching and learning settings can open up new and differing perspectives on the field of adult education, which encourage reflection on graduates' own understanding of adult education and their own role in the field. These findings may suggest that cross-border teaching and learning settings promote a joint socialisation experience in the field of adult education.

On Chap. 6.1.5 – Personal development

Participation in international teaching and learning settings can support graduates of the three master's programmes in their personal development. The data shows that *coping with challenging situations* contributes to the personal development of the graduates. In the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, internship abroad, seasonal school, assisting in an international teaching and learning setting abroad), which require mobility abroad, travelling and staying in a foreign country seem to be accompanied by difficult situations. These can include finding their way around in an unfamiliar environment or communicating in a different language. It is evident that coping with

challenging situations can help graduates gain self-confidence in dealing with challenges. In addition, graduates can learn to handle different situations openly and flexibly. The self-confident handling of unknown, challenging situations is perceived by the graduates as beneficial with regard to their later occupational practice, as it helps them deal with challenging, contradictory situations in the occupational field. This can be interpreted against the background of the structure and requirements of working in the field of adult education. Professional activity in adult education is characterised by acting in unique, unrepeatable situations that are characterised by moments of uncertainty (Helsper 2021) as well as contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011). Mobility abroad can therefore provide graduates with confidence in dealing with critical moments in the field of practice. Particularly in the transition phase from study to work, challenging situations may arise in which extracurricular and interdisciplinary skills can support successful handling of such situations (Benz-Gydat 2017; Boffo 2018). One's own awareness and knowledge of being able to act appropriately and flexibly in challenging situations can therefore make an important contribution to the development of graduates' professionalism. The findings suggest that mobility abroad can prepare graduates particularly well to cope with difficulties and challenges in their later work.

In the context of study abroad, *reflecting on one's own personality* can contribute to the graduates' personal development. Studying abroad seems to offer the graduates the opportunity to perceive themselves detached from the social expectations and social pressure of one's own environment. This helps graduates to become aware of their own person, their own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Studying abroad can thus provide space for self-reflection and self-awareness. In this context, subjective factors of the graduates have to be taken into account. It could be cautiously assumed that the experiences of the graduates differ according to the extent to which their own personality is already consolidated before starting the study abroad. Thus, graduates who have a low awareness of their own selves could benefit from support to develop self-awareness by participating in study abroad. By reflecting on their own personalities, graduates may also develop self-reflective skills. The development of self-reflective skills can in turn be attributed significance with regard to the development of graduates' professionalism. In the discourse on professionalisation in adult education, self-reflective skills are considered an important prerequisite for dealing with contradictory demands for action in the field of adult education (Pachner 2013, 2018). Likewise, the self-reflective examination of one's own person may facilitate an increased awareness of one's own role and function in adult education. This could further contribute to one's professional self-concept.

Engaging with different perspectives of other people can also contribute to graduates' personal development. This is shown in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school) and teaching and learning settings at home (presence of international students in teaching). In these contexts, graduates can experience different, sometimes ambiguous, and contradictory perspectives and ambivalences as well as moments of non-

understanding through interaction and communication with people from different countries. In this way, graduates can develop an open and appreciative attitude towards other ways of thinking, seeing, and acting, which is considered significant for working in the field of adult education. With regard to the practice field of adult education, it can be assumed that an open and appreciative attitude proves to be supportive in dealing with contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies in the field (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011). This aids the handling of ambiguities and contradictions, and initiates processes of understanding. The ability to approach participants with an open, unbiased attitude and to endure tensions on the relational level can also be considered significant against the background of an increasingly diverse target group of adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130). The international teaching and learning settings may prepare students to encounter and handle diversity in adult education (Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann 2014).

In addition, *reflecting on prejudices towards other people* in the context of study abroad can contribute to the personal development of graduates. In the case of one of the graduates interviewed, this can be traced back to the specific situation of the host country where prejudices and stereotypes towards certain groups of people seem to be particularly present in society. By interacting and communicating with people on site, the graduate comes to critically question her own and existing prejudices and stereotypes, which enables her to develop an open and appreciative attitude towards other people. In the field of adult education, an open, appreciative, and unbiased attitude in dealing with participants could prove helpful. In this way, emerging prejudices can be perceived and acknowledged as well as critically questioned. In addition, it can be assumed that the critical examination of prejudices supports the development of (self-)reflective skills. These can be assigned importance with regard to the development of graduates' professionalism (Pachner 2013, 2018), as already mentioned before.

The data also shows that *interacting with people from different countries* can contribute to the development of an open attitude towards people from different countries. This is expressed in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school), where graduates are required to interact with people from different countries. It can be assumed that if graduates view the international interaction and communication positively and as an enrichment, a general openness towards people from other countries will develop. The DAAD Impact Study on the effects of study-related periods abroad confirms this assumption. The results of the study show that the frequency of contacts with people from the host country and with international students as well as the quality of these contacts (in the sense of e.g. pleasant, cooperative, intensive contacts) have an effect on the development of multicultural self-efficacy, intercultural empathy, and fear of foreigners. However, the quality of the contacts is more important than the quantity (DAAD 2019, 4-5). It is also evident among the graduates that the encounters and exchanges with people from different countries play an important role in the development of openness. Moreover, graduates consider an open attitude to be supportive when working

in the field of adult education. With reference to an increasingly diverse target group in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130), the willingness and openness to deal with people from other countries and cultural backgrounds appear to be essential. Graduates could engage more easily with participants, approach them with an open attitude, and enter into a joint dialogue.

