

Globalisation, transnational policies and adult education

Marcella Milana

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2012

Abstract Globalisation, transnational policies and adult education – This paper examines policy documents produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the European Union (EU) in the field of adult education and learning. Both these entities address adult education as an explicit object of policy. This paper investigates how globalisation processes are constructed as policy problems when these transnational political agents propose adult education as a response. The author’s main argument is that while UNESCO presents the provision of adult education as a means for governments worldwide to overcome disadvantages experienced by their own citizenry, the EU institutionalises learning experiences as a means for governments to sustain regional economic growth and political expansion. After reviewing the literature on globalisation to elucidate the theories that inform current understanding of contemporary economic, political, cultural and ecological changes as political problems, she presents the conceptual and methodological framework of her analysis. The author then examines the active role played by UNESCO and the EU in promoting adult education as a policy objective at transnational level, and unpacks the specific problem “representations” that are substantiated by these organisations. She argues that UNESCO and EU processes assign specific values and meanings to globalisation, and that these reflect a limited understanding of the complexity of globalisation. Finally, she considers two of the effects produced by these problem representations.

Keywords Adult education · Transnational policy · Globalisation · UNESCO · European Union

M. Milana (✉)
Department of Education, Aarhus University, Tuborgvej 164, 2400 Copenhagen NV, Denmark
e-mail: mami@dpu.dk
URL: www.dpu.dk/about/mami

Résumé Mondialisation, politiques transnationales et éducation des adultes – Cet article examine les documents directifs émis par l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture (UNESCO) et par l'Union européenne (UE) dans le domaine de l'éducation et de l'apprentissage des adultes. Ces deux organismes considèrent l'éducation des adultes comme un sujet explicite de politique. L'auteure analyse que les processus de mondialisation sont échafaudés comme problèmes de politique quand ces agents de politiques transnationales proposent l'éducation des adultes comme une réponse. Elle prend pour argument principal que l'UNESCO présente l'offre d'éducation des adultes comme un moyen pour tous les gouvernements de la planète de surmonter les obstacles que rencontrent leurs citoyens, alors que l'UE institutionnalise les expériences d'apprentissage comme un moyen pour les gouvernements de soutenir la croissance économique régionale et l'expansion politique. Après avoir étudié la documentation sur la mondialisation afin d'éclairer les théories permettant d'appréhender comme problèmes politiques les défis économiques, politiques, culturels et écologiques d'aujourd'hui, l'auteure présente le cadre conceptuel et méthodologique de son analyse. Elle examine ensuite le rôle actif de l'UNESCO et de l'UE dans la promotion de l'éducation des adultes traitée comme objectif de politique transnationale, et analyse la question spécifique des « représentations » soutenues par ces organismes. Elle avance que dans leurs démarches, l'UNESCO et l'UE attribuent des valeurs et significations spécifiques à la mondialisation, qui reflètent une interprétation limitée de la complexité de la mondialisation. Enfin, elle dégage deux des effets produits par ces représentations de problèmes.

Zusammenfassung Globalisierung, transnationale Politik und Erwachsenenbildung – In diesem Beitrag geht es um Strategiepapier, die von der Organisation der Vereinten Nationen für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (UNESCO) und der Europäischen Union (EU) im Erwachsenenbildungsbereich erarbeitet wurden. Beide Organisationen haben die Erwachsenenbildung ausdrücklich zu einem politischen Ziel erklärt. Der Aufsatz untersucht, wie diese transnationalen politischen Akteure Globalisierungsprozesse als politische Problemstellungen ausdeuten, die sie dann mit dem Mittel der Erwachsenenbildung zu lösen versuchen. Die zentrale These der Autorin lautet, dass die UNESCO die Erwachsenenbildung als Instrument für Staaten in aller Welt darstelle, mit dem sich Benachteiligungen ihrer eigenen Bürgerinnen und Bürger überwinden lassen. Die EU institutionalisiere hingegen Lernerfahrungen, um den Regierungen ein Mittel an die Hand zu geben, das regionale Wirtschaftswachstum zu stärken und ihren politischen Einfluss auszubauen. Die Autorin gibt zunächst einen Überblick über die Veröffentlichungen zum Thema Globalisierung und erläutert die Theorien, auf deren Grundlage aktuelle wirtschaftliche, politische, kulturelle und ökologische Veränderungen als politische Problemstellungen interpretiert werden. Sodann stellt sie den konzeptionellen und methodischen Rahmen ihrer Analyse dar. Anschließend untersucht die Autorin die aktive Rolle der UNESCO und der EU hinsichtlich der Propagierung der Erwachsenenbildung als politisches Ziel auf transnationaler Ebene und fächert die spezifischen Problemrepräsentationen auf, die von diesen Organisationen untermauert werden. Sie vertritt die Auffassung, dass der

Globalisierung durch die Prozesse der UNESCO und der EU bestimmte Werte und Bedeutungen zugeschrieben werden und dass sich in diesen Werten und Bedeutungen ein eingeschränktes Verständnis für die Komplexität der Globalisierung widerspiegelt. Zwei spezifische Auswirkungen dieser Problemrepräsentationen werden zum Abschluss des Beitrags genauer erläutert.

