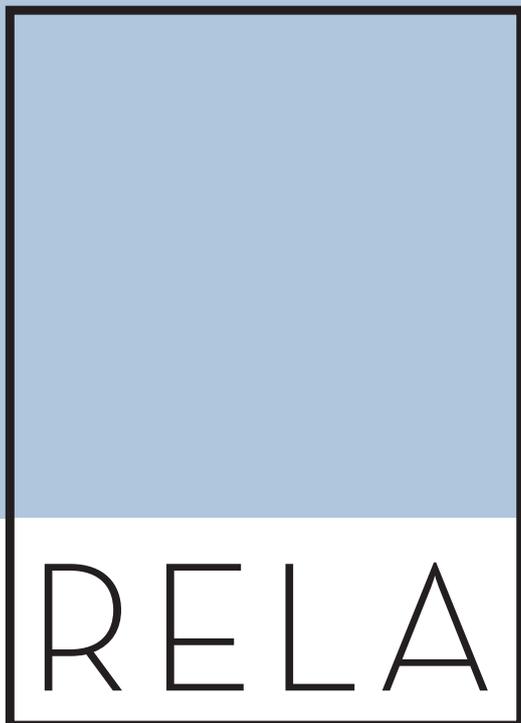


**THIS ISSUE:
THE EFFECTS OF POLICIES FOR THE
EDUCATION AND LEARNING OF ADULTS
- FROM 'ADULT EDUCATION' TO
'LIFELONG LEARNING', FROM
'EMANCIPATION' TO 'EMPOWERMENT'**



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Editorial: The effects of policies for the education and learning of adults - from 'adult education' to 'lifelong learning', from 'emancipation' to 'empowerment'

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Practices of adult education and learning have historically been closely related to policy arrangements – often by defining and reproducing the culture of local, regional or subcultural communities – but increasingly in the service of the consolidation of the nation states. Depending on political situations and institutional arrangements, the states in Europe have been involved in the promotion and institutional framing of adult education and learning. Today the role of the nation state is changing in many ways, and it also affects the role assigned to education and learning arrangements. Both policies at the supranational level and market forces have had an increasing influence on the understanding of what adult education/lifelong learning is about. The shifts in the meaning and use of central concepts in this field are illustrative of these changes.

In this issue we have intended to create a space for reflection on these policy transformations and their consequences. In a call for articles four questions were guiding contributors in addressing 'the work and effects of policies for the education and learning of adults'.

- How can we interpret the shift in policy vocabulary e.g. from 'education to learning', and from 'emancipation to empowerment'?
- What is the influence of transnational agencies and how has this inspired education policy at the national level?
- How is the role of the state in education and learning policies conceptualized? Are there differences in differing (local/national/international) contexts?
- What is the future role of the nation state in adult education?

We have four contributions answering (some of) these questions, by the way all by female authors. They come from different European backgrounds and refer to varied domains of adult education. Marcella Milana, originally from Italy, currently works in Denmark and the US and concentrates in her contribution on political globalization and the shift from adult education to lifelong learning. In order to understand the changes taking place today, she strongly emphasizes the global-local interconnectedness. Rosanna Barros is active in Portugal. She investigates the way concepts and

responsibilities of adult learners and their providers are currently being framed in policy texts of the European Union. A third contribution is by Karin Filander in Finland who presents the results of a qualitative research with different student generations in her own university. She shows how perceptions of adult education/lifelong learning in her university have changed from the beginning days in the sixties, till today. The last contribution in this thematic issue focuses on career guidance policies in Europe. It is written by Ingela Bergmo-Prvulovic from Sweden. The author observes the gradual shift of career guidance from a humanist towards a human capital discourse.

How can we interpret the shift in policy vocabulary?

Over the past decades there has been an important shift in vocabulary from adult (and continuing) education to lifelong learning. This change has pervaded conceptions of the field and practices of education. It has often been seen as a necessary consequence of a move to ‘knowledge societies’ - where the production, dissemination and acquisition of (new forms of) knowledge are considered a major source of wealth creation for societies and individuals. Reference to the knowledge society and the creation of wealth has then, to an important extent, (re)framed and (re)phrased the ‘enterprise’ of adult education and learning in economic terms.

In spite of differences in observations and accents, all authors in this issue remark that policy discourse inside and outside Europe has undergone a remarkable change from the eighties onwards. However, they do not refer to the concept of the knowledge society to explain the transformations that have occurred. They rather refer to the reality of the ‘neoliberal society’ to interpret the changes in policy frameworks and vocabularies. Milana draws our attention to the emergence of new ‘global imagineries’ about the role of lifelong learning both for the individual and for society. She refers to the ‘mantra of lifelong learning’ that, from the eighties onwards, has become increasingly prominent, in combination with a shift in global policy frameworks from welfare state approaches to marketization approaches. She however emphasizes that these changes are not simply the result of top-down decision-making, but are also influenced by specialized groups operating at grass-roots level, interacting with higher levels of policy making, both at the national and the international level. In line with Milana’s observations, yet with a more pessimistic note, Barros emphasizes how, over the past six decades, we have moved from ‘thirty glorious years’ to ‘thirty disastrous years’. She explains how the changes in the wider socio-economic context were reflected in the way concepts obtained new meanings or were replaced by other concepts that corresponded better with the new neoliberal politics that have become dominant from the nineties onwards.

In combination with this contextual transformation, there has been a move from ‘emancipation’ to ‘empowerment’ as one of the main goals of educational endeavours. Whilst these terms may look synonymous, those working in the fields of adult education and learning are well aware of the significance: emancipation is past and empowerment is present. Emancipation relates to the (new) social movements of the sixties and the seventies that gave new direction to policies and practices in the field of education. Emancipation referred to the redistribution of opportunities on a collective level, renewing the social, democratic and cultural goals and brushing the dust off labour education, local activities, religious and cultural traditional institutions. Today, this orientation towards collective transformation has lost momentum and seems to some extent replaced by an emphasis on individual capacity to work and live up to

contemporary societal needs. Yet the question about ‘empowerment’ of people and local communities pops up again now and then. But the main education and learning agenda is connected with a notion of responsibility for one’s own self-development.

According to Bergmo-Prvulovic it comes down to the capacity to prepare continuously for change, for geographical and professional mobility and for instability in general. This shift from collective towards individualized responsibilities began to emerge in the eighties and became dominant by the turn of the century.

All contributors to this thematic issue make similar statements, yet, particularly Filander shows how in her own university the vocabulary on adult education has increasingly been influenced by the discourse on human resource development. According to her, adult education in Finland today is almost exclusively linked to human capital approaches and practices that locate development opportunities for adults in the sphere of working life. The social activism tradition in adult education, which has inspired adult (popular) education practices in many countries, is now articulated in Finland mainly by general educationalists.

What is the influence of transnational agencies?

That brings us to the second question: what has been the influence of transnational agencies in this shift in discourse and related policy? Processes of globalisation, dramatically speeding up from the eighties onwards, have strongly influenced policy definitions of development and prosperity, thereby transforming understandings of the way education could or should contribute to individual and collective welfare and well-being. Globalisation processes have appeared to support the reframing of adult education and learning in economic terms. The market, rather than the state, was expected to play the dominant role in the creation of wealth, prosperity in general and social mobility of the individuals in particular.

All authors in this thematic issue observe that international agencies have over the past decades played a prominent role in this shift in discourse and policy arrangements. The think-tanks of transnational agencies: the World Bank, UNESCO, WTO and the OECD, and the European Union have produced policy documents that gave direction to many of the changes that recently took place. These agencies are the main inspirers of ‘less state, more market’ strategies. They also are the architects of a new policy agenda for ‘lifelong and life wide learning’, while reinventing the vocabulary that is so prominent today in the policy contexts of the individual nation states in Europe. Both Marcella Milana and Rosanna Barros pay attention to the documents produced during the last fifty years by these agencies. They refer to the existence of two generations of political thinking, informing the understanding of lifelong education and lifelong learning, as pointed out by Kjell Rubenson (2008). The first generation is symbolised mainly by Faure’s Report for UNESCO ‘Learning to be’ (Faure et al., 1972), that propagated a radical humanist, emancipatory perspective on lifelong ‘education’. It represented a powerful plea for policies and practices of education that would stimulate learning across the lifespan and this in varied contexts, while simultaneously criticizing the dominant role attributed to formal schooling in modern education. The second generation, from the nineties onwards, is mostly inspired by documents such as the Delors memorandum on ‘Learning: the treasure within’ (UNESCO, 1994) and the OECD report on ‘Lifelong Learning for All’ (1996). The latter documents have been inspirational for recent policy measures and have given direction, though in differential ways, to human capital approaches to lifelong learning. UNESCO has tried to sustain a

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more humanistic dimension, whereas OECD has more markedly emphasized the economic role of lifelong learning. Also the European Union has been increasingly influential in defining the lifelong learning policy agenda. From 2000 onwards it has produced several documents on lifelong learning that basically refer to the 'Lisbon Strategy' (European Parliament, 2000) aiming at making the EU the most competitive region in the world.

The two central notions coming to the fore in many of the policy documents produced by these agencies are 'empowerment' and 'social cohesion'. Above we mentioned how empowerment became connected to the individual capacity to work and manage life in any given life context. Yet, this does not explain why 'social cohesion' is such an important notion nowadays? Policy makers are aware, in part through the influence of grassroots organisations (see UNESCO, 1998), that society needs also 'a glue that holds them together' (Putnam, 2000). A society which celebrates only individual interest neglects the necessary processes of identification with and trust in those institutions which safeguard that society. In response to the symptoms of this risk in the form of 'parallel societies' social cohesion has become key in the vocabulary of present-day policy makers also when they refer to 'lifelong and lifewide learning'. Or, in the words of Delors: Adult and continuing education are not only about learning to do, learning to become and learning to be, but definitely also about "learning to live together" (UNESCO, 1994).

How is the role of the state in education and learning policies conceptualized?

The authors of the four contributions to this policy issue do not give direct answers to this question. They seem to suggest that the transnational agencies are particularly influential in giving direction to the policies of the separate nation states. It definitely cannot be denied that this is the case. However, the question whether this is a unilateral or a multilateral dynamics is not answered univocally by the different contributors. And we also think that the question needs to be considered not only in relation to supra-state policies but also in relation to the policy processes inside the nation state. Milana points to the role societal actors can play in influencing state politics, seeing the current nation state as a 'bargaining state' or a 'network' state. This concept creates space for a diversity of actors, collectives rather than individuals, to influence the decision making of the state. Such influence by non-state actors is hardly a new phenomenon. The construction of the welfare state after the second world war was in many European countries a clear example of how civil society organisations were co-producers of policies, thereby creating stability and loyalty in the interest of the state and its citizens. And in other cases civil society organisations have actually contributed to transform authoritarian states – and recently to question the unity of existing states (Belgium, Spain, UK?). This observation about the influence of local actors in the political decision making of the state, makes clear that individual nation states are not simply the executors of uniform, standardized policies directed by the transnational agencies. It also suggests that there are still opportunities and spaces for the local to play a role in the global and that it is not the global that directs the local one-sidedly. What is new however is that the actors operating in the current bargaining or network society are often much more volatile, given the instability of the economic, political and social conditions of societies today, also in countries where well established institutional bargaining arrangements exist – like the Nordic labour market model or the chamber organisations in Austria.

What is the future role of the nation state in adult education?

This brings us to the last question by which we invited policy researchers to reflect on the way adult education/lifelong learning today is being shaped. Not unexpectedly, the contributors predominantly make a historical analysis of the changes that have taken place. They do not engage in grand narratives about future policy orientations and practices of adult education and learning. This may also be seen as a sign of the times we live in. However, given the observation that in network societies, local actors can still play an important role in co-producing national policies, it may be important for adult education actors to move away from the adaptive and defensive strategies into which they seem to have positioned themselves currently. Apart from the fact that neo-liberal politics has captured the agenda of lifelong learning – the broadening of the perspective to many societal arenas and all ages and stages of individual lives also opens new opportunities for learning policies. Therefore, it could be relevant to reverse the last question mentioned above and ask ourselves: what is the future role of adult education in the nation state? The answers are not obvious. They will need a lot of realism and pragmatism, as opposed to the unrealistic imaginaries of the competitive, market driven politics and policies which have recently proven to create misery for many and unjust wealth for just a few. They will also not point to past times of institution building by educational means. The new opportunities should rather be found in the need for creative experimenting and, for making public those ‘matters of concern’ (Latour, 2004) that have become reduced to privatized responsibilities. Adult education can contribute to such experiments by creating spaces, where education and learning are again connected to societal issues, under the inspiration of old and new values such as democracy, social justice, sustainability, freedom, responsibility, equality and solidarity. We assume that this contribution will not be located nicely within educational institutions and organizations, but will rather have their arena in workplaces, in local communities, in single-cause actions and the (new) social movements which have actually to some extent become mainstreamed in new broader concerns for environment, gender relations and social justice.

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Political globalization and the shift from adult education to lifelong learning

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Abstract

This article reflects on the shift in vocabulary from (adult and continuing) education to (lifelong) learning and the ideological and purposive orientations it carries. It does so by critically addressing the changes occurred in policy discourses concerned with the education of adults after WWII at transnational level. The main argument is that the shift in vocabulary has been favoured by an increased voice acquired by transnational and inter-states entities (i.e. OECD, UNESCO, EU) in educational matters, however in combination with a change in political emphasis, at least within the European Union, from creating jobs opportunities towards securing that citizens acquire marketable skills. While both trends seems to point at the demise of the nation state as a guarantor for social justice, more research is needed to deepen our understandings of the interplay between transnational and nation-state levels; thus the article concludes by suggesting a research agenda to move in this direction.

Keywords: lifelong learning; adult education; OECD; UNESCO; EU

In recent decades, transnational and inter-state organizations working in the field of adult education have silently dropped the term ‘adult education’ in favour of the alternative term, ‘lifelong learning’. This shift in vocabulary has attracted the attention of academic scholars interested not only in the causes of this change, but in the values that it carries. In fact, the change in vocabulary limits the set of practices that define the objectives of adult education as a field of policy and practice. It also shows how these objectives can be put under scrutiny, and how adult education policy and practice can be ameliorated as a result.

Taking Biesta’s (2006) interpretation of the shift in vocabulary from education to learning as a point of departure, this article will draw on documents produced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the European Union

(EU) to reflect on the ideological and purposive orientations embedded in the shift from adult education to lifelong learning that political globalization processes have favoured. The main argument is that while this shift in policy discourse (which has redefined the relation between education, work and socio-economic development) has been promoted by transnational and inter-state entities with their own interest in education, the shift cannot be seen simply as the result of top-down power relations. That states are members of these entities suggests some degree of global-local interconnectedness. In the meantime, with the failure of labour market and employment policies within the European Union since the 1990s, making sure that citizens acquire marketable skills has become a more important political goal than creating and securing job opportunities. While both trends result from political globalization processes, more research is needed to deepen our understandings of the interplay between transnational and nation-state levels; thus in the concluding section I suggest a research agenda to move in this direction.

1. Shifting vocabulary

In his attempt to define ‘a way to understand and approach education’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 9) in the new millennium, Biesta engages with this shift in vocabulary from education to learning. He does so with a point of departure in education and learning theories and philosophies as well as in societal changes. He concludes that the shift from education to learning represents the result of diverse and often contradictory developments, rather than the outcome of an explicit agenda based on a critique of prior knowledge and understanding (or similar) of educational matters. He suggests that four interrelated trends have contributed to the move from education to learning.

The first trend is that constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning have focussed attention on activities in which learners interact with multiple actors in particular environments (cf. Lave & Wenger, 1991). Traditional approaches were challenged as interest moved away from the teacher-learner relationship and/or the knowledge content of such interaction (Biesta, 2006).

The second trend is identified by Biesta (2006) in the impact of postmodernism theories on educational thinking. Education was for a long time considered a viable project of modernity, intimately connected to philosophical humanism and its creed of the rational autonomous being, inherited by the Enlightenment and intertwined with the continental tradition of *Bildung* (a concern for what constitutes an ‘educated’ person and the practice that leads to this pursuit). However, in addressing the failures of the modernism project, postmodernism theories have undermined the idea that education can liberate and emancipate merely by fostering rationality and critical thinking among learners. Consequently, these theories claimed the ‘end of education’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 18).

The third trend is what Field describes as the ‘silent explosion of lifelong learning’ (Field, 2000, p. 4), with special (but not exclusive) reference to the adult population. It is Field’s empirical observation that in contemporary societies more people are spending time and money engaging in diverse learning activities, activities that are often both individualized and individualistic - individualized in form, as the learner may well be on his/her own in front of a book, a DVD player, a computer screen or an iPad; individualistic in content and purpose, as learners are often pursuing their own interests in search of individual satisfaction.

Lastly, the fourth trend is what Biesta terms ‘the erosion of the welfare state’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 18) and the rise of the market economy. This is the erosion of the very idea of the state as the guarantor of a redistribution of wealth through public provision (through health, social security and education) in favour of a privatization of the relation between the state and its citizens, and the re-elaboration of such a relationship in economic, rather than political, terms. This logic, with its focus on the user or consumer of an educational provision rather than on citizens’ access to a public good (education), suggests that ‘learning’ is a commodity that gives consumers (learners) ‘value for money’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 19).

Biesta (2006) is correct in addressing a mix of trends that relate to theoretical and conceptual developments within the humanities and social sciences, but also in taking into account the socio-political and economic developments that have occurred in society at large. In current debates, the mantra of lifelong learning has been adopted by politicians, researchers and, to a lesser extent, practitioners in both economically developed and developing worlds. Yet the statement that learning occurs along the entire life span becomes problematic from a public policy perspective. By bringing the agency of the learner to the foreground, public policy speech shades off the agency of the educator engaged in teaching-learning transactions or broader educative relations, while interfering with the politics of everyday life.

Furthermore, the mantra of lifelong learning embeds diverse meanings across different ‘fields’. Consequently it contributes to struggles over the appropriation of capital by agents in a variety of social settings (Bourdieu, 1984). The complexity of the relationship between *adult* education and lifelong learning emerges clearly from the regional synthesis reports prepared for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) held in 2009 (Ahmed, 2009; Aitchison & Alidou, 2009; Keogh, 2009; Torres, 2009; Yousif, 2009).

A close look at these and other documents produced by (or under the auspices of) transnational and inter-state entities (see the following sections) reveals a shift in the very conception of lifelong learning. Originally intended as a means for personal and social development, the concept today is primarily associated with economic growth and the global competition of nations and geopolitical regions. This in turn has impacted on the opportunity structures for people to engage in ‘worthwhile’ learning throughout life (for a critique see, for instance, Biesta, Field, Hodkinson, Macleod and Goodson, 2011). Accordingly, when we consider the shift in vocabulary from adult education to lifelong learning, one more trend in addition to those identified by Biesta (2006) has to be considered, namely political globalization (Nash, 2000). I will elaborate on this in the following section.

2. Political globalization and the changing nature of the state

In order to understand the impact of political globalization on the shift in vocabulary and on public policy, we may take as our point of departure contemporary globalization, understood to mean a set of processes that expand and intensify cross-national interactions. These processes in turn endorse the establishment of transnational arrangements and integration processes across geographical scales (Castells, 1996; Dreher, Gaston & Martens, 2008; Luke & Luke, 2000; Nash, 2000), leading to global imaginaries that are ‘powerfully reflected in the current transformation of political ideologies’ (Steger, 2009, pp. 11-12). In line with this argument, we observe that the power and authority of the ‘modern’ state are reshaped and transformed (Held,

McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton, 1999). Traditionally understood as an organization where political power is organized and exercised through a set of arrangements controlling specific fields of action (Poggi, 1990), the modern state (and its changing nature) is better captured by the ‘bargaining’ or network state approach (Stråth & Torstendhal, 1992). This conceptualization interprets the state as a structure logically distinct from individual action, but brought about by the interactions of individual actions. Accordingly, although contributions by individuals may be inadequate in resource terms to produce discernible changes, a conscious effort by collectivities can influence not only state structures, but also the power they exercise. This occurs with the production of specialized knowledge by groups with their own interest in policy-making: specialized knowledge which in turn is either appropriated or utilized by the state. While in the latter case the state makes use of specialized knowledge but recognizes that it belongs to the holder, in the former case specialized knowledge is treated as belonging to the state. The linkages between knowledge production and knowledge appropriation or use vary depending on the particular network composition of individual states; thus, even when different states share a similar interest, knowledge appropriation or utilization at national level may differ.

