

ANDRAGOŠKA SPOZNAVANJA

Studies in Adult Education and Learning

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EDITORIAL

INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION

Internationalisation processes are currently experiencing divergent developments:

On the one hand we can observe several pleas for intensified internationalisation. These pleas are made by politicians from different European countries who turn to internationalisation and/or the European Union (EU) as a means of responding to political demands such as the regulation of the financial market, free trade agreements or migration. But one can also find tendencies in politics which try to establish a distance from international developments and focus on the nation state. The strengthening of very conservative or even extreme right-wing parties in many European countries can be understood as an indicator of these developments.

Looking at internationalisation, we can observe quite different emotions. On the one hand one can find elaborate parts of societies which see the free movement of people and trade as an important value. Internationalisation is understood in this sense as unlimited possibilities, as a source of creativity, as a demand for the advancement of human rights and as personal connections between people around the world. Another part of society is facing internationalisation mainly with fear. They are experiencing developments which demand change in their life contexts. They wonder if they can keep up with these developments and what this means for their living conditions.

Internationalisation can mean release from fixed and close norms, from traditions of the past and consequently empowerment to take one's own decisions about one's life. In consequence, internationalisation asks each person for self-determination in their own life – and is bounded at the same time by the traditions, values and norms of each single person's context. As a consequence, this means that this self-determination can be experienced as a threat and/or excessive demand.

Keeping all these differences in mind, internationalisation is a phenomenon that cannot be stopped, pushed back or encapsulated. Moreover, internationalisation is interwoven with all our lives. Each trip to the supermarket, each news item on television and in Europe even many political decisions are deeply interwoven with internationalisation processes. Anti-globalist movements make several critical perspectives on internationalisation processes visible: human rights, climate issues, financing structure. This calls for responsibility within all these processes.

International and comparative research in adult education takes place against the background of these divergent developments. It makes visible the need to understand and interpret these developments. In consequence, international comparison means research into these differences instead of final understanding. It means research into the possible ways of understanding and an investigation into an empathic understanding of different perspectives. Consequently, international comparison in adult education means international and comparative adult education that strives

“[...] to understand in a cognitive, emotional, and social way the limitations of our understanding of our own and other phenomena. Ideally, this insight leads to an attitude of further questioning one’s own understanding in an ongoing endeavour to working on deeper understanding. An ideal ‘result’ [...] is to never have a final result, but to continue the never ending journey of personal efforts to try to understand each other. This also means searching for the things that link us to each other: to be aware of the always existing boundaries of our own understanding while developing an attitude of ‘constantly trying’” (Egetenmeyer, 2016, p. 19).

The Winter School entitled “International and Comparative Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” takes this approach and in 2018 took place for the fifth time at the University of Würzburg.¹ Between 2015 and 2018 it was funded through the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership grant “Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning” (COMPALL)². It was organized by the University of Würzburg in collaboration with an extensive partner network of universities with expertise in adult education in Europe: Aarhus University (Denmark), University of Lisbon (Portugal), Helmut Schmidt-University in Hamburg (Germany), University of Florence (Italy), University of Padua (Italy) and University of Pécs (Hungary). Additionally, there were several associated partners that strongly supported the international Winter School. In 2018 these partners were the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), University of Minho (Portugal), Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife (Nigeria), International Institute for Adult and Lifelong Learning in New Delhi (India) and University of Delhi (India). All the partners experienced the joint teaching of students from our universities as valuable and a perfect context for doing international comparisons.

Every year, the success of previous Winter Schools brought together in Würzburg up to 90 students and 20 lecturers from around the world. This work has now been awarded with the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership grant “International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning” (INTALL) in the 2018–2021 period³, in which we welcome the University of Ljubljana und Dublin City University as well as two practitioner associations (European Association for the Education of Adults and DVV International) as new partners in the programme. Bringing

1 For a detailed outline and reflection of the Winter School see Egetenmeyer (2017) and Egetenmeyer, Guimarães and Németh (2017).

2 See <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>

3 See <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/startseite/>

students and practitioners together to research adult education and lifelong learning means reflecting local adult education practices against the background of international developments. It holds great potential for supporting the empathic understanding of the interdependencies between local and international developments. This is what the INTALL project will develop until 2021. Therefore, it will result in four intellectual outputs: (1) a joint learning methodology (including a Winter School) for students and practitioners; (2) a joint learning community for university and practice teachers in adult and continuing education to connect international teaching and learning settings; (3) a portfolio method to strengthen the employability in adult education and lifelong learning; and (4) a digital learning offer for self-directed online learning.

In 2016, the COMPALL/INTALL-consortium started offering doctoral students guidance on the publication of a comparative paper in joint authorship. The comparison is based on the studies participants work on together with their supervisors as part of comparative group work at the Winter School. There, they take their comparisons and interpretation they are working on during the winter school and improve their research to yield substantial interpretations and comparisons. So far, this process has resulted in three issues published with Peter Lang Publishers (Egetenmeyer, 2016a; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff and Boffo, 2017; Egetenmeyer and Fedeli, 2017).

This thematic issue of *Studies in Adult Education and Learning/Andragoška spoznanja* further contributes to this publishing process using open access. The issue brings together five comparative papers and two book reviews.

All comparative papers are prepared in joined authorship and cover various topical issues in adult education across different contexts, continents, countries, institutions and actors. They focus on mega (policies of international and transnational organisations), macro (national policies), meso (educational institutions, providers) and micro (actors, learners) levels of analysis and their interdependencies, and build the comparison on analysing policy documents and instruments, country reports and strategies, regulations, data reports and statistics, websites and curricula related documents. Some contributions consider fairly similar countries (for instance, Greece and Portugal) and others quite different ones (for example, Denmark and India or Germany and Nigeria) in terms of their history, culture, political system, economy, location and size. All contributions build mainly on a type of “cross-country comparisons in adult education” (Milana, 2017, p. 22), although linked to European or global perspectives in adult education.

In the first paper, *Catarina Doutor* and *Paula Guimarães* discuss and compare adult education policies in Greece and Portugal, two semi-peripheral countries in the EU that share more similarities than differences, also, in part, because of the influence of EU guidelines and funding. Based on a critical analysis of adult education policies in both countries, the authors argue that both countries promote adult education as a strategy for modernisation and competitiveness in line with EU guidelines but not any longer in line with adult democratic and emancipatory policies.

The next paper, prepared by *Jelena Stepanova*, *Tino Concetta* and *Monica Fedeli*, also focuses on two EU countries, namely Italy and Latvia, and analyses and compares students' voice, that is practices of hearing the students' voices as teaching and learning methods, at the University of Padua and the University of Latvia. The authors discuss the factors that determine the differences and similarities between student voice practices in these institutions, focus on the roles and actions of the actors, and argue that both institutions support student participation/engagement in higher education and, in spite of some improvements that are still needed, they are on the right track to implement it on all levels in all dimensions.

In the third paper, prepared by *Sabine Schmidt-Lauff*, *Jörg Schwarz*, *Adedolapo Femi-Aderinto* and *Taiwo Olatunji*, and the authors discuss changes in temporalities modern societies have been facing and how these changes influence adult education providers, especially through flexibilisation. By comparing well-established and highly recognised adult education and learning centres in Nigeria and Germany, the authors investigate what challenges result for adult education and how adult education providers react in terms of flexibilisation. The authors argue that shifts in temporalities cause similar challenges in both countries and that they appear to be an important driver of flexibilisation in adult education and learning.

In the fourth paper, *Shalini Singh* and *Søren Ehlers* explore and compare the development of the recognition of prior learning (RPL) policy in two contrasting contexts, Denmark and India, and analyse what makes RPL policy effective in a given context. By applying Ehlers' Box Model, Integrated Implementation Model and Policy Instruments as a conceptual framework for the analysis of RPL policy, the authors argue that the crucial factors of success for effective policy outcomes are engagement of stakeholders in the policy process, ownership and accountability leading to policy implementation in the short run and policy evolution in the long run, and the use of an appropriate mix of policy instruments that enables the implementation of a certain policy design in a given context.

In the final paper, *Carlo Terzaroli* and *Yinusa Oyekunle* analyse models and activities of career services as a measure of supporting student employability in higher education, and compare career services of the University of Florence (Italy) and the University of Lagos (Nigeria) in terms of their impact on student employability. The authors argue that the future perspective for career services in both universities can be found in the close cooperation with stakeholders and that the integration of the employers' point of view, as well as the co-planning of training and matching activities, represents one of the key elements for creating better connections in tertiary education.

The thematic issue is brought to a close by two book reviews from the Winter Schools prepared by *Simona Šinko* on *Adult Education and Work Contexts: International Perspectives and Challenges* and *Adult Learning and Education in International Contexts: Future Challenges for its Professionalization*.

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UVODNIK

MEDNARODNO IN PRIMERJALNO IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH

Procesi internacionalizacije gredo trenutno v več različnih smeri.

Na eni strani lahko spremljamo pozive k večji internacionalizaciji. Takšna prizadevanja lahko zasledimo pri politikih iz več evropskih držav, ki se zatekajo k internacionalizaciji in/ali Evropski uniji (EU) kot odgovoru na politične zahteve, na primer glede reguliranja finančnih trgov, prostotrgovinskih sporazumov ali migracij. Po drugi strani obstajajo v politiki tudi težnje po vzpostavljanju distance do mednarodnega dogajanja in po osredotočanju na nacionalne države. Znamenje takšnega razvoja dogodkov je med drugim krepitev zelo konservativnih ali celo ekstremnih desnih političnih strank v mnogih evropskih državah.

Glede internacionalizacije lahko opazimo tudi zelo različne odzive. Po eni strani imamo velike dele družbe, ki v prostem pretoku ljudi in blaga vidijo pomembno vrednoto. Internacionalizacijo razumejo kot prostor neomejenih možnosti, izvir ustvarjalnosti, zahtevo po razvoju človekovih pravic in kot medosebno povezovanje ljudi po vsem svetu. V družbi pa obstaja tudi drug del, ki se z internacionalizacijo srečuje predvsem v vzdušju strahu. Od teh ljudi razvoj dogodkov zahteva spremembe v njihovem življenjskem okolju. Sprašujejo se, ali lahko gredo v korak s takšnim razvojem in kaj to pomeni za njihove življenjske razmere.

Internationalizacija lahko pomeni odvezo od fiksnih in zaprtih norm ter preteklih tradicij in posledično opolnomočenje, da ljudje sami odločajo o svojem življenju. Posledica tega je, da internacionalizacija od vsakega posameznika zahteva samoodločanje o lastnem življenju – hkrati pa je v kontekstu vsakega posameznika omejena s tradicijami, vrednotami in normami. To pomeni, da je mogoče to samoodločanje dojemati tudi kot grožnjo in/ali pretirano zahtevo.

Če upoštevamo vse te razlike, ugotovimo, da internacionalizacije kot pojava ni mogoče zadržati, se ji upreti ali je povzeti. Še več, internacionalizacija je sestavni del našega življenja. Vsaka pot v trgovino, vsaka novica na televiziji sta prežeti s procesi internacionalizacije, v Evropi pa to velja celo za mnoge politične odločitve. Protiglobalistična gibanja odkrivajo številne kritične perspektive procesov internacionalizacije: človekove pravice, okoljska vprašanja, finančne strukture. To kliče po odgovornosti v okviru teh procesov.

Vsa ta različna dogajanja so tudi v ozadju mednarodnega in primerjalnega raziskovanja izobraževanja odraslih. Kaže se potreba po razumevanju in interpretaciji tega razvoja. Posledično pomeni mednarodna primerjava raziskovanje razlik namesto dokončnega razumevanja. Pomeni, da raziskujemo možne načine razumevanja in proučujemo empatično razumevanje različnih perspektiv. Mednarodna primerjava izobraževanja odraslih zato pomeni tudi mednarodno in primerjalno izobraževanje odraslih, ki si prizadeva »[...] kognitivno, emocionalno in socialno razumeti omejitve našega razumevanja tako lastnih kot drugih pojavov. V idealnem primeru vodi ta vpogled k pripravljenosti na nadaljnje preizpraševanje lastnega razumevanja in k nenehnemu trudu, da bi dosegli globlje razumevanje. Idealni 'rezultat' [...] je, da nikoli ne pridemo do končnega rezultata, temveč da vedno nadaljujemo pot osebnega truda, da bi razumeli drug drugega. To hkrati pomeni, da iščemo stvari, ki nas povezujejo: da se zavedamo vedno prisotnih meja lastnega razumevanja, medtem ko razvijamo odnos 'nenehnega truda'.« (Egetenmeyer, 2016, str. 19)

Zimska šola »International and Comparative Adult Education and Lifelong Learning« si prizadeva za ta pristop – v letu 2018 se je na Univerzi v Würzburgu odvila že petič.⁴ Med letoma 2015 in 2018 je prejela tudi podporo v okviru programa strateškega partnerstva Erasmus+ »Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning« (COMPALL).⁵ Organizira jo Univerza v Würzburgu v poglobljenem sodelovanju z drugimi evropskimi univerzami z veliko strokovnega znanja na področju izobraževanja odraslih: Univerzo v Aarhusu (Danska), Univerzo v Lizboni (Portugalska), Univerzo Helmuta Schmidta v Hamburgu (Nemčija), Univerzo v Firencah (Italija), Univerzo v Padovi (Italija) in Univerzo v Pécsu (Madžarska). Mednarodno zimsko šolo je dodatno pomembno podprlo še več pridruženih partnerjev. Leta 2018 so bili to Univerza v Ljubljani (Slovenija), Univerza v Minhu (Portugalska), Univerza Obafemija Awolowa v Ile-Ifeju (Nigerija), Mednarodni inštitut za učenje odraslih in vseživljenjsko učenje v New Delhiju (Indija) ter Univerza v Delhiju (Indija). Vsi partnerji so se odločili za skupno poučevanje študentov s teh univerz v okolju, ki se je pokazalo kot idealno za mednarodne primerjave.

Uspeh preteklih zimskih šol dokazuje že to, da se je v Würzburgu vsako leto zbralo do 90 študentov in 20 predavateljev z vsega sveta. To delo v obdobju od 2018 do 2021 podpira novo strateško partnerstvo Erasmus+ »International and Comparative Studies for Students and Practitioners in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning« (INTALL),⁶ ki poleg Univerze v Ljubljani in Univerze Dublin City zdaj vključuje tudi združenja iz prakse (Evropsko združenje za izobraževanje odraslih in DVV International). S tem ko v raziskovanju izobraževanja odraslih in vseživljenjskega učenja združujemo na enem mestu študente in izvajalce, reflektiramo lokalne prakse v izobraževanju odraslih v okviru mednarodnega razvoja. Prav s tem se bo do leta 2021 ukvarjal projekt INTALL. Prinesel naj bi štiri

4 Za podrobne informacije in refleksijo o zimski šoli gl. Egetenmeyer (2017) ter Egetenmeyer, Guimarães in Németh (2017).

5 Gl. <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>.

6 Gl. <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall/startseite/>.

vrste intelektualnih rezultatov: 1. skupno metodologijo učenja (vključno z zimsko šolo) za študente in izvajalce; 2. skupno učečo se skupnost za učitelje izobraževanja odraslih in nadaljevalnega izobraževanja z univerze in iz prakse za zbiranje mednarodnih učnih okolij; 3. uporabo listovnika oziroma portfelja za izboljšanje zaposljivosti v izobraževanju odraslih in vseživljenjskem učenju ter 4. ponudbo digitalnega učenja za samostojno učenje na spletu.

Konzorcij COMPALL/INTALL je leta 2016 začel ponujati svetovanje doktorskim študentom pri objavi primerjalnega članka skozi skupno avtorstvo. Temelj primerjave so študije, ki jih v okviru primerjalnih delovnih skupin na zimski šoli pripravijo udeleženci skupaj z moderatorji. Med zimsko šolo izvedejo primerjave in interpretacije ter jih nadgradijo z dodatno vsebino. Doslej so skozi ta proces pri založbi Peter Lang izšle tri publikacije (Egetenmeyer, 2016a; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff in Boffo, 2017; Egetenmeyer in Fedeli, 2017).

Ta tematska številka *Andragoških spoznanj* dodatno podpira omenjeni publicistični postopek v obliki prostega dostopa. Revija prinaša pet primerjalnih člankov in dve knjižni oceni.

Vsi primerjalni članki so napisani v soavtorstvu in pokrivajo različne aktualne teme v izobraževanju odraslih, zaznamuje pa jih raznolikost okolij, celin, držav, institucij in akterjev. Osredotočajo se na mega- (politike mednarodnih in transnacionalnih organizacij), makro- (nacionalne politike), meso- (izobraževalne institucije, ponudniki) in mikro- (akterji, udeleženci izobraževanja) -raven analize in na njihove soodvisnosti. Primerjava gradi na analizi dokumentov in instrumentov teh politik, nacionalnih poročil in strategij, predpisov, podatkov in statistik, spletnih strani ter učnih načrtov in sorodnih dokumentov. Nekateri prispevki obravnavajo sorodnejše države (na primer Grčijo in Portugalsko), drugi države z večjimi razlikami (na primer Danska in Indija ali Nemčija in Nigerija) glede na zgodovino, kulturo, politični sistem, gospodarstvo, geografski položaj in velikost. Prispevki so v glavnem zasnovani kot vrsta »meddržavnih primerjav v izobraževanju odraslih« (Milana, 2017, str. 22), čeprav se povezujejo tudi z evropskimi in globalnimi perspektivami v izobraževanju odraslih.

Prvi prispevek avtoric *Catarine Doutor* in *Paule Guimarães* obravnava in primerja politike izobraževanja odraslih v Grčiji in na Portugalskem, dveh obrobni državah EU, ki imata več skupnih točk kot razlik, med drugim tudi zaradi vpliva smernic in financiranja EU. Na podlagi kritične analize politik izobraževanja odraslih v teh državah avtorici trdita, da obe državi spodbujata izobraževanje odraslih kot strategijo za modernizacijo in konkurenčnost v skladu s smernicami EU, pri čemer ne gre več za politike demokratizacije in emancipacije odraslih.

Naslednji članek, ki so ga pripravile *Jelena Stepanova*, *Concetta Tino* in *Monica Fedeli*, se ravno tako osredotoča na dve državi EU, Italijo in Latvijo, ter analizira in primerja glas študentov, to je prakse upoštevanja glasu študentov kot metode učenja in poučevanja, na Univerzi v Padovi in Univerzi v Latviji. Avtorice obravnavajo dejavnike, ki določajo

podobnosti in razlike med praksami upoštevanja glasu študentov na teh dveh institucijah, osredotočajo se na vlogo in dejanja akterjev ter trdijo, da obe ustanovi podpirata udeležbo oziroma vključevanje študentov v visokem šolstvu in sta kljub potrebi po nekaterih izboljšavah na pravi poti k implementaciji na vseh ravneh in v vseh dimenzijah.

V tretjem prispevku avtorji *Sabine Schmidt-Lauff, Jörg Schwarz, Adedolapo Femi-Aderinto* in *Taiwo Olatunji* obravnavajo spremembe v času, s katerimi se soočajo sodobne družbe, in ugotavljajo, kako te spremembe, predvsem prek fleksibilizacije, vplivajo na ponudnike izobraževanja odraslih. S pomočjo primerjave uveljavljenih in priznanih centrov za izobraževanje in učenje odraslih v Nigeriji in Nemčiji raziskujejo, katere izzive prinašajo izobraževanju odraslih in kako se nanje odzivajo ponudniki izobraževanja odraslih, predvsem v smislu fleksibilizacije. Avtorji trdijo, da spremembe v času povzročajo v obeh državah podobne izzive in da se te kažejo kot gonilo fleksibilizacije v izobraževanju in učenju odraslih.

V četrtem članku *Shalini Singh* in *Søren Ehlers* raziskujeta in primerjata razvoj politike priznavanja predhodno pridobljenega znanja v kontrastnih kontekstih Danske in Indije ter analizirata, kaj v danem okolju omogoča učinkovitost te politike. Apliciranje Ehlersovega modela, modela integrirane implementacije in instrumentov področne politike kot konceptualnega okvira za analizo politike priznavanja predhodno pridobljenega znanja je podlaga za trditev, da so ključni dejavniki za učinkovite rezultate vključevanje deležnikov v proces oblikovanja politike, občutek lastništva in odgovornosti, ki vodi v implementacijo politik na kratki rok in njihov razvoj na dolgi rok, ter uporaba ustrezne kombinacije instrumentov, ki v danem kontekstu omogoča oblikovanje določene politike.

Zadnji članek sta prispevala *Carlo Terzaroli* in *Yinusa Oyekunle*, ki analizirata modele in dejavnosti kariernih storitev kot mere za podporo zaposljivosti študentov v visokem šolstvu. V članku primerjata karijerne storitve Univerze v Firencah (Italija) in Univerze v Lagosu (Nigerija) v smislu vpliva na zaposljivost študentov. Avtorja trdita, da je perspektiva za prihodnost kariernih storitev na obeh ustanovah v tesnem sodelovanju med deležniki in da pomeni integracija vidika delodajalcev, vključno s sodelovanjem pri načrtovanju dejavnosti usposabljanja in medsebojnega spoznavanja, eno ključnih prvin pri ustvarjanju boljših povezav na ravni visokošolskega izobraževanja.

Tematsko številko zaokrožata oceni knjig z zimske šole »*Adult Education and Work Contexts: International Perspectives and Challenges*« in »*Adult Learning and Education in International Contexts: Future Challenges for its Professionalization*«, ki ju je pripravila Simona Šinko.

Regina Egetenmeyer in Borut Mikulec

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ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING POLICIES: AN ANALYSIS OF GREECE AND PORTUGAL

ABSTRACT

This article discusses adult education policies in Greece and Portugal according to the model proposed by Lima and Guimarães (2011), which encompasses three analytical perspectives on adult learning and education. After the introduction, the methodological path followed is presented based on the document analysis of Greek and Portuguese national reports and the theoretical framework about adult education policies is discussed. A critical analysis of adult learning and education in both countries is made, based on a comparative approach. The conclusions stress the Europeanisation of adult education policies in the frame of human resources management policies as well as concerns about participation in adult education following modernisation and state control aims and conceptual elements. The findings show that both countries promote adult education as a strategy for modernisation and competitiveness in line with European Union guidelines but that there is a lack of evidence concerning democratic and emancipatory policies in adult education.

Keywords: *adult education and learning policies, comparative analysis, Greece, Portugal*

IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH IN POLITIKE VSEŽIVLJENJSKEGA UČENJA: ANALIZA V GRČIJI IN NA PORTUGALSKEM – POVZETEK

Članek obravnava politiko izobraževanja odraslih v Grčiji in na Portugalskem. Upošteva model, ki vključuje tri analitične perspektive učenja in izobraževanja odraslih, kot ga predlagata Lima in Guimarães (2011). Uvodu sledi predstavitev metodologije, ki je bila zasnovana na analizi grškega in portugalskega nacionalnega poročila, razprava pa vključuje tudi teoretični okvir politik izobraževanja odraslih. Kritična analiza učenja in izobraževanja odraslih je bila opravljena na podlagi primerjalnega pristopa. Ugotovitve poudarjajo evropeizacijo politik izobraževanja odraslih v okviru politik upravljanja človeških virov ter zaskrbljenost zaradi ciljev posodabljanja in državnega nadzora na področju vključevanja v izobraževanje odraslih. Ugotovitve kažejo, da obe državi spodbujata izobraževanje odraslih kot strategijo modernizacije in konkurenčnosti v skladu s smernicami Evropske unije, hkrati pa nakazujejo pomanjkanje dokazov o vključenosti demokratičnih in emancipatornih politik v izobraževanje odraslih.

Gljučne besede: *politike učenja in izobraževanja odraslih, primerjalna analiza, Grčija, Portugalska*

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INTRODUCTION

Comparing adult education policies is always a complex endeavour. Adult education as a social phenomenon is based on the worldviews of its most influential policy actors. These decide on programmes based on specific agendas and interests. Although hegemonic agendas from the European Union (EU) are embedded in many neoliberal policies in several countries, various possibilities, divergent projects and alternative activities can be found locally. Differences are on many occasions the result of local reinterpretations of top-down guidelines or related to historical developments. Therefore, it is in between the articulation among hegemonic influences and specific national ones that legislation, programmes, educational aims, provisions, etc. form adult education policies.

It is also important to consider that these policies expressed in discourses and practices are the outcome of relations established among several levels of policy formation and implementation. The mega and the macro levels refer to inter/supranational as well as national guidelines and effective activities; the meso level stresses organisational arenas in which adult education policies take place; and the micro level enlightens the understanding of local actors, such as adult educators and adult learners. Even if mega and macro levels of guidance are powerful for framing education action, local organisations and individual actors can always reinterpret existing guidelines and make adult education practices different than just the outcome of top-down orientations.

Therefore, differences can be appointed in comparison due to contextual features; but the influence of inter/supranational organisation guidelines and the mimetic effect of successful policy transfers from one country to another stress similarities. Based on a theoretical proposal one needs to interpret trends in policy development with each country's specific features in mind.

In the next section, the methodological approaches utilised in this article will be presented; afterwards, a short descriptive juxtaposition of adult education policies in Greece and Portugal in recent years is made as a first step towards comparison. Data analysis based on independent national experts' reports from both countries identifies their similarities and differences, and an analytical comparison emphasises certain trends regarding policy development in both countries within the framework of the EU. The conclusion stresses certain points that emerge from the comparison.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

This article intends to discuss adult education policies in Greece and Portugal in light of three approaches to adult learning and education policies (Lima & Guimarães, 2011) debated in the next section. The main purpose is to compare recent developments in both countries, following Egetenmeyer's proposal (2012). The following question guides the writing of this article: how can similarities and differences between adult education policies implemented in recent decades in countries such as Greece and Portugal be interpreted?