Resumen Globalización, políticas transnacionales y educación de personas adultas – Este trabajo examina los documentos estratégicos producidos por la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Ciencia, la Educación y la Cultura (UNESCO) y la Unión Europea (UE) en el área de la educación y el aprendizaje. Ambas entidades enfocan la educación de adultos como objeto explícito de sus políticas. En este trabajo, la autora investiga cómo los procesos de globalización se desarrollan como problemas de políticas cuando estas entidades transnacionales proponen como respuesta la educación de las personas adultas. El argumento principal de la autora es el siguiente: mientras que la UNESCO presenta la oferta de educación de personas adultas como un modo con el que los gobiernos pueden superar mundialmente las desventajas que experimenta su propia ciudadanía, la UE institucionaliza las experiencias de aprendizaje como un camino con el cual los gobiernos pueden sostener el crecimiento económico regional y la expansión política. Luego de pasar revista a la literatura sobre globalización con el fin de clarificar las teorías que comunican el entendimiento actual de los cambios contemporáneos económicos, políticos, culturales y ecológicos como problemas políticos, ella presenta el marco conceptual y metodológico de su análisis. Luego, la autora examina el papel activo desempeñado por la UNESCO y la UE en la promoción de la educación de personas adultas como un objeto estratégico a nivel transnacional y desglosa las “representaciones” específicas de los problemas tal como los fundamentan estas organizaciones. La autora sostiene que los procesos de la UNESCO y la UE adjudican valores y significados específicos a la globalización, y que éstos reflejan una comprensión limitada de la complejidad insertada en los procesos de globalización contemporáneos. Finalmente, hace resaltar dos de los efectos que producen esas representaciones de los problemas.

Резюме Глобализация, транснациональная политика и образование для взрослых – В настоящей статье рассматриваются основополагающие документы в области образования и обучения взрослых, подготовленные Организацией объединённых наций по вопросам образования, науки и культуры (ЮНЕСКО) и Европейским Союзом (ЕС). Обе эти организации рассматривают образование для взрослых в качестве целенаправленного объекта своей деятельности. В статье анализируется взаимосвязь между процессами глобализации и принятием решений на транснациональном уровне в сфере образования для взрослых. Автор утверждает, что в то время как ЮНЕСКО представляет образование для взрослых в качестве инструмента, который правительства во всём мире могли бы использовать для преодоления барьеров среди населения своих собственных стран, ЕС

рассматривает образовательный опыт в качестве средства поддержания экономического роста и политического развития на региональном уровне. Вслед за обзором литературы по вопросам глобализации, содержащем анализ теорий, касающихся понимания современных экономических, политических, культурных и экологических изменений в качестве проблем политических, автор статьи предлагает свой концептуальный и методологический подход к анализу указанных проблем. Она также отмечает активную роль, которую играют ЮНЕСКО и ЕС в деле продвижения образования для взрослых в качестве политической цели на транснациональном уровне, выделяя при этом некоторые конкретные проблемы, связанные с «репрезентацией» данного вопроса указанными организациями. По мнению автора, глобализация в представлении ЮНЕСКО и ЕС носит сугубо узкий характер, что отражает несколько ограниченное понимание всей сложности этого процесса. В заключение, автор рассматривает последствия подобных «проблематичных репрезентаций.»

Introduction

Public policy in industrial and post-industrial countries has often seen adult education as an instrument for tackling social problems. This has led to the conceptualising of adult education as social policy and thus an object of state policy (Griffin 1987; Pöggeler 1990). By contrast, in transitional and less economically developed countries, adult education has been seen as a means of development, sponsored by both state and transnational organisations (Gelpi 1985). Policy-making processes at the nation-state level, however, are no longer independent from, but rather blended in a transnational space that is “instituted and sustained by nation states, international organisations, inter-state entities and global corporations” (Moutsios 2010, p. 122). It is in this transnational space that the nature and the scope of adult education are currently being revised so as to respond better to the complexity that characterises globalised modern societies. Nation-state policies are affected by the relative positioning of adult education and learning on the policy agenda of major transnational organisations and inter-state entities.

This paper examines policy documents produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the European Union (EU) in the field of adult education and learning. It investigates how globalisation processes are constructed as policy problems when these transnational political agents propose adult education as a response. The main argument here is that while UNESCO presents the provision of adult education as a means for governments to globally overcome disadvantages experienced by their own citizenry, the EU institutionalises learning experiences as a means for governments to sustain regional economic growth and political expansion.

After reviewing the literature on globalisation to elucidate the theories that inform current understanding of contemporary economic, political, cultural and

ecological changes as political problems, this paper presents the conceptual and methodological framework that guided the analysis. This is followed by an examination of the active role played by UNESCO and the EU in promoting adult education as a policy object at transnational level, which also unpacks the specific “problem representations”¹ that are substantiated by these organisations. This paper argues that UNESCO and EU processes assign specific values and meanings to globalisation, and that these reflect a limited understanding of the complexity embedded in contemporary globalisation processes. Finally, two of the effects produced by these problem representations are teased out.

Literature review

The scientific community concurs in the recognition that in today’s world, crises and prospects are no longer confined within national boundaries. Nonetheless, universal agreement is lacking both upon how increased integration takes place and how it affects education policies. This section will address the main controversies in current debates, as these controversies also inform political understandings of the role played by adult education in modern societies.

Globalisation as a contemporary phenomenon

One controversy in current debates about globalisation deals with its historical emergence. David Held et al. (1999) identify three major positions: sceptics, hyper-globalists and transformationalists. Sceptics argue that globalisation is a phenomenon that has existed for centuries and that what is “new” is its scale and scope, rather than its inner characteristics. Hyper-globalists, though not denying the historical roots of globalisation, argue that contemporary globalisation is characterised by the loss of power and authority by nation-states in favour of transnational organisations, inter-state entities, and corporate business. Finally, transformationalists compromise between these two positions by arguing that socio-political and economic changes are reshaping modern societies and transforming, rather than eroding, the power and authority of the nation-state. Seen in this perspective, the “laissez-faire” approach of many governments that leads to neoliberal policy, for instance – often considered the result of a “weak” state – is itself the result of political decisions and “concerted” state action (Kinley 2009; Steger 2009).

Axel Dreher et al. take a slightly different approach. By taking into account the historical evolution of key aspects underlying globalisation, they distinguish between a historical dimension of globalisation, traced back to the mid-fifteenth century, and, since the 1970s, a contemporary dimension. The first phase was characterised by economic, political and technological changes that accelerated in the 21st century; in the second phase, the nature of globalisation processes increasingly altered as ecological and socio-cultural aspects also came to the forefront. In line with this argument

¹ “Problem representation refers to the manner in which the information known about a problem is mentally organized” (Pretz et al. 2003, p. 6).

