BIOGRAPHY AND GENERATION
IN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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For several decades, Peter Alheit has been an influential advocate of biographical research. Typically, his writing is distinguished by a capacity for balancing the particularity of individual biography with a search for patterns and trends. This analytical balancing act rests on a foundation of sociological theory (developing concepts from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias among others), an insistence on the importance of primary empirical data drawn from individual life stories, and a strong sense of the collective experience of far-reaching social and economic change as lived through everyday lives. While his work has had a particular impact in adult education, it is not surprising that his scholarly studies and influence have impacted on methodological debates, as well as touching on wider social science concerns for such concepts as social class and social milieu, as well as over attempts to operationalise the sometimes baroque complexities of Pierre Bourdieu's notions of habitus, capital and disposition.

In recent years, a number of biographical researchers have started to examine the role of generational relationships in transmitting values and norms. Herzberg, in her study of two generations of shipyard workers in Rostock, is unusual in finding that in many cases, the family learning habitus was significantly more influential than the social milieu in which the new generation grew up (Herzberg 2006). As we will see below, starting with

Mannheim most researchers have argued that generation is a second-level influence on norms and values. Yet even if we accept that socio-economic position, gender and ethnicity are more important than generation in shaping fundamental beliefs and behaviours, including orientations towards education, this is in itself no reason for neglecting generation altogether. On the contrary: generation can be seen as a prism, or filter, through which social class, gender and ethnicity are experienced and moulded. It works with, and through, these other factors, and I argue here that education plays a particularly significant role in these profoundly iterative processes.

This chapter opens by stating the case for Mannheim's insistence on the importance of generational analysis. Generational membership plays a significant part in people's subjective sense of who they are, but is also a major factor in shaping common, objective life chances across individual biographies. I then discuss influential definitions of generation and its importance. In the third section, I argue that education, both initial and post-initial, plays a powerful role in sustaining generational differences. The chapter then examines the growing attention currently being paid to intergenerational learning, which I see as an inherently contradictory dimension of lifelong learning. This brings me to ask whether, in modern societies, generation is not only a major factor in shaping life chances, but is widely viewed as a legitimate source of social and economic inequalities right across the life course.

GENERATIONS IN OUR LIVES
The notion of generation is double-edged. It refers, on the one hand, to family positions and relationships and thus marks off phases of the life course in terms of being a child, parent, or grandparent. Generation can also be understood as membership of a cohort, denoting an age-based form of social identification that is structured around people's shared experiences and understandings and the specific social and political events that have occurred throughout their life course. In both cases, learning plays an important role. Family contexts form an intimate and immediate environment for informal learning, which then has enormous spill-over effects into education and training throughout life. Equally, members of every age cohort are influenced by the education and training that they receive, and the context in which they receive it; and they in turn bring shared generational dispositions to bear upon their understandings of what learning is and can be in their lives.

Research into cohort based generational groupings has its roots in sociology. In what is now a classic point of reference, Karl Mannheim (1952) drew comparisons between

generational bonding and class solidarity. For Mannheim, it was important to distinguish between the shared objective conditions of a cohort and their subjective consciousness of a shared interest based on age. In recent years educational researchers have paid considerable attention to the development of shared generational experiences (see, for example, Antikainen et al. 1996; Olkinuora et al.), with a particular though not exclusive focus on generational differences in experiences of the education and training system in relation to such dimensions as the ways in which the education system itself has changed (for example the raising of the school leaving age), the importance of external influences on education (for example the disruption caused by war), and the ways in which the system relates with its immediate environment (which include transformation in family structures, or sharp variations in the youth labour market). So far, most existing research into the educational implications of generation has concentrated on the extent to which these shared conditions help to shape a cohort's orientation towards education. Far less attention has been paid to the extent to which generations can also develop a sense of their shared interests and experiences, a process in which education can also play an important part. To steal a phrase from Marx, we know a lot about generation 'in itself' and how it is shaped by, and shapes, educational experiences and aspirations; and much less about generation 'for itself'.

The one-sided focus of previous research is more surprising given the prevalence of ideas about generational identities in popular culture. Notions of generation 'in itself' appear to play a valuable role in popular culture as sources of humour, pride, recognition and both positive and negative identification. They are also widely used in commercial fields such as marketing and brand management. Not only social scientists talk of the baby-boomers (or, in Germany, the 68-ers), Generation X, and – perhaps – a new Recession Generation.

