
Lifelong Learning: conceptualizations in European educational policy documents

MARIANA GAIO ALVES, CLAUDIA NEVES
& ELISABETE XAVIER GOMES

UIED-FCT, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT Over recent years, lifelong learning has been a central and guiding principle in the formulation of European educational policies. Within this general framework, the authors have been developing a research project that allows them to approach the theme of lifelong learning and European educational policies, taking into account four levels of analysis, namely: the *supranational*, the *national*, the *institutional* and, finally, the *individual* level of analysis. This methodological strategy reflects a theoretical understanding of policy as the result of the actions of a diversity of actors at different levels. This article focuses on the supranational level of analysis, drawing on data from an analysis of European educational policy documents. First, the authors clarify the methodological issues raised by the research findings presented. Second, they discuss the results concerning the process of definition of European educational policies. Third, the authors briefly revisit the evolution of the idea of lifelong learning and discuss the results regarding its plurality of meanings and conceptualizations within the documents considered for analysis.

Introduction

Over recent years, lifelong learning (LLL) has been a central and guiding principle in the formulation of European educational policies. This has been the case particularly since 2000, when the Lisbon strategy was established with the main aim of transforming the European Union (EU) into the most powerful 'knowledge economy' in the world.

Within this general framework, we have been developing a research project that allows us to approach the theme of LLL and European educational policies, taking into account four levels of analysis, namely: the *supranational*, focusing on European orientations of educational policies; the *national*, centred on a study of five member states and their interpretations and strategies for LLL; the *institutional*, addressing specific educational institutions and their responses to LLL policies; and, finally, the *individual* level of analysis, which allows us to explore the ways individuals deal with the growing importance of LLL in educational policies. This methodological strategy reflects a theoretical understanding of policy as the result of the actions of a diversity of actors at different levels. In fact, based on the contributions of authors such as Barroso (2003), Antunes (2004), Ball (2006), Lingard & Ozga (2007) and Lawn & Lingard (2002), we have approached educational policies as a social process of construction that develops on several levels and involves both the definition of the political agenda and the content of that agenda.

This article focuses on the supranational level of analysis, drawing on data from an analysis of European educational policy documents. First, we will clarify the methodological issues raised by the research findings presented. Second, we will discuss the results concerning the process of definition of European educational policies; specifically, how the regulation of policies is taking place and who is involved, thus focusing on the 'politics of education', to quote Roger Dale (in Antunes, 2006). Third, we will briefly revisit the evolution of the idea of LLL and discuss the results

regarding its plurality of meanings and conceptualizations within the documents considered for analysis. This means we will address 'educational policy' (Dale, cited in Antunes, 2006), i.e. the content of the European political agenda. We conclude by summarizing the main assumptions emerging from the research work we have been developing.

Methodological Issues

Assuming that education and training have become central aspects in the European development strategy since the Lisbon Summit (Antunes, 2005; Nóvoa, 2005), we decided to consider the 20 major European policy documents that have been produced since 2000. The content analysis of the documents included a qualitative and thematic strategy as well as a quantitative and lexical one. The former intends to shed light on the main themes presented within the documents and the ways in which they are connected both with each other and also with our research questions and objectives. The latter strategy allows us to characterize how frequently certain words and themes appear within the documents, and this is useful to complement the qualitative and thematic strategy of analysis.

On the one hand, we considered it important to select a set of eight documents (group A, documents 1-8, see Appendix 1) produced by a working group focusing on the key competences of LLL between 2003 and 2006. On the other hand, 12 further documents (group B, documents 9-20, see Appendix 1) comprising different kinds of texts produced between 2000 and 2006 were selected. These documents together represent key elements to understanding the general orientation of European educational policies underlying the two main action programmes of the EU within the field of education: Education and Training 2010 and Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013.

The Changing Regulation of Educational Policy in the European Union

In this section of the article, we intend to illustrate with some examples taken from the document analysis *how* the regulation of education and training in Europe has been changing and *who* is involved in the process of regulation.

One of the main issues we want to address is the fact that, according to the documents, it seems clear that the governance of education and training is becoming increasingly complex and multilevel in Europe (Antunes, 2005; Barroso, 2006). In each set of documents (group A and group B), we found two kinds of evidence for this: on the one hand, it is quite clear that the policy process in the EU is participated in by a large number of actors; on the other hand, even on the supranational level of policy making, consensus is not as clear as it may seem.