In the context of international teaching and learning settings, *networking with people in the academic and practice field of adult education* is identified as another possibility for graduates' personal development. This is addressed in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings (internship abroad, seasonal school, international conferences or workshops abroad) and international teaching and learning settings at home (presence of international students in teaching, international conferences or workshops at the home university). These international teaching and learning settings can be experienced as places where graduates can network with scholars and students of adult education that go beyond their usual contacts at the home university. By doing so, graduates develop skills to establish, maintain, and use networks in their later careers. This points to the formation of cooperative skills, which can be understood as skills to establish, shape, and use cooperation (Leiber 2016, 15). Moreover, it is evident that the established networks of graduates can last beyond their studies, can be used for an exchange of knowledge and experience, and aid further cooperation in the occupational context. The various competence catalogues in adult education (Buischool et al. 2010; Strauch et al. 2019) indicate that the ability to cooperate can be defined as a basic requirement of adult educators. It enables them to build networks and partnerships with relevant actors and clients in adult education and to interact in networks and teams. Working together in collaborations and networks can in turn encourage people to reflect on their own (professional) action (Buschle and Tippelt 2015, 53). Furthermore, with reference to an interview study with young professionals, the ability to cooperate is also seen as playing an important role in the transition from study to work (Benz-Gydat 2017, 237). The development of networks in the academic and practice field of adult education can therefore be seen as important with regard to the development of graduates' professionalism (Jütte 2006; Franz and Feld 2015). In this context, international interaction and communication with people from different countries seems crucial.

Participation in international teaching and learning settings can also require *engaging in challenging tasks*, which can contribute to graduates' personal development. Graduates of the master's programmes only refer to this possibility in regard to cross-border teaching and learning settings (internship abroad, seasonal school). On the one hand, one graduate experiences the simultaneous completion of tasks during an internship broad as challenging. In this context, it appears that the specific activity of the graduate supports developing the ability to work on several tasks at the same time. On the other hand, the thematic focus and the didactic setting of the seasonal school seem to help develop the ability to familiarise oneself with unfamiliar topics in a structured way. This is perceived as supportive with regard to working in adult education. In view of a

changing field of activity and tasks in adult education, which can be attributed, among other things, to diffusion tendencies in the field (e.g. economisation, competition, and digitalisation) (Wittpoth 2013), graduates must constantly deal with new challenges and familiarise themselves with new complex tasks and topics. Likewise, working in adult education requires dealing with contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011), which need to be dealt with systematically and reflectively. Consequently, the international teaching and learning settings seem to represent a training ground for dealing with challenging tasks in the field. This can therefore contribute to the development of graduates' professionalism. However, it can be assumed that such opportunities may also arise in other academic contexts and are not necessarily limited to international teaching and learning settings.

It is clear from the data that participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute in different ways to the personal development of graduates in the three master's programmes. The graduates can gain self-awareness and self-confidence as well as an open and appreciative attitude, which can support them in being able to act appropriately in complex, contradictory situations characterised by moments of uncertainty (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011; Helsper 2021), as well as in dealing with a diverse target group in adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017). In addition, the development of cooperative skills can be seen as significant for the transition from study to work (Benz-Gydat, 2017). Dealing with challenging situations can also prepare students for future challenges in the field. The personal development of graduates can be observed in connection with mobility abroad. The interaction and communication with people from other countries, the teaching and learning content, and the didactic setting of the international teaching and learning settings are also shown to be important.

On Chap. 6.1.6 – Development of foreign language skills

The international teaching and learning settings enable graduates to develop foreign language skills. On the one hand, this is supported by *using a foreign language*. Participation in cross-border teaching and learning settings (study abroad, seasonal school) can particularly help graduates to develop foreign language skills. In this context, graduates mostly refer to the development of English-language skills. The cross-border teaching and learning settings constitute places that require graduates to communicate in another language. Especially when studying abroad, graduates have the opportunity for intensive practice as the mobility abroad often lasts for several months. For graduates, studying in a foreign language can be associated with moments of non-understanding, which require them to reflect on their own understanding and adopt new perspectives (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 10-11). This can also support the development of reflective skills. Likewise, communicating in English can contribute to the development of a common terminology of adult education and the development of international networks and an international community in the field (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 11). With reference

to the internationalisation of adult education in academia, research, and practice, English can be identified as the common spoken language in international cooperation and networking. Consequently, a good command in English can be seen as an important prerequisite for collaboration and interaction with colleagues, partners, and participants in the international field of adult education.

On the other hand, participation in international teaching and learning settings (seasonal school, teaching of international guest lecturers) can support *working with academic literature in English*. This can also contribute to the improvement of the graduates' English-language skills. For graduates who rarely have to deal with English-language literature during their regular studies, the international teaching and settings can offer an important training ground. Working with academic literature in English can be seen as significant for the development of graduates' professionalism, as they gain insights into the academic discourse outside their own national context. This may contribute to the expansion of their academic knowledge and the development of a common terminology in the field of adult education. In the occupational field, working with academic literature in English may be considered beneficial, especially when international insights into the theory and practice of adult education are required.

Among graduates of the three master's programmes, participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of foreign language skills. It is shown that mobility abroad and interaction and communication with people from other countries support gaining practice in communicating in a foreign language. The use of English-language literature on specific teaching and learning content can promote the handling and understanding of academic literature in English. Foreign language skills, especially English, can support graduates in communicating in the international field of adult education. As the common spoken language, English seems essential for academic exchange and international cooperation in adult education.

Following the previous arguments, it can be summarised that international teaching and learning settings (whether cross-border or at home) in the three master's programmes in adult education can provide different opportunities for the development of professionalism. Focusing on the structural factors, it is possible to identify common factors in the different forms of international teaching and learning settings that support the development of graduates' professionalism. These include interaction and communication with people from different countries, mobility abroad, teaching and learning content, didactic settings, teaching and learning cultures, studying as a form of pedagogical practice, and insights into (adult education) practice.