Contemporary globalization is defined as the intensification of cross-national interactions that promote the establishment of transnational structures and the global integration of cultural, economic, environmental, political, technological and social processes on global, supranational, national, regional and local levels (Dreher et al. 2008, p. 15).

Dreher et al. recognise that globalisation processes strongly affect people's basic value orientations and ways of living (cultural globalisation), the ways in which knowledge is produced, used and legitimised for the production of goods and accumulation of capital (economic globalisation), the exploitation of natural resources (ecological globalisation), the reconfiguration of power relations among different interest groups (political globalisation), and technological innovation (technological globalisation) (Castells 1996; Luke and Luke 2000; Nash 2000). David Kinley (2009) goes further and addresses the universalisation of human rights as a supplementary force structuring the global stage, one that is infrequently taken into account when understanding contemporary globalisation.

Both Dreher et al. (2008) and Kinley (2009) lay emphasis on the influence of transnational structures, such as UNESCO and the EU, on integration processes that affect different geopolitical levels worldwide. One important aspect, however, is still missing to fully capture how the set of social processes understood as globalisation has also become a set of powerful discursive elements within the field of education policies. Manfred B. Steger (2009, p. 18) helps to supply this missing aspect by defining globalisation as a set of social processes that expand and intensify social relations while interacting with a “consciousness across world-time and world-space,” (ibid., p. 22) which captures

people's growing consciousness of belonging to a global community ... the rising of a global imaginary is also powerfully reflected in the current transformation of political ideologies – the ideas and beliefs that go into the articulation of concrete political agendas and program (ibid., pp. 11–12).

Each of these political ideologies assigns to the concept of globalisation particular values, meanings and norms about the world which become accepted truths. These truths, while legitimising certain political interests, set the agenda of what can be discussed, which questions can be asked, and which answers can eventually be provided.

Globalisation and education

Another controversy in current debates about globalisation deals with education politics. Some scholars argue that the spreading of a set of universalistic values, norms, content and structure of education across countries leads to a “common world educational culture” (Meyer et al. 1992). Such a new institutional perspective “assumes the existence of a world polity, which is not a physical body or institution but a symbolic and discursive entity” (Daun 2006, p. 2). For some, this discursive entity can serve to legitimise diverse political visions and interests (Fuller 1991); for others, it has been extremely powerful in creating politically convergent views on

education (Apple 2000), with policy convergence considered a real and unquestionable threat to the legitimacy of education as a state affair (Burbules and Torres 2000).

Empirical analyses partly confirm this trend towards policy convergence (see for instance Brown et al. 2011); however, they also highlight the role of national governments in reinterpreting generic policy prescriptions in ways that support pre-existing policies and practices at local level (see for instance Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006). These apparently contrasting results are reconciled in Thomas S. Popkewitz's (2000) argument that certain discursive patterns (what Michel Foucault calls "governmentality") shape the space for local reinterpretations.

A critical reading of available research cautions against seeing adult education as either a global concern or a national affair, in favour of global–local interconnectedness. An example of the bonds between UNESCO, EU and nation-state policies in adult education is found in Italy, where local school-based centres for adult education were established by order of the Ministry of Education in 1997, at a time when adult education was gaining international recognition through the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (UNESCO 1997).² Nevertheless, a clear distribution of responsibilities within adult education was not identified by the Italian State, Regions and Local Boards until 2000, upon ratification of the EU's *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (CEC 2000).³ Although the strength of global–local interconnectedness varies, and is beyond the scope of this paper, its acknowledgement justifies paying closer attention to the development of adult education policy at transnational and inter-state levels.

Conceptual considerations

While adult education practices are "locally" implemented, it is the discursive patterns of globalisation substantiated by supranational and inter-state organisations that construct adult education as a policy object which transcends the nation-state polity. This section argues for a policy-as-discourse⁴ analysis approach to identify the constituents of the discursive patterns promoted by UNESCO and the EU.

² The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA V, was held in Hamburg, in July 1997 and focused on "Adult learning: A key for the twenty-first century".

³ The *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, drafted in Lisbon in 2000 by representatives of the European Commission Member States, has six key messages: (1) New basic skills for all; (2) More investment in human resources; (3) Innovation in teaching and learning; (4) Valuing Learning; (5) Rethinking guidance and counselling and (6) Bringing learning closer to home.

⁴ The concept of *discourse* carries various meanings. As further explained in the next paragraph, the term is used in this context to express that concepts and ideas that inform processes of communication and policy-making are not simple descriptors of things as they are "out there", but rather express the specific viewpoints of those involved in processes of communication and policy-making. Accordingly, *policy-as-discourse* puts emphasis on concepts and ideas and how their use came about in order to understand the resulting communication and policies.

A standpoint in post-structuralism

With its point of departure in post-structuralism, this paper defines “discourse” as the sum total of “all the practices and meanings shaping a particular community of social actors” (Howarth 2000, p. 5). This definition is rooted in the broader social constructionist perspective and therefore shares its social constructionist premises, which refuse a taken-for-granted knowledge about the world, while also recognising the historical and cultural specificity of understandings and representations of the world through social interactions (Burr 1995). A conception of policy analysis, however, is highly dependent on the conceptual framework for understanding what policy is. Comprehensive reviews of current approaches to policy studies (Dalton et al. 1996; Colebatch 2006; Bacchi 1999) usefully elucidate this statement.

Positivist approaches to policy studies

The so-called “authorised choice” or “scientific/comprehensive rationalism” tradition assumes the existence of predefined social problems to which public policy and governments simply react by identifying the best possible solution (see Simon 1961; Bardach 1981). A second tradition, “structured interaction” or “political rationalism”, acknowledges the existence of competing views in identifying social problems that need to be addressed by public policy and governments (see Lindblom 1980; Wildavsky 1979). Both traditions share a positivist approach to understanding policy-making as a rational instrumental process.