In the first case, we wish to stress the results of the analysis of the documents from group A, which revealed that there is a mobilization of contributions from other international organizations such as UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); namely in the form of the work developed by DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competencies: theoretical and conceptual foundations) and the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) initiative for LLL. These contributions are very important in the definition of key competences and basic skills, as stated in document 1 (p. 6): 'International organizations also play a key role in the re-conceptualization of the notions of (new) "basic skills" or "key competences"'.

In the documents from group B, we also found some references to the OECD and UNESCO, and the interesting fact that some documents referred to the USA and Japan in order to compare their strategies and the ones adopted by the EU, as illustrated by the following statement:

As regards performance in the knowledge-based economy, the EU also lags behind the US but is ahead of Japan. Things did improve in the second half of the 1990s, but the EU needs to step up its efforts to be in position to close the gap with the US by 2010. (Document 15, p. 16)

In this sense, we found an extended list of collective actors enlisted into the LLL cause, organized in the following categories extracted from the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013: transnational bodies; countries and regions; national, regional and local bodies; schools; labour market organizations; and social and professional organizations. In addition to these, we also found occasional references to libraries and cultural institutions. Nevertheless, this active participation in a kind of *learning society* takes place to different degrees for the different kinds of actors. In fact, a

significant proportion of the references to collective actors are about objectives and the implementation of strategies, which brings out the sense of educational policy thus characterized: 'in a somewhat narrower public policy sense, education policy can be seen as politics and specifically politics of education mediated by the logics of practice of the bureaucratic field within the education state' (Lingard & Ozga, 2007, p. 3).

Beyond the issue of bureaucracy, we wish to highlight the way these documents stress networking and partnership in a kind of new emergent contract between the state and society concerning education and learning issues. Both Antunes (2008) and Jarvis (2007) consider that LLL becomes an instrument for change of traditional education systems in the context of a new pact between the state and society, in which the state transfers responsibilities to society. Explicitly widening the borders of the national educational systems, the documents target diverse collective actors, trying to make them all responsible for the processes of learning and education:

The key to success will be to build on a sense of shared responsibility for lifelong learning among all the key actors – the Member States, the European institutions, the Social Partners and the world of enterprise; regional and local authorities, those who work in education and training of all kinds, civil society organisations, associations and groupings; and, last but not least, individual citizens themselves. (Document 9, p. 5)

Although this evidence shows that the supranational level of policy is characterized by the involvement of different actors, this does not mean that there is no conflict of interests in the definition of policies. In fact, the analysis of the two sets of documents did reveal some contradictions and different perspectives, which are seen as evidence of a policy process based on struggle, different interests and competing views (Ball, 2006; Lingard & Ozga, 2007).

In the analysis of group A documents, it is possible to identify a process where different perspectives have been involved in the definition and identification of key competences. For instance, some points in the documents indicate that key competences must be 'acquired' when compulsory education is complete, while in other points of the documents it is stated that key competences should be developed across different learning contexts.

Among the documents from group B we found that some documents are more ideological and are characterized by a philosophical discourse that aims at defining general goals and principles (for example, document 9), whereas other documents are more pragmatic and focused on the definition of objectives, indicators and priorities for action. This variety of contents found in the documents, in our opinion, reveals a decision-making process at a supranational level that emerges from discussions and debates where different views and perspectives are present.

In addition, we would like to point out one of the difficulties we found in this work, especially pertaining to the documents from group B. In trying to link the different actions that led to the publication of the documents, we found that recurrent references to the same documents made it difficult to comprehend the evolution of the policy process and to identify the main debates that underlie these documents. Another difficulty was the fact that some of the documents we analyzed were no longer accessible on the same EU websites, making it difficult to trace the decision-making process. These problems we faced point to a certain 'democratic deficit or a limited democracy' (Antunes, 2008) in the structural features of the EU's decision-making system, which affects the participation of citizens within this technocratic system.

Lifelong Learning Policies: caught between economic goals, social cohesion and the individual

An important debate around LLL policies is centred on its main aims and objectives. Several authors (Canário, 2003; Borg & Mayo, 2005; Jarvis, 2006; Antunes, 2008) have pointed out that these policies are being defined in the EU under the aegis of economic competitiveness. In fact, we must remember that the EU is aiming at the development of an LLL culture throughout Europe within the framework of the Lisbon strategy, and concerned with the construction of a knowledge-based economy and society in Europe that can guarantee competitiveness with other regions of the world.