GENERATIONAL IDENTITIES
Some sociologists suggest that generational identities are assuming increasing importance in people's lives. In a contingent, late modern social order, where categories such as class or even gender have become more fluid, Martin Kohli suggests that for some at least, generation constitutes an increasingly important framework for living our individual lives, and also acquires greater significance as a collective anchoring for our social identity (Kohli 2003: 4). Heinz Bude suggests that while people can deliberately change their class or even their gender, it is much harder to find ways of escaping from one's age cohort; he also notes that the idea of generation, lacking the political baggage of class and the historical associations of nation, may hold an active appeal as a positive pole of identification (Bude 2000, 19-20). Equally, as we have seen, it may provide an attractive

negative pole. People develop an identity through what they do not share with others, as well as what they do share; and again the relatively "clean" associations of generation may mean that people are comfortable to identify themselves as *not* belonging to "today's youth" or "the old sixty-eighters". Whether it is of growing significance or not, though, generational experiences play an important part in people's understanding of the self, and educational experiences appear to be critical to these understandings of generation.

The question, then, is whether people's understandings of generational attachments lead them to adopt shared dispositions towards learning. To answer this requires us first to clarify some of the basic terminology. Most definitions of generation tend to follow Mannheim, but even so most generational categories tend to be rather broad, and their boundaries are fuzzy. Antikainen and colleagues offer the following definition in their discussion of educational generations in Finland.

> A generation consists of a group of people born during the same time period and who are united by similar life experiences and a temporarily coherent cultural background. People belonging to the same generation have the same location in the historical dimension of the social process (Antikainen et al. 1996, 34).

This begs some obvious questions. Precisely which time period, for example? And how temporary, and how coherent, is the cultural background? How can these broad generalisations be turned into categories that help us understand the meanings that people attach to generational belonging?

The most common approach in the literature is to define generations in terms of birth cohorts. Typical is an Australian study of generation and identity which took the Boomer generation as its point of departure (Phillips and Western 2005). The authors produced a tripartite categorisation grouped around this pivotal cohort; however, drawing on survey data, the authors found relatively little difference between the self-identities of the three groups, which perhaps confirms the difficulties of defining boundaries in terms of birth cohorts. Instead of birth year, some other researchers have opted instead to look at the years when people came of age, passing through adolescence and early adulthood. Alanen, for instance, adopts what she calls a structuralist approach, defining generation as "a socially constructed system of relationships among social positions in which children and adults are the holders of specific social positions defined in relation to each other and constituting, in turn, specific social (and in this case generational) structures" (Alanen 2001, 12). But this still begs the question, to use Mannheim's terminology, of whether we can then distinguish actual (subjectively felt) generations from potential (structurally

defined) generations. While a strong relational element is highly plausible, and structural factors are certainly a necessary precondition, we also need to look for shared experiences and a degree of cultural unity as further conditions of any definition of generational groupings.

GENERATIONS AND LEARNING BIOGRAPHIES

Education has a complex iterative relationship with processes of forming generations. The question of how the relationship between generation and learning can be best understood has a long history in educational thinking, defined principally in terms of intergenerational transfers of knowledge and values, whereby children acquire the abilities to function in their parents' society (Eccarius 2002). This classical and often normative view of intergenerational socialisation as a one-way process, where the adult generations teach the young, has its roots in antiquity and survived the modernisation processes until relatively recent times. Some years ago, two authors coined the term "inverse socialisation" – defined as the upward transfer of knowledge and skills from children to parents – to describe a phenomenon that they saw as a marked feature of the information society (Cochinaux and Woot 1995); and indeed we may add the transfer of values and lifestyles from adolescents to adults, where some parents try to retain the lifestyle of the perpetual teenager or acquire the skills that are characteristically – even stereotypically - regarded as routine by younger adults.

