

**‘Revolution’, Democracy and Education:  
An investigation of Early Childhood  
Education in Portugal**

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## **Declarations**

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## Abstract

Education systems have long been viewed as playing a key role in developing and maintaining both democratic political systems and the promotion of democratic values. This is acutely the case in Portugal where, in 1974, after nearly half a century of dictatorship, 'democracy' emerged as a central aspiration. It shaped all levels of education, and Early Childhood Education (ECE) specifically has been influenced by the strong desire of the government to create a democratic society. Even though this was an important political project for the government, the implementation of policy was deliberately left to providers. This allowed for and encouraged a diversity of provisions/practices in ECE.

The purpose of this study is threefold: firstly, to explain how democracy emerged within Portuguese history to influence all aspects of society; secondly to understand how democracy is manifested in education policy; and thirdly to explore how it is enacted in different ECE school settings. This involved two levels of analysis: national (state) and local (schools and classrooms). Three different schools (public, IPSS (charity), and private) have been researched and the data collection methods included: interviews of policymakers, ECE experts and educators; analysis of key documents at the national, organisational, and classroom levels and observations in the three schools. The research followed predominantly a critical socio-constructivist and interpretivist approach.

In terms of policy the study found that democracy has, for a long time, served a symbolic function, acting as a 'floating signifier' that provided a 'thick narrative of modernisation' and symbol of 'hope' for the future. At the level of intentions, the three types of school conceived democracy differently in ways which reflected their diverse ideologies/missions. The analysis indicated that the forms in which democracy was enacted reflected the different foci of the different schools. It also illustrated that in these schools democracy was only evident when democratic spaces were created by individual educators. As a result, three different pedagogic styles which demonstrate the enactment of democracy in ECE classrooms have been identified.

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## List of Acronyms:

<b>CDS/PP</b>	<i>(Centro Democrático e Social – Partido Popular)</i> - People's Party
<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IPSS</b>	<i>(Instituições Particulares de Solidariedade Social)</i> - Independent non-profit organisations
<b>MEM</b>	<i>(Movimento da Escola Moderna)</i> - Modern School Movement
<b>MFA</b>	<i>(Movimento das Forças Armadas)</i> - Armed Forces Movement
<b>MP</b>	Minister of Parliament
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OMEN</b>	<i>(Obra das Mães para a Educação Nacional)</i> - Mothers' Work for National Education
<b>PS</b>	<i>(Partido Socialista)</i> - Socialist Party
<b>PSD</b>	<i>(Partido Social Democrata)</i> - Social Democratic Party
<b>SEN</b>	Special Education Needs

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“... if this is the way things started, if there was a big bang in the beginning – you’re not something that’s a result of the big bang. You’re not something that is a sort of puppet on the end of the process. You are still the process. You are the big bang (...) coming on as whoever you are (...) I know I’m that too. But we’ve learned to define ourselves as separate from it.”

(Watts, 1960, [online])

My grandmother is an enthusiastic storyteller and I grew up listening to (*her*)stories<sup>1</sup>. She spoke of the difficulties under Salazar’s authoritarian rule, the experiences of a school system and other social realities that were alien to me. This led me to that ‘dangerous place’ of *curiosity*. The way young men would ‘escape’ the colonial war (including my grandfather) and the way young families would leave the country (including my own) led me to question. What was it like to live under authoritarian rule? What was it like reclaiming democracy and adapting to it? But I had an interesting challenge, my family could tell me about May 1968 in France (where they were), but not about April 1974 in Portugal. So there was a gap in the history I was intensely curious about. I expected that my schooling and education would cover that gap, but that was not the case. I was born in 1985, 11 years after the ‘democratic revolution’ and one year before Portugal became a member of the EU. I grew up while democracy was still being established and the country ‘modernised’. In a single generation everything had changed. The country was being reformed by ‘new’ institutions, a shift away from traditional values and ‘rapid’ economic growth. I was part of a generation being educated by people who were themselves learning to live in a newly democratic country with commendable values which few knew how to fully enact. Once I became an early childhood educator, I started noticing those values in policies, school documents and as part of the unspoken professional ‘ethos’ of teachers. ‘Democracy’ was everywhere, but there

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<sup>1</sup> Stories and histories told from a woman’s perspective (see Miller and Swift, 1976)

was no clarity as to *how*, *why* or *when*, and these are the questions which have motivated this research.

Like many countries in Latin America, Portuguese political history was “marked by despotism, a succession of military coups d’état and the fragility of civil institutions” (Massuh, 1998, p.68). This fragility is still apparent in contemporary education institutions, including schools. After nearly half a century of dictatorship in Portugal, which ended in 1974, democracy began to influence and shape all levels of public policy. The overthrow of the dictatorship brought democracy to the fore. The promotion of democracy occurred within diverse educational policies, notably those for young children. In Moss’s (2011, [online]) words “[t]here is a long tradition of viewing democracy and education as inseparably interconnected: democracy as a basic value and practice in education; and education as a means to strengthen and sustain democracy”. Portuguese Early Childhood Education (ECE) was particularly influenced by a strong political desire to promote a democratic society through a democratic education system. However, even though this was an important political project for the government, implementation was deliberately left to providers. The unclear form and nature of democratic education influenced and strengthened the development of an interesting diversity of ECE policies and practices.

The central intellectual problem under examination in this research is therefore the relation between ‘democracy’ and its changing nature and the pedagogic modes which are transmitted into ECE. This study observes the ambiguities in the social and political processes, and how these ambiguities are shown in the political history of Portugal, educational policies, and practices in ECE (including how those involved (i.e. policy makers, researchers and educators) interpret this). This research is thus divided into three central themes/questions: History (What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?), Policy (Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE?), and Enactments (How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings?).

The first aim of this study is to examine the nature of democracy in Portuguese history. According to Huntington (1991), probably the most important development in the political history of the modern world was the democratisation of nondemocratic regimes within a particular period of time. This 'democratisation phenomenon', following the end of the eighteenth century revolutions in France and the USA, and the 1945 post-world war, was defined by Huntington as the 'third wave' of democracy<sup>2</sup> (Huntington, 1991; Davies, 1999). For him, this 'wave' was distinctive because it was a democracy 'made through democracy'. In other words, countries involved in this wave became democratic through nonviolent resolution of differences, negotiations, compromises, agreements, campaigns, elections and demonstrations (Huntington, 1991). While this might be an 'effective' way of grouping similarities within democratisation processes in different countries, this generalised assumption needs to be examined carefully. For instance, Huntington (1991) goes further with his claims by arguing that the 'making of Portuguese democracy' represented the starting point of this new 'wave'. According to him,

"[T]he third wave of democratisation in the modern world began, implausibly and unwittingly, at twenty-five minutes after midnight, Thursday, April 25, 1974, in Lisbon, Portugal, when a radio station played the song "Grandola Vila Morena"<sup>3</sup> (p.3).

While this is an exciting claim, which aligns with the romantic idea that the 1974 Portuguese Coup was a powerful 'revolution' and a 'special one' for its lack of bloodshed, this is not an entirely accurate reflection of the event.

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<sup>2</sup>"A wave of democratisation is a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specific period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction" in that same period (Huntington, 1991, p.15).

<sup>3</sup>"Grandola, dark town  
Land of fraternity  
It is the people  
Who command more  
Within you, O city.  
On each corner a friend  
On each face equality  
Grandola, dark town  
Land of fraternity."

(Huntington, 1991, p.3).

The revolution was indeed 'pacific' in comparison to other revolutions in the world. However, there were still four men who died and others who were injured as a result of it. Further, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4, the revolution was not characterised by demonstrations, negotiations or the resolution of differences. Nevertheless, the song mentioned by Huntington (1991) is still seen in Portuguese history as the poetic and symbolic signal for a 'democratic awakening'. It signalled the emergence of democracy as a unifying symbol that made Portugal distinctive. I shall examine the emergence of democracy in Portugal in more detail in Chapter 4. Here I anticipate that all revolutionary processes tend to be characterised by a symbolism of a certain level, particularly when it comes to democracy (Huntington, 1991). The term 'revolution' in the 'Portuguese case' could, in fact, be interpreted as a misnomer, especially since, as Maxwell (1995) noted, this revolution "has not turned the world upside down" (p.4). Nevertheless, this arguably 'ephemeral' (Maxwell, 1995, p.5) symbolism left a profound impact on Portuguese society and policies. Indeed, democracy as an ideal was incorporated within all sorts of policies and political discourses and the educational policies were no exception to this ideological inculcation.

This brings us to the second aim of this research, which is to scrutinise the understandings of democracy in Portuguese policy. With its emergence in 1974, democracy became associated with a range of concrete features designed to promote a society which was in the words of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (1976) more "equal, pluralistic (...) freer, just, [and] fraternal..." (Article 1). These are features still present in the current Constitution which was written in 1976 and even though it has undergone various amendments, it still reflects its emergence from "the conditions of the revolutionary period" (Maxwell, 1995, p.1-2). This 'revolutionary' history (alongside the changes associated with decolonisation and 'modernisation' including the entrance of the Portuguese state into the European Union in 1986), has provoked me to question if the ideals of democracy, which were rhetorically incorporated in the Constitution (and reflected the dominant viewpoints at the time), still have resonance and relevance in Portugal

today<sup>4</sup>. The Constitution laid out the principles on which Portuguese education was to be founded, emphasising the central importance of democracy.

As a consequence of the 1976 Constitution, “[t]he education system... [started to be seen as] the set of means by which the right to education guaranteed... the democratisation of society” (Basic Law for the Educational System, Article 1, 1986). This led to what Tarrant (1981) has defined as the “social scientific problem of the direction of causality” (p.9) where it began to be assumed that ‘the higher the general level of education within a society, the greater the probability that this will be a democratic one’ (ibid). Consequently, for the government, both schools and education in general became the primary means through which the country met the demands of and for the new emerging Portuguese democracy.

It is axiomatic that in every society educational practices are influenced by the country’s history and the links between democracy and education are particularly significant. According to Gutmann (1987) “[d]emocratic education supplies the foundations upon which a democratic society can secure the civil and political freedoms of its adult citizens without placing their welfare or its very survival at great risk” (p.289). This could however be contested by the fact that ‘democratic education’ can take various forms and therefore diversely shape the purpose of such foundations. Consequently, stating that “[d]emocracy thus depends on democratic education for its full moral strength” (ibid), is certainly dependent on what ‘democratic education’ means in education policy and how these meanings are enacted.

This leads to the third and final aim of this research, which is to explore how democracy is enacted in different Portuguese ECE settings. To understand the enactment of democracy in ECE it is important to acknowledge that this level of education is distinctive from other levels of education. ECE is seen

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the 2016 commemoration speech of the 40th Anniversary of the Constitution, the President of the Portuguese Republic stated that the compromise to try to democratise, decolonise and modernise, all at the same time, presented obvious challenges to the development of the Constitution (Rebelo de Sousa, 2016 [online]).



as the foundation level of education in many countries, but in others it is not given the same recognition. This is reflected in the ECE 'starting age' which differs across places (in some countries ECE provision starts from birth in others it starts at the age of 3) (OECD, 2001; 2006), whilst, at the same time, adopting different names – crèche, nursery, kindergarten, pre-school. In Portugal ECE is a non-compulsory level of education divided into crèche (0-3 years old) and kindergarten (also known as pre-school) (3-6 years old). This in turn reflects the 'global' challenge behind defining and recognising ECE as either a level of education, or a care setting, or even both. As a consequence of this ambiguity some common denominations differ. For instance, in Portugal an ECE teacher is called an 'educator' and an ECE classroom is known as the 'activities room'. Those differences may be perceived by many as 'small'; however, it is through them that it is possible to comprehend the diversity within this level of education, besides what makes it truly distinctive.

This research perceives education in its 'broadest sense' as a lifelong process (i.e. from birth until death) and the term ECE is used as a reference to all institutions which provide care, education and more for children under compulsory school age. If, as stated by Moss and Petrie, "our construction of childhood and our images of the child represent ethical and political choices, made within larger frameworks of ideas, values and rationalities" (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.55), arguably so does our image of early childhood institutions and professionals providing education and care for young children. For this reason, in this research, the term ECE refers to a plurality of institutions including but not limited to crèches, nurseries, kindergartens and pre-schools.

Reflecting this plurality, ECE is presented in a great diversity of forms in Portugal where it is led by both public and private entities and overall responsibility for the network is shared between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Social Security and Labour. The Curriculum Guidelines for pre-school education were introduced in 1997 by the Ministry of Education in order to improve pedagogical method and content (EURYDICE, 2006/07). However, these guidelines allow autonomy in the

provision of pre-school education in different contexts, schools and classrooms, "i.e. they include the possibility of using various types of learning/teaching options and therefore, various types of curriculum" (Ministério da Educação, 1997a, p.22) which has contributed to the diversity of provision.

Within and across this diversity, it is apparent that democratic education is visible and strongly promoted in Portugal as an intended purpose/feature of ECE. This is demonstrated by both the Curriculum Guidelines and the Pre-School Education Law of 1997. The Curriculum Guidelines for pre-school education in Portugal aim, inter alia, for "citizenship and democratic participation" (Vasconcelos, 1998, p.8), and the first of the nine specific goals identified by the Pre-School Education Law in 1997 is: "To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship" (Ministério da Educação, 1997a, p.14).

This illustrates the importance of democratic principles in the development of Portuguese ECE, but there is little research available which shows how democratic education has been interpreted, enacted and delivered by the pre-school education system, organisations and in classrooms in this context. Given there are a range of providers (public, private, IPSS ("*Instituições Particulares de Solidariedade Social*" - Independent non-profit organisations (charities)), it is likely that there will be diverse interpretations of democratic education which will be implemented in different ways reflecting the particular ethos of the various organisations.

## 1.1. Significance

For the purpose of this introductory overview, there are past and current social, cultural and economic factors which should be taken into account in order to understand the contextualised significance of this research. According to Reeve (2014), in the particular case of Portugal, the movement throughout modern history occurred “first of all [with] the repression exercised by [the] Salazar’s fascism”, secondly with the high emigration rates in the late 1960s/early 1970s during the colonial war; and thirdly with “the high-water period of revolutionary syndicalist and anarchist activity” after the 1974 ‘revolution’. To complicate matters further, this movement culminated with “the lightning process of European integration” (ibid) from 1986 onwards which the country has still not fully ‘resolved’. The entrance of Portugal into the EU “spread the bewitching idea that (...) [the country was] entering a new epoch of wealth for all, a “modern” time when the poverty-stricken past would be hidden and the future would be an eternal present based on consumption, if only on credit.” (Reeve, 2014, [online]). By making reference to these viewpoints I am not trying to defend an ‘Eurosceptic’ argument. This is important because in Portugal there is a strong disbelief and cynicism towards the national political system. Social cohesion is problematic and there is, according to Green *et al* (2009), no confidence in the government. According to Magone (2004) Portuguese identity is visibly “linked to democratic citizenship and all rights and duties that entails.” (p.3). However, whilst Portuguese identity might be, or has been “firmly linked to the European integration process... after decades of isolation due to the authoritarian dictatorship” (ibid), the most recent political movements both in the country and in Europe indicate that being part of the European family of democracies also presents its challenges<sup>5</sup>. My main argument here is that there are cultural, economic, and social legacies from particular transitional periods (for example the rapid transition from dictatorial regimes to democracies) which must be critically examined.

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<sup>5</sup> These ‘attitudes’ highlight an interesting incongruity of the current EU political discussions, as more and more scholars question the legitimacy of the nature of democracy in the European Union (Schmidt, 2013).

Those legacies are similar in several European countries, particularly those in Southern Europe. One example of these is what Reeve (2014, [online]) describes as “social immiseration”, meaning the multiple social effects of strong economic decline. In Portugal, this immiseration is represented by an increase in social and economic inequalities as well as the destruction of “the social fabric” of the nation state (ibid). Reeve (2014, [online]) explores this phenomenon further by strongly claiming that the “Portugal visited by tourists in search of tranquillity under the southern European sun, is a dying country”. While this claim has a fatalist tone that is hard to fully accept, the growth of the ageing population, the decline of the birth-rate, the high levels of poverty and the consequent high emigration rates (ibid) which are currently at levels unseen since the mid-1960s (PORDATA, 2016a, [online]), are slowly transforming economic and social realities in Portugal.

The most recent economic impoverishment has particularly led to what Reeve (2014) calls “the radicalisation of the movement”. Radicalisation refers to the act of “[g]oing beyond the accepted discourse of the “political rights of the citizen”; radicalisation that foments the motif of society as “the demand for independence from political organisations” (Reeve, 2014, [online]). According to Ramiro, in the current political turmoil “this is where the cookie crumbles. Portugal feels like a ticking bomb of social dissent” (Ramiro, 2015, [online]). Recent collective demonstrations and general strikes called by the unions involving young people, transport and civil servants, suggest that this is a country shaken by an economic crisis and demanding an active political response. This, I argue, shows a level of collective responsibility and political awareness that has been dormant since soon after the ‘revolutionary’ period<sup>6</sup>.

In the aftermath of the October 2015 government elections<sup>7</sup>, Portuguese political players reinforced their ‘obsession’ with democracy. The word

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<sup>6</sup> Despite the claims that the country has been living a phase of “[a]usterity without the anger” (The Economist, 2015, [online])

<sup>7</sup> In a dramatic parliamentary vote, 11 days after assuming office (the shortest administration in Portuguese history), the Conservative Coalition (PSD and CDS/PP), who had won the election by the people’s vote, was ousted in parliament by a newly formed left wing alliance between the PS, Communist, Green and Left Bloc parties, which had (a slim) majority in parliament. This unexpected

democracy was seen in practically every political communication, whether in written or spoken form. Those on the right claimed that democracy was in mourning, those on the left claimed that democracy was living a momentous rejuvenation. Considering the current political historical moment, research exploring meanings and enactments of democracy is highly relevant. In addition, as the public sector is strongly affected, so is the education system. This thesis presupposes then, an overall sense of 'social responsibility' by considering these matters a crucial focus of research. Firstly, because as an educator and researcher, I believe that 'discourses of domination and subjugation' can be transformed into 'languages of possibility' (Giroux, 2005, p.144). And secondly because as posed by Giroux (2005):

“No tradition should ever be seen as received, because when it is received it becomes sacred, its terms suggest reverence, silence and passivity. Democratic societies are noisy. They're about traditions that need to be critically re-evaluated by each generation.” (p.131)

These events illustrate broader justifications/motives behind the development of this research on education and democracy. They suggest that, in this particular context, as a result of the dictatorship, the 'revolutionary' process, and the subsequent socio-economic developments, Portuguese society is now experiencing a range of social, political and economic phenomena which can, to a certain extent, offer an explanation for the current state of affairs, including education. There have been significant shifts in mindset and policy which I critically examine in this study. The events from the past, explored in this thesis, provide a backdrop for new understandings of current affairs in Portugal both in terms of democracy and ECE.

The study of democracy within ECE settings is an emerging field that is being shaken by current dynamic changes to education systems. For example, some Scandinavian countries enacted democratic principles in their education systems decades ago and these are being challenged by

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event shifted a Right wing austerity government to a (presumed) anti-austerity Left wing government.

changing political norms (Mäntynen, 2015; Dyrfjord, 2015). Another form of threat/challenge to democracy in ECE in current times is the growing emphasis on discourses that focus on children's outcomes and which view education solely or primarily as an investment in human capital. These discourses are currently generating proposals that are highly unsuitable for education in general and particularly inappropriate to ECE. One example of these are the PISA type assessments being proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) through the International Early Learning Study (IELS) (OECD, 2015). This move towards global test regimes will lead to a standardisation of ECE and contribute to a democratic deficit insofar as decisions are made outside local communities.

This in turn means that on the one hand there are forces seeking to increase the democratic deficit of ECE whilst others seeking and promoting examples of democratic practices in ECE. There is for example an increasing literature available in English on democratic practices in ECE contexts, such as the Reggio Emilia approach in Italy. In addition, Magone (2004) observes that “[t]he number of studies on Portuguese democratic transition and consolidation has increased substantially” (p.1). However, there are few studies reflecting on how democracy has impacted upon the current Portuguese education system, and this study is unique in connecting the historical development of democracy in Portugal to ECE contexts and practices particularly with regards to the enactment of democracy.

This research has two main aims, the first critically explores the processes of democratisation from a historical perspective which contributes to understanding the development of the current Portuguese education system. Secondly, I aim to explore how democracy is enacted in diverse ECE settings and in so doing contribute to redressing the scarcity of studies which focus on how intentions are translated into pedagogic actions. The central motivation of this research is to combine these aims and present a study which is not only relevant to a specific context, but also contributes to the advancement of the education/social sciences field in general.

By implication, I consider it crucial to reflect upon the challenge that, as explained by Mac Naughton (2005) “[c]onsuming and producing knowledge of children and of early childhood education (...) [as] part of the everyday business of early childhood studies” (p.1) poses. She states that “[t]he everyday language, ethics, routines, rituals, practices, expectations, ideas, documents and invocations of quality in early childhood services are formed through and motivated by very particular understandings of children and how best to educate them.” (ibid). In my view, the increasing universalisation, generalisation and standardisation of such understandings has become a challenge for those who believe in a contextualised construction of knowledge. As Kazamias (2012) explains, some scholars believe that “the educational questions are not “centred in the school”; therefore, the schools must be studied in the social contexts in which they function” (p.176). It is then important to make clear that the settings, policies and historical moments examined in this research correspond to a very specific reality. What often happens within ECE studies is that they tend to fall into the dominant discourses of what is ‘right’, ‘best’, or ‘ethical’ (Mac Naughton, 2005) not to mention ‘effective’ or of ‘quality’ for children and ECE providers and practices. Cannella (1997) argued that sometimes we are so embedded in our claims to truth that we end up, if not reinforcing dominant discourses, merely substituting one discourse for another; recreating dominance and marginalising those not represented. While this research involves a very specific focus on historical events, policies and enactments, I do not intend this work to reinforce or substitute one specific discourse. My intention throughout, is to question current understandings of democracy and democratic practices and to analyse them in the context of Portuguese ECE. The intention of this study is not to present what is ‘best’ or what is ‘right’, neither to present a ‘cookbook approach’ (i.e. an approach that would “be able to give us “the truth” [or] that “the truth” can be translated into rules for action, and that the only thing practitioners need to do is to follow these rules without any further reflection on or consideration of the concrete situation they are in” (Biesta, 2007, p.11)) in the understandings and enactments of democracy. This research aims to present current practices and enable the readers’ space to think about potential alternatives

according to their different realities and contexts. The objective therefore is to create awareness of current ideas of how democracy is understood and enacted, in order to critically engage theories with practices. It also intends to open up opportunities for discussion rather than to provide answers of what democratic understandings and enactments *should* look like.

As Portugal has, in contrast to many countries, explicitly and formally identified the promotion of democracy as a key purpose of schooling it provides an important national case study. Arguably, as in many other countries (Dekker, 1992), all levels of the Portuguese educational system are inseparable from its particular socio-political history. By examining the historical, political, social and cultural processes which have shaped the development and emergence of democracy in Portuguese society, this research aims to understand how democracy has filtered down from the constitutional level into the educational system. The overall purpose of this study is to scrutinise the ways in which 'democracy' is described, interpreted and enacted in different settings within which ECE is provided in Portugal, unveiling the extent to which intentions and realities are aligned.



## **1.2. Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis falls naturally into three main parts, which are sandwiched between Chapter 1 which introduces the purpose of the study in its local context (Portugal, ECE and democracy), and Chapter 7 which presents a summary and reflection on the grounds covered.

Part I, which is presented in Chapter 2, deals with questions of epistemology and methodology. It explores the methodology, the choices and challenges, alongside the methods used to answer the research questions. This chapter acts almost as a stand-alone section where I argue that social understandings of knowledge are fluid and relative, and that my ways of understanding the world through this research are critical and dynamic. In this part of the thesis I explain that my positions and perspectives are permeated by assumptions, values and beliefs I have developed as a person, as an ECE professional, and as a researcher, and I have tried to be as reflexive as possible. The qualitative methods used embody this reflexivity and the critical lenses in which I engaged throughout the study. This study involved two levels of analysis - national (state) and local (schools and classrooms). It also followed a predominantly historical and interpretivist approach within a social and cultural framework of constructed and shared meanings (Hughes, 2007); in other words, through critical socio-constructivism.

Part II is concerned with two main aspects. Firstly, with the nature of 'democracy' and 'democratic education', which is presented in Chapter 3 in the form of a review of the literature in order to understand and position the field of study. Secondly, with the politics and history of Portugal, which in Chapter 4 provides the historical milieu for this thesis and addresses research question 1 (What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?). In order to examine how education and democracy in ECE in Portugal were historically intertwined, this section provides a journey through the history of democratisation of Portugal in parallel with the history of democratisation of the ECE system. This engenders a comprehensive understanding of how democracy has

emerged within society and also explores how specific key events in the politics and history of Portugal have impacted the development and democratisation of ECE. Hence, when the political context is presented, the historical structures enable the reader to understand the political developments “as the manifestation of tensions, contradictions or accords [agreements] which associate or oppose the strengths existent in them” (Mattoso, 1993, p.29). The interdependence between economic, social and cultural factors is also a fundamental part of how history is created, and therefore how democracy is understood and enacted.

Part III focus its attention on the policy and enactment of democracy in Portuguese Education. Chapter 5 discusses the policy context and addresses research question 2 (Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE?). In this chapter, I conduct a critical analysis of historical and policy documents and follow these with interviews with policy makers, ECE experts and researchers. Chapter 6 examines how democracy is enacted within the three schools studied and addresses research question 3 (How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings?). In addressing this research question, I present three schools: one public, one private, and one IPSS (charity), where I interview educators, examine documents and present non-participant observations in classrooms, in order to explain the ways in which democracy is interpreted and enacted in the different local contexts.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Epistemological and methodological considerations**

“Dilemmas have no ready-made solutions; the necessity to choose comes without a foolproof recipe for a proper choice; the attempt to do good is undertaken without guarantee of goodness of either the intention or the results”

(Bauman, 1995, p.2)

This chapter reflects on the combination of the theoretical, philosophical, political, professional and personal experiences and beliefs, which underpinned and influenced this research. It debates their implications in particular the choice and use of specific research methods (Robson, 2002). I present the opportunities and conundrums behind a study which followed a broadly qualitative design, unveiling the processes of an inductive research methodology situated within a critical socio-constructivist epistemology. Moreover, I present the struggles of trying to reflexively locate myself as a researcher within the study, while acknowledging my identity as an ECE professional in the world of academia.

Most importantly, in this chapter I explain the theoretical and methodological perspectives employed to address the intellectual purpose which lies behind the research questions. This research aims to unravel the nature of democracy in Portuguese history and to understand how pedagogy enacts the transmission of political ideas, with all the complex interplays and ambiguities of policies which are shown in chapters 4 and 5 throughout key events in the Portuguese history. This includes the views and interpretations from key policy makers, ECE researchers (in chapters 4 and 5) and early childhood educators (in chapter 6). In brief: research question 1 (what are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?) is addressed in chapter 4 and explored through historical research which has some commonalities with path dependence analysis. It also includes interviews with key policy makers and researchers. Research

question 2 (which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE?) is addressed in chapter 5 and pursued by analysis of policy documents and interviews with key policy makers and researchers. Research question 3 (How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings?) is addressed in chapter 6 and based on empirical observations and interviews with educators in three different schools. Central to all three research questions is the interpretation of meanings in both written and spoken form.

This chapter is structured into three parts: The first, explains the philosophical underpinnings of the research. The second, presents the methods used in the collection and analysis of data for each of the research questions. The third, examines the ethical considerations of the study, including an interrogation of the tenets of reflexivity.

## **2.1. Philosophical underpinnings of the research**

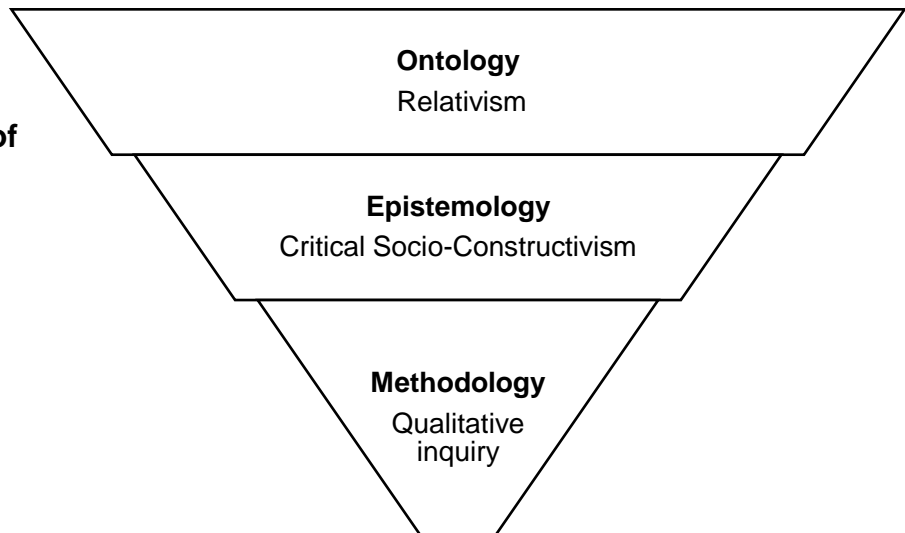
Since this research investigates the meanings and interpretations of an ambiguous term, democracy, within a dynamic field (ECE), it takes a relativist approach to interpreting the world and how knowledge is constructed. I illustrate the philosophical foundations of this study in diagram 2.1. I use the definitions of Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology outlined by Punch (2009). These are based on the following assumptions:

Ontology: “assumptions about the nature of the reality being studied”;

Epistemology: “assumptions about what constitutes knowledge of that reality”; and

Methodology: “assumptions about what therefore are the appropriate ways (or methods) of building knowledge of that reality” (Punch, 2009, p.15).

**Diagram 2.1. -  
Philosophical  
underpinnings of  
the research**



It can be seen from diagram 2.1. that the relativist ontology of this research provides the foundations for a socio-constructivist epistemology, influenced by critical theory. I posit that the nature of knowledge is historically, culturally, socially, politically and economically constructed over time. However, due to the significant oppressions existing throughout society, it is crucial that our assumptions of the world, 'reality' and knowledge should not be accepted without questioning or taken for granted. According to Prout and James (2015) "[w]ithin the interpretive tradition aspects of everyday life which are taken for granted are examined by 'bracketing them off'. The aim is to render them culturally strange by a process of detailed and critical reflection" (p.12). In this research, I engaged in a "process of constructing and reconstructing an intricate social reality of interlocking actions, beliefs and values" (Taylor, 1998, p.5). In other words, I followed an interpretative posture underpinned by ideas from the fields of socio-constructivism and critical theory.

The epistemological foundations of this study were strongly influenced by my professional background. As an experienced early years educator, in my everyday practice with children I located myself within the spectrum of socio-constructivist frames of thought. This was because throughout my teacher training I was influenced by the idea that children and adults are active and creative social agents of change, constructing their own understandings of the world. It was thus based on promoting socially

responsible practices and approaches to ECE, with one of its core principles being the personal and social development of the child as an agent of change. Approaches such as Reggio Emilia, Project Work, the Portuguese Modern School Movement and High Scope were central during my training, and as a result of those influences I perceived individuals as agents, “on the basis of who they are, rather than who they will become” (Nichols, 2007, p.120); and “social citizens in their own right rather than as future citizens in waiting” (ibid).

As the research developed, I realised that my own theories were continuously being reworked, modified and restructured. Starting from the premise that “[i]n representing the world, our theories represent us” (Rinaldi, 2006, p.64), I began to appreciate that the social, cultural and historical discourses and paradigms of early childhood in which I was immersed should be questioned, and not taken for granted, assumed, or generalised (Moss and Petrie, 2002).

As a result, my initial socio-constructivist paradigm shifted to a ‘critical constructivist paradigm’ (Soto and Swadener, 2002) within an interpretive research paradigm. Similar to Rinaldi (2006), I affirmed in this research my belief that “for adults and children alike, understanding means being able to develop an interpretative ‘theory’, a narration that gives meaning to the events and things of the world” (p.64). As such, by pursuing an interpretivist approach, this study argued that

“rather than simply *perceiving* our particular social and material circumstances, each person continually makes sense of them within a cultural framework of socially constructed and shared meanings, and that our interpretations of the world influence our behaviour in it” (Hughes, 2007, p.35).

The choice of following ‘critical socio-constructivism’ and ‘interpretivism’, like any other, came with its own limitations. As Bloch (1992) notes, child development perspectives have dominated early childhood research for many years, and as such there is still some resistance to, and recognition of, alternative theoretical and methodological perspectives, such as interpretivist research (see also Soto and Swadener, 2002).

One challenge of taking an interpretivist approach is that ‘our interpretations’ change over time and if we “continually create and recreate our social world as a dynamic meaning system” (Hughes, 2007, p.39) then what seems ‘true’ today might not seem ‘true’ tomorrow, even when ‘truth’ is considered subjective. If cultural and social frameworks are continually being evaluated and constructed, then naturally there is a cycle where interpretations and reinterpretations occur. This change has a direct impact on actions/behaviours, which in turn influence our understandings of the world. Consequently, views change over time and perceptions and understandings evolve, contributing to further advances in knowledge.

Based on my relativist stance, I was also influenced by postmodernist ideas. For example, the postmodern view of the world, that there “is an acceptance of the pluralistic character of the social experiences, identities and standards of truth” (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.23) mirrors my own perspective. By engaging with postmodern and critical perspectives on “ambiguity and uncertainty (...) values choice, diversity and democratisation” (Seidman, 1998, p.347) my research was able to draw on my interviewees’ experience in order to actively create meanings (Silverman, 2010, p.229) that were “socially constructed, negotiated and shared” (Hughes, 2007, p.36).

In considering my methodology, I was keen to avoid *methodolatry* i.e. “a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual story being told” (Janesick, in Punch, 2009), by “putting method before content” (Punch, 2009, p.27). Qualitative inquiry was therefore an appropriate choice of methodology. In adopting this approach, I became more curious and open to new learning pathways. It was an active learning process of making connections between my professional and intellectual biography and the different theoretical and discursive understandings from the field (Christensen and James, 2000).

In the initial stages of this research I explored the idea of considering myself ‘atheoretical’. I felt that there are many ways to view and describe the world and that those views should be respected and valued for what they

represented. I was also concerned that “theories *impose upon us* a way of looking at the world and *force us* to make certain decisions” (my emphasis) (Hoyuelos, 2013, p.114). I felt uncomfortable with labels or impositions and uneasy committing to theory since my views would shift over time, and, like in *Alice in Wonderland*, “I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then” (Lewis Carroll). This initial approach thus reflected a way of asserting my ‘self-acclaimed’ right of choosing not to choose.

However, I soon realised that by adopting the view that there were many potential perspectives through which to address my research questions, I had already made a conscious theoretical decision. My aim initially had been to take a pragmatic approach, but this made me aware of my scepticism towards theory. A way to overcome such scepticism was to start perceiving theories as “an interpretation of the world in the light of *our projects*” (Hoyuelos, 2013, p.114, my emphasis) which meant I had to generate “the type of critical thinking that brings self-awareness” (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.34) and favour a critical approach rather than “vulgar pragmatism” (Cherryholmes, 1988; Moss, 2007b).

As noted by Moss and Petrie (2002) “theories – whether in the form of academic, political or professional ideas, or offered in the guise of ‘common sense’ – shape our understandings and govern our actions, whether we recognise this or not” (p.17). Silverman (2010) puts it more succinctly: “methodologies and research questions are inevitably theoretically informed” (p.103). Nevertheless, theories are not necessarily exclusive; the social world might be accurately portrayed by a variety of theoretical perspectives. My aim throughout was therefore that my research should offer a platform to think critically about questions with regards to education and democracy in the context of Portugal, through the lens of critical theory.

Methodologically speaking, this research is an inductive qualitative inquiry which uses historical research, policy analysis, interviews and observations to investigate the meanings and interpretations of democracy at the national level, within policy, and at the local level, within practice in three different ECE settings in Portugal.



### **2.1.2. A qualitative study with a focus on critical interpretation:**

Due to the variety of priorities and objectives of qualitative research, it may, at times, be difficult to define. In simple terms, qualitative studies are predominantly text-based, involving non-numerical data. Also when considering definitions, qualitative inquiries tend to be seen as the preferred approaches by those who search for understandings rather than explanations, developing intricacy and variety within the data.

Despite the challenges of defining qualitative inquiry, there are commonalities and basic assumptions associated with the term. Some of the common features of qualitative studies drawn on in this research are:

1. "Openness about the researcher's theoretical and personal starting points;
2. An ethical concern for those whose experiences are being represented;
3. An attempt to reveal the richness of the field in the field's own terms;
4. A need for a careful system of data organisation to support the analysis;
5. A critical awareness of what has been learnt during the research process." (Edwards, 2007, p.134)

Another key feature of qualitative approaches which can be perceived in this study is the role of the researcher. According to Mac Naughton and Rolfe (2007) in this type of enquiry:

"the researcher generally tries to avoid too many preconceptions about what will be discovered and is keen to stay close to and analyse the data, emerging theory from it and perhaps even modifying the line of inquiry in response to developing understandings" (pp.12-13).

Accordingly, throughout the research I tried to keep my perceptions and understandings as open as possible in order to enable flexibility and fluidity. This openness reflected Brannen's (1995) idea that "[t]he qualitative [re]searcher is said to look through a wide lens, searching for patterns of inter-relationships..." (p.4). This research was concerned with interpretation and different ways of seeing the world as it had at its core, the belief that

either individually or collectively individuals hold different conceptions of the world they experience. This also applied to me not only when I was collecting and analysing the data, but also when reflecting upon my own cultural assumptions.

Qualitative inquiry is a commonly-used methodology across the social sciences and by ECE researchers. According to Edwards (2007), qualitative designs enable “getting to grips with the complexities of the social world of early childhood” (p.117). Furthermore, as discussed by Soto and Swadener (2002), interpretative research is important in the ECE field because “it holds the potential for collaborative, negotiated relationships among shareholders and the opportunity to give voice to children and practitioners” (p.44), and in this specific research also to policy makers and ECE researchers.

Therefore, qualitative studies within ECE enable us “to build up a picture of the actions and interpretations of children and adults” (Soto and Swadener, 2002, p.44). This type of enquiry allows the researcher to locate children and adults within “shifting networks of complex interactions”, which facilitates the understanding and interpretation of different possibilities and constraints of specific research contexts (ibid). As the search for ‘understandings’ was the main objective of this research, an inductive qualitative methodology was highly appropriate. The term inductive, which I take to mean drawing observations and patterns from the data itself, distinguishes it from deductive research in which the hypothesis is pre-determined.

In order to stimulate interpretations and generate new understandings, this study presents a variety of data which is interpreted and critically analysed. While the term ‘critical’ is highly ambiguous and used in different ways in diverse contexts (Johnson and Morris, 2010), I draw on Brookfield’s (cited in Langenhove (2011) description of: “the two activities necessary for critical thinking: first, identifying and challenging the assumptions underlying a person’s beliefs and actions, and second, conceiving and exploring alternatives to current ways of thinking and living” (p.97-98). Rather than

assuming that the knowledge and theories on which I draw are “timeless, natural, unquestionable” (Rose, 1999, p.20), I challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and aim to “interrupt the fluency of the narratives that encode” everyday life experiences (ibid). This questioning is visible throughout the thesis and is next shown in chapter 3, where I explore meanings and ambiguities of democracy.

## **2.2. Methods of data collection and analysis**

This section is divided into two subsections based on the research questions. The first subsection explores the data collection and analysis methods for research questions 1 and 2. The second subsection does the same for research question 3.

Table 2.2. provides a summary of the research questions, levels of analysis and sources for this research. It illustrates the two levels of analysis: national and local; and the distinction between research questions 1 and 2 in which document analysis and interviews with researchers and policy makers were key, and research question 3 in which the sources focused around school and classroom documents, interviews with educators and school-based observations.

**Table 2.2.: Research Questions, Levels of Analysis and Sources:**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Level of Analysis</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>RQ1 – What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?</b>	<u>National Level</u> – State	- Historical documents;  -Academic literature  -Interviews with policy makers and researchers
<b>RQ2 – Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE?</b>		-Historical and Political literature;  -Policy documents;  -Interviews with policy makers and researchers
<b>RQ3 – How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings?</b>	<u>Local Level</u> – School and Classrooms:  1 Public;  1 Private;  1 IPSS (charity)	-School and Classroom documents;  -Interviews with educators;  -Observations in schools and classrooms

I was led to my research questions through my interest in understanding how democracy can be translated from historical and political events to ECE pedagogical practice. Each research question used a slightly different set of methods for data collection and analysis which are outlined below and explored further in the coming subsections.

Research question 1: What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal? – Historical research

informed by path dependence analysis as a central element of historical-sociological analysis (Mahoney, 2000), open (unstructured) interviews with researchers and policy makers.

Research question 2: Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE? – Policy analysis of documents, open (unstructured) interviews with researchers and policy makers.

Research question 3: How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings? – Analysis of school and classroom documents, non-participant observation in three schools, semi-structured interviews with educators.

### **2.2.1. Methods for research questions 1 and 2:**

Interviews with policy makers and early childhood researchers were undertaken as informative data at the policy (macro) level. These interviews were open (unstructured interviews) and not only informed the historical and policy analyses directly but also produced important insights which helped the development of the research at its earliest stages.

I initially contacted Teresa Vasconcelos, who was my professor during my university degree in early childhood education. She had been a key player in the department of basic education during one of the historical periods in which I was interested (1990s). She was very happy to be interviewed and spoke of the key policy makers and researchers in the ECE field in Portugal throughout the years. She put me in touch with all the other policy makers and researchers I interviewed: thus it was a form of 'snowball sampling' (Noy, 2008). Each of the policy makers and researchers were contacted via email with an explanation of who I was, the study I was undertaking, and why I thought they could contribute to it. This explanation was accompanied by a request for an interview. From the 8 policy makers and researchers

contacted, 6 responded and agreed to be interviewed. At the interview I gave a personal/verbal explanation of what the study was about and what the interview would look like (i.e. a conversation – an open interview).

In these interviews the main focus was the theme of ‘democracy’ and its meanings and developments in Portuguese history and the education system. These interviews were led as ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford, 2007, p.151) and lasted between one to three hours.

Table 2.2.1. provides a brief profile of the researchers and policy makers interviewed.

**Table 2.2.1.: Researchers and policy makers interviewed:**

<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Interviewee’s name</b>	<b>Brief profile at time of interview</b>
04/01/2012	Teresa Vasconcelos	Director of the Department of Basic Education and Coordinator of the Bureau for the Expansion and Development of Pre-School Education in the Portuguese Ministry of Education from 1996-1999 (during the release of the <i>1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education</i> and the <i>1997 Curricular Guidelines</i> )
28/03/2012	Lynn Davies	Researcher and author of the “Comparing definitions of democracy in education” article
03/09/2012	Maria Emilia Brederode	President of the Institute of Educational Innovation; Member of the National Council for Education; Human Rights Representative at the Ministry of Education (development of citizenship curricula)
20/05/2013	Guilherme D’Oliveira Martins	Founder of the ‘Social Democratic Youth’ party in 1974 (after the Revolution); Secretary of state of educational administration (1995-1999) – (during the release of the <i>1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education</i> and the <i>1997 Curricular Guidelines</i> ); Subsequently Minister of Education; Minister of Finance; Minister of Presidency
23/05/2013	Isabel Lopes da Silva	Early Childhood Education researcher and the <i>1997 Pre-School Education Curricular Guidelines</i> Coordinator
24/05/2013	Maria Emilia Vilarinho	Researcher in Portuguese Early Years, Childhood Sociology and Education Policy (more specifically State/Government/3rd Sector)

As shown in the table above, all interviewees, with the exception of Lynn Davies, were key actors in shaping the direction of ECE policy in Portugal.

These policy makers and researchers were chosen because they have been heavily involved in the development of ECE policy in Portugal in the periods considered in this research.

Interviews were transcribed, translated and analysed through the lenses of historical research and policy analysis with a critical perspective on each. These fields are explored in the next two subsections.

The historical and policy documents were chosen based on the relevant time periods (from when democracy first emerged in Portugal) and on their relevance to education. Historical accounts, official and policy documents included both primary and secondary sources. Two examples were the *1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic* and the *1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education*, which were used to address research questions 1 and 2 and the latter of which was used to frame the interviews in research question 3.

### **2.2.2. Historical research methods:**

In Portugal democracy was, for many years, the exception rather than the rule. As discussed in chapter 1, Portuguese modern history was marked by changes at the cultural, social and economic levels. These changes started to point towards new directions with the 1974 revolution which reinstated democracy. I was interested in understanding the antecedents for the emergence of democracy at the national level in order to understand democratic enactments at the ECE practice level. Historical research is therefore a fundamental part of this research and was used to address research question 1 and, in part, question 2. Mattoso (1992) suggests that the study of history, whether at national, transnational, local or regional levels, always occurs through the study of different political phenomena. In other words, the only possible way to generate appropriate explanations is by understanding the relationships between power and the space in which these events are assumed, defined and transformed (Mattoso, 1992, p.13).

He also notes that one of the challenges of undertaking historical research is that:

“No historical work can account for the complexity of the past in one sole attempt. It has to proceed to successive approximations, even when it privileges a specific level or type of facts – economic, social, cultural, or political – from which it is proposed an interpretation of the whole” (Mattoso, 1992, p.13)

In other words, one can make a variety of links between different historical events and periods, each with their own logics and justifications. It is important to recognise, as Popkewitz notes: “that this history is not straightforward, involves multiple transactions and trajectories, and entails intense struggles” (Popkewitz, 1998, p.536). For this reason, historical researchers distinguish “structures” from “conjunctures”, “facts” from “data” and “events”, “short term” from “long term”, “movements of great amplitude” from “superficial facts”. It is therefore important for historical researchers to understand the distinction between simple information of what happened and its interpretation (Mattoso, 1993).

Furthermore, Mattoso (1993) argues that modern approaches to history could not dismiss the constitution of structures or propose interpretations by means of plain descriptions. History could not be reduced to ‘factology’ nor to a neutral presentation of data. History could not be confined to the narrative of the events which were considered as important or solely as a chronological sequence. The analysis of structures almost always uses data from diverse historical moments in order to demonstrate its permanence. Additionally, the rhythm of political events is different from structural transformations over time (Mattoso, 1993, p.23)

The historical research presented in this thesis has parallels with path dependence analysis by characterising key historical sequences which were contingent to the emergence of democracy. Path dependence analysis then becomes an important strand of the historical-sociological relationships presented in this investigation. According to Mahoney (2000):

“path dependence characterises specifically those historical sequences in which contingent events set into motion institutional patterns or event chains that have deterministic properties. The



identification of path dependence therefore involves (...) tracing a given outcome back to a particular set of historical events..." (p.507).

In this research, the advent and progress of democracy in Portugal is the key contingent event and I trace its impact on ECE. However, path dependence analysis involves more than saying that history matters. As Sewell (1996) argues, path dependence analysis suggests that "what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time" (p.262-263). Page (2006) expands: "when scholars refer to history mattering, they typically do not mean that it matters only for singular events. They mean that the course of the future has changed" (p.91). Therefore, "it is not only a question of what happens, but also of when it happens. [...] issues of temporality are at the heart of the analysis" (Pierson, 2000, p.251). The historical research in chapter 4 is presented through a group of chronologically sequential events, which are key in the emergence of democracy in Portugal. These are: The Liberal Revolution of 1820; the Implantation of the Republic of 1910; the Military Dictatorship of 1926; the New State Regime of 1933; and the Red Carnation Revolution of 1974. This analysis allows me to connect ideas of ECE and democracy while accounting for historical and political struggles within this particular context.

In the next section I discuss the ways in which I undertook the analysis of Portuguese policy documents and secondary sources from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

### **2.2.3. Methods of Policy Analysis:**

Ball suggests that "policies project images of an ideal society" and thus "education policies project definitions of what counts as education" (Ball, 1990, p.3). In Portugal, the 'revolution' of 1974 placed democracy at the forefront of public discourse and marked the emergence of a different set of ideals. From this time onwards democracy was promoted as a dominant ideal in public policies and was henceforth included as a key feature of education policy documents. As such, in order to understand how

democracy is manifested (and with what intention) in this context, it was considered the “fundamental need to explore the values and assumptions that underlie education policy” (Taylor et al. in Yang, 2014, p.294) while at the same time understanding “how these values are institutionalised” (ibid). Ultimately, in theory, “policy has much to do with how a society is governed and what mode of governance is best perceived by its members” (Yang, 2014, p.301), however, in practice this might not necessarily be translated in this way. Hence, it was important first and foremost to recognise that “[p]olicy is a process fraught with choices and involves adopting certain courses of action while discarding others. It is the product of compromise between multiple agendas and influences, over struggles between interests in context” (Yang, 2014, p.302).

In order to answer research question 2, I focused on the development of Portuguese education policies within three different periods: 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. These ten year periods were chosen because they each correspond broadly to a key legislative change. The 1970s saw the arrival of the *1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic* which described the country as democratic and democracy as one of the fundamental values of the nation; the 1980s saw the creation of the *1986 Basic Law of the Education System* which included democracy in all its forms in all levels of education; and the 1990s which saw the establishment of the *1997 Framework Law of Pre-School Education*, and the *Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education* also from 1997 which both envisaged democracy as a fundamental part of ECE.

Considering that “[p]olicy can only be understood, made and analysed in certain contexts... [and that] analysing policy is as much about understanding policy context as it is about understanding policy and policy processes” (Yang, 2014, p.289), the data was complemented with the voices of my policy maker interviewees, who had either been involved in the creation of the relevant policies (some centrally involved) or engaged in the education system during and after these periods.

In this research I interpreted education policy “as a multi-faced, multi-dimensional social and political phenomenon” (Farrell, 2007, p.241), which included “a cycle of strategies bound by time, resources, players and performances within dynamic and often contested political sites” (ibid). The research was concerned with the ‘authoritative allocation of values’, a matter of the ‘operational statement of values’ and a matter of ‘prescriptive intent’ (Kogan cited in Ball, 1990, p.3). The values embedded within them demonstrated not only the priorities of governments and societies, but also where power and control lay. As values cannot be detached from their social context, they eventually become either corroborated or discredited within policy (Ball, 1990). According to Cannella and Lincoln (2004) “Politics and complexity are embedded within research as a construct that generates power for some and can be used to discredit others” (p.168).

The process of analysing policy from the voices of those enacting it, started with acknowledging two features: the first, that “it is hard to control or predict the effect of a policy.” (Yang, 2014, p.294), and the second that the “[i]nterpretation of policy is a matter of struggle” (Rizvi & Kemmis 1987, p.14). This meant that “practitioners interpret policy with their own histories, experiences, values and purposes [and that] their responses to policy text are often constructed on the basis of “interpretation of interpretations”” (ibid). This study also looked at preschools as spaces where minor politics are strongly felt (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005) (this is further explored in Chapter 3). Education policy was recognised not only as a process, but also a product (Yang, 2014, p.291) which “does not exist in isolation” (Yang, 2014, p.286).

The analysis of policy documents was utilised to develop an understanding and perception about its formulation, implementation and analysis. It was not only concerned with policy problems and decisions but also with:

1. “The policy-making contexts of the social problem;
  2. The range of definitions and values held about it; and
  3. The types of policy recommendations to be documented”
- (Anderson cited in Farrell, 2007, p.246)

While policy analysis has different forms, it tends to contribute to the idea that historical and social conditions for policy development and research change depending on who controls the research. Consequently, the focus on the policy process and its actors is different according to who is in charge (Farrell, 2007, p.246). The investigation presented here reflects my interpretations and the understandings of different actors relevant to the policy process.

### **2.2.4. Methods for research question 3**

Research question 3 focuses on the enactment of democracy in three different Portuguese ECE school settings. The national network of pre-school education in Portugal is constituted by the public network (fully funded by the state) which comprises public settings, and the private network (partially funded by the state) which comprises IPSS (independent non-profit organisations - charities) and private settings<sup>8</sup>. I wanted to investigate three different types of schools, in order to provide a variety of lenses and perspectives through which to analyse this enactment. For that reason, I chose three settings from the major providers of ECE in Portugal, i.e. a public (state) school, a IPSS (charity) school and a private school. These settings were unique and as such I was not seeking generalisability regarding school governance. I describe each setting in more detail in chapter 6. I contacted various educator colleagues who put me in touch with schools they knew about who might be interested in taking part in the study. I then contacted the school coordinators via email, with a full explanation of who I was, the study I was undertaking, and why I thought they could contribute to it. The first public school I approached was not able to take part so I then approached another school suggested to me by the same contact. This was, in a sense, opportunistic sampling, since, as Robson

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<sup>8</sup> Other 'modalities' of ECE recognised by the state are itinerant ECE and communitarian ECE initiatives.

(1995) notes, “any real world study must obviously take serious note of real world constraints” (p.24).

When arriving at the schools I had a first meeting with each of the coordinators to whom I explained the reasons for the visit, and with whom all procedures for the data collection (such as times and spaces for interviews and observations) were agreed. An important part of these meetings was that I had an opportunity to make it explicit that it was my intention to be as undistruptive as possible and that my data collection would work around the school and its ‘actors’ and not the other way around. In this initial meeting I also gave each of the coordinators a copy of the information letter presented in Appendix A and Appendix B (containing information regarding the study and procedures for data collection) which was also given to each of the educators before they were interviewed.