Critical policy analysis and post-positivist approaches to policy studies

In contrast to the above approaches, “critical policy analysis” sees policy-making as a process of domination of certain interest groups over others, while “post-positivist” perspectives include several approaches which despite certain differences share an understanding of the policy-making process as a “social construction”. Here the role of analysing, rather than offering policy advice, is to look closely at how social problems are constructed and what sort of effects they produce (Bacchi 2009). From this perspective, policy-making is seen not as the identification of existing social problems to which public policy provides solutions, but as the “problematization” of social conditions (Bacchi 2000) by political institutions in specific contexts and at a certain point in time (Gusfield 1989). Policy-as-discourse analysis thus aims to identify how policy problems are constructed while the responses to problems are being proposed.

Methodological clarifications

The mode of analysis for this study rests within a social constructivist paradigm, as described above. It finds methodological inspiration in Bacchi’s (2000, 2009) suggestion for the interrogation of policy texts on their problem representations,

embedded conceptual logics and effects. In particular, this analysis focuses on “monumental documents” (Neumann 2001). These are policy texts with high political significance, as they represent a point of reference for a given discourse.

UNESCO and the EU were selected for two reasons. First, both these entities address adult education as an explicit object of policy. Second, observers claim that adult education policies at state level since the Second World War “owe a debt to UNESCO”, with special reference to policy conception and implementation in developing countries, with few exceptions (Bhola 1994, p. 319). Similar claims have been made for the EU with reference to the European countries.

A basic condition for a comparative analysis is the selection of cases that represent single instances of the same phenomena (Winther-Jensen 2004). In this study the discourses of UNESCO and the EU, though reflecting different cultural and social settings in terms of member compositions, organisational aims, structure and ways of functioning, also represent single instances of the same phenomenon, as both entities transcend the national polity by addressing adult education as an explicit policy object.

The emergence of adult education as a transnational policy object

This analysis begins with a short introduction to UNESCO and the EU, and their active role in promoting adult education as a political object at both transnational and inter-state levels.

UNESCO

Established in Paris in 1946, UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) represents the concrete result of 20 years of international cooperation after the First World War. In response to a proposal by the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education, the United States of America contributed to the founding of UNESCO to promote peace and security through the application of education, science and culture to international understanding and human welfare. UNESCO’s founding declaration considers illiteracy as incompatible with human dignity, education, science and culture as means of moral conduct, and intellectual and moral solidarity as the foundation for world peace. Originally consisting of twenty countries, UNESCO currently (July 2012) has 195 Member States and 8 Associate Members, distributed across five world regions: Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Since 1949, UNESCO has organised six International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAs) at approximately 12-year intervals. These provided the setting for international norms for adult education policy and practices worldwide (Knoll 2007). Table 1 illustrates selected characteristics associated with CONFINTEAs. Columns two and three show that country representation has increased, as has geographical coverage. Beginning with the 1997 conference, non-governmental organisations have been invited as a separate category of representative bodies (Hinzen 2007).

Table 1 Selected characteristics of UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
CONFINTEA	Geographical coverage	Representation	Major themes	Main concerns	Adoptions
I	Anglo-America	Governments	International exchange & understanding; dissemination of information.		–
1949	Europe	International organisations			
Elsinore					
II	+ Africa	+ Academia	Rural education; popular culture; entertainment media.		–
1960	+ Asia	+ Civil society			
Montreal	+ Latin America				
III	NRC	NRC	Expansion of adult education; educational innovation; democratisation.	Adult education as a worldwide policy matter.	Recommendation on development of adult education (Nairobi, 1976).
1972					
Tokyo					
IV	NRC	NRC	International cooperation.	The economic role of adult education.	–
1985					
Paris					
V	NRC	+ NGOs	Sustainable development.	Scientific, social, economic and ecologically sustainable development; social justice and gender equity.	Hamburg declaration on adult learning and the Agenda for the future (1997).
1997					
Hamburg					
VI	+ Arab states	NRC	Reduction of the adult literacy gap; Social integration; Social benefit.	Internal harmonisation; international benchmarking.	Belém framework for action (2009).
2009					
Belém					

Legend: NRC = no relevant changes

Columns four and five highlight the major themes and concerns for CONFINTEAs. While in 1949 they emanated from the declaration laying UNESCO's foundation, by 1960 the major themes were connected to the changes associated with the expansion of popular media, the industrialisation of rural-based economies, the introduction of long-term loans for education by the World Bank (in 1960), and the establishment in 1951 of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE).⁵ It was only in 1972, however, that adult education became a targeted policy objective beyond the nation-state level. Two events gave it a boost: UNESCO's launch of an Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) in 1967 (Valderrama 1995) and the publication of *An Introduction to Lifelong Education* (Lengrand 1970). In the following years, as neo-liberal thinking and human capital theory found support around the globe against a background of economic concerns, CONFINTEA IV in 1985 concentrated on the economic role of adult education, and made a call for stronger international cooperation. By 1997 industrial expansion in the West and economic development in the Asian emerging economies, followed by the Asian financial crisis,⁶ had brought ecologically sustainable development to the foreground. CONFINTEA VI in 2009 addressed concerns raised not only by the world financial crisis triggered in 2007 and the economic expansion that preceded it, but also by low levels of achievement since the mid-1990s in reducing the adult literacy gap, increasing social integration, and securing the social benefits of education.

As shown in column six, four key policy documents were initiated by CONFINTEAs: the *Recommendation on the development of adult education*, adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its nineteenth session held in 1976 (Nairobi); the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* and the related *Agenda for the Future* (UNESCO 1997), which received much attention beyond the conference delegates, and the *Belém Framework for Action* (UNESCO 2009), currently under implementation.

