Roberto Carneiro, Honorary Doctor in Education/Presentation Fellow of the King's College (University of London), is President of the Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures and Dean of the Institute for Distance Learning of the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP). A former Education Minister, he has coordinated research projects in the various domains of Education and Learning, in Portugal, Europe, Northern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Far East, and conducted development projects for international and multilateral organisations.

Maria Amélia Mendonça, BA in Philosophy, retired, is a former deputy director for adult education in the Ministry of Education and lecturer at the Portuguese Catholic University.

Maria Ana Carneiro, MA in Public Art Studies, USC, and MA in Urban Design, Barcelona University, is a doctoral student in the Culture Studies, UCP. She collaborates with CEPCEP in research projects focused on Adult Education and the impact of ICT in education.

Ana Cláudia Valente, BA in Sociology, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, a post-graduation in Economics and Public Policy and a MSc in Policy and Human Resource Management, ISCTE, is currently doing a PhD in Economics, ISCTE. She works as a researcher in Dinâmia-CET (ISCTE) and CEPCEP (UCP), and since June 2010, is also a member of the Board of CEPCEP.

Lourenço Xavier de Carvalho, BA in Sociology, ISCTE, is a doctoral student in Educational Sciences at the Portuguese Catholic University. He is a researcher at CEPCEP and Co-founder and Chairman of the iLIDH – Luso-Illyrian Institute for Human Development.

André Xavier de Carvalho, BA in Sociology, he is a researcher in Social and Human Sciences at CEPCEP, having participated in various R&D projects, particularly in the fields of education, training and employment.

Henrique Lopes, PhD in Management, University of Évora, MSc in Science Management and MBA, Portuguese Catholic University. He is director of the research centre CEIA and guest researcher at the Centres of the Portuguese Catholic University CESOP, CEA and CEPCEP.

Carlos Liz studied Philosophy and Classical Studies and has been working in Market Research since 1972. He is the founder of APEME (currently Ipsos-APEME) in 1989 – a company in which he is still partner – and a frequent collaborator of CEPCEP in empirical qualitative studies.

Mariana Ribeiro Machado, BA in Psychology, began her career in Market Research in 1992 in Apeme (currently Ipsos-APEME) and she is partner of the company since 1996. She is a frequent collaborator of CEPCEP in empirical qualitative studies.

Jorge Portugal da Rocha, PhD, MSc, and BA in Mechanical Engineering, and MBA, is the advisor to the President of Portuguese Republic for innovation and founder of Daremberg Consulting – a business and technology consultancy firm. He collaborates with CEPCEP on market research studies.

Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo, PhD in Education, UCP, is Coordinator of the Psycho-Pedagogical department of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the UCP, where he coordinates the Master's degree in School Administration. He is the Executive Director of the Association of Private Schools (AEEP) and a regular researcher of CEPCEP.

Sofia Reis, MSc in Education, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, is a researcher at the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP) and has been working in various initiatives of quality management of educational and training organisations.

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(…)

I hope that the discussions around the NOI research papers may help sheding light on a reform agenda that is of maximum urgency in our systems of continuing and lifelong learning. Tackling these challenges could equally provide powerful insights to secure the efficient and effective provision of new public services in rapidly evolving environments.

(Roberto Carneiro, CEPCEP, UCP, President)

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The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) is one of the largest governmental programmes in recent decades to massively upgrade qualifications acquired. It demonstrates among others that recognition of non-formal and informal learning is crucial in order to improve competences needed in our societies today. The example of NOI could be followed by other countries, taking into consideration that education and training systems in the different countries are rooted in very different traditions and that there is no global solution.

(…)

I am happy that UIL is contributing to the work MENON and the Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures of the Portuguese Catholic University (CEPCEP) are undertaking, aiming to reflect on innovation processes in lifelong learning policy in Europe, so as to build a "Europe of innovation". I would like to conclude that it is high time for lifelong learning to be accorded the full recognition that it deserves and for it to be made an integral part of all education policies.

(Arne Carlsen, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Director)

•

The MENON Network is honoured to join this group of prestigious research and development organisations in such a demanding and rewarding activity to present the New Opportunities Initiative, a promising Programme in Portugal, and to reflect upon its results and potential for the European societies and the rest of the world. (…)

One has to take an in-depth reading in this publication in order to reflect upon the various aspects that touch upon the demanding lifelong learning policies and their relevance to social capital building. We need to understand the huge and at the same time sophisticated efforts that are needed in order to radically change the way that public policies are being conceived, documented and run by a seriously handicapped public administration, in most of our European countries and especially those that are currently facing huge social and competitiveness deficits. These are the challenges that Europe, in a global perspective, is facing in the beginning of this century.

(Nikitas Kastis, MENON Network, President)

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Accreditation of prior learning as a lever for lifelong learning
Lessons learnt from the New Opportunities Initiative, Portugal

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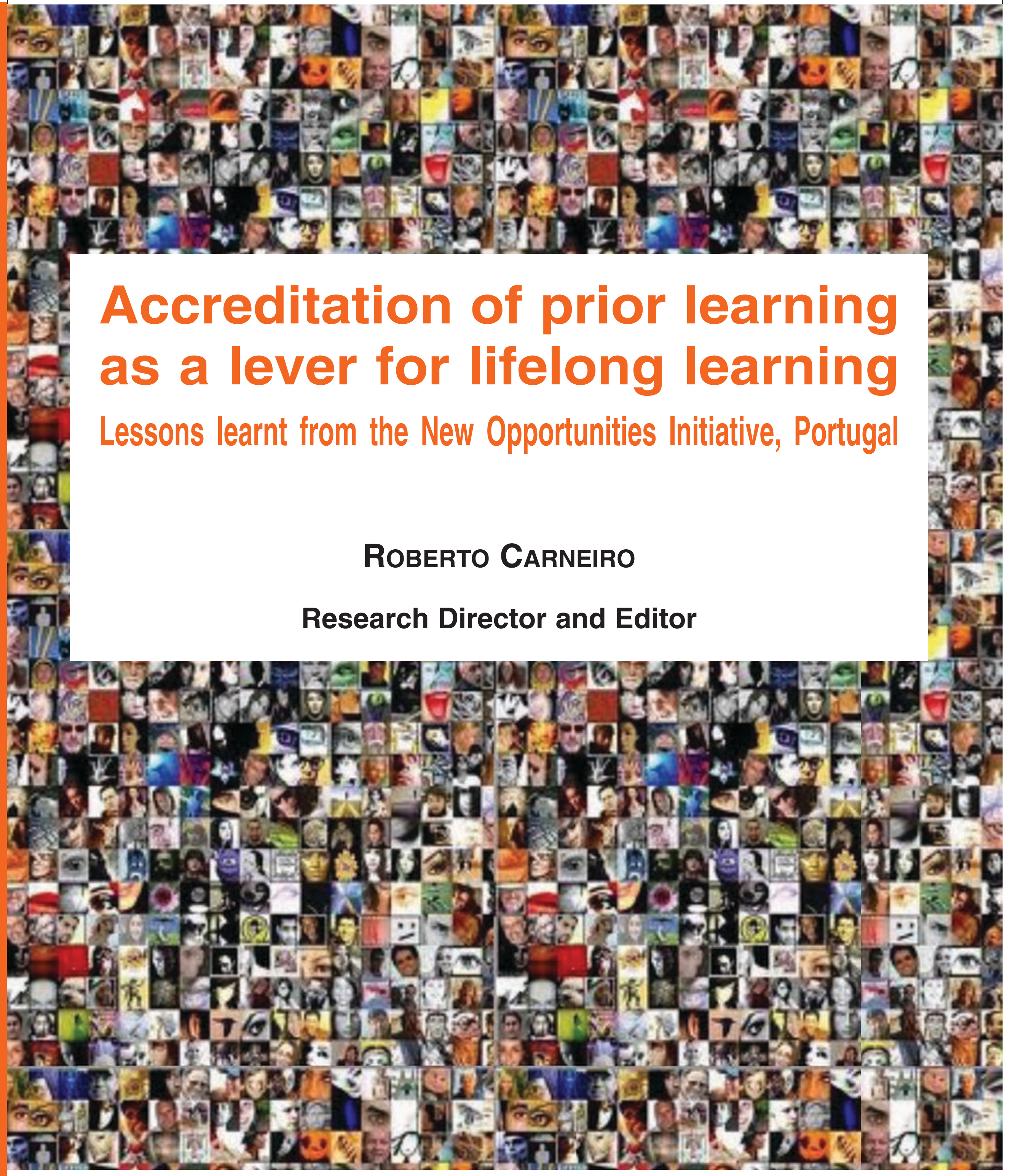
2011



Accreditation of prior learning as a lever for lifelong learning

Lessons learnt from the New Opportunities Initiative, Portugal

Roberto Carneiro

Research Director and Editor

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS DOS POVOS E CULTURAS DE EXPRESSÃO PORTUGUESA
Faculdade de Ciências Humanas
Universidade Católica Portuguesa

MENON Network

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS DOS POVOS E CULTURAS DE EXPRESSÃO PORTUGUESA
Faculdade de Ciências Humanas
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The *Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa* (CEPCEP) – Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures – is a research centre of the Portuguese Catholic University established in February 1983.

CEPCEP pursues the development of culture, knowledge, technology, learning, education, training, and co-operation in the intellectual, artistic, spiritual and scientific fields, bringing together peoples and institutions from different perspectives. In accordance with its charter, CEPCEP undertakes a vast range of activities aimed at furthering the human, social, economic and overall wellbeing of peoples with the promotion of enhanced intercultural dialogues throughout Europe and the World.

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MENON Network

MENON is a European research and innovation network, working since 1999 to foster and smoothen innovation processes in areas such as education and lifelong learning, international cooperation, knowledge society, social inclusion. MENON does so by facilitating the understanding of the processes of change happening in society, by engaging stakeholders in dialogue processes at different levels, and by offering evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice, at local, national, EU and international level.

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Accreditation of prior learning as a lever for lifelong learning: lessons learnt from the New Opportunities Initiative, Portugal

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CENTRO DE ESTUDOS DOS POVOS E CULTURAS
DE EXPRESSÃO PORTUGUESA

MENON Network

Accreditation of prior learning as a lever for lifelong learning: lessons learnt from the New Opportunities Initiative, Portugal

ROBERTO CARNEIRO
Research Director and Editor
President of CEPCEP – UCP, Portugal

November 2011

PREFACE

Lifelong learning, is and will remain for many more years, the single major challenge for the future posed to our learning systems and to the education public policy. Notwithstanding the fact of the matter is that educational systems, generally speaking, have been unable to design and adopt a large-scale model of lifelong learning as efficient, and productive, as the traditional factory-inspired schools of the industrial age. It is not without irony that while we cultivate a vigorous discourse geared at the foundations of a knowledge/learning-driven society for the 21st century our education infrastructure remains stuck to ideas and is built out of concepts that date back to the 19th century.

Innovation and creativity in this field are disappointing in spite of a general feeling that enormous externalities – social, cultural, economic and citizenship wise – could be derived from a strong lifelong learning put in place. The difficulties to move from a (mass)-production led to a (individualised)-demand driven paradigm are conceptually challenging and of complex implementation. This is especially true in times of fiscal crisis and lean public budgets that tend to favour 'more of the same' models that have already "proven" their efficient ways of tackling masses of students packaged into classrooms and provided with an "assembly line type" of educational provision. Hence, the fundamental challenge that lies before us consists in 'imagineering' demand oriented networks that are capable of: (i) personalising learning preferences and (ii) warranting economies of scale that may drive down unit costs to the level that is considered manageable by decision-makers.

Another known caveat remains with the lack of sufficient research-based evidence on 'what works' in lifelong learning. Reforms are only too often piecemeal, short-term, fragmented and seldom undergo evaluative research processes that are independent at their roots. Under the present uncertainties and ever-growing issues, learning from past successes and failures, and benchmarking our experience against that of others becomes so much more important. Moreover, evidence based structural reform – and sustainable innovation – puts a high premium on vision, stewardship, strategy, motivation and leadership, at both political and institutional levels.

The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) is a portuguese flagship programme to recognise and accredit prior learning (RPL, APL) and to endow low-skilled adults with upper secondary qualifications, which is defined as the minimum entry threshold to the exercise of a full citizenship in a knowledge-rich society. NOI's major achievement has been its ability to attract the least-skilled adults to embark in a system of informal and non-formal skills recognition, accreditation and certification, with complements of formal learning, to achieve academic and/or vocational certification. A record enrolment of about one half of the targeted adult population of roughly 3.7 million low-skilled in barely 5 years of implementation is a fact to be duly recognised and lies beyond dispute.

This book gives an account of the robust research efforts deployed at the independent evaluation of NOI. Written on a solid foundation of empirical evidence, this publication encompasses seven papers which were submitted to an extensive peer review procedure inspired by best practices in academic refereeing. The peer reviews were done initially at a distance by senior referees with solid scientific backgrounds and extensive international experience in the domain under appraisal; the process then continued with a face to face seminar where each peer reviewer examined three papers in depth and all experts were invited to act as discussants of each paper; the procedure was concluded by a second round of individual reviews whenever the paper had undergone serious change.

The experts that agreed to act as referees were:

- Adama Ouane, former Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
- Alejandro Tiana, Director General of the Centre for Advanced Studies, Ibero-American States Organization for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) and Professor, UNED, Spain
- Claudio Dondi, President of Scienter, Italy

- Karl Steffens, Senior Researcher and Professor, University of Koln, Germany
- Nikitas Kastis, President of the MENON network, Belgium
- Marja van den Dungen, Senior Manager of the National Centre for Innovation of Education (CINOP) and of the National Knowledge Centre APL
- Walter Kugemann, Former Director of FIM New Learning, Germany
- Roberta Sebastiani[1], Professor, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Italy

The present book brings together the final reviewed papers and closes with a weighted comment, authored by the International Expert Group that monitored the entire NOI evaluative research that was carried out over a period of approximately 2 years and a half.

I hope that the discussions around the NOI research papers may help sheding light on a reform agenda that is of maximum urgency in our systems of continuing and lifelong learning. Tackling these challenges could equally provide powerful insights to secure the efficient and effective provision of new public services in rapidly evolving environments.

CEPCEP is particularly honoured by the willingness and active collaboration of both UNESCO and MENON in the undertakings that led to the production of the book and to the Brussels Seminar designed to discuss its main findings in a broad and open constituency of qualified stakeholders.

Roberto Carneiro
President
CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University

[1] Distance reviewer only.

PREFACE

Lifelong learning assumes greater and greater importance as a means for tackling critical social, economic and environmental problems the world is facing. Nonetheless, its integrative and sector-wide nature has not been accorded the attention it deserves. In addition, adult learning and education is a key component of lifelong learning system and up to now the least institutionalized part. According to the National Reports submitted to UNESCO in preparation for the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), in 2009 and the first Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), most countries do not have specific adult education laws or policies and often there is an inadequate organisational infrastructure, and an unstable funding mechanism to ensure quality provision, wide participation and good learning outcomes.

Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the outcomes of formal, non-formal and informal learning (RVA) – or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as mentioned in this publication –, is crucial for making lifelong learning a reality. In addition RVA provides a pragmatic approach to including new standards and competences in the education and training system in order to be able to participate in the fast changing societies we are living in. The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) developed as a common reference framework by the European Union (EU), is helping education institutions, employers and individuals to compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems.

The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) is one of the largest governmental programmes in recent decades to massively upgrade qualifications acquired. It demonstrates among others that recognition of non-formal and informal learning is crucial in order to improve competences needed in our societies today. The example of NOI could be followed by other countries, taking into consideration that education and training systems in the different countries are rooted in very different traditions and that there is no global solution.

UNESCO seeks to provide Member States with technical support to develop and sustain the delivery of quality and development of responsive integrative education and training services to all their citizens within a lifelong learning framework, as well as to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences relevant to their individual development and to the development in families, in workplace and in societies as a whole.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) contributes to the research in RVA and lifelong learning. It also disseminates research on policy, practice and institutional issues surrounding the recognition, validation and accreditation of informal and non-formal learning. Among others an International Observatory of good practices in the field of recognition, accreditation and validation of non-formal informal and experiential learning has been developed. The aim is to enable a broader and better exchange of national experiences on how to improve RVA policy, institutional support and practice. In addition, following the request of the outcome document of the CONFINTEA VI, the Belém Framework for Action, UIL is now working with Member States to develop the UNESCO Guidelines on recognition of all forms of learning with a focus on non-formal and informal learning. The overall aim of these Guidelines is to propose principles, tools and mechanisms supported by research-based evidence and analysis that can assist Member States in developing or improving structures and mechanisms for recognizing all forms of learning.

I am happy that UIL is contributing to the work MENON and the Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures of the Portuguese Catholic University (CEPCEP) are undertaking, aiming to reflect on innovation processes in lifelong learning policy in Europe, so as to build a “Europe of innovation”. I would like to conclude that it is high time for lifelong learning to be accorded the full recognition that it deserves and for it to be made an integral part of all education policies.

Arne Carlsen
Director
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

PREFACE

The MENON Network is honoured to join this group of prestigious research and development organisations in such a demanding and rewarding activity to present the New Opportunities Initiative, a promising Programme in Portugal, and to reflect upon its results and potential for the European societies and the rest of the world.

The MENON Network has been established by an initiative of five European education, research and ICT institutions, with the status of a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) in Brussels in 1999. The mission of the Network and its founding purpose is to contribute to the uptake of the European education technology sector, while pursuing the aims of upgrading the quality of education systems in Europe. In the course of the last twelve years both the developments at the broad European and the international level and in the countries' lifelong learning systems, together with our common experience in this grouping, stemming out of a systematically built-in insight capability, has enhanced the afore-mentioned purpose and elaborated the capacity of the MENON Network, in order to act proactively and address the emerging inter-governance policy priorities, which have to do with the radical changes in the economic and social structures of the last part of the 20^{th} and the beginning of the 21^{st} century. These radical changes are being facilitated by the wide adoption of the digital information and communication technologies and are having significant effects upon our human and social capital in a globalised world.

It seems that the education and training and lifelong learning systems, in Europe as well as in the rest of the world, are facing the challenge of in-depth transformations. Policy priorities are becoming more inter-twined with those of the related social inclusion and the growth policy agendas. More citizens across the world and for longer periods of time are and will be in need of learning, which has to prove its relevance to the citizens' personal and professional development, to enhance their employability and potential to become active members of their societies.

More and more policy makers, enterprises and other stakeholders are and will be in need to take decisions about the procedures and the quality of the outcomes of education and social policies. In such a context, there is a clear demand for systematic, analytical and validated policy making and assessment support to be offered to all interested parties (EU bodies, governments, international organisations, NGOs, associations, professional bodies and enterprises). The MENON Network has taken up the challenge to address the above-mentioned demand and, in view of these developments, is continuously elaborating its long-term objectives, systematically updating our scope and mission and adopting clear research and development objectives, thus strengthening its capacity as a European Learning Research and Innovation network. In this context, we are investing in the consolidation of the European and international education and social research results and know-how, in order to be capable to offer learning innovation and social capital building solutions to a broader group of stakeholders.

It is exactly in this line of development that the MENON Network was honoured and warmly corresponded to the invitation of the CEPCEP and the Catholic University of Portugal, together with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, to offer our support to the consolidation of this publication, which constitutes an exceptional presentation work of the New Opportunities Initiative, a really innovative Programme to lever Portugal's social capital and jointly address the social inclusion and the growth policy priorities.

One has to take an in-depth reading in this publication in order to reflect upon the various aspects that touch upon the demanding lifelong learning policies and their relevance to social capital building. We need to understand the huge and at the same time sophisticated efforts that are needed in order to radically change the way that public policies are being conceived, documented and run by a seriously handicapped public administration, in most of our European countries and especially those that are currently facing huge social and competitiveness deficits. These are the challenges that Europe, in a global perspective, is facing in the beginning of this century. The present publication and the European Seminar to be run in Brussels, during November 2011, aim at contributing to the documentation of feasible and convincing policies to deal with, at both the European and the national/regional level.

Nikitas Kastis
President of the Board of Directors
MENON Network

TABLE CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

ANEFA – National Agency for Education and Training of Adults

ANQ – National Agency for Qualification

APL – Accreditation of Prior Learning

CAf – Common Assessment Framework

CES – Socio Economic Council

CLV – Customer Life Value

CNAEBA – National Council for Literacy and Adult Basic Education

CRVCC – Centres of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (experiential skills and tacit knowledge)

EEIG – European Economic Interest Group

EFA – Formal Programmes for Adult Education and Training

EQF – European Qualification Framework

EFQM – Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

ESF – European Social Fund

FG – Focus Groups

FP – Foundational Premises

GEPE – Educational Statistics and Planning Office

GETAP – Office for Technological, Artistic and Professional Education

G-D Logic – Goods-Dominant Logic

ICT – Information and Communication Technologies

GRALE – Global Report on Adult Learning and Education

IEFP – Employment and Vocational Training Institute

INOFOR – Institute for Innovation in Training

IPSS – Private Institutions of Social Solidarity

IPTS – Institute for Prospective Technological Studies

JRA – Job Requirements Assessment

LLL	– Lifelong Learning
LLS	– Learning to Learn Skills
LLT	– Lifelong Training Centres
NCP	– Portuguese National Code of Professions
NPI	– Negative Polarization Index
NOC	– New Opportunities Centres
NOI	– New Opportunities Initiative
NQC	– National Qualifications Catalogue
NQF	– National Qualifications Framework
PEPT	– Programme Education for All
PIPSE	– Inter-ministerial Programme for the Promotion of Educational Success
PNACE	– National Action Programme for Growth and Employment
PNAEBA	– National Plan for Literacy and Lower Secondary Education for Adults
PNAI	– National Plan of Action for Inclusio
PNDES	– National Economic and Social Development Plan
POPH	– Operational Programme of Human Development
PPI	– Positive Polarization Index
PRODEP	– Educational Development Programme for Portugal
QREN	– National Strategic Reference Framework
RPL	– Recognition of Prior Learning
RVA	– Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (of the outcomes of formal, non-formal and informal learning)
RVC	– Recognition and Validation of Competences (experiential skills and tacit knowledge)
RVCC	– Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (experiential skills and tacit knowledge)
SCM	– Supply Chain Management
SNQ	– National Qualifications System
S-D Logic	– Service-Dominant Logic
SIGO	– Information and Management System of the Education and Training Supply
SME	– Small and Medium Enterprises
TQM	– Total Quality Management
UCP	– Portuguese Catholic University
VET	– Vocational Education and Training

A.

'NEW OPPORTUNITIES' AND NEW GOVERNMENT: A PARADIGM CHANGE IN POLICY

ROBERTO CARNEIRO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

MENON Network, Brussels

E-mail: rc@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a unique experience in bridging new knowledge, generated from research sources, and paradigm changes in the Portuguese public policy landscape.

The case under scrutiny is NOI – New Opportunities Initiative –, an innovative approach to motivate low-skilled adults to embark in a system of informal and non-formal skills recognition, accreditation and certification, with complements of formal learning, to obtain 4th, 6th, 9th and 12th grades education diplomas or/and a vocational certification.

The NOI strategic objective is to reverse centuries of disinvestment in human capital and to endow the population with a minimum threshold of upper secondary qualifications.

The fundamental submission of the paper, based on robust empirical data, is that evaluative research can, and should, be widely used to improve the knowledge density and quality of public policy.

Keywords: New opportunities initiative, adult education, recognition of prior learning, accreditation of prior learning public policy, policy making, policy evaluation, policy paradigms, public sector innovation, new knowledge and quality, research and change, academia and policy.

1. Introduction

Public policy as defined and studied in our Western world usually follows the inertia of long cycles.

Changes in the public sphere are normally seen as incremental and policy is generally defined on the basis of existing concepts and conventional wisdom. New knowledge generated from research or academia is seldom the engine of policy or the foundation of paradigm changes in government.

The reason is that, under democratic rule, changes in public perceptions are slow. And policy carried out under democratic scrutiny greatly depends on the support of citizens and civil institutions.

This is particularly true of large social sectors such as the education and health systems. These bulky national systems which are responsible for a sizeable chunk of public budgets are also a media exposed stage for vocal stakeholders and a privileged battlefield of ideological confrontation.

Moreover, health and education are dominated by professionals (Mintzberg & Quinn, 1996) whose managerial skills are often weak when compared to their specialised capacities. The rules in health and education are dictated by group interests. Making university professors or hospital doctors abide by basic efficiency or effectiveness criteria is a known conundrum.

These well-grounded facts entail major difficulties in defining and implementing policy changes in education, especially when new policies threaten the *status quo* and long lasting vested interests of powerful lobbying groups (teachers' unions, parents' associations, local authorities, public bureaucracies, publishing houses, business associations, …).

In our paper we will describe a quantum leap in policy pertaining to a particular field of education: adult education and lifelong learning. Furthermore, we will show that this leapfrog change is fundamentally knowledge-driven, against all trends and conventions.

The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI)[1] was officially announced and launched in December 2005. NOI is a vast public sponsored programme contemplating Accreditation of prior learning (APL), Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and adult education, targeted at the entire Portuguese low-skilled adult population (estimated at around 72% of the labour force below secondary studies, or *circa* 3.5 million adults according to the 2001 Population Census).

Barely 5 years after its announcement, about 450 New Opportunities Centres (NOC) were put in place to operationalize the Initiative at field level. These NOC register a record 1.6 million enrolments and have topped the impressive figure of 430,000 certifications (9^{th} and 12^{th} grades).

The paper will depart from the assumption that this sweeping change in public policy, totally at odds with the dominant paradigm of an arcane public administration reflected in each policy phase (Dror, 1989), is propelled by a rare combination of three knowledge-driven engines:

1. A widely shared sense of urgency springing from unprecedented investments in future-oriented research, at meta-policymaking stage;
2. Leadership visions, key choices and change management approaches founded on solid knowledge exchange mechanisms, at policymaking stage;
3. Independent evaluative research[2] enabling both tight monitoring and formative improvement of processes, and the timely and accurate inventory of results, at post-policymaking and feedback stages.

Within limitations derived from the complexity of undertaking a nation-wide effort, the paper will lay down empirical data and field observations, mainly from primary sources constructed in the evaluative research exercise, which may or may not provide support to the above-mentioned set of knowledge-inspired assumptions.

The paper is divided into five parts.

Following the Introduction (Part 1), Part 2 harnesses concepts, facts and figures concerning NOI. While Part 3 brings together a synopsis of relevant

[1] Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades, http://www.en.anq.gov.pt/ and http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/, accessed 10.12.31.

[2] For the purpose of this paper we shall use the term ‘evaluative research’ to define a scientific-led exercise with the objective of conducting a thorough evaluation of a specific policy, covering both procedural aspects and policy impacts.

literature on public policy and paradigm changes, Part 4 provides overarching empirical information on NOI knowledge-driven policies, processes and results/impacts. Part 5 concludes with lessons from the evaluative research, redresses the beginning assumptions of the paper and recommends topics for future studies.

2. NOI – Concept, Facts and Figures

The core of our paper refers solely to one axle of NOI – qualification of adults and lifelong learning. The other half – youth qualification and professional education in secondary schools – is not our terrain of study, nor the object of the analytical categories which support the paper.

Bearing in mind this word of precaution, this section provides a comprehensive analysis of NOI and attempts to probe the full breadth of an overarching change in paradigm. To honour the wholesale strategic approach we shall present both dimensions of NOI – youth and adults – in order to offer readers a wide comprehension of the changes at stake.

Within the limited boundaries of a scientific article, we shall begin with a general overview of concepts to move swiftly into key facts and figures that may help to shed light on the goals and achievements of NOI in its initial phases, under the required lens of objectivity.

2.1. *Concept*

The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) is a national strategic plan to speed up the pace of secondary level achievement in the Portuguese population in order to rapidly catch up with European averages. In December 2005, with NOI, the Portuguese Government established a national priority to overcome the low qualification levels of the Portuguese population, in line with the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the European Agenda for economic growth and social cohesion.

Recognising upper secondary completion as a crucial threshold to enable lifelong learning in a knowledge-rich world, the Initiative summons and represents a national strategic effort regarding further investment in education and training systems and the will to overcome organisational barriers.

The Initiative addresses, by design, two distinct areas of intervention:

- The qualification of youth, curbing the high rates of failure and drop-out from initial education and training systems;

- The qualification of adults, improving access and encouraging participation of the labour force in training programmes and vocational education.

In other words, a two-fold strategy: on the one hand, ‘closing the tap’ that constantly drips into and broadens the pool of the low skilled and, on the other, offering adults a fair chance of redressing their lack of appropriate qualifications.

Stopping the haemorrhage of young school leavers abandoning studies before secondary education completion represents a determination to reverse the most serious endemic weakness of the Portuguese school culture. Addressing this structural flaw would entail strengthening double certification strategies and widely disseminating ‘professional education’ streams which allow, since 1989, for concomitant academic and vocational studies. Furthermore, professional education helped to learn to operate ‘close to market needs’ and to flexibly accommodate rapid changes in job requirements.

By the same token, granting working adults who left school without completing the 12th grade a fresh opportunity to recognize informal learning acquisitions and to upgrade qualifications required extending the network and multiplying the intake of a pilot system of RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning, in place on an experimental basis since 2000, which encompassed the RVC – Recognition and validation of competences (experiential skills and tacit knowledge) acquired via non-formal or informal schemes.

The ambitious goals set out for NOI and the results achieved by December 2010 for both intervention axles are summarised in the next points.

2.2. *NOI for youth*

A) GOAL: By 2010 the number of students enrolled in vocational streams should reach half the total number of secondary education students.

   RESULT: In 2009/2010 total enrolments at upper secondary level are 342,450. Of these, slightly under 150,000 follow double certification courses (43%). The programme reveals that achieving this goal is within reach.

B) GOAL: To reach A) it will be necessary to raise the number of places in double certification courses, estimated at an increased capacity of 35,000 more places in 2010 in comparison to 2005.

RESULT: At the starting point – 2005 – 110,000 places were available. By 2010, an estimated 150,000 upper secondary level students are enrolled in double certification courses. This represents an increase of 40,000 enrolments, exceeding the targeted goal.

C) GOAL: By 2010, all young people at risk of dropping-out of the education system without completing compulsory schooling must be integrated in occupational paths that will enable them to complete 9^{th} grade. That means to create 2,500 new places each year during the period of 5 years, or 12,500 accumulated new posts.

RESULT: At the starting point – 2005 – 15,000 places were available. By 2010, 32,192 young students were enrolled in vocational lower secondary level. Total capacity registers more than a two-fold increase and the goal was exceeded.

D) GOAL: To generalise vocational programmes in public schools in order to complement the limited supply of professional education almost exclusively in the realm of private schools. By 2010, over 450 of these courses should operate in public secondary schools as a regular training offer.

RESULT: In 2010, 94.4% of secondary public schools include professional education streams as a course supply raising the number to 472 public secondary schools that now offer professional studies in their regular curricula.

2.3. *NOI for adults*

A) GOAL: To disseminate the network of Skills Recognition, Validation and Certification Centres (NOC), aiming at 500 in 2010.

RESULT: At the starting point – 2005 – there were 98 Centres. In December 2010, 453 Centres were in operation, slightly below the target, but representing a 362% increase from departure. 2006 and 2008 registered the largest increases – over 170 new Centres in each of those two years. Some NOC were significantly reinforced in human and financial resources, enabling them to exceed their expected capacity.

B) GOAL: To establish national standards to be applied in the recognition, validation and certification of skills at upper secondary education as well as for adult education and training.

RESULT: These standards were set in December 2006[3] at a par with the achievement of other key goals concerning the architecture of a new upper secondary level system.

C) GOAL: To reinforce the supply of Adult Education and Training Courses, equivalent to grades 9 and 12. At grade 9, enrolments should reach 42,000 individuals by 2010, whereas for upper secondary level the target was 65,000 adults enrolled in 2010.

RESULT: At the starting-point – 2005 - in grade 9 there were 8,000 adults involved in these training paths and none at grade 12. By December 2010 there were more than 167,500 enrolments. The goal for compulsory level (grade 9) was exceeded, registering 88,012 enrolments. In view of result B), at upper secondary level (grade 12) there were 79,574 enrolments, a number that surpassed the target. Since 2008, the number of adults enrolled at upper secondary level systematically overtook the lower level.

D) GOAL: To guarantee that by 2010 600,000 adults have obtained a skills certificate via recognition, validation and certification processes. The breakdown is: 255,000 in basic education and 345,000 in secondary education.

RESULT: According to data available in December 2010 over 422,000 adults obtained a certification since 2006:

- 362,588 from Recognition and validation of competences (RVC);
- 58,984 from Adult Education and Training Courses;
- 1,403 from Paths to Conclude the Upper Secondary Level, a modality created in 2007 to allow the conclusion of upper secondary by students with a maximum of 6 incomplete curricular units from extinct plans of studies.

While in basic education 309,752 adults had been awarded this certificate, the number for secondary level had reached 113,223, the consequence of a much later initiation. Thus, it was impossible to attain the initial ambition set for certifications in upper secondary level.

[3] www.catalogo.anq.gov.pt, accessed 10.12.31.

2.4. *Other NOI decisive undertakings:*

A) To raise national awareness on lifelong learning strategies

Politically speaking, to mobilize and motivate the Portuguese population to uptake the challenge of learning is not less critical than to ensure an increased supply of training opportunities. To a large extent, NOI's success relies on ensuring a sustainable demand.

Thus, the launch of vast media campaigns specifically tailored to each NOI line of intervention – youth and adults.

By September 2010, eight major media campaigns had been carried out. The three first campaigns were launched in 2007 and targeted to younger people by addressing misrepresentations concerning upper secondary education and the social undervaluation of Vocational Education and Training (VET), as well as the adult population by conveying the value of experience through the recognition of competences and the importance of qualification through individual pathways.

In the period 2008-2009, four national campaigns were launched: one enhanced the diversity of paths available for young people after concluding the 9th grade and two others focused on the adult population, with the aim of valuing competences recognition as a legitimate route to achieve a formal qualification and of promoting the different routes that lead to upper secondary level. Likewise, media messages emphasised the social value of investment in adult education from a lifelong perspective, including arguments of a positive economic impact.

The last campaigns took place in October 2009 and September 2010. The latter communications elicited business social responsibility in order to stimulate corporate investment and solid commitment of employers in the training of employees whose qualifications remained below grade 12.

B) To develop a quality certification system

The administration made a point of transforming a former Accreditation System of Training Entities into a Quality Certification System, governed by international standards, not later than 2007.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), approved by legislation dated 31 December 2007 – DL 396/2007 –, adopted the European Qualifications Framework principle to describe national qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and follows the descriptors connected to each qualification level. The National Qualifications Catalogue (NQC), launched in May 2008, already includes more than 250 qualifications covering 40 VET areas, and further establishes for each one an occupational profile and modular training and validation standards. The NQC regulating non-higher qualifications and the double certification vocational education and training for adults and young people are key instruments of a fully integrated system, in the spirit of NQF.

C) To create an information and management system for both key NOI axles.

From its very inception, it was deemed necessary to equip NOI with a system that was capable of ensuring two main objectives:

- Sustaining decision-making procedures with regard to a balanced territorial coverage of double certification supply and high standards of quality in NOC's activity;
- Reinforcing the legibility of the training supply and of NOC activity, providing an integrated and comprehensive information tool named SIGO for all agents involved: individuals, education and training operators, professionals, and administration.

The first working group responsible for the conception and development of the system named SIGO (Information and Management System of the Education and Training Supply) was setup in December 2005. SIGO's online platform became fully operational in February 2007, providing a fundamental channel for promoting, managing and monitoring both key intervention areas of NOI.

2.5. *Conclusion*

The New Opportunities Initiative, launched for an initial period 2006-2010, is the largest governmental programme in recent decades to massively upgrade the qualifications of the Portuguese population. To date, NOI implementation performance indicators rest aligned with targets set out in 2005, with few exceptions. Institutional and contextual factors working in favour of this positive evolution were:

- The setting up in 2006 of ANQ – National Qualifications Agency, a public institute operating under the joint supervision of the Ministries of Education and Labour. ANQ's core mission is to promote the generalization of upper secondary education as the minimum qualification level, thus ensuring the accomplishment of goals mapped under NOI;
- The fundamental conditions listed at NOI outset, i.e. legislation on NOC, reinforcement of double certification courses, expansion of RVC system to upper secondary level, NQF, NQC, SIGO, were timely or defined before the end of 2007[4];
- The mobilisation of critical funding from the European Social Fund to support the widening of the skills recognition, validation and certification system and the corresponding institutional effort of a fivefold increase in the number of NOC, as well as the other training options for adults (adult education and training courses or modular short training);
- An unprecedented and hardly expected positive response from the demand-side for which media campaigns turned out to be instrumental;
- Likewise, the growing establishment of company protocols with ANQ to actively engage employers in the proper qualification of employees. There are already 91 collaborative protocols in operation, involving more than 42,000 adults enrolled, 13,000 of which are successfully certified to date.

Among other interesting features that also merit highlighting because they had not been fully considered during the launch period but quickly became central to the present and future of NOI, one should also underline:

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[4] Namely the backbone legislation contained in:
Portaria nr 86/2007, of 12 January, and Portaria nr 370/2008, of 21 May – NOC.
Despacho nr 26401/2006, of 29 December, Portaria nr 817/2007, of 27 July, and Portaria nr 230/2008, of 7 March – Adult Education and Training Courses.
DL 357/2007, of 29 October – Paths to Conclude the Upper Secondary Level of studies.
Portaria nr 370/2008, of 21 May – New Opportunities Centres, and Despacho nr 15889/2009, of 13 July - Certified Modular Training.
DL 396/2007, of 31 December, Despacho nr 13456/2008, of 14 May, and Portaria nr 781/2009, of 23 July – NQF and NQC.
Despacho nr 14019/2007, of 3 July – SIGO.

- A SIGO master development plan, achieved with the assistance of external expertise from the evaluation team, which allows, in one single stroke: to monitor the activity of NOC, co- and self-regulate field institutions, and speed up decision-making processes;
- The decision to commission an external evaluation of the Initiative, to be carried out in the period 2008-2011 by the Portuguese Catholic University. This evaluation has fuelled critical insights for a permanent assessment of NOI's stickiness to field conditions and timely new knowledge essential to the critical improvement of the entire operation;
- The establishment of a NOI Monitoring Committee integrating external experts and representatives of stakeholders.

3. A theoretical framework: Public Policy under transition

Public Policy is an umbrella term hosting a variety of concepts and constructs.

Amongst the most popular academic perspectives we may elicit some key directions: the study of what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes (Dye, 1976); the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the lives of citizens (Peters, 1982); the authoritative allocation of values (Easton, 1965).

Additionally, the analytical frameworks, which theorists employ to interpret public policy, display a vast menu of pluralistic patterns.

Framing the discourse of public policy according to Bobrow and Dryzek (1997) includes five main strands of analysis: (i) welfare economics; (ii) public choice; (iii) social structure; (iv) information processing; (v) political philosophy. Parsons (1995) adds three other frameworks to the list: (vi) political process; (vii) comparative politics; (viii) management.

The dynamics of change in public policy is an outstanding field of inquiry from various approaches. To cite just one of the most widely accepted theories, Kuhn's approach to understanding change in public policy stems from the study of knowledge (Kuhn, 1962). To make his case, the author analyses how frameworks of thinking and research come to dominate an academic field of inquiry and establish 'normal science'.

Consequently, science is seen as a human activity driven by paradigms that are sustained essentially by communities of researchers which largely drive the accepted 'norm' in their respective domain of study.

Whenever a crisis occurs in the standard or normative interpretation of reality, a paradigm revolution takes place. As a direct consequence, interpretative extension or even a full replacement of the challenged norm is offered.

While recognizing the key role of knowledge in paradigmatic thought, Popper (1959) considers nevertheless that knowledge is never final. Thus 'experimentalism', i.e. piecemeal and social engineering, is the prime engine of scientific advancement. In accordance with his viewpoint, social progress does not take place as a result of big or total changes, so much as of a cycle of trial and error experimentation. From this angle, evaluative research and timely feedback to the centre of policymaking is part and parcel of a system of appropriate incremental learning, and thus improvement, in policy execution.

Likewise, seen from the angle of another complementary school of thought, policy arises to ensure that spontaneous societal order takes place in the intersection between free individuals and free markets (Hayek, 1960). Social design becomes less important than the free interaction between autonomous actors, a stance whereby policy has the primordial role of ensuring the creative interplay of free and responsible actors. Under Hayek's assumptions, market imperfections must be firmly restrained and the best way to do so is to ascertain that a proper flow of knowledge and communication is put in place.

Etzioni (1993) frames the development of a 'societal consciousness' as the knowledgeable community response to state centralism and to market individualism when dealing with participatory public policy formulation. With this in mind, Etzioni attempts to strike a delicate balance between government and market as engines of policy by naming intermediate agents – informed community based actors – as the fundamental tenets of both policymaking and execution.

Habermas (1984) prefers a distinct analytical basis to policy making by coining the notion of 'communicative rationality' as a surrogate for utilitarian rationalism (instrumental rationality), and eliciting inter-subjective communication as the main source of knowledge. Constructing mutual understanding generates the *locus* for a new approach to reason and to a subject-centred 'philosophy of consciousness'.

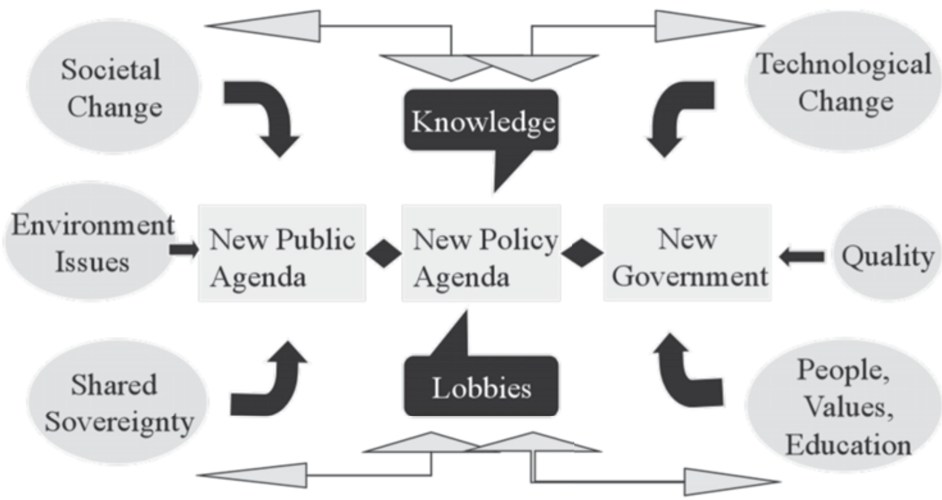
Very much in line with the modern trend of evolutionary theories based upon societal players, a different shift is designed by Schmitter (1974) in his neo-corporatist theory. His perspective focuses on the influence of organized interests (legitimate lobbies) in determining socially accepted knowledge, public policy directions and agenda-setting priorities.

Carneiro (2000) departs from previous theoretical frameworks to emphasize the central role of agenda and policy setting in the formation of new government paradigms. By proceeding along this intellectual avenue, Carneiro aims at an interactive agglutination of former schools of interpretation (Figure A.1).

His approach posits a comprehensive architecture that leads both agenda and policy setting. While new agendas are located at the intersection of rising societal factors, new policies are placed at the triangular combination of new agendas, the interplay of lobbies and new knowledge generation.

Carneiro stresses that the effective implementation of new policy depends primarily on the quantum of citizen-customer trust vis-à-vis the provision of goods and services by the government. Trust, in this contemporary understanding, is contingent on the intersection of two sets of variables that are pervasively present in the relationship between modern government and citizen: the outburst of Media, totally embedded into today's life; and the exponential increase in Education, equipping the average citizen with unprecedented levels of critical views and autonomous judgement concerning the general issues included in the ever-changing boundaries of the public sphere. Media and Education are thus the two major drivers of quality assurance and of increased accountability in public policies.

Figure A.1 Setting the Agenda for New Government' (Carneiro, 2000)

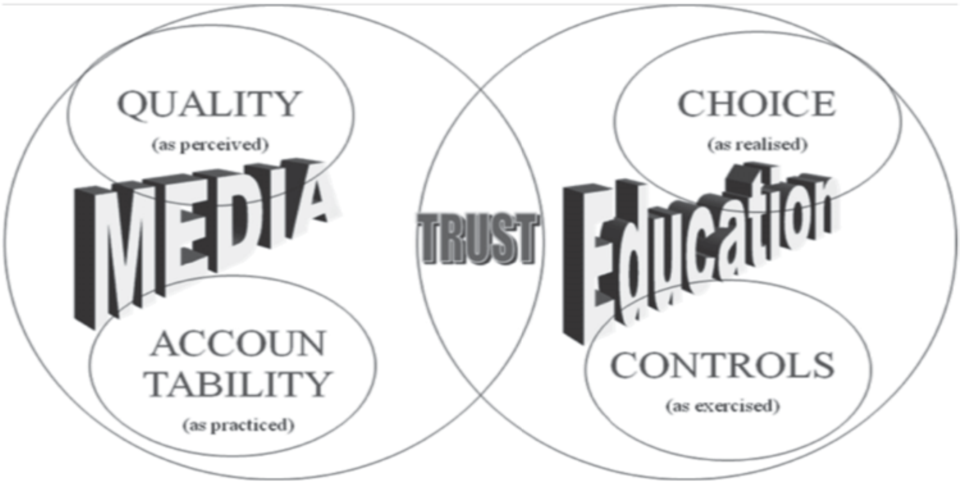


> Media and Education are the two drivers that build credibility or step up mistrust in government. Each one, in its own powerful way, can tip the balance to produce disequilibrium and dissent or, conversely, broaden the foundations of trust on which governing by consent can expect to outlive electoral cycles. Both are powerful generators of societal values. Ultimately, the measure of trust is deeply rooted in the structure of prevalent values and the way in which government interprets them to oversee and ensure the public interest (Carneiro, 2000, p. 108).

The first set of constraints determining trust in policy, interfaced by Media, encompasses accrued perceptions of quality and acute practices of accountability, while the second set, which is knowledge-related and fundamentally mediated by ***Education*,** combines **choice**, as realized, and **controls**, as exercised (illustrated in Figure A.2).

The nature of the relationship between government and the governed is undergoing substantial change. The era of passive submission is giving way to a totally different equation: taxpayers and managers, stakeholders, think-tanks, academia, and representatives, are increasingly active and aware of their political power and social responsibilities.

Figure A.2 Trust: A Qualitative Model (Carneiro, 2000)



In formal democracies – social and electoral – preferences are the outcome of the perceived convergence between realising values and delivering public goods. This basic verification constitutes the very essence of democracy: the will of the people made sovereign. Yet when the two primary drivers of social representations – media and education – favour immediate goals and selfish/material values, short-sighted choices will prevail. In other words, near-equilibrium forms of government will pay off in the voting preferences of the electorate. These ultra-stable majorities can be harmful to the pursuit of the long-term goals in society.

> Gaining trust in a tussle for votes may lead governments to behave as mere brokers among interests. This is a danger to democracy: ultimately deal making takes over the entire sphere of government. Governing stays afloat by a constant display of goodwill in trying to satisfy as many interest blocs as possible. Cultivating near-equilibrium policies is, under these populist circumstances, a bad service to the pressing challenges of charting new courses into the future. In the worst case, trust is measured against the ability to respond to basic entitlement aspirations. A protective constituency is then an easy prey to the demagoguery arsenal so often displayed for ballot purposes (Carneiro, 2000, pp. 108-109).

The rationalization of trust as a key variable in the sustainability and adherence of public policy to societal needs is correlated with a neo-rational tentative of bringing together a wealth of factors and agencies, intervening in policy making at both subjective and objective levels of decision.

Dror (1989), a prolific contemporary author, makes a remarkable contribution to the consolidation of a pure-rationality approach in the form of an optimal model of public policy that draws a sequential distinction between 4 stages and 18 phases covering the entire process in the making of policy:

A. *META-POLICYMAKING STAGE*

1. Processing values
2. Processing reality
3. Processing problems
4. Surveying, processing, and developing resources
5. Designing, evaluating, and redesigning the policymaking system
6. Allocating problems, values, and resources
7. Determining policymaking strategy

B. *POLICYMAKING STAGE*

8. Sub-allocating resources
9. Establishing operational goals, with some order of priority

10. Establishing a set of other significant values, with some order of priority
11. Preparing a set of major alternative policies, including some "good" ones
12. Preparing reliable predictions of the significant benefits and costs of the various alternatives
13. Comparing the predicted benefits and costs of the various alternatives and identifying the "best" ones
14. Evaluating the benefits and costs of the "best" alternatives and deciding whether they are "good" or not

C. *POST-POLICYMAKING STAGE*

15. Motivating the executing of the policy
16. Executing the policy
17. Evaluating policymaking after executing the policy

D. *COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK CHANNELS*

18. Communication and feedback channels interconnecting all phases

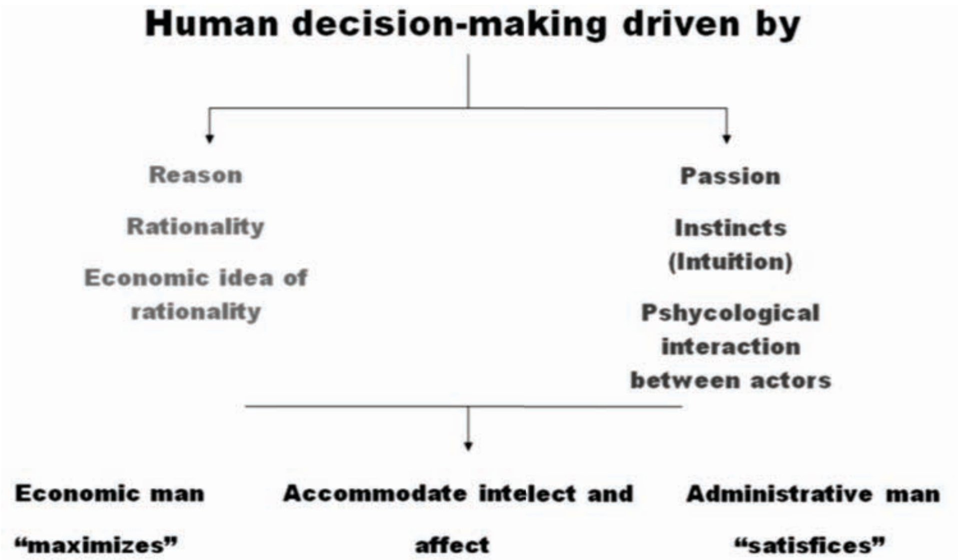
Dror further argues that there is a realm of extra-rational understanding founded on tacit knowledge and experiential knowledge (*metis*). His 18 phases provide decision-makers with an expanded conceptual and enhanced framework through the combination of extra-rational and purely rational elements. The outstanding challenge is to achieve the knowledge threshold required by each phase and stage in order to arrive at a balanced and optimal sequence in policy design and execution.

Vice versa, Simon (1976) challenges the supremacy of purely rational policy making. He performs a stroke of genius in defining 'bounded rationality' as a systemic theory that reconciles intellect and affect. While the economic mind 'maximizes' the effects of decision, the administrative/political mind 'satisfices' the world of stakeholders. The latter approach seeks a course of action that is satisfactory or 'good enough' instead of a purely economic-driven decision whose behaviour is based on the exhaustive review of all possible policy scenarios (Figure A.3).

Indeed, common sense considers that human behaviour in organisations, if not wholly rational, is at least in good part intendedly so. That is to say that the 'ideal-type' model promoted by economic thinking is theoretically sound but unrealistic.

"Almost all human behaviour consists of goal-orientated actions" (Simon, 1985, p. 297). Nevertheless, these actions are not necessarily or exclusively directed at the optimization of material benefits.

Figure A.3 Herbert Simon's Hybrid Model



Language remains the material foundation of both communication and accurate knowledge transmission.

The subject of the relationship between language and politics – a theme that occupies a core position in contemporary public policy analysis – is creatively taken up by Orwell (1954). In *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Orwell portrays a world where those in power proceed to restructure language ('Newspeak') into an exclusive and concise code of expression for world-views and mental habits. His objective ideally would be to drift away from "political language that consists largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness (…); when there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words" (Orwell, 1954, pp. 361-363).

Orwell's total utopia suggests that policy is driven, at its roots, by symbolic knowledge – language above all – and by its skilful use, rather than purely substantive action springing from orderly knowledge (Young & Mason, 1983). Thus, it comes as no surprise that policy-making increasingly surges as an open theatre with entirely analogous regions of communication such as: performance front and back-stages, scenarios and lights, interacting actors and public, rise and fall of stars (Goffman, 1971).

Appropriate language use to convey clear ideas and passionate visions is the privileged playing field of leaders. Leadership is generally regarded as a driving element of governance, whether addressing public policy or dealing with corporate strategy. Leaders are unequivocally seen as a pre-requisite for change, particularly in rapidly mutant contexts and when markets undergo turbulent transitions.

The acceleration of the pace of history and the related need to constantly reshape and adapt policies has gradually replaced the traditional roles of management by robust cultures of leadership. The dynamics of organisational designs have had to accompany some commensurate leaps in paradigms between the 20th and 21st centuries by incorporating learning features (Senge, 1993). Learning organisations must harness capabilities of coping with the ever-increasing pace of new knowledge generation (Kiernan, 1993): from stability to change; from size and scale to speed and response; from vertical integration to virtual integration; from hierarchy to multi-level leadership.

Thus, while management deals with complexity – one main phenomenon of the 20th century epitomized in the development of large size organisations (big government, big corporations) – leadership deals with change, essential to survive in a world of constant mutation and driven by knowledge and new knowledge applications, i.e. innovation. Leaders perform three essential missions in driving policy during times of rapid change: defining a path (vision), aligning resources, motivating and inspiring (Kotter, 1990).

The functions of leadership may be further detailed by breaking them down into five practices and ten commitments (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 22), Figure A.4.

These ten commitments are no other than ascribed behaviours embedding the exemplary leader's knowledge portfolio to arrive at extraordinary results and to achieve an unconditional alignment of constituents.

Figure A.4 Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Leadership
(Kouzes & Posner, 2002)

1	Model the Way	1	Find your own "voice" clarifying your personal values.
		2	Set the example through actions that are in agreement with the values that you proclaim.
2	Inspire a Shared Vision	3	Scan the future imagining atractive – desirable – possibilities.
		4	Involve others in a common vision that appeals to common aspirations.
3	Challenge the Process	5	Search the opportunities through innovative ways to change and to grow in permanence.
		6	Experiment and accept risks valuing the meaning of little victories, learning with mistakes.
4	Enable Others to Act	7	Reach out for collaboration by emphasizing joint objectives and building trust.
		8	Empower the others through power sharing.
5	Encourage the Heart	9	Recognize diverse contributions showing your encouragement to individual excellence.
		10	Celebrate values and successes creating a spirit of community.

Leadership and change go hand in hand.

Research on Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles (Zaleznik, 1977; Goleman, 1998, 2000; Dearborn, 2002; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008) concur on empirical evidence that brings out five key competences of leaders capable of exercising emotional intelligence:

1. Knowing your emotions;
2. Managing your own emotions;
3. Motivating yourself;
4. Recognising and understanding other people's emotions;
5. Managing relationships, i.e. establishing constructive bridges to the emotions of others.

These five attributes are necessary to enable leadership that sparks change and motivates people in accepting to be active partners in carrying out challenging innovative practices.

Kotter (1996) has been, by far, the most dedicated academic to research Change, particularly in organisations (business and government). Knowledge is a basic ingredient that is present in each and every avenue of Kotter's original interpretation of change processes.

In a widely known work, Kotter spells out his eight-stage process to ensure sustainable change:

- Establishing a sense of urgency;
- Creating the guiding coalition;
- Developing a vision and a strategy;
- Communicating the change vision;
- Empowering employees for broad-based action;
- Generating short-term wins;
- Consolidating gains and producing more change;
- Anchoring new approaches in the culture.

Carneiro (2010b) has proposed an extension of Kotter's understanding vis-à-vis change factors that affect the process of 'Transforming Universities'.

In the present paper we shall attempt another application of this acclaimed eight-step theory to education systems and organisations: interpreting the consolidation of wholesale policy change of the kind pursued under NOI, fuelled by a knowledge framework that operated effectively over time and tailored to defining moments of the policy path.

It is timely to refer to the known impacts of knowledge deepening on organisational learning. This particular dimension of a knowledge-based policy development – focusing on the reach for organisational maturity based on accrued self-evaluation and benchmarks – is the main topic of another paper in this series (Melo & Reis, 2010). Later in the paper, we shall allude to the NOC reengineering as an ongoing process that results from turning the SIGO and CAf (Common Assessment Framework) into ordinary self-evaluation instruments and user-friendly tools.

Bearing in mind that the organisational evolution of NOC is the main theme of another paper, it suffices to mention at this stage that the *learning organisation* theory inspires the key evaluative research directions from this particular viewpoint. Theories in use (Senge, 1990, 1993, 1994) underline five determinants of a structural transformation from a purely mechanical organisation ('newtonian behaviour') into a learning organisation ('biological behaviour'). Let us list these determinants as a reminder:

1. Systemic thinking (big picture, conceptual framework pattern recognition);
2. Personal mastery (vision, focusing energies, patience, objectivity, link between personal-organisational learning);

3. Mental models (perfecting inner images, overcoming prejudice);
4. Building a shared vision (objectives, values, mission, shared pictures of the future);
5. Team learning (dialogue, thinking together, free-flow of meaning, community discovery).

In conclusion, the central research issue addressed in the paper dwells on the relationship between new knowledge which is generated by research and the perceived quality of policy. There is no evidence, much to the contrary, that contemporary public policy making, which could/should call on the wealth of empirical and theoretical knowledge available, has benefitted both in quality and accuracy from the remarkable accumulation of scientific knowledge in recent decades.

Nowadays, interdisciplinary research and academic publishing produce an unprecedented *corpus* of advanced knowledge and new insights that is capable of assisting in the formulation/implementation of public policy. Despite this undisputable fact, records of direct consequences of this treasure of new knowledge on good governance practices are extremely feeble, not to say deceiving.

Notwithstanding, one basic assumption of our paper is that some modes of academic knowledge, particularly those that stem from policy evaluative research, may contribute effectively to the improvement of policy. This is true whenever policies undergoing scientific monitoring and scrutiny benefit from an adequate, timely and trustful communication channel between evaluated – the policy maker – and evaluator – the academic institution. The establishment of a fruitful dialogue ought not to undermine the independence and objectivity that are a requisite of any evaluative research exercise (Carneiro, 2009).

4. Bridging knowledge and policy: Three NOI-inspired cases

Management styles and procedures in the Portuguese public administration remain traditional and procedural in essence.

Public policy evaluation as a regular activity is but a recent achievement. This practice is a contemporary of the 'Great Society' defined in the 1960s. The 1980s enhanced its relevance with the inception of widespread public sector reforms inspired by 'New Public Management' theories (Kaboolian, 1998). According to the new trends, a strategic shift occurs in public policy: from a focus on processes and inputs to an emphasis on results and outputs.

A subtle migration towards soft/behavioural approaches to governance as a surrogate of a positivistic/normative stance on government also came to reflect a different attitude vis-à-vis the value of a scientific assessment of policies.

Social theory teaches us that reflexivity is the distinctive attribute of higher-order organisations. Reflexivity expresses the circular relationships between cause and effect and depends on positive/critical feedbacks (Giddens, 1984).

However, reflexivity is only possible when there is access to timely and independent feedback on the quality of service rendered to citizens and customers of the public sector. This concern embodies phase 18 and stage D of Dror's optimal model of public policy making.

Thus, knowledge on performance, impacts, perceptions and motivations, is a primordial and irreplaceable condition of an evidence-based approach to policy improvement and to enable a working reflexive mode in public agencies.

The three cases described in the following paragraphs offer organised analytical data and empirical insights to substantiate outcomes from building solid collaborative bridges between government and academia, as well as unequivocal benefits from evaluative research contributions to policy fine-tuning.

Case #1 – Knowledge can move the agenda-setting toward new policy priorities

The then Minister of Education, Eduardo Marçal Grilo, requested the author of this paper to coordinate a comprehensive prospective study which was carried out over three years (1997-1999). The purpose of this multi- and interdisciplinary work, which involved in excess of 100 seasoned researchers – many of whom would later hold high positions as Ministers or Secretaries of State –, was to deepen existing knowledge on education and learning in Portugal in order to formulate alternative scenarios for the future. All key stakeholders were represented and/or participated in multiple hearings carried out at different stages in the course of the study: employers, unions, parents, teachers, students, local authorities, publishers, universities, …

The basic questions of this ambitious exercise encompassed three streams:

- What education and training can we aspire to at the end of the next 20 years (2000-2020)?

- What is the educational profile that best serves 21st century Portugal?
- How can we ensure a *quantum* of effective change while simultaneously respecting our centuries-old national culture?

The official title of the final report, made public in June 2000, was ***"The Future of Education in Portugal, Trends and Opportunities: A Prospective Study".*** But, most importantly, its sub-title showed the depth and scope of the challenge:

"20 years to overcome 20 decades of educational disadvantage"

This sub-title was intentionally chosen to show the enormous task at hand: to undertake an unprecedented change in our educational landscape, a sort of 'late modernity' challenge (Giddens, 1991) required to achieve Portugal's imperative to catch-up with the advanced economies at the very threshold of a knowledge and information society. This move meant reversing an historical trend of many centuries.

To illustrate the urgency of the issue, the report begins by recognizing that, in the recent past, the advent of democracy and the European option have made a decisive mark on the paths taken by our country. Portugal has changed – quickly and deeply.

However, these unquestionable advances are confronted with persistent problems that constitute the other side of the coin. Portugal's core educational issues date back to 200 years or more of disinvestment in human capital.

In 1800, over 90% of the Portuguese were illiterate – an indicator that was not very different from other southern European countries. In 1900, 78% of the population were illiterate – a situation which was already substantially different from the industrialised countries of Europe where levels of illiteracy had fallen to somewhere in the region of 10-30% (Scandinavia, Germany, England). Portugal was already at a clear disadvantage compared to Spain (60%) and Italy (56%).

The first decade of the 20th century confirmed this diverging trend. In 1910, 75% of the Portuguese were illiterate, whereas this indicator had fallen to 53% in Spain and 46% in Italy. In other words, the rate at which young people in our country were attracted to school was slow. Thus, the reduction in illiteracy proceeded at a snail's pace throughout the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

To better understand this slow academic evolution among the school-age population, it suffices to know that at the dawn of the 20th century only 4.62% of the Portuguese went to primary school. This participation rate in Portugal in 1900 was lower than that in Spain 50 years earlier (5.33% in 1850) or Italy 40 years before (4.9% in 1860). By 1850, another southern European country – France – had achieved a 9.67% rate of primary school attendance – in other words, more than double that in Portugal 50 years later.

Taking a much closer look, it is worth observing that in the 1970s, when many countries in central and northern Europe had already achieved a 90% rate of secondary school attendance, Portugal was still struggling to ensure 6 years of basic compulsory schooling and suffering from illiteracy rates of *circa* 30%.

In the meantime, the race of the 3rd Industrial Revolution took off. Critical factors to win this race are to be found in intangible assets: quality of human resources; knowledge and skills; entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity; education, training and research; cultures of learning throughout life; ability to take risks; attitudes aimed at servicing customers and creating new value for them.

The study moves ahead to offer two basic scenarios for a massive requalification of the Portuguese adult population, overcoming a liability accumulated over the years.

A first scenario – one that is quite conservative in its ambitions – would consist in attaining the existing situation in terms of the educational structure of the 25-64 year old population of the most advanced countries in Europe, such as Finland, Denmark and The Netherlands, by 2020. In order to achieve this, Portugal would have to equip and/or qualify around 2.5 million active adults, half of whom with a secondary or equivalent level of training.

In a second – more ambitious – scenario, the goal would be to converge with the educational structure of the Finnish, Danish and Dutch population by 2020. In this hypothesis, Portugal would be confronted with the need to equip and/or qualify around 5 million active adults, about 1/3 of whom with a secondary or equivalent level of training.

The creation of a Learning Society in Portugal cannot be dissociated from a generational effort to definitively overcome the gap that separates us from the European countries that serve as reference points within the next 20 years. In other words, we are only interested in the second scenario. Even with optimistic assumptions as to productivity gains, this ambition would continuously require around 500,000 people to undergo training each year and the allocation of financing – public, private or mixed – estimated at the equivalent of 10% of the Ministry of Education's total current budget.

The research results also showed that this *desideratum* would need to include both the certification of educational and/or training paths and the recognition/accreditation of knowledge and skills that may have been acquired informally (tacit knowledge and aptitudes).

The study raised a great deal of controversy and discussion.

During the following five years (2000-2005) opinions were split between those who found the recommended targets unattainable and those who thought that a generation thrust based on solid policy, societal determination and collective will could achieve the proposed objectives.

Meanwhile, the Planning Ministry undertook the preparation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) for the period 2000-2006. These studies, completed in 1998-1999, retrieved the above-mentioned scenarios, granting them increased political awareness. The PNDES confirms the major challenge faced by a sustainable development strategy: to overcome, once and for all, the Portuguese educational gap with the aim of converging effectively with the average situation in the European Union concerning the qualifications scoreboard.

Over seventy representatives of the different Ministries took part in these preparatory studies. The state of the art concerning both the Educational System and the Qualification and Employability of the Labour Force received critical inputs from the above-mentioned study (Nanita, 1998). The final text of the PNDES clearly reflected the challenge (MEPAT, 1998).

As a consequence, national awareness received a strong boost in recognising:

- The centrality of Education to sustain both a new growth model and a competitive economy;
- The need for a paradigm shift in order to massively qualify the adult population and reinvent a lifelong learning systemic approach.

Likewise, the Socio Economic Council (CES) – a heavily participated institutional consultative forum involving all social partners – recognized this strategic long term challenge and called for a five-year period of robust investment in adult education. The catastrophic scenario – arriving at 2005 with 65% of the 20-65 year old population with qualifications below upper secondary level – was considered unanimously as untenable.

The sense of urgency to act quickly but in a strategic way and the fact that several members of the PNDES preparatory teams occupied, or came to occupy, senior management positions in government became significant levers of a knowledge-driven agenda that took shape under NOI.

Another relevant piece of research demonstrated that a simple extrapolation of the trend showed that no more than 44% of 25-64 year old in 2015 would be qualified at upper secondary level. Young generations are obtaining higher qualifications but the declining demography set the annual replacement rate of the labour force at a figure well below 2%: "It is clear that we cannot not afford to sit back and wait for the natural replacement of the labour force by a new generation of medium and highly qualified younger workers" (Carneiro, Fazendeiro, Rodrigues, Soares, Vitorino & Conceição, 2000, p. 11).

The scale of the resources involved obliged the Portuguese Government to seek European Funding to expedite the urgent investments needed to re-qualify the country's human capital.

Consequently, following the tradition of the two previous Community Support Frameworks, PRODEP III (2000-2006) – Educational Development Programme for Portugal – elicited two key areas of intervention: youth and adults. Hence, the challenge to enhance adult employability implied:

- Opening education to accommodate new services and methods with the potential to attract new publics;
- Articulating a myriad of education and training paths in a single and effective integrated system.

A simple arithmetic leads us to put at *circa* 7,134 B€ (billions of Euros) the amount of structural funds applied to NOI (974 M€ from PRODEP III +6,160 M€ from POPH, respectively 3rd and 4th Community Framework Programmes). This figure covers the entire period of 14 years (2000-2013) and leaves out other sources i.e. the normal government budget.

Many other studies published in the 2005-2010 period reinforced the need to address the issue. They threw evidence and insisted on several core messages (Carneiro *et al.*, 2007):

- When benchmarking Portugal against other OECD countries over a long time period, and despite progresses recorded in recent years, we do not show a consistent "catching-up" pattern. The 40-60 years age group remains an extremely low qualified and resistant segment to the up-skilling strategies put in place;

- The country will need to use technology-enhanced learning approaches to speed up the uptake of lifelong learning practices;
- Portugal must deploy a serious effort to reinforce cooperation between the education and training systems to arrive at an integrated supply of learning opportunities that may account for the most deprived, excluded and under-motivated adults.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, one sensed that the centre of policy hesitated before undertaking a task of such formidable scale, even if convinced that it would work against a multi-secular backlog of under-education that crippled large proportions of the adult population.

Finally, after five years of pilot experimentation and long deliberations on the scalability of the models tested, on December 14th 2005, NOI was officially announced to the country.

The ceremony, which attracted strong media spotlight, was chaired by the Prime Minister, José Sócrates, with the participation of relevant Ministers – Education, Labour, Economy and Innovation – who emphatically endorsed the new programme before a broad audience of qualified stakeholders.

The author of the paper was graciously invited to deliver the keynote address of the event. His address was entitled 'Discovering the Treasure' and alluded to the repository of background research and studies on which the announced NOI seemed to be grounded. He heralded the political will leading *to new opportunities offered to adults and to opportunities renewed offered to youth* (Carneiro, 2007), playing with the words in the Portuguese language as if a variation on the New Opportunities theme[5].

The Prime Minister himself, in his opening address in the official brochure on NOI that was widely disseminated, resorts to exactly the same allegory: a programme conducive to new opportunities offered to adults and to opportunities renewed offered to youth (MTSS & ME, 2005).

Here, too, language twinning plays a critical symbolic role, bringing together the combined lexicon of academia and of politics.

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[5] "Nova Oportunidade para adultos e Oportunidade Nova para jovens" (Carneiro, 2007, p. 150).

Essentially, strong and determined leadership made the difference to earlier attempts of reforming adult education (Mendonça & Carneiro, 2010).

National education systems are indeed the most complex and resilient to change among all social systems. This explains why, in highly centralized systems as is the case with Portugal, education is usually over managed and under led. Transforming educational structures and uprooting embedded routines are formidable tasks that require visionary leadership.

NOI leadership was exercised at the highest level. The Prime Minister made a point to define a vision, align resources, motivate and inspire the nation to respond to a generational challenge. Kouzes & Posner's conceptualization of a successfully led programme and the correspondent breakdown into five practices comes to mind (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

The concomitant media campaign surreptitiously appealed to emotional elements of a personal decision to undergo further studies and obtain advanced qualifications. The involvement of popular public figures, from sports to TV and from ordinary people to celebrities, combined with a balanced ambiance of proximity – almost intimacy – in producing affective arguments to uphold such decision, turned out to be decisive factors in determining the move of a first batch of early adopters and risk-taking adults, in numbers and publicity, that created the notion of a national design that no one could refuse.

Modelling the way became ostensibly visible, particularly during the inception phase, when the Prime Minister and virtually all Cabinet members were personally involved in setting directions and in distributing diplomas and awards to NOI graduates. Proposing a *shared vision* was assigned to a consistent and persistent public discourse developed around the concept that 'Learning Pays', coupled with carefully planned media campaigns publicizing the endorsement by popular personalities, i.e. sports idols, television stars, admired entrepreneurs, scientists, politicians, etc. At least five years of detailed experimentation led to balanced solutions that equipped the leadership with arguments to overtly *challenge the processes* and propose a scalable solution to the chronic deficit of qualifications in the working population. Public-private partnerships were the coherent proposal to *empower and enable* important segments of the civil society and business actors *to act*. Finally, a lively celebratory attitude to signal small victories and whenever intermediate hurdles were overcome favoured the *encouragement and emotional engagement* of citizens and local agents, and call on a collective drive towards the achievement of ambitious goals.

Kotters' steps 1, 3 and 4 are also well addressed in this case (Kotter, 1996):

- Establishing a sense of urgency;
- Creating a vision;
- Communicating the vision.

But the most remarkable feature revealed by this case is the role of research-generated knowledge in sparking a consensus around the need for a programme such as NOI (urgency), in helping to create a vision upholding NOI, and in equipping key actors with the arguments to 'sell' the vision and achieve widespread advocacy.

Along the line of convincing research-supported arguments, a recent econometric calculation based on comparative data from multilateral sources estimated at *circa* 13,750 million € the loss in GDP incurred by the Portuguese economy during two decades (2000-2020), resulting from a poorly qualified labour force (Carneiro, 2010a).

The opportunity cost of a non-qualified population is several steps higher than the investment involved in the massive education and training of the same population.

Little doubt remains today that a programme such as NOI is an absolutely vital investment in the future of the people and in the sustainable prosperity of Portugal as a sovereign country.

Case # 2 – Evidence-based policy benefits from a permanent dialogue between decision makers and researchers.

On December 26th 2007, the Ministers of Education and Labour jointly invited the author of this paper to chair an evaluative multidisciplinary team based in the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP).

Detailed terms of reference and budgetary procedures were agreed during the first quarter of 2008 and the official signing of the overall assessment contract took place on April 14th 2008. The appraisal exercise would stretch for a 3.5 year period, ending in the Fall of 2011.

Three systemic objectives were agreed upon as generic guidelines for the evaluation activities:

- Assessing the extent to which NOI implementation follows good governance recommendations and best practices concerning education policies targeted at adults and lifelong learning;

- Measuring NOI major impacts at both individual and social levels;
- Monitoring evolving public perceptions of NOI and appraising their influence on beliefs and motivation levels to undergo further education and training.

Alongside these main systemic objectives, the external team was further charged with the responsibility of developing a bottom-up self-evaluation mechanism tailored to the needs of NOC organisational learning and a statistical database software allowing NOC access to real time data on self-monitoring and benchmarking.

An international expert panel made of five reputed specialists would be formed to validate evaluation methodologies and comment on its broad results[6].

ANQ and UCP agreed to a permanent communication channel, both formal and informal, to arrive at the rapid approval of key methodological tools, i.e. focus-group guidelines, survey research questionnaires, case-study sampling, interview studies.

Generally speaking, the entire exercise rested on a trust-based relationship to generate new knowledge on NOI field development and to make it readily available to all relevant political, policy, technical and administrative officials.

In order to materialize the latter commitment, both parties came to agree on a schedule of regular presentations of the UCP team findings to several layers of constituencies: (i) ANQ management board, on a frequent basis; (ii) Ministers and Secretaries of State of the Education and Labour Ministries, on a less frequent basis, contemplating at least one overview session per year; (iii) stakeholders, media, academia, research community, and public at large, by way of overarching open conferences and/or more restricted seminars and workshops.

Table A.1 gives a factual description of the main interactive sessions conducted in the course of the first half of the evaluation exercise.

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[6] The international panel includes: Alejandro Tiana, Spain (former Secretary of State), Claudio Dondi, Italy (President of Scienter), Joe Cullen, UK (Principal Associate, Tavistock Institute), Marja van den Dungen, Netherlands (Managing consultant/manager of the CINOP and of the National Knowledge Centre APL), and Walter Kugermann, Germany (Director, Institute for Innovation in Learning, FIM New Learning).

