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## Teacher Education in Portugal: analysing changes using the ATEE-RDC19 scenario methodology

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JESUS MARIA SOUSA

**SUMMARY** *This paper presents an overview of the development of teacher education in Portugal since the Revolution of 25 April 1974, which brought the country to democracy. Making use of the scenario model created by the ATEE-RDC19, it is an attempt to make clearer the hidden philosophies underlying the changes that are undertaken and show how teacher education has evolved from a romantic and idealistic social vision towards an ideology dictated by economic and selfish interests.*

**RÉSUMÉ** *Cet article donne un aperçu du développement de la formation des enseignants au Portugal dès la Révolution du 25 avril qui a ouvert les portes du pays à la démocratie. C'est en utilisant le modèle des scénarios créé par le l'ATEE-RDC19, que j'ai tenté de rendre plus clair les philosophies masquées par les changements survenus, et de démontrer comment la formation des enseignants a évoluée d'une vision sociale romantique et idéaliste vers une idéologie dictée par des intérêts économiques et égoïstes.*

**RESUMEN** *El artículo ofrece una panorámica del desarrollo de la formación de los enseñantes en Portugal desde la Revolución de 25 de abril, que abrió las puertas del país a la democracia. Utilizando el 'modelo de escenarios' creado por el ATEE-RDC19, he intentado clarificar las filosofías enmascaradas en los cambios sobrevenidos, y demostrar cómo la formación de los enseñantes ha evolucionado desde una visión social, romántica e idealista, hacia una ideología regida por intereses económicos y egoístas.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG** *Dieser Artikel gibt einen Überblick betreffend die Entwicklung der Lehrerbildung in Portugal seit der Revolution vom 25 April 1974, welche für das Land die Demokratie mit sich brachte. Die Verwendung des Szenario-Modells von RDC19 der ATEE stellt einen Versuch dar, die, 'versteckten' Grundannahmen aufzuhehlen, die den vor sich gehenden Änderungen zugrunde liegen und aufzuzeigen, wie sich die Lehrerbildung von einer romantischen und idealistischen sozialen Vision zu einer Ideologie entwickelt hat, welche von ökonomischen und egoistischen Interessen bestimmt wird.*

## Introduction

Individualism versus Social coherence and Pragmatism versus Idealism were the two dimensions chosen by the ATEE-RDC19 to identify four settings to be used as scenarios for teacher education in Europe. As this RDC is focused on ‘perspectives on curriculum in teacher education’, the awareness of underlying philosophies such as those suggested by the extremities of the axes—rather than isolated legal decrees—is a matter of utmost importance, since we share the principle that ‘the curriculum is not an innocent and neutral element of uninterested transmission of social knowledge’ (Moreira & Silva, 1995, p. 8). The reflections on the underground political intentions and their practical effects on the field of education and teacher education make us aware of some existing forces and tensions, pulling us in opposite directions. Inspired by the ‘Scenario Planning’ methodology (see, for example, Dutch Central Planning Bureau, 1992; GBN, 1998; Schwartz, 1991; Wilkinson, 1995) in application to education (Sousa, 2002) and teacher education, the ATEE-RDC19 scenario model, as described in the introductory articles of this thematic issue, is a strong means to deepen reflective attitudes (Schön, 1983; Zeichner, 1993) for an active participation in the future shaping of teacher education.

With these objectives in mind, and after refining the deep meanings of the concepts applied to teacher education through an internal debate and the creation and dramatisation of short stories caricaturing each quadrant, the members of this group have decided to turn their attention to the analysis of developments in teacher education in different European countries using the same methodology. Thus this article aims to analyse the recent developments of teacher education taking place in Portugal, along with other countries’ descriptions written by other members of RDC19.

## An Education System Act Inspired by an Idealistic Social Coherent Philosophy

It is impossible to think about teacher education alone with no connection with education in general, or think about teacher education developments independently of educational changes (Campos, 2000; Formosinho, 2000). This is the reason why this paper starts with a broader overview on education, as the setting where teacher education plays a role.

Since the late 1960s, Portugal has been experiencing almost uninterrupted educational reforms. Nevertheless, the Revolution of 25 April 1974 is to be considered the great landmark of change, as far as it opened the country to democracy. In fact the Constitution approved in 1976 proclaimed that everyone had the right to education on a platform of equal opportunities. Denouncing a strong social coherent tendency, the State was to be responsible for the democratisation of education and was not entitled to orientate education and culture to any particular philosophical, aesthetic, political or religious direction, searching for freedom of personal choice whatever it might be. This trend is very clear in the Portuguese Constitution since education is seen as a means to ‘minimise economic, social and cultural differences, stimulate democratic participation in a free society and promote mutual understanding, tolerance and spirit of community’. These overall principles, approved by the Assembly of the Republic, aimed for a ‘new’ education for a changing society. But it took twelve years until these intentions were condensed in an Education System Act.