The European Union

The European Union (EU), formed in 1992 by the Maastricht Treaty with 12 Member States, represents a natural development of its predecessors, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC; established in 1951 by the Treaty of Paris) and the European Economic Community (EEC; established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome). The Maastricht Treaty, also known as the Treaty on European Union or TEU, broadened the original objective of the European Economic Community, namely the creation of a common market, to include democratic legitimacy and effectiveness for the Union's institutions; an economic and monetary union; a common foreign and security policy; and the development of the Union's social

⁵ This institute, located in Hamburg, Germany, was renamed UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in 2006 and transformed from a foundation under German civil law into a fully-fledged international UNESCO Institute in 2007.

⁶ The Asian financial crisis refers to the collapse of the Thai national currency, the country's bankruptcy in 1997 and the subsequent slumping of national currencies, devaluation of stock markets, and rise in private debts in most of southern Asia.

dimension. After two enlargements, in 2004 and 2007, the Union today (July 2012) represents 27 Member States, while nine candidates and potential candidates may join the Union in the years to come.

Economic means to support training activities among adults in European Member States have been available within the Union since 1951 through the European Social Fund. However, adult education became an explicit object of EU policy in 1996, which was proclaimed the European Year of Lifelong Learning. This decision derived from a proposal by the European Commission⁷ to send “a signal for clarification of the essential requirements and the long-term objectives in the fields of education and training in the Community” (European Parliament & Council of the European Union 1995, p. 45). Its basis was the continuing need for educational and training systems to adapt so as to be able to combat unemployment, find solutions to social conflicts, and be appropriate to anticipated new jobs. The ultimate goal for the Union was to secure economic competitiveness and stability.

On the basis of the conclusions reached during the European Year of Lifelong Learning and at the European Council held in Lisbon in 2000, the European Commission issued *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (CEC 2000). The *Memorandum* was based on a Europe-wide-consultation process, while the EU established the Grundtvig programme (in 2000),⁸ providing economic support for the realisation of learning activities aimed at adult citizens. Both actions revitalised the attention paid to adult education within member and candidate states. Adult education policy has found fully-fledged expression within the Union in an ad hoc *Communication on Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn* (CEC 2006) and a complementary *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is always a good time to learn* (CEC 2007).⁹

Institutional discourses on adult education

This section will develop the analysis by putting under closer scrutiny the set of policy documents referred to above. It will become evident that each document is a “monumental” text, as defined above in the methodological clarifications.

UNESCO and the institutional discourse on adult education for development

As already mentioned, in 1976 UNESCO adopted a *Recommendation on the development of adult education*. The *Recommendation* provides a comprehensive

⁷ The European Union is a pooling of sovereignty, in which Member States delegate part of their political power to shared institutions. These institutions include the European Commission, representing the European Union as a sovereign body, the Council of the European Union, representing the Member States, and the European Parliament, representing the European Union’s citizenship.

⁸ The Grundtvig programme, which focuses on adult education, is one of the four parts of the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning programme. It is named after Danish author, philosopher and teacher Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872), who believed in educating people with knowledge and skills which would enable them to participate actively in their community.

⁹ Having expired in 2010, the *Action Plan on Adult Learning* has since been replaced by the *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning* (Council of the European Union 2011).

definition of adult education and sets out the “principles” that Member States shall apply to secure their provision of adult education “by taking whatever legislative or other steps may be required, and in conformity with the constitutional practice of each state” (UNESCO 1976, p. 2). Furthermore, it invites Member States not only to give full recognition to adult education, but also to take adequate measures to promote its implementation at local, national and regional levels. In the *Recommendation*, adult education is considered “a fundamental aspect of the right to education” (ibid., p. 1), and thus a universal human right, which gives full recognition to individuals’ experiences and supports the integration of “educationally most underprivileged groups” at all levels of communitarian life (ibid., p. 5).

Two decades later, the basic conceptualisation of adult education as a human right was not only reaffirmed but widened in the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* (UNESCO 1997). The *Hamburg Declaration* states in its preamble that adult education is “more than a right ... It is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society” (ibid., p. 1). The definition of adult education introduces a minor but relevant element: the needs of society, to which individuals must adapt, are ascribed a higher priority. Societal needs that emerge in a “world beset by accelerating change and growing complexity and risk” (ibid., p. 3) are addressed in the document as one of the reasons to consider adult education as a “consequence” and “condition” for individuals’ and communities’ participation.

The *Agenda for the Future* (UNESCO 1997), which accompanied the *Hamburg Declaration*, further details the actions to be undertaken in “partnership between state and civil society”. The *Agenda* enlarges the term adult education by including “adult learning”, and introduces a diagnosis of modern societies and a prognosis of the century about to begin. Ample reference is made to a society characterised by accelerating change, growing complexity and risk, advancements in information and communication technologies, and ageing populations. Adult learning is meant to “equip” people with the necessary skills to “function” in such a society. Special emphasis is given to increasing democratic participation, promoting access to adult learning activities, enhancing literacy skills, promoting the right to work (especially in developing countries) and caring for personal health and the environment. Consequently, adult education is considered “a human development and productive investment, [which] should be protected from the constraints of structural adjustment” (ibid., p. 26).

The recent *Belem Framework for Action* (UNESCO 2009) reaffirms adult education as an essential element of the right to education, and while acknowledging the progress made by Member States, aims to overcome conditioning factors that still hamper “the fulfilment of the right to education for adults and young people” (ibid., p. 6). The *Framework* focuses on adult education in a lifelong perspective, characterised by inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values. Much attention is paid in the *Framework* to the need to develop comparable statistical indicators, benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms for Member States, funding agencies, and UNESCO to examine progress in its implementation. A review and update of UNESCO’s 1976 *Recommendation on the development of adult education* (UNESCO 1976) is currently (mid-July 2012) being discussed in expert meetings.