However, this economic concern is balanced with other aims such as social cohesion and personal fulfilment (Biesta, 2006). Although most of the theoretical debates argue that LLL serves

mainly economic goals, we cannot deny that it has two other equally important goals as well: namely promoting active citizenship and promoting personal fulfilment (Kallen, 1996; Canário, 2003; Jarvis, 2007). Our analysis of European educational policy documents shows us that sometimes there is a clear emphasis on economic goals, whereas at other times it seems possible to identify a certain balance between these three goals.

The group A documents allow us to conclude that the European perspective on LLL is clearly informed by economic objectives and aims, although concerns with citizenship, social inclusion and personal fulfilment are also present. As an example of this, we can observe the definition of key competences, which remained unchanged in all eight documents: 'key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment' (documents 1-8).

While this global view of the nature of key competences and their aims remains unchanged throughout the documents, we can identify changes in the definition of each of the key competences identified. In fact, eight key competences were listed (see Appendix 2) and some of these assume different names and definitions in the documents, which expresses the progress of the working group. Additionally, in today's knowledge society, key competences are considered an essential tool to succeed, since

individuals lacking key competences are likely not to achieve personal fulfilment, not to get a good job and not to become an active member of society. (Document 2, p. 15)

the acquisition of key competences by all is required for the attainment of three basic objectives that are attainable at the level of the individual and at the level of society: personal fulfilment and development throughout life (cultural capital) ... active citizenship and inclusion (social capital) ... employability (human capital). (Document 1, p. 11)

The group B documents allow us to reach a similar conclusion. In fact, the three main goals – economic aims linked to the productivity of the workforce; societal aims related to social inclusion, citizenship and democracy; and personal fulfilment and development of the individual – are present in this set of documents, which constitutes a framework for LLL across Europe. However, while the qualitative analysis seems to support the idea of a balance between these three main goals, the quantitative analysis shows that the themes focusing on economical growth aspects are the most frequent ones expressed within the documents, even if individual development and citizenship/social cohesion are also often present.

Additionally, through our documental analysis we can identify a tension between an economic perspective and a humanistic view of LLL. According to some authors, the former prevails over the latter (Canário, 2003; Lima, 2003; Biesta, 2006; Jarvis, 2006) in EU educational policies. In this regard, it is interesting to note that our analysis brings evidence that these two views of LLL – economic and humanistic – are present side by side in the documents. The former is present in a more significant and visible manner, namely within pragmatic documents that are more directed to the implementation of political orientations (documents 10, 12, 15 and 17). On the other hand, the documents that frame an ideological understanding of LLL reveal a more balanced perspective between the two views (documents 9 and 11). The evidence collected through the quantitative lexical analysis reveals the coexistence of these different dimensions. Concerning the group A documents, we found a certain balance between the number of references made to 'personal fulfilment' (24 references), 'social inclusion' (24) and 'employability' (20). Regarding group B, the use of the expressions 'economy' and 'economic growth' (108 references), 'employability' (32) and 'competitiveness' (40) outnumber by far the references made to 'citizenship' (52 references), 'social inclusion' (26) and 'personal fulfilment' (10). This is in line with the identification of 'two forms of LLL [that] have appeared – one institutional and which is essentially, but not entirely, work-life learning, while the other is individual and lifelong' (Jarvis, 2006, p. 28). These two forms coexist within political orientations of LLL. It should also be noted that this tension is supported by another tension, in which education as a responsibility of governments and institutions is, alongside learning, seen as a responsibility of the individual.

Lifelong Learning: ambiguity and plurality of meanings within European policies

The evolution of the LLL idea and current debates around it show that the term can be understood and defined differently according to different goals and interests. Historically, even though LLL may not be considered a new idea, it has gained a new impetus since the late 1960s. Over the last 40 years, as a result of initiatives by the three international bodies the OECD, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, the idea of LLL has played a prominent role in debates around the reconstruction of education and training. Nowadays, LLL has become a central issue across a wide range of international debates, but it has been developing in different ways and with different meanings according to multiple interests. In some points, this idea of learning as a process that occurs along the life cycle and in different contexts is regaining some of its initial contours, and today we can find several authors who define LLL as a process inherent to human development (Usher & Edwards, 2001; Jarvis, 2007).