6.2 Supporting Factors of International Teaching and Learning Settings for the Development of Professionalism in Master's Programmes in Adult Education

With a focus on the individual level of academic professionalisation, the preceding chapters examined the development of professionalism in the context

of international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes in adult education. Therefore, the perspectives of graduates from the three master's programmes in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence have been analysed. The available data shows that participation in international teaching and learning settings in master's programmes in adult education offers different opportunities for the development of graduates' professionalism. It is evident that this is possible in the context of different forms of international teaching and learning settings, which were described in more detail in Chap. 5.1. With reference to the developed characteristics of professionalism development in degree programmes in adult education (Fig. 8), which were determined on the basis of the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education, the development of graduates' professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings unfolds as shown in Fig. 19.

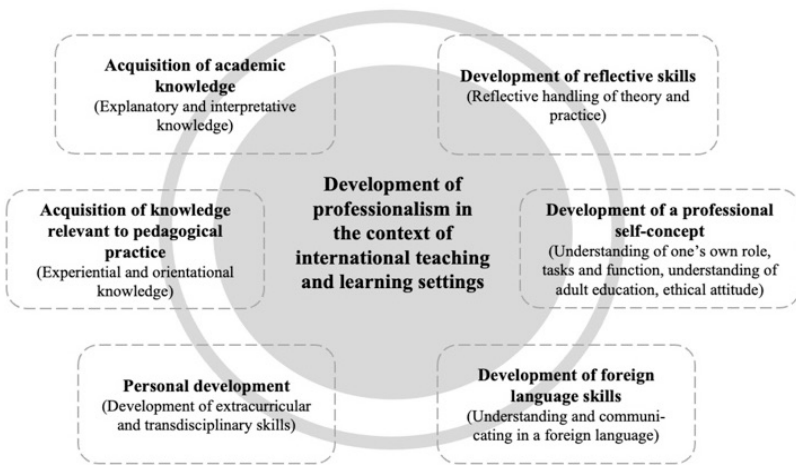


Figure 19 – Development of professionalism in graduates in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master's programmes. Source: own representation.

International teaching and learning settings can contribute to the acquisition of differentiated academic knowledge. This represents explanatory and interpretative knowledge, which is considered an important resource for acting in the field of adult education (Fuhr 1991; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Benz-Gydat 2017; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). In addition, the international teaching and learning settings can support the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice. This can be seen as a first step to the formation of practical action knowledge, as discussed in the theoretical discourse (Kade 1990; Dewe, Ferchhoff, and Radtke 1992). The practice-related knowledge can also be understood as experiential and orientational knowledge but rather provide support in many different contexts of action in adult education practice.

Moreover, the international teaching and learning settings facilitate the development of reflective skills. These are considered an important prerequisite for acting in the field of adult education as they support graduates in the reflective handling of theory and practice (Dewe 2002; Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Pachner 2013, 2018). However, the development of hermeneutic skills, which should equally be focussed on in adult education studies (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018), is not expressed in the data. This might be taken to suggest that graduates were not able to experience reflective and systematic processes of understanding of individual cases in adult education practice. In the context of international teaching and learning settings, it could therefore be demanded that students are guided more strongly to a differentiated consideration of cases of practice (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1081). In the context of international teaching and learning settings, it is also apparent that graduates are supported in developing a professional self-concept. The data indicates that the international teaching and learning settings enable common socialisation experiences, which promote a shared understanding and identity in the international field of adult education. Graduates can become increasingly aware of their role, tasks, and function in the field and develop an appreciative attitude towards diversity and difference in adult education.

Furthermore, the international teaching and learning settings enable graduates to develop personally. The extracurricular and transdisciplinary skills developed can contribute to the development of graduates' professionalism. They can support professional action in practice in different ways (e.g. for dealing with challenging situations). On the basis of the available data, the development of foreign language skills must be additionally taken into account, although these have not been addressed in the theoretical discourse in relation to the development of professionalism. English language skills in particular are seen by the graduates as important for their (future) occupational activity in adult education. This can be interpreted against the background of the internationalisation of adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017; Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017), where English serves as the language of understanding and communication. Furthermore, communicating in a common spoken language can support the reflection of one's own understanding of adult education as well as the development of professional networks and an international community in adult education (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 10-11).

By focussing on the structural factors in the development of the graduates' professionalism, supporting structures in the context of international teaching and learning settings can be derived. These factors clarify how the international teaching and learning settings contribute to the development of graduates' professionalism in the master's programmes in adult education, regardless of differences in the participation. This contributes to answering the fourth research question, which reads:

4. How does participation in international teaching and learning settings support the development of professionalism of graduates in the three master's programmes?

The supporting factors identified in the analysis can be theoretically linked to the underlying heuristic model of the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings in adult education master's programmes (Fig. 9) and transferred into a final empirical model (Fig. 20). The empirical model follows the structure of the heuristic model but focuses on the structural factors, which are added to the model. In the following paragraphs, the supporting factors are described in more detail and discussed against the background of the theoretical assumptions.

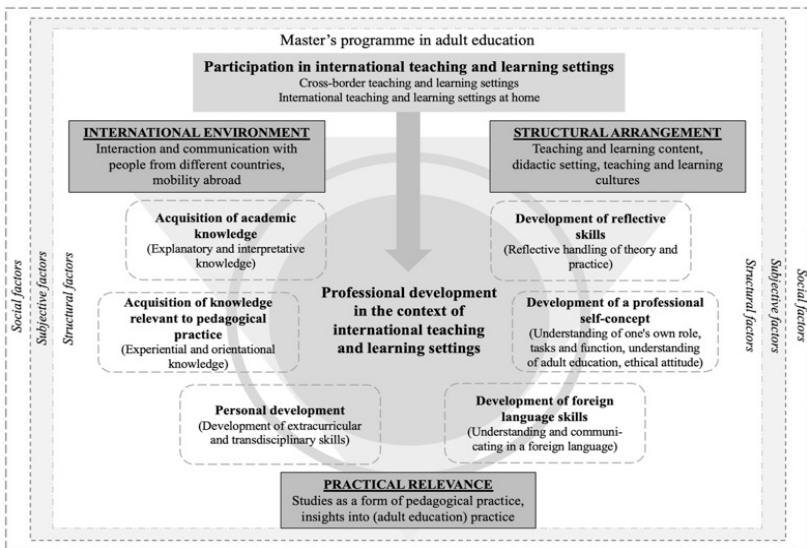


Figure 20 – Empirical model of the supporting factors of international teaching and learning settings for the development of professionalism in adult education master's programmes. Source: own representation.