The discussion in this article is based on a document analysis of Greek and Portuguese national reports (Zarifis, 2016; Guimarães, 2016), developed as part of a research project¹. The reports are secondary level data. These documents include interpretations and conclusions from the experts in charge of producing them. The analysed reports were produced as part of a network of experts funded by an EU programme. Lawn and Grek (2012) have argued that these networks of experts (defined as loosely associated actors due to the fact that experts may belong to very different institutions or even work by themselves as freelancers) act as new spaces for reinventing public discourse on education policy. These spaces allow for wider transnational governance discourses on the knowledge economy, lifelong learning, data collection and comparison. Within the production of reports like the ones analysed, comparison becomes a key element for the constant improvement of EU policy-making, a tool for governing at different levels: the inter/supra national and national, macro/state level of governing; and the meso/organisational and management level of policies with a direct influence on learners and adult educators, for instance. Therefore, as Lawn and Grek argue, “Comparison through indicators, benchmarking and ranking drives the Europeanization process forward today” (2012, p. 10), supporting innovative forms of policy-making across borders and novel forms of governance.

The reports produced by independent national experts in the area of adult education followed a similar structure². This structural similarity enabled a comparison, specifically in terms of *political priorities* and the *main conceptual elements of public policies* (Lima & Guimarães, 2011) adopted after 2000. Besides the two national reports, other sources were used, such as official data on websites, books, journal articles and PhD theses on adult education policies in Greece and Portugal in order to improve the reliability of the text and increase the objectivity of the comparison.

The next sections of the article are directed at comparing. Egetenmeyer (2012, p. 80) proposes four steps for comparison. *Descriptive juxtaposition* involves the collection of data on these countries’ adult education policies. In this step, a review of scientific articles and reports is made and presented separately for Greece and Portugal. This discussion intends to present each country’s state of adult education in an effort to provide side by side arguments and a clearer view of recent developments. The second step includes *analytical juxtaposition* when searching for common features in both countries’ adult education policies. Afterwards, *descriptive comparison* stresses the common and different features within each country. The main aim is to achieve an analysis of similarities and differences

1 This research project was called “Support for DG EMPL’s country-specific expertise in the area of adult education/skills through independent national experts located in the 28 EU Member States” according to Ecorys UK Ltd. coordination. This research was commissioned by the European Commission Directorate-General for *Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion*.

2 This structure was agreed on by Ecorys UK Ltd. and the above-mentioned Directorate-General; it included, among others, statistical information, an overview on the adult learning system, a policy framework and governance, the latest policy reforms, priorities and implementation of policies under development, investment in adult education and the effectiveness as well as the assessment of existing policies, strengths and weaknesses of the system.

between both countries. Finally, *analytical comparison* aims to interpret the differences and common characteristics in adult education policies in Greece and Portugal according to the theoretical framework used in this article.

The choice of Greece and Portugal for comparison was due to the fact that both countries are semi-peripheral (Sousa Santos, 1993) in the frame of the EU. Additionally, both have experience of authoritarian regimes after the Second World War, established parliamentary democracies in the second half of the 20th century and became members of the EU in the late 1980s (Greece in 1981 and Portugal in 1986). Due to their historical developments, these two countries do not have a long tradition of adult education. Since the 1970s, several adult education programmes stressing the characteristics of the three educational policy approaches have been developed. However, these last 40 years have not allowed for the implementation of continuous policies and have been marked by intermittent state intervention in this area (Lima, 2005). Complementarily, both countries have been very much influenced by the lifelong learning guidelines of the EU, denoting the impact of the funding provided by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Owing to the mentioned general communalities, this article aims to describe and analyse similarities and differences in adult education policy according to the analytical approaches that were originally developed by Lima (2005) and incorporated in a joint proposal by Lima and Guimarães (2011). These approaches were also the subject of the Winter School 2018 at the University of Würzburg (Germany), which both authors of this article attended. This article is the ultimate effort to test the relevance of the theoretical framework that was discussed in one of the comparative groups at the Winter School.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical debate on adult education policies is done in this article according to the differentiation of the heuristic model of perception, understanding and interpreting adult learning and education policies covering three different theoretical/analytical perspectives (Lima & Guimarães, 2011). The first perspective includes *adult democratic and emancipatory education policies* that stress the influence of critical pedagogies. Education is lifelong, humanist, aiming at social development, promoting social justice, and cosmopolitan citizenship. A multi-faceted view of development that includes social, economic, cultural and political dimensions, and (social, political and civic) participation is associated with this understanding. A main political priority is to build a democratic society using for this purpose a fundamental social right: education. Solidarity and the common good are important values in basic education and non-formal education programmes. These values also justify implementing a broad range of initiatives to promote a civic sense and a critical, reasoned capacity based on social mobility, civil society organisations and state support (Griffin, 1999a). Educational initiatives aim at building on national cultural traditions. The individual act of learning is linked to existing public offers. The goals of learning are predominantly of a social and indirectly of an academic

nature. Learning starts in social relations, continues throughout life, in all its aspects, based on social problems and leads to educational programmes designed for adults and their perceived needs (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

The second perspective covers *adult education policies for modernisation and state control*. Education is considered a benefit in the context of social and economic modernisation. It is based on the interplay between democracy and economics. It is also an essential pillar of social policy as it involves processes that aim to ensure equal opportunity for all, particularly for those less likely to gain access to education. Education is predominantly school teaching and it is essential for training citizens (Griffin, 1999a). The rules associated with expanding opportunities for access to successful education are increasingly evident in practice; educational processes are strongly regulated (Lima & Guimarães, 2016). For this reason, adult education might be reduced to a formal and second chance; it can also stress the importance of vocational training in promoting economic growth within the schoolification of other modes of education (Olesen, 2004). The educational approach is largely reduced to reading, writing and arithmetic, to academic learning and to school-type vocational training. Therefore, education promotes receiving and mastering literacy. Seeking to discipline the adult population and educate to obey, it advances the instrumental use of reading and writing. The results of education practices illustrate the efforts at social control and the reproduction of social inequalities (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

The third perspective involves *adult education policies for human resources management*. Adult education policies still encourage redistributive principles but provide economic development benefits. Increasing competition, productivity and flexibility must be addressed by education and training systems (Griffin, 1999a, 1999b). Although education retains an important public dimension, the individual takes on new responsibilities. Among these are learning to adapt to change as an individual, being able to decide and make choices in finding the best options in a context of social and economic change. This is where education and economics are drawing closer, aimed towards learning for earning (Lima, 2012). Education and learning are considered investments. In policy discourses, frequent analogies can be found between training and financial capital. Learners are responsible and accept responsibility for their choices (Olesen, 2004). Knowledge has a utility value. In this scenario, the productivity and competitiveness of economic agents are based on their ability to process and apply knowledge effectively (Sanz Fernández, 2006).

ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES: GREECE AND PORTUGAL

Following Egetenmeyer's (2012) guidelines, a descriptive juxtaposition is made below, with each country's developments in adult education presented separately. The main adult education policies and programmes are identified and links to theoretical approaches are referred to based on a short review of literature.

Adult education policies in Greece and Portugal have a somewhat similar history due to the historical developments of the last century. Adult education has not been a central

object of public policies, except on a few occasions, in either country. Additionally, both countries have been affected by the recent crisis caused by global trends and required supranational economic and financial adjustments. These facts have caused certain similarities to occur in both countries, which will be discussed below.

GREECE

The history of education for adults in Greece is relatively short (Zarifis, 2016). The first activities in adult education arose at the end of the 19th century. Later on, in 1929, formal regulations were put in place, such as Law 4397/29, the first effort towards an adult education policy. Through this law, night schools were established with the aim of offering primary education to individuals who had exceeded the statutory age for schooling in primary schools, following modernisation and state control aims of developing basic education as a social right.

The Second World War and the Greek Civil War (1946–49) did not favour the development of an adult education system. Some resistance organisations made efforts towards the education and training of farmers. Later, the Central Committee for Combating Illiteracy (Law 3094/54) was established by the Ministry of Education in 1954. Its mission was to create night schools for the compulsory schooling of illiterate and semi-illiterate individuals according to the aims of modernisation and state control policies (Karalis & Pavlis-Korres, 2010).

The Popular Education Institution was revised in the mid-1970s and a Directorate for Adult Education was created as part of the Ministry of Education. In 1976, following the fall of the military dictatorship (1967–1974), parliamentary democracy was established (Karalis & Pavlis-Korres, 2010). After this event, the conservative government gave importance to popular education, not including, however, emancipatory and democratic aims.

Greece became a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981. Subsequently, adult education was influenced by the policies and the funding of the ESF. These influences resulted in a vast quantitative and qualitative development of adult education (Karalis & Vergidis, 2004). In the post-war dictatorship, the country was governed for the first time by a socialist party, which has included popular education as a main pillar of its programme (Karalis & Pavlis-Korres, 2010). The General Secretariat of Popular Education was founded in 1983 at the Ministry of Education. The Directorate for Adult Education was promoted to the General Secretariat for Popular Education of the Ministry of Education and jobs for permanent staff were created (Law 1320/83). There was an effort to develop democratic and emancipatory policy aims and conceptual elements, stressing a radical reorientation and objectives at central and regional levels. The new Operation Regulation for Popular Education was issued in 1985 and the Organisational Chart of the General Secretariat for Popular Training followed in 1989 (Almpanti, 2013). During the 1980s, the General Secretariat for Popular Education offered adult education training programmes related to culture citizenship education,

social economy-entrepreneurship, and for disabled people too. As a result, adult education activities increased considerably and the number of Popular Education Centres grew to 350 (Karalis & Vergidis, 2004).

The turning point in Greek adult education history happened in 1986 with certain dramatic changes. First, the ESF changed its priorities, turning to vocational training after 1989, when the First Community Support Framework started. To avoid losing funding, government policy followed ESF guidelines, positively denoting its European orientation in terms of human resources management aims. In this sense, support for popular education stopped in a conservative society and political life (Almpanti, 2013).

During the decade from 2000–2010, adult education in Greece was very much influenced by EU guidelines for lifelong learning. The introduction of Second Chance Schools in 2000 clearly contributed to this influence. This policy had an impact on many social and cultural problems, namely illiteracy, unemployment and lack of social cohesion. These adult education institutions provided formal education to adults over the age of 18 who left compulsory education without finishing it. Adults participated in educational activities or programmes with the aim of receiving a certificate. Today, there are 57 second chance schools. The curricula of these programmes are flexible, and importance is given to the acquisition of basic qualifications as well as to personal and social skills development (Zarifis, 2016). This is done in an attempt to fulfil modernisation and state control aims and develop basic education but also to promote human resources management by fostering the upskilling of the workforce and economic development.

Taking EU guidelines into consideration, lifelong learning constituted a high priority for the Greek state from 2004 to 2008. Lifelong learning was understood as a solution for illiteracy problems and a large number of literacy activities were developed. In this sense, several provisions were developed to reinforce adult education (Almpanti, 2013).

In present times, according to Karalis (2017), adult education is based on continuing vocational training and general adult education. General adult education refers to all adult education activities that aim at non-vocational dimensions, such as personal development, leisure time, parents' education, cultural education and citizenship. General adult education organisations include Centres of Vocational Training, Lifelong Learning Centres (KDVM), Parent Schools, Adult Education Centres and Second Chance Schools. Adult education policies have been financed by EU funding. Taking into account the ESF's priorities concerning the Continuing Vocational Training System, the public sector bodies responsible have taken several actions in order to qualify for EU funds (e.g. from the ESF). However, "the guidelines of the ESF's policy [...] provided only for the funding of those programmes which are related to dealing with unemployment and facilitating the adjustment of human resources to the needs of labour markets, as well as for a policy of keeping an equal distance between public and private institutions within the framework of neoliberal choices" (Karalis & Pavlis-Korres, 2010, p. 376). In this frame, the aims of human resources management have been stressed. This link can be observed, for instance,

in relation to coordinating bodies and organisations, with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education being responsible for continuing vocational training and general adult training.

Since 2010 the country has been suffering the most severe economic crisis in its history with dramatic consequences in both social and economic life. For example, salaries were reduced dramatically, and unemployment rates rose from 7.7% in 2008 to 27.3% in 2013 (Karalis, 2017). As a result, low participation rates in adult education (3.3% in 2015 based on data from Eurostat³) are still observed, and consequently, raising participation rates has become a major policy concern (Zarifis, 2016). However, provisions under development follow modernisation and state control policies but mostly human resources management aims, devaluing democratic and emancipatory programmes that could improve motivation, lifelong education and the learning interest of Greek adults. In this sense, “the need for shifting the paradigm” (Zarifis & Gravani, 2014, p. 302) seems to be a relevant argument.

PORTUGAL

Like Greece, Portugal does not have a long tradition of adult education policies. The most relevant developments started in the 1970s. The popular mobilisation that occurred after the democratic revolution on 25th April 1974 took many forms of expression, stressing the dimensions of the adult democratic and emancipatory education policies approach (Lima, 2005; Lima & Guimarães, 2018). In terms of adult education, it was linked to a rationale of intervention typical of popular education. It was based on participatory dynamics and socio-educational activism that has spawned a myriad of local self-organisation initiatives developed by civil society organisations endowed with considerable independence and often of remarkable creativity (Melo & Benavente, 1976).

The most striking educational aspects are often associated with political and social demands, cultural projects, local improvements and community development, mostly from the bottom (of the community) up (to the state and the administration), from a decentralised and autonomous political and organisational perspective. From the variety of collective actors that then emerged, we can single out popular associations, long suspended during the previous authoritarian regime, and the creation of new associations and more-or-less informal groups. Some of these groups were later formalised as popular associations of local development. Among the initiatives that associations and popular movements focused on, especially in the second half of the 1970s, were literacy programmes, cultural and socio-educational work, and basic education initiatives (Lima, 2005).

1986 saw the adoption of the Basic Law for the Education System (still in force) and Portugal’s entry into the EEC. The biggest challenges for this ‘new’ country were to modernise its economy and infrastructure, to make public and private management effective and

3 Data accessed on 27th September 2018 at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=sdg_04_60&plugin=1

efficient, and increase the economy's productivity and competitiveness. Adult education was not seen as a strategic variable in these challenges (Lima, 2005). The Basic Law highlighted second chance learning and school inspired vocational training, even though the latter has not been regarded as a subsector of adult education. This legislation stressed the adult education policies that support the modernisation and state control approach (Lima & Guimarães, 2011; 2018).

Second chance school education and vocational training were thus the cornerstones of educational policies between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s. Mostly developed in mainstream schools with evening classes, second chance education was largely attended by young people who had dropped out of regular day school. With its own rules and making use of a significant countrywide state school system already up and running, second chance education exposed complex dropping-out problems, issues of coordination with the popular education and local associations model; the model was eventually overwhelmed by the centralised paradigm of formal education, school certification of levels formally required by basic and secondary education (ordinary day school) and by the dictates of continuing studies imposed on regular students (Lima & Guimarães, 2011). Faced with the strong schooling and formalisation of adult education, vocational training was regarded as an independent but parallel route, attracting increasing funding, largely from the EU, but revealing structural, political and educational incompatibilities with the popular education and basic education model which, moreover, it always ignored (Lima, 2005).

Up until the late 1990s, formal second chance education was emphasised in adult education policy. It was supported by the idea that adults needed to attain a compulsory level of education (9 years at that time). It was a basic step towards becoming democratic and participative citizens in a free society that fosters equality. Initiatives were developed in education, leading to the decrease in school abandonment and dropout rates, and the general increase of education levels. However, these were not enough to overcome the significant educational differences between Portugal and other European countries (Portugal, 2015). Since the late 1990s, adult education policies have become aligned with EU's lifelong learning guidelines in line with the adult education policies for human resources management approach. In policy discourse, the link between education/training and economic development became clearer. Two main certified forms of provision were established: adult education and training courses, which combined an educational component with a vocational training one, in some courses including training in a specific work context; and recognition of prior learning, fostering the valuing of experience and learning developed throughout life with an economic and social impact (Guimarães, 2011).

The New Opportunities programme, developed from 2005 to 2011, included these two offers. During this period, an important increase in access of adult learners was observed, specifically from those learners involved in the recognition of prior learning. More than one million enrolled in this provision. Around 600,000 got an education diploma and one third of these also got a professional qualification for attending adult education and training courses. The funding mostly came from the ESF (75%). Learners attended local adult

education centres all over the country that hired more than 10,000 adult educators; furthermore, many learners were involved in adult education and training courses (Portugal, 2011). Especially after 2011, Portugal experienced a deep economic and social crisis as a result of the global crisis. It has also been affected by the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund structural adjustment policies. Additionally, the EU structural programmes were implemented in a context of economic and social constraints of unemployment, difficult living conditions, low expectations of the population about the future, and instability in social and political consensus and in the social pact (Mateus, 2015). After 2012 (up until mid-2016), the adult education policy was suspended by the elected Government: the New Opportunities programme was abandoned, the existing adult education centres were shut down and adult educators fired, severe financial cuts were made and there was a decrease in adult learners enrolled and certified by existing forms of adult education provision, such as basic and secondary education. Since 2014, the economy has been recovering slowly based on sectors such as tourism and industry (transport equipment, electric, electronic and computing equipment, pharmacy and chemical products and products from the extractive industry)⁴. A new adult education programme was announced in August 2016, called the Qualify Programme. This programme is still based on the two above-mentioned forms of provision, adult education and training courses, and the recognition of prior learning. A new trend in adult education policies might be emerging, and while its impact is still unclear, human resources management principles seem to be reinforced (Lima & Guimarães, 2018).

DATA DISCUSSION 1: SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GREECE AND PORTUGAL

Europeanisation of adult education policies, lifelong learning aims and the importance of ESF funding – following human resources management principles

In 1990s Greece, lifelong learning arose as a fundamental strategy in the EU's education and training policies. With the aim to promote the Europeanisation of education at an international level, the EU assumed a central role in the field of lifelong learning (Almpanti, 2013). Since then, this influence has still remained clear. As stated in the Greek report, Law 3879/2010 on the "Development of Lifelong Learning and other provisions", which is still in force, intends

to establish an integrated legal framework for more efficient co-ordination and systemisation of the Lifelong Education and Training actions and bodies. [...] All policy priorities today are set in the law 3879/2010 which defines lifelong learning as an activity spanning people's life and aimed at both the acquisition and the improvement of general and scientific knowledge, skills and competencies as well as personal development and employability (Zarifis, 2016, p. 8).

⁴ Data accessed on 28th October 2018 at <https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Grau+de+exposiçao+ao+comercio+internacional+total+e+por+produto-2276>

In this report, it is also added that one of the main strengths of the adult education system is the National Lifelong Learning Strategy:

The strategy is prescribed in detail in the seminal law (Law Nr. 3879/2010) on Lifelong Learning that was voted in by the Greek Parliament in September 2010. This law sets the basis for the planning and implementation of a holistic strategy on lifelong learning and for the creation of the National Network of Lifelong Learning (NNLL), which encompasses all governing bodies and service providers operating under the auspices of different ministries (Zarifis, 2016, p. 17)

During the 2000s, the New Opportunities programme was implemented in Portugal, supported by EU structural funds. The Portuguese report states:

The European Union structural funding programmes, such as the national strategic reference framework (2007–2013) (in Portuguese *Quadro de Referência Estratégica Nacional – QREN*) had their objectives defined before the crisis of 2008 in the context of an economic growth cycle. The increasing link of investment trends and international trade had a significant influence on the New Opportunities programme (in Portuguese *Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades*) developed from 2005 to 2011 (Guimarães, 2016, p. 7).

Following human resources management aims and conceptual elements, the strengths of linking education/training and economic development are also added in this report:

The national strategic reference frameworks and adult education national policies expressed an optimistic understanding of the referred link and reinforced the urgent need of increasing the Portuguese economic competitiveness through the raise of workers' skills (Guimarães, 2016, p. 11).

Concerning the influence of the EU, funding arises as a significant tool. As stated in the Greek report, “from 2000 onwards, with the introduction of some new policies and initiatives [...], many of them were adopted under the threat of a loss of financial support from the European Union” (Zarifis, 2016, p. 6). The same report adds that policy issues and challenges in adult education in Greece intend to improve the

correlation between education & training and the labour market. Despite the efforts and some relevant actions at policy level by the Council of Lifelong Learning and of Linking with Employment, the goal to increase the employment rate of those aged 20–64 to 70% cannot be realised without rebooting the economy within a strategic framework that builds a permanent link between adult education and training with the labour market (Zarifis, 2016, p. 24).

In fact, after entering the EEC, adult education in Greece was influenced by policies and funding rules set by the ESF (Almpanti, 2013; Karalis & Pavlis-Korres, 2010). During the period of 1994–1999, Greek adult education “coincided completely with the acceptance and implementation of ESF guidelines, in order to ensure funding for ongoing training from European Funds” (Zarifis, 2016, p. 6). Even recently, this influence is evident and financing coming from structural funds (ESF) resulted in the expansion of many activities with a clear stress on adult education programmes directed at human management resources and fulfilling labour market needs.

The same influence can be noticed in the Portuguese report. It states that the EU programmes “allocated funding to adult education provision and vocational training” (Guimarães, 2016, p. 3). Additionally, it mentions that “the planned financial support from the European Union for the investment priority most directly targeting adult education [...] aims at increasing qualification and the retraining of human resources, through the improvement of competences, in specific those relevant for work and the labour market, and lifelong learning” (Guimarães, 2016, p. 17).

In sum, the impact of the EU is visible in the implementation of adult education programmes that are strategies of lifelong learning including human resources management aims in both countries.

Widening access and participation while fostering certification – following modernisation and state control principles

In the Greek report, it is stated that the “Achievement of European targets becomes even more difficult because Greece has only 3.3% share of 25–64 year olds participating in lifelong learning, one of the lowest participation rates in the EU” (Zarifis, 2016, p. 19). Therefore, the report stresses that

one key priority relates to the low percentage of adults participating in education. *Raising participation rates* therefore is a major policy concern. Greece has one of the lowest participation rates in lifelong learning (3.3% in 2015 based on data from Eurostat) and this essentially calls for policy incentives that will both motivate and allow adults of all ages and backgrounds to participate, but at the same time requires outreach and guidance policies that will target social groups that are more vulnerable and have limited or no access to lifelong learning provision (Zarifis, 2016, p. 10).

The same concern can be found in the Portuguese report. For instance, critiques were made of the adult education policy suspension in 2012 that had the impact of lowering participation after some years of a policy that allowed the increasing participation of adults in adult education provision. Therefore,

from 2011 to 2015 there was a decrease in the participation of adults in lifelong learning. With low-qualified adults this consistent decrease was evident

between 2011 and 2015. This decrease was due to the suspension of the adult education policy in 2011, and to the end of the national strategic reference framework supported by EU funding programmes (2007–2013). These programmes allocated funding to adult education provision and vocational training. It was also due to structural adjustment policies that involved severe cuts in State expenditure, reducing the scope, resources, capacity and beneficiaries of public policies (Guimarães, 2016, p. 3).

In sum, due to previous historical developments, both countries share policy aims on widening access and participation as well as conceptual elements linked to fostering the certification of adults following modernisation and state control principles.

DATA DISCUSSION 2: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GREECE AND PORTUGAL

Policy considering all forms of adult education vs policy stressing some forms of provision

Both reports under analysis present more similarities than differences, as already mentioned, mainly as a result of EU policies and funds. However, some differences may be found, namely that the Greek report emphasises the lifelong learning policy covering all forms of adult education. Following modernisation and social control aims, the Greek report mentions that “Greece today has developed a subtle yet active lifelong learning policy framework that largely covers all forms of adult education” (Zarifis, 2016, p. 6). Based on this, conceptual elements including second chance education as well as non-formal education are part of the programme

‘General Adult Education’ which includes all organised learning activities (formal and non-formal) that are addressed to adults and seek to enrich knowledge, to develop and improve abilities and skills (including literacy, numeracy and basic skills in ICT), to grow an individual’s personality and active citizenship, is provided by a large number of state subsidised educational institutions. Functional literacy programmes are only addressed to those adults who did not complete compulsory education (Zarifis, 2016, p. 6).

In contrast, the Portuguese report stresses certain forms of provision included in the existing adult education policy, such as the recognition of prior learning, adult education and training courses, and second chance education, leaving many non-formal adult education programmes led by public, private and civil society organisations outside of policy borders. In fact, the stress on the link between education/training and economic development that the Portuguese policy seems to make reinforces the human resources management aims (Guimarães, 2016).

Curiously, this link is weakened by the lack of social recognition adult education policy has among micro, small and medium size enterprise employers. Following this reasoning,

the Portuguese report states that “the large majority of enterprises in Portugal are micro, small or medium sized, in which employers do not value education and training and in which many workers are low educated and trained” (Guimarães, 2016, p. 23). Following a different situation, the Greek report shows a stronger emphasis on a social pact among different policy actors as employers’ investment in learning “is largely achieved through collaborations and partnerships between the Employment Agency (OAED) and private sector stakeholders, employers, social partners and other stakeholders in the fight against unemployment” (Zarifis, 2016, p.13).

A final note should be reserved for participation rates in Greece and Portugal (see footnote 3). In Portugal this rate was 9.7% in 2015, considerably higher than the Greek rate of 3.3%, according to the Eurostat data available. This is a relevant difference that might be explained by the stress put in Portugal’s political agenda on the development of adult education and training policy since the 2000s (Guimarães, 2016). In Greece the recent political situation discussed in the report does not seem to have allowed for similar stress on an adult education policy which led the expert in charge of writing the report to this weakness in the adult education policy (Zarifis, 2016).

In sum, the main differences in both reports relate to the stress given to a policy embracing a range of educational activities, following modernisation, state control and humanistic aims, sharing different conceptual elements referred to in the Greek report, and to a smaller number of conceptual elements in provision in Portugal. These differences are related to historical developments in Greece and to the emphasis put on formal and non-formal adult education, while in Portugal intermittent policies have allowed the abandonment of emancipatory and democratic aims and conceptual elements observed in the 1970s in favour of human resources management, modernisation and state control principles.

CONCLUSION

In this article we intended to analyse similarities and differences between adult education policies in Greece and Portugal, and to discuss adult education policies in these two countries while taking into account a theoretical model covering three analytical perspectives of adult learning and education policies developed by Lima and Guimarães (2011): i. adult democratic and emancipatory education policies; ii. adult education policies for modernisation and state control; iii. adult education policies for human resources management.