In fact, the Law 46/86 of 14 October, the Education System Act (commented on by Lemos Pires, 1987) was published for the development of these principles, establishing

a general framework for the reorganisation of the Portuguese Education system. The education policy of a country can be analysed (D'Hainaut, 1977) either making a content analysis of the intentions declared somewhere, or regarding the reality, which is much more complicated. The Education System Act of 1986 is one of the most important sources for analysis if we focus on its declared political intentions (Sousa, 2000).

An attentive reading shows us, for example, that the education policy, as it is written in the Education System Act, gives great priority to the construction of the society as a whole. The Law stresses the democratisation of the society 'guaranteeing the right to a just and real equality of opportunities in schooling access and success' (Art.2.2). Education is expected 'to promote the development of a democratic and pluralist mind open to the dialogue and to the free exchange of opinions, in respect for the others and their ideas' (Art.2.5); and 'to make citizens able to judge the social environment where they are integrated with critical and creative views and make them able to engage in its progressive transformation' (Art.2.5). Everyone ought to participate in the development of the society, having an education which cares for 'the defence of a national identity and the reinforcement of the Portuguese historical matrix and the cultural heritage of the Portuguese people' (Art.3.a). And this is to be done 'in the scope of a universal and European tradition and the growing interdependency and necessary solidarity among all peoples of the world' (Art.3.a).

In spite of this obvious trend of social coherence and sense of belonging to a major world, the legal document doesn't deny preoccupations with the individual per se, as it claims for 'the right to the difference in the respect for the personalities and the individual projects of existence as well as in the consideration and valorisation of different knowledge and cultures'.

To operationalise these aims the State had to assume control of the education system in general, however mostly focused on basic and compulsory education. This has been in fact free of charge: pupils don't need to pay any entrance or enrolment fees and they all have school insurance although general support, such as school meals, transport, books and materials, is only provided for the most needy pupils.

Pursuing this 'socialising' and 'idealistic' orientation, several political decisions were taken in the last years under the governance of Prime-Minister António Guterres. The Decree-Laws of 18 January 2001, n° 6/2001 and n° 7/2001, respectively, related to basic and secondary education, emphasised the trend, pointed out already before, in the Constitution and in the Education System Act, bringing significant changes to the curriculum development in Portugal. New non-disciplinary areas were created with a cross-curriculum logic such as: (1) a project area making use of research methodology on particular problems felt by the pupils themselves; (2) an area of guided study to help them learn how to study in order to acquire their autonomy; (3) and a civic education area to create habits for a responsible, critical, active and participating citizenship.

For the first time Portugal had a globally coherent national curriculum (Ministério da Educação, 2001a) for all the nine compulsory years of basic education. Not only is the subject specialist, therefore, aware of the logical sequencing of his/her own subject throughout the course but also, of the subject matter of all other disciplines for every year. This leads to a multi-disciplinary approach rather than isolated development of individual subjects. On the other hand, and against the highly centralised tradition, the national curriculum was to be decentralised into a school curriculum project and a class curriculum project, according to different interests and needs, having in mind regional,

local and idiosyncratic characteristics of pupils. These measures were in accordance with the philosophy underlying the 1986 Education System Act, which was oriented by ideological principles of equal opportunities, openness, tolerance, and respect for the difference, a sense of inclusion and personal development.

This reform has been gradually prepared, from 1996–97, with some legal measures to fight against the exclusion in the basic education as, for example, the definition of geographical zones for priority intervention and the possibility of designing alternative curricula for those children with social and cultural handicaps. These opportunities demanded a new kind of autonomy schools didn't have in the past. That is why a new autonomous regime for the school management was created (Law n° 24/99 of 22 April 1999).

This educational reform obviously implied a simultaneous development in several areas like learning assessment, school management, teacher continuing professional development and... teacher education. In that way the principles characteristic of a social coherence philosophy existing in education did frame the same scenario for teacher education in Portugal.