Table A.1 List of external sessions with Ministers, ANQ and Public Events

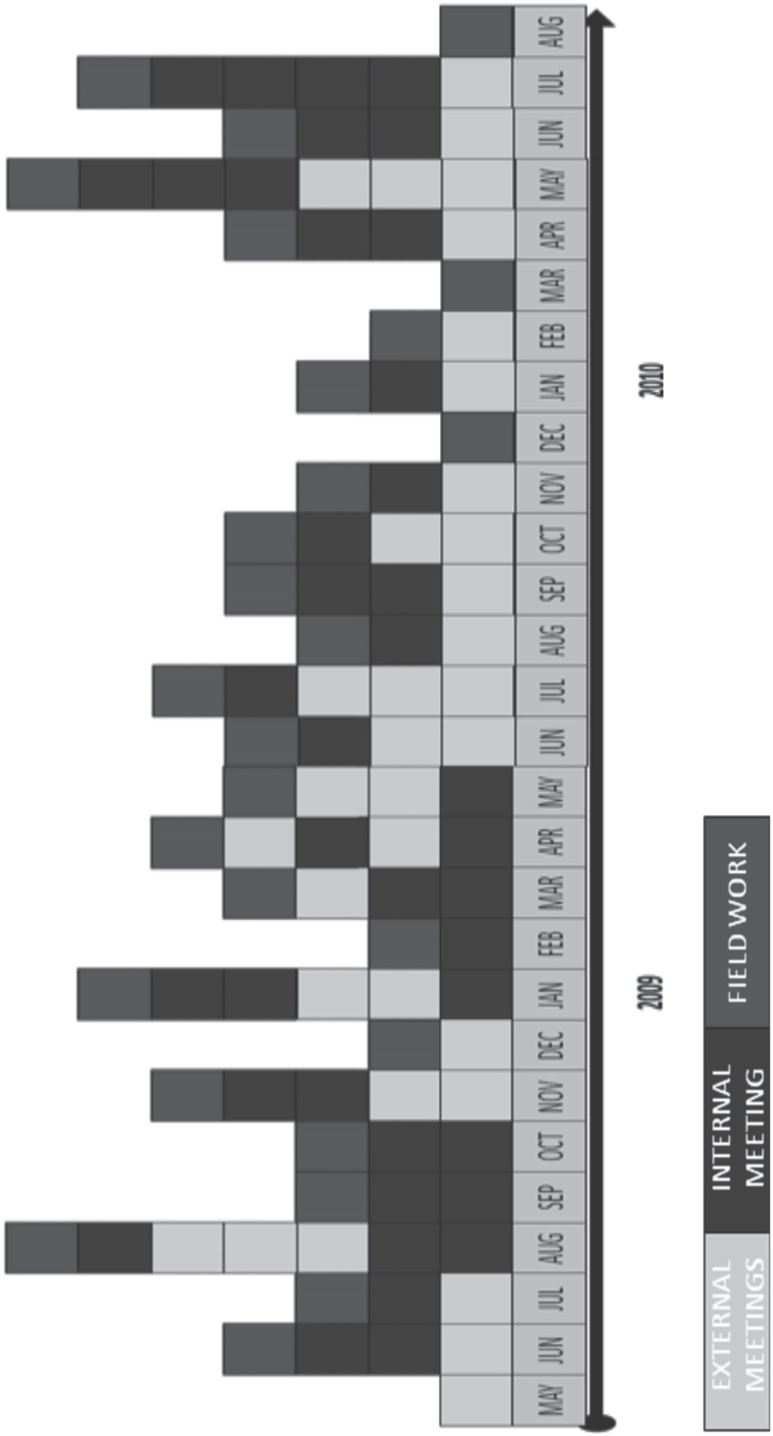
14 April 2008	ANQ-UCP signature of overall External Evaluation contract
12 May 2008	ANQ to agree on products and objectives 2008
02 June 2008	ANQ to agree on methodologies 2008
10 July 2008	ANQ to adapt SIGO
15 July 2008	ANQ presentation of first results qualitative studies
18 July 2008	ANQ-GEPE to agree on SIGO adjustment to evaluation needs
21 July 2008	Education and Labour Ministers presentation of first findings from qualitative studies
03 September 2008	ANQ President to ratify details of evaluation exercise
03-04 October 2008	ANQ and Expert Panel meeting to analyse methods and first results
12 November 2008	European Commission presentation of Memo on “State of the Art” of NOI External Evaluation
02 December 2008	Parliament (8^{th} Commission) presentation of preliminary results
09 December 2008	ANQ Interim Reporting on External Evaluation.
26 February 2009	ANQ presentation of results: focus-groups and in-depth interviews
16 March 2009	ANQ presentation of results: Case Studies
30 March 2009	ANQ presentation of results: SIGO and information/monitoring base
16 April 2009	National Council on Education global presentation of External Evaluation
22 April 2009	ANQ-GEPE to format SIGO according to NOC needs
14 May 2009	ANQ presentation of results: self-evaluation and CAf
25 May 2009	Education Minister to prepare public seminar scheduled 10 July 2010
04 June 2009	ANQ presentation of results: survey on quality and satisfaction, and results of diachronic public policy study; preparation of public seminar
05 June-06 July 2009	ANQ to conclude final arts and editing of thematic dossiers on studies
09 July 2009	UCP press conference to divulge thematic studies and explain public seminar of following day
10 July 2009	FIL vast public seminar (over 1,000 participants) to present first results by External Evaluation Team with independent reviewer/commentators
03 August 2009	Education and Labour Ministers to discuss segmenting NOC and NOI by target-public and population layers
20 September 2009	ANQ to discuss conceptual and methodological reformulation of panel survey study
05-06 October 2009	Expert Panel meeting to debate evaluation results and to make field visits to NOC
24 November 2009	Participation in external seminar Fundação Diferença

27 November 2009	Participation in a Forum organised in partnership with the Algarve University and the Association In Loco
27 January 2010	ANQ submission of 2009 Activity Report
26 February 2010	Meeting with Delegation Campania Region, Italy, to present overall NOI External Evaluation
26 April 2010	ANQ presentation of results: case studies and internet survey
05 May 2010	ANQ presentation of results: qualitative study on perceptions
06 May 2010	ANQ presentation of results: impacts survey research
10 May 2010	ANQ presentation of results: self-evaluation, CAf and SIGO
21 June 2010	ANQ presentation of results: quality and satisfaction survey research
14 July 2010	Education and Labour Ministers to present aggregate results (quantitative and qualitative) for 2008-2010, CAf and SIGO developments; reflect on NOI 2nd cycle (2011-2015)
20-21 October 2010	Expert Panel meeting to take stock on advances of External Evaluation and draft papers; field visits to NOC
22-23 October 2010	Scientific Workshop to discuss and submit draft research papers to international referees and peer evaluation
9 November 2010	ANQ – NOI Monitoring Commission to present aggregate results (quantitative and qualitative) for 2008-2010, CAf and SIGO developments
30 November 2010	4th National Meeting with the New Opportunities Centre – presentation of results: *New Opportunities Initiative and LLL in Portugal – disruption and innovation*
10 December 2010	National Council of Education – global presentation of External Evaluation
21 December 2010	ANQ – Presentation of the results of the Motivations survey; Preliminary discussion of priorities and methodologies of the External Evaluation for 2011

This intense front-office communication of new knowledge was made possible by an equally – or more – intensive activity at the level of back-office meetings and research activities.

To avoid entering into excessive detail Table A.2 depicts, in graphic language, the entire task flow and work load undertaken by the Evaluation Team during the initial two years of activity. To conclude this brief explanation on evaluation methodologies and especially the robust knowledge intercourse established between two partners – evaluator and evaluated, researcher and policy maker – it is worth emphasizing this tacit generation of a formative assessment procedure as a major outcome. Not a mere by-product, but a concrete result of a close relationship interwoven over time and space.

Table A.2 Timeline task flow and work load



SIGO and CAf are the clearest examples of this generative process. As can be observed in Table A.1, intensive interaction involving UCP, ANQ and GEPE – Educational Statistics and Planning Office –, occurred between July 2008 and April 2009 to shape SIGO to evaluation and NOC needs. Concurrently, in May 2009, the NOC self-evaluation exercise proposed by UCP and inspired by CAf was also given the 'green light' by ANQ.

SIGO was initially designed as a tool to support the activity of education and training operators and to sustain decision-making, but it allowed little feedback to NOC operators in timely information. Thus, SIGO displayed enormous potential to provide aggregate information to the administration, but was of marginal utility to field operators.

Based on the ANQ Quality Charter (Gomes & Simões, 2008), UCP designed a set of performance indicators. These indicators were validated by a small group of pilot NOC that, on a voluntary base, tested the tool and gave feedback on the entries required. The evaluation team further implemented an experimental on-line consultation encouraging NOC to comment on the type of information to be made available and support the launch of self-assessment activities. The following task undertaken by the UCP team consisted in constructing a set of composite indicators customized to the needs of simple and aggregate perceptions by each NOC, from both a synchronic and a diachronic perspective.

The ANQ approval of a final format of SIGO was instrumental to implement a CAf framework. This made possible the gathering of relevant information required both for external auditing and for score boarding the entire NOC network.

CAf then became a familiar method to NOC in self-assessment procedures. This methodology helped to enhance performance, promote excellence and encourage networking. The formation of NOC functional clusters was fundamental to sustaining self-assessment momentum and propelling overall performance improvements. Another example of this generative process is expressed in NOI efforts targeted at the reduction of NOC delays in attending applicants.

On July 10th 2009, the first results of the evaluation were presented by the UCP team in a widely attended public seminar sponsored by ANQ[7]. The first reports and conclusions were scrutinised by peer academics and stake-

[7] All videos and written materials of the 10 July 2009 event can be found in http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/np4/44.html. Accessed 31 December 2010.

holders at large. In the opening session, Maria de Lurdes Rodrigues, then Education Minister, highlighted the importance of research-based knowledge for public policies: *"That knowledge may allow all of us to decide and to act better…"*

In their keynotes, both the Education Minister and the ANQ President underscored some main challenges faced by NOI in the near future as they were detected by the external evaluators:

- To reduce waiting lists and delays at NOC;
- To reinforce the effectiveness of other adult requalification offers, such as EFA courses – formal programmes for adult education and training;
- To sustain high standards of quality;
- To develop NOC as "entrance gates" to Lifelong Learning.

In view of these challenges, ANQ scheduled regular meetings with each NOC. The objective of reducing waiting lists would undergo tighter monitoring. SIGO indicators and SWOT analyses were extensively used to ensure continuous progress, enhancing strong points and overcoming weak points at professional, institutional and organisational levels.

Later, in a book published immediately after leaving office, the former Education Minister stresses[8]:

The ANQ contracted the Catholic University to conduct an external evaluation and monitoring of NOI, during the next three years, under the coordination of Roberto Carneiro. The initial results and the first suggestions and recommendations for the progressive improvement of NOI were already presented (Rodrigues, 2010, p. 311).

Kotter's steps 2 and 5 are covered by this case. Let us recollect these steps (Kotter, 1996):

- Forming a powerful guiding coalition;
- Empowering others to act.

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[8] *"Foi contratualizada, entre a Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e a Universidade Católica, a avaliação e o acompanhamento externo do Programa Novas Oportunidades, durante os próximos três anos, sob coordenação de Roberto Carneiro, tendo sido já apresentados os primeiros resultados e as primeiras sugestões e recomendações para a sua progressiva melhoria"* (Rodrigues, 2010: 311). Free translation into English by the author of the paper.

Again, the remarkable centrality of evidence-based knowledge in driving both the formation of a broad change alliance – touching on diverse spheres, from politics to policy, from academia to field actors (NOC), from public agencies to university – and creating an appropriate culture of empowerment was made clear.

At this juncture, one final clarification must be made.

Sustaining a demanding collaborative endeavour is a most relevant objective, but it is far from being the sole concern of the team of external evaluators.

The team bore in mind the necessity to respond to widespread accountability claims and offer fresh evidence-based knowledge on NOI as solicited by opinion makers, lobbies and journalists, particularly by groups who are most active in scrutinizing NOI and highly influential in voicing public opinions.

Case # 3 – Knowledge feedbacks on policy impacts are crucial to sustain change momentum and to unfold new aspirational horizons

It is worth noting that this is a typically forward-looking Case.

Indeed, only the passage of time will confirm, or not, some of the basic initial findings described below. This is notably the case with the political weathering of NOI, under the democratic rule of periodic rotation in power, or the adherence of public opinion to a second cycle of NOI (2011-2015). Furthermore, it remains to be seen how far future NOI policies and targets are well grounded on the host of empirical evidence that the existing knowledge base has made available.

Kotter's three last steps (6-8) in his strategy for the introduction of lasting and successful change are (Kotter, 1996):

- Generating short-term wins;
- Consolidating gains and producing more change;
- Anchoring new approaches in the culture.

While step 6 intends to maintain high the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone involved in change demands (very often entailing a considerable degree of hardship and sacrifice), step 7 aims at maintaining the change momentum without letting go, despite the positive results that may have already been registered and whose effect might be a 'lean-back' in the pace of change or the generation of a false – and dangerous – conviction of early victory.

Step 8 is the *sine qua non* condition of sustainability when dealing with heavy social systems whose homeostatic properties are well-known: the capacity to absorb all shocks and reinstall the old order (culture) simply by retrieving traditions and securing habits.

For each and every one of these steps to become effective and particularly to keep up with the change momentum sparked by a strong leadership public policy and match a demanding public opinion, they must be fed with objective knowledge on concrete impacts and tangible results.

Evaluation can – and should – provide relatively rigorous tools and a rational approach for producing key information and advice to improve or even redirect a particular public policy (Thoenig, 2000).

Despite this obvious benefit, the fact is that governments are often reluctant to submit their policies to academic scrutiny or to engage in independent external evaluation. It is not so much the fear of the results, but short-sightedness in recognizing the effective value of their inputs. Another major deterring factor is that often time scales do not coincide: while public policy is normally extremely keen to announce results and arrive at conclusive supportive results, a typical evaluative research timeline can be much more demanding, especially when field work and collection of prime source empirical data are necessary.

The truth of the matter is that academics share a large part of the blame. Often, scientific jargon is far from accessible to policy makers and academic priorities are arrogantly defined in contradiction with the actual needs of the policy arena, even when the concerned public authorities commission research on policy. The temptation to produce tidy academic papers rather than 'useful knowledge' is huge and difficult to counteract (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979).

In the specific case of NOI, it is worth mentioning that the responsible Ministers announced from the very beginning their determination to submit all areas of reform to the analysis of external and independent evaluation. The fact of the matter is that such public commitment to evaluation is often made by politicians, but rarely carried out and rapidly forgotten. Obviously, this was not the case with NOI.

A culture of evaluation in government is not frequent. As with NOI, the acceptance of an independent evaluation exercise requires the humility to regard policy as a learning journey and the related capacity to accept hard judgements that are often at odds with political misrepresentations, brought to daylight by evaluators, even when these criticisms entail a partial or even substantive recasting of initial goals.

Policy evaluation is often flawed because it misses the target. Performance gaps and inefficient allocation of resources are of prime importance, there is no doubt about that, and they should entail a good deal of energies devoted to evaluation activities. Taxpayers have the right to access up to date indicators on the way and degree of efficiency of how their money is being spent. However, outcome evaluation cannot be left behind. Effectiveness is the ultimate quest of public policy; therefore, impact evaluation should never come second to optimal means or input assessment. As in all other fields of community interest, what is important is to do the right thing, not simply do things right.

NOI evaluation was particularly fertile in providing sound knowledge feedback on impacts.

Although still at an intermediate juncture, there is already information on a strong backlog of NOI impacts whose knowledge made an enormous difference in the way ANQ has conducted its strategic communication to the public and its specific options in the tricky area of policy implementation.

The knowledge that the different evaluation strands have been able to accumulate on NOI perceptions, impacts and social dynamics was the basis for a systematic triangular interaction: Ministers/Secretaries of State, ANQ managers and senior executives, evaluators. In retrospect, this intense exchange of data, evidence, information and knowledge has led to a number of recommendations over time, many of which were taken on board and others that are pending a better opportunity. These suggestions/recommendations that mostly spring from fieldwork can be organised around four strategic clusters:

A. Making NOI results and their notoriety the foundations of a sustainable lifelong learning system that builds on the wealth of knowledge and trust generated by NOC

Notwithstanding the need for further research encompassing pilot experimentation and evaluation of alternative models of evolution, in a bird's eye view, the evaluation so far showed a consistently positive image of

NOI (Lopes, 2010a) and led to practical recommendations that ANQ swiftly adopted:

- Age is the factor that contributes most to the perception of NOI: the younger the respondent, the more positive the perception;
- Satisfaction with NOI attendance was considered highly positive;
- Participants identify concrete gains due to NOI: professional and personal development, advancements in general knowledge, and completion of education;
- Parental education and cultural habits play a major role in the decision to enrol;
- Likewise, a skills gap between partners in a couple is cited as a first and foremost reason to enrol;
- Those who attend NOI denote greater access to and use of the Information Society;
- e-Opportunities are a fundamental inclusive tool in the context of NOI's strategy;
- NOI graduates are most willing to cooperate in promotion campaigns as NOI 'ambassadors'. Likewise, incentives for the constitution of a NOI alumni association should be deployed;
- Setting-up a digital community platform to facilitate 'peer to peer' communication (effective as of October 2010).

B. Improving NOI image, branding, communication and segmentation by target groups

The external evaluation provided ample evidence of how NOI has become a public brand (Liz & Machado, 2010). The awareness of this fact and a better profiling of publics that resist enrolling are essential weapons for renewed NOI communication strategies targeted at the most resilient groups made up of 'late arrivers' and 'laggards'.

Again, turning to the July 2009 event, while the Minister referred to the Initiative as *'a new public service with scale and broad public recognition'*, the President of ANQ singled out NOI as a *'public brand',* adding that *'NOI is already an everybody Initiative'* and that *'the NOI approach is centred on each person'*.

The most persuasive factors in attracting new enrolments are friends and TV. Employers' engagement also shows a high level of efficiency (Lopes, 2010b). Therefore, instituting premiums to recognize exemplary employers was deemed necessary and was a measure that was rapidly taken.

Transforming NOC from 'entrance gates' into 'points of departure' for Lifelong Learning journeys was one of the most challenging recommendations made by the evaluation team already in 2009.

The strong image achieved by NOI is germane to a generalised discovery of a new education service made possible through the alignment of both political and administrative discourses. The Initiative rapidly reached huge numbers: 9,000 professionals working at local level and one million adults enrolled in a service sensed as both innovative and proximal.

As a consequence, a strategic recommendation to take full advantage of NOI's intangible assets stresses the need for a fine-tuned segmentation of NOI approaches to the portfolio of potential 'customers' and ultimately pursuing a path of personalisation, particularly in the next stage design of lifelong learning trajectories.

C. Consolidating NOI impacts and outcomes at different constituent layers

C.1. *Personal/Individual*

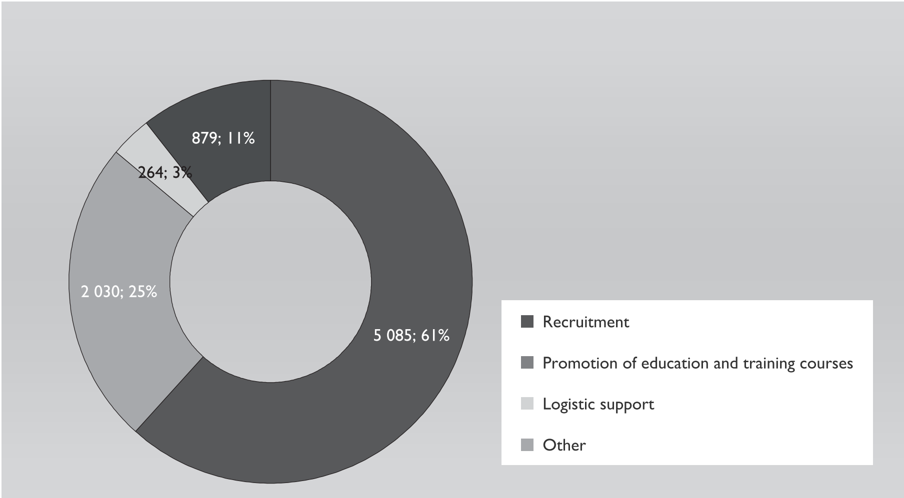
- The evaluation exercise provided solid knowledge on impacts in the field of competency gains (Valente, 2010);
- Among the various types of outcomes, respondents underlined the increase of the *self*, meaning the improvement of self-esteem and motivation to learn;
- The studies signalled notorious upgrades in literacy and e-skills, especially at lower secondary level. However, enhancing lifelong learning capabilities – meta-learning or learning to learn skills – is the primordial structural effect, very much in line with new NOI processes – learner-centred and self-regulated learning strategies that work strongly in favour of the attributes of a *competent and motivated lifelong learner*.

C.2. *Societal*

- Parental education (adults) has a non-negligible effect on children and youth, in particular by bringing parents' certified knowledge at a par with that of their sons and daughters and also by creating family contexts that are more resilient to early dropout from schools.

- Evaluation results showed that the immediate effects on employment conditions were scarce (Lopes, 2010a; Valente, 2010);
- UCP recommended the consideration of better bridges between NOI and the “world of work”, i.e. valuing individual key competences next to employers and matching those competences to job requirements. In addition, a training programme targeted specifically at small and medium size employers is to be launched by October 2010;
- Further research is suggested to explore the impact of robust knowledge generation on the production of micro-changes, mainly at the level of business units and industry;
- The merits of a closer association with the business community and employers’ associations to undertake a second cycle of INO where enticing more resilient publics is foreseen as a formidable task should undergo a thorough and open national, regional and local discussion;
- To date, 104 national and 8,200 regional protocols were negotiated by ANQ and NOC, respectively. Around 86% of the national protocols were celebrated with non-public organisations: companies and not-for-profit private associations. Half the regional protocols were in the Northern region of Portugal (in the most industrious and enterprising areas) and 86% of these agreements committed to reinforce the mobilization effect of NOI towards a lifelong culture, i.e. promoting education and training courses and recruiting participants for NOI (Figure A.5);

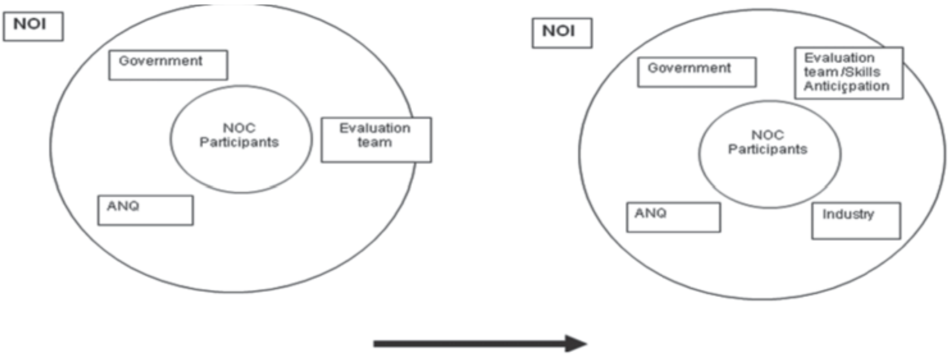
Figure A.5 Motivational breakdown of regional protocols



In future work – both at NOI design / implementation fine-tuning and at a more advanced stage of the evaluative research – it will be necessary to account for a four-pronged partnership by including such core market players as industry and business community. Moreover, frontier research on skills anticipation will prove essential to a better transition from NOI to an ever more thirsty market for new skills and competences required by new jobs and to serve the purpose of sustainable innovation.

Figure A.6 depicts the transition deemed appropriate to ensure a better response of NOI to labour market forces and future skills demands.

Figure A.6 A transition model for NOI and its evaluation



D. Using NOI as an exemplary case of good practice to inspire the transformation of the public sector in Portugal

NOI was launched with the public announcement of very ambitious goals. The assertive policy targets, which appeared as a clear-cut novelty challenging the usually cautious public discourse that was most commonly used in announcing a new public policy, spelt out in Part 2 of the paper, created a social resolve and an institutional commitment that are difficult to replicate. No other adult education programme had motivated such a vast and rapidly increasing participation among the Portuguese non-skilled adult population.

The offer of a radically new design of adult certification and skills upgrading, accompanied by impressive quantitative targets, sparked a commensurate response from the demand side that was without precedent in the history of Portuguese education and was difficult to match by any other European experience, both in scale and in speed (Mendonça & Carneiro, 2010).

Outspoken leadership of the Initiative became the norm, trickling down from the centre of government to all sectorial cabinet departments, in a show of unity and resolve that brings alive the Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2002) described earlier. Modelling the Way and Inspiring a Vision were part and parcel of a conspicuous determination to Challenge Processes and to Empower Stakeholders to Act. Celebrating successful NOI graduations with mainstream media coverage and often involving the Prime Minister in the delivery of diplomas was a major source of encouragement and an important signalling to a generalized emotional commitment to the upgrade of qualifications from the lower-skilled labour force segments.

As stated before, over 9,000 professionals work at NOC. They are supported by a paraphernalia of strategic and operational tools – a system based on institutional self-regulation, involving standards and goals setting, as well as self-assessment (CAf system), continuously supported by SIGO, a sophisticated information and benchmarking tool (Melo, 2010)[9].

The satisfaction levels of those professionals are compounded by these ancillary systems, which act as a stimulus for continuous self-evaluation

[9] It is worth noting that SIGO – Sistema de Informação e Gestão da Oferta Educativa e Formativa was awarded the national prize of Best Improvement of the 8th edition of Best Practices in Public Administration (2010). http://www.boaspraticas.com/prm_gala_vencedores.php. Accessed 31 December 2010.

based on results and impacts. An environment of reflexivity emerges, one that is necessary to generate new educational paradigms and foster institutional maturity.

But paradigm change does not take place in the back-office. It is in the front office, where compliance feedback on the quality of service as perceived by citizens and customers became the driver of new procedures and permanent policy improvements, that a major shift in the 'normal' public service culture takes place.

To this effect, the application of an original and personalised/tailored model to create self-regulation competences and routines has the potential to be considered an exemplary practice for the public sector. This model is scalable, and could thus inspire a new generation of public agencies fashioned to the satisfaction of citizens' (each citizen) needs as their overriding priority.

5. Conclusion

The present paper seeks to make a contribution to an in-depth reflection on the feasibility of establishing effective bridges between new knowledge and quality in public policy.

We have collected empirical evidence confirming the three hypotheses offered at the beginning of the paper as main research questions:

1. That future-oriented research and sound meta-policy studies can sustain a knowledgeable shared sense of urgency and influence the agenda-setting priorities;
2. That a robust knowledge exchange mechanism resulting from a close partnership government-academia is susceptible of inspiring visionary leadership, evidence grounded choices and timely change management approaches;
3. That independent evaluative research carries the potential to enable both the innovative improvement of processes and the inventory of results needed to sustain strategic change, as knowledge-based achievements.

Schaffer & Thomson (1998) argue that most change programmes fail because management focuses on activities, not on results. As a consequence, they come out in favour of results-driven programmes centred on achieving measurable outcomes.

Our paper shows how evaluative research can become a precious help to bridge the two approaches put in confrontation. Indeed, all four key features that the above mentioned authors offer as attributes of a winning change strategy are unequivocally verified in the case of NOI, due to the unique role played by the evaluative research exercise:

1. Introduce managerial and process innovations only as they are needed;
2. Empirical testing reveals what works;
3. Frequent reinforcement energizes the improvement process;
4. Create a continuous learning process by building on the lessons of previous phases when designing the next phase of the programme.

Taking one step back and reflecting upon recent instances where research or survey-generated knowledge exercised a notorious influence on policy, we may compare three distinct angles of analysis. Table A.3 was convincingly offered by one of the reviewers of our paper[10] as a snapshot of the

Table A.3 Three distinct approaches to the relation between knowledge and policy

SCENARIOS	RESEARCH	RELATION	POLICY
Cummins	sporadic	mutually selective	no leadership
PISA	systematic clear focus defined target group well-defined methods	weakly reciprocal	no clear leadership ill-defined goals
NOI	systematic clear focus defined target group well-defined methods theoretical foundation	reciprocal collaborative	clear leadership well-defined goals clear time-perspective theoretical foundation Kotter, 8 steps

[10] This table was creatively organised and presented by Karl Steffens (referee, Universität zu Köln) during the external review meeting that took place on 22-23 October 2010, in Lisbon.

three realities under scrutiny: J. Cummins and his extensive research on bilingual education (Cummins, 2007); PISA, the OECD survey research conducted every 3 years since year 2000 to measure literacy competences in mother tongue, mathematics and science; NOI evaluative research.

Why is NOI an exemplary case for other public sector reforms? Because in the case of public sector innovation, knowledge can be the driver, not competition, as often heralded for business or corporate embedded change.

Why is NOI a success story? Because the evaluative research sheds new knowledge on how an innovative educational supply that is service-oriented successfully replaced an old school order that was industry-oriented. The potential demand was always there, low-skilled adults felt the frustration of incomplete schooling and the handicap resulting from insufficient or inadequate qualifications; however, only an appropriate supply, tailored to the adult population's needs and aspirations, coupled with leadership and effective institutional change management, allowed the spontaneous upsurge of a longstanding repressed demand for additional learning.

Why is NOI a significant policy benchmark? Because it is a unique experience by all international standards. NOI results are widely documented and the policy is strongly accountable. Strengths and weaknesses of the programme are systematically evaluated, subject to confirmation and/or correction in successive appraisal cycles. NOI bears witness to a policy innovative momentum leveraged by a flow of new knowledge and related recommendations resulting from evaluative research. Evidence gathered so far shows that NOI is also a powerful driver towards a lifelong learning model that works.

For the many reasons expressed, NOI, coupled with the evaluative research strategy, carries the potential of a powerful policy benchmark in the international arenas of adult and lifelong learning.

A recent research venture conducted under the auspices of IPTS[11] (Institute for Prospective Technological Studies) surveyed the perceptions of teachers, experts and practitioners, and policy makers via a combination of methodologies: workshops, on-line questionnaires, e-twinning events, four-round survey via Linkedin, and synchronous discussions. This hefty future-oriented exercise generated a set of unique statements that are telling of some major

[11] IPTS is a Research Institute based in Sevilla supporting EU policy-making on socio-economic, scientific and/or technological issues. IPTS is part of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.

perceptions in the realm of lifelong learning concerns. Let us list some of the most striking scenarios elicited by those who were surveyed that are well worth mentioning (Redecker, Leis, Leendertse, Punie, Gijsbergs, Kirchner, Stoyanov & Hoogveld, 2010; Punie & Redecker, 2010):

- 87% think that people will need to become increasingly self-responsible for their own qualifications;
- 87% expect that it will be normal that people will need to supplement their official qualifications with extra on the job training;
- 76% believe that it will be common for citizens to change their professional profiles completely, even repeatedly, during the course of their life;
- 86% argue that skills and competences obtained in non-formal ways need to be better recognised and accepted as formal qualification criteria;
- 56% think that, by 2025, informal learning experiences will have been recognised as a valuable asset for a new job;
- 60% believe that people will be able to obtain official recognition of their skills by taking a standardised test;
- 84% assert that people with low qualifications should aspire to follow a training course to formally upgrade their qualifications to have more employment options.

Through all analytical lenses, NOI seems to capture the essence of future lifelong learning policies. Moreover, NOI addresses the recognised need to find creative new paths to render continuous learning as a tangible and viable reality to most of the working population.

For sure, additional research is needed to pursue fundamental questions that remain undisclosed. As an example of some of the most pressing interrogations, we may mention the following:

- Can knowledge act as a change detonator, both as a 'maximizer' and a 'satisficer' of public policy demands (Simon, 1976)?
- Can knowledge be an effective support of transformational leadership feeding into both the hearts of reason and emotion-based change (Kouzes & Posner, 2002)?
- Would there be intelligent forms of combining knowledge and some elements of competition to accelerate public sector paradigm innovations?

- Could evaluative research as defined and developed in the paper become a required companion of public reforms or, in other words, could evaluative research constitute a new scientific 'norm' to policy quality assurance?
- What are the conditions for new knowledge to be socialized, that is to say, for academic research to acquire the status of a community and societal lever of policy reclaimed reforms?
- Is there a particular and relevant role to be played by 'opinion makers' and 'elites' that deserves specific attention in wide-scale policy change?
- How could language and communication of research outcomes undergo a more effective intermediation to arrive in meaningful codes for the benefit of ordinary citizens, media actors and political agents?
- …

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B.

THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE: UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC POLICY FROM A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

MARIA AMÉLIA MENDONÇA

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: amendonca40@hotmail.com

MARIA ANA CARNEIRO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: mianacarneiro@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Developing the human person and qualifying the labour force have been pivotal concerns for the past and present Portuguese governments. Portugal has been defined as a country with persistent shares of low qualified people compounded with the resistance to undertake lifelong learning. This paper attempts to disclose, firstly, how a close look at adult education public policies reveals features of the past that remain embedded in the present characteristics of the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI). And secondly, which distinctive elements can be found in the New Opportunities Initiative that posit in a uniquely and original manner in the adult education landscape.

Keywords: public policy, adult education, new opportunities initiative.

1. Introduction

Adult education in Portugal is traditionally considered as an important public policy. Notwithstanding the innovative measures taken over the years, the persistent shares of low qualified people compounded with the resistance to undertake lifelong learning (LLL) activities have been a serious predicament. Therefore, qualifying the labour force and developing the human person have been pivotal concerns for the past and present Portuguese governments.

This historical and documental research, complemented by interviews[1] with experts in the field offers a diachronic perspective of events[2]. Researching the history of adult education reveals policy features of the past that remain embedded in the present. By the same token, exploring how NOI differs from previous adult education programmes highlights the value-added of the Initiative and its distinct attributes vis-à-vis previous approaches.

This paper attempts to address two central questions in the field of adult education public policy:

1. What previous knowledge resulting from historical approaches and methodologies experimented in adult education is carried forward as a primal source of inspiration for NOI?
2. What distinctive traits can be found in NOI that position this Initiative uniquely and originally in the adult education policy landscape?

Our point of departure is that a close review of the NOI design may reveal some approaches that resorted to prior knowledge, while others overtly innovated and/or improved prior knowledge resulting from previous experiments in the field.

Thus, our analytical framework stems from research into history which proposes reading signs of transformation heralded in the past history of adult education public policy in Portugal as an invaluable source to understand the key policy options embodied in NOI.

The paper is divided into 5 parts. After Section 1 which includes an introduction that looks further into the research questions and points of departure, Section 2 provides a brief overview of concepts and programmes

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[1] The names of the experts interviewed and respective interview guides are included in Annex I.

[2] These diachronic events are organised in a timetable in Annex II.

which were seminal and steps into what is NOI today. Section 3 provides details on methods and describes data related to legacies that led to NOI as a public policy, and Section 4 discusses the distinctive features of NOI, providing a characterization of the transition from an experimental programme to the current outstanding characteristics of NOI. Finally, Section 5 summarizes our main conclusions.

2. An overview of seminal programmes and concepts

Most adult education activities in Portugal are initiated by public institutions. The evolution of these institutions promoting adult education and training reflects the diversity of national policy measures, as well as the evolution of the concepts and models. Thus, decisions about adult education and training are traditionally politically centralized. In this context, the formal school model was generally reproduced in an evening schedule; however, sometimes significant innovations would never be implemented or only partially implemented. Over time, there are legal documents that, adding to the norms on education, translate interesting decisions regarding professional training.

Compared with other countries, Portugal was a late starter (Carvalho, 1986). Taking as a reference researchers and authors on this matter, this section is a brief note on the legacy of Portuguese adult education and training.

D. António da Costa studied the history of popular instruction in Portugal from the founding of the monarchy to the second half of the 19th century (Costa, 1871). In the beginning of the monarchy "official teaching did not play any direct role in the organisation of national education; teaching in monasteries was the only distinctive feature of education in the first period of the monarchy; and, in popular education, none of the elements that would establish the basis of education did yet exist"[3] (Costa, 1871, p. 20). In 1288, "D. Dinis, founding the university and opening the doors to secular education, launched the basis of instruction in Portugal"[4] (Costa, 1871,

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[3] "*O ensino oficial não representou papel nenhum directo na organização da instrução nacional, sendo o ensino dos mosteiros a única feição característica da instrução no primeiro período da monarquia; e que no ponto especial da educação popular não existia ainda nenhum dos elementos que viriam a fundar a constituição do ensino*". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[4] "*D. Dinis, fundando a universidade e abrindo as portas à educação secular, lançou as grandes raízes da instrução à terra portuguesa.*" Free translation by the authors of this paper.

p. 45). "Portuguese pedagogical activity since D. Dinis to D. Fernando", in addition to General Studies in the schools of the Franciscans and the monasteries of Santa Cruz and Alcobaça, included "all other types of more modest schools" [that] "have continued a meritorious activity of teaching how to read, write and count" [5] (Cavalho, 1986, p. 89).

After the Latin grammars, the first printed books used in schools were the cartilhas (or ABC books) to teach the first letters of the alphabet; João de Barros' cartilha, published in 1539, is the best known. Arithmetic came later.

In the "True Method of Studying" [6] (1746), Luís António Verney presented his ideas about education in the form of letters and, along with other proposals, gave priority to the Portuguese language over Latin. He also argued that women should study and that they were not intellectually inferior to men.

In many countries, adult education assumed social importance in the 19th century. In Portugal, the Constitutional Charter of 1826 guaranteed free primary education for all. Despite this, the Government "ordered that the number of schools be reduced from 900 to 600" on March 20th 1829[7]. In 1835, given the high illiteracy rate, Rodrigo da Fonseca signed the decree on the reform of public education (Costa, 1871, p. 159): the Decree of September 7th, 1835 legislated on all the requirements needed for "a remarkable season in national education" (although it did not include "instruction for the female gender"), and professional training[8] (Costa, 1871, p. 160). Between 1836, with Silva Passos (prominent politician) and 1852, by decree of Fontes Pereira de Melo, industrial training was created and called practical instruction.

In 1870, the government created the Ministry of Public Instruction under D. António da Costa, who was responsible for a number of reforms implemented in just over two months. The most important was the reform regarding education and popular education, which was set aside shortly after being implemented when the ministry was closed down (Costa, 1871, p. 122).[9]

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5 *"(…) todos os outros tipos de escolas mais modestas" (que) "continuaram a sua acção meritória de ensinar a ler, a escrever e a contar".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

6 "*Verdadeiro Método de Estudar*". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

7 *"(…) mandava reduzir as 900 escolas a 600".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

8 Through industrial, artistic and commercial options.

9 *"(…) indispensável, civilizador e imediatamente produtivo".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

As for books, adults and children, “The Portuguese method for teaching how to read”[10] by António Feliciano de Castilho launched a national movement on the issue of popular education. Later, the Cartilha Maternal by João de Deus was published in 1876. It was accepted by the public and disapproved by critics, as was the case with the “Portuguese Method”.

The initiative of the industrialist Casimiro Freire of forming groups of children and adults to be taught how to read and write by someone who knew the Cartilha and the method led to the creation of “mobile schools” where schools did not exist, and consequently promoted the dissemination of the Cartilha Maternal.

Data from 1900 in the Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Portugal[11] provided information about the population of the Mainland and of the Islands, indicating that the number of illiterates was higher than in other countries (Cavalho, 1986).

Table B.1 Literacy and Illiteracy rates in Portugal (1878-1900)

	Total Population	Male Population	Female Population	KNOW HOW TO READ					ILLITERATE				
				Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
					%		%	%		%		%	%
1-I-1878	4 550 699	2 175 829	2 374 870	544 556	12	254 369	6	18	1 631 273	36	2 120 501	46	82
1-XII-1890	5 049 729	2 430 339	2 619 390	667 497	13	381 275	8	21	1 762 842	35	2 238 115	44	79
1-XII-1900	5 423 132	2 591 600	2 831 532	736 509	14	425 287	8	22	1 855 091	34	2 406 245	44	78

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Portugal (Cavalho, 1986).

Reforms in education began even before the (re)creation of the Ministry of Education, starting on March 29th, 1911 with a legislative instrument covering kindergarten, lower and regular education. João de Barros and João de Deus Ramos were the authors of this reform.

The Government officially instituted the “mobile schools” to promote literacy among adults, adolescents and children not covered by official education: “Municipal councils shall establish, in accordance with this decree, evening classes, school missions, dominical and similar courses to eradicate

10 “*O Método Português para o ensino da leitura*”. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

11 “*Anuário Estatístico do Reino de Portugal*”. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

illiteracy among both sexes"[12]. And as a further measure, a census should be carried out of school-age children in each parish and appropriate penalties established for any lack of school attendance.

In June 1923, the "Public Education Statute"[13] was presented to the House of Representatives, under the responsibility of João Camoesas, Minister of Public Instruction, and which included the participation of renowned personalities. This innovative document was the first comprehensive education plan: it integrated professional education and projected for higher education, in addition to the Faculties with professional objectives, and Popular Universities aimed at ensuring the education of workers. Again, this would not be executed because of a change of government that year.

From 1911 to 1930, the absolute number of illiterates increased, although its percentage decreased because of a simultaneous increase in the population (Cavalho, 1986). The illiteracy rate fell by 7.3%.

Table B.2 Literacy and Illiteracy rates in Portugal (1911-1930)

	Population	Male	Female	Illiterate	%	Male	%	Female	%
1911	5 960 056	2 828 691	3 131 365	4 478 078	75	1 936 131	32	2 541 947	43
1930	6 825 883	3 255 876	3 570 007	4 627 988	68	1 974 448	29	2 653 540	39

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Portugal (Cavalho, 1986)

After the 28th of May, 1926, the regime did not embrace "to teach people how to read" as a priority. However, to reduce "the number of illiterate," teaching positions were created on November 30th 1931, but were taken up by school professors with no qualification. In this context of dictatorship, compulsory lower secondary education was reduced from four to three years.

In 1948, the new Industrial and Commercial Technical Education Statute[14] was published, according to which the general courses gave access to the Commercial and Industrial Institutes.[15]

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[12] *"(…) as Câmaras municipais criarão, nos termos do presente decreto, cursos nocturnos, missões escolares, cursos dominicais e outros análogos, para extinção do analfabetismo, em ambos os sexos".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[13] "*Estatuto da Educação Pública*". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[14] Decreto-Lei nr 37 029/48, of 29 August.

[15] Annex I - Statistical Yearbook of the Kingdom of Portugal (Cavalho, 1986).

Keeping in mind the high percentage of illiterates, the Minister of Education Pires de Lima created the "National Plan for Popular Education"[16] – promulgated on the 27th of October of 1952 – whose primary objective was to eliminate illiteracy. Integrated in this plan, the "National Campaign for Adult Education" aimed at educating the Portuguese people. It targeted illiterates between the ages of 14 and 35, integrating valences which were innovative for the time (e.g., the permanent libraries located next to rural schools and the mobile libraries that circulated among the factories), and obtained significant quantitative results in its first years of implementation. As related measures, the lower secondary education diploma was established as a requirement in some situations expressed in the law and missing school led to the imposition of penalties.

Table B.3 Number of adults enrolled in basic education per year

Academic Years	Nr of adults enrolled
1952-53	155 160
1953-54	258 041
1954-55	227 468

(Carvalho, 1986, "Figures taken from the preamble to Decreto-Lei nr 31-XII-1956 on basic education"[17]).

Regarding the internal organisation of this campaign and the interaction among the professionals, the Preface to volume XVIII (Series B – Nr 8) of the Minutes of the Committee of the National Campaign for Adult Education stated the following:

> It cannot be said that there have been many meetings of the Central Committees of the National Campaign for Adult Education; however, no initiative was adopted by those who took direct charge of implementing the Plan for Popular Education, or by any employees of the Ministry of Education with expertise in the field of supplementary teaching for adults under the regime campaign, without obtaining the prior consent of the Executive and Pedagogical Orientation Committee or of the Information and Propaganda Committee (…). Lisbon, July 1955. The Undersecretary of State for Education, Veiga de Macedo.[18]

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[16] "*Plano Nacional de Educação Popular*". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[17] "*Valores recolhidos no texto preambular do Decreto-lei de 31-XII-1956 sobre ensino primário*". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[18] *"Não pode dizer-se que tenham sido numerosas as reuniões das Comissões Centrais da Campanha Nacional de Educação de Adultos, mas nenhuma iniciativa foi tomada por*

In the late 1950s, Leite Pinto was Minister of Education and he extended compulsory education from three to four years for boys in 1956 and for girls in 1960. He also extended adult education to four years.

The Second Development Plan[19], covering the years from 1959 to 1964, continued to invest in technical schools and addressed the need for training of manpower, establishing contacts with the OECD to obtain support for the implementation of the Plan for Cultural Promotion. Once obtained, these subsidies were extended to other countries in a common plan, the Mediterranean Regional Project.

The report of the Mediterranean Regional Project gave continuity to Leite Pinto's proposals regarding changes in education and qualification of personnel to adequately respond to the demands of the economy. The quantitative monitoring of developing programmes had evolved since the "Quantitative Analysis of the Portuguese School Structure (1950-1959)"[20] which introduced the report and the "Evolution of the Portuguese School Structure (1959-1964)".[21] (Martins, Caetano, Lopes, & Cândido, 1963).

In 1962, the Fund for Development of Manpower[22] was created in the Ministry of Corporations and Social Security and in the same year, the Institute for Accelerated Vocational Training was established,[23] aiming at adults, without any coordination with the education system. The National Employment Service was established on December 9, 1965,[24] which was entrusted with the tasks of studying and organising the functioning of the labour market according to international guidelines, of designing the National Catalogue of Qualifications and of organising Professional Placement and Guidance Services.

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quem assumiu o encargo directo da execução do Plano de Educação Popular, nem por quaisquer funcionários do Ministério da Educação Nacional com competência na matéria do ensino supletivo de adultos em regime da Campanha, sem se ter obtido a concordância prévia da Comissão Executiva e de Orientação Pedagógica ou da Comissão de Informação e de Propaganda. (…). Lisboa, Julho de 1955. O Subsecretário de Estado da Educação Nacional, Veiga de Macedo". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

19 *II Plano de Fomento.* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

20 *Análise Quantitativa da Estrutura Escolar Portuguesa (1950-1959).* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

21 *Evolução da Estrutura Escolar Portuguesa (1959-1964).* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

22 *Fundo de Desenvolvimento da Mão-de-Obra* (free translation by the authors of this paper) – Decreto-Lei nr 44 506/62, of 10 August.

23 Decreto-Lei nr 44 538/62, of 23 August.

24 Decreto nr 42 731/65, of 9 December.

Moreover, in 1968, the Department for Vocational Training[25] was created to qualify adults professionally to meet new demands, particularly in the industrial sector.

In 1964, compulsory education for children of both sexes was extended from four to six years. In order to achieve compliance with schooling, the Institute of Audiovisual Education was established in 1965 and was responsible for an educational programme via television. Tele-school also became responsible for teaching adults at the level of the 5th and 6th grades.

The Minister of Education Veiga Simão presented the "School System Project" in January 1971. The Organic Law of the Ministry of National Education was published that same year. Amongst other innovations, it created the Directorate General for Continuing Education, which gave autonomy to adult education in relation to the other Directorates General which supervised the school system. In Section 5 of the Preamble of that Act, it was stated that one of the "General lines for Reform" was the "Progressive implementation of the concept of continuing education" for which this Directorate General was created and was responsible for "preparing and implementing a comprehensive plan for out-of-school education and cultural and professional promotion, mainly targeted at the adult population".[26] As well as for "supplementary action in lower secondary education, to encourage the development of educational libraries and of cultural centres which contribute especially to the social and cultural environment and promote the widespread diffusion of literary and artistic works".[27] The Directorate General, however, was never given an organic law.[28]

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[25] *Serviço de Formação Profissional* (free translation by the authors of this paper) – Decreto-Lei nr 48 275/68, of 14 March.

[26] *"(…) preparar e lançar um vasto plano de educação extra-escolar e de promoção cultural e profissional, destinado principalmente à população adulta"*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[27] *"(…) uma acção supletiva do ensino básico, fomentar a criação de bibliotecas educativas e de casas de cultura que contribuam de modo especial para o progresso social e cultural do meio e promover a difusão generalizada de obras literárias e artísticas"*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[28] Annex I – Evolution rates of illiteracy.

Table B.4 Evolution rates of illiteracy

Years	Men and Women
1890	76,2
1911	68,9
1930	60,0
1950	41,5
1970	25,6

Source: Census of 1890, 1911, 1930, 1950 and 1970[29]

The concept of lifelong education was used by UNESCO in the early 1970s when education policy had already been working with concepts of adult education, continuing education, and recurrent education.

In 1973, overarching legislation was published which structured the education system, covering preschool education, school education and continuing education[30]. "School education is executed through the school system, which comprises lower secondary, secondary and higher education and vocational training" and "continuing education is an organised process of education to promote, in an on-going way, cultural, scientific and professional training, update and improvement".[31]

The Basis XII of the aforementioned Law deals with vocational training stating that "in addition to vocational training courses in the school system, other courses shall be organised with similar purposes, through the combined efforts of public and private sectors, which shall adhere to standards and programmes established or approved by the Government".[32] Continuing education's purpose "is to ensure, in an organised manner, the possibility for

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29 Data in Tables 1 and 2, 3 and 4 are not consistent to the extent that research was based in various sources; as such, data showing different numbers are supported by different censuses or statistical records.

30 Lei nr 5/73, *Diário* de *Governo* – Series I, nr 173, of 25 July.

31 *"A educação escolar é realizada através do sistema escolar, que compreende os ensinos básico, secundário e superior e a formação profissional" e a "educação permanente é um processo organizado de educação destinado a promover, de modo contínuo, a formação, a actualização e o aperfeiçoamento cultural, científico e profissional".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

32 *"(…) além dos cursos de formação profissional no sistema escolar, serão organizados outros com finalidades idênticas, mediante a conjugação de esforços dos sectores público e privado, os quais obedecerão a normas e programas a estabelecer pelo Governo ou por ele homologados".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

each individual to learn throughout life, rendering him/her able to follow, according to his/her tendencies, aptitudes and interests, the evolution of knowledge, culture and the economic, social and professional context". The Ministry of National Education, in collaboration with other departments or agencies and private partners, through institutions created for that purpose or through the use of the school system structures and by way of adopting more appropriate schedules, shall ensure the following:

a) Methods of adult education equivalent to lower secondary, upper secondary or higher education;

b) Activities of cultural or professional promotion designed especially for adults, and namely, cultural development courses, and professional training, improvement, update and expertise courses".[33]

The creation of courses of adult lower secondary education was regulated by law[34]. The restructuring of these courses was "mainly aimed at eradicating illiteracy, felt mostly among the age group above 40, and at promoting the increase of the Portuguese education level". The objectives of these courses should, however, not be limited to promoting literacy, but should also focus on cultural development and on securing updated professional training to all.

There was an evolution in the concept and activities pertaining to adult education. The courses were intended for individuals over the age of 18. However, "for a transitional period (…) individuals between 14 and 18 years" could also be admitted. Popular libraries were created,[35] to be "integrated in future continuing learning centres" in order to "contribute to Portuguese out-of-school education and social progress". Their activities would be taken up by the Directorate General for Continuing Education, which could "establish cooperation agreements with official or private entities".

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[33] *"(…) tem por objectivo garantir, de forma organizada, a possibilidade de cada indivíduo aprender ao longo da vida, tornando-o apto a acompanhar, de acordo com as suas tendências, aptidões e interesses, a evolução do saber, da cultura e das condições da vida económica, profissional e social. O Ministério da Educação Nacional, por si e em colabouração com outros departamentos ou organismos e com entidades privadas, assegurará através de instituições especialmente criadas para esse fim, ou pela utilização das estruturas do sistema escolar e pela adopção de horários mais adequados:*

a) Modalidades de ensino para adultos equivalentes ao ensino básico, secundário ou superior;

b) Actividades de promoção cultural ou profissional destinadas em especial aos adultos e, nomeadamente, cursos de extensão cultural e de formação, aperfeiçoamento, actualização e especialização profissional". Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[34] Decreto-Lei nr 489/73, Diário do Governo – Series I, nr 231, of 2 October.

[35] Decreto-Lei nr 490/73, Diário do Governo – Series I, nr 231, of 2 October.

Actions for cultural promotion among populations in socio-culturally disadvantaged environments were "initiated in the academic year of 1974-75 and conducted by the 5th Division of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

The National Literacy Plan[36] was then elaborated and implemented with the support of the Popular Education Associations[37] and established the allocation of grants for adult education activities[38] and measures of technical support to organisations that promoted literacy projects.[39]

On the 13th of July of 1976,[40] the procedures for evaluation and certification of adults were amended and "the existence of rigid programmes" was not regarded as relevant. The capabilities to be developed and demonstrated by the adults should be developed according to their areas of interest or intervention.

Some of the innovative "guidelines of the learning process and of the final evaluation criteria and form" are defined as follows: "3rd – The content of adult lower secondary education shall be freely established by the adults and their mentors (…) 4th – The learning content may be expressed in the individual portfolio and in the group assignments of the adults (…) subject to final evaluation".[41]

Evening school was allowed only during the 1972/1973 academic year and in only three schools.

Access to University was then permitted for adults who had not completed regular school and aged over 25 years through "*ad hoc* assessment".[42]

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36 *Plano Nacional de Alfabetização*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

37 *Associações de Educação Popular* (free translation by the authors of this paper) – which are identified in Decreto-Lei nr 384/76, Diário da República – Series I, nr 118, of 20 May.

38 Despacho nr 29/76.

39 Despacho nr 53/76.

40 By Portaria nr 419/76, Diário da República – Series I, nr 162, of 13 July.

41 *"(…) 3.º O conteúdo da educação básica para adultos, a nível do ensino primário, será livremente estabelecido pelos adultos e respectivos orientadores, dentro dos objectivos definidos no n.º 1 deste diploma. 4.º O conteúdo da aprendizagem poderá estar expresso no dossier individual e nos trabalhos de grupo dos adultos. Do dossier individual fará parte todo o material utilizado e realizado pelo adulto na aprendizagem das diversas formas de linguagem, do cálculo aritmético e de outros conhecimentos adquiridos. Os dossiers do trabalho individual e de grupo poderão ser objecto de avaliação final".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

42 In force, Decreto-Lei nr 64/2006, Diário da República – Series I-A, nr 57, of 21 March, for individuals aged over 23 years.

Meanwhile, during the academic year of 1975/1976, secondary and technical education were unified, and in 1978, following the unified teaching, Complementary Courses were created, providing opportunities to work or to study further.

Established in 1979, the PNAEBA – National Plan for Literacy and Lower Secondary Education for Adults[43] –, "aims at systematically and gradually eliminating illiteracy and securing progressive access for all interested adults to the varying degrees of compulsory education"[44]; furthermore, the CNAEBA – National Council for Literacy and Adult Basic Education[45] was created in the Assembly of the Republic to monitor the implementation of that Plan.

The Plan starts by defining its Principles, establishing that pursuant to the Constitution, it is for the State to ensure universal lower secondary education and eliminate illiteracy, and that the State recognizes and supports existing initiatives in literacy and lower secondary education of adults through cultural and recreation centres, cultural cooperatives, territory-based grass-roots organisations, trade unions, committees of workers and religious organisations.

The targets reflected a broad vision of adult education: the cultural and educational development of the population, in view of their personal development and their progressive participation in cultural, social and political life; guaranteeing a permanent response to the basic needs for formal and informal adult education through the gradual implementation of a regionalized system throughout the country which ensured the mobilization and participation of populations, the coordination of the use of educational resources and which launches the foundations for a system of continuing education".[46]

In December 1979, the Directorate General for Adult Education[47] was created in the Ministry of Education as the result of a reorganisation of

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[43] *Plano Nacional de Alfabetização e Educação de Base de Adultos* - established by Lei nr 3/79, Diário da República – Series I, nr 8, of 1 October.

[44] *"(…) objectivo a eliminação sistemática e gradual do analfabetismo e o progressivo acesso de todos os adultos que o desejem aos vários graus da escolaridade obrigatória".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[45] *Conselho Nacional de Alfabetização e Educação de Base de Adultos.*

[46] As established in the Plan, at the end of five years, the Directorate General for Adult Education carried out an evaluation of the first phase of the PNAEBA.

[47] Decreto-Lei nr 534/79, Diário da República – Series I, nr 300, 9th Supplement, of 31 December.

the Directorate General for Continuing Education. Its first mission was "to participate in the formulation of adult education policy in the light of continuing education, and to contribute to its implementation".

In 1981, the law on the Worker-Student Statute,[48] repealed in 1997 and again in 2003, set out the legal framework that applied to any worker-student, i.e., to any worker employed by a public or private entity who attends any level of official education or equivalent.

The Institute of Employment and Vocational Training[49] was created in the Ministry of Labour in 1979. The legal framework referring to the Vocational Training System under an Alternating Regime (Learning System) was established in 1984[50] and revised the following year. It was designed for young people and enabled dual certification. The Cooperative Training Law also provided for the participation of enterprises in vocational training.

In 1980, the Council of Europe defined the premises of continuing education: "Man is an ever unfinished being; a changing society demands continuing education (…) There is no sense in maintaining the traditional division between the education system and the vocational training system, given their multiple interdependencies".[51]

In the early 1980s, a Working Group was created in the Ministry of Education to launch a Recurrent Education Programme.[52] Experimental in nature, three courses were initiated in the workplace: two in companies (EPAL[53] and CARRIS[54]) and one in a local authority.[55] The curricula were designed for adults at the level of the 5th and 6th grades with a duration of one year, adequate schedules, qualitative evaluation and professional training under the company's responsibility.[56]

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48 Lei nr 26/81 Diário da República – Series I, nr 191, of 21 August.

49 *Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional* (free translation by the authors of this paper) created by Decreto-Lei nr 519-A2/79, Diário da República – Series I, nr 299, 8th Supplement, of 29 December.

50 *Sistema de Formação Profissional em Regime de Alternância (sistema de aprendizagem)* (free translation by the authors of this paper) established by Decreto-Lei nr 102/84, Diário da República – Series I, nr 75, of 29 March.

51 *The Siena Program*, Strasbourg, 1980.

52 Despacho nr 21/80, of 4 March.

53 Water Company.

54 Public Transportation Company.

55 Despacho nr 54/83.

56 Despacho Normativo nr 58/88, Diário da República – Series I, nr 168, of 22 July.

The curriculum innovation in the 2nd cycle took the form of alternative curricula, and in the 3rd cycle of credit units, with certification of each unit. The Directorate General for Education Support and Development was responsible for all evening courses of preparatory education.[57]

In 1986, the Basic Law for the Education System[58] included training in adult education and promoted the development of recurrent education and out-of-school education. The curricular programmes of recurrent education, lower secondary and upper secondary, defined as a second chance, were diverse because they were suited to the different characteristics of their addressees. Out-of-school education actions favoured educational and cultural development of the individual over obtainment of a diploma. Compulsory education was extended to nine years, including students who began the 1st cycle in 1987/1988.

The GETAP – Office for Technological, Artistic and Professional Education[59] – was created in 1988[60], under the Ministry of Education, to coordinate all vocational training within the formal education system and promote the creation of courses throughout the country and experiments with the structures of vocational training for young people.[61]

The legal framework for professional schools[62] was laid down the following year. Under the Ministry of Education, these schools were a local initiative and offered general and vocational training that was equivalent to upper secondary level education.

In the 1980s, the rates of illiteracy and school failure were still high. Two Inter-ministerial programmes were created by Resolutions of the Council of Ministers to combat early school drop-out – the PIPSE – Inter-ministerial Programme for the Promotion of Educational Success[63] in 1988, and the PEPT Programme Education for All[64] in 1991.

The percentage of school drop-outs who had not completed compulsory education, compounded with the fact that professional qualification after

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[57] *Direcção-Geral de Apoio e Extensão Educativa* (free translation by the authors of this paper) – Portaria nr 243/88, Diário da República – Series I, nr 91, of 19 April.

[58] Lei nr 46/86, Diário da República – Series I, nr 237, of 14 August.

[59] *Gabinete de Educação Tecnológica, Artística e Profissional.*

[60] Decreto-Lei nr 397/88, Diário da República – Series I, nr 258, of 8 November.

[61] Terminated in 1993, its mission was assumed by the Secondary Education Department.

[62] Created by Decreto-Lei nr 26/89, Diário da República – Series I, nr 18, of 21 January.

[63] *Programa Interministerial de Promoção do Sucesso Educativo.*

[64] *Programa Educação Para Todos.*

basic education was not guaranteed for all, resulted in young people being able to leave the education system with no initial training. In 1991, the regime for pre-learning courses was defined,[65] establishing cooperative interaction between the Directorate General for Educational Development[66] (general education) and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (technological training). Students were offered professional equivalence and compulsory education equivalence.

Since 1989 when Portugal started benefiting from structural funds, investments in the qualification of the Portuguese population allowed for the development of adult education beyond the school paradigm.

In the PRODEP I – Educational Development Programme for Portugal,[67] – which marked the first time EU funds were allocated for the development of an education system, the objectives of the Adult Education Subprogramme, developed between 1989 and 1994, were to enable the completion of compulsory education and provide professional training at level 1. It also developed socio-professional and socio-educative courses as a complement to adult education. Meanwhile, the education system expanded the professional training of young people in Professional schools and in Technological Courses in secondary education. The Structural Funds, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) made the education reform possible, particularly in the creation of infrastructures and progress towards greater quality in education and training. European Union funds also enabled the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training to develop the promotion of vocational training.

Recurrent education and out-of-school education were regulated;[68] and specific legislation was announced for adult education in the form of vocational training or distance learning. Recurrent education and out-of-school education were intended primarily for individuals beyond the normal age in the regular education system.

Evening general courses, along the lines of credit units, became the responsibility of the Directorate General for Educational Development and secondary level recurrent education was mainly attended by young people.

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[65] Decreto-Lei nr 383/91, Diário da República – Series I-A, nr 232, of 9 October.

[66] *Direcção-Geral de Extensão Educativa*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[67] *Programa de Desenvolvimento Educativo para Portugal*.

[68] Decreto-Lei nr 74/91, Diário da República – Series I-A, nr 34, of 9 February.

Learning opportunities offered by society outside the school were thus multiplying in all areas. The International Commission on Education for the 21st century defined the four pillars of lifelong education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.

> "Continuing education that is really in harmony with the needs of modern societies can no longer be defined in relation to a particular time of life (adult education as opposed to education of the young, for instance) or to too specific a purpose (vocational as opposed to general). Time for learning is a life time, and every kind of knowledge permeates and enriches others. Lifelong education is an educational continuum coextensive with life and widened to take in the whole of society (Delors, 1996, pp. 99-100).

As regards the "Education and Training throughout life" policy,[69] the actions provided were: "Certification of knowledge/competences acquired throughout life" and "Diversified short duration offers – Technological Literacy". Quantified targets enabled a confrontation with the legal measures subsequently published and their implementation during the period of the Community Support Framework.

Thus, alongside the strengthening of the supply of adult education and training and hence the opportunities to obtain academic certification and professional qualification in a formal way, all citizens, and particularly adults with fewer school years, active employed and unemployed individuals, should also be given the possibility of recognition, validation and certification of knowledge and competences acquired in non-formal or informal ways, in different contexts of life and work, and also in numerous training activities in many different fields and with many different durations. The development of education throughout life entailed new forms of certification that took into account all the competences acquired (Delors, 1996). Education throughout life and lifelong learning were thus constantly mentioned in legal texts and in social representation. The concept of lifelong education was the key for entering the 21st century (Delors, 1996). International organisations devoted various initiatives to a new learning concept, typical of a changing society in which lower secondary education and vocational training became insufficient and required a constant effort to meet all changes.

Correspondingly, a Resolution was passed by the Council of Ministers[70] noting that "the re-launching of adult education in Portugal is presided, on

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69 *Educação e Formação ao Longo da Vida*. Free translation by the authosr of this paper.

70 Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 92/98, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 160, of 14 July.

the one hand by the full recognition of the right to education and training throughout life and, on the other, by the urgency of a national commitment to meet the new demands of a global society and the mutations of professional life in today's world". In order to attain those objectives, the Council of Ministers decided to establish a Taskforce for the Development of Education and Training of Adults[71] with the mission of "initiating and implementing the Society Project S@bER+".[72]

The intended evolution of the Portuguese economic and social model towards higher levels of productivity, especially in sectors exposed to global competition, implied developing the skills of population. This strategic choice was enshrined in the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) for the period 2000-2006 which aimed at reinforcing competitiveness and social cohesion in Portugal.

The priorities of public policy for the upcoming years are described in part I of the prospective study, *The Future of Education in Portugal: Trends and Opportunities* (Carneiro, Caraça & Pedro, 2000):

- The development of a vigorous plan for Lifelong Learning;
- The strengthening of secondary education, in particular by dignifying technological, professional and vocational paths, and disseminating alternating studies;
- The devolution of responsibilities of direction and management of educational centres to the regional and local levels, thus encouraging the coexistence of alternative models and the emergence of open centres and flexible learning.

In part II of the same study, the perceived value of knowledge is seen as the explanation for the development and competitiveness of societies.

Another study by Carneiro (2000) shows that the Portuguese problem remains in the low rates of skills of the adult working population. Its conclusion proposed the following:

> 1st scenario – to achieve in 2020, the current situation of the more advanced European countries such as Finland, Denmark or The Netherlands, regarding the educational structure of the population between 25-64

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71 *Grupo de Missão para o Desenvolvimento da Educação da Formação de Adultos*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

72 *Projecto de Sociedade S@bER*.

> year old. To achieve this, Portugal would have to qualify around 2.5 million working adults, of which about half with secondary education or equivalent training (…). In a 2nd scenario – more ambitious – to converge with the educational structure of the population in Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands, around 2020, Portugal would be faced with the need to qualify around 5 million working adults, of which about a third with secondary level or equivalent training (Carneiro, 2000, p. 42).[73]

The debate on lifelong learning received a strong boost with the Memorandum resulting from the Lisbon European Council in March 2000:

> The labour market in our country still has a number of structural weaknesses which create problems in terms of national competitiveness and quality of employment, as well as of its medium term sustainability. Also in the field of academic qualifications, the gap between certified qualifications of the Portuguese adult population and academic qualifications of most European countries is still significant; the estimate is that among 4.7 million active population, around 2.4 million have not completed nine years of school.

The ANEFA – National Agency for Education and Training of Adults[74] – was created as a public institution subject to the supervision and authority of the Minister of Education and Minister of Labour and Solidarity. This measure highlighted the need for higher levels of qualification of the adult population and gave ANEFA the power to produce rules that allowed a broad universe of training bodies to establish flexible training options for adults, securing them the simultaneous obtainment of academic and professional certification.[75] In view of the initially low results in ANEFA, the Ministry of Labour established protocols with companies that channelled workers in groups.

The challenges Portugal was facing at the beginning of the 21st century, the unemployment rates and the urgent need for qualified human resources

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73 *"Assim, um 1.º cenário – relativamente conservador na sua ambição – consistiria em pretender alcançar, em 2020, a situação actual dos países europeus mais avançados, como a Finlândia, Dinamarca ou Holanda, no que respeita à estrutura educativa da sua população dos 25-64 anos. Para o conseguir, Portugal teria de habilitar e/ou qualificar à volta de 2,5 milhões de adultos activos, dos quais cerca de metade com o nível secundário ou equivalente de formação (…) Num 2º. cenário – mais ambicioso – que colocaria como meta convergir com a estrutura educativa da população na Finlândia, Dinamarca ou Holanda, por volta de 2020, Portugal ver-se-á defrontado com a exigência de habilitar e/ou qualificar à volta de 5 milhões de adultos activos, dos quais cerca de 1/3 ao nível secundário ou equivalente de formação"*. Free translation by the authors of this paper.

74 *Agência Nacional de Educação e Formação de Adultos*.

75 Decreto-Lei nr 387/99, Diário da República – Series I-A, nr 227, of 28 September.

continue to require an articulation between education and training. Two of the four general objectives of PRODEP III (in line with the PNDES 2000-2006) are well cast:

- "To expand and diversify the training of young people, investing in high skills and employability of young generations;
- To promote lifelong learning and improve the employability of the workforce" (Ministério da Educação, 2000a, pp. 31-32).

Active adults also constitute a priority target group for which diverse options of short duration should be made available. The educational system should "establish an Accreditation System for knowledge and competences acquired outside the school system, facilitating the choice of adults who seek further training, the definition of adequate offers by the educational and training systems, as well as the recognition of such competences and knowledge by the labour market".[76]

2.1. *Points of Departure towards NOI*

In the case of NOI, the technical background and the components recovered from past programmes achieved an extraordinary dimension which was largely or primarily due to the current political commitment.

According to the Programme of the XVII Constitutional Government 2005-2009, only 20% of the Portuguese population aged between 25 and 64 completed upper secondary level education (Ministério da Educação, 2000a). The OECD average is 65%.[77] In the same age range, only 9% have completed a higher education level, compared to 24% of the OECD.[78] 47% reached levels below secondary education and are not currently studying. The average of the OECD countries for the same age group is 19%.

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[76] *"(…) instituir um Sistema de Acreditação de Conhecimentos e Competências adquiridas fora do sistema escolar, facilitando a orientação da procura por parte dos adultos de acções de formação posteriores, a estruturação das ofertas adequadas por parte dos sistemas educativo e formativo, bem como o reconhecimento dessas competências e conhecimentos pelo mercado de trabalho".* Free translation by the authors of this paper.

[77] In 2008, these figures changed to 28% and 72%, respectively. OECD. (2010). *Education at a Glance*.

[78] In 2008, OECD data indicated 14% and 28%, respectively. OECD. (2008). *Education at a Glance*.

According to the OECD, between 1970 and 1990, GDP growth in Portugal could have been higher on average if the education levels were comparable to the OECD average. The average years of school of the adult population in Portugal is 8.2, whereas the OECD average is 12.0 years.[79]

At the OECD level, it is estimated that an additional year of school contributes to increasing the annual GDP growth rate by 0.3 to 0.5 percentage points.[80] Portugal is a country where having qualifications is more rewarding: a worker with upper secondary education earns on average 60% more than a worker who has not completed the same level.[81]

More education is also associated with a lower unemployment rate and a shorter duration of unemployment: in 2006, the unemployment rate for the lower secondary education level was 7.7%, while for the higher education level it was 6.3 %. Concerning the length of unemployment, only 21% of university undergraduates take more than a year to return to employment, compared with 35% among those who completed lower secondary education and 56% among those without any qualification. About 3, 500, 000 of the individuals currently active have a level below secondary education, of which 2, 600, 000 show educational levels below lower secondary.[82] Despite the growth in investment in education, Portugal still has a long way to go.

Table B.5 Wage gains by education level, age group 25-64

	Below upper secondary	Tertiary
Portugal (2006)	68	177
Spain (2007)	81	138
Finland (2006)	94	146
France (2006)	85	149
Hungary (2006)	73	219
Italy (2006)	75	155

Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2010.

[79] OECD. (2005). *Education at a Glance.*

[80] OECD. (2005). *Education at a Glance.*

[81] OECD. (2004). *Employment Outlook.*

[82] OECD (2005) *Economic Policy Reforms – Going for Growth.*

The PNACE (National Action Programme for Growth and Employment) 2005-2008[83] is a guide for the implementation of a national strategy to reform and modernize, which is designed within the framework of references and priorities of the Lisbon Strategy as a global response to the guidelines adopted by the European Council.

The high priority for the upcoming years is materialized in the "drastic reduction of school failure in lower secondary and upper secondary education, in the increasing number of young people in technological and vocational secondary education and in the generalization of appropriate curricular choices". Within this framework, quantified targets are defined more specifically for the adult population, including:

- To increase the participation rate of the population between the ages of 25 and 64 in education / training activities to 12.5% by 2010 (4.8% in 2004);
- To qualify 1 million of the working population by 2010, of whom 435,000 by 2008 through education and training courses or recognition, validation and certification of competences;
- To expand the network of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) centres in order to reach 300 centres in 2008 and 500 by 2010;
- To extend the framework of key competences used in the system of RVCC to the upper secondary level;
- To increase the number of technical and vocational courses for education and training of adults, reaching, by 2010, 107, 000 vacancies (65, 000 at the level of pper secondary education and 42, 000 at the lower secondary level) and about 350, 000 adults.

Measure nr 7, referring to the New Opportunities Initiative, supports the strengthening of vocational education, of dual certification, in expanding education and training courses, and extending the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) system".

The Technological Plan[84] (axis 1) of 2005 refers to the need to qualify the Portuguese for the knowledge society, which requires an expansion in

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[83] *Programa Nacional de Acção para o Crescimento e o Emprego* 2005/2008 – Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 183/05, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 228, of 28 November.

[84] Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 190/05, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 240, of 16 December.

the supply of training courses in order to engage a variety of people with different needs and at different stages of their lives. The goals adopted for 2010 required a huge effort of the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) to "reclaim young people and adults who left the educational system early". In this Action Plan, the goals for 2010 converged with those already referred to in the PNACE.

On the issue of qualification, the Programme of the XVII Constitutional Government 2005-2009 stresses that to overcome the country's shortage of skills, education, vocational training and lifelong learning policies shall be targeted and focused in order to reach the objective of technological, scientific and innovative development of the country; the goal is also to "make a qualitative leap in dimension and structure of education and training programmes targeted at adults" (2005, p. 21); to increase the diversity of professional profiles in the labour market; to diversify learning opportunities, transforming schools and training centres into open learning centres.

Along these lines, in Chapter II of the Programme, entitled *New Social Policies – More and better education*, it is said that "processes of recognition, validation and certification of acquired competences and education and training courses, which have already shown good results at the level of lower secondary education, should be extended progressively to the level of secondary education" (2005, p. 48).

The Lisbon Strategy and the Education and Training Programme for Europe in 2010 defined a set of guidelines aimed at the full integration of European citizens in a knowledge society. Skills development in information and communication technologies (ICT) and its transversal integration in the processes of teaching and learning thus become clear objectives of education: "(…) The Government made a firm decision built upon an ambition: to place Portugal among the five most advanced European countries in the technological modernization of education in 2010".[85]

Despite the progress in the last decade, in 2007 the Technological Plan for Education[86] stated that:

> The country is still lagging behind compared to its European counterparts, owing to the fact that policy measures on the one hand, and individual initiatives of school communities on the other, were not enough to produce a substantive change in the landscape of technological mod-

[85] Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 137/07, of 7 September.

[86] Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 137/07, of 7 September.

ernization of education in Portugal. It is therefore important to define the process of technological modernization for Portugal, incorporating international best practices and adapting them to the national context.

The technological modernization of education is a big challenge for Portugal, which, according to the Technological Plan for Education, requires (i) the adoption of a national strategy with very precise guidelines, goals and objectives, (ii) an action plan that clearly defines the measures and means necessary to attain those objectives and (iii) an articulated and coordinated intervention of all actors involved in implementing and monitoring these measures.

The QREN, as a framework document for measures supported by structural funds, lays down the strategic priorities for the period 2007-2013. The POPH defines ten priority axes for human potential, the first being "overcoming the skills deficit of the Portuguese population by establishing the secondary level as a minimum qualification for all", including young people and adults. Hence, it is necessary to raise the skills of young people and improve the qualification of all adults through LLL strategies outlined in the framework of NOI. The types of intervention are: Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences; Courses of Education and Training for Adults; Certified Modular Training; and Re-equipment and Strengthening of the Network of Training Centres.

It is also stated in the Final Report of the National Debate on Education (Conselho Nacional de Educação, 2007) that the competences identified as necessary for the citizens of the 21st century are consistent with the principles set out by UNESCO on education for the 21st century. These refer to the consolidation of four learning structures: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. The proposals concerning LLL suggest measures for organising the training system for youth and adults, highlighting a national strategy for achieving twelve-year schooling, dual certification (academic and vocational), formal and informal learning, the generalization of the RVCC as a condition of access to education and training processes and the collaboration of the media in mobilizing society for lifelong learning. Expanding the options of EFA courses, the need for specific training of agents involved and cooperation between local institutions in education and training of adults are also mentioned.

The evaluation of the Community Support Framework III contributed to the reflection on the results of the application of the ESF and the preparation of the POPH in the field of education, training and employment policies.[87]

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[87] The QREN through the POPH 2007 – 2013 (September, 2007).

The evolution of productivity and the ability to acquire skills were conditioned by the qualification levels of the active population: 75% have not completed upper secondary education and 54% have, at most, completed lower secondary education.

Table B.6 Indicators of evolution of the qualifications of the Portuguese population

	1991	2001	2004
Rate of illiteracy	11	9	n.d.
Rate of pre-schooling	58,0 (1995)	77,2	78,4
Rate of schooling at the age of 15	82,5	92,6	92,6 (2003)
Rate of participation in education at the age of 18	54,1 (1994)	66,3	64,8
Rate of school drop-out (10-15 year old without the 3rd cycle of the lower secondary level)	12,5	2,7	n.d.
Rate of early school leaving (18-24 year old without the upper secondary level)	n.d.	44,0	39,4
Population of 20-24 year old who completed, at least, the upper secondary level	41,3 (1994)	44,4	49,6
Nr of enrollments in the tertiary level	186.780	387.703	395.100*
Students in the tertiary level / population of 20-29 year old	n.d	n.d.	24,8 (2002/2003)
Population of 25- to 64 year old who completed, at least, the upper secondary level	21,9 (1995)	20,2	25,2
Rate of participation of the population of 25-64 year old in education and training activities	n.d.	3,4	4,8

Sources: INE, General Census of the Population; GIASE, Education Statistics; OCES, Education Statistics, EUROSTAT.

The principles, objectives and targets are repeated in all legal documents that refer to the New Opportunities Programme, even before its designation as *Initiative*. The convergence in the objectives and consistency in its guidelines are also clear as regards both education and training. The major purpose is “to strengthen the education and qualification of the Portuguese population from the perspective of lifelong learning”, entailing a decisive strategy to strengthen secondary education. Thus, the strategic objectives, complemented by the strategic priorities of the QREN 2007-2013 (2007, p. 6823), seek to respond to the diagnosis.

3. Public policy in Education – Legacies

There are some key elements of earlier adult education public policy that have inspired what NOI is today. As it will be specified in this paper, there is a clear overlap with previous components, verified in legal documents, and which have (almost always) already been experimented with concrete results. Among all the components, NOI benefited particularly from:

- Proximity and flexibility: Education outside the school (or out-of-school education, aiming at obtaining an academic degree);
- Articulation between education and vocational training (dual ministerial responsibility) and dual certification;
- Validation, Recognition and Certification (including dual certification) of acquired competences (formal, non-formal and informal) throughout life.

3.1. *Proximity and flexibility (education outside the school – out-of-school education)*

Before the legal use of the term out-of-school education, several educational solutions were taken outside the school buildings to bring the educational institution closer to those who could not access it, i.e.: the organisation and implementation of "mobile schools" around the early 1900s, the permanent libraries located next to rural schools and the mobile libraries that circulated among the factories in the 1950s.

The term out-of-school education is used in legal documents to describe flexible adult education programmes developed in school buildings and referring to grades or academic levels. It entails all the activities that take place outside the regular school system through formal and informal processes,[88] although training in this area may be the object of recognition and validation.

As indicated above, under the Organic Law of the Ministry of National Education of 1971[89] which creates the Directorate General for Continuing Education, adult education becomes autonomous in relation to the Directorates General for school education. The concept of out-of-school education,

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[88] Decreto-Lei nr 74/91, of 9 February.

[89] Decreto-Lei nr 408/71, Diário da República – Series I, nr 228, of 27 September.

as stated, entails cultural and social development together with vocational development of adult education.

The concepts of lifelong learning and professional training covered by the school system and also by the private sector are set out in the above indicated 1973 legislative instrument[90]. This Law structures the education system covering preschool education, school education and continuing education. In this context, continuing education also entails the flexible organisation of the educational path that lasts a lifetime and promotes the development of professional and personal skills. Reference is also made to the articulation of the Ministry of National Education with other agencies and private partners.