Concerning the human resources management approach, adult education policies were not the central issues of these two countries’ political agendas for many years, and the recent stress put on adult education has very much been influenced by the EU; the two countries promote adult education as a strategy for competitiveness and not as a policy directed at emancipatory and democratic aims and conceptual elements. Based on our analysis, it is important for these countries to promote the acquisition and improvement of general and specific knowledge, skills and competencies in order to foster employability rather than the motivation for education, critical thinking, personal development and civic

participation of adults. In Greece, lifelong learning guidelines from the EU have been the basis for a fundamental strategy in national policies. Following a similar path, adult education programmes in Portugal aim to increase the qualifications of human resources through the improvement of competencies for the labour market (Guimarães, 2016). In this sense, education and learning are seen as good investments for the future with the purpose of learning for earning (Lima, 2012).

Generally speaking, the analysis of the Greek and Portuguese reports shows that both countries have more similarities than differences due, among others, to the influence of EU guidelines and funding. Looking at the three analytical perspectives of adult learning and education, particularly modernisation and state control, it is important to stress that Greece promotes the formal certification and qualification of people by attracting learners to learning, for example, with Second Chance Schools (SDE). In Portugal, even based on the implementation of forms of provision such as the recognition of prior learning that emphasise informal learning, certification of compulsory education is also a significant policy aim, denoting the importance of achieving a minimum basic educational level for all Portuguese people. Although adult learning and education strategies have been implemented in both, they have not been enough to significantly raise participation rates in formal, non-formal and informal learning activities, as shown by Eurostat statistics⁵.

When considering the emancipatory and democratic approach, there is a lack of evidence. Books and articles read on Greece's and Portugal's historical developments in adult education show that emancipatory and democratic political priorities and conceptual guidelines were part of programmes implemented before Greece and Portugal became members of the EU. Therefore, two arguments may be presented for this lack of evidence. The first one concerns the influence of top-down/mega lifelong learning guidelines in national contexts, a solution this article has tried to stress. Although Zarifis (2016) makes claims about the importance of adult education policies based on a wide understanding of lifelong learning that would face key challenges observed in Greece in present times, both reports express the need for "shifting the paradigm" and of a "new ecology of lifelong learning in Europe" (Zarifis & Gravani, 2014, p. 302) in an innovative national policy framework centred on the learner and emancipatory in nature.

Additionally, the analysis carried out in this article mainly stresses the importance of mega trends, such as the one resulting from the influence of EU guidelines for lifelong learning at the macro level, i.e. national policies. Europeanisation (Almpanti, 2013) is a relevant feature in both countries, especially due to the use of the ESF. Differences relate mainly to macro and meso characteristics, especially the fact that in Greece adult education policy includes a range of educational activities, formal and non-formal, while in Portugal the policy is centred on formal forms of provision.

⁵ As stated by Eurostat at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Adult_learning_statistics, data accessed on 28/10/2018.

When considering the few differences identified in both reports, we believe it would be important to also collect data by using data collection techniques different than document analysis. By choosing data collection techniques centred on local organisations providing adult education programmes and on adult learners and adult educators, for instance, the meso and the micro levels could be emphasised in our analysis. Therefore, a final note has to be devoted to the methodological approaches and choices made. This article is based on the content analysis of two reports complemented by a short review of the literature. In spite of the relevance of document analysis, this data collection technique hides the limitations inherent in an analysis based on written texts. Within these options, similarities were stressed. However, a clearer view of recent developments in adult learning and education policies in both countries would probably require the use of other data collection techniques, such as observation (i.e. case studies, content analysis of the offer and programmes for adult education) or interviews. These other data collection techniques could eventually enlighten a differentiated reception of EU guidelines and differences in policy development patterns in each country.

Another argument presented to explain the lack of evidence on emancipatory and democratic principles might be linked to the structure of reports such as the ones discussed in this article, which are produced in the frame of comparison and networks of experts. Lawn and Grek (2012, p. 9) refer to the importance of these networks' discourses in the production, distribution and circulation of ideas in order to influence the decision-making process in the EU. Within this frame, *monotopia*, one single/one dimensional discourse, has been emphasised by the adoption of one single structure that experts from all EU countries have to follow in producing reports, while *heterotopia*, referring to different scales and sites, fluid and changing trends, mediated by barriers, regional histories and national projects, has been set aside when writing these documents. Therefore, it might be that emancipatory and democratic principles would come to light in such reports if national and regional differences (at macro and meso levels) could be included in the experts' analyses. If so, further research would be needed to develop an article that is far enough removed from the aims established for this one.

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STUDENTS' VOICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ITALY AND LATVIA

ABSTRACT

The participation of students in the educational process is a key to success for higher education. The implementation of activities in which students' voice is heard via different practices and actors on mega, macro, meso and micro levels brings unexpectedly impressive results in learning. The article investigates the role of students' voice in two public educational institutions in Latvia (University of Latvia) and Italy (University of Padua). The comparison is made in two categories, actors and practices, to respond to the research question of whether the Italian and Latvian systems support students' participation/engagement in higher education. The comparative methodology of the study determined the differences and the similarities between the students' voice practices of the two higher education institutions and proved that Italian and Latvian systems support students' participation/engagement in higher education; although some improvements are still needed, they are on the right track to implementing it on all levels and in all dimensions.

Keywords: *collaboration, engagement, Italy, Latvia, students' voice*

GLAS ŠTUDENTOV V VISOKOŠOLSKEM IZOBRAŽEVANJU V ITALIJI IN LATVIJI – POVZETEK

Sodelovanje študentov v izobraževalnem procesu je ključnega pomena za uspeh visokošolskega izobraževanja. Raba aktivnosti, kjer se sliši glas študentov, prek različnih praks in akterjev na mega-, makro-, meso- in mikroravni, vodi do nepričakovanih oziroma osupljivih učnih rezultatov. Članek raziskuje vlogo glasu študentov na izobraževalni instituciji v Latviji in Italiji, in sicer Univerzi v Latviji in Univerzi v Padovi. Primerjava je zajela dve kategoriji, akterje in prakse, v povezavi z raziskovalnim vprašanjem, ali italijanski oziroma latvijski sistem podpira aktivno vključevanje študentov v izobraževalni proces. Komparativna metodologija študije je pokazala razlike in podobnosti med praksami, ki spodbujajo glas študentov na teh dveh institucijah, in potrdila, da oba sistema podpirata aktivno vključevanje študentov v visokošolsko izobraževanje; čeprav še vedno obstajajo potrebe po izboljšavah, sta instituciji na pravi poti do aktivnega vključevanja študentov na vseh ravneh in v vseh dimenzijah.

Ključne besede: *sodelovanje, aktivna vključenost, Italija, Latvija, glas študentov*

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INTRODUCTION

Collaboration is one of the most important issues nowadays in different areas of life. Education is not an exception. One of the significant outcomes of student-student or student-faculty collaboration is the student's growing awareness in the learning and educational process and as the result the increase in motivation and engagement. This leads to the concept of teaching and learning together when the faculty and teachers are learning from the students and students become the active participants of the process, informants, and change agents in collaboration with faculty members (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Cook-Sather, 2014; Grion & Cook-Sather, 2013). Such youth-adult partnerships place students in a preferable position, which gives them the opportunity for their voices to be heard.

The term 'youth-adult partnership' can be defined as a relationship in which both youth and adults can have the potential to contribute to decision-making processes, to learn from one another, and to promote change (Jones & Perkins, 2004). This form of collaboration comes with an expectation of youth sharing the responsibility for the vision of the group, the activities planned, and the group process that facilitates the enactment of these activities (Jones, 2004). A focus on mutual teaching and learning develops in youth-adult partnerships as all parties involved assume a leadership role in some aspects of their shared effort (Camino, 2000, in Mitra, 2009). In other words, youth-adult partnership is called 'student voice', and according to Fletcher's definition, is the meaningful involvement of students, which requires "validating and authorizing them [students] to represent their own ideas, opinions, knowledge and experiences throughout education in order to improve our schools" (Fletcher, 2005, p. 4). However, in addition to providing students with opportunities to communicate their ideas and opinions, student voice work is also about students having the power to bring about changes which will improve their experiences at university (Robinson & Taylor, 2012).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In general, the concept of 'student voice' has been introduced across a wide range of contemporary education research, policymaking and provision (Bahou, 2011; Bragg & Manchester, 2012; Rodrigues, Tribe & Araújo de Holanda, 2013), as providing students with the opportunity to reflect, actively articulate their views and to be partners in the planning, implementation and appraisal of their teaching and learning experience (Fielding, 2004; QAA, 2012) with the aim of improving quality (Rogers, 2005).

There are four main values at the heart of student voice:

- communication as dialogue;
- participation and democratic inclusivity;
- the recognition that power relations are unequal and problematic;
- the possibility for change and transformation (Robinson & Taylor, 2007); whether or not student voice work can genuinely challenge the hierarchical power relations that exist in schools (Robinson & Taylor, 2012).

Besides, it is a well-documented fact that today's Generation Y students regard themselves as active participants with a strong desire to shape their own learning experiences. Keiller and Inglis-Jassiem (2015) support this notion and state that when academics plan to implement new innovations and technology in teaching and learning, they should consider students' voice, especially in relation to student preferences and their levels of competency with regard to new technology (Wyk & Ryneveld, 2017). Moreover, it should be emphasised that the concept of 'student voice' is in many ways similar to 'student-centred' approaches, and it means that in order to develop learners' autonomy and independence, the focus shifts from the teachers' needs to the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations or cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students.

However, although youth-adult partnerships exist in a wide array of organisations, including government agencies, foundations, community-based organisations, and businesses, where youth collaborate with adults by serving on decision-making boards, developing projects, and implementing change efforts, in the most important institutions for youth – schools and universities – they are remarkably absent (Mitra, 2009). This is substantiated by an important national research, led by the University of Padua, carried out in Italy (2014–2017). A survey that included 3,760 students from different universities investigated five areas of interest, which also included the creation of a participatory environment, the use of methods and resources for teaching and learning, and the dimensions of feedback and assessment. Data analysis showed that faculties are still resistant to innovative teaching approaches, how low the level of interaction with students in the form of class discussion and group activities is, and how little feedback and peer-self-evaluation are promoted (Fedeli, 2018). This was the most extensive study done in Italy that included students' voice and opinions on teaching methods in higher education in the last decade. Similar research began in Latvia in 2014 and will conclude in 2019. Representatives from 41 higher education institutions have participated in the survey. Respondents were asked to answer 53 questions in the form of a statement as to whether or not different student-centred educational practices had been introduced at universities/colleges. Overall, there is a positive trend of student-centred education in Latvia. However, several aspects should be improved, such as involving students in the study process and content development, institutionalising the review of study courses and the study outcomes process and clarifying the role of students in their review, taking into account students' needs and diversity, creating teaching guidelines at universities/colleges, and integrated mobility in order to ensure full involvement (AESF, 2016).

It should be noted that student voice has been recognised for a long time only in secondary schools (Brice Heath, 2004; Rudduck, 2007) and is only now emerging as a dominant concept in higher education (Leach, 2012). Most higher education institutions provide platforms and opportunities for students to put across their views, dialogue and have their voice heeded (Floud, 2005). Many universities, in a bid to hear and heed the student voice, encourage students to provide feedback on all student experiences during the study period. To make it more effective, universities should create a culture and a conducive

environment which has transparent formal and informal mechanisms of engaging students in their quality processes.

There are a number of approaches to how students' voices can be heard:

- a student satisfaction survey, where twice per year, students are asked to express their opinions online via the college/university Intranet system (Blair & Keisha, 2014)
- student participation in higher education curriculum development, where the students express their opinions concerning the content and context of studies (Brooman, Darwent, & Pimor, 2015);
- undergraduate students' attraction to serve as pedagogical consultants to faculty members, where students express their expectations and consult on general student opinions (Cook-Sather, 2014);
- students' voices in peer support, an attractive practice where students assist other students in different aspects of university life, trying out as teachers themselves (Meharg, Tizard, & Varey, 2015);
- students' voices as sources in research on evaluating the efficiency of teaching;
- students' voices in formative and summative assessment, where the self-assessment and peer assessment play their roles (The Gordon Commission on the Future of Assessment in Education, Assessment, Teaching, and Learning, 2011).

The factors considered the most important for the evolution of the educational process using students' voices are:

- pedagogical reflection;
- professional learning.

After receiving feedback from students, the most logical and obvious step is to process the data and reflect on it; Cook-Sather and Luz (2014) suggest that capitalising on student feedback can benefit a teacher's professional development.

METHODOLOGY

This paper sought to investigate the role of students' voice in two educational public institutions in Latvia and in Italy: the University of Latvia and the University of Padua. These two universities were selected for the analysis due to the fact that the authors of the paper are representatives of these countries and both participated in the comparative group work process during the Winter School of 2018.

Latvia is a country in the Baltic region of Northern Europe. The Latvian higher education system comprises of public and private universities, academies and colleges, where academic and professional programmes are offered at the first (bachelor's degree), second (master's degree) and third level (doctoral degree). The Cabinet of Ministers issues Regulations regarding the state standard for academic education; teaching methods are chosen by the academic staff of the institution depending on the type of studies and the

specificities of an individual course. The main principles of assessment are that it is mandatory, and that different methods are used.

In Italy, the higher education system is provided by private and above all by public universities. They are considered to be 'institutions of high culture', as well as scientific structures aimed at teaching and scientific research. Public and private universities (recognised and accredited) confer academic qualifications (bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees). State universities elect their own representation within the National University Council and the National Council of University Students, advisory bodies of the Ministry of Education, University and Research. In recent years, the Italian university has experimented with important changes due to the Ministerial Decree 509/1999 and Law 240/2010, which have strongly changed the organisation of universities with the transformation of the training courses in cycles, the promotion of the quality of higher education, and the shift of attention from teaching to learning. The purpose is to facilitate student mobility and recognition of their careers in the European context (use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)). In particular, the need was to balance the paths and objectives of higher education with the aim of creating a homogeneous and harmonious European area of higher education able to promote the mobility of citizens and their access to the world of work.

As mentioned above, the investigation of the students' voice perspective was carried out by the authors through a shared process of perspectives during the International Winter School 2018 in Würzburg, where, after a broad debate on the characteristics of students' voices practices in the two different institutions, some categories of comparison were selected: *actors* and actions (*practices*). The comparison of these two specific categories allowed the researchers to respond to the following research question: Do Italian and Latvian systems support students' participation/engagement in higher education?

The comparative methodology (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2014) of the study was aimed at investigating the factors that determine the differences and the similarities between the students' voice practices of the two higher education institutions. It means that specific attention was focused on the roles and *actions* of the *actors* in Latvia and Italy at macro (on the level of country), meso (on the level of university) and micro levels (on the level of teacher) to trace if Italian and Latvian systems support students' participation/engagement in higher education. The categories, actors and practices, were chosen as the most crucial and influential for the learning outcome. The findings were discussed according to the research question.

The following sources were used in the analysis: European educational regulations and policies, national education laws, regulations and policies of the universities of Latvia and Padua.

STUDENTS' VOICE IN EDUCATION STUDIES IN ITALY AND IN LATVIA

In Italy, the students' voice perspective has obtained increasing relevance year by year since the 2000s. Many scholars have highlighted its importance, identifying it as a way to

create democratic educational environments (Fedeli, 2016, 2018; Grion & Cook-Sather, 2013) and improve educational practices and recognising students as a subsidiary source for the research (Gemma, 2013). They've also found that it promotes discussion practices within the educational contexts because giving a voice to students reinforces two dimensions: the social one, creating strong group integration, but also the introduction of new teaching and learning approaches, such as constant formal and informal feedback to students, peer and self-evaluation, methods and techniques that promote dialogue, students' participation and involvement (Fedeli, 2018). Scholars have stressed that the students' voice perspective gives students the opportunity to be the protagonists of their personalised learning process (Fedeli, 2014, 2016; Fedeli, Giampaolo, & Boucouvalas, 2013), promotes a participatory assessment process in order to support students' quality literacy (Ghislandi & Raffaghelli, 2013) and develops effective teacher-student relationships based on a balance of power and the development of a participatory environment where students and teachers are partners in the planning and realisation of teaching practices (Fedeli, 2017).

Over the last 25 years, since its political redirection in the early 1990s, Latvia has jumped into neoliberalism without any significant analysis of what it actually is and how previously stable cultural values or the economic legacy of the prior system might be undermined. Education policy-makers and practitioners have tried to find quick answers in a major reform process; many of the changes in the field of education were and still are focused on democratisation and the teachers' acquisition of competences that educators need in order to facilitate and implement changes in a new reality of a global world where there is wide access to sources of information and labour. The leap into the knowledge society, which itself has been only vaguely defined, has involved dragging those with previous experience into adopting novel approaches to teaching and learning in a comparatively short time (Zogla, 2017). The change of education paradigms has taken place in parallel to different reforms of the education system in Latvia (Kangro & James, 2008) and the improvement of its quality, thus marking the transition from teaching to learning (Bluma, 2001), placing greater emphasis on students' involvement and contribution in the teaching/learning process. A paradigm shift occurred between 1999 and 2009, when learning started to prevail over teaching, and listening to students' voices became one of those novelties which was gradually adopted in classrooms (Cekse, Geske, & Kango, 2010).

At the mega level, in both countries, the students' voice perspective is supported by different actors, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), whose mission is to promote intercultural dialogue through education, culture, information and communication; the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) with the mission to develop policies for social well-being in the world; the European Union (EU) with the aim to promote harmony among European countries; the European Student Union (ESU) with the purpose to defend and reinforce students' educational, democratic, political, and social rights. This means that if the missions of the different organisations are based on the idea of dialogue, harmony, equality

and rights, it is important to promote the culture of participation, dialogue and communication among people. It is a kind of habit that needs to be built as part of a lifelong process, and therefore, higher education systems need to become one of its main actors by involving students both in teaching and learning practices and in the governance of higher education as required by the Bologna Process. The aim of this policy is to achieve the creation of democratic communities in which young people can also express their opinions.

JUXTAPOSITION ANALYSIS

Actors of the students' voice perspective in Italy and in Latvia

In Italy, at macro level there are not strong policies that support a democratic emancipation of learning, in fact, the Ministry of Education, University and Research is responsible for education at all levels and supervises the university institutions. Through the central administration, it establishes educational policies that are then implemented and managed locally by the regional offices, by the territorial area offices, and by every educational institution. However, the most recent Italian law on university reorganisation, no. 240¹ from 30th December 2010, foresees the participation of students in different academic bodies. At national level, an important body is the National Council of University Students made up of twenty-eight members elected by students. The council remains in office for three years and can be re-elected. It is an advisory body representing students enrolled in courses at Italian universities. Its task is to formulate opinions and make proposals to the Minister of Education, University and Research, implementing a similar action to that which the European Student Union carries out at the European level. The most important proposals are related to the reorganisation projects of the university system formulated by the Minister; ministerial decrees concerning the general criteria for the regulation of the teaching of courses, and the methods and tools for the orientation and mobility of students; the criteria for the allocation of the ordinary financing fund. It communicates the general interests of the university to the Minister and presents to him/her, within one year of the settlement, a report on the student condition within the university system. The council can consult the Minister on facts or events of national relevance concerning teaching and the student condition, about which it receives response within 60 days (Law, 240/2010).

At macro level, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia is similarly responsible for education at all levels; however, supervising higher education and university institutions through the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (2000), it provides academic freedom where "academic staff are entitled to choose study methods", thus learning approaches are decided at meso and especially at micro levels (section 6(4)). Also, students are allowed to express their ideas and opinions openly in an institution of higher education; to elect and to be elected to a self-governance body of students,

1 See: <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/102401.htm>.

to participate in all levels of self-governance bodies of an institution of higher education. Furthermore, the above law states that a student self-governance body shall represent the interests of the students of an institution of higher education in relations with State authorities (section 50. (6)). The student self-governance body shall defend and represent the interests of students in matters of academic, material and cultural life in the institution of higher education and other State authorities (section 53.3). Moreover, the Student Union of Latvia represents the students of Latvia and works for the observance of their rights and interests at a national and international level. It comes together regularly once per two months and contributes to the development and advancement of education and the cooperation of local unions of students of higher education institutions, it improves the quality of education and academic traditions, democracy and individual initiative, the self-esteem of students and development of personality, healthy lifestyle and mental health, civil integration of youth and participation in students' social unions. Another organisation responsible for students' voices in Latvia is the Council of Higher Education. It is an independent institution which develops the national strategy of higher education, implements the cooperation between higher educational institutions, state institutions and the general public in the development of higher education, oversees the quality of higher education guarantees accepting of the best decisions in issues related to higher education (Law on Institutions of Higher Education, 2000). Thus, there are a number of different organisations which defend the rights of the students on the national level and make sure their voices are heard.

At meso level, in Italy, every academic institution guarantees the representation of students as foreseen by Law 240/2010 in different bodies such as the Academic Senate (5 students), the Board of Directors (2 students), the Evaluation Unit (1 student), the University Teaching Commission (3 students), the Equal Opportunities Committee (number of students in balance with the number of teaching staff), the Observatory for Post-Graduate Specialist Training (4 students), the Council of Study Courses (1 student), the Department Council (1 PhD student and 1 research fellow) and Joint Teacher-Student Commissions (3 students).

In Italy, the evaluation body foresees the involvement of all students on the courses and the teaching evaluation process in a survey at the end of each course, as well as the involvement of students' representatives in the GAV (Gruppo Auto-Valutazione, the Self-Evaluation Group) (D.Lgs 19/2012)², useful for the improvement of courses management, curriculum development, and didactical practices according to the students' perspectives. In each of these bodies, students' representatives have a voice and report about issues and proposals connected to different courses in terms of organisation, rights and needs.

In Latvia, at the meso level, the organisation which makes sure students' voices are heard is the students' Council of the University of Latvia. As an independent collegial

2 See: https://www.cun.it/uploads/storico/dlgs_27012012_19.pdf.

institution, it represents the rights and interests of the students of the University of Latvia and its members are elected for a year. It is actively involved in the university's decision-making processes and is the main promoter of students' interests in educational, social, economic and cultural fields. The University of Latvia also creates study programme councils where students are able to use their voices to influence curriculum development, express their opinions and share their experiences. Such an approach definitely provides a learning opportunity for students as well as for the institutions, teachers, and administrators, where everyone has a chance to reflect and grow professionally. Thus, in Latvia at the meso level as well as in Italy every academic institution guarantees the representation of students in different bodies according to the aforementioned law, and in part, students' voices might bring some changes in the system (Law on Institutions of Higher Education, 2000).

In Italy, at the micro level, the development of a democratic student-teacher partnership depends on the attitudes of individual teachers; in fact, the teacher-centred approach is still prevalent in Italian academic institutions. However, in the last five years, academic institutions have been involved in a wide debate on the innovation of didactics that include students' engagement and their protagonism in different teaching and learning processes (Fedeli, Grion, & Frison, 2016). As evidence of that, various national conferences focused on this theme have been organised in Italy³.

In Latvia, at the micro level, the initiative to provide students with opportunities to communicate their ideas and opinions to ensure a democratic student-teacher partnership depends mainly on the particular teacher's initiative, however, the paradigm is gradually shifting from the teacher-centred to the student-centred approach (Law on Institutions of Higher Education, 2000).

In order to analyse the role of Italian and Latvian actors, the following table presents their roles at macro, meso and micro levels.

3 Some international conferences in Padua: *Valutare l'apprendimento o valutare per l'apprendimento? Verso una cultura della valutazione sostenibile all'Università* (March 2017) [Assessment of Learning or Assessment for Learning? Forward to a Sustainable Assessment at University]; *Interrogating Higher Education actors in learning and teaching* (May, 2018); *Teaching4Learning@unipd. C'è sempre spazio per migliorare* (June 2018) [Teaching4Learning@unipd. There is always room for improving].

Table 1: The roles of Italian and Latvian actors

Level	Italian actors	Roles of Italian actors	Latvian actors	Roles of Latvian actors
Macro	Ministry of Education, University and Research	Supervises universities Develop policies	Ministry of Education and Science	Supervises universities Develops policies
	National Council of University of Students	Formulates proposals	Student Union of Latvia	Observes and protects the rights and interests of students at a national and international level
			Latvian Students Association	Resolves issues associated with the representation of student interests
			Council of Higher Education	Develops the national strategy
Meso	University with its governance bodies	Create the governance bodies with students' representatives	University with its governance bodies	Create the governance bodies with students' representatives
Micro	Teachers	Dominant teacher-centred approach	Teachers	Graduate shift to learner-centred approach
		Few are the students' participatory learning experiences		Teachers-researchers implement innovative methods
		Few are the teachers who implement students' participatory approaches		

Source: Authors' own.

The practices of the students' voice perspective in Italy and in Latvia

The realisation of practices according to the students' voice perspective is the second category of comparison. We focused on two dimensions: the assessment process and class management.

In Italy, the involvement of the students in the assessment process is generally managed by the individual teacher. It means that there is no shared assessment culture within the academic systems. Therefore, there are few teachers who involve students in the pre-course phase, investigating their expectations with a questionnaire or during the courses, gathering students' feedback during or after every lesson. After the course there is a phase in which students are more involved through different strategies: a post-course questionnaire, peer assessment, summative assessment, an online survey on the course. Some cases deserve particular attention because of their assessment process: there are some courses at the Department of Education at the University of Padua where teachers, adopting the philosophy of *Assessment for Learning* (Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013) consider assessment as a tool for promoting students' learning and their evaluation literacy. In fact, during these courses, students are involved in the definition of assessment criteria that they then use during their work and during the peer-assessment process, which support their learning during the entire courses (Grion, Serbati, Tino, & Nicol, 2017). In the same courses, teachers implement innovative participatory practices in order to promote students' engagement. They adopt a student-centred philosophy based on some specific class management strategies, for example, a co-definition of the syllabus, the flipped classroom method, an interactive classroom and online discussion, group work, the world café technique, project work, reflection and experiential education. They are all class management strategies that allow students to be the active protagonists of their learning process and learning contexts. Adopting these innovative strategies is a way to recognise students as change agents (Grion, 2016) because their ways of participating in the didactical activities and their perspectives about content, activities, assessment and real learning needs promote didactic innovation and the reconsideration of the teacher-student partnership based on the balance of power and on the responsibility of all actors involved for the teaching/learning process (Fedeli, 2016). It is the result of a productive relationship that generates a transformative experience (Taylor, 2007; Taylor & Snyder, 2012) for the people involved because it allows them to "have questioning discussions, share information openly and achieve greater mutual and consensual understandings" (Taylor, 2016, p. 182).