Following Jarvis's argument that learning is an 'existential phenomenon', from our point of view it is important to have a broad understanding of LLL as a *lifelong* and a *life-wide* process that involves all stages of life and all contexts of potential learning opportunities:

Learning is an existential phenomenon which is coterminous with conscious living, i.e. learning is lifelong because it occurs whenever we are conscious and it needs no end in itself, although it frequently does have a purpose. In a sense it is neither incidental to living nor instrumental in itself, it is an intrinsic part of the process of living. (Jarvis, 2007, p. 98)

Based on this assumption, we will now present some of the evidence, illustrated by data gathered through content analysis, in order to discuss some of the main features of LLL as it is defined explicitly and implicitly in the documents. The official definitions of LLL within the EU policy documents are as follows:

The Commission and the Member States have defined LLL, within the European Employment Strategy, as all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. (Document 9, p. 3)

all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. (Document 11, p. 9)

One first general comment concerns the issue of the purpose and aims of learning. According to Jarvis (2007), learning does not necessarily involve goals, although the official definitions do not consider learning apart from its previously defined objectives. In this way, the EU defines learning as a purposeful activity leading to the improvement of knowledge, skills and competences. In addition, as we can observe, the first definition (in document 9) does not include a reference to personal and social dimensions, whereas in the second definition (in document 11) the main novelty is precisely the introduction of these dimensions. Some authors (Borg & Mayo, 2005; Antunes, 2008) point out that this minor change has, in effect, a great significance and that it followed a public debate promoted in the EU around the idea of LLL by the 'Memorandum on Lifelong Learning'.

The plurality of conceptions of LLL is meaningful since it allows us to identify a certain degree of uncertainty and ambiguity in this political project. Our work reveals that some of the documents are more likely to illustrate a broad understanding, but that the great majority of them, especially the most recent ones, tend to have a more narrow perspective on LLL.

Towards an Understanding of Lifelong Learning in the European Union: between political discourse and pragmatic approaches

Following on from the overall picture of the content of our corpus and its political and conceptual contexts, at this point the article moves on to discuss specific data on particular (and significant) aspects of the documents. From within the whole, we have chosen the following categories identified in the content analysis to be developed in more detail:

- Education and learning processes – reflecting the whole range of formal, non-formal and informal processes and contexts, as well as general and vocational, higher and preschool settings.
- Individual actors – including both education professionals and all other people (pupils, children, adults, students and learners) engaged in LLL processes.

Globally speaking, and given the history of LLL as described above, we may state that the 20 documents analyzed embody the tensions and ambiguities raised within the area of LLL. This may be understood as a kind of contemporary feature of political discourse aiming, as it does nowadays, at very wide and diverse audiences and assembling different meanings into a whole. According to Lingard & Ozga (2007, p. 2): 'policy texts are usually heteroglossic in character, discursively suturing together different interests to achieve apparent consensus and legitimacy'. In our documental study, this is easily visible in the diversified lexical options regarding each of these categories – as we will make clear in the following points – as well as in the different and not always consistent approaches to educational phenomena.

Education and Learning Processes and Contexts

In the context of our research, we outline the characteristics of the education and learning processes that are explicitly proposed or underlie the documents of our corpus. In what sense are they changing through LLL policies? And what are the contexts of the LLL processes?

As we discussed above, LLL implies a certain amount of ambiguity and tension over the relation between 'education' and 'learning'. These difficulties are dealt with in the content of the documents by specifying the issues involved in different kinds of education and learning as processes, outputs and outcomes. Facing this diversity, we propose a group of categories that allows for some comparison of the roles of the different kinds of education and learning. Emerging from the content analysis, we found references that may be organized into the following categories:

- Levels of schooling, from preschool education to higher education: within the 20 documents, we can affirm that the emphasis is placed on higher education (in the case of the group B documents) and basic/compulsory education (in the case of the group A documents). Conversely, preschool is given the least significance of all.
- Levels of formality: explicitly, informal and non-formal education and learning seem to have a central place in the discourse, however, the number of references to either of these is significantly lower than the references to any of the different schooling levels (group B). Moreover, the terms 'non-formal' and 'informal' education are almost absent from the group A documents.
- Training and professional processes: these references have a strong place in the group B documents, varying from initial to continuous education and training. On the other hand, they are almost absent from the group A documents.
- Recognition of prior learning processes: this is aimed exclusively at adults, and we can only find it explicitly mentioned in the documents from group B.