The **international environment** can be determined as a central feature of international teaching and learning settings and an overarching supporting factor. It includes interaction and communication with people from different countries as well as mobility abroad.

The *interaction and communication with people from different countries* in the context of international teaching and learning settings can provide the key basis for experiences in the master's programmes. This supports the acquisition of academic knowledge and knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice, the development of reflective skills, the development of a professional self-concept, personal development as well as the development of foreign language skills. The interna-

tional interaction and communication can result both from contacts at the host university (or host organisation) and from international contacts at the graduates' own university. They contribute to graduates experiencing diversity in their studies. The diversity of such contacts can lead to encounters with new, diverse, and sometimes contradictory perspectives, which can provide new impulses for reflection. This can, among other things, contribute to reflecting on one's own understanding, one's own view of oneself, and of the world. This helps develop a differentiated knowledge and understanding of adult education. In addition, interaction and communication with people from different countries can create environments that require individuals to handle diversity in teaching and learning contexts. In view of the increasingly diverse target group of adult education (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130), this can be considered beneficial for the development of graduates' professionalism (Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann 2014). International contacts can also be used to build professional networks. This seems to develop skills in building, shaping, and using collaborations (Leiber 2016, 15), which can be particularly important in the transition from study to work (Benz-Gydat 2017, 237). The professional networks can also be a relevant resource for the exchange of knowledge and experience, the establishment and implementation of cooperation projects, or the arrangement of future employment.

Furthermore, *mobility abroad* in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings offers environments that can contribute to the personal development of graduates. Mobility abroad, which is associated with a trip to another country, can mean orientating oneself in an unknown context and dealing with new, challenging situations that offer opportunities for self-awareness and self-discovery. As international mobility can be characterised by uncertain, contradictory, and ambiguous moments, this enables students to be prepared for dealing with uncertainty (Helsper 2021) as well as contradictions, paradoxes, and antinomies (Nittel 2000, 2004, 2011a; von Hippel 2011), which is essential for working in adult education practice. Furthermore, mobility abroad enables students to gain practice in a foreign language (especially English) by requiring them to communicate in another language over a longer period of time. Communication in a foreign language can, in turn, make it possible to immerse oneself in moments of non-understanding and to work on one's own (professional) understanding (Egetenmeyer, Guimarães, and Németh 2017, 11). This can contribute to a reflective approach to academic knowledge and understanding of adult education.

The **structural arrangement** of the international teaching and learning settings also plays an important role with regard to the development of professionalism, although didactic, methodological, and content-related issues must also be taken into account in planning and implementing regular courses in the degree programmes. In the context of international teaching and learning settings, it is evident that the teaching and learning content, the didactic setting, and the underlying teaching and learning cultures have an influence on the development of graduates' professionalism.

The *teaching and learning content* set the thematic focus of the international teaching and learning settings. They are closely related to the acquisition of academic knowledge. Participation in the international teaching and learning settings can contribute in particular to the examination of new subject-related content and perspectives that go beyond the curriculum-based content in the respective master's programme and are not covered by lecturers of the programme. In this way, the international teaching and learning settings can contribute to building a broad, multi-perspective knowledge in the master's programmes that goes beyond the topics and perspectives of national discourse and incorporates international as well as transnational perspectives. In view of the interconnectedness of adult education with global and international contexts (Egetenmeyer 2017, 129), a differentiated academic basis appears to be important for understanding different phenomena in adult education. The examination of specific teaching and learning content can also contribute to the development of a professional self-concept (by reflecting on one's own subject-specific interest), the development of foreign language skills (by working with academic literature in English), and personal development (by engaging with challenging tasks).

A *didactic setting* conducive to learning also supports the acquisition of academic knowledge and knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice in the context of international teaching and learning settings. Here, practicing elements and the initiation of self-directed learning processes seem to have a supportive effect. In addition, methodological and didactic knowledge can be expanded by engaging with new teaching and learning methods. This is supported by the fact that during their participation in international teaching and learning settings, graduates can perceive and reflect on themselves as participants and at the same time as future adult educators in pedagogical contexts (see also *study as a form of pedagogical practice*).

In this context, differences in the *teaching and learning cultures* at the universities or degree programmes can be perceived. Participation in international, especially cross-border, teaching and learning settings can make it possible to become acquainted with different understandings of teaching and learning and associated organisational practices, which can contribute to reflecting on one's own and others' learning cultural profiles. This can support the development of a reflective understanding of teaching and learning that contributes to the development of a professional self-concept in adult education.

Closely linked to the structural arrangement, the **practical relevance** in the international teaching and learning settings can be emphasised. This can, in particular, support the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice, the development of a professional self-concept, and the development of reflective skills. The integration of practice references in teaching and learning is attributed particular importance in the academic professionalisation of adult education in academic discourse (Schübler 2012; Egetenmeyer and Schübler 2014b; Egetenmeyer 2016a; Schübler and Egetenmeyer 2018).