In short, the UNESCO discourse sees adult education as a response to cultural and political globalisation processes, and gives due recognition to the universalisation of human rights as a supplementary force structuring contemporary societies. While technological and economic globalisation processes figured prominently in the initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s, these emphases have recently been partly replaced by increased sensitivity to the impact of ecological globalisation processes.¹⁰ However, while ecological concerns still remain in the foreground, political concerns have become inextricably interwoven with economic concerns in defining self-actualisation. This situation is exacerbated by the critical position held by UNESCO since the outset of the new millennium, in the midst of its own members and increasingly stronger financial agencies for development such as the World Bank (Smith et al. 2007).

The EU and the institutional discourse on adult learning for economic and human resource development

In 2000, as already mentioned, the European Commission issued *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*. The *Memorandum* acknowledges that Europe has entered the “knowledge age” and declares that not only individuals but also educational systems “must adapt” (CEC 2000, p. 3). The document calls for equal opportunities for all those living in Europe to adjust to social and economic demands for change. These demands are seen as deriving from the characteristic complexity of a social and political world in which both citizens’ right to plan their own lives and citizens’ responsibility to contribute actively to society – and thus to cope positively with cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity – are recognised. Consequently, the *Memorandum* ascribes lifelong learning two complementary aims: the promotion of active citizenship, and the promotion of employability (CEC 2000, p. 5).

Formal adult and/or continuing education is meant to ensure that “every individual acquires, updates and sustains an agreed skills threshold” (CEC 2000, p. 11). Investment in human resources is addressed as a means of “enabling people to manage their own ‘time-life portfolios’ and making a wider range of learning outcomes more visible for all concerned” (ibid., p. 12). In short, although the term adult education itself is almost never mentioned, adult education is conceptualised as a supply for economic and human resource development.

In 2006 the European Commission published the Communication *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*. The Communication identifies adult learning as “a vital component of lifelong learning” (CEC 2006, p. 1) and proclaims that Member States “can no longer afford to be without an efficient adult learning system” (ibid., p. 5). Adult education is never mentioned in the document, while adult “learning” is described not only as contributing to personal development and fulfilment, but also as sustaining economic growth, competitiveness and social inclusion. Further, adult learning is tasked with supporting individuals in coping with a relatively new challenge for the Union: demographic changes due to ageing population and increased migration.

¹⁰ Ecological globalisation processes refer to the collective impact of diverse material processes, including the exploitation of natural resources, on the health of the planet’s natural systems.

A year later, an *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It is always a good time to learn* was put into force, with the aim to “strengthen the adult learning sector in order to be able to use its full capacity” (CEC 2007, p. 3). The *Action Plan* finds its first justification in the preamble to the Amsterdam Treaty,¹¹ which affirms the joint effort to secure a high level of knowledge through education of the European citizenry. Additionally, it affirms that “the need for a high quality and accessible adult learning system is no longer a point of discussion” (ibid., p. 3).

To conclude, adult education is seen by the EU as an immediate response to economic and technological globalisation processes. Furthermore, the fact that diagnoses of the social world have become less prominent in the EU documents, while self-reference to internal decisions by the Union have increased, is a clear expression of political globalisation processes. A closer look at the EU documents also underscores the effects of political globalisation on communitarian policies, when other political entities interacting with the Union, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), affect its views on adult education. Lastly, the challenges posed by cultural globalisation are undervalued, while those posed by ecological globalisation are absent.

“Problem representations” embedded in the institutional discourses, and their effects

As argued earlier in this paper, post-structuralism and critical policy analysis assume that policy texts do not address social problems, but rather construct policy objectives. These constructions lead to the proposal of policy solutions, while alternative perspectives on the social world are ignored. This section discusses the problem representations and embedded logics substantiated by the above institutional discourses, and tease out the major effects that they produce.

Governments cannot prevent inequalities when acting alone

Although the UNESCO documents analysed here cover a third of a century, at least two problem representations emerge vividly if they are considered as a coherent set of documents. First, national governments are unable to guarantee the basic human right of education to their citizenry; thus they perpetuate inequalities in access to national educational systems worldwide. Second, the social, economic and cultural features that characterise the 21st century pose challenges to national governments that cannot be faced in isolation. Both problem representations see the nation-state as the only social apparatus that can eliminate conditioning factors and limit individual agency within its territory, thanks to its legislative power. Nonetheless these problem representations acknowledge that conditioning factors may also hamper the nation-state in this specific function, thus advocating for supranational

¹¹ The Amsterdam Treaty was signed in 1997 as an amendment to the Maastricht Treaty (signed in 1992 as a basis for the foundation of the European Union). The amendment was particularly concerned with citizenship and individuals’ rights.

organisations like UNESCO to act simultaneously as sponsors and watchdogs for nation-states.

Adult education as a human right

The above problem representations embed clear conceptual logics depicted by a few key concepts. One of these concepts is “human rights”, a concept which, in its broader interpretation, includes the rights and freedoms to which persons are entitled by virtue of being members of humankind. Although human rights are seen as universal and egalitarian, their specific nature is far from being easily interpreted, hence their support by legal rights at national or international levels. It was as early as 1948 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN 1948), asserting that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Art. 1) and that “everyone has the right to education” (Art. 26).

For UNESCO, access to education and adult education is a human right. This position justifies both the organisation’s status as a provider of services to Member States, and its identification of “educationally underprivileged groups”, a many-sided concept. This term refers to biological factors that constrain the learning ability of an individual, who is therefore denied access to education (e.g. physically and mentally handicapped and aged citizens). It also refers to socio-cultural factors that limit either the physical reach of available educational opportunities or the appropriateness of its content (e.g. nomadic rural populations, prisoners and ethnic minorities). Furthermore, the concept includes economic factors that may force individuals to migrate in search of job or educational opportunities, or, through poor educational achievements and structural market adjustments, deny them access to waged jobs (e.g. migrant workers, school dropouts and unemployed people). In addition, the concept includes political and religious conditions that constrain peoples’ lives, forcing them into new socio-cultural and political environments, thus limiting their access to education (e.g. refugees). Finally, the intertwining of all these factors, biological, socio-cultural, economic, political and religious – factors which relegate individuals to predefined and powerless social roles or constrain their access to knowledge (e.g. women, illiterate people) – yields a more complex understanding of the concept.