### **Teacher Education Changes Under the Same Philosophy**

#### *The 'Universitisation' of Teacher Education*

Traditionally in Portugal, infant and primary teacher education was not a university matter until the 1997 amendment (Law n° 115/97 of 19 September 1997) to the 1986 Education System Act (Law n° 46/86 of 14 October 1986) had established a common pattern for all teachers at any level of education and teaching; the schism between the primary and secondary teaching started to disappear because all teachers had to obtain the same academic qualification, that is, the *licenciatura* degree. This is not a particular Portuguese trend, as Bob Moon recognises: 'In the period 1970–2000 many countries chose to integrate the 'normale' schools into the established structures of higher education. The timing and speed of this transition varied from country to country but the process of 'universitisation' as it has been called (Neave, 1994) has now taken place across most of Europe' (Moon, 2001, p. 4).

This political decision was not in contradiction with a scenario of social coherence, because both primary and secondary teachers shared the same care and demands of quality whether at lower or higher levels of teaching. The same respect and understanding, the same social appraisal and recognition for the profession as a whole were aimed at contributing to the creation of a stronger professional identity, where there was no place for first and second category teachers.

#### *Regulation of Teacher Education*

As it is now categorised as higher education, all teacher education now occurs in the universities and polytechnic colleges. In 1988, the universities became academically and pedagogically autonomous (Law 108/88 of 24 September 1988) from the State. But a problem of social coherence was raised when 18 universities and 26 colleges (private and public institutions) started offering more than three hundred different programmes in teacher education throughout the country (including Madeira and Azores). And these programmes did not only confer an academic degree but a professional certificate.

Then the State decided to take control of all teacher education using the following arguments: on the one hand, it had ultimate responsibility for the definition of the policies for the education system employing most of the teachers; on the other hand,

there wasn't any professional organisation in Portugal to control the access to teaching in the same way as there was (and there is) for other professions such as lawyers, engineers, architects and medicine doctors. That is why the State seized the regulation of teacher education, having created in 1998 a National Institute for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (INAFOP) for all initial teacher education, either private or public, either polytechnic or university. After a period of debate and consultation of universities and teacher unions the accreditation system was created in 1999 (Decree-Law n° 194/99 of 7 June 1999).

Consequently all pre-school and primary school teacher education programmes had to apply for accreditation from 8–19 April 2002, for the first time in Portugal. The accreditation was compulsory for public and private institutions and valid for a limited period after which they would be required to obtain professional accreditation renewal. From then on no institution would be allowed to run non-accredited programmes.

Using our scenario model it is easy to recognise the existence of a pragmatic control with this regulatory measure, even if based on negotiation and consultation of professionals and teacher education institutions. I dare to say, pragmatism was put into action aiming at social coherent objectives of national identity.

### *The 'Pedagogisation' of Teacher Education*

Another recent change had to do with the course structure itself. The Education System Act had determined a global approach for all initial teacher education, according to the integrated primary teacher education model and in opposition to the additive secondary teacher education tradition.

The primary teacher education model is a four-year programme having an integrated format articulating not only theoretical and practical components, but also scientific and pedagogical ones from the very beginning of the course. Scientific knowledge, educational sciences, including specific didactics and teaching practice is supposed to be assured simultaneously, the time allotted to each component varying according to the nature of the course. The additive model still persisting for the preparation of the secondary teachers is a five-year programme where, after three years fully dedicated to the academic education in one or two subject matters, there is a fourth year mostly filled with pedagogy and didactics and a fifth year with teaching practice supervised by the university and the school where the student initiates teaching. Notwithstanding the resistance from the universities to the integrated model supported by the growing influence and know-how of educational sciences, the integrated model was then clearly determined by the 'Standards in Initial Teacher Education' (Deliberation n° 1488/2000 of INAFOP) obliging universities to launch a reform at that level.

The 'pedagogisation' reflected in the teacher education integrated approach was supposed to stress a certain way of being rather than specific contents. The idealism concerning an education for democratisation of the society similarly appears in the Education System Act, embedded in the overall principles cited above.

### *The Growing Importance of Teaching Practice*

Under the influence of the newcomers in the university world, and after the initial mistrust by the 'academics' of the practical activities regarded as minor things, teaching

practice started to be valued again. The interaction between theory and practice integrates the initiation of professional practice activities throughout the academic years. These activities have to take place in groups or classes at different levels of development in all the cycles to which the programme gives access, offering varied experience namely with pupils of different sexes, ages, levels of development, social environment and culture. The respect for different individual and group identities is stimulated, suggesting us an idealistic scenario of acceptance and inclusion of the difference in a social coherent society.