### **2.2.5. Interviews:**

Interviews with educators were semi-structured because I wanted them to feel free to spend as much time and attention as they felt comfortable within the different topics explored, whilst allowing space for other topics to emerge. These interviews intended to provide an understanding of the perceptions of meanings and enactments of democracy in each specific setting/institution. They consisted of a set list of questions (the interview framework presented in Appendix C), with the flexibility of adding explanations, changing the wording or changing the order of presenting the questions (Robson, 1995) if I deemed it necessary or appropriate. These interviews lasted between thirty minutes and one hour.

I interviewed all the educators available for interviews in each school, which was 20 in total (5 in the public school, 7 in the private and 8 in the IPSS (charity) school). All educators interviewed were female and all were Portuguese. All educators from whom an interview was requested agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were anonymous and, as such, I have not described educators’ profiles in any more detail.

All interviews (including those for research questions 1 and 2) had the particular challenge of trying to capture every level – local and national – while aiming not to undermine established identities, beliefs and ideas of those interviewed regarding democracy and ECE in Portugal.

The use of interviews helped me search for “rich and highly illuminating material” (Robson, 1995, p.229). However, I found the transcription, translation and analysis a significant challenge. The particular constraints of transcribing and translating were in preserving meanings. Since the data was collected in Portuguese and translated into English, some of the richness of language (both in interview speech and in documents) was lost in the process. I transcribed and translated interviews, speeches, historical documents and policies - all of which had their own rules and linguistic/lexical representations. While I am not a professional translator, I contextualised the translations as much as possible in order to maintain the essence of the meanings in what was being said or written.

The interview framework went through several stages before its final use, illustrating the inductive nature of the research. In my initial stages, for example, I intended to use Lynn Davies’ (1999) eight-point model of conceptions of democracy in education to collect empirical data and to analyse the conceptions of democracy that were enacted. The intention was to use dimensions identified by Davies (1999) to provide an informed choice of ‘what to look for’ while collecting the data. These dimensions were: Basic Values; Rights; System Structures; Structures within Schools; Learning Content; Balance; Training; and Outcomes (and are further explained in Appendix D). I had the opportunity to discuss the framework with Lynn Davies in person during her interview and to reflect how it could be adapted for this study. However, as work progressed my initial framework was transformed and Davies’ dimension became less relevant. The reason for moving away from the initial framework was inspired by a small pilot study where I visited one IPSS and one Private school. In these visits I had the opportunity to talk to educators and to access the schools’ and classrooms’ documentation. Through these I started drawing specific areas which were particularly relevant in the Portuguese ECE context of practice.

Therefore, the final framework consisted of asking educators to consider where democracy was evidently manifested at both the school and classroom levels, in different areas of their work. The areas questioned were:

- Structure (organisational, group<sup>9</sup>, space, etc.);
- Decisions and policies;
- Methodologies/pedagogical practices (which guided teachers action and school philosophies);
- Planning (of activities, resources, routines<sup>10</sup>, etc.);
- Assessment/evaluation (of everything/everyone – children, teachers, adults, spaces);
- Work with families; and
- Work with other professionals.

These areas were presented in an ‘open manner’, i.e. they were introduced with room for interpretation and choice of ‘themes/subjects’ educators would like to emphasise. Educators also had an opportunity to add any areas which were not considered during the interview and where they thought democracy was visible. Following on from their responses educators were also asked to reflect on any possible limitation/barriers which they felt could impact the enactment of democracy in practice.

Both the initial framework (based on Davies’ (1999) dimensions) and the final framework can be respectively found in Appendices C and D.

### **2.2.6. Observations:**

The observations were non-participant, because I wanted to use observations as an instrument rather than being an instrument myself. This means that I was not involved in the class activities, but observing

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<sup>9</sup> General reference to the group of children in the classroom.

<sup>10</sup> Common ‘rituals’ in ECE which set up the line-up of events during the school/classroom day/week.

attentively. The focus of my observations consisted of two main areas of enquiry:

- 1) the different interactions between adults and children (interactions between adult-adult; children-adult; children-children in relation to the adult's role/response) in the schools and classrooms visited;
- 2) the organisation of institutional structures, organisation of spaces, routines and educational resources.

Observations in the three schools lasted a total of 6 weeks (2 weeks in each school). In each school, on the first day visiting the classrooms, I was introduced (with the exception of babies' rooms) to adults and children as an observer, to watch and learn from their day-to-day activities. In some classrooms the educators introduced me, in others they asked me to introduce myself and explain the purpose of the observations. In all classrooms, once the introductions were made, I sat in a corner 'away from the action' but at the same time in a position where I could observe and record my findings and I went in and out of several different classrooms across the course of the day, without being noticed/acknowledged.

I was careful to consider "the extent to which an observer affects the situation under observation" (Robson, 1995, p.191), in particular how my presence might cause behavioural changes in those observed. I was also concerned about the potential biases in my selective attention towards what I observed. In my field notes I registered as much as possible of what I was observing under the foci mentioned above. A field diary was also kept to provide a space for *post hoc* reflection on what has been observed.

Field notes were taken in several classrooms and communal spaces of the three schools visited. I also attended a variety of day-to-day events in the schools, including visits to the park or celebrations of Fathers' Day, aiming to capture the 'life' of the classrooms under observation. My objective was to capture as much as possible from the different 'educational spaces' while retaining the essence of what was being observed within the research time constraints.



I employed critical analysis to identify themes and patterns in all the data collected. This analysis involved “exploring the complex relationships between text and practice, demonstrating the extent to which the interrelationships between dominant discourses, systems of signification, and other social systems function in the constitution of subjectivities and the production of meaning.” (Davies and Robinson, 2013, p.41-42).

One of the most interesting, but also most difficult, observational challenges was that the majority of them involved children (even if they were not being directly observed they were in the observational spaces) and with the younger ones it was harder to act as an ‘invisible observer’. There were numerous occasions when I was trying to take field notes and I was interrupted by groups of curious children. This helped me to reflect upon what I was observing. In some classrooms my presence was completely natural to the children, in others it was a novelty. In chapter 6 I reflect upon the diversity of atmospheres in different classrooms and what this revealed about the enactment of democracy.

### **2.3. Ethical considerations:**

In this section I discuss the ethical challenges and implications of the research, starting with the question of reflexivity.

#### **2.3.1. Reflexivity:**

Reflexivity is an important element of this research due to its strong connection with critical theory. Mason (1996) described reflexivity as a process in which researchers place their work and themselves under examination, whilst recognising ethical predicaments which affect the research process and impact on the formation of understanding. In this study I refer to reflexivity which “urges researchers to be reflexive in relation to interpersonal and ethical aspects of research practice, not just the epistemological aspects of rigorous research” (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.277). The type of research which constantly questions the origins of

knowledge. In other words, I questioned what I knew and how I knew it (Hertz, 1997). To Edwards (2007):

“Self-aware, engaged and reflexive research has emerged in response to researcher’s disquiet about the separation of professional researchers from the field of study and their unease about their ability to speak for those whose lives they have been studying.” (Edwards, 2007, p.123).

As a former ECE professional, I experienced the uneasiness of ‘speaking for others’ during the research process. As a ‘sole’ researcher I also reflected upon the challenges of interpreting and representing ideas and practices of others, from my own tentative construction of knowledge. Popkewitz (1998) argues “knowledge is envisioned as tentative and uncertain having multiple constructions, and formed through negotiations within community boundaries” (p.549). Edwards (2007) also suggests that there are wider implications of this reflective process from researchers who are ECE professionals. She argues that:

“[F]or practitioner-researchers, reflexive self-awareness demands the capacity to separate oneself from the field of study and to gain the distance that allows a fresh examination of familiar events using the lenses offered by previous research studies and new theoretical perspectives” (p.123).

While I was not working as an ECE practitioner at the time of this research, my identity as an ECE professional was ever-present. Examining my own professional and personal ‘identities’ (educator, researcher, culturally and professionally engaged in the context) gave me opportunities to develop new insights and creative perspectives on the field, as well as opportunities to analyse events through different lenses. I was drawn to the idea of ‘mezcla (hybrid) theoretical perspectives’ (Anzaldúa, 1987), in which I could connect the personal and professional ‘I’ to the specific cultural and social context of this research. Also a reflexive perspective which encouraged me “to learn to listen to... [my] inner voices, to trust... [my] intuition, and to interpret research outside existing paradigms” (Diaz Soto, 2009, p.168).

This thesis tries to equilibrate theoretical views alongside a reflexive process. The ‘histories’ from the past and the ‘stories’ from the present are

unveiled through my own voice and the voices of those different educational actors involved in the process. Several challenges arose: on the one hand the risk of over-personalising the research (Bassegy, 1999, p.6) while retaining the reader's attention and interest; on the other hand, the challenge to be "sensitive to the complexities and multiple perspectives revealed in the study" (Edwards, 2007, p.133). This demanded a level of clarity in thought and writing which could both produce illuminating research from a rich 'story', and also offer critical interpretation from my own personal perspectives (ibid).

### **2.3.2. Ethical principles and implications:**

Through the research process I began to realise as Nóvoa (2012) comments that ethics, pedagogy and democracy are closely related and at times highly intertwined. I was careful to follow standard institutional ethics procedures (using BERA 2011) but went further by internalising core principles outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) including:

"Respect: protecting the autonomy of (autonomous) persons with courtesy and respect for individuals as persons"

"Justice: ensuring reasonable, non-exploitative, and carefully considered procedures and their fair administration"

"Support for democratic values and institutions: [with a] commitment to equality and liberty" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.289-290).

I took into account a range of relational, utilitarian, and deontological theories (ethical theories in which actions are judged by a 'moral compass') (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in guiding my actions as a researcher towards those who participated directly or indirectly. I was careful to consider "the ethical implications and psychological consequences for the participants in the research" and to ensure the research was "considered from the standpoint of all participants." (Robson, 1995, p.471).

### **2.3.3. Consent procedures and information given to participants:**

All the policy makers, ECE researchers and teachers interviewed and observed in the research gave their informed consent. By informed consent I meant that those involved in the study had full information about what the study would involve and have decided to voluntarily partake in it (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.291).

As Silverman (2010, p.163) explains: “[i]n the UK, the rules of engagement in research are modelled along the Western ethical framework”. Arguably, so are the ones in Portugal. However, Coady (2007) states: “informed consent procedures should vary from one cultural group to another.” From my perspective, having grown up close to the area in Portugal where my research was based, I felt that a written consent form requesting a signature would, in this particular cultural context, be interpreted by the participants as the author invoking a legal procedure, possibly with an ulterior motive. The participants themselves clearly had no expectation of being presented with consent forms to sign. However, in order to ensure that their consent was informed, I issued an information letter to participants, which is presented in Appendix A, and once they had read it I verbally checked they were still happy to take part. The information letter was written in Portuguese, the language of the participants, (but is translated in the Appendix B) and all agreed without issue.

One deliberate omission on the information letter and in my discussions with schools and educator interviewees was that there was no mention that the focus of the study was ‘democracy’<sup>11</sup>. While Silverman (2010) argues that, in most cases, “[i]nformed consent suggests that you should be entirely open with participants about the purposes of your research” (p.171), but I was aware that “[r]evealing [my] true interests may influence what people say or do” (ibid).

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<sup>11</sup> Here I distinguish educator interviewees from policy makers and researchers, who were told the entire focus of the study including the word democracy.

Since my research aimed to explore how central democracy was in those educators' practices and how it was understood, I felt that if 'democracy' was mentioned as the focus of the study then the educators would naturally and unintentionally be 'directed' to position democracy as a central feature, which would ultimately prejudice the research. In making the decision to omit the word democracy from my initial discussions with educator participants, I consulted the work of Silverman who postulates that, "where a fully open statement of the research problem [might] 'contaminate' the results [...] a degree of 'deception' is thought to be appropriate providing the wellbeing of the participants and their privacy is respected" (Silverman, 2010, p.171). The field of research was thus deliberately kept as open as possible and stated that the focus was on the 'guiding principles of pre-school education in Portugal'.

Robson (1995) suggests that "the withholding of information or the misleading of participants is unacceptable if the participants are typically likely to object or show unease once debriefed" (Robson, 1995, p.472). In this research, none of the interviewees expressed discontent. One interviewee asked afterwards whether the research had a specific focus and I stated that it was 'democracy in ECE in Portugal'. This interviewee said she had thought that might have been the focus, so she was pleased to have been right. There was a sense of honesty and trust developed throughout the research between myself and those involved. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were kept and respected as per each participant's requests. I felt confident that my personable interactions with the participants increased their trust and confidence in both me and the research itself.

### **2.3.4. Ethical implications of the mechanics of interviews and observations:**

I considered in depth whether the research had potential implications, risk or harm to its participants. Given its nature investigating the concept of democracy, in a democratic country, there were no “foreseeable threats to their psychological well-being, health values or dignity” (Robson, 1995, p.471). The only ‘vulnerable group’ were the children in the schools when I was observing the teachers, and I was never on my own with the children, and did not interview anyone under 18.

Each interviewee was asked for his or her permission to record the interview with an audio recorder. Everyone agreed and also many suggested that they would be happy to offer further thoughts at a later stage if needed. The researchers and policy makers also confirmed that they were happy to have their names disclosed in the research. Educator interviewees were informed that they and their schools would remain anonymous. The information letter (Appendix A and B) emphasised that their participation was voluntary and stated that they could terminate the interview at any time. I also included my contact details and the contact details of an ‘independent’ person from the Ethics Committee of the Institute of Education, so participants could obtain further information (or express concerns) about the study through other routes if they so wished.

The observations fully respected the physical and psychological wellbeing of the participants. The schools gave their consent for me to observe the educators and children. One school sent out information about me to parents and the other two schools stated that parents were generally happy for their children to be observed by external visitors carrying out research. This was confirmed by my informal interactions with several parents to whom I was introduced by the educators. Educators and their assistants all gave their verbal consent to be observed in their practice and I expressly stated that I would try as much as possible not to be an intrusive presence in the classroom (Robson, 1995, p.474).

# Chapter 3

## Meanings and ambiguities of democracy and democratic education

"Alternatives are not lacking in the world.  
What is indeed missing is an alternative thinking of alternatives"

(Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2016, [online])

This chapter is concerned with questions of democracy and democratic education within society, education systems in general, and the early childhood education systems in particular. It reviews some of the 'conventional' meanings of democracy, whilst outlining assumptions and conceptions behind so called 'democratic education'.

When exploring a notion such as democracy there is an extensive literature which is exceptionally complex. This chapter does not provide an exploration of the multitude of aspects concerned with democracy. It can however, provide a background to the research, and serve as stimulus for continuing inquiry in this area. For this reason, the literature included was selected taking into account its proximity and possibility to explain the Portuguese 'case'. The literature accounts for the potential relationships between diverse theoretical groundings and the specific context of Portugal with relevance to its history, culture, society and political stances particularly when considering the ECE system, as this is the specific focus of the research.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the general assumptions, meanings and ambiguities of the concept of democracy; subsequently it discusses democracy as an ideology; investigates current and classic models of democracy; then explores the temporalities of democracy; and finally briefly outlines the relationships between democracy and education, followed by the connections between democracy and ECE. Throughout this discussion, reference is made to influences on Portuguese early childhood democracy.

### 3.1. Democracy: meanings and ambiguities

David Held (1987, p.1) comments that “[t]he history of the idea of democracy is curious; [and] the history of democracies is puzzling”. When considering the meanings and ambiguities of democracy, broadly speaking, I often find myself reflecting upon a public lecture I attended at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 2011. This lecture was part of the *Forum for European Philosophy* and had contributors/representatives from the LSE, Louvain University and the UK Small and Medium Size Enterprises organisation (SMEs). The focus of discussion was “democracy in the workplace” and one of its most captivating moments was a debate on ‘why sometimes workers tend to object to democracy’. In this argument three main reasons were presented for this objection; they were: 1) an extensively acknowledged difficulty in defining democracy; 2) a potential question on the source (no one tends to ask for democracy (especially at the local level)); 3) a possible problem with the theoretical principle (in reality/practice the democratic State seemingly has powers which the constituents do not have).

These arguments led to an energetic discussion between the public and the speakers during which controversial questions were asked such as “why do we need to have local democracy as well as state democracy?”. Also raised was the premise that “[d]emocracy bestows an aura of legitimacy on modern political life: laws, rules and policies [which] appear [to be] justified when they are ‘democratic’” (Held, 1995, p.3). This was fascinating considering that many of those researching democratic matters (claim to) defend and embrace the view that democracy is a principle for which acceptance is self-evident, universal and not to be questioned. In contrast, in this debate it was argued that there is an issue as to the source of who asks for democracy and that the alternative viewpoint that in reality *not everyone* asks for it - should be acknowledged. This reflected Saward’s (1994) remark that “full constitutionalisation of an extensive range of social and other rights... may not always be desirable” (p.20) and, “between democracy and other competing values there is no necessary prescription that democracy must ‘win’ when principles conflict” (ibid). The idea that “[d]emocracy has become



its own justification” (Keane, 2009, p.841) was clearly challenged alongside the ‘general view’ that democracy “has been embraced around the world as if it were a way of life that has global validity” (ibid). According to Saward (1994), one “can hypothesise that, even if a full democracy were possible, it would not be desirable, since in a sense it would undermine itself” (p.19). This suggests that, for the sceptical, fully achieving the democratic ideal is not possible.

Additionally, this public lecture reflected some of Villoro’s (1998) views on the meanings of democracy and the reasons for either its acceptance or its resistance. For instance, one side of the discussion mirrored the idea that “[i]n theory, democracy is government by the people for the people. However, in practice, it has taken a different route” (Villoro, 1998, p.96). According to Villoro “[d]emocratic procedures were conceived to achieve that objective, but deviated towards a different political system” (ibid). This deviation and acceptance or objection to democratisation is somewhat justified by historical conditions. However, despite the historical roots which motivate the resistance to, or acceptance of, democracy, Villoro (1998) claims that this too happens “due to the intrinsic characteristics of the very rules and institutions through which it was intended to assure government by the people” (p.96).

Notwithstanding the disagreements, it was generally understood at this lecture (despite the acknowledged difficulty of definition) that we all know what democracy is. As a matter of fact, the discussion started with this assumption and without any attempt to define the meaning of democracy from the outset. There was a general unspoken understanding that “[d]emocracy means a form of government in which, in contradistinction to monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule. Democracy entails a political community in which there is some form of *political equality* among the people” (Held, 2006, p.1). However, as stated by Held (2006), even though “[r]ule by the people’ may appear an unambiguous concept, (...) appearances are deceptive. The history of the idea of democracy is complex and is marked by conflicting conceptions. There is plenty of scope for disagreement” (ibid). As a result, the challenge with knowing what

democracy is, without attaching a definition to it every time we claim to do so, is that it soon becomes apparent that we all attribute different values to it. As explained by Beetham (1994) “[t]hrough frequent misuse the term ‘democracy’ in popular parlance has come to mean whatever political arrangements the speaker personally approves of, and has become emptied of any objective referent” (p.26). Additionally, as Wringe (1984), explains “‘democracy’ rather like ‘freedom’, ‘equality’ and ‘justice’, is so universally approved and so universally claimed as the description of every kind of existing regime that risks becoming totally devoid of meaning” (p.7). Apple (2009) complements this idea by stating that “[c]oncepts such as freedom and democracy are sliding signifiers. Their meanings are struggled over, subject to various manipulations, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic interpretations, and uses” (p.xiii). This leads to what Tarrant (1981, p.9) describes as the “considerable malaise over the ‘meaning’ of democracy, and difficulty in defining it”, or as Morlino (2012) describes it: the ‘definitional conundrums’ of democracy.

There are numerous definitions of/for democracy. Indeed, when starting this study, I could not help feeling overwhelmed by the huge variety in definitions both at the individual and collective levels (Tarrant, 1981; Beetham, 1994; Davies in interview, 28/03/2012). Besides, it is not only the definition of meanings but also the definition of its ‘contents’ that makes this a fascinating and uneasy notion to conceptualise. (One example is the many different disciplines that in one way or another have, arguably, gone above and beyond their ‘scope’ to research democracy. Democracy has been investigated through, and at times, either paired up with or conceptualised as:

- a notion of power/discipline (Foucault) (O’Sullivan, 2008)
- a means for educational reform (Dewey) (Fleuri, 2008)
- a technique (Freinet) (ibid)
- a process (Freire) (Fleuri, 2008)
- a social struggle (Marx) (Hill, 2008)
- symmetrical and compatible to citizenship (Lund and Carr, 2008)
- a process of socialisation (secular humanism) (Asgharzadeh, 2008)
- education for critical thinking (fundamentalism) (ibid)
- a form of global energy (Buddhist, Vedic and Jungian traditions) (Fidyk, 2008))

So much so that one could reasonably accept the suggestion that “democracy is by definition adventurous and unfinished” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.26). The discussion that took place at the public lecture demonstrated that the problem resides in the insistence that democracy is a self-evident and universal consensual truth, when in reality one could argue democracy to be elastic, flexible and unique within specific contexts. As Macedo (in Carr, 2011) stated, “[t]he term democracy is not to be understood within [a] - ready-made, Western developed democracy kit characterised by a blind embrace of asymmetrical market forces, required to be uncritically implemented without analysis or regard to suitability” (p.5). While it is clear that democracy embodies generic features, which tend to be globally considered as the ones that define a democratic system, the word ‘democracy’ can be used in different contexts and mean different things accordingly. (For instance, the meanings of democracy in Portugal are very different from those used in Angola or Mozambique. This can be seen for instance in the political arrests happening (at the time of writing) more visibly in Angola, but also in Mozambique ‘in the name of democratic freedoms’ (Amnesty International, 2016, [online]).

As Keane (2009) argues “Democracy is a geographic, not a global morality...” (p.842). Implicit in this view is that culture and society needs to be considered when thinking about democracy in a specific context. Therefore, in this research, I refer to democracy as an unfinished and contested concept with contextual rather than universal cogency. In other words, as “[a] political form of human coexistence, which (...) [is] the product of a particular history, with specific historical, cultural and geographical conditions of existence” (Mouffe, 2000, p.62).

Taking into account these broad parameters, I consider that there are two significant forms of democracy within the specific context of this research. The first is democracy as a form of ‘political association’ and the second is democracy as a ‘system of government’ (Villoro, 1998, p.95).

Within the first designation, democracy (as a form of ‘political association’) is seen as:

“the achievement of the freedom of everyone. It is a guiding concept, under the influence of which politics can progressively bring society closer to the ideal, although it can never be claimed that the ideal has been achieved in its entirety” (Villoro, 1998, p.95).

This type of democracy also reproduces the idea of community and “in this form of community, there is no form of domination by a few persons over others. If everybody holds power, nobody is subject to anybody else” (ibid). In other words, in this first description democracy is seen as the “power of the people”, where the “people” is the totality of the members of an association. “Democracy” denotes an association in which all the members control collective decisions and their execution, only having to obey themselves” (ibid). This is what Mouffe (2000) would define as a democratic tradition of ‘popular sovereignty’ (p.18). I considered this to be an influential form of democracy especially in societies which have emerged from ‘revolutionary’ circumstances, and as such, a significant form of democracy considered in this research.

At this point, it is also important to recognise that power relationships are essential to the understandings of democracy. Consequently, whilst this study does not delve into the meanings or ‘theories of power’, it still recognises and reflects upon the role of power in the interpretations and enactments of democracy. As defined by Foucault (1983, [online]), power is perceived in this research as:

“a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action”

The power relations underlying this research sway mainly between ‘institutional models of power’ (ibid) which discuss issues such as the role of the State in the emergence of democracy as paramount; and the power related to the ‘objectification of the subject’ (ibid), for example, in power relationships between educators and children in the schools’ enactments of democracy. Therefore, it is implied throughout this study that power is not necessarily good nor bad, it is not violence, neither consent, and its exercise “can produce as much acceptance as may be wished for” (Foucault (1983,

[online])). As articulated by Mouffe (2000): “the main question of democratic politics becomes then not how to eliminate power, but how to constitute forms of power which are compatible with democratic values” (p.32).

Accordingly, the second form of democracy (as a ‘system of government’) represents:

“a series of rules and institutions which support a system of power. These include the equality of citizens before the law, civil rights, citizens’ election of their leaders, the principle of needing a majority to take decisions, and the separation of powers” (Villoro, 1998, p.95).

This form of democracy is *not* seen as

“an ideal, but a form of government that conforms to certain procedures and which can be achieved in various ways, according to the circumstances. It is not an associative project conforming to specific values, but rather a way of living together under a specific power system” (ibid).

This is what Mouffe (2000) would describe as a democratic tradition of ‘political liberalism’ (p.18) where there is the rule of law, the separation of power and individual rights. One could argue this second designation of democracy to be closely aligned with the current neoliberal domination of public and political ideas. This is because in this definition democracy becomes a ‘collective’ legislative process where individuals and groups of people seem to be ruled by conformity, and consequently benefit less than capitalist institutions (Cannella, 2005). According to Cannella (2005), within the current political climate, governments and institutions seem to be “moved to create a legislative environment in which corporate capitalism would become synonymous with democracy” (p.25). By creating democracy as a form of government which conforms to a series of procedures in which the ‘powerful’ create conditions and rules for living together, capitalist interests become more influential. In other words, as this ‘democracy’ is not seen as an ideal it operates by placing its citizens under the “*subjection of the ruling ideology*” (Althusser, 1971, p.7). However, the questions which remains is: who decides what that ruling entail.

This distinction between democracy as a form of political association and democracy as a system of government emerges as relevant in the research,

and is returned to in chapter 6 when I analyse organisational representations of democracy within the 3 settings researched.

### **3.2. Democracy as an ideology and its relationship with policy**

Part of the literature explored thus far (such as Villoro, 1998; and Saward, 1994) indicates a general and polarised portrayal of democracy. Democracy tends to either be considered as an ideal within utopian lines (that arguably can never be achieved in its totality (Saward, 1994)), or as a conforming form of ruling/governing (Villoro, 1998). In the specific Portuguese context of this study I consider democracy as having emerged as a national ideology. Despite the challenges that a theory of ideology may represent (such as the confusion in trying “to identify one single organising theoretical principle which dominates... [its] formulations” (Clarke et al, 1977, p.113)), within Marxist and Critical Theory traditions ideologies tend to be seen as central to politics. Robertson and Hill (2014), state that:

“There are two main perceptions of ideology in critical thought. The first is negative, viewing ideology as distorted consciousness. The other is positive, where ideology can be the positive expression of the interests and world-view or weltanschauung of a class-located person or group.” (p.168)

Regardless of whether one understands ideology as negative or positive, both perceptions seem to equally align with Althusser’s (1971) view that human beings are ideological subjects.

Ideologies are also sometimes expressed in the form of public opinion and can be understood as a collection of ideas which lead our actions and their justifications (Bayley and Gayle, 2003). Ideologies can include, but not be limited to - political, cultural, economic, social, and educational principles. According to Poulantzas (1973) “[p]olitical ideology, in the form of public opinion, presents itself as a body of practical rules, as technical knowledge, as the citizens’ ‘enlightened consciousness’ of a specific practice, as the ‘Reason’ of this practice” (p.218). This impetus which justifies practices, suggests that ideologies are a central component to policy development

(Hill, 2001a, 2001b). However, as stated by Robertson and Hill (2014): “[m]uch policy is short-term, (...) [and either] responds to electoral considerations, or to international economic events” (p.170). This indicates that ideologies are far from being unidimensional whilst referring to many different views within the political spectrum. From left to right, different political views portray different ideological perspectives of actions/inactions of governments and people. For Poulantzas (1973) “[t]his is the underlying conception of the whole series of political liberties: of freedom of speech, of the freedom of the press, etc.” (p.218), which are enabled by systems such as democracy, which (in principle) have the respect for those freedoms as a central value. Additionally, “[g]overnment policy is influenced by long-term ideology and by short-term electoralism, and parties in government comprise within their ranks different ideologies.” (Robertson and Hill, 2014, p.169). Indeed, the ‘democratic ideology’ is often evident in political discourses where democracy is presented as a widely ‘accepted’ and ‘contested’ form of government. As Churchill famously stated in 1947:

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time” (Churchill, 1947, [online cc.207])

This in turn, illustrates that there is a complex historical, social, cultural and economic process for an ideology to become an action. As stated by Kress (1979) “[i]deology involves a systematically organised presentation of reality” (p.15), however, if ‘reality’ is ever changing, that organisation is likely to be fluctuating.

According to Keane (2009) democracy is perceived by some as an ideal because it presupposes “the equalisation of all its citizens’ life chances” (p.862). Fukuyama (1992) argues that our inclination to democracy is set by common sense. To him, it is our common sense which indicates the advantages of democracy over other forms of government; but it is our inherited values and traditions which (ironically) *dictate* whether we are committed to democracy or not. As a result, if democracy is seen to maximise equality and life chances, then it is ‘naturally’ perceived by many

as the best possible ideal in opposition to the alternatives. However, democracy cannot be simply perceived as a reflection of notions of equality, otherwise a paradox arises as in the name “of equality, democracies sometimes must privilege some at the expense of others” (Keane, 2009 p.862), giving credence, in such circumstances, to the argument that the purpose of the ‘democratic ideology’ is itself contravened. Democracy would be undermined by the paradoxical inequality promoted by the sole focus on equality, in the same way that “the democracy that is solely political denies itself” (Freire, 1996, p.146). This indicates that democracy should be more than a form of politics solely promoting equality.

Freire (1996) argued that “[n]o reflection about education and democracy can exclude issues of power, economic, equality, justice and its application to ethics” (p.146). This provides an opportunity for democracy (in different places and through time) to strongly emerge as a direct response and in opposition to specific biased and unyielding events, such as injustices which arise from repressive forms of ruling. Furthermore, democracy as an ideology is supported by the notion that ideologies can also be connected to identities and “identities are often built on the basis of sharing historical experience in a given territory” (Beech, 2009, p.348). This in turn, further reinforces democracy as a contextual matter, i.e. not only as an ideology, but an ideology that develops and transforms itself within different settings and contexts.

In addition, Merelman (1969) noted that “an ideology must have some arbitrary, but considerable, duration in order for us to distinguish its components from passing whims” (p.751). Many events throughout world’s history indicate a sense of having been borne from ‘ideologies’. In *The end of history and the last man* Fukuyama (1992) argues that we are currently living in a post-ideological age and this has emerged due to the failure of proclaimed ideologies to endure. However, according to Robertson and Hill (2014) “[w]henver the ideas and values defined by a particular ideology result in a certain form of action, then the power of ideology is realised.” (p.170). As such, if democracy is indeed an ideology that has been realised around the world then Fukuyama’s (1992) claim cannot be upheld. As stated



by Gramsci (1971) “one can observe the parallel evolution of modern democracy and of specific forms of metaphysical materialism and idealism” (p.685). Consequently, despite their different forms and conceptions, democracies still endure as ideological systems throughout the world.

These ideologies also tend to be associated with utopias. Indeed, the level of ‘utopian thought’ that allows the democratic ideology to thrive is welcomed by many. According to Dahlberg and Moss (2006):

“Utopian thought, (...) provokes and enables radical critique of what exists and it can give direction for future change through the exploration by imagination of new modes of human possibility that can help us to reinvent the future. It both deconstructs the present and reconstructs the future. It provides a provocation to politics and ethics through the act of thinking differently, and, hence enables us to construct a new horizon of possibilities and new directions for future change.” (p.20).

Foucault (1984, [online]) similarly argued that utopias “present society itself in a perfected form or else society turned upside down”. While “utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” (ibid), Foucault claimed that there are real spaces, within every culture and every society, where utopias can be effectively enacted by being “simultaneously represented, contested and inverted” (Foucault (1984, [online])). These enacted utopias re-termed ‘heterotopias’ which have different principles and can be described in various forms depending on their given culture or society (ibid). My interpretation of the relationship between democracy and these conceptions can be described as:

- 1) Utopia - the ideal of democracy (the one that ‘perfects’ society/education/culture and so on);
- 2) Heterotopia - the existence or ‘operation’ of democracy as a reflection of that ideal (in policies/discourses/practices and so on).

In other words, heterotopia is what makes the ideal (utopia) of democracy real as it creates the space for democracy to exist.

The arguments presented here, contrasting the post-ideology of Fukuyama (1992) with the heterotopia of Foucault (1984), support Gramsci’s (1971) premise that hegemonic ideologies tend to be contested. Beech (2009)

argues that political and ideological contradictions in the global space may be explained by the fact that “[p]ragmatism seems to be more influential than ideology” (p.352). This is particularly interesting considering that, as Lynn Davies stated during her interview (28/03/2012): “democracy is a very pragmatic thing”.

In addition, Merelman stated that:

“One of the cognitive skills indispensable for ideological thought is the ability to think causally. In order for a political ideology to grow, the individual must be able not only to see the interrelations of social events and personalities, but also to arrange such events and personalities in meaningful causal sequences.” (Merelman, 1969, p.753)

As such, it is not surprising that, according to Merelman (1969), some consider ideology to be “closely related to educational level” (p.752). This provides an explanation as to why democracy and education tend to be so strongly coupled, particularly in the education of young children. Moreover, within this form of ideology (which searches for meaningful causal consequences) comes the symbolism of democracy which can then be (and is often) translated into policy. Democracy then gains a whole layer of semiotic relationships, meanings and discourses.

This is of particular importance for this research because, as Jason Beech (2009) argued:

“The attributes and politics of the global policy space of education influence the type of discourses produced and reproduced in this space. If global networks that advocate policy solutions are aimed at influencing education policy in as many states as possible (sometimes within a given scope, sometimes universally), the discourses that they produce have to be malleable and adaptable so as to be able to be acceptable and applicable in very different contexts.” (p.352)

I argue in this research (specifically in chapter 4) that, in Portugal, democracy was adopted from global discourses and, as a highly malleable concept, which was transformed over time. As such, democracy is not understood here solely as a liberal consensual ideology which “consists of the international promotion of minimalist conceptions of democracy as a condition of accessing international monetary resources” (Santos, 2002,

p.27). Rather, democracy in Portugal is understood in this study as a concept that was transformed into a pragmatic ideology, and that, consequently filtered from political discourses into educational practices.

As I demonstrate in chapter 4, democracy was consistently adopted in Portuguese history to change the status quo. In terms of education policy, as discussed in chapter 5, democracy emerged as an ideology in the form of utopia which then shifted into heterotopia.

In addition, perhaps due to the marked disparities in the representations surrounding its ideology, different models and conceptions have been proposed in the history of democracy. In the subsequent section I consider David Held's (1987; 2006) classic, modern and contemporary models of democracy and how they relate to the educational context of this study.

### **3.3. Current and Classic Models of Democracy**

Alongside different views on the meanings of democracy, there are also different models and conceptions which have been advanced by various scholars in the field. One example is David Held, who has dedicated part of his scholarship to clarifying “why democracy is so important in human affairs, why is it so contested, and why, despite its vulnerabilities, it remains [for many] the best of all possible governing arrangements” (Held, 2006, p.ix). In his work Held (1987, 2006) developed a range of models of democracy, i.e. “accordingly, complex ‘networks’ of concepts and generalisations about aspects of the political, economic, and social” (Held, 1987, p.6). It is important to understand how those ‘networks’ can influence the different meanings of democracy. Held (1987; 2006) illustrates how diverse conceptions of democracy can be, whilst arguing that democracy is divided into four classic models, five modern models, and two contemporary models:

- The Classic Models of democracy include: *Classical Democracy* (based on the idea of democracy in ancient Athens); *Republicanism* (divided in both protective and developmental republicanism); *Liberal*

*Democracy* (which is divided into protective and liberal democracy); and *Marxist direct democracy*.

- The Modern Models include: *Competitive Elitist Democracy*; *Pluralism*; *Legal Democracy*; *Participatory Democracy*; and *Deliberative Democracy*.
- The Contemporary Models of democracy include: *Democratic Autonomy*; and *Cosmopolitan Democracy* (ibid).

For each of these models (Classic, Modern and Contemporary), Held (2006) identifies their Principle(s) of Justification, Key Features and General Conditions. I have compiled and represented these in the tables in Appendix E.

Held (1987) explains that:

“the models could be reasonably divided into two broad types: direct or participatory democracy (a system of decision-making about public affairs in which citizens are directly involved) and liberal or representative democracy (a system of rules embracing elected ‘officers’ who undertake to ‘represent’ the interests and/or views of citizens within the framework of ‘the rule of law’” (p.4).

Initially, I intended to use Held’s models as a central part of my analysis, because they illustrated the diversity and variance of democracy. However, I subsequently realised that having too many models clouded the issues, as they overlooked specific social, cultural, historic and economic contexts and made the research over-complex. The context (place and time) of each model’s use and development, indicates the ambiguities and reveals different meanings of democracy. In other words, complex networks of social, political and economic generalisations change the meaning of democracy according to its context. It would therefore be extremely difficult to justify that any universal or singular conception of democracy could fully represent the Portuguese ‘case’. As recognised by Held (2006), these models reflect an analysis of the changes and transformations of democracy over time in the West, but not necessarily elsewhere. These different representations move from more traditional forms of democracy to more contemporary perspectives, which, to be used, need to be understood within their social, economic and political settings. There is nothing to guarantee that in one country the Specific Principles of Justification, Key Features and

General Conditions all correspond to the same model of democracy.

Therefore, as Held (1987) states:

“There are good grounds for not simply accepting any one model, whether classical or contemporary, as it stands. There is something to be learnt from a variety of traditions of political thought, and a propensity simply to juxtapose one position with another, or to play-off one against another is not fruitful” (p.268).

This study recognises this constraint and seeks to understand the different conceptions of democracy which have emerged throughout time in Portuguese history without imposing or presupposing the models that have been previously established.

### **3.4. Temporalities of democracy**

In the history of research on democracy, the ways the meanings of democracy have changed over time tend to have been unacknowledged (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006). According to Foucault (1984, [online]): “the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time”. Nevertheless, the relevance of time can be considered twofold. On the one hand, time itself changes perceptions and possibly meanings and ways of understanding democracy. On the other, as was mentioned in the introduction of this study, waves of democratisation have occurred throughout history:

“Huntington stressed that democratisation typically happens in clusters, bunched like grapes on stalks of simultaneity. He pointed out as well that democracy has no historical guarantees. Time has no single track; history is not unidirectional, so that waves of democratisation typically remain vulnerable to tidal reversals, with democracies sliding towards some or other form of nondemocratic rule” (Keane, 2009, p.671)

Therefore, as democracy can emerge, it can also fade, change, and/or transform itself throughout time. History is then “made because particular ways of thinking about what should be done and how it should be done dominate specific epochs” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p.148). Taking into account that this thesis looks at particular events through history, this is of particular importance for this study. According to Rosanvallon and Moyn (2006) the relationship between democracy and time has not been

adequately addressed. To these authors, while attention was given to institutions, procedures and actors, temporality was then perceived as a basic “neutral element” (p.47) which solely accounted for the duration of a given event. In addition, for Foucault (1984, [online]) “[t]ime probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space”. However,

“if democracy is a regime of the self-institution of society, it seems necessary to understand time as an active and constructive dimension. For politics is also the set-up of social time, marked simultaneously by memory and the impatience of the will; it combines [both] rootedness and inventiveness” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.47)

As such, time becomes of crucial importance and in order to understand how democracy is described, interpreted and enacted in the present, and possibly in the future, this thesis looks at the historical forms which democracy took in the past. As Cubitt (2007) explains:

“Having a sense of the past gives a meaning to, but also draws meaning from, present experiences and expectations. The nature of the relationships that are perceived to exist between past and present may vary from society and to society, and may evolve as societies develop.” (p.201)

In this research I observe the ways in which democracy is considered an important symbol in Portuguese society, but its dynamic nature over time has tended to be overlooked.

Cohen and Manion (1994) argued that: “the ability of history to employ the past to predict the future, and to use the present to explain the past, gives it a dual and unique quality” (p.45). This is especially significant for this research, as examining current policies and practices gives some indication of what the future of democracy and education ‘promises’ in the Portuguese context. Moreover, one can argue that this research is also in a privileged position to explore Cowen’s (2012) thought-provoking proposition that the future may as well have a role in determining the past.

As education tends to be seen as a way to 'determine' the future, the following section is concerned with how general understandings of democracy and education have been perceived in the literature.

### **3.5. Democracy and Education**

Recently "there has been worldwide resurgence of interest in questions about education and democratic citizenship both from educators and from politicians" (Biesta and Lawy, 2006, p.63). Nonetheless, for many years, 'Democratic Education' and 'Education for Democracy and Democratic Citizenship' have been areas of significant research for a number of educationalists worldwide. In 1916, Dewey, a pioneer in the development of the concept of 'democratic education', argued that democracy was "a mode of associated living of conjoint communicated experience" (p.87) and education was a social process where social relationships formed the core of educational institutions. More recently, Kerr (2010) stated that 'education for democratic citizenship' refers to the promotion and "establishment of sustainable forms of democracy in society based on respect for human rights and the rule of law" (p.7) through educational practices and activities. Dewey (1916) saw education and democracy as inextricably intertwined and suggested that educational institutions had the responsibility "to shape the ends of the educative process" (Olssen et al, 2004, p.269) within their social relationships. Biesta and Lawy (2009) claim that "[i]n new and emerging democracies the focus has, understandably, been on how education can contribute to the formation of democratic dispositions and the development of a democratic culture" (p.63). Although it could be argued that democracy becomes in this way a political and educational ideal, it is also important to bear in mind, as Gutmann (1987, p.15) maintains, that democracy should not be regarded as a form of political socialisation. In other words, democracy and democratic practices in schools should not be used as a form of enforced indoctrination of a specific political ideology - as by definition democracy suggests a choice. Most importantly, as argued by Biesta and Lawy (2009) "democracy is not confined to the sphere of political

decision-making but extends to participation in the 'construction, maintenance' and transformation' of all forms of social and political life" (p.65). In other words, the 'democratic ideal' within education implies 'democratic action'.

It is not surprising then that "questions about education and democratic citizenship have not only been raised in the context of how to build democracy. In many established democracies similar questions have been asked about how to maintain and nurture democracy and democratic culture" (Biesta and Lawy, 2006, p.63). According to Torres (1998), in modern contemporary societies, theories of democracy and citizenship represent the challenges and the complexities of political science. This is because the liberal democratic State "in line with a traditional approach, must perform two basic, yet many times contradictory functions: foment the increase of capital, whilst maintaining the harmony and social consensus" (Olmos and Torres, 2012, p.100). Therefore, notwithstanding years of study and discussion, one of the main challenges in educational research is still to fully understand the relationship between education and democracy (Ginn, 1996) and how to enact it at different levels.

For Dewey (1916), democratic education was a "type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" (Dewey, 1916, p.115). Gutmann (1999) reinforced this idea and went further by defending the need for developing moral character while allocating responsibility to all the actors in the education process. As such, democratic education in these terms is not necessarily about teaching children democracy, but rather to embody democracy in educational practice according to our roles in education and society (i.e. as parents, teachers, citizens, and so on). Through this embodiment democracy can then happen as a practice of citizenship. Within this perspective Gutmann (1999) maintained that "[d]emocratic education (...) shapes the education of future citizens which in great measure forms their moral character" (p.49). According to her:



“democracies must rely on the moral character of parents, teachers, public officials, and ordinary citizens to educate future citizens, democratic education begins not only with children who are to be taught but also with citizens who are to be their teachers.” (ibid)

This in turn, leads to what Lawy and Biesta (2006) described as ‘citizenship-as-practice’. According to these authors: “[i]nstead of seeing citizenship as the outcome of learning trajectory, citizenship-as-practice suggests that young people learn to be citizens as a consequence of their participation in the actual practices that make up their lives” (p.45). This also provides an indication of the general reasons behind the Council of Europe’s attempts to promote and establish democratic practices within education. For the Council of Europe:

“Education for democratic citizenship means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.” (Council of Europe, 2010, p.7)

Freire (1976), on the other hand, believed that democracy needs more than the intention to transform citizens and societies as “it will not appear as a natural by-product of even major economic changes” (p.38). He believed that democracy “must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions” (ibid). Consequently, history and its politics also have a role to play. As stated by Gutmann (1987) “[d]emocratic education is therefore a political as well as an educational ideal. (...) the ideal of democratic education is being ruled, then ruling (...) [hence, education] not only sets the stage for democratic politics, it plays a central role in it”. (p.7). This is extended in the meanings of education and its role towards people - by educating citizens; and society - by acting upon its issues. According to Freire (1976):

“Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men [sic], on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion” (p.38)

Regardless of an extensive literature which advocates the value of democracy and assumes a strong link between educational practices and democracy, empirical research investigating the relationship between these two notions in the Portuguese context is still scarce. Indeed, there is research (such as Davies, 1999; Ghanem, 2004; Schou, 2001; Beane and Apple, 2007; Arthur and Sawyer, 2009; Council of Europe, 2010; Moss, 2014, amongst others) available which has studied in depth the use of democratic conceptions and pedagogies in different countries. However, research which considers democratic pedagogy in Portuguese education, particularly at the level of ECE, is sparse.

There is also a concern with a recent “educational discourse where the emphasis has been upon questions concerned with ‘outcome[s]’ rather than with ‘process’ – with curriculum and methods of teaching rather than questions of understanding and learning” (Lawy and Biesta, 2006, p.34). The following section explores ideas and understandings of democracy and ECE in the broadest sense, from studies in the field to theories and practices of living and experiencing democracy.

### **3.6. Democracy and ECE**

The importance of democratic practices and approaches at the ECE level seems to be broadly accepted. According to Moss (2007a) the centrality of democracy and democratic practices in ECE was established by two main developments: one, “the growth of policy interest in early childhood education, leading to an expansion of services” and two, “the need to revive democratic politics” (Moss, 2007a, p.5). This in turn, leads to two important questions. The first, what form does democracy take in the ‘education of young people’? And the second, why is democracy so essential, particularly in the education of young people? These questions are addressed further in this study; however, as Peter Moss (2007a) argues:

“The case can be put in a nutshell. Democratic participation is an important criterion of citizenship: it is a means by which children and adults can participate with others in shaping decisions affecting

themselves, groups of which they are members and the wider society. It is also a means of resisting power and its will to govern, and the forms of oppression and injustice that arise from the unrestrained exercise of power. Last but not least, democracy creates the possibility for diversity to flourish. By so doing, it offers the best environment for the production of new thinking and new practice” (p.7).

The literature explored thus far suggests that the ideology of democracy can grow not only from reflection but also from meaningful and causal events. As such, it can be further inferred from the literature that discourses of democracy can be ‘easily developed’ (although not necessarily enacted), particularly in the education of young children. Furthermore, in democratic early years education systems and practices, there is what Dahlberg and Moss (2005) describe as the ‘minor politics in preschool’:

“Minor politics involves a constant critique and takes a reflective attitude. It is questioning and induces stuttering, disrupting discourses and destabilising accepted meanings, denaturalising the taken-for-granted, opening up issues to confrontation and contestation. It makes us aware that our constructions are constructions, which are produced in particular contexts and shaped by particular discourses” (p.151).

As a result, democratic education is not only about developing the democratic ideology, but to develop it while critically reflecting on and reconceptualising its meanings and practices. Paulo Freire (1976) for instance, believed that democracy is achieved through the process of *conscientização* (conscientization) i.e. through “the development of the awakening of critical awareness” (Freire, 1976, p.19). He argued that one cannot sit and wait for democracy to happen, even if it is intended to be part of the educational process. Both Freire and Giroux (1989) argued that democracy needs to be constructed as ‘practice’ and not only as ‘method’. In Portuguese ECE, for instance, there is an expectation that democratic ‘production’ and enactment should emerge from confronting and contesting everyday life situations (Ministério da Educação, 1997a). However, as Beltrão and Nascimento (2002) state, democracy cannot become a reality solely through an institutional system but mainly through the practices and actions of citizens and teachers. This is also connected to the previously explored idea that democracy is a process that constantly needs widening

and deepening, and as such is never finished. Therefore, the school as an educational institution, is considered to have a central role to play in the education of citizens which will create and maintain democracy. This idea is very much in line with the French pedagogue Celestin Freinet's view that: "[o]ne prepares the democracy of tomorrow by democracy in the school. An authoritarian regime at school does not know how to form democratic citizens." (Freinet in Lee, 1994, p.16).

Additionally, according to Gollob *et al* (2010) there is a 'political culture' which sees the:

"School as a micro-society [that] can support its students to acquire and appreciate key elements of a democratic and human rights culture, including the following:

- The students are able to know and express their interests and views with confidence and self-esteem.
- The students treat each other with mutual respect, including listening and empathy, that is, the willingness and ability to switch perspectives.
- The students are able to settle conflict through non-violent means, that is, negotiation and compromise.
- The students appreciate the function of institutional frameworks that protect and limit their individual rights of liberty. They add the "soft", informal element of political culture to the "hard", formal element of rules.
- The students appreciate politics as a practical effort aiming to solve problems that require attention and a decision.
- The students participate in the process of electing representatives and in formal decision-making processes.
- The students engage in non-prescribed ways to influence decision making, such as through awareness raising, activism, lobbying and by handling problems on their own.
- The students take responsibility for their decisions and choices, considering their impact both for themselves and for others.
- The students are aware that if they do not participate in decisions that affect them, others will make them, and the outcome may be unfavourable for them." (p.27)

He sees these 'key elements of a democratic and human rights culture' to be part of social interaction, whilst immersed in an extended 'political culture'. This 'political culture' in education "is strongly linked to the attitudes and values that young citizens acquire through processes of socialisation, including their school experience" (ibid).

Considering democracy in ECE concretely, there are necessary conditions and activities for its enactment. Moss (2007a) maintains that there are four types of activity necessary in order to bring democratic politics into ECE schools. These are: decision-making; evaluation; contesting dominant discourses; and change. (Moss, 2007a, p.13). He argues that democratic practices require certain values to be shared and certain conditions for their enactment. These conditions vary from tools (such as democratically trained ECE professionals; critical reflection, decision-making, interpretation and dialogue in the pedagogical practice), and values (which encourage democracy). The table below displays the 'value-conditions' for democracy in early childhood institutions as proposed by Moss (2007a). The table is divided into necessary values and key features of democratic education in ECE:

**Table 3.6. Necessary values and key features of democratic practices in ECE**

<b>Democracy in ECE</b>	
<b>Necessary values</b>	<b>Key Features</b>
Understanding the child as a competent citizen and an expert in his/her own life	Children's opinions are worth listening to; Children have the right and competence to participate in collective decision making
Recognising that children, as well as adults, have a hundred languages to express themselves	Democratic practice means being able to 'listen' to the many languages of the child, as well as the adults in the life of the child
Respecting diversity	Democracy is founded on relational ethics - the ethics of encounters (see Dahlberg and Moss, 2005)
Recognising multiple perspectives and diverse paradigms	There is more than one answer to most questions; There are many ways of viewing and understanding the world
Welcoming curiosity, uncertainty and subjectivity	With the responsibility that each of them require of us individually and collectively
Fostering critical thinking	As "a matter of introducing a critical attitude towards those things that are given to our present experience as if they were timeless, natural, unquestionable: to stand against the maxims of one's time, against the spirit of one's age, against the current of received wisdom ... [it is a matter] of interrupting the fluency of the narratives that encode that experience and making them stutter" (Rose, 1999, p.20).

(Based on Moss, 2007a, p.13)

These democratic environments also resonate with Freinet's pedagogical principles. According to Freinet in a democratic pedagogy:

- Teachers are facilitators in a classroom, not dictators;
- Motivation makes students better learners;
- Participation of students implies freedom;
- Participation in the classroom nurtures self-confidence; and
- Classrooms are part of the world (in Acker, 2000; 2007)

These are principles which influence some ECE practices in Portugal today (particularly the democratic approaches of the Portuguese Modern School Movement (MEM)). According to Niza (1998) the MEM is a movement which emerged 'discretely' (mostly underground) in the 1960s. It initially emerged in a primary school in Évora (interior of Portugal) as a fusion of various convergent practices. It was initially influenced by António Sérgio's<sup>12</sup> proposals of civic education; by the practices of children's inclusion in education, particularly those used with visually impaired children in a Helen Keller Centre's practices; by Freinet's techniques of experimentation, learning, and trial and error; and by socio centred interaction with influences from sociocultural perspectives developed by Vygotsky and Bruner (ibid). The movement is in constant development since its inception. Its practice is based in communication and cooperation, with a focus on learning and teaching that accounts for sociocultural development within sciences, techniques, arts and everyday life (ibid). The Portuguese MEM sees children as having the right to actively participate in the construction of an inclusive and democratic school culture (Niza, 2012b, p.382). Consequently, democracy is perceived in the MEM's practices as an act of 'citizenship in construction' in other words "a shared education for active and democratic citizenship" (Niza 2012b, p.385). According to Niza (2012b) in MEM schools and:

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<sup>12</sup>"António Sérgio de Sousa was one of the most influential intellectuals in the culture and politics of twentieth-century Portugal" (Nóvoa, 1994, p.501). In 1918 he wrote that "the reformed school of the future should influence adults – and not only children – in a spirit of solidarity, co-operation and tolerance, as the focal point of society that it ought to be; the science of education should be seen as a tool of life in society; the school itself should be, in the strongest sense of the word, a society; and at all times the teacher should feel like a warrior fighting to reform the nation" (Sérgio in Nóvoa, 1994, p.506)

“[a]mongst (...) MEM professionals, democratic citizenship is learnt in the course of the cooperated management of the curriculum, passing by the cooperated construction of the knowledges and cognitive competencies, by the regulation of critical occurrences, by the reflection and deepening of responsibilities and the human rights in the democratic organisation of democracy inside and outside the school” (p.385).