In support of this innovative perspective, an important project called "Teaching4Learning @Unipd" (Fedeli & Taylor, 2017; Fedeli, 2018) wants to improve and modernise the didactics at the University of Padua, creating communities for innovation in different departments. Its aim is the innovation of didactics through teacher training and the dissemination of practices useful to guarantee student engagement and participation. This project is also based on a sustainable approach foreseeing the development of a community of practices within each department thanks to the training of teacher-experts as change

agents. Their role is to disseminate a new culture of teaching and learning, and to support the training of their colleagues in their departments.

In Latvia, the involvement of students in the assessment process is also managed by the individual teacher and there is no shared assessment culture within the academic systems (Law on Institutions of Higher Education, 2000). In Latvian universities, some teachers might ask students to complete a pre-course questionnaire on their own initiative to acquaint themselves with the students' expectations. Also, some teachers might ask students to complete a lesson evaluation questionnaire either at the end of each lesson or every second lesson/lecture. Some single teachers-researchers might ask students to fill in post-course questionnaires or use the peer-evaluation approach for course assessment at the end of the course. Nevertheless, on the level of the university, it is compulsory for the students to complete satisfaction surveys at least twice per year (at the end of the winter and spring terms), where the students have to fill in 10–20 Likert-type questions (closed and open) expressing their opinions anonymously online via the university's intranet system. The system was introduced at the University of Latvia approximately 10 years ago, and after a problematic first few years of getting used to the system, there have been no obvious problems with using the system and analysing the data in the last 7 years. At the University of Latvia the teachers have free access to the students' evaluations, at least via the directors of particular programmes, and they are also analysed in the annual self-assessment report and the University administration comments shortly on the students surveys in the annual meetings; however, as a tool for significant professional development, it might be called symbolic, and there is still space to develop and expand this instrument of students' voice. Also, student's voices can serve as a source in research evaluating the efficiency of teaching. It refers to the increase in the share of teachers with doctoral degrees or those who are pursuing a doctoral degree; thus, the students' voices become the sources in the teachers' research on evaluating the efficiency of teaching which provides motivation and engagement in lifelong learning both for the teacher and the students. In fact, a team-based learning method is applied in some courses, an innovative approach promoting students' engagement and involvement in learning, introducing self-assessment and peer assessment during and at the end of the course. It gives the students a chance to express their voices at the beginning of the course, during every single lesson/lecture and eventually at the end of the course, giving the teachers an opportunity to reflect on this feedback and make the appropriate conclusions and improvements at the micro level.

INTERPRETATION ANALYSIS

The students' voice perspective in both countries seems to be supported quite well at the macro level, where a strong influence is played by the Ministry of Education with the role of university supervision and policy development. However, at this level (see table 1), the role of students in Latvia seems to be stronger; in fact, in Italy, there is only the National Council of the University of Students, while in Latvia at the same level, there are three more representative student bodies – the Latvian Students Association, the Student Union

of Latvia and the Council of Higher Education. The reason for the presence of just one big body at the macro level in Italy can be found in the idea of peripheral institutions, autonomy and, in fact, this seems well transposed at the meso level with the constitution of many bodies with students' representatives. The presence of the aforementioned bodies in Latvia at the macro level signifies the interest and possibility to provide support to students not only on the university level but rather on the state level, and due to the fact that Latvia is a considerably smaller country in comparison to Italy, it makes it easier to support and ensure the equality and democratic participation of students in various issues even at the macro level.

In both countries, at the meso level, the role of students is well-represented; in fact, students' representatives are involved in different organised bodies, even if to a different extent. It means that the policies at the macro and meso levels are student-oriented because they foresee their participation at different levels of university management with the aim to improve didactical approaches, guarantee their own rights, and promote citizenship development. These elements show that higher education institutions in both countries have incorporated into their policies, at least formally, those national norms that were developed according to European Recommendations (Bologna Process, 2015; European commission, 2010). However, it is useful as well to underline that if the Latvian policies at the macro level seemed to be stronger than the Italian ones, thanks to the presence of three more bodies, in contrast, they seemed stronger in Italy at the meso level, where students' representatives are present in the different hierarchical organised bodies. That could explain that Italian academic institutions have really included in their policies the European perspective of changes, trying to keep up with the general culture of innovation and promote changes at the micro level. Therefore, these articulated students' representatives in Italy show that there is a strong policy and a consistent student-orientation on the meso level that would promote an evident and fast impact at the micro level. Despite all that, the situation in both countries is similar at the micro level. In fact, student participation and engagement depend on the individual teacher's attitude. It is the personal dimension of the teacher that directly impacts didactic and assessment approaches as well as the teacher-student partnership. In fact, the teachers' culture of teaching and learning depends on it, their idea of the learning environment, their idea of student behaviours and participation. And teachers' attitudes cannot be changed just through policies at the mega, macro and meso level, but through innovations in teachers' culture. It is an attitude that finds its roots in teachers' culture, in their theoretical background and their experiences as teachers and as former students. The change of teachers' culture can probably be promoted by supporting them in the acquisition of the awareness of these aspects, through quality training based on the analysis and sharing of practices, theories of learning at national and international levels, and reflection on their own practices. In fact, in Italy, the shift from the teacher-centred to the student-centred perspective is gradually happening thanks to a wide debate on these aspects at the national level with the participation of experts at international level, which is, step-by-step, affecting the didactics approaches and teachers' culture. That is a kind of bottom-up process whose strengths consist of having

a relevant impact not only at the micro level but also at the macro and meso levels, where policies seem to need to be reinforced above all in terms of monitoring and assessing the implementation of students' voice policies. In Latvia, the historical background imprinted on the culture of teaching, and it is not so easy to implement changes in a fast and painless manner; it takes time and a paradigm shift in the consciousness of every single teacher. However, changes have begun and the idea of collaboration, communication and participatory teaching/learning is in the air; thus, introducing educational training to every teacher at macro and meso levels might trigger positive changes in teaching approaches and transform the dominant teacher-centred approach in the classroom into a more advanced and innovative learner-centred environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The Italian and the Latvian educational systems do support students' participation/engagement in higher education, and although some improvements are still needed, they are on the right track to implement it on all levels and in all dimensions. This means that the strong meso level policy-system needs to be well-interpreted in order to transform practices and help faculties to change their teaching and learning perspective to a student-centred approach. At the micro level, in both countries, the democratic student-teacher partnership is strongly connected to individual teachers' attitudes rather than to a systemic culture of higher education institutions, as indicated by the difficulty not only to embed policies in practices, but also to consider students as pedagogical consultants to faculty members (Cook-Sather, 2014), as sources for evaluating teaching efficiency, as experts in providing support to peers (Meharg et al., 2015) or in giving their opinion concerning the content and context of studies (Brooman, et al., 2015). If the process of teaching and learning change has begun, much more needs to be done in order to create democratic learning environments, where the balance of power between students and teachers can really generate a didactic innovation process based on a new teacher-student partnership that is characterised by a common responsibility for the teaching/learning process (Fedeli, 2016), and where a general teaching/learning perspective of change can be guaranteed only through a more effective connection and continuity among the different levels of actions and policies (macro, meso, micro), according to an ecological approach.

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FLEXIBILISATION OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SHIFTING TEMPORALITIES IN NIGERIA AND GERMANY

ABSTRACT

In his theory of acceleration, Rosa (2013) describes how modern societies have recently been going through a severe change in temporalities. This new dynamic confronts providers in Adult Learning and Education (ALE) with the challenge to not only adapt to shifting temporalities regarding their own processes and structures but also to support learners in adapting to a new 'pace of life'. One way of reacting to social acceleration can be considered flexibilisation. In our contribution, we compare ALE in Nigeria and Germany to investigate how social acceleration takes effect in both societies, what challenges result for ALE and how ALE providers react in terms of flexibilisation. By examining policy papers, recent empirical studies and data reports, we can show how shifts in temporalities cause similar challenges in both countries and that they appear as a driver for the flexibilisation of ALE.

Keywords: *adult learning and education, time, temporalities, acceleration, flexibilisation, Nigeria, Germany*

FLEKSIBILIZACIJA UČENJA IN IZOBRAŽEVANJA ODRASLIH V KONTEKSTU SPREMINJAJOČIH SE ČASOVNOSTI V NIGERIJJI IN NEMČIJI - POVZETEK

Rosa (2013) v svoji teoriji pospeševanja obravnava velike spremembe časovnosti, s katerimi se v zadnjem obdobju soočajo sodobne družbe. Ta nova dinamika ponudnikom na področju izobraževanja in učenja

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odraslih zastavlja ne le izziv prilagajanja spreminjajoči se časovnosti z vidika lastnih procesov in struktur, ampak tudi pri ponujanju podpore udeležencem izobraževanj, ki se prilagajajo novemu življenjskemu ritmu. Enega od načinov odzivanja na družbeno pospeševanje najdemo v fleksibilizaciji. V našem prispevku primerjamo učenje in izobraževanje odraslih v Nigeriji in Nemčiji, da bi ob tem raziskali družbeno pospeševanje v obeh družbah, katere izzive prinaša za učenje in izobraževanje odraslih ter kako se ponudniki izobraževanj odzivajo v smislu fleksibilizacije. S proučevanjem dokumentov o politiki izobraževanja odraslih, novejših empiričnih študij in podatkovnih poročil pokažemo, kako premiki časovnosti ustvarjajo podobne izzive v obeh državah ter se pojavljajo kot vzvod za fleksibilizacijo učenja in izobraževanja odraslih.

Ključne besede: učenje in izobraževanje odraslih, čas, časovnosti, pospeševanje, fleksibilizacija, Nigerija, Nemčija

TIME, ACCELERATION AND FLEXIBILISATION IN ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Time is of great importance in our experiences of everyday life in modern society, and one could even state that modernity itself is defined by a specific temporality (Koselleck, 2004). Education and learning have become crucial aspects for modernisation and the rise of a highly dynamic knowledge society, which has led to the overarching, global and deeply anchored programme of lifelong learning. However, there is still a lack of attention in adult learning and education (ALE) research regarding the interrelations between modalities critical for modernisation (e.g. our world as global acceleration society) and their effects on the system of ALE, its providers and educational programmes (e.g. quick adaption and on-demand reactions). In our contribution, we apply a comparative research approach to investigate one specific relation between modern temporalities and educational practices, namely between acceleration and flexibilisation. Comparing ALE in Nigeria and Germany, we ask: *How does social acceleration take effect in both societies, what challenges result for ALE, and how do ALE providers relate to these changes in terms of flexibilisation?*

As time is of symbolic significance (Elias, 1988, p. xxv), social or individual phenomena can be characterised by temporal attributes. In our society of acceleration, the “slow ones” are considered those who have been “socially left behind” (Nowotny, 1996, p. 34). The Western school system is ordered around curricula, classes that are divided by age, and uses *chronological* time standards to evaluate learning progress. Education as a moral authority strives to create modern time-utilisation ethics (Göhlich & Zirfas, 2007, p. 108). The goal is to achieve future-oriented thinking and benefit-oriented actions with time as a limited resource through the habituation of time, an understanding of flexibility and an appropriate utilisation of time.

As the modern idea of time emphasises the necessity for ongoing transformation (Schäffter, 2001), flexibility and overarching change, the concept of lifelong learning can be seen as a manifestation of the temporalisation of modern society. Learning as the

adoption of infinite transformation (Schmidt-Lauff, 2012, p. 38) is triggered by the political idea of lifelong learning in continuity (Bélangier & Federighi, 2000), which implies a steady progression into ‘the future’ as the horizon. The agenda of lifelong learning follows the idea of acceleration and the inherent transformation metaphor as a central formula of legitimation. Dörpinghaus and Uphoff (2012) have criticised many references to lifelong learning as *self-institutionalisation*. Learning for a flexible, autonomous and balanced life is reduced to learning as an act of alienated, accelerated adaptation. Thus, the question remains whether lifelong learning is the solution or the problem – or whether it creates contradictory relations. To argue this question, it is helpful to get a more differentiated understanding of social acceleration.

In his attempt to deliver a phenomenology of social acceleration, Rosa (2013) has described three dimensions or forms of appearance. The first one is *technical acceleration*: not only has the transport of people, things and information sped up but so has the production of material and immaterial goods by technological innovations. In a historical perspective, the steam engine and the train, the assembly line and the car, the microprocessor and the Internet are markers of this process. Second, Rosa has noted the *acceleration of social change and an increase of contingencies*, which he has connected to the idea of a ‘shrinking of the present’ in the modernisation process. In modern society, the past becomes outdated more quickly, while the future becomes increasingly unpredictable, which leaves a very narrow time frame for a present where we can safely rely on our past experiences for our future decisions. Rosa has observed empirical evidence on the acceleration of social change (e.g. alterations in the structures of the family and intergenerational relations) in the dynamic of the so-called ‘obsolescence of knowledge’, in the change of career structures and the de-standardisation of the life course. Third, Rosa has described the *acceleration in the pace of life*. On the one hand, there has been an objective increase in the number of experience episodes per unit of time, which can empirically be shown by quantitative time budget studies. On the other hand – and much more challenging to investigate empirically – has been the subjective impression of time pressure and of time ‘flying by’. This phenomenon has been traced by Rosa to two reasons taking effect simultaneously: the fear of missing out and the pressure to adapt. The claim for social and cultural participation thus produces a higher time pressure.

These analytically separated aspects of social acceleration are tightly interwoven in social practice, while at the same time, the relative strength of their effects on different societal sub-systems, fields and actors may vary empirically. In our paper, we will focus on ‘flexibilisation’ as one answer to the challenges described. According to Bateson, flexibility can be understood as an “uncommitted potential for change” (2007, p. 497). This definition points to the relation of flexibilisation and acceleration as it stresses that flexibilisation describes a form of strategies in coping with fast-paced changes in technology, society and personal life by striving for adaptativeness to new and unpredictable circumstances. Flexible employment forms allow enterprises to adapt to changes in demand, flexible working hours allow employees to adapt to changes in their personal

circumstances, and so forth. Hence, if we assume that social acceleration significantly affects ALE, we have to examine flexibilisation as one core strategy in dealing with it. Of course, such an analytical concept has to be elaborated empirically, and thus we will try to carve out the basic logic of this connection by applying a comparative research approach, the specific challenges of which will be discussed in the next section.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH ON ACCELERATION AND FLEXIBILISATION IN ALE

Investigating time aspects in ALE with a comparative research approach takes up two different traditions. On the one hand, comparative research is a rather new field in ALE (Reischmann & Bron, 2008) and has quickly developed to yield manifold insights over the past decades. On the other hand, 'time' is by no means new for comparative, educational research. "The importance of evolutionary time was emphasised in comparative research at the early stage of the development of comparative education research" (Jokila, Kallio, & Rinne, 2015, p. 18). Beginning with this early stage and continuing until today, there has been a strong tradition of comparative education that focuses "extensively on historical analysis as a way to understand factors influencing educational systems" (Jokila et al., 2015, p. 18).

In contrast to a historical approach to comparative research, time can also be examined as a topic of the comparison. This is particularly helpful where time is researched as a 'resource' and/or 'constraint' to ALE and especially when the research seeks a broad international comparison of time-related issues. This approach can rely on many objective measures related to time aspects for which increasingly more reliable data sources exist (e.g. hours spent on ALE activities per year, mean duration of courses or schedules of courses).

However, there is also a need for comparative approaches that try to understand the qualitative dimension of temporal aspects in ALE. By conceiving time both as a physical and social phenomenon, it is not merely an external condition for education but rather a medium and outcome of learning processes. The relation between time and ALE is much broader than a historical or chronometric comparison may show and much more complex than common chronological units of measurement imply. Only by respecting time as a basic category of social and hence educational practice can time-ambivalences (e.g. continuity versus contingent or social versus natural) and time-ambiguities (e.g. flexible, linear, acceleration or maturation) and their relevance for the lifelong educational system, ALE providers, programmes, professionals and adults come into view. Corresponding to how the spatial turn reshaped our perspectives on social reality, a temporal turn is needed.

To establish such a perspective on time-related aspects of ALE in a comparative research setting, a methodological approach is required that allows qualitative in-depth comparisons. Egetenmeyer (2012, p. 80) has proposed a model with four levels. First, one has to describe the cases to be compared standing side-by-side in the form of a "descriptive

juxtaposition”. This step includes a focus on specific aspects relevant to the research question, but it is in the second step, the “analytical juxtaposition” where the crucial features of each case are worked out in more detail. The third step of “descriptive comparison” summarises commonalities and differences, which prepares the final step. By connecting the findings and relating them to further features of the cases, the “analytical comparison” asks why these commonalities and differences occur.

For the comparative question of the article at hand, we broadly follow the principles of this model. We restrict our comparative analysis of both countries to specific institutional contexts, namely the ALE centres of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) in Nigeria and *Volkshochschulen* (VHS) in Germany as well-established, widespread and highly recognised providers. The juxtapositioning focuses on the following three main factors. First, we describe the institutional setting of ALE in the examined countries and the historical process of its institutionalisation as a basis. Second, we discuss if and to what extent both countries can be meaningfully described as ‘accelerated societies’ in accordance with Rosa’s (2013) dimensions of social acceleration outlined above. Third, we detail more recent developments of the NMEC and VHS in order to analyse them as means of a *flexibilisation* by ALE providers. Policy papers, public statistics and data reports were used as data sources for this comparison. However, as this comparative analysis has to deal not only with two very different countries but also with complex time-related phenomena, we first include a fundamental examination on the concept of time in Nigeria and Germany.

TIME, ACCELERATION AND FLEXIBILISATION IN NIGERIA AND GERMANY

There are diverse perspectives from which the concept of time could be considered in Germany and Nigeria. Typically, we can distinguish a Western, linear perspective of modernity from a traditional, pre-colonial African perception of time that focuses on actuality and events (Babalola & Alokun, 2013). In social reality, we can find a large variety of combinations of these perspectives (Levine, 2006). For instance, Germans are described as very punctual (*pünktlich*) and schedule-oriented people (Schuman, 2014). Time is carefully managed, while calendars, schedules, timetables and agendas are respected to the letter, trains arrive and leave on time and projects are carefully scheduled. This is because German living and working follows structure in forms of laws, rules and procedures, which is reflected in all economic, political and social spheres (“Business etiquette”, n.d.).

In contrast, Africans, including Nigerians, are believed to have an idea of time but are not very time-conscious or do not value time (Babalola & Alokun, 2013). This misconception birthed the notion of “African time”, which according to Nnaji-for (2016), depicts Nigerians as having no sense of punctuality regarding appointments or schedules. While rejecting this name tag, Nnaji-for (2016) opined that the best description of this tardiness was to say Nigerians lacked time-discipline. He reasoned that Nigerians keep time in their own way, different from Western time categories, which meant that while they were

not consistent with adhering to time constraints or specific schedules, they were fully conscious that time elapsed. He supported this observation with the argument that among other reasons, the lack of basic amenities rendered people helpless in certain situations over which they had no control and was a contributory factor. He gave the example that it was not possible to know the schedule of mini-buses (*danfo*) by checking online, i.e., to know when they would arrive at a given bus stop because public transportation did not operate on a schedule. There was, however, the awareness of the negative implications of “African time” to which efforts were being made to sensitise people towards punctuality.

Nigeria

In this section, we present the history and institutional structure of ALE in Nigeria and the cases of flexibilisation in the context of NMEC.

History and institutional structure of ALE

In conformity with the Jomtien declaration of “Education For All”, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the NMEC via Decree 17 of 1990 (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010). The Commission was established with the broad objective of developing policies and strategies aimed at eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria by monitoring and standardising the implementation of mass literacy delivery in Nigeria, networking with local and international stakeholders to actualise its vision, and striving to produce self-reliant neo-literates through skills acquisition and functional literacy programmes. The body creates awareness of the importance of literacy and non-formal education and solicits the cooperation of stakeholders in making all Nigerians literate. The Commission also develops literacy programmes for disadvantaged groups while collaborating with state and local governments (LGs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in implementing literacy, non-formal, and continuing education programmes in Nigeria (NMEC, 2017). These programmes can generally be referred to as ALE in Nigeria.

To effectively carry out ALE in Nigeria, the NMEC has an institutional structure in which it operates under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). The FME formulates policies on ALE, supervises the activities of the NMEC and provides funds to carry out its mandate. The FME mobilises funds to states and LGs to pay for ALE programmes, while also initiating cooperation dialogues with international donor agencies (NMEC, 2017).

The NMEC works directly with the zonal offices in the six geopolitical zones of the Federation, which serve as intermediaries between the national headquarters and the state agencies; it monitors and supervises the state agencies while having a parallel link to NGOs, vocational centres and direct beneficiaries in the states (Aderinoye, 1997; NMEC & UNICEF, 2010). State agency officials working in LGs reach out to the learners in the communities under their LGs, and the LGs then mobilise learners, recruit instructors, monitor classes, keep records, evaluate ALE programmes, provide materials on behalf of the state agencies, and pass progress reports to the state agencies for onward transmission

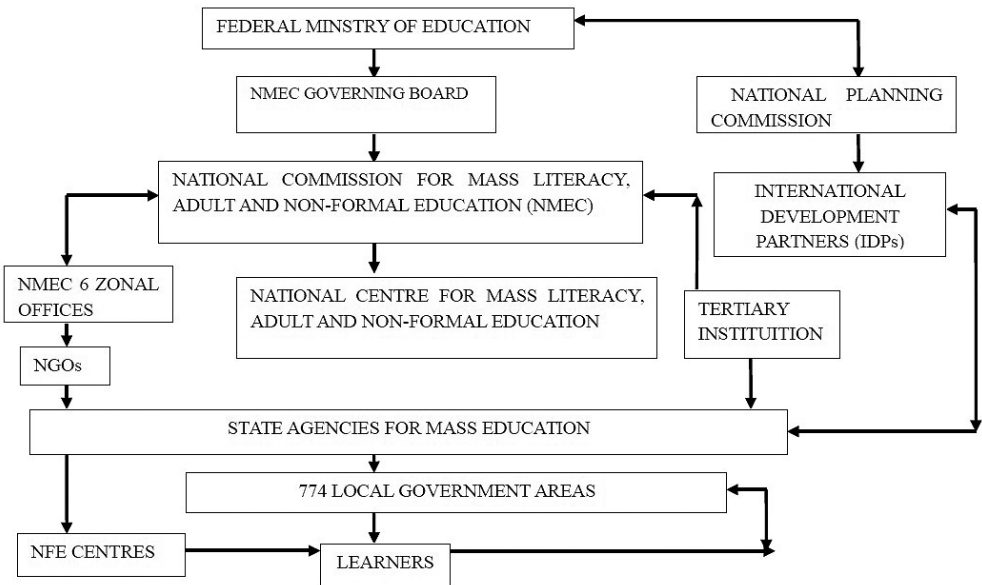


Figure 1: Institutional Structure of Mass Education in Nigeria (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010, p. 5).

to the zonal office (Aderinoye, 1997; NMEC & UNICEF, 2010). In the same vein, NGOs collaboratively work with the government to contribute to the promotion of ALE by embarking on sensitisations, providing data to the Commission and cooperating with international donor agencies for the promotion of ALE programmes (Aderinoye, 1997).

According to NMEC (2017), programmes operated by the Commission are structured to cover areas related to various forms of literacy education, continuing education and vocational education while focusing on an array of beneficiaries. These beneficiaries include adults who have never been to school or are above school age and cannot read, write and compute; those who left school before acquiring basic education due to various factors; persons who are already engaged in economic activities but require further learning to meet the needs of the ever-changing world of work; persons in need of rehabilitative education; vulnerable and constrained women; and adult nomads/migrants.

Recent developments and acceleration: Shifting temporalities?

In various global and local contexts, observable changes are occurring. We take ‘recent’ to cover mostly the first two decades of the 21st century. First, after a series of military interventions and consequent political instability, Nigeria established its fourth republic in 1999. Since then, Nigeria has been regarded as a *transitional democracy* with its attendant challenges (Mahmud, 2015). Second, in 2002, the democratic administration that had been inaugurated in 1999 resuscitated the open university. The National Open University of Nigeria primarily targeted individuals who wanted to *balance the temporal structures and tensions between work and learning*. This provided opportunity and accessibility for

various groups such as women, inmates and people in riverine areas (Temitayo, 2012). Third, the accelerated evolution of information and communication technology (ICT) has increased the consciousness and activities of globalisation in Nigeria. This growth is visible in the growing e-commerce industry, mobile phone users, internet penetration and social media subscribers (Agency Report, 2018; Orimobi, 2018). This *new temporal reality of interconnectivity* permeates all spheres of 21st-century daily life in Nigeria, including ALE.

Therefore, the 6th edition of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013) explicitly acknowledges “the tempo of development activities on-going in both global and local contexts” and that “fundamental changes in socio-economic and political structures wholly dictate the need for a change” (FRN, 2013, p. ii). The current ALE policy is thus informed by various global and local developmental frameworks. The latest policy document on ALE in Nigeria (NMEC, 2017) was informed, among others, by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the nation’s commitment to “eliminating mass illiteracy within the shortest possible time” (NMEC, 2017, p. iv). The NMEC and UNICEF (2010, p. iii) had stated that “aggressively addressing” a few issues is necessary for “a rapid scaling up of literacy programmes” for youth and adults. In other words, shifting temporalities and the consequent demands and challenges have manifestly determined current strategies, including flexibilisation, for ALE in Nigeria.

Flexibilisation of ALE: NMEC programmes as an example

Nigeria presently deals with the issues of “physical access, quality access and economic access and equity” (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010, p. v). The NMEC (2008, pp. 66–68) reports that the issue of distance and time is a major contributor to non-participation in ALE in Nigeria due to the unplanned scheme of work, distance from learning centres and inappropriate timing of lessons. It is acknowledged that delivering various ALE programmes across Nigeria cannot be uniform, and there is a need for temporal-spatial flexibilisation. Thus, ALE in Nigeria is conceived “as learner centred, flexible, democratic, and functionally oriented and covering a broad spectrum of activities” (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010, p. v).