While the conditions that lead to educational disadvantage are in no way responsible at the individual level, communities of humankind can be held accountable, with the nation-state as representative of the most important community – citizenry.

In sum, UNESCO discourse calls for a new task for nation-states: to “forge alliances”, within and outside territorial borders, if the “cumulative effects of multiple disadvantages” (UNESCO 2009, p. 8) are to be overcome, and thus the human right to access adult education is to be fulfilled.

Governments are not making optimal use of available resources

A closer look at the European Commission documents considered in this paper shows two interrelated problem representations. One of these is constituted by

European citizens, organisations and governments not “working together effectively”, and thus not adapting to the social and economic changes resulting from the expansion of information and communications technologies and the expected EU enlargements (which took place in 2004 and 2007). The other is that national governments are not making “optimal use” of institutional, human and financial resources, available at both national and European levels, to achieve the Union’s agenda of making Europe the most competitive region of the world.

People as an economic asset

As already noted, the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (CEC 2000) expresses a general concern with active citizenship and employability. Active citizenship has multiple dimensions. One dimension is the active use of existing knowledge as access to and acquisition of information and skills. A second dimension is active planning of one’s own life. Finally, a third dimension is active participation in learning activities. Employability addresses “the capacity to secure and keep employment” (ibid., p. 5) at the individual level. Active citizenship and employability are interconnected. On the one hand, obtaining and maintaining a position in the labour market is a precondition for citizens to take full responsibility for their own lives, while contributing to economic growth. On the other hand, accessing and acquiring knowledge and skills is a prerequisite for active participation in the labour market. This interconnectedness lays the foundations for the EU’s claim that “people are Europe’s main asset and should be the focal point of the Union’s policies” (Council of the European Union 2000, p. 8).

A slightly different logic is introduced in the *Communication* and the *Action plan* by combining employability with social inclusion. Social inclusion refers to high levels of educational attainment (educational inclusion), having employment (labour market inclusion), and physical and geographical connectivity (public inclusion).

A specific understanding of “change” also underpins the *Memorandum*, as a result of two concomitant factors: the expansion in the use of information and communication technologies in both economic and non-economic sectors; and the expansion of the Union’s geopolitical borders with the ending of the Cold War in 1989 and the subsequent dismantling of the Eastern bloc.

In short, the EU’s discourse calls on Member States to make more effective use of available resources to promote regional economic growth.

The effects of institutional discourses on adult education

Political discourses become accepted truths, which in turn frame which political responses and local reinterpretations are possible (Steger 2009; Popkewitz 2000). Accordingly, Bacchi (2000, p. 55) invites us to question what effects political discourses produce. The UNESCO and EU discourses tease out two major effects: (1) the liability effect; and (2) the morality effect.

The liability effect

The liability effect is an example of a “discursive effect” (Bacchi 2009, p. 16). Discursive effects close off from consideration issues that are not included in a given discourse. In our case, the liability effect results from emphasis on nation-states’ increasing accountability to international agencies, in order to increase socio-economic progress at national, regional and global levels. This emphasis is sustained by a strong focus by both UNESCO and the EU on the development of benchmarks.¹² By portraying nation-states as accountable to international agencies, both discourses close off attention from the question of who is to be accountable to citizens, in both political and ethical terms. Traditionally, this has been the nation-state. However, increasing compliance with international “standards” tends to push governments to look outwards, both at other governments’ achievements and at international agencies’ requests, rather than inwards, at internal citizenry’s needs.

The morality effect

The morality effect is a type of “subjectification” effect (Bacchi 2009, p. 16). Subjectification effects result from normative claims about what is good or bad social conduct; they therefore create “dividing practices” among social entities (Foucault 1982, p. 208). In this study, the morality effect results from the identification of who is held responsible for social justice and inclusion. Both the UNESCO and the EU discourse make such an identification, though with different results. While UNESCO entitles individuals to rights, accompanied by both individual and social responsibilities, the EU entitles individuals to responsibilities that have social effects. Accordingly, UNESCO reminds governments to fulfil their responsibility in making sure that individual rights are satisfied while the EU sanctions citizens who do not comply with the responsibility to guarantee their own social inclusion. Both effects raise further questions, not only of who is to decide what is good or bad conduct, but also of whose rights and obligations are not acknowledged.

Concluding remarks

This paper makes the case that supranational and inter-state entities not only represent the outcome of political globalisation processes, but also contribute to the discursive patterns of globalisation. In particular, I have illustrated how UNESCO and the EU put forward specific “problematizations” of adult education as a policy response to the challenges posed by globalisation processes. Each of these policy constructs assigns specific values and meanings to globalisation processes, which not only reflect diverse institutional aims, but also partial understandings of the

¹² Formally, UNESCO and the EU are accountable to their Member States; however, the increase in the use of benchmarking by these organisations tends to revert the terms of the accountability equation, by making individual countries somewhat accountable to these organisations.

complexity embedded in contemporary globalisation processes. Further, I argue that both discourses produce effects. One (the liability effect) raises the question of who is accountable to citizens in modern nation-states; while the other (the morality effect) raises the question of who is to decide what is good or bad conduct, and whose rights and obligations are not yet fully acknowledged.