As such, there is a deep belief in a democratic cooperative school, that is profoundly humanised by the participatory construction of knowledge that happens in relationship between adults, children and the community. Niza argues that this is an arduous task, as only a few commit to the belief that:

“Either our school is, by aspiration, by effort, a permanent ethical and democratic construction, or we will never have a democracy. This is the path we follow: a hard path, disturbing for many. That is why many give up, because they don’t want to have so much work in a profession that is so hard, so violent. For us, ethics, pedagogy and democracy are exactly the same thing. Hence, this exigency that we impose on ourselves.” (in Nóvoa, 2012, p.17)

Despite the argument that democracy is difficult to enact in practice, it still is a very appealing ideology to many. In Portugal democratic education at the ECE level is not restricted to MEM. In addition to the already mentioned Framework Law for Pre-School Education and the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education (also further discussed in chapter 5) which state the promotion of ‘democratic life experiences’ in ECE (Ministério da Educação, 1997a; 1997b), there are a number of other curricular approaches which have place in Portuguese ECE that put democracy at the centre of their practice. One of them is the “pedagogy in participation” system of beliefs enacted by the Childhood Association in Portugal (Formosinho and Formosinho, 2012). This association perceives ECE centres as democratic spaces where they propose to enact what can be interpreted as a social justice conception of democracy where there is a level of equality and equity which stresses social responsibility, inclusion and participation.



As per the examples above, it is evident that democracy is perceived as a central value in Portuguese ECE, whether by national policy standards and curricular objectives, or by specific pedagogical approaches<sup>13</sup>.

However, democracy is not exclusive to Portugal, in fact, democracy has for a very long time been a central part of the ECE curriculum in many other countries. For instance, according to Einarsdottir and Wagner (2006), within the education policies and curricula of Nordic countries there is a proud “claim to a distinctive, shared ideology about children and childhood, including such cherished cornerstones as egalitarianism, emancipation, [and] democracy” (p.2). Jensen *et al* (2010) demonstrate this in the Danish example by stating that the Education Curricula Act “promotes day care centres as democratic meeting places, where children can be active participants and have positive experiences with each other and the adults (day care workers, teachers)” (p.247). Similarly, Onnismaa and Kalliala (2010) also refer to the importance of democracy in the Finnish context, with all the consequences of its misrepresentations, particularly in terms of the democratic approaches to the professionalization of the ECE workforce. The Norwegian ‘Kindergarten Act’ also refers to democracy as the basis for the maintenance of a democratic society by stating that “[t]he Kindergarten shall promote democracy and equality and counteract all forms of discrimination” (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005, p.1). The list could continue with specific examples from Iceland and Sweden’s ECE policies and practices (Moss, 2007a). Nevertheless, the importance of democracy both in policy and practice in ECE is not exclusive to Nordic countries.

In places such as New Zealand and Australia democratic education (Mitchell, 2011) and the participation of children as citizens (Nichols, 2007) has also been strongly promoted in ECE. In Poland, Katarzyna Gawlicz (2016) is currently researching approaches for introducing democratic

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<sup>13</sup> I use the term ‘approach’ with caution whilst purposefully avoiding the term ‘model’, as “whatever the philosophy, the construction of a model assumes that educational outcomes can be predetermined” (Cannella, 1997, p.104), demonstrating in this way a reductionist perspective of the educational experience (ibid). Consequently, I interpret democratic ‘movements’ and ‘approaches’ as ways of living.

practices in Polish preschools, with a focus on encouraging children's autonomy and decision-making processes. Gawlicz's research aims to understand the emergence of democratic schools in Poland and, from the perspective of the children's right to participation (Article 12, UNCRC, 1989), examines the extent to which children make decisions on matters that concern them. Researchers in England, Finland and Estonia also joined forces in a longitudinal research project to study child-initiated pedagogies in ECE settings in these countries, with the overall aim:

“to provide a deeper theoretical basis for ‘democratically appropriate practices’ in early years settings, and galvanise teachers everywhere to find spaces for child-initiated pedagogies at a time when national policy frameworks and dominant discourses shape early years pedagogies differently.” (Robertson et al, 2015, p.1815)

The number of initiatives concerned with ECE and democracy, as expressed above, demonstrate that there is strong evidence to suggest that democracy is of interest for education in general and ECE in particular. Alongside the literature explored throughout the chapter, these also show that democracy is not simply the ‘hot topic’ of the moment but a value that has concerned numerous scholars in different contexts for many years.

Another specific example that needs to be presented here is Reggio Emilia. In many ways similar to the MEM (in its philosophy), particularly in the vision of the child as a strong, competent, human being, and with its connection to democracy in its ethics and pedagogy. In both MEM and Reggio Emilia there is a shared belief that as Anzaldúa describes: "to be human is to be in a relationship; to be human is to relate to other people, to be interdependent with other people" (in Evans, 2000, p.195); to make alliances and learn through “communications and concrete experiences” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p.69). There is thus a profound respect for relationships within the environment and the community. In Reggio, according to Rinaldi:

“The School, not worn out by its educational role, becomes a meeting place for different subjects (family, community, cultural institutions in an attempt to create the sense of education and educability and, above all, to guarantee educational action that offers the community a venue dedicated to investigating the meaning of citizenship, participation and democracy” (in Hoyuelos, 2013, p.23)

In Reggio there is an element of relationship which “is substantiated in a way of thinking that is not primarily based on philosophical or scientific dogma but on the relationships that enable the child and the person) to be a ‘knowing individual’” (Rinaldi, 2006, p.81). The child is perceived as a *protagonista*:

“who therefore:

- Makes distinctions, decides on limits and makes choices, all of which are essential building blocks of knowledge;
- Is the protagonist in the act of cognition but also that of commentary, as learning must be accompanied by reflection and revisiting. What we have in mind, then, is an environment that becomes a sort of reflecting surface in which the protagonists of the learning experience can see the traces of their own action, and which enables them to talk about how they are learning;
- Experiences learning as practice, not so much to pursue an end but to change oneself, (...) the school conceptualised as (...) a ‘workshop of learning and knowledge’;
- Expresses the aesthetic dimension as an essential quality of learning, knowing and relating. Pleasure, aesthetics and play are essential in any act of learning, knowledge-building. Learning must be pleasurable, appealing and fun. The aesthetic dimension thus becomes a pedagogical quality of the scholastic and educational space” (Rinaldi, 2006, p.81)

This vision of the child in Reggio Emilia marks its nature as a profoundly democratic environment of shared relationships. Where children are active constructors of their learning experiences. Reggio is perceived as an environment of provocation where children and adults are perceived as researchers who “possess the habit of questioning their certainties” (Malaguzzi, 1998, p.69) and “assume a critical style” (ibid).

### **3.7. Conclusion**

Taking into account the diverse perspectives developed throughout the years relating to democracy and education it is firstly crucial to recognise that democracy can be understood at different levels. For instance, democracy can be interpreted at the two levels of analysis which are explored in this thesis (national and local). Secondly, there are two specific

dimensions when talking about democracy which seem to be of significance - the 'political' and the 'educational'. It is important to understand that while the political is intrinsically connected to politics, the political dimension is still implicitly distinct from the functioning of politics. As Rosanvallon and Moyn (2006) explain:

“To refer to “the political” rather than “politics” is to speak of power and law, state and nation, equality and justice, identity and difference, citizenship and civility – in sum, of everything that constitutes political life beyond the immediate field of partisan competition for political power, everyday governmental action, and the ordinary function of institutions” (p.36).

Similarly, in the educational dimension, 'education and democracy' is different from 'education for democracy and democratic citizenship'; and 'democratic education' is distinct from 'education for democracy'. Education and democracy suggests a focus on pedagogical approaches and methods which are adapted and performed in democratic ways, while democratic education implies using education as a form of 'political tool for socialisation/indoctrination' i.e. contributing to, developing and/or maintaining a democratic society. However, those definitions and distinctions tend to be rather fuzzy in the field. Concomitantly, another important dimension to infer from the literature is that democracy is a form of living (Dewey 1916) and as such does not happen in isolation. Part of the aim of this study is to understand how democracy has filtered down to education and for that reason it is important to understand how democracy and education are intertwined.

Overall, my intention in this chapter has been to illustrate that “modern democratic society is a society in which power, law and knowledge experience a radical indeterminacy” (Mouffe, 2000, p.1) and consequently there can be no 'true' definition(s) of 'democracy'. As stated by Birch (2007) “we cannot arrive at an objective and precise definition of democracy simply by elucidating the intrinsic meaning of the term, in so far as it might be said to have an intrinsic meaning” (p.111). Saward (1994, p.7) explains: “what is needed is a definition of democracy which is not forged in theoretical isolation, but which is embedded in a theory which justifies and clarifies the concept of democracy as part of the process of definition” (p.7). As such, in

this research “the goal of reflection and action is not to achieve some mythical and utopian “realisation” of democracy, but to further deepen its possibilities in full awareness of its insoluble quandaries” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.26).

With regards to ECE, conversely, there is willingness to make the utopia a reality. As previously stated by Saward (1994) some perceive democracy as an ‘ideal’ that can hardly be achieved. However, others such as Foucault (1984) and Dahlberg and Moss (2005; 2006) have discussed the potentialities of pursuing the ‘utopia’. In addition to the examples given particularly with MEM and Reggio, the promotion of democracy in ECE seems to be possible through the creation of spaces for ‘pedagogical recontextualisation’ (Stoer, 1992).

## Chapter 4

### The historical 'fado'<sup>14</sup> of Portuguese democracy

This chapter “seeks to provide a historical account of the effort occasioned by the permanent interaction of reality and its representation by defining historico-conceptual fields” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.62). It does so by offering a general overview of different events which have emerged as important in the promotion and development of democracy in Portugal. The events focused on here are: *the Liberal Revolution of 1820; the Implantation of the Republic of 1910; the Military Dictatorship of 1926; the New State Regime of 1933; and the Red Carnation Revolution of 1974.*

Through an analysis of each of these, I address the first research question of this study: What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?

Additionally, this chapter partially lays the ground to address the second research question: Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within education policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested in the state policies towards ECE?

This is mainly a critical historical analysis of different periods in the Portuguese history which is primarily based on secondary sources which include historical and policy documents. It is also supplemented by primary sources, which include interviews with key contemporary researchers and policy makers in ECE who experienced the 1974 revolutionary period in Portugal.

I considered it fundamental to include the historical documents conjointly with the ‘voices’ and ‘expertise’ of those interviewed, even if they were not ‘active’ within a specific historical period, not only to enhance the sources of information and data collected but also to provide additional interpretations and perspectives to the events under discussion. I perceived this to be an

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<sup>14</sup> Stoical destiny/melancholic fate/type of popular Portuguese song

important aspect of this chapter, as the inclusion of these 'voices' further reinforced that "[f]acts and knowledge should not be confused. Facts by themselves are meaningless; knowledge is the process of constructing meaning involving the connecting and interpretation of certain facts from a particular perspective" (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.33).

According to Rosanvallon and Moyn, (2006):

““[u]nderstanding” ... in the field of history implies reconstructing the way actors made sense of their situations, rediscovering the affinities and the oppositions from which they planned their actions, [while] drawing the genealogies of possibility and impossibility that implicitly structured their horizon” (p.66).

Therefore, retracing past events from as wide a range of resources as possible (Acker, 2007). This reflects the complementarity/relationship between historical understandings and the emancipatory potential to engage in the 'meaning making' processes defended by the critical and social constructionist perspectives adopted in this research.

This chapter provides historical and political understandings, i.e. 'makes meaning', of the processes of Portuguese democratisation and the democratisation of its ECE system. This section explores in parallel the process of democratisation of both - society and ECE.

According to Magalhães (1997) ECE history in Portugal can be divided into three distinct phases: protect children (late 1800s), instruct them (early/mid 1900s) and educate them (post 1974). As Vilarinho (2011) states, the different political ideas which have been created from the late 1800s up until the present time, have not only revealed different conceptions of ECE, but also redefined its functions and forms of institutionalisation throughout history (Vilarinho, 2011). The democratisation of the system from the mid-1800s was a big part of this institutionalisation process and the democratic values (of equality of opportunities and equity) which started emerging then played a crucial role in the development of the ECE system as it is known today.

Overall, the different periods which resulted in Portuguese 'democratisation' were mirrored in the development of ECE through three

manifestations: first its inclusion in the education system as a level of education (first as an attempt to create the Republic (post 1910) and then officially after the Revolution of 1974); second, through the redefinition throughout the years of its value and function (being regarded as a state affair, a family affair, a health/care affair; a social affair and/or an education affair); and third through the extent of commitment/involvement versus disinvestment of the state in ECE (both in infrastructure and human resources, such as the creation/non creation of public kindergartens and provision/non provision of teacher's training).

While some specific allusions to a few influential policies during the different periods are made, it is important to point out that the main concern of this chapter is to outline the historical events which are most significant to address the research questions. The political and educational backgrounds which have influenced the historical development of ECE provide an understanding of how these have impacted on the current provision. As a result, the relevant policies, legal and governmental measures are referred to but not explored in depth during this historical background overview. Key policies and political discourses are further presented and analysed in chapter 5.

#### **4.1. Overview of the political, educational and historical milieu**

#### **4.2. Liberal Revolution 1820**

Also known as the Constitutional Revolution, the Liberal Revolution of 1820 represents the first step towards democracy. After centuries of absolutist rule by Kings and Queens which pulled the country in diverse directions (Christian Crusades, Maritime Expansion, Colonisation, Catholicism, Enlightenment...) and the first "virtual" dictator, Marquis of Pombal<sup>15</sup>,

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<sup>15</sup>Secretary of the State of the Kingdom of Portugal and the Algarves, currently equivalent to Prime Minister - in office from 1750 to 1777.



democratic ideas only became 'real' once they were ratified in the constitution. Although the first liberal and republican ideals were introduced from 1755 by Marquis of Pombal, influenced by the French Enlightenment (Chilcote, 2010, p.25), it was not until 1820 that democracy started to emerge as a 'national feature'.

The Liberal Revolution of 1820, as Rivero (2010) points out "can be seen as an independence process, as the abolition of the ancient regime, as the constitution of liberty, [and] as the foundation of a Portuguese Constitutional-liberal tradition" (p.1). In fact, this revolution was a response to the feeling of 'national humiliation' triggered by several events: The Napoleonic invasions (which left the country in ruins and in the hands of the British army), the royal family (that had abandoned the country and set up court in Brazil<sup>16</sup>), and the extreme clerical power of the time (Rivero, 2010).

When<sup>17</sup>on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1820, the garrison rose up in Oporto to issue a 'freedom manifesto' they set the precedents which shaped the first General Extraordinary and Constituent Assembly of the Portuguese Nation. From this moment on, Portugal became what Locke (cited in Pateman, 1989) defined as "an embryonic liberal democratic state" (p.91).

This revolution was the consequence of a combination of liberalism and nationalism and it resulted in the following: the creation of a new constitution with a representative government, the return of the royal family, the end of the inquisition and the independence of Brazil (Maxwell, 1995; Rivero, 2010).

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<sup>16</sup>The Royal family departed in 1807 after the Napoleonic invasions only returning to the country in 1821. In 1816 D João VI was crowned King of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves. This led to the general feeling of 'inversion of roles' - being ruled through a trans-Atlantic reign for 13 years, Portuguese people felt that they were losing their post as kingdom to be treated as a colony. (Rivero, 2010).

<sup>17</sup>After a failed military coup led by General Gomes Freire de Andrade in 1817.

### 4.2.1 Education and ECE

In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the Marquis of Pombal's education policy was one which saw it as the responsibility of the family to provide care and education for young children<sup>18</sup>. The only exception to this were orphans who were educated in charitable institutions (Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins in interview, 20/05/2013). As in most countries in the western world, it was only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards that the conception of 'child' and 'early childhood' started emerging in Portugal (Folque, 2008; Vilarinho, 2004). In response to the progressive industrialisation, the growth of female labour, and the existence of disadvantaged groups (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997) ECE organisations which emerged in the mid and late 1800s focussed on assistance/care and were aimed at destitute children. The emergence of these represented the beginning of private and charitable initiatives, both with a strong welfare orientation. It is believed that the first institutions specifically for children up to 6 years old were created in 1834. These were mainly located in the 'metropolises' (such as Lisbon and Oporto) and aimed to assist children from disadvantaged social backgrounds. These institutions came to be recognised as critical in the social development of childhood and care in Portugal and some are still operational today (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

In 1834, D. Pedro IV<sup>19</sup>, founded the "society of the asylum homes of the destitute children" (*Sociedade das Casas de Asilo da Infância Desvalida*). These care institutions received children from when they started weaning, up to 7-year-old boys and 9-year-old girls. They were created with the goal of protecting, educating and instructing poor children and to enable parents and families to carry on their 'day-to-day' life, i.e. to enable parents to sustain the family through work without leaving the children unattended (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997; Vilarinho, 2011).

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<sup>18</sup>During this period, the concerns with regards to young children's education referred to Primary education as at this point in time there was no mention of ECE.

<sup>19</sup>D. Pedro IV of Portugal, I of Brazil, although briefly reigning in Portugal has had a great influence in the Portuguese history. Nicknamed "the liberator", he was the first king devoted to fight for religious and civic freedoms (Armitage, 1836).

According to Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins in his interview (20/05/2013), there was an extensive debate about the nature of the pedagogy which should be used (notably since the 'Romantics'). However, this had limited impact. The pedagogical knowledge and willingness was insufficient to promote the effectiveness of education due to the lack of resources and several 'disruptions' which occurred. For example, the extinction of religious orders in 1834 led to a reduction of schooling, and it was necessary to begin a new network of primary schools. These schools were partly financed by a private legacy, that of Earl Ferreira<sup>20</sup> (Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins in an interview).

Another crucial moment for the development of ECE during this period was in 1879 when the MP Rodrigo de Freitas mentioned the name of Fröbel<sup>21</sup> in parliament for the first time. This intervention called the government's attention to the importance of this level of education. As a consequence of this, ECE was included in the state's budget for local authorities in order to support the creation of kindergartens from the 1880s onwards (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

It is thought that the first kindergarten was opened in Lisbon in 1882 on the commemoration of the centenary of Fröbel's birthday. In addition, some legislation considering the goals of pre-school education and the training of ECE teachers was enacted. All areas of child development including social development were incorporated in legislation (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

This period represents the beginning of the development of ECE with social and educational functions in Portugal.

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<sup>20</sup> Earl (*Conde*) Ferreira was a Portuguese commercial entrepreneur and philanthropist, and one of the greatest drivers of public education at the time. The network of primary and elementary schools only developed with the so-called plan of centenarians in the year of 1940 (Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins in interview, 20/05/2013).

<sup>21</sup> ECE pedagogue concerned with childhood studies and founder of the kindergarten concept of schooling.

### 4.3. Implementation of the Republic 1910 – 1926

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was an important historical moment in Portuguese politics. As a result of the events following the liberal revolution (which led to the fragile state of the monarchy, the public discontentment towards its costs, the subjugation of the country to British colonial interests<sup>22</sup>, the political and social instability resulting from João Franco's dictatorship<sup>23</sup> and the failure of the progressive modernisation of the country), a revolt led by the Portuguese Republican Party emerged in 1910 which deposed the constitutional monarchy and established a republican regime in Portugal.

With the liberal revolution a movement of free-thinkers, nonconformists, politicians and students (inspired by the French third Republic) emerged. This group of intellectuals defended Portuguese modernisation which included the development of political and economic democracy, secularisation of the state and education and universal male suffrage (Wheeler, 1978). With the 'Lisbon Regicide', which killed the King, D. Carlos I, and his eldest son, D. Luís Filipe, in 1908, the 'erosion' of the Portuguese monarchy was consummated and the path for the republican regime was opened.

However, despite the Republican Party being presented as the only option for the country to return to its former stature it did not enjoy popular consensus because although the separation of the state and church pleased the urban population (i.e. individuals from higher social classes), it angered those living in the rural areas<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, political instability

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<sup>22</sup> 1890 British Ultimatum - forced the retreat of Portuguese military forces in the land between the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola which had been claimed by Portugal, against the British will to link their colonies from the north of Africa to the very south (Nowell, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> Although the first representative government was established after the 1820 Liberal Revolution, a new slightly inhibited dictatorial approach was adopted through this new 'representative regime' when João Franco became the President of the Council of Ministers in 1906.

<sup>24</sup> Due to historical reasons Portuguese social classes have been demarcated between rural and urban 'conceptions of population'. Usually rural refers to population from lower social backgrounds with a major attachment to religion and a traditionalistic approach in, to and through society. While urban is normally a term linked to the population that lives in the city and tends to imply a stronger connection with modernisation and liberalism.

was inevitable. Indeed, as soon as the Republic was proclaimed in 1910, policies reflecting republican ideals were promoted but never implemented. Over the next sixteen years, from 1910 to 1926, Portugal experienced forty-six governments, which all influenced ECE in different ways. Portugal was, during this period, the most unstable regime in Western Europe (Igreja, 2004).

#### **4.3.1. Education and ECE**

With the creation of the Republic there was an urgent need to broaden its social scope and support as education for all, especially young children, became crucial for the new regime's survival. The goal was to nurture future generations according to republican principles. The only way to achieve this was through the development of an education system which reflected their ideals. The progress of the country depended on the education of its citizens, and a new strategy or way to understand the role of the school was necessary to enable an educational reform which would impact society as a whole (Igreja, 2004; Rodrigues, 2004). In other words, an approach which considered the need for a comprehensive attitude towards schooling connecting pedagogical, financial and administrative aspects of education within its social environment was critical (Rodrigues, 2004).

As a consequence, Citizenship Education, for instance, assumed an early role in this new educational approach, with the intent of educating "citizens for the life in democracy" (Igreja, 2004, p.122). The main objective of the introduction of citizenship education in the primary education curriculum was to promote the political and cultural socialisation of citizens who were loyal to the values and principles of republicanism. It was the schools' duty to educate citizens who were ready to consciously participate in the electoral process through exercising their right to vote. Also, according to Rodrigues (2004) republicans believed in the positive reform of the institutions and society, through the education of citizens. This represented not only the 'turn' to an ideal of citizenship, but also the conditions needed to support the Republican principles. Hence, the most fundamental

objective of the school, according to the republicans, was to 'create good republicans', in other words, 'good citizens'.

Portuguese pedagogue João de Barros (in Rodrigues, 2004, p.65) also stated that during this period it was believed that, rather than being educated, children needed to be integrated into the 'republican homeland'. This integration should occur via education for social morality and via civic education, both of which should be introduced gradually through the experiences provided to pupils as opposed to a theoretical/didactic approach. The Republican plan to establish a public school system corresponded to the belief that it was the state's responsibility to grant the 'instruction' of its citizens. Therefore, through public education reforms the belief was that the 'nation state' could be renewed and redefined.

In addition, in 1910, approximately 75% of the Portuguese population was 'illiterate'<sup>25</sup>. Thus, the eradication of illiteracy was one of the main goals of the Republican Party. It was believed that illiteracy promoted the lack of "conscious citizens and the lack of professional instruction" (Rodrigues, 2004, p.65). On the whole, illiteracy prevented "the formation of men useful to themselves and to society" (ibid). If the creation of new pedagogical points of view instinctively corresponds to the ideals of every new society, then it would be legitimate to assume that by 1910 the Portuguese society's aspiration was to have *access* to education. As such, a 'truly republican education' should be provided by the State to fight the high levels of illiteracy which in turn would result in brand new citizens.

According to Rodrigues (2004), during this period, "[t]he Republican leaders regard[ed] the school as an important instrument for political prestige" (p.65) essential in order to assert their 'power' and 'legitimacy' within the population. This new attitude was articulated by the law of 29 March 1911 which sought to reform 'Primary and Normal' education. In this decree's

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<sup>25</sup>For translation purposes the term 'illiteracy' is used. In Portugal, however, literacy tends to have more of a cumbersome meaning from that of 'analphabeticism' which is the one intended in this context. Analphabeticism in the Portuguese context is many times perceived as an individual's inability to read or write, while illiteracy refers to the inability to understand and interpret the meanings of what is read or written. Currently in the Portuguese context people who can read and write can still be considered illiterate.

preface “the school is seen as a workshop to ‘manufacture’ citizens” (Rodrigues, 2004, p.65) and the teachers as the “great mentors of the new generation” (ibid). Consequently, new provisions for basic schooling for adults and children were presented as a major objective and as a result, between 1911 and 1919, there were many laws and policies passed regarding education. However, due to the political instability mentioned above most of these policies did not see the light of implementation but remained purely intentional in documents (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997; Vilarinho, 2011). Despite this, during this period, ECE emerged as an important social and pedagogical concern/question. In 1911 the state officially and legally recognised the existence of ECE as a level of education. This legislation declared that ECE was for all children between 4 and 7 years of age. ECE was deemed critical to foment children’s physical, intellectual and moral development in preparation for school (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

In 1912 Portuguese pedagogue César Silva (cited in Rodrigues, 2004, p.65) reinforced the view that it was the republican mission to create a “new man” through education. Silva believed that it was urgent to ‘create citizens’ from the new generations. According to him early childhood education would be the “laboratory” and primary school would be crucial, as it was *in*, and *through*, these levels of education that “the true republican soul would be formed” (ibid). Consequently, the education of young children became the means to break the links with the past, particularly with the monarchy and religious influences, especially of the Jesuits, which dominated education until then (Rodrigues, 2004). The belief was that through early years and primary education the future of Portugal, as a Republican libertarian and patriotic nation, would most likely be guaranteed.

Despite the lack of practical application of most of the policies in this period, the recognition of ECE was crucial for its integration in the educational system. It was also critical because it paved the way for the emergence of pedagogical movements, inspired by the ideas of Rousseau, Fröbel and Pestalozzi (Walsh et al 2010) which contributed to the clarification of the

nature of the children and their education, especially in the role of ECE within Portuguese society (Vilarinho, 2011).

#### **4.4. Second Republic – Military Dictatorship 1926 – 1932**

According to Rodrigues (2004), the representative liberalism emergent from the previous events of 1820 and 1910, rather than generating democracy “artificially created oligarchies” (p.84). These oligarchies were not only unable to take the country to fulfil its aspirations, but also failed to “restore the public order and tranquillity” (ibid). The political feuds and government inadequacies along with the instability of forty-six governments in sixteen years led to a military coup in 1926 designed to create ‘forceful stability’. The political turmoil alongside the inability to continue the pursuit of republican ideals and fervour, led to the end of the first liberal and democratic experience (Igreja, 2004). In Maxwell’s words “...by 1926 Portugal’s military leaders decided that the republican experiment should be replaced by a dictatorship” (Maxwell, 1995, p.16). The unstable political situation was no longer acceptable and the discontent at the lack of efficiency of the First Republic was growing, provoking questions as to whether the end of monarchy had been *de facto* the best option. The 27 June 1926 military coup led by General Gomes da Costa represented the start of what would be nearly half a century of authoritarian rule (Harvey, 1978, p.10). Interestingly, this form of dictatorship was, years after, considered by some, such as President Dwight D. Eisenhower as “necessary in countries whose political institutions are not so far advanced” as others (cited in Maxwell, 1995, p.7).

Between 1926 and 1928 the great political instability continued and was marked by a succession of protests and revolts against the absence of a democratic republic (which was removed by the coup). During these protests, the government started to apply repressive measures which suppressed fundamental rights and freedoms. This period sees the start of censorship of the press, political arrests and deportations to the Portuguese islands (such as Terceira in Azores) and colonies (such as Guinea-Bissau,



São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor). Also, due to the “chronic deficit” (Igreja, 2004, p.137) of the state’s financial accounts, Salazar, a University Professor of Economic Politics, was invited to join the new government as Finance Minister in 1928. He accepted the position on the condition that he could supervise the budget and accounts of all ministries. He also requested (and was granted) the right of veto of all the proposals to increase any expenditure within all states’ accounts (De Meneses, 2009). In his acceptance speech, on 27 April 1928, Salazar made his intentions clear:

"In vain would it be to expect miraculously, by magic wand effect, changes in the circumstances of Portuguese life. Little even would be achieved if the country would not be willing to all the necessary sacrifices and to accompany me with confidence in my intelligence and in my honesty - absolute confidence, but serene, calm, without exaggerated enthusiasms nor depressive discouragements. I will elucidate ‘him’ on the way forward on the reasons and the significance of anything that is not clear to ‘himself’; ‘He’ will always have at ‘his’ disposal all the elements necessary to the judgment of the situation.

*I know very well what I want and where I am going, but do not demand me to come to an end in a few months. In all, let the country study, represent, complain, argue, but obey when it comes the time to command.*

The action of the Ministry of Finances will be in these early days almost exclusively administrative and should not provide broad cooperation with the Government’s Diary. Do not presume however, that to be silent is the same as being inactive."

(Salazar Speech - excerpt cited in Matos, 2003, my emphasis)

From this speech it can be seen, as stated by Portuguese politician Cunha Leal<sup>26</sup> (cited in Matos, 2003) that in the period “[b]etween Salazar [as] Finance Minister and Salazar [as] Head of Government, [Portugal] lived a period of democracy amid “dictatorial parenthesis”” (p.106). Freire (1970) argued that:

“Within certain historical conditions, manipulation is accomplished by means of pacts between the dominant and the dominated classes – pacts which, if considered superficially, might give the impression of

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<sup>26</sup> President of the Ministry of Portugal from December 1921 to February 1922. Equivalent to Head of Government today.

a dialogue between the classes. In reality, however, these pacts are not dialogue, because their true objectives are determined by the unequivocal interest of the dominant elites." (p.128)

In other words, although dictatorship was not declared, it was slowly emerging. Salazar's time to command the country had arrived and the people were asked to obey.

The importance of the 1926 coup has been generally overlooked by historians. As Maxwell (1995) explains, perhaps because of Portugal's "peculiar historical trajectory, historians have given more attention to outcomes than to initiations" (p.3). Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that the so called 'National Dictatorship' ended the liberal parliamentary system and accorded power to the army. It also marked the start of profound changes in Portuguese society. This new regime also granted power to one of the most important characters in Portuguese modern history - the next most powerful man after Pombal – António Oliveira Salazar (Maxwell, 1995, p.16).

The extent of Salazar's 'power' is illustrated by his speech in May 28, 1930 (four years after the establishment of the dictatorship) when he addressed government officials and army officers in the 'Navy Arsenal Risk Room'. Everything about this event was contradictory and ironic, as is arguably most of Portuguese history. Before Salazar's speech the troops marched from the "Republic" to the "Freedom" Avenues<sup>27</sup>. A symbolic irony as the path to be followed by the country in the future did not envisage either 'republic' or 'freedom'. In his speech Salazar made a conscious decision to emphasise his influence and succession strategy. He affirmed that "Dictatorship should solve the Portuguese political problem" (Salazar in Matos, 2003, p.135). The emotions conveyed in his speech, and his evocative assertions that he was a man of the populace who had come and worked his way from the 'bottom-up' and who knew and understood the hardships of the people, made him a figure hard to be ignored. Despite the four years of dictatorship established by the government in 1926, it was the two years (from 1928 to 1930) of Salazar's 'financial dictatorship', that

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<sup>27</sup> Names of two Avenues in Lisbon.

marked the beginning and the strengthening of the authoritarian political regime. In fact, Salazar ascended to power in 1932, almost naturally, as 'the man who puts the country 'in order' and makes 'order' his word, the one who says that it is also through the transformation of national education that it is possible to change what is wrong in the country' (Matos, 2003).

#### **4.4.1. Education and ECE**

Due to the 'new wave of instability' during the first years of the Second Republic (1926-1932), this new dictatorial regime was initially characterised by hesitation on what position they took regarding the educational system they wished to implement (Igreja, 2004). As Freire (1970) comments "...it would indeed be naïve to expect the oppressor elites to carry out a liberating education" (p.118). The only certainty of the new government was a desire to dismantle the educational system set up by the previous republican regime. As a consequence, this period was not particularly significant in terms of educational developments at any level of education (Igreja, 2004). However, it is in this period that political indoctrination and ideological controls started being introduced in education through the curriculum as the means to preserve the religious and traditional values of the Portuguese culture and society.

It was with a spirit of 'renewal' that the Minister of Instruction<sup>28</sup> (1926-1928), Alfredo Magalhães, created a law (decree no. 16077 of October 26, 1928) to change the primary school curriculum (Rodrigues, 2004, p.85). From the 1928/1929 academic year onwards, primary education needed to give emphasis to the teaching of the foundational disciplines of 'every education', i.e. emphasis needed to be given to Portuguese language ("key for all knowledge" (ibid)); to History, especially history of the Patria (concept used by Salazar to refer to the country and its colonies which represent a high level of nationalism); and to Moral and Civic Education - Moral ("science which guides the Man in the practice of their duty" (Rodrigues, 2004, p.85); - Civic ("moral component which prepares the citizen to comply with his

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<sup>28</sup> As denominated at the time. Currently equivalent to Education Minister.

duties towards the Patria” (ibid)). This decree also made reference to the pedagogical role of the teacher who should advise and demonstrate good actions and comply with academic responsibilities (Rodrigues, 2004). This law demonstrated the desire of the Ministry of Instruction to use education to indoctrinate pupils in the new values (family, religion and nationalism) of the dictatorial regime.

Regarding ECE in particular, the military dictatorship initiated both constructive and detrimental developments. On a positive note, during the first years of the Second Republic (1926–1937) twelve new official (public) kindergartens were created. Also there was an emerging awareness of pedagogies and pedagogical practices applied to ECE. Ideas from Montessori, Décroly and Dewey were incorporated in a proposal for a new programme of ECE. This proposal was developed by the pedagogue Irene Lisboa, who was inspired by the European Movement of the New School<sup>29</sup> and by “the best of the Portuguese culture of the time” (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997, p.10). Later on, in the second period of the Second Republic (described below), due to the resistance to new ideas, Irene Lisboa was forced by the government to retire from teaching in order to avoid Salazar’s censorship and repression (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997, p.10).

One adverse effect was that with the repression of the republican ideals and the preoccupation with the creation of a stable government, there was a regressive shift in priorities which affected education and the development of ECE in particular. Generally speaking, the military dictatorship gradually dismissed and minimised the role of ECE and removed it as a priority. Eventually, towards the second period of the Second Republic, ECE began to be actively suppressed and was subsequently forgotten.

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<sup>29</sup> A movement that developed through Pestalozzi’s ideas which has influenced ECE pedagogy. For the first time the child was seen as a social actor; active agent of its own socio construction of knowledge (Boyd & Rawson, 1965).

#### **4.5. Second Republic – New State (*Estado Novo*) 1933 – 1974**

In 1928, António Oliveira Salazar joined the government as finance minister. The improvement of state accounts, especially after the great recession of 1929, contributed to the growing confidence of the military in Salazar's competency. The financial policies adopted by Salazar were so successful that he was considered by a great proportion of the people as the 'saviour of the nation'. For the first time in fifteen years the country's accounts had a surplus and the great management of the Portuguese finances across all ministries was recognised and marked Salazar's ascension to power (Igreja, 2004). By providing order and a balanced budget Salazar managed to obtain control in 1932 as president of the Council of Ministers<sup>30</sup> (Maxwell, 1995; Harvey, 1978).

During his rule, Salazar stated that he 'knew what the country needed', created his own party - named the National Union<sup>31</sup>, and 'rearranged' the Portuguese Constitution (Harvey, 1978, p.10-11). In 1933 a new era started with the approval of his new Constitution. According to Maxwell (1995) a new "corporate" regime with fascist influences, characterised as a catholic authoritarian regime was introduced. There was a clear aversion to change, which set Portugal "against the twentieth century" (Maxwell, 1995, p.17). Industrialisation was discouraged and Salazar was skilled enough to play off "the great powers against each other" (ibid). Another contribution to Salazar's popularity was the World War II as he was considered "the man who has kept Portugal out of the fires of war" (Direcção Geral do Espectaculo - video archive (n.d.) [online]).

With the implementation of the New state regime, Portugal faced a different path from the one envisaged by the Republican Party during the First Republic. The ideals from the creation of the republic were lost and the country started moving in the opposite direction. This regime was the representation of a "strong state, centralised, bureaucratic and authoritarian" (Igreja, 2004, p.145). Its authoritarianism was derived from a

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<sup>30</sup>Currently denominated as Prime Minister.

<sup>31</sup>The 'National Union', created the artificial image of 'national cohesion' acting as direct support (umbrella) for all actions of this regime (Harvey, 1978).

combination of colonial imperialism and conservative Catholicism (with the Church's support) resulting in a rejection of democratic liberalism and tendency towards socio-economic interventionism (Igreja, 2004, p.141) with Salazar at the centre to guarantee the coordination of all sectors and to shape the "national character". In one of his speeches Salazar explained to the nation how "being Portuguese meant to be Portugal":

"...some are unable to see that we work to uphold the identity of the collective being thus reinforcing our national character. This is what we do. Those attributes which were revealed and crystallised, and which make us ourselves and not others; that sweetness of temper; that modesty, that humanity, which is so rare in today's world; that measure of spirituality which, despite all forces against it, still inspires the Portuguese way of life; the spirit of endurance; the unassuming heroism; the adaptability and the capacity to imprint our way of being on the outside world; the regard for moral values; the faith in the law, in justice, in the equality; between men and between peoples; all of the above, unprofitable as they may be as principles, constitute nonetheless the mainstay of our national character."

(Direcção Geral do Espectaculo - video archive (n.d.), [online])

It is curious to see how, in the same speech, Salazar presents 'the spirit of endurance' and the 'faith in justice and equality' as national characteristics of the Portuguese citizen. Dimensions, which arguably might not be considered as contradictory, nevertheless, can be said to have 'characteristics' with very different meanings when referred to in either a democratic context or during a dictatorship. These strong collective 'values' were progressively engrained in the individual as they sought to create the new Portuguese citizen. The focus was on creating an imagined 'past' with little reference to a modernist future (progress) or economic growth. This is very similar to the national identities and relationships between education and economy established in East-Asian 'developmental states' (Maca and Morris, 2012).

#### **4.5.1. Education and ECE**

Across all levels of education, the educational policy adopted by the New State Regime very much focused on what Igreja (2004) describes as:

- a) “creating a segregated educational system, which relied on selecting students for access to schools;
- b) on the reduction and shaping of the curricula of selected subjects (such as citizenship education);
- c) the marginalisation of the teacher profession;
- d) the reduction of investment in teaching training;
- e) maintaining a disciplinary mechanism that controlled both teachers and students;
- f) the centralisation of the administrative system, with staff selection made by the state (such as the selection of University directors, school principals and head teachers)” (p.146).

The public ideology of the New State regime was defined by its three ruling principles of ‘God, Patria (nation), and Family’. By having God, in other words ‘religion’ (Catholicism), Patria, in other words ‘Portugal and its former colonies’, and Family, in other words ‘familialism’<sup>32</sup> (Esping-Andersen, 1999) - as the key features/values of the state, it is no surprise these were reflected in the education system. The introduction of these three principles was popularly known as the “education of Salazar”. The school became a system for political indoctrination and ideological control which preserved the values of Catholicism and the ‘traditional structures’ of Portuguese society (Rodrigues, 2004). This new nationalistic educational approach profoundly impacted the development of culture in Portugal and helps to explain the conservative approach to change and progress. The aim of the educational system was to promote and inculcate the values of this regime. Igreja (2004) argues that the school became a means to create a society based on the ideological principles of: obedience, hierarchy, devotion to the nation, devotion to Christianity, and corporatist organisation<sup>33</sup>. During this period the school’s function was not to develop the children’s skills, knowledge and competencies, it was instead to develop, on each individual, a nationalistic feeling, which would enable the state to dominate the same (Igreja, 2004, p.147).

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<sup>32</sup> A welfare system where the family is presumed to take responsibility for the welfare of its members (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

<sup>33</sup>Although presented as an ideology of this regime, “Politically speaking, corporatism was to have little impact, since its organisations were never able to speak for the ‘nation’” (De Meneses, 2009, p.89)

In 1937, using the 1929 recession as a justification, Salazar's government promulgated a law that extinguished the provision of all official (State) kindergartens. This represented the end of the 1% coverage provided by the government and saw the creation of the OMEN - Mothers' Work for National Education (*Obra das Mães para a Educação Nacional*). ECE was defined as one of the priorities of the family and it was the responsibility of mothers to ensure the education of their children. Thereafter the Ministry of Education's responsibility for ECE became reduced, arguably due to the country's poor economic status. From this moment on the Ministry of Education made its position clear and the public provision for expansion of the ECE system could not be supported by the state (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997, Vilarinho, 2011).

During the New State regime ECE gained a new social dimension, particularly from 1933-1960 when there was a clear redefinition of purpose and policies (Vilarinho, 2011). With the primary intention of reducing child mortality rates ECE started (in a very small scale) being managed by the Ministry of Social Providences and Cooperation and the Ministry of Assistance and Help. In the 1950s the Ministry of Education was primarily concerned with primary education dismissing any direct involvement with ECE. This in turn, contributed to the development of private initiatives and to the consolidation of the role of the IPSS (Particular Institutions of Social Solidarity) as part of the ECE system. Namely, the great contribution from the *Santa Casa da Misericórdia* (Holy House of Mercy - IPSS) to provide the support for young children's protection and education during this period (ibid). ECE was again associated with the care of poor and destitute children.

By this time, the only publicly supported official kindergartens were provided by the Ministry of Interior (through the social assistance sub-office) to secure assistance for children at risk and from disadvantaged backgrounds. Consequently, up until 1966, Portuguese early childhood organisations had predominantly a care component, i.e. were not directly focussed on educational purposes. The staff were not qualified and the concern was solely the care for the basic needs of the children (Vilarinho, 2004)



Salazar left government in 1968 due to illness. The dictatorial regime continued with Marcello Caetano as the successor of Salazar until 1974. Only after Salazar's death, in 1970, ECE was reintegrated into the educational system by Veiga Simão<sup>34</sup>, then Minister of Education. Simão started a new educational reform from 1971 which included the public expansion of ECE coverage and the training of ECE teachers. By 1973 two ECE teacher training schools were opened and ECE was reorganised as an integrated part of the official education system. This period was also marked by the acknowledgement from the government that the majority of the ECE organisations did not have the necessary qualified staff, which increased the recognition of the need to change this. Nevertheless, the implementation of this reform was interrupted by the revolution of 1974 (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997; Vilarinho, 2011). Simão's educational reform is further explored in chapter 5.

Another great influence on the development of democracy and democratic ideas in the ECE system, which affected its development after 1974, were the different 'underground' teacher training networks such as MEM - *Movimento da Escola Moderna* (Modern School Movement), which operated clandestinely from the early 1960s (Folque, 2008). MEM is an educational approach inspired by the ideas of the pedagogue Celestin Freinet and the socio-constructivists Jerome Bruner and Lev Vygotsky. "For the MEM practitioners, school defines itself as a space for the initiation of practices of cooperation and solidarity within a democratic life" (Niza, 2012a, p.192-193). The work this movement developed throughout the years, especially in establishing principles of cooperation, socio-cultural integration and initiation to democratic practices, have influenced some of the current forms of ECE in Portugal.

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<sup>34</sup> University Professor, director of the University of Mozambique from 1962 - 1970 when he was invited by Caetano to join the Portuguese Government as 'Minister of National Education' until the revolution in 1974.

#### 4.6. Third Republic – Red Carnation Revolution 1974

After Salazar's death in 1970, his successor, Marcello Caetano moved away from Salazar's focus on a past tradition and decided to "promote the economic modernisation of Portugal, but in combination with extreme political caution... In a country where institutions had been created to resist capitalism as much as liberalism" (Maxwell, 1995, p.22) this was not realistic or likely to happen. Salazar's death was received by a peculiar state of apathy. Following his death, the poet Miguel Torga (cited in Saraiva, 1974, p.80-81) wrote:

"Salazar died... The work of national domestication was realised long ago by a domineering tenacity that used only the negative qualities of the Portuguese, and had no other wisdom of the time than the lesson of the routine sanctioned in the codes of the past. The hunger for adventure, the restlessness of freedom, the breath of hope, pride, honour, joy and courage - all out systematically and ruthlessly deleted in remembrance of the flock. Hence there are not any signs of grounded sadness envisaged, and even less of redeeming euphoria. The whole nation passed without any jolt, from breathing monotonously with the dictator, to breathe monotonously without him".

Considering the level of passivity, and the deferential attitude to the state which had been progressively engrained in Portuguese culture and society, it is no surprise to observe that "the regime proved incapable or unwilling to reform itself fundamentally even after 1968, when Caetano replaced Salazar" (Fishman, 1990, p.427).

However, even though this was arguably a stagnant regime, without support from the population, rather than the people taking action "the impetus for change emerged instead from within the armed forces" (ibid). The colonial war (which led the country to economic ruin), in conjunction with the high rates of emigration (young men and their families) to escape the war, and the general feeling that the ideology of freedom from the colonies "was scarcely more profound than the Portuguese colonial logic" (Harvey, 1978, p.4), led the army (inspired by Marxist ideals) to plan a revolt against the government. After two coups, an unsuccessful one followed by a successful counter coup, on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1974 a dramatic event that was meant to transform the Portuguese society occurred. A coup d'état by the *Movimento*

*das Forças Armadas* (MFA) - Portuguese Armed Forces Movement<sup>35</sup> - marked the beginning of a new political era, which ended dictatorship and founded the emergence of democracy.

However, even though Harvey claims that “[w]hat started as a coup became a revolution which was stopped by a reaction before it became anarchy” (Harvey, 1978, p.2), it seems that unlike neighbouring Spain, for instance, “the military in Portugal helped initiate leftist popular mobilisations and quickly lost the cohesion and discipline necessary to serve as an effective and predictable instrument of state coercion” (Fishman, 1990, p.431). The country, for a short and euphoric period of time 1974-1975, became an anarchy. The 1974 revolution in Portugal can be recognised as an evolution. It represents a military coup that ended the dictatorial regime. There was no mass uprising until afterwards (1975-1976) and the demise of the military dictatorship had its roots primarily in the inadequacy of the colonial war.

Consequently, during the course of the ‘revolution’ major areas of political freedom (such as freedom of expression, the right to strike, the right of assembly... (see Beetham, 1999) were “debated, discussed, wrangled over and eventually established” (Harvey, 1978, p.2). Fundamental rights and freedoms were restored and “[t]he liberation of Portugal from dictatorship, oppression and colonialism represented a revolutionary change and an historic new beginning in Portuguese society” (The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Preamble). Similar to what happened in France after the French revolution, the emergence of Portuguese democracy seems to be marked by an understanding that democracy represents not only a political model but also a social form. “Democracy as a social formula... implying a system beyond which there is nothing else to demand – the system... that would bring to an end all contestations and all quarrels” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.143). With this ‘revolution’, nearly half a century of subjugation from oppressive regimes ended, and the country moved to a new political order with the emergence of democracy at its

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<sup>35</sup> Group of officers in the Portuguese Armed Forces (mainly lower-ranked) with left-wing political views, responsible for the 1974 revolution.

centre. As democracy emerged out of the conditions of the revolution, it rapidly became a national ideology which unified diverse groups. As a national feature, democracy started being included by the state in the documentation relating to all public policies and institutions. Exactly one year after the 'revolution', the first elections by universal suffrage for the first newly democratic constitutional government saw the highest voter turnout in Portuguese history (RTP Archive (n.d.), [online]). On the 25th April 1975, 91.6% of the Portuguese population went to the ballot to appoint a one-year government (CNE - Comissão Nacional de Eleições, (n.d.), [online]). The main objective of the election was to appoint an Assembly to write a new Constitution to replace the *New State Regime*. As soon as the Constitution was created the government was dissolved and new elections took place on 25th April 1976.

The Constitution, as stated in its preamble, was drawn up in 1976 by the "people's legitimate representatives" in order to meet "the country's aspirations" (1976 Constitution Preamble). This Constitution

"affirms the Portuguese people's decision to defend their national independence, safeguard the fundamental rights of citizens, establish the basic principles of democracy, secure the primacy of the rule of law in a democratic state, and open the way to socialist society, respecting the will of the Portuguese people and keeping in view the building of a freer, more just, and more fraternal country"

(The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Preamble)

Also as further elaborated in chapter 5, according to the Constitution (1976) the education system became the means to guarantee the democratisation of society, the state was the 'instructor' and the society its teacher.

#### **4.6.1. Education and ECE**

Huntington (1991) opined that "[t]he death of the dictatorship did not ensure the birth of democracy. It did, however unleash a huge array of popular, social and political forces that had been effectively suppressed during the dictatorship" (p.4). With the 'revolution', popular movements started emerging and while the military forces were trying to organise a new government, masses of people were trying to reorganise their lives through

this new ideology - democracy. The transitioning period “was characterised not only by a purge of state institutions, but also by dramatic political conflicts and revolutionary mobilisations (including the seizing of much property)” (Fishman, 1990, p.439).

There was a period of ‘participatory euphoria’, ‘direct democracy’ and ‘citizenship in action’, which led to the creation of new kindergartens. Due to popular demand<sup>36</sup> and in the name of the modern fundamental rights, groups of people started occupying empty houses and palaces to create kindergartens (these social movements emerged as relevant in the research and are returned to in chapter 5).

As Teresa Vasconcelos explained:

"in the post April 25 there was a whole movement which was parallel to the legislation... a movement that can only be explained because at the time there was a revolutionary process linked to the occupation of houses and vacant mansions, which the population took to create nurseries and kindergartens. Thus [the development of ECE during the revolution] was linked to these popular movements both in rural and urban areas. And from that point the Ministry of Education was required to have a team which would support these initiatives". (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

If democracy meant freedom and equality, then the ‘popular initiative’ believed that it had the right to take action. While still trying to put a new government in place, the state was forced to act upon popular initiatives.

Similarly, Maria Emilia Vilarinho stated:

"There is a whole construction which is very marked by the (...) April revolution and that whole movement that Professor Steve [Stephen Stoer] called the "popular movement". It is the foundational popular movement, early childhood education is placed on the political agenda, more through the hands of the people in the local associations in the first phase, than by politicians, because there is an absolute necessity to give response to social problems of the time<sup>37</sup>... in this period, the concept of participatory democracy is much more present than what then happens over the years. (...) this

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<sup>36</sup> 1960-1973 – female work rates have exponentially increased during the late years of the dictatorship, due to the absence of men in the country, due to colonial war and emigration; this in turn stimulated the growth of ECE private and charitable institutions (Vasconcelos, 2000; Vilarinho, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> including the fact that women, in the late 60s, early 70s, start entering with strength into the job market and as such the emergence for childcare needs (Vilarinho in interview, 24/05/2013)

relationship with early childhood education, also begins here, in a search for associations of base, organisations of various kinds - so essentially this movement happens... in metropolitan areas, especially within the large urban centres where this need to effectively have someone, an institution that cared for/sheltered children, arises... so the idea, from the parents' side, from the adults, the idea is actually... a participatory democracy in the sense of reclaiming the entitlement right to institutions for supporting children. And this dimension of democracy in the educators' work is also very marked at that time." (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013)

This movement not only affected services in terms of their provision and organisational structure, but also influenced the perception of the purpose of ECE and the role of professionals as well as emphasising 'participation' as the most powerful form of democracy.

As a direct response to the democratic popular projects, in 1979 the government created the 'Kindergarten statutes'. These acknowledged ECE as a fundamental level of education valuing the development of children as crucial to contribute to and develop an economically, culturally and civically sustainable society (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

The popular movement which followed the revolution was a period of nostalgia for some of the interviewees who recollected this period. Isabel Lopes da Silva said that during this period:

"In Early Childhood Education democracy was reflected mainly at the organisational level. There were thousands, (I don't know exactly because I think that this history of popular initiatives to assemble nurseries, kindergartens is not made). There were thousands of grassroots initiatives throughout the country, committees of residents, of parents' associations, so it was a great explosion of popular democracy in early childhood education in the post April 25. [Explosion] which ends quickly in 76, with the statute<sup>38</sup>, because in 76 this revolutionary democracy of the early days of the revolution, and that enthusiasm from 76, are, say, the State takes over." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2015)

As illustrated in the interviews, immediately after the 'revolution' ECE developed more as a result of popular democratic participation and less through laws and decrees. It was citizenship in action that gave power to the people who demanded the provision of ECE from the state and reflected

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<sup>38</sup> Law 5/77 published in 1977

a model of policy which started at the micro level (schools) and made its way to the top, to the macro level (State). It moved from the people to the ministries (Vasconcelos in interview, 04/01/2012). Also apart from these public initiatives, as in many other countries, ECE organisations of both a private and public nature started expanding due to the new engagement of women in the economy (Moss, 1992).

However, this participatory approach had a short life, as mentioned in the various interviews, and it only lasted a couple of years after the democratic popular movements emerged. The “State took over”. The coordination effort from the government in order to respond to the different needs after 1974 resulted in the separation of services between two different ministries - Ministry of Social Security and Labour for children 0-3 years old and Ministry of Education for children from 3-6 years old. This marked the beginning of a new understanding of ECE where social well-being and education started being considered as two different dimensions. Additionally, by releasing women to the job market and preparing children as future social ‘entrepreneurs’, ECE also became a vehicle for supporting the economic prosperity for this new ‘democratic’ society.