In a general sense, we argue that there is evidence of a transitory phase taking place in the understanding of what learning and education are or, better still, of what and how they should be. On the one hand, LLL translates into open and permanent learning processes and so the documents explicitly express the importance of every kind of learning, both throughout the course of life and in all dimensions of life; proposing a commitment between 'life-wide' and 'lifelong' learning. By so doing, educational policy extends itself to training and to individual processes of learning. On the other hand, the documents reveal a trend to formalize and contain individual learning within the formal educational systems through processes of schooling and graduation. In this way, the content of the texts shows inconsistency between the desire to change and reshape education systems and the pragmatics of doing so. In this sense, the more ideological documents emphasize the diversity of processes, whereas it is the pragmatic documents that really define what must be learned by all people and what should be achieved by member states' educational systems. These pragmatic documents emphasize clearly the schooling process, especially compulsory and higher education.

From our point of view, there is one other relevant aspect which emerges in the content analysis, specifically in the area of the connections between all these different processes. This regards the recurrent issue of the usefulness of learning content, and is stated in the literature reviewed (Canário, 2003; Biesta, 2006; Popkewitz et al, 2006) and evidenced in our research. Whatever, whenever and wherever we learn and teach is good as long as it is somehow useful. This idea becomes clearer in the official definition of LLL, which emphasizes the idea of learning activities with previous goals/objectives, as we have noted in a previous section of this article.

Focusing on the contexts of these processes, we have found evidence that reinforces this inconsistency. With the aim of highlighting the pragmatic opportunities revealed by the documents, we have identified the following contexts of learning and education: schools, universities and other institutions of higher education; training and learning centres, with some references to local ones; workplaces; libraries; learning communities; cities; and regions. Confirming the aforementioned emphasis on formal dimensions of learning, we also found evidence in the quantitative analysis of a predominance of references to schools and universities, with 'libraries' and 'learning communities' being the least mentioned of all these potential contexts.

Given this evidence about both processes and contexts of LLL, we conclude by suggesting that a kind of paradigm transition is taking place, in which some goals go beyond the pragmatic capability available and in which, on the other hand, the approach is still anchored in the past. By this we mean that the political ideals of education and 'lifelong' and 'life-wide' learning are presented in the educational context of a strong emphasis on formal procedures and contexts, and thus it seems that there is no available knowledge on how to do it in other ways. It seems that the approach remains one of modern rationality, of bureaucratic hierarchies and of dependence on linear causality and planning.

Individual Actors

Education professionals. Antunes (2008, p. 140) refers to teachers as the Achilles heel of the scripts for the future offered by the central, transnational educational policy documents of the beginning of this century. According to the author, this is so because in the context of a wave of individualization of learning processes with no physical borders, teachers are not desirable characters but, at the same time, learning does not (yet) seem possible without them.

From our findings, we can also highlight that teachers have a complex position in the context of the documents, which reveal a kind of dichotomistic approach to them. These texts explicitly aim at diversifying the role of the education professionals directly engaged in the education, learning and training processes. The content analysis allowed for the identification of the following denominations or kinds of professionals: teachers, trainers, educators, guidance professionals and learning mediators. However, this diversity is not evenly distributed throughout the documents. 'Teacher' is the only term present in all the documents, followed by 'trainer'. One other aspect emphasizes the importance of these 'traditional' actors: namely that in the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013, these are the only possible actors that can benefit from European funding, resources and mobility support.

So, we can conclude that although there is evidence of some changes in what is defined as education and learning processes in the framework of LLL, the script is still very dependent on the traditional professionals, even if it demands from them new tasks and functions – such as the ones connected to the strong idea of *guidance*.

People: LLL is all about people. This idea is repeated throughout the documents. In fact, references to people who engage in LLL processes are more expressive and widespread than any references to learners, students, pupils or trainees. From our point of view, this is consistent with the idea of learning everywhere and all the time, in which context people do not need an official status to be involved in learning and education processes. Nevertheless, this is more significant for certain groups of people than for others: children and the elderly are almost absent from the documents, while 'adults' and 'young adults' have a leading role. Other researchers have identified this same fact (for example, Borg & Mayo, 2005; Antunes, 2008). This interpretation is consistent, also, with the aforementioned predominance of higher education in the group B documents. However, on

the other hand, it collides with the clear emphasis on compulsory education as the central stage for the acquisition and development of the 'key competences' for LLL.