Practical experiences are made possible in the international teaching and learning settings through *study as a form of pedagogical practice* (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1073). In their studies, graduates can experience and reflect on themselves both as learners and (future) practitioners in adult education. In this context, the international teaching and learning settings make it possible to engage with new teaching and learning methods and different teaching-learning cultures (see *structural arrangement*), which go beyond the 'usual' content of courses in the regular programme. The international teaching and learning settings can consequently open up practical experience in unfamiliar study contexts, which can contribute in particular to the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice.

Furthermore, the international teaching and learning settings can provide *insights into (adult education) practice*, which can contribute to the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice as well as to the development of a professional self-concept. Participation in cross-border teaching and learning settings in particular can offer opportunities to gain practical insights into the structures and fields of activity and tasks of adult education in other countries and contexts. On the one hand, the practical insights can contribute to the acquisition of knowledge relevant to pedagogical practice with regard to education and adult education in other countries, whereby the subjective experiences are to be critically examined for false assumptions. On the other hand, the practical insights can encourage students to examine their own career aspirations and ideas and promote the development of a professional identity. Likewise, initial practical work experiences may be enabled, which represent important environments of experience and places of learning in academic professionalisation (Schüßler 2012). With reference to the results of this study, however, it should be noted that internships abroad seem to play a secondary role among graduates compared to mobility abroad for study purposes (Chap. 5.1). At the same time, academic contributions and studies (Egloff 2002; Männle 2009; Egloff and Männle 2012) point to the central importance of internships in relation to the development of professionalism in academic adult education. In this regard, there seems to be a potential for further development that might require an increased focus on and promotion of internships, both at home and abroad. This could provide students with more practical experience.

In sum, it can be concluded that international teaching and learning settings can contribute to the development of professionalism in adult education studies in different ways. Both participation in cross-border teaching and learning settings and participation in international teaching and learning settings at home can provide opportunities for the development of professionalism, whereby the development varies from individual to individual. The international environment, the structural arrangement as well as the practical relevance of the international teaching and learning settings constitute supporting factors in this context. However, these factors are not to be considered separately from each other, but interact in the international teaching and learning settings. For exam-

ple, students can be confronted with different teaching and learning cultures at the host university during a seasonal school and get to know new teaching and learning methods. At the same time, interaction and communication with participants from different countries attending the seasonal school can encourage them to reflect on the specific teaching and learning methods against the background of the participants' subjective prerequisites and learning-cultural profiles. As a consequence, the development of graduates' professionalism can be supported by different structural factors that interact with each other. The interplay of these structural factors can thus create unique «places and times» (von Hippel and Schmidt-Lauff 2012, 84), which can prepare graduates for meeting the requirements and challenges of the (international) field of adult education.

PART IV

Conclusion

Summary and Outlook

This international and comparative study highlights the relevance of international teaching and learning settings in the academic professionalisation in adult education. At the structural level of academic professionalisation, the study reveals a variety of forms of international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home), which are integrated in three selected master's programmes in adult education in Germany, Serbia, and Italy. The provision of international teaching and learning settings in these master's programmes is shaped in a complex interplay of different overarching contexts, which include education and higher education policy, funding, the internationalisation of universities, programme structure, international commitment and networking of the academic unit and students, and internationalisation of adult education, as well as fundamental political, economic, and social processes of change.

At the individual level of academic professionalisation, the results of the study highlight different opportunities for the development of professionalism in the context of international teaching and learning settings, although the development depends on various subjective, structural, and social factors (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). It is clear that the development of professionalism can take place both in cross-border international teaching and learning settings as well as international teaching and learning settings at home. For the development of professionalism, it is not so much the individual form of the international teaching and learning settings that is significant, but rather the international environment, the structural arrangement, and the practical relevance of the inter-

national teaching and learning settings. Overall, the results of the study point to the contribution of international teaching and learning settings to the development of students' professionalism in adult education. This contribution has so far only been highlighted in a few studies and academic contributions with reference to selected forms of international teaching and learning settings (Egetenmeyer and Lattke 2009; Egetenmeyer 2012; COMPALL 2018; Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer 2018; Staab et al. 2020; INTALL 2021).

In the concluding remarks, the internationalisation of the master's programmes is located at the interface of the internationalisation of higher education and the internationalisation of adult education (Chap. 7.1), where potential for further development can be identified. With regard to the development of professionalism of (former) students in the master's programmes in adult education, reference can be made to the importance of diversity experiences in the context of international teaching and learning settings for the development of professionalism (Chap. 7.2). At this point, it is possible to reflect on future requirements and further research that could highlight additional support for the development of students' professionalism. Finally, against the backdrop of the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic, an outlook on the internationalisation of degree programmes in adult education is provided (Chap. 7.3). In this way, the findings can be linked to current developments in society and the world.

7.1 Internationalisation of Master's Programmes in Adult Education – between Internationalisation of Higher Education and Internationalisation of Adult Education

In view of the findings of the present study, it can be stated that the provision of international teaching and learning settings in adult education programmes is shaped between the internationalisation of higher education on the one hand and the internationalisation of adult education on the other.

Based on developments in education and higher education policy over the past thirty years, the internationalisation of higher education has become a central necessity and prerequisite as well as an integral part of universities, even though science and universities are fundamentally international in nature (Teichler 2007a; de Wit and Altbach 2021). Strategies, funding structures, programmes, and measures at European, national, and university level guide the master's programmes in a direction that calls for the integration of international, intercultural, and global perspectives into teaching and learning. In this context, the internationalisation of higher education is often seen as a competitive pursuit of global prestige and rankings by higher education policies and institutions (de Wit 2019). At the universities in Würzburg, Belgrade, and Florence, internationalisation efforts can be identified at the organisational level, expressed through strategies, service units, and further frameworks as well as programmes and measures. The universities provide conditions that can support the internationalisation of the master's programmes but can also hinder it. A limitation is evident, for example, in the international double degree programme at the University of Florence, where difficulties are evident in the practical implementation

of the programme at the organisational level. The influence of the universities is also reflected in the master's programmes in accordance with the goals expressed by programme heads, (academic) staff, and students in relation to the international teaching and learning settings. The goals refer to rationales from the universities' strategies. At the same time, the internationalisation of the master's programmes is accompanied by social-cultural and partially political rationales of internationalisation. These emphasise that the internationalisation of the master's programmes is also intended to make a contribution to society as a whole (e.g. by promoting intercultural understanding). With reference to Brandenburg et al. (2020), the social mission of universities has rarely been the focus of internationalisation efforts in the higher education system. However, due to social developments (e.g. climate change, racism, trade wars), this is increasingly necessary in order for universities to fulfil their social responsibility not only to the higher education community, but also to society as a whole.