By 1973, courses in adult lower secondary education are aimed at individuals who have not attained the qualification corresponding to compulsory education, thus promoting knowledge improvement and update, in order to secure a better integration of the individual both in his/her professional activities and in society.

The preparation of the 1980-1990 PNAEBA established the link between adult education and local and regional development in a wide perspective of spaces of education. A broader vision of education was adopted, supporting initiatives in literacy and adult lower secondary education, particularly by local cultural and recreational organisations, grassroots organisations, workers' unions, and religious organisations. Reference was also made to a national regional system that permanently covers basic needs of formal and informal adult education.

Article 16 of the Basic Law for the Education System of 1986[91] includes adult recurrent education and training, integrating a perspective of continuing education which is to be supported by the State.

Recurrent and out-of-school education are regulated by law.[92] While recurrent education is considered "a special type of school education", understood as a second chance in order "to obtain the certificates and diplomas awarded by regular education", out-of-school education "is constituted by all the educational activities that take place outside the regular system education, through formal and non-formal processes". The regulation of

[90] Lei nr 5/73, of 25 July.

[91] Lei nr 46/86, of 14 October.

[92] Decreto-Lei nr 74/91, of 9 February.

out-of-school education is characterized by greater flexibility, while training in this area may be the object of recognition and validation.

Noteworthy is the creation of ANEFA in 1998,[93] whereby "flexible paths of training for adults should be provided by the training bodies, simultaneously guaranteeing them an academic and vocational certification". As per its powers, ANEFA promotes and authorizes the establishment of education and training courses for adults, organised on the initiative of training agencies accredited by the INOFOR (Institute for Innovation in Training),[94] municipalities, enterprises, workers' associations, and also schools, IPSS – private institutions of social solidarity[95] – and vocational training centres. EFA courses apply innovative models "based on modular and flexible pathways" through a framework of key competences for lower secondary training, a framework for vocational training, based on qualification itineraries organised in credit units; structured processes for recognition and validation of skills acquired throughout life in formal or informal ways.

A national network of centres for recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC Centres[96]) was created in 2000[97] in complement to the existing system of adult education and training.

In conclusion, several past experiences inside or outside school buildings contributed to a change of mentality, focused in the offer of different possibilities to the student to pursue his/her studies, and characterized by the NOI flexible public service, characterized by its proximity to the adult.

3.2. *Articulation between education and vocational training; Dual Certification*

Education and training have always been placed under separate ministerial authorities and regulated by different instruments, despite some attempts to overcome this separation. Although this issue is predominantly political, knowledge and experience of experts from the two ministries have played a key role in transforming mentalities and traditions. The advantages of bridging education and vocational training are now indisputable, in view of

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[93] Decreto-Lei nr 387/99, of 28 September.

[94] *Instituto para a Inovação na Formação.*

[95] *Instituições Particulares de Solidariedade Social.*

[96] *Centros de Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências.*

[97] Portaria nr 1082-A/2001, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 206, of 5 September.

the Portuguese situation and the results of the experiments of ANEFA, later confirmed by ANQ.

In the early 1980s, an experimental programme of Recurrent Education was launched by the Ministry of Education. In 1988, as a consequence of linking Education and Labour, one-year curricula were designed for adults at the level of the 5th and 6th grade, with a schedule suitable for adults, qualitative assessment and integrating vocational training, the latter being under the responsibility of the employer.

In 1988, the GETAP – Office for Technological, Artistic and Professional Education[98] was created under the Ministry of Education to coordinate and innovate all vocational training in the formal educational system for young people.[99] Professional schools, a novelty then introduced into the Ministry of Education, were private institutions operating under the local initiative and offered young people general education and professional training that were equivalent to upper secondary education. This model was recently extended to the entire secondary education in public schools.

In 1991, cooperation between the Directorate General for Educational Development (general education) and the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (technological training) established a system of pre-learning courses,[100] offering dual certification to students.

As stated above, curricular innovation in lower secondary education, integrating general education and technical and vocational training, takes shape in the form of alternative curricula, and, in the 3rd cycle, in the form of credit units, with certification of each unit. The Directorate General for Educational Development is now responsible for all preparatory evening courses.

Also, PRODEP I, through the Subprogramme in Adult Education, developed between 1989 and 1994, provided the conditions for the completion of compulsory education (1st and 2nd cycles of lower secondary education) and the acquiring of a professional qualification at level 1.

A 1991 decree-law[101] stipulated that the training plans in recurrent adult education and out-of-school education "must respect the different training

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98 *Gabinete de Educação Tecnológica, Artística e Profissional.*

99 Closed down in 1993, its powers were assumed by the Department of Secondary Education.

100 Decreto-Lei nr 383/91, of 9 October.

101 Decreto-Lei nr 74/91, of 9 February, article 21.

paths and rhythms of individual learning as well as the articulation with areas of vocational training".

To meet the national commitment of providing opportunities for education and training throughout life,[102] ANEFA[103] was created under the authority and supervision of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour and Solidarity; as well as the other powers already referred to above. It supports initiatives by promoting the articulation between public and private entities.

The model of the formal programmes for adult education and training (EFA) was designed in 2000 by the Taskforce for the Development of Education and Training of Adults under ANEFA (which enabled and approved the realization of the courses), following the PRODEP I and II models (professional component and school component): flexible education options based on the recognition and validation of previously acquired competences, curriculum design which integrates general education and professional training in an articulated structure, and modular systems organised by competences.

The creation and organisation of the courses may be initiated by different training bodies accredited by the Institute for Innovation in Training. The monitoring and evaluation of the courses are developed in conjunction with the regional structures of the two Ministries. The framework for key competences at lower secondary level is then drafted under the responsibility of ANEFA.

Dual certification is the strongest example of the articulation between the education and training systems. The legal regime for the Vocational Training System under an Alternating Regime (Learning System) was defined in 1984[104] and revised the following year. It was designed for young people (aged between 14 and 24), and included a specific training component to be developed primarily in companies and a general training component, complementing the former, and awarded dual certification. The Learning and Professional courses targeting youngsters led to the creation of the EFA courses and Post-secondary technological expertise courses, that later culminated with the integration and improvement of the EFA courses in NOI.

The challenges of the beginning of the 21st century, in view of the high levels of unemployment and the urgent need for qualified human resources, continued to require coordination between education and training. One

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102 Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 92/98, of 14 July.

103 Decreto-Lei nr 387/99, of 28 September.

104 Decreto-Lei nr 102/84, of 29 March.

of the general objectives of the PRODEP III[105] was to improve attendance in general secondary education and level III qualification and reach active adults and provide them with diverse options in short-term activities.

A different understanding of the relationship between education and training led to the creation of the DGFV - Directorate General for Vocational Training[106] which was responsible for the systemic functioning of the school education system – regular and recurrent and out-of-school – in a model of lifelong learning, and to the end of ANEFA[107] and the approval of a new organic structure for the Ministry of Education.

On the education side, the development of General Directorates that were concerned with alternative solutions for education (Extensive Education, Adult Education, etc). On the labour side, the IEFP and its predecessors represented similar efforts for professional education. These parallel efforts culminated in joint efforts of dual responsibility, first with ANEFA, then with DGFV, leading to ANQ as the responsible institution for NOI.

3.3. *Validation, Recognition and Certification of acquired competences throughout life*

The assessment procedures also brought positive legacies to future policies in education and training, particularly the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults and competences acquired throughout their personal and professional life.

Adults were (are) able to benefit from the recognition and validation of knowledge and competences, recognized not only for their economic value, but also from the lifelong education perspective. The criteria and procedures for assessment and certification of adults at a level equivalent to the 1st cycle were altered by a legal instrument[108] which further established the flexibility of programmes according to the areas of interest or intervention of the adults and the individual portfolio as a possible object of final assessment.

The extension of adult education courses to the level of preparatory education, to be decided annually by the Director General for Support

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[105] Ministério da Educação, 2000b, pp. 31-32.

[106] *Direcção-Geral de Formação Profissional.*

[107] Decreto-Lei nr 208/2002, Diário da República – Series I-A, nr 240, of 17 October.

[108] Portaria nr 419/76, of 13 July.

and Educational Development,[109] required a redefinition of the evaluation procedures through a specific instrument[110] pursuant to which assessment may be continuous or final. The individual's work portfolio and individual process are considered as tools for continuous assessment. "The results of the continuous assessment are ratified by a certification committee, to which "the candidate's work portfolio as well as its individual process should be submitted". The final assessment consists of a written part (a test for each curriculum area) and an oral part which "will consist of a dialogue based on the individual portfolio (…) or on the performance in the written test, or any other material that the jury considers appropriate".

The Directorate General for Support and Educational Development can authorize the creation of alternative curricula for specific groups of the population.[111] An Order is issued introducing changes in the evaluation system: in any of the cycles of lower secondary education, assessment is continuous and carried out according to criteria of competence"; the "documents for registering the continuous assessment are the student's portfolio and his/her individual process".[112]

Under the responsibility of the Directorate General for Support and Educational Development, in recurrent education courses, curricular programmes at the level of the 3rd cycle of lower secondary and upper secondary education[113] are based on credit units, with certification of each unit.[114]

The general aim of promoting the personal and social fulfilment of individuals established in the Basic Law for the Education System[115] underlies "the general framework for the organisation and development of adult education in the areas of recurrent education and out-of-school education".[116] "The joint regulation of adult recurrent education and out-of-school education aims to create conditions that allow articulation between the two models, as well as recognition not only of the diversity of organised forms of educa-

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109 Portaria nr 419/76, of 13 July, see article 3.

110 Portaria nr 95/87, Diário da República – Series I, nr 34, of 10 February.

111 Portaria nr 243/88, of 19 April.

112 Despacho nr 22/SEEI/96, Diário da República – Series II, nr 120, of 19 June.

113 Despacho nr 34/EBS/86, of 4 October - applies the pedagogical organisation system based on credit units to the general evening course of secondary education, created by Despacho Normativo nr 73/86, Diário da República – Series I, nr 194, of 25 August.

114 Despacho Normativo nr 193/91, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 204, of 5 September.

115 Lei nr 46/86, of 14 October.

116 Created by Decreto-Lei nr 74/91 of 9 February.

tion, but also of social situations and experiences". It also lays down the foundation of the RVC process, determining the possibility of ensuring the recognition and validation of knowledge acquired and of social and vocational experience, as well as curriculum equivalences and their respective accreditation.

Among its powers, ANEFA[117] has the competence to elaborate a "system of recognition and validation of informal learning for adults, aiming at academic and professional certification", thus motivating adults to seize opportunities of lifelong learning. The purpose of the RVC model is to certify, as was the case with the credit units: some adults may be certified at the beginning of the process. In any case, the two processes – academic and professional – are essentially formative processes.

A national network of centres of recognition, validation and certification of competences (centres of RVCC) was created in 2001,[118] which promotes the National System of Recognition, Validation and Certification, designed and organised by ANEFA and complements the systems for adult education and training already in place. The certification process includes an review carried out by an external jury and additional training if necessary. The structure of the National RVCC System is based on the Framework of Key Competences for Education and Training of Adults and on the Accreditation Procedure Regulation of the Entities Promoting the Centres of RVCC.

The centres, promoted by public or private organisations accredited by ANEFA, are constituted "as privileged spaces for the mobilization of adults and for the application of methods of recognition and validation of previously acquired skills, aimed at improving school certification and professional qualification." Costs incurred with their implementation and operation were supported under PRODEP III.

In PRODEP III (2000-2006), active adults constitute a priority group for which several courses should be made available with an emphasis on short-term actions; moreover, the education system should establish an Accreditation System of Knowledge and Competences Acquired outside the school system (Ministério da Educação, 2000a).

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117 Decreto-Lei nr 387/99, of 28 of September.

118 Portaria nr 1082-A/01, of 5 September, amended and repealed by Portarias nr 286-A/02, Diário da República – Series I-B, nr 63, Supplement, of 15 March and nr 86/07, Diário da República – Series I, nr 9, of 12 January.

Part I of the prospective study *The Future of Education in Portugal*: *Trends and Opportunities* (Carneiro, Caraça & Pedro, 2000) sets out the priorities of public policy for the coming years. In Part II, the perceived value of knowledge is seen as the explanation for the development and competitiveness of societies, entailing the progress of individual skills obtained in formal and informal ways and registered in an individual portfolio.

"Recognition of learning through experience is a strategic option for achieving the objective of enhancing the qualification of active population lacking school". In axes 2 of the POPH[119]-QREN[120] (Operational Programme of Human Development - National Strategic Reference Framework) on adaptability and lifelong learning, there is a proposal to provide new opportunities through various forms of intervention, among which the "expansion and consolidation of the system of RVCC".

In conclusion, the legacy of the design of the RVCC system and the creation of the first CRVCC around 2000, with the approval of the Lower Secondary Framework of Competences become clear. These actions, departing from systems and institutions, culminated in the expansion of the centres, currently named by CNO and in the approval of the Upper Secondary Framework of Competences. In parallel, the methods applied were also experimented in the past with the implementation and use of the *dossier* since the late 1970s as an assessment instrument of the knowledge acquired by the student, which led to an adaptation of this format to what we find for the compilation of evidence of the competences of the individual gained throughout life in the *portfolio* as the main assessment tool for the RVCC processes within the NOI.

4. What is distinctive about NOI?

In *The transition from quantity to quality: A neglected causal mechanism in accounting for social evolution*, R. L. Carneiro explains the transition from quantity to quality of social evolution and transformation first pointed out by Hegel, and then by Marx and Engels:

> Since the time of Marx and Engels, scientists have come to recognize the validity and utility of the notion that, during the course of changes in nature, a quantitative increase in substance, once it reaches a critical

[119] *Programa Operacional do Potencial Humano.*
[120] *Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional.*

threshold, results in a qualitative transformation of state (Carneiro, 2000, p. 2927).

As it was specified in the previous section of this paper, there are earlier components present in legal documents and experiments. However, NOI's current success can be further explained by the political commitment that supports the Initiative. Indeed, some measures were published in the past, but they have not been implemented because of a mismatch between the technical capacity underlying the definition of the measures and political commitment, these two dimensions proving not always to be in concurrence.

Unlike what was stated in section 2 of this paper, which identified several governmental changes that provoked political execution ruptures and discontinuities, we would like here to draw attention to the political commitment as a distinct factor since the early days of NOI. Also characterized by its continuity (2005-2010), this contributed to NOI having revealed a build-up in quantitative changes promoting the increase of the minimum level of education of the Portuguese population, and thus giving rise to qualitative and structural changes in Portuguese society.

4.1. *From ANEFA to ANQ*

The purpose of the public education policy – ensuring young people and adults access to higher levels of education and culture as well as to a professional qualification – led to the creation of the "task force for the development of adult education and training" in the Ministries of Education and Labour and Solidarity.[121] This group launched the Project S@bER+ (to know more) and initiated the process that led to the creation of ANEFA (National Agency for Education and Training of Adults)[122] and to the construction of an experimental system of validation of knowledge and skills.

It is stipulated that ANEFA is constituted

> (…) as a field of application of innovative models of education and training of adults, based on modular and flexible pathways through the application of: a framework of core competences for lower secondary training; a framework for vocational training, based on qualification itineraries organised in credit units; structured processes for recognition and validation of competences acquired throughout life through formal or informal ways.[123]

[121] Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 92/98, of 25 June.

[122] Decreto-Lei nr 387/99, of 28 of September.

[123] Despacho Conjunto nr 1083/2000, Diário da República – Series II, nr 268, of 20 November.

Moreover, formal programmes for adult education and training (EFA courses) are regulated and their scope defined as: “targeted at people aged over 18, not qualified or lacking the adequate qualification to ensure a proper insertion in the job market and who have not completed lower secondary school of four, six or nine years”.[124]

The basic policy instruments to develop adult education and training are the PNDES – National Economic and Social Development Plan,[125] the PNE – National Employment Plan, and the commitments of the Strategic Coordination Agreement – intended to cover the supply.

To reinforce the adopted measures, “a national network of centres of RVCC was created, which promotes the National System of RVCC, designed and organised by ANEFA, and complementing existing adult education and training systems.[126]

These centres may be promoted by public or private organisations accredited by ANEFA to apply RVCC methods; their respective installation and operation costs are supported under the measure “Education and training throughout life” of PRODEP III.

According to the “Implementation Report of PRODEP III” of 2002, the main achievements highlighted in Measure 4, beyond the production of specific materials, were:

- The certification of 3 291 adults, 24, 459 having registered with the RVCC Centres;
- The training of 233 instructors of the S@bER+ actions (52 of ANEFA and 181 of other entities);
- The training of 16, 655 adults through the S@bER+ actions, about 92% of whom were successful in fulfilling the training objectives (2003).[127]

A new structure of the Ministry of Education[128] demised ANEFA, which was succeeded by the DGFV – Directorate General for Vocational Training.

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124 Despacho Conjunto nr 1083/2000, Diário da República – Series II, nr 268, of 20 November.

125 *Plano Nacional de Emprego*; *Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento Económico e Social*.

126 Portaria nr 1082-A/2001, of 5 September, which implementation led to some adjustments being adopted through Portaria nr 286-A/2002, of 15 March.

127 Execution Report of PRODEP III - 2002 Operational Intervention for Education, May 2003.

128 Decreto-Lei nr 208/2002, of 17 October.

In view of the importance of the EFA courses for this initiative (NOI), it is important to fit them in the development of the System of RVCC (…) and the expansion of this offer to schools and clusters of schools. In 2007,[129] the legal regime of the EFA courses was defined for lower secondary and upper secondary level and levels 2 and 3 of professional training. In addition to vocational certification, extending the network of EFA courses to schools allowed adults to obtain an academic qualification as well.

The EFA courses[130] started as an experimental network implemented by only a few training institutions selected for this purpose. Initially applying to courses at lower secondary level of education, according to dual certification logic, the EFA courses were gradually increased. The launch of the New Opportunities Initiative was fundamental for their expansion and consolidation. In order to meet the objective of generalizing upper secondary level as the minimum qualification level for the population, defined by the XVII Constitutional Government for policies on education and training, the Reference Framework of Key Competences for Education and Training of Adults at the Upper Secondary Level was approved in 2006, making the development of RVCC processes at that level of education possible. That reference should thus be applied to EFA courses, according to the terms of the NOI.

Simultaneously, a deep integration of education and training took place towards the definition of a national system of qualifications, based on the National Qualifications Catalogue in which the EFA courses take part as a procedure for double certification of training specifically addressed to the adult population.

At the institutional level, reference should also be made to the role of the new opportunities centres (NOC)[131] as privileged agents for promoting access to EFA courses through the implementation of processes of recognition and validation of competences that integrate the curriculum of this education and training offer.

In the context of goals and policy guidelines, the ANQ was created under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education, with the mission of "coordinating the implementa-

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[129] Portaria nr 817/2007, Diário da República – Series I, nr 144, of 27 July.

[130] Depacho Conjunto nr 1083/2000, of 20 November.

[131] NOC integrated the previous centres of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC Centres).

tion of policies for education and vocational training of youth and adults, and ensuring the development and management of the system of RVCC".[132]

The preamble to ANQ's decree-law entrusts NOI with the basic tasks of achieving the objectives of the Agency, of qualifying the Portuguese population and promoting lifelong learning: dual certification, ensuring various modalities of completion and certification of the upper secondary level of education, and RVCC as fundamental pillars[133].

The establishment and operation of the NOC was regulated in 2008,[134] giving them the following powers:

a) Referring adults to education and training offers which better suit their profile and needs, motivations and expectations;

b) RVC of competences acquired throughout life for purposes of placement in qualification actions;

c) RVC of competences acquired throughout life for the purpose of obtaining a level of education and qualification".

The aim of generalising upper secondary education as the minimum level of qualification entailed reforms which were deemed necessary in the vocational training system.[135]

Following an agreement with the social partners, the Government decided to approve the Vocational Training Reform, the National Qualifications System, incorporating the National Qualifications Framework, the National Qualifications Catalogue and Record Book of Individual Competences, and the Regulation System of Access to Professions.

Much of the funding needed for this effort of qualification comes from the QREN 2007-2013 through the POPH. The importance of investment in human capital stems from the latter's recognized importance for economic growth, employment and social cohesion.

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[132] Decreto-Lei nr 276-C/2007, Diário da República – Series I, nr 146, 3rd Supplement, of 31 July. Portaria nr 959/2007, Diário da República – Series I, nr 160, of 2, approves ANQ's by-Laws.

[133] Specified in Decreto-Lei nr 357/2007, Diário da Rapública – Series I, nr 208, of 29 October.

[134] Portaria nr 370/08, Diário da República – Series I, nr 98, of 21 May, repealing Portarias nr 1082-A/2001, of 5 September, nr 286-A/02, of 15 March, and nr 86/07, of 12 January.

[135] Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 173/2007, Diário da República – Series I, nr 214, of 7 November.

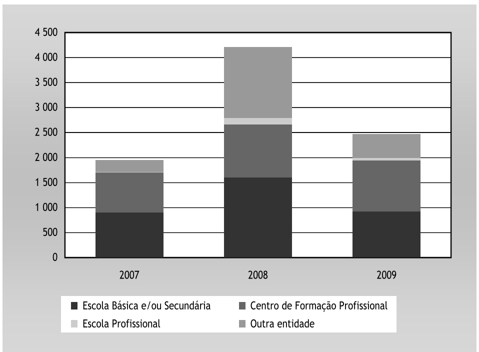
Upon the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 regarding the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, Member States should adopt this instrument as a reference so that, by 2012, close links are fostered with and among national systems "in order to improve citizens' mobility and facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes". The National Qualifications System has been creating the necessary instruments, such as the National Qualifications Framework which, in addition to improving access and progression in training, also promotes transparency, mobility and comparability of qualifications.

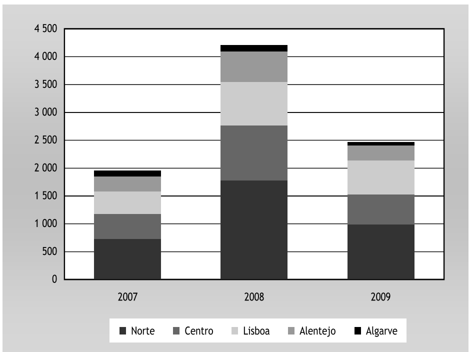
It is therefore relevant to point out that ANEFA and ANQ are the responsible institutions and that the PRODEP programmes and POPH respectively are the financial mechanisms that support the previously mentioned institutions, serving their same strategies.[136] This aspect of integration of dual responsibility (Labour and Education), first through ANEFA and then through ANQ and the financing through POPH is a different aspect from previous experiments, contributing to the range of scale of NOI.

In conclusion, there was a build-up in quantitative changes since the ANEFA:

– New EFA courses were launched;

Figure B.1 New EFA courses launched in the period 2007-2009, by promoter and region





[136] More specifically, for one side the PRODEP III and ANEFA are aligned with the expressed strategy in the PNDES of opening the educative system. For the other, the POPH and ANQ are aligned with the strategy expressed in the PNACE and in the Lisbon Strategy. Following, the contemporary documents that translate this same coherence, the PNAI focuses on the social inclusion affairs and the PNE on employment matters.

– There was a significant increase in the number of centres and of adult enrolments. Between 2001 and 2005, 98 centres for RVCC were created, with an estimation of 150,000 adults enrolled and 50,000 certificates,[137] all at lower secondary level. Between 2005 and 2010, a total of 454 NOC were established, and there were more than 300,000 certifications (with 255,735 certifications at lower secondary level, and 52,805 certifications at upper secondary level by the end of 2009);

Figure B.2 Evolution of the number of centres since the establishment of RVCC Centres

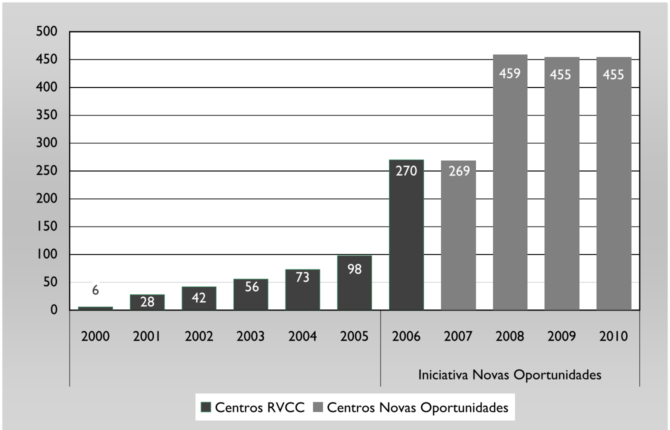
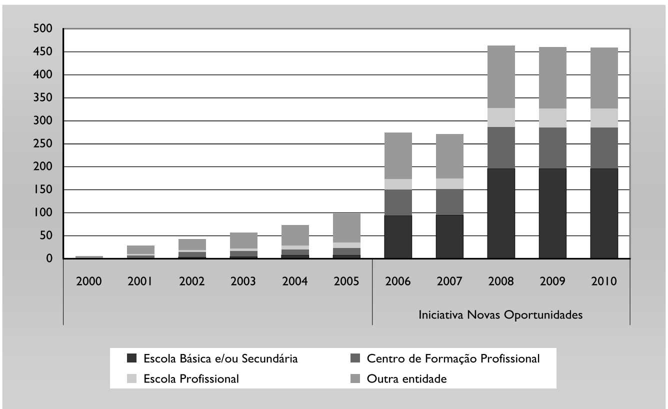


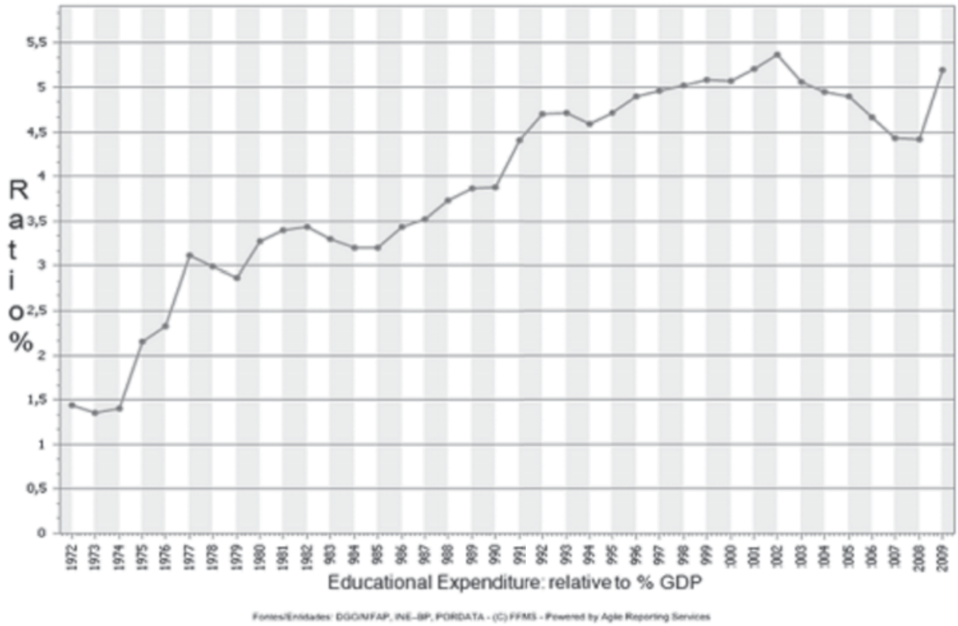
Figure B.3 Evolution of Centres by promoter type



[137] http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt (last accessed 2010.09.30).

– According to data from Pordata[138], Portugal gradually and continuously increased the percentage of GDP invested in education between 1972 and 1997, when it started to stabilize.[139] If we consider that the investment in Adult Education[140] in PRODEP III referred only to Measure 4 – Education for Lifelong Learning, which allowed the creation of RVCC and modular training –, we can conclude that it represented an investment of 87 million Euros, corresponding to 5.4% of the PRODEP III investment. However, strictly speaking, several other measures helped to test configurations of dual certification and open education systems as regards a new paradigm towards a closer relationship between the training system and lifelong learning, which underpinned the structure of NOI. These other measures have exceeded a financial budget of over 900 million €, or a little more than 60% of the allocated funds;

Figure B.4 Educational Expenditure: relative to %GDP



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[138] www.pordata.pt, accessed on 10.10.16.

[139] As we can understand from the data available in the Education at Glance 2010, Portugal expended in 2007, 5,6% of the GDP in educational costs, compared to the similar 5,7 of the OECD average of the same year.

– The Operational Programme of Human Development (POPH) for the period 2007-2013 represents 37% of the strategic funds allocated to National Strategic Reference Framework (QREN), supported by the EU. For the first time in Portuguese recent history, there is a unique Operational Programme to finance human resources development. This Plan allocates 8,800 million Euros. 84% of these funds serve a Political Vision of a new competitive model of economic growth for Portugal, which is dependent on Medium and High Qualifications. Thus, 70% of the POPH funds are allocated to NOI;[140]

– There was an increasing number of cooperation protocols for qualification with companies, services and public administration organisms: in 2005, only 1 protocol was established, whereas by 2010, 82 protocols had been concluded;[141]

– Advertisement campaigns have been carried out targeting different audiences: the 2007 campaigns which targeted the adult and young population attempted to clarify what the programme was about (flexibility and recognition) and its value. In 2008, the "Learning has paid off" campaign aimed at demonstrating the positive results of acquiring upper secondary level education through testimonies of adults who completed the process, as well as from a representative company that concluded a protocol with the Initiative. In 2009, the campaigns focused on the young and adult population who did not complete upper secondary level education: the "there are more and more professions in your school" campaign associates training and employment as well as the diversity of options in schools and training centres. In the same year, the "this was the goal that I lacked" campaign targeted adults and associated the Programme with a national athlete who testified having concluded the upper secondary level through NOI. Last, in 2009, the "invest in a learner" campaign that targeted employers was represented by directors of major companies.

The New Opportunities Initiative in the context of political choices and priorities of the XVII Constitutional Government is regarded as "a new impetus for the qualification of the Portuguese population, having the upper secondary level of education as reference". Portugal took very significant steps in this field in the second half of the 1990s with the creation of

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140 In "*Avaliação ex-ante do Programa Operacional Temático para o Potencial Humano – Relatório" – Fevereiro de 2007*. Carneiro, R. *et al.*, p. 21.

141 www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt (last accessed 2010.12.31).

ANEFA, the establishment of the lower secondary referential skills at the lower secondary level and the operation of an initial network of Centres of RVCC". Through NOI, this was further extended to the level of upper secondary education, providing a learning opportunity in an integrated network of upper secondary and professional schools; improving the system of RVCC, expanding the network of centres and extending the system to a level equivalent to upper secondary education (2005, p. 5198).

Currently, the Centres direct adults towards the most appropriate educational itineraries: providing a certification of lower secondary level (a certificate of qualification corresponding to the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycle of education and a lower secondary education diploma), of upper secondary education (certificate of qualification of upper secondary level of education) or vocational certification (certificate of qualification and / or qualification diploma of level II or III). If the validation process does not lead to a certificate or diploma at the end of the process, a certificate of qualifications is always given, with the identification of the units of competence that have been validated. The acquired learning can be complemented by training courses of various lengths, depending on the diagnosed needs.

The legal framework of the National Qualifications System (SNQ) was established and its operational structures defined by decree-Law dated 31 December 2007.[142] Qualification means the formal outcome of a process of evaluation and validation supported by a competent body, recognizing that the individual has acquired competences in accordance with the set standards.

The SNQ is constituted by the ANQ, the National Council of Vocational Training and sectorial qualification councils, the NOC, lower secondary and upper secondary schools, vocational training centres, and other entities with certified educational structures. It also integrates companies that promote the training of their workers and higher education institutions according to specific legislation.

The National Qualifications Framework was also created under the decree-law, as were the National Qualifications Catalogue, prepared according to European guidelines,[143] and recommendations which include the EFA courses as a method for dual certification training specifically targeted at

[142] Decreto-Lei nr 396/2007, Diário da República – Series I, nr 251, of 31 December.

[143] European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning - Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council, of 23 April 2008.

the adult population[144] and the individual competences record book. The National Qualifications Catalogue currently comprises 254 qualifications, 15 fields of study and 39 areas of education and training.

Clearly, the New Opportunities Programme has been the subject of greater political commitment and is highly demanding in terms of quality and quantity of supply and results.

Replacing ANEFA as regards the interest and effort of the Government and social partners, the characteristics of the programme, the instruments that have been experimented with success in the past and have gained a good image among recipients, ANQ inherits a programme that has an extraordinary dimension and enormous responsibility. The NOI has reached a totally different scale.

It can be said that politicians initially followed the experts concerning the convergence of strategies that enabled the implementation of NOI; however, at a later stage, the agenda was set by politicians. NOI has been the subject of increased political commitment concerning dissemination and publicizing of the message, repeating the theme of education and training for members of the government and the constant presence of Secretaries of state, ministers and even the Prime Minister on the occasion of the delivery of certificates, disseminated in the media.[145] This personal political involvement in NOI could be considered a liability concerning its future sustainability.

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[144] In the context of the adoption of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, national qualifications frameworks are being developed in most countries until 2010. The 2008 joint progress report of the Council and Commission of the European Union on the implementation of the Programme "Education and Training 2010 – lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation", tells us about the preparation and the systems of validation of non-formal and informal education.

[145] In a preliminary study of the NOI in the media, in the first phase of the external evaluation of the NOI by the Portuguese Catholic University, it was concluded that there was a predominance of references by the Prime Minister and Minister of Education, along with their visual presence through photographs published: out of a total of 8 articles in the newspapers in the year 2005, 4 included a photograph. In all these, the Prime Minister appeared at the centre of the Initiative, alone or joined by a committee.

5. Conclusion

The New Opportunities Initiative, in the context of political choices and priorities of the XVII Constitutional Government, is considered as “a new impetus to qualify the Portuguese population, eliciting as reference, the upper secondary level of education” (2005, p. 5198). As a public policy, it aims to respond to the identified weaknesses in the education and training systems and increase levels of productivity, competitiveness and qualification.

The formidable challenges up to 2020 faced by the entire nation were spelt out in another paper (Carneiro, 2010).

Time became a critical variable in the up-skilling efforts to be undertaken. Moreover, clarity in deliberating at each policy crossroad and a profound knowledge of what works, based on past evidence, are decisive conditions for the effectiveness of NOI, which embodies the last chance of reaching scalability and timeliness in the huge requalification of the labour force. Hence, it is very relevant to conclude the paper with the unequivocal responses to each of the two initial questions put forward at the beginning.

1. What previous knowledge resulting from historical approaches and methodologies experimented in adult education is carried forward as a primal source of inspiration for NOI?

Our research scrutinised roughly one century of education policies. It leads us to single out three points that may be identified as commonalities between NOI and previous policies/campaigns to enhance adult education in Portugal:

a) Flexible out-of-school education, placed outside regular school, recognition and validation of formal and informal competences, and proximity (i.e.: rural and itinerant libraries). The concept of out-of-school education, as referred to by the Directorate General for Continuing Education in 1971, entails cultural and social developments, together with the vocational development of adult education; the underlying idea of education goes beyond the strict purpose of better integrating individuals in their professional activities, and extends to better integrating them in society. In this context, recurrent education is understood as a second chance to obtain certificates awarded by regular education. Through ANEFA, a framework was established for key competences for lower secondary training contributing to flexible and modular itineraries organised by credit units. Likewise, RVCC processes are defined;

b) Bridging formal education and Vocational Training – a dual ministerial responsibility (Education and Labour). Collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity dates back to the recurrent education programme (1980), integrating vocational training in the 5th and 6th grade curricula. Later (1989), professional schools offered both general education and vocational training. The objective of dual certification was pursued by the pre-learning courses in 1991 established between the Directorate General for Educational Development and the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training. The EFA courses, created in 2000, offered dual certification for the lower secondary level. Since PRODEP I (followed by PRODEP II and III), Portugal has been benefiting from structural funds which enabled the development of adult education beyond the school paradigm, providing alternative conditions for both the completion of compulsory education and the obtaining of a professional qualification. The former ANEFA and current ANQ, are the public institutions which have been given competences in diverse fields of adult education and training and remain under the dual ministerial authority;

c) APL, RPL[146] and Certification of non-formal and informal competences. In 1976, the importance of flexible programmes, freely established according to the adult's areas of interest or intervention, was already recognized; the learning content, expressed in an individual portfolio, was also the object of final assessment. Later in 1987, referring to adult education courses, the need to undertake a dialogue based on the individual portfolio within the final assessment was reiterated. The Basic Law for the Education System also recognized that recurrent education and adult education aimed at the recognition of organised forms of education, as well as personal and social experiences. Under ANEFA, a system of recognition and validation of informal learning for adults, using the portfolio as one of the main tools, was created and, in 2001, a national network of centres for recognition, validation and certification of competences was established (later renamed by ANQ as New Opportunities Centres). The establishment of the lower secondary framework of competences allowed for the application of the RVCC at that level.

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[146] APL – Accreditation of prior learning; RPL – Recognition of prior learning.

2. What distinctive traits can be found in NOI that position it uniquely and originally in the adult education policy landscape?

NOI owes much of its success to a mantra of unique and original approaches that stimulated demand and instilled a breadth of achievement to both the actors and the stakeholders who are deeply involved in the provision and local regulation of the Initiative.

Among other factors, our research brought evidence on the following outstanding features:

a) Political thrust and personal commitment from the centre of government executed by ANQ. This is evidenced in the outstanding increase in the number of RVCC Centres under ANEFA, and NOC under ANQ; the number of political public and media appearances of the Prime-Minister, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour associated with the Programme; the increasing number of advertisement campaigns. All this is reflected in the increasing numbers of registrations and certifications (lower secondary and upper secondary), verified since 2005;

b) The volume of resources allocated since ANEFA through PRODEP III increased even more with POPH. There has been an increase in funding allocation since PRODEP III through the POPH: from 60% of 900 million Euros to 70% of 800 million Euros for adult education, respectively;

c) Diversity and coverage of supply. Under ANQ, the number of types of courses increased drastically, the National Catalogue of Qualifications currently comprising 254 qualifications, 15 fields of study and 39 areas of education and training;

d) Establishing an ambitious threshold: upper secondary education for all including a joint professional certification. Under ANQ and in order to meet the objective of generalizing the upper secondary level as the minimum qualification of the population, defined by the XVII Constitutional Government in education and training policies, the Reference Framework of Key Competences for Education and Training of Adults at the Upper Secondary Level was approved in 2006. And this warrants the development of processes of recognition, validation and certification of skills at that level of education.

Suggestions for further research

– To find elements in the study of the history of education that clarify how it has been affecting genders differently, given the recognized importance of women in the promotion of education.

– To further develop and understand the role of technicians and professionals in the development of adult education (apart from the important role of the leaders and decision-makers).

– To further research the role of funding mechanisms as vehicles and stimuli for developing the education system or the Lifelong Learning system.

– An analysis based on an international benchmark of programmes and their position in a diachronic perspective of the evolution of adult education public policy would be pertinent.

– Survey of policy makers on lifelong learning models.

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ANNEX I

Interviewee: José Alberto Leitão

Position: Director of the Department of Professional Training of the IEFP, former Vice-President of ANEFA.

Date of the interview: March 2009

Guidelines of the interview:

1. Uptake on the evolution of the policy of adult education and training.
2. Comprehension the creation process of ANEFA.
3. Consideration of the innovations introduced by NOI.
4. Grasping the transition from ANEFA to ANQ.

Interviewee: Vasco Correia Alves

Position: Chief of Cabinet of the Secretary of State of Education, former Adjunct and Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Education

Date of the interview: October 2008

Guidelines of the interview:

1. History of adult education as regards:
   a. Institutions
   b. Proceedings
   c. Legislation
   d. Innovations

Contribution from interviews with 19 experts, conducted in 2008 by the team of qualitative studies (case studies) led by Ana Cláudia Valente, focusing on the review of NOI as a public policy: history, originalities and innovation. The institutional affiliations refer to the dates of the respective interviews.

National experts in the areas of education, training, employment and economy:

1. Clara Correia (ANQ)
2. Maria do Carmo Gomes (ANQ)
3. Paulo Feliciano (ANQ)
4. Elsa Caramujo (ANQ)
5. Francisca Simões (ANQ)
6. Cristina Duarte (ANQ)
7. Manuela Freire (ANQ)
8. José Manuel Pureza (Area Coordinator of Citizenship and Professionalism of the Framework of Key Competences of the Upper Secondary Level)
9. Jorge Dias de Deus (Area Coordinator of Society, Technology and Science of the Framework of Key Competences of the Upper Secondary Level)
10. Deolinda Monteiro (Area Coordinator of Culture, Language and Communication of the Framework of Key Competences of the Upper Secondary Level)
11. José Alberto Leitão (IEFP)
12. Márcia Trigo (Former ANEFA)
13. Ana Luísa Oliveira Pires (ESE – College of Education of Setúbal)
14. António Oliveira Neves (IESE – Institute of Social and Economic Studies)
15. Luís Centeno (S2E2 – Society of Economic and Social Studies)
16. José Cardim (ISCSP – Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences)
17. Patrícia Ávila (ISCTE - Higher Institute of Labour and Enterprise Sciences)
18. António Firmino da Costa (ISCTE – Higher Institute of Labour and Enterprise Sciences)
19. Luís Imaginário (FCE – Faculty of Educational Sciences in Oporto)

Guidelines of the interviews:

1. Understanding the objectives of the NOI:
   - 1.2. If they are well defined
   - 1.3. If they are relevant
   - 1.4. If they have been appropriated by the actors
2. If the NOI objectives are appropriate for the technical and institutional capacity installed and capable of being performed in accordance with the methods defined?

ANNEX II

Illiteracy Rate	No data available until 1900				
Actions	University Foundation	João de Barros' *cartilha* was Published	"True Method of Studying" Luís António Verney		Number of schools to reduce, from 900 to 600
Purpose/Objective	Secular Education; Bases of Instruction	Teaching to read and to write	Ideas about education, priority to Portuguese language over Latin. Women also should study and are not intellectually inferior to men.	Free primary education to all citizens	Change of Government intends to reduce the state expense
Structures and Plans					
Dates	**1288**	**1539**	**1746**	**1826**	**1829**
Decrees/Laws				Constitutional Charter	

1835	1836-52	1870	1876	1878	1882	1890
			The *Cartilha Maternal* published by João de Deus		The industrialist Casimiro Freire created “mobile schools” where schools did not exist	
Fight aginst high illiteracy rate; concerned with national education and professional education					**Groups of children and adults to be taught how to read and write by someone knowledgeable of the Cartilha, as well as of the method; dissemination of the Cartilha Maternal.**	
Rodrigo da Fonseca signs the decree which underlies the reform of public education	Fontes Pereira de Melo creates by decree industrial training which is denominated as practical instruction.	The government created the Ministry of Public Instruction under D. António da Costa, who was responsible for a number of reforms implemented in just over two months: reform regarding education and popular education				

73%	69%	65%	60%		52%	42%
	The Government officially instituted the “mobile schools”: evening classes, school missions, dominical and similar courses			Teaching positions were created but were taken up by school professors without any qualifications to do so		
	To promote literacy among adults, adolescents and children			In a context of dictatorship - to reduce “the number of illiterate		
	Reform covering kindergarten, lower and regular education - João de Barros and João de Deus Ramos	The “Public Education Statute” is presented to the House of Representatives, of the responsibility of João Camoesas, Minister of Public Instruction: first comprehensive plan for education	Compulsory lower secondary education was lowered from four to three years.			
1900	**1911**	**1923**	**1930**	**1931**	**1940**	**1950**

		33%		
Permanent libraries located next to rural schools and the mobile libraries intended for circulation among the factories				
With the primary objective of eliminating illiteracy; aiming at educating the Portuguese people; targeting primarily illiterates from 14 to 35 years old; achieved significant quantitative results in its first years of implementation.			Obtain support from OECD for implementation of the Plan for Cultural Promotion -extended to other countries in a common plan, the Mediterranean Regional Project	**Aiming at adults, without any coordination with the education system**
The Minister of Education Pires de Lima created the “National Plan for Popular Education”, with the “National Campaign for Adult Education”	Leite Pinto, the Ministry of Education extended from three to four years compulsory education for boys	Leite Pinto, the Ministry of Education extended from three to four years compulsory education for girls and **extended adults education to four years**	Second Development Plan: invest in technical schools and addressed the need for training of manpower	Within the Ministry of Corporations and Social Security, the Fund for Development of Manpower is created; the Institute for Accelerated Vocational Training is established
1952	**1956**	**1960**	**1959-64**	**1962**

			26%	
	Tele-school Programme also became responsible for teaching at the level of the 5th and 6th grades for adults thereafter			
	To study and organise the functioning of the labour market according to international guidelines; to design the National Catalogue of Qualifications and organise Professional Placement and Guidance Services; to document, research and inform; to "evaluate" the results of several changes in the school system, gradually becoming a center of innovation.	**To qualify adults professionally in order to able them to meet new demands, particularly in the industrial sector.**		**To give autonomy to adult education in relation to the other Directorates General supervising the school system: preparing and implementing a comprehensive plan for out of school education and cultural and professional promotion, mainly targeted at the adult population**
Minister Galvão Teles: Compulsory education for both sexes extended from 4 to 6 years	The National Employment Service is established; the Ministry of Education created the GEPAE – Office for Educational Action Studies and Planning; Institute of Audiovisual Education was established	The Corporations Ministery creates the Service for Vocational Training		The Minister of Education Veiga Simão presented the "School System Project"; the Organic Law of the Ministry of National Education created the Directorate General for Continuing Education
1964	**1965**	**1968**	**1970**	**1971**
				To te Directorate General, however, was never given an organic law

The night shift school was allowed only in three schools. **Access to University was permitted to adults without having completed regular school and aged over 25 years, through the so-called "*ad hoc* assessment**	Popular libraries are created	Actions for cultural promotion among populations in socio-cultural disadvantaged environments were conducted by the 5th Division of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.
	To promote, in an ongoing way, cultural, scientific and professional training, update and improvement; libraries: to be ìintegrated in future continuing learning centers" in order to "contribute to Portuguese out of school education and social progressî. The activities of these libraries would be taken up by the Directorate General for Continuing Education, which could "establish cooperation agreements with official or private entities"	
	A legislative instrument is published which structures the education system covering preschool education, school education and continuing education	
1972-73	**1973**	**1974-75**
	Lei nr 5/73, Diário de Governo ñ Series I, nr 173; Decreto-Lei nr 490/73	

	The procedures for evaluation and certification of adults are amended, and ìthe existence of rigid programmes" is not regarded as relevant; the individual portfolios are subect to final evaluation; individuals who were responsible for adult education activities and literacy actions were awarded	
	Established the allocation of grants for adult education activities; and measures of technical support to organisations that promoted literacy projects	**Aims at systematically and gradually eliminating illiteracy and securing progressive access for all interested adults to the varying degrees of compulsory education; is created within the Assembly of the Republic to monitor the implementation of that Plan; DGAE: to participate in the formulation of adult education policy in the light of continuing education, and to contribute to its implementation**
Secondary and technical education were unified	The National Literacy Plan elaborated and implemented with the support of the Popular Education Associations	**PNAEBA – National Plan for Literacy and Lower Secondary Education for Adults; CNAEBA - National Council for Literacy and Adult Basic Education; the Directorate General for Adult Education is created within the Ministry of Education as the result of "a reorganisation of the Directorate General for Continuing Education; the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training is created within the Ministry of Labour**
1975-76	**1976**	**1979**
	Despacho nr 29/76; Despacho nr 53/76; Portaria nr 419/76; Decreto-lei nr 384/76	

	21%.			
		With an experimental nature, three courses are initiated at the workplace: two in companies (EPAL and CARRIS) and one in a local authority		
		Articulation between education and employment: The curricula are designed for adults, at the level of the 5th and 6th grades but with duration of one year, with adequate schedules, with qualitative evaluation and including professional training of the companyís responsibility	For young people and enables dual certification; the Cooperative Training Law also provides for the participation of enterprises in vocational training	
Working Group is created within the Ministry of Education to study and launch a Recurrent Education Programme	The law on the Worker-Student Statute		The legal framework referring to the Vocational Training System under an Alternating Regime (Learning System) is established	The Basic Law for the Education System: includes training in adult education and promotes the development of recurrent education and out of school education; Compulsory education extends to nine years
1980	**1981**	**1983**	**1984**	**1986**
	Lei nr 26/81		Decreto-Lei nr 102/84	Lei nr 46/86

As tools for continuous evaluation the dossier/portfolio of work and the individual process of the adult, and as a final evaluation, among other hypotheses, it should be established a dialogue based on individual dossier/portfolio.		
	With the aim of coordinating all vocational training within the formal education system and of promoting the creation of courses throughout the country and experiments with the structures of vocational training for young people; with the aim of combating early school drop-out	These schools are of local initiative and offer general and vocational training to young people, with equivalence to the upper secondary level
	The GETAP - Office for Technological, Artistic and Professional Education is created under the Ministry of Education; An Inter-ministerial programme created by Resolution of the Council of Ministers – the PIPSE – Inter-ministerial Programme for the Promotion of Educational Success; The Directorate General for Education Support and Development is responsible for all night courses of preparatory education	The legal framework for vocational schools under the Ministry of Education; 1989-94 PRODEP I – Educational Development Programme for Portugal -marked the first time EU funds are allocated to the national education system
1987	**1988**	**1989**
Portaria nr 95/87	Decreto-Lei nr 397/88	

11.%			
Specific legislation is announced for adult education in the form of vocational training or distance learning; night shift general courses, along the lines of credit units, are now the responsibility of the Directorate General for Educational Development and recurrent education of secondary level is attended mainly by young people			**Several courses for adults should be made available with an emphasis on short-term actions; moreover, the education system should establish an Accreditation System of Knowledge and Competences Acquired outside the school system**
With the aim of combating early school drop-out; recurrent education and out of school education were intended primarily to individuals beyond the normal age in the regular education system.	**Re-launching of adult education in Portugal is presided the full recognition of the right to education and training throughout life and by the urgency of a national commitment to meet the new demands of a global society and the mutations of professional life in today's world**	**Improve higher levels of qualification of the adult population**	**The gap between certified qualifications of the Portuguese adult population and academic qualifications of most European countries is still significant; targeted at people aged over 18, not qualified or lacking the adequate qualification to ensure a proper insertion in the job market and who have not completed lower secondary school of four, six or nine years; PRODEP III active adults constitute a priority group**
An Inter-ministerial programme created by Resolution of the Council of Ministers ñPEPT Programme Education for All; Recurrent education and out of school education are regulated; The regime for pre-learning courses was defined establishing a cooperative interaction between the Directorate General for Educational Development (general education) and the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (technological training)	**Taskforce for the Development of Education and Training of Adults with the mission of initiating and implementing the Society Project S@bER**	**ANEFA – National Agency for Education and Training of Adults is created as a public institution subject to the supervision and authority of the Minister of Education and Minister of Labour and Solidarity**	**Lisbon European Council; formal programmes for adult education and training (EFA courses) are regulated: The basic policy instruments to develop adult education and training are identified as being the PNE - National Employment Plan, the PNDES - National Economic and Social Development Plan 2000 - 2006; PRODEP III 2000-2006**
1991	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**
Decreto-Lei nr 383/91	Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 92/98		Despacho Conjunto nr 1083/2000

New Opportunities Initiative	**Approval of the Framework of Key Competences for the Adult Education and Training at the upper secondary level, to be applied to the EFA courses and RVCC processes**	**National System of Qualifications, integrating the National Framework of Qualifications, the National Catalogue of Qualifications and the Individual Booklet of Competences, and the System of Regulation of the Access to Professions.**	The establishment and operation of the NOC was regulated in 2008; it establishes a new legal regime for the EFA courses and modular training
It aims at increasing the opportunities of active people to the lifelong learning; re-attract youth and adults who left early the educative system; to reinforce the vocational learning of dual degree, to expand the supply of courses in education and training as well as enlarging the RVCC system		**Coordinating the implementation of policies for education and vocational training of youth and adults, and ensuring the development and management of the system of RVCC; to overcome the structural deficit of qualification of the portuguese population, implementing the upper secondary level as the minimum reference for all, youth and adults**	
Programme of the XVII Constitutional Government 2005-2009; Technological Plan; National Action Programme for Growth and Employment (PNACE) 2005-2008		**The ANQ was created under the joint supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education**	
2005	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Lei nr 52; Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 190/2005; Resolução do Conselho de Ministros nr 183/05		Decreto-Lei nr 276-C/2007; RCM nº 173/07; DL nº 396/07	Portaria nr 370/08; Portaria nº 230/08

C.

BRINGING LIFELONG LEARNING TO LOW-SKILLED ADULTS: THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

ANA CLÁUDIA VALENTE

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: anaclaudia.valente@sapo.pt

LOURENÇO XAVIER DE CARVALHO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: lxcarvalho@ilidh.org

ANDRÉ XAVIER DE CARVALHO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: axc@ilidh.org

1. ABSTRACT

The New Opportunities Initiative (2005-2010) is analysed as a major and most recent adult education programme in Portugal. It set up ambitious goals for low-educated adults' education and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is clearly at its heart. This major educational innovation is assessed in a comparative analysis with some of the recent RPL trends across European and OECD countries. The main research question is whether RPL can be considered a promising strategy to bring education and lifelong opportunities to low-educated adults, encouraging them to be enrolled or to further participate in learning activities.

Keywords: adult education; motivation for education and learning; educational innovation; recognition of prior learning (RPL); lifelong learning.

1. Introduction

Even though Portugal has experienced several adult education programmes, none seem to have completely succeeded. Portugal entered the 21st century with 3.5 million people (around 70% of the labour force) below ISCED 3.

In these last decades, the "Portuguese exception" on qualifications has gained special attention from the academic research community with sound effects on policy-making. Most of the studies on the topic stated the importance of having 12 years of schooling for all as a minimal learning platform for lifelong learning. Later, urgent and creative policies and new institutional frameworks were debated and implemented.

The governmental initiative New Opportunities (2005-2010) (NOI) is currently the most prominent programme for youth and adult education. The Initiative set up ambitious goals for adult education and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is clearly at its heart: to qualify one million adults by 2010, the upper secondary level of education being its target level (650,000 through RPL processes and 350,000 through adult education and training courses).

At present, more than one million low- skilled adults are enrolled in the New Opportunities. Although the Initiative had set up specific goals, one million enrolled adults is still a surprising number. No other adult education programme had motivated such a large and rapidly increasing participation among the Portuguese low-skilled adult population. Why is this happening? Why now and not before?

Our research hypothesis indicates that the educational innovation carried out, especially learning processes based on RPL, appears to have been the main reason for this. Having in mind some theoretical background and empirical findings on adults' motivation and participation in education, especially in a low-skill context, as well as the main features of the previous adult education programmes, it seems that providing competence-based education and making educational levels accessible by RPL on such a large scale can have been a distinguishing and valuable asset that brought back educational investments into low-skilled adults' life.

The paper also provides strong arguments in favour of this new education paradigm to further lifelong learning opportunities for low-skilled adults, which means that greater attention should be given to further motivation, guidance and new learning solutions in the future.

The paper is divided into six sections. Section 1 introduces the lifelong learning paradigm as a major challenge to address the low skills problem. Section 2 reviews some of the theoretical and empirical literature on RPL in the context of the recent reforms of the educational systems. Section 3 introduces the research questions. Section 4 describes the research methods. In section 5 empirical findings are presented and discussed and in section 6 we summarise our main conclusions.

2. Lifelong learning and low-educated adults

At the beginning of the 21st century, Europe is still facing a low skills problem: 77 million people have only lower secondary education or less (ISCED 1-2), i.e. 23% of the total labour force.

Although the problem affects all European countries, it shows highly differentiated intensities. Overall, in 20 out of 31 European countries 70 per cent or more adults completed at least upper secondary education, but a very divergent pattern persists in Portugal, Malta and Turkey where only a quarter of the adult population has reached this level of education.

Several evidences have shown that formal education plays a very important role in people's life, even if non-formal and informal learning is being increasingly recognized. Several drawbacks in labour market participation, earnings prospects and social recognition are closely related to low educational attainment.

Non-completion of upper secondary education is associated with large earnings disadvantages in all OECD countries. On average, more than 26% of those who are employed and have not completed upper secondary education earn less than half of the national median earnings and consistent evidence on earnings differentials suggests that upper secondary education forms a dividing line beyond which additional education attracts a particularly high premium (OECD, 2010b). Also, civic participation and social engagement, as well as health benefits, seem to be persistently poorer for those who failed to reach high levels of education (OECD, 2007) (Hoskins, d'Hombres & Campbell, 2008).

One of the most important drawbacks of low education attainment is indeed further learning potential of adults throughout their life. Participation in formal education seems to be a non-motivating issue for those who had an unsuccessful experience in school. Participation in formal education is also a difficult target for those who lack the necessary requirements to have a learning career in the education system.

Data from the Labour Force Survey (EUROSTAT, 2007 in Brozaitis, 2010) on adult participation in formal and non-formal education and training show very low rates for the ISCED 2 group in nearly all the countries (a rate of 2.5% for the low-educated compared to a rate of 6.3% for the total population). The ISCED 1-4 group participates in education and training much less than those who had completed tertiary education, i.e. ISCED levels 5-6 (averages of 6.8% and 15.9% respectively). This means that adults with higher educational attainment are more likely to participate in formal education than adults with a lower attainment. Moreover, those who participate more in formal education and training are also those who participate more in non-formal education and training. Differences in adult participation in formal and non-formal education and training by ISCO groups, between low- and highly-qualified, still persist (Brozaitis, 2010).

To understand why low-educated adults participate less in learning is therefore a crucial issue for lifelong learning, as some of these reasons may be targeted by educational reforms. Low- educated adults are in a position of being major beneficiaries of lifelong learning opportunities, as long as these are equitably distributed and well-targeted, quantitatively and qualitatively. Otherwise, long-lasting effects of low educational attainment on lifelong learning may prevail.

Making lifelong learning a reality for all seems to be a difficult task. A brief policy of OECD, published in 2004 (OECD, 2004), sets up some fundamental features of a lifelong learning paradigm which are challenging all the educational systems, even if some could be better prepared to develop it.

First of all, demand and supply of learning opportunities are part of a connected system covering the whole life cycle and comprising all forms of formal and informal learning. A more systemic view of education and learning outside the formal system is needed. The central position of the learner is another distinctive element of lifelong learning; requesting targeted and personalized education provision to meet each individual's needs and reach a wider range of learners. This implies a focus on improving the access (enrolment), the quality (of provision) and the equity (fair and inclusive distribution) of the learning opportunities.

Nevertheless, reaching all individuals, especially those who most need to improve their educational background seems to be highly dependent on the individuals' motivation to learn, a fundamental issue in lifelong learning.

It requires efforts to develop the capacity for "learning to learn" and ensure foundation skills for all, especially those who lack them.

Having this in mind, both academics and policy makers are increasingly recognizing that formal education and training systems have difficulties in meeting the learning needs of some segments of the population, especially those who need more differentiated solutions or inclusive strategies, whose motivation to further education investments through life may be compromised. To motivate low-skilled adults or to provide everyone with an opportunity to obtain a qualification that is at least one level higher in their lifetime to improve their basic skills, professional proficiency or key competences is a common concern, even in countries that are best placed to implement a lifelong learning strategy. But what kind of educational innovation seems to be delivering the most promising results from the point of view of lifelong learning motivation and participation among low-skilled adults? Will it be possible to reach the low-skilled adults relying upon supply-driven educational reforms?

In the next section, this question will be addressed by focusing on the RPL-driven educational innovation which has been increasingly discussed as one of the most promising strategies to bring lifelong learning opportunities to all.

3. A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. *The Recognition of Prior Learning*

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) or the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is already considered a milestone of the lifelong learning strategy and most of the OECD countries and European Member States are putting considerable efforts into it.

A growing number of countries has implemented initiatives for validating non-formal and informal learning, opening up opportunities for a wide range of learners and providing individuals with a 'second chance' to reach their full learning potential. The adult education sector, in particular the one devoted to low- skilled adults, seems to be the main beneficiary of these initiatives.

One of the first attempts to map European experiences in RPL (Bjornavold, 2000) concluded that, during the 1990s, most Member States gave greater attention to these issues and started to work on methodologies and institutional arrangements to identify, assess and recognize learning taking place outside formal education and training institutions, although the overall picture was, at the time, a “heterogeneous mix of national and sectoral approaches” (Bjornavold, 2002, p. 9).

Colardyn and Bjornavold (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004), based on a first version of the European Inventory on Validation, covering 14 countries and most of the candidate countries in 2004, concluded that national policies on validation were defined and developed by a large number of countries, although there was a great variance of stages between them. There were countries at an “experimental stage”, which accepted the need for initiatives but were still uncertain as to whether and how this could influence existing structures and systems on a more permanent basis (Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Sweden, Austria and Germany); there were countries moving towards ‘national systems’, building on a legal and institutional basis (France, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands); and countries with permanent systems already in place but under substantial debate (Finland and UK).

More recently, Feutrie (Feutrie, 2007) proposed a typology of recognition of non-formal and informal learning systems based on evidences across the 27 European Member States. The proposed six groups range from one group where there is nothing in place in terms of recognition of non-formal and informal learning (Greece) to a group where global systems are in place (Flemish Belgium, Denmark and Norway).

The European Inventory on Validation (Otero, McCoshan & Junge, 2005) and the recent work by CEDEFOP (CEDEFOP, 2008) on the topic also support these findings by proposing a simplified classification based on three main groups of countries. The first concerns countries where validation has become a reality for individual citizens (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Romania, Spain and UK). The second includes several countries where validation is still emerging as a practical reality for individuals (Austria, Czech Republic, Iceland, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Sweden), even though the level of activity varies considerably within this group. These countries are currently starting to implement validation and in some cases they have experienced a variety of pilot methodologies on the basis of which they are developing a national approach. The degree of acceptance may also vary from sector to sector. It is suggested that, in many of these countries, the validation of informal and non-formal learning will play a greater role in the next few years (CEDEFOP, 2008). Finally, a third group where activity is low or non-existent is still relevant in the

European context (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Slovak Republic and Turkey).

It is clear that the level of attention currently paid to non-formal and informal learning at a national level still varies significantly in the European context. Political interest, legal frameworks and institutional arrangements as well as global acceptance vary considerably among these groups.

There are few nationwide and large-scale systems for recognition of non-formal and informal learning. A significant part of the activity related to validation has been driven either by the European agenda, or by the EU-funded projects, private or third sectors, through projects and programmes of limited duration. Working on national qualifications frameworks in response to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) may be changing the situation. Many of these countries, especially those in the last group, are considering validation as an integrated part of the future National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF).

Validation is still a new and controversial theme, especially as far as its practical implications are concerned, causing resistance even (or perhaps mainly) within the educational sector. The formal education and training system is still the mainstream route to qualifications. As Pires acknowledged, "although the experiential learning is the basic process of learning, its potential has only been recently recognized and valued, specifically among formal education and training systems and institutions" (Pires, 2008, p. 6).

The maturity or perceived quality and efficiency of the education system within a country are important elements that have been taken into consideration by many stakeholders, especially the educational professionals, as regards possible developments of the RPL systems. As Duvekot *et al.* (Duvekot, Schuur & Paulusse, 2005) (Duvekot, 2007) stress, very different "learning cultures" still persist in the European context, which makes trust and progress in RPL systems very different as a national concern. In highly "credentialist" countries, for instance, institutions, employers and people in general are much more attached to qualifications awarded by the formal system. Making qualifications accessible by experience is still something to be accepted. As is often the case, the education system is taken as a reference point – most notably in terms of its standards and assessment methods – in organising a system for recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.

However, development towards validation of non-formal and informal learning systems has accelerated in recent years. So far, in Europe it is a multispeed process where countries are at different stages of practical implementation and overall acceptance and important breakthroughs may occur. Recent evidence from the OECD countries (OECD, 2010a) has also revealed a wide variety of policies and practices but, in many cases, "recognition processes remain marginal, small-scale and even precarious, although a number of countries are trying to move towards more integrated systems" (OECD, 2010a, p. 9).

Several reasons can explain these developments (economic, social, demographical factors and technological progress), but education system factors, such as improving the accessibility and the efficiency of the formal education system, are some of the most cited reasons (Otero, McCoshan & Junge, 2005) (Feutrie, 2007) (CEDEFOP, 2008). As Andersson and Harris (Andersson & Harris, 2006) discussed, the RPL is mainly an educational response to the need for widening participation in education and training even if economic advancement and social inclusion are relevant and demonstrate expected benefits.

This apparently means that the educational reforms taking place are strongly supply-driven (Bjornavold, 2000). That was the case in 2000, when CEDEFOP drew a first mapping of validation of non-formal and informal learning. At the time, Bjornavold (Bjornavold, 2000) stressed that:

> Only in a few cases can the development of measurement and assessment methodologies be described as driven by demand or by push from the bottom up. If we study the last half of the 1990s when this trend gained momentum and strength the existence of programmes like Adapt and Leonardo da Vinci at European and sector levels have contributed to the setting and changing of 'the assessment agenda'. (…) The coming period will show whether this supply driven movement will find users, for example at sector and enterprise levels, appreciating the effort put in (p. 22).

After a decade this still seems to be the case.

However evidence on barriers to participation, based on OECD and European surveys (OECD, 2003) (OECD, 2005) (OECD, 2008b) (Brozaitis, 2010), suggests that under-investment in adult learning is closely related to demand-side reasons. The most cited reason is lack of time, mainly due to work or family obligations (opportunity costs). Lack of awareness of the need for training and lack of information are also among the most cited reasons. Lack of resources to pay for education or training is another key issue, especially among lower- educated individuals. The lack of prerequisites still represents an important obstacle for the ISCED 2 group: 1 in 4 respondents consider it as an important obstacle to the participation in learning activities (Federighi, 2008).

Time, money and information all seem to be responsible for low participation rates in lifelong learning, especially among the low-educated adults. The question is whether individual intrinsic motivation for education is lacking or whether it is just (and complex enough) an expression of market failures. Putting it another way, if market failures could be addressed by the education system, would it be possible to foster significant participation in lifelong learning (particularly in formal education) by low-educated adults?

Educational systems are changing and innovating to implement the "lifelong learning for all" strategy. This means that the time, money and information constraints reported by adults may be addressed, at least theoretically, by supply-driven reforms. But it is not sufficient to merely provide economic support or the availability of time for learning, as a recent study by Federighi *et al.* (Federighi, 2008), covering several practices in low-skilled adult education in 33 European countries, concludes. "Good practices prove that ongoing educational and training activity is only possible in situations in which the individual is also motivated to learn, generating "awareness" of the human potential that is amplified with the growth of personal and instrumental knowledge" (Federighi, 2008: 39). It seems that placing the individual at the centre and making learning more attractive to adults can help to increase participation through motivation as one of the key issues of lifelong learning (OECD, 2003). Otherwise, participation may still remain low and shaped by the "Matthew effect"[1], when individuals with low qualifications, who are most in need of RPL provision, are still those who benefit less from it.

As recent evidence shows, the recognition of prior learning is central and closely connected with at least three main efforts to reform the education systems:

- Opening up qualifications to a wider range of learners, especially those seeking a "second chance" (Bjornavold, 2001) (Colardym, 2001) (CEDEFOP, 2008) (OECD, 2010a).

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[1] The "Matthew effect" was first coined by the sociologist Robert K. Merton in 1968 to address the phenomenon of the accumulated advantage. Its name was taken from a line in the Gospel according to Matthew. In education, the "Matthew effect" can be used to show that early success in school usually leads to later success in educational achievements. The same effect can be found concerning participation rates in education and training activities.

- Shifting education towards learning outcomes (and standards) (Straka, 2002) (Werquin, 2007a) (CEDEFOP, 2009) (Bjornavold & Mouillour, 2009) and including varied learning settings.
- In many cases, supporting (or being supported by) advances in national qualifications frameworks (Bjornavold, 2007) (Young, 2007) (Coles, 2007) (Werquin, 2007a) (CEDEFOP, 2008).

Nevertheless, as Werquin (Werquin, 2007a, p. 5) stresses, based on OECD countries' experiences, "A qualifications framework is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition but qualifications frameworks and recognition systems have in common the notion of learning outcomes – as opposed to input-based learning systems". Being essentially technical tools, or "classifiers" (Young, 2007) (Coles, 2007), national qualifications frameworks seem to be used, especially in the last few years, as catalysts to make larger reforms of the education and training systems smoothly. The situation in Europe does not differ, as CEDEFOP concludes: "The rapid development of national qualifications frameworks (NQF) across Europe in response to the European qualifications framework (EQF) has, in the period 2005-2007, led to a growing interest in validation" (CEDEFOP, 2008, p. 6).

Apart from other key ingredients to increase adult participation in lifelong learning, such as financial incentives, quality assurance mechanisms, institutional coordination and partnerships, some other innovations in the education systems may be highlighted, namely:

- Flexibility in learning provision to suit adults' circumstances and schedules (modular systems, ICT and distance education…).
- New learning processes related to work and daily life, based on less formal and embedded methods with a highly personalized character which implies learning that is learner centred and contextualized to make it relevant to adults' experiences.
- Assessing and giving credit for knowledge and skills acquired at work, home or community settings which can ensure that adults do not waste time relearning what they already know.
- Sound information, advice and guidance suited to reach adults who otherwise might not consider learning, or who have little motivation to learn.

However, even with an extensive and well documented body of empirical literature on educational reforms and RPL initiatives, mainly across OECD countries and EU Member-states, little is still known about their impact on demand. This is a critical issue to assess the results of the RPL-driven reforms of the education systems which are taking place, but systematic and comparable data on their impact on demand is surprisingly scarce. Werquin (Werquin, 2007c), based on data from OECD countries' authorities, suggests that "regardless of the quality of the recognition programmes that are on supply, the number of applicants remains rather small, even though it is increasing and sometimes rapidly" (Werquin, 2007c, p. 11).

Even if dispersed data are available, given that very different natures and stages of development of the RPL systems coexist, the countries' potential for recognition are quite different and the characteristics of the targeted participants may vary, which makes it almost impossible to reach comparable figures. Still, efforts should be put into assessing the effects of RPL systems in education and learning participation, providing detailed data on the low-skilled adults' education demand.

Yet the demand and the individuals' motivation to learn still remain critical issues to be addressed in lifelong learning, RPL and other particular efforts such as those previously stated are emerging as the most promising elements of the supply-driven reforms to increase participation in lifelong learning. This seems to be the case with the Portuguese experience in adult education.

Taking stock of the previous adult education programmes, especially those introduced by the National Agency of Adult Education in the mid-1990s (Mendonça & Carneiro, 2009), the NOI came out in 2005 and provided for the first time a large-scale adult education programme on the basis of RPL, aiming to encourage one million adults to raise their formal qualifications to upper secondary level. After five years, more than one million adults have enrolled, although less than one third has reached upper secondary education. No other adult education programme had motivated such a large and rapid increasing participation among the Portuguese low-skilled adult population.

Analysing the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) in the historical context of adult education public policies in Portugal, Mendonça and Carneiro (2009) concluded that the Initiative was gathering some of the good experiences of the past on a large-scale base, such as out-of-school education, double certification (or dual qualification) and RPL.

A strong political interest and institutional support were perhaps the first and most noticeable knowledge-driven innovations of this governmental initiative (Carneiro, 2010), but the mainstreaming strategy of RPL was also featured in extended educational innovations, namely:

– To use a key competences framework for adult learning assessment and contents.

– To make the key competences achievement equivalent not only to the lower secondary (already in place by the National Agency of Adult Education), but also to the upper secondary level of education.[2]

– To make key competences credits and full qualification awards accessible by recognition of prior learning.

– To provide other flexible and competence-based education paths for those who do not have the necessary conditions to go through the RPL process: adult education courses with dual qualification and short education and training modules.

With this in mind, it could be suggested that major educational innovations may have had an important effect on demand and, if so, significant constraints that prevent low-educated adults from progressing in their educational attainment or participating in lifelong learning can be addressed by supply-driven educational reforms.

4. Research questions

Our research questions focusing on the NOI experience are: how can educational innovation carried out by the NOI – especially as far as the RPL mainstreaming is concerned – explain the massive enrolment which is taking place? And how far can the NOI bring lifelong learning further motivation and opportunities to low-educated adults? Particularly, will RPL be a promising strategy to achieve that?

Having in mind the main research questions, a framework of analysis is suggested (Figure C.1).

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[2] For the lower secondary level of education, key competences include “Maths for Life”, “Language and Communication”, “ICT” and “Citizenship and Employability” (Alonso, 2002). This framework was introduced by the National Agency for Adult Education, before the launch of the NOI. For the upper secondary level of education, the key competences framework includes a broader and more demanding set of competences such as “Society, Technology and Science”, “Culture, Language and Communication” and “Citizenship and Professionalism” (Gomes, 2006). This framework was introduced with the NOI.

Figure C.1 Framework of analysis

Time	Dimensions	Indicators	Research questions
Before	**Motivation**	Enrolment	What motivates individuals to be enrolled in the New Opportunities Initiative?
During	**Learning processes**	RPL process	What distinctive features of the RPL process are perceived by individuals? Were they important to be enrolled and to succeed?
After	**Outcomes**	Personal gains	Were there any benefits particularly associated with personal fulfilment? Did the learning experience based on the RPL process matter?
		Learning outcomes	Did individuals progress in key competences? Or was the RPL only making prior non-formal and informal learning visible and did it not create or improve any key competences?
		Motivation for further learning	Are individuals motivated for further learning? What kind of learning seems to be preferred?
		Participation in further learning	Are there any indicators of increased participation in lifelong learning after qualification awards? What kind of learning?

Several indicators and specific research questions are proposed to address the question of adults' motivation to be enrolled in the NOI and to participate in further education and training activities. Learning processes based on RPL and learning outcomes are considered relevant elements to understand if and how the NOI can promote lifelong learning prospects among low educated adults.

5. Research methods

The NOI has been evaluated by a university research team (CEPCEP, UCP, 2008-2010) and some of the research methods and findings used in this paper are the result of that work.

The research methods are mainly of a qualitative nature. The main purpose of these methods is to collect and compare evidences and opinions on motivations, learning processes based on RPL and outcomes of those who are, or have been, directly involved in NOI – individuals already awarded a qualification level, their families, the New Opportunities Centres (NOC) and employers (Figure C.2).

Figure C.2 Research methods

	Individual and family	**New Opportunities Centre**	**Employer**
Context	Home	Education	Work
Research methods	Interviews with individuals and their families Analysis of individual "learning portfolios" Individual skills survey and self-assessment	Interviews with technical staff in NOC Analysis of individual "learning portfolios"	Interviews with employers

Two main research methods are used: case studies in the New Opportunities Centres and individuals' skills surveys. Most of the field work was carried out in 2008, 2009 and 2010, including a third online appliance of the skills survey. These latter results from the skills survey are not yet available. All the research findings reported in this paper concern the empirical evidence collected in 55 case studies conducted between 2008 and 2010 and the results of the 154 survey respondents during 2008 and 2009.

By the end of 2010, 55 cases studies at the NOC were completed and more than 200 people were interviewed, including individuals, their families, employers and educational professionals working in the New Opportunities Centres (coordinators, RPL technicians, guidance professionals, teachers and trainers). Additionally, detailed field work analysed individual learning portfolios and observed final awarding sessions in the presence of external and accredited evaluators.

All the NOC selected for the case studies had already certificated adults awarded with a lower or an upper secondary level of education. Other important criteria of selection were also considered, such as experience (year of establishment of the NOC), performance (number of certificated adults awarded since 2006) and qualification (granted directly, by the NOC itself, or indirectly, in coordination with other education and training providers). Although the RPL option is still the core intervention of the NOC, other qualification choices are available, namely the adult education course and modular vocational training. All these qualification options have been the subject of analysis, but the results reported in this paper refer strictly to the RPL.

Criteria such as the type or institutional nature of the NOC (public schools, professional schools, VET centres, higher education, social and local development associations, employers and employers' associations) and regional location (the 5 regions of Portugal mainland) were also considered because of their importance both for the NOC performance and the demand dynamics and characteristics.

Apart from these criteria, the selection of the NOC for case study benefited from the expertise and field experience of the National Agency for Qualifications and other privileged agents in order to include two other criteria of a subjective nature: the level of quality of the NOC and its innovation capacity. The idea was to considerer some cases which are of a very high (or a very low) quality and include innovative practices. For a better understanding of the selection procedure, see ANNEX 1.

Specifically designed to assess the learning progress as far as key competences standards are concerned and used in the RPL process, an online skills survey was submitted to adults who had already been awarded with an additional educational level (lower or upper secondary level). The skills survey is based on self-assessment and competence-use indicators covering daily activities and work contexts (job requirements assessment method) (OECD, 2008a).

Eight key competences are being assessed, resulting from a comparative analysis of the Portuguese key competences standards used for adult education (Alonso, 2002) (Gomes, 2006) and the European Key Competences Framework (European Council, 2006). These key competences were grouped in three main categories: hard, soft and meta-skills (Figure C.3).