Our literature review pointed to a certain agreement around the existence of evidence of educational policy *governing people* (Borg & Mayo, 2005; Popkewitz et al, 2006; Antunes, 2008). Moreover, in a general sense, in what concerns the connections between the individual actor and his/her own process of LLL, we recall the words of Gert Biesta (2006, p. 169), since the evidence revealed by our content analysis of the 20 documents confirms this reading: 'under the conditions of the learning economy lifelong learning itself has become understood as an individual task rather than as a collective project and ... this has transformed lifelong learning from a right to a duty'. In the context of these groups of documents – which may be denominated as a kind of 'script of the future' (Antunes, 2008, p. 140) – people are referred to as living in a process of learning and their biography becomes 'the project of design ... in which deliberate, intentional acts lead an individual from one sphere of life to another as if life were a planning workshop' (Popkewitz et al, 2006, p. 440).

So, what does this active and responsible lifelong learner look like? The following description of this desirable citizen of the most competitive knowledge society is based on the definition of the key competences for LLL:

Lifelong learners are people who, from an early stage of life, become competent in several domains of responsible living in a society of knowledge and progress.

They are very good communicators, both in their mother tongues and in foreign languages. They are always willing to learn new things and so they are adept at manipulating internal and external resources of learning and collecting information and knowledge. As they do so they are, or course, sensitive to cultural issues and means of expression.

In more specific terms, these people are highly competent in discrete contemporary domains of knowledge and development, such as Mathematics, Sciences and Technology, especially digital technologies.

With all these characteristics, they have everything it takes to succeed and so they risk innovating and they have strong entrepreneurship skills.

The interweaving of policy framework documents with pragmatic political documents, as we have attempted in our research project, has dangers and can make us pause for thought, but it allows for the emergence of some new possibilities, such as those that have been raised in this article.

Conclusion

The research work we have been developing allows us to point out some assumptions that have been made both in the 'politics of education' and 'educational policy' (Dale, cited in Antunes, 2006).

With regard to the *politics of education*, we have gathered evidence that confirms the existence of an overarching educational agenda at the European level, demonstrating the influence of international organizations in shaping the globalization of education (Dale, 2008). This agenda is also the result of interactions between the EU and other international organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO, interactions which reveal the features of a changing educational policy regulation. However, the data collected also shows that the definition of this agenda is a dynamic process marked by struggle, tensions and ambiguities among the different perspectives, actors and levels of regulation.

An overall interpretation of the findings might be that LLL policy is framed, above all, by economic aspects, but has two other main features as well: the importance given to citizenship and social inclusion, and the need to guarantee that each individual is responsible for the development of his/her own learning process. Nevertheless, we find evidence of tensions and even contradictions in the content and syntax of the documents, which lead us to believe, like Borg & Mayo, that:

there are resources and spaces of hope. No hegemonic arrangement is ever complete and there can be spaces within the interstices of organizations that allow possibilities for counter-

hegemonic work. The EU is no exception. Like all institutions, it is not monolithic and its processes of policy making are quite complex. (Borg & Mayo, 2005, p. 219)

European *educational policy* might be in a transitory phase. We have shown tensions and gaps between a will to change educational systems (their professionals, processes and borders, outputs and outcomes) and the ability to do so without drawing on the traditional tools deriving from modern rationality and bureaucratic principles. In fact, recent theoretical contributions have shown the open-ended character of contemporary educational processes, as well as their unpredictability and non-linearity (Jörg, 2006). However, in the documental analysis we highlight that learning is understood as an instrumental activity guided by a defined set of goals.

The evidence collected stresses the individualization underlying European educational policy. This is clear in two connected dimensions: the first regards the emphasis placed on the individual's responsibility for his/her own learning processes and consequent success. Embedded in this is the second dimension, visible in a kind of clarification of the 'desirable citizens of the European society of knowledge'. We believe our interpretations are consistent with those presented by Borg & Mayo (2005, p. 214): 'What is striking ... is the intimation that the skills required for success in the market economy are the same skills necessary for active citizenship.'

According to these arguments, LLL has become more and more a duty and responsibility of each person rather than a right and a collective good which should be provided by public institutions. The fact is that the 'new educational order' (Field, 2000) and the current economic pressures tend to develop these and other discussions around the meaning and goals of LLL.