Student teachers are this way gradually introduced into the real professional field. Starting from the observation of extra-curricular school activities, the student teachers contact institutions other than schools, such as special education institutes, hospitals, children at risk social organisations etc., in order to broaden their educational horizons. Then they gradually assume the teaching of small units in a supportive learning environment until they get to the final year, which is largely devoted to the teaching practice. This professional practice period in the final year is undertaken by giving lessons to one or more classes in a system of shared responsibility between trainees and the school mentor and supervision by the teacher education institution. At this stage the teacher education institution offers seminars combining subject specialism and pedagogy, theory and practice, as well as analysis work and discussion with the mentors and the professional practice period group. The seminars are the material result of this integrated system.

To operationalise this model, partnerships are established with schools and other institutions, formalised through collaborative protocols clearly indicating the roles, responsibilities and skills of all participants, including the trainees. These partnerships presuppose cooperation and dialogue among different levels of knowledge (theory and practice, subject specialism and pedagogy, university and schools) characteristic of a social coherent scenario.

### *Standards in Initial Teacher Education*

The standards constitute a set of general criteria for assessing the degree to which the programmes meet the demands of teaching performance. According to the legislative text, 'the standards indicate the principles, which must be safeguarded, and the objectives which should be reached, but they leave a wide margin of freedom for institutions to decide on how to effect them. For example, they do not prescribe in detail how professional practice periods, field trips and mechanisms for regulating the programme should be run, nor how to effect partnerships with schools and the educational administration.' But all the programmes include the following education components, appropriately interlinked: cultural, social and ethical education (1), education in speciality teaching areas (2), general education studies (3) and initiation of professional practice (4).

In this model, research plays an important part aiming for a real professional who takes decisions in an autonomous way. He doesn't follow others' instructions without knowing why and how. The decentralisation of the curriculum down to a class curriculum project demands a teacher who is aware of the complexity of education. So he has to undertake research projects, publish work of academic nature and participate regularly in the activities of his academic community.

### **An Abrupt Shift Towards Pragmatism and Individualism**

The 2000 OECD PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) study denouncing the illiteracy and innumeracy of Portuguese pupils alarmed public opinion about education (Fino & Sousa, 2002). This fact allied to the negative marks candidates have had in recent years in such vital areas as physics and mathematics for access to some universities (Ministério da Educação, 2001b) was the pretext for some opinion leaders to blame our education system in general and accuse teachers and their education in particular for this situation. Many articles have been published in the most read national magazines and daily and weekly newspapers (see, for example, Prado Coelho, 2000; Barreto, 2002; Mónica, 2002; Monteiro, 2002; Norton, 2002; Santana Castilho, 2002). 'These commentators have something in common: they are opinion-makers with a relevant space in important mass media. They don't need to justify what they write because they simply express an opinion. And there isn't any mechanism to protect readers from incorrect and non-based statements or 'impressions', or protect them from abusive generalisations, with political objectives in mind' (Fino & Sousa, 2002).

The result of this movement of scepticism against the idealistic and social coherent state of education as described above was a document published on the Internet under the name of 'Manifest for the Republic Education' (Anonymous, 2002) asking for support from unsatisfied citizens who had to sign their names and identify their occupations. It was 'a short and simple text, with 736 words in 80 lines, full of grandiloquent and supposedly 'consensual' statements about the assumedly catastrophic state of education' (Fino & Sousa, 2002). It started this way: 'Portugal is living a time of worry due to the ruining of great national expectations. The Portuguese have thought—this dream has been nourished!—that they could access to the high civilisation standards of the most developed countries in Europe without any effort. When they see it is not true, they feel defrauded and sceptical'. It goes on with this same emotive style, appealing for the mobilisation of the society, namely 'the elites [...] the Portuguese brought up in educational settings of greater intellectual and professional demands who will surely be able and motivated to give their contribution to the decisive effort that can make Portugal an informed, qualified and enterprising community.' Trying to give this idea a serious scientific tone it affirms: 'Every national and international study on the education of the Portuguese comes to the undeniable conclusion that the Republic is badly educating its children'.