Like many later commentators, Mannheim thought that events and experiences in youth were particularly important in generational formation. This was a stage of life when people experienced "fresh contact" with the "accumulated heritage" (Mannheim 1952, 293) and responded in the light of their own understandings rooted in their own historical location. As well as freshness, this life stage is widely thought of as crucial in the process of identity formation, and is characterised by high levels of contact with like-aged peers across a variety of contexts (McMullin, Comeau and Jovic 2007, 302-303). In contemporary circumstances, "keeping up" and "staying ahead" become permanent challenges for members of the different generations. These processes can be overlaid with more or less overt conflict between generations, material as well as cultural. McMullin, Comeau and Jovic (2007, 308) noted that many of the younger IT workers in their sample thought that their generations tended simply to "pick up" computing skills, believing that older ones had to work hard to achieve the same learning goals; their interviewees routinely used the language of generations, sometimes with slightly abusive overtones ("old farts", "young idiots").

Several studies have examined the relationship between generations and education. A number of Finnish studies have rightly been especially influential in recent years, particularly since the publication in English of a landmark study by Ari Antikainen and his colleagues (Antikainen et al. 1996). Accepting that of course there are huge variations in the experiences of different socio-economic groups and between those of the genders, Antikainen and his colleagues argued that different generational cohorts have distinctive experiences of the education and training system, both in their youth and subsequently in early adulthood and later in their life course. Examples include changes inside the education system itself (such as the raising of the school leaving age), those that are external (such as the disruption caused by the total wars of the twentieth century), and those that concern the system's relationship with its immediate environment (which include transformation in family structures, or sharp variations in the youth labour market). For a variety of historical reasons, these changes have been unusually sharp in Finland, leading some researchers to conclude that "the educational gaps between different age groups are very wide in international comparison" (Olkinuora et al. 2008, 42). This distinctive generational pattern may mean that the Finnish case is atypical, but the existence of a body of related studies is nevertheless significant for researchers working on different European contexts.

In their study, Antikainen and colleagues identified four generational groupings (1996: 35). How they did so on the basis of their data analysis is not entirely clear from their account. However, the four categories appear to be based on relational and historical factors, and in three cases are defined by their shared educational experiences:
- Cohort with little education (born before 1935)
- Cohort of educational growth and inequality (1936-1945)
- Cohort of educational growth and welfare (1946-1965)
- Young people (1966-)

The last grouping is somewhat anomalous, in that it is initially defined by chronological age alone, rather than on the basis of its relationship to the educational system. The study was particularly concerned to consider the different orientations of each cohort to the possibility of learning in adult life.

Following the Antikainen study, a group of researchers from the University of Turku deployed a similar approach to the analysis of workplace learning (Aro et al. 2005). Importantly, though, this study addressed informal learning, as well as the formal education that largely shaped the Antikainen typology. Drawing on evidence from a large

scale survey of adult education participation in Finland, this group also distinguishes between four groups, which do not entirely overlap with those found in the Antikainen study:

- The cohort of war and scarce education (born 1921-39);
- Structural changes and growing educational opportunities (1940-55);
- Welfare and abundant educational choices (1956-69); and
- Forced individual choices (1970-82).

The fourth generation is described as facing "not only the freedom but also the necessity of continuous choices", arising partly from marketisation, with pupils being portrayed as clients faced with a variety of curricular options (Aro et al. 2005, 465).

A third study, also by researchers from Turku, draws on the work of Antikainen, Aro and Roos among others (Olkinuora et al. 2008). Based on a large body of empirical data gathered between the mid-1980s and the early years of this century, it examines the meanings of lifelong learning for three generational cohorts:

- Young adults (20-35 years old), facing forced individual choices as a result of insecurity in the labour market combined with the steady extension of initial education;
- Middle-aged workers/citizens (35-50 years old), who experienced welfare and wide educational choice in their youth, and overwhelmingly work in secure employment; and
- Aged adults and pensioners (aged over 50), who share very strong beliefs in the value of education, but are themselves often on the periphery of the learning and information society (see Olkinuora et al. 2008, 44-53).

All three studies confirmed that there are clear differences between generations in attitudes towards learning; while all cohorts placed a high value on formal education, older adults tended to see it as a guaranteed pathway to social mobility, while younger adults tended to view it as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for employment and a career (Aro et al. 2005, 472). Finally, the third study underlines the importance of early educational experiences along with adult education as a source of legitimate socio-economic inequality. The authors concluded from their data that a "participation threshold" had arisen between the oldest generation, who were likely neither to have opportunities to learn nor particularly wish to take up those that are available, and younger generations, who may take these opportunities for granted (Olkinuora et al. 2008, 55).