Figure C.3 A Typology of Key Competences

Hard skills	Literacy skills	Reading and Writing
		Listening and Speaking
		Math
	e.Skills	Computer use
		Internet use
		Information
		Media

	Basic skills in science and technology	Science
		Technology
	Foreign languages	Reading and Writing
		Listening and Speaking
Soft skills	Communication and cross-cultural skills	Cultural diversity and expressions
		Cultural participation
	Personal and social skills	Self-direction and initiative
		Change and adaptability
		Interaction and collaboration
		Communication and influence
	Civic skills	Diversity and responsibility
		Civic participation
Meta skills	Learning to learn skills	Self-concept and self-esteem
		Thinking skills
		Learning motivation
		Learning strategies

Source: Based on the Key Competences Frameworks for Lower and Upper Secondary Level of Education – New Opportunities: Adult Education, Portugal (Alonso, 2002) (Gomes, 2006) and the European Key Competences Framework (European Council, 2006).

By the end of 2009, 154 adults had been surveyed. Criteria such as gender, age, educational level (after participation in the NOI) and qualification options were considered to select this target group. The selection procedure does not intend to be a statistical procedure aiming to have a representative sample of the certificated adults, but a rather illustrative and qualitative picture of some of their features (for detailed information, see ANNEX 2). For instance, criteria such as qualification level (upper secondary) and qualification options (adult education course) were privileged in the selection procedure in 2009 because of specific research interests.

53% of the 154 respondents were women and 47% were men. 46% were between 35 and 44 years of age. The remainder were distributed between the age groups of 25 to 34 years old (23%) and 45 to 64 years old (21%). 36% of the respondents completed lower secondary education and 60% upper secondary education by participating in the NOI. Most of these adults completed an RPL process (75%) and 25% attended an adult education course.

6. Empirical findings and discussion

6.1. *Motivation for enrolling in the New Opportunities Initiative*

One of the most striking evidences when adults were asked why they participated in the NOI was that a great diversity of reasons seems to have motivated them. They expected a great deal from their participation in the Initiative and very different and important things for their lives.

Comparing evidence from the skills survey and the interviews, it is possible to address four main reasons that were consistently ranked highly by almost everyone, regardless of their educational level (Figure C.4). They were: "to get a higher educational level"; "to have a new opportunity for furthering studies"; "to improve career prospects" and finally a more subjective reason expressed as "to be part of the modern world".

Figure C.4 Motivations enrol in the NOI from an individual's perspective

Levels of educational attainment	Before Motivations to be enrolled in the NOI
Lower Secondary	"to start my own business" "to know new people and have fun" "to improve other's image of myself" "to get a better salary" "be more involved in my children's school life"
Upper Secondary	"to open new horizons" "to improve my self-image" "to develop useful knowledge and skills for life" "to value my personal and professional experience" "to get an additional educational degree"
Both	"to get a higher educational level" "to have a new opportunity for furthering studies" "to improve career prospects" "to be part of the modern world"

Source: NOC case studies (2008-2010) and skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

Although consistent with the aims of the Initiative, making the secondary level of education accessible for all who missed their first chance in the education system, it is important to stress that educational expectations were strongly emphasized among low-skilled adults, above the career prospects. In general, obtaining an additional degree later in life seems to be very close to the "new opportunities" idea: something that can open new and better future prospects, such as an educational career, new employment perspectives ("to start my own business"; "to get a better salary"; "to improve career prospects") or more useful knowledge and skills.

Another important and very explicit reason to be enrolled in the NOI is an improved self-image, a feeling of personal fulfilment which is linked to the idea of "filling in the gap" of the lost educational opportunity of the past, as Liz *et al*. (Liz, Machado & Burnay, 2009) also highlighted. The social recognition from a formal education progress is also expected, for example: "to improve other's image of myself"; "to be more involved in my children's school life" or "to value my personal and professional experience". This seems to show that education still has an important role in people's life for different and meaningful reasons, such as "to be part of the modern world".

These motivations were very consistent with the NOC professionals' opinions. People are coming to the Initiative to achieve a lower or an upper secondary level of education because of the perceived "value of education". Nevertheless, for the NOC professionals, the idea that "this might be something different" from the school system, very much supported by the Initiative media campaigns ("now your experience counts"), was crucial to motivate such an impressive number of low-educated adults to be enrolled. The expectations to get an additional educational degree based on previous life experience more rapidly and more conveniently are often expressed.

To be enrolled in the NOI seems to be, above all, a personal decision, very much in line with the adults' perceived "value of education". Most of the adults who were interviewed did not have the employers' support or encouragement to be enrolled in the Initiative. Most of the employers interviewed, when they were aware of their employees' participation in the NOI, still saw it as a personal decision, not as something that could be a strategic asset to the organisation.

However, it is important to mention that there are several other cases of active and engaged participation on the part of employers from the private sector (mainly large companies) and public administration. In these cases, the Initiative is considered as a strategic way to provide education and training for their low-skilled employees, with higher levels of personal involvement in the organisational development. Employers also frequently refer the idea of the company's "social responsibility", contributing to the national endeavour of upgrading the labour force qualifications.

6.2. *Learning experience: does the RPL process make a difference?*

Most of the people who were surveyed had a clear perception of some of the distinctive features of the NOI from the moment they decided to enrol. The publicly and widely expressed idea in the slogan "now your experience counts" was a first reason to expect something different – and more attracting – from the NOI. Although most of them did not understand how this idea would be expressed in the learning experience provided by the NOI, it looked very promising. Moreover, large media campaigns and strong political engagement all seemed to support their decision (Carneiro, 2010) (Liz, Machado & Burnay, 2009).

There are three main ways to progress in the NOI – long adult education courses, short education and training modules and the RPL- all of them offering the possibility of a dual qualification. A large majority of those enrolled prefer the RPL path, but not all are able to take it up. The RPL combines several appealing features: it can be a shorter way to reach the educational level; it can be an easier way, as it is mostly based on individual's experience; it can be a more suitable way, as it is adaptable to individual's time constraints.

The convenience of the RPL was also evident in the Liz *et al.* (Liz, Machado & Burnay, 2009) research findings based on several focus groups. The NOC professionals also supported the convenience of the RPL which is considered the first and most suitable option of adult education in the NOI. Sometimes it is hard to explain to individuals why such a different way to progress in education needs so much time and personal investment to make learning visible (learning portfolios, NOC meetings, group sessions, individual research…) or to attend teaching lessons or modular training to complement learning gaps. And in some cases, to explain why the RPL path, although very convenient, is not possible because of the lack of prior experience (particularly work experience) or foundation skills to succeed in the process. In some cases, the RPL is combined with modular training, but in other cases a complete adult education course (of dual qualification) will be needed. In this latter case, some NOC professionals reported a negative effect on adults' motivation.

Those who experienced the RPL path were asked about their learning experience, assuming that it would be very different from the learning experience that most of them had in the educational system. The idea was to understand the individuals' 'perspective on what were the perceived distinctive features of the learning process based on RPL and to find out if they contributed to motivate and to reach success. The same question was also put to the NOC professionals. The most valued aspects were the following (Figure C.5).

Figure C.5 The RPL experience

Individuals	"after all, my experience has value" "I know more than I would expect" "I realized what I know and what I don't know and need to learn" "what I know is recognized by others and has value for the education system" "now I know I can make it"
NOC professionals	"the adults reconcile themselves with the school" "the idea that people only learn in school and that only what is learnt in school is valid is being questioned" "they want more and more, they want to learn more, because they realized that, after all, they do know and they can make it. It is the valorisation of their own knowledge and skills that made all this possible"
Both	Time and effort put in the process of RPL (especially in the learning portfolio) Reading, writing and communications skills, ICT use and learning to learn skills are widely enhanced by the RPL requirements and process Sharing moments of study within the family (especially with their children) Discussing and sharing difficulties with NOC professionals Discussing and sharing difficulties within group sessions in the NOC The availability and care of the NOC professionals during all the process The formality and the ceremonial aspect of the final certification session (it is an open session and it requires the presence of external and accredited evaluators)

Source: NOC case studies (2008-2010) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

As can be seen in the statements above, there are many valued and positive aspects.

Individuals seem to value the RPL experience because of its dimension of self-recognition., i.e. the RPL gave them the opportunity and the resources to reflect on their life experience, taking stock of their acquired knowledge and skills and recognizing what and how this can be used in an educational ladder. This process of "putting things in perspective" also seems to have had important implications for the adults' self-image and self-confidence to succeed ("I know more than I would expect" and "now I know I can make it"). They realize that their experience has value, not only for them, but also for the formal education system, which is granted by the validation and the certification procedures of the RPL leading to a final certification.

As far as the learning dimension of RPL process is concerned, other distinctive elements are worth mentioning. First, the self-assessment dimension, which is required by the RPL in its initial phase (the recognition phase). This self-assessment of learning gaps, based on a set of pre-defined key competences standards, is above all an individual task, although greatly supported by the NOC professionals, and seems to be a crucial element for furthering learning and skills achievement.

Second, the RPL process is in itself highly demanding on skills use. It is assumed that a minimum level of foundations skills is acquired; otherwise the RPL process is compromised. But some of these foundation skills, such as reading, writing and communication skills or computer and internet use are also widely used and enhanced by the RPL process. Writing a paperback portfolio or creating a digital portfolio, using web-based communication and research tools, making oral presentations or participating in group discussing sessions are good examples of such an enriched learning context. Also learning to learn skills are widely enhanced by the RPL, especially through a self-regulated learning capacity (see section 5.4 for a detailed report on learning outcomes).

Finally, the RPL process seems to be an important path towards self-confidence and self-motivation to learn. For the NOC professionals, it is precisely this dimension that can be one of the most distinctive elements of the RPL experience ["(…) it is the valorisation of their own knowledge and skills that made all this possible"]. In their opinion, "the adults reconcile themselves with the school": they realize that there are other forms of schooling and ways of learning than the ones experienced in their childhood and youth, which are closer to their adult life and to their expectations, as well as equally certified by the educational system.

Several aspects of this "new" organisational support provided by the NOC and their staff were often mentioned and valued by the adults who were interviewed (see also Figure C.5). Almost all the adults referred to the RPL as a demanding task, in some cases even unexpectedly demanding. The time and effort they had to put into the RPL process, especially to create the learning portfolio, were of such intensity and difficulty that, somewhere in the process, motivation and self-confidence were shaken. Especially in those moments, the availability of the NOC professionals, providing guidance and support, seems to have been crucial to overcome barriers. Sharing and discussing needs and difficulties with NOC professionals, peers or within family, were all mentioned as fundamental aids to keep up the motivation and self-confidence.

6.3. *After the qualification: personal gains*

All those who were interviewed already had a certification. One of the main concerns was to ask them what kind of benefits they experienced from the additional educational level they were able to reach. It was strongly emphasized that they should keep this relationship in mind and report only the benefits that otherwise would not have been reaped, i.e. if a further educational level was not achieved.

The most impressive reporting refers to high personal gains from the experience of participating in the NOI (Figure C.6). Nearly everyone stressed "personal fulfilment" as the major gain, which is also supported by Liz *et al.* findings (Liz, Machado & Burnay, 2009). A gain that seems to be highly valued, even if enhanced career progress or employment prospects did not occur. Some families and employers were very consistent in supporting this personal improvement, stressing a reinforced role in the family context, especially in their children's education, greater motivation for continuous training, or more initiative or adaptability to changes in the work organisation.

Figure C.6 Relevance of the NOI in an individual's perspective

Levels of educational attainment	**After Relevance of the participation in the NOI**
Lower Secondary	"it reinforced my role in the family context, especially in my children's education" "to improve the other's image of myself"
Upper Secondary	"a way to progress in the education system, to participate more in the vocational training or to engage in informal learning activities" "to improve my self-image"
Both	"to reach personal fulfilment"

Source: NOC case studies (2008-2010) and skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

Especially for those who had reached lower secondary level, two main benefits were of particular importance and also very highly related with the reported motivations to participate in NOI: "to improve other's image of myself"; "to be more involved in my children's school life". It seems that to reach the 9^{th} grade is already delivering important personal and social benefits.

The educational professionals who were interviewed also made a strong statement. Examples of adults with low levels of self-esteem and with no confidence in their success are recurrent in the activity of the NOC. A great deal of time and energy seems to be spent during the first stages of the RPL processes, supporting individuals' decision and giving them information, advice and help to pursue. Making them believe that their own life experience can have value for education and that an additional educational level is possible seems to be a continuous endeavour for the RPL professionals.

Self-esteem and self-confidence are thus perceived as personal gains and highly valued assets for adults who, being low-educated, move at least one step up their educational level. Although important for all, individuals with upper secondary level seem to value other aspects related to educational prospects in the formal system (Figure C.6.).

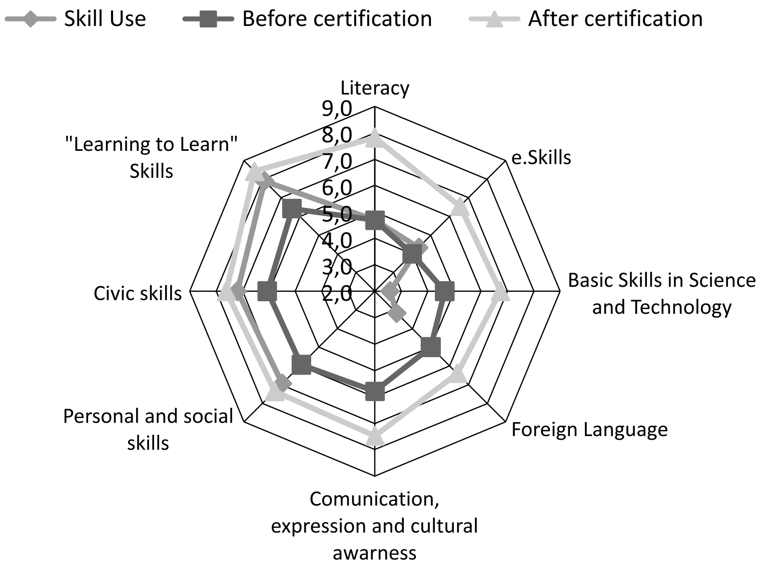
6.4. *After the qualification: learning outcomes*

As far as learning outcomes are concerned, two main research methods were combined: case studies, with a special emphasis on standards and assessment methods, and individuals' skills survey using self-assessment metrics and indicators of competence-use based on the methodology of job requirements assessment (JRA).

The next two graphs, based on data from the 154 individuals surveyed in 2008 and 2009, represent a broad picture of the learning outcomes resulting from their participation in the NOI. Both Figures C.7 and C.8 show, in a 10 points scale, the average level obtained for each of the eight key competences considered. The surveyed individual classifies each competence indicator through self-assessment. Some competence indicators refer to levels of proficiency (particularly for hard skills, as defined in Figure C.9) and some concern examples of competence use in daily routines and job tasks. For each key competence, it is possible to compare the average level obtained before participation in the NOI (dark line in figures C.7 and C.8) and the average level obtained after participation and qualification (light grey line in figures C.7 and C.8). By using the responses of Module 2, which is based on JRA, it is also possible to compare the average level of key competences use in the current individuals' work contexts (grey line in both figures).

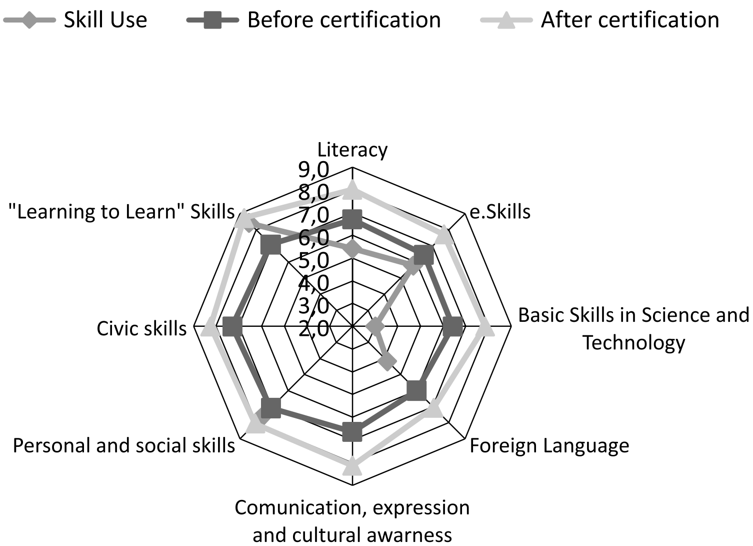
There seems to be consistent evidence that several key competences were achieved or improved (Figures C.7 and C.8). Although the lower secondary level of education reported greater progress in almost all the key competences assessed, which is due to substantially lower levels of previous

Figure C.7 Key competences progress after NOI and key competences use in the work context – lower secondary educational level



Source: Skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

Figure C.8 Key competences progress after NOI and key competences use in the work context – upper secondary educational level



Source: Skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

achievement, individuals with upper secondary level of education still reported a comparative advantage, i.e. they generally start and achieve higher levels of key competences.

The most highly ranked key competences were the literacy skills (reading, writing and speaking) and the e. Skills (computer use and internet use) with effects on changing daily habits after certification, especially among those awarded lower secondary education. In particular, improved e. Skills seems to be the main change in this respect, even if small progress was made as a computer or internet user. For someone who simply did not know how to use a computer this represents a huge step. This finding is also consistent with those by Lopes (2010). The intensity of internet use is directly and positively related with educational attainment, but those who attained the lower secondary level of education experienced the largest increase in internet use.

Learning to learn skills were also among the highly ranked key competences. These skills include self-image and self-esteem, critical thinking, motivation for learning, learning strategies and participation in education and training. Although all seem to have progressed, the most significant improvement was in self-esteem and motivation for learning among the adults attaining lower secondary education (Figure C.9).

Figure C.9 Learning to learn skills (LLS) progress after NOI and LLS use in the work context– lower and upper secondary educational levels

Source: Skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

Soft skills such as personal and social skills, civic competences and cultural awareness and expression were also referred to, but this progress remains less consistent. Less progress was made in several hard skills, such as math, basic skills in science and technology and foreign language. This was also found by Lopes (2010).

Finally, a very consistent picture was found (Figures C.7 and C.8) based on the job requirement's assessment (OECD, 2008a) which enable us to confront these results with the key competences used in a work context.

Hard skills are much less used than soft and meta-skills in the work context. All individuals, independently of their educational attainment, seldom use writing skills, basic skills in science and technology and foreign languages and, when they use them, it is at rather low complexity levels.

Even in the work context, the comparative advantage of the upper secondary level appears. These individuals frequently use more hard skills, although the frequency diminishes with the level of complexity of those skills. Particularly, they have to read more and they have to use computers more often. They also distinguish themselves from those who have only the lower secondary level in two other key competences: learning to learn skills, especially those involved in critical thinking; and soft skills, in particular, self-direction and initiative, change and adaptability and communication and influence.

Data from the case studies, in particular from the NOC professionals who were interviewed, show a very similar picture of learning outcomes resulting from the individuals' participation in the NOI. Even for those who followed the RPL process, learning progress was achieved more especially in literacy, e. Skills and learning to learn skills. In the NOC professionals' opinion, this is additional evidence of the adequacy of the RPL process for adult education, even in low-skills contexts, since the RPL starts by making learning visible but ends up in a meaningful learning path for the adult learner ("I realised what I know and what I don't know and need to learn").

6.5. *Motivation and participation in further learning*

Although further participation in learning by those who participated in the NOI is not assessed and data are not available, it is consistently reported by individuals and NOC professionals that there is greater motivation to engage in new learning activities. Lopes (2010) reported the same finding using a large panel survey to assess the individuals' impacts from participation in the NOI: 56% of the individuals surveyed declared that they were willing to participate in education and training.

Those who attained the upper secondary level of education seem to be more available to do it. They frequently express great motivation to enrol in the university. Most of them were missing a few subjects of the formal education system to do so. In these cases, participation in the NOI was only a short step to make it possible.

But individuals attaining the lower secondary within the NOI also expressed a strong motivation to progress to the upper secondary level within the Initiative. To pursue and to reach the "next step" seems to be a very important personal goal. The previous successful experience in the NOI and the feeling that the next level is not so far are important factors, as Liz *et al.* also reveal (Liz, Machado & Burnay, 2009). Most of them are also aware that the lower secondary level is not enough. To fully participate in society, to obtain a better job or better working conditions (or to remain employable) or to reach a better position in the social hierarchy, they must have at least upper secondary level of education. Even if personal fulfilment was the most cited reason to progress in education attainment, there are important social and economic expected benefits from that decision.

It is interesting to note that most individuals seem to have a clear preference for formal learning in the education system (in some cases within the NOI), leading to a formal qualification, and especially an additional education level. They also expressed motivation to participate in vocational training and informal learning, but in a less significant way.

A summary of the main research findings may be found in ANNEX 3.

6.6. *Discussion*

The individuals enrolled in the NOI were mainly motivated by the opportunity to obtain an additional degree, which is clearly in line with the explicit purpose of the Initiative: to provide a second-chance to achieve lower or upper secondary level of education for those who missed the first one.

Yet that does not seem to tell us the whole story. Even if education still plays an important role in peoples' lives and low-skilled adults experience several disadvantages because of their poor educational background, it does not seem that any kind of opportunity will attract adults to education investments. Several adult education programmes before the NOI had the same purpose, but they all failed to reach such a number of participants. It seems appropriate to ask what else could be provided by the NOI that seemed to be so motivating for so many people.

Therefore, by the end of 2010, NOI encouraged more than one million adults to enrol in education. Although the goal to reach one million adults awarded with the upper-secondary education remains to be achieved, a first and perhaps most difficult task has been performed: to motivate low-educated adults to engage in learning activities. Why?

Our research hypothesis referred to the way the education was provided – mainly on the basis of RPL – and how it fitted the adult experiences and interests. The research findings showed that some important supply-side innovations could have had a particular role in the motivation that led the adult to enrol in the NOI.

Making learning progress and education attainment possible and faster by recognizing previous knowledge and skills ("now your experience counts") and valuing learning outcomes from non-formal and informal contexts was a first, well-perceived and valuable feature of the NOI by the low-skilled. As Werquin (Werquin, 2007a) stressed, a close relationship with the formal education system, opening up the qualifications awarded for learning outcomes achieved outside schools, is a strong mechanism to make lifelong learning attractive and accessible for all.

Allowing personalized paths makes it easier to fit adults' time constraints and providing regular information and advice throughout the process seem to be decisive to meet adults' needs and difficulties. The way RPL professionals and other teachers and trainers are involved in the process and care for adults' motivation and guidance (CEDEFOP, 2008) (Valente, Xavier de Carvalho & Xavier de Carvalho, 2009) (Werquin, 2010) was already pointed out as an important element to keep up adult motivation and self-confidence. In the NOI experience, not only the RPL process is considered the most suitable way to provide education to low-skilled adults, but also the RPL professionals and all the teachers and trainers involved are regarded as very important facilitators. Otherwise, even RPL can be a difficult task for those who prefer it.

Apparently all this has brought education closer to individuals' daily life. A kind of a "new school" in the formal educational system was built: a school which recognizes personal goals and prior experience. Education progress became less distant and institutions and professionals were considered a friendly support to make progress happen. As some of the professionals interviewed stated: "the adults reconciled themselves with school".

Although individuals were highly motivated "to get a higher educational level" or "to have a new opportunity for furthering studies", they also expected a great deal from their participation in the Initiative and very different and important things for their lives. Economic returns from education were expected but these were not identified as the primary driving force to participate in NOI. Educational progress came first, meaning that personal fulfilment and social recognition were still closely related with educational credentials. Hence, a wider and far reaching approach of adult education which encompasses not only human capital endowment and economic returns, but also personal fulfilment and social outcomes (OECD, 2007) (Hoskins, d'Hombres & Campbell, 2008), may be the most appropriate way to envisage a "lifelong learning for all" strategy.

After successful participation in NOI, most of the individuals expressed remarkable "self" gains. Personal fulfilment, greater participation in the family context (especially in the adult's children education) or greater self-esteem and self-confidence to further learning experiences were consistently reported. Based on this evidence, we agree with Duvekot and Konrad (2007) in saying that the way learning takes place and the learner is engaged in learning may have an important transformative dimension. "(…) individuals were likely to perceive a change in their status from 'non-learner' to 'learner' and to increase their self-esteem and confidence" (Duvekot & Konrad, 2007, p. 1), although credits and assessment often neglect these transformative effects, as the authors stressed.

But the NOI experience also provides evidence on learning outcomes. Progress in key competences was achievable even in the context of RPL. For those who showed initial low achievements in some foundation skills, in particular literacy skills and e. Skills (computer and internet use), considerable progress was made. Learning to learn skills are also among the most highly ranked key competences attained, especially as far as self-image, self-esteem and critical thinking are concerned (especially by those who reached lower secondary education within NOI).

As regards learning progress, it seems that at least three elements may have been decisive in the NOI experience: a clear definition of key competences standards; the learner-centred approach embedded in the RPL process; and an effort to make learning progress.

Key competences can be better suited to adults' life experiences and transferable to a wide range of life contexts (Bjornavold, 2000), although some may still remain largely illegible for employers, as some research findings indicated (see ANNEX 3).

In the NOI, the learner-centred approach embedded in the RPL appeared to have enhanced learning to learn skills far beyond the expected key competences to be met, including greater self-esteem and self-confidence to further learning experiences. As Looney (2008) noticed, reflective and self-regulated learning is crucial to develop learner autonomy in improving foundation skills not only in formal learning contexts, but also in daily life. Werquin (2007a, 2007b) also acknowledges that individuals often learn way beyond any given initial objectives. "They learn about themselves, about team working, about behaving in groups, whether heterogeneous or homogeneous…" (Werquin, 2007b, p. 6). As the author pointed out, this may be proposed as a novel type of learning – "semi-formal learning" – a fourth type of learning which is close to the concept of informal learning, but taking place in the context of a formal learning activity, such as the RPL process.

However, the RPL is usually considered a prime way to make prior learning visible, thus not adding new or improved learning outcomes (OECD, 2010a). Having in mind the research findings presented in this paper, it seems that one can expect more from RPL, at least in the context of low-educated adults.

So far, these research findings show a promising way to bring back education to low-skilled adults. Enhanced motivation to take at least one step up their qualifications, to improve key competences and remarkable self-gains and the convenience of the RPL path may all be indicators of how the NOI can be having a lasting effect of lifelong learning. Whether this will be the case still remains uncertain. Time and accurate monitoring and assessment will be needed to gather firm evidence.

7. Conclusions

Lifelong learning opportunities are unequally distributed. Those who left school early, especially before completion of secondary education, and did not have the chance to progress in educational attainment are often those who participate less in learning activities in their lives.

So far, the NOI has reached an important goal: to bring back educational investments to more than one million low-skilled adults. Apparently a first and perhaps most difficult task has been performed: to encourage low-educated adults to improve their educational attainment.

Why adults were motivated to enrol in the NOI and how far the Initiative can provide lifelong learning further motivation and opportunities for those who successfully participated in it were the research questions addressed by this paper. Our research hypothesis is that some major educational innovations taken from the supply-side were of considerable value to achieve such an unprecedented enrolment and to make lifelong learning opportunities attractive.

Research findings show that education still plays an important role in adults' lives. "To get a higher educational level" or "to have a new opportunity for furthering studies" were the first and most highly ranked reasons to enrol in NOI. Although career prospects and expected economic benefits were expressed, none of them seem to have been the prime reason. Educational progress for those who were low-educated during most of their lives also seems to be closely related to an improved self-image and self-esteem and expected social recognition, especially in daily contexts such as family and community.

Providing competence-based education and making educational levels accessible by RPL, on such a large scale, were important educational innovations to reach the low-skilled adults. Time and information constraints were targeted. The RPL process is considered by individuals and educational professionals the most suitable way to meet adults' education needs. Key competences that are of primary importance to seize lifelong learning opportunities, such as literacy and e. Skills (computer use and internet use), or to boost self-regulated learning throughout life, such as learning to learn skills (self-concept and self-esteem, critical thinking, learning motivation and strategies), revealed significant improvements after the experience of RPL and the successful achievement of an additional qualification. One can expect from RPL more than just making prior learning visible. Added learning outcomes and remarkable self-gains show that learning progress come from the RPL process, at least in the context of low-educated adults. Finally, further learning activities, especially those aiming at additional educational attainments, are of adults' particular interest as they consistently reported. Motivation for lifelong learning seems to have been enhanced.

So far, our research findings suggest that important achievements are taking place and that a strong argument in favour of this new education paradigm to promote lifelong learning opportunities for low-skilled adults can be made.

At present, two important questions remain to be dealt with. The first is how to increase the certification rate among those who are participating in the NOI, assuming that the upper-secondary level is still a very demanding aim for a large number of adults below the 9th grade. This is clearly a question of efficiency. A second and forward looking question is how far the NOI will be a real lifelong learning opportunity for all the Portuguese low-skilled adults, not only for those already participating in the Initiative, but above all, for those who are still lacking the enthusiasm to enrol. These late comers are still numerous and they seem to be far more challenging for any RPL-driven educational innovation than the first comers.

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ANNEX 1

New Opportunities Centres' (NOC) Case studies (2008 to 2010)

Number of case studies		15 case studies in 2008 25 case studies in 2009 15 case studies in 2010	A total of 55 case studies
Selection criteria	NOC factual criteria	Year of establishment of the NOC	
		Type of NOC (public schools, professional schools, VET centres, higher education, social and local development associations, employers and employers' associations)	All types. In 2010 NOC from public schools and employers (public administration and private sector) were preferred
		Region (NUT II)	All the 5 regions (Portugal mainland)
		Qualification level provided (lower and upper secondary)	One or both
		Number of certificated adults awarded since 2006 (lower and upper secondary)	
		Qualification path provided directly by the NOC itself or indirectly, in coordination with other education and training providers (number of certificated adults awarded since 2006 by RPL or Adult Education Course (AEC), only academic award or dual qualification award)	All In 2008 only RPL. In 2009 and 2010 both RPL and AECs were considered.
	NOC subjective criteria	Quality level of the NOC (informal and qualitative assessment by the National Agency for Qualifications)	
		Innovation capacity of the NOC (informal and qualitative assessment by the National Agency for Qualifications)	
Selection method		Selection based on qualitative analyses and previous criteria (not representative of the NOC universe)	Data provided by the National Agency for Qualifications
Case study methods		In-depth interviews (NOC management, adult education professionals, awarded individuals, their family and employer, when possible) Analysis of individual learning portfolios Local observation	More than 200 interviews. In some cases, adult education professionals from other providers connected with the NOC were also interviewed

Source: The NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP 2008-2010).

ANNEX 2

Individuals' skills survey (2008 and 2009)

Number of respondents	35 in 2008 119 in 2009	A total of 154 respondents
Selection criteria	Certificated adults (awarded with an additional qualification level after NOI participation)	Only already awarded adults
	Gender	Both
	Age	All age groups
	Qualification level (lower and upper secondary)	Both
	Qualification path (RPL or Adult Education Course (AEC), only academic award or dual qualification award)	All
Selection method	Selection based on qualitative analyses and previous criteria (not representative of the individuals universe)	
Survey methods	Online survey based on three modules: Module 1. Individual characterization and its participation in the NOI, including motivation to be enrolled Module 2. Job requirements assessment (JRA) concerning key competences use (based on PIAAC, OECD, JRA methodology) Module 3. Self-assessment of key competences level, before and after participation in the NOI and final certification	Module 2. Indicators of key competences use based on JRA methodology: 10 points scale for frequency of use (from 1, never, to 10, everyday). Module 3. Self-assessment of key competences, before and after the NOI: 10 points scale for individual's own capacity (from 1, very low, to 10, very high) for each different key competence's indicators.

Source: The NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP 2008-2010).

ANNEX 3

Main research findings

Dimensions	Indicators	Individual	New Opportunities Centre	Employer
Motivation	Enrolment	Several reasons all highly important To achieve basic or secondary education as the prime reason	To achieve lower or upper secondary education in a faster and more convenient way Media campaigns were crucial (“now your experience counts”) “First comers” as highly motivated Concerns remain on the “late comers’” motivation	Lack of support in most cases Considered mainly as a personal decision Some large enterprises are actively engaged in the NOI
Learning processes	RPL process	The preferred way to qualification award Faster, easier (based on personal and work experience) and more suitable (reduced time constraints)	The preferred way to qualification award (adults motivation) “First comers” as the most suitable for the RPL path Concerns remain on the “late comers” prior learning gaps	Still largely illegible by the employers A lot of them are skeptical about the NOI compared to the traditional education system (especially because of lack of trust in RPL path)
Outcomes	Personal gains	Improved self-esteem and self-confidence Personal fiulfilment	Improved self-esteem and self-confidence Personal fiulfilment	Improved self-esteem and self-confidence Personal fiulfilment
	Learning outcomes	Computer and internet use, literacy and learning to learn skills are the most evident and valued	Computer and internet use, literacy and learning to learn skills are the most evident	Still largely illegible by the employers Some mentioned improved personal and social skills
	Motivation to further learning	Increased motivation after diploma Progress to upper secondary or to the university as the main motivation	Increased motivation after diploma Progress to upper secondary or to the university as the main motivation	Some mentioned an increased motivation for continuous training in the enterprise or for new job requirements
	Participation in further learning	Data are not available	Increased awareness Still much to be done on guidance services and vocational training Lack of data on participation in lifelong learning after qualification award	Data are not available

Source: NOC case studies (2008-2010) and skills survey (2008-2009) from the NOI evaluation project (CEPCEP, UCP).

D.

FAMILY: A KEY VARIABLE TO EXPLAIN PARTICIPATION IN NOI AND LIFELONG LEARNING

HENRIQUE LOPES

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: henriquelopes3@yahoo.com

ROBERTO CARNEIRO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

MENON Network, Brussels

E-mail: rc@fch.lisboa.ucp.pt

ABSTRACT

Family is a well-known determinant of child and youth education. As for adults, this relation remains an open question. This paper analyses the contribution of both the original family and the current family to the decision to return to education in adult life. For each family context we study life conditions, the relations to schooling and the role of human relations. Our research concludes that for adults, as in younger ages, family remains a powerful determinant and an effective medium to be used by public policies to enhance the demand for further education. We resort mainly to Bourdieu's theory on *habitus* to interpret the empirical data. Moreover, we provide empirical evidence demonstrating that *habitus* evolves in the adult phase as a consequence of a person's interaction with the environment and of his/her current family characteristics.

Keywords: motivation, lifelong learning, family influence, *habitus.*

1. Introduction

The point of departure of this chapter is that each person has a particular history which begins at birth and is reflected throughout that person's life in each and every action. To understand the deep motivations underlying a decision to enrol or not in an adult education process we must first understand the person as a proactive actor in a social process, rather than as a reactive being that reacts to discrete stimuli sent by external sources.

Our research focus on the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) deals with the motivations of adults to return to learning. There are several emerging dimensions. We have reflected on approaches usually referred to as 'motivational conditions' although the approach known as 'motivational processes' was also considered relevant. However, a sociological approach was finally favoured to enable a better interpretation of both motivational conditions and processes.

Unlike opposing theoretical approaches, our data show that different theories can coexist to explain one same phenomenon, complementing each other and allowing a comprehensive understanding of the motivations underlying a decision to enrol. This is the case when confronting economic utility and family motivation in researching the determinants of the drive for engaging in lifelong learning at work.

Indeed, the impact of the labour environment on motivations is widely known (even though it was partially neglected at the time) from the theories on the place of the labour force at the beginning of the 20th century by Fayol, Taylor and Ford. From 1929 onwards, other researchers have developed comprehensive literature demonstrating the extreme importance of labour environments on personal economic behaviour: as an employee, as an economic actor in society, as a driver of the company's culture, using labour as a tool to achieve different goals in life.

Hence, two factors contribute decisively to the ultimate decision (to enrol or not in NOI): the labour environment and the family. A range of articles has been published, addressing the impact of labour contexts. Our article focuses on one very particular angle: the influence exercised by the family on the adult to undertake further studies.

It is widely recognized that the family is a core institution of society with impacts on the entire social environment. Referring to the specific data under review in this paper we evaluate family as a driver for deciding to return to school. This perspective is much less usual, as it focuses on adult populations rather than on children and we would like to elaborate on part of these findings in the present chapter

Very little research is available on this particular perspective. Moreover, the existing literature elicits young adults as the focus of analysis. A common line of the scarce evidence collected shows the strong impact of parental schooling levels, mainly mothers, on the levels of success, ambitions and schooling achieved by their children (Department of Education, 2008).

Existing longitudinal studies undertaken on young adults – a population that is considerable younger than our target population – confirm the high correlation between levels of schooling achieved by both parents and children (Hintsanen, Hintsa, Merjonen, Leino, & Keltikangas-Jarniven, 2011). However, robust research on the impacts of the current family on the adult's decision to return to education is still disappointingly scarce

We chose the family as a construct to study motivation in the context of adults returning to school by drawing an analogy to its recognition in psychology as one of the decisive factors in children's education.

In adult education, namely when discussing differential personal inclinations to undertake lifelong learning, research-based discussions on the role played by families are, however, almost inexistent as was underscored.

The original studies collecting the data under analysis did not aim at researching on this specific point, but were intended to conduct a thorough evaluation exercise for NOI's Agency (ANQ). Several data of scientific interest were drawn from these databases. A small part will be shared in the present chapter.

In this context, understanding the family entails understanding the lifelong development of the individual inside that nuclear structure. It is thus assumed that institutionalized childhood or youth experiences cannot be read through these lenses. Two periods were considered: the initial family at a frozen period in time when the respondent was 14 years of age; and the current family.

In our view, growing up within a family develops a particular way of being in society and thus a specific relationship with educational processes. Bourdieu is one of the most authoritative authors on this. For him, people develop social patterns during the two main socialisation periods: primary acquisitions (childhood/youth) and secondary acquisitions (adulthood) from the behavioural property of *habitus*, i.e. the inculcation of predispositions to act in a specific way. This is not a behaviourist approach that is similar to that of Pavlov's dog, but a learning process, as the author himself states: "*structures structurées prédisposées à fonctionner comme structures structurantes*" (Bourdieu 1980, p. 88). In other words, it encompasses the dialectical connection between the person's actions and learning processes, serving as a grammar of behaviour. The *habitus* refers to perception and action in the world surrounding the individual, but leaving room for adaptation; it is therefore a structuring structure. Those schemes are structured insofar as they derive from socialisation processes.

Living in society, the person develops the *habitus* through perceptions, actions and social dispositions resulting from social experience. Unlike in the conditional behaviour, people are able to create 'phrases' of behaviour, adapting their reaction to different contexts, but always preserving the essence of the answer pattern. Bourdieu named this essence the 'Hysteresis of the Habitus'.

'Similarity of the Habitus' is another important point in Bourdieu's theory. Different individuals from the same social group living in similar environments develop a similar *habitus* because they share the same life experience. The consequence for the future is that they will share similar ways of perceiving the world, feeling and acting.

For Bourdieu, changing the *habitus* is difficult; it persists even in very adverse situations or through disruptive social transformations. Notwithstanding the inertia of the initial *habitus*, it could still be partially transformed by social experience. If a person changes his/her social reference group or social behaviour, he/she could adopt a new *habitus*, a different *habitus*, or change the old *habitus*. Moreover, the inertia of the *habitus* (hysteresis) is compensated by the flexibility to act under the same '*habitus'* structure' in new situations, namely when moving from family to professional environments (Bourdieu, 1979).

In this theory, the *habitus* is very much connected to social origin, emerging within each person's specific social context. For example, in lower economic strata people are more connected with the concrete aspects of life, whereas people from the upper strata are more oriented towards abstract dimensions that are not related to a need to ensure basic subsistence. With the *habitus* as a minimal script, a person may compose phrases of *habitus*, each time re-inventing solutions for new problems within what is expected in the respective social group. This approach is very much opposed to the rational actor used in economics. Here (in Bourdieu's theory), people are not necessarily trying to find the most efficient way of maximizing their choices, but are instead putting their entire personal and social history in each option.

Another important dimension in Bourdieu's theory is the *campus* concept. The *Campus* is the conceptual space where the *habitus* is created and regulated by different forms of capital coexist. There are several *campuses* (philosophical, economic, artistic, etc.), each of which is defined by the interactions of its members, under determined social rules. There are general rules that are common to the various *campuses*, and rules that are specific to each *campus*.

Finally, reference should be made to Bourdieu's understanding and explanation of capitals. Several forms of capital coexist:

– **Cultural capital**, which ensures the perpetuation of the system of social values, positions and attitudes towards school (Bourdieu, 1966). It is for the school to define what is appropriate to learn and the type of subject-knowledge relationship. As such, some relationships with cultural capital are more positive than others. According to the author, positive relationships with the school process are acquired within the family (Lane, 2000). The family tends to pass on knowledge and the ways of the dominant class, valuing these over those of belonging. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has therefore a double dimension: that of knowledge accumulation, validated by the more educated groups in society (privileging school in this context) and that of regulation and valorisation of that knowledge mainly within the family. Cultural capital may assume three states: an embodied state, when it is permanently assimilated; an objectified state, when it is materialized in goods that are accessible through economic capital (paintings, pictures, etc.); and an institutionalized state when it generates symbolic property of that acquired capital (diplomas and respective qualifications), itself becoming a symbolic capital.

– **Social capital**, which consists in the possession of a certain amount of social relations, which can be translated into economic advantage. Social capital is the strategic vehicle to manage relationships in a social group, pulling or pushing them, thus creating the individual's network of social relations.

– **Economic capital capital** (or Human capital) consisting of a capital accumulation under different modalities – knowledge, experience, competences, skills and aptitudes – that, by and large, determines the form and intensity by which the remaining forms of capital enable a sustainable rent generation throughout a lifetime.

The theoretical analysis of capitals clearly shares some similarities with Marx's theory; however, it should not be confused with it, even in the limits of interpretation, given that Bourdieu himself, since the mid-1960s, laid down a clear diversion with that school of thought, parallel to an interpretative separation from existentialist discourses. The truth of the matter is that while some influence from Marx is surely traceable a flavour of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Weber and Durkheim is equally present, but always in the framework of an autonomous discourse (Lane, 2000). Unlike Marx's understanding of the individual's passivity towards social conditions, which are the drivers of social dynamics that are able to create the tensions that push the individual to act, for Bourdieu, human subjects develop a dynamic and dialectic relationship with those social conditions, interacting with them and even recreating them through their actions.

Bourdieu places the various forms of capital at the same (or almost) level and reads them through an economic lens that results *inter alia* in the use of 'efficiency' and 'fungibility'. For example, if new knowledge expressed through symbolic, intellectual or other forms of capital loses efficiency in a certain social context, another, which generates greater efficiency, may replace it.

Along this line of thought, where we find a mild economic favouritism, school assumes a parallelism with work. Both these environments when scrutinised under the umbrella of the same analytical tools (Bourdieu & Boltansky, 1975) are most relevant determinants of market valued assets such as qualifications and skills possessed by the individual.

This focus on Bourdieu does not imply that we regard that author's theory as a motivational theory. As it will be clear from the results and their discussion, Bourdieu's social model is a better tool to answer the question of what drives people to enrol in NOI than motivational theories, whether those focusing on the creation of conditions for motivation, or those focusing on explaining the process. In sum, Bourdieu provides a holistic understanding of the massive return of more than 1.5 million Portuguese to the educational process in adulthood.

To explain the return only through motivational elements would render impossible the inclusion of facts that are transversal to society. Therefore, in our view, the NOI appealing dimension consists in much more than conditions and processes behind the motivation of those who enrol; this is a sociological phenomenon of multidimensional features, one of which is the motivation to return.

However, this is not to deny that classical theories may offer good situational contributions to interpret the data. Under the classification approach of motivational theories, Boone & Kurtz in their book 'Management' (4th ed. in 1992, chapter 13, pp. 304-310) propose a division of the ten most relevant theories for motivation in a work context, under which four of them are clustered together as factors that are particularly relevant in generating the core conditions for motivation: Maslow's five-level hierarchical theory (1943-54); Alderfer's three-level ERG theory (1969); Herzberg's two-factor theory: hygiene and motivation (1968-74); and McClelland's three-need theory – achievement, affiliation & power (1953-1987). The remaining six motivational theories are gathered under motivational processes: Vroom's valence-expectancy theory (1964); Porter-Lawler's motivational theory (1968); Adam's equity job motivation theory (1963); Locke's goal setting theory (1965-1990); Goldstein's (1994) and Locke & Latham's goal-setting alternative theory (2002); and Skinner's behavioural theory (1957)

Since all of these are classical theories and have been widely known for decades, we will not explain them further. It is noteworthy that they were (are) useful to interpret the data, provided they are used at the local level.

Therefore, rather than opting for Bourdieu as opposed to motivational theories, we complemented both approaches, sometimes giving predominance to the classical motivation theory whereby participation in adult education remains shaped by the "Matthew effect"[1]; but as regards a population's desire to return to school as a social phenomenon, we opted for Bourdieu's general framework of understanding.

Departing from this theoretical framework we have defined our research questions:

1. Can the study of NOI offer robust evidence on the impacts of parental schooling levels on the individual's propensity to undertake further learning throughout his/her entire lifetime?

2. To what extent does the internal dynamics of current families influence the adult's decision to return to learning?

3. Under what circumstances could current family conditions overrule the long-lasting effects of the original family?

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[1] See footnote 158, chapter C. Bringing Lifelong Learning to low-skilled adults: the New Opportunities Initiative.

2. Sample and methodology

The initial sample consisted of 750 people engaged in NOI's process and another 750 who, although with identical conditions to register, did not enrol in NOI.

The method of data collection was the telephone survey via the national network of landlines. For those enrolled in NOI, they were randomly drawn from the database of those who completed their training. The average length of the interviews was 22 minutes. For those who were not enrolled, we used national telephone lists, eliminating all those in transit in some of NOI's procedural steps, those over 65, those under 20, and those who had spent their childhood and/or youth outside Portugal, in order to target only those in the intermediate age group, users of the Portuguese education system and with no personal relationship with NOI. We also eliminated cases containing parasite variables, procedural or other elements that were likely to disturb the results.

To study NOI's population, 2,759 people were contacted between November 21 and December 8, 2009, resulting in 751 interviews. For the population that was not included in NOI, 4,921 contacts were made, which resulted in 806 interviews between 9 December 2009 and 18 January 2010, using a total of 57 interviewers (Lopes, 2010a, b, c).

We then proceeded to undertake a qualitative evaluation of the response function, its objective quality, etc., composing two samples of 750 subjects considered to be the best interviews of each surveyed group.

To develop the survey tool, in-depth interviews were conducted with students at different stages of the NOI process, teachers and directors also linked to NOI and others who, although not having participated in the Initiative, could, in theory, have been one of its actors. The concerns, ideas, criticisms and suggestions of these groups of people produced an initial version of the survey which was organised according to major topics drawn from social sciences: characterization of the initial family, interest in adult learning, work, spouse's education, household and equipment, cultural habits, sensitivity to information technology, and perception of NOI and generally of lifelong learning. Only part of the differential characterization of the family is presented here.

Parts of two other studies were used for re-testing (whenever possible and depending on the type of assessment), where they showed potential scientific relevance. Both studies involved around 1,500 people each. When referred to, the respective data will be duly identified in the text of this chapter.

3. Results and discussion of results

The dimensions of the family were analysed when the interviewee was 14 years of age and at present. Only the results which are of interest to our reflection will be presented. Those representing NOI are identified as 'enrolled' in the Initiative, and the others are referred to as 'non-enrolled'.

The results are split into three parts: the primary family context (at the age of 14); the secondary family context (present); and the type of motivations that reinforce the decision to initiate the process.

The family at the time the respondent was 14 years of age

Parents' profession

Respondents stating that their parents were employed were requested to specify the profession. For this purpose, the Portuguese National Code of Professions (NCP) was used. The results for fathers were as follows:

Table D.1 Father's profession

Fathers	Is or was enrolled in the New Opportunities programme?	
Fathers (NCP)	Enrolled	Non-enrolled
Senior administrators, directors and senior company staff	5%	4%
Scientific and technical professionals	1%	2%
Technicians and associated professionals	2%	2%
Administrative and similar professionals	3%	4%
Service providers and salesmen	10%	9%
Farmers and skilled agricultural and fishery workers	22%	29%
Craftsmen and related professions	42%	36%
Armed forces	1%	2%
Does not know	2%	2%
Does not answer	11%	10%
Total	100%	100%

There is a higher incidence of 'craftsmen and related professions' among the fathers of the enrolled and 'farmers and skilled agricultural and fishery workers' among the fathers of the non-enrolled, which resulted in a trend of sig. χ^2 0.088. It should be stressed that among the non-enrolled, around 40 people did not want to state their father's profession. The second study presented very similar results and did not provide any new information. It seems that in the cases where fathers carry out industrial or services' activities their children tend to return to education as adults more often than when the fathers' activity is in the primary economic sector.

The same analysis was carried out for mothers. The differentiation of occupations is nil (sig. χ^2 0.18). This could be partially explained by the significant number of mothers in both groups who stay at home as housewives. Most mothers of the enrolled are linked to services and there is a higher number of mothers linked to agriculture among the non-enrolled. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that most mothers stay at home, the rest representing barely one third of the total.

Table D.2 Mother's profession

Mothers (NCP)	Enrolled	Non-enrolled
Senior administrators, directors and senior company staff	1%	1%
Scientific and technical professionals	1%	2%
Technicians and associated professionals	3%	2%
Administrative and similar professionals	3%	7%
Service providers and saleswomen	24%	16%
Farmers and skilled agricultural and fishery workers	23%	41%
Craftswomen and related professions	29%	24%
Armed forces	0%	0%
Does not know	2%	2%
Does not answer	13%	4%
Total	100%	100%

Similar results were found in the second study. Rather than social classes, as proposed by Bourdieu, one can identify different social groups within classes where qualifications are lower, in professions with lower salaries and consequently with a lower quality of life. On the one hand, we have people from the industry and the services' sector and on the other, farmers and similar professions. These different environments impact on the children who, as adults, return to education much less frequently. It seems that there are not only 'social classes' but also two layers within the classes, reflecting different levels of capital appropriation. To test this, one must measure the parents' schooling level:

Level of schooling attained by fathers

The next step was to investigate whether the fathers' educational level later reflected on their children's choices in the context under study. The educational level attained in any of the groups was very low in both studies: 3.6 years for the fathers of the enrolled and 3.3 for the fathers of the non-enrolled in the first study, which was, however, sufficient to cause a significant difference (χ^2 sig. 0.000); 4.3 years for the fathers of the enrolled and 3.0 for the fathers of the non-enrolled in the confirmatory study, again causing a significant differentiation (χ^2 sig. 0.000).

Let us take the first year as an example (the second is almost equivalent).

Table D.3 Father's last level of schooling

		Enrolled	Non-enrolled
What is your father's level of schooling?	Never went to school	13%	22%
	1^{st} grade	1%	2%
	2^{nd} grade	4%	3%
	3^{rd} grade	12%	12%
	4^{th} grade	58%	45%
	5^{th} grade	0%	1%
	6^{th} grade	2%	2%
	9^{th} grade	2%	2%
	10^{th} grade	0%	0%
	11^{th} grade	0%	1%
	12^{th} grade	1%	1%
	Vocational education after secondary	0%	0%
	University and equivalent	1%	1%
	Post-graduate	0%	0%
	Other	0%	1%
	Does not know	4%	6%
	Does not answer	1%	1%
Total		100%	100%

As shown in Table D.3, the major differences concern the number of people not having attended school who are in far greater number among the non-enrolled and those with the former 4th grade among those enrolled. However, the numbers could be even more evident considering the lack of response by many of the non-enrolled who would not disclose their father's schooling level. This difference between having attended school, even if only at the most basic level, and not having attended at all, will be highly influential in the way one looks at the school-family relationship. In the second study, it was possible to reduce the number of non-answers. The difference between groups increased greatly, reinforcing the interpretations.

Level of schooling attained by mothers

The mothers' scenario emphasises that of fathers, as shown in the chart below, reinforcing the idea expressed above.

Table D.4 Mother's last level of schooling

		Enrolled	Non-enrolled
What is your mother's level of schooling?	Never went to school	25%	36%
	1st grade	2%	3%
	2nd grade	5%	4%
	3rd grade	13%	14%
	4th grade	48%	32%
	5th grade	0%	1%
	6th grade	2%	2%
	9th grade	1%	2%
	10th grade	0%	0%
	11th grade	0%	0%
	12th grade	1%	1%
	Vocational education after secondary	0%	0%
	University and equivalent	0%	1%
	Post-graduate	0%	0%
	All other answers	2%	4%
	Total	100%	100%

The mothers' average schooling level is even more fragile than that of fathers: 3.0 and 2.6 years of schooling for those enrolled and onn-enrolled respectively, resulting in a very significant intergroup difference (χ^2 sig. 0.000).

There are great differences in the number of mothers who never went to school, with particular incidence among the non-enrolled respondents; and the highest number of mothers with 4^{th} grade level is found among those enrolled.

Two other studies were carried out to reinforce this data analysis, involving around 3,000 other respondents, half of whom was enrolled and the other half was not enrolled. The results are very similar. In the latter, a special effort was made to reduce the number of refusals and of 'does not know' answers. The results re-stress the pattern of differentiation, the global picture thus remaining the same.

The overall idea is that achieving certain threshold levels was not necessary for deep changes to occur. Small improvements in cultural capital (for example parental enrolment versus non-enrolment in education) can lead to major differences in the life styles of the children of those families decades later. In other words, not only the accumulation of capitals, but also the qualitative state of possessing (or not possessing) the specific capital is important.

Habit of purchasing books other than schoolbooks

Data have shown that there was a greater probability of finding a purchaser of non-mandatory school books among those enrolled (Sig χ^2 = 0.005). Nevertheless, the buying habits were very scarce in all cases (average values are of 3.8 and 3.5 over a 10-points scale, for the enrolled and non-enrolled respectively).

Regular reading of newspapers

Newspapers are another source of information (even more so in the past when the respondents were still children). Respondents were asked whether in their families, when they were 14 years of age, at least one person read the newspaper regularly. Most replied negatively in any of the sample groups. Yet, the group that participated in NOI showed a higher probability of reading (sig. χ^2 0.02), with average values of 4.5 versus 4.2 and a dispersion indicating greater access to information.

In the same line of thought, it is likely that children who receive support within the family have better results than others who are given no support. Evidently, there are no direct measures of observation of what really happened within those families, as this is assessed through the respondents' perceptions of their experiences, sometimes over several decades. It is likely that there may be a pattern close to reality, regardless of the biases that each may carry when digging into their past,. To assess this dimension, questions were produced as follows.

Family collaboration in school work

Despite the generally low participation rate of families in their children's school work, there are differences between the groups, with slightly more cooperation being reported in the families of those currently enrolled in NOI (5.8 vs. 5.5). However minimal, this was sufficient to cause a difference of statistical significance (sig. χ^2 = 0.001). The ability of parents to cooperate is strongly correlated with their academic preparation. It should be remembered that parents of the non-enrolled have fewer qualifications than those of the enrolled, benefitting from very few years of schooling. Hence, it would be surprising if they were able to provide as much help as the others.

Individuality in school effort

The pattern of behaviour is found to be identical to the previous analysis, but with the directly opposite response. This question concerns the lack of support in school tasks on the part of the student's family, which resulted in a significant differentiation between groups (χ^2 of 0.000). However, we do not find a linear pattern of response. The highest value among the non-enrolled is due only to a very large group of respondents choosing 10, thus leading to a different IPP of 40% and 48%.

Parents' presence at school meetings

Here, we find a strong differentiation between groups, both in terms of average (6.6 in enrolled, 5.8 in non-enrolled) and in the dispersion measures (sig. χ^2 = 0.004), indicating a greater presence among the parents of those enrolled.

Preparation for tests by the student

Again, a situation of great isolation of the students was found in both sample groups, resulting in an IPP of around two thirds (63% and 68% respectively for the enrolled and non-enrolled), even though the average of the enrolled is higher (7.5 and 7.9), thus generating a differentiation of small statistical significance (sig. χ^2 = 0.039).

It is not possible to establish direct links between these behaviours and an intangible construct such as the *habitus*, but one may find a pattern in both groups in relation to school as a social institution. Patterns show that in families where school affairs were slightly more structured, young students received more support from the family to succeed at school than those in the other group. The difference shows that the *campus* of education is filled with family reactions (school *habitus*) with a high consistency between patterns. Those that are more favourable tend to be present in families where people have other positive *habitus*. The contrary is also true in a kind of net of *habitus* or 'lateral hysteresis'.

Maximum educational level attained

We sought to ascertain the schooling level of respondents by asking them the maximum level attained (for those enrolled in NOI, the last level attained before enrolling). Groups show very different response structures: focusing on those enrolled in NOI, responses referred to the educational level attained, varying between having completed 6th and 4th grades and not having completed 9th grade. In contrast, as regards those who are not enrolled in NOI, responses focused on the age of completion of educational levels: 5th and 10th grades. This shows a different attitude in each case: the first group completed early schooling and (we speculate) was unable, for whatever reason, to continue to another cycle. In the second group, school dropout is common in the mid-cycle. This is considered to be very relevant to understand the psychological profile of future candidates and design communication campaigns.

The average values of education are also different, although this aspect is much less important for the operational understanding of the blend of educational levels displayed. Among those enrolled, there is an average of 6.2 years, whereas among non-enrolled the average is of 5.7. It is believed that the real value in the second group tends to be lower for two reasons: more than 10% of the non-enrolled respondents refused to state their education, as opposed to all enrolled respondents. This proves defensive characteristics, showing that those enrolled in NOI tend to be rigorous in identifying school progress where this brings them added social value; secondly, as in all cases of social desirability, there could be some exaggeration in the qualifications indicated by the respondents.

The pattern of results and the default assumption show higher completed levels of education among those enrolled in NOI, which reinforces the relational link between prior schooling levels and the decision to sign up for

Table D.5 Highest level of schooling attained

		Enrolled	Non-enrolled
What was the highest level of schooling attained?	Never went to school	0%	0%
	1st grade	0%	1%
	2nd grade	2%	1%
	3rd grade	1%	2%
	4th grade	21%	5%
	5th grade	4%	41%
	6th grade	38%	2%
	7th grade	8%	12%
	8th grade	14%	2%
	9th grade	7%	2%
	10th grade	1%	17%
	11th grade	3%	4%
	No answers – refusals	0%	11%
	Total	100%	100%

NOI. Likewise, there is very relevant information about the time when the child leaves school. When a child leaves school at the *end* of a cycle, this indicates the fulfilment of a goal and thus gives rise to a very pleasing sense of completion. Conversely, if dropout occurs during the course of a cycle, this suggests another form of decision making/understanding by the parents of the role of education vis-à-vis the integration of future adults. This is another way of distinguishing different family approaches to the school phenomenon. But we do not know whether dropout relates to economic problem or is simply the result of a limited family-to-education relationship. What remains clear is that it makes much more sense for the families of those who are enrolled that t dropout occurs at the end of school cycles, whereas it is largely accepted by the other group that a young student drops out of school in the middle of a cycle.

Bourdieu tells us that in under-educated families a *habitus* is created that gives more attention to concrete aspects of life than to school, as the latter is more abstract and linked to other social classes, especially the dominant class. If a family is more equipped (the more economic and social capital it possesses) it is more likely to support and promote the improvement of its children's schooling, thus aiming to accumulate symbolic and social capital.

Alternatively, one can apply a hierarchical motivational theory, as it is very likely that dropout was due to deep economic problems in the family. In the past, among Portuguese poor families, people had to go from being a cost to becoming a resource as quickly as possible: school represented a cost in many senses; but even a small apprentice's salary could be a great help for the family.

This interpretation provides a good example of how Motivational Theories and Bourdieu's Theory may co-exist and complement each other.

Evaluation of primary school and corresponding school practices

The first years of life, also because of school, are crucial for the development of the individual. Moreover, the first cycle of education marks the first contact with the 'school'. Therefore, capturing the image of those initial years may provide clues to understand why some people attribute more value to returning to learning and schooling than others. Here lies the essence of the *habitus*: to generate the structures that will respond to future educational phenomena. The assumption is that if people have a good experience with education this will lead them to return to school. The relational phenomenon was measured through 11 elements:

Gestalt image of primary school

There is still the image that primary school is particularly good, both groups expressing high values (8.3 and 8.5 out of possible 10, noting that this difference bears no true statistical significance). This study measures the statistical distribution (sig. $\chi^2 = 0.078$), showing only a slight trend in favour of the non-enrolled. Another way to analyse this topic was to use polarity indicators, the positive being close to 80% and the negative falling to 6%, leading to a trend that is similar to that mentioned above.

Assessing the primary school's conditions

Tangibles are a core part of assessing the provision of services in evaluative models of consumer behaviour and are, in this context, represented by the respondents' perception of their schools' conditions. It should be noted that the evaluation has *gestalt* characteristics and does not necessarily provide true answers: when the respondents attended primary school they were able to objectively assess the facts; however, they had neither the maturity nor the expertise to do so. Moreover, at present, the time distance may obscure the analytical data. Hence, what is captured is a mix between memory and current evaluative rationality. The evaluation results show an average value of 5.4 in both groups, with the non-enrolled expressing a more negative evaluation. The values of polarization, both positive and negative, are also identical. Despite these similar mean values, the study of dispersion measures showed significant differences ($\chi 2$ sig = 0.003), with greater criticism being expressed by the non-enrolled.

From the data, we are unable to conclude whether the difference stems from perceptual elements (as we have seen in several of the other items, overall conditions were more favourable for the non-enrolled), or if the assessment is the consequence of a disadvantaged educational background. It is noteworthy that after all these years since primary school, those who did not seek to enrol in NOI had a worse picture of their schools' conditions than those who did enrol.

Possibility of family support in studies

During the design of the survey, it was stressed that for children to receive support from their parents or whoever replaces them, this may only be made effective if the caregivers have a minimum of resources. The expectation was that the level of parental education was very low, which turned out to be true.

When confronted with this question, respondents were very assertive, in line with the results shown in respect of their parents' schooling level. In particular, the non-enrolled polarized their response, resulting in average values of 6.0 and 6.2 and a differentiation (sig. χ^2 = 0.027), which is consistent with data on parental education. If we disregard the repeated pattern of what we called 'protective parents', we are able to estimate that most respondents, when children, could not have received support from their parents since they themselves had been deprived of basic knowledge.

This partially answers the question of early school dropout by respondents and the permissive attitude of families. Lack of stimulation by parents was in many cases associated with their lack of education and therefore a lack of 'school culture' in the family. Again, this is the expression of a specific relationship between family and school as a social institution and of structures (*habitus*) of family-social power interaction, fulfilling expectations from the respondent's point of view: a very poor family (in every social sense of poverty) will focus on the need to survive by honouring liabilities and preparing their children for work, while a not so poor family will focus on investing in the preparation of their children for the future, an attitude in which school plays a most relevant role.

Organisation of studies by the child

We were interested in ascertaining who organised schoolwork during primary school. The values found are surprising positive, taking into account that they refer to a cycle in the child's life when the role of parents is crucial.

Descriptions show that, in essence, the two groups were not so different in terms of desirable supervision. The mean values were of 8.3 and 8.6 for those enrolled and non-enrolled respectively, expressing a widening gap as regards the second group, with statistical significance (sig $\chi 2 = 0.023$). In other words, 4 out of every 5 children were provided with the supervision, which should be expected.

We then moved on to undertake the same evaluation regarding post-primary school (for those who attended it).

Gestalt image of post-primary school

The image is again very positive; however below that of primary school. Averages were of 8.1 and 8.2 for the enrolled and non-enrolled respectively. There was no other intergroup differentiation (sig $\chi 2 = 0.575$). As regards other items: 'Recognition of support provided by post-primary school teachers', average values of 7.2 and 7.3, (sig $\chi 2 = 0.669$); 'Assessment of the post-primary school', mean values of 5.0 and 4.6, (sig $\chi 2 = 0.787$); 'Acquisition of school material', average values of 7.3 and 7.6 (sig $\chi 2 = 0.409$); 'Possibility of family support in studies', mean values of 6.2 and 6.1 (sig $\chi 2 = 0.152$); 'Friendships formed during post-primary school', values of 7.8 and 7.9 (sig $\chi 2 = 0.643$).

We do not know if the differences are a result of very different school conditions or if they merely reflect the fact that the most distant child memories tend to be more positive, or if other elements contribute to bringing down the values. This is a topic for future research.

The family at present

Spouse's occupation

There are differences between the groups expressed by replacing workers by the retired. The situation is largely justified by the fact that the population of those non-enrolled is older than that of those enrolled. Notwithstanding occasional exceptions, the differentiation between groups was very significant (sig. $\chi^2 = 0.000$).

Level of schooling completed by the spouse

The average level of education attained by the spouse was very different in both groups: among the enrolled, the average was 8.1 years of schooling, while among the non-enrolled, the average was only 6.5 years. Moreover, a large number of people refused to state the spouse's schooling level with emphasis on the non-enrolled group. As in previous similar situations, this may be indicative of defensive behaviours. In confirmatory studies, the results are very similar: those enrolled have more highly qualified spouses.

Explanations could be drawn from many different theoretical perspectives: from self-image theories, which concern the qualification gap between spouses to motivational theories where self-esteem plays an important role.

But referring to Bourdieu's theory, it is expected that the spouses differ between groups. Each group has its own social dynamics and develops patterns of social reaction. The life style followed by a member of the group reflects shared social values, the person's network of relationships within the reference group, and relationships between groups and the objectives of the group. As such, according to Bourdieu's approach, education of the spouses of the enrolled group should be, higher than in the other group, as verified.

Number of household members

The number of household members is interesting, as it provides a better perception of the income per capita and a better understanding of the family dynamics.

We found different family structures (sig. $\chi^2 = 0.000$) between groups. Among those enrolled in NOI, families have 3 to 4 members, whereas among the non-enrolled, the figure is lower. This gap derives from the difference in the average age of the groups, which accounts for a larger number of children in the household of enrolled respondents. This was based on the number of children in the family who were still living with their parents or who had already gained their independence.

Cultural habits of family members

In this context, we analysed various levels of development and cultural information:

Purchase of non-school books on a monthly basis

Volitional reading habits are major sources of connection to learning and openness to new horizons. If there is a tradition of acquiring non-school books, this indicator is of great importance. We opted for a monthly basis reference, since the use of other timelines in pre-testing became very difficult, as states the theory of consumer behaviour. Values found are quite low: of 4.2 and 3.3 respectively for those enrolled or not in NOI, but sufficient to cause a high intergroup differentiation (sig. χ^2 = 0.000). Even if we use polarity indicators, the differences in IPP are of 21% and 14% for each group respectively. A low purchase pattern of non-school books was evident during the pre-NOI period in both groups, in line with the low reading habits of the Portuguese. In addition to the scalar distributive elements, the differentiation lies at the extreme, where a large number of non-enrolled respondents state that they do not buy non-school books, while those enrolled state that they buy books on a monthly basis.

Again, the pattern of cumulative cultural capital is clear: the higher the cultural capital accumulated, the more likely it is that a person will try to find new learning paths, a phenomenon the Ancient Greeks named *autopoiesis*. Throughout history, the dominant class has always been associated with the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital. In other words, this is again a direct application and confirmation of Bourdieu's theory.

Going to the cinema or theatre, twice a month or more

Cinema and theatre were also regarded as forms of openness to new knowledge for the reasons set out above. The frequency measure used was 'twice a month or more', since we are dealing with two different formats. As in the previous situation, the overall cultural consumption rate was very low. However, it is above that of book consumption, with reliability values of 2.7 and 2.2 in 10 possible points and an IPP minimum of only 9% and 6%. There is a very clear distinction between groups (sig $\chi2$ = 0.000) due to the representation of the extremes of flow distribution. The pattern is the same as that mentioned above in the last point.

Looking for cultural attractions

Consuming cultural goods through leisure activities has been associated, implicitly or explicitly, with the meaning of 'cultural'. In this sense, interviewees were given the opportunity to indicate a broad spectrum of activities, which ranged from listening to music to visiting a space of conceptual art. Occurrences were higher than in the previous cases, perhaps reflecting the breadth of the 'cultural' concept. Yet the pattern remains: those registered in NOI are much more likely to seek the acquisition of cultural goods. The averages reflected the difference, with values of 5.5 and 4.6, and polarity indicators of 34% and 26% for each group, again representing a significant difference ($\chi2$ sig = 0.000).

Both groups suffer major weaknesses in the matter under consideration but, unlike in previous cases, these are no longer the effects of extreme population distributions, as there is a consistency throughout the distribution. This is again highly consistent with Bourdieu's approach to cultural capital consumption as the expression of a connection between economic capital and social capital regarding the main *campus* of social networks.

Expression of cultural spending in the family budget

Another way of verifying cultural consumption in the family (accumulation of cultural capital) is to question whether the overall spending activities are cultural expressions in themselves. Looking for the meaning of 'family budget' in the decision making about family expenses, it refers to the alternatives for applying the capital held, and the class of expenditures as the result of a given set of priorities. We did not seek to define the 'culture' concept, thus allowing the respondents to include what they wished in the expenditures. In Bourdieu's interpretation, each social class tends to get as close as possible to the dominant social class, reproducing behaviours and values. The expression 'cultural behaviour' is different in each culture and social class, expressing values and knowledge transmitted by social actors and formal institutions such as cultural knowledge, membership and other forms of exclusivity, which always involve monetary and non-monetary costs. As noted before, in general, most of the families come from low-income groups and therefore the volume of monetary costs involved may not be significant enough for social improvements. Mostly, it seems that the component of expenditure devoted to culture is reduced in both groups. Yet, it is among those enrolled in NOI that there is greater effort, 3.2 *vs.* 2.7, resulting in a strong differentiation (sig $\chi2$ = 0.000). This is the expression that both groups come from very low social strata; however, the non-enrolled are less equipped in terms of tools, which also explains their non-enrolment.

Reading newspapers

One of the main tools for exercising full citizenship is to be aware of what is happening in society. The *media* largely supports the introduction and sharing of ideas, as newspapers are one of the most efficient vehicles for social participation and information at low cost and with easy access.

In contrast to previous points, reading the newspaper is much more widespread in the social behaviour of the Portuguese. The pattern showed that there were essentially two major groups: those who are in the habit of reading daily newspapers (about 40% of respondents) and those who have no such habit (30%), with low level of occurrences for the others. Both groups have, however, a sampling distribution that is similar to the frequency with which they read newspapers, resulting in a significant intergroup difference ($\chi 2$ sig = 0.012).

Listening to the radio

In the same logic, respondents were asked whether they listened to the radio which, unlike many newspapers, does not have to be paid for. Results show that those registered in NOI are much more sensitive to listening to the radio (sig $\chi 2$ = 0.000) and consequently to news and all other radio programmes, whether of high or low quality; it is unquestionably a way of connecting to the world. Again, the non-enrolled have less contact with different social perspectives.

Reading trade or professional magazines

Concerning reading technical and professional magazines, we tried to gauge the proactive search for continuing self-learning. The difference was even more striking than in the previous case, with average responses of 5.45 for those enrolled in NOI and barely 3.53 for the non-enrolled, thus revealing a large intergroup differentiation (sig $\chi 2$ = 0.000). These results reinforce the idea that the level of receptivity among those enrolled in NOI is already evidence of greater self-learning inclinations, while those who are not enrolled in NOI have lower levels of information. The nature of this category is more of an operational tool, although it requires cultural capital for its use. Again, the non-enrolled group is handicapped when compared with the enrolled group.

General motivation to participate in the New Opportunities' Initiative

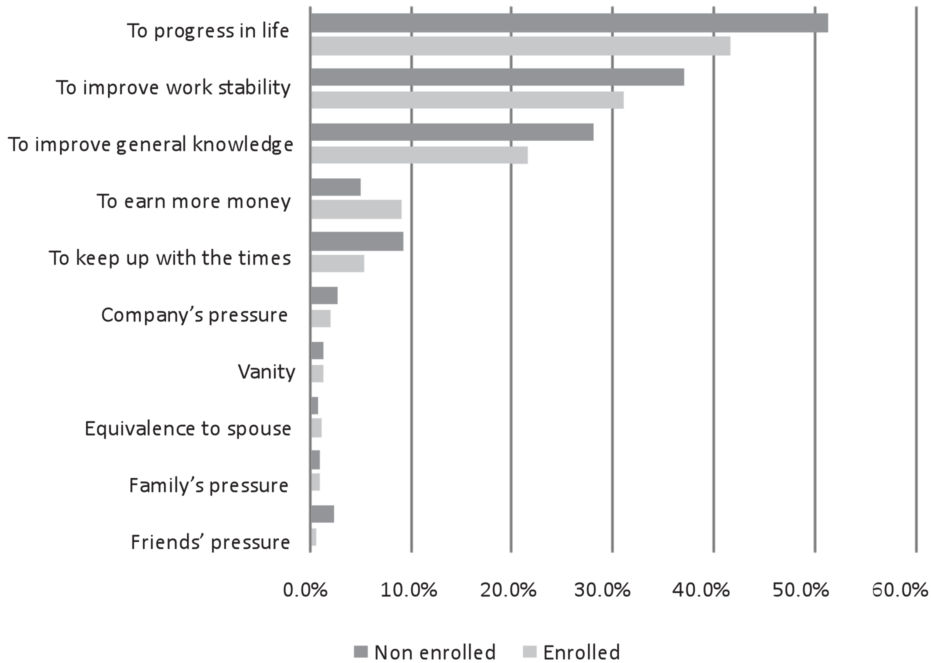
Parallel to motivations deriving from relevant networks of social relations, the respondents' internal motivations were also the object of our analysis. We sought to understand whether the family partially shapes the person's behaviour, as shown in the a points above, or whether enrolment derives from an explicit conscience or, on the contrary, whether the conscience of that act refers to the immediate reference frame, largely ignoring its genesis, in line with what Gunnar Myrdal coins as the 'maximum possible conscience'.

As becomes evident from the previous topics, there are clear family differences between the groups (enrolled and non-enrolled in NOI), as regards both initial and secondary families. If indeed the *habitus* contributes as a structural behavioural reference, with the attributes described at the beginning of the chapter, this entails that there is no active or explicit conscience of its existence; instead, actions are attributed to another cause. Individual in society tend to associate their actions to the emotional and cognitive elements rather than to the structural contributions of those actions. The *habitus* emerges in the analysis of life processes that are registered over a reasonably long period, associating the more or less automatic behaviour with the reasons underlying its emergence. This is a determining element when trying to explain the deep motivations for returning to school through a social understanding and as something that is built over a lifetime, rather than through seemingly flat and linear motivational theories which are difficult to fit diachronically in highly complex contexts.

Firstly, under scrutiny were the reasons that, in the respondents' view, lead people to enrol in NOI. There were significant statistical differences between the enrolled and non-enrolled (sig $\chi 2 > 0.010$) in the following categories: to keep up with the times; to earn more money; to improve one's general knowledge; to progress in life. A less marked differentiation (sig $\chi 2 > 0.050$) was found in the categories 'work stability' and 'friends' pressure'. There was no difference between groups in the remaining categories; however, it should be noted that these latter categories could more easily be seen as appealing to the person's image (vanity, equivalence to spouse's schooling level and company's pressure). This profile, which is situational and declarative in view of the data known to the individual at that moment, is better framed by motivational theories. Almost all motivational theories are applicable given the presence of intrinsic and extrinsic elements, elements of ambition, of safety, etc. What all theories fail to explain is the reason why, considering the systematically different life stories of the enrolled and non-enrolled, ultimately some people enrolled and others did not.

Motivational theories did not fail in analytical dimensions; on the contrary, is it possible to confirm at a local level (every motivational theories have confirmation in many of those main points) those statements. However, if they provide 'local optimal points[1]' a 'global optimum point' that explains why someone enrolled in NOI and others did not cannot be found.

Figure D.1 Motivation to enrol in NOI



Again, we are able to identify the same pattern: those who enrolled in NOI have a more future-oriented, positive and pro-active approach to life than those who did not. Among those who enrolled, the response is of higher quality, since it is very much based on personal experience, whereas the non-enrolled assume an external reading or a projective image of the reasons for enrolment.

There are scarce references to the family, which take us back to an internal *locus* of causality, as well as to the lack of consciousness concerning the genesis of the action. This is not in itself strange in light of Bourdieu's theory: who puts the blame of their lack of civility as a driver or as a citizen on family educational flaws? How many people invoke their social class of origin to explain what they choose from a restaurant menu?