#### **4.7. Today**

In Portugal democracy has arguably been reduced to the establishment and maintenance of certain rights and freedoms which focus on the citizens right to participate. For instance, as explored in chapter 6, educators feel that at the level of decision making, even if their opinions are not taken into consideration, it does not really matter, because importance is given to the act of giving an opinion rather than the outcome of such an opinion. In Portugal there is a popular expression which states that "it is the intention that counts" and it seems that these acts of subservience have not disappeared from the time Salazar was preaching for 'people with docile character'. Consequently, one can assume that there is a combination between what has been left from the past and what was introduced with the revolution. For instance, the integration of the country into the EU and being

dependent on international monetary flows and policies/decisions set by others, brought to Portugal another type of retrenchment, but the same level of subservience. One educator said: "with how things currently are, politically speaking, liberalism is almost an imposition" (interview with educator Zínia).

This chapter suggests that Portuguese society, culture and politics still reflect a level of allegiance to residual historical ideas which in the most current times begs the question as to whether there was a revolution or a "mere" reaction to reform the government in power? Democracy whether in representative or participatory forms continues to divide 'ideologies' and present different meanings depending on the 'values' held by the person/political party describing it. Moreover, Portuguese democracy is clearly an open and elastic concept which floats and shifts over time to serve the purposes of those in power and out. This arguably leads to a permanent situation of state instability.

However, independently of left and right wing governments - with the country being subject to European Union policies - the biggest concern at the moment is probably how current conceptions of democracy embody capitalist and neoliberal ideals. At best, in my view the answer is unclear, and offers no solution to what Portuguese democracy can look like in the future.

In Portugal democracy, or 'democracies', have shifted, transformed and floated over time, and need to be understood not only in historical and political terms, but also by their psychological requirements.

Rather depressingly, Merelman (1969) defends the idea that the demands of democracy ("with its emphasis on openness, flexibility, gradual reform, progress through secular endeavour, and tolerance for those on the margins of society" (p.766)), are not reached by most people. He believes "[m]ost people do not reach a high enough level of moral or cognitive development to maintain a long-run commitment to such a system" (ibid). As a result, the only solution for him is that:



“Either democracy must support itself by assuring material well-being for most of its citizens or it must extract commitment at the cost of developing in its people a sense of nationalism. Both forms of support may eventually come into conflict with the norms of the system itself. We are led to the conclusion that diverse kinds of democratic commitment, resting as they do on different modes of perception and evaluation, provide considerable potential for fission and fragmentation” (Merelman, 1969, p.766).

The current instability in Portuguese democracy is an example of how its different commitments and definitions throughout history, contributed to its elasticity and fragility.

Moreover, the longevity of autocratic governments influenced the development of a frail and somewhat arbitrary form of democracy and the implications of this for ECE are yet to be fully understood. Throughout the different historical periods, school was seen as instrumental in promoting both democracy and authoritarianism.

In current times, education is concerned with many aspects, of which, it could be argued, democracy tends to be a forgotten one. We live in a world of so called ‘knowledge based economies’ (Ball, 1998; Nóvoa, 2013) and education systems follow the ‘necessary’ motions to align with this common trend (as arguably any other service oriented to the public, that can, economically speaking, make *it* (knowledge based economies) thrive). Apple (2013) argued that “education is being commodified. Its institutions are being turned into “products” that are to be subjected to the logic of markets” (p.16). Portugal is not an exception to this alignment. For instance, in 2004 the Portuguese Ministry of Education produced a national report on the ‘Development of Education in Portugal’. According to the Director of the Bureau for European Affairs and International Relations, Maria Emilia Galvão (2004), this report constituted:

“The Portuguese contribution to the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Bureau of Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Its topic “Quality Education for all young people: challenges, trends and practices” echoes the need to develop educational policies that may be better adapted to the realities of our society at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p.6)

This report is a consequence of the 'Lisbon Strategy' (ibid) which in the year 2000 delineated a new direction for an education system that would be geared to support a knowledge based economy, i.e. a contemporary Portuguese society (aligned with the economic aspirations of the EU). With this strategy:

“two important decisions were made: to move towards a knowledge-based economy as the way forward towards Unionisation and to foster European policies through the open method of coordination. The means to achieve a knowledge society was described in terms of “investment in people”, by playing education at the forefront of European initiatives” (Nóvoa, 2013, p.107).

Portugal hence contributed to the “numerous texts and documents [which] would gradually build a European educational space” (Nóvoa, 2013, p.104). This reflects a changing ideology which emphasises the economic objectives of the education system, where there is a growing relationship between cost-benefit and the creation of different levels and types of education (see Arnove, 2012). This consequently leads to different educational objectives which change the purposes of different levels of education (this is for instance demonstrated in Portuguese ECE through the different beliefs, different ideological responses of ECE professionals towards ‘readiness to school’ agendas (Robertson, 2015) i.e. their responses and perceptions whilst enacting ECE as ‘preparatory-school’ or as ‘pre-school’ (Ang, 2014)).

Nevertheless, this use of education to support the economic aspirations of society, is not a recent tendency in Portugal, it is actually one that emerged with some strength when the revolutionary spirit was fading. In 1976, the minister of education Mário Sottomayor Cardia suggested that the priorities of the education system were “1) to improve the quality of education, and 2) to make Portuguese schools more adequate to respond to the labour market” (Stoer, 1986, p.107). In Portugal, sociologists such as Stephen Stoer (1986) and Boaventura Sousa Santos (1984) remarked, and warned against, the risks of undertaking a rapid transformation of what was initially a democratic discourse into a neoliberal discourse. The protection of the ‘newly formed’ pluralist democracy became a challenge when the world was becoming increasingly more responsive to the strong (‘liberal’) capitalist

interests globally emerging in the 1970s and 1980s (and growing ever since). Due to the vulnerability of a newly formed democratic society, liberalism was 'naturally appealing' and perhaps to some extent demanded from this 'new' Portuguese society. All the industrial developments which have been delayed during the dictatorship had now scope to develop, and education had to also find a way to respond to it. As such, throughout the years, traces of liberal thinking can be found alongside 'democratic discourses' in Portuguese education policy and practice.

Therefore, one cannot present Portugal as an exemplary display of how to implement and enact democracy. One can, however, argue that Portugal presents indeed a unique case, for its history and political developments, from which certainly lessons can be learnt. The major difference in the Portuguese case is perhaps that, throughout the historical path to democratisation of the country, for instance after the revolution, many (namely Teodoro (1982), Santos (1984), Stoer (1986), Pires (1987) amongst others) have defended the aim of education to be first and foremost educating the people, with participatory and democratic practices as central to the education system. Additionally, claiming that this practice had to start from the beginning, i.e. from pre-school and basic education.

This demonstrates that, as argued by Chilean researcher Llaña Mena (2007), conceptions of democratic education tend to be legitimated in many of the official discourses. These discourses affirm the intention of using democracy as a means of superseding social inequalities. However, they also often deny the complexities of the social and cultural world. Therefore, these discourses tend to reduce the 'reality' in which the education systems are sustained, making this 'reality' simplistic and unidimensional. Democracy risks then being sustained in education and society within the ideology of the common sense, where the resulting complexities are likely to become invisible (or continue to be unacknowledged) (ibid).

This can be used to support the argument explored in this chapter that democracy in Portugal is not only 'floating' in its meanings as it suits those in power, but it is also a 'fragile conquest' (d'Oliveira Martins, 1998). As

expressed in some of the interviews in this research, there is a clear awareness/belief in Portugal (for example, in its public policies) that democracy cannot be taken for granted; as it emerged, it can also disappear. Therefore, even if democracy has emerged in Portugal as a 'symptom' of an ideological society (which was briefly lived as a form of direct and participatory democracy), the later representative form of democracy (that naturally replaced the revolutionary euphoria), cannot afford to be transformed into a form of 'pathological democracy' (see Della Porta, 2013) just existing on paper with no action. Consequently, it is argued in this research that the initial critical discussions which replaced dictatorship for democracy (expressed as the beginning of the third wave of democratisation by Huntington (1991)), are still essential in order to maintain democracy as central to both society and education. Furthermore, the evidence explored here seems to suggest that, rather than confined to the cabinet offices of 'political representatives', these discussions need to take place at the societal level, with people reclaiming their power of participation.

Regarding education, Llaña Mena (2007) argues that the recognition of complexity, within socio and cultural realities, enables the establishment of "fundamental dimensions to defend an education which contributes to the permanent reconfiguration of democracy" (p.52). This reconfiguration, includes the protection of plurality and tolerance, whilst confronting unequivocal and totalitarian ways of thinking and being. This also includes not only the acknowledgment of the incompleteness of the human being, but also his/her constant interaction with the world (which is in turn produced by her/his own activity) (Llaña Mena, 2007; Freire, 1996). Consequently, the argument for maintaining the uniqueness of a participatory democratic education system indicates that this democracy needs to be experienced and lived, rather than suppressed, for instance, by international pressures of what local education systems *should* look like. According to Llaña Mena (2007) "education systems have the historical responsibility to support the 'formation' of people in plain development, of helping them sustaining their life projects; to be socially supported" (p.53). This aligns with the role of

democracy in education in Portugal, which aims to promote equality of opportunities by reducing social inequalities. Mena's (2007) idea that education should also:

“promote forms of coexistence which signify the respect of the other and the inevitable differences between the human beings; supporting values of solidarity, participation in a constructive dialogue, all of which since the earliest introduction to the education system” (ibid)

is also in line with the ideas of democracy in Portuguese education in general, and ECE in particular. This in turn, strengthens the idea that using, the previously mentioned, laws of markets to ‘shape’ education systems, is the same as disregarding the importance of education to anything other than economic models of society. Let alone ideals that emerged from a revolution, such as solidarity, access to education, or equality of opportunities for all. It could then be further argued that the laws of markets have a tendency to be flawed. For instance, as António Nóvoa (2013) argues: “the evidence makes it undeniable that the Lisbon strategy (2000) has failed” (p.111). Specifically, a number of benchmarks, objectives, indicators, and programmes appointed as aims of this strategy in terms of education and training have not been met<sup>39</sup>. “The idea that Europe would become the most competitive, dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world has now been clearly abandoned” (Nóvoa, 2013, p.111). The evidence presented in this research suggests that the alternative lays on building the “counter hegemonic globalisation” (Santos, 2005, p.xvii) of education, one that is “organised from the bottom up” (ibid). This aligns with the ‘responses/actions’ such as the ones seen after the revolution in 1974 with parents and local community associations building their own schools whilst informing policy from what was emerging in the practice. Other examples where this has happened and thrived in Portugal, are for instance the MEM schools born as a response to an underground movement reclaiming democratic practices in Portugal in the 1960s; not to mention

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<sup>39</sup> EU members by 2010 should reach benchmarks such as: “i) no more than 10% early school leavers; ii) decrease of at least 20% in the percentage of low achieving pupils in reading literacy; iii) at least 85% of young people should have completed upper secondary education; iv) increase of at least 15% in the number of tertiary graduates in mathematics, science and technology, with a simultaneous decrease in gender balance” (Nóvoa, 2013, p.109); and so on.

again the numerous initiatives which emerged after the Portuguese revolution which created ECE settings and still exist today (even if different from when they first started)<sup>40</sup>.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

To Rosanvallon and Moyn (2006), “political concepts ([such as] democracy...) can be understood only through the historical work of their testing and the historical search for their clarification” (p.45). The historic events discussed in this chapter were so rich that one can hardly avoid a certain amount of simplification.

My intention in this chapter, in addressing research question 1, was to demonstrate the contextual background for this thesis while providing an initial overview on the antecedents to the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal. This chapter has also begun to highlight the various conceptions of democracy which emerged within state policies towards ECE, to address research question two. It also provided an in-depth analysis of the socio-political context, which will provide the background for addressing the critical analysis of how educational conceptions were enacted, which is research question 3.

The historical analysis of the Portuguese context offered above identified significant events/factors which triggered “macro processes of change” (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003, p.6) over time. Nevertheless, it is important to “note that... [this analysis was] not simply a matter of saying that democracy *has* a history. More radically, one must see that democracy is a history” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.38, original emphasis).

In this account I aimed to demonstrate that the antecedents of the emergence of democracy resulted from “work irreducibly involving exploration and experimentation, in its attempt to understand and elaborate

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<sup>40</sup> A strong international example which aligns with this are Reggio schools born in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in the aftermath of the Second World War from parents’ initiative to build a school for their children/community.

itself” (Rosanvallon and Moyn, 2006, p.38). The specific events described suggest that the development and emergence of democracy in Portugal has occurred almost in a cyclical way as it was shaped by the changing political contexts.

The Portuguese ‘path’ towards democracy happened in summary, as follows: An Absolutist Monarchy (authoritarian regime) after a garrison revolt became a representative government (‘embryonic stage of democracy’). This representative Government was progressively transformed into a repressive dictatorship. This new ‘monarchic representative dictatorship’ was followed by a revolution which entrenched a democratic republican regime. This new and unstable republican democracy resulted in a military coup which was followed by a military dictatorship. This was followed by a ‘one-man dictatorship’ under Salazar’s authoritarian rule, which ended in a military coup to restore democracy. Currently democracy in Portugal arguably reflects all of these different ideals and points towards an uncertain future.

Based on the events identified above, in Portuguese history democracy was the exception, rather than the rule and consequently it has been given a heightened symbolic importance, that is enhanced by the nature of the 1974 revolution: which occurred without the usual paraphernalia of freedom/liberation movements (e.g. national heroes, major conflicts).

Taking into account all the major events, democracy can be interpreted to have emerged in this context as a highly rhetorical and elastic concept which has the flexibility for many diverse interpretations, serving in this way the function of a ‘floating signifier’ (Beech and Lista, 2011). A floating signifier emerges when certain ideas or concepts (such as democracy) are taken up in global discourses and abstracted from historical experience. In other words, at different times and in different places these global ideas/concepts are re-signified in a different way. This re-signification is also diverse in different locations as it enters into localised power struggles (ibid), as in the case of Portugal. Indeed, after the revolution, democracy as an ideal was

introduced in all sorts of policies and political discourses and educational policies, and ECE, was no exception to this ideological inculcation.

In Portugal the search for “the liberal-democratic regime has constantly been the locus of struggles which have provided the driving force of historical political developments” (Mouffe, 2000, p.5). Democracy emerged in response to specific transformational changes in the cultural and social fabric and has shifted over time influenced by the needs and swings of each particular historical event. One of the most recent and powerful shifts occurred in the 1974 revolution, when democracy was transformed from a participatory or popular democracy to a representative form of democracy.

This reinforces the importance, for this research, of the post 1974 Revolution period which was characterised by an active investment from both, society and education, on the values of democracy, solidarity and freedom as opposed to the previous dictatorial ideologies and indoctrinations (Igreja, 2004).

Nevertheless, as Rosanvallon and Moyn (2006) explain:

“[i]t is also necessary to show that disappointment is born from the difficulty of making the democratic ideal a living force in quotidian reality: democracy has been prey in turn to fear of conflict and to anxiety about its absence, torn between the aspiration to individual autonomy and the quest for participation in life together.” (p.55-56)

This constant ‘shift’ between dictatorship-democracy, democracy-dictatorship, with democracy before 1974 being an exception and dictatorship the rule, left profound marks on Portuguese society and profoundly influenced the development of its educational policy.

For instance, during both the First Republic (1910 - 1926) and the Second Republic (1926 –1974) politics and education were inextricably intertwined in order to produce the ‘specific type’ of society and citizen which the ruling state desired. Education was used to nurture a liberal society during the First Republic and an authoritarian society during the Second Republic.

Based on these two specific periods it is possible to identify two features:



- 1) During the years of the First Republic the education system aimed to achieve the democratic principles of education for all with emphasis on the promotion of equality of opportunities. Education became a priority, centred on the 'formation' of the citizen that has knowledge and is informed within a broader social perspective dimension. Each individual was taught with the intent of becoming a participative member of society who would exercise his right to vote.
- 2) With both dictatorial regimes of the Second Republic, while these were oppressive, education was still a priority. Education was accorded a new nationalistic character with a focus on: the studies about the great Portuguese empire; Portuguese history which portrayed all the national heroes; and a civic education with a profound patriotic, moral and religious character, stressing hierarchy and order.

These conclusions are consistent with Tarrant's (1981) portrayal of the Platonic idea that "[i]n totalitarian societies, education has been the means for the infusion of loyalty to the norms of the party, and in capitalist democracies, the indirect means for sustaining civic attitudes and loyalties, and economic and political viewpoints" (p.13). Similarly, in Portugal, the state utilised education as a strategy to fulfil certain critical functions in society. As Igreja (2004) explains, during different periods of the Portuguese education history the "project of society and [the] education system constitutes... two polarised axis of human activity, being the second [education] a vehicle for the realisation of the first [society]" (p.111).

With regard to ECE in particular, with the process of democratisation of society, there was a concomitant democratisation of the ECE system which was evidenced by the development of policies such as the Pre-School Education Framework Law and the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education<sup>41</sup>. Both developed in 1997, originated from post-1974 revolution policies and are still in practice today, reflecting diverse democratic ideals. These range from a focus on 'personal and social development based on

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<sup>41</sup>These policy documents are further explored in chapter 5

democratic life experiences' to the 'equality of opportunities of access to education and learning success' (Ministério da Educação, 1997a; 1997b).

A historical analysis of the political situation of Portugal was crucial in order to understand the development of ECE policies. I indicate and explain its selective nature, i.e. depending on different historical periods, its purpose was either socially, economically or culturally defined. Consequently, ECE in Portugal has expanded in a variety of ways which resulted in different current forms of provision (public, private and IPSS organisations).

Dating from the 1800s the philanthropic and religious initiatives which often embody a strong care/health component are aimed at the most disadvantaged children and led to the development of the IPSS schools. The private kindergartens which developed due to the lack of governmental support to create public kindergartens have benefited children from the most advantaged backgrounds, and contributed to the development of the profitable corporation private ECE sector. The end of dictatorial rule in 1974 led to a popular initiative which demanded the expansion of public ECE, according to the new democratic principles of equality of opportunity, equity of access and universality. These initiatives resulted in a national ECE system with Public, Private and Charitable (IPSS) organisations. As a result of these historical and political changes, chapter 5 discusses key public and education policies in which democracy emerged and filtered down to the ECE system, in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

## Chapter 5

### Policy and education landscapes in pursuit of democracy

This chapter addresses research question 2 (which conceptions of democracy have emerged within education policies in Portugal and how are they manifested in the states' policies towards ECE?) by presenting an examination of the emergence of democracy in Portuguese public and education policy. This analysis exposes the ways in which democracy is conceived, manifested and intended in Portugal. Furthermore, it illustrates how democracy has filtered/permeated from a 'revolutionary' ideology down to the policies developed within the education system.

The intention of this chapter, however, is not to present a detailed analysis of each policy, nor to propose a full revision of Portuguese ECE policy *per se*, as that has already been done (see Pires, 1987; Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997; Vilarinho, 2004; Vilarinho, 2011, Rodrigues, 2014). The fundamental objective of this chapter is to reveal and unpack some of the policy and related education documents, which have been significant in the development of ECE, since they featured democracy as a central motif.

In Portugal, democracy whether as a form of 'political association' or as a 'system of government' (Villoro, 1998) did not result from either the continuation, or the evolution of the previous regime (Teodoro, 1982). It was the revolution in 1974 that promoted a dramatic transformation in the Portuguese political system. This abrupt shift from dictatorship to democracy instigated several measures in the political arena to demonstrate and guarantee the establishment and maintenance of democracy. These measures in part consisted of the creation of policies which intended to achieve the democratisation of education and consequently society.

The chapter is divided into three periods - 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, each with its own (a) policies, (b) conceptions, (c) manifestations and (d)

intentions. As stated in chapter 2, these ten year periods were chosen because they each correspond broadly to a key legislative change that directly impacted on the ideas of democracy as central to ECE in Portugal. The three different periods are displayed in table 5., below, and the chapter is structured in accordance with the elements there listed.

The major policy documents under discussion during each period are: the *1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*; the *1986 Basic Law of the Education System*; the *1997 Framework Law of Pre-School Education*; and the *Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education* also from 1997; all of which are still in effect today<sup>42</sup>. As part of the analysis, other relevant key legislative documents (such as the 1973 Basic Law for Education, the 1977 Pre-School Education Law, the 1979 Kindergarten Statutes, and the 1994 Green Paper) are also referred to.

The democratic conceptions, manifestations and intentions considered below, derived from my analysis/categorisation. The first section below analyses the 1970s. I argue this was a period of *Democratic Hegemony* in which democracy emerged as a strong motif throughout all aspects of public policy. I describe this period as a *Revolutionary Democracy* insofar as it was a product of the 1974 revolution. Democracy in this period was manifested as a *National Ideology* with the intent of creating and maintaining a democratic society through equality of opportunities of access and success in school. The 1980s was a period which I term *Ubiquitous Democracy* in which democracy was portrayed as an omnipresent principle in all education policy. It was manifested as a *Guiding Principle* with the intention of affirming the principles of education and democracy as constitutionally 'prescribed', alongside the intention to foment democracy as a form of citizenship. In the 1990s, there was a period which I term *Regulatory Democracy* in which democracy played a central role within ECE policy by becoming a standard item within the objectives of pre-school education. As a result, democracy

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<sup>42</sup> A new revision of the Curriculum Guidelines was released for public consultation in April 2016. Due to the purposes and time frames of this research, this new proposal is not considered in this study.

was manifested as a *Rhetorical Symbol* with the main purpose of continuing all of the intentions above while further reducing social inequalities.

**Table 5.: Democratic conceptions, manifestations and intentions**

<b>Period</b>	<b>(a) Policy</b>	<b>(b) Conception</b>	<b>(c) Manifestation</b>	<b>(d) Intention</b>
<b>1970s</b> <b>Period of democratic hegemony</b>	1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic	Revolutionary Democracy	National Ideology (Utopia)	Create and maintain a democratic society through equality of opportunities of access and success for all
<b>1980s</b> <b>Period of democratic ubiquity</b>	1986 Basic Law of the Education System	Ubiquitous Democracy	Guiding Principle	Affirm the Constitution and foment democracy as a form of citizenship
<b>1990s</b> <b>Period of democratic regulation</b>	1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education + Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-school education	Regulatory Democracy	Rhetorical Symbol (Heterotopia)	Continue all the above and construe democracy as the means to reduce social inequality

This chapter also includes data from interviews with policy makers and researchers who reflected on the events (particularly those related to the 1974 revolution) which promoted the development of the policies under discussion. They also reflected on how democracy was included within ECE policies and practices. This meant that different interviewees provided various interpretations of what democracy meant in the past and present. They also experienced a reflective process through the interviews themselves, and I have taken this into account in my socio constructivist interpretation of our conversations. As Lopes da Silva emphasised in her interview, through their involvement and experience in the field, policy

makers and researchers advanced their own “intuitive opinions... [and] educated guesses” (interview, 23/05/2013). There was an effort to use memory as a tool in particular to make sense of personal and professional experiences which ranged from policy making processes to “formative moments, significant encounters, locations and human relationships” (Cubitt, 2007, p.154).

## **5.1. Education policy landscapes in the 1970s – Democratic Hegemony**

In Portugal the democratisation of education was, according to Teodoro<sup>43</sup> (1982), evident since the early 1970s as it was at the centre of the political debates when José Veiga Simão was the Minister of education (from 1970-1974). These debates addressed many of the problems faced at the time, such as the dictatorial, belligerent, and outdated ruling system. They also addressed perspectives for the future development of education which resulted in the ‘Veiga Simão Reform’ (as it is known). This reform was significantly advanced for its time (post Salazar but within the dictatorial regime), and consequently, faced opposition from the existing conservative political institutions (Marçal Grilo, 1994). The objectives of Simão reform were the:

- a) opening and freeing education from particular ideologies
- b) changing of old educational practices
- c) extension of compulsory schooling
- d) diversification of higher education
- e) increased number of school places; and
- f) creation of better access to education with improved conditions that promote the success of all young people of schooling age (ibid).

In addition to these objectives, as mentioned in chapter 4, the ECE policy context also started changing with the Veiga Simão’s reform of the education system (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997; Marçal Grilo, 1994, Formosinho, 1997, Vilarinho, 2011). This changing process started

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<sup>43</sup> Portuguese comparative education scholar

specifically in 1973 when Veiga Simão approved and published the Basic Law for Education. This law aimed to reintegrate ECE into the education system<sup>44</sup>. However, as indicated by Formosinho (1997) even though ECE was, since 1973, considered as both a level of the education system and a public service, its role within the system remained ambiguous. This in part happened because the 1974 revolution interrupted the ‘Veiga Simão reform’ without allowing the 1973 Basic Law for Education to make an impact. Simão’s reforms were paradoxical insofar as they were relatively liberal, and presaged later changes, but introduced during the period of dictatorship. He explained this paradox in the following manner:

“The [1933] Constitution did not consecrate everything I considered that it should be enshrined in this area [education]. The Basic Law [of 1973] introduced principles which I considered fundamental, such as the right of all citizens to education, independently of their economic ability and equal opportunities was essential to the creation of a more just society. I had the notion that I would find great opposing forces, at the Corporate Board and at the National Assembly. When the proposal arrived there were dispatches that had already been published. The law crowned a lot of what had already been done. (...) I believed, as the liberal wing, that it was possible to move towards democracy through a transition of renewal. Regimes must be transformed and I fought for this transformation. (...) Even today I feel sorry that this transformation did not happen. In the same way I pity that Marcello Caetano has not been able to overcome the reasons of the heart. I often say that he had a major conflict between reason, which told him he had to make the change, and the heart, which was strictly conservative and prevented him from making the decision. The dream of making the transformation to democracy was expressed by me in speeches. I lost and won who was able to make the revolution.” (Leiria, 2014, [online])

Simão’s reforms represented an extremely significant step towards the modernisation of the Portuguese education system, and consequently the efforts made to develop education prior 1974 were, to some extent, ‘defeated’ by the revolution. While offering one step forward just before the overthrow of the dictatorial government, it seemed that once the political regime changed education started to regress. In other words, (at least) during the transitioning period, the ‘revolution’ became an obstacle to the

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<sup>44</sup> A goal which was proclaimed many years earlier in the aftermath of the implementation of the First Republic in 1910.

modernisation of education. After the revolution there was an extreme effort to democratise the education system with the main principle of altering the past and eradicating all the vestigial remnants of the regime in place before 1974 (Marçal Grilo, 1994). Regardless of whether the objectives proposed by Veiga Simão pointed towards the 'desired' direction or not (i.e. notwithstanding whether the previous objectives were in consonance with the democratic principles emerging at that time).

The former Portuguese education minister Eduardo Marçal Grilo<sup>45</sup> (1994), described the revolutionary period from 1974-1976 as one of the most turbulent, yet important, in Portuguese education history. After the revolution in 1974, the country changed and a new image of the future started to materialise through the development of public policy, which included a vision of what education should entail.

Marçal Grilo (1994) identifies the period between 1976 to 1986 as the first constitutional government after dictatorship, which was marked by a range of (fundamentally political) measures that aimed to achieve:

- a) The establishment of a democratic 'legality', mainly at the level of school management. [By the means of laws, policies that would include democracy in education at the operational and institutional levels];
- b) The correction of the injustices and diversions which happened from 1974 to 1976. [Due to adjustments to a newly adopted form of ruling, which in the beginning (1974-1976) took the form of a brief anarchy that developed from the wish for democracy. Also due to the end of the colonial war and the return of those then considered expats];
- c) The stabilisation of the education system [which with the new democratic regime became a state responsibility and open for all regardless of background];
- d) The reestablishment of confidence [in the government, the education system, and democracy]  
(Marçal Grilo, 1994)

The aims above were intended to align the education system with the new democratic ideal. By investing and transforming the existing 'organisational structures', the government was placing itself in a position to promote an

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<sup>45</sup> Education Minister of the XIII Constitutional Government 1995-1999, followed by Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins 1999-2000.



education system which could fully support the new emergent democratic society.

In the revolutionary period of the 1970s, several decrees were created and issued to respond to the changes happening in the field. As discussed below, the mid 1970s represent a period in Portuguese education policy which resembles a 'production line' with many policies being created to respond to the particular initiatives emerging from the new 'democratic' nation. There was a high level of 'firefighting' in response to a new reality that was being enacted without either a specific or a strategic direction, with the exception of the firm objective of pursuing democracy. Despite the broad democratic ideal, without an overarching law for education that clarified the emerging principles of the newly formed democratic regime, intentions and realities seemed to continue walking down different paths. Different structural measures to change the education system only started being officially introduced in 1978 (ibid).

Below I analyse the key policy initiatives that consecrated democracy as a national feature of Portuguese public policy.

### **(a) Policy: 1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic**

“On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1974 the Armed Forces Movement crowned the long years of resistance and reflected the deepest feelings of the Portuguese people by overthrowing the fascist regime. Freeing Portugal from dictatorship, oppression and colonialism was a revolutionary change and the beginning of an historic turning point for Portuguese society.”

(The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Preamble)

The establishment of a democratic regime resulted in the creation of the 1976 Constitution. Still in effect today<sup>46</sup>, this Constitution is the document

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<sup>46</sup> 10% of the original articles of the 1976 Constitution are still in effect after the seven revisions the constitution has suffered in the past 40 years. The first revision in 1982 removed part of the ideological component of the Constitution, by abolishing the revolutionary council and giving more scope to private initiatives to thrive, amongst other changes. (Almeida and Gomes, 2016 [online]).

which lays the foundation and sets the direction for all public policy, and consequently, is expected to be the document upon which all education policy is founded. The most significant change, born from the archetypes of the revolutionary period, is perhaps the introduction of democracy into the system as a reference and symbolic ideal. I use these terms, reference and symbolic, to interpret democracy as an ideological hegemonic concept that is a panacea (meant to resolve all the society's problems), with education playing a central role in this resolution.

The relevance and symbolic hegemony of democracy within policy and education was stressed by Vasconcelos in her interview. She stated that in Portugal:

"historically... first, we lived a dictatorship, therefore for us ideologically the word 'democracy' was crucial because we didn't have it. And so we can very well understand that in all the laws, decree-laws, framework laws, etc., it always appears equality of opportunities, democracy, etc. because it didn't exist" (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012).

This in turn contradicts the principle of developing an education system that was free from an ideology, which was previously promoted by the 'Veiga Simão Reform'. The role/intent of the State towards education from this moment on is clearly expressed in Point 2 of Article 73 of the new Constitution. The principle asserts that:

"The state shall promote the democratisation of education and the other conditions needed for an education conducted at school and via other means of training to contribute to equal opportunities, the overcoming of economic, social and cultural inequalities, the development of the personality and the spirit of tolerance, mutual understanding, solidarity and responsibility, to social progress and to democratic participation in collective life"

(The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Article 73)

As per the Constitution, the democratisation of education comes in many shapes and forms, which include: equality of opportunities, overcoming of inequality, tolerance, solidarity, responsibility, individual and collective engagement, amongst others. Article 73 clearly affirms education and democracy as dimensions that are wholly interweaved in order to create the

ideal society (with all the characteristics that, according to the 'democratic views' laid by the Constitution, society should entail).

Also, as d'Oliveira Martins explained in his interview:

“Democracy can never be guaranteed (...) this is the reason why the act of education is essential to reinforce the idea of active and responsible citizenship... [and as a result] education and democracy [become] intimately intertwined” (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013)

In order for democracy to become a reality, it had to respond to the social problems of the time whilst being considered as an integral part of all public policy. Education was seen along functionalist lines, as a primary instrument to meet the demands of this new modern society.

Regarding the development of ECE policy, as seen in the interviewees' testimonies presented in the final section of chapter 4, democracy emerged primarily from a parallel movement of democratic action. In the words of Vilarinho:

"Early childhood education is placed on the agenda (the political agenda), more through the hands of the population in the local associations, than by politicians, in the first phase, because there is an absolute necessity to give response to the social problems of the time" (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013)

Consequently, within the 1974-1976 period, democracy occurred in ECE policy from the micro level (the actions of the people) to the macro level (the government policies) (Vasconcelos in interview, 04/01/2012). The peoples' actions reflected their belief in the children's right to access to ECE, and the families' right to childcare support. These actions placed pressure on the government demanding concrete arrangements to provide the services in need (Vilarinho in interview, 24/05/2013).

However, despite the numerous popular initiatives to create supportive services for children and their families<sup>47</sup> (between 1974-1976), the creation of an official network of pre-school education only began in 1977

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<sup>47</sup> many of which closed down during the 'normalisation period' (which came with the 1979 Statute) as they no longer fulfilled the conditions and requirements set by the government (Vilarinho, 2011)

(Formosinho, 1997). A new cycle of Pre-School education began on 1 February 1977 with the publication of Law No.5/77. This law:

"creates the public system of preschool education, whose main objectives are to encourage the child's harmonious development and help to correct the discriminatory effects of socio-cultural conditions of access to the school system. Pre-school education is optional and is intended for children from three years until the entry age in primary education" (Law No. 5/77).

According to Vilarinho (2011), this law incorporated three major attributes: 1) the democratisation of education; 2) the principle of equality of opportunities; and 3) the children's right to a laic<sup>48</sup> and free<sup>49</sup> education (Vilarinho, 2011).

This represented the first serious commitment to give expression to the ideas laid out in the 1976 Constitution, which proclaimed the basic principle of education for all. With the 1977 law, a public system of pre-school education was established, allowing for the expansion throughout the country of an ECE network of public kindergartens (ibid). As Vasconcelos conveyed in her interview, this law was extremely important as it declared for the first time that - "the State *is responsible* for creating a public network of pre-school education" (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012).

The first State/Public kindergartens were created in 1978 and in 1979 the Kindergarten's Statute was published (Formosinho, 1997). This statute (Decree-Law No.542/79) recognised Pre-School education as the beginning of a lifelong education process. This 'education process' was materialised by the aggregation of family, community and State actions (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997). Moreover, the State made itself fundamentally responsible for providing education and compensative support if any other 'mechanisms' failed (i.e. family and community) (Vilarinho, 2011; see also Vasconcelos, 2014).

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<sup>48</sup> *Laic* comes from *Laïcité* which is a complex term used in several European countries to describe the separation of State from religion with reference here to education.

<sup>49</sup> unpaid

## **(b) Conception: Revolutionary Democracy**

The 1976 Constitution indicates that it is the responsibility of the State to create a system where a democratic society can flourish and be maintained. This in part demonstrates the idealistic views coming from a 'revolutionary standpoint' in which education is set as the means to guarantee that ideal.

As explained by Lopes da Silva:

"if there was no democracy it was the school that would create that democracy in the new generations - always the idea that the school will transform society. And if democracy was recent, the school had a role [to play] ..." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

Also, the type of democracy which emerged at the time, was a democracy concerned mainly with promoting communal action to solve local problems.

Lopes da Silva reminisced, particularly on the practice of teachers:

"... immediately after the April 25, the first stage of the practice of early childhood educators was to go to the communities, to the streets, talk to people, meet, undertake a sociological analysis of the population, and so on." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

Vilarinho explained in her interview that this idea of communitarian work and participatory democracy acted as a movement which was ingrained in the training of the educators in the 1970s. The educator was seen:

"as someone who works with children (...) but also as a community animator. (...) this idea (...) is very present in the training of educators at the time. And much associated with a concept of participatory democracy.

(...) [the origin of] the public system of preschool education... at this time is very marked [by this] (...) I think the very concept of democracy, of what is to be (...) an educator in the democratic context, is much more present and is more steeped in the educational practices of kindergarten teachers than in the other levels of education.

And I think it is very much due to the way (...) [democracy] emerged, and for the timing and for (...) 'the socio-political engagement', of these new professionals. (...) it is a movement of revolution, openness, necessity, therefore to respond to a demand from the community of an approach to the needs. And also a claim of new rights for children. (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013)

Vilarinho remarks on the distinctiveness of this level of education (particularly with regards to the emergence of the ECE movement in Portugal) as a social responsibility, or reciprocal system, which moves

between the community to the children and from children to the community, with the educator performing its role as a socio-cultural agent. However, the education initiatives, which emerged after the revolution, survived solely from direct participation, i.e. with no direct involvement from the governing structures of the time.

Marçal Grilo (1994) noted that the great political instability lived at the time was in part a result of a struggle to promote a 'democratic euphoria' which refused to accept anything from its recent past. The development of Portuguese education policy is strongly marked by 'revolutionary ideologies', and the efforts to democratise the education system demonstrate both the need for, and the ideology of, democracy in 'broad' terms. It could be argued that the Portuguese case acts as a strong example of the claim that "[i]n moments of transition, education becomes a staging ground, or experimental space for larger democratic projects" (DeLissovoy et al., 2014, p.82).

As mentioned in chapter 4, the Portuguese revolution was also inspired by Marxist ideals that sought to establish an education system which reflected the drive of a revolutionary democratic struggle. However, "democracy was rapidly transformed into anarchy, [and] due to the lack of political leadership capable of containing the excesses that inevitably had to occur after five decades of authoritarian regime" (Marçal Grilo, 1994, p.406), the education system started being designed within a context characterised by euphoria, idealism and demagoguery.

Nevertheless, it would arguably be naïve to suggest that an education system could reinvent itself without any traces from the past, especially during the end of a revolutionary period when so many strong and competing views on the purpose of education were emerging. The paradoxes generated from the conflict of new and old ideologies are visible throughout the Portuguese education policy development. Evidence of the 'revolutionary' spirit attached to democracy in the mid-1970s was for instance the refusal to continue anything from the past, which is reflected in

the principles stated by the new constitution (which are described in the different sections of this chapter).

### **(c) Manifestation: National Ideology (Utopia)**

As discussed in chapter 1, the Portuguese Revolution did not “turn the world upside down” (Maxwell, 1995, p.4). However, it “recaptured most of the euphoria of revolutions past, if little of their bloodiness” (ibid). With the shock and surprise coming from the revolution there was a brief interlude of euphoria where anything and everything seemed possible. As expressed by the interviewees, kindergartens and early years’ settings emerged in this period from this sentiment of ‘participatory euphoria’, ‘direct democracy’, and popular movements of ‘citizenship in action’. Democracy became a direct outcome of the revolution, and a symbol, “an emotive word... [which] excites approval.” (Tarrant, 1981, p.19-20). It became a symbolic national concept that has been understood in very different ways.

Lopes da Silva suggests in her interview that ideas have changed throughout time and particularly the idea that democracy can prepare citizens for the future was not always taken seriously. What started as a strong democratic aspiration after the revolution shifted markedly over the years:

"This democratic intention has diluted; you see?! For two strands, one strand more to the [political] right - the school is eventually to teach reading, writing, counting; and another, the pedagogies very centred in the child are not very directive [which] are not convenient for children from underprivileged backgrounds [who] need a pedagogical structure. (For these two sides, the compensatory pedagogies; there is a very complex evolution of research, of ideas, it is very complex) (...) at that time there was a consensus, but it was a revolutionary consensus. Of freedom, enthusiasm, excitement (...) There wasn't something very rational, neither much thought... “the school will be the future”, “the school will build”, but then... there is the relationship between school and society which I think is always a bit complex and has different aspects" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

From Lopes da Silva's perspective there was a profound hope that school and society would be strongly coupled, particularly in the aftermath of the revolutionary enthusiasm.

After the 'revolution', democracy emerged with specific connotations (values) and became synonymous with certain empirical manifestations such as 'equal, pluralistic society, freer, just, fraternal...' (The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Preamble). The preamble of the 1976 Constitution states that this document "...matches the country's aspirations" and emerges with and from the revolution to promote a country with a profound "respect for the will of the Portuguese people" (ibid).

Article 2 of the 1976 Constitution affirms Portugal as a democratic state based on the rule of law. It states that the revolution made Portugal a country concerned with respecting and promoting:

- plural democratic expression;
- fundamental rights and freedoms
- separation and interdependence of powers
- view to achieving economic, social and cultural democracy
- deepening participatory democracy.

(The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976, Article 2)

Within education, democracy appears as education for all - a form to promote an equitable society with the ideal of levelling up the prevailing disparities promoted during the dictatorship. Democracy appears in education as the 'ingredient' that will be essential to overcome economic, social, and cultural inequalities (The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, 1976).

Democracy in education is also associated with participation in the form of both associations and management. Article 77 of the 1976 Constitution, claims that both "teachers and students have the right to take part in the democratic management of schools, as laid down by law" (Principle 1); it also states that "the law shall regulate the forms in which associations of teachers, students and parents, communities and institutions of a scientific nature participate in the definition of the education policy" (point 2). This demonstrates the willingness to promote the principle of democratic



participation (to all actors of the education process), even if only through the (legislative) creation of representative structures such as associations.

One could argue that the Portuguese State and its policies have developed an interest in the conditions for the existence and continuance of democracy, although not necessarily in the meanings of democracy. Inevitably, the 1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic is a highly rhetorical document, which in itself demands the existence of an extensive system of regulation, with laws and policies emerging from it for its intentions to, arguably, become realities. As mentioned by Lopes da Silva in her interview (23/05/2013), after the revolution Portugal had to face “the deep democratic problem – [of understanding] what is the State (?)”, and who regulates it. In a democracy, one could maintain that it is the people. However, during the dictatorial regime there were no mechanisms to make such regulations. The introduction of democracy in public and education policy represented a deep national ideology (utopia) of creating a more just and free society which promoted equality of opportunities for all.

#### **(d) Intentions: Access to and Success in Education**

Democracy in education policy emerged with the clear intent of ensuring equality of opportunities of *access to* and *success in* education. This occurred through the ‘modernisation of the education system’ intended by the ‘Veiga Simão reform’ in the early 1970s and was further reinforced after the revolution, particularly within the 1976 Constitution.

Article 74 of the 1976 Constitution established a set of principles, which proclaimed the intention to promote the democratisation of education. It could be argued that these new principles were presented as an elaboration and extension of the ones established in the ‘Veiga Simão reform’ (even though there was no acknowledgement of this; as that would not be in line with the new revolutionary aspirations to eradicate all remnants of the dictatorship). After stating in article 73 that “the state shall promote the

democratisation of education”, article 74 of the 1976 Constitution elaborates on this goal and describes the state’s responsibilities thus:

1. “Everyone has the right to education, with the guarantee of the right to equal opportunities in access to and success in schooling.
2. In implementing the education policy, the state is charged with:
  - a) Ensuring universal, compulsory and free basic education;
  - b) Creating a public, and developing the general, preschool education system;
  - c) Guaranteeing permanent education and eliminating illiteracy;
  - d) In accordance with his capabilities, guaranteeing every citizen access to the highest levels of education, scientific research and artistic creation;
  - e) Progressively making all levels of education free of charge;
  - f) Inserting schools into the communities they serve and establishing links between education and economic, social and cultural activities;
  - g) Promoting and supporting disabled citizens’ access to education and supporting special education when necessary;
  - h) Protecting and developing Portuguese sign language, as an expression of culture and an instrument for access to education and equal opportunities;
  - i) Ensuring that emigrants’ children are taught the Portuguese language and enjoy access to Portuguese culture;
  - j) Ensuring that immigrants’ children receive adequate support in order to enable them to effectively enjoy the right to education.”

(The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976, Article 74)

Each point of article 74 (above) establishes the policy actions necessary to help achieve the intentions of the new democratic ideology. Broadly speaking the dominant themes/intentions emerging from these principles are: the right of access to and success in education, which would be enabled through an expansion and universalisation of free schooling; equality of opportunities; inclusion of disabled learners; and support for emigrant and immigrant children/learners.

According to these principles, school should be inclusive, free and universal, and pre-school education ought to be fully integrated as part of the education system. They also reflected the conditions inherited from the Portuguese education past, which had not yet been resolved, such as the struggle to eradicate illiteracy.

One aspect, which is not always discussed or taken into account when analysing the relationships between education and democracy is the inclusion of, and support for, emigrant/immigrant children. According to Brederode in interview (03/09/2012), multiculturalism is also one important aspect of democracy which tends to be forgotten. In addition, as Lopes da Silva discussed in her interview (23/05/2013), it was easy to forget that as society developed so did children, and this included the increase of multiculturalism in schools throughout the years.

This aspect of democracy, that can be interpreted as democracy as access to and success in education for all, was still very new to Portugal in the 1970s. A view that was shared by Brederode, Lopes da Silva and Vasconcelos, was that even today, educators that had not fully or critically integrated multiculturalism in their practices created difficulties for the 'actual' enactment of democracy in the kindergarten. This in turn, seems to suggest that the vision of democracy as proposed by the Constitution (as equality of opportunities for all) might not be fully achieved yet in terms of education practice.

In addition, the Constitution envisages that the State has the responsibility to protect the diversity of the education institutions (i.e. sustain the public, private and cooperative nature of education) and reconcile different interests. Thus, for example, Principle 1 of Article 75 affirms that: "[t]he state shall create a network of public education establishments that covers the needs of the whole population". The next principle states that: "[t]he state shall [also] recognise and inspect private and cooperative education, as laid down by law" (Principle 2, Article 75).

In the light of the expansion of the pre-school education system which occurred in the 1990s, this recognition of variety within the education became an important consideration in improving education access and success for all. It also helps to explain the current diversity of provision in the early year's sector. This diversity can provide a series of opportunities, which may be perceived as supportive of the quest for democracy. For instance, diversity tends to be welcomed if there is recognition that the State

does not have the full capacity to provide a free and universal public ECE system. Moreover, in the words of Vasconcelos a variety of initiatives can be seen:

“... as positive. That is public, private, solidarity [charity]... otherwise, it was a completely centralised system, we would end with the other initiatives and only create public... nor the capacity to do this existed and I don't think it to be a correct political choice. What has to exist, and the pre-school education framework law is very clear on this, there has to exist accountability” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

Vasconcelos suggests that the diversity of ECE provision contributes not only to improving access, but also to improving success in education. This suggestion follows the idea that different types of provision can account for different ‘needs and interests’<sup>50</sup>, and if the needs and interests of the children are fulfilled through a variety of educational offers then the complexity of the education system becomes a way of responding to different social, cultural, economic factors and requirements. However, demanding accountability as a means to monitor a diverse system of providers will always impact on the type of provision in place, as schools will be ‘forced’ to comply with certain ‘universal requirements’ which may not be part of their initial philosophy/ethos (which in turn can potentially jeopardise democratic practices).

Another aspect concerning access and success, later introduced by the 1979 Kindergarten's Statute, was the requirement of the participation of parents in the ‘consultative council’. This Statute gave parents in each school the right to provide their views on matters such as: the organisation of the institution, the annual activities plan, the participation of the families within the school and so on (Vilarinho, 2011). While this represented a limited range of activities, arguably it was a way to democratically involve the families (by giving them access to the school via the means of participation), while reinforcing the complementary role of ECE to the family as the first educator of the child. In practice, however, the policy could be

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<sup>50</sup> ‘Needs’, ‘interests’ and ‘quality’ are words frequently used in ECE dominant discourses, and are in this thesis used with caution. It is my view that further analysis is required on who decides what those ‘needs’ and ‘interests’ are or on what ‘quality’ means and looks like.

argued to be ambiguous, as participation occurred through the creation of *representative* structures (where parents were not involved directly but represented by governing bodies such as, for instance, associations of parents). Additionally, as Lopes da Silva emphasised this was the beginning of the transformation of direct participative democracy into representative democracy:

"...it was this law which established the so-called board of education in kindergartens, which has parents, municipalities, educators, and assistants, but always a little bit a representative democracy – which I don't know if it makes a lot of sense in institutions - and not a direct democracy..." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

The democratisation of education with the goal of achieving equality of opportunities of access and success, the freedom to learn and to teach, the laicisation<sup>51</sup> of the public education are all representations of an ideological, philosophical, political, religious directive. As Teodoro (1982) opined: "if opening the access to education is an essential condition, it is not enough, in the meantime, to secure to all a truthful equality of opportunities of success in terms of education" (p.30). Perhaps for that same reason some of the changes and resistances, which occurred during the transition period, could be considered as necessary.

Brederode stated in her interview that "the interpretation given to what is democracy in school keeps changing with the political life in Portugal". She discussed different stages of the establishment of democracy in the education system, straight after the revolution:

"the first change was in the revelations of the 'strengths' of the people within the schools, of who was in charge, [and the strong actions] to 'throw to the ground' all the [schools'] directorates. Then there was also a concern with the contents of the books, the [school] manuals (...)

There's the phase of 'revelation of strength' [of who is in charge], there's the phase of 'content' [management]. Next, when there is the 'normalisation' [period], which happens with the [education] Minister Cardia in 76/77, it is very amusing (...)

[Minister Cardia] (...) created the programme of a secondary [school] discipline of 'introduction to politics', and he ends with the

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<sup>51</sup> Also from the term *Laïcité* loosely translated into English as secularisation, or freedom from ecclesiastical control.

programme, ends with the discipline that he has himself created, and thus follows a Sergian line [from António Sérgio<sup>52</sup>]; henceforward the union of 'active education' (that democracy is what is done, inasmuch as defending a very representative democracy) with no values whatsoever, neither contents, because that could be very indoctrinating" (interview with Brederode, 03/09/2012).

Brederode's view highlights the shift from direct to representative democracy and demonstrates the reluctance of the State to promote a set of clearly defined democratic values, as they would somehow resemble the previous dictatorial experience, which was also founded on a specific value system (specifically God, Family and Patria). The 'speed' and 'necessity' of the state to move away from its past, explains some inconsistencies (that can be seen in the next section of this chapter) that emerge in the Portuguese education laws regarding democracy, and shows the struggle of the government in trying to establish democracy without authoritarianism.

This aim, to avoid looking like the previous government, resulted in a form of 'democratic indoctrination', and created principles within the policies that were contradictory. One could either argue that democracy in Portugal was all encompassing, meaning many different things to many different people, or that the state was living the problem of compromise, because it was unwilling to commit to a singular view of what democracy could represent in the Portuguese context. Perhaps because, as stated by Brederode in her interview, in Portugal:

"democracy means different things to different people and above all to different forces... [and perhaps most importantly] democracy [also] represents the space to have different ideals" (interview with Brederode, 03/09/2012).

Accordingly, while the intentions were clear, there was a lack of clarity in meaning, and consequently room for interpretation. This is one example of what could be considered as both the strength and the fragility in the Portuguese education system as portrayed in the law, and as Lopes da Silva said in interview "fragilities aren't changed by decrees, it will take centuries" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013). Merelman (1969)

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<sup>52</sup> António Sérgio de Sousa (also referred to in chapter 3) was a Portuguese intellectual "who saw education not merely as a specialized, professional field, but as the bedrock of the processes of social, economic and political change" (Nóvoa, 1994, p.503).

argues that after political movements have succeeded in establishing themselves “the less ideologically sophisticated adherents become apathetic or even antagonistic. As a consequence, leadership passes from agitators to colourless administrators or ruthless pragmatists” (p.766).

Vasconcelos expressed that in Portugal:

"democracy is built on two levels, a macro level in which we are great at, in the laws, we always have very progressive laws, fantastic etc., and the micro level of the movement of people, of citizens, populations, and at this level we have a society with a large democratic deficit, people do not organise, they are always expecting the state to do everything, etc.

[in comparison with Anglo-Saxon countries the Portuguese] mind-set is exactly the opposite mind-set; we are victims of the state... we want to be super protected by the State... which will solve all the problems.

[through the development of policies] (...) at the macro level... we attempt to build democracy. At the micro level, it is very complicated, because at micro level it is necessary citizenship, the sense of citizenship, and we have very little" (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

Lopes da Silva also reinforced this opinion, and expanded on it, by emphasising that Portuguese "democracy is very recent" and "if there is not more democracy especially in contrast with the Anglo-Saxon countries", it is because:

“civil society is not strong, I mean, the person is always waiting... on the one hand there is a civil society poorly organised and very dependent on the state, the state is the one who has to create the school... and on the other hand there are a variety of popular associations, music, sport<sup>53</sup>, who want nothing to do with the state and who extremely distrust the state.

So I think our democracy lives a bit between ‘the state who provides all’ and ‘we do not want anything to do with the state’, but we also do nothing for the community, we do for our community, for that group, for that specific community, and not to the community at large, what is for the community in general it is with the state, we do not have anything to do with it.

The state shall provide healthcare, education, because there is much that dependency, this mist of dependency and suspicion (...) it seems to me that there is this tension" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

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<sup>53</sup> Which also create and maintain IPSS institutions.

To some extent, the comments from both Vasconcelos and Lopes da Silva further reinforce the need to connect democracy with the notion of citizenship which emerges strongly in policy during the 1980s. From the perspectives of policy makers, Portugal has a weak sense of citizenship, and this needs to be reflected and included in policy and practice.

## **5.2. Education policy landscapes in the 1980s – Democratic Ubiquity**

The 1980s were marked by a period of reflection on the effects of the 1974 revolution. In 1982, the Portuguese educator António Teodoro published *The Portuguese Education system. Situations and Perspectives (O Sistema Educativo Português Situações e Perspectivas)*. This influential text aimed to analyse and characterise the education system of the time. It also intended to propose some new perspectives, which, according to him, were “fundamental for the school to be, in Portugal, an institution of transformation and progress” (Teodoro, 1982, p.15). Teodoro (1982) strongly believed the education system was living in troubled times. There was a crisis emerging from several complicated roots, one of which being the legacy of strong fascist politics of the country’s past, particularly during the 50 years before the overthrow of the dictatorial regime. He argued that despite the efforts to include democracy within the new policies, this legacy was still very present on the day-to-day lives of traditional institutions. According to Teodoro (1982), the only possible solution for this crisis was the full democratisation of the school, i.e. the democratisation of the whole of the education system.