Taken together, the Finnish studies confirm that the concept of educational or learning generations has some warrant in the evidence. All of the three typologies, while differing in key respects, connect generational groupings to shared experiences of education, connecting private experiences with changes in public institutions. They may require modification, though, in a number of ways. There is, for example, evidence of a marked gender dimension to educational generations. In her qualitative study of three generations of Norwegian women, for example, Bjerrum Nielsen (1998) notes that for those whose youth occurred in the period 1955-1965, getting away from their mothers' lives is often an explicit aim, while education has become available as an obvious choice. While the older women had either been denied the opportunity altogether, or struggled to achieve entry, their daughters, aged around 18 at the time of the study, mostly saw higher education as a required means to the end of realizing their skills and abilities, an all-but obligatory step on the pathway of individualisation.

Of course, the gap between genders is not necessarily a sharply defined one. Bettina Dausien stresses that biographical differences between men and women fall into broad patterns that are better described as "gender-typical" rather than "gender-specific" (Dausien 1998, 108). These gender-typical patterns themselves may be changing, not least as a result of declining average family sizes (including significant growth in the number of no-child units) and steady rises the proportions of time spent by women in paid employment. Nevertheless, within these typical narrative patterns, women show more of a tendency to present and assess their biographies in terms of relationships, particularly kinship relations and community ties but also increasingly workplace connections, while men are more likely to focus on their self as agent, acting primarily throughout their work trajectory (Dausien 1998, 11-13). The marked gender dimension to generation is particularly important in view of the opening up of the educational space to women during the course of the twentieth century. Further, there is a well-known tendency for education to play a greater part in shaping life chances for women than it does for men (see for example Blundell, Dearden, Goodman and Reid 2000). Above all, gender is an important dimension of generational identities within the family.

This was largely confirmed by the findings of the Learning Lives project in the UK (Biesta et al 2011, Chapter 5). According to our data, within the family circle generational time was a frequent point of reference for interviewees, who used generational positions and events as key, easily understood markers of identity and change. Cohort membership was treated in a more diffuse way, and was cited partly in order to draw a contrast between one's own

peers and members of a younger or older cohort. In both cases, though, generation could also be a reference point for explaining learning and attitudes to education. People contrasted their own experiences and expectations with those of their parents, and with those of their own children. They adopted particular orientations towards education that they explained in terms of the belief systems and behaviours of their parents' generation; this included some interviewees who rejected parental views on the importance of formal education. In turn, they then expressed clear ambitions for the education of their children's generation, emphasising the opportunities and challenges that had opened up since their own youth. Our interviewees also associated shared educational experiences, such as university study or youth training schemes, both with their identity and their hopes for the future. Generation was, then, part of a very precise and clearly defined way of stating one's relative position within the family, and experiencing relations of chronological age through the family; but it was also experienced and understood, albeit in a more diffuse and general way, as part of a wider sense of one's biography, including one's biography of learning.

There are at least four ways in which age cohorts can become "educational generations". First, school structures and cultures primarily affect the young, and therefore form a central part of the generational habitus during youth. Second, since the structures and cultures of school systems are subject to change, they can be understood as "something that has an effect on what a generation takes for granted" that then distinguishes it from other cohorts (Aro et al. 2005, 461). Third, school systems are connected with other areas of everyday life, and particularly with people's transitions into adulthood. They therefore shape people's experiences of the labour market, and they tend to influence – and feature strongly in – people's accounts of their subsequent adult lives. This aspect is strongly associated with the ways in which people's identities are formed (including self-forming of identity). Fourth, school systems can trigger cohort-based social movements. The clearest example in recent decades is probably the student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which provides a widely recognised generational marker. Finally, generations may have shared dispositions which lead to a positive or negative stance towards lifelong learning. For example, baby boomers who see themselves as "forever young" are likely to see enthusiasm about learning as an expression of their youthful orientation towards life.

So what can we learn from the existing body of knowledge? In particular, the Finnish studies indicate that there are some important differences between generations in their attitudes towards both initial education and adult learning. Some of this is common sense: for instance, being a university student is likely to have carried a very distinctive set of

meanings for young people at a time when the higher education participation rate was three per cent; the same status carries quite different meanings when the participation rate is over forty percent, and higher education entry is part of the normal biography – at least for the middle classes, for girls and for some ethnic groups. But some of these studies have found much more deeply-rooted differences in orientations towards learning, resulting for example in varying generational views of on-the-job-training (Aro et al. 2005, 466).