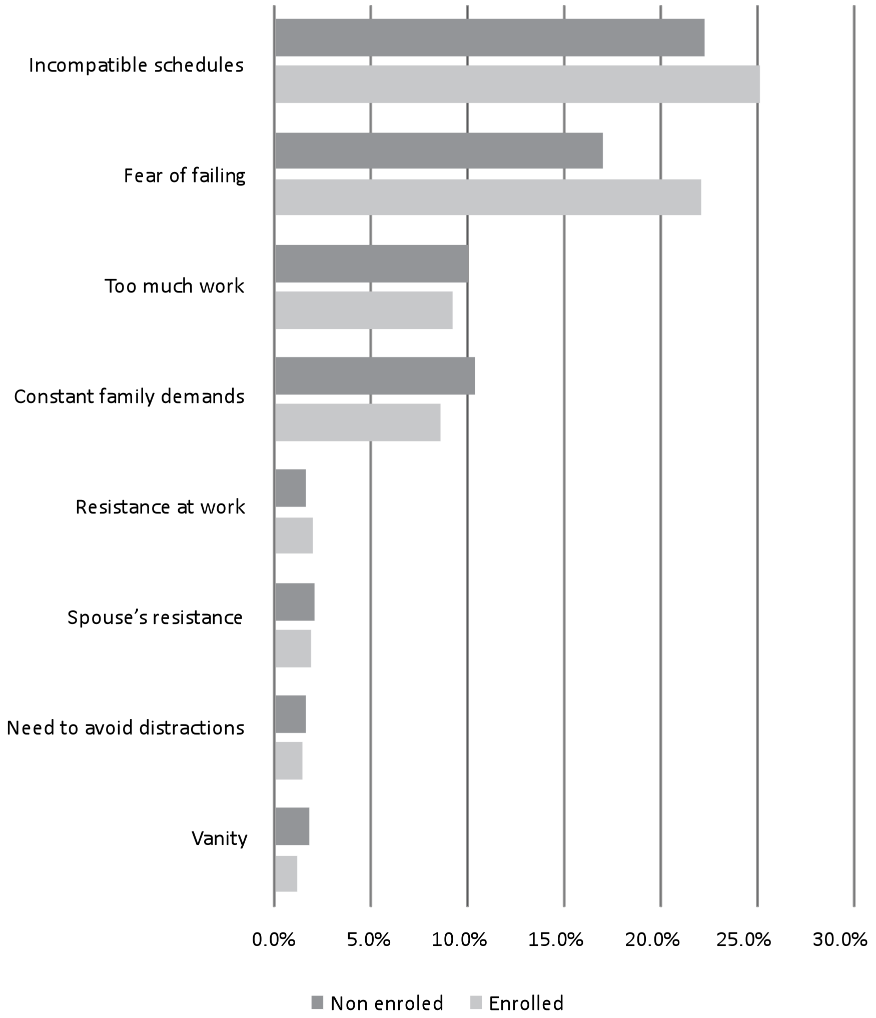
A similar procedure to that used for the reasons to enrol was used to ascertain the reasons behind potential NOI participants not having yet enrolled. Here, the reactions of the two populations under study come much closer, even though there is a reversal of roles. This is of the utmost importance as it concerns the development of the *campus*: those who have enjoyed conditions, even if minimal, for evolving, have been able to reformulate their behaviour by adapting and associating it with evolutionary processes (re-adaptation of *habitus*), whereas the others did not evolve; notwithstanding, both groups have retained the reasons for resisting learning and evolution in what Bourdieu referred to as reproduction of the *habitus* of the social class of origin, built to preserve the essence of its distinctive behaviours even when, either by chance, merit or displeasure, there is social mobility.

It is only in the 'fear of failing' category that there is a statistical separation between the non-enrolled and the enrolled (sig $\chi 2 > 0.022$), where the former clearly assume the existence of that fear. This is also of great importance. What in essence separated the enrolled and the non-enrolled was the different ways they approached life and its dynamics, thus becoming social actors with differing levels of participation. In the study on life impacts (Lopes & Carneiro, 2010a) it was shown how people who return to school through the New Opportunities' Initiative become more self-assured, develop greater self-esteem and enhanced willingness to participate socially and, above all, to continue progressing, ie. education induces these improvements in the citizen. Therefore, one assumes that those families which have a more favourable relationship with school (institution) convey values and behaviours (*habitus*) that are closer to schooling than those of families who do not. Hence, those who have been deprived not only of education, but also of values that highlight the importance of schooling did not acquire those competences of self-assurance and self-esteem that a closer involvement with school could have induced.

The remaining categories pertain to functional elements such as difficulties in terms of schedule or of articulation between family and work. This chapter's premises highlight that, even where they are functional, some categories refer to the family as a referential element in deciding to go back to school as an adult; therefore, whether for positive or negative reasons, the family acquires much more importance than the individual in the act of deciding to return (or not) to school. Hence, campaigns targeted at attracting/motivating adults should contain a strong family component; likewise, educational offers should provide answers to problems arising for potential participants who, although interested in enrolling in adult education, are unable to do so, and should encourage participants in adult education to make their spouses become involved in processes of educational improvement.

We then focused on those enrolled in NOI, questioning them on the personal motivations leading to that decision.

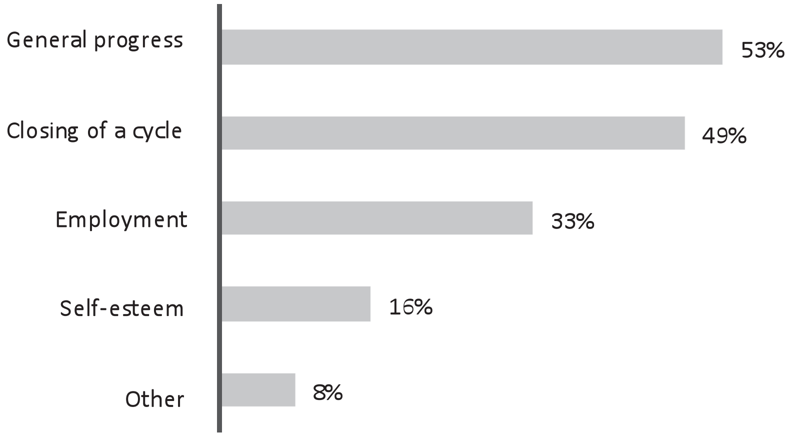
Figure D.2 Motivations not to enrol in NOI



There is, first of all, a desire to progress in life, generally felt by those wanting to go further and who adopt a dynamic and proactive approach to life. More than half the respondents mention this category. Secondly, we find the completion of a study cycle that was interrupted in youth. It is as if people had an original 'defect' that needed correction, which is sought in adulthood through the New Opportunities' Initiative. As in the previous case, this is mentioned by half the respondents. Thirdly, we find the relevance of elements associated specifically with employment, followed by improvement of self-esteem with an impressive 16%.

It is interesting to note that there is a systematic internal *locus* of causality to justify what may be considered as a socially correct action.

Figure D.3 Motivations not to enrol in NOI – main categories



As regards the non-enrolled, respondents were asked to state the reason for not having yet enrolled. As already seen in other items of the survey, albeit in a less direct way, there is a very great prejudice, showing how the *habitus* contributes decisively to its birth and operation. Bourdieu's theory explains that the tendency to preserve social structures generates obstacles to their modification, thus making the reproduction of class relations very likely. Prejudice is, to a large extent, the transtemporal social construct that lies at the root of peoples' barriers to their own social development and mobility, and expresses (in this case) the stance of a social group that is limited in resources and horizons and is in a kind of 'anti-autopoiesis'. According to Bourdieu, the initial family is the best place for foundational learning to occur and is where the dimensional *campus* of life predisposes the individual to acquire a certain *habitus*. In our specific case, prejudices are acquired through experiences within the initial family and shape the individual approaches to the world in a continuous restructuring process around that model.

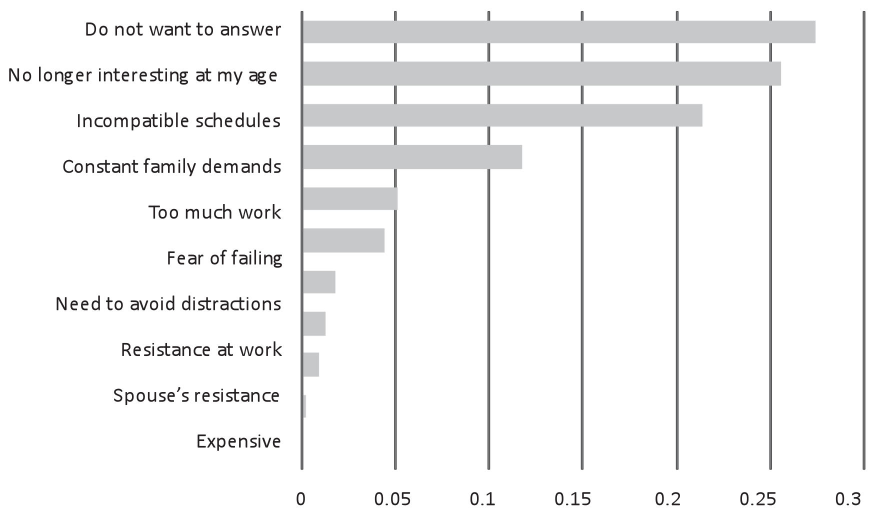
In our context, one of the strongest prejudices is the assumption that, after a certain age, people no longer have reasons to return to learning. It is the most cited category. Overcoming this cultural resistance requires great effort in building a favourable public opinion.

The issue of possible difficulties in terms of time schedule comes up again. We do not know if this is factual argumentation or easy justification; each one knows about his/herown time management. Such a claim can only be confirmed by probing through a set of personal stories.

Fear of being unable to meet demands when returning to school could be regarded as a prejudice or, possibly, as a bad self-image. For Bourdieu, the lower the social position the worst the self-image, as the distance to the dominant class – primary referential model for actions – is greater. The explanatory model used here allows for a clear explanation of the intensity of this mediation.

Circa 40% of respondents fail to indicate a specific reason for not having enrolled; this may have several explanations, from the actual absence of an objective reason for not enrolling to the incapacity to even conceive of returning to school as an adult, or other reasons which could not have been shared with a stranger in the context of a telephone interview.

Figure D.4 Personal reasons for 'not to enrol'

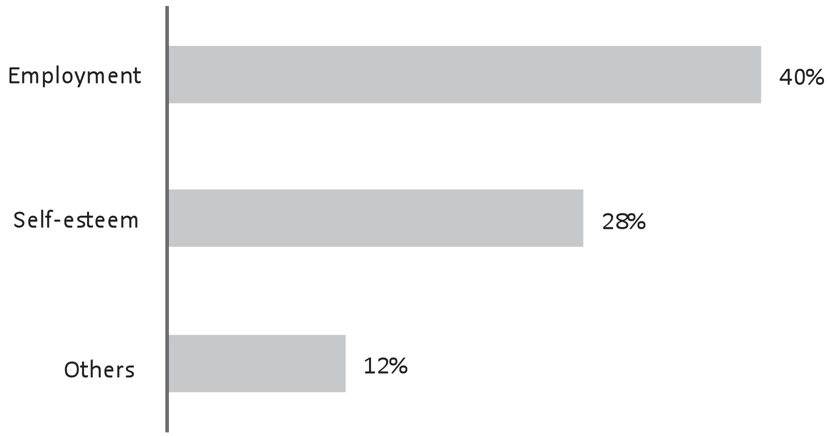


The important point is that among those who express reluctance to enrol in NOI, the majority builds on prejudices and these, by their nature, are susceptible to change through effective consumer communication and education campaigns.

Non-enrolled respondents were asked directly what would make them decide to enrol. The answer-pattern is very much in line with the previous points made, now complemented with functional elements.

Again, orthogonal categories were grouped into large categories. There were two dominant categories: employment-related reasons which reinforce previous findings; and self-esteem, which is of extreme importance but has not yet been fully assumed by the social actors behind the NOI.

Figure D.5 Personal reasons for 'not to enrol' – main categories



When discussing the importance of self-esteem for enrolment, one should keep in mind that, beyond the potential for being better remunerated or improving job security and even above the citizen with a completed study cycle or any other external variable, there is the person that looks at him/herself in the mirror everyday and sees, or not, the image he/she holds of him/herself, which is the inner driver of that person's decisions. To return to learning and school as an adult is a way for the person to look at him/herself differently, of setting out new horizons and, especially, of acquiring the capacity to do so.

We also aimed to study the expected reactions of the present family, Bourdieu's secondary family. The assumption is that the family's internal dynamics largely determines the individual's reaction to the world: the ability to interact with it, the freedom to do one thing instead of another, the balance between several requests and the options taken with regard to a set of objective and subjective needs. In addition to these operational aspects, there are also the capacities and limitations induced by the family. The family acts as an organic unit with collective needs (e.g. to pay the rent, to feed its constituents), collective goals (e.g. to choose the vacation destination that fits the family's preferences) and self-imposed limitations deriving from choices taken as a family (e.g. religious options, philosophical options, etc.). In sum, the secondary family operates as a unit of reaction to social dynamics, where members exercise a double personal dynamic: both in a space of personal freedom and in a group space where they represent the concerns and shared objectives.

In this context, the spouse and children's reactions to the person's participation in a process that may lead to work, status or social changes or even to improvement of the current environment, and interact with that person's individual mechanisms of engaging with those processes of returning to school. Two contributions are possible: *inertia*, where long training processes may imply that the person is unable to perform old tasks as well as before (time competition) or to face greater financial burdens caused by the inability to perform professionally (financial competition); or, *positive contributions* based on the assumption that progressing in life is preferable to regressing or stagnating. In general, and in Portugal more especially, there is a high correlation between better qualifications and higher wages. In theory, this return would enable an increase in labour security and work remuneration.

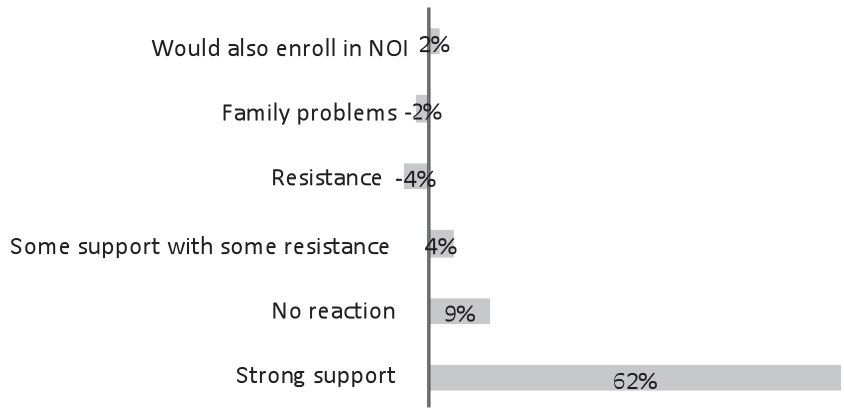
According to Bourdieu, a second source of effects is found in the subjective elements of the secondary family's dynamics. The family is a mechanism of reproduction of values and codes of conduct where the referential elements, whether cultural (referential cultural groups) or economic (reproduction of behaviours of the dominant class), are passed on to future generations. Due to social tensions, the various elements of the family will bring out different emphases in reproducing social patterns or fostering social breakthrough. This is viable through adaptation (*habitus'* reformulation) of old *habitus* to new times or by adopting new models of social behaviour.

Education is, by definition, one the most radical forms of social transformation, promoting social mobility and questioning ways of reacting to stimuli of the surrounding context; educating further a large share of the labour force necessarily entails deep social transformations.

In consideration of Bourdieu's theory, when balancing favourable and unfavourable, objective and subjective elements, the future beneficiary of the process of returning to school expects support from the spouse and strong support from the children. From the former, given the potential improvement of the family's quality of life and future prospects for betterment; from the latter, given that, further to that improvement, they become more educated and hence better equipped to face social change. We also studied whether this dynamic would impact on the non-enrolled to promote their integration in programmes aiming at re-engaging adults in schooling processes. This did not include the enrolled respondents, as they had already taken the decision of enrolling, for whatever reason. It is regarding those who remain at the margins of processes of returning to school, and more broadly to lifelong learning, that recruitment dimensions must be found in order to change the current situation.

As an open-ended question, respondents were asked what they expected would be their spouses' reaction to a decision to return to school, for example through NOI. The results found were the following (Figure D.6).

Figure D.6 Expected spouse's reaction

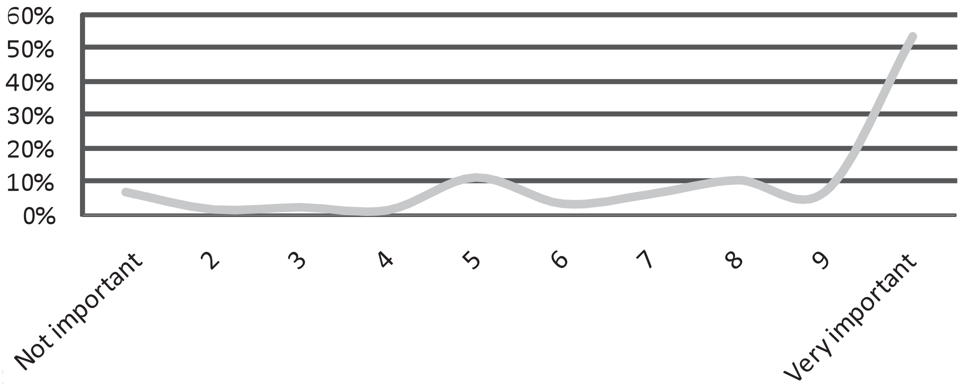


As shown, it is expected that spouses show strong support, in line with what would be anticipated in Bourdieu. It is likely that the person assuming the social role of being the other family pillar puts an effort into something, which could entail economic improvement for the family unit and thus a general improvement of its living conditions. In the proposed understanding of the family as a motivational driver to return to school and learning, the next step is to assess to what extent that role is relevant for the respondent.

A distinction should be made: one thing is the reaction of the spouse as already expected by him/her, thus not affecting the respondent's individual decision; another is that of the spouse as an element of the family dynamics, builder of spaces of socialisation and the organic reaction of the family to society in the *campus* in which it is present.

The data are very clear and reveal a much higher than expected bias, even having Bourdieu as a reference. Therefore, instead of average and dispersion values, we chose to present the registered distribution. Not only is it very high in average terms, but it is very polarized.

Figure D.7 Importance of spouse's reaction to the enrolment in the NOI

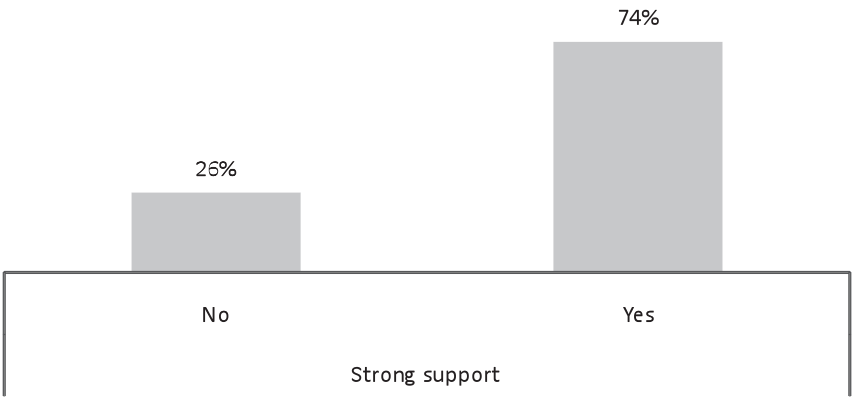


Data clearly show that great importance is given to the spouse's reaction, indicating that instead of the prevalence of an individual reaction to learning stimuli there is a group reaction, if not a functional one, to those stimuli within families. It would be interesting to have data that would allow us to ascertain whether the pattern is identical in dysfunctional families.

The next step was to study another extremely important family pillar: children. Children have been assuming a growing role since the industrial revolution, from being a mere family patrimony to becoming full and proactive elements within the family structure. We estimated that also they would support their parents' decision to go back to school, given the inherent objective value of increasing the family's capitals, in addition to all other emotional reasons.

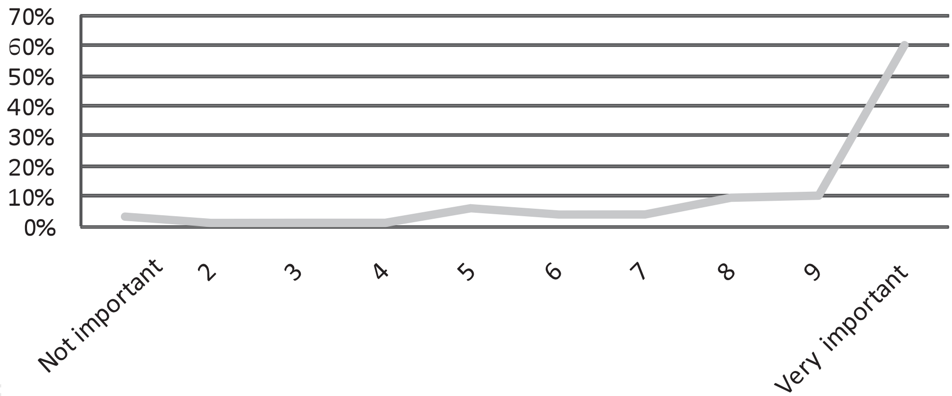
Again, open-ended questions were posed to non-enrolled respondents and their answers were subject to content analysis. Grouping the responses revealed a strong support from children, higher even than that of spouses.

Figure D.8 Expected reaction from children to parents' enrolment in the NOI



Below is the distribution of the importance attributed to children's reaction to the possibility of their parents returning to school.

Figure D.9 Importance of children's reaction to parents' enrolment



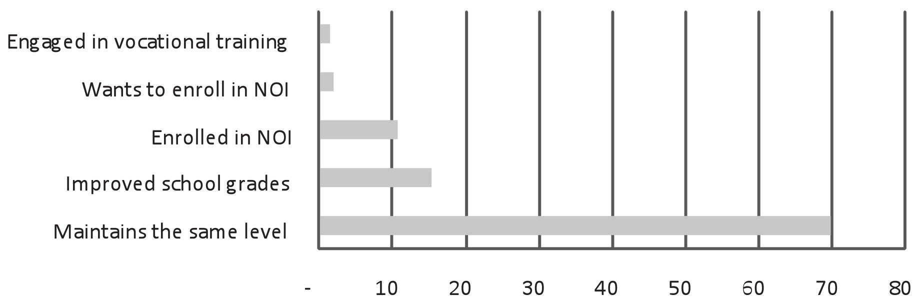
As shown, values are effectively higher than those of spouses. This is very strong evidence that the family reacts as an organic entity and that children act to reinforce the elements presented in connection to spouses.

One might question why in the *circa* 500 families surveyed, the potential for support is so strong and yet the decisive step of returning to school remains absent. The main reason we offer is the emergence of several *habitus* over the years in reaction to social mobility which, in turn, is perceived in a multiplicity of changing sites: change of social class, change before the unknown, change in ways of acting which always bring some sense of stability, etc. In essence, these individuals seem to have learnt to stay still and to accept such stillness even when the conditions for change are as intense as those indicated. This does not concern one *habitus* in reaction to learning, but a whole range of *habitus* which makes life coherent for those with scarce resources and provides stability to the group's social structure, thus giving way to the reproduction of social and economic relations in a given *status quo*.

Altering this *status quo*, whatever the *modus operandi,* puts power relations at risk. In the present case, the return of large masses to learning, to school and, if taken full advantage of, to lifelong learning, should be largely supported by society, as it renders it more robust in ways of dealing with societal challenges and complexities. However, even in the absence of quantified data, it is clear that the reaction of those having obtained their diplomas through classical processes is not at all positive. Their symbolic capital runs the risk of eroding because of an absolute increase in the number of people possessing identical capital: symbolic capital, by its nature, only has value when it is managing scarcity. Finally, given the intimate relation between cultural and symbolic capitals and economic capital, a sudden increase in the schooling rate in the labour force assumes potentially disruptive social characteristics, generating resistances and fears on the part of those entrenched in power structures.

Lastly, we asked those already enrolled in NOI whether, after breaking with part of the *habitus* which had up to enrolment prevented them from returning to learning, the new experience also impacted on the family's dynamics, reaching out to the respective spouse. It was shown that most of the spouses remained at the same level of schooling; however, one in three had initiated or intended to initiate processes for improving his/her education by returning to school through classical processes, through NOI or through alternative forms of vocational training.

Figure D.10 Impact of the enrolment on spouse



The fact that only one third of spouses sought to enhance their cultural capital despite their families having shown ability to progress, may be interpreted according to two aspects: firstly, at the moment of enrolment in NOI, spouses had slightly higher training than those who were enrolled, thus reducing the potential for determining factors to act, such as self-esteem or comparison with spouse to generate motivation (i.e., the usual mechanisms of classical motivational theories); secondly, if we assume that the family is an organic unity of society, the individual will always have an intimate space of existence within the family, interacting with it, creating from within its multiple forms, but preserving a part of existence that is of his/her own exclusive knowledge and underpins his/her entire personal equation.

Dynamics may be (are) constructively or destructively created within the family; but, however positive they may be, there is a force of inertia brought about by past learning, on the basis of which the individual preserves his/her format of existence, thus fulfilling social roles that are pre-defined since before he/she was born; and these factors shape the individual's ways of reacting to stimuli and prevent him/her from progressing.

4. Conclusions

Two ideas remain as main points from the present research: (i) family plays a key role in the processes leading to the adults' decision to return to education, and (ii) Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is not found to be totally deterministic, at least concerning adults.

Firstly, we found that, as a result of their own educational development, families transmit to their children a relation with school that greatly determines their future educational behaviours. Those who adhere to NOI have consistently benefitted from a better relationship with school during their childhood and better support from their families than non-enrolled individuals. This general landscape is very much in line with the theoretical framework that was proposed to interpret the data. Parents who are able to provide better schooling conditions to their children benefit from better conditions during their childhood than those parents who are unable to provide identical access to their children.

Those who are not enrolled in NOI show an overall lower tendency to return to education and, hence, to grow professionally and academically, even though they recognise that further learning would have a positive effect. In other words, weaknesses from 20, 30 years ago or more are still felt and are still affecting the horizons of those impaired by them. Those who were oriented at an early stage towards school and education in a wider sense, even if to a minimal extent in relation to the other group, are today more proactive individuals in search of lifelong learning solutions, whether through NOI or other formats of learning and professional training that are offered in the context of our knowledge-driven society.

The family, and in particular the initial family, is the fundamental element for building the relational processes with education and schooling, not only as known in children's education, but also in lifelong adult education. It is within the family that the deep mechanisms for mediating and structuring develop.

Returning to the present family, this organic unit is also of a fundamental importance, not only because it reflects much of the individual's past but because it contains a whole range of possibilities that are not yet embraced by public campaigns aiming at attracting and motivating adults to return to education and learning. This is a very important conclusion for public policies insofar as it provides evidence-based *rationale* to devise public campaigns that target intra-family emotional relationships. These alternative initiatives have the potential to recruit members of the family other than those already enrolled in lifelong learning programmes; most importantly, if the relationship with learning processes is understood as a reflection of both personal and family reactions to social stimuli, then it is within that dynamic that adequate answers must be found to ensure the sustainability of lifelong learning programmes.

However, family interaction with society and the individual is not linear, i.e. the enjoyment of better contextual conditions does not necessarily lead to the automatic enrolment in NOI and vice-versa. In fact, we are confronted with a very complex decisional basis; however, it is undeniable that there is a higher probability that those who did enjoy the additional stimulus are among those who were most likely to enrol in NOI.

Secondly, any effective discussion on the deterministic existence of *habitus* appeals to a property that has not been considered by Bourdieu. The original theory presents *habitus* as a logical condition or an absolute state (although dialectic) condition: either you have it or you do not. Yet, the data that we could gather indicate that, at the origin of the *habitus*, there may be different levels of quantitative imprints, which are responsible for varying qualitative states. This points to the conclusion that the *habitus* possesses different levels of intensity. In other words: even though parents of both the enrolled and the non-enrolled had very low levels of schooling at the time the respondents were 14 years of age, minute differences when referencing those with slightly more educated parents meant a greater likelihood of benefitting from a whole range of resources: more qualified spouses, benefitting from a better quality of life, and so on.

Conversely, in the present family it was observed that interaction with reality transformed the original *habitus,* adapting it to new patterns of responses, for example adoption of a greater use of the Information Society via NOI. This means that the *habitus* is adaptable and has the capability to evolve like any other human mental and social skill.

This different approach to Bourdieu's *habitus* theory fits very well with the study and with the understanding of the motivational phenomenon under scrutiny regarding school as the most important place for social transformation to emerge.

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E.

BRAND MODELLING: THE CITIZEN PERCEPTION OF A PUBLIC POLICY

Carlos Liz

Ipsos Apeme, Portugal

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: c.liz@ipsos-apeme.com

Mariana Machado

Ipsos Apeme, Portugal

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: m.machado@ipsos-apeme.com

Jorge Portugal Rocha

Daremberg Consulting, Portugal

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: jmportugal@daremberg.com

Abstract

This paper presents a study that analyses the perception of a target audience of a single, flagship, public policy. For this purpose, we considered a three-leg brand model, incorporating the concepts of brand relationship quality, brand communications and brand personality. The awareness, perceived image attributes, experience and attitude of the target audience towards the Brand was analysed in terms of a qualitative brand equity measure and linked to the latter to explain the high degree of satisfaction with the Brand and the massive adhesion to the training programme. We conducted Focus Groups and individual interviews. These new data were used to test the proposed Brand Model. The results show that the Public policy is perceived as a relevant Brand in the eyes of the target audience. The Brand transmits shared values such as inclusiveness, social recognition, and self-esteem; presents clear arguments for intended intangible benefits (beyond the scholastic degree); and uses coded words, which remain embedded in the mind of the audience. Perceived high level of relationship quality is driven by responsiveness and customisation, among other factors. It was found that the Brand's essential traits are friendliness and openness. There is evidence of a high level of brand equity, which may explain the satisfaction with the programme and the massive adhesion to it.

Keywords: Public Policy, Branding, relationship marketing, Permanent campaign, Brand communications, Brand personality, Brand Equity, Service quality, New opportunities initiative.

1. Introduction

1.1. *The problem and its relevance*

In the consumer's world, people have become more demanding (turning into sophisticated selectors of brands, smart decision makers), as well as more distrusting. Customers as voters in the political market have been following the same patterns. Increasing levels of distrust in constituencies is becoming a real problem that politics must face (Scammell, 2003; White & Chernatony, 2002). Political voting behaviour shows that there is decreasing party loyalty amongst voters (Dalton, 1996). Scrutiny by the media of policies contributes to this new reality of citizens. As with commercial Brands, if the relationship of mutual trust between citizens and political bodies is violated, it can take a very long time to rebuild it (Bauer, 1996).

Other observed trends include greater competitive pressure in the political market through non-electoral competition, less differentiation between political offers, and a general professionalization and enlargement of the scope of political management activities, including the use of the Internet and other new communication technologies. A growing emphasis on marketing aspects of political competition can be observed in all Western democracies (Butler & Collins, 1996; Scammell, 1999).

The weakening of political "cleavage systems", lower levels of party identification and higher electoral volatility are the new challenges that governments and political bodies must face in order to promote their ideas and intentions. These and other crucial changes in the political arena have fostered interest in research on how governments promote their policies. Marketing concepts and tools are relatively new to political science (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). Election campaigns have attracted most attention from the political marketing community, as the focus has increasingly evolved from merely advertising activities towards a strategic view of the political campaign (see, for a perspective, Scammell, 1999). Conceptually, the political campaign is equivalent to a "selling" moment. The strategic political imperative of the winning candidate changes once in power. The issue is no longer to convince the electorate at the time of election, but to reassure it about the government's ability to fulfil its electoral promises.

A pertinent question is what happens after the election. It is well-known that delivery is a slow process in government, where different risks are always present. Failure to manage delivery causes concern for political incumbency, for it threatens the chances of re-election. In business marketing, this gap between customer expectations and what is delivered by the brand is known as the *service delivery gap*; in politics there are gaps "between quality specifications and service delivery." However, unlike in the business environment, even when political leaders understand market demand and accept the need for a problem to be solved, they may be incapable of doing anything about it (Newman, 1999).

It is widely acknowledged that most of the conditions in government work against fostering a true "market orientation" of political action (e.g., public policies) towards the citizen and the reflection and responsiveness it requires, as Politics is the art of "crafting the possible". The realities of government present many constraints and crises as public demand for tangible delivery on election promises increases. The question is: can political marketing concepts help governments to reinforce support in delivery processes, and if so, can they be viewed as an alternative to the current mainstream tools of demagogy, spin and media relations? (O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Ewan, 1996; Harris, 2001; Fritz, Keefer, & Nyhan, 2004).

1.2. *Previous studies*

Several limitations are found in political marketing studies. First, political marketing has been perceived too narrowly by the political science community (Lock & Harris 1996; Butler & Collins, 1999), mainly in the context of political communications in elections periods. Second, existing literature on political marketing has largely and with only a few exceptions (e.g. Brandenburg & Johns, 2009) dealt with the supply side of the theory, focusing on what the candidates or incumbent government politics actually do. Third, some concepts are poorly defined in a political marketing context.

The "after-sales analogy" (Needham, 2002) is especially suited for the government context. The post-electoral process resembles the efforts of commercial firms to ensure post-purchase satisfaction. Governing a country, in the sense of the development and execution of public policies, has more in common with service delivering than product selling. Hence, the "image" and "reputation" general elements of a government, together with people's specific experience with Public policies outcomes, dictate the Incumbent's next electoral success. The satisfaction and loyalty of the citizens will depend on the perceived ability of government to deliver its promises (Harrop, 1990; Scammell, 1999).

There is a current trend that defends that only a focus on a wide interpretation of the political marketing theory allows one to understand the success or failure of government activities. Instead of merely seeking to analyse marketing management activities, a broad interpretation of political exchanges, agents, and institutions is required and will be sufficient to understand the specific consequences of, and for, political marketing (Henneberg, 2008).

The character of marketing of government public policies as focusing on exchange theory can been seen as providing an ontological foundation for political marketing (O'Shaughnessy, 1990; Newman, 1999). The underlying assumption is that reality is made up of actors (or forces) that are in relation with each other. Marketing activities cannot be performed by a single actor; there is always an exchange between actors (within or among entities). Thus, the corresponding epistemology would prescribe an inquiry that looks at networks of relationships (or "dyads") as the main focus of analysis. The implication is that research on governmental activities (or political campaigns) should focus not only on the political activities of parties/candidates, but embed them in the relevant "market exchange" structures with citizens, the media, etc. (Henneberg, 2008).

Challenging the notion that *"traditional marketing frameworks do not fit neatly into a political marketing configuration"* (Dean & Croft 2001, p. 1197), several new concepts have been brought into the political marketing literature, e.g. the "market orientation", "political market" and the "political product" (Lees-Marshment, 2001), "Segmentation and Positioning" (Baines, 1999), "Permanent campaign", "relationship marketing" and "branding" (Scammell, 1999; O'Shaughnessy, 2001).

1.2.1. *Market orientation*

A positive relationship between market orientation and better firm performance has long been demonstrated (e.g. Narver & Slater, 1990). Market orientation means adjustment of the business offer to customer needs. Service has been the manifestation of this orientation and the most promising means of differentiation, i.e. increasing the uniqueness of the business offer.

Similarly, a number of scholars have defended and modelled a market orientation in politics, including Lees-Marshment (2001), Newman (1994; 1999), and Ormrod (2005). The underlying principles dictate that the political agent is in touch with and responsive to ordinary citizen concerns. A market orientation in politics has been the subject of significant research because it offers an approach to electoral success.

1.2.2. *Permanent campaign*

Much less attention has been devoted to the promotion of governmental activities. Early efforts (Blumenthal, 1982) and more recent accounts (O'Shaughnessy, 1990; 2001; Scammell, 1999) do not dismiss the need for research on marketing activities within the government. As pointed out by Needham (2002), these approaches have two limitations: the inherently descriptive nature of the government communications system, and the preference for the view of governing as a sub-category of campaigning.

Political marketing has become "the organising principle round which policy was constructed" (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). This development signals that political marketing has moved from a context of short-term tactical devices of political communications in the pre-election period towards the era of strategic marketing in a long-term permanent process which aims to ensure continued governance (Smith & Hirsh, 2001). From the political marketing viewpoint, the concept of permanent campaign reflects the blurring between the election of a government and the governing activities, i.e. policy development and implementation.

Thus, there is a need for the political marketing theory to understand the interplay between electoral exchanges (campaign-based marketing) and policy implementation (government-based marketing) as part of the overall political system that can be explained by a "service logic", i.e. "a process of premises and delivery/implementation that is 'co-produced' by all involved actors" (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007).

Relationship marketing

Almost three decades have passed since Barry's (1983) seminal formulation of relationship marketing concept. There is wide consensus that relationship marketing is a rather different concept from traditional (i.e. transactional) approaches in managing exchanges (Gronroos, 1994). The concept of relationship marketing is historically built in a behavioural perspective of relationships, which includes relational constructs like quality, trust and satisfaction (see, for a review, Rust & Chung, 2005).

The traditional marketing view is that the seller gets the better of the buyer in a series of independent transactions, each of which must be profitable for the seller. The relationship perspective acknowledges that building relationships will be decisive for the long-term competitive success. The existing foundations in customer's relationship management provide a variety of interesting concepts (Groonros, 2000).

Relational marketing concepts that have gained importance in marketing theory in the last decades do not find their equivalent in political marketing (Scammell, 1999; O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Henneberg, 2002; Bannon, 2005). Dean and Croft (2001) and 0'Shaughnessy (2001) propose the use of relationship marketing in connection with development of long-term strategies to build brand loyalty and reinforce the concept of "life-time voter". In the political arena, this concept reflects the shift from customer acquisition to customer retention, which has been happening in the commercial world. Moreover, it revives an old ideal of staying a party voter for life (Dean & Croft, 2001). The view of political marketing as a long term planning focus is supported by Baines, Harris, & Lewis (2002) and Smith & Hirst (2001), amongst others.

With voter volatility increasing, to enhance a stable relationship with supporters seems appealing, although the appropriateness of the concept for citizens remains. The literature in customer relationship marketing argues that traditional, i.e. transactional; marketing can co-exist with relationship marketing. (Gronroos, 1994; Pels, 1996). This paradigm shift is evident in all types of marketing, even in that oriented towards mass consumer goods. Thus, further research is needed to address the understanding of citizens' perception, desires, behaviour and the nature of long term-relationships in a more dynamic manner. Relationships are predictive in behaviour and are less likely to volatile swings (Gordon, 1998).

Branding

Brands are an intangible marketing device that allows positioning the image of a particular product or service in the mind of the consumer. The concept implies a web of complex associations. Branding principles have been applied in virtually every setting, ranging from commercial products and services, non-profit organisations, media news, TV shows and, more recently, political parties and public policies (Aaker, 1991; Kotler & Kotler, 1999).

It is widely accepted as axiomatic that political bodies (e.g. parties) can be viewed as brands (Kavanagh, 1995; Lock & Harris, 1996; Kotler & Kotler, 1999; Needham, 2005). O'Shaughnessey (2001) suggests that politicians must realise that both they and the parties function as brands. However, there is an ongoing debate about the appropriate use of the brand concept because of the differences between political and commercial markets (Scammell, 1999). Significant criticism against the use of brand management techniques in the political arena has been formulated. Branded policy initiatives have long been commonplace in the political arena. For example, classic moments in the US presidency are illustrated with brand names such as "The new deal" or "The great Society". These initiatives were the starting point of a social conversation intended to develop new policy products (Barberio & Lowe, 2006).

What is new in more recent policy initiatives in the USA and Europe, such as "No Child Left behind", is that these are "pre-packaged", in a sense of final products, instead of starting points for the policy making process. These branded policy initiatives are *"the trenches dug to hold ground and stop advances by the opposition"* (Barberio & Lowe 2006, p. 7). Branding may narrow the political agenda, demand conformity of behaviour or message, and even promote political disengagement at local level (Reeves, Chernatony & Carrigan, 2006). If branding aims to conquer competitive advantage of the incumbent political agent, this may be achieved at the expense of the political process (Scammell, 1999; Needham, 2005).

However, this criticism may reflect only a partial view of the branding process, as it implies a product-orientation approach. An alternative approach adopted by a vast majority of branding studies (see Keller & Lehmann, 2005, for an overview) adopts a consumer-oriented perspective. In this view, the focus is how and why consumers learn about brands. The basic premise is that consumers (citizens) have an innate motivation to learn about and decide about brands, both to know where to consume (or to accept or reject policies), and to cope with over-communication.

Brands affect how consumers evaluate products and services. Similarly brand effects have also been identified in the way citizens evaluate policies. This has led political leaders to become concerned with the image with which political agents are perceived (Scammell, 2007; Smith 2009). From this stance, three subjects are of utmost importance: Brand communications, Brand personality and Brand Equity.

a. Brand communications

Communication is at the heart of relations between the brand and its stakeholders. Political Brand communications have been discussed (Needham, 2002, 2005; Barberio & Lowe, 2006, among others). Three dimensions are nuclear to the commercial brand communications and common to the political brand: Values, Arguments and Code words.

First, political brand communications in electoral campaigns or in the permanent campaign of governments try to appeal to citizens in the same way as commercial brands. They convey universally desired values and a broad value-based language and images to connect with the widest part of the public, regardless of ideological orientation, party affiliation, or other possible cleavages. Second, political brand claims and offers comparisons about the advantages of an offer. Third, political brands encourage the “consumer” to see a benefit beyond the one that is immediately evident in the product or service by means of code words, or, indirectly, by use of symbols.

New market trends are emerging which significantly affect brand communications. First, the rise of a “push-pull” marketing communication marketplace; second, the rise of the consumer-to-consumer marketing communication through electronic facilities such as social networks; and third, Brands and branding have become more critical as the marketplace has become increasingly commoditised (Kitchen & Shultz, 2009).

There is a gap in current political marketing needs in the co-ordination of communications. The concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has been discussed by the political marketing community (O’Shaughnessy, 2001; Smith, 2001; Patti, Luck, & Chapman, 2003) as a potential response to this need. IMC is a process whereby all governments or parties brand communications with citizens and other key stakeholders are managed. Its focus is on building brand relationships. The core of this concept is: everything the political agent does and does not sends a message to the constituencies. There is a need for coordination and integration of the political marketing process in order to strengthen the image of the political agent or policy among the key citizens groups (Baines, Harris, & Lewis, 2002). This effort is of nuclear importance to build a united image and reinforce the integrity of the political brand image, for the sake of values such as "honesty, completeness and soundness" (Duncan, 2002).

b. Brand personality

An important component of a brand's image is its personality. More than a marketing fad, brand personality is at the root of the brand identity.

A considerable amount of knowledge on brand personality of consumer products and services exists (see Keller & Lehmann, 2005, for a review). The progress of brand personality in consumer markets has a landmark in the model of Aaker (1997), which is a general personality scale that is developed in the USA using commercial brands.

Only recently have brand personality models been applied to political parties in the UK, mostly in the use of empirical primary data (Smith, 2009). Citizens may use Brand personality traits to perceive differences among the parties and their offerings. In the same way, brand personality is a useful device to increase differentiation of a public policy from other alternatives (not necessarily from political competition). A positive brand personality may facilitate the acceptance of the content of the public policy with goodwill for the government political organisation. A distinctive brand personality can help to create a unique set of favourable associations in the mind of the consumer regarding the public policy and therefore the political agent responsible for its implementation.

c. Assessing Brand Equity

Brand equity has gained renewed interest in recent years. Its role has been growing in the marketing of services. Because of the inherent differences between product and a service (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985), the concept of brand equity may require some adaptation for extension to the context of services marketing (Krishnan & Hartline, 2001).

Although many definitions exist from the customer perspective, brand equity is part of the factors that attract to a particular product from a particular company generated by "subjective" parts of the product offering, i.e., excluding the product attributes. In the same way, the brand equity of a public policy is made of "intangible" factors that attract the citizen, excluding those specific to the service (e.g. a training programme). These factors include attachments and associations that exist over and beyond the objective government "service" itself. The relevance of the concept is due to the quality-laden informational content that it provides when consumers process information about a particular product or service (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993).

"Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991). In a political marketing context, this definition translates into the value provided to citizens by enhancing their interpretation or processing of information and confidence in the "purchase" decision (e.g. adherence of a Public policy). For the Government, brand equity represents the gain of efficiency and effectiveness of policies, Brand loyalty and consequent competitive advantage (Needham, 2006).

To manage brands properly, political marketing practitioners should have a clear understanding of the political equity in their brands. Qualitative valuation of the equity at the citizen level is then required (Keller & Lehmann, 2005). The value of a brand and its equity are determined by the consumers' words and actions. All approaches to measure brand equity share a common base: all typically focus on brand knowledge constructs in the mind of consumers as a source or foundation of brand equity. Several "hierarchy of effects" models have been considered in the literature in connection with Brand equity. A simple hierarchy (or chain) model with three dimensions, from the bottom (lowest level) to the top (highest level), is described as (see, for details, Keller & Lehmann, 2005):

a. Awareness (ranging from recognition to recall)
b. Associations (encompassing tangible and intangible service considerations, including perceived quality)
c. Attitude (ranging from loyalty to addiction)

Various similar models (see Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003) were tested and applied to commercial brands in different markets. Several qualitative research techniques are available to evaluate brand equity constructs and associations at these three levels (Aaker, 1996; Zaltman, 2003).

1.3. *Present Contribution*

Despite the developments discussed above, most studies have focused on a conceptual or purely descriptive approach, calling for the need for more research into the implementation of the concepts. It is accepted that Branding and other marketing concepts need to come under further scrutiny from an empirical stance.

Previous studies on branding and the political market focused on the supply side, i.e. on the political agent – a personality or a party. Analysis of public policies were offered, but as examples of manifestations of the global brand attributes. To our knowledge, there is lack of evidence-based studies focusing on a specific public policy and the citizens' perception through the lens of a brand model.

This paper attempts a contribution considering the demand side, i.e., the citizens' perception of a specific public policy. Our research focus is a public policy developed by the Portuguese Government, the *'New Opportunities Initiative'* (NOI[1], see Carneiro, 2010, for a detailed account). The number of people involved in this initiative – more than one million registered over and universe of 3.7 million potential customers, and 400,000 completing the programme in three years – makes this flagship policy of the Portuguese government a particularly elucidative case for social and political science research.

The aim is to offer a prospective view of the perceived performance of government from the concept of a specific policy as a brand. From the point of view of the citizen, we try to address the main exchange characteristics in the political sphere and the interaction structures (e.g. the political product, the characteristics of policy deliveries, and the participative product realisation) regarding a specific public policy.

Our approach seeks the cognitive understanding of individuals as the main explanatory framework, in contrast with traditional approaches based on aggregate groups and long-term, structural explanatory constructs. This is in line with trends in more cognitive psychology-influenced behavioural research that allow for the integration of consumer behaviour theory (Aaker, 1999).

Unlike previous studies that focused on the supply side, our aim is to investigate the hypothesis of NOI as a brand, from the point of view of the citizen with a direct experience of participating in NOI training programme. Specific information on the supply side, such as government communication strategies and tactics, would be not relevant and will not be considered here.

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[1] Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades, http://www.en.anq.gov.pt/, and http://www.novasoportunidades.gov.pt/. Accessed 2010.12.31.

The approach adopted in the paper encompasses brand concepts and models as a tool to demonstrate that, from the point of view of the citizen-user, NOI has the properties of a marketing brand. In this sense, we are using branding not as an *ex-ante* positioning marketing tool, but rather as an *ex-post* evolution tool of the public policy, an exercise that is much less frequent in marketing science.

Bringing to political marketing research how buying behaviour is driven by branding can increase knowledge about how citizens perceive policy promises and their implementation. Therefore, a theory of marketing-oriented citizen behaviour would contribute to answer questions regarding the impact and appropriateness of public policy promotion strategies and tactics.

Here, an effort is made to provide more prescriptive concepts about how to develop optimal policy offerings based on a brand concept. The study will try to answer to the following questions:

a) How is NOI positioned in the mind of the citizen, from a brand model perspective?
b) Whether NOI may be considered a brand;
c) Does the NOI brand contribute to explain the massive adherence of citizens to the programme?

To bring answers to our research questions, we will propose and make use of a three-leg brand model, which includes brand dimensions such as relationship quality, communications and personality on the basis of empirical data obtained from a qualitative approach to understand the perception of the stakeholders (participants, programme monitors, employers) of NOI. Next, a brand equity model based on attractiveness factors is put forward in order to evaluate the level of brand equity of NOI and infer an explanation of NOI's success.

This paper is divided into four parts. After the introduction, Section 2 presents the three brand models. Section 3 analyses the qualitative approach. In Section 4 we present the results of analysis of citizen perception from the brand model perspective and discuss their implications. The paper ends with a chapter on conclusions.

2. The marketing models

The ontological foundation of the political marketing models considered here is based on the concept of a "qualified" market exchange. The fabric of reality is made up of agents and structures in relation to each other; every constituent is characterised by a number of exchanges within a network of relationships. Marketing is then an exchange between agents, instead of being the activity of a single agent. The corresponding epistemology requires an investigation of networks of relationships (or relationship marketing "dyads", Andersen, Hakansson, & Johanson, 1994; Lindgreen, 2001) as the main focus of analysis (Kotler & Kotler, 1999; Henneberg, 2008).

The criteria for the brand models presented here were not based on the "best model", as it is rather difficult to demonstrate that a given brand model is better than another in universal terms. The following models were adopted because they incorporated three basic elements – namely, values, service quality experience and communication – which are known to be highly relevant for accessing a public policy in the perspective of a brand.

2.1. *The service quality relationship model*

Customer satisfaction is one of the primary factors that lead to sustain relationships over time. The theoretical basis for models of satisfaction is consumer psychology, and especially the theory of expectancy disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980), which posits that a primary driver of satisfaction is the difference between customer's expectations and perceptions.

The early service quality models (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993), adopted a similar concept. It is adopted here to examine the perceived quality of service, i.e. the comparison between expectations and actual performance. The satisfaction (and loyalty) is determined by the gap between the desired level of service (within a given "zone of tolerance") and perceived service (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994).

2.2. *The brand communication model*

We adopted the model of Barberio & Lowe (2006), which consists in the three facets of branding: value-laden language, selling arguments, and code words and symbols.

2.3. *The brand personality model*

The brand personality framework consists in five personality dimensions – sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Various previous sources may have the potential to influence brand personality.

A detailed explanation of these antecedents is found in Smith (2009). They may influence personality traits. It is postulated that the positive personality traits of the public policy may have a strong influence on the public perception of performance.

Personality is defined as "the set of meanings constructed by an observer to describe the inner characteristics of a person" (Allen & Olson, 1995, p. 392). Brand Personality is the "set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p. 347). From a consumer learning perspective, the personality of a public policy is represented as a web of associations of the human characteristics relating to that party which is present in the mind of the consumer. We adapt Smith's (2009) conceptual framework approach to a political party personality to a public policy personality.

3. Empirical Data collection

The methodology adopted in this study to collect the empirical data consisted of focus groups and individual in-depth interviews.

3.1. *Focus Groups*

We used focus groups to provide insights into people's image, motivations and source of behaviour. More than merely a source of new ideas and hypotheses (Merton, 1987), the focus group are a valuable tool to generate new empirical data that can be compared with existing theoretical models.

Focus groups (FG) are currently being used by the research community, not without a range of positions on the criticisms of representativeness and validity of inferences in focus group research (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996). See Savigny (2007) for a critique of the basic assumptions that inform the use of focus groups in Political science literature.

The evolving practice amongst many researchers has been an in-depth immersion, resulting in a thematically ordered account supported by material quoted from transcripts. A problematic issue in interpreting FG findings is how far illustrative quotations represent broader themes. If the analysis is to be systematic, the presentation of extracts is insufficient, some authors argue (Hoijer, 1990).

In this study, we adopted a hybrid approach. The traditional analysis was combined with systematic coding of transcripts using content analysis. This methodology combines interpretative analysis of transcripts and quantitative techniques (Hoijer, 1990; Kepplinger, 1989), making explicit the frequent claims for the distribution of analytic themes, and avoiding unwarranted generalisation and "spurious" representations of the meaning of the data. The quantitative coding was set up with the help of the appropriate coding software.

3.2. *Design of Focus Groups*

Project-level

A mixed approach was adopted to design protocols for the groups. In the first two meetings, an emergent, exploratory protocol was adopted, whereas in the remaining groups a more standardised design was adopted (Morgan, 1993) with identical protocol questions, allowing in this l case a high degree of comparability across groups (Knodel, 1993).

Ex-ante segmentation was performed. Participants were selected on the basis of their experience with the programme. Three segments were considered: 1) NOI participants who completed the programme; 2) NOI registered people waiting to begin the programme; 3) NOI monitors. The group discussions took place in Lisbon, Oporto, Viseu and Faro. The groups' socio-demographic composition was heterogeneous. The total number of groups was 20, considering the nuclear segments, namely adults enrolled, potential users and NOI monitors.

Group-level

The group size of 6-8 participants was found appropriate (Morgan, 1992). The moderator had 20 years of experience of group moderation and marketing research. The moderator's role is crucial, requiring the monitoring of a complex social interaction, encouraging contributions, and managing disruption, diversion and other problematic group dynamics (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996).

Special care was put into the process of producing focussed interactions. First, the moderator's style and guidance of the discussion. Second, concerning the group impact on the discussion itself, minimising the impact of any "polarisation" effect. The discussions were conducted in a structured way in order to provide an orderly agenda of the topics.

The "group effect", i.e. the interaction of people (Carey, 1994), allowed extracting the data on the extent of consensus and diversity among of the participants. Furthermore the participants were asked to make comparisons regarding their experience and views.

The moderating style was "more structured", following most marketing approaches to focus groups (e.g. Greenbaum, 1999), i.e. the moderator style exercised a high degree of control of the discussion The average number of questions asked during the discussion time (2,30 h average) was 190.

Data acquisition issues

The focus group interviews were recorded and the transcription was outsourced. Following each group discussion, members of the research team conducted a debriefing to identify issues that could affect the analysis (e.g. domineering or quiet members).

To improve the efficiency of the recording and transcription, two members of the research team were present at every focus group. In addition to the moderator, a co-worker took detailed notes of the order of speakers and any significant non-verbal communication. This greatly facilitated the transcriptionist's work.

Analysis issues

Though there was controversy about the analysis' units of focus groups interviews (e.g. Carey, 1995; Morgan, 1995), we adopted the perspective that both the individual and the group could be an object of analysis (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). This analysis was made possible through the identification of any undue influence of the group on individuals and vice-versa before framing the final conclusions.

The moderator checked that the data became "saturated" and little new information emerged after the 5/6th group of each segment (Zeller, 1993). Apparent agreement resulted from participants' coercion and self-censorship and alternative viewpoints were checked (Carey & Smith, 1994). A simple and effective method for coding the data was adopted (Berkowitz, 1997).

3.3. *In-depth individual Interviews*

Additionally, a total of 45 in-depth interviews (1.3h length in average) were carried out with potential users, NOI monitors and Firm managers.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 *The service quality relationship model*

We sought to characterize and evaluate the relationship of the costumer's cluster with the NOI using the Perceived Quality Model. This relationship was divided into two dimensions: Interaction Quality and Outcome Quality.

The perceptions from which we can infer the quality level of interaction with the NOI reflect a high level of empathy with the NOI educational agents which is visible throughout the education and training process (from «*hosting*» to the symbolic moment of the «*jury's certification*»). The capacity on the offer side to understand the needs of individual users/costumers, anticipating problems and providing practical solutions, respecting and valuing each individual as a starting point to establish relations of trust and partnership, in a strong logic of customization (one-to-one) seemed to be key elements in this relationship.

> "The group **I was in was amazingly good, the interaction between people, the way one feels and acts** that is to be critical when there are people who want to give up: where you think you are going? Hand it over, it means there is an evolution from moment one person is going to the first interview, where they are 30 or 40 people to listen and to choose, till the moment when teaching starts we get a spectacular ice-breaking "(Man, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "I speak for myself, the willingness to study is not so much strong, but if we have **someone** who we like **explaining the contents, a person available to help, concerned with the way things are going with us** individually and in the group, I find this is very important because it makes each one motivated to achieve "(Man, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "The most striking thing was by the end, the external member of the jury congratulated everyone around, but then, **he made a direct speech mentioning the work of everyone each one of us, Iand I don't think he has forgotten anyone**. Work by work he analysed and spoke in depth of everyone's work and **the way he did was an ego boost for of each of us**. A professor from university with much class and sensibility to the type of people that I was dealing with and talking to" (Woman, certified, Faro, 2008).

NOI's ability to meet the objectives it pursues (certification) and the assurance given by technical staff's delivery, and the theoretical assumptions that underpin the initiative were also important.

> "**I think, for me, the big incentive for me of Novas Oportunidades** was **the type of trainers I had**, and this can vary was the type of trainers I had" (Man, in process, Porto, 2009).

> "**I have an idea of the trainers as good professional**, because teaching adults is different from teaching young people, it's completely different. You need to be much more patience patient because we often are very tired from a day's work, we are in a good mood and they overcome all these problems and **therefore I think they are excellent professionals**" (Man, in process, Lisbon, 2009).

> "**Then, I believe one can assess the knowledge that people have, whether it's general culture, or professional culture, add to what we have already studied,** and the result is … having a higher level than the one already obtained" (Man, potential users, Lisbon, 2008).

Concerning outcome quality perceptions, it is important to stress that the respondents referred to benefits which went beyond the certification. These were self-esteem, the revelation of an accumulated knowledge, and one's status as a person with cultural dignity with implications in the re-evaluation of one's role in the household and close social networks. There are signs of the creation of a dynamic in cultural behaviours, linked to reading skills and curiosity for subjects that were not immediately linked to everyday life.

> "I think it was, it really is, a new opportunity, I think it's fantastic**, it really drives, I have gained a new impulse for studying,** to have a profession that I like… (Man, EFA, Porto, 2009).

> "Much stronger, yes, our **intellectual grows stronger**" (Woman, in process, Viseu, 2008).

> "Before, I didn't use to read or only read magazines such *Maria*… Not now, **I always have a book to read, I love reading**… "(Woman, certified, Viseu, 2008).

Access to computers and the Internet, as well as learning expression techniques and content discovery, are strong points of NOI. To understand technology as a key operator to live in the contemporary world is an additional argument to enhance the quality of results. Benefits in this area seem clear, with implications for the real lives of adults.

> "Today **I express myself more carefully**… …**I learned how to speak for an audience**, and therefore to be cautious because here in the North, we sometimes are a bit sloppy and I learned it all on the 12th grade" (Man, in process, Porto, 2009).

> "**Knowing how to speak, to have a conversation**" (Woman, in process, Viseu, 2008).

> "**Learning to use computers**… and learn to teach my son" (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

> "**Now, I know how to use the computer,** it was something that I really liked it because I really didn't know anything and I learned actually I wanted to but I couldn't and I had this opportunity. The time of the presentation [to the jury] I also enjoyed it, but **I liked more learning the technology** (Man, certified, Faro, 2008).

> "Till now an illiterate person was someone who could not read or write, but in few years, us we'll be illiterate, because others couldn't read or write**, but us with low educational level a low level of education certified, we don't know anything of IT, computers, and we will be the next illiterates if we do nothing for ourselves** (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2009).

Within this dimension, the ability to set expectations (even if not effective) in promoting employability and economic impact, either at the macro – the country – or at micro level – organisations and individuals, regardless of its materialization in short, medium or long term is also worth noting.

> "It's always needed, and now more than ever, for the time we have before ahead of **us, we must have further knowledge**. The better is the training you have, cultural, technological, etc.… **the better you can be professionally and you can better adapt to new jobs**" (Man, certified, Porto, 2009).

"**In my work nothing changed, I know, but** I'm aware they have new projects **and with more skills and an educational level I can take part in such projects**. Moreover and you know I am prepared to assume certain responsibilities" (Woman, secondary certification, Lisbon, 2009).

"No, **in a near future I do not expect radical changes**. I work at the Institute, it is large, dispersed, and there are a lot of us" (Man, certified, Porto).

We should note that the dimension of physical environment quality is not positively valued and that it is an element of dissatisfaction.

We identified loyalty to NOI, such as the tendency to go further (or the explicit willingness to do so) amongst users with qualifications between the two levels of certification – primary and secondary – and some cases of spontaneous organisation of NOI alumni groups, with activities (educational, training, cultural, social) of their own.

"A person is always learning like our colleague said, this was a **challenge I did the 9th grade and now I go for the 12th year grade**" (Man, in process, Porto, 2009).

"I already gave an indication to the employment centre that I'm **open about the 12th grade** and they are waiting for a course to start a course there as a way to continue the training" (Man, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

"I did the **9th grade and I am now up to 12th**." (Woman, in process, Porto, 2009).

"The best assessment we have is from the first and a half year of operation, we do have **an alumni groups, association of former students of the Centre Novas Oportunidades that are currently doing a database of employability**, and it was their own initiative. On Fridays they promote **cultural movements**, and there it is a presentation of papers, singing…" (Directors/Coordinators of NOC, Porto, 2009).

In parallel, the sample of users also tends to assume a role of prescribers of NOI within its own network of relationships, actively recommending the initiative to those that might be able to use it.

> "I **have advised people to go**. My colleagues who do not have the 9th grade" (Man, in process, Faro, 2008).

> "**I was contaminated**, because I have several colleagues who went to the New Opportunities" (Man, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "Yes, **I mentioned it to a girl friend**. She will now **go for registration**" (Woman, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

4.2. *The Brand Communication Model*

According to the model, a brand must communicate universal values or desired values, using a language with high intensity values. The empirical evidence shows that values of this magnitude, such as the equality of mankind, the dignity of the human person, and the inclusion of freedom (understood as providing access to more – and new – optional choices in the future) were internalized through the communication (in the broad sense) of the NOI by the sample that was interviewed.

(Equality)

> "To fight **inequality**…" (Woman, waiting list, Viseu, 2008).

(Dignity)

> "To tell my daughters, **I have this course, I am a professional, I earn a fair salary and I can not be kicked wiped out by the boss, because there's people without that level of education and is trampled they're wiped out**…" (Woman, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

> "I want… **to be a competent person, to have aptitudes**" (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

(Inclusion)

> "I can be very experienced and have a tremendous expertise, **but if you don't have a diploma if you don't have the necessary skills you don't even get an interview**…" (Woman, EFA, Lisbon, 2008).

> "Today lots of people are dealing with the internet had and they have **never touched computers before, and in this is the way today, you're there and you send e-mails**" (Man, in process, Lisbon).

(Freedom)

> "Maybe you can **find new paths**" (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

> "**With my own professional experience, if I gain more skills, obviously I can go for a higher position** (…)" (Man, potential user, Lisbon, 2008).

According to the model, the sample population shows the ability to mention the benefits of this public policy compared with other educational offers (in this case, other options in Adult Education and Training available on the market), explaining its nuclear mode of operation, based upon prior learning and recognition of skills.

> "I think the New Opportunities campaign was able to transmit that… something that had never been done before. Through the professional experience we acquired, an equivalence is possible allowing and it allows us to take further steps" (Man, certificate, Lisbon, 2009).

> "**It's to mix in a diploma the life experience, working experience, personal experience, that is**!" (Man, EFA, Porto, 2008).

The benefits of NOI, either tangible (as a result of the proposal formatting, with accessibility and convenience advantages) or intangible (social recognition and self-esteem improvement, assuming a symbolic value for individuals) tend to characterize the perceptions of the target audience and appear consistently in the discourse on the NOI.

NOI publics also indicated institutional guidance with good field presence and power of persuasion (employment centres, the employing companies, for example). NOI is characterized by the flexibility of its operational structure (a process that evolves according to time/pace of each adult, with strong spatial mobility). This procedural simplification, expressed in an appropriate sequence of operations, allows candidates to focus on their objectives.

> "I think it was an ad, I think, speaking about Novas Oportunidades **and then went to the internet, read about it and I went to a centre**, I get in touch with a centre. And I knew how and what I could do" (Man, in process, Viseu, 2008).

> "It was through a flyer I found in the cafe. There were courses in Sophia de Mello Breyner School, **I went there, I register, and they called me. I did liked, I started to like and on February, then started the 12th grade**" (Woman, in process, Porto, 2009).

> "Attending classes, going there on a regular basis is very difficult for me because I work in shifts. **Though the advantage is that it is only once a week from 4 to 7**. The timetable is not bad because it was the one of my choice; they had three options" (Man, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "What caught called my attention in Novas Oportunidades**, was the fact that one session per week, just 42 hours reference and it was easy I find availability, although it is in all, it is demanding** (Man, certified, Faro, 2008).

> "The professional experience each one has in different areas can help to have a certificate and **be socially and professionally approved**, that's the image, I found it innovative at the time (Man, certificate, Lisbon, 2009).

> "Now I feel **a more secure person**" (Woman, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "It is to correct **mistakes from the past**" (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

The discourse of the interviewees shows a direct comparison with the other educational offers available, or in a broader sense, with the regular school system, which support the arguments in favour of the NOI.

> "**I tried before the evening school by credit units and is very hard to working all day,** and as much the boss says we have the right to leave early, one has to stay **there until 11, midnight**…" (Woman, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "It is much different from what we were used to. **We used to go to school, study, see to watch the teachers talk, to speak, to study, to make tests, there's it has nothing to do with it that** … "(Man, certified, Lisbon, 2009).

> "**It's a different process because in school we're gaining knowledge and here we show you what we already know**" (Man, certified, Faro, 2008).

Finally, the Model Brand Communication includes the use of sentences built up by the communication itself (symbols and code words) by the audience it addresses, which may eventually acquire new meanings for this specific audience.

This is clearly identified in the way costomers adults play with the naming of the Public Policy (Novas Oportunidades – New Opportunities) in spontaneous speech. A name that, on the one hand refers to a different educational offer that is provided by the regular educational system and, on the other, a statement that recipients recognize as their own. The way people express themselves about the NOI shows signs of ownership of the expression level of everyday life, introducing it in ways and rhythms of life as well as in the construction of syntactic speech.

(Naming "New Opportunities")

"It was my daughter's headmistress, she told me that there is now **an opportunity for those with low levels of education**" (Woman, in process, Lisbon, 2008).

"A colleague in my job told me: oh man why don't you take it yourself, take the **Novas Oportunidades**. And I was hesitating: I don't need nothing of this, but then she pushed me, so I thought: I'll see then we'll see. **And I took these new opportunities**" (Man, certified, Lisbon, 2008).

"I think the word **Novas Oportunidades** draws attention to those who have a basic education, as to those who have a maximum schooling. **Novas Oportunidades are new opportunities**" (Man, waiting list, Faro, 2008).

The same kind of phenomenon could also be found in examples that highlight the linguistic appropriation that is made of two main claims of the NOI advertising campaign: "*Your experience counts" and "Learning pays off".*

("Your experience counts")

"And, no, this process is relying on our personal lives, and our professional life also very often one has much experience, one has already achieved much, but one has no certificates, no diplomas… well. **But experience also counts**" (Woman, certified, Lisbon, 2009).

"I got the idea that what was worthily telling **was our experience, as it counts**" (Woman, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

("Learning pays off")

"But it is as it is; **I thought about take some courses it pays off in to compensate the future**…" (Man, potential users, Lisbon, 2009).

"My idea is to finish the 12^{th} grade, to compensate the one subject from secondary I missed**, it pays off,** to take a degree and have more options" (Woman, potential user, Lisbon, 2009).

Similarly, one can identify the use of a set of expressions of a more technical nature and that does not seem to be part of the common language, more specifically *qualification* and *skills*. As an explanatory hypothesis, it is to ensure the concrete function, not to confuse or alarm part of the wider audience (as the communication model predicts). In this sense, these experiences ensure value for the user and replace a lexicon linked to the traditional model of education (e.g. educational levels, qualifications, and diploma) that is not threatened. Simultaneously, this set of expressions is the sign of a brand that has its own codes, reducing the possibility of comparison with the traditional schooling models.

> "I got the idea that it was an a State opportunity for the State has, for this very same reason, to **qualify** people. For people who were not able to finish school, to continue on with their **qualifications**" (Woman, potential user, Lisbon, 2008).

> "And then it leads to a whatever certificate staying I have such **skill**" (Woman, EFA, Lisbon, 2000).

> "Novas Oportunidades have several choices. It is a **skill certificate**…" (Man, potential users, Lisbon, 2008).

It is important to stress at this stage that the perception of the different respondents converges with the idea of an initiative with clear purposes and that communicates in a language that is relevant for the recipients. Thus, in accordance with the communication model, there is significant evidence that the NOI is perceived as a value brand, especially for users and potential users.

4.3. *The Brand Personality Model*

Considering the five personality dimensions defined in Aaker's Model and making use of respondents' perceptions about the NOI one can validate the association of at least two dimensions of the public policy, namely: *Sincerity* and *Competence*.

Concerning *Sincerity,* empirical data allow us to infer that, in NOI's universe, a set of personality traits that are relevant in support of this factor is projected, namely those that show:

- A simple way of being (down-to-earth); there are no discontinuities with real life, and the environment in which learning takes place.
- A sensitive harmony of family relationship (*family oriented*), redesigning roles in the household.
- Able to deliver its promises (*honest*), introducing a direct link between outcome and process, avoiding diversions.
- A pragmatic orientation (*realistic*), incorporating only the necessary theory in process development, always stressing goal achievement.
- A healthy and positive attitude about adult education (*wholesome*), providing a new approach in terms of ideological framework in the world of education training
- An innovative style (*original*), able to surprise and at the same time to seek an effective contribution to solve a perennial problem.
- A friendly approach (*friendly*), centred on the concern and interested in the users' agenda, without imposing the provider's agenda.
- An affectionate tone (*sentimental*) that creates a scenario that provides a balanced outcome between the individual and community.

> "When one talks about his experience**, it is to value this person, it is to appreciate it and its saying okay, you're not ignorant, you have the 4th grade or 5th grade or what so ever, you learned things and these things can be at your service. It is simplicity and it does not speculate**" (Man, opinion leader, Lisbon, 2008).

> "And so I thought I had knowledge enough to have the 9th grade! And they kept saying that **it was just showing them what we really knew**…" (Man, certified, Faro, 2008).

> "That **we did not fear not being able…. what was valuable was our own experience**" (Woman, waiting list, Lisbon, 2008).

> "It is a retrospective of our lives. It's going back many years ago and check out what we liked to do and then the **portfolio is precisely what our life is it is all there. It is something that if we put there it is because it was part of us, it is like a twin brother that we have there**" (Man, in the process, Porto, 2009).

> "I am **showing a daughter, aged 16, how important is going to school is**" (Woman, in the process, Lisbon, 2008).

> "**My wife always encouraged me**, she has a degree in sociology. The **children were happy** and joke. My son also took the chance to give me tips on math, answer my questions; it **was funny in that sense**" (Man, certificate, Porto, 2009).

> "Once a diploma in hands **it is forever**" (Man, potential user, Lisbon, 2008).

> Companies benefit from us being more professional and enjoying life, I say" (Man, waiting, Lisbon, 2009).

> "I am a student and am doing the RVCC and I want to tell you, **I'm going on the best days of my life because since I was a boy I wanted to learn more and more**. The lady was really happy **because this is the goal, is to give an opportunity to each one of us**" (Man, in process, Porto, 2009).

Similarly, in the *Competence* dimension, the evidence supports the recognition of traits related to:

– A cogent personality (*reliable*), with a self-restraint concern that favours the seriousness of the value proposition.

– An industrious attitude (*hard working*), imprinting the effort by educational agents, stressing its own working methodology based on the assertion of personal will.

– A repository of expertise (*technical*), expressed in materials, and confined contents with a correspondence with the rest of the educational system.

– A structured organisation (*corporate*), in which the network does not prevent the perception of a whole with adequate levels of internal alignment.

– A successful way, which manifests itself in a systematic progression of adhesions, captured in the statistics through a social capillarity phenomenon.

– A confident tone (*confident*), where speech assertiveness refers to stability and to system development.
– An assertion of leadership in adult education (*leader*), with a clear share of voice in the context of Public Policy communications'.

> "**Six months with hard work**. There was no days time off..." (Man, certified, Lisbon, 2008).

> "If I am able to calculate the perimeter of the triangle, **the trainer has the feeling, I know some maths**" (Woman, in process, Viseu, 2008).

> "This offered, although there were some similar processes existing, but the **momentum that the Government gave to this project, I think it is very important to thousands of people who have no secondary education degree**" (Man, waiting list, Lisbon, 2009).

> "I make a very positive conclusion, as an RVCC professional RVCC I have a different perspective. As for me it is positive and favourable, because I followed have accompanied people in basic education. They were very skilled people but who didn't know, they did not believe themselves, people were 'stand-by' people, not favouring vocational training, but after RVCC they evolved. People who later came to me to tell: I'm going to do an EFA on secondary education that started just now. Others who have told me, I have finished the secondary level. Others, who have enrolled in professional training, **wanted more. And this is from my own experience with people since 2005. There are more than 500 people, is not an isolated thing**" (Directors/Coordinators NOC, Porto, 2009).

> "Over the past 30 years there is something I have never seen and I'm seeing at the moment, possibly the result of several constraints, I **have never seen so many people going into New Opportunities Centres to complete their qualifications, ever, it is something unprecedented**. If something is to underline, within this initiative, is the fact that people really move in some way" (Directors/Coordinators, NOC in Schools, Lisbon, 2008).

"I think the **offers are now more concentrated** and that's good because formerly people had to go looking and now there **is a massive investment, in the media, and in the schools**… It is this strong commitment" (Technical/NOI trainers, Porto, 2008).

"**And people have some confidence, because if they arrived there already technicians gave them already tools or actually saw they had tools to get there**" (External evaluator, Lisbon, 2008).

"I wanted to say that this is a way of actually democratization of training that **enables people**, **wherever they do it, to accede to a certification or to increase training**. And this will respond to a great problem we have in society" (Technical/Trainers, different types of NOC, Porto, 2008).

"The **process is tight** in the sense that it is reasonable but still **they stay because they see that there is something different from what until now was offered**" (Directors/Coordinators, NOC in Schools, Lisbon, 2008).

However, this set of perceptions should not be generalized to all clusters analysed, in particular Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). In fact, perceptions of this sector suggest that the NOI suffers from a notorious problem of lack of credibility that will prevent the implementation of this model.

"It's very beautiful, saying that everyone in the country has the 12th grade, when **and it is not real**. Have some crap courses that give them equivalent to the 12th grade and this is only one because maybe there are more people doing the same thing, and no one fails…" (SME, Lisbon, 2009).

"Then there is another aspect which **I am very much critic and that is the idea of substance. There is that one individual take anyone for an example, however much experience acquired through professional life, has enriched its own curriculum too**… I cannot believe that people with the 7th grade, in one year, with the lessons of this type… with the time devote to these **people it is not possible to add them the necessary knowledge for them to obtain the diploma of the tenth or twelfth grade**, in under the same circumstances as others who have been there for 12 years. I think this is bad" (SME, Porto, 2009).

The empirical evidence collected for the personality model, although focusing on two of its dimensions, can justify the use of this model.

4.4. *Discussion*

The positioning of the brand in the mind of citizens may provide evidence that the Portuguese government conducted, deliberately or not, a structured brand promotion plan, instead of simply communicating the fundamentals of the public policy to citizens. A brand promotion plan encompasses setting objectives, a strategy and tactics (Needham, 2002).

The NOI's presumed Brand promotion plan

The brand promotion objectives include unification, differentiation, media penetration and perception shaping. The above analysis of the brand positioning in the mind of the target audience may support the claim that these goals have, on the whole, been attained. It is clear that all resources involved in policy execution – including physical structures, communications, training content, training centre, and monitors – are seen as pertaining to a common brand, the NOI brand. The brand and the underlying policy were perceived as innovative and different from anything else that existed before in the adult training field. The policy has drawn considerable media attention through government PR offices, independent journalists and opinion-makers, which greatly contributed to audience awareness and the absorption of the key messages. Last, the image attributes of the policy brand are clear in the eyes of the target audience.

The brand strategy

The first of four strategic elements is the use of simplified messages which aim to communicate intangible aspects of the policy attributes. The analysis above shows that the target group is able to identify key universal values – self-confidence, social recognition and equality, inclusion, among others – which go beyond simple arguments in favour of a training programme. A high degree of consistency of brand communication, the second strategic element, is suggested in the clear way in which people express their perceptions. There is no evidence of misalignment between intangible aspects and practical benefits (e.g. obtaining 9th and 12th degree certification) contained in the brand messages. The third strategic component of branding consists in the promotion of genuine brand values. The target audience was keen to express the set of core social values which were clearly associated with NOI. The last strategic element of brand promotion – reflecting people's aspirations – is also evident in the inspection of the target audience. People referred to NOI as a decisive moment of change in their lives.

Brand Equity evaluation

As discussed above, the level of Brand awareness, the positive associations, and citizen attitudes may provide an indication of its equity. The analysis showed that by this measure, brand equity was likely to be high for those who attended the programme. It was found that all stakeholders of the programme were very aware of the brand name 'Novas Oportunidades'.

The most noticeable association of the brand, its identified "essence", is "friendliness" and "openness". For those who attended the programme, the desire to engage in new training programmes is evident, indicating a latent acceptance of the "lifelong learning" concept. It is believed that completion of the NOI programme will bring personal and social benefits. In this view, NOI is a living personality, which may be able to bring new advantages that positively affect people's lives. Thus, there is a notion of a long-term exchange, signalling a renewed ability to accept new challenges. Furthermore, the alumni groups are another indication of a strong level of emotional connection, in this case among participants in the programme. The experience with the brand works as a common bond and a networking platform for people who did not know each other. The high level of brand equity for those who participated (and also those awaiting to begin) in NOI may explain the great satisfaction observed and the massive adhesion to it. It is premature, however, given the present results, to draw conclusions on the impact of NOI in relation to global government performance. But what seems to be certain is that experience of the NOI brand will remain prevalent in the minds in all those involved.

From the training centres personnel perspective, NOI brand also seems to provide high levels of equity. First, NOI directed the value of Inclusion in favour of an entire population (who was excluded long ago from officially acquiring new competences). NOI is perceived as a response to proven inefficiencies of former adult education and training models, representing a new standard in the field and a good response for the country in terms of public policy. NOI is perceived as a driving force for a paradigm change in the basic assumptions of education and training by providing a true orientation towards market needs and demand, instead of focusing on supply capabilities. NOI provides an informal network platform among education structures and agents to share knowledge from processes of learning by doing, direct experiences, and insight.