Against the backdrop of an adult education environment that is increasingly intertwined with global and international developments, the internationalisation of the master's programmes also becomes relevant for the field of adult education. Through their internationalisation efforts, the academic units of the three master's programmes illustrate that the integration of international teaching and learning settings into the programmes not only meets the demands of an internationalisation of higher education but also brings with it a subject-specific added value. The international teaching and learning settings are linked to professionalisation opportunities for the students, which should contribute to a differentiated knowledge and understanding of adult education. Another aim is to prepare students for handling diversity in the field of adult education practice, for example, by promoting intercultural understanding. This is also attributed importance in the adult education discourse with regard to the development of professionalism (Egetenmeyer 2017, 130; Staab and Egetenmeyer 2019, 280). Consequently, the internationalisation efforts of the academic units can be understood as a response to the professionalisation requirements in the academic, research and practice field of adult education. Students are to be prepared for a world of adult education that is increasingly intertwined with global and international developments.

Furthermore, it is evident that the internationalisation of the master's programmes is particularly driven by the international commitment and networking of the responsible academic units. As Simoleit (2016) also emphasises in her study on the Europeanisation of three universities, the internationalisation of master's programmes is largely driven by the initiatives of individuals and their networks. Consequently, questions of sustainability can be raised. If internationalisation efforts remain dependent on individual actors and are not systematically integrated into degree programmes or anchored in the structures of academic units and universities, it is not certain how the international qualification offers and international cooperation in the degree programmes may change as staff come and go. This concern is particularly valid in light of the fact that personal contacts and building trust are considered important factors for successful in-

ternational cooperation in the master's programmes. In addition, it is not certain how the internationalisation of degree programmes in adult education is shaped when the respective academic units have a lower level of international commitment and less pronounced networking structures than is evident in the three master's programmes studied. In these programmes, the provision of international teaching and learning settings could presumably remain rather marginal. In line with Schüßler and Egetenmeyer (2018), adult education as an academic discipline is therefore called upon to meet internationalisation requirements in adult education academia, practice, and research.

In order to sustainably and comprehensively integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into degree programmes, it may be necessary for adult education as an academic discipline to gradually move towards internationalisation of the curriculum (Leask 2015), together with the responsible academic units, universities, and other stakeholders at local, national, and global level. This could lead to a systematic and comprehensive integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the content of the curriculum as well as into further activities and support services at the universities. To this end, the existing diversity in universities and local communities should be increasingly recognised as a resource that can be made accessible to students (Leask 2015; Brewer and Leask 2022). In the three master's programmes, a range of international teaching and learning settings (cross-border and at home) could be identified, however, only few are embedded in the formal curriculum of the programmes. This indicates that participation in international teaching and learning settings depends on the one hand on the students (e.g. Are they interested in gaining international experience during their studies? What previous experience have they had in an international context?). On the other hand, it depends on the academic staff whether additional international perspectives are integrated into the studies (e.g. through international literature) or whether additional international activities (e.g. participation in international conferences) are made accessible for the students. For this reason, a more systematic integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives into the formal, informal, and hidden curriculum could be called for (Leask 2015). This could also help to ensure that international teaching and learning settings are increasingly linked and do not remain isolated experiences. Students could be encouraged to actively integrate their (previous) international and intercultural experiences into different teaching and learning settings. The diversity of students and lecturers already present in the degree programmes could be utilised regardless of international mobility. As a result, international, intercultural, or global perspectives could be open to all students on an equal footing and irrespective of physical mobility. This could increasingly contribute to the development of international and intercultural skills as well as a reflected attitude and view of the world. There may be a growing need to prepare students to make a meaningful contribution to society on a local and global level, especially in view of increasing social challenges (e.g. racism, COVID-19 pandemic, warlike conflicts in Europe) (Brewer and Leask 2022, 259). In the context of adult edu-

cation, this demand seems particularly relevant, as professional action in adult education is always linked to a social (educational) mandate, which demands that adult educators act in a socially responsible and socially constructive way.

The findings of this study show that the internationalisation of the master's programmes takes place at the interface of the internationalisation of higher education and the internationalisation of adult education. It is important to systematically relate these two processes to each other – especially if internationalisation is to take place sustainably and systematically. In order to integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning in a sustainable and systematic way, it may be necessary to consider which contextual influences affect internationalisation and how these can be claimed in a targeted and planned manner. The overarching contexts derived from the international comparison of the three master's programmes (e.g. education and higher education policy, internationalisation of the university, programme structure) could prove helpful in this regard. Identifying and reflecting on the different contexts could reveal potential for the systematic (further) development of the internationalisation of teaching and learning. In this context, the following questions with reference to the overarching contexts of the internationalisation of the master's programmes can be considered starting points for reflection and further discussion¹:

- Who are my students? How can they be actively involved in the international teaching and learning settings?
- What (international) partnerships exist at the academic unit? How can these partnerships be made sustainable?
- Which subject-specific needs and which further needs exist that should be addressed by the international teaching and learning settings?
- What conducive/obstructive framework conditions can be found at the organisational level? How can these structures be strategically used or further developed?
- Which international teaching and learning settings already exist (in the degree programme, in the university)? How can these be systematically linked with other international teaching and learning settings?