References

- Antunes, F. (2004) *Políticas educativas nacionais e globalização: novas instituições e processos educativos – o subsistema de escolas profissionais em Portugal (1987-1998)*. Braga: Institute of Education and Psychology, University of Minho.
- Antunes, F. (2005) Globalização e europeização das políticas educativas: percursos, processos e metamorfoses, *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas*, 47, 125-143.
- Antunes, F. (2006) Governação e espaço europeu de educação: regulação da educação e visões para o projecto 'Europa', *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 75, 63-93.
- Antunes, F. (2008) Globalização e individualização: educação ao longo da vida entre a economia do conhecimento e a coesão social, in F. Antunes, *A nova ordem educacional*, 133-175. Coimbra: Almedina.
- Ball, S. (2006) *Education Policy and Social Class*. London: Routledge.
- Barroso, J. (2003) Regulação e desregulação nas políticas educativas: tendências emergentes em estudos de educação comparada, in J. Barroso (Ed.) *A escola pública: regulação, desregulação, privatização*. Porto: Edições ASA.
- Barroso, J. (2006) *A regulação das políticas públicas de educação: espaços, dinâmicas e actors*. Lisbon: Educa Edições.
- Biesta, G. (2006) What's the Point of Lifelong Learning if Lifelong Learning Has No Point? On the Democratic Deficit of Policies for Lifelong Learning, *European Educational Research Journal*, 5(3/4), 169-180. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/eej.2006.5.3.169>
- Borg, C. & Mayo, P. (2005) The EU Memorandum on Lifelong Learning: old wine in new bottles? *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 3(2), 203-225. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14767720500167082>
- Canário, R. (2003) A aprendizagem ao longo da vida: análise crítica de um conceito e de uma política, in R. Canário (Ed.) *Formação e situações de trabalho*, 189-207. Porto: Porto Editora.
- Dale, R. (2008) Construir a Europa através de um Espaço Europeu de Educação, *Revista Lusófona de Educação*, 11, 13-30.
- Field, J. (2000) Governing the Ungovernable: why lifelong learning policies promise so much yet deliver so little, *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 28(3), 249-261. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283002>
- Jarvis, P. (2006) Globalisation, Knowledge and Lifelong Learning, in R.V. Castro, A.M. Sancho & P. Guimarães (Eds) *Adult Education: new routes in a new landscape*, 15-30. Braga: University of Minho.
- Jarvis, P. (2007) *Globalisation, Lifelong Learning and the Learning Society: sociological perspectives*. London: Routledge.

- Jörg, T. (2006). Towards a new Learning Science for the Reinvention of Education. A Transdisciplinary Perspective, in *Educational Research, Policy and Practice in an Era of Globalization*. Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association International Conference. <http://www.lib.ied.edu.hk/cgi-bin/handle.pl?pub=2260/1851>.
- Kallen, D. (1996) Aprendizagem ao longo da vida em retrospective, *Revista Europeia de Formação Profissional*, 8/9, 16-22. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/8-9-en.pdf>
- Lawn, M. & Lingard, B. (2002) Constructing a European Policy Space in Educational Governance: the role of transnational policy actors, *European Educational Research Journal*, 1(2), 290-307. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/eeerj.2002.1.2.6>
- Lima, L. (2003) Formação e aprendizagem ao longo da vida: entre a mão direita e a mão esquerda de Miró, in (A. Quintanilha [org.]) *Cruzamento de saberes, aprendizagens sustentáveis*. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- Lingard, B. & Ozga, J. (2007) Introduction: reading education policy and politics, in B. Lingard & J. Ozga (Eds) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Education Policy and Politics*, 1-8. London: Routledge.
- Nóvoa, A. (2005) Les États de la politique dans l'espace européen de l'éducation, in M. Lawn & A. Nóvoa (Eds) *L'Europe réinventée: regards critiques sur l'espace européen de l'éducation*, 197-223. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Popkewitz, T., Olsson, U. & Petersson, K. (2006) The Learning Society, the Unfinished Cosmopolitan, and Governing Education, Public Health and Crime Prevention at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 38(4), 431-449. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2006.00203.x>
- Usher, R. & Edwards, R. (2001) Lifelong Learning: a postmodern condition of education? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(4), 273-287. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/07417130122087296>