There are some limits to the Brand model application. The most noticeable relates to Aaker's personality sub-model which defines trait dimensions that found their validity in commercial brands (notably American Brands). But it is debatable whether these traits may be applied to brands in political markets, especially public policies. This question is especially sensitive to those traits that show an aspiration nature (e.g. Sophistication and roughness). The cultural setting in which brands are created and move is well-known, so we would need to review the traits from a European cultural perspective. Another limitation is the relatively short time of contact with the Brand. Was enough time given to NOI to be recognised as having a "personality" by stakeholders? It is likely that those who have a direct experience with the Brand through education programme are more sensitive to Brand personality.

The empirical evidence shows that the citizen-users expect to continue the learning process they began in NOI. The expectation is that those who are responsible for the programme will devise new learning opportunities. If NOI cannot fulfil these expectations, its value may weaken with time as people may transform their perception of the public policy from a long-term strategy to increase national levels of adult education to a mere short-term government tactic to gain people's preference.

5. Conclusions and future work

This paper analysed the perception of a target audience of a single, flagship, public policy. We considered a three-leg brand model, incorporating the concepts of brand relationship quality, brand communications and brand personality. We further discussed the results from the perspective of a presumed brand promotion model. The awareness, perceived image attributes, experience and attitude towards the Brand of the target audience was analysed in terms of a qualitative brand equity measure and linked this latter to explain the high degree of satisfaction with the Brand and the massive adhesion to the training programme.

The results show that the public policy is perceived as a relevant Brand in the eyes of the target audience. The brand transmitted shared values, such as inclusiveness, social recognition, and self-esteem; presented clear arguments in favour of intangible benefits (beyond the simple degree); and used coded words, which remained embedded in the minds of the audience. The perceived degree of relationship quality is driven by responsiveness and customisation, amongst other factors. Brand essential traits are friendliness and openness. There is evidence of a high level of brand equity, which may explain the satisfaction with the programme and the massive adhesion to it.

Our empirical evidence shows that people perceived NOI as a new way of learning and obtaining credit for personal effort to learn in non-formal and informal systems. There is also strong evidence that NOI is a friendly way of returning to education. There is no support to affirm that NOI is perceived as an effortless way to obtain a diploma.

Future research is needed to clarify some questions that were raised by the present research. The "citizens" group mentioned in the title refers to those who had a direct experience of the NOI programme. The conclusions of the study are valid for this particular group. A complete assessment of the image of the public policy would require considering samples of other stakeholders, e.g. people potentially targeted that did not consider engaging with the programme, non-target people that completed the formal education and employers.

Special interest remains in accessing the image of NOI brand in other sectors that were not the primary target (e.g. those who completed the 9th and 12th Secondary degree by following the traditional path). This is an important sector that would need to be accounted for in terms of its ability to lead opinion making in favour of credibility and wide social acceptance of the public policy and its associated Brand. Furthermore there is evidence in our research that managers of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) do not perceive the NOI brand as favourably. An explanation may relate to the level of education (on average lower than that of the average citizen) of these managers. But it could be also associated with a lack of credibility of NOI due to poor brand communication. In any case, this is a weakness of the Brand and its effectiveness, as these SME managers constitute, as major employers, one of the most important stakeholders of the policy.

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F.

DISCUSSING NEW OPPORTUNITIES INSIDE S-D LOGIC: NEW OPPORTUNITIES AS A TOOL OF GOVERNMENTAL APPROACH FOR NATION VALUE CREATION

HENRIQUE LOPES

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: henriquelopes3@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The transformation of the economy in western countries from an industrial base to a service base forces one to think that the traditional economic models are undergoing considerable reconsideration. The SD-Logic was an enormous contribution to understand an economy based on services within which people and companies are entities that generate wealth through knowledge exchange. Based on these principles an interpretation of LLL is presented, using the NOI experience, as a tool for increasing the volume of knowledge in society and capable of enhancing exchanges of information. It was concluded that: 1. the model is useful in this kind of reflection, 2. that the public policies of LLL are a way of boosting the economy of a country, 3. women can, by this medium, contemplate a reduction in their differentials in education when comparing to men.

Keywords: S-D Logic; Management models; Services; Public governance tools.

1. Introduction

1776 is known as the year of the American Constitution, but a no less important reference for this year is “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations” by Adam Smith. This book, born as a moral philosophy discussion, came to be the foundation of modern capitalism. In this book, individual greed, which is morally bad if viewed from a personal dimension, could be transformed into something positive if viewed from a societal perspective: the set of all economic decision making (specially by investors) leads society into a continuous efficiency process where each person aims at finding the best personal result (micro-efficiency event). Economy will be the result of all decision making, usually named “the invisible hand”. To achieve efficiency in each exchange of goods, people try to find the best solution (value for money), which could be, for example, the best price, new answers to old questions, best performance, etc., all of which increase the utility of the proposed good. This understanding of the economic mechanism leads the 19th century Western world into economic progress, innovation and general wealth.

Later, another moralist philosopher, who was very much influenced by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, Karl Marx, published *Das Kapital* in 1867, substituting greed for solidarity as the glue of the economic relation. In Marxist theory, the importance of a goods’ economy remains a central point and, in giving very little importance to services, it explains them as a necessary support process for achieving the good. That is why blue collars are much more important for his political theory than white collars.

Both theories are very similar in their essences (regardless of their political impact, maintaining economic philosophy as the main focus). Even Marx presents *Das Kapital* as a development of Adam Smith’s and Ricardo’s works. In both cases the essence is the exchange theory where the value of a good can be exchanged for money (value representation) and this money can be exchanged for another good that the person may need. Services are always subsidiary, enhancing the possibility of exchanging goods. These theories represented a very significant evolution from the old farm-based economy to industrial dominance and have remained the basis of economic transactions for the last 200 years. It should be remembered that during those times the main sector was agriculture in most countries and industry had only just begun in the so-called “developed countries”. Services remained a very small part of the economies until WWII.

After that, in a world where, for the first time in history, industrial capacity surpassed people's needs, only companies that could offer something more than just the direct use of the good could survive. At the same time, throughout the 20th century, productivity increased, generating centennial trends of 6% per year in agriculture, 4% in industry and 2% in services reducing the number of employees needed in the traditional economic sectors. That is why, at the end of the second millennium, more than half the workers in developed countries work in services. This huge number of workers and the creation of many new services business transformed the sector, representing now more than 70% of all economies in Western countries.

2. Responding to the Service problem

In the richest countries, in the 1950s, many large companies transferred the focus of their market efforts from product to customer. Those that achieved better market results were those that abandoned the primacy of financial reports or engineering development, putting all eggs in the customer basket. Naturally, though, this first effort was made without the proper tools or academic support.

In the mid-1970s, economies changed definitively from *industry-based* to *service-based economies* as a result of a trend towards continuous labour specialisation. For example, in a traditional industrial business such as a bakery, the whole process would be performed by the baker (buying the flour, baking the bread, producing the yeast, selling the product, keeping the accounts, etc.). In modern management (service based economy) one can find other companies performing parts of the process with better performance rates at a lower cost: one distributes the bread flour, another produces the yeast, another is in charge of the accounting, probably a chain store sells the bread, and so on, reducing the intervention of the baker to just a small part of the process where he can apply his *distinctive knowledge*. Production is no more the end of the process, but only an intermediary part.

Whilst the example of the baker represents a general tendency of the last 40 years, services bring about new problems which cannot be adequately solved by old economic models: services are intangible, cannot be stocked, most of the times they require the manufacturer's presence, have large provider variability and other aspects that in essence go in the opposite direction and tradition to those of a goods' economy.

To the question of how to react in a services' economic world, many economy and management schools – TQM (Total Quality Management) (Hauser & Clausing, 1988; Parasuraman, Zeithalm & Berry, 1988), supply and value chain management (Norman & Ramirez, 1993; Srivastava, Shervana & Fahey, 1999), relationship marketing (Berry, 1983; Gummesson, 1994, 2002), services marketing (Gronroos, 1984, Zeithalm, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985), etc. – have proposed an answer. These proposed paths, kept at a micro-economic level (companies), put the focus on different process aspects: quality, customer perception, value chain analysis, customer satisfaction, to refer to just the main trends.

All had some positive results, where they solved partial problems and created the opportunity to enhance economic performance. The number of known examples of companies that were successful with this kind of solutions is significant. The most well-known are British Airways, Xerox, Philips or Nike. But it is generally recognized that all these solutions are partial approaches; meanwhile, a new economic paradigm emerged, specialized in a services' based economy.

The S-D Logic model is the result of the evolution of all these partial models, of critiques to these models and of the intention to fill in the gaps between them.

3. New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) as a public policy

The reason for the outstanding dimension of NOI both in terms of the numbers of active population involved (more than 25% in just four years) and of the national effort deployed (economic, structural, etc.) relates to the fact that, in Portugal, historically, there has been a structural problem in preparing the workforce and a deficit in the certification of knowledge obtained through other means than the traditional school channel: about 70% of the labour force lack high school education, alongside a still high level of school drop-outs, even though the 12th grade (upper secondary education) is legally mandatory for everyone.

In NOI, people are able to seek formal recognition of knowledge already obtained via informal or non-formal schemes, through tests and class attendance. People may also seek to increase their knowledge by attending courses which are designed on a case by case basis, taking into account the professional, educational and personal background of the candidate. The duration of the training can vary from months to years.

In both cases (with training and without formal training), learning gains are assumed, to the extent that even when people do not have to participate in training courses, they must attend discussion sessions on non-school contents such as interpersonal relationships, public presentation of works, discussion with a validation jury, drafting of texts, etc.

The education levels which may be obtained via NOI are the same as in traditional schooling (basic, lower secondary, upper secondary), if people can obtain a degree for the validation of previously acquired knowledge and then engage in courses specifically defined for them to complement their qualifications. Currently, the vast majority of candidates seek the upper secondary level, but in the first year of NOI there has been much more demand for lower secondary education.

This chapter proposes to analyse NOI as a public policy tool which comes close to the concept underpinning the S-D Logic model or at least shares some points with it.

It is advocated that the S-D Logic model can be used in public policy country analysis and action (macro level) in the same way as in company strategic management (micro level). Consequently, knowledge management (by improvement through NOI) at country level ensures better preparation of the labour force in a service-oriented economy, qualifying workers with the new desired competitive economic skills.

Only a few of the foundational premises could be directly analysed at this early stage; however, some indirect measurements will be presented in order to share data and help to find connecting points between S-D Logic and NOI's results.

4. The S-D Logic Theory

In 2004, Vargo & Lusch, departing from the referred schools and theories (and many others), proposed the new concept of "Service Dominant Logic" or S-D Logic, evolving for the first time from a goods-based to a service-based economy. One of the major aspects is to move from a Services Marketing approach to a Service Science approach (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008; Maglio et al, 2009).

S-D Logic theory's starting point is that knowledge and skills embedding into the exchange process are the most important elements: "core compe-tences are not physical assets but intangible processes, they are bundles of skills and technologies" (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, p. 5). This theory had eight foundational premises (FP)at that time: 1. The application of specialised skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange; 2. Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange; 3. Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision; 4. Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage; 5. All economies are service economies; 6. The customer is always a co-producer; 7. The enterprise can only make value propositions; 8. A service centred view is customer oriented and relational. For the authors, this model is very "company model" or "sector model". Later (Vargo & Lusch, 2008), after critiques, the FPs were increased to ten to include "All social and economic actors are resource integrators" (FP9) and "Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary" (FP10).

Other important concepts in the S-D Logic theory are "Operand" and "Operant" resources. The first refers to resources that must be acted upon to become useful, for example, raw materials, goods in production and other physical resources needed for final consumption. The second concept is much more closely related to education: it refers to skills and competences needed for acting upon operand resources and for connecting goods and services in networks of supply chains. It is assumed that acting upon Operant Resources generates benefits for the final user.

These dimensions of resources are very important because they separate the production of strategic materials from the use and management of those materials. In other words, if a company (or, in the light of this chapter, a country) develops enough skills for the acquisition, substitution or efficient management of a raw material, it could become a better user, and consequently a better presence in the market than another company (country) that possesses the raw material in nature. The example of countries of oil use versus countries of oil production (with few exceptions) is paradigmatic.

In S-D Logic, one should be exact when using the singular/plural form of the term Service. When used in the singular, it means the process as a market promise without physical expression. When used in the plural, it means the concrete delivery of economic units of exchange from an output trade into the market (Vargo & Akaka, 2009, p. 36).

It is recognized that S-D Logic is not yet a complete theory and that it will take significant supplementary analysis and discussion of design elements (e.g. the reviews of Gronroos, 2006) that oppose the "black box" of goods consumption and the operational applications (e.g. the reviews of Schulz & Gnoth, 2008) and reveal the limits of the theory, when going from a personal to a firm level of analysis, before it can be accepted as a structural economic theory. Even the authors share the notion that the theory must be developed and make reservations in that sense: for example, they make recommendations for not applying S-D Logic to various sectors of activity, namely education (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), or for not considering the model as a paradigm (Vargo & Lusch, 2007).

In support of the proposal of applying S-D Logic to adult education we argue that, as a social structure, education evolves similarly to economy, both reflecting social evolution. Education emerged from an industrial model in the 19^{th} century, where a person would step into the educational system different from everybody else, and would finish the process like everybody else. Taking the same parallelism between social structures, the 4^{th} step of educational evolution corresponds to the "Service paradigm" where the essence of the system becomes to give a service to society. Modern education is transformed into a broad array of paths and a much more customized solution.

On the other hand, education could be seen as the equivalent to the "invisible hand" of Adam Smith. Not as an economic tool related with moral for producing efficiency and wealth, but representing the dialectic between present and future, where a better prepared population is better able to overcome the challenges of future societies. This is supported by many examples, the most well-known of which is the correlation between salary and educational level. Portugal is one of the European countries where this correlation is more visible.

A second reason for supporting the application of S-D Logic at a different level (national rather than individual) are the shortcomings that result from determining the economic impact of education primarily at the individual level. Aggregating people into large population groups avoids personal variables. Only main trends remain.

Even though defending S-D Logic's application to education, our only focus is NOI, because of the specific object of our empirical research. Later, research could (should) be extended to other education fields based on what has been found in the meantime.

Some of the founding premises have no direct connection to NOI and there are many aspects of NOI (historical impacts, legal dimensions, Portuguese cultural specificities, etc.) that do not fit well into the S-D Logic theory. However, in our opinion, this does not prevent us from testing the application of S-D Logic to adult education.

5. Methodology

For discussion purposes, the paper is illustrated with results of five research tasks by the Portuguese Catholic University (CEPCEP) which has undertaken an independent evaluation of NOI for the Portuguese Governmental Agency (ANQ) that oversees NOI, totalling nearly 9,000 interviews, 20 minutes to half an hour each, conducted in 2009 and 2010 using the CATI method. It employed around 70 interviewers, specifically trained for the tools that were used.

Each of the five tools was preceded by a long qualitative phase, pre-tests, before finally being approved by ANQ. Is was very beneficial that the Agency is led by researchers in social sciences, which made it possible to engage in technical discussions while simultaneously developing field work (with people formerly enrolled in NOI, teachers, directors, etc).

This assessment measured the customer's degree of perception of the quality of service, identified motivations, impacts on lifestyle and work, attitudes towards learning by people who attended NOI and by others who had not completed equivalent levels acting as a control group.

More indirect dimensions were also evaluated, such as family characteristics, employment history and social background of those registered, to refer to only the most relevant. The detail of these studies can be found in the five reports submitted to ANQ (NOI's managing agency) almost all reports being available to the public (Lopes, 2009a, 2009b; 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). At this point, it should be stressed that reference is made only to the information contained in these reports which we regard as the most illustrative.

The random sample was drawn from NOI's national database, named SIGO, respecting all major demographic dimensions: successive runs executed on the database until it reflected the selected demographics. For those not enrolled in NOI, random contacts were made using national phone numbers. Some filters and other restrictions were used to shape distribution by type of days, interview hours, gender and age of the interviewees. If the contact fulfils all conditions, a final randomnized selection is run by asking for the last person celebrating his/her birthday at targeted household.

For a representativeness of 95%, the studies present a confidence interval of around 2.2-2.4%. Some questions were also used in different tools in order to establish bridges between samples and tools. Results present a very high accuracy level between tools.

6. Results

We will present all the Foundational Premises established in the theory. In some of the FP it is possible to establish more direct connections between the S-D Logic theory and NOI's results; other FP, the majority, show only indirect connections which, however, may be used to launch the discussion. These indirect connections should be read as an invitation for further research to be undertaken with tools that are specifically designed for that purpose, whether supporting or disputing the idea that the application of S-D Logic to education presents a very powerful tool to improve educational public policies. In all FP the concept is discussed in the light of a service-based economy and relating to adult education in an LLL perspective.

FP1: *The application of specialized skills and knowledge is the fundamental unit of exchange.*

The nature of this FP is very axiomatic, thus largely avoiding experimental testing; however, it allows us to discuss the concept.

With the growing labour specialisation imposed by a service-based economy, each worker's participation becomes progressively limited to a reduced part of the production process, thus leading people, companies and other entities to increase economic acts of exchange, at the same time generating a scale effect within people's work: one worker produces more in a small part of the process, a phenomenon which has been known since Taylor and Ford. S-D Logic's contribution is that a small part of the production process should correspond to that in which the worker has specialized knowledge. A second dimension of this FP is that the worker needs to buy (directly or indirectly through workflow) all that he does not produce. This assumption also holds true for collective economic actors.

The consequence of the above in a service based economy is that not only should each economic actor (from the individual person to large companies) work better to sell better in his/her respective part of the production process, but that all social actors should also possess purchasing competences within the exchange social network to buy better. This means not only technical skills, but also relational and negotiation skills, and even skills in foreign languages if part of the supply chain is settled abroad.

In other words, each production cell (from the individual worker to the company), in the nem service oriented economy, should acquire and permanently develop a wide range of skills, from technical to meta-skills.

When applying this logic at country level, if sufficient skills and competences are not acquired by the labour force it will not achieve a sufficient level of work specialisation. This is a serious limitation for the continuous specialisation of modern production.

The result will be low market capacity (low capacity of integration in the transnational economic exchange network) leading to a low level of exports and a high level of imports (in order to meet the social knowledge demand – fashion for example) considering that foreign supply is more adapted to needs than local supply. The final result will be a high trade balance deficit and medium to high service balance debts. Systematic debts lead to a weak currency or, if a strong currency is adopted as in the Euro zone, the latter becomes an unattractive place for investments. Put together, the referred economic relations will create a vicious circle where money is not enough to generate wealth and currency simultaneously decreases the capacity to react to crises.

Portugal is an example of the above: low skilled people in the active population, especially amongst the elderly workers, systematic financial and balance deficits, medium to high unemployment rates, and generalised shortage of money in governmental departments. However, it is a traditional world-level exporter of goods (apparel, shoes, electrical machines, etc.) almost always in a "façonnage" style (producing locally for international brands). This means that if Portugal does not advance more than industrial knowledge, it will not be able to benefit from the value that derives from brand services (selling identity, status, pleasure, etc., given by brands). S-D Logic's authors joined by Merz (2009) wrote: "we believe that S-D logic and the brand literature can reinforce and inform each other" (p.1), showing the connection between the S-D Logic theory and branding.

Because Portugal has a dominant goods-oriented management, only a small part of the value chain remains in Portugal and the country must deal with the permanent risk of factories being dislocated to countries that are able to propose lower final prices owing to lower salaries being paid to workers or to countries where there is no need to comply with environmental rules, or even to countries where production is organised in a much more efficient way.

This double phenomenon explains why countries with very high productivity rates improve their output (e.g., Germany, The Netherlands, where a highly skilled active population works in a service oriented economy), as well as countries with very low salary costs (e.g., China, India, compensating a goods oriented economy and, sometimes, a low skilled active population).

At the same time, intermediate countries continue to struggle with great difficulties (Portugal, Greece, Spain, etc.). Using a strategic model language, we "stay stuck in the middle", the worst possible strategic position.

Using the S-D Logic's approach, the solution entails embedding a high level of knowledge in every service or good to enable the emergence of attractive exchange proposals. Under the axiomatic application of FP1, more educational preparation (knowledge and skills) should be guaranteed at national level to workers or potential workers (unemployed people, young people who dropped out of the educational system, etc.), which could induce increased amount of knowledge incorporation into each economic process. As the fundamental unit of exchange is knowledge (productive, managerial and social) embedding into the process, it results in a greater capacity for new exchanges between parts of the process, and establishing better economic relations in traditional processes as seller (e.g., branding) or buyer (e.g., international supplying).

Both effects lead to a better ability to compete in foreign markets and resist proposals to supply local market from abroad, which amounts to more qualified manpower and / or a reduction in unemployment, together with increased wealth.

As said above, FP1 is basically axiomatic. But under S-D Logic we can understand that any effort to improve skills in the active population is a potential contribution for generating the conditions necessary to achieve a service oriented economy. Recently, Gummesson, Lusch & Vargo (2010) stated (p. 23): "Education is perhaps the prime outlet of knowledge. It reaches young people in their formative years and teaches them the basics of management and economics. The students bring this knowledge to their future jobs, and employee and executive training provide a direct channel to those who may already have the power to introduce change. Educational institutions therefore carry a unique responsibility to absorb and assess the new logic." We extend this principle to adult education where NOI could take on a major role.

1,309 persons who completed the NOI course were interviewed in one of the studies undertaken for ANQ (Lopes, 2010a). They were asked about the progress they felt at the level of content knowledge as a result of having gone through NOI. Twelve categories of learning were listed and respondents were asked to indicate the benefits from NOI on a ten-point scale (from no progress to a lot of progress) and for each of the categories.

It is assumed that all formats of knowledge may be useful for a process of economic exchange. There is no evidence for the moment that this is true because of the significant lack of research on the matter; however, the rationale is: a process of exchange of services involves many more dimensions of knowledge than agricultural or industrial processes, as illustrated above, entailing more than a mere relationship with work tools, where it also mobilizes relational elements of supply and demand (even if they were not of a monetary nature).

In all categories (except for one) values were of 6.08 to 7.37 (ten points scale) and the exception was “reading, writing and communicating in a foreign language”, which only obtained 4.74 points, still close to the centre of the scale. The distribution of the standard deviation was fairly stable between categories, ranging between 2.15 and 2.70. Thus, people interviewed record much improvement in terms of level of knowledge.

Figure F.1 Improvement of knowledge attributed to NOI

There was a differentiation in terms of educational levels in the acquisition of a foreign language, where people who had completed the upper secondary level set themselves apart from many of the remaining cycles, thus generating a high intergroup differentiation (sig. $\chi^2 = 0.000$), which is easily explained by the content of each grade level sought.

There are different paths for completing NOI, some more informal such as RVCC and others more formal such as EFA, together accounting for 99% of those enrolled. Differences were registered between these paths, with a systematic advantage for those who seek the EFA: acquisition of English (sig $\chi 2 = 0.049$) foreign language (sig $\chi 2 = 0.000$), use of the computer (sig $\chi 2$ s< =

0.008) and Internet (sig $\chi2$ = 0.007), search and management of information on Internet (sig $\chi2$ = 0.013), arithmetic and mathematics (sig $\chi2$ = 0.001), citizenship and civic participation (sig $\chi2$ = 0.005), basic competences in science and technology (sig $\chi2$ = 0.004), personal and social competences (sig $\chi2$ = 0.000), learning to learn (sig $\chi2$ = 0.013). The trend is not so clear in the communication area, under the category understanding and criticizing the media (sig $\chi2$ = 0.084). Only social participation did not show any differentiation. It is too early to attribute the gap to the learning style at stake. At present, we do not know whether the increase in knowledge derives from the formal approach or from the fact that people who are advised by NOI's teams to follow the EFA path have some special characteristic that determines the difference. The intergroup evaluation of paths in demographics does not show any particular reason for the differences.

In conclusion, the application of this FP1 to NOI demonstrates how a large national initiative to improve school level accreditation increases the self-perception of knowledge in its different dimensions and the perception of employers that employees engaged in the initiative become better workers. They are probably much more than mere perceptions. It is easily accepted that some real knowledge improvements are acquired during the month/years of engagement with NOI.

Considering that the most important aspect in this FP1 is to embed the maximum knowledge possible into the economic process and understand this process in a service perspective, NOI potentially becomes a very good public policy tool (in both educational and economic terms) to achieve that.

FP2: *Indirect exchange masks the fundamental unit of exchange*

The road of labour micro-specialisation imposed by the continuous tendency for organisations to become more efficient, at the same time bigger and self-specialized, leads to different effects: 1 – most of the times workers lose the sense of customer orientation, since the large majority does not have a direct relationship with the end customer; 2 – Even inside very competitive firms, one working process just becomes the input for the next production step. As there is no money exchange between colleagues or production sub-phases, people lose the sense of added value (of their own job) or alternative market offer (from/to the next process step or the acquisition of equivalent work by outsourcing); 3 – As the number of employees grows, there tends to be more bureaucratic organisations. Hence, organisations stay away from final customers and possibly from the early objectives.

As a result of these three effects, the final product (good or service) provided to the market tends to be neglected.

Coming back to FP1's essence, each of the processes exchanged between phases represents one exchange of applied skills or knowledge. The conjunction of the three conditions of FP2 with the latter idea results in the risk that great part of the skills is used in non-profitable activities and/or disregarding customers' desires. The other risk is that not all necessary and available skills are embedded in the final product. Both ideas are very important given that the final product or service provided to the market is just a vehicle to which the exchange of knowledge was added.

More than in competitive companies, this reality clearly degrades the final goal in public services: most of the time, public/governmental or equivalent services are very bureaucratic, not customer oriented or cooperative inside processes or between services, and probably show low efficiency rates. They suffer from all three effects by their nature, geographic expansion and different processes.

At the same time, on the customer side, there are some difficulties in terms of demand: the public does not have a monetary perspective of the services provided, occasionally expecting unrealistic levels of service; they cannot evaluate the value of the service provided, since, in most situations, there is no alternative offer; finally, there is no tradition of customer orientation in this kind of services.

Large companies, namely those that act as a monopoly, tend to work in the same perspective for the same reason.

Again, there is no research with empirical evidences that show some econometric model with S-D Logic theory of these (for the moment) common sense assumptions.

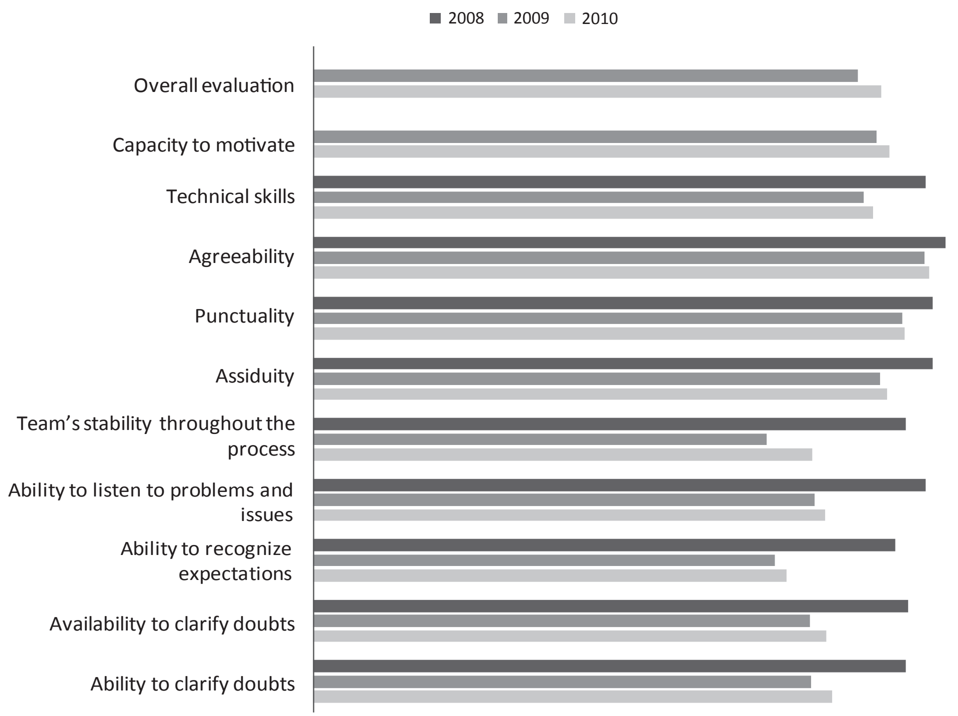
With this limitation, we are left with the possibility of using NOI's experience itself to evaluate FP2 indirectly through the abstract construct of "service quality", where we have measured the perceived quality in all processes' workflow.

As a public service with the dimension described above, in terms of percentage of active and total population involved, as well hundreds of places (NOI Centres) providing the service, it tends to acquire a bureaucratic profile. The absence of payment by the customer also reinforces this bureaucratic approach. On the other hand, it is new and the "business" amounts to knowledge management, which is fully in line with S-D Logic's approach.

If NOI maintains a traditional public service approach, it will have a lowly perceived service quality, mainly in those items related to the contact with final customers. If NOI adopts a S-D Logic profile, this group of relational indicators will be high and position it among those showing best performance in the enquiry.

For measuring purposes, some 4,500 persons were surveyed during a 3-year period (from 2008 to 2010, 1,500 persons each year) (Lopes, 2009a; 2010b), making use of around 120 service quality indicators in 10 dimensions, going from the first contact with NOI to the conclusion of the process. A 10 point scale was used. The synthesis of the results below shows that not only the overall evaluation is positioned between high and very high, but also that the highest evaluation was given to the RVCC Team, which is comprised of the group of persons from the NOI Centre with whom the respondents established a relationship.

Figure F.2 RVCC Team's Evaluation



Assuming that the relation between "Perceived Service Quality" and "Service delivered" is accurate and expresses the complexity of services, skills and knowledge exchanges, one may conclude that NOI is truly an S-D Logic organisation.

As a process, NOI shows a very good customer- oriented management. Trying to understand the reasons for the exceptionally high values, the team of researchers engaged in an analysis with the National Agency, with international experts in adult education, etc.

Is it accepted that part of the performance[1] derives from the high level of independence of each NOI Centre (NOC), thus reducing the number of intermediary steps of processes as well as the bureaucratic aspect: hundreds of NOI centres adopt a local solution (inside companies, acting in local authorities, in schools, clubs, etc.), providing a specific solution for each person. Another important feature is the centres' small size, enabling each NOC's team to preserve the sense of final customer and final needs/goals.

Doing away with all bureaucracy and enabling a direct involvement with the final customer results in an abnormally[2] high level of customer perception of service quality, especially when related to service providers.

In this context, this FP2 appears much more conceptually related to FP8, at least when measured via this abstract construct. An econometric model with direct measures as regards the exchanges of services and skills should be able to solve this problem in the future.

The application of CFA algorithm results in only one dimension with 72% of total variance in "personal relation".

The average values of the items were fully in line during the last two years, showing very positive results and reflecting values similar to those recorded in the first year. Addressing the theory of consumer satisfaction, these results are somewhat strange, considering that in the first year (which is the reference), the average values were already very high. In fact, in the theory of consumer behaviour, according to the principle of regression, the mean values tend to decline gradually as the population increases. The product life cycle presents a similar pattern: early adopters should favour it the most.

The values are all quite high, fluctuating between a minimum of 8.91 (ability to recognize the expectations of the candidate) and a maximum of

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[1] Naturally, it is accepted that the professionals provide a significant contribution.

[2] Comparing, for example, with official indexes, such as ECSI or ACSI.

9.49 (agreeability) over 10 possible points. The average values of performance can also be considered very high as regards the partial indicators for the teams, such as the official indicators of ECSI or ACSI in public services. Only healthcare is an exception, presenting very high rates for team indicators; however, in this case, there is the special situation of life dependency and, as it is widely known, the relation between doctors and patients is unique, even though, in this context, the value is higher than in healthcare ECSI or ACSI team's indicators.

FP3: *oods are distribution mechanisms for service provision*

Citing the authors directly as regards the new economic exchange process: "the common denominator is the application of specialized knowledge, mental skills and to a lesser extent physical labour (physical skills). Knowledge and skills can be transferred (1) directly, (2) through education or training, or (3) by embedding them in objects" (Vargo & Lusch 2004, pp. 8-9). This FP represents products as condensed forms of services. In other words, when someone buys a product, the objective is not to have that product *per se,* but to acquire the services contained therein. For example, when someone buys a car, that person seeks the shuttle contained therein, or to enjoy the prestige associated with it, or if it provides integration in a particular social group. Likewise, the purchase of a mobile phone is to enable communication services. Another reason to acquire products is to condense knowledge: the purchase of a DVD containing a database does not aim at the piece of plastic, but at the knowledge contained therein.

Therefore, services are the ultimate goal of the purchase; they can be purchased directly or made tangible (through the products), insofar as they provide services directly or via high abstraction (satisfaction, pleasure, etc.). The other reason relates to the fact that they may condense large amounts of knowledge. Perhaps the maximum level of condensation may be found in a computer chip: in essence, just a fragment of silicon, but in which large quantities of knowledge are introduced when transformed into a chip.

NOI is by definition a service; therefore, this premise is not directly applicable.

FP4: *Knowledge is the fundamental source of competitive advantage*

Traditionally, the concept of competitive advantage lies in the possession of natural resources, technologies, proximity to markets, or other element of the value chain that a company can use with more advantages than its competitors. In the S-D Logic model, competitive advantage is just the nature of knowledge. One can illustrate the reason for the new model with the examples of companies and countries that have access to vast natural resources but however do not use them to their advantage. As seen in the previous FP, products are trading vehicles for the use of services. This means that when the value chain is established, a direct flow of services and products (representing condensed services) acquires significance only when there is the ability to manage each sub-process. Thus, along the value chain, three formats of knowledge are provided: knowledge to manage the process (management), knowledge to execute every step properly (services) and knowledge pertaining to the qualifying products it uses (products). When the combination of the three formats of knowledge develops the ability to compete, it becomes a competitive advantage.

Apart from these static aspects of the FP, there is another dimension: the dynamics. For the founders of S-D Logic, dynamics is the dialectic between the company and the market: the companies that best develop competitive advantages are those that are better able to learn from the market. This observation stems from competitive learning (the company *versus* its main competitors), compounded with the understanding of consumers (identifying unmet needs, etc.).

NOI is a means to increase schooling, technology and social knowledge. It can directly enhance the improvement of the services market, influencing companies where people work to better manage the process flow along the value chain by enabling a better implementation of each sub-phase of the process (static elements) and increasing the capacity of interaction with the environment (dynamic elements).

A country's economy is the sum of all its economic and social structures, boosting the capacity to create competitive advantages over competitor nations. Competitive advantage is not self-generated: it must be created!

The main relation to professional knowledge is that it reinforces willingness to learn, whatever the scale of analysis, through the awareness of the need to continue to develop professionally; as such, NOI becomes a starting point of a phenomenon of learning in many fields and situations (LLL approach), including the acquisition of professional knowledge. Hence, it is only logical that the element shared by most of the respondents is the willingness to learn and obtain more training, which was, in reported by 55.6% of the total sample.

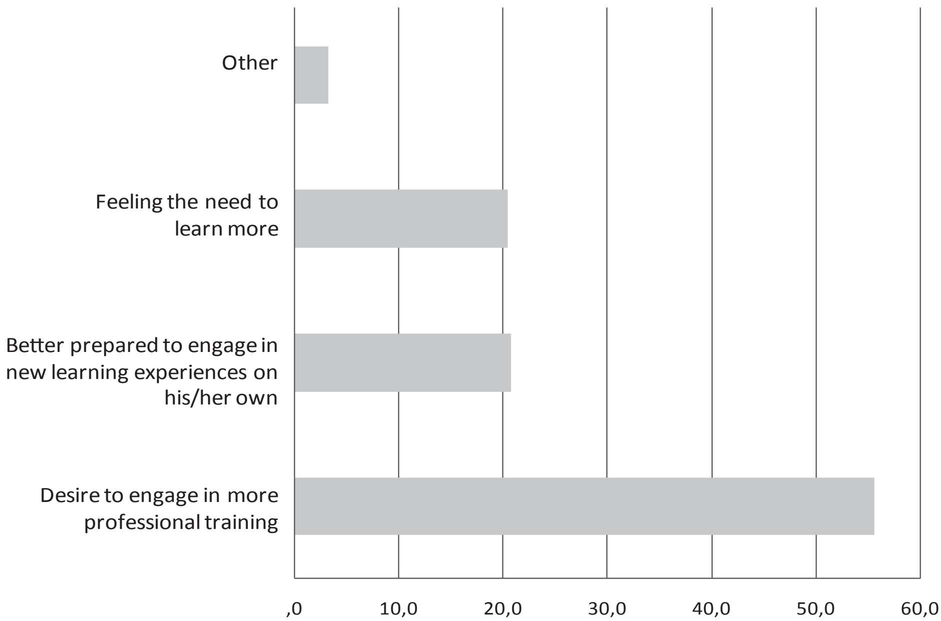
Taking into account the social and demographic sample group under analysis with respect to the New Opportunities Initiative in Portugal, it means that projecting the results of the sample to the more than a million people who have already integrated will result in a value in excess of half a million people who are ready and willing to accept an offer of vocational training beyond other formats of learning. As such, the offer can provide an adequate response.

In a competitive environment in which the nations of the Euro capture new investment which is largely based on the capacity of their workforce, the number of people enrolled in learning processes and ready to learn on a lifelong basis opens the door to empower Portugal with another competitive advantage, to become a learning country.

This is a great change to Portugal's traditional external image, and is useful for marketing the country, while offering the space to accommodate new international investments in fields that do not require intensive labour but intensive knowledge.

In the same line, there is a second dimension relating to a sense of being prepared to have autonomy in the acquisition of new learning (20.8%) and of being aware of the need to learn more (20.4%). All other feelings

Figure F.3 Feeling at the level of professional training



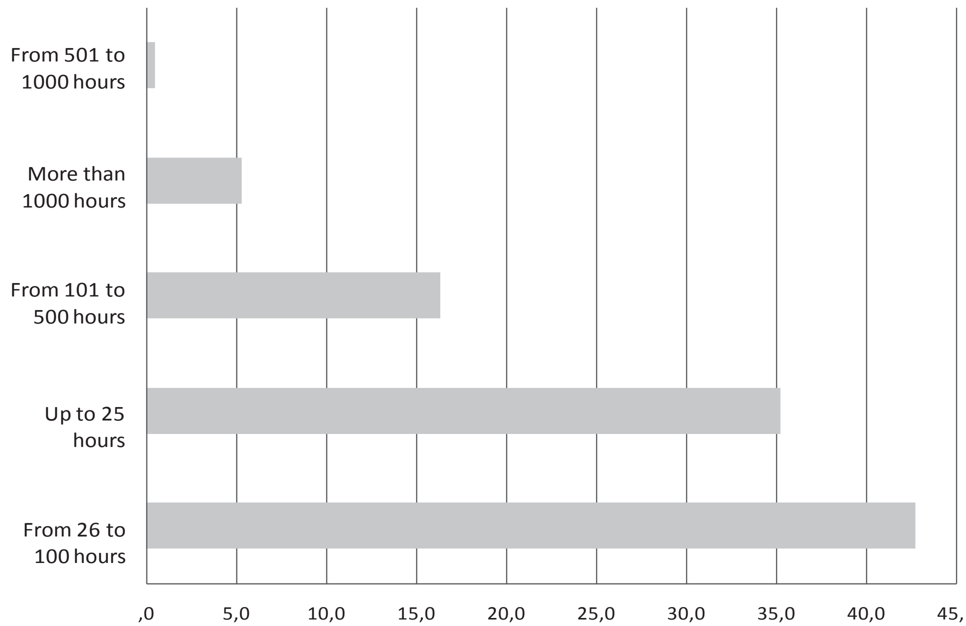
triggered in the context of professional knowledge amounted to only 3.2%, although no further detail is provided.

There was a significant difference ($\chi 2$ sig = 0.002) between levels of qualification, with an emphasis on people with upper secondary education being more willing to receive new training in whatever format. The remaining groups had a symmetrical pattern.

The question then emerged of whether there has been training since the moment when the respondents finished their process at NOI. The 27% of respondents confirming this can be analysed in different ways: the value is certainly much higher than the national average, even if compared to the entire work force; however, it is only half of those who in the previous point expressed readiness to engage in such training. The difference between those who received training and those who are ready to receive it represents the number of people who suffered a loss, which is called an "opportunity cost" to the country.

There was no intergroup difference in terms of the candidate's educational qualification (sig $\chi 2$ = 0.156) or in the chosen NOI path (sig $\chi 2$ = 0.552). Five classes were created: up to 25hours, from 26 to 100h, 101 to 500h,

Figure F.4 Duration of training completed

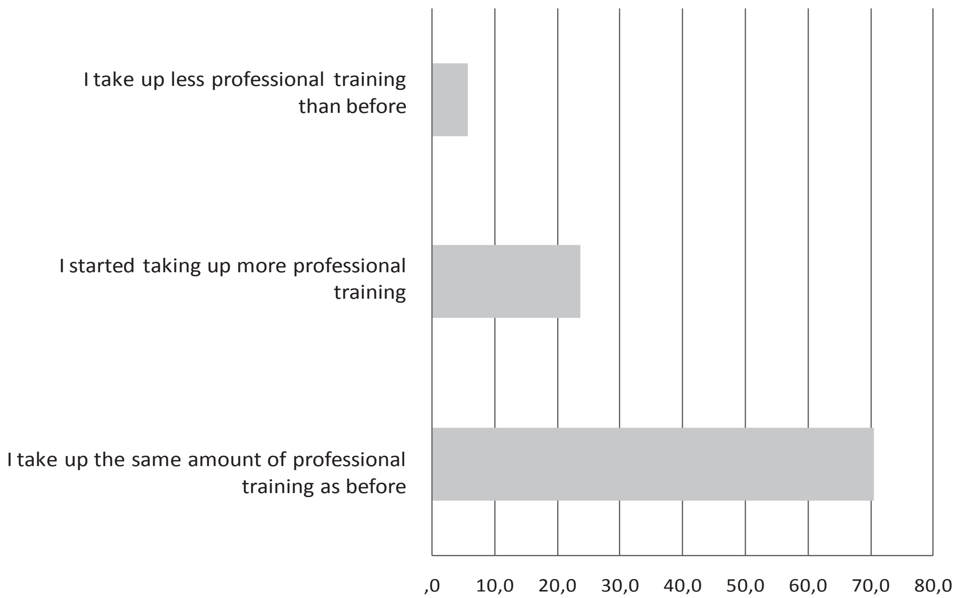


from 501 to 1000h and more than 1000h. The class of 26 to 100h had the highest occurrence rate (42.7% of those receiving professional training), followed by a short training class (35.2%). The figures were much lower for longer classes for about one-fifth of the respondents.

Was training received more or less frequently than before? Respondents were asked to compare the frequency with which they undertook training periods prior to and after NOI. It should be noted that unemployed people and those in similar situations were not included in the analysis; as such, respondents were only those who are currently employed.

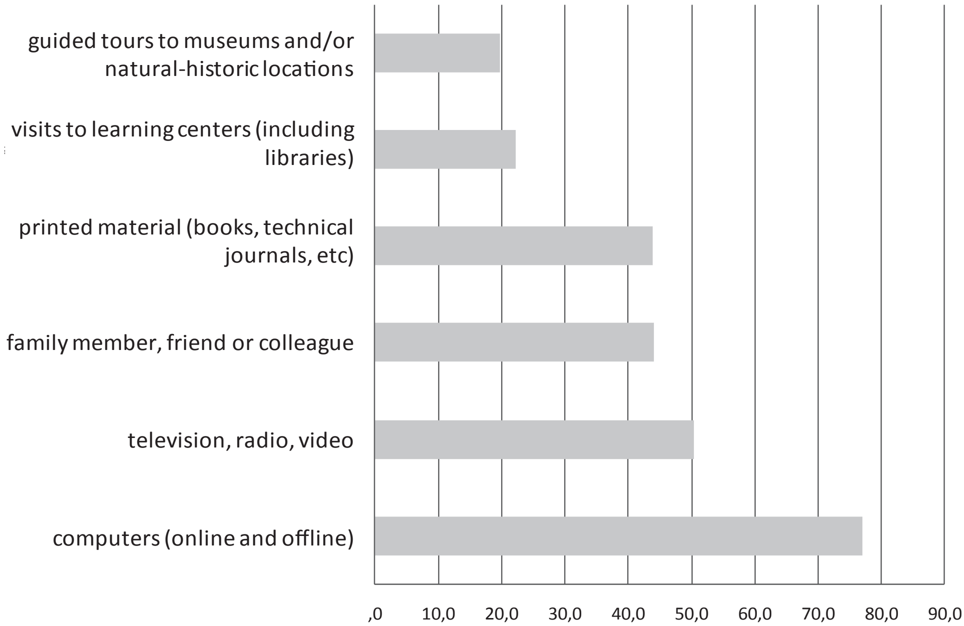
Most respondents maintain the same level of training as before integrating NOI (70.6%), but there are more who increased the level of training (23.7%) than those who decreased it (5.7%). It is presumed that there has been progress but overall returns should be read through another perspective which is that of the national under-utilization of the wish for training: the desire of many workers to progress in the field of vocational training is a national resource which is not being fully exploited.

Figure F.5 Variation in engaging in professional training



Other learning formats, from the perspective of knowledge increase, were then inventoried; even where they do not apply to the workplace, they can provide the resources to improve professional skills. The six classes that stood out during the design tool are listed below. They show that where respondents stated specifically that they "…deliberately tried to devote him/herself to learning…", computers were by far the most popular choice, with a 76.9% preference rate, followed by media and social networks and printed material, all with values over 40%. Those involving physical movement are used by only one fifth of the respondents. Although there is ample room for progress, more than 90% of those who integrated the NOI and are employed sought ways to continue to progress on their own initiative.

Figure F.6 Post-NOI demand for learning



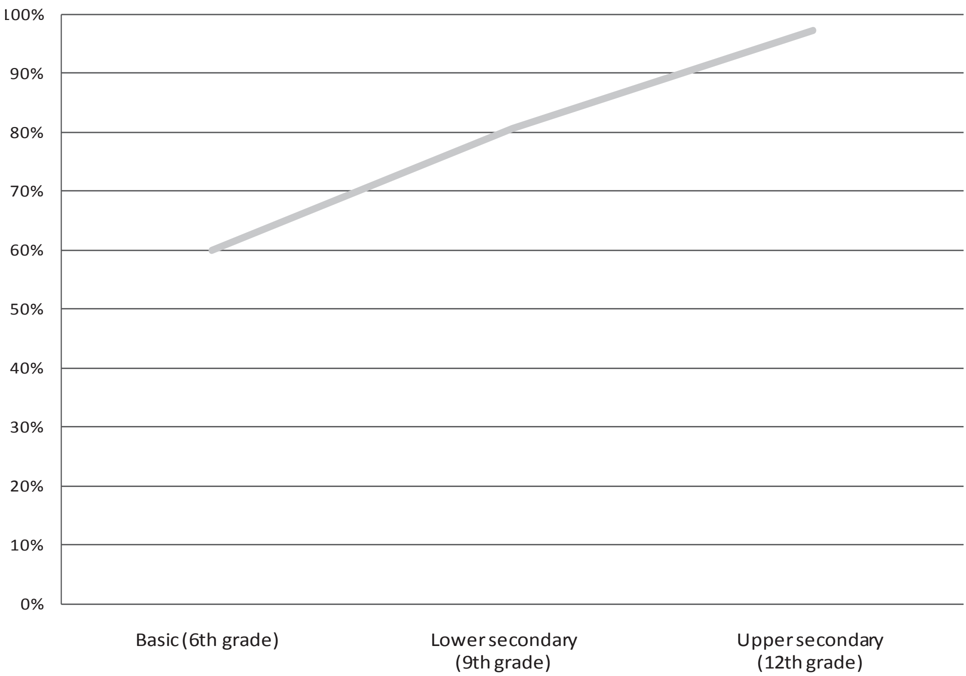
All those with upper secondary level education (12th grade) seem to be more autonomous in the acquisition of knowledge than less qualified groups. Where they initially showed less autonomy in the acquisition of professional knowledge, they now show other trends as citizens: greater search for information on the Internet (sig χ^2 = 0.034), less demand for TV and radio (χ^2 = 0.048 sig).

Much of the effort of NOI has entailed an increase in e-inclusion. A key step for citizens to be able to access a wide range of opportunities is to want and to know how to use the Internet.

More than four-fifths of those who attended NOI are Internet users. There was therefore a significant increase, which is in line with the progressive involvement of the whole society in this context.

There is a significant difference ($\chi 2$ sig = 0.000) in Internet use rates by level of education. Almost all those with upper secondary level education (12^{th} grade) have confirmed Internet use, whereas those with only the basic level (6^{th} grade) showed a slightly below average utilization rate in the past year.

Figure F.7 Rate of Internet by qualification obtained



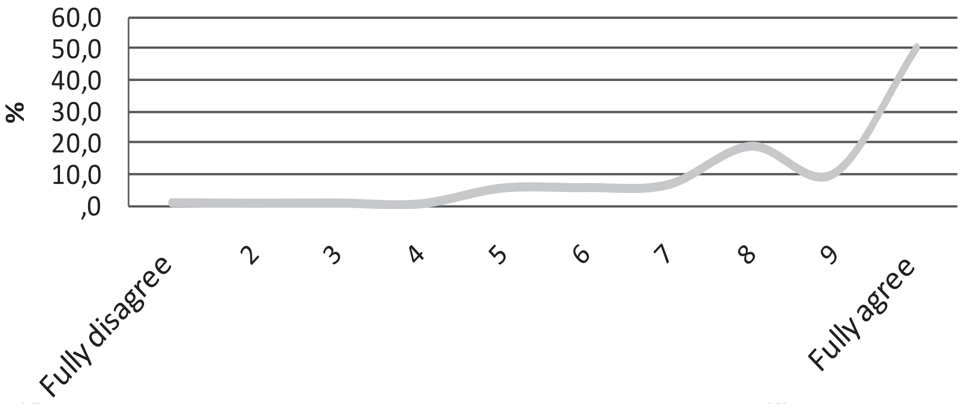
Closely related to this FP (using knowledge as the tool for producing competitive advantages) is the relation between those with schooling in general and their readiness to engage in more learning in their adult life. 1,500 persons (750 integrating NOI and 750 out of NOI) (Lopes, 2009a) were asked about returning to school. Our departing point are public policies; this FP is much more easily applicable if the population is willing to assume the idea that returning to school or to develop the notion of lifelong education are a good thing.

One of the salient facts was that the large majority of respondents, whether integrated in NOI or not, regarded returning to school as something very good. This positive position opens the door for more initiatives like NOI or others to be undertaken, in different areas of learning, thus promoting qualification and certification and, in a very direct application of FP4, creating conditions to solve the economic and social crisis.

The results are especially important for countries with an average economic development such as Portugal, acting as catalyses of knowledge embedded in economic processes.

Respondents were asked whether going back to school as an adult was a good thing, resulting in an average value of 8.70. This shows that there is still great potential for capital enhancement of the training and qualification of the Portuguese population. The values on the negative side of the scale are almost non-existent (NPI[3] 2.3%) and PPI[4] covers four-fifths of the respondents.

Figure F.8 Going back to school as an Adult is very good



The aspects pointed out as advantages during the qualitative phase were listed to understand why people attribute such high values to returning to school as adults. The first relates to improvement at work. The average was 8.50, which supports the presumption that a person with more qualifications can aspire to career advancement.

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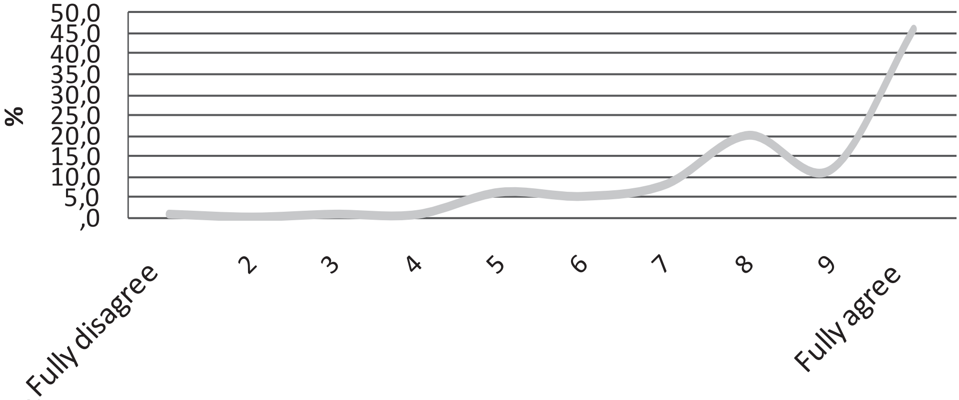
[3] NPI – Negative polarization index.

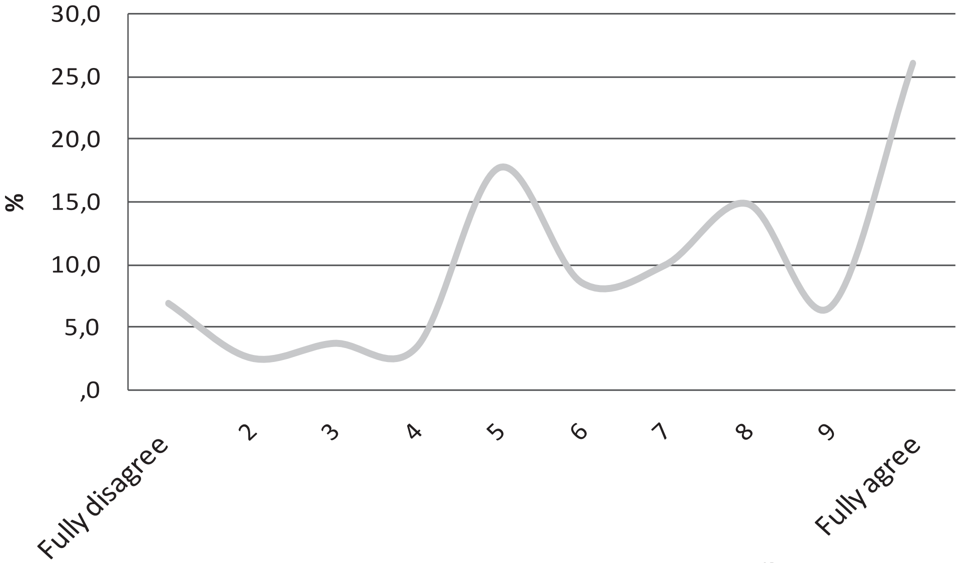
[4] PPI – Positive polarization index.

Figure F.9 Going back to school as an Adult enables improvement of professional career



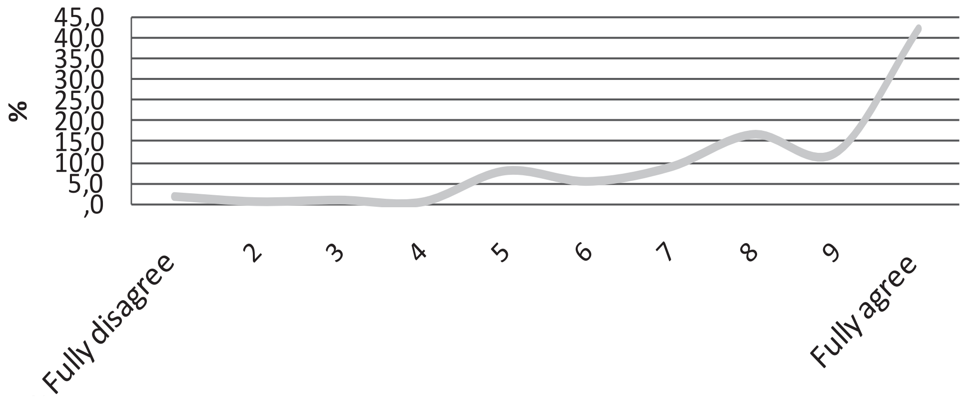
The presumption about better wages is not viewed with the same intensity (an average of 6.84). Since there is no intergroup differentiation, it cannot be attributed to the change in sample composition. At present, the country is experiencing economic pressure, regardless of qualifications. Times are not prone to large wage progression induced by the increase in qualifications. Several trade union struggles are based on this assumption.

Figure F.10 Going back to school as an Adult enables better wages



The issue of self-image is considered, as it relates to the NOI experience. In the first year, the average was very high (of 8.70) among those registered. In the second study, it was found that the average was 8.24 which is still of value to potential new NOI recruits who are certainly sensitive to this argument: the number of those showing extreme sensitivity to this dimension is the majority. Knowing that one can only increase the knowledge embedded in economic processes through the active participation of all participants in the production flow, this aspect becomes a key element in attracting workers in a positive, constructive and catalytic way.

Figure F.11 Completing or attaining new levels of education improves self-image



Also related to the awareness of self-image is the image which is induced by relevant peers. Among these, family as the core of society's basic organisation will be the most relevant. The average value (7.10) is not as high as that of general self-image. This is to be expected since family relationships are much broader and more complex than the images perceived by its members. However, being one of many dimensions, this element is of the utmost importance. The distribution reported herein supports the intuitions drawn in the previous report that this will be one of the dimensions (although not the main communication axis) to use to communicate reasons for attracting new members.

Another way of viewing this FP applied to adult education is to understand school as a place of knowledge sharing. In adult education and related training processes there are significant differences between students: different professions, different life experiences, and different ages; in fact, differences in almost everything. As such, adult education programmes such as NOI largely promote intercultural experience or, in other words, diversity, the true engine for embedding knowledge in each “service encounter”. This is true for provider-customer acts as well as for acts within the process.

FP5: *All economies are service economies*

As seen in previous FP, S-D Logic is established on the basis of the relationship between goods and services that reverses the previous trend that services are intended to assist in the production and distribution of industrial and agricultural goods.

The question has an historical genesis relating to a series of “economic eras”. It expressed the heart of the economy and form of social organisation in each historical phase. This does not mean that all productive formats have not existed in every age in agricultural, industrial and service sectors. They co-existed, promoting one of them when it was most relevant to the human being and to its economic function.

It began with an “Agricultural Era” which dominated until the industrial revolution. Adam Smith marked the beginning of the “Industrial Era”. Modern times correspond to the beginning of the “Services Era”. The transition from the Industrial Era to the Services Era represents the transition from a goods-dominant (GD) logic to a service-dominant (S-D) logic.

To understand the business, one must look at the form of organisation, degree of labour specialisation and prevailing technologies. During the Agricultural Era, the worker would execute the entire the production process, from planting to selling the products (macro-specialisation) and acquiring products and services for food production, often for survival. In the Industrial Era, labour specialisation emerged in order to foster scale economies. Job knowledge and skills, the main focus for industry and agriculture, would ensure productive workers, whereas services were designed to support production and industrial distribution.

Knowledge of ICT became the technology that largely determined efficiency and responsiveness of an economy in a Services Era: ICT allows greater interaction with the market (the phenomenon of learning and testing innovation opportunities) and the generation and distribution of knowledge. By acquiring this additional knowledge, it is possible to embed more knowledge in the products, potentially rendering them more successful in the market.

The nature of this promise is not directly related to NOI, nor can it be tested through NOI's samples' assessment studies. However, one may assess the contribution of NOI for improving ICT knowledge among those enrolled in the initiative. Assuming FP5 to be true, more ICT qualified workers leads to a better work force in the Service Era.

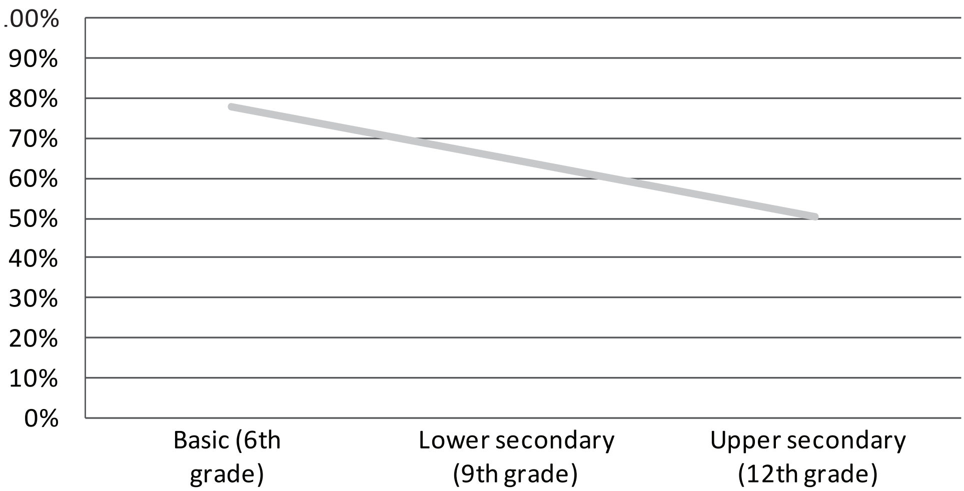
From the beginning, NOI has given special attention to ICT, attracting people who otherwise would not have used ICT, predisposing those who wish to learn more and be more open to the world. The result is that a large mass, highly representative of the working population, is being orientated towards this key technology.

Most people who use the Internet attributed this to their engagement with NOI, which suggests that around two-thirds have not used it before. In social terms, NOI triples the rate of Internet usage.

However, initiation to Internet usage largely depended on the level of education sought. People who seek higher education degrees *a priori* have different horizons.

The practical consequence in relation to the topic under consideration is that the incremental value evolves inversely to the level of education pursued: while 80% of those in the second cycle accessed the Internet for the first time, the percentage in the secondary cycle was only 40%. The degree of statistical significance was maximum (sig $\chi 2$ = 0.000).

Figure F.12 First internet usage rate due to NOI

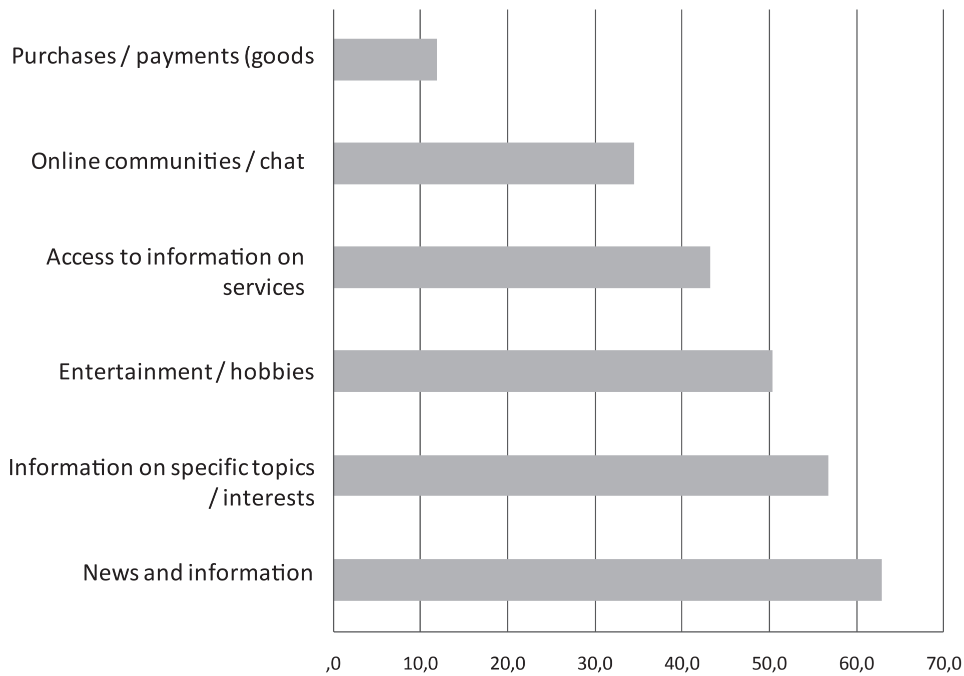


As for Internet usage goals, it is noted that the vast majority of people uses it for personal and professional purposes and only 9% for work purposes. There was no intergroup difference as regards the chosen NOI path or level of qualification.

A comparative reading of Internet usage shows that, in general, there has been greater use of associated tools. To a large extent, this is due to the fact that the group of Internet users has grown substantially. Overall, there were no intergroup distinctions by level of education, with the exception of consulting and information services (χ^2 sig = 0.004), for which those with upper secondary level education demand a more intensive use than those with lower education levels.

We cannot attribute the entire linear increase of the group categories under analysis to the fact that they have engaged with NOI, for Portuguese society (as most countries) promoted the use of digital tools.

Figure F.13 Personal use of the internet



In order to further clarify this point, each person was asked to indicate whether they had changed their behaviour, when comparing the periods before and after engaging with NOI. Over 60% recognized that a change had occurred.

The usage intensity rate is also very interesting: almost 60% of respondents became daily users). Those with upper secondary level education had a much higher usage rate than those with other educational levels, which, in turn, resulted in a high differentiation between groups in terms of schooling levels ($\chi2$ sig = 0.000).

One of the most important issues for public policies management based on evidences is the contribution of proactive measures to increase ICT use. NOI includes the "e-opportunities programme"[5] which gave people computers and Internet access. In other words, pro-activity derives from not depending on people's monetary power to buy the computer or to pay commercial broad bands. The only dependence lies in personal motivation to use it.

This e-opportunities programme is of major importance, reporting 72% of use by the NOI population.

Again, a great difference between educational levels was registered (sig $\chi2$ = 0.000), with a larger use being reported among those who have completed the upper secondary level. This is easily explained by the contents of the training programmes: those who want to finish the upper secondary level must use computers and Internet to be able to complete the training programme, whereas those in the basic or lower secondary levels do not have so many ICT needs for the formal recognition of their educational levels. Other sociological issues could also be contributing to the intergroup differentiation.

FP6: *The customer is always a co-producer*

The difference in customer relationship between the model under discussion and the classical model lies in the way the consumer is regarded. In the classical model (goods' dominance), consumers are a "target" that companies aim to reach and manage, and somehow manipulate the effect of sale. Knowledge is essential in this model for those who sell proactively.

In the S-D Logic model, the consumer is understood interactively, thus becoming a "co-producer" in the process of entering and interacting with the

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[5] People engaged in NOI were offered a laptop at a symbolic price as well as Internet broad band connection for 3 years.

market. Production is just an intermediate element of the process, useful to the market, which means that the acquisition of the good does not exhaust the exchange process, but is only its starting point. For example, when a consumer buys a computer, this acquisition merely initiates the process of generating value. The consumer will have to learn how to use the machine and maintain and develop it. The way customers will use the product or service will determine the future of their applications, determining the finding of new applications and ways of using the initial proposal of the selling company.

The essence of a service-dominant logic is clearly pointed by Lusch & Vargo (2009):

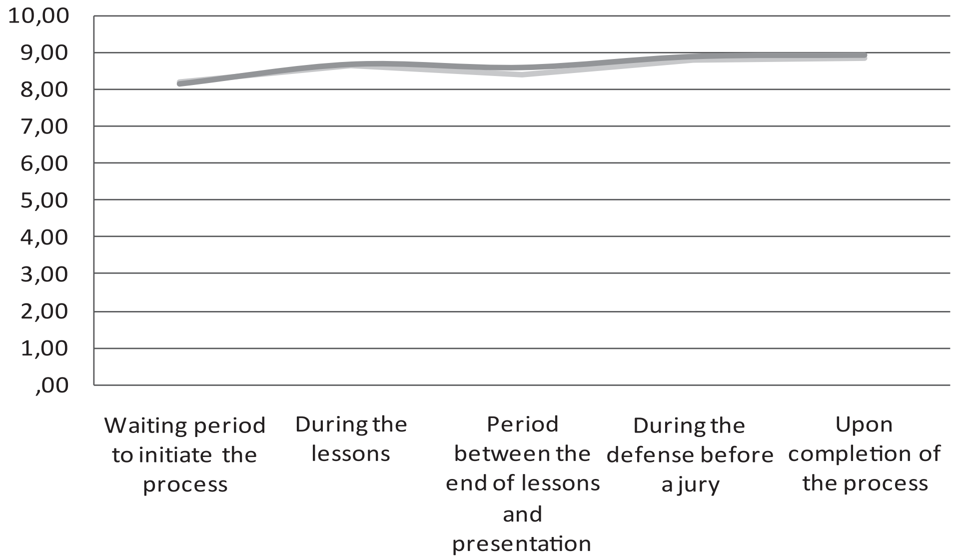
> With the rise of a network economy, customers are part of an extended enterprise and co-producers of the firm's marketing process. Enterprises need to learn not to fear it but embrace it as a healthy part of a highly networked market economy. Inbound marketing is made more effective, efficient and complete when customers are viewed as partners to be "marketing with" or "co-creators of value" (p. 2).

We can analyse this FP in two ways: those enrolled are customers that co-produce with NOI's team (the service deliver), or, through certification via NOI, people are able to co-create in better ways with their own customers at their work.

For the first possibility (NOI as a co-creation process), the satisfaction index of those enrolled could be taken as a good proxy because it condenses the overall perception on service quality and on value-for-money, even in the case of non-monetary dimensions of evaluation.

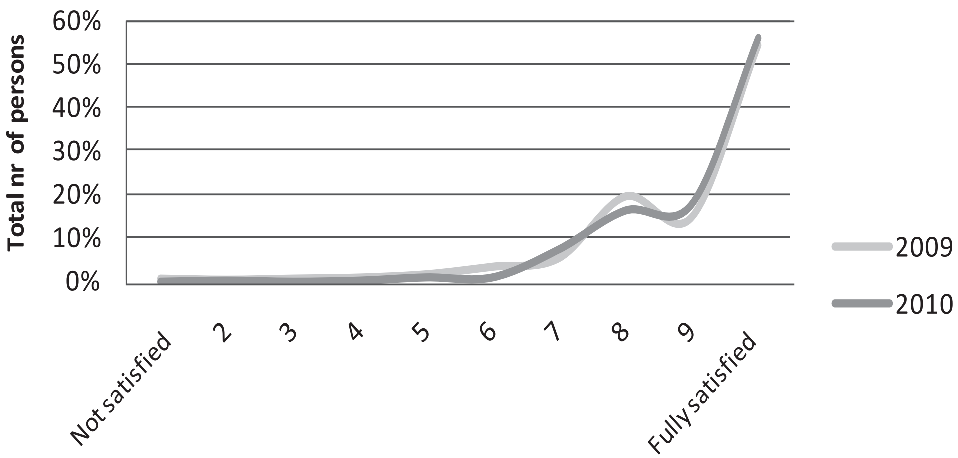
As regards NOI, the satisfaction rate reported by some 808 people who completed the entire process and were randomly selected is very high (Lopes, 2010b). The lines representing the distributions in 2009 and 2010 essentially overlap, showing that fluctuations are more the result of the process itself than of specific performances at any step of the process. We may wonder what the satisfaction rate is in each sub-phase of the NOI process; there were small fluctuations, as expected, in cases of personal management of anxiety and self-image.

Figure F.14 Fluctuation during the process



Note: Question posed to those who completed the entire process; 2009 n = 406 and n 2010 = 402

Figure F.15 Overall satisfaction



Note: Question posed to those who completed the entire process; 2009 n = 406 and n 2010 = 402

Another proxy to assess whether NOI represented something important in the lives of those who undertook the process is to ask them for an evaluation as regards the degree of importance of this experience for them. The result is that the vast majority of people (almost three -quarters) stated that it had been of the utmost importance. A second element worth mentioning is that there are no records on the left side of the scale.

The second reading of this FP (co-creation phenomenon between those certified via NOI and their clients) is more complex. So far, studies that have focused on NOI did not reflect upon the effects of the new certification and/or qualification of workers on their clients, so we cannot properly assess any impact on economic processes.

One may only speculate, based on, the fact that leaders of large companies with a high percentage of workers engaged in NOI reported improvement in the performance of their employees.

Based on employers' declarations as well as on many in-depth interviews during the qualitative phase, we are led to believe that engaging in NOI-like programmes is conducive to the existence of FP6 in this second meaning. However, this is an area that needs further investigation in the context of adult work learning.

FP7: *The enterprise can only make value propositions*

One of the biggest problems in proposals that companies present to the market concerns succeeding in transforming the value embedded in products or services (value in exchange) into something useful (value in use). The best example of FP7 is a product or service provided by a company to the market which does not sell because it does not entail any gain for the consumer or because it deteriorates before it is sold. In this case, all knowledge embedded in the supply and cost of production and distribution is transformed into a loss.

There is only real value when the consumer purchases the product or service and gives it a sense of use and usefulness. This implies that FP7 application can be a great incentive to innovate, to produce and distribute in the correct way, but if you cannot be effective enough to persuade consumers to use the product or service acquired then you will not generate value. According to FP7, this will be one of the dimensions of comparison with other competitors.

Many other dimensions of FP7 could be investigated at more abstract levels of supply: e.g. in fashion, products or services are accepted by consumers and integrated into daily practices, etc.; as well as consumers' reaction as social actors in the non-monetary market of services. In other words, this leads to a discussion on operand and operant resources: those targeted by NOI are operant resources (which generate benefits through the improvement of competences and skills).

Indirect measurements of how people grasp the learning received and apply it in their personal or professional lives are still contradictory and superficial. So far, 4,500 people have been interviewed on this topic, revealing positive developments as regards some non-monetary services, especially those relating to citizenship (becoming a better spouse, better father, better guardian, more aware of the news and events in society, etc.), and negative impacts on other dimensions (less engagement, less cultural participation and consumption, etc.).

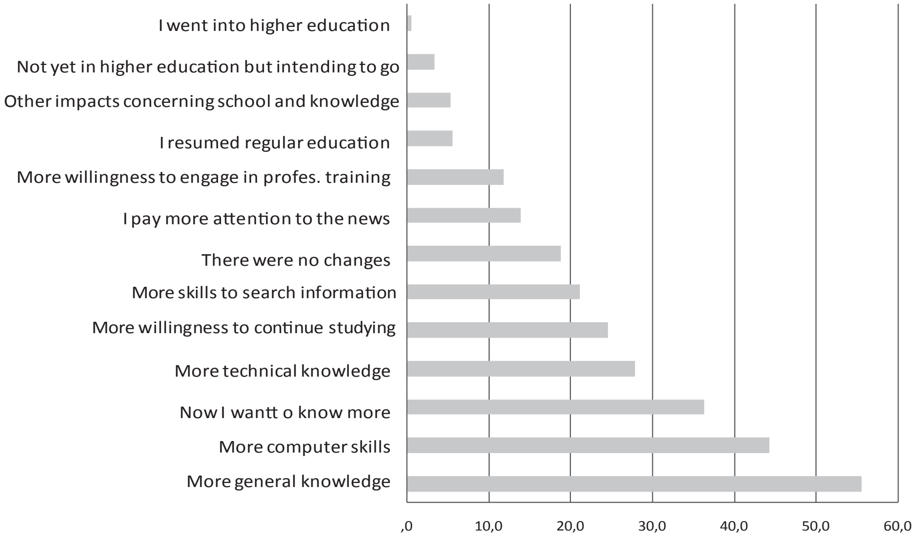
Illustrating the above ideas:

There is a widespread feeling that people engage in NOI to acquire more knowledge, even though it is a certification process and not necessarily a learning process. In this line, the most salient aspect is the acquisition of general education, with 55.5% of respondents mentioning it. More than 25% express knowledge increase in terms of information technology, technical expertise and willingness to continue studying. Both situations could be read as operant resources' improvements. It is very interesting to note that 0.5% had already entered university and 3.5% are now more inclined to do so.

The number of people who felt that there was no impact of the training objectives was only 18%. Furthermore, many respondents had already abundant previous training that could be used for the RVCC accreditation process, thus avoiding the need for complementary training.

One cannot speak of a systematic differentiation between educational levels, but there were some cases of separation between groups. A comprehensive reading indicates that people who have completed the upper secondary level report higher rates of knowledge acquisition in general (sig $\chi 2 = 0.001$ to 0.055 indicators with differentiation), and those who completed other cycles have made major gains in computer use (sig $\chi 2 = 0.016$ to 0.052 indicators with differentiation). The difference is easily explained by the

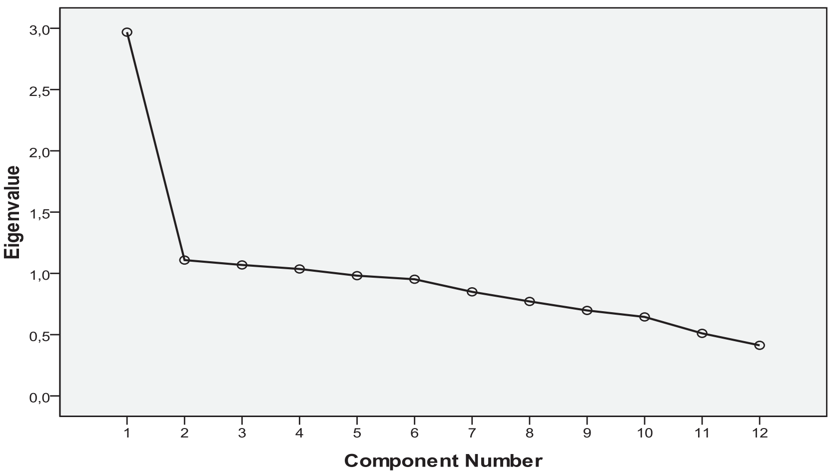
Figure F.16 Objective impacts of NOI



requirements of RVCC and EFA protocols which reinforce the idea of oper- and resources progress in all groups.