As explicated earlier, the structure obtainable in Nigeria allows for multi-level and multi-dimensional coordination of ALE. Linkages/collaboration and public-private partnership as a strategy for implementing ALE programmes have been renewed (NMEC, 2017). The strategic decentralisation-partnership pattern has impacted delivery in Nigeria’s ALE programmes, and the NMEC and UNICEF (2010) claim that collaboration has led to the reaching of over 1 million learners and the establishment of at least 3 learning centres in all of the country’s 774 LG areas. According to the NMEC (2017), flexibility will be encouraged in every component of ALE. Hence, the following paragraphs are a summary of how the NMEC currently provides ALE for four major components.

Basic Literacy is equivalent to Primary 1–3 of the formal system and lasts between 6–9 (or 9–12) months and a total of 78 contact hours, translating to about 2 hours per week. The

curriculum is flexible (e.g. process or sequences of content), and the duration/schedule depends “on time that is available to the learner”. Modern learning approaches and materials can allow the programme to be completed in fewer months than expected (NMEC, 2017, p. 38).

Post Literacy has 12 subjects/courses (including Life Skills, Liberal Education, Women Education, Citizenship Education and Introduction to Computer Education), equivalent to Primary 4–6 of the formal system and lasts for 2–3 years. The curriculum is also as flexible in process and sequences of content as in basic literacy.

Continuing Education assumes the forms of remedial education, extramural studies and open and distance learning (ODL) in preparation for Junior School Certificate Examination, Secondary School Certificate Examination and professional examinations. It takes up to 12 or 24 months, with variations depending on the nature of the specific programme, weekly contact hours (NMEC, 2017, pp. 37–38) and individual learner’s capacity.

Vocational Education may last up to 12-24 months or more, depending on the trade or craft and as jointly agreed upon between the organisers and the learners. It consists of 18 subjects based on the National Vocational Qualification Framework. This framework classifies and recognises prior learning “acquired by individuals, irrespective of where and how the training or skill was acquired” (FRN, 2013, p. 18).

Therefore, some strategies for flexibilising ALE programmes in Nigeria include flexible duration/schedules, the use of an equivalency system that enables adult learners to mainstream into the formal education system at different levels and recognition of prior learning. The diversity of the prospective learners is considered “in terms of need/aspiration for survival, participation, protection and development with emphasis on their characteristics, psychology and environmental differences” (NMEC, 2017, p. 29). This diversity presupposes that ALE centres across the country are not uniform regarding schedules, programmes and technology. For instance, Nomadic Education and Integrated Quranic Education (i.e., combined Islamic religious and basic education) are provided, targeting the northern Muslims (FRN, 2013; NMEC & UNICEF, 2010) as both a content and time flexibilisation strategy to ensure that people are not left behind because of their ethnoreligious characteristics.

Nigeria is committed to building a literate environment. One of the strategies for achieving this is the “establishment of mobile libraries, rural libraries, reading rooms, and varied places to settle for reading and writing” as well as “collaborating with ICT providers” (NMEC, 2017, p. 12). The NMEC (2017) admittedly recognises that ICT facilitates “continuous learning ‘throughout their lifetime’ because both traditional and new media break ‘cost, time and space’ barriers” (p. 72). Such facilities would be in every community (FRN, 2013, p. 20). In the UNESCO (2014) training manual for NMEC facilitators, ICT is regarded as “the order of the day” (p. 171). The acknowledgement of this shifting temporality has informed the inclusion of training on the use of some common tools and applications for literacy programmes. The use of ODL approaches for ALE in Nigeria is

well recognised (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010; FRN, 2013; NMEC, 2017). Meanwhile, the NMEC's deployment of ODL in Nigeria is still limited to the use of mass media, particularly for literacy programmes.

The Literacy by Radio programme is being employed to provide literacy and numeracy skills to adult learners in 21 indigenous languages and English (as of 2010) "in order to reach as many non-literate people as possible and make them literate within a short period" (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010, p. iv). The Cuban method has been adopted, which is a blended learning approach that consists of a radio listening session and a face-to-face session. As recommended by Olatunji, Otefisan and Ajayi (2017), blended learning enables the learner to effectively combine work, learning and living responsibilities. However, chief among the challenges of the radio initiative is that support from state and local governments is still low (NMEC & UNICEF, 2010). Another challenge, as admitted by UNESCO (2014), is that many Nigerians may not know about the Literacy by Radio programmes. A viable solution to this problem is effective mobilisation and orientation. An online presence via a functional and user-friendly website is also significantly necessary for the NMEC's organisations and current operations but is still missing.

Germany

In this section, we outline the development and institutional structure of ALE in Germany and then examine examples of flexibilisation practices in *Volkshochschulen* (VHS).

History and institutional structure of ALE

The institutionalisation of ALE in Germany had its first big developmental leap in the 19th century. With the growing importance of education in modern society, the education of adults was institutionalised in different social contexts and communities such as bourgeois clubs, workers' federations (and trade unions), churches and business companies (Olbrich, 2001). In contradiction to school or tertiary education, ALE in Germany today is far less regulated by the state and is still connected to its diverse institutional roots. There is a broad variety of ALE providers, while the state plays a more coordinating role following the principle of subsidiarity. Furthermore, adult education is legally regulated mainly at the level of the 16 federal states (*Bundesländer*). Even if ALE laws generally focus on how ALE should be promoted and which providers are eligible for public funding, this situation contributes to the very heterogeneous landscape of ALE in Germany (Nuissl, 2018).

Nonetheless, there are some institutions that have a long tradition and play an important role in today's landscape of ALE, with presumably the best-known being VHS. With precursors in the late 19th century, many VHS were founded after WWI in 1918 and 1919, and still exist today (Nuissl, 2018). Presently, VHS are an omnipresent institution of ALE, with one in every larger municipality and in the more rural areas, where they may be spread out with multiple branches. As the last annual data report of VHS shows (Huntemann & Reichart, 2017, pp. 9–10), there are 899 VHS in total, with 594,000 courses, 6.6 million participations and 17.9 million hours taught. They employ about 4,000

pedagogical professionals who are responsible for the conception of the programmes, the organisation of courses and evaluations, while course instruction is mainly done by freelancers. In 2016, a total of 192,000 freelancers were teaching courses for VHS. Over half of the VHS have a municipality as the responsible body, one-third a registered association (*e.V.*), and some are organised as non-profit limited liability companies (*gGmbH*). Regardless of their legal form, their financing is usually a mix of three sources. In 2016, participation fees made up 37.9%, regular public funding constituted 36.5%, and funding from other sources (especially EU and federal funds) was 25.6%.

VHS traditionally offer a wide range of topics, from language courses to vocational education, and from basic education to yoga classes, that can be categorised in six programme areas. Table 1 shows the absolute number and relative proportion of courses, participants and hours taught for each of them in 2016. Health and language courses each made up about one-third of all courses and also of the participants. At the same time, over half of the hours taught at VHS in 2016 were in language courses, which had an above-average duration. This was also true for basic education courses leading to a formal degree, while the first three programme areas all showed below-average course durations.

Table 1: Programme areas of the VHS

Programme area	Courses	Hours taught	Participants
Politics, Society, Environment	36,748 (6.2%)	591,307 (3.3%)	516,926
Culture & Crafting	89,245 (15.0%)	1,555,373 (8.7%)	870,251
Health	197,394 (33.2%)	2,936,155 (16.4%)	2,336,793
Languages	202,14 (34.0%)	9,686,585 (54.1%)	2,303,676
Work & Occupation	51,237 (8.6%)	1,464,822 (8.2%)	427,007
Basic Edu. & Formal Qualification	17,566 (3.0%)	1,656,090 (9.3%)	150,588
Total	594.330	17.890.332	6.605.241

Source: Huntemann & Reichart, 2017, pp. 41–42.

Recent developments and acceleration: Shifting temporalities?

When we look for evidence on acceleration in Germany over the past two decades, we can first focus on technical acceleration, where the transport of people, goods and information has played an important role. The mobility of people in Germany can generally be considered high, and the latest mobility report shows an overall mobility rate of 85% (BMVI, 2018). While the number of journeys per person and day has stayed relatively stable since 2002, the time needed for them has slightly declined while the distance covered has increased (BMVI, 2018). Furthermore, the necessity for mobility has been diminished by a second development. E-commerce has developed tremendously over the past two decades, with sales rising from €1.1 to €53.6 billion between 1999 and 2018 (Handelsverband Deutschland, 2018), leading to a massive increase in goods sent. These developments

are tightly connected to the development of Internet usage in Germany. Between 1997 and 2017, the percentage of Internet users rose from 6.5% to 89.9%, and at least 72% are presently daily users (ARD & ZDF, 2017). Mobile Internet usage rose from 20% of Internet users to 68% of Internet users between 2011 and 2016 (Koch & Frees, 2016). This technological innovation alone has provoked a dramatic change in communication and interaction in both work and private life, including a temporal flexibilisation of these processes¹, which has contributed to a substantially altered perception and usage of time in everyday practices.

Second, accelerated social change and higher contingencies could be analysed as counterparts to processes of flexibilisation. In Germany, the labour market reforms at the beginning of the century aimed at an increased ‘flexibility’ for companies, employees and job-seekers. While the first should be enabled to adapt to changes in the markets more quickly with flexible forms of employment (e.g. subcontracted temporary employment), the latter had to develop more flexible career strategies and give up the idea of a lifelong occupation. This development not only fundamentally changed the labour market but also had a tremendous impact on lifelong learning (Dobischat, 2004). Even the current proliferation of right-wing populism and restorative positions throughout Europe could be discussed as symptoms of and reactions to a longing for security that is not threatened by migration but by the contingencies of late modernity.

Third, the increased pace of life is related to the fear of missing out and the pressure to adapt, which makes the connection to adult education obvious as it aims to facilitate cultural participation and social integration. Hence, we can recently see substantial discourse on and an intensified institutionalisation of educational guidance (Schiersmann & Remmele, 2004). The multitude of options for ALE makes it challenging to find the ‘right’ one. Yet, while ALE can be a way to address the need for quick adaptation and the fear of missing out, it also competes with an increasing number of alternative options of time use. This demands higher flexibility by ALE providers (e.g. time slots or course duration). Simultaneously, the challenge of coping with time became a prominent topic for ALE itself. Courses on time-management boomed after the 2000s, while in recent years, there has been a trend for courses on anti-stress, awareness and techniques of “deceleration” (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, 2014).

Flexibilisation of ALE: VHS as an example

Looking for the aspect of technical acceleration, we could raise the question of how VHS adapted to the importance of the Internet and web-based learning scenarios. Surprisingly, only in 2015 did the national association of VHS issue its ICT-strategy paper, “extended learning worlds” (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband, 2015). Though there was a use of web-based learning scenarios in many VHS before, this seems quite late for a common strategy, considering that a large market for web-based learning had already developed

1 E.g. short-term mutual synchronisation of appointments via smartphone instead of long-term fixed appointments.

at that time. The focus on “extending” the existing learning world relates to VHS being a very well-established provider, with widespread offline “learning worlds”. Combining local accessibility with online offerings can thus be seen as a strategy to react in a most flexible way to learners’ demands.

From the perspective of a structural flexibilisation of the offerings, the growing importance of “Just-in-Time” and “On-Demand-Courses” stands out. This trend showed up for the first time at the turn of the century (Nahrstedt, Brinkmann, & Kadel, 1997). Today, many VHS offer potentially interesting courses that are then only carried out when a minimum number of learners register. In addition, VHS offer to arrange custom courses especially tailored to the needs of (especially organisations) clients. In 2016, these made up at least 9% of the total hours taught (Huntemann & Reichart, 2017, p. 21).

At the same time, a quick reaction to such demands has become more important as some VHS offer courses on demand within 72 hours. This just-in-time delivery of custom courses relies on the specific structure of the VHS, especially the large networks of freelancing teachers and also their extensive organisational and material capabilities. Yet the time organisation of courses remains quite stable. Weekly courses are still the most common form (58.6%), though their proportion is declining in favour of courses that take place more than once a week (Huntemann & Reichart, 2017). A division into two main forms of time organisation regarding the topic areas is emerging: courses with longer duration or more frequent classes, especially for language courses or integration courses; and shorter or one-time courses in political education (nearly 25% one-day events), vocational education (16% one-day events) and cultural education (12% weekend events). These are areas where ALE is orientated towards the needs of learners to reflect on current societal developments, to provide certain competencies or to follow personal learning interests, and the time organisation seems to address these needs with greater flexibility.

COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

The theory of acceleration turns out to be an insightful heuristic for the comparison between ALE in Nigeria and Germany. Although we are comparing two countries that may appear quite different in their history, culture, political system and economics, various indicators of shifting temporalities are observable in both countries, and we can find evidence on how they affect ALE. This observation led us to focus on flexibilisation as one specific form in which ALE may react (or better relate) to social acceleration. Even though we can show that flexibilisation surely plays an important role for both Nigerian and German ALE, it is the differences in its specific forms that demonstrate the value of a comparative research approach.

The use of ICT for learning by blending, embedding and extending offline and online learning worlds is a flexibilisation strategy obtainable in both countries, though to varying degrees and with different preferred media. For example, Literacy by Radio is of great importance in Nigeria. This may relate to the mentioned strategic decentralisation

partnerships that also have a large influence on ALE delivery. Both technical and organisational measures ensure that as many people as possible can be reached by the educational offers and that easy accessibility is realised. This achieves flexibilisation in the spatial and temporal dimensions as a programme such as Literacy by Radio enables people to learn literally *en passant*. In Germany, web-based learning plays an important role for VHS, especially in blended learning scenarios. As VHS already have widespread coverage and good accessibility because they are located in every larger community, ICT-related flexibilisation strategies seek to use this asset and combine it with the temporal flexibility gained by online learning, and more recently, with an online-network for VHS organisations, professionals and learners (cf. <https://www.vhs.cloud/>).

We can also find differences in the flexibilisation of the time-related organisation of courses. The phenomenon of just-in-time delivery and on-demand courses has not yet received attention in Nigeria, but the duration and schedules of programmes are usually determined (to a great extent) by the temporal tensions and capacities of individual learners. This dynamic could be related to differences in the perception of target groups. While the NMEC's target groups for its various programmes are formed by individuals, VHS also target organisations and institutional clients. Only on this basis is the fairly high rate of custom courses coming about. For individual learners, there is still a dominating time regime in the form of the weekly course, although we pointed out changes in the direction of shorter courses in specific topic areas in Germany.

These differences in the delivery strategies and organisation of courses strongly relate to the diverse contents of ALE and the overarching societal needs in both countries. In Nigeria, basic education is the biggest need of the people, and flexibilisation is important for providing the broadest accessibility due to the challenges of an accelerating society. In contrast, in German VHS, basic education is the least demanded topic area. In its differentiated education system, ALE with its many providers and course offerings tries to cover the increasingly diverse and varying individual learning interests in a "society of singularities" (Reckwitz, 2017). This intensified orientation towards individual demands instead of societal needs also has to be discussed critically as it is not a mere reaction but also contributes to the multiplication of possibilities of how to spend one's time and thus to an overall increase in the pace of life.

CONCLUSION

Currently, critical phenomena from the range of acceleration scenarios and flexibilisation described above are becoming a critical focus of pedagogic learning theories. Across dimensions, acceleration takes on a twofold function both as a model and a goal; objects, people, information, matter and life – and eventually thinking and learning – are accelerated (Göhlich & Zirfas, 2007, p. 116). Therefore, the answer to our question on whether the concept of Lifelong Learning is the *solution* or rather *part of the problem* of social acceleration, can't take the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'. The concept of Lifelong

Learning remains highly ambivalent, even paradoxical, and creates sometimes contradictory relations. Our criticism focuses on the one-sided goal of lifelong learning by which learning is monopolised for accelerated progress in response to the dynamics of societies and social change (Rosa, 2013) worldwide and is understood merely as an indispensable investment in the future.

The accelerative dynamics specifically use the future to function as an unfinished draft requiring continuous, flexible relearning (lifelong and life-wide). The temporal phenomena of a perceived ever-shrinking present, dynamics and the pressure to change (e.g. by learning) are no longer limited to individual changes, to a one-after-the-other or to continuous reshaping. Rather, they encompass radical reconstruction and profound transformation. The ensuing destabilisation of both individual conditions of life and collective orientation principles – the challenge of discontinuous continuities – is also growing increasingly important for the practice of ALE.

On the other hand, the potential of the concept of Lifelong Learning is to underline the importance of strengthening collective structures (regulations, programmes such as NMEC in Nigeria, organisations such as VHS in Germany, etc.). These collective structures promote a socially accepted learning-time culture in which individual educational biographies can be perceived as a continuous identity negotiation between de-standardised life-courses (Rosa, 2013).

The flexibilisation of ALE was shown as a relational and ambivalent aspect of social acceleration opening up both opportunities and threads. It is the “rhythms of lifelong learning, between continuity and discontinuity”, what we defined as flexibility and what Alhadeff-Jones describes as “a privileged resource to conceive the organization of the temporal complexity” (Alhadeff-Jones, 2017, p. 121). Thus, it can function as an instrument to cope with the challenges of recent temporal shifts and can contribute even more to social acceleration. Yet flexibilisation also has the potential to create different learning forms, spaces and especially times that could support temporal counter-movements of ‘deceleration’. To investigate these possible effects, more research on how flexibilised forms of ALE affect the learning process of adults is urgently needed.

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RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING: POLICY ANALYSIS FROM DENMARK AND INDIA

ABSTRACT

This comparative study based on policy documents and statistical data analyses how the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning policy designs has developed in two contrasting contexts (cases), Denmark and India, using the conceptual formulations of Ehlers' Box Model (2005), the Integrated Implementation Model (Winter, 2012), and Policy Instruments (Vedung, 1998). As requirements for effective policy implementation, the authors argue for the involvement of all stakeholders, ownership and accountability by stakeholders leading to effectiveness in the short run and policy evolution in the long run, and the use of an appropriate mix of policy instruments.

Keywords: *recognition/validation/accreditation of prior learning, employability, inclusion, Denmark, India*

PRIZNAVANJE PREDHODNO PRIDOBLENIH ZNANJ: ANALIZA DANSKEGA IN INDIJSKEGA PRISTOPA - POVZETEK

Primerjalna študija temelji na analizi dokumentov o politiki priznavanja predhodno pridobljenih znanj ter statističnih podatkih o rabi in izvedbi te politike v dveh različnih kontekstih (primerih): na Danskem in v Indiji. Uporabljene so pojmovne formulacije Ehlersovega modela (2005), modela integriranega izvajanja (Winter, 2012) in instrumentov politike (Vedung, 1998). Pogoji za učinkovito izvajanje politike so vključenost vseh nosilcev interesov, prizadevanja in odgovornost nosilcev interesov, ki kratkoročno vodijo do učinkovitosti in dolgoročno do razvoja politike, ter raba primerne kombinacije instrumentov politike.

Ključne besede: *priznavanje predhodno pridobljenih znanj, zaposljivost, vključevanje, Danska, Indija*

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INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Organisation (ILO),¹ the European Union (EU), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have been pushing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)² through guidelines for the development of national RPL policies (ILO, 2004; European Council, 2012; UNESCO, 2012). RPL was promoted as a social policy tool in 1972 to create “learning opportunities for the under-privileged” (UNESCO, 1972, p. 41). In 1995 the European Commission (EC) portrayed it as an economic policy tool for promoting employability for all (EC, 1995). Several countries have adopted RPL since it is regarded as a win-win policy for all stakeholders: adults seeking RPL, providers offering RPL, employers needing certified human resources, unions aligned with the interests of any of these stakeholders, and the state, which is responsible for citizen welfare and the economy.

The paper is divided into eight sections. Section 1 explains why RPL has become a policy tool for the development of employability and formulates a research question. The conceptual framework is described in Sections 2 and 3 with formulations by Ehlers (2005) about three ideal types of RPL policy design, and by Winter (2012) about a general model for policy implementation. A description of supplementary conceptualisations of administrative principles by Winter and Nielsen (2010) in *Market, Hierarchy and Network*, and policy instruments by Vedung (1998) in *Carrots, Sticks and Sermons* is included. In Section 4, RPL is discussed as a policy design for employment policy. Section 5 and 6 demonstrate the development of national policy designs in Denmark and India. A comparison and discussion of RPL in Denmark and India are included in Section 7, and Section 8 comprises the conclusion. The methodology includes case studies of Denmark and India using policy documents and statistical data, followed by the comparison of the two cases. Ehlers’ Box Model, the Integrated Implementation Model and Policy Instruments are used as conceptual formulations.

RPL AS A POLICY TOOL FOR EMPLOYABILITY

Lack of employability is a major global challenge leading to various socio-economic problems and political unrest. The high number of unemployed people, youth population in NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), immigrants and refugees, and those employed in the informal (unorganised) sector need pathways for livelihood and opportunities for further economic growth (Box 1). Marginalised populations are excluded from the mainstream development process and their cultural identity is often at risk because their knowledge, skills and competencies are rooted in indigenous cultures comprising the sustainable component of their identity. Those who migrate from one country to another might possess knowledge, skills and competencies that are relevant

1 Led by social partners.

2 In this article, recognition, validation or accreditation of prior learning are considered to be synonymous policy terms and RPL is used as a common term to represent all of them.

but not recognised in destination countries. Their knowledge, skills and competencies gained informally or non-formally, equipping them for better opportunities of livelihood and inclusion, cannot be materialised effectively without formal certification. Their integration in the mainstream development process becomes difficult and they become social costs rather than productive human resources. While at the macro level, this accentuates the skills gap, hampers productivity and reduces overall gross domestic product (GDP), at the micro level, it hinders the process of inclusion of individuals in society by keeping their earnings low, limiting their rights, and obstructing their social inclusion.

Estimation of prior learning can boost economic growth, pull many out of socio-economic problems, enhance their social integration, and decrease some of the possibilities for political unrest. Apart from that, dynamic labour markets that render much of the existing knowledge, skills and competencies obsolete and frequently create the need for new ones also demand the constant upgrading and recognition of learning in all kinds of settings as and when the demand for them arises.

Box 1: Statistics regarding lack of employability

- 5.6% (192 million) of the global population is unemployed (2018)
- 7.3% of the population in the EU is unemployed (2018)
- 10% males and 34% females (15–24 years) globally are neither in employment, education or training (NEET) (2017)
- 53% of South Asian females are in the NEET category (2018)
- 17.2% (15.8 million) amounting to one fifth of Young Europeans (15–34 years) are in the NEET category (2017)
- 258 million people are immigrants and 25.4 million people are refugees across the globe (2017)
- 85% of refugees live in low- and middle-income countries outside of Europe (2018)
- 22 million immigrants lived in Europe in 2017
- More than 90% of the labour force in Micro and Small Enterprises and more than half of the global labour force is employed in the informal/unorganised sector with limited workplace rights and facilities (2018).

Sources: Eurostat, 2018a, 2018b; ILO, 2018a, p. 2; 2018b; 2018c; 2018d; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2018.

Owing to the huge skill gap in the labour market and poor learning outcomes from education systems all over the world, RPL appears as a quick solution for promoting employability. It can provide better career opportunities, motivate the beneficiaries towards learning more, promote mobility, enhance inclusion and increase productivity. Keeping in mind the relevance of contextual factors, in this paper, RPL is analysed as a policy tool for promoting employability in two contexts, Denmark and India. The comparison is based on the question: *How have RPL policy designs been developed and implemented in different contexts?*

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Winter's (2012) Integrated Implementation Model and Ehlers' (2005) formulation of three ideal types of RPL policy design provide a conceptual framework for understanding the development and implementation of both top-down and bottom-up RPL policies in different contexts. Understanding how a multi-staged policy process (in this case, RPL) might achieve a certain goal (in this case, the promotion of employability), it is important to analyse the stages of the policy process one by one.

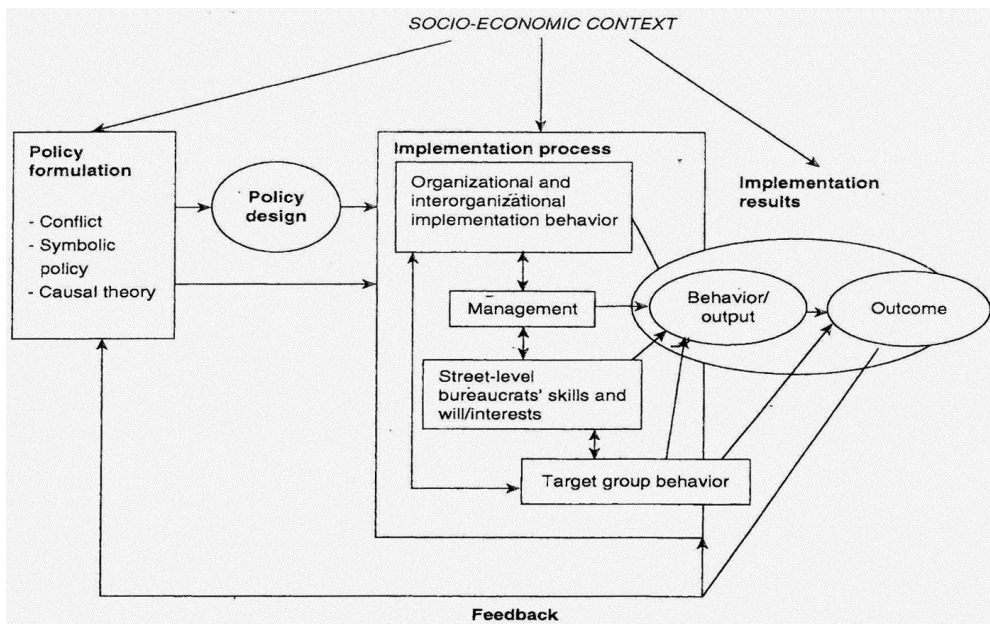


Figure 1: The Integrated Implementation Model

Source: Winter, 2012.

As evident from Figure 1, the implementation process comprises of five different variables: 1) policy design, 2) organisational and inter-organisational behaviour, 3) management behaviour, 4) street-level bureaucrat behaviour and 5) target group behaviour (Winter, 2012, p. 258). According to Winter's model, the policy formulation can be 1) characterised by conflict among stakeholders, 2) based upon a theory of causality or 3) symbolic (implying pretention of action rather than real action).