These and other possible questions could support a targeted and sustainable structural further development of the provision of international teaching and learning settings in degree programmes in adult education. In conclusion, in line with Egron-Polak and Marinoni (2022, 92), it is important to remember that the internationalisation of higher education is a very complex phenomenon that is not easy to describe or understand. It is therefore important not to underestimate the complexity of internationalisation, otherwise incorrect conclusions and decisions can be made at the programme, organisational, or national level.

¹ The questions are not to be understood as exclusive or fixed. They serve merely for illustration and clarification at this point.

7.2 Professionalism Development and Experiences of Diversity in the Context of International Teaching and Learning Settings

The present study highlights the importance of integrating international, intercultural, or global perspectives in adult education programmes with regard to the development of professionalism. The internationalisation efforts at the structural level of the master's programmes, which point to opportunities for students' professionalisation, have been confirmed by the experiences of graduates of the master's programmes. It is evident that international teaching and learning support the graduates' qualification in the field of adult education, their personal development, and development of foreign language skills, which are in line with the goals presented by programme heads, (academic) staff, and students of the master's programmes. It appears that the integration of international teaching and learning settings into the master's programmes has some impact. It is evident that participation in international teaching and learning settings can contribute in different ways to the development of graduates' professionalism.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that the development of professionalism in adult education studies is highly individual. Different subjective, structural, and social factors interact in the development processes (Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018, 1074). These can lead to different experiences and learning processes. In her study on the academic learning potential of students' semesters abroad, Egetenmeyer (2012, 166) states that although an academic learning potential is 'hidden' in semesters abroad, it must first be 'lifted' by the students. Students should therefore be supported in making use of this learning potential by, for example, providing appropriate time periods or involving students in the planning processes (Egetenmeyer 2012, 167). These findings are supported by the results of the present study. Participation in international teaching and learning settings can be associated with different opportunities for the development of professionalism, which are experienced differently by the graduates. By interweaving the perspectives of graduates from the three master's programmes (Denzin 1970; Flick 2011b), although participation experiences are heterogenous, it has been possible to identify overarching structural factors in the international teaching and learning settings – namely: the international environment, the structural arrangement, and the practical relevance of the international teaching and learning settings. These factors are seen as significant for the development of professionalism in the master's programmes in adult education. Considering these factors when planning and arranging international and learning settings at programme level may therefore help students to take advantage of the opportunities that are inherent in the international and learning settings for the development of their professionalism.

It becomes apparent that the structural arrangement and the practical relevance also seem to be relevant for the planning of teaching and learning settings independently of the integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives. In the academic discourse, for example, the inclusion of practical insights and experiences in adult education studies is emphasised in regard to

the development of students' professionalism (Schüßler 2012; Männle 2018; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018). The specificity of international teaching and learning settings, however, seems to arise from the experience of diversity. As can be seen in the data, the international teaching and learning settings enable graduates to reflect, modify, and specify their existing knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives by experiencing a diverse composition of participants (students, lecturers, and other persons), a variety of subject-specific topics, perspectives, and methods as well as various practical insights into the diverse field of adult education. The added value of international teaching and learning settings could therefore be attributed to the diversity and differences experienced in these contexts, regardless of the form of the international teaching and learning settings. In the academic discourse on professionalisation in adult education, the promotion of the handling of diversity in adult education studies is highlighted by Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann «as a cross-sectional task of academic professionalisation». It concerns «the structural-systematic promotion of 'diversity experiences' and ergo the translation of the subject of diversity into different adult educational mediation and programme formats at the learning site university» (2014, 191). This translation seems to have been successful in the context of the identified international teaching and learning settings in the three master's programmes, as students are confronted with diversity at different levels: on the interpersonal level, in their interactions (e.g. with international students), on the content level (e.g. with different perspectives on a topic in adult education), and on the practical level (e.g. by getting to know different adult education practices in other countries).

In order to open up diversity experiences to all students and to promote an appreciative attitude towards diversity and difference, a systematic and comprehensive integration of international, intercultural, or global perspectives into degree programmes in adult education could be necessary. As already indicated in connection with the internationalisation of the master's programmes (Chap. 7.1), this can be promoted through internationalising the curriculum (Leask 2015; Brewer and Leask 2022). This may require linking international teaching and learning settings with other qualification offers at the universities or preparing and following up on students' international and intercultural experiences. An organised framework could be put in place to guide students towards reflections that critically question social differentiations and associated inequalities in order to train a reflective approach to diversity and difference (Robak, Sievers, and Hauenschild 2013; Schreiber-Barsch and Lehmann 2014). Guided reflections can also support students in linking their diverse, sometimes contradictory experiences to their existing academic knowledge in reflective and hermeneutic processes. The systematic linking of theory and practice represents a central moment in the development of professionalism in academic adult education. It supports the development of reflective and hermeneutic skills (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2012c; Schüßler and Egetenmeyer 2018), which are only partially articulated among graduates in the context of international teaching and learning settings. In order to promote diversity experiences, it might be also important to

perceive the existing diversity at the universities and in the local community as a resource that can be harnessed in the teaching and learning processes. In this context, further theoretical and empirical studies of diversity in the context of academic professionalisation in adult education might provide further clarification and recommendations.