APPENDIX 1

List of Documents

Document Number	Title	Author(s)	Date	Type	Pages
GROUP A					
Key competences					
1	'Implementation of "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme. Working Group "Basic Skills, Entrepreneurship and Foreign Languages"'	European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture	November 2003	Report	65
2	'Implementation of "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme. Working Group "Key Competences"'	European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture	November 2004	Report	51
3	'Implementation of "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme. Working Group "Key Competences". Analysis of the Mapping of the Key Competency Framework'	European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture	November 2004	Report	37
4	'Implementation of "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme. Working Group "Key Competences". Key Competences for	European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture	November 2004	Report	22

	Lifelong Learning: a European reference framework'				
5	'Implementation of "Education and Training 2010" Work Programme. Focus Group on Key Competences'	European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture	June 2005	Report	18
6	'Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning'	European Commission	November 2005	Proposal for a recommendation	21
7	'Opinion of the Regions Committee about the Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning'	Regions Committee	June 2006	Opinion	21
8	'Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning'	European Parliament and Council	December 2006	Recommendation	9
GROUP B					
Policy framework programmes: Education and Training 2010 and Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013					
9	'A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning'	European Commission	October 2000	Memorandum	36
10	'Report from the Education Council to the European Council. "The Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems"'	European Council	February 2001	Report	17
11	'Communication from the Commission. "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality"'	European Commission	November 2001	Communication	40
12	'Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe'	Education Council and European Commission	February 2002	Work programme	22
13	'Council Resolution for Lifelong Learning'	European Council	June 2002	Resolution	

14	'Investing Efficiently in Education and Training: an imperative for Europe'	European Commission	January 2003	Communication	31
15	“‘Education and Training 2010”: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms. Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe’	European Council and European Commission	February 2004	Report	42
16	'Decision No. 791/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 Establishing a Community Action Programme to Promote Bodies Active at European Level and Support Specific Activities in the Field of Education and Training'	European Parliament and European Council	April 2004	Decision	9
17	'Modernizing Education and Training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe. 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and of the Commission on Progress under the “Education and Training 2010” Work Programme'	European Council and European Commission	February 2006	Report	19
18	'Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament. Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems'	European Commission	September 2006	Communication	11
19	'Decision No. 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 Establishing an Action Programme in the Field of Lifelong Learning'	European Parliament and European Council	November 2006	Decision	24
20	'Draft Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, Meeting	European Council and Representatives of the Governments of the Member	December 2006	Conclusions	4

Appendix 2

List of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Key competence	Document 1 (2003)	Document 8 (2006)
1	Communication in the mother tongue	Communication in the mother tongue
2	Communication in foreign languages	Communication in foreign languages
3	3.1 – Mathematical competence 3.2 – Science and technology	Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (since 2006)
4	TIC	Digital competence (since 2004)
5	Learning to learn	Learning to learn
6	6.1 – Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences 6.2 – Civic competences	Social and civic competences (since 2006)
7	Entrepreneurship	Spirit of initiative and spirit of entrepreneurship (since 2006)
8	Cultural awareness	Cultural sensitivity and awareness (since 2006)

MARIANA GAIO ALVES is an Assistant Teacher in Educational Sciences in the Faculty of Science and Technology at the New University of Lisbon, Caparica, Portugal. Her research interests cover higher education, lifelong learning and transitions from education to work.

CLAUDIA NEVES has a degree in Social Policy, a Master's degree in Education and Society, and has just finished her PhD on 'Lifelong Learning in the European Union: comparative analysis of the strategies of five member states'. She is a member of the Education and Development Research Unit in the Faculty of Science and Technology at the New University of Lisbon, Caparica, Portugal. Her major research interests include education politics and policies, lifelong learning, the European Union, forms of regulation in education, global education agendas, and the influence of international organizations, education indicators and statistics.

ELISABETE XAVIER GOMES is a PhD student in Educational Sciences at the New University of Lisbon, Caparica, Portugal, working on children's educational processes in contemporary cities. In early 2000 she worked on teacher training courses at the Polytechnic Institute of Beja, where she was also involved in the elaboration of regional education charters. Her major interests concern the development of relational approaches to school and out-of-school intentional education, the connections between educational studies and urban studies, different levels of educational policies and contemporary educational relationships.

Correspondence (all authors): UIED, Education and Development Research Unit, Faculty of Science and Technology, New University of Lisbon, P-2829-516 Caparica, Portugal (uied@fct.unl.pt).