At the stage of designing a policy, the structure and functional relationships are chalked out, for instance, who will do what, when, and how. Ehlers (2005) states that even though RPL policy designs may differ because of contextual factors (culture, history, past policy choices, and the like), three *ideal types* can be identified: the market-led, the state-led and the partner-led type (Ehlers, 2005, pp. 505–511).

In the *market-led ideal type*, non-profit associations (funded by competing, self-governing providers) formulate and implement the RPL policy design. Even though the state might provide basic policy guidelines, no public subsidies or public monitoring might be available. RPL is a product in the market that individuals can buy from providers if it benefits them and is affordable. The state, unions and employers are not involved or are negligibly involved. Thus, RPL is not a state prerogative. The RPL policy designs that took shape in the US are market-led and have since 1974 been regulated by a non-public institution, CAEL (Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning). In the UK, government policy guidelines similarly act as the basis for RPL policy designs. RPL is defined as “identification by an awarding organisation of any learning undertaken, and/or attainment, by a learner” (Ofqual, 2018, p. 70). This implies that self-governing providers formulate and implement RPL policy designs in the UK.

The core in the *state-led ideal type* is the state which formulates, implements and evaluates RPL policies. RPL is conceptualised as a right for citizens or at least manifested as a provision for citizen welfare, and the duty of the state. Market and social partners have limited influence while the state pays all major costs and monitors policy implementation. For instance, education providers, unions and employers have limited influence on RPL policy formulation and implementation in France. The Validation of Acquired Experience (VAE) (or RPL) is the citizens’ right and the state’s duty.

Tripartite negotiations among the state and social partners regarding who gets and pays what, when and how comprise the core in the *partner-led ideal type*. The stakeholders pay the costs directly or indirectly and benefit from RPL. Policy designs can be changed over time as they are compromises among stakeholders. German-speaking countries and Nordic countries have partner-led policy designs built upon tripartite negotiations. For instance, methods and tools for *Realkompetanse* in Norway were developed in a huge state-funded project between 1998 and 2002, engaging stakeholders from private, public, and voluntary sectors. The Norwegian RPL reform was based on the experiences gained during the project.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRINCIPLES AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Supplementary conceptualisations are relevant for the comparison of RPL policy designs. Winter and Nielsen (2010) describe three administrative principles³ that influence all variables: *market*, *hierarchy* and *network*. These principles are usually developed/rooted over time in a particular context and are difficult to change. The market principle in such a context is led by actors aiming at profit-optimisation in the long-run for the employers and adult learning providers. The policy designs are implemented on the basis of whether there is a demand in the market for a particular outcome and someone (adult learners or employers) is ready to pay for it. The administrative principle of hierarchy is a top-down approach in which the state develops a policy design and all stakeholders have to follow

3 Ways in which the administration of the policy implementation process is organised in a particular context.

the orders of the state or else be penalised. The network administrative principle characterises a bottom-up approach and is used in contexts where policy decisions are usually reached by consensus. The implementation of the network principle requires strong social capital and cultural norms that support the implementation of all policy decisions once they are taken. Using this principle for implementation implies that a consensus is reached and trade-offs are negotiated among different stakeholders, who then decide to implement a policy motivated by whatever outcomes they have negotiated for themselves.

The administrative principles identified by Winter and Nielsen (2010) appear as corresponding to Ehlers ideal types (2005) but they refer to different phases of the policy process. Winter and Niensens' (2010) descriptions could explain why a particular type of policy design as per Ehlers' (2005) conceptualisation find (do not find) less or more resistance in a given context during implementation, despite being logical or beneficial for the stakeholders. Problems in the execution of policy implementation by, for example, implementation managers or street-level bureaucrats⁴ can lead to the ineffectiveness or the failure of policies. For instance, hiring untrained assessors (street-level bureaucrats in Figure 1) to conduct RPL assessments might ruin the policy outcomes since the assessment of RPL requires specialised professional competencies to understand the complexities of human learning and specify what has been learnt in informal and non-formal settings. Thus, when administrative principles do not support the policy design, policy change might be obstructed due to path dependency. This implies that once an administrative principle becomes deeply rooted (a path is chosen) in a context, changing it might incur huge, multiple costs owing to the change required in the structured, non-structured institutions, values, beliefs, culture and the like that develop around it. Individual human behaviour (of the professionals and the target group) is an important factor that makes path dependency concrete. Moreover, inducing changes in the administrative principles for one policy might make policies incoherent at large and create confusion or failure to ensure the smooth flow of actions and impact among stakeholders.

However, this does not imply that change is impossible. Policy designs could vary across policies, and all policies in a given context do not necessarily follow a similar design, unlike administrative principles. For instance, even though the Indian policy design for RPL is state-led, that is not necessarily the case for other Indian policies, whereas the administrative principle remains hierarchical. Furthermore, policy designs extend beyond implementation and include evaluation and further input for formulation and policy change. In addition, changes in the context provide a critical juncture or a window of exceptional opportunity or conjuncture (a situation in favour of change) that can be used by decision makers to introduce reforms or radical changes in policies with minimum resistance (Cerna, 2013, p. 4). Moreover, changes can also occur due to a change in the *advocacy coalition* (alignment of influential stakeholders along a certain approach or perspective) emanating from a window of opportunity or independently (Sabatier, 1998, p. 129, 139;

4 In the case of RPL, street-level bureaucrats are the staff who assess the applicants.

Gornitzka, Kogan, & Amaral, 2005). Sometimes, policy changes are merely incremental, induce continuity and lead to building-up of policy, for instance, *Realkompetence* in Denmark. On the contrary, aiming at discontinuity through incremental changes can lead to gradual transformations in the long run while abrupt changes can lead to policy replacement.

The implementation of a particular policy design using a particular administrative principle embedded in a certain context is done by utilising a combination of *policy instruments*. Vedung (1998) has identified three policy implementation instruments: *carrots, sticks and sermons*. While carrots imply gains (economic or otherwise), sticks imply punishment, and sermons imply information, awareness and value-based appeals regarding why a certain policy should be implemented (Vedung, 1998). The conceptualisations by Ehlers (2005), Winter and Nielsen (2010), Winter (2012) and Vedung (1998) are used to analyse and compare the contrasting RPL policy designs in Denmark (partner-led) and India (state-led), providing adequate scope for testing the considerations embedded in the conceptualisations. The market-led type is not used for comparison but for reference and reflections because of the authors' limited knowledge about the contexts with market-led policy designs.

RPL POLICY AND THE PROMOTION OF EMPLOYABILITY

Popular definitions of public policy, such as *policy refers to what a government decides to do or not to do* (Lineberry, 1977), are becoming less relevant with the increasing participation of stakeholders. In Nordic countries, it is not really up to the state to take policy decisions on its own. Furthermore, the influence of transnational actors at different stages is sometimes more relevant than the influence of governments. Thus, at least in the case of RPL, a policy is public, owing to the recipients or the target group influenced by the policy rather than who decides, implements, or evaluates it.

Learning occurs in various settings: formal, non-formal and informal; it is a constant, lifelong and life-wide process. The formal recognition of all types of learning outcomes achieved at different stages in life and in different settings adds to the description of an individual's capabilities to do (or not do) a particular task. It helps to identify whether an individual would fit the requirements of a particular job. In labour markets marred by a skills gap, it even becomes critical to identify all the skills and competencies an individual has in order to address skill mismatch. Moreover, the estimation and recognition of an individual's learning outcomes enables that person to make informed choices regarding what skills and competencies are lacking and should be acquired for her/him to access the employment opportunities available in the labour market.

Formal certification of individual learning outcomes can also provide her/him with alternative opportunities to access the formal education system on the basis of learning outcomes achieved outside it, in non-formal or informal settings. This may create pathways for the social inclusion of individuals who did not have access to formal education channels or organised sector employment opportunities in the labour market.

Thus, RPL is a policy tool in favour of employability on the job market as well as access to formal learning. It is also known as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (in the US), Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (in Canada), *Realkompetence* (in the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)), and Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (in the EC). The EU recognises accreditation, certification, recognition, assessment (and the like) of learning outcomes in non-formal and informal settings as validation of prior learning.

In most countries, the procedure for RPL is defined under a common framework or RPL Policy formulated by the state, market and/or social partners. The most generalised steps include: 1) application by the individual to the relevant authority for the recognition of knowledge/skills/competencies that need to be formally recognised; 2) an evaluation of the knowledge/skills/competencies of the applicant by the relevant authority according to a uniform qualification framework defined or recognised under the policy framework in a given context; 3) award of formal certification from the competent authority; and 4) recognition of the certificate by an employer/education provider and access to the labour market and/or formal education on the basis of that certificate.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL RPL POLICY DESIGNS IN DENMARK AND INDIA

The Danish Case

Denmark is a small (the current population is 5.6 million), high income country with negligible informal economy (apart from the exchange of services mainly in rural areas (black economy) and certain micro-level economic activities often by second generation immigrants). Danish society is organised into numerous associations about almost everything. Adults with similar interests engage with one or even multiple associations. Policy decisions are taken primarily through consensus among stakeholders rather than by a majority vote unlike in many democracies. Much consensus is reached through *tripartite negotiations* among the state, employers and unions (organised as associations). Parliamentary Committees interact with respective Ministers since it is possible to establish minority governments. Policies formulated by Parliamentary Committees ensure that policies are developed with a long-term perspective rather than with short-term populist considerations. Changes in governments do not lead to abrupt policy changes even though changes in strategies are introduced owing to the difference in the way each government works. Thus, negotiations related to a particular policy area might go on for decades until a mature system is achieved and all stakeholders gain enough to form a consensus. A wide variation or contrasting differences among stakeholders' interests may lead to rather vague policy designs with limited regulations (Ehlers, 2005). The policies are actually often open for interpretation by each stakeholder (micro-politics) so that consensus can be reached during the implementation process (see Figure 1). Even though this leads to the introduction of experimental policy designs or the formulation of policies according to contextual dynamics, implementation problems remain and take time to get resolved.

The RPL policy in Denmark is a success. It aims at providing opportunities to people for further education to make them more employable, enhance their income opportunities, and promote equality in the society in the long run. An alternative focus could have been provisions with a direct focus on labour market needs rather than further education (like in Finland) but the stakeholders in Denmark could not reach a consensus regarding this (Nordiska ..., 2003, pp. 63–64). The policy is based on the assessment of learning in all types of settings: formal, non-formal and informal. This is similar to RPL policies in other Nordic countries but different from the EU approach which does not include recognition of learning in formal settings⁵ (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2003; EC, 2012). The Danish policy includes provisions for an assessment of *Realkompetence* provided at each preceding NQF (National Qualification Framework) level at each successive NQF level. With limited regulations (sticks), much of the policy implementation depends upon strong social capital (sermons) and the will of stakeholders motivated by long-term incentives (carrots) to support policy decisions.

It took decades to develop a functional policy design. In 1984, the Danish Parliament proposed a 10-points programme on the education and training of adults. Apart from other provisions, the programme proposed that all adults should have the right to get credits for their *Real Knowledge* (competencies) – irrespective of how they gained it (Folketinget, 1984). As per Danish regulations, the Danish government was free to take (or not take) action on the proposed programme since the programme lacked the status of an act or law. The 1984–2004 period was characterised by tripartite negotiations among the state and the social partners. A consensus to implement RPL in vocational education was achieved and in 2007 an act made it mandatory for all educational providers to offer RPL (Ehlers, 2005).

The influence of the NCM and the EU can be seen on the Danish act on *Realkompetence* that introduced the first full-fledged policy on RPL, thirty-five years after the UNESCO recommendation that pushed RPL onto the international policy agenda! The recommendations by the NCM (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2001, 2003) and the EU's standardised and integrated policy on Validation of Prior Learning for all member states under its Education and Training Strategy 2010 (Undervisningsministeriet, 2004) are reflected in the policy design (Ehlers, 2013). Apart from that, the Copenhagen Declaration on increased cooperation in European Vocational Education and Training (2002), the Maastricht Communiqué on Cooperation in European Vocational Education and Training (2004), the Council Recommendation in 2012 for the mandatory formulation of an RPL policy in each member state by 2018, and policy recommendations to cope with implementation challenges in member states in 2010, 2015 and 2016, all comprise the EU's RPL policy and have influenced the Danish policy as shown by annual Danish Country Reports to the EU regarding policy compliance (Ehlers 2013; Cedefop, 2019).

The current RPL policy design has four primary stakeholders who are engaged in micro-politics with each other. These stakeholders and their stakes (time and money) are presented in Table 1.

5 In EU policies, formal learning is integrated into the pan-European credit transfer system and mobility policy.

Table 1: Stakeholders and Stakes in RPL in Denmark

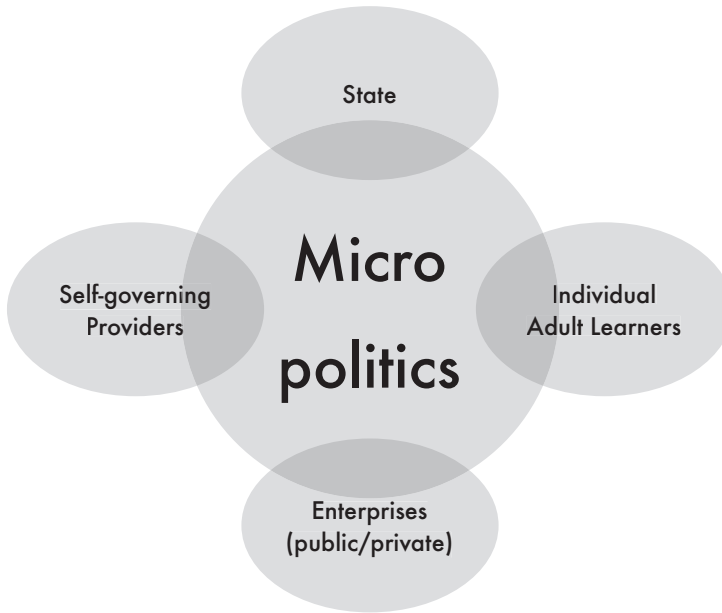
Stakeholder	Description	Stake (Reason for Micro-Politics)	Stand
State	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funds the self-governing providers of adult learning on the basis of ECTS points^{<=>} earned by individual adult learners; 2. Funds the education of individual learners through formal channels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RPL saves costs since learners can gain additional ECTS while the state has to pay less to providers, and individuals get paid by employers or associations; 2. RPL saves time (resource) since the adult learner is back on the labour market in a very short time. 	Supports RPL.
Individual learners seeking RPL (over 25-year-olds)	Paid by employers, associations, or self-funded.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Want to achieve better career opportunities, status and higher income; 2. Want to save time and work rather than gain formal education. 	Support RPL.
Enterprises (public and private)	Supported by employer organisations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get certified human resources; 2. Save their own time and costs for assessing human resources; 3. Get the possibility to enhance employee satisfaction by illustrating that learning occurs at the workplace and not only through formal education channels. 	Support RPL.
Self-governing providers of formal learning and RPL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paid by the state based on the total ECTS points they manage to 'sell'; 2. They are profit-optimisers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective implementation of RPL threatens their 'monopoly' as providers of adult learning; 2. Each time RPL is done, they lose an opportunity for 'selling' ECTS points and therefore funding possibilities. 3. RPL requires special training for the assessors; 4. Heads of provider institutions may not be willing to invest time and resources for the implementation of RPL. 	<p>Oppose RPL. They demand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. compensation for the loss of funding possibilities due to RPL; 2. additional funding to cover assessment costs.

Source: Created by the authors.

Thus, despite a well-negotiated policy design, implementation challenges are a reality.

All primary stakeholders are engaged in micro-politics with each other while the providers demand more funds (since they are profit-optimisers) and negotiations about who should pay the costs continue, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Micro politics among stakeholders in Denmark



Source: Created by the authors.

A national evaluation (2010) argued for detailed provisions to ensure effective RPL in case the providers failed to deliver quality, advocated economic incentives to minimise the resistance of providers by accepting their demands for more funds, and recommended awareness creation regarding RPL in order to ensure effective implementation (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2010).

The Indian case

India is characterised by a massive population, widespread poverty and resulting socio-economic problems, high unemployment, huge skill-gap, large informal sector, and sizeable number of non-literates and child labourers (Box 2). The high rate of school dropouts, limited access to higher education and vocational training, complemented by lack of adequate resources, infrastructure, and political will make learning in informal and non-formal settings necessary for the livelihood of millions. Adults without formal education work in the informal sector and struggle with exploitative social structures (like

the caste system) that also have occupational connotations.⁶ They have knowledge and skills to earn a livelihood but a lack of formal certification forces them to survive at minimum levels of income and career possibilities. At the same time, traditional knowledge and skills that also provide identity to millions of people are on the verge of extinction due to lack of formal channels for imparting them to future generations. In a converging global economy, RPL is not only relevant to equip the working age population with adequate certification to find jobs but also for creating comparative advantage in areas of knowledge exclusive to traditional Indian culture. Competing in the international market requires not only lifelong learning but also the constant recognition of that learning. RPL is thus a relevant tool for addressing socio-economic challenges, promoting inclusive development and making a large part of the population employable.

Box 2: Statistics from India

- 1.3 billion population (2018)
- 4.6% (62.7 million people) live in extreme poverty without basic necessities
- 3.5% unemployment rate (18.6 million people) (2018)
- 81.1% employment in informal sector (2018) with limited or negligible rights and inappropriate working conditions
- 287 million non-literates (37% or more than one third of the global non-literates) (2011 Census)
- 10.1 million child labourers (2011 Census) with limited possibilities for formal education
- 1% of the people own 73% of the wealth (2018)

Sources: Government of India (GoI), 2011; ILO, 2018a, p. 21, 129; Oxfam, 2018.

RPL is included in the skill development policy and aims at promoting 1) social inclusion, 2) employability, and 3) more human resources in the Indian labour market to cater to global requirements for skilled labour. It follows a state-led policy design (since 2008) owing to the hierarchy in India where the government makes the policy and bureaucracy implements it. Only informal learning is recognised, and monetary awards are provided by the state to various stakeholders. Table 2 shows the milestones of RPL policy development in India.

The influence of the ILO is evident from Indian policy documents (based on terminology and provisions) and the ILO's RPL reports for India (Ummat, 2013; ILO, 2014; GoI, 2009; MSDE, 2015, 2017). The ILO has been doing a policy analysis of Indian initiatives and suggesting reforms based on best practices (ILO, 2014, pp. 15–18). It has highlighted that Indian initiatives were fragmented and even though they exceeded their target in numbers, they were ineffective (in terms of quality) between 2008 and 2013 (Ummat, 2013, pp. 2–3).

⁶ The caste system (social stratification) in India has been associated with people's professional identity for centuries and the nomenclature for many castes/social groups emanates from certain traditional professions/jobs.

Table 2: Timeline of RPL Policy Initiatives in India

Year	Programme	Source Ministry	Focus of the Initiative
2008	Part of Skills Development Initiative Scheme, Modular Employable Skills	Ministry of Labour and Employment	<p>Launching RPL:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on skills; 2. Only informal (experiential) learning included; 3. Aimed at enhancing employability, promoting social inclusion and adding up to the country's human resource; 4. Offered: a) better employment and formal education possibilities to applicants; b) certified human resources to employers saving their assessment costs; c) reimbursement of assessment costs to providers.
2012	RPL linked to National Vocational Education Qualification Framework	Ministry of Human Resource and Development (ministry responsible for education)	Standardisation of prior learning to establish equivalency between formal learning certification and certification from RPL.
2013	Skill Knowledge Provider Scheme	Ministry of Human Resource and Development	Direct pathway provided from informal learning to formal education based on assessment by linking it to offers for further formal education.
2013	Skill Training Assessment and Reward Scheme	Ministry of Finance	Monetary award to applicants for getting their skills recognised.
2014	Initiative under the National Institute of Open Schooling	Ministry of Human Resource and Development	Assessment of the prior learning of dropouts from the formal system by accepting different types of evidence like pictures, reports from supervisors, videos and the like.
2015	Guidelines on Recognition of Prior Learning Under the Prime Minister Skill Development Scheme	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidated policy on RPL including existing provisions but with more weightage to actors from the market. 2. Highlighting the social value of RPL by providing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) recognition to traditional job profiles to provide social prestige to selected traditional practices for livelihood and formal recognition to their contribution to national income; b) recognition to informal learning models where no alternative formal models exist to conserve the existing knowledge and skills.

Source: Created by the authors based on Ummat, 2013; ILO, 2014; GoI, 2009; Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), 2015, 2017.

The ILO thus recommended a consolidated policy to create impact and highlighted the need for adequate data generation in order to keep track of whether the initiatives were able to recognise learning relevant for the labour market or were merely adding to the number of unemployed people with skills that were not demanded in the market at all. Stakeholder coordination was limited, many State⁷ governments showed inadequate engagement in policy implementation, adequate awareness and information was lacking, changes in skill standards were required, and the policy lacked attraction for applicants as well as providers (Ummat, 2013, p. 3). The management, administration and financing of the policy was complicated and weak, monitoring was inappropriate and delayed, skills and skill-standards were not updated for long, the number of facilitators was inadequate, assessments were not standardised and were delayed. On top of that, the certification was not accepted by many employers, including several government ones (Ummat, 2013, p. 9).

In 2015, consolidated guidelines were issued to put together all fragmented initiatives and the ILO recommendations seemed to be accepted. Despite much contribution in voicing the concerns in the informal sector and providing RPL offers in sectors where government and market initiatives are missing, civil society actors like LabourNet (ILO, 2014, p. 10) were given limited space in policy and not even identified formally as stakeholders. Furthermore, no provisions for data generation and policy evaluation were introduced, thus making the provisions more symbolic than effective. The acceptance of RPL certification is not mandatory for governmental or non-governmental actors because of which it does not necessarily lead to employability. Data regarding how many people have been placed in jobs after certification under the policy shows that most applicants who were provided certification were already employed before applying and a very trivial number of applicants received new jobs (The Indian Express, 2016). However, the data does not transparently show how the chances to negotiate better contracts at work or increase in salary etc. changed for the applicants due to certification. A major contribution of the policy seems to be (there is no accurate official data regarding this) the inclusion of those in the informal sector due to absence of any certification in the formal sector.

In 2018, 54.4 per cent of Indians are not employable (looking for jobs with required degrees and certifications but lacking the knowledge, skills or competencies to fit the requirements of the jobs in the labour market) (Wheebox, 2018, p. 44). This means that provisions for the recognition of learning outcomes (and not only skills) from non-formal and formal settings like in Denmark have to be included. RPL may not be very fruitful until acceptance of certification through RPL is made mandatory and jobs are available in the market for those who get their skills recognised. Furthermore, cost sharing is another relevant concern since the state is providing monetary rewards to the providers and the applicants, but the approach is unsustainable. Finally, the challenge of policies based on short-term political interests and electoral politics (British Council, 2014, p. 13) has to be addressed to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of policy solutions.

7 Federal units in India are known as States like, for example, Landers in Germany, Regions in Denmark and Provinces in Canada.

COMPARISON AND DISCUSSION

The analyses of RPL in Denmark and India show that the two policy designs are very different and the contexts within which they are embedded are contrasting. Ehlers' (2005) identification of ideal types facilitates the understanding of fundamental differences in the structure and function of RPL and the elements they comprise of.

While the Danish policy design is partner-led and bottom-up, the Indian policy is state-led and top-down. The Danish policy has successfully evolved over decades from a cultural-social policy on providing rights to under-privileged groups to an economic policy on enhancing the employability of the working population as such, increasing productivity in the economy, and saving costs for the state. The evolution of the Danish policy from cultural-social to economic policy has been guided by stakeholders and their respective interests within the far-sighted policy framework for constant development and ensuring equality among citizens. These stakeholders have been influenced by transnational actors, especially the EU and the NCM. The Indian policy design has been influenced by the ILO. However, the policy design is top-down and the voices of all the stakeholders are not heard. This hampers the process of policy evolution according to contextual needs. The problem is further accentuated by the absence of mechanisms for data generation, control, evaluation and impact assessment. Without any feedback and adequate information regarding policy implementation, the initiatives remained fragmented and of poor quality in the beginning. The consolidation of initiatives after the ILO's recommendation also proved futile because no major structural-functional changes were made. All this indicates that the policy is symbolic and motivated by short-term political gains, no matter what goals are mentioned in the policy documents.

Despite the fact that the state pays all major costs for RPL in India and even provides rewards and compensation to the primary stakeholders, the policy has failed to achieve its outcomes. RPL policy is a *cost* for the Indian state. On the contrary, even if the different stakeholders in Denmark continue to negotiate about who should pay the costs for RPL, effective outcomes have been constantly achieved and the policy is an *investment* for the Danish state. The most problematic area in India is a symbolic policy design, whereas in Denmark, it is policy implementation influenced by micro-politics.

Apart from all this, contextual differences between the two countries are stark. The quality of RPL in Denmark is assured to be the same as that of a certification from formal education, the Danish labour market has the capacity to absorb all those who get RPL, and constant negotiations among stakeholders ensure that the policy adapts to changing needs. In India, quality is not assured, only informal learning is recognised, and certification is not accepted everywhere. Furthermore, RPL might merely add to the number of skilled unemployed people in India and pose additional macro-level challenges for the government and thus remains a low priority.

The evolution of RPL policy in India and Denmark is fundamentally different, aiming at different objectives, adopting different pathways and engaging different stakeholders.

However, the comparison makes it evident that a combination of policy designs with administrative principles and policy instruments is required to make it a success. For instance, in the Indian case, providing carrots (monetary rewards) did not make the policy effective. Ehlers emphasises the possibility for different policy designs while Winter points out the different stages and crossroads where policies could fail. Thus, a combination of policy instruments to implement a policy design by overcoming the friction generated by administrative principles in a given context may ensure effective outcomes for RPL policy.