Seen in this perspective, transnational and inter-state entities with their own interests in education not only assign to the concept of lifelong learning particular values, meanings and norms about the world that become accepted truths; in doing so, they produce specialized knowledge in a conscious effort to legitimize specific political interests, to set the agenda of what can be discussed, and to influence state policies. Yet state membership in transnational and inter-state entities blurs the boundaries between knowledge production and knowledge appropriation or utilization; and this cautions against ascribing the shift from adult education to lifelong learning policies either to global or to local politics. Rather, it is an argument in favour of global-local interconnectedness. Although the strength of such interconnectedness may vary in different localities – something that is beyond the scope of this paper to assess - acknowledging global-local interconnectedness justifies paying closer attention to the conscious efforts made by transnational and inter-state entities to rethink the relation between education, work and the economy by the production of ‘global imaginaries’ (with, however, nuanced meanings). To these I will now turn.

3. Rethinking the relation between education, work and socio-economic development

It is particularly through the work by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and – to a limited extent - the European Union (EU) that lifelong learning has acquired substance in diverse global imaginaries. These imaginaries reinterpret the relations between education, work and socio-economic development in these entities in ways that reflect their differing cultural and social settings of member composition, organizational aims, structures and ways of functioning.

Several observers have traced the origins of lifelong learning back to the 1960s to understand its wide appeal in contemporary public policy. Rubenson (2006) highlights how the construct emerged as a response by the OECD and UNESCO to educational and social crises that affected the globe in the 1960s and again in the 1990s. Tuijnman and Boström (2002) complement this analysis by paying special attention to the role of

the UNESCO Institute for Education and its related journal, the *International Review of Education*, in fostering lifelong learning as an organizing principle for educational planning in western as well as in developing countries. Finally, Borg and Mayo (2005) offer a critical perspective on the adoption of lifelong learning at the outset of the twenty-first century as a core principle for promoting educational reforms within the European context. These analyses show how lifelong learning as a political mindset has changed, not only over time and across transnational organizations, but also over time within each organization, leading to the development of fundamentally different ideologies, legitimizing conflicting value-systems. It is worth noting that this was particularly relevant in the case of UNESCO and the OECD, as there is a consensus that the EU uncritically embraced the OECD's interpretation and strongly contributed to its adoption in national political contexts in Europe (Borg & Mayo, 2005; Rubenson, 2006, 2009). As a result, the distinction between formal, non-formal and informal learning - as originally conceptualized by experts working for the World Bank and UNESCO - became distorted.

In particular, Rubenson (2006, 2009) identifies two generations of political thinking informing the notion of lifelong learning. The first of these, from the 1960s to the 1980s, was strongly bound to the emerging notion of 'lifelong education' as developed by UNESCO, as well as the conception of 'recurrent education' launched by the 1969 Conference of the European Ministers of Education and soon afterwards adopted by the OECD. The concept of 'lifelong education' emerged not only in response to the increasing dissatisfaction with education that ultimately led to the student uprisings of the late 1960s, but also to a concern to identify educational models that would meet not merely societal needs, but the needs created by inequalities between highly economically developed and less economically developed countries. 'Recurrent education' was promoted by the OECD as a political strategy for educational planning in response to two developments in the 1960s: the expansion of education to promote economic prosperity worldwide (in the wake of human capital theory and its claim for a return on investment in education), and the concern to make public spending on education productive (in terms of achieving better economic, social and educational benefits).

The second generation, beginning in the 1990s, according to Rubenson (2006) found its fullest expression in the OECD report *Education and the economy in a changing society* (OECD, 1989), exemplifying societal concern with the challenges and threats posed by contemporary globalization processes, especially in the fields of economy and technological advance. The report led to the forging of closer ties between the economy and education, and saw a reinterpretation of the 'recurrent education' conception, now strongly bound to the distinction between learning occurring in formal, non-formal and informal structures, originally elaborated by Coombs and Ahmed (1974) in a study sponsored by the World Bank (Tuijnman & Boström, 2002). This new OECD position was elaborated further in the report *Lifelong learning for all* (OECD, 1996). Within UNESCO, the second generation of lifelong learning took shape in the work of the International Commission on Education and Learning for the Twenty-First Century, set up in order for the organization to regain international visibility within the educational policy arena (Jones, 2005). The work of the Commission, chaired by the former president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, resulted in the publication of *Learning: The treasure within* (Delors et al., 1996). The report not only reaffirmed the need to position education at the top of the policy agenda, but did so through its adoption of a critical stance towards any vision of economic growth that did not reconcile with equity issues, respect for the human condition and for the natural

environment. Consequently it advanced lifelong learning, rather than lifelong education, as the response to globalization processes at the same time as the OECD was also embracing lifelong learning as a new mindset for its policy.

In a more recent analysis Rubenson (2009) confirms that the OECD's second-generation thinking about lifelong learning has currently not only reached its fully fledged expression, but has become a common-sense view in public policy, thus foreshadowing possible alternative approaches (see also Medel-Añonuevo, Ohsako & Mauch, 2001; Wain, 2001). An understanding of possible alternative approaches, however, requires a step back in order to put under scrutiny how lifelong learning has acquired its current connotations over time within each of the organizations that contributed to its development.

Within UNESCO, the Institute for Education (UIE) was established in 1951 to function as a contact point for educationalists around the world and carry out studies on the principles, aims and most suitable methods for education. In 2006, following the shift in terminology from 'education' to 'lifelong learning', it was renamed the Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). It was through the work supported by the UIE in the late 1960s that a forerunner of lifelong learning, namely 'lifelong education', came to be conceptualized as an organizing principle for educational development worldwide (Tuijnman & Boström, 2002). The concept first came to international attention in the early 1970s, thanks to two publications by UNESCO: *An introduction to continuing education* by Paul Lengrand (1970), and the report of the International Commission on the Development of Education by Edgar Faure et al. (1972), *Learning to be: The word of education today and tomorrow*. Wain (2001, p. 184) called the latter 'the canonical text of the lifelong education movement', with its radical approach to education, eclipsed over time as it lost UNESCO's backing. An analysis of these publications reveals that the notion of lifelong education still made primary reference to the need to create new and diverse education and learning opportunities in order to broaden democratic processes, within a radical project rethinking the very nature of education and culture as processes 'transcending the limits of institutions, programmes and methods imposed on it down the centuries' (Faure et al., 1972, p.145) - a project that embedded strong social-democratic liberal ideas (a belief in individual growth inextricable from social development) and also incorporated radical stands (de-schooling, de-institutionalization) (Moosung & Friedrich, 2011). Coombs and Ahmed's distinction (1974) between three possible modes of education - formal, non-formal and informal - developed the definition of lifelong education further. Here, both formal and non-formal modes aimed to support learning occurring in informal settings by using similar pedagogical approaches and methods, but through differing organizational settings and by reaching out to different target groups. This distinction made it possible to define lifelong education as:

a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the life-span of individuals, in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectivities. It is a comprehensive and unifying idea which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning for acquiring and enhancing enlightenment so as to attain the fullest possible development in different stages and domains of life. (Dave, 1976, p. 34)

The above definition was accompanied by a set of 'concept characteristics' to support its concrete implementation within a variety of socio-cultural contexts. These included an understanding that education does not necessarily correspond to formal schooling, hence a view of education in its totality as a socio-political and cultural utopia for a

more humane society (Wain, 2001). Accordingly, 'lifelong education' covered formal, non-formal and informal contexts for education, and sought continuity over time (vertical articulation) as well as an integration of diverse dimensions (horizontal integration). Lastly, 'lifelong education' represented not only a universal principle, but a concrete step towards a democratization process in education that should lead to the improvement of the quality of life for all (Dave, 1976).

Subsequent elaborations by a group of experts invited by UNESCO to define a theoretical framework for the implementation of lifelong education led to the publication of *Towards a system of lifelong education* by Arthur Cropley (1980). In the following decade, however, not much can be found as a concrete implementation of this framework, not least because in the 1980s political attention moved towards problems faced by governments in handling slow economic growth and subsequent increased unemployment, larger public deficits, and rapid technological change (cf. Rubenson, 2006; Tuijnman & Boström, 2002).

The debate within UNESCO on lifelong learning revived in the mid-1990s, as already noted, with the publication of *Learning: The treasure within* by Jacque Delors et al. (1996). This report stated the need to reconsider education in order to cope with the disenchantment affecting modern societies, by shifting paradigm from local community to world society, from social cohesion to democratic participation, and from economic growth to human development. Although the report made no direct use of the term 'lifelong learning', it identified four pillars on which pedagogical action was to be based: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. In so doing, it took a stand against the diffusion of human capital theory that had permeated the OECD's policy, while reaffirming the central role of the state in guaranteeing the welfare of those who experienced distorted social structures. In fact the Delors report stressed that 'education system[s] must operate within the context of a social compact... governments have a huge responsibility to act as the brokers of this compact' (Delors et al., 1996, p. 223), at the same time as the OECD was calling on governments to 'promote the development of appropriate "bridges" and "ladders"... in which the various elements of education and training provision can be articulated' (OECD, 1996, p. 184). Nonetheless, a thorough ideological analysis suggests that while the Delors report preserved a social-democratic liberal approach, unlike the Faure report, it was not immune to neoliberal ideas, such as the updating of skills (Moosung & Friedrich, 2011).

It was not until 2001, however, that UNESCO re-entered the debate on lifelong learning with the publication of *Revisiting lifelong learning for the 21st century* by Medel-Añonuevo et al. (2001). This booklet gave a sharp critique of the OECD's vision of lifelong learning, visions which spread to other transnational organizations (such as the EU and the World Bank) as a guiding principle for policy work worldwide. It underlined how contemporary interpretations of lifelong learning had departed from the notion of lifelong education from which the concept derived, as demonstrated by the following passage:

The predominantly economic interpretation of lifelong learning in the last ten years... has become problematic for many educators and practitioners who have come forward with such terms as "Lifelong (L)Earning" and "Learning to Earn" as their succinct criticism of the way the term is being promoted. (Medel-Añonuevo et al., 2001, p. 1)

Thus at the same time UNESCO was introducing the concept of 'lifelong education', the OECD was adopting 'recurrent education', whose relationship to lifelong learning

was first stated in the report *Recurrent education: A strategy for lifelong learning*, published by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in 1973:

Recurrent education is a comprehensive educational strategy for all post-compulsory or post-basic education, the essential characteristic of which is the distribution of education over the total life-span of the individual in a recurrent way... In this context, the concept of lifelong learning assumes a more precise sense in that it accentuates the need for adaptation through a constant registering and processing of information, formation of concepts, and development of attitudes and skills. (CERI, 1973, pp. 16-17)

Yet critical analysis suggests that ‘recurrent education’ was a pragmatic response by the OECD, aimed at securing a ‘good fit’ between educational profiles and the skills and competencies required on the labour market at a time when the unprecedented expansion of upper and higher education had led to an oversupply of graduates (cf. Rubenson, 2006, 2009). Thus Bengtsson (1985) and Tuijtinman (1990) argue that the adoption of recurrent education was an ‘educational strategy’ for giving new signification to degrees and certificates which, though traditionally considered an end in themselves, were now seen as necessary steps in an educational career that would extend in the course of the lifespan.

Although the OECD endorsed recurrent education as a planning strategy in education to increase economic gain at both individual and societal levels, by encouraging the individual’s search for knowledge and skills that would better match the labour-market demand, its implementation partly failed. As Rubenson (2009, p. 255) notes, ‘the OECD’s agenda setting effort lacked the support of the required national ‘policy window’; further, it was not well anchored in the overall program of the OECD’.

A couple of decades later, however, as already noted, a new report by the OECD brought back the recurrent education conception, now presented under the new guise of lifelong learning, in a report produced for the 1996 meeting of the Council of Ministers. The report, *Lifelong learning for all* (OECD, 1996), embraced the advances made by UNESCO through the recognition of diverse modes of learning in formal, non-formal and informal contexts. But this conceptual appropriation was filtered through a human capital theory approach, resulting in an emphasis on formal education occurring out of school, as well as on non-formal and informal processes linked to the workplace. This twist created stronger ties between education and work, thus allowing for joint political action between the ministries representing these two strands of public policy.

In OECD (2004, p. 1) words, lifelong learning ‘covers all purposeful learning activity, from the cradle to the grave, that aims to improve knowledge and competencies for all individuals who *wish to participate* in learning activities’ (emphasis in original). With its move from education to learning, the OECD’s definition has been seen as a subtle way to redefine the relation between the state and its citizenry (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b). In fact, by removing government responsibility for educational structure and institutions, lifelong learning makes individuals responsible for their own learning, and thus is ‘well suited to a neoliberal agenda’ (Rubenson, 2009, p. 256). Not surprisingly, this has led to the current situation, where the OECD’s mindset for lifelong learning seems to represent ‘the’ only way to interpreting lifelong learning, a position that is resisted by UNESCO (cf. Medel-Añonuevo et al., 2001) but has been adopted by other international organizations (such as the World Bank and the EU).

To recapitulate, ‘recurrent education’ and ‘lifelong education’ represent the first two political responses to the notion of lifelong learning that was rooted in the French conception of ‘*éducation permanente*’, a conception adopted by the Council of Europe

in the late 1960s (Schwartz, 1968, 1970) and launched internationally within the context of UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAs). However, these two concepts embedded quite different significations. While recurrent education restricts education to formal activities deliberately undertaken in a distinct, institutional sphere, lifelong education identifies education with life (Wain, 2001). Thus the OECD and UNESCO differed markedly in their appropriation of lifelong learning as a frame of reference for policy purposes; and while the EU has brought no additional value to its conceptualization, it has helped to disseminate the OECD's view within its member states. In this respect, Nordin (2011, p. 17) speaks of 'an adjustment of the "second generation" [of the OECD's lifelong learning discourse, as depicted by Rubenson 2009, AN] that affects the content as well as the structure of the discourse'. In other words, the EU has radicalized the economic perspective introduced by the OECD through the adoption of a set of new implementation strategies that strongly affect all its member states.

At this point it is worth asking whether the incorporation of lifelong learning as a guiding principle within the EU's policy is just an example of what Rubenson (2009) calls the hegemonic position of the OECD's second generation, or whether in fact it represents the emergence of a third generation of lifelong learning. Rather than defining new frameworks for public policy to accommodate observed societal changes, such a third generation would thus be adopting a homogenizing vocabulary - lifelong learning - that assumes a priori agreement, in order to hide the processes of political signification that might occur in its contextual appropriation and usage.

In the following section I focus on adult education as a distinct objective that has attracted political attention beyond the nation state.

4. Adult education: A global polity

A 'global polity' is defined by Corry (2010) as a polity structure that results from a set of social actors oriented towards the governance of a common object, which is made real, distinct and subject to political action. In this section I argue for the existence of a global polity based on de-territorialized norms to govern adult education, which emerges from UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAs) and the EU's work in the field of adult education (and learning). However, the values and meanings carried by these norms have changed over time, and are interpreted differently by UNESCO and by the EU.

The first CONFINTEA (at Elsinore, Denmark, in 1949) addressed as its major themes international exchange and understanding as well as dissemination of information across countries - themes that were at the core of UNESCO's foundation. The following decade saw many new developments. Economic and technological advancements led to the expansion of popular media such as film, radio, and television. At the same time, industrialization processes favoured the economic development of rural-based economies; while long-term loans for education (1960) were introduced by the World Bank to support this process and UNESCO established its Institute for Education (1951). The second CONFINTEA (Montreal, 1960) therefore acknowledged these changes by addressing on its agenda rural education, popular culture, and entertainment media.

It was not until the 1970s, however, that adult education became a targeted policy objective beyond the nation state, when UNESCO published the Paul Lengrand report (1970) and launched an experimental World Literacy Program to boost 'functional

literacy'. Hence the third CONFINTEA (Tokyo, 1972) promoted the expansion of adult education, as well as the innovation of its methods in support of democratization processes worldwide. This way of thinking about adult education was reflected in the *Recommendation on the development of adult education*, adopted in 1976 (Nairobi) by the UNESCO General Conference.

During the 1980s, as economic concerns spread around the globe and human capital theory supported neo-liberalist thinking in education, the fourth CONFINTEA (Paris, 1985), not surprisingly, focussed on the relationship between adult education and economic development, and called for stronger international cooperation in the field.

It was only in the 1990s, when industrial expansion and economic development had been followed by a major economic crisis, that the fifth CONFINTEA (Hamburg, 1997) concentrated its attention on sustainable development - a form of development that would be not only ecologically sustainable, but also scientifically and socially sustainable, thus promoting social justice and gender equity. This was reflected in the *Hamburg declaration on adult learning* (UNESCO, 1997), and has found further application, since 2000, in a variety of development goals and initiatives supported by the United Nations.

The most recent CONFINTEA (Bélém, Brazil, 2009) has been primarily concerned with the backdrop of economic expansion and subsequent world financial crisis, but also with the limited achievements reported regionally in reducing the adult literacy gap, increasing social integration, and securing the social benefits of education for vast portions of the adult population. As a consequence, the *Bélém Framework for Action* (UNESCO, 2009) calls for new emphasis on international benchmarking in the field.

Since 1996, proclaimed the European Year of Lifelong Learning, the EU has increasingly deliberated adult education matters. In 2000 the EU issued a *Memorandum on lifelong learning*, in which lifelong learning entered the European discourse: both non-formal and informal learning were for the first time incorporated as a new object of communitarian education policy. In the Memorandum, formal adult and/or continuing education is assigned the task of securing that 'every individual acquires, updates and sustains an agreed skills threshold' (EC, 2000, p. 11), and investment in human resources is seen as a means of 'enabling people to manage their own "time-life portfolios" and making a wider range of learning outcomes more visible for all concerned' (EC, 2000, p. 12).

While the Memorandum initiated a European-wide consultation, the EU also established the Grundtvig programme (2000), providing economic support for the realization of learning activities aimed at adult citizens. It is only in recent years, however, that adult education policy has found its full expression within the Union, starting with a *Communication on adult learning: It is never too late to learn* (EC, 2006) and a complementary *Action plan on adult learning: It is always a good time to learn* (EC, 2007) by the European Commission. While adult 'education' is never mentioned in the Communication, adult 'learning', including 'all forms of learning undertaken by adults after having left initial education and training', is addressed as 'a vital component of lifelong learning' (EC, 2006, p. 1). Accordingly, the *Action plan on adult learning* not only affirms that 'the need for a high quality and accessible adult learning system is no longer a point of discussion' (EC, 2007, p. 3) but assigns to adult learning the main tasks of reducing labour shortages.

The above documents paved the way for a *Resolution on adult learning* by the European Parliament (EP, 2008). Recognizing that 'adult learning is becoming a political priority' (EP, 2008, para. A), the Resolution urges member states 'to establish a lifelong learning culture, primarily focussing on education and training for adults' (EP,

2008, para. 3). In doing so, the Resolution also stresses the need for reliable data for policy-making purposes. Although personal development is mentioned as one of the goals of lifelong learning, primary attention is paid throughout the Resolution to workers' employability, adaptability, and geographical and vocational mobility 'which is important for the functioning of the internal market' (EP, 2008, pp. 2-3). A few months later, the Council of the European Union (CEU) published its *Conclusions on adult learning* (CEU, 2008), in which it recognized:

the key role which adult learning can play in meeting the goals of the Lisbon Strategy by fostering social cohesion, providing citizens with the skills required to find new jobs and helping Europe to better respond to the challenges of globalization. (CEU, 2008, p. C140/11)

In its *Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (CEU, 2011), the Council of the European Union spells out that 'in order to face both the short and long-term consequences of the economic crisis, there is a need for adults regularly to enhance their personal and professional skills and competences' (CEU, 2011, p. C 372/2), thus setting the priority areas in which member states should direct their attention for 2012-2014, with a focus on increasing and widening adult participation in lifelong learning, building a strong adult-learning sector, promoting social cohesion, and enhancing citizens' creativity and innovative capacity.