Methodologically, though, even broad generational groupings of this nature are open to challenge. As Paterson and Ianelli note, the analysis of cohort-based evidence is liable to bias arising from differential mortality and migration (Paterson and Ianelli 2007, 336). While they are particularly concerned with the limitations for quantitative data sets, this inbuilt bias can also be an issue for researchers working on qualitative data, such as those used in this study. Moreover, qualitative encounters introduce a stronger possibility of interviewer bias, as interviewees inevitably shape and negotiate the interview process in the light of what (and whom) they see in front of them. All of these limitations mean that we should proceed with caution in imposing artificial boundaries around any notion of learning generations. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the idea of learning generations is an important one in helping understand what learning means to people and how they approach it through their lives.

INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

The discussion so far has concentrated on generations as groupings based on age cohort and shared experience. Another body of work looks at intergenerational learning within families (e.g. Boström 2003) or the reproduction of educational – and other – inequalities across generations (e.g. Gorard, Rees and Fevre 1999). Alison Fuller and her colleagues have considered generational differences in higher education access, but with particular respect to inter-generational transmission of inequality, in their study of barriers to participation in higher education in England (Fuller, Heath and Johnston 2011). Gender again plays a central role. Partly this is because primary care responsibilities, whether for children or for the infirm elderly, is far more likely to lie with women than with men.

The concept of generation may help us understand lifelong learning in quite a new way. In a critical analysis of concepts of social capital and lifelong learning, Peter Alheit has emphasised the extent to which contemporary economic and social tranformations have eroded established ties to local and class-based social milieus and mentalities, in spite of

the fact that growing socio-economic inequalities are one of the most important of these wider changes. He concludes that life courses are, as a result, "far less pre-ordained than in earlier times", while the constant pressure to make new choices and adopt new perspectives bears ever more clearly upon the individual – and, we might add, on individualisation processes (Alheit 2008, 7). This helpfully points us to an inbuilt tension between grand designs for lifelong learning on the one hand, and for intergenerational learning on the other.

Ideas of lifelong learning correspond to a society where the intergenerational transmission of skills, information and knowledge will no longer suffice. By intergenerational, I mean here both those forms of "primary socialisation" that take place within intimate social groupings such as the family, and those forms of "secondary" and even "tertiary socialisation" that take place in school, youth peer groups, and university. In Durkheim's classical account, these formal and informal processes of socialisation involved adults in passing their superior knowledge to the young. Of course, all socialisation processes are invariably iterative in nature, involving as they do interaction between agentic individuals, but the underlying principle of earlier systems of education and training rested on an assumption that initial educational experiences in youth would suffice for a lifetime of work, family and leisure.

One relatively simple example is to consider the importance of generation to the identity of migrant groups. Particularly among migrant groups, intergenerational exchanges appear both to help maintain existing collective identities, while simultaneously enabling adjustment to a new context. A sociocultural study of child/grandparent learning among Sylheti/Bengali-speaking families in east London explored the ways in which grandparents served as founts of inherited knowledge, including key social and communicative competences; equally, though, the children brought new competences that older adults had not previously accessed, such as familiarity with new technologies (Kenner et al. 2007). This study also noted the important caring role carried out by many grandparents, in a context where mothers are increasingly engaged directly in the labour market.

However, the Learning Lives findings suggested that intergenerational transmission is not always simple and unilinear (Biesta et al 2011). One of the interviewees, Lui Carter, was born in Britain to Pakistani parents who had settled in Britain in the 1960s. In his mid-thirties when interviewed, Lui – not his real name - resisted aspects of intergenerational socialisation, rejecting the ascribed identity of Pakistani migrant in Britain; yet he simultaneously wished to maintain his status and membership of the family while also

maintaining his Muslim faith. This was a particular challenge given that he was gay; while his sexual orientation was largely accepted by his primarily White workmates, his family circle were both bitterly disappointed that he would not have children, and entirely unable to marry his sexuality with their faith. He had decided, he said, that

> You can't, you can't reconcile it I've heard so many people in similar situations that have said that being Asian and not being straight are two things that will never mix because being from an Asian background it's automatically expected of you that you have to marry, not you should, you have to get married. . . . what we're trying to do in my generation is trying to maintain the peace and respect of our parents and understanding, you know, respect of the family and the honour and not bringing on shame, you're torn between that and the life that you're really leading which is living in the western open-minded world where things aren't as suppressed and frowned upon as they are back in India or Pakistan or wherever.