The revolution enabled profound changes in education, such as: the democratic management of schools, the democratisation of the curriculum (for example by broadening the educational content (e.g. going beyond the educational values of the dictatorship: Family, God and Patria), the access of all population (independently of background) to education, and so on. However, advocating the democratisation of education, according to Teodoro (1982), meant not only to defend an aesthetic demand (i.e. a symbolic goal) and a condition for the integral development of the human



being, but also the establishment of democracy as an imperative for the economic development and social progress of the country. Democratisation in this sense was perceived as a concept which encompassed both an individual and a social dimension.

Furthermore, Teodoro (1982) believed that by engaging in a process of democratisation of the education system, the state would be demonstrating a compromise towards all of those who fought against retrenchment and authoritarianism. The democratisation of education should comprise three complementary though (at times) convergent dimensions. These were:

- Equality of opportunities of access to education
- Equality of opportunities of success in education
- Participation in the system (Teodoro, 1982, p.16).

While all these dimensions were contained in the 1976 Constitution, Teodoro (1982) claimed that:

“the existing contradictions of the Portuguese society’s democratic process did not create conditions which allowed to carry a global project of reforms of the education system, capable of corresponding to the anxieties of the young people, teachers, workers, and all of who fought for a democratic school with solid scientific and pedagogical quality” (Teodoro, 1982, p.24)

His comments reflected an emerging recognition that the education system had not yet achieved what it proposed in the aftermath of the revolution. While I found no specific evidence claiming that Teodoro’s (1982) book influenced some of the principles which underpinned the 1986 Basic Law for education, I argue that there are clear links between them, reflecting the views he and others expressed.

The next section explores how the 1986 Basic Law for the Education system was created and how democracy was introduced within many different forms and in all levels of education (specifically ECE).

### **(a) Policy: 1986 Basic Law for Education**

Directly drawn from the 1976 Constitution the 1986 Basic Law for Education is the first official document from the Ministry of Education which fully articulates the relationship between the policy intentions and the measures

which should be implemented/enacted in the education system since 1974. This law consecrated the foundations of the Portuguese education system, which still exist today. It could be said that the 1986 Basic Law provided the 'necessary' guidance to the education system, and ended a period of uncertainty and incoherence that lasted 12 years after the reinstatement of democracy.

The 1986 Basic Law is based upon several principles, which demonstrate how democracy is/should be manifested at the policy level. The foundational statements are expressed at a number of levels including the 'principles of definition' of the law; the 'general principles'; and the 'organisational principles' of the education system. Within all of these, there are specific principles, of which democracy and democratic education are central.

For instance, Principle 2 of Article 1 under the 'scope and definition' of the law, states that:

“The education system is the set of means by which the right to education is materialised, which is expressed by the guarantee of a permanent training action-oriented to promote the overall development of personality, social progress and the democratisation of society.”

(Basic Law for Education, 1986)

The 'scope and definition' of this Law thus highlights the Constitutional directive that the education system should be perceived as the means to:

- a) fight despotism, and
- b) guarantee the democratisation of the country.

Similarly, Principle 2 of Article 2, under the 'general principles' states that:

“It is the State's special responsibility to promote the democratisation of education, ensuring the right to a fair and effective equality of opportunity in access and success in school.”

(Basic Law for Education, 1986)

This principle repeats the intention and allocates responsibility to the state of one of the grand objectives of the 1976 Constitution, of democratising education and society, by providing every citizen with access to and success in education.

Grilo argues that one of the first foundational aspects of the 1986 Basic Law was “the massification and democratisation of the education system” (Marçal Grilo, 1994, p.409). Table 5.2. below shows the growth on the numbers of enrolments across the whole of the education system from 1974 to 1990.

**Table 5.2. – School Population from 1974-1990<sup>54</sup>**

School Population								
School Year	Pre-School	Basic and Secondary Education					Higher Education	Middle School or other (e.g. vocational education)
		1-4	5-6	7-9	10-11	11-12	University	Non-University
1974-1975	42490 7.8%	933112 85.2%	253192 27.9%	241560		56910		174547
1980-1981	100178 17.8%	917925 100%	322382 41.1%	259289 26.2%	178118	69682	27050	74859
1984-1985	116325 22.9%	890371 100%	375516 56.6%	314880 37.6%	248823	83448	35248	74299
1989-1990	121638 41.7%	670441 100%	343192 69.2%	363384 54.0%	287913	107905	38882	87369

( - Student numbers retrieved from Marçal Grilo, 1994, p.410;  
 - Percentages retrieved from PORDATA, 2016b, [online])

There are a couple of noticeable aspects which can be inferred from the table above, one of them is that with the end of dictatorship the birth rates decreased exponentially throughout the years (this can be seen in the decreased enrolment of students in the years 1 to 4)<sup>55</sup>. The other, is that the access to education particularly in ECE increased substantially particularly from 1975 to 1980, which means that the ‘massification’ of this level of

<sup>54</sup>Regarding access to ECE, Portuguese data tends to be presented in terms of capacity (‘coverage’) which is reflected on the table above in the numbers of student population. In terms of access, the percentages presented represent the ‘real rates of schooling’, i.e. the number of enrolments compared to the student population of the same age.

<sup>55</sup> This is particularly important because it can be a representation of the efforts of ‘modernisation’ of the country for instance by an opening of birth control and Women’s employment.

education started with the establishment of democracy, rather than necessarily from the 1986 Basic Law. What this Law attempted, was to align the intentions and actions of the education system to respond to its rapidly enlarged student population. In the mid-1980s the expansion of the education system in Portugal happened by means of:

- 1) the extension of the compulsory school years from 6 to 9 years;
- 2) the increase in access to education; and
- 3) the increase in search for education places from people from disadvantaged social classes, which started considering education as a factor of professional and social valorisation [Education as the process of creating value out of knowledge for personal and professional appreciation alongside the social utility of the individual] (Marçal Grilo, 1994).

Portuguese researcher Eurico Lemos Pires (1987) stated that some of the general principles in the 1986 Basic Law are paradoxical and only affirm what was already constitutionally described in 1976. The general principles of the 1986 Basic Law specify the following:

- 1) the right to education and culture;
- 2) the democratisation of education translated in a just and effective equality of opportunities within the access and success in education;
- 3) the freedom to learn and teach;
- 4) that the state does not have the right to schedule education and culture according to philosophical, aesthetic, political, ideological or religious directives
- 5) the creation of a non-denominational<sup>56</sup> public education system
- 6) the right to create private and cooperative schools. (Pires,1987)

Despite being directly drawn from the Constitution, the seemingly inconsistent nature of this law is quite striking. As noted by Pires (1987) one of the most contradictory (yet constitutionally ratified) principles, is the one which states that “the state is not subordinated to ideological directives” (Pires, 1987, p.25). However, as Pires contended, “[a]nalogically the enunciated principle is in itself an affirmation of a philosophical, political and ideological nature” (ibid). In following the 1976 Constitution, the 1986 Basic Laws main function is to guarantee the constitutional right to education by aiming for the global development of personality of the individual, social

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<sup>56</sup> An education system where no religious belief is given precedence over any other and different religious communities are treated even-handedly by the school and the state. In the law this is described as non-confessional.

progress, and the democratisation of society. These objectives determine all the (constitutionally ratified general and organisational) principles enunciated in the law, which align the whole of the education system. The 1986 Basic Law essentially explains and elaborates the vital concepts and objectives of the education system within the context of the 1976 Constitution. As Vasconcelos explained, this is the first law:

“which makes explicit... [i.e.] explains the principles of democracy - education for all, access of all people to basic education (...) [Furthermore, regarding ECE] it consecrates [that] it is also the role of the state to foster an early childhood education network, preschool as they called it at that time" (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012).

Similarly, Vilarinho (2011) commented: “[T]he publication of the Basic Law of the Education System – Law 46/86 of 14 October – is an important legislative mark, essentially because it consolidates the insertion of preschool education in the education system and reinforces its educational function” (p.114). Therefore, as emphasised by Vasconcelos in her interview:

"the request of/for democracy in education begins with the April 25, [through] the population's demand, but in terms of legislation it is the Basic Law that determines, for its guidance, determines the 'democraticity' of education, so from [19]86.

At that time, it is created, it is firm in the law, something that was not there before - the need for a preschool education system, but from 3-6 years and to be done in close collaboration with the families" (Interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

The 1986 Basic Law defines preschool education as a level of education within a 'facultative regime' (i.e. a level of education which is optional) that precedes 'school education' (i.e. education in school), and which starts from 3 years old until pupils' entrance into (compulsory) primary education. According to Pires (1987), it is possible to deduce five fundamental beliefs which define the trajectory and perspectives outlined by this Law for preschool education. Pires (1987) contends that these are:

- a) The specificity and autonomy of the 'preschool education' in relation to 'school education'. This is translated into ECE specific objectives which is conducted according to contents, methods, and appropriate techniques specific to that level of education. This law establishes

the exceptionality of this level of education while unambiguously defending the belief that preschool education is not a 'preparatory' stage. It lays down a clear demarcation of preschool education in relation to basic education and demonstrates that ECE is an autonomous level of education, which is not subordinated to the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of basic education (i.e. Primary school).

- b) The recognition that the family has a key role to play in the education of the child and that preschool education will always be conducted in articulation with the family environment. The cooperation with the family is meant in a bidirectional sense (home – school and vice-versa) and it is perceived as one of the specific characteristics of this level of education.
- c) The creation of a public network of preschool education, whose existence is ensured by the State, and provided by multiple sources (such as central, regional or local institutions, associations of parents, civic organisations, religious organisations, charitable institutions and other legal or individual entities). The state is assigned with the responsibility to not only take their own initiatives, but also boost all the other initiatives by other providers that are well integrated into the public network. This means that in order to sustain a public network of preschool education the state also has the responsibility to subsidise, in whole or in part, the operating costs of these initiatives.
- d) The establishment of a guidance unit for pre-school education (i.e. 3-6 years old) which belongs to a single Ministry, which is the Ministry of Education, regardless of the responsibility for its realisation, i.e. even in pre-school institutions that may depend on other Ministries (such as The Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, and so on)
- e) The reiteration that preschool education activities should be performed by specialised professionals, who were empowered with adequate training through higher education degrees as stated by the Basic Law, in other words, qualified early childhood educators. (Pires, 1987, pp.41-42)

In 1986 these principles were set out as intentions which were clearly stated within the Law for the development of ECE. Most of them, however, only became the subject of policy actions years later (mainly from the mid-1990s onward). For example: in 1994 a green paper was issued that highlighted the fragmentation and lack of collaboration between Ministries in the provision of ECE services; 'the establishment of a guidance unit for preschool education' only happened with the creation of the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education in 1997; the training of ECE teachers also changed throughout the years and with the approval of the Framework Law for Pre-School Education in 1997 all educators were required to have a BA Honours degree (4 years of training) as a minimum qualification to work with children. As Vasconcelos emphasised in her interview, "it takes a long time to change these things" (interview, 04/01/2012) and some of them have changed since those intentions were expressed (for instance educators training which today requires a Master's degree; and (as discussed in chapter 6) the pressures that some educators' feel to enact pre-school as preparation for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle of education, which endanger the uniqueness of this level of education).

Despite the development and the exponential growth (in terms of provision) of preschool education, particularly between 1976 and 1985, the investment in ECE suffered a decline from 1985 onwards. Vasconcelos explained in her interview, the 'Roberto Carneiro reform'<sup>57</sup> of the education system did not include pre-school education. During the 'Cavaco Silva'<sup>58</sup> years', from 1985 to 1995, the pre-school education growth was stabilised as a consequence of ECE no longer being a political priority (interview, 04/01/2012). In her research, Vilarinho (2011) denominated this period as "the retraction phase" (p.114).

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<sup>57</sup> Minister of Education of the XI Constitutional Government from 1987 to 1991.

<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister of the X, XI and XIII Constitutional Government (1985-1995) and President of the Portuguese Republic from 2006-2016

## **(b) Conception: Ubiquitous Democracy**

Within the 'organisational principles', as defined in Article 3 (Principle L) of the 1986 Basic Law, the education system should be organised to ensure it is:

“Contributing to the development of the democratic spirit and practice, through the adoption of processes and structures of participation in the definition of education policy, in the administration and management of the school system and in the daily teaching experience, which integrate all stakeholders in the educational process, especially students, teachers and families.”

(Basic Law for Education, 1986)

Organisations are thus expected to promote democracy ubiquitously through the 'democratic spirit', 'participation' and 'management' from all those involved in the education process. In this way, democracy becomes ubiquitous as it is expected to be a part of all areas within education. This reflects one of the major beliefs proclaimed by democratic educators who claim democracy to be part of life, or more specifically, to be life itself (Dewey, 1916). Lopes da Silva emphasised in her interview that, since the revolution, democracy in Portuguese education was believed to be learnt through:

"...democratic living, and to what extent a group was democratically organised... the democratic structure of that time [after the revolution] had also a lot to do with the group decision, the class councils.

(...) [it] was very [similar to the] Modern School Movement's proposal - the class councils, school boards, and the existence of a direct democratic decision on some disciplinary aspects, some of the so called 'conflicts'.

Some decision even at the level of study and decision [making], which we never arrived at (...) because democracy is still at the group level (of the social functioning of the group), but not at the organisation's level of learning...

So this idea that there is also the organisation of learning, that each [child] can organise and structure their own learning process, I think that neither exists nor is [considered] in the Basic Law.

The Basic Law is very much democracy in the sense of social decisions and not [at the individual level of learning], and for me that would also be democracy." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)



In Lopes da Silva's view, even though democracy is both, an individual and collective concept, within education the individual tends to be considered more as part of the group rather than on his/her own. Also, the initial quest was for a form of pervasive direct democracy. However, as previously explored in this chapter, when incorporated into policy, this democracy was over time transformed into a form of representative democracy (i.e. an indirect form of democracy where decisions were made by groups (such as councils, boards, associations) empowered to make those decisions in the name of all individuals concerned) that remained ever-present in all areas of education. In other words, a representative conception of democracy that was all encompassing and ubiquitous became a central part of education. This shift from participatory to representative democracy however, illustrates Mouffe's (2000) claim that:

"To imagine that pluralist democracy could ever be perfectly instantiated is to transform it into a self-refuting ideal, since the condition of possibility of a pluralist democracy is at the same time the condition of impossibility of its perfect implementation" (p.16).

### **(c) Manifestation: Guiding Principle**

The development of democracy in education, as a guiding legal principle for the education of critical citizens, is emphasised in the 1986 Basic Law, Article 2, Principle 5, which states that:

"Education promotes the development of the democratic and pluralistic spirit, respectful of others and their ideas open to dialogue and free exchange of opinions to form citizens capable of judging with critical and creative social environment in which they live and engage in their progressive transformation".

(Basic Law for Education, 1986)

This principle illustrates and strengthens the premise that democracy entails many different conceptions, both at the individual and collective levels. Democracy is manifested as the embrace of 'collective oneness'. It presupposes the individual identity within the group, where one is perceived as an agent of transformation – a citizen – who can express and discuss different viewpoints. This expression is guided by the promotion of democracy, which enables the development of active critical and creative thinking.

The 1986 Basic Law also promotes, within the rubric of Democracy, attitudes which perceive education as a means to overcome inequalities. Not all these principles were incorporated in policy actions or organisational practices. Thus, for example equality of opportunities of access to education and success in learning has never been fully achieved in practice, remaining in this way an aspiration. However, the 'democratic aspiration' to promote equality within aspects such as gender, geography, age, amongst others, was expressed in the 1986 Basic Law through the following principles:

- 1) "Securing:
  - a) Moral and civic training ('formation');
  - b) Training to work in consonance with the interests, capacities and vocation of each one;
- 2) Decentralise, de-concentrate, and diversify the structures and educational actions;
- 3) Develop the participation of populations in educational actions, specifically of students, teachers, and family, in the definition of education policy, in the administration and management of the school system and in the quotidian pedagogical experience;
- 4) Promote the correction of regional asymmetries in respect to the education, culture and science benefits
- 5) Securing the existence of a second opportunity schooling
- 6) Securing the equality of opportunity for both genders" (Pires, 1987, p.27).

These principles highlight the intent to promote participation, management and administration as roles to be performed not only by the policy but also by all stakeholders in the education system independently of 'who they are' or 'where they come from'. This in turn means that the State did not perceive education as its sole responsibility, but rather the responsibility of all of those involved in it. The State thus promoted a level of shared responsibility with 'democratic values', such as equality, and participation as guiding principles for the educational action. The researchers and policy makers interviewed (such as Vasconcelos and Lopes da Silva), indicated that this 'shared responsibility' (or rather the diffusion of the State's 'obligation') for education resulted in tension between the State and the People. They described an antagonistic relationship between the role of the state and the role of all those involved in the education context during this period of time. For example, with regards to the education of children from birth to the age of 3, which was regarded by MPs (from the whole political spectrum) as the

responsibility of the families rather than the Ministry of Education (this debate was intensified in the 1990s and is still in discussion today).

#### **(d) Intention: Citizenship**

Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins contended in his interview that generally speaking in Portugal “education and democracy are mediated by the notion of citizenship”, and this explains the purpose of education. According to him, the purpose of education:

“(…) is not to create people capable of performing certain jobs. It is not to say: "Oh well, now let's see, let's create observatories of active lives and let's train people, let's plan and let's train people as the carpenters we need, as the grocers, lawyers, doctors...

No, education is not that! Education is training free and responsible citizens. This aspect is absolutely fundamental.

For that reason, we are at the heart of democracy. And (...) we must not forget that democracy is the acceptance of difference and imperfection. This point is very important.

Democracy is never acquired. That is why the act of educating is crucial to reinforce the idea of active and responsible citizenship. Each circumstance demands new conditions, new challenges. This is therefore the fundamental question. Education and democracy are closely linked.” (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013)

This helps to explain why, within this context, education was viewed as central to democracy and vice-versa. Education and democracy in Portugal are (in principle and in policy) intertwined to an unprecedented level. d'Oliveira Martins view illustrates that democracy is seen to only exist if each individual is educated within experiences of “active and responsible citizenship” (ibid) and democratic participation. This in turn suggests that in Portugal democracy is expected to play a central role in creating responsible and active citizens. This also places a tremendous responsibility on education as the primary means to achieve the democratisation of society.

The 1986 Basic Law for the Education System also defined the ideal citizen with reference to individual attributes. According to Pires (1987) within this law the ideal citizen should be:

- 1) “Free
- 2) Responsible
- 3) Autonomous

- 4) Solidary<sup>59</sup>
- 5) Owner of a spirit which is:
  - a) Democratic and pluralist
  - b) Respectful of others, of their ideas and their cultures
  - c) Open to dialogue and to free exchange of opinions
  - d) Critical and creative in relation to the social environment
  - e) Able to consciously reflect on spiritual, aesthetic, moral and civic values
- 6) Owner of a capacity for work and for active life, and also for the creative use of spare [free] time” (Pires, 1987, p.26).

The definitions above produce an image of the ideal citizen, however, according to Pires (1987) the Basic Law for Education does not make explicit a model of the society in which a citizen should be integrated. Little is known about ‘this society’ except for the premise, stated in the Constitution, that it should be a democratic one, with all that entails. It also places the ‘man’ (or the individual) as the essential and central element of society. As Pires (1987) comments, the ‘individual’ is perceived to be at the centre of the educational project.

The ‘individual’ therefore becomes the agent of transformation of the society (in development) through the education process. This presents a parallel with the idea of child centred education (the child at the centre of the education process) which is prevalent in ECE. According to Edwards (2009), “these beliefs and values about early childhood education position children in the centre of the learning experience and emphasise the idea that children should be empowered through and by their learning” (p.31).

Additionally, a leading influence in this area of education (particularly within the development of Portuguese ECE aspirations in the 1980s/early 1990s) was the Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire. Freire (1997) noted that “the disrespect in the reading of the students’ view of the world, reveals an elitist taste, and is therefore antidemocratic” (p.139). In 1997, the Portuguese pre-school education system defined the child as “the subject of the education process” (Ministério da Educação, 1997b, p.23), whilst valuing and respecting “his/her knowledge as the basis of new knowledge” (ibid). This illustrates the diverse and changing influences on and interpretations of

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<sup>59</sup> Referring to a person which displays solidarity. From "Solidaire, the French root of the English word “solidarity,” originally meant “to be bound together.”” (solidaire network [online])

democracy as a guiding principle in the development of Portuguese education policy over time.

The relationship between citizenship and democracy (discussed above) is both revealing and ambiguous. On the one hand, it is widely established, that there is a connection between citizenship and democracy. On the other, it is unclear whether, in this particular context, there is a neoliberal concept of citizenship which is being referred to where: “[c]itizens become consumers who contribute to society primarily through the work they do and the choices they make(...) in a market that serves as the ultimate arbiter of wants, needs, and desires” (Van Heertum, 2009, p.214). Or if citizenship and democracy are being positioned as a means or ‘hope’ to change the circumstances of the past, “‘hope’ as the superordinate construct, with ‘democracy’ as one of its subordinate concepts” (Arthur and Sawyer, 2009, p.163).

If education, as it seems to be in the Portuguese context, is connected to a permanent ideological project it becomes difficult to understand the absence of a consistent policy direction in the promotion of democracy. By this I mean that the relationships between policy intentions and democratic actions lack coherence and face problems of implementation. In Portugal education is seen as both a process and an end for a democratic society. Whilst democracy in education policy can eventually help in overcoming inequality but it cannot necessarily ensure equity. For example, with regards to the selection criteria for children’s access to ECE, there are no public Crèches, this means that services for children from 4 months to 3 years old are only provided by IPSS and Private Institutions, which means that not all children have access to it. In addition, the selection criteria for Pre-School Education in the Public school is done by age, i.e. older children (4 and 5 years old) have priority of access; in the IPSS the selection is based on family income, children from lower income families theoretically have priority, in practice (as discussed in chapter 6) this is not necessarily the case; and in the Private school the criteria is to fill the available spaces as long as families can afford the fees.

There is therefore a duality and perhaps ambiguous manifestation of democracy in education policy. On the one hand, it was as a result of a revolutionary ideology, that democracy was manifested in education policy, intended to nurture the kind of citizen who could help improve and contribute to a democratic society for the 'public good'. On the other hand, democracy in Portuguese education policy is also a characteristic which is so 'exaggeratedly' present that it becomes almost tokenistic, symbolic and inconspicuous; i.e. the generalisation of democratic principles inculcates a type of democracy which is an assumed feature of education and life in society, but incongruously lacks the specificity that might encourage individual and collective responsibility. This, can arguably, put the democratic process within education at risk of becoming both ubiquitous and almost redundant.

There was amongst the interviewees a clear consensus that there was a major difference between what is written/said and what is done. In their view, political intentions and educational enactments are two different things, and consequently this law has faced serious challenges in its implementation.

In the words of Lopes da Silva:

"... between the law, between conceptions and practices of teachers sometimes there is no recognition that there is some relationship (...)  
The laws reflect some concepts, now the laws being applied is different." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

Vasconcelos agreed and stated:

"in 1986, the Basic Law has immense merit... so after all the so-called reform of the education system - at the level of everything - the teacher class is very conservative, and so everything that was implementing a reform of the education system had much resistance on the ground.

I would also say, because the Portuguese tendency comes from many years of Salazar, to implement everything from above. And so, if it is implemented from above we always find resistance, even the Basic Law of the Education System (which in itself is an excellent law, continues to be an excellent law [today]), always found implementation difficulties on the ground." (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

These challenges illustrate Merelman's (1969) view that "more people are capable of reaction than reform" (p.766). This suggests that the 'revolutionary cycle', from reform to reaction, might not have been completed in the Portuguese path to democracy. Vasconcelos continued, indicating that in Portugal:

"we have very capable people to elaborate the laws, then we consult the laws of other countries and create very progressive laws but after, on the ground, the implementation is always very complicated and therefore I would say ... [there is an intentionality] which hardly passes into action.

(...) there are very good things that have happened [with this law].  
(...) we now have almost the entire population schooled (apart from some problematic areas), and this did not happen before April 25. There was only an 'elite', which had access [to education]. There were many children outside the education system (...) at that level, the Basic Law had great influence.

(...) after [the Basic Law] the changes are much slower, and it is mainly the so-called 'massification of education' which brought 'all' to the education system." (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

The revolutionary enthusiasm and participatory action of 1974 was consecrated as a policy intention in the 1976 Constitution and described as a set of education policy actions in the 1986 Basic Law of the Education System. This demonstrates that the most important policies in Portugal emerged as a response to specific historic and social events. However, the challenges of implementation suggest that concrete policies were always many steps behind society as by the time policies were developed and ready to be enacted, the historical moment which gave rise to those policies had passed. This also suggests that top-down policy is, in these circumstances, by definition a 'delayed policy', as society changed faster than the policymaking process. Policy production in Portugal has therefore responded to key historical events. There is consequently a level of desynchronisation between policy making and policy enactment. In Portugal's political history, there was a rapid movement from bottom-up policies emerging from the revolution to top-down decisions during the later establishment of a representative democratic system. As such, Portugal is still characterised by a reliance on policies emerging as top-down structures versus lived realities (Kostouli and Mitakidou, 2009). Despite all the 'good

intentions', there are power structures that are cumbersome rather than facilitative, which cannot be ignored.

### **5.3. Education policy landscapes in the 1990s – Democratic Regulation**

The 1990s (particularly the mid-1990s) are known in the 'Portuguese ECE community' as the 'expansion years' or according to Vilarinho (2011) the 'revitalisation period'. Despite the emphasis placed by the 1986 Basic Law on the integration of pre-school education into the overall education system, by 1988 the rates of pre-school education coverage were still around only 36%. This was low compared to the 60-80% rates at the same time in Northern European countries (Vasconcelos, 2000). In other words, Portugal was still far from realising the proposition of 'access to and success in education for all'.

In 1995, the opposition won the elections and the government changed (from a Social Democrat government - PSD (Centre-Right) to a Socialist government - PS (Centre-Left)). With this change the expansion of the pre-school education network became a priority and placed on the political agenda again. As noted by Vasconcelos in her interview, the new political motto was that 'there was no democracy unless there was pre-school education for all' (interview, 04/01/2012). d'Oliveira Martins also contended that "[i]n the name of equality of opportunities and [in the name of] the promotion of quality, pre-school education was, since 1995, taken by the Government as the first educational policy priority and as a decisive factor for the development of the Portuguese society" (in Ministério da Educação, 2000, preamble).

It was strongly believed at the time, that a quality pre-school education played a significant and influential role on future levels of schooling. As such, it was seen as imperative to establish a national network of pre-school education, which would coordinate education, family and social support. Pre-school was perceived as the first step of basic education, which was irreplaceable in order to achieve the UNESCO's goal of *quality* education



for everyone. It aimed to balance the development of all the potentialities of the child, while providing them with opportunities for autonomy and socialisation. It also had the role of preparing children for successful schooling and constituted an important support to families in their educational task (ibid).

In order to achieve all of those objectives, in 1997, both the Framework Law for Pre-School Education (Law 5/97 of 10 February) and the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education were promulgated. This legislation provided the legal framework for ECE policies which are still in practice today, and further discussed in the section below.

### **(a) Policies: 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education**

Marçal Grilo (1997) claims that while preschool education was included in the 1986 Basic Law for the Education System, ECE did not have its own legislative framework until the introduction of the Framework Law for Pre-School Education in 1997.

The Framework Law was created with a clear democratic purpose in mind, whilst reflecting some of the intentions presented previously within the 1986 Basic Law. The fundamental objective of the Framework Law was not only to define the general objectives of this level of education, but also to define the specific pedagogical and organisational principles by which ECE should be founded. It therefore built upon the 1986 legislation but differed from it because it established pre-school education as the first step of basic education and as a basic social service with its own pedagogical principles. Accordingly, the 1997 Framework Law established nine specific goals for Pre-School education. These were:

- a) "To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.
- b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.
- c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and learning success.

- d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual differences, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.
- e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.
- f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.
- g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.
- h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.
- i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community." (Ministério da Educação, 1997a, p.14).

The creation of the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education established the juridical framework for pre-school education. It stipulated that as a general principle:

"Pre-school education is the first step in basic education in a life-long educational process. It is complementary to family education, acting in close partnership in order to provide a balanced development of the child with a view to his/her full integration in society as an autonomous, free and co-operative individual" (Ministério da Educação, 1997a, p.11).

In addition, within the framework law:

"...the Pre-School education objectives contemplate not only the personal and social development areas, but also the intellectual, humane and expressive development. The child is considered, already at this education level, as a future citizen and, as such, should have, from the earliest age, experiences of democratic life" (Vasconcelos, 1997, p.13).

This suggests the child as a citizen waiting nurturing into a democratic life (with democratic related experiences) which will potentially ensure the child's active citizenship in adulthood. However, two points can be noted. The first is that many educators already consider the child as a citizen from birth, rather than a citizen waiting to make a 'positive' contribution to society (Nichols, 2007). Second, the lack of clarification of definitions (or specificity of meanings) seems to contribute to a variety of beliefs, which have filtered into education policy and created opportunities for a diversified practice. This ambiguity is further promoted by the existence of the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School education, which are discussed below.

## **(a) Policies: Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education**

The 'Curriculum Guidelines' is a document (the first of its sort) which is a common reference to all educators from the National Network of Pre-School Education (i.e. Public Network (Public settings) and the Private Network (IPSS and Private settings)). These guidelines provide generic advice on the organisation and content of the ECE curriculum. They are not a programme, as they adopt a perspective more centred in suggestions and indications for the educator, rather than stipulating the learning that should be achieved by the children. They also differ from a formal curriculum because they are more general and they include the possibility of enacting diverse educational practices (Ministério da Educação, 1997b).

The Curriculum Guidelines are organised in three parts:

1) General principles and pedagogical objectives as per the Framework Law of Pre-School Education of 1997(presented earlier).

2) Foundations and organisation of the Curricular Guidelines. Which are based on the following principles:

- “- Development and learning as inseparable aspects; - the recognition of the child as subject of the education process – which means starting from what the child already knows and value their knowledge as the foundation for new learning;
- The articulated construction of learning – which implies that the different areas to contemplate should not be seen as sealed compartments, but addressed in a holistic and integrated way;
- The demand to respond to all children – which presupposes a differentiated pedagogy, centred in cooperation, in which each child benefits from the education process which is developed with the group” (Ministério da Educação, 1997b, p.14)

3) General guidelines to the educator, in terms of the foundations for the curricular development and the educator's responsibility. According to these guidelines the educator should take into account:

- “- The general objectives stated in the Framework Law for Pre-School Education as intentions that should orient the professional practice of the educator;
- The organisation of the educational environment – as a support of the curricular work and its intentionality. The educational environment involves different levels in interaction: the organisation

of the group, space and time; the organisation of the education establishment, the relationship with parents and other educational partners;

- The content areas – which constitute the general reference to consider in the planning and evaluation of the learning situations and opportunities. There are three distinctive content areas: - Area of Personal and Social Formation; - Area of Expression/Communication with three domains: 1) motor expression, dramatic expression, plastic expression and musical expression; 2) language and writing; and 3) mathematics; and - Area of Knowledge of the World.

- The education continuity – that arises from the process which starts from what the children already know and have learnt, creating conditions for the success of future learning.

- The education intentionality – that arises from the reflexive process of observation, planning, action, and evaluation which is developed by the educator, in order to adapt their practice to children's needs” (Ministério da Educação, 1997b, p.14)

Isabel Lopes da Silva stated in her interview that the (hi)story behind the creation of the Curriculum Guidelines is quite a curious one, because it demonstrates a different intentionality from what emerged.

“The Curriculum Guidelines were commissioned by Manuela Ferreira Leite, Minister of Education of the [Social Democratic Party] PSD, at a time when there was no longer much money, and she (we are talking about 1994), and she wanted to transfer all childhood education to the private [sector] with State subsidies. [There was] even a decree issued in this sense... the only ordinance in Portugal which speaks about this early childhood education ‘thing’, as the OECD says - as an investment that has long-term return, either in workers' return, or in compensatory measures, it is the only legislation in its introduction which says this, there is no other”. (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

However, as it was at the end of this government's tenure this decree was never applied (as happened with many other laws and decrees in the unstable times of Portuguese education policy).

Lopes da Silva continued explaining that, with the intention of moving ECE to the private network through State subsidy, there was a need to create a control mechanism “because if the state was going to give money it needed to have some control instrument [to know] what were the children doing [in the preschool]”. It was Ferreira Leite who “ordered the curricular guidelines”, but it was “the socialist [PS] government that came next [who made them] ... a great ‘face card’” [i.e. manifesto] of its education politics. The Socialist

government at the time had the development of education policies as central within its manifesto. Consequently, even though the Curricular Guidelines for Pre-School Education emerged initially to promote private control, they were converted into “an instrument of unification of a national network of pre-school education” (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

Teresa Vasconcelos in her interview also emphasised that the process of developing the Curriculum Guidelines was itself a democratic one. She explained:

“there was a previous paper prepared by Professor Isabel Lopes da Silva and we spent one year with this prior document to negotiate it with organisations, with early childhood educators, we had study circles on the document, so the final document only came out a year later, and so it was considered a form of democratically prepare Curriculum Guidelines, it was with the contribution of the educators’ class and with input also from the scientific community, which gave advice, organisations of parents who also gave advice, we did auditions across the country (...)

The OECD considered the construction of the Curriculum Guidelines an exemplary practice. For this reason, after all these years we continue with the same curriculum guidelines that were to be reviewed after three years – (were to be reviewed in [the year] 2000)(...) there have been several attempts, but no one - we all say: "look, ... if it is to improve it, very well, if it is to come out worse, it is best left as it is" and indeed [despite] the various attempts, we think that is still a reference document, because it is a socio-constructivist document, clearly, it doesn't give, it is not a normative document, it is guidelines, then within the guidelines it is possible to integrate various curricular models, several pedagogical proposals, etc.” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

From Vasconcelos words there are two key messages that can be inferred. The first, that a process of consultation (following the democratic ideal of participation of different stakeholders of the educational process) was extremely important to create these guidelines (which are not always a feature of policy making processes). Second, that the freedom to choose a pedagogical practice was seen as a positive aspect in the ECE sector, as it is perceived to contribute to a form of democracy. In other words, the diversity of practice is popular amongst those who perceive pedagogical choice as a democratic offer. This diversity is still present today. As stated by Vilarinho in her interview:

"Currently this is a strongly heterogeneous reality. Heterogeneity is the brand (...) There is an institutional diversity (...) of great institutional orientation (...) to which somehow the framework law would be the Magna Carta...

[within] the differences in pedagogical practices, taking into account the institutional variety, this fragmentation still exists, it is still very large. Although the framework law sought to have here a second stage of standardisation, and there were many positive aspects. " (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013)

In addition to the promotion of pedagogical choice, the manifestation of democracy within the Curriculum Guidelines is also demonstrated through "citizenship and democratic participation, intercultural, ecology, non-sexist approaches to education (...) and cultural participation." (Vasconcelos, 1998, p.8).

Therefore,

"rather than a prescriptive list of targets to be achieved by the children... [the curricular guidelines] may also be differentiated from the curriculum notion since they are more general and wide-ranging, i.e. they include the possibility of using various types of learning/teaching options and therefore, various types of curriculum." (Ministério da Educação, 1997b, p.22)

The 'openness' of the Curriculum Guidelines was seen to allow educators freedom to adopt different pedagogical practices and approaches (this explains the popularity of the same with the ECE professionals). According to Lopes da Silva the Curriculum Guidelines were a very welcomed instrument as they contributed to the recognition of the profession while supporting educators' self-image.

Regarding the introduction/insertion of democracy into the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education, Lopes da Silva said that it came "from the legislation, from the framework law, because we very much agreed with the framework law" (interview, 23/05/2013). She noted:

"...[democracy] passes into the curriculum guidelines through personal and social education 'formation' from a democratic organisation of the group in which children have the possibility of decision and choice, because there is a concept that was also at that time – (that had to be a little explained) - that is the concept of independence and the concept of autonomy, that is, independence as independence of the child, knowing to wash their hands, knowing to dress up, knowing to undress, so the independence and

autonomy, because to choose you need to know what you can choose from" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

Vilarinho also revealed her views on the emergence/manifestation of democracy within the curriculum guidelines:

if you say, - 'democracy emerges within the Curriculum Guidelines, through the work with children' - no, it doesn't emerge [in this way]. The Curriculum Guidelines... at its core congregate everything that was a pedagogical thinking of early childhood educators... very marked by progressive democratic streams of education. So I think it's a distinction of this professional group.

It was(...) above all marked and obviously associated with two movements of expansion; the expansion of the actual system and the expansion of the educators' training system which is no longer in the hands of (...) (the church (...) and philanthropy), that had the teachers training colleges; and the State, whom also began to take on this role. So these two movements will affirm, in depth, these principles of democracy, solidarity (...)

at that time, we already had well present in our practice (...) these principles which are structuring today (...) the respect for the child, the child as an actor with agency, capable, so not looking at the child as a passive subject, but as someone who has an agency that can and should influence their context and its pedagogical practices (...) which take place in a (...) social position, that comes from a principle (...) of 'democratic democratisation' (...)

Now (...) where is the foundation (?)... It is indeed to believe that (...) we want to live in a society that is democratic, which respects others, respects the diversity of ideas, whether it's the children's ideas, whether it's the parents' ideas, whomever actor's the ideas are from (...) The Curriculum Guidelines are a culmination of revival and the update of an entire pedagogical discourse that was being developed... (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013).

Both Lopes da Silva and Vilarinho's reflections indicate that democracy emerged in the Curriculum Guidelines as a consequence of the specific pedagogical thinking (which saw children, early childhood educators, and parents as free agents within the education process), not only from the time but one that revived some of the beliefs and ideologies from the revolution. The 'spirit' surrounding the conception of the Curriculum Guidelines illustrate the beginning of viewing the child has an active agent and actor with potential to take ownership of its education process. It also views children as individuals that should be nurtured into a process of life where they could engage in democratic relationships with others, for instance by the means of 'participation' and 'choice'.

## **(b) Conceptions: Regulatory Democracy**

Vasconcelos explained that one of the reasons for the interest of the socialist party (PS) in the education of 3 to 6 years olds was the very strongly organised movement at the trade/teacher unions' level, which emerged at the time. This included a street movement with demonstrations where ECE teachers:

“asked for the so called democratisation of pre-school. [This happened] before 1995 at the end of Cavaco [Silva's] government... [and] the claim was: ‘we want the same privileges of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle<sup>60</sup> teachers, in terms of pay, working conditions, etc. and we want the dignifying of preschool and its democratisation’.” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

Vasconcelos noted that

“the background of this policy making process was very interesting. In 1994, a Green Paper was issued from the National Council [of Education], prepared by Professor João Formosinho - the Green Paper No. 1/94 which draws the government's attention to the need to invest in preschool education. So, this was before PS won the elections in 1995, therefore this Green Paper was also historical” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012).

The 1994 Green Paper triggered the Socialist Party (PS) campaign to support ECE. It also informed the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education, which defined ECE not only as the first step of Basic Education, but also as a basic social service (Formosinho, 1997).

The Framework Law's contribution to the development of ECE is reflected by the propositions and compromises it makes. For instance, it ensured that the pedagogical supervision of ECE was done by the Ministry of Education, even though other ministries and private organisations operated ECE settings. It also included within its responsibilities the creation of curriculum orientations (i.e. the *1997 Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education*) (Bairrão and Vasconcelos, 1997).

According to Vasconcelos in her interview, this 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education was also crucial because it asserted the State's responsibility to guarantee the existence of a National Network of pre-school

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<sup>60</sup> Primary school



education. This Network comprises of the public sector which encompasses public institutions and the particular and cooperative networks, which includes private, and IPSS institutions. She noted some of the government priorities at the time (which aimed to enact some of the intentions stated in the 1986 Basic Law and in the newly formed 1997 Framework Law), such as: the release of funding to guarantee that there was an ECE educator in every IPSS classroom; the continuing expansion of the public and the private and cooperative networks; the creation of legislation which stated that if there was no public or IPSS provision the State would provide vouchers for children to attend the particular and cooperative institutions; and also legislation guaranteeing the quality of the education institutions in terms of structures, resources, and so on.

Arguably the role of this law was not only to support the expansion of ECE, but also to enable and encourage a greater intersection between the different services offered and to establish common principles by which the responses (even though diverse) could be guided (Precatado et al., 2009). This included the regulation of democracy as the provision of democratic life experiences in ECE, as per the first grand objective of the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education.

### **(c) Manifestations: Rhetorical Symbol (Heterotopia)**

In this period (1990s), the manifestations of democracy in ECE policy were very much connected with the broader purposes of education and with the understanding of what was the role of the State in its provision. d'Oliveira Martins reflected on why he felt it was important to consider ECE as the first step of basic education and also how ECE complemented family action. He noted:

"[w]hat distinguishes a backward society from a developed society is the ability to learn. People say, "Knowledge occupies no place" people say "Learning until you die." This is extraordinarily important

because it means a (...) paradigm of education, and 'formation'<sup>61</sup> throughout life, what we best refer to as continuing education. (...) but being a continuum it starts right from childhood education, and therefore requires good 'formation'... - early 'formation' and early childhood education...

there is a crucial triangle, which has to do with democracy, with citizenship, with learning and with education - school, family, community. The teacher is the professional educator, father, mother, grandparents, family, are the natural educators (...) education has to be done in complementarity for one simple reason. Because education is also education and introduction to the social environment..." (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013)

As such, the role of ECE policy in the 1990s was to make democracy possible, firstly by acting as a thick narrative of modernisation, to advance the 'backward' society still undermined by the dictatorial remnants; and secondly by transforming the utopia of the 1970s (ideas of equality, access for all, solidarity, and so on) into the heterotopia of the 1990s (policies, guidance regulations, and so on). Consequently, encouraging the purpose of ECE not only to be the continuation of the families' education, but also to provide children with a rich social environment where they could be immersed in democratic life experiences. For d'Oliveira Martins this is a statement affirming that education cannot lack:

"the social environment, the life of relationship, and the complexity and uncertainty of the life in relationship. Democracy needs this life of relationship and needs this introduction into a different environment from this protected environment which is the family environment (...), that is why it is essential that we have increasingly perfected the issue of early childhood education as a whole" (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013)

Furthermore, all the principles stated in the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education contain 'characteristics' of democratic practices (such as freedom of communication, inclusion of diversity, criticality, participation and so on).

As emphasised by Lopes da Silva in her interview

"between the unique statute of [19]79 and then the framework law there is a difference in the child's admission as a citizen that there

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<sup>61</sup> The process of being 'formed' is used in Portugal to refer to education. It is a notion that adds a more personal dimension to the Anglo-Saxon concept of 'training'.

wasn't in [19]79. The child was still dependent, fragile, and so I think there was this evolution.” (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013)

By establishing and maintaining the first of its goals “[T]o promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.” (Ministério da Educação, 1997a, p.14), the Framework Law is also contributing to a larger on-going debate on the relationship between education and democracy.

For instance, the Council for Europe in 2010 developed policy tools for democratic citizenship for its partners in an attempt to promote the same idea. It defines the main purpose of Education for Democratic Citizenship as being to help every citizen to “play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society through exposure to educational practices and activities” (Kerr, 2010, p.7).

By promoting the idea of rights and responsibilities through the education process the Council seeks to create a more stable, secure and progressive continent. Indeed, by emphasising the social conscience aspect of rights and responsibilities of each individual within society, the Council has made an emphatic and explicit link between education and democracy, arguably even if it is increasingly operating in an innate neoliberal agenda.

Consequently, Education for Democratic Citizenship is considered by the Council as a type of education that “places high value on the qualities of open-mindedness, tolerance of diversity, fairness, rotational understanding, respect for truth and critical judgement.” (Olssen et al, 2004, p.269).

These ‘qualities’ are believed by the Council, to be the pre-requisites for a democratic Europe. Arguably all these ‘pre-requisites’ aim to achieve similar objectives to those stated by the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education – i.e. providing democratic experiences to create democratic citizens while creating and maintaining democratic societies. The education policy tried, by being as broad as possible, to cover all the existing significant gaps in ECE, but resulted in paradoxical policies and diverse practices outlined earlier.

This brings up the issue of the subjectivity of interpretation. If there are no mechanisms to explain the law and its operational meanings, nothing stops new norms and priorities from emerging from one government to another and consequently the transformation of practices and corresponding development of new ideals is inevitable, even without changing the core policies. It is a law which vigorously specifies goals and intentions, but faintly specifies means and actions.

This is why, in part, in Portugal priorities change from one government to another, as legislative changes are often not accompanied by any related policy actions. Open and nonspecific laws are useful tools to make political life less challenging and are solely dependent upon interpretation and who is 'running the show'. In Portugal, priorities, propositions and ideas tend to change every time there is a new government. Lopes da Silva revealed that:

"the exaggeration in Portugal is great in this sense, change a government, sometimes changes the minister, doesn't even change the government, change the minister in the same government and... the minister does in his/her ministry, in his/her backyard, what he/she thinks is correct, it doesn't have anything to do with what came from behind nor with more comprehensive legislation, it has to do with what he/she thinks, what he/she feels, with his/her concepts. On top of that, usually, his/her views are... unsubstantiated... are beliefs, this gives a great instability and therefore teachers no longer, [they] are a little bit, [they] have to generate a filter..." (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

Depending on the different ministers' and governments', diverse ideological perspectives emerged over the years, resulting in a complex education policy process. While the main challenge is the rhetorical and symbolic nature of the 'policy making' process, the political changes and upheavals over time also resulted in a mishmash of education and social development policies. Due to the amalgamation of diverse political decisions and no consensus on values and specific educational principles, the different levels of Portuguese education have developed in particular ways, which at times appear to be neither strategic nor linear.

Having broad values, intentions, and objectives within education policy, arguably, makes them both inclusive and aspirational. This means that the

views of the different stakeholders in the educational context (teachers, researchers, politicians, parents and children) will be represented (included). However, their (stakeholders) views will likely be either disparate and/or diverse (disperse). This in turn, arguably demonstrates that meanings, attitudes and intentions within education policy risk becoming superficial and lacking in real purpose.

#### **(d) Intentions: Reduction of Social Inequality**

Both the 1997 Framework Law and the Curriculum Guidelines for Pre-School Education reflected a new effort by the government to expand ECE in a perspective of lifelong learning and with the goal of reducing social inequalities (Vasconcelos et al, 2003).

Another relevant aspect, in relation to the intention of promoting the democratisation of society, is that in 1997 there was a revision of Article 59 of the 1976 Constitution. This revision started to establish and uphold the right of women to enjoy both family and professional life (Fourth Constitutional Revision - Constitutional Law 1/97). In order to guarantee the equality of gender in the work force, as an aspect of a democratic society, it was crucial to expand the national networks of pre-school education to complement family action (Vasconcelos, 2014). Subsequently between the years 1995 and 2000 the total access to Pre-School (3-5 years old) increased from 54.5%<sup>62</sup> to 71.6% (of which 84.2% were 5 years old; 72.4% were 4 years old, and 58.3% were 3 years old) (Vasconcelos et al, 2013)<sup>63</sup>.

The view of the child as a citizen has also changed within ECE policy over time, Lopes da Silva explained that:

“the first major legislation for early childhood education post April 25 was the ‘Unique Statute’ of [19]79. And if we compare (...) a content

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<sup>62</sup> 53.8% according to PORDATA (2016b, [online]), the ‘Database for Contemporary Portugal’

<sup>63</sup> The number of enrolments reached its pick in the academic year 2011/2012 with a national capacity (‘coverage’) of 97.9% for 5 years old; 91.6% for 4 years old, and 78.4% for 3 years old (Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência (DGEEC), 2015), this demonstrates that while the system is not yet Universal the capacity increased significantly. In 1961 the ‘real rates of schooling’ (i.e. the number of enrolments compared to the student population of the same age) for Pre-School Education were 0.6% contrasting with 88.5% in 2015 (PORDATA, 2016b, [online])

analysis of the principles and global aims of education of the... texts... there is indeed a great evolution of the statute of [19]79, the basic law and then the framework law of preschool education in the conception of the child as a citizen" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

The first goal of pre-school education, which stated that children should be exposed to democratic life experiences, affirms the suggestion that democracy is necessary for the life of a citizen.

The policy analysis and the views of the interviewees left the impression that at the policy level there is an unprecedented effort to try to include democracy in all forms, but that democracy may be perceived as 'broken'/incomplete because it failed to address important issues. It seems that the policies present a version of democracy that promotes equality of opportunities but does not necessarily foster equity. Brederode emphasised in her interview that "it was believed that equality of opportunities would bring democracy" (interview, 03/09/2012). However, the interviews with policy makers indicated that equality of opportunities has not been fully achieved. The specific examples cited were the lack of public support for children from 0-3 years old and the 'ambiguous' position of children with SEN. Democracy without inclusion, at all levels, might not be perceived as democracy at all. An analysis of the laws and of the 'voices' of those involved in some of the struggles for democracy reveals that even though the framework law impacted positively in the expansion and development of the ECE system, it has not enabled the full access to and success in education for all. To some extent in some cases it perpetuated the marginalisation of those already excluded even further.

All the interviewees referred to what they called 'the perverse effects of change'. They identified issues related to the democratisation of education, i.e. issues that impact on the 'capacity' of the system to be fully democratic. As discussed earlier, one of the most common 'grievances' emerging from the policy makers and researchers' interviews was the inability of successive governments to consider ECE from birth until compulsory school age. The debate is on-going and these were some of the views expressed on this issue:

Teresa Vasconcelos referring to the 1997 Framework Law noted:

"the very law came out with some, what I call 'weaknesses'. One of them... was not to consecrate preschool education starting from 0 years... still today. And this is anti-democratic...

the very body of the framework law is very interesting because it says the preschool serves among other things to reduce geographic disparities, socio cultural rights of children, and so on. So finally, to give equal opportunities to all and create what is called the "parity" because parity goes beyond democratic equality, parity is the positive discrimination of those who are most disadvantaged. (...) and in the law comes exactly this (...)

(...) in 0-3 years I think it's a situation – I would not want to be too strong – but it is a situation of a great democratic fragility" (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins also reinforced the idea that education does not start at 3 years old. This is perceived as a clear contradiction to the law which, while assuming education for all and education as a lifelong learning process, paradoxically perceives as the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to provide ECE services for children from 3 years old onwards.

He elaborated:

"Early childhood education is not only pre-school, pre-school education is between 3 and 5 years old, early childhood education is exactly what precedes and so is the educational complement of what we broadly designated as day-care. But the educational process is all of that (...) (I discussed this a lot with Professor Teresa Vasconcelos with whom I in fact agree) to say 'be careful' education does not begin at 3 years of age, from 3 to 5 we are in pre-school and pre-school education is not a 'little school', is not anticipating to read, write and count, no! It is above all the contact with life, it is especially the lessons of things as pedagogues have noted, (...) the lessons of things, understanding things, the relationship with things, and with others, the space of relationship, and this is very important" (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013)

For Lopes da Silva this action (dividing care 0-3 years old and education 3-6 years old) reflects the fear of the State to 'take children from the family' too early:

"It is still that fear, if is the state that takes children too early - or if it's the family [sole responsibility] - and the state only works with the family because children of this age still belong to the family, and only "belong to the state" (in quotation marks) when they pass to compulsory education" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

She pointed out that in the 1970s after the revolution:

“The meetings with the social security following the April 25 were completely stormy (...) Because they said, “the children are not born at three years old or you take them all” (I will never forget) “or you take them all or else we stay with them” I mean, this fight crèche<sup>64</sup> - kindergarten, who gets what, was [discussed] shouting, at that time, it was screaming, and then it stayed like this 3, 0, divided in half 0-3 for one, 3-6 for another (...) the issue is not yet resolved (...) I do not know if it will be resolved so quickly.” (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

It seems there is a general agreement between policy makers that democracy in ECE in Portugal requires a relationship between all actors in the education context (children, teachers, community and families). However, as the law does not consider ECE from birth, one can assume this to be a ‘democratic hiccup’ which directly impacts on the agenda of equality of opportunities of ‘access and success’ for all. As such, the interviewees believed that the full democratisation of the system has only been partially met.

The inclusion of children with SEN is perceived as the other main issue that the Framework Law did not make clear. Teresa Vasconcelos explained that she initiated the process to create the framework law with Professor João Formosinho, with the intent of providing policy guidance for the expansion of the ECE sector. She described thus:

“the ministers and secretaries of state’s cabinets drew up the law that came out, in my perspective, with some mistakes (...) we had the office for the expansion of preschool education that had representatives of the Education Ministry, representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity and we had two consultants who were João Formosinho and Professor Joaquim Bairrão Ruivo. (...) an Article about education came out (...) with which we did not agree, because it gave emphasis to SEN and not to a general intervention to reduce socio-economic disparities. We drew up an opinion - we even went to Parliament [to discuss the bill within the specialty] (...) but (...) MPs do not have to listen to researchers in education. (...) [so] the law itself came out with some, what I call, weaknesses.” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012).

Lopes da Silva in her interview referred to the same issue when she was drawing on policy documents to develop the Curriculum Guidelines:

“we agreed a lot with the framework law, only one thing we have tried to remove, which is something that comes from behind and that for

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<sup>64</sup> Settings with care and education component for 0-3 years old children.



me is anti-democratic... which is the [section that states] 'refer children with disabilities'... which in an inclusive perspective, that is a democratic perspective, has nothing to do with that. That was one thing that jurists brought from the past and which we still tried to prevent, but it's there and people do not realise because after the Curricular Guidelines no one ever talks about it, because a child with special needs is entitled to be in the kindergarten as others and be served according to their needs... It is the principle h) of Article 10 "To identify inadequacies, deficiencies and precocious behaviour, encouraging better orientation and guidance of the child". I mean, no one agreed with this and in fact then never anyone spoke of it (...) within the laws there are always remnants of earlier designs. The worst for me is this "inadequacy and deficiency" (interview with Lopes da Silva, 23/05/2013).