A thorough examination of UNESCO and EU policies on adult education (and learning) brings to light differing institutional justifications for a global polity in this field. UNESCO calls for 'alliances' within and outside territorial borders to fulfil the human right of disadvantaged groups to access adult education; the EU calls for a variety of social actors to use the available resources more effectively to promote regional economic growth. On one aspect, however, there is silence, namely, the failure of labour market and employment policies. I will elaborate on this in the next section.

5. The failure of labour market and employment policies

When we look at the European Union as a pool of states that is representative - both in complexity and, until the recent economic recession, in economic success - of the economically developed North, it is of interest to observe that, although economic means to support training activities among adults have been available within the Union since 1951 through the European Social Fund, adult learning became an explicit object of inter-state policy only in the mid-1990s, and found fully fledged expression only recently (see section four). In fact, even though the 'old Europe' (the EU 15) had a long adult education tradition, only a few states have had, and still have, adult education policies. Among these are the Scandinavian countries, for instance, in sharp contrast to their Mediterranean counterparts.

Yet even in those states with a tradition of policy and practice in adult education, there has been a constant redirection of public financial resources from popular/liberal towards vocationally oriented provisions (Milana & Larson, 2011). This reflects a general trend observed in Europe, whereby adult education is reduced to vocational and work-related education, thus creating the conditions for the private sector, rather than the state, to become its main provider (Keogh, 2009).

Trying to understand the rationale beyond this trend, it becomes apparent that in Europe, as in other Western countries, increased political attention has been paid since the early 1980s to competence development, sustained by a convergent view of learning

processes as a central asset - regardless of whether the context is formal, non-formal or informal. The implementation of so-called 'lifelong learning systems', not least through educational reform at state level, is considered a precondition for the goal to be achieved. This has led to the blooming of a multiplicity of competence-development agenda settings in a variety of policy arenas.

In a critical examination of the EU agenda setting for competence development Milana (2009) has brought to light the 'regulatory ideal' that directs current educational reforms in European member states, thus sustaining the above-mentioned trend reducing adult education to vocational and work-related education. This 'regulatory ideal' is based on a simplified account of the social problem it aims to address, i.e. a lack of productivity within the Union, which is grounded on a few assumptions. First, there exists a bottleneck in the single market due to a lack of skills availability among the population. Second, education and training provision represent the only means by which to break this bottleneck. Third, it is possible to reach a perfect equilibrium between the quantity and quality of skills workers have and jobs require. Lastly, the skills workers acquire via education and training correspond to the jobs they can obtain.

This has important consequences for the way adult education (and learning) policy and practice are reframed by individual states, as it assumes that nation states are no longer the guarantors for social justice in taking responsibility for a fair redistribution of resources, by, for instance, paying attention to job creation or the protection of basic worker rights to avoid exploitation, unfair salary distribution, etc. In the meantime, the above assumptions also underestimate the diverse institutional settings of the European labour markets, the under-utilization of available skills, the shortage of adequate paid work, the quality of employment and the unequal distribution of work (De Grip & Wolbers, 2006; Gangl, 2003).

In short, the increased political focus on vocational and work-related education (and adult 'learning'), at least in Western societies, may be also explained by the diminished role of the state in securing job creation and citizens' protection in relation to that of the market.

6. Concluding remarks

The shift of vocabulary from (adult and continuing) education to (lifelong) learning can be partly explained by at least three factors: theoretical and conceptual advancements in the humanities and social sciences; the empirical observation that people are spending more time and money on learning activities; and the rise of the market economy, together with the demise of the welfare state (Biesta, 2006). In interaction with the above processes, however, I argue that an additional trend can be identified in political globalization and the subsequent changing nature of the modern state and its authority, which after the Second World War contributed to a shift in mindsets on the relation between education, work and the socio-economic development of nations. This led to the emergence of lifelong learning as a global imaginary, which in its most popular interpretation favours an economic view on education. Yet state membership in transnational and inter-state entities cautions against interpreting this simply as the result of top-down power relations. In the meantime, increased political attention to competence development, sustained by a convergent view of learning processes as a central asset for economic growth, has kept silence on the failure of labour market and employment policies by moving policy attention away from securing job creation and citizen protection, towards securing that citizens acquire marketable skills. Although

these trends seem to point to the demise of the nation state as a guarantor of social justice, more research is needed to deepen our understanding of the interplay between transnational and nation-state levels. Thus as scholars we are called upon to establish new research agendas that will investigate the relations between transnational policy-making and state models for adult education.

I would like to suggest here three points to be at the core of such an agenda. First, the relationship between transnational and inter-state organizations and single states: much research on adult education either ignores or under-values the conditioning effects that result from increased political globalization. Second, the relationship between adult education as a global polity and as localized practice: available research cautions against interpreting adult education as either a global concern or a national affair, while recognizing global-local interconnectedness. Lastly, the tensions between the needs of the knowledge economy, innovation and social cohesion: differing political and ideological logics seem to be influencing the position of adult education within a broader agenda of national and regional growth.

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From lifelong education to lifelong learning

Discussion of some effects of today's neoliberal policies

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Abstract

When we think about current adult education in the context of the uneven and contradictory social and economic impact of globalization, it necessarily implies thinking about the transfer from the paradigm of lifelong education to the paradigm of lifelong learning. We shall examine the essential quality involved in the social significance and the political dimension of each of these paradigms, because, since the post-war period, both became innovative educational policy strategies capable of mobilizing and transforming society. We would like to stress the importance of re-thinking the role of adult education today in the light of the responsibilities shifting from the state to individuals, arising from the implications of this transition of paradigms: we do this by framing it in the context of the socio-productive restructuring movement, which speeded up the move from the so-called model of qualification, associated to social emancipation, to what is known as the model of competence (later competences), which is associated with individual empowerment. Therefore in this article we intend to question this new policy direction, which is associated with a conceptual and methodological shift in adult education practices, by using the prism of a critical sociology of education.

Keywords: adult education; lifelong education; qualifications for social emancipation; lifelong learning; competences for individual empowerment

First thoughts

This article addresses the establishment of an international discourse. We therefore briefly introduce definitions of basic concepts that will be discussed throughout the paper. The first main concept is *adult education*. We accept that this concept is pluralist: it is ideological as well as technical. The concept of adult education is mostly understood as a social and human right (Gadotti, 2011), approximating the UNESCO agenda. We follow those critical educators (Lima, 2003; Torres, 2008) who perceive the concept of *adult learning* as an expression that opposes the humanist-critical roots of the popular tradition of *adult education*. There has been a shift in paradigms from

lifelong education, where the concept of *education* is seen as a collective entity and a state obligation, to *lifelong learning*, where the concept of *learning* is seen as an individual entity and a personal duty. This has led to a loss in the broader view of adult education as a key issue related to social themes such as inequalities, power relations and political struggle for a better world for all. The research question guiding these reflections is: who gains most and who loses most in this conceptual and paradigmatic shift in the public policy agenda of adult education, especially in the European context? We shall now look at this issue in greater depth.

The main characteristics of adult education under the paradigm of lifelong education

In the history of modern systems of education the so-called world crisis in education which took place at the end of the 1960's would mark the beginning of a gradual shift in the understanding given to adult education, and in more general terms to the actual nature of education itself. In this way, the *lifelong education movement* that emerges at this time represents a real turning point in thinking about education, due both to its worldwide dimension as well as its socio-political stance. The instability of our economic, political and social reality, in the context of the crisis in the welfare state, and the central role played on the international stage by UNESCO in the area of education, is the basis for the context in which the *concept of lifelong education* is reintroduced in debates about education. We say re-introduction due to the fact that some of the key theoretical ideas about lifelong education actually date back to the early 20th century, based mainly on the theories of Dewey, Smith, Lindeman and Yeaxlee. Their work represents an indispensable legacy, even though they referred to another socio-political context and a different age, when central assumptions about adult education were forged, namely: the understanding that education does not end when a person leaves school, insofar as education fulfils the role of ensuring the viability of life in society, irrespective of age (Dewey, 1916); the idea that adult education, as a basic necessity to a country, must be expanded, insofar as it helps to build citizenship, and this is then perceived as universal and desirable throughout the life of its citizens (Smith, 1919); the growing importance given to experience in the learning process amongst adults, as well as the importance attached to discussion groups as an appropriate methodology for adult education (Lindeman, 1926); also the idea that human needs are part of the social fabric of a powerful socio-political system that is contained within a context of pedagogical action in adult education (Yeaxlee, 1929).

An interesting outcome of our research on the genealogy of concepts in adult education (Barros, 2011a) is that despite the intensity of these pioneering debates we should point out that there was a kind of gap between the 30's and the 50's as far as adult education's conceptual heritage is concerned, and this has helped to gauge the effective use of the *concept of lifelong education* in public debates on adult education. However, when it resurfaced in the sixties, the dominant understanding given to the *concept of lifelong education* comprises three basic dimensions: one is a severe criticism of the school model of formal education¹; a second dimension is related to the need to ensure a form of 'lifelong' education which keeps knowledge up to date and allows adults to keep up with technological developments in society (UNESCO, 1960); and a third dimension promotes equal educational opportunities and access to permanent and effective social promotion². These three dimensions create a concept and an ideal out of *lifelong education*, and indeed two of these fundamental dimensions lead us to think in humanistic terms about educational policies for adult education.

Looking at the work and effects of policies, we should underline that the main international body to have an effective role in the promotion of the *lifelong education paradigm* was UNESCO. Under its patronage several documents were produced, among which stands out the influential Report coordinated by Edgar Faure et al. (1972) *Learning to Be – the world of education today and tomorrow*. The *concept of lifelong education* that was developed has implications for the entire educational process, and includes all its forms, expressions and moments in order to ensure the implementation of an innovative strategy in the global education of children and young people, and to prepare adults to pursue their autonomy and freedom with a sense of social justice. *Lifelong education* is understood, in this context, as an educational project that is continuously inter-relating with the individual as well as the social dimension of education, and is aimed at the construction of a ‘new man’, and the offer of a humanist system of collective values. This vision of *lifelong education* contains explicitly political choices and represents a project which has an ideological nature, a utopia (Faure et al., 1972, p. 143). Since then the understanding given to the *concept of lifelong education* would become more and more clearly linked with the political dimension of education (Lengrand, 1989; Lima, 2003). The concept is now commonly associated with, on the one hand the restructuring of school systems, and on the other hand, the drafting of social transformation projects. In other words, associated with *lifelong education* is a new vision and interpretation, both with respect to the educational process at the various levels of education, as well as to the perception of a common destiny for mankind.

Given that the *lifelong education movement* has developed within a global framework of strong criticism and opposition to the school model, it is no wonder that the repercussions in the field of the discursive and pedagogical practices of formal adult education would be profound. Besides, this period corresponded to an expansion, unprecedented in the history of adult education, particularly with regard to its non-formal and informal characteristics: in fact it went against the two structural axes that characterize the whole school model - the spatial and the temporal axis. In this way it reached beyond the public space of the school with regard to its educational practices, and stepped outside the temporal constraints of the inflexible logic of a school education by introducing the possibility of negotiating schedules and timetables with a degree of flexibility. The aim was to allow education to be present at all stages of life (UNESCO, 1976). In the Faure Report it says in relation to this that ‘the educational enterprise will only become efficient, just and human by undergoing radical changes affecting the essence of educational action, as well as the time and place for education’ (Faure et al., 1972, p. 142). This alternative understanding of the concept of education assumes, in the same way, a break with what this report calls ‘preconceived ideas about instruction –it was for the young and took place in schools– prevented people generally from conceiving of lifelong education in normal educational terms’ (ibid., p. 142).

The role of the school with regard to *lifelong education* changes completely, to the extent that the basic education that is acquired there is now perceived as only a prelude, and whose aim is as follows: to provide adults with the best means to communicate with each other; to promote the ability to obtain information independently; and to create a more cohesive society where individuals can communicate, work and live cooperatively with each other. So, *lifelong education* represents a lever to change the entire understanding of the modern concept of education. We can safely emphasize that the *lifelong education approach*, with regard to the restructuring of school systems and the entire educational process, aims to reunite what the school system of education has locked up. For this to be achieved, a restructuring of this nature would involve at least

two different consequences: first, the separation between the idea of education and the idea of there being a right age to learn; and second, the total loss of significance for the notion of success and failure at school, with a focus now only on personal growth and the creation of a path towards 'learning to be'.

The political dimension of education, which has been recognized and debated vigorously with regard to *lifelong education*, now represents its most significant contribution in the light of a critical sociology of education (Giroux & McLaren, 1997; Mészáros, 2005; Zinn & Macedo, 2007), by proposing a theoretical path as well as a plan of action, in this case related to the vision of building a new society, a *learning society* and a new type of city, the *educational city*. We believe this vision is in fact the essence of the *paradigm of lifelong education* and also of what is understood as adult education in the Faure Report. The established political and educational agenda is based on a theory of action with clear objectives of social transformation, and these are progressively examined throughout the report. This new society, the society of learning, will only make sense in the context of this new understanding given to education, which is seen not only as school education but as *lifelong education*. Twenty-one principles and recommendations are presented in this document, and these show the way forward to make the 'today and tomorrow's' reality as close as possible to the idealized utopia. Thus, in the report Faure defends his point of view from a firm political-ideological positioning that leaves no doubts about the nature of social transformation behind this vision, that 'it is out of the question for education to be confined, as in the past, to training the leaders of tomorrow's society (...) education is no longer the privilege of an elite' (Faure et al., 1972, p. 160). The effect of such policies on adult education and learning clearly means social emancipation for all.

According to *lifelong education*, the idea of the educational city, which is part of the underlying vision of the learning society, is based on the principle that when we accept that education will increasingly become a primal need of each individual we will have to invest all our efforts to broaden and expand its scope mostly in two necessary directions: first to develop other types of schools, polytechnics and universities which benefit from other forms of teaching, as well as from other types of educational relationships, and which are constructed from existing models; and secondly, the creation of other types of institutions in the city, both public and private, which will be able to embrace an educational role in the various institutional dimensions of city life by maximising the existing educational potential in local communities. It is in this sense that the city can also be understood as being educational. This is a deliberate comparison with the Athenian educational ideal of a *paideia*, and in this way the educational city represents 'a school for civic sentiment and fellow-feeling' (Faure et al., 1972, p. 162).

In Faure's report the vision of the educational city and a learning society, which is a vehicle for social transformation whose fundamental purpose is to democratize education and democracy itself, is as important today as it was then. According to this political-philosophical perspective a truly democratic education is the basis for guaranteeing 'man's right to be' (ibid., p. 162). But the goal of democratizing education implies changing the traditional bases of the relationship between society, the state and education. All layers of society, and particularly those referring to the political, economic and family spheres are called on to make a real contribution, because, in this perspective, a society of learning, besides being democratic, also needs to be mutually supportive, and in this context it is assumed that 'the fight against ignorance is as important as the fight against hunger' (Faure et al., 1972, p. 235). Lastly, this learning society is not only a democratic and supportive movement but is also pacifist in nature.

Its proposed path of action will reverse mankind's warlike propensity. The plan is manifestly utopian but it doesn't diminish its power of action. We think the utopian vision is simply reinforcing the underlying principle of today's educational debate (still). That is to say, as Paulo Freire put it, it is the torch which lights the way towards the creation of a more 'human' society.

However, mostly on account of its somewhat ideological slant, the *concept of lifelong education* has created controversies, divisions, schools of thought, and counterclaims, and disagreements. This has led to a general reflection about education on an international scale, as well as to the very particular interpretation given to literacy and adult education as part of a liberating project (Freire, 1975; Gadotti, 2001; Gelpi, 1983). Nevertheless, and despite its utopian branding, *lifelong education* has actually made its way into the public educational policy-making process. It did so on the back of UNESCO (1985, 1997), which in some ways helped to put it on the global stage and partly explains the sociological and historical importance that the *lifelong education perspective* has attained, as Lima has stated in this respect, 'we need only to remember that lifelong education as a *continuum* between the education of children, young people and adults, is seen in certain countries as cornerstone work of the welfare state, and which goes hand in hand with other social policies and also redistributive policies' (Lima, 2003, p. 129).

As so many of its minor failings have been pointed out and given that forty years have passed since Faure's Report, allowing us time to step back and look critically, it is not difficult to understand that many of the promises of *lifelong education* have not been kept: they have remained dormant, with much of their transforming power untapped, both in terms of national systems of education, as well as with regard to society itself (Comissão Europeia, 1995; UNESCO, 1996, 2009a, 2009b; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009). In the words of one of lifelong education's foremost advocates: 'from the theoretical point of view the principle [of lifelong education] has progressed considerably, but in practice the situation is less impressive (...) it does not appear that the set of traditional structures has in fact been substantially modified' (Lengrand, 1989, p. 9). Yet despite these promising discursive practices, with regard to the actual educational practices a fundamentally school-based logic has persisted.

There is no single reason behind a change in the world of education since those times, especially since it has been the humanistic approach to *lifelong education* that has surrounded the issue. But the growing *fin-de-siècle* dominance of a public discourse about a pragmatic approach to social and educational policies, inevitably linked to private groups interested in taking advantage of the crisis in the welfare state in core countries in order to expand the market, would constitute a powerful force for change (Sousa Santos, 2005). What we have here is for the most part an ideologically constructed crisis which draws attention to the difficulty of putting the political principles of *lifelong education* into practice, and invariably points to the economic unsustainability of a *lifelong education for all*. Alongside the transformation in the socio-economic climate caused by the oil crisis, a new global swing to the neo-liberal right at the end of 20th century had a significant impact on what inspired the U-turn with regard to adult education.

The main characteristics of adult education under the paradigm of lifelong learning

In the second half of the 20th century, it was the *lifelong education* approach that was mostly behind the educational policies of the welfare state and social thinking in social sciences, but in the 21st century the concept of *lifelong learning* quickly replaced it. This change in emphasis is a consequence of the domination of neoliberal globalisation (Barros, 2009). It concerns a change in the socio-educational panorama which in turn reflects the effects of a broader change that took place in the international political and economic context (Falk, 1999; Bauman, 1999; Bourdieu, 1998, 2001). What took place was that the *Keynesian consensus* of post-war international politics, according to which education is perceived primarily as a citizen's right and which the state should provide, was replaced by a new agreement, the *Washington consensus* of post-cold war world international politics, under which education was to be seen first and foremost as a service to the consumer that the state should liberalise (Field, 2002). To understand the impact of the new neoliberal political consensus we have to be aware of at least three other levels of consensus, intended to reverse the political-ideological assumptions of the Keynesian consensus: the first one concerns the future of the economy (World Bank, 2000); the second is about development policies (McMichael, 1996); and the third refers to the role of the state in the economy (World Bank, 1997). Out of all this arises in the first instance a new global economy associated with a growing global prevalence of a financial and investment way of thinking over the real economy (Chossudovsky, 1997), as well as the emergence of a new international division of labour (Tilly, 1995; Olesen, 2008, 2010).

The result has been a profound impact on the social structures that shape the socialization of individuals, with the result that, on the one hand, there has been a huge increase in the social divide between classes within national societies, even changing the norms of social stratification which had prevailed since the post-war period; and on the other hand, it has caused a break with the collective cultural values of the construction of the sense of belonging and social identity, by putting constraints on and personalizing their own symbolic classification criteria of social and cultural relationships. There is therefore a new economy, a new type of politics and a new social stratification emerging in our contemporary history. And it is in this broader scenario of social transition that we witness the shift from the hegemony of the perspective of *lifelong education* to that of *lifelong learning*.