There was an attempt to study the relationships between categories by factor analysis. The study identified the existence of four factors under the Kaiser norm but, in reality, it expressed a dominant factor and a secondary beam of three elements according to the standard interpretation of "stress value".

Figure F.17 Scree Plot



Analysis of array overruns in factors after varimax rotation reveals that there is a dominant element representing the acquisition of new knowledge within the NOI process. This is followed by a particularization of the education desired with the beam of the other three factors: desire to continue studying (factor 2), and to return to education, whether higher education or not (factor 3) and higher education (factor 4). It is very interesting to see that the lack of educational gains negatively impacts on the first factor, reinforcing the above interpretation.

Table F.1 Rotated Component Matrix (Rotation converged in 6 iterations)

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
I went into higher education	,081	–,035	,271	–,688
Not yet in higher education but intending to go	,092	,069	,386	,585
I resumed regular education	,066	–,007	–,830	,083
More technical knowledge	,569	–,144	–,029	,333
More general knowledge	,760	,026	–,040	–,062
More computer skills	,713	,002	,094	,065
More skills to serach for information	,560	,132	,312	,220
Now I want to know more	,536	,321	,052	–,145
I pay more attention to the news	,385	,227	–,055	–,101
More willingness to continue to study	,173	,712	,125	–,071
More willingness to engage in professional training	,037	,741	–,080	,181
There were no changes	–,719	–,241	,183	,036

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

FP8: *A service centred view is customer oriented and relational*

As Vargo (2009) wrote:

> "Relationships, by any definition, are not limited to dyads but rather are nested within networks of relationships and occur between networks of relationships. These networks are not static entities but rather dynamic systems, which work together to achieve mutual benefit (value) through service provision (…) for the purpose of maximizing CLV[6] (…). The one-

[6] Customer life value.

> time buyer, the occasional supplier, the interested, non-purchaser, the aspiration purchaser, incidental customers, etc., as well as the social context (MacNeil's (1980) "social matrix") are all part of the value-creation milieu and are collectively often as (if not more) important as long-term providers and long-term customers. This whole value-creation configuration must be understood and dealt with for effective customer-relationship management to be possible. (…) Fortunately, many of the insights necessary for this understanding can be found in the sub-disciplines and alternative lenses for understanding various aspects of marketing. (…) I suggest that S-D logic provides a macro lens for development of this market view, though a transcending meaning of relationship in terms of mutual value-creation through mutual service provision" (p. 378).

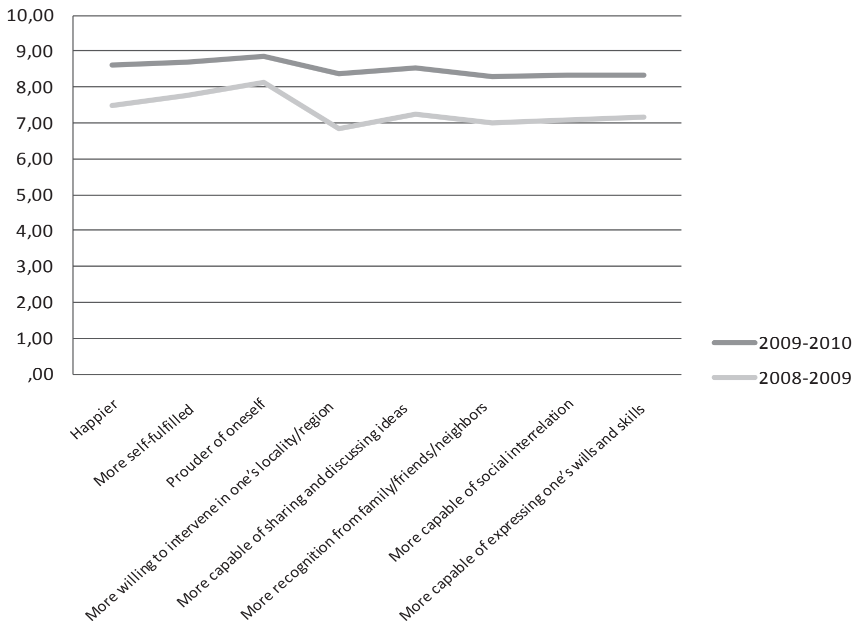
In our view, education, and especially adult education, could be seen as one of the sub-disciplines that help to understand such a complex phenomenon. The last 50 years have shown that firms seeking market success had to abandon a passive attitude towards goods' production to adopt a growing involvement with consumers and stakeholders, which became even truer for those who did not have products to sell (services). Historically, there was a first attempt to collect data about the consumer, later on, about satisfaction and more recently about the relationship throughout the value chain and marketing relationship. Where the model allows for the creation of value through the phenomenon of co-creation with the consumer, the relationship with the consumer is not merely one of a marketing approach to achieve success in the market but a way to maximize value for all parties. S-D Logic's authors argue that this FP is not new: it is just a throwback to the early days of pre-industrial revolution industries, where sellers would contact their customers directly. For example, a manufacturer of carts would hear what his client had to say about the product, and would then discuss the production details. Even during the manufacturing process, it would be possible to gather opinions, suggestions and other contributions from the clients so that the cart would better serve their desires (higher value creation).

Last but not least, another aspect of this FP concerns the finding that purchase goods and services that often require pre-sale and post-sale (cars, Internet, computers, etc.) leading to the products themselves are increasingly interactive services, which means that the importance of the relationship with the customer is growing, requiring careful management.

As declared by the authors, to achieve market success it is necessary to demonstrate customer orientation and relational capabilities. For this FP's first dimension, we do not find any direct measurement in the assessment used for NOI's evaluation for the National Agency. For its second dimension, we hold some insightful data.

Moving on to the elements of the Self, reported values are giving rise to a new class of operant resources: those that enable the individual to become a better social and relational actor. Dwelling on some internal improvements: the individual becomes able to take higher risks, more socially involved, develops more self-esteem; and these conditions are the basis for engaging in entrepreneurship as a type of meta-operant resources[7]. We assume all critiques of this interpretation considering that Vargo and Lusch never made any reference to meta-resources; however, given that education is the object of the present chapter, it seems possible to discuss this idea.

Figure F.18 Self-improvements – samples averages

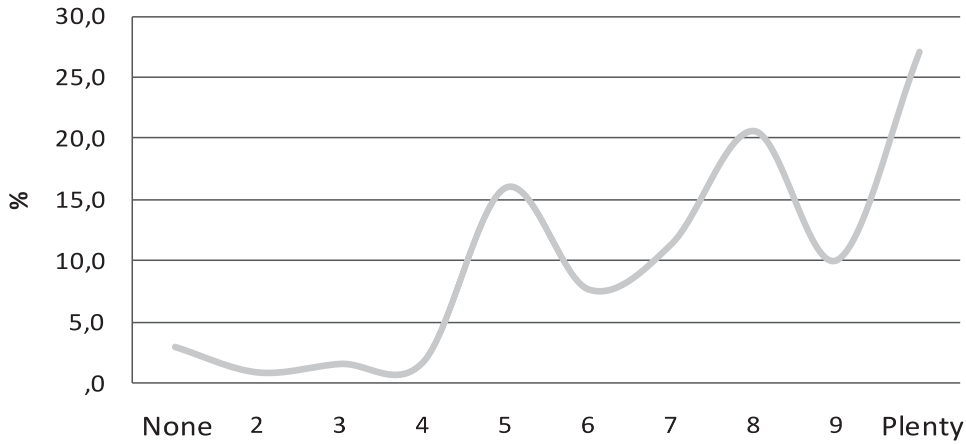


As important as the average is the form of distributions of those meta-operand resources. The first analysis focused on the increase in the feeling of happiness induced by engaging in NOI. The gain remains unequivocal,

[7] The concept of meta-operand resources is proposed as expressing the conditions at the individual level for the emergence of the competences and skills of operand resources.

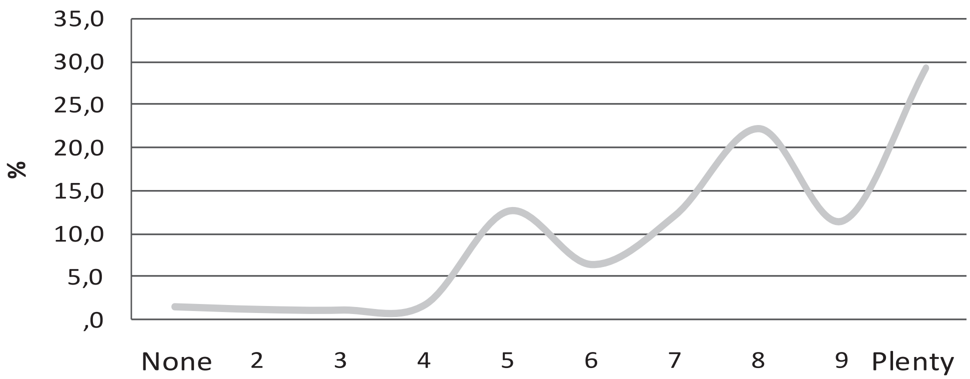
but there are two sub-groups that are not so positive. The first sub-group, represented by those in the negative region, is a very small but extreme group because ultimately it reflects those positions on the average, especially those affecting the standard deviation. The second sub-group, much larger as a score of distribution centre, expresses a nearly identical result. A happier person is a more positive person, and a positive person is someone who takes much greater risks which may lead to that person becoming an entrepreneur.

Figure F.19 Recognition of increased happiness



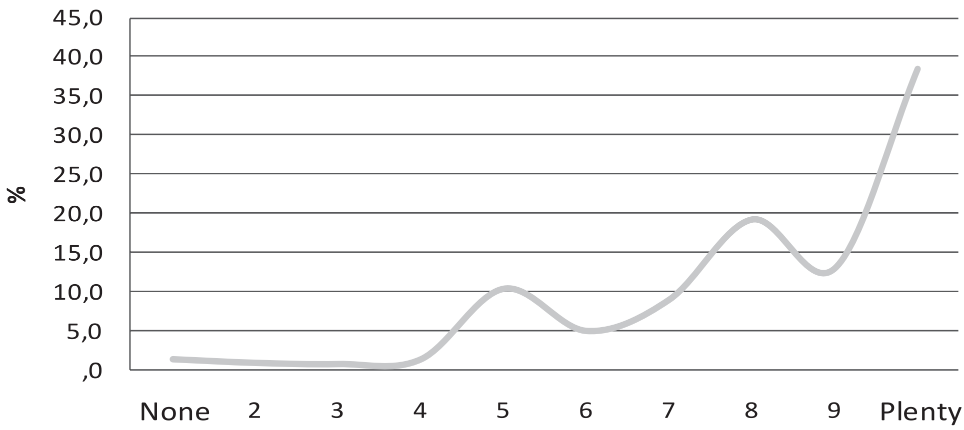
The recognition of personal achievement follows the same pattern, with the positive difference that there is no extreme negative group. This meta-operant condition shows the same distribution shape as the first condition.

Figure F.20 Recognition of increased personal accomplishment



The feeling of self-pride still shows remarkable positivity. This can easily be explained by the type of feeling in question, which explains why there is also a significant group in the extreme right side of the distribution. The placing of self-pride as a meta-operand resource shows an evolution that is similar to the previous condition.

Figure F.21 Recognition of increased self-pride

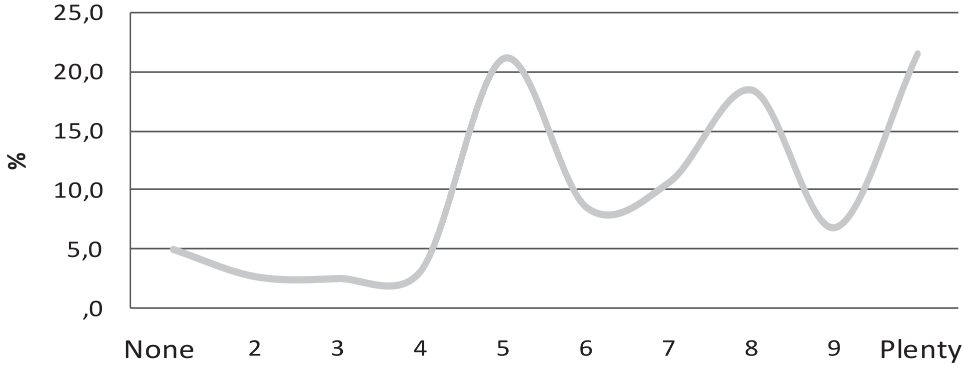


When stepping outside the individual and subjective reality of the individual to enter the realm of volition, one can observe an immediate change in the shape of the distribution, with an increment in the left side which corresponds to the simultaneous decline of extreme positivity. Yet a reading in terms of citizenship is of relevance in respect to NOI, where certification of the workforce becomes a tool for increasing citizenship. This seems to be another meta-operand resource, but with higher expression in FP9, which places the person as a social SCM (supply chain management) of the value network[8].

The idea persists that NOI could be a tool with acceptable performance to improve this dimension of social participation.

[8] Value network is a concept emerging from the S-D Logic theory (Lusch, Vargo & Tanniru 2010), where the economic actors interact with organisations and technical structures. Here, the concept is used at the individual level, taking the person as an economic actor and the country as the structure where economic actors interact.

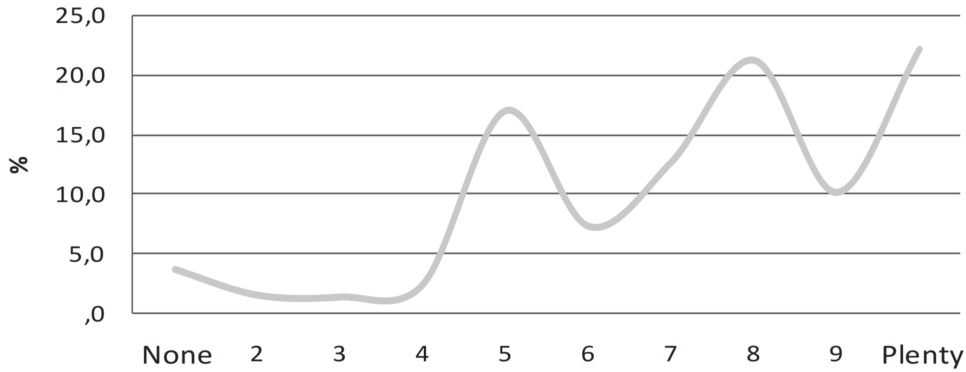
Figure F.22 Recognition of increased willingness for social participation



The data distribution above is in line with the idea that someone who is better qualified is also potentially a better citizen and this occurs through greater social intervention. On the other side, integration in the social structure depends on the citizen's social participation and this is the core of the integration of economic structures in a matrix of SCM organisations.

The next point incorporates the aspects discussed before: cognition, emotion and volition. This may be why its distribution corresponds to the average distribution of the two previous situations. All that was said on the previous point and Value Network could be extended to this paragraph.

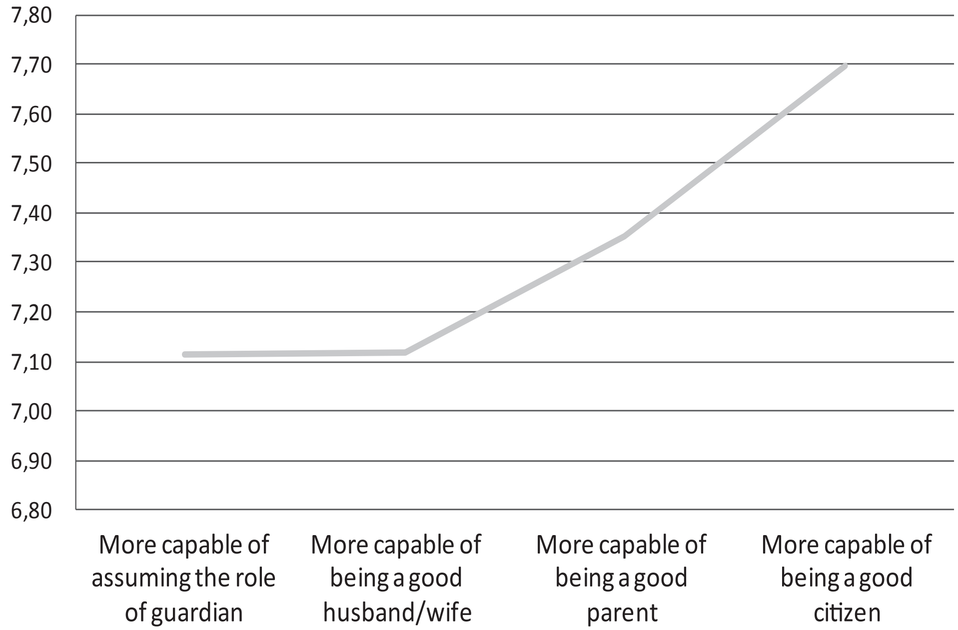
Figure F.23 Recognition of increased willingness to share ideas



Where the person is seen as the physical support of society's operand resources and the personal inner conditions as meta-operand resources, society could be seen as a large matrix where people and structures (economic and non-economic) created by them interact, producing, on the one hand, the economic structure and, on the other, the societal structures, with some parallel to Bourdieu's "campus" concept.

Close relational capabilities depend partially on the Self. We have measured some other aspects of the Self geared towards living within our network of close contacts. The pattern of results was very close to the remaining elements of the Self: average scores between 7 and 8 points (over 10) and a standard deviation between 2 and 3 points.

Figure F.24 Self-improvements



All four categories focused on better skills related to school, marital and parental relations, and society. It is interesting to observe how the lowest value is reported as regards improvement of skills as a guardian, *a priori* the category which is closest to the concept behind NOI. At the opposite pole, we find an increase in responsibilities as a citizen.

Quite surprisingly, one can ascertain that, in terms of differentiation, there is no difference between study cycles, which would be to be expected, given the length and diversity of the training required to obtain the secondary level. However, there is no difference.

The study of the relationship with the exterior was assessed by asking the interviewees to award a value to the periods before and after entering NOI. Both distributions are listed below. The difference between the lines corresponds to gains or losses. It seems that the negative side of the scale holds the dominant distribution for the period before NOI, whereas for the period following NOI, the line in the positive side of this scale prevails, representing those who are the most outgoing.

A qualitative reading indicates that there will be a real improvement in the use of information, both quantitatively and qualitatively, which will amount to learning behaviours, reflecting on to the various dimensions of the lives of those involved in NOI. It is, however, too early to draw firm and definitive indications of change; only with in-depth research will it be possible to draw a complete frame.

FP9: *All social and economic actors are resource integrators*

This idea encompasses the principle that nothing or almost nothing is done by the individual who is isolated from society. Those who expose and share ideas are those who build value propositions and transform them into value. For example, an individual may have the better idea of the history of mankind, but, by keeping it to himself, the idea will never be of value for society as a whole.

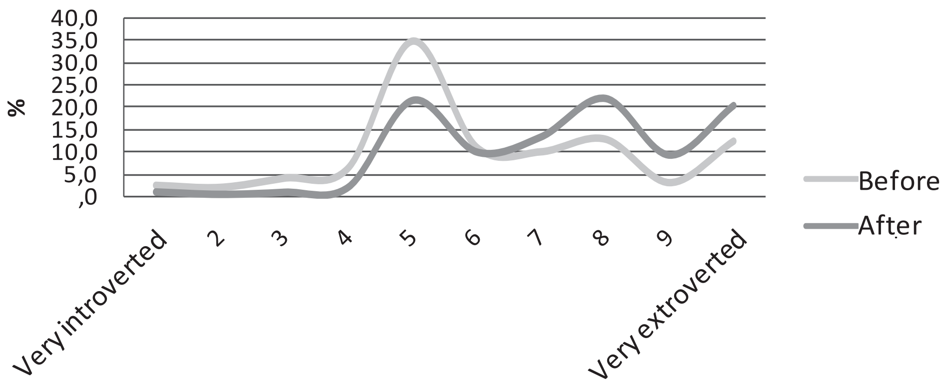
One can also go one step further and bet on the dialectics of knowledge building on a remote invocation of the Gestalt theory in which the whole is more than the sum of its parts. For Vargo & Lusch, the creation of this FP in 2008 was intended to specify the old assumptions about where the integration of knowledge in economic processes could be performed individually or within organisations. For example, a person may contribute to the enrichment of the productive flow by introducing innovation, applied knowledge (technical), management or others in the same way that a company may bring value to society by providing goods or services to be integrated into other production processes or for final consumption.

This FP moves from the traditional approach by specific level of the economy in dyads (offer-demand / provider-customers / etc.) to a network of SCM. In other words, in the past (but also in the present) concepts like B2B or B2C, etc., were used. According to this premise, all are transformed into A2A (actor to actor) (Vargo & Lusch, 2010).

Current discussions are interested in showing the importance of existing training and learning procedures to stimulate the opening of knowledge from each person to the next. This requires ways of providing more knowledge (traditional learning) and of lowering each person's self-limitations that act as barriers to exposing their knowledge and ideas before others. In other words, extraversion and self-confidence are the catalytic formats of each individual that enhance the process of value creation.

These communication dimensions were measured in NOI's sample (Lopes, 2010c) by asking respondents for an evaluation on a ten-point scale of the periods before and after NOI. The distribution shows an evolution towards more extroversion, thus moving respondents to the more positive side of the distribution.

Figure F.25 Recognition of levels of introversion/extroversion



Intergroup differentiation could be observed between respondents who had completed lower secondary school and demonstrated greater extroversion before entering NOI (sig $\chi 2 = 0.025$), and the remaining cycles, (sig $\chi 2 = 0.308$) where, in the later stage, there is an increase in their level of extroversion, and people with upper high school had improved their scores compared to the initial stage of NOI.

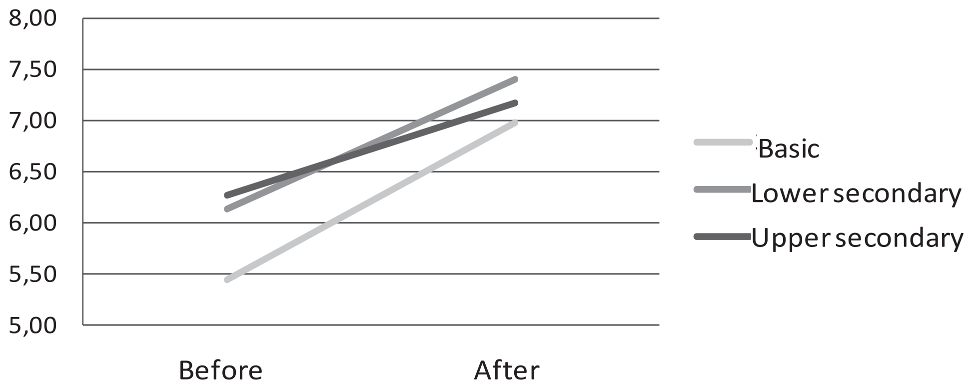
A more extroverted person (by definition) would more easily share ideas in any context. In the work space, there is the potential to transform critiques into productive outputs, as in the social matrix, there is potential to increase citizenship.

An analysis by education level shows that the greatest improvement occurs in the lowest grade (6th year – basic). In the beginning, groups are separated according to the order of the levels that they want to achieve (the nearest to the final cycle where they remain at that time). After completing NOI, all groups increased their extroversion levels; however, respondents from the basic level showed the best progress, followed by the lower secondary (that surpasses the upper secondary). The least progress, in absolute and relative terms, is found among respondents with upper secondary level education.

Data show that NOI is a very efficient tool as a public policy to increase the extroversion levels of a social group, even at national level.

Doubts remain as to the duration of the extroversion promoted by NOI. If the improvement follows the Hawthorn effect[9] paradigm in the work context, it is expected that it will begin to decrease after some months or years. One thing is certain and important: it does not follow Hawthorn's educational paradigm which expects very short improvements (Clark & Sugrue, 1991) or no effect at all (Nisbett, i.e.), given that the time between NOI completion and the interview would dissolve any first impact. This means that the impact on extroversion levels is deeper, affecting (positively) the inner person.

Figure F.26 Changes in extroversion levels



Taking a wider view of public policy, there are potential positive externalities deriving from the above, insofar as extroversion is associated with a much wider range of dimensions: economy (e.g. the customer's mood is one

[9] The Hawthorn effect was proposed in 1950 by Landsberger to describe the stimulation promoted by novelty over labour conditions. Its name comes from a famous experience carried out between 1924 and 1932.

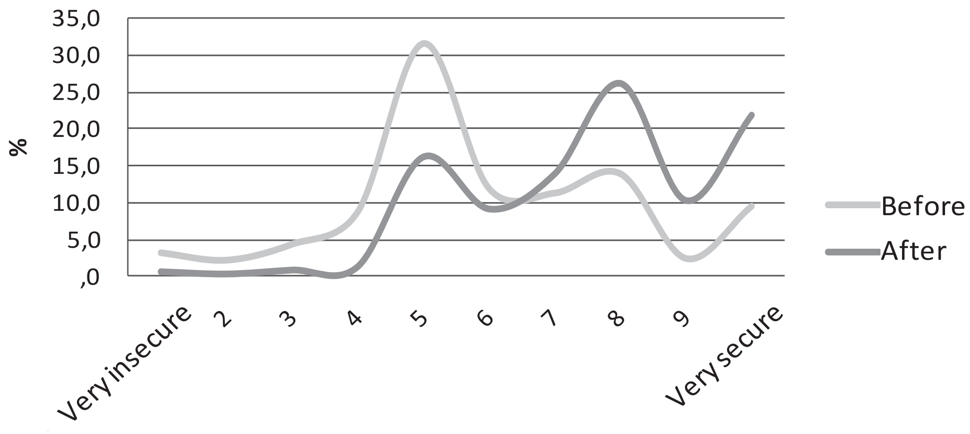
of the main indicators in economic market future analysis), healthcare (an extroverted and positive person is a better and less expensive patient), etc.

Another way of examining this issue is to evaluate the changes occurring internally in a study comparing each subject individually, creating a scale from -9 to +9, in which the negative side is defined as greater introversion and the positive side as greater extroversion. There were virtually no reports of greater introversion following the NOI process. Most do not report changes and a large group progresses from 1 to 3 points. More detail on this issue could be obtained by using the clinic approach; however, this is not the purpose of this research.

Despite the small improvement in absolute numbers, we should point out that: 1- The effect is null or positive, never negative; 2- The authors have no knowledge of any experiences to improve extroversion levels of very large populations. So, we do not know whether 1 point represents a small or a deep impact.

A procedure that is identical to that which analyses the introversion-extroversion dimension was applied to the feeling of security. The parallelism of distribution is the same.

Figure F.27 Recognition of self-security levels



Like extroversion, self-confidence allows a person to better integrate the dynamics of society. Namely, by becoming more confident the person becomes better able to overcome the economic crisis at a personal level (more positive thinking, looking to the future) and as a member of the community (for example, not delaying buyer behaviour in long term assets). This is also a positive quality for entrepreneurs: only those who are self-assured take the risk of investment. As depicted in the graph, NOI contributes to the social improvement of one's sense of security.

Data on extroversion and self-confidence increases bring us to the discussion of the possibility of improvements in networking, since both attributes are facilitators of co-operation at work.

If people are engaged in professional networks, they are potentially better placed to meet the new challenges posed by the economy.

In the same way, the social acts telescopically improve children and young person's learning processes, since people's declarations on those matters are clearer.

Online professional and knowledge communities and many other forms of online sharing networks represent potential tools for improving the economy. Notwithstanding the consequence of and the evidence of the empirical data presented here, it is impossible to establish a measurable link between online network inclusion and economic improvement or efficiency.

One can only speculate about a type of "co-operative advantage" in parallel to the traditional "competitive advantage". Countries with traditions of high levels of co-operation, even in old competitors such as Sweden, Singapore or Finland, remain among the richest of the planet. On the other hand, countries where competition is the rule do not fare so well in the on-going economic crisis.

The idea underlying FP9 is that each organisational level (person, department, company, country, aggregation of countries) represents a resource integrator. To this FP9 we add that the premise works better if the appropriate conditions are put in place. Increasing extroversion and self-confidence clearly contribute to these conditions. The ultimate consequence will be economic growth and quicker answers to the new ecological conditions of the global economy.

FP10: *Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary*

The reason for the existence of this FP is due to the difficulty in predicting the value of co-creation in the current state of knowledge. A single artefact or idea in different persons can generate different results, as the same person in two different situations will award different values using the same economic process. Thus, this entails a failure in measuring economic performance and advancing the value-for-use of a proposal that a company makes to society.

The economic value of the interaction between people and the dialectic of the context is questionable, remaining outside the predictive capability and value of information.

This paper studies, on the field, the problem of the double impossibility: it is impossible to know how each person will use the knowledge acquired and how the changes in resources with economic value will develop. Since there is great randomness, something close to Katona's Law will apply, whereby in phenomena involving very large numbers of random positive and negative factors, they tend to offset each other. If this is true in the current context, where it concerns national level and this is a semi-closed measurable economic system, the result of the economic differential increasing capacity of knowledge partially corresponds to the increased value of acts expressed by the nation's economic indicator of GDP.

One topic, which the authors of S-D Logic did not discuss remains unknown: whether perceived economic processes, through production, integration and flow of knowledge, are summative, as it is assumed under S-D Logic, or if there is an entropy of knowledge which is represented by loss of interest in knowledge with less economic interest: when there is replacement of one technology by another, what is the economic value of prior knowledge? For example, when a tailor works with a CAD-CAM robot to cut fabric, what is the value of the knowledge acquired over the years?

By its nature, this premise cannot be further explored in this article.

7. Conclusions

NOI's main point is its strong impact on the active population (nearly 30%), meaning that almost all economic processes occurring in Portugal have been affected, because someone in the value chain was or is involved in NOI.

The problematic point is to know whether the country and companies are prepared to use the workers' new knowledge. It should be remembered that knowledge embedding in the process only works if it is transferred from the worker to the economic object. Not only would the increase in knowledge and skills (workers' qualification) be wasted if companies did not know how to use this new expertise, but it would eventually increase national external currency debts, because qualified people would then become more open to acknowledge new realities. These new realities usually require more knowledge embedding: for example, people who discover the possibilities of the Internet are more likely to become customers of computer providers, broad band providers, etc.

The capacity to increase knowledge along the value chain is called "management". Without accurate management throughout the value chain, value creation remains limited, regardless of the technical quality of production. This is why Portugal (and many other similar countries) produces many of the most well-known brands, selling industrial products with a small percentage over the income of the public price: exportations at production price and importations at market price resulting in systematic trade debts.

Others, such as China, India, etc., export large quantities of goods, thus generating surplus in their trade balances. For this to be possible, salaries need to be very low and many other local industrial conditions need to be in place which are impossible in countries with environmental rules, to mention only one aspect. The result is reflected in living conditions in industrial exporting countries and unemployment in rich countries. Intermediary countries such as Portugal and many others reveal both situations.

The solution should entail qualifying the managers of companies where newly qualified people work. This is particularly true for many small companies where managers do not have high skills and competences and where resources are usually insufficient to acquire these. The particular importance of SME is very significant, since they are the largest employment generators and the main tool for fighting unemployment.

Another important dimension of NOI concerns the possible LLL approach, which enables results to impact the economic sphere more quickly than in the traditional educational process because the period between knowledge acquisition and the possibility to transfer that knowledge to production processes (goods or services) is much shorter. Many of those engaged in NOI are workers sent by large companies or coming on their own initiative. Although the experience is short, there are references from companies' CEO recognizing that those involved in NOI become better workers.

Three other points are relevant for this discussion:

1. When considering NOI from S-D Logic perspective, the result is a process of embedding knowledge in all economic fabric, whether final products and services or in each economic act (monetary or

non-monetary). "Injecting" knowledge at the national level prepares the population for new knowledge challenges and potentially new economic paradigms. One of the most obvious examples is the recent "fab-lab" model (Gernshenfel, 2005). Developed in a laboratory by the MIT in the 90s, this production model could be applied at national level were the population to be technologically prepared. In this production model, ICT and specific fabrication devices could be produced locally, with much less environmental impact and investment. In some cases, the author defends a reduction of up to 99% over market price. Critiques of this fab-lab model state that the elements of exchange involving goods are not fully resolved (Groonros, 2006); also, it contradicts the principle that economic development requires an ever-increasing division of labour. Even considering all these limitations, it is undeniable that the S-D Logic should be included in a future where, no matter how, the manufacturing and distribution of goods are likely to increase the added value by way of knowledge and where the "value in use" remains located in the capabilities and contextual situation of the consumer and consumption.

2. In most countries, women have less education and fewer working qualifications than men, thus contributing to the asymmetries in career advancement opportunities and their economic independence. Drop out levels in early schooling or even school absence among many Portuguese women has defined their situation for generations. NOI can contribute to overcome this historical gap. In the case under analysis, women represent circa 55% to 65% (Lopes, 2009b; 2010b; 2010c) of those who shave signed up and completed the process so far. Based on this, NOI contributes to promoting gender equality and democratizing society. The gender asymmetry among those who seek NOI is interpreted as a social fact, but also as largely explained by the asymmetry at the departing point and, therefore, independent of mobilization efforts. Not only are women active individuals in the working sphere, but they also play a very prominent role in the education of and school quality for their children. Some countries (e.g., Singapore, South Korea, etc.) place a tremendous emphasis on the maternal role in improving the quality of education that children receive. Therefore, improving the quality of women's training is also a way of improving the quality of training for the youngest members of families involved in NOI.

3. It is further argued that the economic returns of LLL strategies and/or qualification of the workforce tend to be more immediate than those of the basic training provided to each child. As seen, S-D Logic entails injecting knowledge into manufacturing processes and focusing on final goods transformed into vehicles for trading knowledge; moreover, preparing the workforce will thus be the fastest way of embedding knowledge in monetary and nonmonetary processes. The acceptance of this proposal implies that a nation has three ways to embed knowledge in the economy: the traditional education paths; qualification and certification of knowledge for those who have not progressed as much through traditional ways as would be desirable; and maintenance and adaptation of knowledge that is relevant to society through LLL. According to S-D Logic, all three routes are potential sources of wealth generation, where the policy maker is able to manipulate a composite formula which corresponds to optimal efficiency in these three alternatives.

However, attention must be drawn to the equality of training. This may not be true if research deepens the unit of minimal learning (element not yet operational), defining a utility function of the acquired information related to the context in which the person lives and building upon the two concepts to calculate the profitability of each learning process.

Notwithstanding the absence of these metrics and, thus, the inability to accurately calculate the composite function, it can be argued with certainty that any of the three tools are optimized when applying S-D Logic to a nation.

S-D Logic seems to be a very interesting tool (if not paradigmatic) for public policies that link adult education and the economy. The most direct consequence is questioning the rule adopted in all countries, where higher education investments are required each year, regardless of the chosen path.

With a metric that manipulates the returns at the micro level of learning, for the individual, and production units, it will be possible to define the optimal value of investment in education and training for a country, and to establish the value of different composite training courses: traditional, recuperative and adaptive in an LLL strategy.

Another way of studying this issue is to analyse S-D Logic through the market. By improving the production process, according to the model, it will be possible to focus investment on key points of the process flow: management of the process, condensation of knowledge (products), transaction of knowledge (services), "value in use" of knowledge (generated value in use for the buyer).

The direct application of the S-D logic model leads to the conclusion that results would be potentially better if the starting point had been to train company managers first, as they would have created a better process flow, and the managing staff second, in accordance with each person's capabilities, thus resulting in an optimized value creation process (adapting and creating the context for the generation of value via phenomenological ways); and only then, the workers, in accordance with the needs: recuperative or adaptive training, taking the consumers as the end goal (incremental value for use with the resources available).

However, countries and people are not tools in generating optimized capital. The possible optimization of the process resulting from the expertise injection into the system, with a capacity of direct and proportional extraction of "value in use" and monetary value, is not necessarily consistent with value creation at high levels of abstraction, such as in terms of self-image, satisfaction, pleasure, etc. They also legitimate elements in a democratic society.

Therefore, it is important that countries with high deficits in workforce training, such as Portugal, qualify and certify the maximum number of people (if possible, covering the entire population), considering that, according to S-D Logic – arguably in a free application of the model – a better qualified person tends to perform better, even when playing a sport, than a less qualified person and less prepared contexts. This helps to explain why schools with children and young people from better economic families tend to have better results, regardless of what is being assessed.

One important point is the high quality of training and the amount of knowledge that is embedded in the economic process and their relevance to anticipated contexts of use. In other words, as regards consumers, this will reflect on the gap between the "value in use" for a person with no training and a person who has received training. In the production processes, this is the differential value of knowledge embedding provided by the employee in any single work process where training is provided.

As such, qualification and training solutions, in a context as wide as the national context, when considering information technology as a strategic element, should secure support programmes as e-opportunities and network access, so as to enable less economically prepared individuals to access the Internet. When this occurs, there is a high adhesion to the programme and very high rates of use.

Returning to NOI, the application of S-D Logic will be achieved in different ways, namely:

1. Being strongly committed to the training and certification of managers, so that they include knowledge in the definition and management of current flows of value creation processes.
2. Persisting with the training of uncertified and unqualified population groups in order to achieve a larger national “pool of knowledge”.
3. Articulating all efforts made so far in creating an LLL programme that is adequately linked to NOI to compensate the knowledge entropy occurred in the meantime.
4. Ensuring the highest quality in all training and certification programmes.

With the available empirical data, one can only objectively discuss NOI and other similar educational processes. Conclusions reflect that natural restriction. However, based on experiences (empirical and theoretical) of other educational processes, one can expand the present analysis to other educational levels and contexts. Further research should be undertaken for this purpose.

Another research possibility which seems to be very insightful is to study the application of adult education to company owners and top managers of SME. Traditionally, large companies have “brains retention programmes”, head hunting and many other Human Resources’ tools to improve knowledge management. On the other hand, SME do not show the same sensibility to the issue. From this article’s viewpoint, if specific training programmes similar to NOI were to be developed for SME’ leaders, this could provoke a kind of catalytic knowledge process, where better managers demand and promote better employees and better economic processes. The research questions are: how to organise this kind of programmes?; how to recruit managers and owners of SME for the programmes (rewards, social recognition, economic efficiency, etc.)?; how to integrate adult educational programmes in programmes for SME’s managers?; to mention only the most pressing research needs.

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G.

ORGANISATIONAL SELF-REGULATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES CENTRES

RODRIGO QUEIROZ E MELO

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: rqmelo@ucp.pt

SOFIA REIS

CEPCEP, Portuguese Catholic University, Portugal

E-mail: sofia-reis@sapo.pt

ABSTRACT

The Portuguese government initiative ‘Novas Oportunidades’ (NOI, 2005-2010) is currently the most prominent programme for adult education. It sets up ambitious goals for adult education and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) is clearly in its core: to qualify one million adults by the end of 2010, having the secondary level of education as a target level. This programme has been delivered by 440 organisations specifically set up for it: the New Opportunities Centres (NOC). The NOC must carry out their work according to the standards set out in a Quality Charter issued by the central agency responsible for the programme. They are financed by state and European Community funds.

One of the standards set forth by the central agency is that all NOC must have regular self-assessment programmes. To help the NOC in self-assessing, a team from the Portuguese Catholic University assisted in implementing the CAF model.

After doing so in 2009, we found significant differences in the results obtained with the 231 NOC that used CAf when compared with the results of the EIPA database and the Azores Islands schools (which also use CAf). A distinct feature is the special focus of these organisations on their clients.

Our research hypothesis is that the NOI public policy, with its new approach to the way central offices of public administration interact with the organisations that implement the policy in the field (NOC) and its focus on self-assessment has created the right incentives for the NOC to focus on their clients and use self-assessment as a self-regulatory instrument.

Bearing in mind some theoretical background on the regulation of organisations and systems and our empirical findings, it seems that the NOC system experience may break the way for a new model of regulation of state initiated educational systems. A system based on organisational self-regulation – through standards and goal setting and self-assessment – rather than on command and control (top bottom).

The paper also provides strong arguments in favour of this new regulation model as a way of committing organisations to the task of reinventing themselves. In this case, whilst the NOC's role as RPL centres fades away, they must develop into LLL (Lifelong Learning Centres), providing adults with new learning solutions in the future.

The paper is divided into 5 sections. Section 1 consists in an introduction that briefly summarizes the Novas Oportunidades Initiative in the context of state-run educational and training systems in Portugal and introduces the research questions. Section 2 reviews the literature on self-assessment of education sector organisations, on learning organisations and on change in organisations. Section 3 describes the way the self-assessment project with the CAf model was conceived and implemented with the NOC, as well as the adaptations made to the CAf model. In section 4, we discuss the results and in section 5 we summarise our main conclusions.

Keywords: adult education; self-regulation; self-assessment; CAf model; learning organisations; change in public administration.

1. The New Opportunities Initiative in the context of state-run educational and training systems in Portugal and the research questions

1.1. *The context of the Portuguese education and training system*

In the early 20th century, with the expulsion of the Jesuits and the foundation of a state- run educational system, Portugal initiated what is now a long standing tradition of centralised top down management of education. This is the case up to now. In the school year 2006/2007, Portugal had 10,071 state-run schools with 1,451,681 students (K to 12) and 2,439 private schools with 324,088 students (K to 12). The state schools are all dependent on the Ministry of Education which contracts teachers and defines the curriculum, methods of student assessment, student disciplinary rules and all other issues concerning the daily life of these organisations. Private schools contract their own teachers, but must follow the state curriculum and state rules on assessment. The formal adult education system (up to secondary and vocational training) is also state-run and dependent on the Ministry of Education. Accordingly, the adult training system is mainly dependent on the Labour Ministry, which sets the standards and finances the supply. This is coherent with a 19th century approach to government as a whole and to the education and training field in particular. The Educator State is seen as the sole provider of schooling and training and the Government is its Great Headmaster.

The topic of this article arises from three different, though not independent factors. Firstly, "(…) there is growing discomfort with existing arrangements of government. Citizens demand greater democracy and transparency. Communities seek more autonomy (…)" (Carneiro, 2000, p. 93). Secondly, in an ever more complex world, the "one fits all" solution does not address the public`s needs. The world has moved from linear to complex interactions where predictable cause/effect relations are not at hand for centralised solutions. Thirdly, "(…) part of the problem is the difficulty of creating major changes in advanced societies where many problems have already been greatly ameliorated. Remaining problems are stubborn ones for which inexpensive or feasible solutions do not yet exist (…)" (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1995, p. 442). Summing up, the top bottom approach to rendering public services is at stake. Therefore, state-run systems providing education and training are looked at with suspicion; centralised uniform approaches to public policy in education have proved to be an unfit approach; and the problems that modern education and training systems face are difficult and unanswered.

It is in this context that the Portuguese government addressed the problem of the 3.5 million under qualified (or, at least, under certified) people in the country (population above 18 who do not have completed nine or twelve years of schooling).

1.2. *The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) and the New Opportunities Centres (NOC)*

The Portuguese government implemented the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) in 2005. NOI is an education policy whose aim is that all Portuguese have an equivalent of 12 years of schooling. On the one hand, it promotes professional education for students. On the other it aims at promoting a significant increase in the qualifications of adults. For this, the target was to qualify 1 million adults between 2005 and 2010[1]. The qualification of adults was conceived through two approaches. It was known that a relevant number of Portuguese adults, though formerly under qualified, had, in fact, developed important competences. Therefore, there was a need for a comprehensive mechanism of recognition of prior learning (RPL). However, the aim was to foster qualifications and not only to recognise existing non certified knowledge. Therefore, besides creating the RPL mechanism, the NOI implemented new services of adult education. The task of bringing adults into the system, diagnosing their individual needs and servicing them was committed to new educational structures called New Opportunities Centres (NOC). The NOC – now 454 - carry out their work according to standards set out in a Quality Charter issued by the central agency responsible for the NOI and are financed by state and European Community funds. NOC may be founded by schools (state or private), corporations, municipalities or other entities. The NOI is implemented by a state agency – Agência Nacional para a Qualificação (ANQ) – created and dependent on both the Education and the Labour ministers. This agency designs the NOI policy and its instruments and regulates the system of NOC. One of its regulatory functions is financing of operations. The resources for this policy derive from the European Social Fund. The financing of each NOC is contracted between the centre and the agency and is in accordance with specific goals that the centre must achieve. The main document that regulates the NOC operations is the Quality Charter. This document establishes 5 steps of the RPL process and 7 levels of NOC organisation. For each step and level,

1 The fact that the policy was accompanied by a specific tangible target was, in itself, a clear sign that the NOI was planned and implemented with a fresh approach to public policy.

there are indicators of service (43 in total) and a quality reference for each one. The NOC must follow these steps and fulfill the levels of organisation bearing in mind the quality reference for each one.

1.3. *The research questions*

Our research hypothesis is that the NOC operating context, with its totally new approach in the way central offices of the public administration interact with the organisations in the field has created pressure for the latter to (i) focus on the clients and (ii) to be inventive in shaping the way they work.

It seems that the NOC system experience may break the way for a new model of regulation of state-initiated educational systems. A system based on organisational self-regulation – through standards and goal setting and self-assessment – rather than on command and control (top bottom).

The paper also provides strong arguments in favour of this new regulation model as a way of committing organisations to the task of reinventing themselves. In this case, whilst the NOC's role as RPL centres fades away, they must develop into LLT (Lifelong Training Centres), providing adults with new learning solutions in the future.

2. Self-assessment of education sector organisations: regulation, learning and change in organisations

Besides goals for outputs, the NOI also had goals for the procedure itself. One of these goals is that "100% of the NOC have periodic self-assessment procedures" (ANQ, 2007, p. 34).

No model or procedure for self-assessment was enforced and, though the central agency promoted some SWOT exercises, NOC were left to decide how and when to self-assess (as long as they did it). In practical terms, this meant that the goal was far from being reached. Though some NOC did self-assess, and though the large majority declared that they did it, empirical evidence showed that these were not rigorous exercises[2]. Therefore, an external evaluation team was contracted to propose a self-assessment framework for all NOC which needed help in this endeavour.

[2] This was later supported by some of the data presented and discussed in section 4.

For the first time in the history of Portuguese public policy, self-assessment became not only an obligation for all organisations participating in the implementation of the policy, but also a criterion for the evaluation of the policy itself. This is clear evidence that NOI constitutes a new approach to regulation in the education and training sector in Portugal.

We shall now present the conceptual framework that was considered in the choice of the self-assessment model and procedure for the NOI.

2.1. *Regulation*

The main issue in regulation is to know who creates the rules and who enforces them. In traditional public policymaking in education and training, both of these functions belong to the state.

In the new design of the regulatory role of the state, regulation mechanisms based on command and control – legislation, enforcement and sanctions for infringement – are replaced by mechanisms of verification of the conformity between goals and results (Hutmacher, 1995) and by mechanisms of self-regulation. In this conception, the state establishes mechanisms of accountability by the organisations and promotes self-regulation aiming at organisational learning and continuous improvement.

In the education sector, this trend goes hand in hand with mechanisms of school autonomy and school-based management. These mechanisms have been defended on the grounds of individual freedom and collective self-determination. But there are also arguments in favour of this new regulatory paradigm on the grounds of efficiency and quality development. In the context of the NOI, self-assessment is not a question of promoting autonomy and improvement but of promoting improvement through autonomy. Going back to Shadish, Cook, & Leviton (1995), RPL and LLL are part of those stubborn problems that traditional approaches have not been able to overcome[3].

Using a metaphor from the field of family therapy (which is also an art of intervention in a social system):

> (…) one of the goals of therapy [regulation] is to move the family [education and training organisation] to a state of creative ferment in which the realities that are acquired can be replaced by a search for new paths.

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[3] For a description of public policies on RPL see Valente 2010.

> Flexibility must be induced by increasing the fluctuations of the system, transporting it to a higher level of complexity. Therapy [regulation] is a process that, creating a crisis, pushes the family that is stuck in their developmental spiral, towards their own development (…) (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981, in Relvas, 2003, p. 36).

2.2. *Accountability*

In the context of self-assessment of the NOC, accountability is not considered simply as the act of giving account of what was done with the resources given to each organisation. Going a step further, this account is complemented, or even overcome, by the act of giving account of what the organisation has learned about the way it operates and how it will improve. In the new paradigm, organisations are asked for *smart accountability*. The trend goes from accountability and improvement to accountability for improvement. To fulfil this aim, the assessment model must simultaneously (i) contain the parameters that are imperative for the pursuit and enforcement of the organisation's mission and (ii) be open to the specificity of each organisation's culture and maturity.

Without prejudice to the State's obligation to promote education and training, the movement towards holding education and training organisations accountable for their improvement through assessment tools is undeniable and unstoppable (Belfield & Levin, 2002; Lafond, 1999; OFSTED, 2004).

What seems undisputed is that in this new paradigm of responsible and liable action, school principals will be acting in an environment where accountability for performance is part of their daily life (Hess, 2003) and where evaluation of institutions with a view to improving them plays a major role (Guerra, 2003), (Portuguese and Danish Unities of Eurydice, 1990).

2.3. *Self-regulation*

In self-regulation, it is the entity that creates the standards that determine its conduct. Again, the anthropological metaphor helps to understand the issues of self-regulation in organisations. From an operational perspective, self-regulated learning involves setting goals, prioritising objectives and planning the way (Frank & Dommaschk, 2006). This is a self- monitorisation with a view to better self-knowledge in order to maximize learning: "(…) self-regulation guides behaviour along a specific route to a goal or objective (…)" (Underwood, 2006, p. 111).

In the context of describing self-regulation in organisations, it is useful to use Mintzberg`s analyses of work coordination. For this author, there are six basic mechanisms: mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardisation of work processes, standardisation of results, standardisation of skills of workers and standardisation of norms (Mintzberg, 1995). In top bottom, centralised systems of organisations like the education and training systems in Portugal or France, the main form of work coordination in each organisation has been the standardisation of skills and norms. The first mechanism works by limiting access to the organisation to workers with previous specific certification. This guarantees that workers entering the organisation have the knowledge and competences to perform the tasks which are expected from them in a pre-determined way. On the other hand, standardisation of norms guarantees that new knowledge and methods are incorporated in all the organisations of the system through norms created and enforced by some central authority. Equal initial training, prescription of expected performance and consolidation of work procedures are the mechanisms of teacher coordination (Hutmacher, 1995).

These mechanisms of work coordination are the backbone of educational systems based on mechanisms of command and control. In centralised education and training systems, where improvement and reforms originate in central agencies, work coordination is carried out by regional bodies which report to the member of government with the education and training portfolio.

So, the path of organisational autonomy and self-regulation cannot be tracked without the creation of settings and tools that enable the internalisation of the work coordination mechanisms. Without these, autonomy and self-regulation is likely to be a failed movement because professional depend more on some external authority than on some internal legitimacy for guidance on their tasks and performance.

In existing systems, the introduction of internal mechanisms for work coordination is not a question of legislative framework. Professionals and organisations will not change their culture through the mere imposition of new management tools or by decree. Elimination of the outer layers of decision and transference of responsibility for results to organisations will only be successful in exceptional circumstances, organisational or personal, where talented leaders and supervisors are able to radically change culture and processes. However, dependence on exceptional people will hardly bring sustained improvement to the functioning of the organisation for it will not survive the disappearance of talent.

However, the system of NOC created by NOI was built from scratch and, therefore, much more suitable for the implementation of a new regulatory paradigm. RPL processes, the organisational framework for NOC and the professional training required for the professionals to be contracted were all created along with the policy. And so the principles of self-regulation were embedded in all aspects of the system from the beginning.

2.4. *Organisational learning*

The new approach to state regulation that we have described has a clear focus on improvement. And self-regulation alone is not enough to promote improvement. Improvement only happens when people in the organisation, through self-regulation, change their practices, making them more effective and/or efficient. In this case, self-regulation promotes self-development.

Here, we appeal to the concepts of organisational learning and learning organisations (Argyris, 1978, Bolivar, 2000, Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005). Organisational learning corresponds to the phenomenon of knowledge acquisition by members of the organisation associated with the impact that this knowledge has on the ways of thinking and doing within the organisation (Bolívar, 2000; Clímaco, 2005). Thus, organisational learning has a personal component – cognitive – coupled with the acquisition of knowledge or skills by one or more people in the organisation and an institutional component – action – coupled with the impact of the acquisition of knowledge on work processes of the organisation. There is organisational learning only when these two elements come together: the acquisition of knowledge followed by action in the organisation's processes.

A learning organisation is an organisation that has established structures and strategies that enhance organisational learning (Bolívar, 2000). In a learning organisation, the acquisition of knowledge by individuals does not arise by chance. It is encouraged and there are specific mechanisms to transmit this knowledge from the personal sphere to the collective sphere of the organisation. This concept does not correspond to a mere transposition of the concept of individual learning to collective learning, but requires an intent of the organisation in promoting learning by individuals and applying this knowledge in processes and the organisational structures.

Improvement is linked to this ability to create environments and tools that foster organisational learning and turn the organisation into a learning organisation. Using concepts to be developed further, self-assessment of schools, when aimed at school improvement, enhances organisational learning and a school that systematically self-assesses is a learning organisation (Clímaco 2005; Bolívar, 2000).

Within the phenomenon of organisational learning, Argyris (1978) distinguishes two types: single-loop learning and double-loop learning:

> (…) organisational learning involves the detection and correction of error. When the error detected and corrected permits the organisation to carry on its present policies or achieve its present objectives, then that error-detection-and-correction process is *single loop* learning (…). *Double-loop* learning occurs when the error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organisation`s underlying norms, policies and objectives (…) (Argyris, 1978, p. 2).

Therefore, double-loop learning implies a major change in the fundamental rules of the theory in use of the organisation (Argyris, 1978). As such, this type of organisational learning is more demanding. Introspective exercise, where by staff members question their beliefs, is needed. This requires a deeply self-critical attitude. A learning organisation, while maturing as an organisation, goes through processes of single-loop learning and eventually achieves (when it does) more sophisticated forms of learning. Here, self-assessment plays an important role as a tool for learning, helping the organisation to mature from the simplest models of learning to more elaborate ones.

As we saw, individual learning is needed for organisational learning to occur; significant individual learning that is shared with the group and influences its actions. This requires a constant reconceptualization of the organisation by its members:

> (…) organisations establish how they work from the way people work: (…) If you want to improve a school system, before changing the rules see the ways people think and interact. Otherwise, the new policies and organisational structures will simply disappear, and the organisation returns, over time, the way it did before (…) (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005, p. 24).

And: "(…) As individual members continually modify their maps and images of the organisation, they also bring about changes in organisational theory-in-use (…)" (Argyris, 1978, p. 17).

2.4.1. *Theory in use and theory of operation (Argyris)*

For Argyris (1978):

> "(…) each member of the organisation constructs his or her own representation, or image, of the theory-in-use of the whole. That picture is always incomplete. The organisation members strive continually to complete it, and to understand themselves in the context of the organisation (…)" (p. 16).

The theory-in-use corresponds to the theory of operation of the organisation that supports agents' behaviour. Although all behaviour is the result of a theory of action, the theory behind the behaviour may be expressed or implied. When implied, it may even be contrary to the theory expressed by the organisation and its members. Thus, this author distinguishes the theory-in-use from the adopted theory. They may be coincidental or not. When they are not coincidental, the organisation functions in false-self and double loop learning is difficult or even impossible. Argyris compares an organisation to an organism whose cells (people) have a picture of themselves in relation to the whole. The organisation's practices originate in these images. Consequently, "(…) our inquiry into organisational learning must concern itself not with static entities called organisations, but with an active process of organising which is, at root, a cognitive enterprise (…)" (Argyris, 1978, p. 16). In large or complex organisations, the cognitive process of conceptualisation of the organisation and the role of each one cannot be conducted face-to-face. Therefore, organisational charts are needed to mediate the construction of organisational images of the individual (Argyris, 1978).

2.4.2. *Constructivism and change (Guba)*

In the last quarter-century, Guba proposed a scientific paradigm shift. As opposed to the quantitative scientific paradigm, this author proposes a naturalistic/qualitative paradigm (Stufflebeam, 2008) where the main function of a *constructivist* researcher is to give visibility to the variety of constructions that exist among different actors in a given scenario. This is an ontologically relativist stance (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) in which "(…) constructions are, quite literally, *created realities*. They do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some "objective" world that exists apart from their constructors (…)" (p. 143).

Constructions "(…) consist of some available information configured into some integrated, systematic, 'sense-making' formulation whose character depends on the level of information and sophistication (in the sense of ability to appreciate/understand/apply the information) of the constructors (…)" (1989, p. 143).

Constructions are foundational of action and are constantly changing. Being the product of the information and sophistication of their authors, exposure to new information or increase in sophistication create challenges for construction (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) that may or may not lead to change.

Change in constructions may occur in four scenarios (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 145):

1. Stability – there is new information, consistent with the existing constructions and that does not require an increased level of sophistication of the constructor to deal with it. The existing construction extends to and incorporates the new information. This change in construction is the most common and does not create great resistance on the part of the constructor.

2. Information disjunction – there is new information, but this time it is inconsistent with the existing construction while not requiring an increased level of sophistication of the constructor. Once the initial resistance disappears (after reconfirmation of the new information), the existing constructor will be amended to incorporate the new information. This change of construction is less frequent and is slow because there is always resistance[4].

3. Sophistication disjunction – there is new information, consistent with the existing building, but it requires an increased level of sophistication of the manufacturer to internalise/understand/apply it. In this scenario, change is difficult because it requires an effort on the part of the constructor. However, as it does not require a paradigm shift, change, though difficult, is possible without major disruptions.

4. Information and sophistication disjunction – there is new information that is not only inconsistent with the existing constructions, but also requires an increased level of sophistication of the constructor to internalise/understand/apply it. In this scenario, the holders of the existing constructions are under great stress. Required changes to their constructions may be such that some are unable to carry them out. Change in this scenario is very slow and very painful.

[4] According to Guba & Lincoln, constructions are self-sustaining and self-renewed (1989, p. 145).

So, when it comes to processes of change, one must consider which of the four scenarios will be found by the constructors:

> (…) If the holders of a given construction are to change, it is essential that they be exposed to new information and/or given the opportunity to grow to whatever level of sophistication may be needed to appreciate or understand or use that information (…) (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 148).

Stressing the importance of the involvement of stakeholders in change as an almost *sine qua non* condition is not an exclusive constructivist paradigm. Stufflebeam, a disciple of Guba who is not a follower of this paradigm, commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of the constructivist approach to evaluation, points the advantage of deep involvement from all stakeholders because "(…) it is consistent with the principle of effective change that people are more willing to give importance and use an assessment or any other change process if they are consulted and involved in its development (…)" (Stufflebeam, 2001, p. 73).

2.4.3. *Senge – The Fifth Discipline*

For Senge, organisational learning depends on the development of five disciplines by people in the organisation (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005, p. 17):

- Personal field: exercise personal mastery of individual aspirations and awareness of the reality that surrounds us. Reconciling these two fields keeps people in a permanent creative tension;
- Shared vision: a collective discipline that builds mutual focus. People with a common purpose can make a commitment to the organisation, share images of the future and the principles and practices that will help them to get there;
- Mental models: through thought and research, people develop an awareness of attitudes and perceptions – their own and that of others. "(…) How many mental models in education are" unquestionable "and remain hidden, one of the critical instruments for a learning school is to develop the ability to speak safely and productively about matters that are uncomfortable and dangerous (…)" (p. 17);
- Learning in teams: small groups of people transform their collective thinking in order to mobilise their energy for common purposes and produce an intelligence that is greater than the sum of individual talents;

– Systemic thinking: in this discipline people learn to better understand interdependence and change. Systemic thinking is based on a growing body of theory about feedback and complexity.

For Senge, education organisation's current crisis stems from its conformity to industrial like production patterns. To overcome this situation, it is necessary for schools to be "(…) organised around the understanding of living systems (…)" (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005, p. 43), autopoietic living systems characterised by emerging self-organisation.

Organisational learning, although a necessary condition for sustainable improvement, is not enough. There are factors linked to implementing change that could frustrate efforts to improve. William Shadish, Cook, & Leviton (1995), summarising the theory of social programming, presents these problems of linking improvement to the use of evaluation results:

> (…) most evaluators now aim for incremental rather than radical improvements in remaining problems. Another problem is that multiple groups have stakes in how social policies and programs are organised and changed. Each group lobbies for the priorities it assigns to problems and proposed solutions (…) (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1995,p. 442).

Moreover,

> (…) evaluators have realised more clearly that policymakers, program officials and project employees assign higher priority to improving their jobs and promoting their beliefs than to evaluators` goals of identifying technically superior options for problem definition or program design (…) (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1995, p. 444).

As a side note, organisational learning does not create advantage for the organisation alone. The instruments of organisational learning create learning groups that help individuals to gain knowledge and develop skills. Especially in the field of education, where training is often a process of self-regulated learning, the existence of a learning group is an essential function at the level of individual motivation (Frank & Dommaschk 2006).

2.5. *Organisational maturity*

Turning to the anthropological metaphor of learning of the child, it is useful to look at the life of organisations as a development between different stages of maturity. Seven year old children read and have the capacity for abstract thinking. But they are not able to read and enjoy Hamlet, much less think of modern England in light of the work of Shakespeare. This is not a matter of acquiring knowledge; it is a matter of cognitive maturity. Similarly, organisations (especially people organisations; those in which the main factors of production are human relationships) go through different stages of development. In each stage, they are able to perform different tasks or perform them in different ways: the most basic tasks in the most premature stages, more complex tasks in more mature stages. It is a journey of evolution towards complexity (Morrison, 2002). When it comes to self-assessment, the model and methodology themselves must be adjusted to the level of maturity of the organisation. In previous research on the evaluation of schools (Melo, 2005) it became evident that some difficulties experienced by schools in implementing the model of self-assessment stemmed, above all, from dissonance between the stage of organisational maturity of the school and the stage needed to embark on qualitative and rigorous self-analysis. By maturity we do not mean the ability of the organisation to produce better or more efficient outputs, but its level of self-consciousness (Damásio, 2000), the greater or lesser ability to promote organisational learning (Argyris, 1978), the greater or lesser capacity to move towards becoming a complex adaptive system (Morrison, 2002; Ambrósio, 2006, Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005). However, unlike people, who, in normal conditions, have a natural process of biological and psychological maturation, organisations are social constructions and so their maturation depends on changes in the complex web of human relationships that constitute them (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005). Consequently, the process of organisational maturity is likely to be provoked, led, promoted. One of the possible dynamics to promote this maturation process is the establishment of self-assessment schemes.

2.6. *Autonomy, regulation and self-assessment*

The displacement of the regulatory function of the Administration from command and control to monitorisation and follow-up depends, at an instrumental level, on the ability of systems to set up evaluation mechanisms that allow this new regulatory function to be exercised. Top down decision-making is supported by inspection and compliance verification; the new regulatory paradigm needs evaluation (Clímaco, 2005; Afonso, 2002; Barroso, 2005) and information technologies. And when we speak of evaluation, self-assessment is a major tool: "(…) internal evaluation becomes major tool for school-based management (…)" (Nevo, 2002b, p. 5).

School autonomy, in its varied aspects and multiple forms (Barroso, 2006), or better, decentralisation of the school system creates new operational and emotional challenges (Scheerens: 2002). The use of new skills or newly delegated responsibilities involves taking new decisions and creates new tensions. Both within the school and between the school and others (Chapman, 1996), resulting in two poles of autonomy: decision and responsibility. Decision involves the need to perform the multiple tasks in decision making – question formulation, information collection, evaluation of alternatives – and responsibility requires that the school repositions itself according to the decision and its consequences. In this second case, a new relationship is built between the school and its stakeholders (both internal stakeholders – teachers, staff and students – and external stakeholders – parents, citizens and institutions). As a result, the school becomes open to the local community (Climaco, 2005).

But school autonomy does not only contend with the roles of the school. It implies re-assigning roles that were previously committed to the educational administration[5] which is the entity that, in the absence of school autonomy, decides before a specific event. School autonomy thus implies a redistribution of roles between the Educational Administration and the school. Although according to some (Barroso, 2006) this redistribution of power is not so much a consequence of autonomy as a means of improving the education service, but a way of responding to the crisis in education, school autonomy and the reorganisation of State functions in education are concomitant and intertwined phenomena.

But total autonomy in the education sector is not possible. Education being a public good, it is not possible to "(…) conceive of fully autonomous or independent schools (…)" (Chapman, 1996, p. 37). Hence, there is an important role for the Educational Administration in ensuring the quality and availability of education. This creates the need to find new forms of governance of schools and educational systems (Clímaco, 2005) with non-linear rearrangements (Chapman, 1996). The quest is to find the right balance between the need for autonomy at the organisational level as an instrument for improving the educational service provided and the need for new mechanisms to regulate the system by the Educational Administration. Thus, the traditional role of administrative command and control, anchored in an inspection agency responsible for verifying the deviations from the norm and punishing them, is replaced by negotiated goal setting and monitoring goal achievement.

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[5] By educational administration we mean all agencies or entities, regional or national, dependent of the Government or with its own democratic legitimacy, that have the power or duty to intervene in school life, making decisions or giving instructions to schools.

In short, school autonomy is a tool for diversity and school evaluation is a regulatory instrument of that diversity (Nevo, 2002b). This reality is not specifically Portuguese. Evaluation of schools emerges as a necessary consequence, or pre-condition for greater autonomy in other countries such as Norway (Monsen, 2002) or Austria (Schratz, 2002).

2.7. *The conceptual framework*

In conclusion, to sustain the self-regulated organisations created by the NOI, it was necessary to create an instrument that could transform them into learning organisations. This instrument was self-assessment whereby people in these organisations would mature in their constructions. The self-assessment project required that they gathered more and new information that could disrupt existing constructions. Change would then occur in a scenario of stability or information disjunction (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In the first stages of the process, mental maps (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Dutton, & Kleinder, 2005) may maintain some stability, but these organisations will be preparing themselves to face the challenges of the future: as RPL candidates fade away, their existence will depend on the capacity to re-invent themselves as, for instance, LLL Centres.

In the design and implementation of a self-assessment model for the NOC it was considered that:

- The NOI is a special kind of public policy. Instead of the traditional top bottom, centralised approach to RPL and adult education, ANQ was implementing a network of autonomous organisations (NOC) with which it was negotiating goals with reference to the policies' own goals;
- ANQ did not create a huge amount of regulations and norms establishing tight procedures to be followed by the professionals of the NOC. Instead, it issued a Quality Charter and left each NOC to decide the best way of achieving its goal;
- Self-assessment should be a means of holding NOC accountable for their actions;
- But in a smart way – *smart accountability* – in that the effort should have an impact on self-regulation and improvement;
- All this was in a context of uncharted ground: an aim of 1 million adults in the process, with new procedures, new organisational

frameworks and no previous experience for the majority of people who were to implement the policy;

- So, organisational learning was an absolute priority;
- As was the need to balance NOC autonomy with the need of the ANQ regulation of the system;
- Self-assessment is a fairly new, untested instrument of regulation.

The goal was to enable structured, shared reflection within the NOC in order to foster learning organisations that are capable of self-regulation.

2.8. *Assessment*

"(…) That the evaluation of schools is necessary in a modern society is not in question. What is in question is the kind of evaluation that is needed for what purpose (…)" (Simons, 2002, p. 18). Despite the pressure and the increased visibility that self-assessment of schools has had:

> (…) the institutionalisation and mainstreaming of evaluation practices is a long-standing problem for schools and is not close to being resolved. While some school leaders have understood and benefited from the evaluation, few have managed to incorporate into day-to-day of school while those who could have fought to maintain their use and application. Evaluators and users are skeptical that we can institutionalize evaluation practices in schools in a satisfactory manner (…) (Miron, 2003, p. 771).

These difficulties are also a reality in Portugal. However, they do not undermine the principle that "(…) schools are learning organisations and should therefore promulgate a process that helps their staff continually study, assess and improve services (…)" (Stufflebeam, 2003, p. 776). Nevo also recognises the difficulties – "(…) most schools are not yet used to evaluate their programmes and projects (…)" (2002a: ix) – but defends a combination of external assessment and self-assessment of schools "(…) for the benefit of school accountability and school improvement (…)" (2002a: x).

The approach to improvement from the self-assessment has the advantage of the process evolving from the empirical reality of school, but has the disadvantage of improvement becoming an incremental rather than a disruptive process. "(…) An evaluation centred approach to school improvement provides an alternative to more proactive, planning approaches which start out with mission statements and objectives (…)" (Scheerens, 2002, p. 38). Besides the reasons already presented to increase the importance of school evaluation, Scheerens advances further: "(…) academics working in the area of school effectiveness and school improvement in Europe have started to recognize the importance of evaluation and monitoring of activities at the school (…)" (2002, p. 39). For Stufflebeam, "(…) ongoing, defensible evaluation is essential to help schools identify strengths and weaknesses and obtain direction for school improvement (…)" (2003, p. 804).

External evaluation is a hetero-analytical tool that is mainly intended to make public what the school is doing. It is a model of accountability (Stufflebeam, 2001; Sanders, 2003) and educational planning at the macro level. Thus, recipients of the results are outside the school: the educational administration, parents and the public in general. Hence, the usefulness of the model and the procedure must be evaluated according to the value it creates outside the organisation (information on its performance) (Miron, 2003) and here the credibility of the appraiser is essential. Hence, the assessment should be conducted by an independent agent. In fact, self-assessment is always suspected of producing biased results (Nevo, 2002b).

Self-assessment, on the other hand, is fundamentally a tool for school management (school-based management) and for transposing power from the administration to the school (empowerment) (Nevo, 2002b, p. 5). Accordingly, and in line with the theories of organisational learning, self-assessment should be a process whereby the school community takes ownership in order to create conditions or encourage deep and sustained improvement. Hence, the internalisation of the evaluator is a prerequisite of the process. Simons argues that the internalisation of assessment is essential for educational improvement that requires some level of secrecy about what goes on at the school. It is necessary to balance the information needs of governments and the parents' right to information with the need for schools to have "(…) a degree of autonomy, free from outside scrutiny, to experiment, and take those creative risks that fuel good education and motivate teachers and students to improve (…)" (Simons, 2002, p. 19).

Nowadays, self-assessment plays a major place in the political discourse on improving education systems. In Portugal, only schools with practical self-assessment may be subject to external evaluation and, thereafter, apply to enter into a contract of autonomy. In Norway, where self-rated schools were launched about 16 years ago, this was considered the cornerstone of a national system of school assessment which was set up to improve the national educational system (Monsen, 2002).

In Portugal, Norway and the Netherlands, the option on self-assessment policy was not to prescribe any model of self-assessment, leaving it up to schools to decide (Monsen, 2002, Scheerens, 2002). The Norwegian, Dutch and Portuguese cases appear to be identical in that the political impact of self-assessment is greater than the practical consequences for schools (Monsen, 2002; Scheerens, 2002).

3. Self-assessment of NOC with the CAf model

Bearing in mind the conceptual framework described in section 2, when preparing the external evaluation of the New Opportunities Initiative, the UCP team proposed the use of the CAf model for self-assessment of the NOC (customised to meet the special needs of the NOI and the NOC).

This framework has advantages from both a theoretical and a practical standpoint.

On the theoretical side, CAf:

- is a very adaptable framework and would therefore suit NOC created by schools as well as NOC created by companies or municipalities;
- is founded on TQM principles and so may contribute to organisational self-regulation and improvement;
- involves different stakeholders in the organisation, contributing to the development of self-assessment.

On the practical side, CAf:

- was designed at the European Union level, with participation of all member states and is therefore perceived by all as a legitimate framework;
- is not subject to royalties or any other type of fees for its use;
- may be used by people in organisations with little training.

3.1. *Origins of the Common Assessment Framework (CAf)*

Given the importance of self-assessment methodologies for improving the performance of organisations, including the public sector (state agencies), the Ministers of the Member States of the European Union responsible for Public Administration created the Common Assessment Framework (CAf).

CAf is a Total Quality Management (TQM) tool inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the model of the German University of Administrative Sciences in Speyer (European Institute of Public Administration, 2004).

This methodology for self-assessment aims to: (i) seize the specific characteristics of public sector organisations, (ii) serve as a tool for public administrators who wish to improve the performance of their organisations, (iii) serve as a bridge between various tools of quality management and (iv) facilitate benchmarking between public sector organisations. The CAf was initially presented in May 2000 at the 1st. European Quality Conference for Public Administrations, held in Lisbon.

In the international arena, self-assessment of public sector organisations appears as a materialisation of new managerialism in the public sector. CAf is created and fostered in the European Union under the aegis of the Innovative Public Services Group and corresponds to the introduction of techniques created in the private sector into public sector management (DGAEP, 2007). This introduction of management techniques that are specific to the private sector in the public sector goes hand in hand with the discussion on public sector efficiency (Clímaco, 2005; Barroso, 2005; Fowler, 2004; Marques, 2005), and the state's role in society:

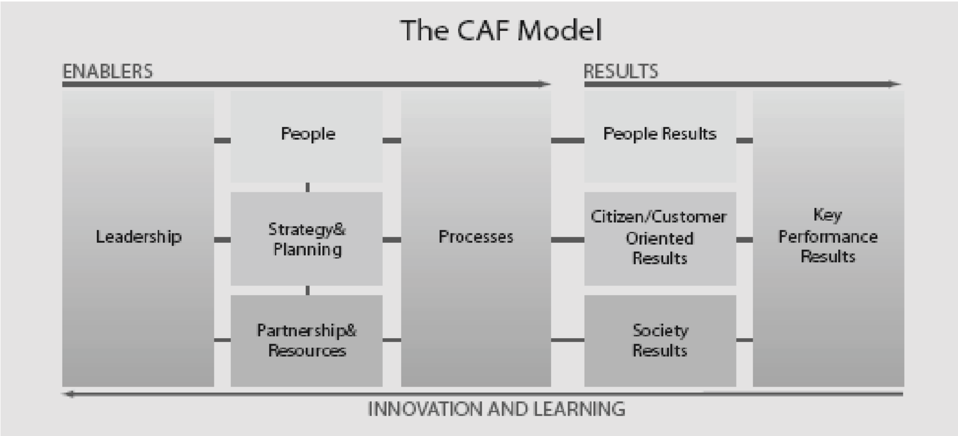
> (…) The debate about the quality of public administration, which includes, of course, education, and on desirable models to increase its efficiency and effectiveness, has its root in the recognition of the very high levels of inefficiency in public management and the dissatisfaction of citizens with the quality of care and service in general. But it also stems from an ideological debate between models of political management and design of State (…) (Clímaco, 2005, p. 28).

This introduction of private sector management mechanisms in the public sector is a transnational reality supported by international agencies – such as the OECD and the World Bank – and both right and left wing political parties. In the education sector, school assessment is a proposed that both by the liberal right and the moderate left. Each field inserts these mechanisms in a different world view and a distinct role of the State in society and the education system. On the one hand, the apparent inefficiency of the public sector could be overcome by these mechanisms; secondly, there is a phenomenon of contamination (Barroso, 2003) that promotes the implementation of solutions from one place to the other. It is by virtue of these movements that we go from EFQM to CAf.

3.2. *Structure of the Common Assessment Framework (CAf)*

The CAf model of self-assessment is structured in 9 criteria and 28 sub criteria. The 9 criteria set the framework of analyses, taking the self-assessors from the 5 enablers to the 4 types of results.

Figure G.1 The 9 CAf criteria (EIPA, 2006)



The conceptual framework underlying the CAf model is composed by TQM principles and the EFQM concepts of excellence: results orientation, customer focus, leadership and constancy of purpose, management by processes and facts, involvement of people, continuous improvement and innovation, mutually beneficial partnerships and corporate social responsibility. The model is therefore an adequate tool for continuous improvement.

3.3. *Customisation of CAf for the NOC*

Since 2006, some members of the CEPCEP team have been implementing CAf as the self-assessment model for all the schools in the Azores Islands. Early on in this project we found that, although the CAf framework and self-assessment process are suitable for any type of organisation, it was important for organisations that the model was customised to their particular context and needs. The customisation of the CAf model and the process of self-assessment are accepted by EIPA (EIPA, 2006). So, the CEPCEP team customised CAf for the NOC. The customisation of CAf increased the impact of self-assessment on these organisations as it (i) focused the self-assessment teams' work and (ii) made it possible to use self-assessment as a regulatory instrument of the NOC network. On the one hand, experience shows that self-assessment teams tend to spend a great deal of time working on the meaning of the concepts used in the Caf model. This is precious time spent out of direct analyses of the way things are done in the organisation. On the other hand, if different teams in different organisations focus on very different actions, it weakens the regulatory side of self-assessment as it (i) makes benchmarking more difficult and (ii) there is no guarantee that the self-assessment effort is focused on what really matters.

The major changes in the CAf model were:

- Criteria 5 and 9 (and their sub-criteria) were rewritten to focus on the NOC key processes and key results;
- The examples for each sub-criterion were rewritten;
- The key performance indicators for criterion 9 are given to the NOC in an on-line database of key results.

3.4. *Criterions 5 and 9*

On the CAf model, criterion 5 Processes has three sub-criteria: 5.1. Identify, design, manage and improve processes on an on-going basis; 5.2. Develop and deliver citizen/customer oriented services and products; and 5.3. Innovate processes involving citizens/customers.

On the CAf-NOC model, criterion 5 – Processes – has four sub-criterions: 5.1. Identify and design key processes; 5.2 Identify and design support processes; 5.3 Manage and improve key processes; and 5.4 Manage and improve support processes.

This modification was intended to focus assessors on the design and management of the key processes themselves rather than on clients and innovation. At this stage i, the NOC are young organisations with many quantitative goals. Therefore, it is important for them to establish their workflows. Eventually, criterion 5 may be subject to a new focus, but, for now, it was decided this was where self-assessment could add value.