This was, then, a sharp generational clash where Lui had learned to "understand two sets of rules", which also involved him in learning how "to lead two different lives". It is probably not surprising, then, that Lui was pleased rather than dismayed when his employer proposed to relocate the call centre, and him along with it, to another town.

Again, Lui's story presents the double face of generation. He links his experiences and orientations to those of his family, but also to those of the cohort of young British adults who come from Asian immigrant families. The tensions, narrated by Lui in terms of lived experience, may also illustrate the wider tensions that are contained within notions of intergenerational learning. And this is not a peripheral case of an atypical individual: migration is one important facet of the wider flexibility and mobility that are so commonly cited in discourses of lifelong learning. It represents and expresses the processes of 'disembedding' knowledge and beliefs from specific local contexts that Giddens sees as so typical of late modernity (Giddens 1991). It is precisely this process of disembedding that makes generation as cohort an increasingly important element in definitions of the self, while at the same time it devalues the experience and wisdom of older generations and presents lifelong learning as an unavoidable necessity.

CONCLUSIONS

Collective cultural identities may be overlaid with more material foundations of generation, which can entail denial of opportunity to others from older or younger generations. This is made highly visible in current debates about access to housing for

those who came of age at a time of rapidly rising prices, who find the housing market dominated by members of older generations. But if we look at education, then it is older generations who are excluded from parts of the labour market that are open to the beneficiaries of the educational expansions of the 1970s through to the 1990s. The expansion of graduate occupations may provide welcome opportunities to those who have been through today's mass higher education system, but it is closed to those who came of age in the period of minority, even elite, higher education.

So the creation of generational identities is partly agentic, and partly the outcome of history. This history can include changing age-based definitions for limiting access to and exclusion from public resources, which are as important in education as in many other areas. Adults who left school during the period of elite higher education face quite different life chances from those adults who left school during the period of mass higher education. Life chances are distributed not only along the major social axes of differentiation – socio-economic class, gender and ethnicity – but also along the axis of time. Equally significant is the subjective acceptability of generation as a basis for differentiation. To all appearances, this pervasive structural inequality seems no more than 'common sense': it is, in short, almost universally regarded by the wider population as legitimate.

There is also an important subjective dimension to this process. I have argued that biographies are shaped by the opportunity structures that are available at specified stages of the life course, when age-related transitions are at stake. It follows that the salience of generation in people's experiences will partly reflect the extent to which individuals engage in non-normative transitions. Adults who return to study in higher education, for instance, are experiencing in adult life a process of education that is normatively defined as appropriate to school-leavers. In so far as they place themselves in a context defined by a predominantly youthful peer group, such adults risk being "infantilised"; at the same time, they are faced with experiences that may challenge or reinforce the taken-for-granted assumptions of one's own generational identity, as well as the equally taken-for-granted beliefs about the generation of one's peers. Generation thus becomes a more explicit and reflexive component of one's biography, as one seeks to reflexively organise one's experiences – including particularly the non-normative experiences – in ways that generate sustainable senses of the self, including the learning self. This suggests a rich research agenda for the future.

At the same time, the "real world" consequences of these processes may be troubling. The temporal structures of education include second and even third chance routes for adults, which are designed to promote mobility and adaptability, and may allow for new couplings and uncouplings of standard patterns of education, work, family and retirement (Biesta, Field and Tedder 2010). It is easy to celebrate this emancipatory dimension of lifelong learning, but it remains the case that there is an "age penalty" for those who engage in "delayed" transitions. If this arises partly from prejudice, it is also a result of straightforward economic calculations (older entrants to any occupation have less time in which to make up for lost ground) combined with structural blockages to further advancement within the education and training system. Attempts to remedy some of these blockages, for example by accrediting prior learning, have had little success. As Alheit and Dausien note, these problems particularly affect those who have taken time out from the labour market, mainly women; and those whose credentials and expertise were acquired in other societal contexts, such as migrants (Alheit and Dausien 2002, 13). Once again, then, generation intersects and interacts with other axes of differentiation to produce enduring patterns of advantage and disadvantage. While further research is one requirement, these questions are also of immense practical and political significance.

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