The concept of *lifelong learning* was the dominant political outlook at the beginning of this century. However, this is not strictly speaking a 'new' concept, as Lima points out, 'it is important to understand the centrality assigned to lifelong learning starting with its secondary or rather peripheral emergence in the 1970, as the satellite idea of the then key concepts of lifelong education or continuing education' (Lima, 2003, p. 130). It is important to remember that many buzz words in the field of education received official recognition within the context of the main international political bodies. Thus, the promotion of the *lifelong learning* paradigm is especially linked to the OECD and the EU, as both produced several policy documents, such as the OECD report published in 1973, *Recurrent Education – a strategy for lifelong learning*, (OECD, 1973) and after that, the document entitled *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* published by the European Commission in 2000, one of the most important and disseminated policy documents in 21st century.

In the widely distributed *Memorandum* the concept of *lifelong learning* is understood as: 'any learning activity with an objective, undertaken on a continuous

basis and aimed at improving knowledge, skills and competences' (Comissão das Comunidades Europeias, 2000, p. 3). The distinction is clearly made between two of the dimensions associated with the concept: one of them is expressed in the term 'lifelong', where 'the emphasis is laid on time: learning during a lifetime, continuously or periodically' (ibid., p. 3); and a second dimension is expressed in the term 'lifewide' in all areas of life, which:

draws attention to the dissemination of learning, which can take place in all aspects of our lives (...) reminding us that a useful and pleasant acquisition of knowledge can take place, and indeed does, within the bosom of the family, during our leisure time and in our continuing social and professional life. (ibid., p. 3)

It is widely known that the concept of *lifelong learning* has become quite dominant today in transnational policies concerning adult education, and has enjoyed a degree of recognition in particular in the context of European policies since the 1995 White Paper (Comissão Europeia, 1995) and 1996, the *European year of lifelong learning*. This event heralded the launching pad for European guidelines concerning political agendas in the field of national mandates for adult education. Since then, within this 'silent enrolment explosion' taking place in the field of adult education (Tuijnman, 1996, p. 26), it is possible to pick out the most frequent interpretations presented in public debate about the concept of *lifelong learning*, and which form the basis of its widespread adoption in the new canonical educational *ethos* present in many of the contexts of today's adult education, namely: one in which it is presented as being a key tool for adaptation to change, both by individuals as well as organizations and society in general, to the extent that the concept is perceived as being the best educational tool to increase flexibility and economic competitiveness; in another sense it is seen as a policy of social cohesion and for combating exclusion through educational programs intended for adult audiences considered problematic; another interpretation presents it as a factor of employability and professional promotion; and a final one that shows it as a strategy to develop consumer-citizen participation in the social, cultural and political spheres of their societies. It is significant that since the turn of the century, all European governments have been implementing adult education policies referring to the *lifelong learning* paradigm that are eminently vocational and technocratic in nature, as we found during the course of a recent research project on European countries' national reports to CONFINTEA VI (Barros, Guimarães & Lima, 2012).

This widespread adoption has been behind the latest turning point to take place in the history of this sector, and which Jarvis sums up as follows: 'the commodification of education for adults' (Jarvis, 1995, p. 242). In public debate in this field there was a conceptual and theoretical reconstruction in adult education, based on sources from management, especially on the theory of human capital and the theory of development of human resources, whose ideological basis is neoliberal (Milana, 2012). The main consequence of this is that the meaning and purpose of education is now reinterpreted in terms of productivity and competitiveness. This political-ideological trend is reflected in the majority of adult educational practices on offer in the capitalist centres and southern European developing countries³. This can be illustrated by the Portuguese case, where we find a predominance of educational political discourses oriented towards adaptability, employability and the production of competitive advantages in the global market (Barros, 2009, forthcoming).

In this way, the economic, political and cultural bases that underline the adoption of *lifelong learning* in a political sense have contributed to the spread of a new mission statement for adult education: as a management tool of the work force; as a means to

prevent forms of social conflict; and as a tool of adaptability. The first statement sees adult education as a central instrument for the management of the workforce (European Round Table of Industrialists [ERTI], 1995). The premise for this interpretation is based on changes in the economic situation recorded in the last decades, which are presented as inevitable, in particular with regard to the dramatic transformations that have occurred in the world of work. These changes have led to the systematic erosion of outward signs of well-being that marked the so-called ‘thirty glorious years’, which followed World War II, namely: full employment, labour rights, universal social rights, the gradual tertiarisation of business, the exponential growth of consumption, increased leisure time, the expansion of access to education (Mishra, 1995, 1998). The oil crisis of the 70’s is the milestone that marks the end of this cycle and the beginning of another more austere age, which has been labelled the period of ‘thirty disastrous years’ by the most critical sectors (Forrester, 1997; Chomsky, 2000), or as the ‘new economy’ by the more conservative sectors (Taleb, 2007; Krugman, 2008). The most representative characteristics of this second cycle are: the emergence and maintaining of mass structural unemployment; international competition with regard to work; and rapid and constant technological innovations. In this context, adult education, now restructured for a market context which also favours a *lifelong learning* approach, is there to provide a range of services, which, from the point of view of human resources management, are seen as the key to increasing efficient productivity (Comissão Europeia, 2002; Consejo Europeo, 2011). These educational offers are presented as a required investment for the entire manufacturing sector that will represent gains in competitiveness in the national economies in the global market, with the promise of future returns and benefits for the population.

The second statement sees adult education as a means to prevent forms of social conflict (OECD, 2003, 2005). This interpretation is based on the promotion of social cohesion and the fight against social exclusion, which are essential in a context where the result of social options and policies of the new economy, namely the neoliberal consensus, is the systematic churning out of the unemployed, the spread of poverty, the generalization of insecure employment and a sharp drop in real wages, as well as an unprecedented creation and concentration of wealth, while at the same time there is more social inequality and a rising rate of bankruptcy (Martin & Schumann, 1996). The result of this is an imminent threat of civil violence on the part of a growing section of the population that is marginalized by an uncaring political class. In Europe, the social consequences of the erosion of the welfare state (which reflected the political commitment that permitted the articulation of democracy and capitalism on behalf of social justice) gave rise to an unprecedented increase in the scale of long-term structural unemployment, creating social framework that is harmful from a social point of view, but not necessarily from an economic perspective (Boyer, 1999). The massive amount of existing offers of education for young people and adults, both in the public and private sector, which are presented as new opportunities for employability (European Association for the Education of Adults [EAEA], 2006), can be interpreted as a way of curbing violence, a sort of safety valve or palliative factor in the social management of unemployment, inspired by the classic social control mechanisms, and well-known among conservative social policies. It is all about maintaining social order, despite injustice, to ensure the proper functioning of the economy (George & Taylor-Gooby, 1996).

The third statement sees adult education as a tool of adaptability for the benefit of the working population. This way of seeing it is based on the key assumption that it is employees themselves who are responsible for maintaining their jobs, and this

necessarily involves self-empowerment and the constant updating of skills. Here the future is presented as inexorable with technological change and development seen as something inevitable and unstoppable (Beck, 1998, 2000). In this context, it is argued that employees must learn to learn throughout their life, in an aggressive logic, in which, along with the current systematic appeal for training and *lifelong learning* there is a renewed highlighting of individual responsibilities for the acquisition of technical knowledge (OECD, 2000) and ‘competitive skills’ (Lima, 2003, p. 129).

In short, the current understanding of the adult education mission is founded on these three central political statements. From this it follows that the adoption of the perspective of *lifelong learning* represents, essentially, a partial and instrumental appropriation of the field of adult education, whose potential for social transformation and social emancipation, which was developed in the framework of a philosophical tradition with critical and radical roots, has been strategically confined to a state of latency. In this way its use has been strictly limited to what best suits the market, that is, it is confined to the scope of a philosophical tradition with technocratic and vocational roots.

Mapping the effects of policy changes: from collective qualifications to individual competences

As we have seen, *lifelong education* and *lifelong learning* each have a different approach and a firmly based way of understanding a definition of adult education, especially in terms of how intentionality or mission is attributed. In other words, each of these models involves the adoption of specific underlying principles that imply very different practices.

This discussion (occurring on capitalist centres) could be situated within the socio-productive restructuring movement which began in the last quarter of the twentieth century. This shift of contexts has implied the transfer of the *model of qualification* to what is known as the *model of competence*, which gave the concept of competence (later competences) and empowerment such a strong central position within the framework of today’s adult education. This is so both at the level of its discursive practices, as well as formal, non-formal and informal educational practices. From this perspective particular attention is drawn to the fact that contemporary educational practices carried out with adults which appeal to the concept of competence, particularly those with a non-formal character, turn out to reveal an *ethos* whose main characteristic is to put education at the service of business interests (Boshier, 1998). Most of the current adult education discursive practices dominant in European policy documents leave us with little doubts about this. In fact, the *lifelong learning* paradigm provides an understanding of the concept of competence that appears to be deeply instrumental and applies overwhelmingly to key benchmark skills that underpin a logic of educational results (meaning productivity gains for companies, and competitive empowerment for employees). Despite theoretical work to accomplish an acceptable educational definition of competence (Gillet, 1998; Perrenoud, 1999; Le Boterf, 2000), there is not yet a consensus on this. In mapping the effects of changes in terms of this conceptual domain, we see that the shift in thinking from competence to competences was mainly the rolling out of a new European Union policy concept.

The understanding of the evolution of the *lifelong education* approach towards that of *lifelong learning* requires an understanding of some continuities (these include the critique component of the school system in the Faure Report, which allowed a more inclusive view of formats and innovative contexts for adult education and learning), as

well as an understanding of some tensions and ambivalences stemming from an accelerated process of socio-productive restructuring. There has been a change in models, from the Taylor-Ford production paradigm to a new flexible or post-Ford production model. In the present context of hybrid structural transitions, we can observe that the concept of competences is winning the central ground.

The current hegemony of the concept of competences (particularly the prevailing understanding which reduces it to the concept of professional competence) is firmly bound to the interpretation that has traditionally been given to the concept of qualification. The spread of the concept of qualification, which came to the fore in the late 1940s, was based on two main axes of socio-political structuring, which together would help to sustain a model of social organization that would dominate throughout the Western world. These two axes were: the system of collective agreements, aimed at classifying and ranking jobs; and the systems of education and vocational training, with the task of classifying and organizing knowledge around diplomas and certificates. It is because of this that there is now a triple meaning attached to the current understanding of the concept of qualification. First, in terms of employees, referring to the knowledge and skills which stem from their vocational training; next in terms of the job, indicating the standard requirements required by the job; thirdly in terms of classifying the employees in the hierarchy of professional categories, each with their own salary and legitimate status, and which then serve as a basis for the idea of promotion and social emancipation (Kovacs, 1994; Schwartz, 1995; Bellier, 2001).

This qualification-based model, because it was so highly structured, allowed for a society in which individuals *a priori* believed that a certain level of qualification would correspond to a certain level of social status. This *status quo* acquired by qualifications can imply two things. First, it allows a collective feeling of belonging, which is important for the construction of professional and social identity among workers (Olesen, 2008), since different qualifications had a certain secure market value, that is, they would be the holders of a particular value that is unchanged by the context. Second, it allows for the creation of concrete social promotion channels resulting from a legitimate and permanent collective bargaining, based on collective agreement pay scales, out of which came, for example, the statutes of civil service careers.

However, this sort of social structuring came to a crisis at the end of the twentieth century, giving way to a time of uncertainty in which new modes of organization and social stratification emerged, whose rules are not always easily understood. This is a paradoxical situation in society, since, within the framework of changes in the relationship between the economy, the workplace and between education and training systems, some rather ambiguous situations have arisen (Bron, Kurantowicz, Olesen & West, 2005). For example, alongside a trend towards the devaluation of certificates and diplomas, and an ending to meritocratic opportunities for social advancement and access to jobs, there co-exist different ways of social, symbolic and professional classification, not unlike the transition in hegemony from the qualifications model to the new model of competences. In this way a new set of discursive practices emerge that point to a growing inadequacy of the qualification model. These appear to be based on changes in the employment system, which now requires technical skills to deal with the innovations introduced into these organizations by new information and communication technologies (OECD, 2006). Therefore the model of competences is now presented as a response to the inadequacies diagnosed in the model of qualifications. And, as is to be expected, this response springs promptly from the theories of human resources management, and in particular from the schools of thought of the so-called forward-

thinking and predictive school of management (considered as key elements of the new economy).

The model of competences, on which the recent models and provisions for non-formal education for adults are founded, presupposes two things: first, that there is a connection between competence and action, in which experience is the central concept; and second, that competences refers exclusively to the person, by which competence implies a new assumption of responsibility at the individual level, although previously it was at the collective level, as well as the social recognition and encouragement of this assumption of responsibility through the concept of empowerment.

The influence of this shift in responsibilities is quite profound for adult education, both in the political discourse about the field and in the underlying logic of educational practices regarded as innovative, especially in formal and non-formal methods with singular emphasis on the recognition of prior learning (Barros, 2011a). These new practices based on competences are, of course, the ones which are given the most support today by the supranational financing policies based on the *lifelong learning* approach, which, in the context of the European Union in turn mark the agenda both of educational policies carried out by the Ministries of Education, as well as the social policies carried out by the Ministries of Labour of the various Member States.

Thus there appears a new ideological-political rhetoric that articulates the field of adult education with the world of training and employment by means of various educational neoliberal governance mechanisms (Dale, 2005; Barros, 2009). This new way of thinking comes on the back of the idea of an inevitable technological shock (Fukuyama, 1992), requiring people as well as organizations and institutions to constantly adapt to evolving technologies, at the risk of countries losing their global economic competitiveness.

Considering the close relationship today between the new economy, flexible work practices and educational practices aimed at competences and skills, it is not surprising that the terms, approaches and concepts used in the context of management theories often appear in discursive practices on education in general and about adult education in particular. Moreover, in turn, and in a similar way, some terms, approaches and concepts in the field of education are appropriated and re-conceptualized under the auspices of management and organizational flexibility (Tuijnman, 1996; Lima, 2003; Barros, 2011b).

These much used flexibility strategies are the most visible aspect of an ongoing neoliberal globalization (Soros, 1987; Greenspan, 2007), and are based on four axes of action: in numerical flexibility, by which businesses quickly reduce or increase their workforce, basing this on the concept of additional human resources, which is used in the form of temporary work, short term contracts, part-time, and occasional work. The result is that this kind of flexibility, which is very popular at the moment, leads increasingly to the casual nature of employment; a second axis, which supports the first, is flexibility in salaries which, in essence, breaks wage agreements standardized by the model of qualifications, reducing expenditure on employees and increasing profits; a third strategic axis is called distancing which functions by subcontracting both goods and services; and finally a fourth axis is functional flexibility, which appears closely associated, on the one hand, with the general idea of multi-competences, and on the other hand, with the idea of transferability of these same competences, by applying these in such a way the desired results for the organization will be achieved. The result is the change from a model of salaried fixed employment to a job model which is becoming increasingly autonomous in that it transfers the responsibility for job management to the one who carries it out. This model of competences, which has come

to take precedence in the discursive practices of adult education, is widely advocated by management theorists. For example Senge (1990) defends, under the new information and management systems, the appliance of five key aspects, designed with the explicit purpose, it should be noted, to create new models of thought among the workforce that may contribute towards the liberation of their collective aspirations.

All these transitions are a reflection of the latest evolution in capitalism, which has been transformed into a wild capitalism, which leaves its marks on the whole of today's social life, making it de-standardized and individualistic and creating a constant climate of uncertainty and risk. We live in times of growing insecurity arising from the instability of our professional situation, which is also reflected in the physical and psychological health of workers, who are becoming increasingly isolated and socially unprotected. This is exacerbated by increasing social inequality, exclusion and violence. Seen as a whole, this situation gives society a general sense of disenchantment and alienation, allied to a paradoxical situation in which the adult is incited to action while at the same time is discouraged from acting, that is, people are encouraged to be compulsively active while receiving education. Furthermore it is to be noted that they are engaged in *lifelong learning* in all aspects of their lives. These individuals are told not only that their employability is in their own hands but also that the possibility of them becoming competent workers is also their own responsibility. But a competent worker at the beginning of the 21st century is a well-adapted one, whose personal action is reduced to the sphere of their positive professional commitment, and their positive performance as a consumer. Therefore, a citizen that is competent to work and consume cannot be too active in asking questions and in querying unfair social realities. In a way, the competences model of lifelong learning seems today to be actively advocating the consolidation of a 'collective free aspirations world'. We believe that this neoliberal utopia can be upset by another kind of commitment in educational work.

Final thoughts on interpreting shifts in adult education policies

The impact of these transformations in adult education is having a profound effect, and is generating a paradoxical situation. In fact this has traditionally always been a field of knowledge in which critical perspectives have played a part, and this has given rise to most of its inheritance and heritage in terms of theoretical and pedagogical conceptualisations developed by a broad set of humanist educators, many of whom agree with the general assumptions of the paradigm of *lifelong education*. Despite this, the phenomenon of education and training for competences invaded the field by means of its polyvalent rhetoric, which comes from the normative, political-philosophical discourses which are in essence administrative and managerial (Fragoso & Guimarães, 2010).

We can safely conclude that one of the main differences between *lifelong education* and *lifelong learning* comes down to the role and mission that is assigned to adult education itself. Thus, as far as lifelong education is concerned adult education political mandate was essentially a social transformation plan, based on a humanist ideology, seen as a vision of building a learning society, made up of interdependent institutions and committed to the safeguarding of social justice and the *res publica*. But with respect to *lifelong learning*, the political mandate applied to adult education is seen as a social adaptation policy, following a neoliberal and individualistic ideology, represented in the vision of building a learning society, made up of autonomous organisations that provide qualifications and which are committed to safeguarding private interests. They are two

opposite poles of a *continuum* with contextual characteristics to which researchers should apply even greater tools of analysis.

It is clear to us that any debate about adult education will have to be conducted in the domain of political principles and values (Barros, 2012). We disagree here with discursive practices of mainstream European Union and OECD policy documents. We take the line of some critical educators and researchers who see the evolutionary path of *lifelong education* towards *lifelong learning* mainly as a division rather than a continuity. Indeed, the concept of *lifelong learning* may seem on the surface to follow in the footsteps of the underlying principles of the concept of *lifelong education*. However, as we have highlighted in this article, the way many of these concepts was understood underwent drastic change, and some of them re-appeared dressed up in technical and de-politicised language. In other words, we believe that the current interest in *lifelong learning*, far from implying a renewed interest in the political social ideals of the seventies, as at first glance the discourse appears to suggest, is in fact based on exactly the opposite: its deliberate and continuous erosion. Boshier goes even further and is quite candid in his criticism when he says that ‘if lifelong education was an instrument for democracy, lifelong learning is almost entirely preoccupied with the cash register’ (Boshier, 1998, p. 5). Basing our arguments on the principles of critical social thought, we can interpret these changes and observe that the original socio-political vision of *lifelong education* that advocates social justice and a ‘co-naissance’ (Wildemeersch, 2010), has been subverted; it has been replaced with *lifelong learning* that advocates social peace, which turns it into a new form of oppression (lifelong and lifewide).

Faced with this, many critical educators and researchers have sought to revive or at least give visibility to educational practices in the field of critical and engaged adult education within their spheres of influence, albeit on a somewhat small-scale. They carry this out on a more informal level, potentially still adhering to a tradition inherited from the principles of a socio-educational and socio-cultural emancipatory perspective (Ackland, 2011), or based on popular education (Martin & Shaw, 2006), and community interventions for local development (Wildemeersch & Kurantowicz, 2011). These are in some way strongholds, normally seen as radical or critical (and usually not subject to EU financial programmes), and represent small pockets of political resistance to the dominant management-based *ethos* currently associated with adult education and learning in both public and private institutions (which appears to have succumbed to a market-based rhetoric). It is urgent that counter arguments of a critical and irreverent nature should be applied to these overwhelmingly dominant discourses, so that at least one clear lesson concerning the historical heritage of adult education should be drawn: it is a field with a long conceptual tradition linked to the safeguarding of the democratisation of society, the promotion of human rights and social transformation. It will, thus, help to create more enlightened communities and consequently societies where there is a greater sense of justice and solidarity. This is what the participants in the WSF (World Social Forum) discussions have been comprehensively demanding for the benefits of all.