These discussions demonstrate that for the interviewees encouraging support for SEN children outside the ECE system was considered highly undemocratic. It also indicates that as the objectives within the law are ambiguous, the Curricular Guidelines statement of SEN children inclusion in mainstream settings was prioritized over this specific objective in the law (enabling 'diverse-abilities' children to be included in the system). These testimonies also demonstrate that while early childhood researchers have been involved in the elaboration of policy there were still aspects of the law they did not agree with and considered undemocratic. It also indicates that for the ECE system to be considered fully democratic there needs to be inclusion at all levels, i.e. age, 'diverse-abilities', socio-economic conditions and so on. Considering the issues discussed above if democratic education involves 'access to and success in education for all', it seems that democratisation of the ECE system in Portugal has not yet been fully achieved.

#### **5.4. From Policy intentions to the enactment of democracy**

This chapter has looked at how democracy in Portugal has been conceived, manifested and intended within education policy and within policy towards ECE. However, in preparation for the analysis in chapter 6, it is important to reflect further upon the complexities of transferring democratic intentions to democratic practices. While collecting the data for this study I also reflected upon this process. In May 2013, I registered the following in my field diary:

“From the conversations with policy makers and researchers, different themes that need further analysis have emerged. On the ECE experts’ side, the same kind of discourse was evident. (...) Generally speaking, they believe that documents and practices are two different things. It was also quite evident the belief that Portugal has changed as a country. Yet, this could at the same time be somewhat considered as contradictory when thinking that Portugal has changed and progressed quite rapidly in many ways, whilst at the same time democracy is still seen as a very recent system. It felt as if democracy was a system that is still being frequently adapted and tested and therefore constantly shifting. In the same way there was a shift between dictatorship and democracy in the past, it seems now that there is a constant shift between different types of democracy. There seems to be a stronger political awareness of the consequences of a dramatic change such as that. As a result, democracy becomes a ‘sacrificed’ regime. It is stretched, bent and sometimes (especially most recently) discredited by public opinion (i.e. people and political parties). This leads to the same old question - everyone claims to know what democracy is, however, democracy ends up being ‘practiced’ differently, in different periods of time.”

(Diana Sousa, field diary excerpt - 25/05/2013)

There was a strong perception that policy makers and researchers shared the general view that political intentions (democratic experiences) and educational realities (democratic enactments) were not aligned.

Vasconcelos reflected on this during the interview. She questioned:

“How is that put into practice? At the micro level it is very complicated, because we do not have a sufficiently democratic practice at the micro level, for example the structure of the teacher who is a civil servant, is not, in general, “because the government demands and so on... and we cannot here contest some things” (...) that is not democratic! It is not: ‘demand and we obey if we think that it is to be obeyed’. If we think that this is going against our pedagogical or ethical principles, or whatever, or humanistic, we have to challenge this orientation. Now it’s not doing it by ourselves... and risking dismissal, it is in group, democracy is built in group” (interview with Vasconcelos, 04/01/2012)

Vilarinho further reinforced this difficulty of permeating political intentions to educational realities by reflecting upon the shift from participatory to representative democracy with the very concrete example of the most recent teacher training programmes:

"In the educators training there is this tendency (in educators and teachers in recent years), with the Bologna declaration and the changes that happened, (...) the practice dimension, of reference to the practices, the critical reflection of practices which emerges from the educational sciences’ area is increasingly being devalued. (...) there is more time (...) for certain disciplines and for the technical and methodological dimensions. I am not saying that they are not important, but this concern... which is to reflect on society and democracy (...) what we are in our context (...) is increasingly

absent. And (...) educators, teachers and young teachers may be... [they] have a less critical posture, a more uncritical position...

Therefore, democracy, the right to freedom, the so called representative democracy is present, but participatory democracy of giving voice to children, giving voice to other actors, to promote practices that mobilise these activities, the children's agency, I have doubts that it is so striking [currently], when without theoretical reflections.

In the early years of democracy, [this criticality and participation] was more present" (interview with Vilarinho, 24/05/2013).

Indeed, regarding the enactment of democracy, there was general consensus amongst the interviewees that there is an ongoing difference between what is written/said and what is done.

Nevertheless, despite the scepticism of the policy makers and researchers interviewed, there was a general understanding that democracy has a unique space and form within ECE in Portugal. For instance, Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins suggested democracy in ECE was connected with specific characteristics, such as freedom, responsibility and autonomy. He believed that in education democracy passes from intentions to realities from experience rather than discourse:

"(...) education teaches us that (...) If there is contradiction between discourse and practice, more easily the child or young person will follow the practice (...) So the idea of experience and example is absolutely fundamental (...) education is an awakening of consciences to freedom and responsibility and at the same time it is an act of construction. Construction that has to do with the personal and social development... (...) the art of educating requires amelioration of this awakening (...)

In pre-school education, [the child] can contribute to democracy through tasks. Be helpful, be respectful, (...) It starts with very simple things, this act of respect, for example, they are washing the brushes or washing the hands they've used in finger paint, well, they should not jump ahead of others, there is a queue, and that is to teach respect (...) she should respect her colleague, she should help the teacher or help the colleague, and not harm, if he is doing the design or construction, (...) That she has to respect her colleague's own space. So the idea of democracy to be interiorised, has to start with very simple tasks, very simple, and above all by the understanding of what the child is capable of... Democracy starts right here. In freedom, in autonomy, in responsibility, in respect, in care, in attention" (interview with d'Oliveira Martins, 20/05/2013).

The centrality of democracy in ECE practice in Portugal is evident from d'Oliveira Martins testimony, who perceives ECE as a space of relationship with others, a space of coexistence, and a space of experiencing autonomy as an individual, where the 'awakening of consciousness' can occur. It is not solely concerned with the future citizen, but with the present human being that lives in relationship with others.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

Within the three periods represented in this chapter (1970s, 1980s, and 1990s), democracy has been manifested extensively in Portuguese public and education policy. The analysis indicates that the democratic jubilation emerging from a revolutionary ideology has diluted over time. This suggests that in the specific context of this research, both in education and society, democracy has not only been established and maintained, but has also evolved, possibly into forms that demonstrate its powerful symbolic role in a country marked by years of autocracy and ideological conservatism.

Additionally, a continuous relationship between tradition and change made policy decisions far from being coherent and linear. The complex historic and sociological relationships show the relation between 'democracy' and its changing nature and the policy modes which carried and carry its messages into ECE. This chapter also established the ambiguities in both of those social and political processes, and how these ambiguities are shown in the political history of Portugal, and its educational policies. This ambiguity led to processes of change in Portuguese policy being less critical than they ought, particularly in establishing a clear distinction between intentions and actions in order to pursue change via a much needed level of "critical modernisation" (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p.179). Nevertheless, while the lack of critical engagement seems to be ever present (possibly due to a past conservative dictatorship), the country has for many years been resistant to capitalism, and consequently the reform predominantly followed historical lines. This is important because it helped the education system to initially resist falling into a process of "vulgar modernisation" i.e.

falling into a “dogmatic and ahistorical reform, involving marketization” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p.179). As a result, rather than being planned in its “narrowest and most conservative sense, [and] simply reduced to the acquisition of certain skills” (ibid), education was initially perceived as the means to educate the citizen in all their capacities through opportunities for democratic experience. This, however, does not mean that today (in an overwhelmingly globally neoliberal society guided by capitalist rules and interests) this ‘narrowest and conservative’ outlook to the purpose of education will not prevail. There could potentially be space for an argument that policy representation nowadays “isn't about creating a deeper democracy, but deeper markets – and the two are increasingly incompatible” (Chakraborty, 2015, [online]).

In chapter 4, I argued that historically democracy has emerged in Portugal as a ‘floating signifier’ (Beech and Lista, 2011). However, it is also important to acknowledge, particularly within education policy, that the different understandings of democracy do not always act as re-signification. As seen in this chapter, in Portuguese education policy there are a range of representations of what democracy means. Consequently, democracy can be considered a broad concept where different views are represented in different contexts and at different points in time. Despite the fuzziness surrounding its breadth, it is possible to perceive democracy in this context as an intent, a process and an outcome.

The primary objective of including democracy in Portuguese education policy is to act as a tool to guarantee the democratisation of society. As such, “[i]n this context too, politics is reduced to arguments about the best way to manage the status quo...” (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p.179), i.e. to manage democracy. In this case, education is used for the same purpose, i.e. to create and maintain democracy. Nevertheless, rather than “[p]olitics in education, shorn of any argument about meaning” (ibid) there was a determination at the education policy level to create meaning through the promotion of characteristics that a democratic education should entail. As such, democracy in this context has intended equality of opportunities of

access and success for all, inclusion of diversities, freedom of communication, development of critical thinking, citizenship and so on.

Additionally, in Portugal, democracy is projected in public and education policy as a statement of hope for the future – i.e. is intended as a thick 'narrative of modernisation' (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). The system is modernised through this new ideal of democratisation of education and consequently society. As ECE is the first step of basic education in a lifelong learning process, it is also the level of education which initiates democratic life experiences. As Augusto Santos Silva stated: "the major acquisition of Portuguese democracy in terms of education seems to be the valorisation of basic education" (in Vilarinho, 2011, p.8).

Despite the obvious consequences of such acknowledgment, such as the investment in the expansion of ECE provision throughout the years, the interviews with policy makers and researchers indicated a conviction that in practice educators perform a 'thin version' of this narrative. Indeed, policy makers suggested that there is a gap between intentionality of policy and its enactment in practice, demonstrating in this way a level of uncertainty with regards to the enactment of policy. This presumed gap between policy and practice is supported by the view that "[p]olicy texts... confer power upon preferred modes of speaking and judging, and upon certain ways of expressing moral and political subjectivity" (Sevenhuijsen in Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.81). As a result, policies establish narrative conventions, which allow for argumentation and (mis)communication and above all – interpretation.

By definition, laws could be deterministic, insofar as to generate actions or allocate funds, however, this is not the case in this particular context. In other words, it is not because democracy is stated in the law that democracy is therefore guaranteed. Consequently, legal documents are not sufficient to make democracy a reality. As shown, laws in Portugal, especially in the field of ECE, are often more to do with expressing the state's good intention than with specifying policy action for implementation. This suggests that "John Dewey's insistence that democracy needs to be reborn in each

generation and education is its midwife" (Giroux, 2015, p.2) is demonstrated in the Portuguese policy context.

After analysing policies, discussing interviews from those involved in the policy making process, and considering the difficult coherence between rhetoric and intentions, symbolism and action, what emerged from my interpretation is that over time democracy has played out distinct conceptions within ECE. Nevertheless, despite all of the differences between conceptions, manifestations and intentions, which emerged in policy from the 1970s to 1990s, the policy intentions still pursued a common set of aims which sought to further the purposes of education.

Another aspect represented in the different periods identified in this chapter is a movement of democratic manifestations from utopia to heterotopia (Foucault, 1984) (both discussed in chapter 3). As illustrated in this chapter, in Portugal, policy oscillated between utopia (from mid-1970s to 1980s), by which I mean a conception of democracy that emerged from highly enthusiastic and euphoric circumstances, manifesting itself as a national ideology that sought to create and maintain a democratic society through equality of opportunities of access and success for all; and heterotopia (from 1980s to the 1990s) by which I mean the capacity to "simultaneously 'representing, contesting and inverting' [policy, while revealing] ... their own paradoxes and slippages" (Taylor, 2013:32).

Whilst the policies described between 1970s and 1990s are still in practice, I argue that democracy as a concept is still evolving. Additionally, despite advancements in the conceptions of democracy over time, currently democracy in Portugal is manifested as a fundamental attribute, in which all of the conceptions, manifestations and intentions are incorporated, in principle, within policy.

Chapter 6 will discuss whether and how these conceptions, manifestations and intentions are enacted in practice, within three different ECE settings.

## Chapter 6

### Democratic enactments in schools and classrooms

In chapters 4 and 5 I have established that in Portugal democracy is seen as a central part of the education system not only for the benefit of education, but also to maintain a democratic society. This chapter aims to further the discussion by examining how democratic principles are defined, lived and manifested within three different ECE settings in Portugal. Democracy is described in Portuguese ECE policy, as has been shown in chapter 5, as a value in education that is lived (experienced) rather than learned. For this reason, I consider it extremely important to understand whether and how intentions align with realities. In other words, how this 'description' of democracy in education policy is interpreted and enacted within ECE practice. Michael Saward (2003) contends that:

“Democratic principles come alive (are 'lived') through the medium of formal decisional mechanisms or devices which are designed to activate them and which come to be justified in terms of them. Their perceived utility as principles will largely rest on the performance of those devices. This is the essence of the reflexive relationship between principle and action” (p.166).

In this chapter, I address research question 3 (How is democracy enacted in three different Portuguese ECE settings?) by presenting a discussion of the decisions and mechanisms which ECE educators and schools adopt in order to enact democracy. The settings researched are kindergartens of different providers: one public; one IPSS (charity); and one private setting. The sources of data presented in this chapter are: interviews with educators; observations in classrooms; kindergarten and classroom documents (such as Education Projects, Rules of Procedure, and Curricular Projects); and reflections and notes from my field diary.

In my discussion of the three individual settings I make comparisons between them, but there is no intention to generalise these findings, neither to make any assumptions that these perspectives are necessarily representative of the different forms of provision. As Tobin *et al* (1989) argued in their *Preschool in Three Cultures Study*, “[c]learly one preschool



cannot be assumed to represent the preschools of a nation" (p.8). Similarly, the views of the policy makers, researchers and educators interviewed in this research cannot be assumed to represent the views of all stakeholders of the ECE process in Portugal. Each perspective is interpreted in the context of its own ethos and identity. Nevertheless, the data and interpretations generated here present broader implications for our understandings of the connections between education and democracy in ECE policy and practice, which may be relevant beyond the specific case of Portugal.

The chapter is thus divided into three parts which focus on each of the following dimensions:

- 1) The missions and objectives of the settings researched; where I present a portrayal of the different objectives of the schools as reflected in their documents and educators' perspectives (expressed in their interviews);
- 2) The organisational representations of democracy; where I present an analysis of how each school has a different foci and consequently a different representation of democracy (using the previously discussed missions and objectives as foundations for this analysis);
- 3) The classrooms representations of democracy; where I identify educators' common elements for the enactment of democracy, which are used differently within different pedagogical practices (in this study I have identified three different pedagogical approaches which demonstrate different enactments of democracy in ECE).

The first dimension, is mainly illustrative of the background of the settings researched and has the main objective of 'setting up the scene' for the discussions that follow in the subsequent sections. The second and third dimensions, are analytical and present the interpretations of democratic enactments in the three settings studied.

In Portugal, ECE is seen as the first step of basic education and, consequently, understood as the first level of 'schooling' where democratic experiences can be initiated. It was previously indicated, by the policy makers and researchers interviewed, that in contrast to what happens in

higher levels of education, democracy is more likely to be present in ECE. This is suggested, in part, because ECE in Portugal is a non-compulsory level of education without a specified curriculum, which in turn leads to an expectation of freedom of practice and, arguably, to greater opportunities for participation and decision making on what the curriculum/education practice can look like. As such, I illustrate here the importance of this autonomy, freedom, to decide and enact practices, as a strong democratic principle for Portuguese early childhood educators.

Additionally, the key findings identify that at the level of intentions, the three types of schools conceive democracy differently in ways which reflect their diverse ideologies/missions. This means that the organisational representations of democracy reflect the different foci of the different schools. The public school presents democracy connected to a social dimension of contributing to the 'public good' by being primarily concerned with the standardisation of democracy within structures and rules. The IPSS presents an idea of democracy which emphasises the personal dimension of the child, considering the focus from the individual to the society. The private school highlights democracy as communitarian cooperation and work in group.

All educators found it extremely difficult to separate the school from the classroom as they considered there was a strong connection between the two. However, whilst it was possible to identify different organisational representations of democracy in the three settings, the variation of educational practices in the classrooms was so pronounced that understandings of democratic enactments in the classrooms could not be clustered by institution. Therefore, at the classroom level, 10 essential elements (that emerged from the educators' interviews) for the enactment of democracy were identified (these were: Choosing; Sharing; Making Decisions; Resolving Conflicts; Expressing Opinions; Participating; Listening; Critical Thinking, Freedom and Respect). I also suggest that at the level of the classrooms there were different pedagogical styles (instructive, responsive and synergetic pedagogies) in which different types of democracy (procedural, interactive and critical democracy) were enacted.

## **6.1. The Settings:**

The three settings<sup>65</sup> researched were located in an urban area (geographically close to each other in Lisbon). It is not possible to provide more detailed information in order to preserve the anonymity of the schools. All settings, were different in nature and size, and catered for children from different socio-economic backgrounds. All the settings had different philosophies and approaches, as well as their own individual principles and missions, as stated in the section below. Nevertheless, all settings were guided by the same national pre-school education framework law of 1997, and the same curriculum guidelines for pre-school education, both discussed in chapter 5. All settings had a pedagogical coordinator, which in the Public and Private kindergartens was also one of the educators of the school, and in the IPSS (charity) was the psychologist of the school. They had similar documents, such as the education project (kindergarten document where broad objectives of the school were defined – with all its objectives decided by the pedagogical team (i.e. by all educators in the school)) and curricular project (classroom document where each educator in their own classroom defined the broad objectives (for the classroom)).

## **6.2. Missions and Objectives of the three Settings Researched**

In this section, I present the mission and objectives of the three settings according to the school documents and the educators' perspectives. This part is more illustrative than analytical, and I use the educators' interviews as an illustration of their understandings of the missions and objectives of the schools they worked at. A summary of the main characteristics of the schools and the educators can be found on table 6.2. below:

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<sup>65</sup> Throughout this chapter terms such as school, kindergarten, and pre-school are used interchangeably to correspond with particular types of setting. A school only with kindergarten/pre-school (3-6 year olds) rooms forms one type of setting (such as the Public setting researched). A school with both crèche (0-3 year olds) and kindergarten/pre-school (3-6 year olds) rooms forms another type of setting (such as the IPSS and Private settings presented in this study).

**Table 6.2. – Summary of schools and educators**

Schools	Socio Economic Context of the school	Ages and Training of Educators	Educators' pseudonyms	Age of children per classroom
<b>Public school</b>	Fully State funded institution which belonged to a 'Mega Group' of public schools from different education levels. Catered for children from 3-6 years old in kindergarten rooms, from different backgrounds, mainly from lower/medium social classes.	Educators were between mid-30s and late 50s years of age and were mostly from different training institutions (for example Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus and Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politecnico do Porto).	Begónia	3-4 year olds
			Frésia (Pedagogical coordinator)	3-5 year olds
			Glicínia (Department coordinator)	No classroom this year due to department position. Visited all classrooms frequently and was engaged in all the school's activities
			Zínia	3-5 year olds
			Amarílis	3-5 year olds
<b>IPSS (Charity) School</b>	Religious institution of Catholic orientation. Partly funded by the State and partly funded by the families. Received children from across the whole social spectrum, mainly children from lower and higher socio-economic backgrounds from 4 months to 6 years old in crèche and kindergarten rooms.	Educators were with ages between mid-20s and late 50s and were mostly from the same training institution (Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa).	Lobélia	5 year olds
			Iris	4 year olds
			Magnólia	2-3 year olds
			Camélia	4 year olds
			Gardênia	4-12 months' old
			Petúnia	5 year olds
			Hortênci	3-4 year olds
			Dália	3-5 year olds
<b>Private School</b>	Family owned school, which followed the Modern School Movement (MEM) model. Catered for children from different socio-economic backgrounds, mainly from medium/high socio-economic classes, from 4 months to 6 years old, in both crèche and kindergarten rooms.	Educators were with ages between early 20s and mid-30s and were mostly from the same training institution (Escola Superior de Educação de Lisboa).	Violeta	3-4 year olds
			Papoila	5-6 year olds
			Margarida	1 year olds
			Orquídea	2-3 year olds
			Tulipa	2-3 year olds
			Calla	4-5 year olds
			Sálvia (Pedagogical Coordinator)	No classroom this year due to maternity leave. Engages with former classroom activities frequently.

### 6.2.1. Public School

The Public School researched was a kindergarten that belonged to a 'Mega Group', i.e. attached to a 'grouping' of publicly funded schools (managed by the same directorate) from the same geographic area. This 'grouping' was constituted by several schools from different levels of education from pre-school (3-6 years old) to secondary school (up to 18+ years old), including another kindergarten.

The kindergarten discussed in this research catered for children from 3-6 years old from different backgrounds, mainly from lower/medium social classes. It was centrally managed by the 'Mega Group's' directorate and consequently had to follow the same guidelines from the 'grouping'. As a public kindergarten, it had also to comply with national public statutory requirements.

The management of the school operated mainly at two levels:

1) the governing body of the 'grouping' - where all levels of education were represented by one respective department coordinator for each educational level; and

2) the institutional level - where there was a pedagogical coordinator (which was one of the educators of the school) who coordinated the management of the school in terms of pedagogical direction, administration and practical matters. There was also a parents' association, which could feed into the decisions made at both levels.

In terms of principles, the 'Mega Group Educational Project'<sup>66</sup> stated that:

"By promoting collaboration and cooperation between different actors, creating flexible educational environments, the School fulfils its mission: an inclusive education, of quality, demand and rigour, capable of providing the formation of active citizens, stakeholders, responsible and civically engaged in building a more just, solidary and united society." (Mega Group Educational Project)

In addition to these objectives, a few educators expressed that the kindergarten's mission involved a concern with the socialisation of the child,

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<sup>66</sup> Document which stated the general objectives of all schools that belong to the 'grouping'.

whilst treating the school as a space of shared relationship. They stated<sup>67</sup> that:

“The mission is the positive integration [of the child] in the school environment, socialisation, welcoming children and families, valuing the school as much as possible, the kindergarten.  
And the objectives are to fight unsuccessful schooling and promoting union (...) an open school in relationship with the community”

(Glicínia, educator)

(...) socialisation and communication are very important in the kindergarten, any educator gives emphasis to that, or playing with one another, sharing with one another, living with the other not by his/her side but really sharing (...)  
our objective, in kindergarten, is very much about that, and the comfort and the harmony, it is them feeling, being happy, feeling that the school is a good thing, we are giving them the baseline of a future life”

(Frésia, pedagogical coordinator and educator)

It is trying to transform the child’s day in a happy day and essentially also developing the relationship between themselves, which is the friendship relationship, of knowing how to share, knowing how to be...”

(Zínia, educator)

In addition, two of the educators above also mentioned that the preparation of the children for the ‘first cycle’ (primary school) was a strong part of this kindergarten’s mission. In other words, there was a strong emphasis on the readying of the child ‘for school’. This perceives the kindergarten as ‘preparatory’- school and is visible in the statements below. These educators specifically defined the mission and objectives of this school as:

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<sup>67</sup> Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

“(…) comfort, harmony and affection in the first place (…) and then preparing children for life and then of course preparing children for the 1st Cycle [Primary School].”

(Frésia, pedagogical coordinator and educator)

“(…) The objective here, essentially in the kindergarten, is effectively, because we are a pre [school], preparing children for the 1st Cycle, meeting the objectives of the pre-school.”

(Zínia, educator)

A couple of other educators also emphasised as a mission of this kindergarten the preparation of the child ‘as a citizen’ that is free and lives in solidarity. They indicated that:

“The objectives are the same objectives of the pre-school education [as defined by the pre-school framework law], and the mission is perhaps helping children to become responsible, free, solidary and critical citizens, that learn what they want to know and also what we also transmit to them without them asking.”

(Amarílis, educator)

“The general objectives seek to develop children’s competences, their personal and social development for citizenship, for respect of/for the other and also for his/her own personal and cognitive development.”

(Begónia, educator)

The missions/objectives presented by the Mega Group’s educational project reverberate a combination of the principles described in Portuguese policy throughout the years specifically “building a more just, solidary and united society” which resonates with the 1976 Constitution, and “the formation of active citizens, stakeholders, responsible and civically engaged” which echoes some of the principles stated in the 1986 Basic Law for Education.

Additionally, the views provided by the educators align to some extent with what is defined within the policies. Nevertheless, this alignment presented a selective focus. For example: “helping children to become responsible, free, solidary and critical citizens” can be linked to both the 1976 Constitution and the 1986 Basic Law and to “develop children’s competences, their personal and social development for citizenship, for respect of/for the other and also for his/her own personal and cognitive development” can be connected to the objectives defined in the 1997 Framework Law for Preschool Education (all discussed in chapter 5)).

### 6.2.2. IPSS [charity] School

The IPSS (i.e. independent non-profit institution) belonged to a religious order. This school was part of a larger institution, which included other schools/educational centres and charitable/religious organisations (some of which private).

The IPSS researched received children from 4 months to 6 years old in crèche and kindergarten rooms.

In terms of social background, of the three schools researched this was the most disparate. It received children from across the whole social spectrum, mainly children from both lower and higher socio-economic backgrounds<sup>68</sup>.

Even though the school was part of a larger religious institution and as such had to comply with its overall statutory requirements, on a day-to-day basis the management of the school operated mainly at the local level. There was a directorate constituted by some members of the religious order (nuns), some educators, and the school psychologist, who was responsible for the

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<sup>68</sup> In this school parents/legal guardians of the children paid school fees according to their income (meaning that some did not pay any fees). Even though this type of schools exists in Portugal to overcome social inequalities, in this particular case, state funding tended not to be sufficient to cover all the expenses, so in reality children from higher socio-economic backgrounds helped subsidising the intake of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This raised questions and concerns regarding the strategies this school needed to adopt in order to be sustainable and to keep their mission of supporting the most disadvantaged families. This was one of the everyday concerns of this school, particularly at a time when parents were losing their jobs due to the economic crisis (conversation with the pedagogical coordinator, field notes diary, 18/03/2014).



pedagogical direction of the school. In terms of principles, according to the Rules of Procedure, this IPSS:

“is an institution of Christian orientation, which aims to promote the integral education of the person according to the pedagogy of the Gospel. It starts with a Christian understanding of life that provides a harmonious growth and maturity through an understanding of the capabilities of each one and of development in all its dimensions, while respecting the democratic principles of coexistence, rights, freedom and fundamental guarantees, enshrined by the Constitution”. (Rules of Procedure – Internal regulations document)

In addition to these principles, some educators mentioned in interview that a strong part of this school’s mission was to support the families. Three educators defined the mission and objectives of this school as thus:

“The most important, and also the reason why the school emerged, was to give support to the families in terms of health, of education... It is in these bases that we are founded, and mainly in my ‘remit’ [crèche], it is to make the continuation of the family and of everything the developing child needs...”

(Gardênia, educator)

“I think the gist of the objectives of this school is providing for the children and for the families. I think here [in this school] we greatly value the families’ role, making them feel tranquil and secure to leave their children here. And that the children feel happy and can here develop all the competencies they have to develop in this period of time. I think here as a team we function very much in this sense, and I think that is our great objective.”

(Hortênciã, educator)

“The mission of this school is educating children in partnership with the families in a pedagogy based on the children’s freedom of choice. And for that reason we use a combination of various models, the project work pedagogy, the Modern School [Movement] model, Reggio Emilia, all pedagogies that are based on learning starting from children’s interests and children’s choices”

(Dália, educator)

In addition to the complementarity to the family action, for other educators there was a clear intention to reconcile the school's mission to support the families with the values that emerged with the adoption of specific pedagogical approaches/ways of living (MEM, High Scope, Project Work methodology and Reggio Emilia) and the specific moral codes followed as a religious institution. A couple of educators stated that the mission of this IPSS:

"(...) has to do mainly with educating in a harmonious way, as a whole. Counting with all partners, we here, the family, and always taking into account, at least for me, that have into account the values of the gospel, as this is a religious institution, we accept children of every creed, the values in the gospel are universal.  
And I see an education in partnership (...) always as a whole and based on the impetus of the child"

(Magnólia, educator)

"We have pedagogical principles by which we are governed, that have to do with the models that we work with, in this case Reggio Emilia, some principles of High Scope model. I do not follow any specific model in my classroom, I try to make the most of the best [features] of each one, and I have my own way of working.  
We try to follow the charisma principles of [the patron saint of the school]".

(Petúnia, educator)

There was also a concern for the individual. It is visible in some of the above statements that an education centred on the child and their family's needs was a crucial aspect for educators in this school. Other educators mentioned that there were specific values concerning the child that were fundamental part of this school's mission:

“This is a school that works very much on values, it is a school that works very much the autonomy, self-esteem, security, stability of children and families

(...) when we educate by the values we cover everything (...) “you are able, you can do it” and through our everyday projects we always meet these areas, but the principal is working the values, security, stability, harmony, the global harmonic growth of the child”

(Camélia, educator)

“It is forming the person, a human being with integrity, whom we need to take to discover other dimensions. Not only the dimension of having, of knowing, but also of his/her own personal and social formation, that is based on values, on relationship, on the expression of feelings, and on cooperation. This is not a robotic work (...) It is being attentive to the needs. We already know there is a curriculum that is based on the areas and that we work these proposals, we already know that they [children] have many interests, but then there are specific things that have to be honed”

(Lobélia, educator)

Alongside the individual and ‘developmental side’ of the children’s needs and consequent specific values, one educator also stated specifically that the objective of the school was:

“Forming conscious citizens of what exists and what doesn’t exist, of reality; with a critical sense; capable of resolving problems; capable of being happy; of liking themselves, I think that’s the great objective”

(Iris, educator)

As stated in the internal regulations document, by “respecting the democratic principles of coexistence, rights, [and] freedom” the mission and objectives of this school in documentation followed some of the principles stated in the 1976 Constitution. Additionally, the perception of many educators of their mission as the continuation of the family education

aligned with the general principle of ECE as complementary to the family action as defined in the 1997 Framework Law for Pre-School Education.

### 6.2.3. Private School

The Private kindergarten was a family owned school, which followed the Modern School Movement (MEM) model.

This school catered for children from 4 months to 6 years old, in both crèche and kindergarten rooms, and offered lunch and after school activities/homework support to older children coming from other schools<sup>69</sup>.

The children attending the school were from different socio-economic backgrounds, mainly from medium/high socio-economic classes.

The school was managed by a directorate, which consisted of an association of family owners of which two were educators, one of them also being the pedagogical coordinator of the school. In terms of principles, the school's pedagogical mission was described as follows:

“Our pedagogical model in kindergarten is the Modern School Movement. This model is based on democratic, ethical and cooperation principles. Our pedagogical action objectives reflect the principles defended by the Movement.

In our school educators and children work together to create a rich learning environment within knowledge and moral values and where we believe in the integration of all, while valuing the interactions and moments of sharing which arise from it.

We believe in the school as community, and from this, three formative purposes that give meaning to the educational act emerge:

1. Initiation to democratic practices;
2. The reinstatement of values and social meanings;
3. Cooperative reconstruction of culture”

(School’s Educational Pedagogy).

In addition to the set of pedagogical principles described above, the pedagogical coordinator (also educator in the school) mentioned the children’s right to education as a strong part of the school’s mission. She strongly believed that this school’s mission was to promote the children's

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<sup>69</sup> many of them former pupils in this school

right to participate and have an active voice in the education process. This educator explained the mission and objectives of this school:

“We start from the general principle that education is a right of the child since birth, therefore we consider that the crèche starts as well by being a right of the child and we follow on in this perspective of the right to education since the nursery [baby room] to the kindergarten classrooms with older children.

Starting from this guiding principle, that education is a right of the child since birth, we build our education subproject, with these principles of education as a right of the child, and the right of the child to participate in the educational project in which she is involved. We then cross these new principles with the Modern School Movement, we think that the things also overlap, and then the kindergarten side is all guided by the principles of the Modern School Movement”

(Sálvia, pedagogical coordinator and educator)

Other educators equally mentioned the strong roots of the school with the MEM. They also added ‘education for optimism’ as a specific value that represented the identity of the school. According to them the mission:

“It’s very much the participation of the child and the optimistic participation of the child. Creating an optimistic child, who is capable of participation in the society in which she is immersed, capable of giving her opinion, and of participating actively”

(Margarida, educator)

“Our mission is really to have optimistic and happy children, who come to the school with willingness to learn and with willingness to know more, and not as an obligation.

And this is what makes me get out of bed in the morning, that we are really here to support them, and not to ‘be’ that methodology that it’s Spring and we work the Spring, it’s Autumn, we work the Autumn. No! It is going [being guided] by the interests of the children and by what they want to know”

(Calla, educator)

“(…) This school was built at the pedagogical level, we have a pedagogy, and something stronger…

(…) when we faced this school’s project, (…) it was straight with this nature of making a pedagogical change to the more traditional education (…) straight from our belief in the movement’s [MEM] principles (…)

[in the beginning] in the classroom, as educators, we kept constructing our identity within the movement’s pedagogy, and then constructed what we wanted for our school, which are the same principles of democracy, cooperation, team work, values education, education for optimism, a whole raft of values and principles which the movement created.”

(Violeta, educator)

A couple of other educators additionally discussed the importance of working in partnership with the families and how being a school open to the families was associated to their view of democracy as essential to their objectives:

“What I feel is that this is a family school, everybody knows everybody, the parents (…) we work a lot in partnership with the families, and I think that is one of the underlying principles of our practice.

Everything we work in the classroom starts from the interests of the child, and for that reason it ends up reflecting a bit of the family culture and the culture of themselves [children], because it’s everything that comes from home, that we always try to make the most of to be more significant [for the child].

Then, as here [in this school] the model is the MEM, since very young we try in some way to instil these principles of democracy (…) since the crèche, even though in the crèche it’s not yet the MEM in its entirety, but it’s a little from there that we start transmitting these principles. Therefore, I think that it draws a little on this, democracy, sharing, contact with the families…”

(Tulipa, educator)

"I think the objective of this school is to become as familiar [family oriented] as possible, never waiting for what they [children] bring from home, but to be a great continuity of what they bring from home. Here is their home as well, and I think we define ourselves very much like a families' school, it comes from all the work we do with the family, with all the community, and it is no doubt, I think, what mostly characterises this school, it is the family side that we never leave at the door, because many times schools close their doors to the parents and families, and I don't know if this school could exist without the parents, and I think we would lose much of our identity without the parents and without the family, it is one of the things that characterise us."

(Papoila, educator)

In addition to the ideas of working in partnership with families as part of the broader community within the school, there was an educator who also mentioned the school community and partnership between the different activities on a day-to-day basis in the different classrooms. The following statement demonstrates strong credence in working with the community (families and wider school) and the respect for the child as an individual that needs to be listened to:

"I think what moves us in the first place is, without any doubt, the interests of the children. Our work is highly governed by that. Obviously, with a previous work that we do, and with our orientations, and with our support. But it is very much based on listening to them and also feeling what they feel. Of course at different levels, from the kindergarten to the crèche levels, in a different way, but always having the development and growth of the children in sight (...) according also to what they give us and then it's a bit like a vicious cycle that is that thing of giving and receiving. Because they give us so much, then we feed what they have to give us and then we are always going on this snowball enriching each other.

It's a growth and learning that is very collective, counting with the support of all interveners, families, partners from the community, the other classrooms, within the actual classrooms, and I think that this is one of the greatest points of our school, this richness of environment also, and the appreciation that we give to everything"

(Orquídea, educator)

Different themes have emerged from the educators' views on the mission and objectives of this school. There was a general understanding of education has a right of the child with the school role being the provision of hope for the future (by generating optimistic children), whilst working in partnership with the families and wider community through the principles and values instilled by the MEM (such as democracy, cooperation, participation and sharing).

### **6.3. Organisational Representation of Democracy**

This section is divided into two subsections:

6.3.1. - Similarities and differences between the three settings; where I discuss educators' perceptions of the pre-school education objectives as defined by the 1997 Pre-School Education Framework Law, alongside their views on the guiding principles of their practice; and

6.3.2. - Representations of democracy in the three settings; where I deliberate upon the different representations, features, theoretical understandings and conceptions of democracy in the three settings researched.

#### **6.3.1. Similarities and differences between the three settings**

The data presented thus far demonstrates that there were similarities and differences between the three schools researched. These similarities and differences also help explaining, and further understanding, the different foci of each school (which is later explored in section 6.3.2.). For instance, most educators across the three settings agreed that the school is a space of relationship; a social space; an extension of the family, which aims to 'form' free and responsible citizens. In addition, none of the schools referred to parents or families as consumers, but rather as collaborators. Particularly the IPSS and private schools' missions presented a strong outlook on the family, emphasising their roles as partners. It was clear, however, that



despite similarities, the three schools were quite distinctive. They were unique in their natures, roles and particularly in their missions.

Educator's views of the schools' missions and objectives as described in the section 6.2. above, demonstrate that these missions were not only defined by documentation but also by each educator's perception on the purpose of ECE, and of the setting they worked at. Each educator had their own ideas of what the school represented and how they engaged with that representation as professionals. Furthermore, while the viewpoints expressed did not distance themselves from the objectives stated by the education policies, they still presented specific focuses. They emphasised specific aspects of ECE that the educators personally related to. For instance, there were educators that saw the personal and social development of the child as a citizen as the most important mission of their school, whilst others saw the continuation of the family action, or supporting that action, as their principal aim. Principles such as these are not necessarily dissociated from each other. When interviewing the educators, I asked them to perform an exercise that demonstrated this reflection. This involved ranking in order of influence on their practice the following objectives of pre-school education, as defined by the 1997 Pre-School Education Framework Law (from 1 - most influential, to 9 - less influential):

- (a) To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.
- (b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.
- (c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and learning success.
- (d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual differences, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.

- (e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.
- (f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.
- (g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.
- (h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.
- (i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community.

The order of influence of the objectives across the three schools can be found on table 6.3.1. below. A further breakdown of the overall order of influence according to the educators in the different schools can be found in Appendix F.

**Table 6.3.1. order of influence of the objectives of preschool education in the three schools:**

	IPSS								Private								Public				
a)	3	5	1	1	3	7	2	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	3	7	1	1	1	2	
b)	2	4	5	4	2	6	8	4	2	1	3	3	8	5	2	5	5	2	4	1	
c)	4	2	2	3	9	4	9	8	5	8	9	7	7	8	8	6	4	3	6	5	
d)	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	3	6	3	4	4	1	2	1	1	2	4	2	3	
e)	6	9	4	5	8	5	3	6	7	7	7	5	6	7	4	2	8	6	3	6	
f)	5	3	8	6	7	3	5	7	4	5	8	6	3	3	7	4	3	5	5	8	
g)	7	8	7	8	1	9	6	5	9	6	2	1	2	4	5	3	9	7	7	4	
h)	8	7	6	7	6	8	7	9	8	9	6	8	9	9	9	8	6	8	8	7	
i)	9	6	9	9	5	2	1	1	3	4	5	9	5	6	6	9	7	9	9	9	

During this exercise, all educators, across the three settings, said that every objective was important on its own, and that they could not exist in isolation. Additionally, none of the educators thought that any of the principles would engage in conflict with each other, whilst considering that all objectives

moved in the same direction. However, it was interesting to see that objectives (c), (e), (f) and (h), were not considered by any educator as the most influential. Particularly with regard to objective (c) relating to “equality of opportunity in access to education and learning success”, I found in chapter 5 that this was the most closely related aspect to democracy within policy, but it was placed as second most influential principle only by two out of eight educators in the IPSS. Later on in the interviews, some educators did mention equality of opportunities and access to school as a democratic aspect of ECE, but at this point did not refer to it as the most influential aspect of their practice.

The most influential objectives, according to the overall rankings given by the educators, were objective (a) where democracy is specifically addressed, followed by objective (d) which emphasises the developmental aspect of ECE with respect for the individual differences and the importance of differentiating learning accordingly. This emphasis on principle (a) suggests that the educators see democracy as relevant to their work.

When asked if they would add any other objective to the list, half of the educators interviewed said either ‘no’ or that ‘perhaps there were things to add’ but as the objectives were presented they felt the list was already all encompassing. However, the other half of the educators had specific objectives they would like to add, including some agreements. For instance, some educators felt that creativity, both artistic creativity and creativity to resolve problems should be part of these objectives:

“Well, there isn’t any... here, it says (f) “to arouse curiosity and critical thinking”, but none of them speaks of creativity for example. Because I think we sometimes cut the opportunities in what respects to children’s creativity. Why shouldn’t they draw a black sky if they want to? Why shouldn’t they draw an orange, green or lilac sun? I think sometimes creativity is a bit restrained by these objectives, I would include here creativity”

(Papoila, educator, Private)

“...the development of creativity and of the importance of creating multiple languages in the world that we live in. I am a bit sensitive to this. Or we can create active citizens, in the way that they can find multiple strategies to resolve a problem without getting frustrated, seeing a problem and not getting frustrated by the first barrier they find. It’s very important these days. It ends up being considered a little bit here in point 5 [(e)] (...) but it could be even more central...”

(Orquídea, educator, Private)

“I don’t think the development of creativity is well explicit here. It’s one of the things that, there are even studies and communications about it, of how school kills creativity. When I talk about creativity I don’t mean artistic creativity, I mean creativity at all levels, mainly in resolving problems. Critical thinking is here, but in my perspective it’s not [the same]”

(Iris, educator, IPSS)

Another common aspect emphasised by educators from the private school was looking at the child as central in the education process, as an active citizen, a human being with active voice, and autonomy:

“I haven’t read here autonomy (...) I think fomenting autonomy (...) it’s also one of the fundamental principles, we really want them to be able to leave here [the school] with the foundations to do the things by themselves”

(Tulipa, educator, Private)

“Respecting the rhythm of each one, I think it’s the principal. Spirit of sharing, being an active citizen, things that are crucial in our school that reveal gaps in these objectives”

(Calla, educator, Private)

“The right of children to participate, the right of the child to have an active voice, that were a little bit left out. When we look at these objectives we realise how centred they are in the educator. What the educator is going to provide, what the educator is going to incentivise, promote, foment, it ends up for never being centred in the child, so I think if there is anything missing here is to see the child’s side”

(Sálvia, educator, Private)

Two other educators indicated the lack of reference in the objectives to the importance of affective relationships and socialisation in this level of education:

“The affectionate curriculum is very important for me. We develop project work in small groups, in which there is a balance between free choice and the choice of the educator. Our way of work is based on relationship. And relationships bring good things and not so good. The less good are the frustrations. (...) our school makes children think, question. (...) our philosophy is that children work their thought, their creativity, their action and that they feel happy with what they did. That they have a purpose a sequence, a logic.”

(Lobélia, educator, IPSS)

“...here they don’t talk about socialisation, I don’t know, I’m a little bit afraid that the pre-school may forget the affectionate part of ‘giving the shoulder to the tear’ (...) they are still very young and sometimes I see the educator that is so concerned with the perfect graphism [writing] and forgets the shoulder, the tear, I’m a bit afraid of that, and that doesn’t come here. Perhaps the affection.”

(Frésia, educator, Public)

Finally, a couple of other educators referred to things they thought should be compulsory as part of the objectives. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to all ECE workers and one year of compulsory ECE for children, respectively:

“I think team work with the assistants and the technicians subjacent to education, even mandatory continuous formation [continuous professional development (CPD)]. It’s scary, how very few educational professionals still believe in continuous formation”

(Violeta, educator, Private)

“I would add that the ‘year zero’ should be compulsory. Pre-School is absolutely fundamental”

(Amarflis, educator, Public)

As I discussed in chapter 2, when starting the interviews with educators I did not inform them that the focal point of this research was democracy. The interviews initiated with a focus on the guiding principles of ECE practice in order to understand whether democracy was one of them. The examples provided above illustrate already that some of the educators naturally connected the objectives of pre-school education with some of the principles that tend to be associated with democracy (such as participation, choice, listening to children’s voice). As the conversations with educators progressed, I focused the questions around objective (a) of the 1997 Pre-School Education Framework Law: “To promote the child’s personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship”. All educators were asked the same questions (which can be found in appendix C) and when asked<sup>70</sup> whether democracy was a concept with influence in the school, the answers were unanimously yes:

“Yes, [democracy] it’s a commandment!”

(Orquídea, educator, Private)

“Much [importance] yes!”

(Iris, educator, IPSS)

<sup>70</sup> Question: 9) Taking for example the first objective of the Curricular Guidelines, which refers to democratic practices - to democracy. Would you say that democracy is a concept with influence in this school? How is it manifested and evident? What practices incorporate the concept of democracy?

Additionally, the answer of one of the educators below illustrates how, when I started focusing the questions on 'democracy', some educators instantly started identifying that notions such as 'access to education' were a huge component of democracy, reflecting Portuguese policy discourse.

"Principle one is the basis for everything. It's knowing how to be with the other. It's that all children have access to pre-school before they go to school because there are many who still don't have it [access]. When educating a child my objective is creating a democratic citizen, it's collaborating with families, it's valuing the children."

(Glicínia, educator, Public)

All educators across the three settings claimed 'democracy' as a principle of unquestioned importance in their practice. They believed democracy to be an inherent feature of ECE because of its nature (holistic and non-compulsory level of education) and because of its emphasis on relationships (with children, parents, communities). They further reinforced the idea of democracy as a 'broad concept', whilst referring to democracy as a component of the personal and social development of the children. They considered democracy as a transversal concept which cross referenced with many areas of action in ECE. They also agreed on democracy as a concept that does not happen in isolation.

The missions and objectives of each school (presented in section 6.2. of this chapter), also portrayed some level of connection with democratic principles and notions. Before democracy was mentioned in the interviews many educators referred to it (and its associated values), as principles of both the school and of their pedagogical actions. This did not mean, however, that democracy was the educators' focus, it meant that democracy was considered as part of what they did. In other words, it demonstrated that democracy was a central part of these educators' 'discourses'. Consequently, when describing the mission of each school, educators mentioned some of the features that in later questions they considered as

manifestations of democracy in practice. Features such as sharing, choosing, participating, were presented as part of the guiding principles offered in the discourses which defined each school objectives and missions. This in turn, demonstrated a closer connection between the ideas of democracy and the missions and purposes of ECE for the educators participating in this research. The democratic 'ethos', however, was very different between those who created physical spaces for democracy to happen and those who created those spaces through discourses. There was a level of criticality in thinking about democracy that materialised differently from those with concrete practices featuring 'democracy' and those who had an idealistic intention to enact it. This can be seen in section 6.4. of this chapter when I analyse the classroom representations of democracy and identify different pedagogical approaches to enact them.

Throughout the interviews with educators I started realising that each school also presented different priorities (as earlier indicated in the educators' views on the mission and objectives of their school). This in turn meant that even though the three schools shared some of the same principles, naturally the weights they gave to each was different.

### 6.3.2. Representations of democracy in the three schools:

In this section of the chapter I argue that democracy presented three distinct focus; one in each school. In other words, in my view, the evidence provided (both earlier and later in this chapter) indicates that the three schools 'interpreted' democracy differently (i.e. democracy presented different forms in the different schools). The evidence across the three settings demonstrated that when looking specifically at the manifestations and enactments of democracy, there were different representations, features, theoretical understandings (discussed in chapter 3) and conceptions (discussed in chapter 5) in the three schools. This in turn means that the three schools did not only differ in their principles/missions but also in the ways democracy was understood by the educators. Each setting had its own organisational representation of democracy, with its conceptions,



understandings and features aligning with the specific foci of the setting. The table below summarises my interpretation of the different organisational representations of democracy in the three settings researched:

**Table 6.3.2.: Organisational Representation of Democracy**

	<b>Public School</b>	<b>IPSS (charity) School</b>	<b>Private School</b>
<b>Organisational Representation of democracy:</b>	Structural Representation of Democracy	Individual Representation of Democracy	Collective Representation of Democracy
<b>Key features/focus:</b>	Respect for rules of 'coexistence'	Individual opportunities of choice	Group decision making
<b>Theoretical understandings of democracy:</b>	Democracy as a system of power	Democracy as a system of power and as a form of association	Democracy as a form of association
<b>Conceptions of democracy:</b>	Revolutionary, Ubiquitous and Regulatory democracy	Revolutionary and Regulatory democracy	Ubiquitous democracy

- The public school presented an emphasis on structural democracy (a type of democracy which was focused on rules of coexistence). This school demonstrated a connection to Villoro's (1998) definition of 'democracy as a system of power', as discussed in chapter 3. Democracy in this setting was also aligned with the three periods discussed in chapter 5, demonstrating some characteristics of the revolutionary, ubiquitous and regulatory conceptions of democracy.
- The IPSS was concerned with an individual representation of democracy (with emphasis on individual opportunities of choice). This setting showed to balance a relationship between 'democracy as a system of power' and also as 'a form of association' (Villoro,

1998). Democracy in this school was also aligned with revolutionary and regulatory conceptions of democracy.

- The private school was focused on a collective representation of democracy (with a particular concern on group decision making). This school was mainly linked with democracy 'as a form of association' (Villoro, 1998). In addition, the setting views aligned mostly with the ubiquitous conception of democracy.

Throughout this section of the chapter I present the evidence that supports my understanding of the different foci of democracy in each of the three schools.

### 6.3.3. Public School:

As indicated earlier, in the Public school some educators emphasised their mission as a service that intended to prepare children for the future life and school (i.e. 'preparatory' school for education and society). While others emphasised social coexistence and relationships. These two aspects emerged strongly in the educators' interviews. For example, when asked what values they hoped children acquired in their school a couple of educators stated:

"Having the capacity to initiate writing, reading, mathematics, knowing how to democratically resolve the problems that emerge in their life, by making agreements with their colleagues, not in conflict"

(Amarílis, educator)

"Respect for themselves and respect for the other. That they take with them well developed global skills: cognitive, physical, motor, to then be ready for future acquisitions"

(Begónia, educator)

Whilst others stated:

“The value of sharing, friendship, love, respect and education”

(Zínia, educator)

“Above all the acceptance of the other, the respect for the other, wanting to know more, learn more...”

(Frésia, educator)

In contrast, for one of the educators in this school the individual was emphasised over the ideas of either coexistence or the development of future academic skills, she stated:

“Confidence, being themselves, believing that they are capable. I would like them to meet their own goals, that they can be what they would like to be in life, not in academic terms, but if they are happy, if they have joy. Self-confidence, self-esteem, it is absolutely fundamental”

(Glicínia, educator)

Regarding pedagogical approaches the public school did not follow any set model (i.e. each educator was free to choose whatever pedagogical model they wished or deemed fit). Consequently, out of the three settings the public school was the one which presented most variation (i.e. extreme disparity or ‘potpourri’) in the classrooms’ pedagogical practices. The table below displays some examples of how, according to the educators, democracy was manifested in this school in terms of methodologies/pedagogical approaches:

**Table 6.3.3.: Manifestations of Democracy in Methodologies/Pedagogical Approaches – Public School**

<b>Public School</b>
<p><b>In the School:</b></p> <p>There was mention to the ‘Internal Regulation’<sup>71</sup> with rules that all had to follow and comply with (for instance, health and safety, safeguarding children, etc.). One educator stated that:</p> <p>“what the [grouping] director wants, is that the objectives are met and that the patterns delineated by the [grouping’s] educational project are followed, then there, in the internal regulation, there are the norms” (Glicínia, educator)</p> <p>Other educators referred to the general objectives set by the ‘mega grouping’ that each school had to achieve. However, these objectives still enabled freedom of practice within the school:</p> <p>“Within the school, each classroom is independent. There are various, the methods are diverse and dependent on the educators teaching training” (Amarilis, educator)</p> <p>“The kindergarten in itself does not limit us [educators], we have the freedom in each classroom to follow the pedagogy that we think best for our group.” (Zínia, educator)</p> <p>Democracy for the majority of the educators was manifested in the fact that the school did not limit any educator to use the methodology which they (either individually or in group) believed to be more adequate.</p> <p>“We are free to choose what we believe in. And generally we, the educators in this kindergarten, follow a flexible pedagogy, of a constructivist orientation, basically flexible pedagogies, that aren’t rigid and that follow the interests, needs and characteristics of the group [of children]”. (Begónia, educator)</p>
<p><b>In the Classroom:</b></p> <p>All educators stated and valued the fact that they were free to find the strategies to achieve the goals set by the curriculum guidelines and the objectives the educator had set for their own classroom in the beginning of the year.</p> <p>“Each educator is free to use the method that... because as I said, we have the Curriculum Guidelines and our own goals, but to meet them, which strategy, which methodology, each educator is free to work how.... and find strategies.</p>

<sup>71</sup> School internal regulations document.

There isn't any line, the guiding line is the Curriculum Guidelines and the goals, from that each educator is free to..." (Glicínia, educator)

Some educators mentioned they sometimes followed 'situational pedagogy' responding to what was happening in the classroom. They also said they tried to use observations of the children to decide on the strategies they wanted to use, they claimed to try to be flexible and open to what emerged every day in the classroom. The statements below demonstrate the high variety of methodological approaches not only between classrooms in this school but also within the classrooms themselves:

"I base myself in the pedagogies of constructivist orientation, project pedagogies, more flexible pedagogies, situational pedagogies that are based in the observation of the child, in the planning, in reflection, in the actual action and reformulation, if it's the case" (Begónia, educator)

"In this classroom I follow a little bit of each method, I don't follow only one. A bit of the modern method, a bit of João de Deus method<sup>72</sup>, and a bit of the investigation method, the scientific method" (Amarílis, educator)

"I follow very much the situational pedagogy, the curriculum pedagogy, so we [educators] make our own [curricular] project, but we also many times react accordingly, we plan without any doubt, but sometimes that planning is changed to follow the 'situation' that happened that day, so a situational pedagogy. But also because we have the freedom to do so" (Zínia, educator)

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<sup>72</sup> Method developed by Portuguese Pedagogue João de Deus at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to eradicate illiteracy. This method was focused on learning how to read, write and count and widely adopted for primary education by parliamentary decision in 1822 becoming optional by 1903 (Belo and Silva, 2015). The method has developed throughout the years and it is still applied as a pedagogical methodology by early years educators that have been trained in that tradition.