However, as the findings of this study suggest, students of adult education tend to be reluctant to participate in international teaching and learning settings. Reflecting on structural and subjective barriers to participation in international teaching and learning settings may therefore be necessary. By investigating the reasons for (non-)participation, it could be analysed how students in adult education studies can be actively encouraged to engage more with international teaching and learning settings in their studies. Therefore, the available data would need to be examined in a secondary analysis with regard to graduates' motives and incentives as well as obstacles in relation to their participation. This could contribute to complementary assumptions and insights regarding the graduates' participation in international teaching and learning settings, which can be additionally considered when planning international teaching and learning settings at programme level. In this way, the identified structural factors could be aligned with the subjective factors of the students (e.g. their needs, motives) to support the development of students' professionalism in adult education. The need to align international teaching and learning settings with the students' needs and experiences has already been highlighted as important for the provision of international teaching and learning settings in the master's programmes (Chap. 5.4).

7.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education during COVID-19

With the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019/early 2020, the higher education landscape worldwide was faced with major challenges. With the temporary physical closure of higher education institutions, there has been a widespread shift to virtual modes of collaboration, research, and teaching and learning. The first comprehensive reports on the impact of COVID-19 on the higher education landscape (Farnell, Skledar Matijević, and Šćukanec Schmidt 2021; UNESCO 2021; Schleicher 2022) provide insights into the global developments and expected medium-term consequences for the higher education sector, the higher education institutions, and students and teachers. The international mobility of students, teachers, and researchers was severely affected by the temporary physical closure of universities, temporary border closures, and restrictions on entering and leaving countries. With the onset of the pandemic, planned study abroad programmes had to be stopped, postponed, or (partially) replaced by digital formats. After initial forecasts that suspected a drastic decline in the number of international students, however, initial data for the academic year 2020/2021 point to a less severe decline in international mobility. For example, the number of international students in Germany decreased by about 20% (Farnell, Skledar Matijević, and Šćukanec Schmidt 2021, 13). Globally, between the years 2019-20 and 2020-21, declines of 17% for incoming student

mobility and 59% for outgoing mobility were reported (UNESCO 2021, 19), although the figures may vary between regions and countries.

At the time of writing this thesis, it remains unclear how international student mobility will develop over the next few years. Will student mobility numbers return to their pre-pandemic starting point or even increase further? Will international mobility be largely outsourced to the virtual realm (e.g. through Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, MOOCs)? It also remains to be seen which additional political, economic, and social needs and which individual needs on the part of students will be imposed on the internationalisation of higher education. In addition, it is necessary to address how to deal with a long-standing decline in incoming and outgoing mobility of students and lecturers, who contribute significantly to the diversity of universities. In order to be able to sustainably integrate international, intercultural, or global perspectives into teaching and learning, regardless of physical mobility, a stronger focus on internationalisation at home and internationalisation of the curriculum could be required in the coming years. Virtual teaching and learning formats might play an increasingly important role in the internationalisation of higher education. Furthermore, in the academic discourse on higher education, there is concern about financial losses for universities (especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries) if international students, who represent an important source of income for the universities, go elsewhere (Farnell, Skledar Matijević, and Šćukanec Schmidt 2021, 13; Schleicher 2022, 10). It therefore remains to be seen how the higher education landscape and in particular the internationalisation of higher education will develop over the coming years. According to Brewer and Leask (2022), however, the COVID-19 pandemic can be understood as an opportunity. The pandemic may constitute an engine for innovation, especially with reference to the internationalisation of the curriculum (hereafter abbreviated as IoC).

The time is ripe to reimagine IoC—that is, to shift away from mobility for the minority as the primary means of IoC to global learning for all based on an inclusive pedagogy of intercultural encounter at home and abroad through new modes of remote instruction. This will require sustained cooperation between a broad range of actors—students, faculty, IT services, student support staff, and others—working in partnership to create engaging intercultural learning opportunities for all students online, in class, and in their local communities (Brewer and Leask 2022, 259).

In view of the findings of the present study, which draw attention to the contribution of international teaching and learning settings with regard to the development of students' professionalism in adult education, adult education as an academic discipline is also challenged to critically reflect on the developments since the COVID-19 pandemic and to push for future developments. In this context, it may be necessary to pay more attention to the internationalisation of the curriculum. In this way, diversity experiences could be systematically integrated into the formal curriculum as well as additional areas and activities of studies.

As the study shows, international, intercultural, or global perspectives can be integrated into teaching and learning not only in the context of cross-border teaching and learning settings, but also through international teaching and learning settings at home. Both of these can promote academic professionalisation in adult education. A follow-up study could provide additional insights into whether and how the internationalisation of the master's programmes studied has changed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. One could investigate how the forms of international teaching and learning settings or the goals and framework conditions have changed, and which additional contexts play a role in the provision of the international teaching and learning settings. In the context of the three master's programmes, further surveys of students and graduates could be used to show whether the experience of international and intercultural experiences has changed since the pandemic and what impact this has had on the development of students' professionalism. Further studies could also help to provide insights into the internationalisation of adult education programmes in other countries in Europe and beyond. As already noted in the introduction to this thesis, studies dealing with the internationalisation of adult education programmes remain marginal. For this reason, adult education research would face the challenge of closing further research gaps. International and comparative studies, like the one presented, offer particular promise in revealing social, structural, and subjective influences and their interdependencies on academic professionalisation. This can contribute to the further development of degree programmes in adult education (Egetenmeyer and Schüßler 2014a, 97). Both qualitative and quantitative methods which focus on internationalisation in the context of academic professionalisation in adult education both in an explorative and hypotheses-testing manner are suitable for this purpose.

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International Teaching and Learning Settings in the Academic Professionalisation of Adult Education. An International and Comparative Study

Academic education plays an important role in the development of professionalism of adult educators. Given the interconnectedness of adult education with global and international developments, this international and comparative study illustrates the need for a systematic and comprehensive internationalisation of adult education programmes and the relevance of international teaching and learning settings for the development of professionalism in adult education. Based on focus group and graduate interviews of three master's programmes with a focus on adult education at the Universities of Würzburg, Belgrade and Florence, similarities and differences in the internationalisation of the programmes are revealed and supporting factors for the development of professionalism are highlighted.

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