Notes

¹ See, Ivan Illich (1970) as the most radical thinker against formal school, and Philip Coombs (1968) as the most representative of the concept of crisis in education.

² As Paul Lengrand (1970), Julius Nyerere (1974), Ettore Gelpi (1983), for example, put it.

³ We use Wallerstein (1984) ideas on power and the modern economy to identify countries as Germany as a capitalist centre and countries as Portugal as a southern European developing country.

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Discursive turns from 'Bildung' to managerialism

Memory-work of the Finnish adult education generations

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Abstract

The article focuses on the struggles over ethos in academic adult education tradition that grows from the frameworks of student generations in Finnish adult education. It brings together elements of present-day analysis and historically sensitizing memory data on generations of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. My interest here lies in how the rhetoric of lifelong learning and education has revised the basic assumptions of adult education. The data suggest that the dominant narrative of adult education is increasingly the discourse of marketization. Finnish present-day student generations seem to have lost their intrinsic connections with the Scandinavian traditions of popular enlightenment and the values of equality and basic logics enabling 'second chances' for all adult citizens within the Nordic welfare state. One of the results of the analysis was the following question: Should we reinvent adult education again from the standpoint of sustainable development of 'ordinary people'?

Keywords: adult education; student generations; memory-work; moral codes; ideals

Introduction

My intention in this article is to argue that we need to analyse history in order to understand the present struggles of meaning making in adult education. In the analysis, the standpoint in these struggles over definitions grows from the frameworks of earlier student generations in Finnish adult education. Here I bring together elements of present-day analysis and historically sensitizing memory data on adult education generations. The aim is to explore how different student generations of adult education of the 1960s to the 2000s understand the central meaning of their studies and how the stories of adult education they have maintained during the different decades, function as a framework for their own identity as practitioners of adult education. My research question in this article is: How do the former and the present-day students define adult education and understand this field of study? I intend to use their own conceptual

choices, catch-phrases and symbols to inform the theoretical and practical turns in the studies of adult education. In the background of this narrative analysis lies a historical analysis of the turning points and changing causal logics in Finnish adult education as a narrative construction (Koski & Filander, 2009; Koski & Filander, forthcoming).

As one of the students of the 1970s and now one of the academics of Finnish adult education I also had a personal interest in analysing the narrative turns of my own field of study. Our 1970s student generations had a strong 'key generation experience' (Mannheim, 1923/1952) because we were involved in such a generation experience that activated and mobilized us students to engage in the emancipative practices of the student movement. We wanted to emancipate ourselves and all human beings from the limits and chains of capital, manipulation and institutional rules of education. We also had a strong experience of 'being different', a somehow unique clan of students who from the margins of the social sciences and the educational sciences had to find their own way and interpretation of adult education. An analysis of students before and after my own generation identifies diverse culturally shared vocabularies and narratives in making sense of adult education.

The conceptual debate surrounding adult education

Replacing the concept of adult education with that of lifelong learning is usually seen as hugely expanding adult education. Adult education as lifelong learning has moved from the margins, or shadows, of traditional educational institutions and marginal social and cultural movements to the mainstream of the education policy of the globalized world and to the European economy and development. It has been re-configured as more 'relevant' to the world of work and more 'flexible' to better support the desire for economic competitiveness (e.g. Edwards & Usher, 1996, p. 221). This expansion broadens the scope of professional action of adult educators and challenges the traditional definitions and discourses of adult education as well as general education. The concept of lifelong learning removes the boundaries and clear-cut divisions of labour that earlier separated the different sectors of education (Edwards & Usher, 1997, p. 164).

Still, there are good reasons to pose also the following question: Is being everywhere being nowhere? The process of boundary-crossing with lifelong learning has during the last decades been a process in which adult educators have lost the sense of their own traditions as the field of study. Peter Jarvis (1997, p. 157) argues that adult education as a separate educational entity appears to be under threat. According to him, adult education is already 'an almost outdated concept' in the global and neoliberal economy. He argues that 'there is almost certainly no future for it as a separate form of educational provision' mainly because it has lost its connections to the radical social movements that earlier have espoused good causes and purposes for it (*ibid.*, p. 155). Also, according to Michael Welton (2005), adult educators, practitioners and theorists, who traditionally have become accustomed to speaking on behalf of the empowerment of neglected adult learners from the margins of social and intellectual space, are now facing the demands of the mainstream of the global economy.

The word 'empowerment' has become a kind of management's pet, but at the same time it has lost its former meaning (Welton, 2005, p. 132; see also Ingles, 1997, pp. 6-11). In the educational markets of human resource management, empowerment has become a development-oriented discourse, fashion and personnel policy created and carried on by management consultants as a competitive advantage of the workforce

(Legge, 1995, pp. 62-66; see also Filander, 2003, pp. 41-49). The rhetoricians of change management who often produce unthought-through 'visions' of innovation empowerment and joined-up e-governance also produce new self-images and identities for the field of adult education. They are the ones who want to erase the past and kick-start the future. These rhetoricians of development insist that the past should play only a minor part in progressive policy making that should be focused on the latest dawn of managerialism and consumerism. Alongside this downgrading of the past sits an impatience for the future (Pollitt, 2008, p. 2; Filander, 2009).

It is argued that adult education researchers should look for the origins of adult and continuing education and explain why adult education is in trouble today (Finger, Jansen & Wildemeersch, 1998). Adult education has become part of the strategic discourse employing the concepts of management and productivity. It has lost its links to its history with the state, to social movements as well as to the historical and ideological roots of progressive and radical adult education. It is also assessed that the critical tradition in the field of adult and continuing education will have difficulty surviving if adult educators respond to societal challenges without reflection and mainly adapt themselves to the demands and needs of the global markets (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17). Learning has been accepted as an effective and 'value-neutral' concept to represent and contribute social and cultural changes to several fields of practice, in which adult educators, or rather human resource developers now, work as forerunners of change.

Research and discussion in adult education is at a crossroad (Salling Olesen & Rasmussen, 1996, p. 18; see also Finger & Asun, 2001; also Suoranta, Kauppila, Rekola, Salo & Vanhalakka-Ruoho, 2008). Shared discussion between such practical cultures like popular enlightenment and vocational and work-related education and learning is missing. There is mutual suspicion in relation to the academic environment and a need to develop an all-round linguistic and cultural and internationally oriented theoretical framework that could create new conceptualizations and reorientation for the fragmented field. Also practitioners seek understanding and legitimation for their work from scientific discourses that could help them to understand their pedagogical work not only as an instrumental activity, but also in regard to processes of cultural criticism and democratization of knowledge (Salling Olesen & Rasmussen, 1996, pp. 20-21).

Memory-work data on student generations

The storytelling data on memory-work was gathered from different student generations in the University of Tampere in 2009. The University of Tampere is a special place for the Finnish tradition of adult education, because it was for a long time the only university in Finland where it was possible to pursue academic studies on adult education. Adult education was first taught at the Civic College which was originally founded in 1925 in Helsinki and which later became the University of Tampere in 1966. From 1928 to 1965 the subject was called 'the study of popular enlightenment' (Rasila, 1973, p. 47); in 1965, it was renamed adult education. The whole subject was transformed from the Department of Social Studies to the new Department of Education in 1974. From 1980 onwards, seven other Finnish universities also started to teach and conduct research on adult education in their Departments of Education; this expansion, however, is not included in the data of this analysis.

The data used here were collected from the participants in the Paideia¹ seminar in October 2009. Paideia was the student organization of adult education in the University of Tampere, which was founded in 1964 for students of adult education. In Finnish

universities, student organizations have been important autonomous spaces for the students to act and influence and socialize themselves into their main subjects of study. Almost 400 former students of adult education at the University of Tampere received our invitation to participate in a ‘class reunion’; eventually, 53 former students from 1950 to 1990 accepted our invitation. Of these participants, 27 wrote their memory story about their relationship to adult education and sent it to me by e-mail before or after this seminar day. After reading the stories I realized that these former students, mostly of the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s, who after all these years decided to answer our call, were a highly self-selected group. They were the ones who found their period of studying adult education in one way or another also important for their life history. In that respect, they represented the key informants of their generation. Highly probably they were also the ones who already were the most active during their student years, taking part on the discussions on the future of their own discipline.

In addition to my storytelling data, I also use recently collected interviews (20) in my analysis as a comparative data for the memory-work. The interviews were conducted by twenty students of lifelong learning and education at the University of Tampere, each of whom interviewed one fellow student of either adult education or general education in 2009 and asked the interviewee to tell what kinds of images and characteristics they link to students of adult education and adult education as a field of study at the present-day university. The students currently pursuing their studies represent here the existing understanding and reality within the framework of lifelong learning and education. The interview data are not ‘representative’ in the same sense as the memory-work data that self-selectively gathered together the most active students of their own time. The interviews were collected more or less sporadically and randomly from any student interviewed by their fellow students. Still, they may work here as a kind of comparative mirror for the memory-work of former students of adult education.

What originally motivated me to analyse my memory-work data was the idea of memory-work developed by Frigga Haug and others (Haug et al. 1987; Haug, 1992). I found it interesting to develop spaces for memory-work, where we could collectively examine and seek new meanings for our memories of studying adult education. ‘Everything remembered constitutes a relevant trace – precisely because it is remembered for the formation of identity’ (Haug et al., 1987, p. 50 as cited in Onyx & Small, 2001, p. 774). This approach to organizing data makes it possible to work on memory and experience in both a constructive and a destructive way (Haug, 1992, pp. ix-x). The idea is to work in a process in which narratives for the past and present and future could ‘grasp together’ bits and pieces of episodic memories into a narrative that could construct for us a shared understanding of the historicity, of which as such we are not yet aware (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 8).

During Paidea’s seminar 2009, we were able to create for ourselves a shared space where we had a chance to recall the common meanings and memories of events, which we collectively reappraised from the time of studying adult education together. We did not, however, follow any of the procedural steps⁵ of memory-work developed by Crawford et al. (as cited in Onyx & Small 2001, p. 776). Half of the participants (27) wrote 1 to 3 pages³ about particular episodes, actions or events that would work as a trigger or cue for the next step to a more thorough collective analysis of memories. When we divided the participants into smaller generation groups, each group of former students was free to discuss the concrete memories of their own generation in smaller groups in the way which they themselves found agreeable. One way to find a shared and familiar atmosphere was to recall the past and the ‘spirit of age’ (Zeitgeist) of their generation.

Among the recollections was a memory of us students of the 1970s generation finding a lot of joy in making statements during our student years. We all also shared a memory of being active for various important purposes, so we decided to make a statement again for fun. The roles played by the participants in this process were amazingly clear from the beginning. Despite these kinds of humoristic episodes during the seminar, the shared generation experience of different student generations still remained very diffuse and episodic. This is one of the reasons why I decided to conduct a thorough qualitative content analysis of the individual written memory-work episodes that I had collected before this meeting. In addition, I found it interesting to compare this memory data with the interviews conducted with present-day students.

Generation as a theoretical concept

As a theoretical framework I employ here Karl Mannheim's (1923/1952) concept of generations, which he used to understand the structure and intellectual movements of social change characteristic of his time. The social phenomenon of generations, as a fact of belonging or as a common location in the social and historical process, represents here a particular kind of key experience of adult education generations embedded in special student periods of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. I asked the former students of adult education to tell me about their experiences, to look back to the ethos of adult education that they used to know and to recall typical practices and memories from the time they were students. I also wanted to find out if they felt that adult education as a field of study had something critically important to give to them or to their own time and the 'spirit of age' (*Zeitgeist*) they lived in.

According to Karl Mannheim, shared consciousness and group solidarity are characteristic of key experiences and can in certain historical circumstances also produce potential and preconditions for social action which in certain circumstances can have influence on the events of history. The generation of people of the same age who feel a sense of solidarity and togetherness can be called the experiential generation (Mannheim, 1923/1952). In the circumstances of social change, this experiential generation can share a kind of key experience that shapes the tastes, preferences and habitus of the same generation (Virtanen, 2001, pp. 22-23; see also Alanen, 2001, p. 103).

In this analysis, the concept of generation is used to represent contemporaries who in a way share a common destiny and the same ideas and concepts of adult education of their own time (cf. Mannheim, 1923/1952, p. 306). The influence of a certain generation experience can be detected from similar positionings that stay relatively alike throughout their lives. According to Timo Toivonen, there are no such empirical studies that could detect the influence of a generation experience from youth to adulthood and old age. In this analysis, the method used is retrospective analysis that tells us about the most central ideas, concepts and things that former students felt important and shared among themselves in their studies even after so many years. These opinions and memories are things that they subjectively considered central in adult education. In this analysis I argue that these subjective memories are as such worth researching (Toivonen, 2003, pp. 117-118). However, it is important to remember that these memories are told from the present-day understanding. Some of the participants in this storytelling have behind them a long career in the field or they have already retired from their posts. Therefore, the memories of their studies in adult education are more or less part of their whole life history. Participation in the same historical and social

circumstances and common experiences in adult education may here work as a background for the same generation experience. It is also possible to detect some distinctive patterns of interpreting adult education in the interviews with present-day students of lifelong learning and education.

Students of the 1960s as 'seekers of core humanity'

Some former students of adult education (9) told me that in their studies in popular enlightenment and adult education in the 1960s⁴ they had learned mainly basic wisdom of human growth. They had also learned how to take part in discussions and how to ask totally new kinds of questions. It was not always easy. One recollection starts like this: 'Now there is just the same kind of chilliness of autumn in the air as there was when I started my first year of study in Tampere. (...) It is not easy to start telling about things that you really never totally understood' (F6⁵). She adds that she will tell about some scattered events and memories of the time when Urpo Harva, the first professor of adult education, a philosopher and a well-known debater, acted as a guide for his students, teaching them all kinds of things in the 'light of scientific spirit and without political agitation' (see e.g. Castrén, 1929/1991). She still does not know what the values of the professor really were. Those who agreed with Harva somehow seemed to be politically on the left. On the one hand, Harva was considered an arch-reactionary but, on the other hand, an 'endless provocator with good arguments' (M8). In the 1960s, studying adult education seemed to be for students a choice that had its own special flavour and character: 'At Paideia's first pre-Christmas party we got raisins and nuts, when warm beer was offered in other parties' (F6).

At the beginning of the 1960s, the subject was still called popular enlightenment; in 1965, it was renamed adult education. This was experienced as an ideological change moving from the old enlightenment to a more modern and democratic adult education. Still, adult education was not considered a very good concept by the students of adult education either. The Finnish-language term equivalent to 'education' is usually used in connection with school children and young people only. Adults are not supposed to want to be 'educated' because of their mature adulthood and their own free will and their adult dignity. According to the students of adult education, both enlightenment and education of adults were concepts that referred to something that was given from above. In the 1960s, it was a key thing in adult education to emphasize responsibility and respect for the adult student. It was experienced as a core of the whole subject of study but, according to a former student, it was not articulated clearly enough through the name 'adult education' (F1). Another former student described the same standpoint by using Finnish literature as an example:

I felt that popular enlightenment was quite a strange ideal, meaning that there are some civilized persons who are able to enlighten uncivilized ones. My ideal on adult education is best phrased by Juhani Jukola, a character in Aleksis Kivi's 'Seven brothers'⁶: 'You educate me, because I want you to, and you will keep your mouth shut because I want you to, and I read before you always according to my own will'. (M8)

Adult education was also considered an easy subject compared to, for example, sociology, because of its clear relationship to ordinary people. However, in light of future employment possibilities, adult education was still considered a better choice. Later on 'sociology almost turned into statistics, mathematics and mechanics and that's

why adult education was definitely a better choice' (F1). Another former student had similar preferences in her studies, but she calculated her choices more carefully:

As a student, I think that I thought like this: I wanted to do something that was close to social work but, as a subject of study, social policy was so dull, it meant only counting money. I found sociology very arousing, but it was so unconcrete. Popular enlightenment [the name of the subject of adult education before 1965], on the other hand, was considered a slightly antiquated subject, also easy perhaps, but gradually it started to exist also as a profession, although 'WE REALLY DID NOT THINK ABOUT WORK AT THAT TIME' [capital letters from the memory-work of the student]—on the other hand, [Professor] Harva stated in some of his books that folk high schools were built on very beautiful places in order to develop students' aesthetic senses—and I wanted to live in the countryside. (F6)

The former students of adult education felt that they were the critical opponents of their time. In liberal adult education, the central emphasis was on freedom and independence in studies, not on producing economical benefits (F6). The fight for equality and respect for student dignity was present in, for example, the key story of one passionate librarian who told how she was convinced about the importance of public libraries and the idea of the Open University. Her enthusiasm and the ideal of adult education that was important to her directed her towards development work done for the public libraries. 'Only after retiring have I realized that there are perhaps also other more important things to spend our tax money on than the libraries' (F1). A critical standpoint towards adult education was not very visible for the students. 'You just knew that adult education was not the favourite of the media' (F6). Civic or liberal adult education institutions represented something other than financial profit makers. It did not support the consumerist values of society or easy entertainment either.

Adult education was a choice that challenged students to find their own way against the mainstream. Among the important phrases and philosophical key words in almost every memory story of the 1960s were phrases like 'growth as a person', 'education as facilitation', 'learning for life', 'become what you are', and 'the whole person'. These were some kinds of guiding stars for the writers of memory stories. In these phrases they summed up their basic experience in adult education. Many students of the 1960s referred in their answers to their old textbooks. 'Today when I look at Jaeger's *Paideia*, a relic of the past, on my bookshelf, I can think that young people are indeed really smart' (F4). The aspiration of growing up as a human being helped another one to find in her mind a book by Overstreet called 'The Mature Mind' and Dostoyevsky's 'theme of a good human being'. This person says that 'this pattern of thought has been in my mind all these decades, and I still work on it at some point' (F2) and talks about continuing a lifelong project in a way linked to promoting equality. Along with adult education also this issue became important. Likewise 'a kind of spark was ignited in the form of growing interest in philosophy, which I haven't been able to study because I haven't had time, not yet!!!' (F2). A third person reveals how he 'already as a student read a book by Teilhard de Chardin *Le phénomène humain* [The Human Phenomenon]', which had a lasting impact on his view of the world and how he shapes it (M8).

The institutional context of adult education for former students was popular and liberal adult education that offered a possibility to study like adults, not like children at school. 'The institution of popular adult education works in the middle of people and with people' (F4). It meant that 'you offer people new possibilities for mental and

spiritual growth' (F4). The central message of adult education was understood as an antithesis to traditional learning at schools.

The 1970s generation as 'planners and actors for equality in working life'

When the students of the 1970s started studying adult education at the University of Tampere, they arrived in the middle of transition and strong student movements. Some stories from the 1970s (12) tell us about demonstrations and protests against the administrative transition that transferred adult educators against their own will from the Department of Social Studies to a new Department of Education. Students came actively out to protest against these reforms and transformations. This fight for adult education as a social science became a 'shared task' and a key question to many students of adult education. In one story a former student told me how 'it is difficult for me to analyse what I actually learned in the studies of adult education curricula and what I learned taking part in Paideia's activities' (F9).

Best in the studies were the things that we did in groups, in collectivities (...). We did not try to learn things alone but considered them together in groups. Above and beyond that we took initiative ourselves—we demanded, we organized and really participated and examined different kinds of alternatives and extra courses and studies. (F19)

At the beginning of the 1970s, the professor of the field was in the process of retiring. In one story a former student recalled that when he went to see the student adviser, she told him that 'The professor of adult education is Urpo Harva. But don't worry, he will retire soon' (M15). This was a sign of a generally shared belief that the adult education of the early 1970s represented something old-fashioned that should soon be re-evaluated and changed. The field of study started to turn away from liberal adult education and 'Bildung' to vocational training; the vocational turn culminated in 1973 and 1975 when the Committee Reports on Adult Education were published (Koski & Filander, 2009, p. 134).