When asked how democracy was manifested and what sort of practices incorporated democracy in the public school one educator stated:

“(…) the democratic life, what is for me democracy, it’s respecting the freedom, my freedom ends where somebody else’s freedom begins. Now what we are going to explain to the child is that he has to respect that space of the other, he cannot interfere, he cannot hit, so it is in this way that we explain democracy... it ends up to be. For example, sharing, many of them are still very egocentric. For example, they don’t have resources which belong only to themselves. The children bring pens and cookies to be shared between all. What I understand in democracy, on that side, is that they know ‘I bring, but they [the other children] also can use what’s mine, it is for everyone’, [this] also encompasses democracy. Then it’s also respecting, you can’t destroy the work of your colleague. Now he has to speak and we have to be quiet if we want to listen to our colleague. For me democracy is to know how to be with the other... and is that freedom, really respecting the freedom of the other. He can choose, has the right to choose where he is going, what area is the one he would most like to work “ah, but I want to come here” “Ah, so you have to see how many are already there” the area is already complete, you can’t go, now if you want to go there and talk to your colleagues and see if any of them can go to another area, if they can swap with you. It ends up being them learning amongst themselves, to try to resolve, even if at times there are certain conflicts. I only act when I think I have to act, because before I try that they resolve [the conflict] between themselves. Resolving these small conflicts without the educator or adult’s intervention”.

(Glicínia, educator, Public)

There was general agreement amongst the educators in this school that democracy was generally manifested through sharing with others and respecting the space, freedom and opinion of the other. Attending ECE was seen as the opportunity children had to learn respect, which was mainly connected with social skills – for example: to wait for their turn, not talk on top of each other, resolve conflicts between themselves. ECE was also perceived as an opportunity to learn that diversity exists and that it was within the group that children had the opportunity to learn how to live in society.

“I think we live in a democracy but with respect. And I think that that is lived in the kindergarten. They [children] learn (...) they know that they have to respect their own time, not talk on top of their colleague, respecting the opinion of their colleague, [learning] that there is much diversity. [democracy] is manifested by the respect, by listening until we join the knowledge that one has with the knowledge that another one brings, because each one has its own experiences (...) it’s a way of learning to live in society”

(Begónia, educator, Public)

According to another educator, democracy was often enacted through the opportunity children had to *sometimes* individually choose activities they would like to do, or, if it was a group activity to talk through the options, vote, and reach a consensus.

“Children sometimes, when they do the morning planning, they can choose, opt doing various activities. Or otherwise we reach a consensus, when there are various themes, and we see what is best for that day.”

(Amarílis, educator, Public)

Also connected to their perception of democratic enactment, some of these educators mentioned that children also had the opportunity to learn friendship values and to help the poorest – i.e. children were in an environment where they could learn how to live in solidarity with others. One of the educators stated:

“[democracy] has to do with whether they learn to share, if they learn to wait for their turn, if they learn friendship, if they learn to help the poorest.”

(Zínia, educator, Public)

For three out of the five educators interviewed in this school democracy was manifested in the opportunities children had to understand as they quoted an old Portuguese saying that: “my freedom ends where someone else’s

freedom begins". Which represents the idea that one person is free until the moment their freedom interferes with the freedom of another.

Juxtaposing the different views of the educators in this setting of the general manifestation of democracy with the previously discussed missions and objectives, democracy in this school resonated 'the ideal citizen' proclaimed by the constitution (with the intent of creating an individual with solidarity values, that respects the others, that knows how to live in society within its rules), a democratic citizen for 'the public good'. There was an emphasis on democracy as a standard which could only exist through the compliance of the rules (such as respect, wait for their turn, not talk on top of each other). In summary, a democracy that was strongly based on respecting and following a pre-determined structure. Which was pre-determined by the adult (for example through pedagogical beliefs - 'children *sometimes* can choose'), by the circumstances imposed by the 'grouping' (such as those equally defined for all levels of education in internal rules), by the expectations of what ECE should 'look like' (such as changing daily routines to accommodate celebratory days) (as I have registered in my observation notes from the field).

With regards to theoretical understandings of democracy, I perceive this setting as having a connection to Villoro's (1998) definition of democracy as a system of power (i.e. 'not an ideal', but a form of management that 'conforms to certain procedures'), as discussed in chapter 3.

It was also my view that the Public school presented a connection with the three periods discussed in chapter 5. This school depicted some characteristics of the revolutionary, ubiquitous and regulatory conceptions of democracy. In other words, there was an effort, at least at the discourse level, to present democracy as a form of success (Revolutionary Democracy), citizenship (Ubiquitous Democracy) and reduction of inequalities (Regulatory Democracy).



#### 6.3.4. IPSS:

The IPSS came across, as seen in their mission and objectives in section 6.2.2., as a school that aimed to protect and support children and their families with a strong component of care associated to their education and religious mission (i.e. promote values specific to the institution, such as respect to oneself and the other, respect for the child as unique). Additionally, when asked what values they expected children to keep after their time at the school, most educators focused on the individual child's capability to be and critically think for him/herself, but also as beings in relationship with the other:

"... [I hope] that they respect the other and have critical thinking, that they can think for themselves and have their own opinions. I think that's the basis for everything, if they have their own identity, I think they can cope much better with all situations that can happen, because the changes are immense after. I hope they have respect for the other and that they have their own identity"

(Hortência, educator)

"Above all that they are happy (...) with group spirit, with interest for people and for the others, that they have most respect for differences, with values of sharing, cooperation and above all creativity. I hope they also take with them a 'head' that is made to think for itself"

(Petúnia, educator)

"critical thinking, respect for the other, humility, being able to understand the perspective of the other, being able to observe before they act, managing to be less impulsive which is normal in these ages (...) that they can be persistent and entrepreneurs, that they can choose a task and not give up in the middle of it"

(Dália, educator)

With regards to methodologies, the IPSS followed 4 specific pedagogical approaches<sup>73</sup> (Reggio Emilia, High Scope, MEM and Project Work methodology). Consequently, as the school was influenced by four different models, the practices in the classrooms were adapted accordingly. The table below gives some examples that demonstrate this variation at the school and at the classroom levels:

**Table 6.3.4.: Manifestations of Democracy in Methodologies/Pedagogical Approaches – IPSS**

IPSS
<p><b>In the School:</b></p> <p>One educator mentioned that the choice of methodologies within the school had been an expedition. Throughout the years, educators <i>almost</i> made a conjunct choice of which methodologies they considered best for their practice, which methodologies they would like to select in order to define the institution.</p> <p>“It has been a journey, this had been almost like a joint decision of which methodologies we take and what we want from our practice in terms of school and also to characterise our institution” (Iris, educator)</p> <p>As such, the school had foundational pedagogic models which each educator used in the ways and proportions they found best. Those models/approaches were Reggio Emilia, High Scope, MEM and project work methodology.</p> <p>“We have a very eclectic vision in which we take what we think best from a number of pedagogies. How to work in project, how for example the structure of the house [this school’s architecture is the same as] of Reggio Emilia, we have a series of things at the language level, [at the level] of writing [which are] from the MEM (...) it’s not a rigid thing, we always have flexibility and we very much educate experiences” (Magnólia, educator).</p> <p>“We talk a lot with each other and share what we do, and many times we give suggestions to each other. Sometimes we also observe either the classroom or the practice of our next door colleague and we reach the conclusion that maybe</p>

<sup>73</sup> ‘Approaches and methodologies’ are words used with some caution in this context as some people would disagree with the ‘approach/methodology’ perspective. Hoyuelos (2013), for instance, argues that: “Reggio is neither a program nor a model or a methodology. Reggio is a challenge that puts into question those truths that we believe cling to schools, those treasures that restrict us.” (p.8)

her method is more efficient and we try it in our classroom. Deeply I think it is a sharing experience” (Hortência, educator)

For these educators, democracy was manifested not only in the freedom they had to manage the approaches adopted by the school as they found best, but also on the fact that each of those approaches had a high emphasis on the child as the centre of the education process with active participatory involvement in their own learning journey.

### **In the Classroom:**

Educators stated that they managed their practice in the ways they wanted, in the ways which reflected their own beliefs and personality.

“Of course in the classroom each educator manages [practice] in the way that is more convenient for her, and also in accordance with her own personality, character and way of being. The instruments or everything that is subjacent to each of these models and is more related to herself or her group of children. So we have a certain freedom to manage these models inside our activities room and frame it in the way we think best and in accordance to the group we have. Because not every year is the same, there are different children and we have to continue adapting our practice, in consonance with the group. Each classroom is a classroom, despite all of us presenting ramifications with what is decided as a whole [school]. When you visit the classrooms you will see that many of us use the same instruments, but not all of us have the same instruments. They are the same things but used in different ways” (Iris, educator).

There were different models within the institution but there was freedom to apply the work instruments and all the subjacent principles from each model according to the group of children, i.e. the practice was adopted in conformity with the group of children.

“While the school has these models as a foundation, we [educators] have the freedom to use them as we think best and in the proportions we think best for our classrooms. This is therefore, more than democratic!” (Dália, educator)

Each classroom was a classroom, and even though each one of them presented ramifications of each model, the same instruments were not used in the same manner by every educator.

“It ends up presenting a series of experiences which emerge from practice, even for the classroom disposition, the routine, the way we perform the day-to-day routine. All this, always in function of the children’s participation, by experience, if they participate we gain better results than when things are imposed” (Magnólia, educator).

Regarding specific examples of the manifestations of democracy in this school, one educator stated:

“firstly through respect, through the opinion of each one, then for the chance that the children have to choose what they want to do, to choose or not to choose. The voice that we give to children, in other words, the chance that they have to speak their mind and to give their opinion even if it’s contrary to the other children’s, or even [contrary] to ours [adults]. Of respecting others, of listening to others, of giving the turn, of being listened to. This is a mini society it is here that we train them for life out there.”

(Iris, educator, IPSS)

A few educators agreed democracy was generally manifested through respect. Respect for the opinion and choices of each child and respect for others. Democracy in this school was very much manifested by giving voice to the children, i.e. giving children the possibility to say what they thought, to give their opinion even if it was against the opinion of the other children or against the opinion of the adult.

“I always think about the child, starting from the educational need of that child. Each child is unique; we have to respect the time of each one. Promote the development of each child in function of, and inclusion of each child in our school. In accordance to their own culture, we are Catholic, but we accept Muslim, we accept all other religions, therefore I cannot demand that a parent brings a cake if they don’t like to sing ‘happy birthday’, we have to respect. It’s the most important point of this institution, the individuality of each child, and then, integrating the family.”

(Camélia, educator, IPSS)

It was believed this respect would help children learn to live with difference and also be aware of the other, for example by feeling part of the group and giving their turn to others. Part of this respect was based on listening to others and also being listened to. Some educators mentioned that in their practice it was crucial to give opportunity for children to choose what they

wanted to do or what they did not want to do – the possibility of choosing but also the possibility not to choose. For some, it was important that children felt they in fact participated in decision making, in choices, in the organisation of work and projects.

“For example, if you want to choose something in the classroom you ask in the big group [i.e. all classroom], here [in this school] it happens frequently, even though we privilege the work in small groups (...) but I think that almost every classroom already has that so called ‘meeting moment’ exactly to debate problems linked to citizenship and democratic education. Making decisions together, learning to live in group.”

(Petúnia, educator, IPSS)

“I speak for my classroom, but from what we [educators] share with each other, my perception is that here we try that children feel that they really participate in decision making, in the choices, in the decisions that we make, at organisational level, at the projects level, at the level of everything we are working on.”

(Hortênciã, educator, IPSS)

One of the educators stated that children have an active role in choosing what they learn and explore. For example, if there were several proposals from the children then each one of them voted on the themes/questions they wanted to see answered on their projects. They then discussed and decided in group how they were going to answer those questions.

“The children are the ones who decide what they are going to learn and explore, we even have voting systems and everything, of the themes, what questions they want to see answered, how we are going to answer them. Therefore, it parts very much from them, even though the adults always conduct and help them to discover new ways, but it’s more than democracy”

(Dália, educator, IPSS)

Democracy was also perceived as the mechanism to exercise the right to give an opinion, the right to make their own choices, and also to accept that many times they were limited by the choices of the majority of the group.

“I see our classroom group as a miniature society, and to be able to coexist in the day-to-day there are a series of rules which presuppose democracy, respect, knowing to wait, not to push, ask to speak, sit without disrupting the other (...) a series of things (...) that make part of this process of deciding together, of seeing what we are going to do (...) they are young but they start to understand that they have the power to choose (...) and also that there are limits and from a certain limit sometimes the choice belongs to the adult, and sometimes there are some conflicts and even their capacity to understand how far they can go and supersede them. But I think they have the opportunity to opt and they have that right.”

(Magnólia, educator, IPSS)

One of the educators also mentioned that this democracy was manifested by ensuring that the opportunities were equal for all, rather than fomenting the opportunities of those who were ‘natural leaders’. This educator felt she had a role to play in managing equality in the classroom.

On the whole, I interpreted democracy in this school as a concept that emphasised the individual relatively to the group. In my view, this IPSS setting presented democracy based on the individual in relationship with the other and in their individual capacity/opportunity of choice. As a result, in terms of the theoretical understandings of democracy, as discussed in chapter 3, I suggest that this setting balanced between democracy as a ‘system of power’ (Villoro, 1998), by fostering the equality of children before the institutional rules within its organisation; and also ‘democracy as a form of association’ (ibid), by engaging in an associative project which was guided by values inherent to the religious character of the institution. With regards to the conceptions of democracy that have emerged in policy, in my view this school aligned mainly with revolutionary and regulatory conceptions of democracy. This is primarily due to the school’s mission of

providing equality of opportunities by providing access to those that are socially disadvantaged and consequently having as one of its purposes to reduce social inequality.

### 6.3.5. Private School:

The private school, emphasised in its mission education as a right of the child (i.e. the child's right to participate and have an active voice in the education process). The child's voice and capacity of expression was referred to by most of the educators interviewed. When asked what values they hoped children to acquire in this school a couple of educators stated:

"... This democracy that we try to transmit to them throughout all this time, this active voice that they have (...) that they are willing in cooperation, sharing, mutual help, in showing that they have voice, that they have opinion"

(Calla, educator)

"Autonomy and active citizenship, of telling the 'truth' that they feel..."

(Violeta, educator)

In addition to the children's capacity to express their opinions and feelings, some educators also reinforced ideas of collectiveness which were attached to specific values:

"In first place, that they have a critical spirit, that they have voice to express when they arrive to other educational contexts, to contexts of real life. We always try that children are ready for real life, that this is not a kindergarten of make belief. Also that they have human values, of sharing, cooperation (...) generational coexistence (...) optimism (...) resilience that helps them not to give up at the first setback"

(Sálvia, educator)

In terms of methodologies, the private school followed the Portuguese MEM, and consequently demonstrated the least variation in practice of the three schools researched. Educators' views on the manifestations of democracy in methodologies and pedagogical approaches can be found on table 6.3.5. below:

**Table 6.3.5.: Manifestations of Democracy in Methodologies/Pedagogical Approaches – Private School**

<b>Private School</b>
<b>In the School:</b>
<p>According to all the educators the pedagogical model existent in the school was the MEM.</p> <p>“Our method/pedagogy is the MEM for both the school and the classroom” (Violeta, educator)</p> <p>One of the educators explained that the school’s pedagogy was fully democratised, through the projects, the instruments existent in the classrooms, and through the role of the child in the classroom.</p> <p>“Our methodology is the MEM. One of MEM’s principles is democracy and I think we always work with this principle. For example, we always receive invitations from the other classrooms to participate in the day-to-day. The educators from other classrooms participate in the life of our classroom, we are not a classroom with a closed door, where ‘this is my classroom’, ‘it is your group’, where ‘you’ cannot come in, or cannot give ‘your’ opinion, cannot make part of ‘our’ day” (Margarida, educator)</p> <p>The school focused on the active participation of the child.</p> <p>“It starts from the movement [MEM] in which we have an active participation of the child, active listening, the sharing of ideas, there is always democracy, because they [children] always end up amongst themselves and with us [educators] to reach these concepts. So, active listening, giving voice to the children, really fomenting actual democracy” (Tulipa, educator)</p>
<b>In the Classroom:</b>
<p>For these educators, more than having maps/pedagogical instruments in the classroom was the democratic attitude from the educator according to</p>



the MEM principles (such as collaboration, participation, sharing) which made the real difference on how democracy could be enacted.

“We consider that in the school as well as in the classrooms, the educational pedagogy which is strongly present is the MEM. So, anyone that knows the model and enters our school, understands that it is democratised in its plenitude through the projects, through the instruments that exist, through the role of the child in the classroom, through the sharing of power. Therefore, it is more than having maps on the wall, which is what happens in many classrooms [in other schools], even the educator’s attitude, which is important that goes in line with the MEM’s principles, of sharing the power, that is not an educator that has a role centred in herself/himself, on the contrary it is [an educator who is] defiant, provoking, so these are the most important principles” (Sálvia, educator)

Democracy was fully dependent on the educators’ attitude towards the principles of participation and collaborative practice.

“It’s the participation or non-participation of the child in the activity, the acceptance from the adult, because many times the adult also gets frustrated when the child does not want to participate. It feels like the adult failed to respond to the interests of the child. However, it is important for the adult to be conscious that the child has the right to not participate” (Margarida, educator).

Regarding the manifestations of democracy in this school one educator stated:

“It’s also very much based in the way that everyone democratically participates, in other words, how each one’s word is important in trying practices of equality, but that at the same time that equality implies different opinions, in other words, freedom of expression and each child have its own opinion and expresses it. Critical thinking. And in our school we defend precisely that, because we understand each child as an individual with an active voice”.

(Orquídea, educator, Private)

For all educators in this school democracy had to happen on a daily basis. One of the educators stated that having one or two projects a year where

children participate and give their opinion does not make a school democratic.

“in practice (...) it’s not because we say that children do a project per year in which they participate and give their opinion, that the school is a democratic school. It has nothing to do with that, democracy has to happen daily. It only makes sense to me having a democratic school where everyone has an opinion, where everyone exists, that in reality there are spaces and times to democratise democracy”.

(Sálvia, educator, Private)

Most educators claimed that in this school everything was democratic: from the meetings educators had with the children, the choice of activities, to the establishment of the classroom rules. One of the general principles of this school was that everything had to pass by the type of democracy that they tried to transmit where everything in the school was discussed and each opinion had value.

“Because here [in this school] everything is democratised. The meetings that we do, the choice of activities, even the establishment of the classroom rules, everything, everything passes [as democracy], in fact, I think one of the global principles is everything passing by this democracy, that we try to transmit and everything is discussed, each opinion is valued and so in my opinion it is one of the main [principles]”

(Tulipa, educator, Private)

“Here [in this school] we don’t decide anything alone. Everything we do in the classroom school trips, the work, the reality in the classroom, even the agenda we create, the maps, everything is conversed with them [children], everything is dialogued in a way that they also feel to be part of all of these dynamics”.

(Calla, educator, Private)

As part of following the MEM educators in this school considered everything they did as democratic, for instance one of the educators gave the example of when the school had to review the food menu and children and adults

wrote every day what they were eating and then elected the foods they liked and discussed what could be taken off the menu to give space to other dishes not included and which they stated as their favourites.

“The children participate in every decision about everything... when we had to review the [school’s food] menu, we played a game in the classroom of writing every day what we were eating and after we did a voting of what we liked the most to know what was coming off the menu and what could go in, other dishes that they have said to be their favourite. (...) [this is] the quotidian life, democracy exists in everything from planning to conception”.

(Violeta, educator, Private)

As per the views expressed above, for many of these educators, democracy was something that happened in their daily lives. They believed as their mission to let participation happen naturally on the day-to-day interactions as an ‘effective’ form of participation. Not imposing things from the adult side and not conducting. Not fomenting obligatory participation, while giving freedom to the child to say “no, I don’t want to participate”.

“How is it [democracy] manifested, in what things? In the power of choice that they [children] have, they can choose if they want or don’t want a work, ‘yes or no’ to participate in a project, in the choices that they make in the tasks. I don’t know, throughout the whole day they have a democratic life, that’s our life. They also have the limits, they know that they can choose, they know that they can say ‘no, I don’t want’. I think many times it passes by this ‘no, but I prefer that’, and it’s here that we give them the opportunity to say, which I don’t hear many times, that it’s not said, that it’s not present at all times in our life”

(Papoila, educator, Private)

Most of the educators in this school perceived that nothing was decided alone, at the same time as they regarded the individual choices of the child. This suggests that in the private school there was an emphasis on democracy as a collective responsibility. Democracy, in this school, was very much based on the role of the group in decision making. Due to this emphasis on community and collective decisions, this setting was mainly

linked with a theoretical understanding of 'democracy as a form of association' (Villoro, 1998) (as discussed in chapter 3). In addition, the emphasis on the creation and maintenance of democracy as an active principle within the school, with democracy, according to the educators, being ever present in the everyday life of the school, indicated that this setting was mostly connected with the ubiquitous conception of democracy which emerged in policy (as discussed in chapter 5).

#### **6.4. Classrooms Representation of Democracy**

When asked if there were any differences between the intentions of the school and the intentions of the classrooms all educators across the three settings stated that they were the same, as they complemented and built each other. All educators claimed 'coherence' was essential between the school and the classroom, as these needed to be in 'tune' with each other. They also stated that the school had its own objectives and then each educator applied them in the classroom, as they thought fit, i.e. according to the pedagogies they wanted to use. The statement below reflects this view:

"The school is the cake and the classroom is the slice. The school is the base and we work all for the same"

(Glicínia, educator, Public)

Even though all educators initially started by agreeing that it was difficult to separate the school from the classroom, upon reflection some educators from the different schools contradicted this agreement. A couple of them expressed that:

“From the school to the classroom, it’s two different things, because the other educators have different practices, and can’t find a way of doing a similar work in all classrooms. Pre-school asks for more and demands more than what is being done. I’m not criticising my colleagues, but I think that, increasingly, children have to go to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle well prepared, and they [colleagues] have to do everything possible to provide activities for them [children] to meet these objectives”

(Amarilis, educator, Public)

“I think there isn’t [difference between the school and the classroom] but deep down there is, maybe there shouldn’t be. We [educators] in the classroom are very, when we are in the school we are ‘from everyone’, but of course in the classroom I am going to be a little more preoccupied with the children from my classroom, we belong to the school so we are also preoccupied with the school. I am going to give an example, the children in my classroom developed a project about the moon. [The children said] ‘some call it first quarter’, ‘some call it last quarter’, they wanted to know why there were different names for the moon, they went on to discover and then they thought that they should communicate their project to all the classrooms in the school. And then it emerged the question of how to communicate the findings to the classrooms of the 1 year olds’, 2 year olds’ and babies’ rooms. They realised very quickly that they could not communicate the project in the same way as in the 4 and 5 year olds rooms, ‘because they [the younger children] don’t know the letters and numbers very well’, and ‘because they are babies they still don’t pay much attention to the images’. So the children in my classroom had the notion that they should engage in pedagogical action, so we went on to make (...) 3 different types of communication of the project, for some we did flyers, we had a display, for others we gave them games to play in their classrooms. In the crèche, namely the babies’ and 1 year olds’ rooms (...) they [children] made a performance with an exhibition of the moon, using projection with music in a dark environment with differences of light, so they [babies] could see the different phases of the moon (...) this pedagogical differentiation makes all the difference in the group and corresponds to what I was saying that we [educators] are preoccupied with the children both in the school and in the classroom, I think themselves they are preoccupied with the school [as a whole] (...) and this [example] demonstrates it”

(Violeta, educator, Private)

Therefore, while the school was widely perceived as a space of relationship, it was soon evident that schools and classrooms were different due to: first, the different age groups that each classroom catered for (particularly in the IPSS and private schools that also catered for younger children (from 4 months old)); and second, the levels of autonomy each classroom could enjoy (across the three schools). The schools had their mission and philosophy which had been decided either by the directorates of the schools or by the pedagogical teams (all educators), but the classrooms were the space of action of each individual educator, where there was freedom to individually choose the pedagogic approach desired.

From the answers provided by the educators in the three settings (including some of the ones presented earlier in the chapter), there were 10 elements which have emerged as necessary for the enactment of democracy. These were, in no particular order:

- Choosing
- Sharing
- Making Decisions
- Resolving Conflicts
- Expressing Opinions
- Participating
- Listening
- Critical Thinking
- Freedom
- Respect

(Examples of the coding of the educators' interviews can be found in Appendix G). Out of all the elements referred to by the educators, when asked about specific examples of the manifestation of democracy, freedom and respect were the strongest (i.e. most mentioned). Respect was the mostly mentioned element that educators wished children to take from the school particularly by the educators in the Public setting (evidence presented in section 6.3.3.). Overall, Freedom and Respect, were both perceived across the three schools as the basis for all the other necessary elements to thrive and consequently to enable democracy. Freedom and Respect of choices, the others, themselves, the spaces, the rules

(independently of who chooses and establishes them). Additionally, the development of 'critical thinking' was the weakest (i.e. less mentioned) when educators were specifically asked about manifestations of democracy in the school. However, critical thinking emerged strongly for most IPSS and Private school educators as a value that they wished children took with them when they left the school (evidence of this can be seen in the educators' statements above on sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5.).

One dimension not explored in this research, but that can be further developed in future studies, was that of 'democratic accountability' (Biesta, 2007). One particular discussion during the interviews both with policy makers, ECE researchers and educators, was 'responsibility', and how being responsible for one's actions/choices/participation had a strong connection with democracy. Responsibility was deemed as part of democracy, as a 'shadow' of all elements necessary for the democratic enactment, particularly freedom and respect. During the observations I noted this particularly when, for example, in all the classrooms across the three schools, each child was responsible to manage their own presence when playing/working in a particular space. In most classrooms each child marked his/her presence either on a map or on the respective area, this was done in order to respect other children's choices and spaces.

Considering both the interviews with educators and my observations of the settings researched, I concluded that democracy, in these particular contexts, was enacted if democratic spaces were created which allowed all the necessary elements to be exercised on the foundations of freedom and respect. All these elements, however, took different forms and degrees, which meant that they were subject to interpretation and subjected to the educator's vision of what democracy should look like. In other words, these elements could be considered as practical manifestations of how democracy was visible in the classroom, but were not always mono dimensional. As part of a 'discourse' these elements were strongly present, but did not result in common practices, they represented variables of critical engagement with democracy which varied markedly from classroom to classroom.

From what the educators perceived as 'democratic enactment', through the interviews, classroom documents, and observations, I identified 3 different pedagogic styles which demonstrate the variation of democratic 'enactment' in the ECE classrooms researched. By 'pedagogic styles/approaches' I mean a value-laden "social process that involves educators and children in relationships" (Edwards, 2009, p.61) in their day-to-day activities (see also Moss and Petrie, 2002). The three specific styles that I have identified through my observations were:

- 1) Instructive pedagogical approach - where the educator acted as a master intentionally creating democratic discourses, and democracy was presented at a strong symbolic level. This was mainly a procedural type of democracy, which was especially prominent in the interviews and that was not associated with much criticality. In this pedagogical approach all the elements necessary for the enactment of democracy (Choosing, Sharing, Making Decisions, Resolving Conflicts, Expressing Opinions, Participating, Listening, Critical Thinking, Freedom and Respect) were present at a symbolic and procedural level.
- 2) Responsive pedagogical approach - where the educator acted as a mediator intentionally creating responses based on values attached to democracy, and democracy was presented at a strong interactive level. This was a type of approach where democracy acted as a supportive mechanism for the educational practice. In other words, where all the 'necessary elements' specifically: Choosing, Sharing, Making Decisions, Resolving Conflicts, Expressing Opinions, and Participating, were presented at an interactive level.
- 3) Synergetic pedagogical approach - where the educator acted as a support to the education process whilst intentionally creating 'democratic spaces'; and democracy was presented at a strong critical level. In this approach all the elements for the enactment of democracy were present, but the forms of enactments specifically associated with critical democracy were based on: Listening, Critical Thinking, Freedom and Respect.



The three pedagogical approaches can be seen in table 6.4., below, alongside the roles and key features of the educators, the classroom representations of democracy and the privileged elements necessary for the enactment of democracy according to each pedagogical approach.

**Table 6.4.(a): Pedagogical approaches**

	<b>Instructive pedagogy</b>	<b>Responsive pedagogy</b>	<b>Synergetic pedagogy</b>
<b>Role and key features of the educator:</b>	Master  intentionally creates democratic discourses	Mediator  intentionally creates responses based on values attached to democracy	Support  intentionally creates 'democratic spaces'
<b>Classroom representation of democracy:</b>	Procedural democracy	Interactive democracy	Critical democracy
<b>Privileged elements for the enactment of democracy:</b>	Choosing, Sharing, Making Decisions, Resolving Conflicts, Expressing Opinions, Participating, Listening, Critical Thinking, Freedom and Respect	Choosing, Sharing, Making Decisions, Resolving Conflicts, Expressing Opinions, Participating, and Listening	Listening, Critical Thinking, Freedom and Respect

This does not mean that in every classroom, of each denominated school, educators would be following a particular pedagogical style. The level of variation of practices between classrooms and the consistency with their own conceptions of democracy within the same school were high. Consequently, within the same setting the pedagogical practices were likely to be different. In addition, while the pedagogical styles were markedly different, they did not necessarily happen in isolation. Educators could either perform one style or change their practice responding to the circumstances of everyday life in the classroom. My perception, however, is that generally, the practice of the educators: in the Public School mostly aligned with the instructive pedagogy (procedural democracy); in the IPSS with the responsive pedagogy (interactive democracy); and in the Private School with the synergetic pedagogy (critical democracy). Nevertheless, as discussed above, the variation within practice was high and the pedagogical styles cannot be fully aligned by institution.

Tables 6.4.1. and 6.4.2. below present 2 examples of my observations in ECE classrooms as an illustration of how educators practice encapsulated the variation within the 3 identified pedagogical approaches. These examples show concretely the ways in which within the same 'necessary elements' democracy was 'enacted' differently. The 2 elements illustrated here are Choosing and Resolving Conflicts:

**Table 6.4.(b).: Observation: Choosing:**

<b>Choosing</b>	
<p><b>Instructive pedagogy</b>  (educator as a master)  <b>Procedural democracy</b></p>	<p>In the morning meeting the educator called the children one by one to choose the area they would like to go to play/work in – The children were sitting on the carpet and the educator on a chair. The children one by one, as they were called, said out loud which area they would like to go to, stood up and went directly to the area of choice. The areas filled up one by one (with 3 or 4 children each) by the time the educator called the last children to choose, there were very few choices available to choose from.</p>
<p><b>Responsive pedagogy</b>  (educator as a mediator)  <b>Interactive democracy</b></p>	<p>In the morning meeting two children were responsible to manage the activities in the room (the ‘responsible children’ changed every week). The ‘responsible children’ were standing up next to a wall map and all the other children were sitting on a circle of chairs. The ‘responsible children’ randomly picked photos of the other children from a bag and asked them one by one which areas they would like to go to. Then, as the children answered the ‘responsible children’ placed the photos of each child on a map (with Velcro) in the corresponding area of choice. All children patiently waited sitting until they have all decided where to go. The educator helped mediating some of the conversations when opportunities emerged to negotiate with each other if they would like to swap areas as the places were filling up.</p>
<p><b>Synergetic pedagogy</b>  (educator as a support)  <b>Critical democracy</b></p>	<p>In the morning meeting children were sitting around a table with the educator where they planned and registered what they were going to do in the day. After deciding what they wanted to do and how, throughout the day, each child self-regulated their own choices of areas. Once they chose they registered their choice on a wall map by marking it with a pen. At the end of the month in a group meeting they all discussed the map and checked the areas in which they have been playing/working the most. The educator then would reflect with the children why they privileged some areas over others (if that was the case) and encouraged them to try different/new areas next time.</p>

**Table 6.4.(c): Observation: Resolving Conflicts**

<b>Resolving Conflicts</b>	
<p><b>Instructive pedagogy</b>  (educator as a master)  <b>Procedural democracy</b></p>	<p>The educator observed the conflict and let children try to resolve it. As the conflict was not resolved the educator intervened by first listening and then talking to the children involved in the conflict. The educator reminded the children of the rules of the classroom, the rules of respectful coexistence and suggested a solution, which the children promptly accepted.</p>
<p><b>Responsive pedagogy</b>  (educator as a mediator)  <b>Interactive democracy</b></p>	<p>The educator observed the conflict and sat with the children to listen to each other and talk through it. The educator encouraged children to express how they felt and asked them to think how they would feel if they were the other. Together, through conversation they discussed options and decided on a solution they were all happy with.</p>
<p><b>Synergetic pedagogy</b>  (educator as a support)  <b>Critical democracy</b></p>	<p>Children were expected to resolve their own conflicts. If those were not resolved the children registered the conflict on a wall map that had a column entitled 'didn't like' Where they wrote 'I didn't like that...' (by themselves or with the help of an adult who would write what the children dictated to them). The children discussed the conflicts every Friday in a group meeting where the conflict was exposed - all sides were heard and the group collaborated by engaging in discussion to find a solution. The educator asked the children to decide on resolutions/commitments to avoid the conflict in the future. Some of those resolutions were transformed by the group (children and adults) into classroom rules throughout the year.</p>

As previously discussed, while the pedagogical styles were distinctive, they were not automatically practiced in isolation. Educators at times adapted their practice responding to everyday life situations in the classroom. As

such, within the diverse ECE practices the educators could perform many roles and have the freedom to be whoever they chose to be. As stated by Malaguzzi in democratic spaces, the educator has the power to be someone:

“who is sometimes the director, sometimes the set designer, sometimes the curtain and the backdrop, and sometimes the prompter...who is even the audience – the audience who watches, who sometimes claps, sometimes remains silent, full of emotion, who sometimes judges with scepticism, and other times applauds with enthusiasm” (in Rinaldi, 2001, p.89)

However, in my observations I perceived that the understanding/interpretation of the educators to what democracy is, how it is manifested and enacted in the school and classrooms, was somewhat far from that 'revolutionary democracy' with hands on practice, which was referred to in chapter 5 by policy makers and researchers, that emerged in the mid-1970s. Within the time I spent in schools, I concluded that the role of the adult as the 'regulator' was still quite strong in the classrooms, and more aligned with an idea of representative democracy. As expressed by one of the educators:

“Democracy is being able to exercise the right of giving your opinion, of being able to make your own choices and many times of limiting yourself to the choices of the majority”

(Dália, educator, IPSS)

Most of the educators listened (or claimed to listen) to the children and then decided whether or not to enact their views and wishes. There was always an element of control; for the child to reclaim democracy the adult had to be open to allow it to happen. There seemed to be two distinct and contradictory views to balance out in the practices. On the one hand a view that would have a focus on the vulnerability of the children that need protection and guidance from the adult; on the other, a view with a focus on the potential the child actually had to be the owner of their educational experience. Depending on the adult's perception of the child, she then decided the extent to which democracy was enacted. Consequently, the

enactment of democracy in the classroom was tied with whatever that adult had defined as democracy and whatever values were 'allowed' by the same adult to be enacted. This means that while in this research I was concerned with demonstrating democratic enactments, not all practices were automatically democratic, even though all educators presented democracy as central within their discourses.

#### 6.4.1. Degrees of autonomy

It was demonstrated in section 6.3 of this chapter (particularly in tables 6.3.3., 6.3.4., and 6.3.5), that the degree of autonomy in each pedagogical practice in the classroom was conditioned by the pedagogical methods chosen by the school. This diversity in pedagogical practise was enabled by the freedom which was endorsed by the curriculum guidelines for pre-school education. In the Public school all educators were free to choose the pedagogical approach they wanted. In the IPSS and the Private schools, the educators were free to manage their practices whilst framed by the pedagogical approaches followed by the setting. However, this did not mean that once following a 'pedagogical style' educators had to 'commit' to it. On the contrary, some educators travelled between one pedagogical direction to another as they created synergies to be responsive to what was happening in the classroom. It depended on how strong specific methodologies were part of their own pedagogical beliefs. How strongly educators felt about a particular approach.

Consequently, there was tension between language/discourse and pedagogical practice. In other words, discourse and practice were loosely coupled and educators were then transformed into conveyors, catalysts, holders of power and colonisers. As stated above, the curriculum guidelines and the schools' missions allowed for great diversity in educators' individual practices. Hill (2014) stated that "[e]ven when the curriculum is very tightly controlled, even where it is very rigidly prescribed, there are, as Gramsci, taught us, always spaces, little spaces for us to infiltrate, to use, to colonise" (p.187). Therefore, when there is no control that level of

colonisation/infiltration can be even stronger in determining most of what happens in the classroom. Educators become the colonisers of whatever they believe should happen in the classroom.

The evidence provided in this chapter suggests that this autonomy in the classroom, i.e. freedom, was many times perceived by the educators as a synonym of democracy. This is not entirely surprising as with the emergence of democracy in the 1974 revolution many freedoms were established: freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, freedom of choice; all happening at different levels and in different ways. According to Freire (1996):

“The taste for freedom is part of the very nature of men and women, it is part of their orientation toward being more (...) Freedom, a sine qua non of being more, is not the finish line, but the starting point.” (p.151)

During the interviews freedom emerged specifically as:

- Educators' freedom to choose methodologies/principles;
- Educators freedom to provide an opinion (e.g. on decision making processes);
- Children's freedom to choose areas (of work/play);
- Children freedom to express wants, desires and needs.

The Freedom of the educator either to choose or to manage educational methodologies; the freedom towards their own pedagogical principles and strategies in the classroom was translated in the various pedagogical actions which occurred in the different classrooms. This freedom in turn would be transformed in power for educators to make decisions. Freire (1996) contended that:

“It is not possible to act in favour of equality, respecting others, the right to a voice, participation, and reinventing the world in a regime that denies the freedom to work, eat, speak, criticise, read, disagree, come and go; in short, the freedom to be” (p.146)

This consequently explains why educators valued their freedom of practice, whilst considering it a highest form of democracy. This freedom of the educators to act in their classrooms according to their will, was then transformed in power. “Power consists of, in the first instance the ability to make things happen – and we generally exercise power to our advantage” (Mac Naughton, 2009, p.82). As such, power was infused in the everyday relationships between adults and children and between children

themselves. It was crucial to recognise this relationship between freedom and power in order to understand how democracy could be enacted in ECE classrooms. During my observations I concluded that in most circumstances in ECE classrooms, a scenario where children demanded democracy was highly unlikely. This perhaps due to children in ECE age still tendentiously being seen and treated as vulnerable, needing protection and guidance. If democratic spaces were not provided young children were to a large extent automatically subordinated to the wishes and powers of the adults. The same was observed with regards to the pedagogical team. My perception from talking to the different educators and in my informal conversations with school staff members, was that it was difficult to fully establish, promote or enact democracy if there was not this predisposition as an active principle of the actual school (i.e. from the Directorate, all the professionals, involvement of families, and community). Within the enactment and promotion of democracy educators had power in two specific circumstances:

- 1) in their work with the children, as they could decide whether they wanted or not to perform a democratic practice and enact it accordingly in the classroom.
- 2) as professionals that had the power to influence the philosophies and policies established by the school at the structural and organisational levels.

In addition, as demonstrated in tables 6.3.3., 6.3.4., and 6.3.5., the idea of freedom in the classroom was stronger in the Public and IPSS settings where there was greater variation on the pedagogical orientations of the school. The Private school focused mainly on ideas of participation because their pedagogical orientation was already following the principles and practices of the MEM.

One 'challenge' whilst trying to understand the enactment of democracy in ECE was that it was often perceived by ECE professionals as a form of child centred education. Consequently, everything would automatically be considered as democratic. Within educators' discourses democracy always existed, the challenge was that critical engagement was then necessary for these discourses to move beyond rhetoric. I also noted in my field diary that:



“Child centred models are considered by definition, or rather, understood by the educators, as democratic (taking into account that they start from the interests of the children and not as an imposition from the adults’ side).

At a more superficial level, it seems that it is the management of the classroom (on a day-to-day basis) and the resolution of conflicts, which defines a ‘holistically’ democratic practice. It seems that there is a level of democracy which is allowed by the adults through that perspective of practice centred in the children. Which corresponds primordially to the capacity of the child to decide what they want to do. Or to have the opportunity to decide ‘details’ of the classroom such as how many children can be in area X or Y. Which works many times as a response to the behaviour of the children, acting as regulator of that same behaviour, as it affects directly the experience of the child in that space. The discomfort tends to give space to a collective decision which works for all.

It is the adult who determines how profound, and the extension of, the involvement of the child, either acting as a mediator or as a guide. There is a difference between mediating the decisions of children whether at superficial or a deeper level and guiding the decisions of the children to inevitably where (consciously or unconsciously) the educator considers more appropriate. Guiding as a subtle way to suggest (the adults’ preferred ‘option’) rather than imposing as an obligation.”

(Diana Sousa, Field Diary, 19/03/2014)

My reflection about the centrality of the children in the education process, alongside the role of the educator as the holder of power, aligns with Cannella’s (2000) argument that:

“Teaching methods construct the order of children’s bodies in space and in relation to all other objects in space, (...) [whilst] Methods construct an environment in which (...) controlled behaviours are expected by everyone; (...) [and] Power is constructed as the illusion of choice providing alternatives...” (p.41).

In addition, when asked about barriers to the enactment of democracy a common limitation revealed in the answers of most educators across the three schools were: the adults, i.e. themselves, as the person who had the ultimate power/word. Below I present the educators’ views on this matter (a summary of the overall limitations/barriers to the enactment of democracy can be found in Appendix H):

“I believe that people who are inflexible, people who are authoritarian, people very centred in themselves and people who cannot understand what is this of ‘working with children’, are able to cut [stop] this possibility of children’s democratic living. Because, and this happens a lot in kindergarten, that is arriving and applying a recipe and collecting the results, without leaving space for the child to decide. Those schools that have working sheets and that the only task is colouring them, or an activity that the educator has decided that ‘is this way’ and doesn’t give margin to the child to say ‘no’ or to not explaining why not, or to argue, or to do it in another way, different from the one the educator had thought. An educator that doesn’t consider the hypothesis of learning with the children is automatically limiting this democratic living. ECE cannot be faced today as ‘adult-centric’. We all learn daily. I learn immensely with my pupils every day. An adult that cannot see how much he/she can learn with the children, that only himself/herself can teach it’s cutting this democratic living from the start. Moreover, an educator that thinks he/she is going to teach... our [educators’] preach is helping to learn, not quite teach”

(Iris, educator, IPSS)

“I think that the major obstacle to democracy is the actual adult. The participation, democracy, it is born and it dies in the attitude of the adult. If the adult is a democratic adult, that promotes democracy in the classroom, democracy happens. If it’s an adult, a professional, that is authoritarian in which everything as a focus on himself/herself, the participation and democracy die”

(Sálvia, educator, Private)

With regards to the adult being a limitation to democracy, in the Public school there was the specific issue that the pedagogical team is allocated by national context and can change frequently, presenting difficulties to a collaborative work between the adults themselves.

“if there is an adult that can’t work in a team. When we are always in a new school it’s difficult to implement democracy. We have to adapt to the children, the team, the managing bodies, etc. When we spend a long time in the same school we can also fall into the other extreme ‘ah, it’s always the same thing’. When, let’s say, we have a more liberal vision, when nothing is imposed to us, we have to implement the democracy of respecting each other, as long as we can build that team. When we have many educators that are contracted [usually one year contracts] the teams are ‘of passage’ and it’s difficult to engage in team work”

(Glicínia, educator, Public)

## 6.5. Conclusion

The evidence presented throughout this chapter demonstrated that ‘democracy’ reflected “something that has been filtered, processed, and already interpreted” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.3) by the educators. It also showed that: “[h]ow we think about children and childhood, the value we place upon them, finds its way into how we act towards them (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.99). According to Freire (1996) “[i]f a teacher truly believes in democracy, he or she has no option, upon realising his or her incoherence, than to shorten the distance between what he or she says and does.” (p.162) Therefore, “[P]olicy and practice also shape the way we think about children. Our constructions of children and childhood inform our actions towards them and are in a feedback system with them” (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.99).

Making a final link between policy and practice, in the current American context Cockburn (2014) stated that there is a level of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ policy. This is described as a type of policy that is meaningless and pieced together. In paediatric neurology ‘Alice in wonderland’ syndrome (AIWS) is

a condition “characterised by visual hallucinations and bizarre conceptual distortions” (Kuo et al, 1998, p.105) (see also Todd, J. 1955). While at a first glance one could eventually argue that with regards to democracy there is a level of ‘wonderland’ in Portuguese education and society at times, looking specifically into ECE, it seems the democratic principles and values of the policies were embedded in the educators’ discourses. Moreover, the conceptual ideas of democracy were not necessarily distorted in discourses, they could be considered to be distorted at times in ECE practice, if considering different perspectives (i.e. other than the ones presented here) on democratic enactments. This in turn suggests that powerful discourses (such as the strong discourses of Portuguese educators on democracy) can risk distorting the realities of what happens in the classrooms.

This leads to my interpretation that the enactment of democracy in ECE schools aligns with the necessity of engaging in critical effort (Freire, 1996) (i.e. questioning, reflecting, listening to what is happening in the context of practice). It also suggests that, in the ECE settings researched, the enactment of democracy was part of a Local Interpretation of a Larger Idea (LILI) (Fleet, 2015) which had its own semiotic complexity. In other words, I consider that in the classrooms democracy was presented as a multimodal package with ‘contextual configuration’ (Jewitt, 2009). These configurations were flexible and context specific. They were transformed depending on the philosophies of the schools and depending on individual educators’ ethos and practices. This means that democratic spaces had shared conceptual understandings. However, conceptual meanings of democracy were symbolic, and as a result the forms in which democracy was represented were complex and different, i.e. as opposed to the discourses which reflected many of the ideals and intentions defined by the policies, the practices in the schools were not uniform.

One ‘challenge’ within the notions of democracy in ECE was that the democratic enactment was frequently perceived by ECE professionals as a form of child-centred education. All educators believed their practice was centred in the interests of the child, and as a result, everything that happened in the school and classroom tended to be automatically either

associated with democracy or considered as democratic. Many of the educators interviewed perceived the education process as part of the 'holistic development' of the children. In other words, everything that happened in the school/classroom could be interpreted by educators through every 'area of knowledge/development'. For instance, if baking a cake, the educator could claim that she was developing the child's logic-mathematical skills, literacy, social skills, creative thinking and so on. Consequently, when I directly asked educators about democracy, democracy was perceived to be in everything they did. Educators did not change their speech/discourse when I focused the interview on democracy, they simply saw democracy as pervasive. Therefore, although with selective focus, within discourse, democracy always existed and as a result, the three schools presented a level of discursive enactment of democracy which partially aligned with the different manifestations and conceptions of democracy that emerged within national education policies throughout time. Additionally, educators tended to fear being seen as authoritarian, and as a result, they naturally connected with notions of democracy.

The potential challenge with this approach is provided by Cannella's (1997) critical stance on child-centred approaches. According to her: "within the construction of child-centeredness, adults have legitimised the power of surveillance and judgement over children" (Cannella, 1997, p.134). This argument is extended with the idea that "child-centeredness constructs the illusion that children in educational environments have choice when actually the "will" is imprisoned through the pretence of freedom" (ibid). Whilst this provides a counter argument for dominant discourses that 'displace' the agency of the child, as Woodhead (2009) argues, it is also important to recognise different understandings of child-centeredness. Woodhead (2009) conveyed that child-centeredness can also be "coupled with the demand that children be respected as subjectivities, as meaning-makers, as social actors, and more recently as right-bearing citizens" (p.19). As a result, I argued in this chapter that democracy in the contexts researched was a transversal concept that did not happen in isolation. This 'transversality' crossed many discourses, and language came across as an

important aspect to take into consideration when reflecting upon democratic practices. The language/discourse used to define the missions and objectives of the schools in the documents consulted was close to that of legislation, and the discourse of the educators in the classroom with the children reflected their intentions and what they valued as missions and purposes of their actions. Accordingly, for the enactment of democracy a conscious critical effort appeared to be necessary within the roles of the educator, the parent, the child, the school, the State. However, as Mouffe (2000) stated:

“It is necessary to realise that it is not by offering sophisticated rational arguments and by making context-transcendent truth claims about the superiority of liberal democracy that democratic values can be fostered. The creation of democratic forms of individuality is a question of *identification* with democratic values, and this is a complex process that takes place through a manifold of practices, discourses and language games” (p.70, original emphasis).

As such, a conscious use of language and power (which were many times and in many ways connected) enabled active voices to emerge. This in turn, illustrated that “while the human subject is placed in relations of production and signification, he is equally placed in power relations which are very complex” (Foucault, 1983, [online]) and central in questions of democracy.

The educators had a very clear presence of democracy and democratic ideals in their discourses about the missions and guiding principles in their practice. This was interesting, because it demonstrated that even though democracy was included in policy in order to be secured, having democracy as part of documentation or discourse still did not guarantee democracy in practice. Despite having democracy embedded in the discourses, democracy was mainly enacted as an active part of specific pedagogical approaches. Democracy was enacted in ECE classrooms as part of the ‘praxiological ethos’ (by which I mean the purposeful and reflexive nature of the pedagogical action) of the school/classroom, by the means of the educators (as the conveyors and power holders).

Finally, the ideas discussed in the chapter also raised further questions that even though are not explored in this research, can be asked in future studies. For example, the settings catered to children from different socio-

economic backgrounds. Could this mean that the 'democracy' to which the children are exposed changes according to what the children's socio-economic background can 'buy' / provide for them? There will most certainly be the argument that different needs will demand different provisions, which is one of the arguments for the continuing diversity of providers in the Portuguese ECE and I do not assume the schools studied in this research to represent the schools of a nation. However, diversity of provision does not necessarily mean more opportunities for all. As such, one must raise questions as to the equitable equality of opportunities that are either being provided, or denied to children. Are children from disadvantaged backgrounds being marginalised by the 'democratic opportunities' they are being exposed to? This thesis has no scope to address these questions, but I would like to express them as a potential analysis for future developments emerging from this research.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was: firstly, to explain how 'democracy' emerged in Portuguese political history; secondly to understand how it was manifested in policy (particularly with regards to ECE); and thirdly to explore in what ways democracy was enacted in three different ECE settings. As a result, history, policy and enactments were the three central themes in this research. The main goal was to understand how democracy permeated from the historical and constitutional levels into the education system in Portugal. In order to do so, I examined the key historical, political, social and cultural events and processes which contributed to the development and emergence of democracy in Portuguese society.

It is important however, to recognise the complexities of a study of this nature. On the one hand, conceptions, meanings and descriptions of democracy are convoluted, which makes understandings of democracy challenging to outline. On the other, in every society there are multiple cultural, historical, social and economic aspects which provide layers of complexity, and I cannot expect to present them all in fairness in this thesis. In addition, the Portuguese 'case' is especially complex and consequently, I acknowledged throughout this research that there are intricacies and ambiguities in the socio-political history of Portugal, educational policies, and practices in ECE which contribute to subjectivities, different understandings and 'realities' with regards to the manifestations and enactments of democracy in policy and practice.

The interpretations presented in this study are reflective of the contexts studied (i.e. the specific settings researched) and the specific views from those interviewed, and not representative of a generalised view of Portuguese ECE practice. Nevertheless, I have shown that from the macro (State and policies) to the micro (schools and classrooms) levels, there was a pedagogical transmission of political ideas. This was demonstrated



through the analysis of the changing nature of democracy in Portuguese history and policy, and how policy intentions were translated into ECE pedagogical practices.

Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins (1993) contends that Portuguese education and society are still heirs "of a certain historicist optimism stemmed from the eighteenth century progress, which still arises, often as a result of an inexorable determinism - as if we were puppets of a giant puppet theatre" (p.40). For this reason, I considered the historical component of the emergence of democracy in Portugal to be of crucial importance in order to explain how democracy is understood and enacted today. I started this historical analysis in 1820 precisely to understand how this 'progressivism of the 1800s' materialised. I argued for "an emphasis on processes over time" (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003, p.10), whilst being concerned with the importance of undertaking a contextualised view of the issues researched. As stated by Malaguzzi (1998):

"We come from a culture and we are immersed in history, in doctrines, and in economic, scientific, and human facts with which we are openly engaged, at all times, in a difficult and arduous process of negotiation and a struggle for survival" (p.58)

Consequently, I opened Chapter 1 with the premise that in the grand scheme of things, we are not puppets in the process, stating that 'we' (as individuals, as citizens, as members of one or various societal structures) are still part of the process; as individuals and as members of different collective organisations, we are actors that construct not only understandings and knowledge(s), but also realities. Researchers (such as Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Banks, 1993; Cannella, 1997, Soto and Swadener, 2002, amongst others) have challenged the idea that knowledge is universal, suggesting instead that our ways of seeing the world are socially, historically, politically and culturally constructed. As such, "contexts within which learning occurs" (Cannella, 1997, p.128) are absolutely fundamental and need to be understood within their contextual rules and structures. Therefore, Part I of this study presented the central questions considered in this research and the epistemological assumptions inherent in those questions. Chapter 2 looked at theories as tools (Rinaldi, 2006) and

explored the ideas of critical socio construction of knowledge and realities through the epistemological and methodological considerations undertaken in the research. In this chapter I outlined the theoretical and methodological perspectives employed to address each of the research questions.