References

- Apple, M. W. (2000). Between neoliberalism and neoconservatism: Education and conservatism in a global context. In N. Burbules & C. A. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 57–77). New York: Routledge.
- Bacchi, C. (1999). *Women, policy and politics: The construction of policy problems*. London: Sage.
- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourses: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(2), 45–57.
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?*. French Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.
- Bardach, E. (1981). Problems of problem definition in policy analysis. In J. P. Crecine (Ed.), *Research in public policy analysis* (Vol. 1, pp. 161–171). Greenwich, Conn: JAI Press.
- Bhola, H. S. (1994). Adult education policy formation and implementation: A global perspective. *Policy Studies Review*, 13(3/4), 319–340.
- Brown, P., Lauder, H., & Ashton, D. (2011). *The global auction. The broken promises of education, job and incomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burbules, N. C., & Torres, C. A. (Eds.). (2000). *Globalization and education – Critical perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An introduction to social constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Castells, M. (1996). *The rise of the network society, the information age: Economy, society and culture*. Cambridge/Oxford: Blackwell.
- Colebatch, H. K. (2006). *Beyond the policy cycle: The policy process in Australia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Council of the European Union (2000). *Presidency Conclusions, Lisbon, 23–24 March 2000*.
- Dalton, T., Draper, M., Weeks, W., & Wisner, J. (1996). *Making social policy in Australia: An introduction*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Daun, H. (2006). Comparative education, globalization and the world system: Towards a methodology. Paper presented at Comparative and International Education Society Conference, Baltimore (USA), 12 February–1 March.
- Dreher, A., Gaston, N., & Martens, P. (2008). *Measuring globalisation. Gauging its consequences*. New York: Springer.
- CEC (Commission of the European Communities). (2000). *A memorandum on lifelong learning*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- CEC (Commission of the European Communities). (2006). *Communication from the Commission – Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- CEC (Commission of the European Communities). (2007). *Action plan on adult learning. It is always a good time to learn*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- Council of the European Union. (2011). *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning*. Brussels: Council of the European Union. Accessed 27 July 2012 from <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st16/st16743.en11.pdf>.
- European Parliament & Council of the European Union. (1995). Decision No 2493/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 1995 establishing 1996 as the “European year of lifelong learning”, Official Journal L 256, 26.10.1995, 45–48.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (pp. 208–226). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fuller, B. (1991). *Growing up modern: The western state builds third-world schools*. New York: Routledge.

- Gelpi, P. (1985). *Lifelong education and international relations*. London: Croom Helm.
- Griffin, C. (1987). *Adult education as social policy*. London: Croom Helm.
- Gusfield, J. R. (1989). The bridge over separated lands: Kenneth Burke's significance for the study of social action. In H. Simmons & T. Melia (Eds.), *The legacy of Kenneth Burke* (pp. 28–54). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D., & Perraton, J. (1999). *Global transformations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hinzen, H. (2007). CONFINTEA VI - The UNESCO International Conference on Adult Education in the context of MGDs, EFA, UNLD, LIFE and DESD. *Convergence*, 40(3/4), 265–283.
- Howarth, D. (2000). *Discourse*. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Kinley, D. (2009). *Civilising globalisation. Human rights and the global economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knoll, J. H. (2007). The history of the UNESCO International Conferences on Adult Education. *Convergence*, 40(3/4), 21–41.
- LeGrand, P. (1970). *An introduction to lifelong education*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Lindblom, C. E. (1980). *The policy-making process*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Luke, A., & Luke, C. (2000). A situated perspective on cultural globalisation. In N. Burbules & C. A. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Critical perspectives* (pp. 275–298). New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, J., Kamens, D., & Benavot, A. (1992). *School knowledge for the masses: World models and national primary curricular categories in the twentieth century*. Philadelphia: Falmer.
- Moutsios, S. (2010). Power, politics and transnational policy-making in education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 8(1), 121–141.
- Nash, K. (2000). *Contemporary political sociology: Globalization, politics, and power*. London: Blackwell.
- Neumann, I. B. (2001). *Mening, materialitet, makt: En innføring i diskursanalyse*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (2000). Reform as the social administration of the child: Globalization of knowledge and power. In N. Burbules & C. A. Torres (Eds.), *Globalization and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Pöggeler, F. (Ed.). (1990). *The State and Adult Education*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang.
- Pretz, J. E., Naples, A. J., & Sternberg, R. J. (2003). Recognizing, defining and presenting problems. In J. E. Davidson & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *The psychology of problem solving*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Simon, H. A. (1961). Decision making and planning. In H. S. Perloff (Ed.), *Planning and the urban community*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute of Technology and the University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Smith, P., Pigozzi, M. J., Tomasevski, K., Bhola, H. S., Kuroda, K., & Mundy, K. (2007). UNESCO's role in global educational development. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(2), 229–245.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G., & Stolpe, I. (2006). *Educational import: Local encounters with global forces in Mongolia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Steger, M. B. (2009). *Globalization*. New York: Sterling.
- UN (United Nations). (1948). *The Universal declaration of human rights*. New York: United Nations.
- UNESCO. (1976). *Recommendation on the development of adult education* adopted by the General Conference at its nineteenth session, Nairobi, 26 November. Accessed 18 July 2012 from http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/AdultEducation/en/declaration-nairob_e.pdf.
- UNESCO. (1997). *The Hamburg declaration – The Agenda for the future*. Fifth International Conference on Adult Education 14–18 July. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- UNESCO. (2009). *Harnessing the power and potential of adult learning and education for a viable future – Belém Framework for Action*. CONFINTEA VI Belém, 4 December. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- Valderrama, F. (1995). *A history of UNESCO*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Wildavsky, A. (1979). *Speaking truth to power: The art and craft of policy analysis*. Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Winther-Jensen, T. (2004). Comparative education in a world of globalization. *World Studies in Education*, 5(2), 81–94.

The author

Marcella Milana, PhD is an Associate Professor at the Department of Education, Aarhus University (Denmark), where she leads the Danish track of the European Masters in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management, and teaches international students. She specialises in comparative and adult education. Recently she obtained a Marie Curie Fellowship to investigate the politics of adult education in a globalised world and the conditioning effects of inter-governmental organisations on nation-state policies and local practices. She co-convenes the Research Network on Policy Studies in Adult Education within the European Society for Research in the Education of Adults (ESREA), is joint Editor of the *International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE)*, and serves on the Editorial board of the *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education (JACE)*. Since 2011, in her capacity as International Research Associate, she supports the work of the Paulo Freire Institute at the University of California of Los Angeles (USA).