In the field of adult education the discourse of research on working life was becoming a new vocabulary of the new era. Work invaded all areas of life and defined its values. Adult education was more and more defined as learning at work. According to one person's story, adult education was defined only as 'planning of education, planning of education, planning of education' (...) (F17). Studies in adult education in the 1970s focused on 'the general characteristics of adult learning and developing the system of adult education in the Finnish welfare state' (M18). Some former students criticized the methods the teachers were using; they missed real connections to theory and practice—teaching was more or less a general declaration of lifelong learning (M17). One former student recalls, however, how one of the teachers of adult education was a real exception to the rule. She was able to teach real project skills in the course of didactics, where she made students responsible for implementing a real course of 'the pedagogy for lone parents'. This former student was grateful to Ritva Jakku-Sihvonen [the teacher] for encouraging her in her dislike towards 'pedagogical tricks' which did not arise from the contents (F19).

Aulis Alanen, a substitute professor in the 1970s, advanced the vocational turn of adult education, still opposing the tendency to replace the concept of adult education with that of adult training. According to one former student, there was a strong will to defend the concept of adult education (M18). Educational equality in working life was the main target now. There was a strong belief that it was possible to create shared

societal rules and legislation concerning working life in the Finnish welfare state to defend the educational equality of workers. There was a lot of talk on that employers should pay their share of the costs of employees' further education and thus create for adult population a chance to further educate themselves and to complete vocational degrees.

Among the important phrases in almost every memory story of the 1970s were core sentences like 'A Finnish employee will work on average in five different professions or jobs during his or her working life', 'Everybody can learn or improve his or her position', 'Belief in that every age is a good age to learn new things'. Above all, adult education was considered to improve the equality of life of ordinary adults in their working life practices. Still, all former students wanted more than just to plan and do practical things. They missed the glory of philosophical reflection on adult education, practical benefits of development at work were not enough. 'I am still allergic to the phrases like 'ordinary, small people', 'the ordinary man in the street' or 'the common people'. There are no such things as ordinary people. There is no need to limit research to such things that so-called ordinary people can understand.' (F19). The core idea of 'Bildung' and human growth was to some extent still present among the generation of the 1970s.

Memories of shared opposition in the 1970s were strong. Some adult students considered odd all the political activities that invaded into all activities and studies in the university (M11). However, many students experienced insights that referred more or less to the 'general buzz' of the mobilized generation. They learned to act in the immediate democracy within the administrative practices of the university; they learned to be active persons able to influence their own destiny as active citizens. As a former teacher of adult education in the 1970s, one storyteller, Kari Rantalaiho, summarized his analysis of the student generation of the 1970s in adult education in his storytelling:

I considered students in Paideia like small hobbits who stubbornly held onto the light of life and the traditions in the middle of transitions where soulless and cold intruders [the representatives of general education] tried to repress adult education. (...). For me, the student organization of Paideia was an important educator in immediate democracy.

The 1980s and the 1990s generations in an alienation process from the ethos of the welfare state

In the 1980s, the shared ideals, fights and politics of student movement escaped from the universities.

The triumph of marketization of adult education had started and somehow our generation thought that we just had to get along with it. But the ideals were still there, each person had slightly different ideals, for example, within the peace movement. Submission to the markets took place later on in the 1990s. (M21)

In the studies of adult education, the strong ideals of educational equality, the ideology of the Open University and 'Bildung' were still present. One storyteller remembered someone telling her recently that 'you are still going strong and you have still power to talk with eyes burning with passion about 'Bildung' like twenty-thirty years ago'. She herself has some doubts about her coping strategies now. She talks on the basis of her present job, in which work is sometimes brutal and often means hard decisions

concerning personnel and keeping the eye on finances. According to her, it is difficult to keep up the high spirit when the wider content and larger meaning of work appears to be lost in hard everyday life in the workplace (F23).

The memories of students of the 1980s (6)⁷ imply that at that time adult education as a major subject lost ground to certain minor subjects that became more important to them. Very few considered adult education as their own thing. One storyteller told me that in the beginning he felt that adult education could offer him a many-sided degree that could provide him professionally with a very wide area of social activities and practices. He liked the idea that it was not possible to predict what the future contents of the degree would be (M21). At that point, adult education was already interpreted from the wider perspective of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning was everywhere. Feelings of strangeness developed stronger and stronger, although he later on got a job in projects in the field of adult education. Although he had always had clear connections to projects in the field of adult education through his work career, he could not consider this field as his own (M21). Similar experiences and feelings were also present when another storyteller said that social psychology finally was the subject that really struck a cord in her. First she thought that she would change her main subject but, for some reason, she did not. Later on social psychology and adult education have always been part of her work practice, although she still does not know what she will become when she grows up (F 23).

The ideology of lifelong learning was present in the talk, also with a person who identified herself as a journalist, not as an adult educator:

Adult education gave me faith in lifelong learning and continuous development of oneself. Study of adult education also created critical mind and ability to look situations from the standpoint of the uncomprehending and disadvantaged: "You have to tell things in such a way that everyone, even your grannie, will be able to understand your message. (M25)

In the 1980s, adult education was a difficult context in which to identify oneself. According to one storyteller, the teachers of the subject were more or less only looking into the past and into the glorious 1970s. However, some students found a new spirit and passion from the works of developmental work research conducted by Yrjö Engeström. 'I don't remember what ideals the adult educators in Tampere represented. Rather it was this Engeström's bunch who were critical and forerunners of change in Helsinki' (F13). The only storyteller of the 1990s in this data continues the same story of incoherence. Studying lifelong learning and education meant for her more or less running after study attainments. It was not possible for her to find her identity as an adult educator during her studies of lifelong learning and education. Later on, when she worked as a teacher for unemployed adults to improve their basic abilities to work and cope with their lives, she felt that she had at last identified herself as an adult educator (F26).

Students of the year 2009 facing careerism and customerization

In the year 1993, the two separate programmes of adult education and general education were joined into one programme of lifelong learning and education. Students entered the joint study programme with only some special courses in adult education. The first-year students did not identify themselves as adult educators but educationalist who studied in the programme of lifelong learning and education. The main subject was

usually chosen during the second year of studies; one had to choose either general education or adult education. Out of 20 interviewed students, seven had chosen adult education as their main subject, 13 were students of general education. For the purposes of this comparative analysis, I focus only on the data in which adult education is the main subject of discussion. For some students, it was almost impossible to distinguish between adult education and general education.

I have chosen general education, because I was told that it is a subject that does not exclude anything, but I am a bit confused in this situation, because I still don't feel that I'm only an educationalist, I feel that I'm also an adult educator. I think that this is very confusing (...), I don't see it as a different area (...) I don't have such a division in my head. (1B/2009, p. 3)⁸

Some students of general education have broken away from adult education. One student said that it is more or less part of an orientation that she could never consider. Adult education appears to be like economics or management sciences (1B/2009, p. 15). Instead, she did commit to multicultural issues, development co-operation and education of media in the curricula, to which adult education was almost an antithesis according to her understanding. This same 'prejudice' appeared to be a very shared one among the students of general education: '(...) Yes, there is a certain difference whether one works with children or young people, somehow I feel that the motivation of adult educators appears to be so centred around career' (2B/2009, p. 12).

From the standpoint of general education, the students of adult education appeared to be

people who play it safe: (...) Those who choose adult education are the ones who perhaps think economically wiser, they think that money is moving in the practices of working life (...), but when I made my choice, I didn't really know what adult education is or what adult educators do. I chose general education because I had some work experience in the kindergarten. (4B/2009, pp. 26-27)

On the other hand, adult education was interpreted as a 'risky business' compared to general education: 'General education excludes nothing (...) so general education is considered a safe choice (laughing)' (5B/2009, p. 37).

As educationalists all students suffered from the same misunderstanding: 'When you tell your friends and parents that you will become an educationalist, everybody thinks that you will become a school teacher or teacher in the kindergarten.' (HB9/2009, p. 5) Still, being an adult educator did not fascinate as a special alternative, because nobody seemed to know what adult education was about. When you become something that is close to the images of real professions like teachers, you feel safer with all that uncertainty that present-day students of lifelong learning and education have to tolerate (For 'the experts of uncertainty', see Filander, 2005).

Those students who had chosen adult education did not express such uncertainties as the students of general education. Adult education appears to be a subject often chosen by the older students (HB9/2009, p. 2). Many students had experience of working life that made them more self-confident compared with younger students. Because of their life situation, they usually also wanted to graduate in a very short time (6B/2009, p. 43). Sometimes their orientation changed during the studies: 'I at least had a very practical approach in the beginning, to get support for my own work' (3B/2009, p. 17). Later on, his relationship to the studies changed into more theoretical one: 'I think that a student who is more interested in the relationship between education and

society and dimensions of sociology of education will choose adult education as his or her main subject' (3B/2009, p. 18).

For a group of students who identify themselves as 'typical human resource developers', adult education appears to be a very clear and self-evident choice. They do not 'feel comfortable with images of 'educators' who as pedagogues shake their finger at students out there' (7B/2009, p. 44). Yes, it was a very clear choice (...) I did not even think about general education (...) I feel that educationalists have to have a kind of 'passion for development work'. She or he must be very open and be very interested in the environment and world around them (7B/2009, p. 48). They want to work with adults and they feel that humanistic values and business are not two different things (7B/2009, p. 50).

Those who have chosen adult education usually also know where they want to be employed. They are interested in human resource development work and recruitment. Business studies and economics are their main interests (HB8/2009, p. 56). They think that the central core concepts and research subjects in adult education could be, for example, quality of working life and change in working life as well as demands that those changes set for people. In the Department of Education they do not feel at home: 'I don't belong to those educationalists (...), it is not my thing. I am one of the students of adult education who consider changing their main subject into economics or administration (...) we are quite many' (HB8/2009, pp. 59-61).

Some students missed a more careful classification between the concepts of adult education and adult training. The following statement summarizes the three alternatives that clear up the identity crisis among the students of lifelong learning and education:

If we talk about adult education, we talk about humanistic educators; it is something that is more part of social [frameworks]. But when we speak about the work of an adult trainer, it slightly resembles the work of a consultant, but more that of a trainer in an organization—so-called human resource trainer (...) I think that many students who are more oriented towards the children choose that area [of general education]... Then the others could be clearly adult trainers. And then there are those that represent the golden middle ground who think that their approach is considered more social-scientific. If one has chosen adult education, I think that they are clearly oriented to training—general education is more like education, education of children and adult education is clearly more like training.—I don't think that I am a real educationalist, because I've chosen adult education that in a way separates you from the masses, from the most of the students. (9B/2009, p. 13)

Comparative analysis of the memories and interviews of generations

The idea in this analysis was to work in a process in which narratives for the past and present and future can 'grasp together' bits and pieces of episodic memories into a narrative that constructs for us a shared understanding of the historicity, of which as such we are not yet aware (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 8). The main interest here was to identify on the level of agents and subjects the differences and similarities of subjective meaning making processes of experiential generations of students in adult education. With a thematic and comparative reading of the conceptions of former and present-day students, it was possible to construct a transgenerational comparison of how their particular kind of key experiences, catch-phrases and symbols construct discursive turns in the narrative history of Finnish⁹ adult education. The narrative turns were conceptualized as a process from 'seeking of core humanity' to the search of 'equal

ethos of working life' to the 'alienation' from the values of welfare state and to the careerism and customerization of the present-day students of adult education.

This narrative history of transitions in the ethos of adult education is in no way especially surprising. In fact, it confirms the analysis conducted by Aulis Alanen (1992), who has proposed central turns in the Finnish adult education policy from the conformist policy of civilization and 'Bildung' (from the 1920s to the 1960s) to the planning-based period of the welfare state and adult education (from the 1970s to the mid-1980s) and to the market-based adult education (from the mid-1980s to the 1990s) (Alanen, 1992, pp. 10-15). However, the narrative history of my analysis provides empirical data on the subjective experiences and basic value assumptions of these turns and exposes the norms and ideals that have been present on the academic adult education curricula of each generation.

The next summary shows how different generations have framed their 'generalized others' and how these 'others' have changed during the decades (Table 1).

What was important for the 1960s representatives was the relationship to the equal ethos of the Nordic welfare state and the basic logics of universalistic rights for all citizens (e.g. Kosonen, 1998, p. 37). The rights of the so-called 'ordinary people' and respect towards them as students were considered the most central aim and emphasis of the field. Among the former students, adult education was considered to represent cultural criticism, and even some kind of critical tradition, in relation to the dominant economic and consumerist values of society. However, moral grounds and ideals of civilizing people and commoners for full citizenship and individually enlightened humanity and spiritual growth were already in the 1960s turning in a more instrumental direction (see also Koski & Filander, 2009; Koski & Filander, forthcoming).

In the 1970s, students were living in the middle of the reforms of the higher education system and the welfare state, at the time when the first and second Committee Reports of Adult Education (Komiteamietintö [KM] 1971; KM 1975) were published and the vocational turn in adult education took place (Koski & Filander, 2009, p. 134). In the rapidly industrialized and urbanized Finland of the 1970s, society was facing great structural changes. People were moving from the countryside to suburbs and from agricultural to industrial work. At the same time, wage labour was becoming the dominant social sphere of life. Instead of being 'seekers of core humanity', the generation of adult education became a vital promoter of material production as 'planners and actors for equality in working life'. In the societal context of the welfare state, the general declaration of the positive discourse of lifelong learning embodied the moral values of human equality along with the increase in industrial production. Economic production turned out to be understood again as the very basis of human growth (Koski & Filander, 2009; see also Koski & Filander, forthcoming). Talk on 'ordinary, small people' was present to the extent that one of the former students felt still allergic to that phrase in her memory-work.

In the 1980s, the mainstreaming of lifelong learning produced many significant changes in the orientation of adult education. It became more difficult for students to consider the field of adult education as their own, because lifelong learning was everywhere without any clear socio-cultural or institutional connections. Although their identity as adult educators was diminishing, the former students argued that the values and ideals of educational equality, the ideology of the Open University and 'Bildung' still created a critical mind and ability to look at the situation from the standpoint of the uncomprehending and disadvantaged 'ordinary people'. However, the 1980s student generation lived already in the middle of the alienation process from the ethos of the welfare state and in the middle of increasing marketization of adult education.

Table 1. Summary of generations

Experiential generation	The generalized other /institutional connections	Shared content in adult education	Ideals / key words
The 1960s generation	Other social studies, especially sociology and social policy Liberal and popular adult education/popular enlightenment	Adult education as a practical and philosophical subject of study Ordinary people and enlightenment work Unmodern orientation The central message of adult education as an antithesis to traditional learning at schools	The fight for equality and respect for the adult student dignity Critical opponents of their time; criticism to financial profit makers, consumerist values of society and easy entertainment Key ideals: 'growth as a person', 'the whole person', 'education as facilitation', 'learning for life', 'become what you are'
The 1970s generation	Fight for adult education as a social science Invasion of general education Vocational turn of adult education and research on working life	General characteristics of adult learning A general declaration of lifelong learning Developing the system of adult education in the Finnish welfare state Instruments for planning of education	Educational equality in working life was the main target now Educational equality of workers–'the common people' The glory of philosophical reflection was absent, but still in the level of ideals present Collective activities of students as a central place for learning
The 1980s and 1990s generations	Lifelong learning perspective; institutional connections become more unclear–the need for lifelong learning is everywhere The triumph of marketization	Students did not succeed in considering this field of lifelong learning as their own Faith in lifelong learning and continuous development of oneself Some students found a new spirit and passion from the works of developmental work research	The ideals were still there; ideals of educational equality, the ideology of the open university and 'Bildung' Adult education created a critical mind and ability to look situations from the standpoint of the uncomprehending and disadvantaged/ ordinary people were still there.
The 2009 generation	A joint programme of lifelong learning and education for adult education and general education General education excludes nothing and it starts to have a more progressive image than adult education Images that link adult education to enterprises, economics or management sciences and practical training	Different groups of students make their own interpretations–confusion and 'prejudices' against adult education are more common Knowledge in the field of economics and business sciences is understood as the core of adult education	Key concepts for adult training ; quality of working life, change in working life, demands that the changes set for people Human resource development-oriented students do not feel comfortable with images of 'educators' Humanistic values and business are not two different things You have a kind of 'passion for development work'. She or he must be very open and very interested in everything Adult education separates you from the masses, from the most of the students of education

Source: Author

According to the former students of the 1980s, the real triumph of marketization did not start until the 1990s. Marketization meant a transition from the ethos of the welfare state and liberal adult education and 'learning for living' into compulsory 'learning for a living' (Martin, 2001; see also Crowther, 2004, p. 134). According to Pekka Kosonen (1998, p. 43), the problems faced by the welfare state and thus by the public sector in Finland in the 1990s stem from changes in the economy, the labour market and political institutions, which were leading to a reassessment of the roles of welfare systems and to changes between the public and the private. The discursive shift in public debate was evident also in the ideals, goals and expectations concerning the discourses and languages of adult education (cf. Filander, 2003, p. 15). Students and voluntary participants in the multiple fields of adult education became more often paying customers. Financial profit-making, profitable benefits and consumerism were no more values against which future practitioners of adult education and lifelong learning could fight. On the contrary, adult education was considered to be more like economics or management sciences, largely focused on human resource management, career, business and administration.

When we compare the memory-work of the former students with the interviews of the present-day students, we can see a clear break in the ideals, goals and expectations concerning adult education. Adult education is no longer mainly considered as a field of study that fights for equal rights for small or 'ordinary people', for wider and equal 'Bildung' for all, or tries to look at situations from the standpoint of the uncomprehending and disadvantaged people. Rather, the present generation of adult educators is more interested in separating from the 'masses'. The present-day students of adult education seem to have narrative approaches very much similar to the ethos of the enterprising self with values of excellence (see Rose, 1992). Knowledge in the field of economics and business sciences is understood by them as the core of adult education. Although some students of adult education are still considered more like a humanistic and social-scientific clan of students, the majority of them identified themselves as future leaders of human resource development, as 'typical human resource developers' or adult trainers who try to combine business with well-being at work.

Conclusions

My original aim was initially to find some shared grounds for a continuation narrative of adult education from generation to generation. Nevertheless, based on my analysis, I ended up writing a story of narrative transitions and even of a break in the discourses of adult education from the standpoint of earlier and present-day students. In order to understand what is really said and remembered, we need to proceed to analytical reading of the memories to reach culturally and socially shared scripts of these stories and memories being told (e.g. Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, pp. 21-22). We have to ask what kind of socially and culturally shared vocabularies or 'voices' these former and present-day students of adult education use as their resources when making sense of adult education.

Vocabularies of human dignity and growth as well as talk on 'ordinary people' have changed into talk on human resource management and making distinctions to the 'masses'. The moral narrative of liberal adult education has changed into the utilitarian and impassioned talk on development work in enterprises. For adult education, adaptation to the learning paradigm within the educational department has been a

process of alienating from the basic equality values and moral codes of the Nordic welfare state and traditional paradigms of adult education with 'second chances', dignity and human growth for so-called 'ordinary people'. The social pedagogical orientation of adult education has changed into the orientation of business sciences aiming to combine humanistic values and quality of working life with business. However, impassioned work for human resource management may also represent the values and practices of 'cold intimacy' and 'emotional capitalism', a culture where emotional, psychological and economic discourses and practices mutually shape each other (Illouz, 2007, p. 108; see also Brinkmann, 2008, p. 96).

The managerial change is evident in this case study of adult education generations. It is part of the larger process that has in recent years been occurring in Western European universities, where adult education departments have gradually changed from adult education into lifelong education and adult learning (see *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 2010). Adult education has expanded beyond its traditional boundaries and become part of the general paradigm of learning and education without clear institutional connections to adult education. Richard Edwards and Robin Usher (1996, 1997) see this change mainly as a positive challenge for adult educators to move themselves from their marginality to the boundless field of lifelong learning and multiplicity of purposes. According to them, there is, however, a real danger of managerialism becoming the only universal imperative and a new metanarrative of reading the multiple discourses of lifelong learning and education (Edwards & Usher, 1996, pp. 227-228).