As for the aim of creating a self-assessment framework that could function as a regulatory instrument of the network, focusing on the design and management of processes (rather than on their client orientation and innovation) NOC will have to look in depth into each stage of the Quality Charter. As a result, (i) ANQ is confident that all people will really look into the Quality Charter and (ii) NOC may give relevant feedback to ANQ on the pros and cons of this document (therefore contributing to its continuous improvement).

As for criterion 9 – Key performance results – the CAf model has two sub-criteria: 9.1 External results: outputs and outcomes to goals; and 9.2 internal results.

On the CAf-NOC model, criterion 9 – Key performance results – also has two sub-criteria, but they have a slightly different scope: 9.1 is dedicated to the outputs regarding the direct clients (adults) and 9.2 is dedicated to process indicators.

A set of performance indicators that covers both sub-criteria was included in the CAf –NOC framework. These indicators are foreseen in the Quality Charter and are at the disposal of the NOC on-line in a database created by UCP.

3.5. *Rewriting the examples*

For each sub-criterion, the CAf model includes,, a set of examples that "explain the content of the sub criteria in more detail and suggest possible areas to address, in order to explore how the administration answers the requirements expressed in the sub criterion" (EIPA, 2006). As the CAf model is aimed at all sectors of activity, these examples are necessarily open in scope and do not address concrete situations of specific sectors. Therefore, although helpful, these examples could not be clear enough for the self-assessment teams of NOC. Since the CAf-NOC framework is aimed at more than 400 organisations in a very specific activity and all these organisations follow the Quality Charter, it was decided to review each example and, whenever possible, rephrase it to (i) incorporate real life situations of a NOC or (ii) incorporate norms of the Quality Charter.

3.6. *On-line database of key results*

One of the key innovations in the implementation of the NO Public Policy is the obligation of the whole network of NOC to operate within a central management database. Therefore, all the steps of the RPL process of each adult in the system are registered and available for the NOC where the adult is enrolled and for ANQ. This database was not subject to any special treatment so the information was only available as a whole. Nevertheless, it was very important information for the self-assessment teams to consider and for ANQ to monitor the network. So, the UCP team built indicators that are calculated with the information contained in this database and made available to all NOC and ANQ on-line.

With this instrument, the self-assessment team of each NOC has real time access to the key results mentioned in criterion 9, not only to the their NOC's results but also to a comparison with different groupings of other NOC. This facilitates both evaluation of results and benchmarking.

Figure G.2 View of the on-line database with results for criterion 9 for a NOC

NOVAS OPORTUNIDADES
APRENDER COMPENSA

ANQ
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO

1020332 - Associação Comercial e Industrial de Coimbra ANUAL 2009 Dados a 01-08-2010

Indicadores	Básico						Secundário					
	Centro	Número de Adultos	Concelho (288)	Nuts_III (10)	Nuts_II (2)	Nacional	Centro	Número de Adultos	Concelho (288)	Nuts_III (10)	Nuts_II (2)	Nacional
9.1-A Percentagem de adultos encaminhados	44%	71/163	93%	91%	92%	98%	65%	115/178	109%	105%	101%	89%
9.1-B Percentagem Enc. Ofert. Externas	3%	5/163	10%	10%	13%	31%	19%	33/178	29%	29%	34%	13%
9.1-E Percentagem de adultos com cert. Total	99%	75/76	95%	96%	98%	95%	100%	44/44	93%	94%	93%	97%
9.1-F Percentagem adultos com cert. Parcial	1%	1/76	5%	4%	2%	5%	0%	0/44	7%	6%	7%	3%
9.2-B Intervalo tempo médio Insc-Diag	25.2	129	61.1	53.3	50.4	73	16.8	139	80.8	66.3	68.7	51.2
9.2-C Intervalo tempo médio entre Diag-Enc	30.9	71	26.6	32.5	35	82.9	35.1	115	45.5	62.7	79	42.7
9.2-D Percentagem de sessões individuais	10%	90/918	19%	22%	15%	34%	16%	135/841	20%	29%	30%	19%
9.2 E Percentagem de certificados com form.compl	100%	75/75	98%	92%	86%	34%	98%	43/44	72%	68%	46%	77%
9.2-F Duração média Form. Complementar	28.6	75	18.2	16.1	19	17	13.9	43	9.3	12.8	16	20.7
9.2-I Percentagem de transferencias	4%	6/163	8%	6%	6%	13%	10%	18/178	16%	11%	12%	8%

Notas:
9.1-A Número de encaminhados no período (independentemente da data da sua inscrição) sobre total de inscritos no mesmo período.
9.1-B Mesmo que anterior mas tendo em conta apenas os encaminhamentos para ofertas exteriores.
9.1-E Percentagem de adultos com certificação total no universo de todos os certificados (total + parcial) no período em causa
9.1-F Percentagem de adultos com certificação parcial no universo de todos os certificados (total + parcial) no período em causa
9.2-B Tempo médio de tempo (dias), entre inscrição e primeira acção de diagnóstico. (O universo é o de todos os adultos com 1ª acção de diagnóstico no período em causa)
9.2-C Tempo médio de tempo (dias), entre diagnóstico e primeira acção de encaminhamento. (O universo é o de todos os adultos com 1ª acção de encaminhamento no período em causa)
9.2-D Percentagem de sessões individuais em todas as sessões (individuais + em grupo) ocorridas no período em causa
9.2-E Percentagem de adultos que receberam formação complementar, tendo em conta todos os certificados no período em causa
9.2-F Média da duração da formação complementar (em horas) para todos os certificados no período em causa)
9.2-I Número de transferidos no período (independentemente da data da sua inscrição) sobre total de inscritos no mesmo período.

Metas 2009

Figure G.3 View of the on-line database with comparison between goals and results for a NOC

NOVAS OPORTUNIDADES
APRENDER COMPENSA

ANQ
AGÊNCIA NACIONAL PARA A QUALIFICAÇÃO

Associação Comercial e Industrial de Coimbra

Metas contratualizadas para o ano 2009 e resultados alcançados entre Janeiro e Dezembro de 2009, por nível de qualificação

NÍVEL BÁSICO:

	Metas 1)			Resultados 2)			Metas / Resultados 3)	
Indicadores de actividade	N.º	%		N.º	%		N.º	%
N.º de Inscrições 4)	300			163			-137	-46%
N.º de Encaminhamentos 5)	270	90%	INS	71	44%	INS	-199	-74%
N.º de Entradas em Processo de RVCC 6)	189	70%	ENC	65	92%	ENC	-124	-66%
N.º de Certificações 7)	180	95%	PROC	76	117%	PROC	-104	-58%

This indicators platform has proved to be a very important instrument for self-assessment. The fact that self-assessment teams do not have to spend their time gathering information on key results and that the information gathered is the same that is used by management to monitor the organisation improves the process, empowers the teams and keeps their work focused on analyses rather than instrumental tasks (Melo, 2010).

3.7. *The process of self-assessment*

The CAf framework establishes a ten step procedure for self-assessment. It was built and focuses on self-assessment carried out by a single organisation whilst the CAf-NOC project is aimed at the more than 400 organisations. Furthermore, the CAf-NOC project also aimed to promote benchlearning between NOC. Self-assessment was also an excuse to have people from different NOC thinking about what they do through the same framework, at the same time and with some sharing of problems and solutions. It was also necessary to design a way of assigning each NOC to a consultant that could assist the self-assessment team in the process. There were only six consultants available for all NOC in the country.

To match the aims (networking, aid) and the resources (six consultants), the project was implemented as follows:

19. All NOC were divided into clusters of up to 12 NOC;
20. Day 1: one-day training session with all clusters of a given region (6 sessions with between 24 and 66 NOC in each session) where the project team explained the project, the CAF-NOC model, the procedure and the expected outputs;
21. Day 2: half -day training sessions for each cluster with its consultant where doubts were discussed and the procedure was planned;
22. Day 3 (at least one month later): half day training sessions for each cluster with its consultant where doubts were discussed and problems and solutions were shared;
23. Day 4 (at least one month later): half day training sessions for each cluster with its consultant where last minute doubts were discussed;
24. The NOC completed their self-assessment reports and improvement plans;
25. The consultants gave feedback to each NOC on these documents.

The self-assessment reports and improvement plans were loaded on an on-line database so that the project team could monitor the process and could meta-analyse the project. Quality control of the consultants' work was done through on-line questionnaires after day 1, day 4 and one month after the NOC handed in their self-assessment reports and improvement plans.

In 2009, 265 NOC initiated the process of self-assessment. These were the NOC that existed prior to 2008 and therefore had been in operation for at least two years. All the other NOC had only been in operation for one year or less and were considered unfit for self-assessment at this stage. The latter would initiate the process in 2010. At the end of 2009, 231 of the 265 NOC completed their self-assessment and built an improvement plan.

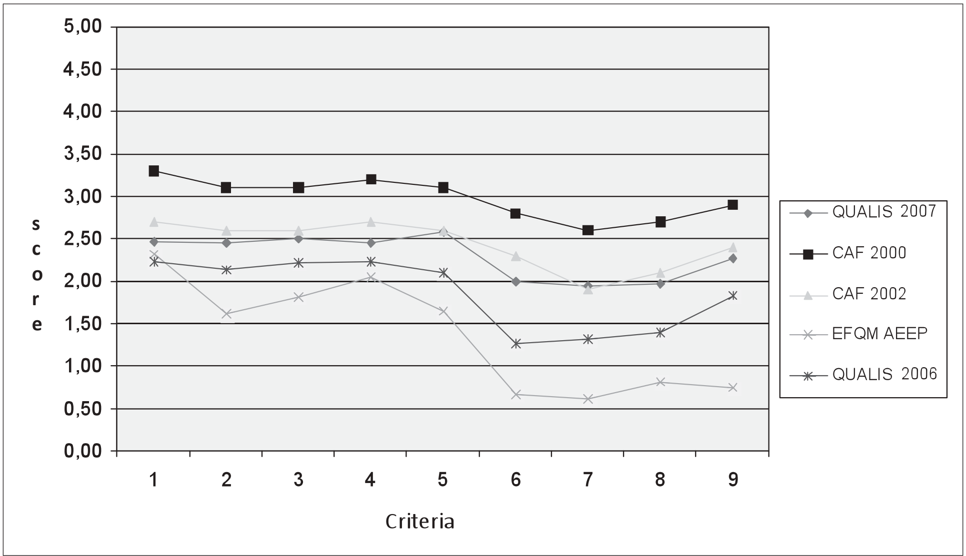
4. Results

Bearing in mind the theoretical background presented in section 2 and the way the CAf framework and the self-assessment process were adapted by UCP for use by the NOC described in section 3, we now present the results of the self-assessment reports and the questionnaires filled in by the NOC self-assessment teams in order to support our research questions: the NOC's operating context, with its totally new approach in the way central offices of the public administration interact with the organisations on the field has created pressure for the latter to (i) focus on the clients and (ii) use self-assessment as a self-regulatory instrument.

4.1. *Focus on the client – scores*

The first set of data we present is the average score used by the self-assessment teams of the NOC in each criterion of the model. The value of this analysis is not the score in itself. The score given to the NOC is the result of a decision taken by each self-assessment team, using its own criteria and aims and, therefore, its value is not suitable for benchmarking organisations. A not so mature organisation may score more than a more mature one just because one self-assessment team was more demanding than the other. However, one may use these scores to judge the accuracy of the self-assessment exercise of the organisations. As we found in the past (Melo, 2007), the average scores attributed to each of the 9 criteria by groups of organisations tend to form a line with an equal morphology:

Figure G.4 Score lines from different groups of CAf users: CAf in Europe, Azorean schools, Portuguese private schools

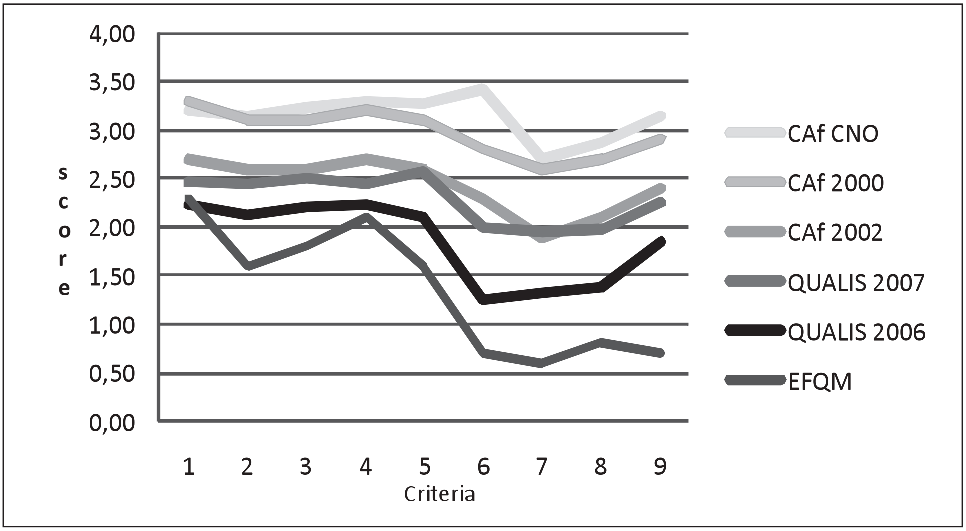


In figure G.4 we present the average score attributed to each criterion by the self-assessment teams of different groups of CAf users. QUALIS 2006 is the group of 38 schools of the Azores Islands (Portugal) that self-assessed in 2006. QUALIS 2007 is the same group but with the 2007 results. CAf 2000 and CAf 2006 represent the group of organisations that used CAf in 2000 and in 2006 and reported their scores to EIPA. EFQM AEEP is a group of around 50 private schools from Portugal that self-assessed with EFQM in 2000.

The five lines have a significant proximity in shape. Leadership (criteria 1) scores highest than strategy (criteria 2), enablers (criteria 1 to 5) score higher than results (criteria 6 to 9). And in the results criteria, key results (criteria 9) are score better than the others. It is no wonder that this happens and it means that organisations in general are more focused on processes than on outcomes and that there is still a long way to go in the monitorisation of outcomes (client – criteria 6, people – criteria 7 and society criteria 8).

But, when we compare the NOC's scores with the others there is a significant difference.

Figure G.5 Score lines from different groups of CAf users: CAf in Europe, Azorean schools, Portuguese private schools, NOC



The CAf NOC line (CAf CNO in the figure) diverges significantly from all the others in that criterion 6 (client results) is scored well over criteria 5 and 7. Disregarding the absolute score value attributed, NOC seem to focus more on their clients (adults) than on their processes, unlike all the other organisations for which we have data. It can be argued that a good part of the success of the NOI (presented in other articles of this book) is a result of this focus. But, in our present scope, despite the results obtained, our finding is that NOC organisations report that they are more focused on their clients (one of the eight TQM principles) than organisations from the public sector (CAf 2000 and CAf 2002) and schools (QUALIS 2006, QUALIS 2007 and EFQM AEEP).

We attribute this to the context of self-regulation in which the NOC operate. On the one hand, although the RPL procedures follow standards and some procedures set out by ANQ, the greater part of their daily business is dependent on planning and action carried out by the NOC and the mechanisms of coordination are internal. People are allocated jobs in the NOC by the NOC director, adult engagement and training sessions vary between NOC. On the other hand, each NOC has contracted with ANQ its goals for each type of RPL process and financing will depend on the level of fulfilment. Therefore, NOC are especially attentive to their clients` (adults) needs and opinions.

However, this finding could be more a consequence of the different composition of the NOC system when compared to CAf, QUALIS and EFQM than a consequence of the NOI. It can be argued that the difference in scoring patterns resulted more from the fact that many NOC were created by the private sector, while the CAf and QUALIS experiences we benchmarked are composed of public sector organisations. So, it was necessary to find out if, for example, NOC created by schools scored this way or like the QUALIS or EFQM AEEP schools. Therefore, we analysed scoring according to the legal nature of the creator of the NOC (regular schools, professional training schools, professional training centres, others) to see if this difference in score line is common to the whole NOC system or just to any one of the groups of NOC.

As we can see in figures G.6 and G.7, there is a significant difference in scoring between NOC created by professional training centres and all the others. In fact, the latter have a scoring curve that is consistent with the scoring curves presented in figure G.4. This finding gives us new and important information. Firstly, it shows that NOC created by schools have a different pattern of scoring than schools themselves. Therefore, despite having the same geography and ultimately depending on the same government body, the different contexts of operation have a significant impact on the two organisations' cultures. The school, dependent on top down, centralised

Figure G.6 Score lines from different groups of NOC: Professional schools, Training Centres, Schools

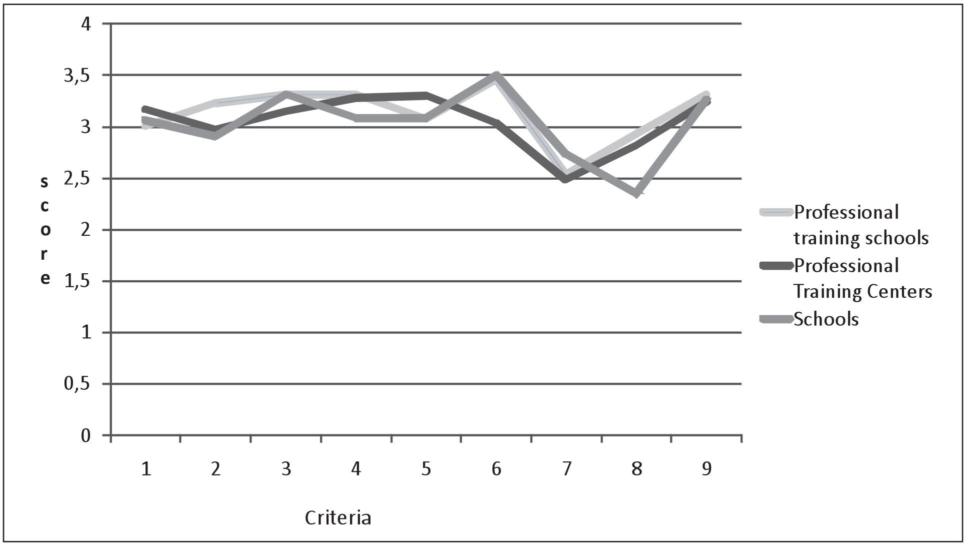


Figure G.7 Score lines from different groups of NOC: Professional training centres, all others

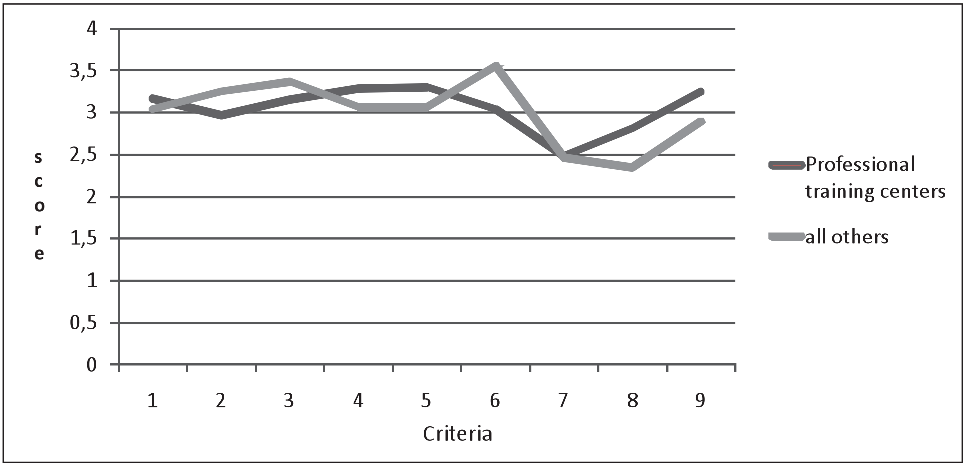


Table G.1 Average scores on CAf criteria by nature of the entity that founded the NOC (2009)

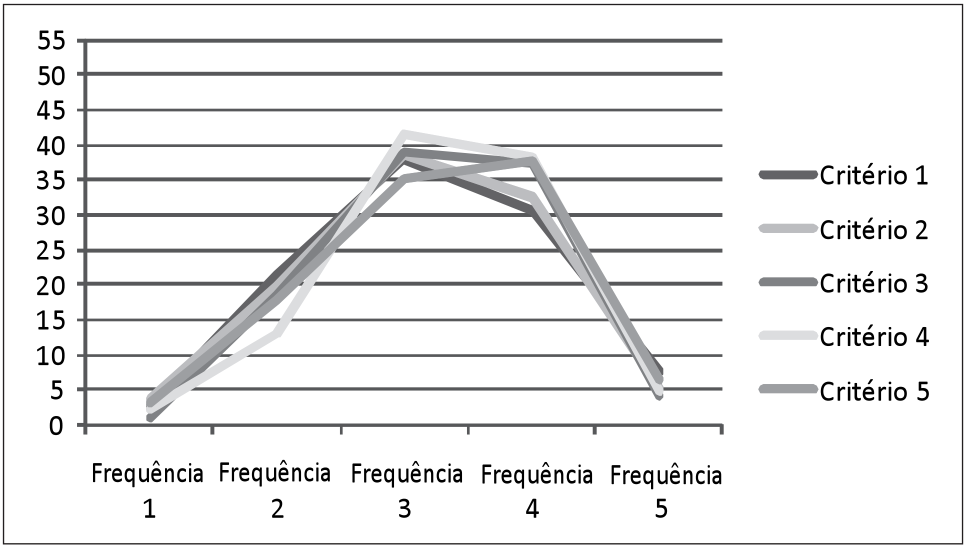
Criteria	14 Professional training schools	35 Professional training centers	75 Schools	73 others
1	3,00	3,17	3,06	3,41
2	3,23	2,97	2,91	3,26
3	3,31	3,15	3,31	3,29
4	3,31	3,28	3,09	3,32
5	3,08	3,3	3,09	3,29
6	3,46	3,03	3,50	3,47
7	2,54	2,48	2,74	2,56
8	2,92	2,81	2,34	2,88
9	3,31	3,24	3,26	3,03

regulation follows orders. The NOC, which are autonomous and self-regulated, focus on their clients. Secondly, the only exception can be explained. NOC created by professional training centres are much less autonomous from their creator than the others and tend to be more dependent on external coordination mechanisms. The professional training centres depend on and belong to a public entity named Instituto do Emprego e da Formação Profissional (IEFP)[6]. IEFP has a central governing body and regional directors. Planning and procedures are done centrally and a national system of centres executes instructions. During the procedure of self-assessment, all NOC from the professional training centres waited for instructions from the governing body and, when instructed to self-assess, they complied.

This finding is consistent with and gives strength to our theory of self-regulation and client focus of the NOC and even the exception contributes to the theory, as it comes from a group of NOC that function on a top down basis.

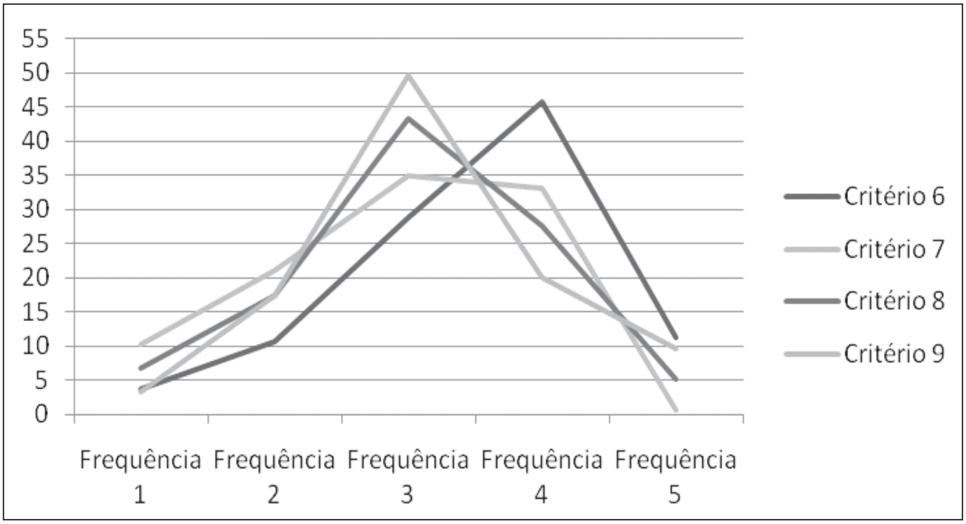
One last test was carried out to obtain more data on reliability of the scores used by the self-assessment teams. The distribution of the scores in the scale was analysed for each criterion to see if there was evidence of random scoring.

Figure G.8 Distribution of scores through enablers criteriaa



[6] Employment and Vocational Training Institute.

Figure G.9 Distribution of scores through results criteria



As shown in the two figures, there is an almost perfect Gauss curve in the enablers criterion and a Guass curve tilted to the right on criteria 6. The score for the enablers criterion is therefore reliable with respect to non-random use. As for the results of criterion scoring, it is also reliable, as the difference in criteria 6 is explained by the focus on client discussed above.

4.2. *Self-assessment as a self-regulatory instrument – questionnaires*

The second set of data we present are the results of the questionnaires the UCP team asked the NOC teams to fill in during the self-assessment procedures and some statements made by the NOC self-assessment teams in their self-assessment reports.

The first questionnaire was sent before the first training session. The only information that the NOC teams had been given was that UCP was doing an external evaluation of the NOI and that it would be proposing a non-compulsory framework for self-assessment. The questionnaire was about the NOC's previous experience in the field of self-assessment and their expectations. Of the 245 NOC that received the questionnaire, 67% responded.

The second questionnaire was sent one month after the NOC self-assessment teams had finished their self-assessment reports and improvement plans. This questionnaire was about the NOC's experience with CAf. Of the 245 NOC that received the questionnaire, 73% responded.

Most of the questions posed in the first questionnaire were repeated in the second. This was intended to give some insight into the possible impacts of the self-assessment project on the perceptions people have of self-assessment itself. Both questionnaires had yes and no answers, but most were formulated to receive an answer of agreement or disagreement in a 7 point scale where 1, 2 and 3 are negative (disagree strongly to disagree) and 4 to 7 are positive (agree to agree completely).

The self-assessment reports were delivered through a database displayed on a website.

4.2.1. *Prior self-assessment experience*

In the following figures we show the answers given by the NOC self-assessment teams on their prior experience in self-assessment.

Figure G.10 Question made to the NOC

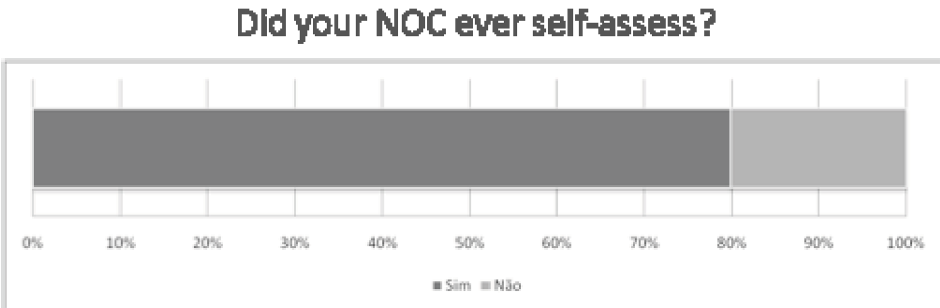


Figure G.11 Question made to the NOC

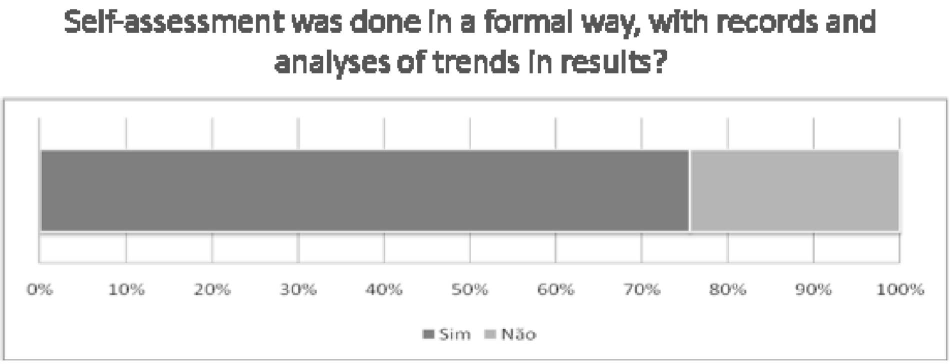
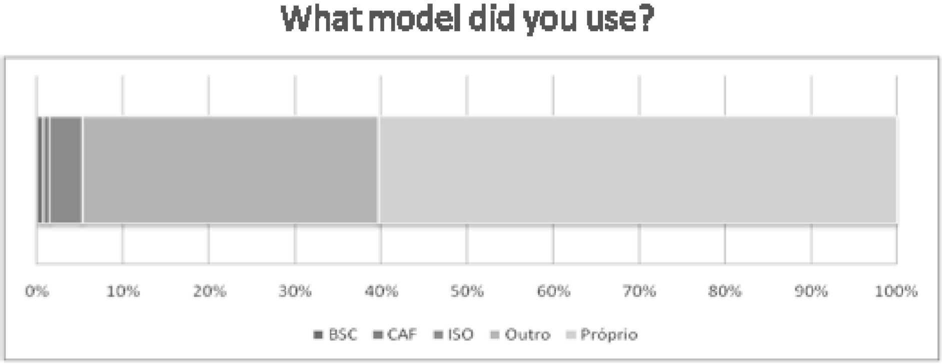


Figure G.12 Question made to the NOC



This first group of answers (figures G.10 to G.12) gives us good insight into the state of the art in self-assessment in the NOC system. Though almost 80% of the responding NOC declared that they self-assessed and that they did it in a structured way, 60% declared they used a self-assessment model made by themselves and 35% declared they used a model other than the ones listed in the questionnaire (BSC, CAf, EFQM, ISO). This response, as the project consultants confirmed during the meetings with the clusters of NOC, derives more from a poorly structured idea about the nature of self-assessment than from the existence of widespread practices of self-assessment. The probability of so many NOC having built structured self-assessment models on their own was, according to the literature on this field, very weak. Nevertheless, as we see in the responses with the label "2009" in figures G.13 to G.15 below, people from the NOC responded that the self-assessment they had done had great impacts on the way the NOC operate, the way professionals who work in the NOC perform their duties and the knowledge they have about their organisation.

This is consistent with some of the statements NOC made in their self-assessment reports:

> *We stress the importance of this work because although there were previously defined periods of evaluation, the methodology provided a critical analysis of the activities undertaken by the NOC, as well as structured brainstorming that are the vehicles for continuous improvement* (C47).

> *The implementation of this model allowed for reflection and evaluation in a more organised and systematised way* (C45).

> *The implementation of this model gave structure to the loose moments of assessment already carried out by our Centre* (C33).

> *Assessment became more systematised and allowed us greater readiness to face new challenges* (C18).

> *The implementation of a system of self-evaluation is very important because it makes the team reflect on their practices. Not that it is not always assessing and modifying their work, but this self-assessment draws our attention to other aspects that are taken into account but are not measured* (C10).

4.2.1. *Prior self-assessment experience*

In figures G.13 to G.15, we show the answers given by the NOC self-assessment teams on the impacts of self-assessment.

Figure G.13 Question made to the NOC

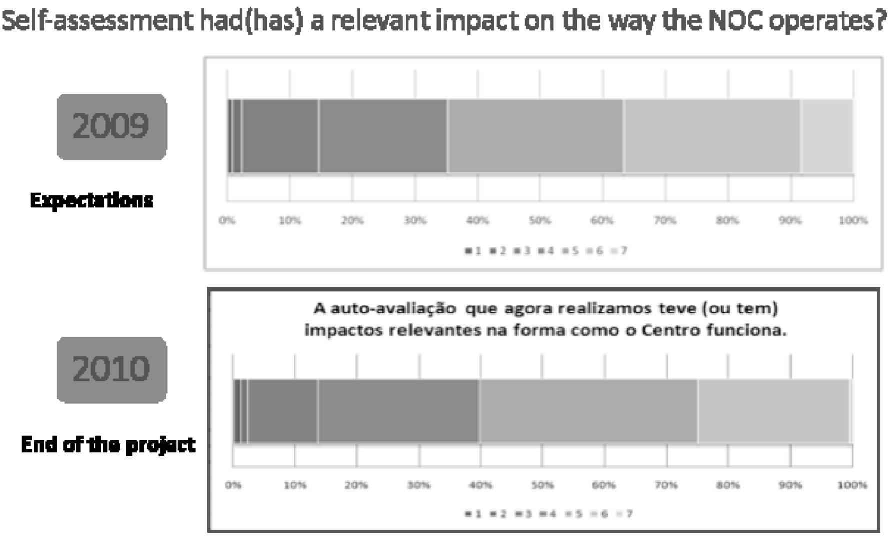


Figure G.14 Question made to the NOC

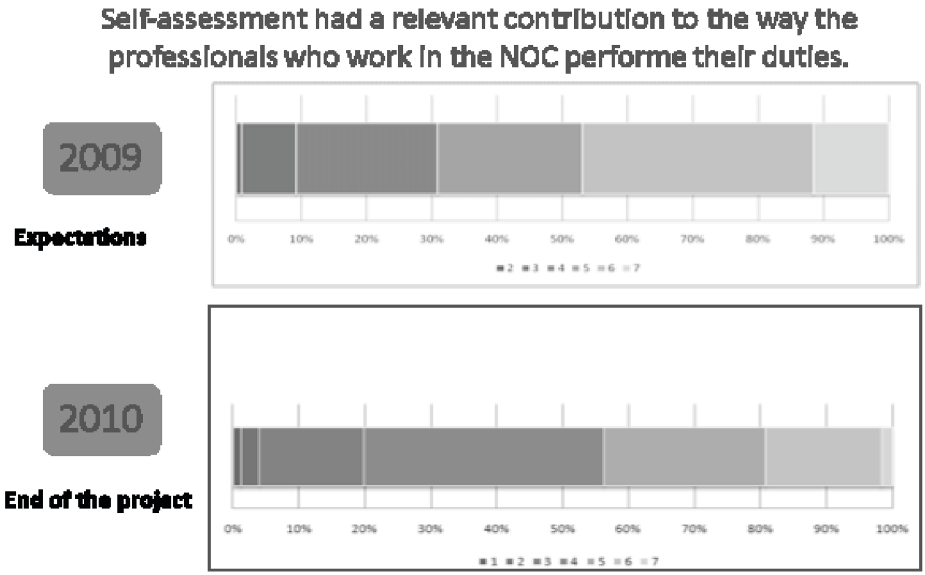
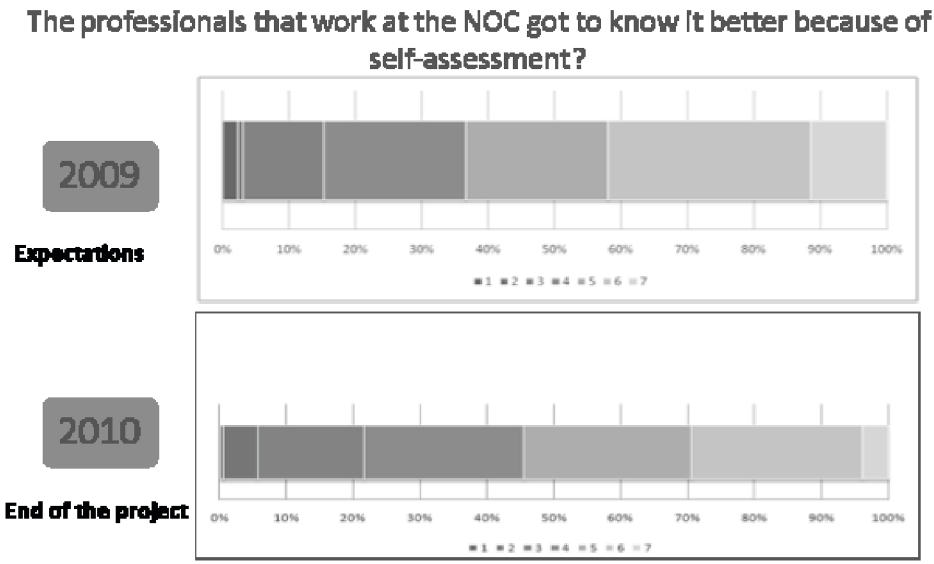


Figure G.15 Question made to the NOC



This second group of answers (figures G.13 to G.15) meant to shed light on the impacts of self-assessment on the NOC in what pertains to collective performance (figure G.13), personal performance (figure G.14) and acquisition of knowledge about the organisation by individuals (figure G.15). In these figures, the answers obtained before initial training are presented under the label “2009”. Answers obtained after the NOC self-assessment teams had finished their self-assessment reports and improvement plans are presented under the label “2010”.

The common feature of the second group of answers is that the number of NOC that answered 7 or 6 greatly diminished. If we analyse this pattern with the great positivity in the answers presented in figures G.16, G.17 and G.18, we may conclude that one of the main impacts of the project is that people in the NOC became more demanding in regard to the techniques and impacts of self-assessment as a result of using a structured model with external help. But even so, a majority of almost 55% of the NOC teams responded that people got to know their NOC better because of the CAf self-assessment, using the 3 top scores (5, 6 and 7). 40% use the same score for impact on the way people perform their duties and 60% for impact on the way the NOC works.

These results support our thesis that self-assessment is an instrument of personal and organisational learning and a mechanism of internal coordination of work. Although further evidence is needed (particularly, more qualitative data collected in real life situations), there is a consistent pattern of satisfaction with the impacts of self-assessment.

In the self-assessment reports, the NOC teams state that:

> *It was possible to identify priority interventions and to understand the dynamics underlying the processes; these issues are proving to be crucial in the building of changes supported on consequential reflections* (C57).

> *The main achievement of self-assessment was the sharing of experiences and opinions, the moments created for joint reflection and the analysis of divergent views. All this in favour of a more homogeneous strategy for the NOC* (C56).

> *The self-assessment team believes that the use of the process was very positive, in that it allowed for a joint review of the entire team on various aspects of the operation of the NOC* (C51).

> *The team was taken to reflect the Organisation as a whole and not just the technical aspects that each individual assumes. This led, in addition to a set of improvement actions, to define a line that guides the Centre in the search for results and increased quality, based on a solid and motivated team focused on the interest and satisfaction of adults* (C36).

> *The first conclusion is that the process in itself is already a factor of growth and development of the organisation because it fosters a whole, organised and deep internal reflection* (C25).

> *We felt it was useful in our daily operations to the extent that some improvement actions have been implemented and developed after the completion of the report* (C9).

4.2.3. *Satisfaction with the model*

In figures G.16 to G.18, we show the answers given by the NOC self-assessment teams regarding their satisfaction with the CAf NOC self-assessment.

Figure G.16 Question made to the NOC

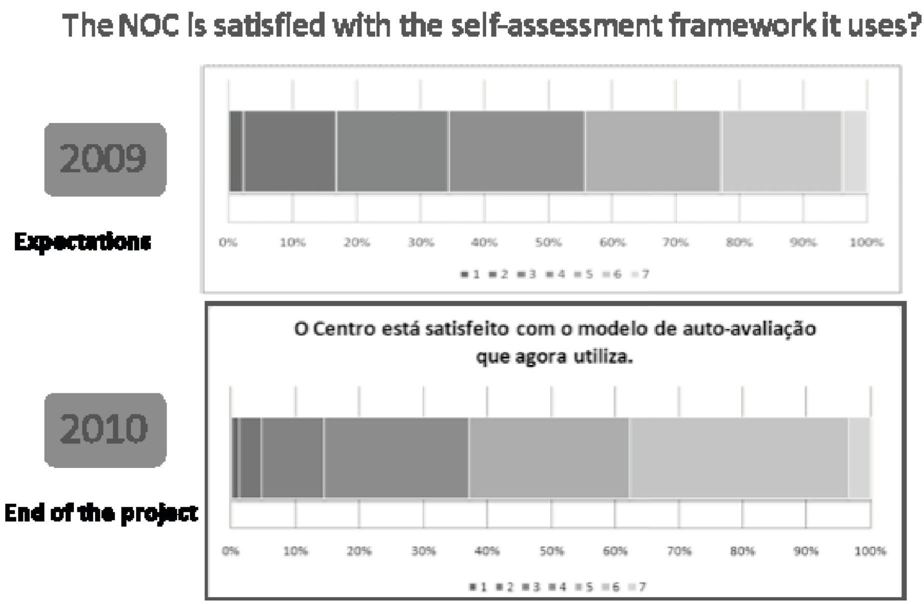


Figure G.17 Question made to the NOC

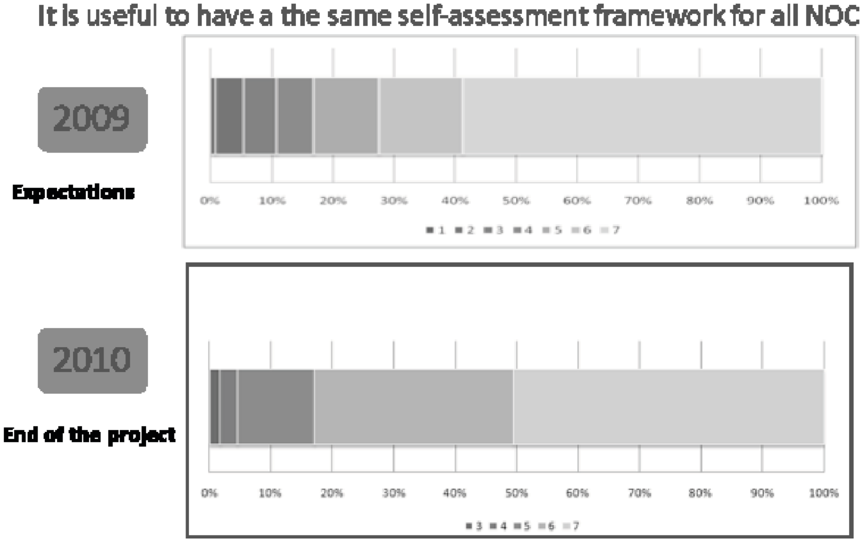
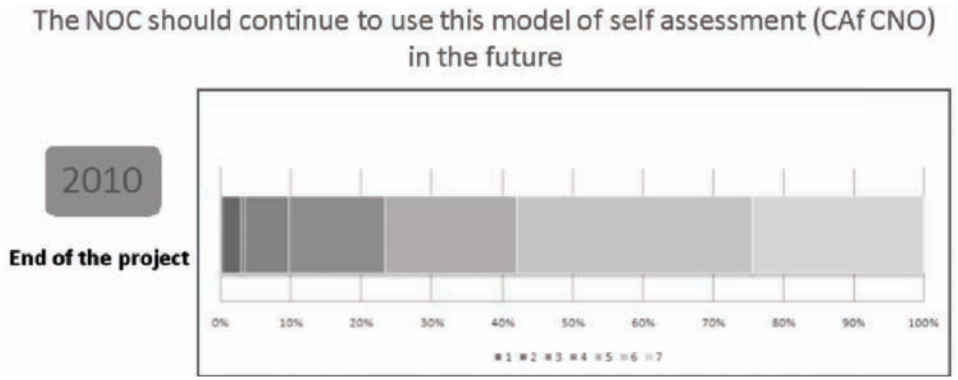


Figure G.18 Question made to the NOC



In this third group of answers (figures G.16 to G.18), we measured the NOC satisfaction with the self-assessment model they used. Again, the label “2009” indicates the responses obtained before day 1 and the label “2010” indicates those obtained after the NOC self-assessment teams had finished their self-assessment reports and improvement plans.

The most surprising results from these questionnaires are those presented in this third group of questions (figures G.16 to G.18). Firstly, satisfaction with the self-assessment model grew in a significant way: from 44% of answers

5, 6 and 7 in 2009 t0 62% in 2010 (with 1, and 2 answers going down from 18% to 5%). Secondly, NOC found it extremely useful that everyone uses the same model: from 83% of answers 5, 6 and 7 in 2009 to 95% in 2010 (with 1 and 2 answers going down from 11% to 0%). Lastly, 58% answer 6 or 7 that the NOC should continue to use CAf, while only 10% answer with 1, 2 or 3.

In conclusion, despite the effort asked of the self-assessment teams (extra work on non-paid extra time), most consider that self-assessment is a useful endeavour that should continue. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that of the 265 NOC that initiated self-assessment in 2009, 231 finished the task. 14 of the non-compliers began self-assessing in 2010 with the new group of 295 NOC that were created in 2008.

As one self-assessment team put it:

> *The team recognizes that this process, though it bullied us into dedicating too much time to self-assessment, is undeniably important. We have incorporated some practices of supervision and monitoring of day-to-days actions and are feeling, therefore, more reflective practitioners* (C67).

5. Main conclusions

Public policy in education and training today faces those stubborn problems that traditional approaches have not been able to overcome (Shadish, Cook, & Leviton, 1995). The NOI innovated in respect to the organisational framework created for the operation of the NOC. As a consequence of this innovation, self-assessment assumed a major role in the regulation of the system. Especially as self-regulation became a necessity in face of the novelty of the tasks these organisations were asked to perform (RPL and adult education and training in large scale).

The NOC proved to be different organisations when compared to schools and public administration in general. They are significantly more client focused.

Self-assessment proved that it had the potential to be a self-regulation instrument and that it may foster learning in and about the organisation. Despite the overtime, people in the organisations feel that it is a useful endeavour. Self-assessment alone will not change, but self-assessment is a powerful tool when used in the context of a theory of change (Carneiro, 2010).

All this, in itself, does not solve the stubborn problems. But auto-regulated, learning organisations will. And these are what NOC may become.

Suggestions for future studies

For further studies we make three suggestions:

- The results presented provide some arguments in favour of self-assessment as a way of committing organisations to the task of reinventing themselves. In this case, whilst the NOC role as RPL centres fades away, they must develop into LLL (Lifelong Learning) Centres, providing adults with new learning solutions in the future.
- Carneiro (2010) gives evidence of knowledge as a driver for public policy innovation. We do not have enough data to support that knowledge has been a driver for innovation at the NOC level, but it is important to further investigate this issue.
- The NOC regulation system – based on organisational self-regulation (through standards, goal setting and self-assessment) rather than on command and control external regulation (top-bottom) – breaks the way for a new model of regulation of state initiated educational systems. It would be important to understand if this mechanism of regulation may be generalised to the whole school system.

Acknowledgements

The CAf-NOC self-assessment project would not have been done without the precious contribution of a dedicated team I had the honour to lead. Francisco Jacinto, Hugo Caldeira, Isabel Salvado, Melissa Marmelo and Sofia Reis helped design the project and worked as consultants for the clusters of NOC.

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NOI EVALUATIVE RESEARCH
FINAL REVIEW EXTERNAL EXPERTS

Marja van den Dungen (rapporteur)
Alejandro Tiana
Claudio Dondi
Joe Cullen
Nikitas Kastis
Walter Kugemann
Fabio Nascimbeni (convenor)

1. Introduction

The New Opportunities Initiative (NOI) is a national programme of the Portuguese government to massively upgrade the qualifications of the segment of the Portuguese population that lacks basic formal educational qualifications (2005-2010). The programme combines Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with adult and vocational education and certification. Further, the NOI is in line with the renewed Lisbon Strategy and the European Agenda for economic growth and social cohesion, since it supports two of the three EU2020 priorities: smart growth and social inclusion, as well as three key EU targets: increasing the employment rate, increasing educational attainment and reducing poverty. It is presented as the largest governmental programme for upgrading of qualifications of recent decades in Portugal (the target group is the entire Portuguese low-skilled adult population of 3.5 million adults), but it is also the largest governmental programme of this kind known in Europe.

The NOI has set out ambitious goals for different levels of achievement:

- Certification (quantitatively and qualitatively): certification of skills of 600,000 adults via recognition, validation and certification processes (255,000 for the Primary Education and 345,000 for the Secondary Education level).

- Infrastructure: establishment of a network of NOI centres for delivery of recognition, validation and certification processes (aiming at 500 centres in 2010), development of centres in relation to quality demands in organisational, personnel, recruitment and enrolment terms.
- System: development of national standards to apply in the recognition, validation and certification processes; development of system for quality assurance; development of national information and management system for monitoring of activities of the centres; launching national campaign for motivating and enrolment of adults.
- External evaluation of the NOI by a research team of the Portuguese Catholic University (2008-2011) and independent monitoring and appraisal of this research by a panel of qualified peer evaluators from abroad. Research methodology and results were presented to and discussed among researchers and evaluators in three annual meetings (2008, 2009 and 2010). In the last meeting the evaluators team, reinforced with another four international referees, gave their reviews and suggestions on the concept research papers presented in this publication. We are glad to see that reviews have been used in the revised papers.

In this chapter we present a final review of the NOI research and results from the perspective of the external peer evaluators. It must be noted that, although the review is "final" from the point of view of the international peer evaluators, the seven papers presented were not intended to be the only ones produced within the NOI external evaluation: additional research had to be suspended due to the reconsideration of NOI by the Portuguese Government. This means that the frequent recommendations here expressed towards the need of further research do not have to be interpreted as a judgment of inadequacy but rather a warm hearted call for further research to be developed in a promising – in some cases extremely original – area of analysis. We collectively recognize the value of associating substantial evaluative research activities to an important national programme with few benchmarking possibilities at international level.

2. Review about the NOI evaluative research

The report presents 7 papers that combine theoretical and empirical knowledge drawn from experience and evaluation of the NOI. After a short introduction of each paper follows a reflection of the peer evaluators.

2.1. *New opportunities and new government: a paradigm shift in policy*

This first paper is a theoretical and empirical study. It places the NOI in the context of a paradigm shift in the policy of adult education and lifelong learning. This paradigm shift is propelled by a rare combination of four different knowledge based engines:

- a sense of urgency: nationwide effort is needed based on future-oriented research and meta-policymaking;
- leadership visions, choices and change management: sustainable change is needed to create new opportunities in policy making;
- independent evaluative research: tight monitoring combined with formative improvement of processes, as a feedback mechanism for policy;
- communication and feedback channels.

The basic assumption is that some modes of academic knowledge, particularly those that stem from policy evaluative research, contribute effectively to the improvement of policy. Carneiro states that this is true, if there is a trustful communication and dialogue between the evaluated (policymaker) and the evaluator (academic researcher), independency and objectivity. He presents three cases with evidence of improvement of policy based on academic knowledge. Important sources of knowledge for the NOI initiative are hard data about the qualification level of the population, extrapolation of these levels to the future labour force and benchmarking against other OECD countries. This knowledge is the foundation of the strategic choice for a long-term programme (5 years NOI) with significant investments of the Portuguese government and European funding. Evaluative research of NOI functions as a feedback mechanism for policy development and for making interventions in the programme; evaluative research also provides learning about investments and results.

Reflection

The paper presents the NOI approach as a new, distinct and rich scenario for the relation between knowledge and policy making. Distinct features are as introduced by the external evaluators: clear leadership, theoretical foundation, reciprocity and collaboration.

According to Carneiro the NOI approach can be used for other reforms in the public sectors in Portugal. We believe that they can also be used in all European countries involved in lifelong learning strategies. The NOI is an unprecedented example of national policy, based on research to create a national programme for giving new opportunities for a population. It is a systemic approach in which all elements are put in place: vision, leadership, systems, standards, processes, infrastructure, funding, a national awareness-raising campaign, monitoring of activities and results at individual level, and evaluative research. The programme is a change agent for thinking about learning. It creates a positive drive to participate in further learning, rewarding competences already developed for the sake of societal and economic participation.

In general Lifelong Learning Programmes tend to be reactive (retrospectively responding to already existing problems, like illiteracy) rather than 'transformative; partially rather than holistically innovative (for example introducing RPL/APL without linking it to individual learning pathways) and lack embedded evaluation that can identify 'what works, for whom and under what circumstances' in order to support accountability. There is a lot of European research about lifelong learning and APL (OECD, CEDEFOP, European Journal of Education, European Journal of vocational training), but this research is mostly descriptive (trends in Europe), conceptual (what is APL) or experimental (use of RPL for teachers for example). There is little research about lifelong learning and APL on the scale of the NOI research with results scaling from policy evaluation till the individual level, with the exception of large scale studies in South Africa and comparative studies carried out by OECD (see Harris, Breier and Wihak (Ed.) (2011) Researching the recognition of prior learning, NIACE).

2.2. *The new opportunities initiative: understanding public policy from diachronic perspective*

This paper attempts to describe how adult education policies of the past remain embedded in the NOI and which elements of the NOI are distinctive and innovative in the adult educational landscape. The paper is based on desk research and interviews with experts. The study concludes that most adult education is initiated by public institutions and decisions are politically centralized. In general formal schooling was reproduced in an evening schedule. The high rates of illiteracy were an important trigger for adult education. After legislation of adult education (1973) more attention was given to methods, activities, content and schedules for adults; the concept did evolve. In 2000 a prospective study was published: *The future of Education in Portugal: trends and opportunities* (Carneiro, Caraca & Pedro). The low rates of skills of the adult working population and high unemployment rates are a problem. A scenario is presented to achieve a level of more advanced countries like Finland, Denmark or the Netherlands in 2020: this scenario is the starting point for the later initiation of NOI. Key elements of early adult education have inspired NOI: proximity and flexibility of education; bridging education and vocational training, leading to dual certification; validation, recognition and certification of acquired competences throughout life with the portfolio as a central tool.

Reflection

The paper states that the above-mentioned key elements are present in NOI. However, distinct factors in relation to earlier educational policies are underlined: political commitment and continuity of this commitment (2005-2010); the volume of resources allocated; diversity and coverage of supply; establishment of an ambitious threshold (upper secondary education). The strong political commitment in combination with the role of evaluative research was already a key issue in the first paper from Carneiro. As external evaluators we would also mention the role of evaluative research in the NOI as one of the distinct factors. The huge amount of knowledge that this process has generated is a rich source for further development of lifelong learning and knowledge sharing, both at national and international level.

This paper places the NOI in the perspective of decades of educational policy. From another diachronic view it would be interesting to value the impact of NOI on educational policy from a future perspective of 10 or 20 years. In the study about brand modelling this issue is addressed as follows: ‘If NOI cannot fulfil the expectations about further learning, its value may weaken with time as people transform their perception of the public policy from a long-term strategy to increase national levels of adult education to a mere short-term government tactic to gain people’s preference.’ Finally, the paper relates the NOI’s conceptual framework with radical pedagogical approaches such as the Freirian ideas on conscientisation of citizens. This is recognised in the paper with its call in the conclusions for ‘an analysis based on an international benchmark of programmes and their position in a diachronic perspective of the evolution of adult education public policy’.

2.3. *Bringing lifelong learning to low-skilled adults: The new opportunities Initiative*

The main research question is whether RPL can be considered as a promising strategy to bring education and lifelong learning opportunities to low-educated adults, encouraging them to be enrolled or to further participate in learning activities. On the basis of theoretical and empirical findings of a comparative analysis of RPL trends across European and OECD countries, the hypothesis is that providing competence-based education and making educational levels accessible by RPL leads to large-scale participation of low-skilled adults. The research makes use of interviews with 154 individuals and their families as well as with NOI staff and employers, of analysis of individual portfolios and of an individual skills survey and self-assessment to learn about individuals' motivation for enrolment in NOI. 75% of these 154 individuals had completed the RPL process. Four motivations were dominant: to get a higher educational level, to have new opportunities for furthering studies, to improve career prospects, to be part of modern world. This was consistent with the NOC professional opinions. The RPL learning experience does indeed make a difference: individuals expect a new approach, in which life experience counts. RPL is valued as positive (experience is valued, there is a progress in the development of key competences), but also as very demanding (as a full set of skills is needed to fulfil the process). An important element to promote and retain adult motivation and self-confidence is seen in the facilitating role of the RPL professionals, teachers and trainers.

Reflection

The NOI programme gives a central role to accreditation of prior learning or APL – in the above paper mentioned as RPL, recognition of prior learning. APL is seen as a lever for lifelong learning.

The interpretation of APL in Portugal differs however from definitions in other countries. The Analytic Quality Glossary gives the following core definition: APL (or APEL) is the formal acknowledgement – based on professional assessment – of learning acquired from previous experience, usually from experience unrelated to an academic context (www.qualityreseachinternational.com/glossary/apel.htm). The formal acknowledgement is a general characteristic in most APL practices; in the Netherlands for example formal acknowledgement of APL means that each individual gets as a result of an APL procedure a report with a qualitative description and evidence of competences in relation to formal qualification standards. The individual can use this report to get exemptions for vocational education and training to reach a full qualification or can use this report with employers and labour organisations for career development. In the NOI there is no formal acknowledgement attached to the RPL process itself. The programmes for adult and vocational training build on the competences already developed and the formal acknowledgement is the full certification usually obtained after reaching the 9th or 12th grade or/and vocational certification. This interpretation of APL can be understood from the national need for upgrading of qualifications. Formal acknowledgement acts however also as appraisal and motivator for further learning. We understand that the NOI presents a lot of 'sleepers', people involved in the programme who don't make enough progress and don't get to the final certification. Formal acknowledgement in APL makes competences visible and can act as a motivator to continue the programme till certification. We would suggest further research into the sleepers and the late-comers (in line with the suggestions of the researchers). The research deepens into motivation to enrol in RPL, but only from the perspective of people that are enrolled. This may influence the appraisal of RPL. Furthermore the research does not provide answers about whether RPL as a starting point of learning does really motivate for further learning (the hypothesis of the research).

2.4. *Family: a key variable to explain participation in NOI and lifelong learning*

This is a piece of theoretical and empirical research about the influence of the family as a driver for deciding to return to learning in the NOI, drawing largely on Bourdieu's work on the role of the 'habitus' as a key field in shaping 'social capital'. The methodology is based on a comparative study of people engaged in NOI and people who did not enrol. The study looks at the former family context (at the age of 14), the present family context and the types of motivations that reinforce the decision to initiate learning. The study demonstrates that the parents of the non-enrolled are more often working in professions with lower qualifications and salaries, that a far greater number of people have not attended school or refused to fill in the information about their educational background, and that the enrolled show higher completed levels of education. These differences are also shown in the study of the present families. There are also differences in motivation to enrol: those who enrolled in NOI have a more future-oriented, positive and proactive approach to life. So there is evidence that the educational background of parents is reproduced in future educational behaviour of children. But there is also slight evidence that behaviour can change in reaction to and interaction with other influences, transforming the original habitus. The study provides important suggestions for public campaigns that target intra-family emotional relationships.

Reflection

The results indicate that educational behaviour of families strongly influences educational behaviour of children. The parents of people enrolled in NOI show higher completed levels of education than those of non-enrolled. So it seems that educational behaviour tends to reproduce itself. This has implications for the NOI strategy: because if this means that the groups being easier to reach do participate in the NOI, what is needed to reach the latecomers? The enrolment of 1.6 million people is a huge success (the forerunners, with better educational backgrounds). But the question remains: how to reach the laggards, the other 1.9 million? What new strategies are needed? How can public campaigns influence intra-family emotional relationships? What role can be played by the people enrolled in NOI as ambassadors to people not enrolled? Improvement of work stability is an important motivation to enrol in NOI (after progressing in life). The research gives information about the level of professions, but does not about employment or unemployment. What role can employers play in workers enrolment and completion of NOI programmes?

The problem of the social environment as a factor for non-participation is also known in other European countries. International studies can be used to learn from other approaches. We understand that the data are only a small part of a very rich database. We hope this data source will be used for further research, because it is a unique source of information for lifelong learning on individual level.

2.5. *Brand modelling: the citizen perception of a public policy*

The paper provides an empirical study that analyses the citizens perception of NOI as a brand, incorporating brand relationship quality, brand communications and brand personality. How can the brand explain the high degree of satisfaction with the brand and the massive enrolment? Focus groups and in-depth interviews are used as research methods.

The results show positive evidence in relation to all four elements of the brand:

- the public policy is seen as relevant
- the brand transmits shared values: inclusiveness, social recognition, self-esteem
- the brand is clear about tangible and intangible benefits (arguments)
- brand traits are perceived as sincere (open and friendly) and competent (reliable, hardworking), so called code words.

The responses of SME however suggest that NOI suffers from a perceived lack of credibility that will prevent the implementation of the model.

Reflection

Our remarks are in line with the conclusions of the researchers themselves: broader validation is needed. Focus groups are already known with the NOI: participants who completed the programme, registered people waiting to start and NOI monitors (of NOI centres). These groups can be seen as believers in the brand. For objectivity of results we would prefer to take also into account people who are not enrolled (like in the study on the role of family). The interviews are carried out with potential users, NOI monitors and firm managers. It may be the case that only firm managers are the only ones not familiar with the NOI. The remarks of two representatives of SME shed a less positive light at the NOI (disbelief and criticisms about legitimacy of certification). We would suggest to carry out more research into the brand appraisal of companies by approaching two specific groups: companies with employees enrolled in the programme and companies who have no experience with NOI.

Furthermore the study concludes that users tend to assume a role as promoters of NOI within their networks or relationships. It would be interesting to compare this finding with the conclusions on the role of the family as a motivational factor (as set out in the previous study about the role of the family), because for branding the NOI a deeper knowledge is needed about factors which can be most effectively applied to increase for enrolment.

2.6. *Discussing new opportunities inside S-D logic: new opportunities as a tool of governmental approach for nation value creation.*

The study tries to find connections between S-D logic, NOI results and economic processes. S-D is a theory nowadays in development, where S-D stands for service dominant logic, evolving from goods-based economy. S-D logic made a significant contribution to understanding how an economy based on services works through exchange of knowledge. The S-D logics are in this paper applied to adult education, as a social structure reflecting social evolution similarly to economic structures and processes in general evolve. The hypothesis is that embedding a high level of knowledge in services or goods leads to attractive exchange proposals, establishing better economic relations. In other words investment in education – in NOI – leads to better ability to compete in foreign markets. The crucial point is whether companies and society are able to make effective use of the new knowledge. This demands management throughout the value chain. Qualifying managers is an important next step. The research method chosen for the paper is quantitative survey research: 9,000 interviews with people enrolled and people not enrolled in the NOI. The results present some indications that it is possible to establish some direct connections between S-D logic and NOI results, but there are also indirect connections. Examples of direct connections cited include: people interviewed report greater improvement in terms of level of knowledge. Researchers conclude that NOI has a strong impact in terms of economic processes occurring in Portugal, because nearly 30% of the active population is engaged in NOI. In their opinion the problem is whether the country and companies are prepared to make use of the workers' new knowledge. Management is needed to increase knowledge along the value chain. This entails qualifying the managers of companies where newly qualified people work. This is especially needed for SME where managers are not highly qualified and have insufficient resources. Also important is persisting with the training of uncertified and unqualified population groups to achieve a larger national pool of knowledge.

Reflection

The S-D logic is a theory under construction, but it already suggests interesting ways of analysis. Application of the theory to adult education and to NOI results is still experimental. The paper suggests some direct and some indirect connections that will deserve more attention. As the researchers state in the paper, further research is needed. For example, a study of the application of adult education to company owners and top managers of SME should be developed. Programmes like NOI could provoke a catalytic knowledge process for economic development. We subscribe to this call for further research.

2.7. *Organisational self-regulation and self-assessment: the case of the new opportunities centres*

The NOI programmes are delivered by 454 New Opportunities Centres (NOC). These centres could be founded by schools (state or private), corporations, municipalities or other entities. These centres must perform along a Quality Charter and all the centres must have self-assessment programmes. The idea behind using self-assessment is to stimulate organisational self-regulation through standards and goal setting rather than through command and control. Self-assessment became a criterion for the evaluation of the NOI policy. A novelty is that self-assessment is oriented to accountability for improvement. This implies the development of autonomy, self-regulation and organisational learning.

To help the NOI in self-assessing, a team of the University assisted them in implementing the Common Assessment framework (CAf) model. The CAf model is a framework for quality improvement derived from EFQM, a model for quality management designed at the European level and therefore perceived as a legitimate framework. All the NOC goals and results in relation to CAf criteria are registered in a central database for self-assessment but also for benchmarking. Comparison between NOC and other organisations (public schools) concludes that NOC are significantly more focused on their clients. Results support the thesis that self-assessment is an instrument for personal and organisational learning and a mechanism for internal co-ordination of work. Also satisfaction with the self-assessment model grew in a significant way.

Reflection

The research provides evidence for a stronger client focus of centres using self-assessment. Self-assessment is seen as an instrument for organisational learning. Centres became over time more satisfied with the self-assessment model, a great majority (95%) finds it very useful that everyone uses the same model. Most of the centres that initiated self-assessment (265 NOC) did actually also finish it. These results however suggest more about acceptance of and satisfaction with the model than about actual learning for improvement of the centres. Further research into organisational learning by self-assessment is needed.

3. Reflection at some general issues

3.1. *Sustainability of innovation*

The quantitative and qualitative results of the NOI are impressive: 454 NOI centres, 1.6 million enrolments, 430.000 certifications. These results are however clearly linked to the enormous investments of the Portuguese government and to the use of European funding in the programme. This brings us to the issue of sustainability of this innovation. Economic and financial crises in Europe in general and in Portugal specifically will lead to great reductions in public expenditure in all fields, including in the field of Adult and Vocational Education and lifelong learning (offering lifelong opportunities for learning). How will this affect the infrastructure for and participation in the NOI? How did the NOI anticipate the new situation with less public spending? Did the NOI centres make business plans for the future? Research suggests that sustainability of innovations often gets attention only at the end of projects, whereas it would be more effective to think already at the start about the sustainable implementation of the innovation. This demands a planned strategy (*Determinants for Failure and Success of Innovation Projects: The Road to Sustainable Educational Innovations*, OU Netherlands/SURF, 2005).

As for the impact of this innovation action, one could expect that such a successful public policy action should not only enter into a consolidation phase, with deploying decentralised and sustainable local activities, coupled with the necessary SWOT analysis and the results of emerging "learning accountability" assessment schemes, as well as by expanding into other areas of learning demand, in the same way of an integrated and inter-governance approach, serving as a catalytic model for upgraded other areas of learning of public interest such as tertiary education and social inclusion.

3.2. *Coherence of research*

When we look at the whole picture of research presented we can map it as follows:

Educational policy and NOI	New opportunities and new government: a paradigm shift in policy. The new opportunities initiative: understanding public policy from diachronic perspective Discussing new opportunities inside S-D logic: new opportunities as a tool of governmental approach for nation value creation.
Motivation to participate	Bringing lifelong learning to low-skilled adults: the new opportunities Initiative Family: a key variable to explain participation in NOI and lifelong learning
Perception of the NOI	Brand modelling: the citizen perception of a public policy
Quality management of NOC	Organisational self-regulation and self-assessment: the case of the new opportunities centres

This mapping suggests that some themes are missing as research areas:

- The quality of professionals of the NOC as compared to professionals in regular public education systems. These professionals are the carriers of the new paradigm for lifelong learning. What level and quality of professional involvement in the programme is needed to ensure enough people enrol and stay in the system?
- Follow up of people that finished NOI training and certification programmes. The research so far gives good indications about tangible and intangible benefits of NOI. Will these benefits last later in life? Will expectations about progress in life and career be realised? These are also important questions in relation to the issue of creating knowledge in the value chain, which would deserve a long-term longitudinal cohort study to assess impacts. Will employers make use of new knowledge?
- A lot of the research is done with a 'converted constituency': people enrolled in the NOI and professionals of NOC. How can the results

of the NOI achieve greater credibility and legitimation in the outside world? An additional stakeholder analysis and an overall 'SWOT' analysis integrating evaluation results would help.

- A SWOT analysis should be complementing the policy assessment research up to this phase. This further research area, together with the longitudinal cohort study mentioned earlier and the validation of innovative accountability schemes and measures in order to assess performance of similar integrated policies are of immediate validity for the next phase of the NOI Programme.

AUTHORS

Roberto Carneiro

Roberto Carneiro is President of the Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures and Dean of the Institute for Distance Learning of the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP). Carneiro is a tenured professor of UCP where he teaches Knowledge Management and Learning Organisations, Leadership and Change Management, Globalization and Social Change, New Technologies and Organisational Culture, Economics of Human Resources, and Innovation Policy. He is also a Professor of the National Institution of Administration where he coordinates the Executive training of Public Managers in the area of Leadership and People Management. Furthermore, he is a visiting professor in the Macau Institute of European Studies. In the research field Carneiro has conducted European and National projects dealing with his main fields of expertise: Education, Human Resources, Economics of Education, Future and Foresight Studies, ICT impacts on society and culture, Migrations. Carneiro has extensive international experience with the World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, European Union, Council of Europe and other development agencies, and served as a member of the UNESCO International Commission for Education in the 21st Century. A former Portuguese Minister of Education (1987-91) and Secretary of State of Education and of Regional and Local Government (1980-1983) he currently runs the Observatory of Immigration and was responsible for the Information Society Observatory in Portugal (2003-2006). A graduate of the Lisbon Technical University he conducted his post-graduate studies in the UK (New University of Coleraine and London School of Economics) and is a Honorary Doctor in Education/Presentation Fellow of the King's College (University of London). Carneiro was Chief Editor and is a member of several National and International Journals, was the first President of the Editorial Board of eLearning Papers, and Chairs the Editorial Board of the European Journal of Education. He has over 450 papers published in 5 languages and about 25 books covering his main fields of study.

Maria Amélia Mendonça

Maria Amélia Mendonca (1940) began her professional life working as a primary school teacher. After that she completed a BA in Philosophy at the Universidade de Lisboa and was then appointed to work in the training sector of the Central Planning Department. In 1972 she joined the Education Research and Planning department of the Ministry of Education where she worked for eight years, once again in the area of training and professional qualification, and in assessing the 3rd and 4th experimental grades as well as the unified secondary education. From 1980 she devoted herself primarily to adult education as manager in the Adult Education department of the Ministry of Education, either in the evaluation of actions and projects or in the research on evaluation and certification of adults. As a consultant for the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Maria Amélia collaborated in the evaluation of a vocational training project in the Portuguese-speaking African countries which included travelling to and working in these countries. Intercultural education – both researching and publishing – took up the last years of her public service professional life. As a consultant, she worked for the Ministry of Education and for the National Council of Education. At the same time Maria Amélia was responsible for the History of the Education in Portugal subject at the Portuguese Catholic University, Lisbon, and for the Ethics subject at the School of Decorative Arts of the Ricardo Espírito Santo Foundation, also in Lisbon. As part of her permanent training, she participated in a variety of seminars and workshops, mostly in the areas of education and evaluation. Maria Amélia obtained several doctoral postgraduate courses in the area of Assessment in Education, with a scholarship granted by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). She did an internship in the United States, in order to collect information on adult education collaborating in several projects in various states. Some of her works were published in the Office of Studies and Planning of the Ministry of Education and in the General Directorate of Adult Education, as well as in the Committee for the Education System Reform. She retired from the public service ten years ago.

Maria Ana Carneiro

Maria Ana Carneiro is a doctoral student in the Culture Studies programme at the Portuguese Catholic University is a recipient of a doctoral scholarship from the Portuguese Science Foundation (FCT). In addition, she currently collaborates at the Study Centre on Peoples and Cultures (CEPCEP), of the Portuguese Catholic

University in research projects focused on Adult Education and the impact of ICT in education. She is also a teaching assistant at the School of Design of IADE – Institute of Visual Arts, Design and Marketing, in Lisbon. She holds a Master's degree in Urban Design: Art and Society from the University of Barcelona and a Master's degree in Public Art Studies from the University of Southern California. She received her BA in Social and Cultural Communication from the Portuguese Catholic University.

Ana Cláudia Valente

Ana Cláudia Valente was born in Angola in July 2, 1970. She currently lives in Lisbon, is married and has two daughters. She has a degree in Sociology by the Universidade Nova de Lisboa, a post-graduation in Economics and Public Policy and a Master's degree in Policy and Human Resource Management by ISCTE. Ana Cláudia is currently doing a PhD in Economics, also in ISCTE – Lisbon Univer-sity Institute. From 1996 to 2004 she was Coordinator of Prospective Sectoral Studies at INOFOR. She works as a researcher in Dinâmia-CET (ISCTE) and CEPCEP (UCP). Since June 2010, is also a member of the Board of CEPCEP. Her research areas are education and training policies, skills anticipation, human capital, innovation and economic growth.

Lourenço Xavier de Carvalho

Lourenço Xavier de Carvalho is a doctoral student in Educational Sciences at the Portuguese Catholic University, he also holds a BA degree in Sociology by the Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE). Lourenço is a reasearcher at the Portuguese Catholic University and co-founder and Chairman of the iLIDH – Luso-Illyrian Institute for Human Development. Over the past 10 years he has participated and coordinated several national and international Research and Development projects and has been a consultant for public and private bodies in the Education, Training, Employment, Immigration and Knowledge Management areas. He also has acted as an expert and member of working groups in the European Commission and OECD programmes, being author and co-author of over a dozen publications. He is the co-founder and Director of the European Social Literacy programme LED on Values.

André Xavier de Carvalho

André Xavier de Carvalho was born in Lisbon in 1982, he has concluded his undergraduate studies in sociology at the Portuguese Catholic University. André has developed his activity as a researcher in Social and Human Sciences at CEPCEP – Portuguese Catholic University. He has participated in the last six years in various R&D projects, particularly in the education, training and employment areas and has been a member of the external evaluation team of the New Opportunities Initiative and member of the Observatory of the Technological Plan for Education. He also participated in several European projects related to the development of social, personal and civic skills, with a special focus on values education. He is also responsible for the processes of impact assessment of the European Social Literacy Programme – LED on Values – in its various areas, conducting research studies of the programme (Executive Coordination of Research). He is also trainer in the leadership and behavioral areas.

Henrique Lopes

Henrique Lopes, holds a PhD in Management, from the University of Évora with “Distinction and Unanimous Praise”; and is currently developing a second PhD. He also has a Master’s degree in Science Management from the Portuguese Catholic University (“Summa con laude”) and an MBA in Marketing from the same University. Henrique is the director of the research center CEIA and guest researcher at the Centers of the Portuguese Catholic University CESOP, CEA and CEPCEP. He is also chairman of the Scientific Council of the Management School of ISEC. Henrique participates as a member of the New York Academy of Sciences, as a Vice Chairman of the Commission for Healthcare Quality in IPQ – Ministry of Economy, and Member of the European research network EAGD. He is author and co-author of twelve books and book chapters and of several scientific papers, opinion articles published in the specialized press in the fields of economics/management. He has participated as Scientific Chairman, Session Chair and Speaker at 15 International Conferences and more than a hundred national seminars and conferences. Outside of the academic activity he works as a consultant on strategy and marketing in domestic and foreign companies where he directed or co-chaired 41 national and international projects in the fields of Marketing, Quality Management and Strategic Management as well as Technical Reports for issuing legal proceedings as per example to the European High Supreme Court of Justice's grounds the process of the Portuguese Republic. He has collaborated on projects in Africa in the field of education and in Portugal in the field of business ethics.

Carlos Liz

Carlos Liz studied Philosophy and Classical Studies and has been working in Market Research since 1972, having founded APEME (currently Ipsos-APEME) in 1989 – a company in which he is still partner. In the last two decades he has been directing several projects concerning the Portuguese society, focusing on the dynamics that make public opinion, dealing with topics such as: happiness, consumer trends and sustainable development. During this time Carlos Liz has gathered innovative insights on public branding allowing a deeper understanding of the role that brands play in consumers/citizens reality.

Mariana Machado

Mariana Ribeiro Machado has a degree in Psychology, with a focus on Social Psychology. She began her career in Market Research in 1992, in Apeme (currently Ipsos – APEME), and she is partner of the company since 1996. In the last 20 years she has been responsible for conducting and managing national and international projects in areas such as Retail, FMCG, Telecommunications, Banking and Public Policies. She is a member of ESOMAR – European Society for Opinion and Market Research.

Jorge Portugal da Rocha

Jorge Portugal da Rocha holds a PhD, MSc and graduation in mechanical engineering and an MBA (Master of business administration). In the last 25 years he gained diverse professional experience, ranging from academic research and teaching, founder of a business and technology consultancy firm, senior manager at leading companies in retail and banking sectors, and consultancy to the Government. Since 2007 to the present date, he is the advisor to the President of Portuguese Republic for innovation.

Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo

Rodrigo Queiroz e Melo, PhD, UCP, is Coordinator of the Psycho-Pedagogical department of the Faculty of Human Sciences of the Portuguese Catholic University, where he coordinates the Master's degree in School Administration. He is the Executive Director of the Association of Private Schools (AEEP) and member of the board of the Lisbon School of the Law Faculty of the Portuguese Catholic University. Rodrigo has coordinated the QUALIS project of self-assessment of schools in the Azores Islands and is a member of the external evaluation team of the New Opportunities Initiative, coordinating axis III. He was a member of the Observatory of the Education Technological Plan and belongs to the scientific board of the AVES Programme (assessment of schools with secondary education) at Manuel Leão Foundation. He has a degree in law and taught tax law at the Instituto Superior de Gestão, where he coordinated the Department of Distance Learning. He was Chief of Staff of the Minister of Education of the XVI Government and is a CAf expert for the European Education Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). Rodrigo represents AEEP in the work group for education statistics and training at the National Institute of Statistics. His areas of interest are school administration, professional assessment, organisational assessment, education policy (school reform) and school choice.

Sofia Reis

Is a researcher at the Portuguese Catholic University (UCP). She obtained her Master in Sciences of Education from Universidade Nova de Lisboa and has been working in various initiatives of quality management of educational and training organisations.