CONCLUSION

A policy can be defined as a statement of intent by the stakeholders who formulate it. RPL has developed from a *social policy for the inclusion of the under-privileged* to an *economic policy* for promoting employability *for all* in Denmark. In India, it was adopted as a socio-economic policy for inclusion but has evolved into *political symbolism*. The most important factors leading to these developments in the two contexts have been: 1) the engagement of stakeholders in the policy process, 2) ownership and accountability leading to policy implementation in the short run and policy evolution in the long run; and 3) the use of an appropriate mix of policy instruments (carrots sticks and sermons) that enable the implementation of a certain policy design in a certain context with administrative principles and political, social and economic realities.

With the network administrative principle, all stakeholders have space to negotiate and influence the policy design. When they cannot get their interests included in the policy design, they manage to do it through micro-politics during policy implementation. Since the policy depends upon negotiations and is constantly changing, the accountability of stakeholders cannot be fixed but they take ownership, motivated by possibilities for the fulfilment of their interests. The policy evolves based on the negotiations among stakeholders gradually. Political, social and economic realities like unemployment rates and short-term or long-term policy considerations play an important role in all stages of the policy process.

The hierarchy administrative principle means that the space for voicing stakeholders' concerns is already limited and pathways to include them in a bottom-up fashion need to be created using a mix of policy instruments. In the case of India, the policy design proposed by the ILO is adopted by the state with much leverage to the market but with no concrete mechanism for policy evaluation and data generation, and with no involvement of other stakeholders. This leads to limited accountability, negligible control and inadequate transparency at all stages of the policy process. Neither the state nor the market actors take ownership since the policy design does not create a need for it. Other stakeholders like civil society organisations find engagement either difficult or irrelevant.

Thus, irrespective of policy design and contextual factors (including administrative principles), an appropriate mix of policy instruments, the engagement of all stakeholders and

ownership or accountability through systematic processes (like adequate documentation and data generation) are required for effective policy outcomes.

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CAREER SERVICE AS A MEASURE TO SUPPORT EMPLOYABILITY: A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

ABSTRACT

The paper examines models and activities of career services as a measure to support students' employability in higher education. It presents a comparative study between the University of Florence (Italy) and the University of Lagos (Nigeria). It starts from a meso-level analysis of service models and data based on institutional university reports. In fact, the literature at international level illustrates the relevance of career service organisations in supporting the educational process. The analysis of the models and structures of career service in both institutions has proven that they will help to implement measures to support employability. The common trend, from a future perspective, can be traced in close cooperation with stakeholders. The integration of employers' points of view as well as the co-planning of training and matching activities represent some of the key elements for creating connections at the higher education level. We can thus state that career services are expanding in scope and method in response to global employment trends and socio-economic, political and technological development.

Keywords: *career service, comparative studies, employability, higher education*

POKLICNO SVETOVANJE KOT UKREP, KI PODPIRA ZAPOS LJIVOST: PRIMERJAVA UNIVERZE V FIRENCAH IN UNIVERZE V LAGOSU - POVZETEK

Članek raziskuje modele in aktivnosti poklicnega svetovanja v visokem izobraževanju kot načina podpiranja zaposljivosti študentov, in sicer na podlagi primerjalne študije med Univerzo v Firencah (Italija) in Univerzo v Lagosu (Nigerija). Začne se z analizo na mesoravni storitvenih modelov in podatkov institucionalnih poročil obeh univerz. Literatura na mednarodni ravni kaže na velik pomen poklicnega svetovanja pri podpiranju izobraževalnega procesa. Analiza modelov in struktur kariernih storitev na obeh institucijah je dokazala, da ti pomagajo pri izvajanju ukrepov, ki podpirajo zaposljivost. Z vidika prihodnosti skupni trend izhaja iz bližnjega sodelovanja z nosilci interesov. Upoštevanje perspektiv

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delodajalcev kot tudi skupno načrtovanje usposabljanja in sorodnih aktivnosti sta dva ključna elementa ustvarjanja povezav na ravni visokega izobraževanja. Na podlagi tega lahko trdimo, da poklicne storitve širijo svoj obseg in metode v odgovor na globalne trende v zaposlovanju in družbenoekonomskem, političnem in tehnološkem razvoju.

Ključne besede: *poklicno svetovanje, primerjalne študije, zaposljivost, visoka izobrazba*

INTRODUCTION

The young people of any nation are the human resource value and source of wealth creation for economic development (Andrés, 2005). The youths or young adults who passed through college and higher education at one point or another were taken through career education to provide them with the best career path that will develop their potential for self and societal development. Career education is considered an important form of education, capable of contributing to a nation's economic competitiveness by way of its human resource value (Cheung, 2012). Career education is about developing knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned programme of learning experiences in educational and training settings which will assist students to make informed decisions about their lives, study and/or work options and enable their effective participation in working life. Career education is very common in secondary school education where students are given career guidance that will ensure their effective transition into higher education. However, in higher education, career education is provided in the form of career services to prepare students for their future endeavours. Thus, career service is born out of career education and continues to expand in scope and delivery as the world keeps changing largely due to socio-economic, political and technological advancements (Kumar, 2007).

Since time immemorial, career service has been designed to develop strong career pathways for students of higher education across the globe. Such services are also named Career Services Offices (CSOs), Career Centres, or Career Resource Centres (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). The advent of career service in the higher education sector was recognised as early as the 1940s but became popular in the 1970s and 1980s when graduate unemployment became more rampant, and career offices began emphasising skills development and training to prepare students for a more competitive labour market. Ever since then, service provisions have expanded to keep up with current labour market demands, student employability needs, and changes in technology (Dey & Real, 2010).

Institutions of higher learning are very particular about the success and future sustainability of their respective students and thus provide necessary career services that will help them actualise their goals and aspirations in life as well as compete in the world of work (Heppner & Jung, 2012). In every institution of higher learning, there is a centre or unit responsible for the provision of career services, but the nomenclature ascribed to each unit and services tends to vary from one institution to another (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014), hence the need for comparative study. Some of the career services provided are career

counselling/career talk, job placement, vocational guidance, professional networking, and so on. However, as a result of global social and economic needs leading to the production of unemployable graduates, demographic changes and the high pace of technological advancement, especially in the workplace, increasing pressure has been put on higher education to support the employability of students (Dey & Real, 2010; Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Rufai, Bakar, & Rashid, 2015). To this end, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their respective career centres have had to adapt in terms of services provided and *modus operandi* to meet the demands of the 21st century world of work.

Higher education career centres are now tailoring their services towards empowering students with employability skills that will make them employable in the market economy as well as ensure career sustainability for future development. Employability in this sense connotes a set of achievements, understanding, personal attributes and competencies that make individuals gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which in turn serve as a benefit to such individuals, the workforce, the community and the economy at large (Yorke & Knight, 2006). Similarly, Pool and Sewell (2007) and Kumar (2007) opined that employability refers to how well knowledge and skills attained at school can be applied at the workplace. This means that employability could be regarded as a set of skills acquired during educational experience that helps students adapt and excel in the workplace (Yorke, 2006).

These skills include: written and verbal communication skills, problem solving and analytical skills, interpersonal skills, creative thinking skills, information technology skills, adaptability skills, leadership skills, team work skills, emotional intelligence skills, demonstration and presentation skills, etc. (Finch, Hamilton, Riley, & Zehner, 2013). In the same vein, the World Economy Forum (2017) highlighted some employability skills that will be most desired by employers by 2020, such as complex problem solving skills, critical thinking, creativity, people management, coordinating with others, emotional intelligence, judgement and decision making, service orientation, negotiation skills, and cognitive flexibility. A quick point to take away from the above is that these skills tend to change with the demands of the modern world of work.

The challenges of career service are greater than ever before given the need to enhance the employability of students (Dey & Real, 2010). Employability in this sense has gone beyond the ability to secure a job and progress in it; rather, it is about developing critical and reflective abilities that empower and enhance the students' self-reliance. Hence, emphasis is placed on competencies required to sustain oneself and build smart cities for the future (Harvey, 2003). Career service today tends to add dynamism to their services by creating synergies between the office and the employers of labourers, practitioners and professionals in respective fields of work. This includes, for instance, training in the use of information and technological tools for solving complex problems; online employment boards and resources; workshops on résumé writing, mock interviews, and networking workshops; professional development and personality assessments; training programmes for students in hands-on skills, encouraging students to do more volunteer

work in reputable organisations, inviting experts and employers to expose students to career opportunities and labour markets demands and so on (Rufai, Bakar, & Rashid, 2015). These and many more are what career service does to support the employability of students in this millennium.

It should be noted that much has been written about Career Service and its support for student employability (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005; Usher & Kwong, 2014; Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Heppner & Jung, 2012; Cheung, 2012). Despite their increasing importance, little comparative analysis has been done on Career Services among different international institutions. Therefore, this paper presents a comparative study of Career Service as a measure to support employability between the University of Florence, Italy and the University of Lagos, Nigeria. These two countries and universities were selected as a follow up on the analyses from the International Winter School for Comparative Studies on Adult Education and Lifelong Learning where Career Service and strategies for enhancing student employability were discussed. These two countries and universities were selected for comparison due to the fact that both countries belong to different continents and cultural environments. While Italy is a European country and is regarded as a developed country, Nigeria is an African country often regarded as a developing nation. Additionally, Nigeria is known as a multiple ethnic nation with 250 ethnic groups and languages. Italy is known as one of the pioneers of western culture having left a powerful mark on it to date. Complimentarily, both universities are public universities controlled by state and federal governments. However, the quality of public universities in Italy is higher compared to their private universities, while the quality of private universities in Nigeria is higher than public universities, denoting the impact of government funding and provision of infrastructural amenities on their university institutions.

Additionally, youth unemployment is a big issue in the two countries. For instance, in Italy, the employment rate of recent graduates in 2018 was only 37.3% (Eurostat, 2018), while the unemployment rate in Nigeria by the end of 2017 was 40%, and it also ranked among the top ten countries with the highest unemployment rate in the world (Djibouti was number one with 54%) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The statistics showed that the unemployment rate in Italy is lower compared to Nigeria. The implication of this is that the strategies and practices adopted by HEIs in these two countries are likely to be different because Italy has a high level of human development and Nigeria is struggling to raise it. The above justification emphasises the need for this comparative study between the University of Florence, Italy and the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The following paragraph deals with the research methodology used to analyse the career service models at the University of Florence and the University of Lagos. Studying Career Centres is nowadays a key factor for understanding emerging trends in higher education relating to social, economic and political challenges. The research aims to deepen

understanding of how universities are trying to bolster the employability of their students and graduates. The literature on Career Service at the international level (Lehker & Furlong, 2006; Dey & Real, 2010) clearly states the relevance of this structure in creating a link between education and work, with the main intention of facilitating graduates' transitions. The *connection model* identified by Dey and Cruzvergara (2014) suggests the relevance of a strategic role given to centres according to the emerging challenges of economies and labour markets (World Economic Forum, 2017). In this perspective, the research question focuses on understanding how the different organisation of Career Service can affect the educational process of young adults in higher education. In detail, the question that guided the research is the following: which are the differences and similarities between the organisational structure of educational activities within the Career Service of the University of Florence in Italy and the University of Lagos in Nigeria?

In fact, the paper aims to look at the pedagogical and formative values of career activities in order to increase the employability potential to create a common framework and exchanges of good practices at the international level. The pedagogical background is adult education and work pedagogy, a growing field for educational studies (Boffo & Fedeli, 2018). In this sense, the research sets out to focus on the organisation of Career Service (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014) and to provide some evidence about the educational offer of employability activities and the students' participation in them. In this connection, it concentrates on the meso level of university organisation and model (Bereday, 1972). Starting from an analysis of the context, it aims to highlight the universities' approaches to the challenges of job placement and career development. The models and services described here are taken from the official Career Service websites. The data refers to the official annual reports of the University of Florence¹ and the University of Lagos (Field Report, 2017; Annual ..., 2016); elaborated by the Career Service units are their strategies put in place to enhance student employability. According to the career service units, the official sources reflect the institutional point of view of both universities in this field, which represents the only available and reliable standpoint at the moment. In fact, recent development on the topic at the national level has not yet produced specific public analyses at institutional level.

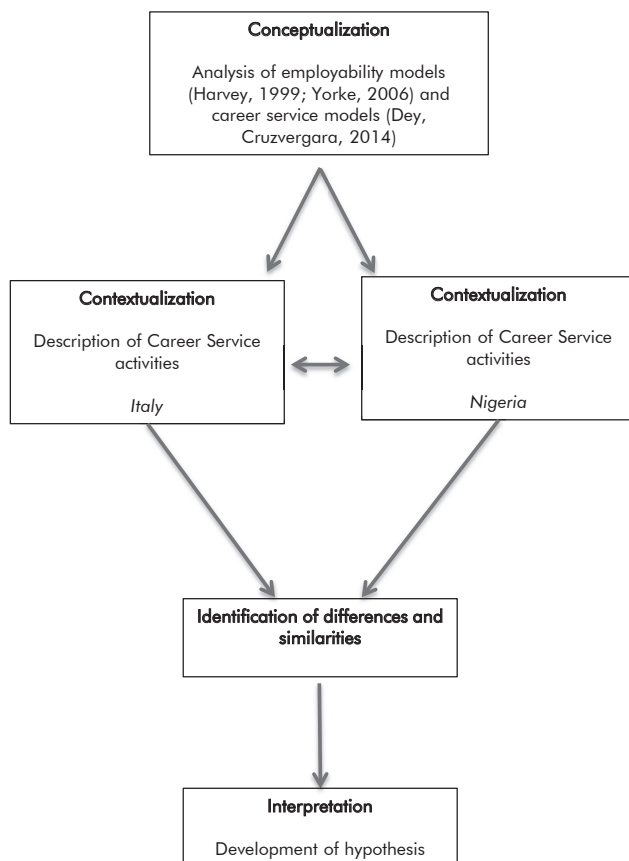
The comparison between the University of Florence and the University of Lagos started from the common experience of the International Winter School Comparative Studies on Adult and Lifelong Learning (COMPALL). During comparative group work, the authors realised the common approaches and understanding of the structure of both Career Centres. The University of Florence has developed an institutional research-based model for Career Service during the last decade (Boffo, 2018), and the University of Lagos experienced similar growth starting in 2010. According to this point of view, and its implications for current national and international policies, the authors worked on a comparative analysis (Charters, 1992; Bray, 2005) at the meso level (strategies and measures implemented

1 The annual reports are available at <https://www.unifi.it/vp-11327-piano-del-job-placement.html>.

by universities). According to Phillips (2006), “one of the principal aims of comparative education is to ‘learn lessons’ from the experience ‘elsewhere’” (p. 313). In that perspective, this comparative study intends to provide a basis for analysing educational actions and providing new perspectives for policies and practices at higher education level (Egetmeyer, 2017).

The structure of the comparison, following Phillips’ (2006) and Bereday’s (1972) comparative research approaches, is based on four specific steps, as showed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Structure of the Comparative Process



Source: Authors’ own elaboration from Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014.

- The first step includes the conceptualisation of the key dimensions in order to come up with the research question. In this case, we illustrate the state of international studies concerning Career Service models and practices.
- The second step includes a “detailed description of educational phenomena in the countries to be investigated” (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2014, p. 118); in fact, the

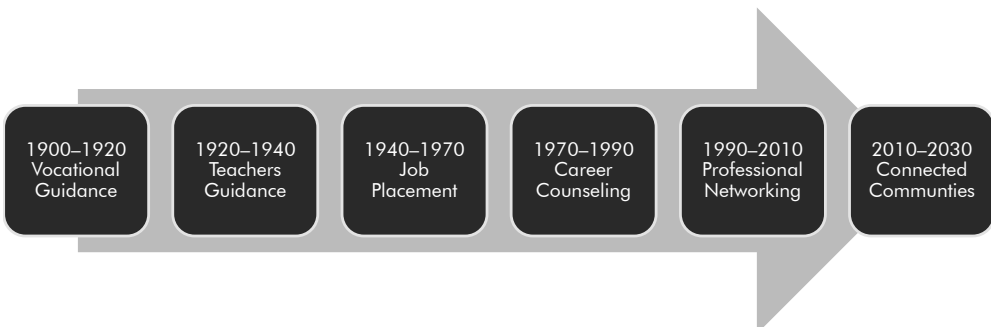
following paragraphs describe the Career Services at the University of Florence and the University of Lagos, following the perspective of three main categories: the organisation and model of Career Service, the educational actions provided and the numbers of attendees.

- The third step focuses on the isolation of similarities and differences according to the categories, to highlight common points and divergences in the offer of career services.
- The fourth step sets out to explain factors and causes through hypotheses, providing an interpretation (Egetenmeyer, 2017).

STATE OF THE ART: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER SERVICE MODELS AND PRACTICES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The relationship between education and work has longstanding roots from as early as the end of the 19th century as a policy approach in the Victorian Age (Peck, 2004). At the same time, it is equally important to underline how the approach starts from an educational perspective (Peck, 2004, p. 4) compared to other disciplines such as economics and sociology, which traditionally consider the topic in a placement perspective (Watts, 1997). The reconstruction of the historical pathway of Career Service models is extremely interesting to understand how we got to our institutional structures. Dey and Cruzvergara's (2014) study provides an interesting view of the evolution of these services in higher education. As Figure 2 shows, the authors identify six different phases in the journey from the early 20th century to today.

Figure 2: Evolution of Career Services in the USA



Source: Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014, p. 6.

Before the arrival of specific centres on individual college campuses, faculties assumed responsibility for offering mentoring and vocational guidance to students, preparing them for the workplace (1900–1920) (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014; Herr, Rayman & Garis, 1993). The first office is registered in Boston at the Frank Parson's Career Center and is called Vocations Bureau (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014, p. 7). In the post-World War One period (1920–1940), which brought with it the strong industrialisation of the country, there was

a gradual influx of students who increased the need of teachers in training to equip themselves with specific guidance skills.

However, it is only after World War Two that the US Higher Education scenario provided further change. The economic boom and the huge growth in the demand for workers, together with the necessity of relocating war veterans, accelerated the process of transformation into a new paradigm oriented towards job placement (1940–1970) (Herr, Rayman & Garis, 1993, p. 15). In fact, in these years university centres increasingly focused on matching the interests and skills of graduates with the demand for skills from employers (Kretovics, Honaker, & Kraning, 1999).

In the following two decades (1970–1980), higher education progressively moved towards a developmental model that places the responsibility for learning outcomes on students in a situation that, at the same time, offered a decrease in economy and a growing competition for job positions (Kretovics et al., 1999). This type of approach encouraged students to take charge of their professional development and subsequent job search (Herr et al., 1993).

For this reason, Career Service returned to an offer more linked to guidance and counselling, thus shifting the gaze towards the preparation of the students within the educational path (Herr et al., 1993). The explosion of technological innovations (1990–2000 and the following decades) involved the process of transition between education and work, with an impact also on the structure of Career Services. This constitutes a driver of change that “helped reengage career centers in employer relations and helped transform them into a comprehensive career services office that facilitated the relationship between students and employers through various networking career events and recruiting activities” (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014, p. 8). Both the recruitment software side and the dissemination of social media have had an important effect on the way students attribute meaning to their experience and come into contact with companies. At the same time, we can observe a reduction of funds made available to universities, with a consequent shift of attention to placement results: in fact, the budget requests advanced by Career Service to academic governance have influenced the shift from an approach based on measuring the results of access to services towards assessing employment results at the end of studies (Lehker & Furlong, 2006).

Against this backdrop, the models implemented in various universities at the international level can be many and various too. If the trend is to respond to socio-economic changes, with a relapse on generational trends, Career Service centres will become more and more like advanced centres for innovation and understanding the future. For this reason, research and analysis will play an increasingly crucial role in understanding the main lines to which career development services are heading. The following comparison will reveal the educational structure in the two case studies in Italy and Nigeria.

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

The following paragraph illustrates the comparative analysis of the career service at the University of Florence and University of Lagos following three formulated categories: (a) the organisation of Career Service, (b) educational actions provided and (c) numbers of attendees. These three categories are developed for the comparative analysis because they constitute and represent the main functions and activities of career service in both universities.

Career Service at the University of Florence, Italy

Organisation of Career Service

The University of Florence is one of the most important Italian public universities. Its 24 departments are organised in six scientific areas: biomedical, sciences, technologies, social sciences, humanities and education. It is an important and influential centre for research and higher training in Italy, with 1,800 lecturers and internal research staff, 1,600 technical and administrative staff, and over 1,600 research assistants and doctoral students. It offers a wide range of study programmes at various levels and in all areas of knowledge with a population of about 60,000 registered students (www.unifi.it/placement).

Job placement services only appeared in 2010; comparing this data to other Italian HEIs, the story of Career Service at University of Florence is relatively recent. Nevertheless, the growth of a structured model has been quick and effective during the last 7 years. Based on projects and research, the governance designed a model that follows the suggestions of Harvey (1999) and Yorke (2006) and their work on the concept of employability.

In fact, the structure of the Career Centre, with a variety of events, is not just the result of an administrative process for students' services, but a continuous process of reflecting on and researching the best practices at the national and international levels. Scientific conferences and publications, as well as specific research projects, support the foundation of a community that involves delegates, teachers, career officers, tutors and professional experts (Boffo, 2018). At the same time, the desire to consolidate periodic relationships with companies allows the Career Service to understand new labour market trends and future skills demand with these specific goals:

- supporting the transition to the labour market and the development of employability;
- reducing the duration of the transition from higher education to work, and facilitating supply-demand matches;
- taking care of relationships with local institutions and businesses;
- fostering knowledge transfer and the third mission of the university;
- organising programmes for creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

In this sense, in 2016 the job placement unit developed a model (see Figure 3) aimed at supporting students in the development of skills and capabilities for their professional lives.

Figure 3: The Career Service model of the University of Florence



Source: Boffo, 2018, p. 18.

Educational actions provided by Career Education

This model (see Figure 3) concentrates on four different sectors: *Career Education*, *Educational Activities for Employability*, *Meetings with Employers* and *Entrepreneurial Skills Development*.

The area of *Career Education* intends to accompany the development of awareness on the construction of one's own career project by enhancing soft skills through workshops. In detail, the programmes consist of²:

- *Skills Map*, a one-day activity to increase self-awareness and support the planning of one's personal and professional path through Design Thinking and Personal Business Model Canvas (Terzaroli, 2018);

The sector *Educational Activities for Employability Skills* offers a set of services to bolster the development of skills and capabilities able to support the transition towards the labour market. In detail, the programmes consist of:

2 Retrieved from <https://www.unifi.it/vp-10548-career-service-per-studenti-e-laureati.html>.

- *Workshops for Active Job Research*, to support the development of tools to improve the effectiveness of job applications, with CV and Cover Letter elaboration and preparation for job interviews;
- *CV Check*, to individually scan the effectiveness of the CV and to improve awareness about personal and professional skills;
- *Video CV*, to elaborate on the format of a personal video CV. An innovative tool for job application, it consists in a synthetic presentation of personal and professional characteristics and provides information about communication and relational skills;
- *Assessment Centre*, to get to know the specific soft skills demanded by employers and to be able to face this recruitment tool³.

The third area of *Meeting with Employers* organises events to facilitate skills demand-supply matching, with a various set of employers' presentation and recruitment days: those services help students and graduates gain insight into the world of work and experience real situations of recruitment methods. In detail, the programmes consist of:

- *Employer Presentations*, to get to know employers and understand the skills they require. The presentation is focused on the recruitment process and on professional profiles required by companies;
- *Career Lab*, to participate in recruitment activities and have job interviews directly with employers. It also represents a way to improve skills and to understand how job selection is organised;
- *Career Day*, to participate in the official University of Florence job fair days aimed at matching graduates and employers⁴.

The fourth area, called *Entrepreneurial Skills Development*, is aimed at organising workshops and challenges to foster the intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial mind-set of young people (Boffo & Terzaroli, 2017). In detail, the programmes consist of:

- *Entrepreneurial Training Programme*, to improve entrepreneurial skills and to focus the research towards professional projects. It's a training programme aimed at fostering entrepreneurial skills through Design Thinking (Buchanan, 1992) and LEGO® Serious Play methodology (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2017). The focus is on the entrepreneurial attitude and on skills for project planning and management.
- *Job-In Lab*, to participate in joint innovative projects with companies that aim at starting changes or improving the productive process. The workshops are linked to experiences in the work context through which students improve their professional and personal skills⁵.

3 Retrieved from <https://www.unifi.it/vp-10548-career-service-per-studenti-e-laureati.html>.

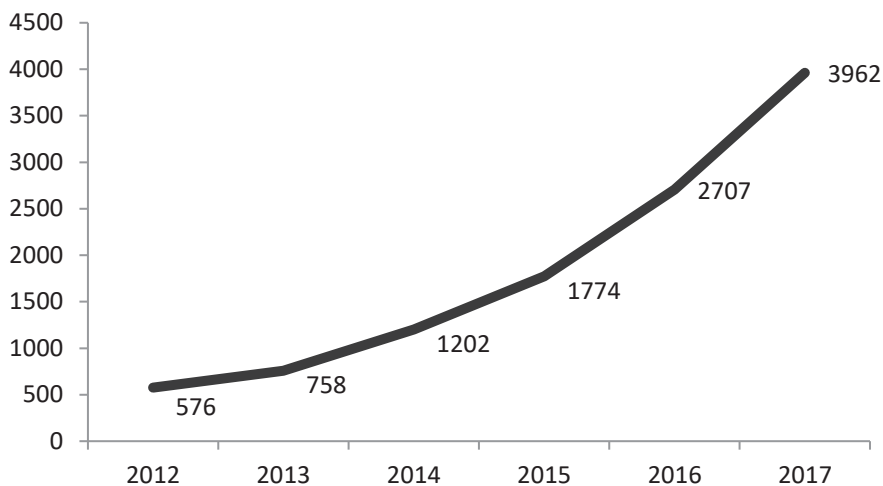
4 Retrieved from <https://www.unifi.it/vp-10548-career-service-per-studenti-e-laureati.html>.

5 Retrieved from <https://www.unifi.it/vp-10548-career-service-per-studenti-e-laureati.html>.

Number of attendees

A glance at attendance at those services reveals an increase in the interest and participation of companies in Career Service activities. Figure 4 illustrates the evolution of University of Florence's partnerships with national and international companies from 2012. The relevance of this fact shows how the attention to university-to-work transitions have bolstered new connections: in a broader sense, the Career Service created a stronger environment in which both employers, students and graduates are able to meet their needs, transforming them in working opportunities.