Nevertheless, the socio-cultural and historical roots of adult education with social movements and the less privileged common people who need to have a 'second chance' in life are still with us with a new emphasis and talk on 'ordinary people'. John Clarke suggests that this new interest in 'ordinary people' is part of their assumed a-political character and potentiality of 'ordinary people' becoming important in the process of finding a new locus for governing the social. When excluded and marginalized 'ordinary people' become both the object and the means of modernizing society, they represent important moral and social or civic virtues as partners or participants to co-producers of welfare, care, community and the 'social fabric'. Ordinary people thus represent the members of the public, service users, residents, citizens, or bearers of the 'lay perspective' (Clarke, 2012, p. 25). I argue that revitalizing and rethinking the traditional talk and interest in 'ordinary people' may in the new future also revitalize a new interest in adult education.

Invited to the present, memories may have consequences for the future as well. Research can also be seen as a critical activity aiming to change and influence the world in which the researcher is conducting research (Usher, 1996, p. 9). As one of the students of the 1970s and a representative of the equal ethos of the welfare state, I found the alternative discourses of former student generations with cultural criticism and even a critical tradition to dominant consumption and the guiding stars of the 1960s like 'learning for life', 'become what you are' and 'the whole person' very inviting. I argue that these memories and images of adult education are worth considering anew from the present-day perspective. The demands for permanent flexibility, willingness to change and develop and increase mobility have too often become things that instead of positive 'emancipation' produce a widespread overburden. People start to lack the energy, drive and desire to keep up with the pervasive demands to be flexible lifelong learners interested in permanent change and (self) development (Brinkmann, 2008). This situation creates a serious need to reinvent traditional adult education with the idea of 'Bildung' and 'core humanity' to increase the real meaning of life (Lindeman, 1926).

In his time, Eduard Lindeman (1926), one of the classics in adult education, attempted to create an adult education movement to revivify adult education, so that it would become again an adventure which could help people see the meaning of the whole of life. According to him, 'Art, its appreciation and enjoyment, belongs to those who have or are capable of having 'intrinsic sensibility' and the highest function of adult education may well be the discovery and release of these qualities of sensibility among the many'. Also in this respect, 'ordinary people' and traditions of adult education may become important again in modern society where too many people are marginalized, left outside and lack positive expressions of respect and recognition for others (Sennett, 2003).

Notes

¹ Paideia was founded in 1964. At the beginning of the 1990s, it was renamed Mentor. This organization was then intended for students of both adult education and general education. Both also shared almost the same study programme of lifelong learning and education.

² In Phase 1, the individual's reflections indicate the processes of constructions. Phase 2 involves a collective examination of the memories, in which the memories are theorized and new meanings are created. In Phase 3, the material provided from both the written memories and the collective discussion of them is further theorized (see Onyx & Small, 2001, pp. 775-777).

³ Two persons wrote much longer narratives; they were more like autobiographies covering their whole lives.

⁴ One former student of this generation started her studies already in the 1950s.

⁵ The codes for the data: F means a female person and M means a male person.

⁶ This reference originates from a novel written by the Finnish national author, Aleksis Kivi, called 'Seven brothers' (1870/1969). Juhani Jukola was the oldest and most stubborn of the brothers, who did not learn as easily as the youngest one did. This novel is considered the greatest and most outstanding work of Finnish literature and it has crucially influenced the self-image of the Finnish national spirit.

⁷ Only one person among my storytellers belonged to the 1990s generation.

⁸ The passages in quotations are from the transcript. They are followed, in parentheses, by the code number of the interview, year and page reference to the transcript. In the longer extracts from the transcripts, which I call episodes, three full stops ... indicate a pause, (...) shows that passages not essential for the purposes of the interpretations or words serving to fill out a sentence have been deleted. Square brackets [] are used when words have been added to the text for the sake of clarity or when original words have been replaced by words which, while they carry similar meanings, make it more difficult to identify the speaker.

⁹ It is important to remember that this analysis is based on the academic tradition of adult education that was until the 1980s in Finland concentrated only in the University of Tampere. This tradition represents in this respect the tradition of Finnish academic adult education.

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Subordinating careers to market forces?

A critical analysis of European career guidance policy

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Abstract

This study explores language regarding career and career development in European policy documents on career guidance in order to disclose underlying view(s) of these phenomena conveyed in the texts. Qualitative content analysis was used to approach the subject in the texts, followed by a sender-oriented interpretation. Sources for interpretation include several sociological and pedagogical approaches based upon social constructionism. These provide a framework for understanding how different views of career phenomena arise. The characterization of career phenomena in the documents falls into four categories: contextual change, environment-person correspondence, competence mobility, and empowerment. An economic perspective on career dominates, followed by learning and political science perspectives. Policy formulations convey contradictory messages and a form of career 'contract' that appears to subordinate individuals' careers to global capitalism, while attributing sole responsibility for career to individuals.

Keywords: career; career development; lifelong learning; guidance; European policies

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, a new social arrangement of work emerged. Occupational and educational prospects were no longer linear, predictable or stable, and employment was no longer secure nor lifelong (Savickas et al., 2009). Globalization – economic and social conditions, business and industry – required a knowledge economy and a more knowledgeable workforce (Jarvis, 2009a). By the late 20th century, a renewed interest in lifelong learning had thus emerged which emphasised the economic perspective, ideas of global capitalism and competition, in contrast to the humanistic perspective of the 1960s (Rubenson, 2009). Transnational agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD and the European Commission have played key roles in communicating this increased interest in lifelong learning strategies in European

countries (Jarvis, 2009b) and have promoted a neo-liberal model of globalization (Torres, 2009). The intensified focus on lifelong learning in Europe (e.g. European Commission, 2001; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 1996) was followed by an increased focus on career guidance policy making. As part of the adult education field, career guidance is recognized to play an important role in implementing lifelong learning strategies in European countries (see, e.g., European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [CEDEFOP], 2005; Jütte, Nicoll & Salling Olesen, 2011).

A more fragmented working life has entailed recurring transitions for adults. Guidance practitioners in different countries and settings often serve as support to adults transitioning between different educational and working settings. Assisting and supporting adults in their career prospects and choices, they are influenced by several kinds of theories, such as career and counselling theories (Kidd, 2006). Theories of career choice and decision-making (e.g. Kidd, 2006), narrative approaches to career guidance (e.g. Cochran, 1997; Savickas, 2005), adult learning theories such as life history approaches or biographical approaches for instance (e.g. Alheit & Dausien, 1999; Merrill, 2009), are found relevant for supporting adults in today's environment (see, e.g., Savickas et al., 2009). Kidd (2006) stresses that career guidance is 'essentially educative.... helping individuals learn, sift and make sense of material in order to come to a greater understanding of themselves' (2006, p. 68).

While the organization of career supportive activities may differ within and between countries, and the directions for practice may differ, it should not be taken for granted that the aims of career intervention are always clearly defined or articulated. Nilsson (2010) states that, although aims inform the direction of practice and express some kind of underlying ideology, it has never been seriously analysed whether guidance shall primarily satisfy individual interests or the interests of the market. Different trends have influenced guidance practice in line with changing views about career and career development (e.g. Kidd, 2006; Nilsson, 2010). Several authors (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989; Collin, 2007; Kidd, 2006; Patton & McMahon, 2006) point to a conceptual confusion regarding career and career development due to multiple meanings and differing interpretations among the different fields of practice, perspectives and disciplines. Collin (2007) notes that the concepts are used for various personal, scholarly, social, managerial, economic and/or political purposes. In addition, according to Manninen (1998), education has different roles that lead to different guidance policies. From a career management focus, guidance is based upon adjustment to changes; from a career planning focus, guidance is based upon future opportunities; and from a career designing focus, guidance is based upon interests and strengths.

One should not ignore the influence common policies can have on career guidance practice in virtue of the fact that they somehow communicate the main purpose of education. The creation of common policies to be applied across the diverse career guidance structures, delivery systems and practices of EU member states would seem to occasion the imposition of some particular view of career phenomena. However, dilemmas that may occur when understandings of career phenomena are contradictory, seem to go unrecognized. As indicated by Jütte, Nicoll and Salling Olesen (2011), it is a paradox that adult education appears to lose both visibility and contour the more it becomes central to debates of lifelong learning. This appears to also be the case for guidance practitioners as part of the adult education field. The need for further knowledge concerning career guidance and adult career development, in relation to changing conditions and about policy strategies designed to connect education, working life and the supporting societal system has been identified by several authors (e.g. Lindh

& Lundahl, 2008; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Therefore, it is important to scrutinize the language regarding career and career development in the relevant European policy documents. The expressions, statements and view(s) concerning career phenomena therein certainly influence the directions for career guidance practice in European countries. This study aims to explore characterizations of and disclose underlying views concerning career and career development as revealed by the language of European policy documents for career guidance.

Previous research

With the emergence of the new landscape of working life, researchers connected to the career field started to look at the possible impacts it would have on the career field (e.g. Brousseau, Driver, Eneroth & Larsson, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1996; Nicholson, 1996). From the organizational literature, the concept of ‘protean career’ was introduced (Hall & Mirvis, 1996), meaning that ‘to adapt and survive in a changing world, the individual needs to be self-generating’ (Patton & McMahon, 2006, p. 5). Patton and McMahon describe a change in focus from linear career development ‘to development through work and other life roles’ (2006, p. 6), where careers are no longer predicted and individuals need to focus on employability instead of job security. Hall (1996) states that, increasingly, the new career will be a continuous learning process; he suggests the need to develop meta-skills, such as learning how to learn, as well as self-knowledge and adaptability. As a result of this development, some new approaches to career guidance suggest that guidance practitioners need to work preventively with their clients (e.g. Plant, 2005; Savickas et al., 2009). Several authors also state that there is a crisis in the core concepts and models within the career field and that these need to be ‘reformulated to fit the postmodern economy’ (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 240). The emerging connection between lifelong learning strategies and career guidance policy, however, is not further analysed. These approaches do not clarify what the point of departure should be for career guidance practice, even though they recognize career as belonging to the individual (Savickas et al., 2009). Neither do they clarify the view(s) from which career shall be understood given the conditions of a knowledge-based society; they simply indicate that further analyses are needed. Arguments for an existing crisis in the fundamental theories, methods and models within the field, however, presuppose that there used to be a common understanding about the core concepts. This does not seem to be the case, as there is no common definition of the concept of career in the literature. As this study concerns the understanding of career phenomena, the focus will be on career theory.

Reviews of career theory suggest that the field is predominantly composed of psychological views and secondarily of sociological views (e.g. Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989). An overview by Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) describes different disciplinary positions on the career concept. For example, from a psychological perspective, career is regarded in one of three ways: as *a vocation*, as a *vehicle for self-realization*, or as a *component of the individual life structure*. Theory developed from the first position, accepts the traditional psychological position on stability of personality in adulthood and intends to help guide individuals, organizations and society. The second position is humanistic, focusing on the opportunities a career can provide for personal growth and on the benefits of individual growth to organizations and society. The third position regards transitions throughout a career as predictable. From a sociological perspective, career is regarded as either *the unfolding of social*

roles, recognizing the individual's mutual contribution to the social order, or as *social mobility*, regarding an individual's title as an indicator of social position. Also mentioned is the economic perspective, where career is regarded as *a response to market forces*, emphasizing the short-term distribution of employment opportunities and the long-term accumulation of human capital. The political science perspective regards career as *the enactment of self-interest*, emphasizing wealth, power, prestige and autonomy as principal objects of self-interested behaviour in the context of institutional political realities (Arthur et al., 1989, p. 10). Conceptual confusion and lack of clarity concerning the aims of career guidance practice creates uncertainty and challenges for practitioners and their clients.

Theoretical approaches

This article is guided by the view that the language of policy documents about individual career and career development derives from certain views and perspectives which, in turn, influence directions for career guidance practice. Given the lack of a common understanding of career, a framework is needed to capture how the different understandings of career arise. As a means of providing such a framework, and because the relationship between objective and subjective career is involved in career guidance practice (cf. Kidd, 2006; Nicholson & de Waal-Andrews, 2005), this article rests upon pedagogical and sociological approaches which conceive of society both in terms of objective and subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Freire, 1972; Simmel, 1971a). Freire (1972) suggests that objectivity and subjectivity coexist in a constant dialectical relationship and that objective social reality is a product of human action. The meaning of objective career is thus a product of human action. Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe how the production or construction of social reality occurs, and explain that we take the reality of our everyday world for granted. Their view of reality as socially and linguistically constructed through an on-going dialectical process composed of the moments of 'externalization, objectivation and internalization' (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 149) provides a framework for understanding how different views and perspectives on career and career development arise. Human actions are repeated, disseminated and sorted into patterns – externalized – and practiced by others as habitual activities that are, institutionalized. Certain habitual patterns are typified and finally passed over to others and the institutionalization becomes objectified (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). When habits of communicating about something in a certain way, say, career and career development, become institutionalized, they are difficult to change because they are already given. Language, relationships and the era and context in which we live, all affect the way we understand reality (see, e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 2009). Gergen says that - in our case, views and perspectives on career and career development – get their meaning through their social usefulness: 'The way we describe and explain, so do we fashion our future' (Gergen, 2009, p. 11). Simmel (1971a) describes how individuals are influenced by and thus become bearers of cultural and structural conditions and institutions in society. His dialectical perspective employs the concepts of objective and subjective cultures. According to Simmel (Frisby & Featherstone, 1997), the reciprocal interaction between subjective and objective culture is conflictual because the development of objective culture encloses forms of domination. Simmel (1971b) suggests that individuals can be subordinated to impersonal objective principles; that is, we can be subordinated to a relation of ideas and moral constructs that we have not initiated. According to Freire

(1972), objective social reality does not exist by coincidence, but as a product of human action; therefore, it will not change by coincidence. His pedagogy (Freire 1972, 2000) provides a perspective of reciprocal interaction between subjective and objective conceptions of career that help bring our taken-for-granted views into awareness. Dialogue is central to Freire's pedagogy, (as it is to the profession of the guidance practitioner), and the key objective in his pedagogical approach is the creation of awareness to enable a process of liberation. The role of education, according to Freire, is to develop individual awareness so the individual can choose and decide for herself and independently change her situation, rather than adapt to a pattern that is already given.

The present article regards career guidance practice from an adult education perspective: as a supportive and educative practice (cf. Alheit & Dausien, 1999; Cochran, 1997; Kidd, 2006; Savickas et al., 2009) with focus on the individual, in which learning is regarded as 'a qualitative change of understanding, rather than the quantitative increase of knowledge' (Bron & Wilhelmson, 2004, p. 14). Moreover, it is inspired by humanistic ideological discussions about lifelong learning (e.g. Gustavsson, 1996; Rubenson, 2009).

Methodological approaches

To capture the socially and linguistically constructed, objective social reality concerning career and career development that is produced by human action, focus is turned towards relevant European policy documents. The documents contain statements and expressions about career and career development that come from the societal level (thus representing structural conditions and institutions in society) that in turn influence both guidance practitioners and their clients. Based upon social constructionism, the intention here is to explore statements and expressions of and underlying view(s) on career phenomena that are socially and linguistically constructed. The following questions will be answered: *How does the language of European policy documents for career guidance characterize career and career development? What does the language disclose about the underlying view(s) regarding career and career development conveyed by the texts?*

Sampling

Because of the particular focus on European strategies to improve and direct the guidance field in implementing lifelong learning strategies in European countries, documents published by European Union agencies that in some way expressed one or several of the following words in combination were traced: *policy/policies, guidance, strategies, and lifelong learning*. With help from reference lists in articles and books that in various ways addressed career, guidance and issues of lifelong learning policy, and through web searches, four documents were located, selected and downloaded as empirical material for this study: Council of the European Union (2004, 2008); European Commission (2004); and CEDEFOP (2005). The selected texts represent a top-down perspective, and the language is therefore assumed to contain indications of and give expression to the senders' underlying view(s) of career and career development.

The analysis and processing of data

Qualitative content analysis as described by Graneheim and Lundman (2004) was deemed the appropriate method for approaching the texts. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), a conventional approach involves an inductive development of categories. This approach was used in the initial part of the analysis to explore the texts with regard to the first research question. The result of the first research question will be presented descriptively; the resultant categories, as per Graneheim and Lundman (2004), will refer to the manifest content.

First, the texts were read several times to gain an overall understanding of their content. Thereafter, meaning units corresponding to formulations of career and career development were identified. This way of identifying meaning units analysis was inspired by other studies (e.g. Curtis, 2004; Wallengren, Segesten & Friberg, 2010) which used questions aimed towards the texts to ensure that correct meaning units were included in the analysis. The search for meaning units in the present study is based on a holistic conception of career (Collin, 2007) and from the only definition of career found in the texts: 'Career refers to pathways in life in which competences are learned and/or used. The term covers life wide experiences both formal (education, work) and informal (home, community)' (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 24). The following question was formulated and addressed towards the texts: *What textual units describe and express career and career development?* The meaning units identified were then extracted from the original texts, pasted into a table in a Word document and numbered according to chronology, meaning unit and page number of the original text. The meaning units were coded with synthesis key words or phrases. The material was reduced by bringing meaning units with the same or similar codes together. The reduced meaning units with codes and the inductively formed subcategories functioned in this process as tools with which to think. The subcategories were abstracted into four categories.

To gain a deeper understanding of these inductively developed categories, the following part of the analysis rests upon the textual model of Hellspong and Ledin (1997), described in five components: A text is constructed as we, 1) in a certain context, 2) use words (the textual) 3) to say something (the ideational) 4) to someone (the interpersonal) 5) in a certain way. To gradually disclose the underlying view(s) about career and career development in the texts, a sender-oriented interpretation was made according to the textual context and various disciplinary perspectives on the concept of career (Arthur et al., 1989). In the discussion section, I will look at what impact this may have for the role of future guidance practice and will further elaborate the result in relation to pedagogical and sociological approaches.

Result

How does the language of the selected European policy documents characterize career and career development?

The characteristics of career and career development that emerge from the analysis of the texts are captured in the four categories presented below.

Contextual change

Career and career development is characterized by *instability* and change. 'Citizens of any age and at any point in their lives' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 2) are

Table 1. Example of the analysis process, going from meaning units towards code, sub-category and category

Meaning unit	Code	Sub-category	Category
Citizens of any age and at any point in their lives (1:1:2)	Recurrent life-changes	Instability	Contextual change
Learning at all ages and in a range of settings (1:22:5)	Changes in different settings		
Prepare Union citizens to develop their learning and professional pathways in a broader geographical context (4:3:1)	Being prepared for learning and professional pathways Being prepared for mobility	Preparation	
Develop their skills and competences throughout their lives (1:25:6)	Constantly being prepared	Preparation	Environment–person correspondence
linked to changing needs in the labour market (1:25:6)	Develop capabilities for correspondence – matching labour market needs	Adaptation, adjustment	
Transition to work, as well as return to studies (1:17:5)	Change from one condition/circumstance to another	Readjustment	
during periods of transition: – learning about the economic environment, businesses and occupations – understanding education, training and qualifications systems (4:22:5)	Environmental understanding	Transition learning	

Source: Author

expected to expose themselves or be exposed to recurrent life changes, to ‘lifelong career transitions’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 3), and to pass ‘through the range of learning, work, societal and personal transitions they undertake and/or encounter’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 13). This requires individuals to be constantly prepared for these changes, as they need to ‘adapt their skills...to remain ahead of foreseeable or necessary changes’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 1). Thus, individuals’ career and career development includes continuous *preparation* for change. They also need to be prepared for learning—not occasionally, but constantly. They should look ahead and be prepared ‘for learning at all ages and in a range of settings, manage their learning and work access and progress through diverse learning opportunities and career pathways’ (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 5) and ‘develop their learning and professional pathways in a broader geographical context’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 1) for geographical and professional mobility. Thus, individuals’ careers and career development includes *preparation for instability*. Individuals are expected, either through their own commitment or in response to demands from surrounding conditions, to pass through multiple learning, work, societal, and private transitions: ‘Citizens’ lives are increasingly characterised by multiple transitions: notably from school to vocational education and training (VET), higher education or employment, or from employment to unemployment, further training or departure from the labour market’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 1).