There is a clear shift towards an economic pragmatism when the texts says: 'This is the fundamental reason why the Portuguese go on not being able to produce the resources they consume.' Or when it says later: 'School has opened its doors to a greater number of children, as it is the role of a democratic regimen. But even that success is more apparent than real, since we are the country of the community with the greatest number of school drop-outs. On the other side, the students who resist against leaving school do have, in general, a very deficient education at too expensive prices. That makes Portugal one of the countries in the European Union spending proportionally the most on education and having the worst results at the same time. This way, the improvement of economic and social conditions we succeeded in creating in very favourable conditions is running the risk of being lost, wasting an opportunity that will very hardly appear again.' If we pay attention to some expressions, we agree they come from the areas of management and economy denouncing neo-liberal economic approaches contrary to the philosophy underlying the Education System Act as we saw



above. The allusion that 'they go on not being able to produce the resources they consume' and the concern with 'a very deficient education at too expensive prices', 'spending proportionally the most on education', are complemented with other references to the 'economic conditions', 'great economic space', 'levels of development', 'a wealthier country', 'progress', expressions recurrently used along this very short text.

Within this context, there was a not unexpected victory of the Social Democratic Party (PSD) in the legislative elections held on 17 March 2002, after the resignation of the Socialist Prime Minister António Guterres. The leader of PSD was then invited by the President of the Republic to form a new Government. After signing an agreement with the right-wing Popular Party (PP) to form a coalition, the new Portuguese Government, presided by Durão Barroso, took office on 6 April 2002 with a programme based on four goals: (1) an authoritative, modern and efficient State; (2) reorganisation of public funds and economic development; (3) investment for Portuguese people's academic qualifications; (4) reinforcement of social justice linked to equal opportunities. This sequence order is indicative of the main priorities of the new government.

As far as education is concerned, one of the first decisions taken by the Council of Ministers (26 April 2002) was the cessation of the curriculum reorganisation of secondary teaching approved by the Decree-Law n° 7/2001, of 18 January, under the pretext of having no conditions to start with it the next school year. As it was quite impossible to stop the curriculum reorganisation of basic teaching, because it had already started, the Council of Ministers (11 July and 1 August 2002) introduced some measures affecting the pedagogic conditions of work, such as the reduction of the number of teachers in the non-disciplinary areas of projects, guided study and civic education, the increase of days in the academic calendar of pre-schools, the introduction of national exams in the ninth year of schooling, etc., in accordance with a government programme of austerity, discipline and sacrifice to get the highest results with an improved rationalisation of costs. In the political discourses the idea prevails that Portugal has to be as competitive as the other European countries. It is reasonable to deduce we have to rely on the most capable students under these new conditions.

So the question that can be asked is: which effects of this new trend are we feeling on teacher education? It is interesting to note that on 24 April the first call for accreditation of initial teacher education programmes ever made in Portugal closed. This process was carefully prepared with the publication of some legal documents: The 'regulation of the accreditation process for initial pre-school, basic and secondary teacher education programmes' was approved by the INAFOP General Council on 28 September 2000, the 'standards in initial teacher education' were ratified by the same institution on the 13 November 2000, the 'candidature guidelines for accreditation of initial teacher education programmes' were approved on 5 April 2001 and finally both general and specific profiles were published ('The school teacher general teaching profile' in the Decree-Law n° 240/2001 of 30 August and 'The pre-school and primary school teachers specific profiles' in the Decree-Law n° 241/2001 of 30 August). At the deadline of this long process, INAFOP had received 66 applications for accreditation of teacher education programmes preparing pre-school and primary school teachers to be analysed by accreditation sub-committees already constituted to that purpose. The visits to the teacher education institutions were expected to take place from 15 September to 30 November 2002.

On 26 April 2002, that is to say, immediately after closing the process of receiving the applications for the accreditation of the programmes, the aim to reduce expenses

everywhere made the Council of Ministers extinguish INAFOP the same way as it did to many other public organisations under direct State administration. All teacher education institutions got a laconic one-paragraph message saying the process of accreditation was cancelled by government decision. Contrarily to public teacher education institutions, the courses of which were already regulated by external examiners, the private ones were this way allowed to go on educating teachers with no external control of their quality.

From the changes occurring in education and teacher education in Portugal, it is possible to say that the ideological values such as democracy, respect for being different, tolerance and solidarity, characteristic of an idealistic social coherent setting that made the State be responsible for the welfare of all the citizens, in conformity with the principles of the Revolution of April 1974, are giving way to a pragmatism searching for efficiency, modernity, progress, quality and competitiveness in an inexorably globalised world, probably opening the doors to a process of privatisation of education and teacher education systems. New rules of supply and demand tend to substitute the State regulation.

What does this development mean? And how does education and teacher education contribute to the progress of Portugal? It is crucial that these questions are addressed by teacher education institutions if they don't want to abdicate the responsibility of the design of teacher education programmes, making clear the underlying philosophies. The scenario planning methodology may help us better understand the existing trends of the present time, which will probably shape the future.

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