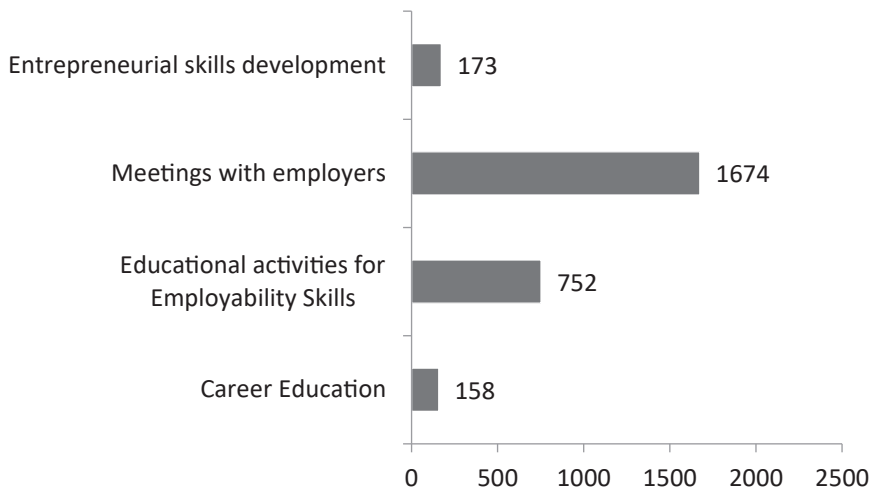
Figure 4: University of Florence partnerships with companies



Source: <https://www.unifi.it/vp-11327-piano-del-job-placement.html>.

The same analysis can be traced in student and graduate attendance to services. Figure 5 reflects how people participate in Career Service events. Meetings with employers are the most appreciated types of service since they provide the opportunity to get to know companies and recruiters and to arrange job interviews too. At the same time, we can see the interest in educational activities for employability skills: in fact, students are increasingly recognising the relevance of workshops, resume reviews, video CVs and the Assessment Centre to better prepare themselves for their future careers.

Figure 5: Students' and graduates' participation in Career Services



Source: <https://www.unifi.it/vp-11327-piano-del-job-placement.html>.

Career Service at the University of Lagos, Nigeria

Organisation of Career Service

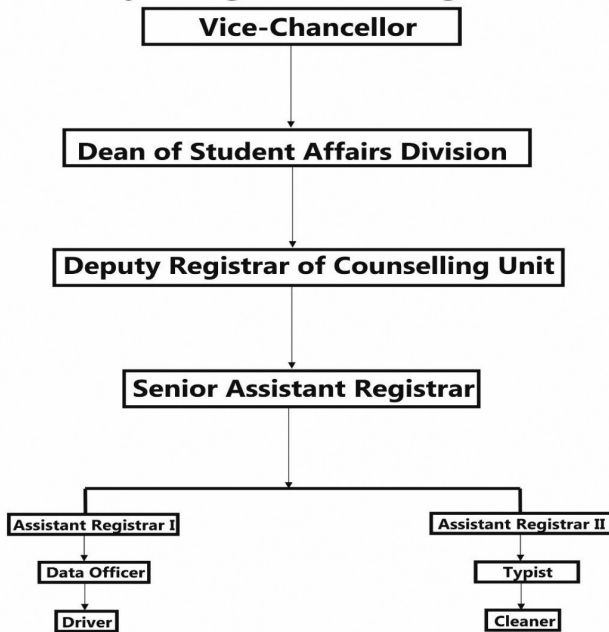
The University of Lagos, Nigeria was established in 1962. Career service in the University of Lagos is provided by the counselling unit under the auspices of the Student Affairs Division of the University of Lagos. Hence, the unit responsible for providing career services and guidance for students at the University of Lagos is regarded as the 'Counselling Unit'. It is responsible to the Student Affairs Division, which in turn is responsible to the office of the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Therefore, the Deputy Registrar of the counselling unit reports to the Dean of Student Affairs Division, while the Dean of Student Affairs Division reports to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos.⁶

The administration of the counselling unit in the University of Lagos is a top-down model. The Vice-Chancellor of the University is the head of the administration, down to the Dean of Student Affairs Division, to the Deputy Registrar of the counselling unit, to the Senior Assistant Registrar, then to the two Assistant Registrars, to the Data Officer, followed by the typist, driver and the cleaners. The information is presented in Figure 6 below.

⁶ Source: <https://unilag.edu.ng/about-us/>.

Figure 6: University of Lagos counselling unit model

University of Lagos Counselling Unit Model



Source: Field Report, 2017.

Educational actions provided by the counselling unit

The following are the educational actions provided by the counselling unit of the University of Lagos as regard career service programmes, presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7: University of Lagos Counselling Unit model for Career Services



Source: Developed by Yinusa Oyekunle.

In detail, they consist of (Field Report, 2017, p. 2):

- *Work Study Programme* – the University of Lagos established a work study programme in 2010 for students who are on good academic standing (i.e. 3.5–5.0 scale). This programme allows qualified students to gain work experience and practical skills for a semester by serving in various administrative units of the University.
- *Coach for Pay Programme* – this programme was instituted in 2014 to enhance the teaching and communication skills of students. Usually, students who are academically successful are afforded the chance to teach other students who needed help to improve on their academic performance. The student instructors are known as coaches and are paid for the services rendered.
- *Career Counselling* – organised for students to guide them on their career path to success, this programme is done every session to equip students with relevant information on 21st century vocations to enhance their career development. Career counselling can be individual or group counselling. Group counselling can be run in batches across all disciplines in the university.
- *Job Placement Service* – the counselling unit of the University organises an annual job placement programme for final year students to increase their chances of employability on the labour market. Final year students are given the opportunity to meet with the representatives of companies and multi-national organisations. This programme gives room for students to network with and be recruited by potential employers. Organisations like Procter & Gamble, Nigeria, PZ Cuttans, Nigeria and banking institutions in Nigeria, etc. participate.
- *Hands-on-Skills Training* – human resource experts are invited from reputable organisations to talk to and train students in skills for employability on the labour market, vocational skills and career development. Hands-on-skills training is mostly practical skills such as information and technological skills, training in professional cosmetology, event planning, bead making, etc.
- *Leadership Training* – the counselling unit of the University of Lagos, Nigeria organises leadership training for undergraduate students mostly from 200 level to 500 level. The counselling unit partners with organisations and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria such as Impact Your World Initiatives and Slum-to-School Initiatives to deliver a talk and take students through a short training period to awaken their leadership potential.
- *Effective Study-Habit Training* – this training is organised for students across all levels in various disciplines. Students are trained in how to study effectively and efficiently in order to perform excellently in their academic pursuit.

Number of attendees

When the counselling unit is organising programmes in collaboration with other companies or organisations, attendance is dependent on the participating companies. Most times, these organisations might want the participation to be in batches which makes attendance 30–50 students per training. However, for programmes organized within the

university, attendance ranges from 100–200 students per programme annually (Field Report, 2017, p. 3).

Similarities and differences in career services provided at the University of Florence and the University of Lagos

Differences

- Organisation

At the University of Florence, job placement services came into the limelight in 2010. Hence, the establishment of career services as a unit is relatively new. In terms of the administrative process, career service at the University of Florence has maintained a structured model during the last 7 years since its inception, targeted towards student employability, which is in line with the suggestions and works of Harvey (1999) and Yorke (2006).

At the University of Lagos, the provision of career services has been in existence since over a decade ago. This service is provided by the counselling unit under the auspices of the Dean of Student Affairs Division. The administrative process of the counselling unit is tailored towards the students and staff of the university. However, the counselling unit at the University of Lagos does not have a structured model designed for student employability, it provides a variety of services tailored towards it.

- Activities for the employability of students

At the University of Florence, the Career Service Centre provides 4 main services to enhance student employability. The model presented in Figure 3 above revealed these key activities, which are: Career Counselling, Entrepreneurial Skills Development, Meeting with Employers, and Educational Activities for Employability Skills. All other activities are subsumed under these 4 main services. Hence, it has maintained a narrow or focus view in its service provision.

At the University of Lagos, the counselling unit provides broad career services for the students. These services, presented in Figure 7 above, are: the Work Study Programme, the Coach for Pay Programme, Career Counselling, the Job Placement Service, Hands-on-Skills Training, Leadership Training, and Effective Study-Habit Training. Hence, the counselling unit maintained a broad view in its provision of career services.

It should be noted that while the University of Florence's Career Service is responsible for providing entrepreneurial skills development for students, the University of Lagos' counselling unit provides minor services on entrepreneurial skills development for students. The University of Lagos' Entrepreneurial and Skills Development Centre was established in 2015 and is responsible for providing major services in entrepreneurial skills development.

Subtle difference also exists in the range of services offered by the Career Centre in Florence and the counselling unit in Lagos. While the counselling unit covers the 4 main

activities of the career centre, activities or programmes like work-study and the Coach-for-Pay programme were not covered by the career centre at the University of Florence.

- Participation and attendance

At the University of Florence, companies have shown strong interest and a high level of participation in the career service provided by institution's career centre between 2012 and 2017, as evidenced in Figure 4 above. Student and graduate attendance and participation in the services provided is also encouraging, as revealed in Figure 5.

At the University of Lagos, there was no accurate data on the interest and participation of companies in the career services provided by the counselling unit. However, the counselling unit has ensured and maintained a cordial and strong relationship with the participating companies while working on the prospect of involving more companies in order to bolster student employability. In addition, student and graduate attendance is mostly determined by the participating companies which is sometimes around 30–50 students per programme and for programmes organised internally, attendance ranges from 100–200 students per programme annually.

Similarities

In discharging their duties, the career centre and the counselling unit of the two universities maintain a cordial relationship and effective collaboration with the companies which allow the units (the career centre and the counselling unit) to understand new labour market trends and future skills demands required for the employability of their students.

In terms of activities for employability, the two units provide 4 key activities (career counselling, entrepreneurial skills development, meeting with employers, educational activities for employability skills) which are essential to support their students in the development of skills and capabilities for their professional lives.

Interpretation

A glance at the structure of career services adopted by the University of Florence and the University of Lagos seems to be very interesting in terms of open reflection. The presence of two models could determine the effectiveness of activities offered to students and graduates. Both of them have a diverse mix of educational and matching actions that could provide young adults with the opportunity to prepare themselves for the transition towards the labour market. In this sense, Career Service could effectively impact the students' employability as well as the presence of specific programmes.

In addition, it was revealed that structure and organisation is key for the effective running of Career Service in higher education: it determines the direction and flow of delivery of career services to support employability within the multiple connections of the university (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). The University of Florence and the University of Lagos had a strong structure for Career Service, which makes it easier to support student

employability (Boffo, 2018). Although the University of Florence's structure and organisation of career service is stronger compared to the University of Lagos' due to the structure model in place. The good news here is that there is room for improvement at both institutions following international trends in Career Service models. The University of Lagos can design a structure model targeted at employability (see Figure 7). The lack of a strong and effective structure of Career Service will render the programmes and strategies designed to enhance students' employability insignificant whether or not the institutions have viable programmes.

The study also revealed that Career Services at both universities have some measures in place to support employability with their activities (Harvey, 2003), such as career education, entrepreneurial skills development, meeting with employers, and educational activities for employability skills. Educational activities like presentations and seminars on career opportunities, and networking workshops with employers are good measures to support the employability of students if the institutions could strengthen the collaboration and synergise with experts, professionals and employers to determine the trends in the workplace and incorporate it into teaching and learning programmes (Lehker & Furlong, 2006). One of the essences of comparative study is to identify gaps and adopt best practices from the compared institutions to suit one's purpose and practices. In other words, activities that support employability and are not practised by the other institution can be adapted or adopted to suit the other institution's practices, and other higher institutions can learn and benefit from them as well.

Based on the analysis we could state that the implementation of a model of services has supported, despite the differences, the dissemination of students' approach towards the professions. It is not so complex to conclude that the absence of those services won't have helped the acquisition of work-related skills and capabilities (Boffo, 2018).

At the same time, the peculiarities of student attendance and participation in employability reveal different policy strategies in the two countries. For example, students at the University of Florence are much more focused on matching skills in demand and supply than on developing an entrepreneurial perspective: it refers to a traditional approach based on the research of jobs rather than to the creation of new companies and start-ups, which is just a recent trend. On the other hand, the University of Lagos, due to a developmental approach in the employability process, pays a lot of attention to counselling, coaching and training for the continuous growth of young people.

Furthermore, student participation and attendance in Career Service programmes is important for ensuring programme effectiveness targeted towards employability. The above analysis on participation and attendance rates quickly points to one thing – awareness development and mobilisation. Awareness creation and the mobilisation of students to participate in programmes organised by Career Centres is the duty of the institution's administration as well as the career service offices. Through awareness and the mobilisation process, students' interests could be raised and motivate them to participate in Career

Centre programmes that will enhance their employability at the global level. Campaigns, rallies, sharing fliers, institutional mobile communications and so on are various avenues they can use to increase awareness across all levels of the activities and programmes the career service of the institution provides (Cheung, 2012).

In its approaches and measures to support employability, a Career Service must avoid bombarding students with career information but rather empower them with practical career skills that will help them link their personal values with career choices in tandem with the demands of the skills required by employers. In retrospect, it is crucial for Career Service professionals and providers in each institution to understand the contextual and social demands on career services and play a dynamic role to react to socio-economic challenges with their service innovations. Therefore, the various services offered by career service professionals should reflect and be able to help students meet the present demands of the workplace and the modern world of work (World Economic Forum, 2017).

The common trend that suggests the future perspective for Career Services in both institutions can be traced to close cooperation with companies. The integration of the employers' point of view as well as co-planning training and matching activities represent one of the key elements for creating connections at the higher education level (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). Following this flow, the future will show how universities will embed employability programmes within curricula, study courses and their planned strategic actions.

FINAL REMARKS

The place of Career Services in HEIs cannot be over-emphasised, especially when it comes to supporting students to garner employability skills that are sellable and sustainable in the global market as evidenced in the analyses carried out at the University of Florence and the University of Lagos. While Career Services in higher education have been in existence as far back as 1900 and became noticeable in the 20th century in response to the underemployment of graduates across globe, they at the time offered services for students such as job placements, career counselling, career education and guidance, and professional networking. Thereafter, Career Services began to expand in scope and method of delivery in response to trends in global market demand and socio-economic, political and technological development.

In conclusion, this comparative study helps to bridge education with work. It provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the Career Service of both institutions: they provide a diverse mix of educational and matching actions that will enhance young adults' employability in the labour market. The models, structures and organisations of Career Service in both institutions have proven that to a large extent, they will help achieve the measures put in place by the Career Service to support employability in a future perspective (World Economic Forum, 2017).

Acknowledgments

The paper is the result of joint work in the common areas of research planning, index and references. However, the abstract, methodology, the State of the Art section and the paragraphs on Career Service at the University of Florence can be attributed to Carlo Terzaroli, and the introduction, the paragraphs on Career Service at the University of Lagos, the similarities and differences, interpretation and final remarks sections to Yinusa Oyekunle.

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Regina Egetenmeyer, Monica Fedeli (ur.)

**ADULT EDUCATION AND WORK CONTEXTS:
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES**
**Comparative Perspectives from the 2017
Würzburg Winter School**
Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2017

Monografija *Adult Education and Work Contexts: International Perspectives and Challenges* (219 str.) združuje deset prispevkov udeležencev zimske šole Würzburg 2017. Izšla je kot 72. zvezek zbirke »Studies in pedagogy, andragogy and gerontology« pri založbi Peter Lang.

Plačano delo in zaposlitev sta pri odraslih razmeroma dolgo obdobje pomemben del preživljanja vsakdanjika in pomembno določata tudi posameznikove možnosti za kakovostno preživljanje prostega časa. Značilnosti plačanega dela in zaposlitve imajo za posameznika tudi dolgoročne posledice, saj pomembno določajo življenje po upokojitvi, tako v socialnem, finančnem kot tudi zdravstvenem vidiku. Relevantnost zaposlitve in zaposljivosti na širšem družbenem področju se kaže tudi v tem, da sta obe temi obsežno vključeni v javne politike na nadnacionalni in nacionalni ravni.

Izobraževanje odraslih, delo in zaposlovanje so pod vplivom mednarodnega in transnacionalnega dogajanja. Razvoj tehnologij, demografske spremembe ter migracije med državami in znotraj njih posameznikom prinašajo številne priložnosti za izbiro življenjskih poti, tudi poklicnih in zaposlitvenih. Vzporedno s tem pa je posameznik izpostavljen različnim pritiskom in zahtevam po prilagoditvi številnim novim situacijam. To tudi strokovnjakom za izobraževanje odraslih daje številne možnosti za poklicno udejstvovanje, hkrati pa od njih zahteva določena nova znanja.

Zbrani prispevki obravnavajo izobraževanje odraslih in njegovo vlogo v kontekstu dela in zaposlovanja, pomemben del analize pa je namenjen tudi strokovnjakom za izobraževanje odraslih, natančneje njihovem izobraževanju, zaposlovanju in položaju na trgu dela. Poseben poudarek je na raziskovanju nadnacionalnih vplivov in identifikaciji mednarodnih podobnosti ter razlik.

V nagovoru urednika zbirke Bernd Käßlinger in Steffi Robak poudarita potrebo, da izobraževanje odraslih za delo preseže ideal prilagodljivega in fleksibilnega delavca ter da s svojo bogato tradicijo osredotočanja na udeležence, pristope od spodaj navzgor in

razsvetljevanja ponudi alternative konceptom človeškega kapitala ter pristopom od zgoraj navzdol. Uvodni prispevek urednic monografije Regine Egetenmeyer in Monice Fedeli med drugim opiše tudi posebnosti primerjalnega raziskovanja izobraževanja odraslih v primerjavi z drugim izobraževanjem. Podobnosti med državami lahko pojasnimo z nekaterimi teoretskimi koncepti (na primer globalizacija, analiza javnih politik), za razumevanje in interpretacijo razlik pa raziskovalci potrebujejo dobro poznavanje socialnega konteksta. Prispevek zajame tudi razmislek o implicitni hegemonski naravi razvoja in učinkih mehkega prava v izobraževanju odraslih. Vključuje tudi vmesno evalvacijo strateškega partnerstva Erasmus+ »Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning – COMPALL«, v okviru katerega je potekala zimska šola Würzburg 2017.

Prispevki so razporejeni v tri vsebinske sklope: trije prispevki v prvem sklopu obravnavajo (*javne*) politike vseživljenjskega učenja in področje zaposlitve, trije prispevki v drugem sklopu obravnavajo *transnacionalne perspektive (javnih) politik v izobraževanju odraslih*, zadnji trije iz zadnjega sklopa pa so osredotočeni na *zaposlitve in profesionalizacijo izobraževanja odraslih*. Udeleženci zimske šole so izbrane vidike izobraževanja odraslih raziskovali in primerjali na primeru držav, iz katerih prihajajo, in tako prispevki vključujejo opise in primerjavo med zelo raznolikimi državami.

V prispevkih so na primeru Nemčije in Italije predstavljeni vplivi nadsacionalnih politik in nacionalnih struktur ter splošen vpliv pristopa menedžmenta človeških virov na vseživljenjsko učenje; na primeru Indije in Južne Koreje avtorji raziskujejo javne politike in programe vseživljenjskega učenja ter razvoja spretnosti in se sprašujejo, kako jih prilagoditi raznolikim nacionalnim kontekstom. Politike nadaljnjega poklicnega izobraževanja in usposabljanja so analizirane na primeru Italije, Brazilije in Indije, vplivi rezultatov raziskave PIAAC na nacionalne politike izobraževanja odraslih in vzroki za razlike v odzivih so raziskani na primeru Avstrije in Estonije, težave pri implementaciji nacionalnih ogrodij kvalifikacij na primeru Kambodže in Nemčije, o teoretskih vidikih podjetništva v visokošolskem izobraževanju pa se sprašujejo na primeru Italije in Nigerije. Primerjalna refleksija o dimenzijah strokovne identitete strokovnjakov za izobraževanje odraslih ter o identiteti izobraževanja odraslih kot stroke je narejena na primeru Indije, Nemčije in Portugalske, analiza kurikula magistrskega študija izobraževanja s poudarkom na razvoju zaposljivosti in mehkih veščin pa na primeru Italije in Indije. V predzadnjem prispevku avtorji raziskujejo razmerje med prakso in izobraževanjem na univerzitetni ravni študija izobraževanja odraslih in izobraževanja učiteljev v Siriji in Ugandi, monografija pa se sklene z analizo in primerjavo metode izobraževanja odraslih, inovativnih, samostojnih, aktivnih in eksperimentalnih pristopov k učenju v Nigeriji in Indiji.

Celotna monografija je v e-obliki dostopna na spletni strani založbe: <https://www.peterlang.com/view/title/64191>.

Regina Egetenmeyer, Sabine Schmidt-Lauff, Vanna Boffo (ur.)

**ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN
INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS: FUTURE CHALLENGES
FOR ITS PROFESSIONALIZATION
Comparative Perspectives from the 2016
Würzburg Winter School
Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2017**

Monografija *Adult Learning and Education in International Contexts: Future Challenges for its Professionalization* (213 str.) združuje 14 prispevkov udeležencev zimske šole Würzburg 2016. Zbrani prispevki so eden od rezultatov širšega prizadevanja za razvijanje mednarodnih, transkulturnih in primerjalnih raziskovalnih kompetenc strokovnjakov za izobraževanje in učenje odraslih, predvsem doktorskih študentov in mladih raziskovalcev.

Izobraževanje in učenje odraslih sta v zadnjih dveh desetletjih postali mednarodni in transnacionalni fenomen, kar ima posledice za razvoj izobraževanja odraslih kot stroke in tudi za zahteve po strokovnih znanjih vseh posameznikov, ki delamo na področju izobraževanja odraslih. V okviru evropskih programov Erasmus+ in njegovih predhodnikov se nam »mednarodni« prostor izobraževanja odraslih pogosto zreducira na Evropo ali celo ožje, na Evropsko unijo. Pričujoča monografija to omejitev preseže. Združi namreč avtorje in prispevke o izobraževanju odraslih iz mednarodnega prostora v najširšem smislu – iz Kanade, Brazilije, Južne Koreje, Kitajske, Malezije, Nigerije, Nemčije, Italije, Srbije, Portugalske, Avstrije ... Prispevki predstavljajo izobraževanje odraslih iz zelo različnih kontekstov, tako z vidika tradicije, kulturnih in gospodarskih značilnosti, politične ureditve in podobno kot tudi iz organizacijskega vidika – od univerzitetnega izobraževanja strokovnjakov do neformalnega izobraževanja in priložnostnega učenja. Avtorji poiščejo skupne točke, podobnosti in razlike ter pokažejo (z)možnosti primerjalne andragogike tudi z vidika strukturiranosti primerjalnih analiz.

Prispevki so razporejeni v tri vsebinske sklope. Prvi – *izobraževanje odraslih v kontekstu mednarodnih (javnih) politik* – vsebuje pet prispevkov o medsebojnem vplivanju mednarodnih, nacionalnih in lokalnih politik izobraževanja odraslih, izobraževanja odraslih kot stroke in njegove profesionalizacije. Prispevek o zaposljivosti mladih odraslih na Kitajskem, v Južni Koreji in na Portugalskem je primer besedila o tem, kako se med seboj zelo raznolike države soočajo z enakim problemom – zaposljivostjo mladih odraslih. Nadalje

je izpostavljena potreba, da imamo strokovnjaki za učenje in izobraževanje odraslih sposobnost razvijati omrežja in sodelovati s strokovnjaki z drugih področij izobraževanja. Eden od prispevkov analizira karierne perspektive izobraževalcev odraslih v luči možnosti, ki jih prinašajo javne politike izobraževanja odraslih – nove zaposlitve, kot so delovna mesta, povezana s prepoznavanjem in priznavanjem kompetenc, svetovanjem in informiranjem v izobraževanju odraslih, koordinatorji izobraževalnih centrov.

V drugem vsebinskem sklopu – *okviri profesionalizacije v izobraževanju odraslih* – so štirje prispevki o tem, kako aktualni širši družbeni kontekst vpliva na institucije, akterje in profesionalizacijo izobraževanja odraslih v izbranih državah. Prispevki analizirajo in primerjajo kontekste in kurikule v univerzitetnem izobraževanju izobraževalcev odraslih; prehod doktorskih študentov izobraževanja odraslih na trg dela; kontekst, zakonodajo in možnosti, ki določajo poklicno udejstvovanje strokovnjakov za izobraževanje odraslih; zadnji prispevek pa se osredotoča na vprašanje, kako lahko strokovnjaki za izobraževanje odraslih podpiramo odrasle pri njihovih življenjskih tranzicijah.

Tretji vsebinski sklop – *dimenzije profesionalizacije izobraževanja odraslih* – v ospredje postavlja posledice internacionalizacije družbe za izobraževanje odraslih na makro-, mezo- in mikroravni v izbranih državah in tudi širše. Avtorji raziskujejo aktualne perspektive izobraževanja odraslih; subjektivne teorije poučevanja in učenja odraslih ter njihovo povezanost s teoretičnim znanjem in praktičnimi izkušnjami; didaktiko neformalnega izobraževanja in izobraževanje izobraževalcev.

V zaključnem delu sta seznam avtorjev z njihovimi zaposlitvami in kontaktnimi podatki ter seznam vseh del iz zbirke »Studies in pedagogy, andragogy and gerontagogy«, v okviru katere je kot 69. zvezek izšla tudi ta monografija.

Monografija in proces njenega nastajanja sta tudi praktičen zgled, kako lahko izobraževalna institucija svoje programe (v tem primeru zimsko šolo in programe izmenjav z drugimi univerzami) prek nadnacionalnih programov (v tem primeru v okviru evropskega programa iz strateškega partnerstva Erasmus+ »Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning – COMPALL«) dopolni z dodatnimi vsebinami, sodelovanji in dejavnostmi.

Celotna monografija je dostopna na: <https://bit.ly/2Fo4XzH>.

Simona Šinko