Environment-person correspondence

The requirement of preparation for instability implies that individuals need to *adapt* their careers to reality. Guidance practitioners shall support individuals in ‘their choice of realistic and meaningful careers’ (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 3). The meaning of career, as per the above mentioned definition, thus implies that requirements for preparation for instability lead individuals to adapt and adjust their pathways in life – educational, working, private, and community pathways – to objective reality. Individuals need to ‘develop their skills and competences throughout their lives linked to changing needs in the labour market’ (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 6), so they can become ‘employable and adaptable staff’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 11). Individuals thus need to adapt, develop and relate their abilities and their capacities to correspond with, or match, labour market requirements. They need to raise their ‘awareness of current and future employment and learning opportunities and through geographical and occupational mobility’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 14). Matching is expected to improve through individuals’ environmental understanding and their geographical and occupational mobility (and thus, their increased employability). In addition, it is expected that individuals’ motivation, employability and adaptability will increase if they continuously engage in training and learning opportunities within and outside the workplace. The ever-expected, recurring contextual change, or this instability, requires a certain type of *transition learning* for individuals. Individuals need to gain a certain environmental knowledge, an understanding of the environment and surrounding conditions; ‘particularly during periods of transitions...[they need to learn] about the economic, environment, businesses and occupations...[and understand] education, training and qualifications systems’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 5). In addition, individuals need to be able to ‘evaluate [themselves], know [themselves]’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 5), ‘identify their transferable skills’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 14) and describe their interests, abilities, and skills ‘acquired in formal, informal and non-formal education settings’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 5), as well as complete their educations. The multiple transitions of different types require individuals to *adjust* or *readjust* their pathways in life according to market requirements.

Competence mobility

The term ‘career development’ occurs only once in the texts, where it is expressed as part of improved matching: ‘...improving work performance and motivation, rates of job retention, reducing time spent in job search and time spent unemployed through improved matching of individuals’ competences and interests with work and career development opportunities’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 14). Individuals are expected to continuously, at different ages and stages in life, make their capabilities visible (*visibility*), as well as describe their capabilities and the skills they have learned or used in different contexts: ‘to identify their capacities, competences and interests’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 2), ‘to identify competences gained from non-formal and informal learning; and to develop other competences’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 24) and to ‘manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used’ (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 2). As a way to create conformity between individuals’ different life paths, personal development and employability, individuals are expected to describe their interests as well as to validate, or otherwise gain acknowledgement (*recognition*) of their non-formal and informal learning: ‘validation of non-formal and informal learning that includes reference to the role of guidance in helping citizens to identify

competences developed through such learning' (European Commission, 2004, p. 4). This implies that the competences an individual has learned or used in one context shall be used in a new context (*utility*). An individual's career and career development thus includes a kind of competence mobility.

Empowerment

Individuals are expected 'to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 2). They are thus expected to be independent and to control and manage their careers, thus their life paths, in different contexts in which they learn and apply their skills. They are expected 'to self-manage their learning and career paths effectively' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 9), their 'work access and progress through diverse learning opportunities and career pathways' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 5). Individuals thus need to learn how to make informed educational and vocational choices, to control their access to learning and work, and to progress through active involvement and participation in various learning opportunities and career paths. Learning throughout life in life's various venues and developing one's own management skills, such as learning to learn, social and civic skills and 'a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 24) constitute the foundation for the empowerment of the autonomous individual. Likewise, the ability to independently search for learning opportunities, guidance and support 'is essential for an individual's personal fulfilment, professional development and social integration' (Council of the European Union, 2008, p. 2). The individual's responsibility, her independence, or *autonomy*, is therefore essential for positive outcomes in which staff, pupils, students, and trainees become well motivated and 'capable of accessing and benefiting from learning opportunities both within and outside the workplace' (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 11) and 'take responsibility for their own learning and set their own goals for achievement' (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 11). Individuals will manage, plan and be responsible for their learning and work pathways in accordance with their life goals, while they also relate their skills and interests to the market. They are responsible for defining their own goals. Personal fulfilment is gained through self-government, preparation and correspondence with the market. Individuals are expected to govern themselves and manage their multiple transitions, 'to self-manage their learning and career paths effectively' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 9), to 'manage...the transitions' (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 8).

What does the language disclose about the underlying view(s) regarding career and career development conveyed by the texts?

To understand the underlying view(s) regarding these phenomena conveyed by the texts, we need to turn our attention to the senders of this message and to the context in which the texts have emerged. The categories that emerged from the analysis will thus be elaborated according to a sender-oriented interpretation, followed by a receiver-oriented interpretation in the discussion section below.

Conditions and responses to these conditions

Contextual change and its subcategory of *instability* refer to the context of changing social and economic conditions governing an individual's career or – under a more holistic conception of career, – life prospects. The social and economic conditions of instability can be understood as a consequence of globalization processes and the

transition to a knowledge-based society, in which the reality of instability appears to be taken for granted. Under the category of *environment–person correspondence*, the sub-categories of *adaptation*, *adjustment*, *readjustment* and *transition learning* can all be regarded as required responses to these conditions. The categories of contextual change and environment–person correspondence are closely related. For example, *preparation*, as a subcategory of *contextual change*, seems to be a prerequisite for the required responses. Senders who appear very clearly in these categories are those representing labour market needs and those representing enterprises and workplaces, as exemplified by the following quotes: ‘employees and enterprises to have access to information, guidance, counselling to pursue a strategy for developing the competences of individual workers’ (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 7); ‘well motivated, employable and adaptable staff, capable of accessing and benefiting from learning opportunities both within and outside the workplace’ (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 11). Thus, it appears that the texts are communicating views concerning individuals’ career and career development that derive from an *economic perspective* on career, that regards career as *a response to market forces* (cf. Arthur et al., 1989). Moreover, the career management focus, based upon adjustment to changes (cf. Manninen, 1998), appears to dominate these categories.

Transition learning, in turn, addresses a *learning perspective on career*, which is not mentioned as a dominant view on the career concept in Arthur, Hall and Lawrence’s review (1989). The relationship between career and learning has been recognized, however, by other authors (see, e.g., Merrill, 2009; Patton & McMahon, 2006). According to Patton and McMahon (2006), the concept of learning has been a part of career decision-making, anchored in the theory of Parson (1909) and learning came to include the concept of adjustment with the approaches of person–environment matching. As the senders communicate a matching perspective, transition learning then appears to embrace adjustment and the closely related concepts of adaptation and readjustment. If instability is imposed upon individuals, then learning might as well mean adjustment to sometimes less favourable conditions for the individual. The economic perspective and the learning perspective on career can be understood in relation to the increased interest for lifelong learning driven by business and industry (cf. Jarvis, 2009a) and ideas of globalised capitalism (cf. Rubenson, 2009).

The category of *competence mobility*, embracing the sub-categories of *visibility, recognition and utility*, and the category of *empowerment* can be regarded as *tools and behaviour with which to respond for the purpose of utility*. The expressed need for individuals to continuously highlight their capacities and competences and identify their interests corresponds to a career-designing focus in guidance policies (cf. Manninen, 1998), but it discloses the needs of the senders—that business and industry benefit from utilizing individuals’ capacities and competences. In combination with the economic and the learning perspectives, individuals need to respond to social and economic conditions; they need to adapt, adjust or readjust their interests and strengths by validating their capabilities in order for their capabilities to be mobile (i.e., available for other uses). Within the category of *empowerment*, the texts appear to communicate a *political science perspective on career* that regards career as the enactment of self-interest, emphasizing autonomy as the leading object of behaviour (cf. Arthur et al., 1989). There are contradictions, however, between formulations of the individual as independent and self-managing and the requirements to respond to the labour market. Formulations of the individual as self-managing might refer to the meaning of the individual as autonomous in a positive sense, but the other side of the coin implies a huge individual responsibility for keeping oneself suitable for matching, adaptable, adjustable, readjustable and prepared for constant changes. Individuals may need to

cope with unwanted changes and imposed requirements. In this sense, it can be questioned whether the career really belongs to the individual.

Given the context in which the selected texts occur, the emphasis on autonomy can be understood in light of the dominant neo-liberal political agenda in Europe, which is underpinned by agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, UNESCO and OECD (Torres, 2009). These agencies have influenced the policy area of lifelong learning (see, e.g., Ouane, 2009; Rivera, 2009; Schuller, 2009). Ouane (2009) describes the view of lifelong learning of the European Union, the World Bank and the OECD as primarily 'work- and economy related' (Ouane, 2009, p. 307). Together with the holistic definition of career (CEDEFOP, 2005) this implies that individuals, in designing their careers, that is, their lives, need to learn to adjust, adapt and readjust their life paths for the purposes of utility in order to correspond with the needs of the market.

The texts convey career and career development as the search for environment–person correspondence. 'Environment' is placed deliberately before 'person' because it seems that the individual is subordinated to the demands of the environment. The language in the texts appears to be influenced by a view of careers as 'protean' (cf. Hall & Mirvis, 1996), but not for the purposes of individuals. The career meta-competencies suggested by Hall (1996) are recurrently mentioned in the texts but are used for purposes that suit the overriding political goals of competitive economic development: The overall aim of the European Union is to become 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010' (CEDEFOP, 2005, p. 3). This may be a thread of the neo-liberal view in which the state, according to Plant (2009), functions as an enterprise association, galvanizing and mobilizing resources in the pursuit of a dominant end. The state pursues 'a single overriding goal or a comprehensive goal within which other values will be given a subordinate place' (Plant, 2009, p. 7).

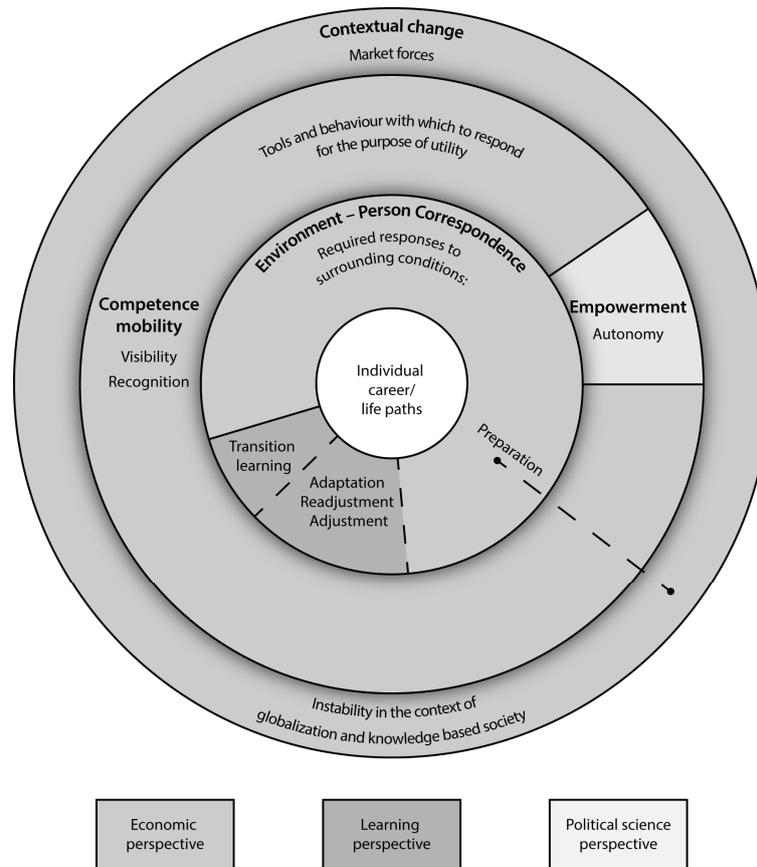
In summary, the categories disclose several views about career and career development that derive from disciplinary positions of career intertwined in the formulations. The most prominent is the economic perspective, followed by a learning perspective and a political science perspective on career, as presented in Figure 1.

Discussion

The attempt to integrate lifelong guidance policies into lifelong learning strategies appears to have brought the economic perspective to bear on career guidance practice in the texts analysed. Together with the intertwining of learning and political science perspectives, a rhetoric emphasis has been placed on the individual as autonomous, but in fact, it appears that the individual is *subordinated to a principle* (cf. Simmel, 1971b), namely that of global capitalism (cf. Rubenson, 2009), while simultaneously being left with sole responsibility for career and all that this entails.

This subordination of the individual challenges the humanistic position of career as a vehicle for self-realization described by Arthur et al. (1989). It challenges the view of career and career development as belonging to the individual and it indicates that what is communicated in the texts is an idea of a career contract that is inequitable. Moreover, the subordination of the individual requires reconsideration concerning for whom – that is, on whose demands – career guidance practice is conducted, as practitioners are supposed to work impartially and focus on the individual (e.g. CEDEFOP, 2005). The prevalence of different views regarding career and career development intertwined in the texts communicates contradictory messages: paradoxes

Figure 1. Perspectives on career found in the texts analysed. Source: Author.



emerge when rhetoric in policy documents both emphasizes the individual's self-management and subordinates the individual to surrounding demands in the sense that the individual is responsible for keeping him or herself employable, adaptable, motivated and mobile in order to respond to market forces. According to the views on career and career development disclosed in the texts, the main issue for career guidance practitioners is to work towards preparation and to support individuals in transition learning for adaptation, adjustment and readjustment to changes. Are adaptation and adjustment the only possibilities remaining for individuals' careers in the 21st century? Even though the texts mention the creation of awareness, this becomes problematic and contradictory when the dominant emphasis is on adaptation. With the dominance of the economic perspective on career, it appears as if transition learning first and foremost embraces an adaptive approach to learning.

Divergence in what is really meant by learning, as noted by Fenwick (2010), and the different views on lifelong learning as a phenomenon (Rubenson, 2009) need to be highlighted. Concepts such as career development are hardly mentioned in the texts, and personal development, rather than being treated as an end in itself, seems to be relegated to the status of happy by-product of more legitimate efforts to respond to market forces. There is a need for intensified pedagogical discussions in European countries concerning these mixed messages and different views connected to the field of career guidance practice. The mixed messages create difficulties because tensions between opposing meanings of career, career development and learning and opposing expectations concerning the goals for career guidance practice may arise in career guidance practice. Policymakers and career guidance practitioners within different

working fields need to be aware of different views and perspectives regarding career and how these might influence directions for practice.

Several authors have cautioned against uncritical acceptance of conceptions of career self-direction, saying that it could lead to decreased employer responsibility (e.g. Brousseau et al., 1996; Nicholson, 1996). Based upon the work of Simmel, Honneth (2004) argues that the goals of self-realization in Western societies are lost and transmuted into support of the system's legitimacy. He says that the individualism of self-realization has become 'an instrument of economic development, spreading standardization and making lives into fiction' (Honneth, 2004, p. 474), where individuals will most likely suffer more than they will prosper. The meaning of self-realization – peoples' wishes, opportunities and struggles to reach certain life goals and realize their dreams – appears to have been made secondary to the requirements for adaptation: a match is perfect as long as it is a match for the benefit of society.

One should not assume that individuals regard their careers and career development in the same way as the views disclosed above. According to Nicholson and de Waal-Andrews (2005), one of the most important challenges for theory and research is the relationship between objective and subjective career. I believe there is a need to include voices from the subjective perspective of reality and, thus, the subjective career in the debates on career phenomena and in policy making, because the objective perspective is predominantly communicated based on the needs of the senders. As argued by Freire (1972), this objective social reality does not exist by coincidence; rather, it is a product of human action. The ideational message in the texts appears to communicate a vision of the knowledge-based society with the new working life conditions, a different slant on Hall and Mirvis' (1996) protean career contract. This is formulated based on the needs of the senders for overriding economic and political purposes, and the expected responses to social and economic conditions will be repeated and sorted into patterns, thus becoming habits. These habits, according to the theory of Berger and Luckmann (1966), will be externalized and practiced by others as habitual activities, thus institutionalized, and finally, the nature of career and career development will be objectified. To paraphrase Gergen (2009), the way policy documents describe and explain career and career development fashions our future understanding of the phenomena.

There is a need to refocus what seems to be a taken for granted view on the new conditions of working life and the new career contract in the knowledge-based society. The exchange between individual and surroundings may not to be mutual, and the outcome for the individual tends to be less observable. The trend of unpredictable career choices and career development and unstable or unforeseeable career paths challenges guidance practitioners and educational policies that base their activities upon concepts of career planning (cf. Manninen, 1998). The difficulty of making decisions in a world of constant change has led to a shift in rhetoric from individuals searching for self-realization towards a requirement for individuals to adapt. Guidance practitioners are in turn expected to support individuals according to the dominant principle of global capitalism, with the mission to construct an adaptable workforce. In this sense, the language of the texts analysed communicates *subordinated careers*, in which individuals, in their career prospects, become 'beings for others', as expressed by Hegel (Freire, 1972, p. 73). It therefore appears that education, in its broader sense, aims to enforce an educative, disciplinary strategy for the purposes of the market above all. It becomes problematic for guidance practitioners and their clients if their main object – career and career development – is actually made secondary within this framework of common policy making to a hidden agenda of the disciplinary process of working life.

They are thus caught in a struggle between adaptations to structure vs. personal development towards true empowerment. If career and career development are to *actually* belong to the individual, not just rhetorically, and if individuals are to *actually* be able to choose and decide for themselves, and not just be solely responsible for their responses to market forces, there is a need to support individuals in emancipation processes and to equip them with critical awareness. If the aim to empower individuals to be autonomous and self-directed is to become a reality, the role of education must shift its focus from adaptation to a given pattern formulated with economic concerns in mind and based upon the needs of the senders, who represent the market, towards the promotion of critical awareness and empowerment as the central role of education, as found in the pedagogical theory of Paulo Freire (1972). So, what limitations and what possibilities might emancipatory career guidance bring forth against the backdrop of the powerful influence of market forces? According to the perspective of those who regard guidance as a tool for achieving market purposes, emancipatory guidance might be regarded as not necessarily leading to market efficiency. The result of emancipatory guidance will not be measureable in the short term. In the long run, however, emancipatory guidance creating awareness, promoting personal development and empowering individuals through facilitating qualitative changes in their understanding of themselves and their conditions, should result in the achievement of precisely those objectives pursued, with individuals becoming autonomous and self-generating and deciding for themselves. There is a major difference between subordinated adaptation to overriding principles and requirements, and making decisions based upon awareness of one's own conditions.

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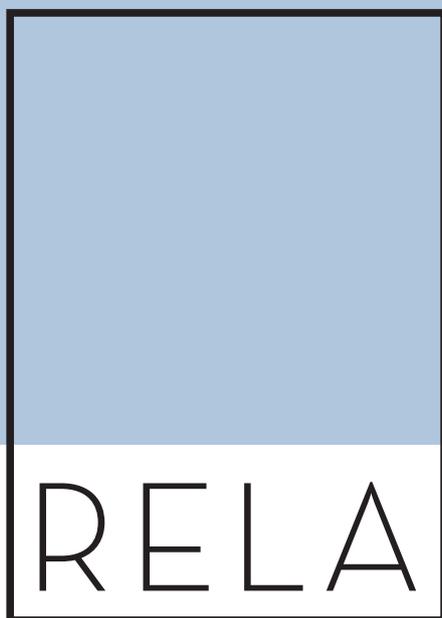
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Aims & Scope

The European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) is a refereed academic journal creating a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. It has a particular focus on issues at stake for adult education and learning in Europe, as these emerge in connection with wider international and transnational dynamics and trends. Such a forum is important at a time when local and regional explorations of issues are often difficult to foreground across language barriers. As academic and policy debate is increasingly carried out in the English language, this masks the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci. The journal thus attempts to be linguistically 'open access'. Whilst creating a forum for international and transnational debate, contributions are particularly welcome from authors in Europe and other locations where English is not the first language.

RELA invites original, scholarly articles that discuss the education and learning of adults from different academic disciplines, perspectives and traditions. It encourages diversity in theoretical and methodological approach and submissions from non-English speakers. All published contributions in RELA are subjected to a rigorous peer review process based on two moments of selection: an initial editorial screening and a double-blind review by at least two anonymous referees. Clarity and conciseness of thought are crucial requirements for publication.

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