Part II of this study considered the nature of democracy and democratic education while examining the politics and history of Portugal. Chapter 3 focused on the literature and argued that democracy is a concept that needs to be considered not necessarily as an uncontested global truth but a reality that is transformed locally/contextually. I suggest in this research, that democracy cannot by definition, be treated as a taken for granted concept. In other words, democracy needs critical discussion and analysis in order to 'survive' within the contexts of its 'practice'.

Subsequently, Chapter 4 addressed research question 1 (What are the antecedents of the emergence of democracy as a national ideology in Portugal?). In this chapter I presented a historical analysis of the democratisation of the country alongside the democratisation of the ECE system. This analysis aligned with Apple's (2013) statement that "[e]ducation is part of society. It is not something alien, something that stands outside. Indeed, it is a key set of institutions and a key set of social and personal relations" (p.18). Nevertheless, rather than making an explicit distinction between 'historical sociology' and 'historical institutionalism' (see Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, 2003), I maintained an open historical analysis, following Freire's (1976) premise that democratic education "must grow out of a critical educational effort based on favourable historical conditions" (p.19).

I argued in Chapter 4 that democracy emerged in Portuguese history as a "floating signifier" that was interpreted and rearranged in a multiplicity of diverse meanings, depending on the context of reception" (Beech, 2009, p.355), whilst demonstrating that "[t]hroughout most of history, sudden changes in government were treated by historians and political analysts as cyclical phenomena (hence the term "revolution")" (Goldstone, 2003, p.53). As a result of the recurrence of events that changed political regimes, in

Portugal democracy was initially adopted as a very broad global concept, being then modified and contextualised according to the circumstances prevailing in different periods of time. I found that Democracy in Portugal has been treated as an extremely elastic and malleable concept with different interpretations depending on the political regime in place. Beech (2009) argues that “[t]he communicative power of these discourses resides in this complex combination between stability and malleability, and between discursive limitations and reinterpretation” (p.355). Democracy thus, emerged with a strong symbolic connotation and more recently, since 1974, it was used to signal a ‘thick narrative of modernisation’ (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005) that was essential to support the ‘new’ modern and more functionalist society. Education was also portrayed as playing a functional role by aiming to ‘produce’ citizens that could live in accordance with a democratic society. Portuguese ECE consequently experienced a process of democratisation over time, while responding to the different aims and demands of society. ECE provisions and practices also responded to the different views of children and different views of education which have emerged over time.

Part III of this research was focused on democratic conceptions, manifestations and intentions within policy, and on enactments of democracy in three ECE settings. Chapter 5 addressed research question 2 (Which conceptions of democracy have emerged within educational policies in Portugal and how are these conceptions manifested (intent) in the state policies towards ECE?). In this chapter I suggested that different conceptions of democracy have emerged within policy. To make these conceptions explicit I discussed three relevant periods in the development of policy, these periods were chosen to respond to key policy changes that placed democracy as a central aspiration. I analysed key policy texts within each of these periods and identified specific democratic conceptions, manifestations and intentions for each. These periods were firstly, a period of democratic hegemony in the 1970s, with a revolutionary conception of democracy, manifested as a national ideology with the intent of creating and maintaining a democratic society through equality of opportunities of access

and success in school; Secondly, a period of democratic ubiquity in the 1980s, with a ubiquitous conception of democracy, manifested across all levels as a guiding principle with the intention of affirming the principles of education and democracy as constitutionally 'prescribed', alongside the intention to encourage democracy as a form of citizenship; Thirdly, a period of democratic 'standardisation' in the 1990s, with a regulatory conception of democracy, manifested as a rhetorical symbol with the main purpose of continuing through rules and regulations the intentions from the previous periods while further reducing social inequalities.

As per the descriptions above, using the 1976 Constitution as a frame of reference, a strong assertion of democracy at the policy level across all of the three periods was the goal of providing access to and success in education for all, as a form of equality. Other goals associated with democracy within policy were the idea of democracy as citizenship and democracy as a means to reduce social inequality. This chapter also established that democracy was initially manifested as utopia (i.e. the ideal of equality, opportunity, citizenship), which by being incorporated centrally in the policies was transformed into heterotopia (i.e. a move from an aspiration that emerged from the opposition to a prescriptive form of ruling that 'established' the 'operation' of democracy in 'reality').

In Chapter 6 I addressed research question 3 (How is democracy enacted (action) in three different Portuguese ECE settings?), and argued that the enactment of democracy in the three settings reflected distinct representations of democracy both at the organisational level and at the classrooms level. Firstly, I suggested that there were different organisational representations of democracy in the three settings researched. The different settings interpreted democracy in accordance to their missions and objectives, i.e. the focus of democracy was different in each of the three schools. The Public school presented an emphasis on structural democracy (a type of democracy which was focused on rules of coexistence); the IPSS was concerned with an individual representation of democracy (with emphasis on individual opportunities of choice); and the Private school was focused on a collective representation of democracy (with a particular

concern on group decision making). These different organisational representations of democracy also aligned with the different conceptions of democracy which have emerged within policy. Specifically, the Public school aligned with the three periods discussed demonstrating some characteristics of the revolutionary, ubiquitous and regulatory conceptions of democracy; the IPSS aligned mainly with revolutionary and regulatory conceptions; and the Private school aligned mostly with the ubiquitous conception of democracy. This in turn, was also associated with each of the schools aligning with different theoretical understandings of democracy advanced by Villoro (1998) (and explored in chapter 3). The Public school demonstrated a connection to democracy mainly as a system of power; the IPSS stressed relationships between democracy as a system of power and also as a form of association; and the Private school primarily incorporated democracy as a form of association.

Secondly, I indicated that at the classroom level there were different representations of democracy which were associated with different pedagogical approaches. The interviews with educators in the different schools revealed that for this group of professionals there were common elements which were considered as fundamental for the enactment of democracy. The elements that were perceived by the teachers as necessary for the enactment of democracy in ECE were, in no particular order, as follows:

- Choosing
- Sharing
- Making Decisions
- Resolving Conflicts
- Expressing Opinions
- Participating
- Listening
- Critical Thinking
- Freedom
- Respect

Despite these being common elements across the different schools, the practices varied markedly at the classroom level. This means that the

variation within practice was high and each of those elements were practiced in different ways. Consequently, educators' pedagogical styles could not be fully aligned by institution. In other words, each educator interpreted these elements according to the practices they preferred independently of which school they were at. As such, there were multiple ways of choosing, making decisions, participating, and so on. Thus for example in some practices participating meant that children had the task to distribute resources in the classroom, in others it meant that children participated in theirs and the groups' learning process by setting up their own projects and routines. The elements were at times overlapping and highly subjective and subject to the educator's freedom to perform the pedagogical approach of her choice. I argued in chapter 6, that there were different forms of democratic enactments which tended to be manifested through different pedagogical approaches. During the research I identified three different pedagogical styles through which ECE educators felt they were enacting democracy. These were:

- 1) An Instructive pedagogical approach where the enactment of democracy was procedural and the educator acted as the master of the education process. In this approach democracy was presented at a high symbolic level and the educator intentionally created democratic discourses;
- 2) A Responsive pedagogical approach where the enactment of democracy was interactive and the educator acted as the mediator of the education process. In this approach democracy was presented at a strong interactive level and the educator intentionally created responses based on values attached to democracy;
- 3) A Synergetic pedagogical approach where the enactment of democracy involved a strong critical element and the educator acted as a support to the education process. In this pedagogical approach democracy was presented as a concept that required critical interrogation/discussion and the educator intentionally created democratic spaces to allow for this to occur.

Overall, I argued in chapter 6, that within the three ECE settings researched all educators presented strong democratic discourses which aligned with policy discourses. In addition, due to the conceptual meanings of democracy being highly symbolic and subjected to contextual interpretations, I suggested that the forms in which democracy was described, interpreted and enacted varied markedly across the different schools (with each school presenting a specific organisational representation of democracy, i.e. with a different focus) and varied across classroom practices (with educators presenting different pedagogical styles, which reflected their beliefs and preferences).

## **7.1. Challenges and Opportunities**

In this research, I have presented two levels of analysis, the national (State) and the local (schools and classrooms). Within both levels different challenges and opportunities have emerged that require reflection. In brief, I argue that the 1974 revolution located democracy as the new fundamental/core value of Portuguese society, which was adopted as a concept with high symbolic significance. The inclusion of democracy in public and education policies showed the central role allocated to education in promoting and maintaining democracy in society. This expectation included the ECE sector, which was not part of compulsory schooling, but was viewed as providing the foundations for the development of a democratic society.

In the introduction of this research I raised a number of issues, some of which I address here. For instance, at the national level, arguing that the catalyst for the emergence of democracy in Portugal was far removed from what one might consider a 'revolution' created its challenges. In Portugal the democratic process was, and still is, characterised by the symbolism of the revolution. When I state that the revolution was not at the macro political level characterised by demonstrations, negotiations or resolutions of conflicts I do not mean that these did not exist. There is evidence that the

introduction of democratic processes did involve demonstrations and negotiations which were particularly visible in the education sector. And even though there is no clarity as to whether these represented resolutions of conflicts (for example the division of the ECE sector into children from 0-3 years of age being responsibility of the Ministry Social Security and Labour, and 3-6 years old children being responsibility of the Ministry of Education), at the local level, there was immediate action to resolve social problems affecting people at the time (for example parents and local associations' initiatives which resulted in the occupation of houses vacated by the dictatorship to create kindergartens).

An overlap between the national and local levels during the democratisation process was for example a raising of the voices of those being affected, for instance: 23 May 1974 – in Lisbon, students from middle schools initiated strike action until their requests were met (such as the end of exams); 2 June 1974 – the executive of all Students' Unions in the country discussed the possibility of creating a National Union of Students in order to democratise the system; in the Summer of 1974 there were numerous boycotts to the exams at several universities in the country, amongst other demands, which kept emerging mainly until 1976 (Marçal Grilo, 1994). This is all evidence that there were voices being raised with a sense of responsibility and agency within education as a result of the quest for democracy. Nevertheless, my argument is that this democratic euphoria ended very quickly. The MFA (Armed Forces Movement) plan for the country (which resulted from the 1974 revolution) was very clear: democratise, decolonise, and develop. As such, despite being seen as the 'people's revolution', which was initiated by the military, the people themselves had no *direct role* in shaping the socio-political development of the country after the 'euphoria' passed (i.e. 1974-1976). The democratic ideology brought ideas of the construction of a democratic socialism which by 1976 (with the beginning of the first Constitutional Government<sup>74</sup>) was already being perceived as a utopian ideal that was being subsumed in the

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<sup>74</sup> There were 10 Constitutional Governments between 1976 and 1986.



'bureaucratisation' of democracy (i.e. democracy was placed as central 'on paper' in the policies that were created from that transitioning moment onward). Since 1974, the development of public policy was (and still is) marked by the inclusion of democracy as an ideal that plays a central role in policy, but not necessarily in practice. This resulted in a process of democratisation through policy that survived and is much stronger today by the means of representative structures at the State level (representative democracy) rather than by the actions of the people at the local level (direct/participatory democracy). This is why fragilities also emerge when we talk about the 'European Project' as clearly the 'one size fits all' type of political management does not work if it does not account for the contextualised political and historical complexities that explain the 'current state of affairs' of one particular country. This is also the reason why I question the idea of 'revolution' as in my view the revolution has not yet completed its cycle. In other words, the 'revolutionary euphoria' lasted and was sustained through an ideology which emerged from the overthrow of dictatorship, however as soon as the aspirations started being put on paper, firstly with the Constitution in 1976 that 'euphoria' was diluted and the aspirations became intentions, and the intentions slowly over the years started being materialised in actions. However, the processes are complex and societies change, the Portuguese society has suffered profound changes from 1974 to today and not all actions were met and are relevant today. As such, I argue that the revolution is still ongoing, and for the democratic project to be sustained the 'revolution' must keep challenging and questioning the processes of social and political change.

At the local level, I showed that despite political intentions which expect the presence of democracy in education, the three ECE settings researched were unique and interpreted, described, and lived democracy in their own way. Each of the settings had their own representations of democracy, with focuses varying from the individual to the group. Additionally, the extreme diversity in pedagogical practices at the classroom level, reinforced the view that local contexts matter and need to be taken into account. This research suggests that the attempt to standardise ECE through the introduction of

PISA type assessments could serve to encourage convergence of practice and limit the choices made by teachers. That would serve to undermine one of the key elements, educators' freedom/choice, which was associated with democracy in ECE in Portugal.

The recognition of different pedagogical approaches in the enactments of democracy in ECE also reminds us of the importance of being aware of educators' power (the educator being aware of his/her own power). Looking at contradictions helps move forward an understanding of where agency is located, and perhaps raises more questions than answers. I am not making any new claim when stating the position of educators' power over children (see for instance Mac Naughton, 1999). I was asked in a conference I was presenting at: "How do you square that circle, if children will always be children and adults will always be adults?". I reflected upon this and asked myself whether this was in reality the most important question. In other words, why would I want to 'square a circle' in a study that aims to investigate democracy where supposedly there is freedom to present it as a conception which embodies different 'shapes' and 'forms'? To be more precise, when I refer to power relationships between adults and children, I am making the claim that the awareness of power relationships by educators is crucial when talking about the enactment of democracy. As Cannella (2000) explains:

"Power is not linear nor necessarily positive or negative. Power, knowledge, discourse, and human beings are complex, multifaceted, and multidirectional. As human beings, we have constructed ourselves as objects, agents, subjects – thinkers, learners, teachers – adults and children. Perhaps there is no limit to our construction."  
(p.42)

Therefore, "[i]t is a question about proportionality and perspective" (Moss and Petrie, 2002, p.56), and perhaps more importantly a question about choice. From my interpretation, educators can either use their power to empower or to hinder children, and that is a pedagogical (relationship) choice.

It is important to acknowledge, raise and openly discuss these issues. However, as stated by Giroux (2005) "[t]he fight for curricular democracy

and our roles as public intellectuals requires more than rethinking the relationship between knowledge and power” (p.134). Perhaps with the assumption that some of the questions will not have an immediate answer, in this study I perceived democracy as a concept that needs constant questioning. Why is there a dominant view that democracy is important when at times the capacity to think about how this democracy can be enacted does not seem to be always present? Why are ideas such as democracy sometimes taken for granted and not questioned? Presumably the many definitions of democracy share a recognition that they need debate and discussion. If educators only accept the democracy they choose, is that democracy? Is democracy of any value in practice without asking what is the purpose of including democracy in ECE practice? Without questioning why and how, can democracy risk becoming an unattainable expectation of policy rhetoric and empty discourses?

This study has shown that despite its different forms, in Portugal there is an ‘effort’ at the macro level for democracy to be ‘secured’ through the creation of policy which stresses the centrality of democracy. At the micro level democracy is ‘secured’ through individuals’ (such as educators, school directors, parents) beliefs and how they decide to enact it. In Portuguese ECE the complexity and ambiguity of education policies alongside the diversity of provision and flexibility in practice allows for a wide range of democratic enactments. As a result, policies and practices create the heterotopia that makes the utopia a reality. The social and political changes and the enactments transformed the utopia (ideal) into heterotopia (reality through policy and practice). Heterotopia then offers the opportunity to develop new thinking and new practice: an ever-changing utopia. The major opportunity offered by this study is perhaps the indication that fulfilling the ‘utopia’ is possible (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005; 2006). This research suggests that through the spaces created for the enactment of democracy in ECE, by reflecting, listening and critically questioning practice, it is possible to engage with a utopian change that perceives democracy as forever developing, whilst reinventing itself in response to the contexts of its practice. There are indeed challenges but there are also alternatives and

perhaps, taking into account some of the ideas expressed throughout this research, it is time to make an effort to understand why democratising democracy might be necessary. As Sousa Santos (2005) argues, social emancipation needs to be reinvented, and this requires the acknowledgment that “there are alternatives to the dominant paradigms” (Santos, 2005, p.xix). It is therefore crucial to start building the future of education and society towards this new manifesto (that “another world is possible” (Santos, 2005, p.xviii)), and ECE as a highly socio-political arena is at the forefront of this emancipation.

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(the term '[online]' is used to refer to a range of resources (such as academic texts, video archives, databases and media articles) which were accessed on websites and for which page numbers could not be traced)

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## Appendix A: Information Letter in Portuguese



### Uma Investigação da Educação de Infância em Portugal: Folheto informativo

O meu nome é Diana Sousa, estou a fazer doutoramento no Instituto da Educação da Universidade de Londres sobre educação de infância em Portugal. Parte desta investigação consiste numa recolha de dados em 3 Jardins de Infância, um público, um privado e uma IPSS.

A investigação focaliza-se em tentar perceber quais os princípios orientadores da educação de infância nos jardins-de-infância Portugueses, quais os ethos e filosofias pelos quais as instituições se movem. Para a recolha de dados irei visitar-vos uma semana em Março e a outra em Junho. As duas semanas de visita consistem em recolha de documentação do jardim-de-infância (ex. projecto pedagógico, planificações, etc.), entrevistas com os directores, coordenadores e educadores do jardim-de-infância, e observações.

As entrevistas são relativamente informais não existem respostas “certas” ou “erradas” e a participação neste projecto é completamente voluntária. As entrevistas serão gravadas e se decidir participar tem o direito de me pedir para parar a entrevista a qualquer momento. Escolas e entrevistados que participam neste estudo serão anonimizados uma vez que darei pseudónimos (em vez de usar nomes reais) a todos os participantes nesta fase do projecto. Certificar-me-ei de que toda a informação que me providenciar será protegida e utilizada apenas para os fins deste estudo.

Se necessitar de mais informação sobre esta investigação por favor não hesite em contactar-me: Diana Sousa, (+44) xxxxxxxxx [dianaxxxx@xxxx.com](mailto:dianaxxxx@xxxx.com)

Se quiser falar com o administrador de investigação do Instituto por favor contacte xxxxxxx [xxxxx@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:xxxxx@ioe.ac.uk) , (+44) xxxxxx

## Appendix B: Information Letter in English



### **An Investigation of Early Childhood Education in Portugal: Information Letter**

My name is Diana Sousa, and I am doing a PhD about early childhood education in Portugal at the Institute of Education - University of London. Part of this research consists of data collection in 3 kindergartens; one public, one private and one IPSS.

The research aims to understand what are the guiding principles, the ethos and philosophies which underpin early childhood education practices in Portugal. For the data collection I will be visiting you, one week in March and another week in June. The two-week visits will consist of collection of the kindergarten's documentation (e.g. pedagogical project, lesson plans, etc.), interviews with directors, coordinators and kindergarten educators, and observations.

The interviews are relatively informal, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers and the participation in this project is completely voluntary. The interviews will be recorded and if you decide to participate you have the right to ask me to stop the interview at any time. The schools and the interviewed participants in this study will be anonymised, they will be given pseudonyms (instead of using real names).

I would like to assure you that all the information you provide will be protected and used only for the purposes of this study.

If you need more information about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me: [my name and contact details]

If you have any further questions or concerns and would like to talk to someone else about this research you can contact the Institute research administrator [name and contact details of the administrator]



## Appendix C: Interview Schedule

### Guidelines for Interview

- 1) How would you describe the mission and fundamental objectives of this school?
- 2) What motivates them?
- 3) What do you think of them?
- 4) How are these principles and objectives manifested in the curriculum?  
How are they reflected in terms of  
- Education; School organization; planning; Assessment methods?
- 5) Thinking about the **educational objectives** set out in the framework law for pre-school education ...  
What is the significance and influence of the same? would say that they are influential in this school? Any in particular?
- 6) Would you add any other objective(s) if you could? Which one(s)?
- 7) Thinking about the day-to-day practice of this school, I will ask you to rank the order of these objectives (from 1 most influential to 9 least influential). In your view, which objectives have more influence in this school?
- 8) I will ask you to do the same in relation to the activities room, from 1-9. In your view, which objectives have more influence in the activities room?
- 9) Taking for example the first objective, which refers to democratic practices, to democracy. Would you say that democracy is a concept with influence this school? How is it manifested and evident? What practices incorporate the concept of democracy?  
**Explain table - focus on democracy**
- 11) Is there a difference between what the school tries to achieve and the activities room?
- 12) In your experience, are there any factors that limit your ability to promote democracy, are there any barriers? As an educator, do you think it's easy to implement a vision of democracy?
- 13) Looking back to the objectives of pre-school education, in your opinion, is there any conflict between them? Are any of these objectives pulling in different directions or do they all travel in the same direction?
- 14) Is the first objective, the one that talks about democracy, in tension with any other?
- 15) When children leave this school, what do you expect to see in them, which values do you hope they acquired in this school?

10) Where do you think democracy is strongly evident (which examples can you think of the evidence of democracy) in the school and in your activities room in terms of ...

	<b>School</b>	<b>Classroom</b>
structure		
Decisions and policies		
Teaching methods / Pedagogies		
Planning		
Evaluation/assessment		
Working with Families		
Working with other professionals		
Is there anything else that should be on this list?		

### **Objectives of Pre-School Education defined by the 1997 Pre-School Education Framework Law**

- a) To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.
- b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.
- c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and learning success.
- d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual differences, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.
- e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.
- f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.
- g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.
- h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.
- i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community.

(Ministério da Educação, 1997a: 14)

Ministério da Educação. (1997a). Law nº5/97 (10 February) - Framework Law for Pre-School Education. Lisbon: Edition M.E.

## Appendix D: Initial Data Collection Framework (based on Davies' (1999) dimensions)

**Table D1**

<i><u>National level – State</u></i>	
<i><u>Basic Values</u></i>	What values are associated with democracy? Are there different values to different levels of education? Are there specific democratic values for ECE in Portugal?
<i><u>Rights</u></i>	How are these viewed and incorporated into educational life? What rights exist in ECE in Portugal now? Have the democratic rights of ECE changed over time?
<i><u>System Structures</u></i>	What are the structures created within the administration of the educational system (centralised, decentralised...)?
<i><u>Structures Within Schools</u></i>	What version of the working of democracy is preferred or foregrounded?
<i><u>Learning Content</u></i>	What is the state's position about teaching democracy? Is there a curriculum or expected content regarding democracy to be taught in schools?
<i><u>Balance</u></i>	What is the state's position about the balance between freedom and constraint?
<i><u>Training</u></i>	Is democracy or democratic practice included as a subject in teacher's training curriculum (as a legislative requirement)?
<i><u>Outcomes</u></i>	What sort of democracy is possible within ECE (considering the diversity of provision)?

**Table D2**

<b><u>Organisational level – School</u></b>	
<b><u>Basic Values</u></b>	What is the ethos/philosophy of the school? What values exist within them regarding democracy?
<b><u>Rights</u></b>	Do students and teachers have the same rights?
<b><u>System Structures</u></b>	Is there a central or hierarchical control of the school? Is the school structured within democratic systems of participation (school boards, parents' advisory groups, voices heard)?
<b><u>Structures Within Schools</u></b>	Is the working democracy foregrounded directly related to the basic values/ethos/philosophy of the school? Does the school follow any specific 'type' of democracy (representative, participative...)?
<b><u>Learning Content</u></b>	Is democracy integrated as an essential part of the curriculum developed by the school?
<b><u>Balance</u></b>	How is the 'power' distribution by the organisational structure of the school structured?
<b><u>Training</u></b>	Are teachers selected according to specific training requirements? Does the school provide any specific training programmes with regards to democratic practices?
<b><u>Outcomes</u></b>	What sort of democracy is seen as possible within the economic constraints of a society, number of places available?

**Table D3**

<i><b><u>Classroom level</u></b></i>	
<i><b><u>Basic Values</u></b></i>	What values are associated with democracy in the classroom? Are the values presented in each classroom specifically connected with a particular methodology in practice?
<i><b><u>Rights</u></b></i>	Are the rights embedded with the school rights or were they specifically created for the classroom? Who has decided the existent rights? Are they aligned with responsibilities?
<i><b><u>System Structures</u></b></i>	What are the structures created within the administration of the classroom?
<i><b><u>Structures Within Schools</u></b></i>	Does the working democracy foregrounded differ from that of the school? Does the classroom have autonomy to choose its own form of democracy?
<i><b><u>Learning Content</u></b></i>	Is democracy taught as a formal part of the curriculum? Is the consultation process shared?
<i><b><u>Balance</u></b></i>	How does the classroom balance freedom and constraint? Have the classroom rules been decided democratically? Does a 'shared leadership' environment exist within the classroom?
<i><b><u>Training</u></b></i>	What training or rethinking is seen as necessary when democratising a classroom?
<i><b><u>Outcomes</u></b></i>	Do all the children have the same opportunities, independently of their socio-economic background?

## Appendix E: Compilation of Models of Democracy (Held, 2006)

Classic Models						
	Classical Democracy	Republicanism		Liberal Democracy		Direct Democracy
		Protective Republicanism	Developmental Republicanism	Protective Democracy	Developmental Democracy	
<b>Principle(s) of Justification</b>	Citizens should enjoy political equality in order to be free to rule and be ruled in turn	Political participation is an essential condition for personal liberty; If citizens do not rule themselves they will be dominated by others	Citizens must enjoy political and economic equality in order that nobody can be master of another and all can enjoy equal freedom and development in the process of self-determination for the common good	Citizens require protection from the governors, as well as from each other, to ensure that those who govern pursue policies that are commensurate with citizens' interests as a whole	Participation in political life is necessary not only for the protection of individual interests, but also for the creation of an informed, committed and developing citizenry. Political involvement is essential to the 'highest and harmonious' expansion of individual capacities	The 'free development of all' can only be achieved with the 'free development of each'. Freedom requires the end of exploitation and ultimately complete political and economic equality; only equality can secure the conditions for the realization of the potentiality of all human beings so that 'each can give' according to his or her ability and 'receive what they need'

(Held, 2006)

Classic Models							
	Classical Democracy	Republicanism		Liberal Democracy		Direct Democracy	
		Protective Republicanism	Developmental Republicanism	Protective Democracy	Developmental Democracy		
<b>Key Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct participation of citizens in legislative and judicial functions;</li> <li>- Assembly of citizens has sovereign power;</li> <li>- The scope of sovereign power to include all common affairs of the city;</li> <li>- Multiple methods of selection of candidates for public office (direct election, lot, rotation);</li> <li>- No distinction of privilege to differentiate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balance of power between the people, aristocracy and the monarchy linked to a mixed constitution or mixed government, with provision for all leading political forces to play an active role in public life;</li> <li>- Citizen participation achieved via different possible mechanisms, including election of consults, or representatives to serve on ruling councils;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Division of legislative and executive functions;</li> <li>- The direct participation of citizens in public meetings to constitute the legislature;</li> <li>- Unanimity on public issues desirable, but voting provision with majority rule in the event of disagreement;</li> <li>- Executive positions in the hands of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sovereignty ultimately lies in the people, but is vested in representatives who can legitimately exercise state functions;</li> <li>- Regular elections, the secret ballot, competition between factions, potential leaders or parties, and majority rule are the institutional bases for establishing the accountability of those who govern;</li> <li>- State powers must be impersonal, i.e. legally circumscribed, and divided among the executive, the legislature and the judiciary;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Popular sovereignty with a universal franchise (along with a 'proportional' system of vote allocation);</li> <li>- Representative government (elected leadership, regular elections, secret ballot, etc.);</li> <li>- Constitutional checks to secure limitation on, and divisions in, state power and to ensure the promotion of individual rights, above all those connected with freedom of thought, feeling, taste,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Socialism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public affairs to be regulated by Commune(s) or council(s) organized in a pyramid structure;</li> <li>- Government personnel, law officers, administrators subject to frequent elections, mandates from their community and recall;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Communism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'Government' and 'politics' in all forms give way to self-regulation;</li> <li>- All public affairs governed collectively;</li> <li>- Consensus as decision principle on all public questions;</li> <li>- Distribution of remaining administrative tasks by</li> </ul>



	<p>ordinary citizens and public officials;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With the exception of positions connected to warfare, the same office not to be held more than twice by the same individual;</li> <li>- Short terms of office for all;</li> <li>- Payment for public services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competing social groups promoting and defending their interests;</li> <li>- Liberties of speech, expression, and association;</li> <li>- Rule of law</li> </ul>	<p>'magistrates' or 'administrators';</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive appointed either by direct election or by lot.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Centrality of constitutionalism to guarantee freedom from arbitrary treatment and equality before the law in the form of political and civil rights or liberties, above all those connected to freedom of speech, expression, association, voting and belief;</li> <li>- Separation of state from civil society, i.e. the scope of state action is, in general, to be tightly restricted to the creation of a framework which allows citizens to pursue their private lives free from risk of violence, unacceptable social behaviours and unwanted political interference;</li> <li>- Competing power centres and interest groups</li> </ul>	<p>discussion, publication, combination and the pursuit of individually chosen 'life plans';</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear demarcation of parliamentary assembly from public bureaucracy, i.e. the separation of the functions of the elected from those of the specialist (expert) administrator;</li> <li>- Citizen involvement in the different branches of government through the vote, extensive participation in local government, public debates and jury service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public officers to be paid no more than workers' wages;</li> <li>- People's militia to sustain the new political order subject to community control.</li> </ul>	<p>rotation or election;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Replacement of all armed and coercive forces by self-monitoring;</li> </ul>
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(Held, 2006)

Classic Models							
	Classical Democracy	Republicanism		Liberal Democracy		Direct Democracy	
		Protective Republicanism	Developmental Republicanism	Protective Democracy	Developmental Democracy		
<b>General Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small city-state with agricultural hinterland;</li> <li>- Slave economy creating 'free' time for citizens;</li> <li>- Domestic service, that is, the labour of women, freeing men for public duties;</li> <li>- Restriction of citizenship to relatively small numbers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small city community;</li> <li>- Maintenance of religious worship;</li> <li>- Society of independent artisans and traders;</li> <li>- Exclusion of women, labourers and 'dependants' in politics (expanding opportunities for male citizens to participate in the public realm);</li> <li>- Intensive conflict among rival political associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small, non-industrial community;</li> <li>- Diffusion of ownership of property among the many;</li> <li>- Citizenship depends on property holding, i.e. society of independent producers;</li> <li>- Domestic service of women to free men for (non-domestic) work and politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of a politically autonomous civil society;</li> <li>- Private ownership of the means of production;</li> <li>- Competitive market economy;</li> <li>- Patriarchal family;</li> <li>- Extended territorial reach of the nation-state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent civil society with minimum state interference;</li> <li>- Competitive market economy;</li> <li>- Private possession and control of the means of production alongside experiments with 'community' or cooperative forms of ownership;</li> <li>- Political emancipation of women, but preservation in general of traditional domestic division of labour;</li> <li>- System of nation-states with developed relations among states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unity of working classes;</li> <li>- Defeat of bourgeoisie;</li> <li>- End of all class privileges;</li> <li>- Substantial development of the forces of production so that all basic needs are met and people have sufficient time to pursue non-work activities;</li> <li>- Progressive integration of state and society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All remnants of classes disappear;</li> <li>- Abolition of scarcity and private possession of the means of production;</li> <li>- Elimination of markets, exchange and money;</li> <li>- End of social division of labour</li> </ul>

<b>Modern Models</b>					
	<b>Competitive Elitist Democracy</b>	<b>Pluralism</b>	<b>Legal Democracy</b>	<b>Participatory Democracy</b>	<b>Deliberative Democracy</b>
<b>Principle(s) of Justification</b>	<p>Method for the selection of a skilled and imaginative political elite capable of making necessary legislative and administrative decisions.</p> <p>An obstacle to the excesses of political leadership</p>	<p>Secures government by minorities and, hence, political liberty;</p> <p>Crucial obstacle to the development of excessively powerful factions and an unresponsive state</p>	<p>The majority principle is an effective and desirable way of protecting individuals from arbitrary government and of maintaining liberty.</p> <p>However, for political life, like economic life, to be a matter of individual freedom and initiative, majority rule must be circumscribed by the rule of law. Only under these conditions can the majority principle function wisely and justly.</p>	<p>An equal right to liberty and self-development can only be achieved in a 'participatory society', a society which fosters a sense of political efficacy, nurtures a concern for collective problems and contributes to the formation of a knowledgeable citizenry capable of taking a sustained interest in the governing process</p>	<p>The terms and conditions of political association proceed through the free and reasoned assent of its citizens. The 'mutual justifiability' of political decisions is the legitimate basis for seeking solutions to collective problems.</p>

(Held, 2006)

Modern Models							
	Competitive Elitist Democracy	Pluralism		Legal Democracy	Participatory Democracy	Deliberative Democracy	
<b>Key Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parliamentary government with strong executive;</li> <li>- Competition between rival political elites and parties;</li> <li>- Domination of parliament by party politics;</li> <li>- Centrality of political leadership;</li> <li>- Bureaucracy: an independent and well-trained administration;</li> <li>- Constitutional and practical limits on the 'effective range of political decision'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Citizenship rights, including one-person-one-vote, freedom of expression, freedom of organization;</li> <li>- A system of checks and balances between the legislature, executive, judiciary and administrative bureaucracy;</li> <li>- Competitive electoral system with (at least) two parties</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitutional state (modelled on features of the Anglo-American political tradition, including clear separation of powers);</li> <li>- Rule of law;</li> <li>- Minimal state intervention in civil society and private life;</li> <li>- Free-market society given fullest possible scope.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct participation of citizens in the regulation of the key institutions of society, including the workplace and local community;</li> <li>- Reorganization of the party system by making party officials directly accountable to membership;</li> <li>- Operation of 'participatory parties' in a parliamentary or congressional structure;</li> <li>- Maintenance of an open institutional system to ensure the possibility of experimentation with political forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliberative polls, deliberative days, citizen juries;</li> <li>- E-government initiatives from full on-line reporting to direct access to representatives;</li> <li>- E-democracy programmes including on-line public fora;</li> <li>- Group analysis and generation of policy proposals;</li> <li>- Deliberation across public life, from micro-fora to transnational settings;</li> <li>- New uses of referenda tied to deliberation polls, etc.</li> </ul>	
		<p><b>Classic pluralism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diverse range of (overlapping) interest groups seeking political influence;</li> <li>- Governments mediate and adjudicate between demands;</li> <li>- Constitutional rules embedded in a supportive political culture</li> </ul>	<p><b>Neo-pluralism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiple pressure groups, but political agenda biased towards corporate power;</li> <li>- The state, and its departments, forge their own sectional interests;</li> <li>- Constitutional rules function in context of diverse political culture and system of radically unequal resources</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deepening of deliberation from renewing representative democracy to radical, deliberative participatory democracy</li> </ul>	

Modern Models						
	Competitive Elitist Democracy	Pluralism		Legal Democracy	Participatory Democracy	Deliberative Democracy
<b>General Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Industrial society;</li> <li>- Fragmented pattern of social and political conflict;</li> <li>- Poorly informed and/or emotional electorate;</li> <li>- A political culture which tolerates differences of opinion;</li> <li>- Emergence of skilled strata of technically trained experts and managers;</li> <li>- Competition between states of power and advantage in the internal system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Power is shared and bartered by numerous groups in society;</li> <li>- Different types of resource dispersed throughout population;</li> <li>- Value consensus on political procedure, range of policy alternatives and legitimate scope of politics;</li> <li>- Balance between active and passive citizenry sufficient for political stability;</li> <li>- International framework upholding the rules of pluralist and free-market societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Power is contested by numerous groups;</li> <li>- Poor resource base of many groups prevents their full political participation;</li> <li>- Uneven distribution of socioeconomic power provides opportunities for and limits to political options;</li> <li>- Unequal involvement in politics: insufficiently open government;</li> <li>- International order compromised by powerful multinational economic interests and dominant states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective political leadership guided by liberal principles;</li> <li>- Minimization of excessive bureaucratic regulation;</li> <li>- Restriction of role of interest groups, particularly trade unions;</li> <li>- International free-trade order;</li> <li>- Minimization (eradication, if possible) of threat of collectivism of all types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct amelioration of the poor resource base of many social groups through redistribution of material resources;</li> <li>- Minimization (eradication, if possible) of unaccountable bureaucratic power in public and private life;</li> <li>- An open information system to ensure informed decisions;</li> <li>- Re-examination of childcare provision so that women as well as men can take up the opportunity to participate in public life;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Value pluralism;</li> <li>- Strong civic education programme;</li> <li>- Public culture and institutions supporting the development of 'refined' and 'reflective' preferences;</li> <li>- Public funding of deliberative bodies and practices, and of the secondary associations which support them</li> </ul>

(Held, 2006)

When reflecting upon the contemporary meanings of democracy Held (2006) also advanced ideas of what democracy should mean in current times. He indicated that nowadays there are two other models of democracy – Democratic Autonomy and Cosmopolitan Democracy. The principle(s) of justification, key features and general conditions for both are as follows:

Contemporary Models		
	Democratic Autonomy	Cosmopolitan Democracy
<b>Principle(s) of Justification</b>	Persons should enjoy equal rights and, accordingly, equal obligations in the specification of the political framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them; that is, they should be free and equal in the processes of deliberation about the conditions of their own lives and in the determination of these conditions, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others	In a world of intensifying regional and global relations, with marked overlapping 'communities of fate', the principle of autonomy requires entrenchment in regional and global networks as well as in national and local polities

Contemporary Models				
	Democratic Autonomy		Cosmopolitan Democracy	
	State	Civil Society	Short-term	Long-term
	Polity/governance			
<b>Key Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principle of autonomy enshrined in constitution and bill of rights;</li> <li>- Parliamentary or congressional structure (organised around two chambers based on PR);</li> <li>- Judicial system to include specialised fora to test interpretations of rights (SR);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diversity of types of household and of sources of information, cultural institutions, consumer groups, etc.;</li> <li>- Community services such as childcare, health centres and education internally organised to include elements of DP but with priorities set by adult users;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reform of leading UN governing institutions such as the Security Council (to give developing countries a significant voice and effective decision-making capacity);</li> <li>- Creation of a UN second chamber (following an international constitutional convention);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New charter of rights and obligations locked into different domains of political, social and economic power;</li> <li>- Global parliament (with limited revenue-raising capacity) connected to regions, nations and localities;</li> <li>- Separation of political and economic interests; public funding of deliberative</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Competitive party system (recast by public funding and DP)</li> <li>- Central and local administrative services, internally organised to include elements of DP with a requirement to coordinate 'local user' demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development and experimentation with different types of self-managed enterprises;</li> <li>- Diverse forms of private enterprise to promote innovation and economic flexibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced political regionalization (EU and beyond) and the use of transnational referenda;</li> <li>- Creation of a new, international Human Rights Court; compulsory jurisdiction before the International Criminal Court</li> <li>- Establishment of an effective, accountable, international, military force</li> </ul>	<p>assemblies and electoral processes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interconnected global legal system, embracing elements of criminal and civil law;</li> <li>- Permanent shift of a growing proportion of a nation-state's coercive capacity to regional and global institutions</li> </ul>
			<b>Economy/civil society</b>	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancement of non-state, non-market solutions in the organisation of civil society;</li> <li>- Experimentation with different democratic organisational forms in the economy;</li> <li>- Provision of resources to those in the most vulnerable social positions to defend and articulate their interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a diversity of self-regulating associations and groups in civil society;</li> <li>- Multi-sectorial economy and pluralisation of patterns of ownership and possession;</li> <li>- Public framework investment priorities set through general deliberation and government decision, but extensive market regulation of goods and labour</li> </ul>

(Held, 2006)

<b>Contemporary Models</b>		
	<b>Democratic Autonomy</b>	<b>Cosmopolitan Democracy</b>
<b>General Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open and free information to help ensure informed decisions in public affairs;</li> <li>- Full use of deliberative democratic mechanisms and procedures from deliberative polls to 'voter feedback' to enhance the processes of enlightened participations;</li> <li>- Overall regulatory objectives of the economy set by government in discussion with public and private agencies;</li> <li>- Entrenchment of rules governing labour, welfare, health and the environment in the operational dynamics of corporations;</li> <li>- Minimization of unaccountable power centres in public and private life;</li> <li>- Maintenance of institutional framework receptive to experiments with organisational forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing development of regional, international and global flows of resources and networks of interaction;</li> <li>- Recognition by growing numbers of peoples of increasing interconnectedness of political communities in diverse domains, including the social, cultural, economic and environmental;</li> <li>- Development of an understanding of overlapping 'collective fortunes' which require democratic deliberation – locally, nationally, regionally and globally;</li> <li>- Enhanced entrenchment of democratic rights and obligations in the making and enforcement of national, regional and international law;</li> </ul> <p>Transfer of increasing proportion of a nation's military coercive capability to transnational agencies and institutions with the ultimate aim of demilitarization and the transcendence of the states' war system</p>

(Held, 2006)



**Appendix F: order of influence of the objectives of preschool education in the different schools\_(1 most influent – 9 less influent)**

**Table F1 - Public School:**

a) To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.	7	1	1	1	2
b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.	5	5	2	4	1
c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and for successful learning	6	4	3	6	5
d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual characteristics, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.	1	2	4	2	3
e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.	2	8	6	3	6
f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.	4	3	5	5	8
g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.	3	9	7	7	4
h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.	8	6	8	8	7
i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community	9	7	9	9	9

**Table F2 - Private School:**

a) To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.	1	2	1	2	4	1	3
b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.	2	1	3	3	8	5	2
c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and for successful learning	5	8	9	7	7	8	8
d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual characteristics, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.	6	3	4	4	1	2	1
e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.	7	7	7	5	6	7	4
f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.	4	5	8	6	3	3	7
g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.	9	6	2	1	2	4	5
h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.	8	9	6	8	9	9	9
i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community	3	4	5	9	5	6	6

**Table F3 – IPSS School:**

a) To promote the child's personal and social development based on democratic life experiences within a perspective of education for citizenship.	3	5	1	1	3	7	2	2
b) To foster the child's integration in different social groups, teaching respect for different cultures and encouraging a growing awareness of his/her role as a member of society.	2	4	5	4	2	6	8	4
c) To contribute to equality of opportunity in access to education and for successful learning	4	2	2	3	9	4	9	8
d) To stimulate each child's overall development with respect for individual characteristics, inculcating patterns of behaviour favourable to significant and diversified learning.	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	3
e) To develop expression and communication throughout multiple languages as means of relating, of informing, raising aesthetic awareness and understanding of the world.	6	9	4	5	8	5	3	6
f) To arouse curiosity and critical thinking.	5	3	8	6	7	3	5	7
g) To ensure each child's welfare and safety, especially in terms of individual and collective health.	7	8	7	8	1	9	6	5
h) To correct precocious, deficient or socially unacceptable behaviour, promoting the best guidance to the child.	8	7	6	7	6	8	7	9
i) To encourage families' participation in the educational process and establish effective co-operation with the community	9	6	9	9	5	2	1	1

Table F4 - order of influence of the objectives of preschool education in the three schools:

	IPSS								Private							Public				
a)	3	5	1	1	3	7	2	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	3	7	1	1	1	2
b)	2	4	5	4	2	6	8	4	2	1	3	3	8	5	2	5	5	2	4	1
c)	4	2	2	3	9	4	9	8	5	8	9	7	7	8	8	6	4	3	6	5
d)	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	3	6	3	4	4	1	2	1	1	2	4	2	3
e)	6	9	4	5	8	5	3	6	7	7	7	5	6	7	4	2	8	6	3	6
f)	5	3	8	6	7	3	5	7	4	5	8	6	3	3	7	4	3	5	5	8
g)	7	8	7	8	1	9	6	5	9	6	2	1	2	4	5	3	9	7	7	4
h)	8	7	6	7	6	8	7	9	8	9	6	8	9	9	9	8	6	8	8	7
i)	9	6	9	9	5	2	1	1	3	4	5	9	5	6	6	9	7	9	9	9

## Appendix G: Example of educators' interviews coding:

Interview question 9) Taking for example the first objective of the Curricular Guidelines, which refers to democratic practices - to democracy. Would you say that democracy is a concept with influence in this school? How is it manifested and evident? What practices incorporate the concept of democracy?

### Public School:

#### **Educator 1 - Portuguese transcript –“Muito.**

Porque eu interpreto esta democracia democrática o aceitar um não, por isso é que eu acho importante a escola. Eu vejo esta vida democrata assim: “a minha liberdade acaba quando acaba a Liberdade do outro” e é com atividades que temos que contornar isso, e então em escola que temos que dar, temos que **partilhar**, muita vezes precisamos muito, mas “toma lá que precisas mais”, isto é o educador que tem que ensinar porque no meio familiar não é fácil **partilhar** com o outro porque muitas vezes as crianças nós estamos numa escola de amizade temos que ajudar o outro não temos que rir, mas porque o professor perguntou ou porque tem , ou porque tem alguma dificuldade em falar temos que ajudar e eu como vejo a vida democrata por ai acho que é muito importante.

#### **Educator 1 – English transcript - “Very much.**

Because I interpret this democratic democracy, the accepting a no, that’s why I think the school is important. I see this ‘democratic life’ in this way: ‘my freedom ends where the freedom of the other begins’, it’s with activities that we have to contour this, and in the school we have to, so many times [we have to] to give, to **share**, and many times we need it very much, but ‘here you go you need it more [than me]’. This is what the educator needs to teach, because in the family environment it’s not very easy to **share** with the other, because many times the children... we are in a school of friendship, we have to help the other, we don’t have to laugh... but because the teacher asked, or because it [the child] has some difficulty in speaking we have to help and I see the democratic life in this way, which is very important.”

#### **Educator 2 – “Principle one is the basis for everything.**

It’s knowing how to be with the other. It’s that all children **have access to pre-school before** they go to school because there are many **who still don’t have it [access]**. When having a child my objective is creating a democratic citizen, it’s collaborating with families, it’s valuing the children.

Yes, because the democratic life, what is for me democracy, it’s **respecting the freedom, my freedom ends where somebody else’s freedom begins**. Now what we are going to explain to the child is that he has to **respect that space of the other**, he cannot interfere, he cannot hit, so it is in this way that we explain democracy... it ends up to be. For example, **sharing**, many of them are still very egocentric. For example, they don’t have resources which belong only to themselves. The children bring pens and cookies to be **shared** between all. What I understand in democracy, on that side, is that they know ‘I bring, but they [the other children] also can use what’s mine, it is for everyone’, [this] also

encompasses democracy. Then it's also **respecting**, you can't destroy the work of your colleague. Now he has to speak and we have to be quiet if we want **to listen to our colleague**. For me democracy is to know how to be with the other... and is **that freedom really respecting the freedom of the other**. He can **choose**, has the right to **choose** where he is going, what area is the one he would most like to work "ah, but I want to come here" "Ah, so you have to see how many are already there" the area is already complete, you can't go, now if you want to go there and talk to your colleagues and see if any of them can go to another area, if they can swap with you. It ends up being them learning amongst themselves, to try to solve, even if at times there are certain conflicts. I only act when I think I have to act, because before I try that they **resolve [the conflict]** between themselves. **Solving these small conflicts** without the educator or adult's intervention".

**Educator 3** – "The first is fundamental without any doubt.

They have been made as being in a 'rising' order [from the most important to the least, even though they are all crucial].

It has always, it has always to do not only with this, it has to do with all, it has to do with the educator in itself. It has, because if they learn to **share**, if they learn to wait for their turn, if they learn friendship, if they learn to help the poorest. The role of the educator is important in certain moments, but then when the educator orients, it shows... [example of the poor child in the class] ... It shows how they are innocent, that it's inside themselves. If in the future they are followed in a similar way to the following they have in the Kindergarten, those children are pure and we can work them. So they need the right following. At home, as it's obvious, home is the principle, but yes, it is very much **manifested on our day to day** in every moment".

**Educator 4** – "Yes, I think so, in general yes.

The children sometimes, when they do their morning planning, **they can opt** doing various activities. Or we reach a consensus, when there are various themes, and we see what's best for that day".

**Educator 5** – "Yes, I think so.

Because the child also ends up learning to **respect the opinion of the other** even if it's different and maybe even **learning with it to respect**. We all have the right, but the child has to learn that her right ends where the right of the other begins. I think we live in a **democracy but with respect**. And I think that that is lived in the kindergarten. They [children] learn, but sometimes it is difficult to conciliate, but they know that they have to **respect their time** not speak on top of the colleague, **respect the opinion of the colleague** that there is much diversity. I think that democracy also really starts in the kindergarten. And it's manifested through the **respect**, through listening until you join the knowledge that each one of you has with the knowledge that the other brings, because each one of them has experiences, the family is the base, and here in the school they can start **demonstrating but with respect**. For example, when one speaks you have to raise your hand, I think it's a way for them to learn to live in society, of starting to learn".

### Private School:

**Educator 1** – “To me is fundamental.

The problem after is how this democracy is democratized in reality. It’s very beautiful to have an objective which implies democracy, and that democracy is written in there, but after in practice we are going to see that it’s not because we say that children do a project per year in which they **participate** and **give their opinion**, that the school is a democratic school. It has nothing to do with that, **democracy has to happen daily**. It only makes sense to me having a democratic school **where all have an opinion**, where all exist, that in reality there are spaces and times to democratize democracy”.

**Educator 2** – “I think it’s one of the principal.

Because **here [in this school] everything is democratized**. The meetings that we do, **the choice of activities**, even the establishment of the classroom rules, **everything, everything passes [as democracy]**, in fact, I think one of the global principles is everything passing by this democracy, that we try to transmit and everything is discussed, **each opinion is valued** and so in my opinion it is one of the main [principles]”.

**Educator 3** – “Yes. Totally! In everything!

The children **participate in every** decision **about everything**... when we have to review the [school’s food] menu, we can have a game in the classroom of writing every day what we have eaten and after we did a voting of what we liked the most to know what was coming off the menu and what could go in, other dishes that they have said to be the favourite. For example, to see the quotidian life, **democracy exists in everything from planning to conception**”.

**Educator 4 [crèche, 1 year’s old room]** – “It is, it is!

I think perhaps the democratic practices become more evident in the Kindergarten than in the Crèche. Nevertheless, **these democratic practices** already happen in the crèche; they [children] **are already part of the life in the classroom**. Of course they [children] are much more conducted by the adult, but for example, they [children] **choose**. When we [adults] put the tables for lunch we aren’t the ones to sit them and impose a place; the places are disposed and they **choose** in which table they want to have lunch, they already make a little bit part of the group’s life. Or [for example] we are giving the waters and if there is somebody [child] who stands up and grabs a water bottle and likes to help. So it’s not everything conducted by the adult, they make part of this, of our routines, still in a very light/superficial way, but we already work so that effectively after we live in a democratic group, wherein **they also have an effective participation**. While there are schools in which children do not **participate** in any of this. It’s not possible a child to take a friend’s bottle and give it to him, it’s not possible, the adult imposes the place to the child ‘and today you are going to have your lunch here’ and even if the child doesn’t want and kicks and cries, the adult is not flexible and this here [in this school] doesn’t happen. Ah, and also in relation to democracy, the fact that many times we propose an activity and not all children are interested, we are not going to instil in the child a mandatory participation in an activity which doesn’t interest or motivate her. The child **has always**

the freedom to say 'No' I don't want to participate. And even though she doesn't speak, she perfectly demonstrates what she does and doesn't want. So I think there is also a disposition from the adult to understand these signs from the child, and this is also democracy, accepting that the child is not interested and doesn't want to participate"

**Educator 5** – “Super, [democracy] it's one of the most important things.

Here [in this school] we don't decide anything alone. Everything we do in the classroom school trips, the work, the reality in the classroom, even the agenda we create, the maps, everything is conversed with them [children], everything is dialogued in a way that they also feel to be part of all of these dynamics”.

**Educator 6** – “Yes, I think so!

How is it [democracy] manifested, in what things? In the power of choice that they [children] have, they can choose if they want or don't want a work, 'yes or no' to participate in a project, in the choices that they make in the tasks. I don't know, throughout the whole day they have a democratic life, that's our life. They also have the limits, they know that they can choose, they know that they can say 'no, I don't want'. I think many times it passes by this 'no, but I prefer that', and it's here that we give them the opportunity to say, which I don't hear many times, that it's not said, that it's not present at all times in our life”

**Educator 7** – “Yes, [democracy] it's the word of order!

It's also very much based in the way that everyone democratically participates in other words, how each one's word is important in trying practices of equality, but that at the same time that equality implies different opinions, in other words, freedom of expression and each child have its own opinion and expresses it. Critical thinking. And in our school we defend precisely that, because we understand each child as an individual with an active voice”.

### IPSS School:

**Educator 1** – “Much [importance] yes!

[it's manifested] firstly through respect through the opinion of each one, then for the chance that the children have to choose what they want to do, to choose or not to choose. The voice that we give to children, in other words, the chance that they have to speak their mind and to give their opinion even if it's contrary to the other children's, or even [contrary] to ours [adults]. Of respecting others, of listening to others of giving the turn, of being listened to. This is a mini society it is here that we train them for life out there.

**Educator 2** – “Yes, decidedly!

The children are the ones who decide what they are going to learn and explore, we even have voting systems and everything, of the themes, what questions they want to see answered, how we are going to answer them. Therefore, it parts very much from them, even though the adults always conduct and help them to discover new ways, but it's more than democracy, I think so!



**Educator 3** – “I think so, yes.

Globally in the actual society is very important for me to know that my idea wasn't chosen, but that I had a chance to manifest it and that the **others respect it**, but it wasn't chosen, I have to accept, it's not my defeat, it's the unacceptance of others and this leads to a very **critical thinking**. Because when I say “I want this!” and my idea doesn't win I have to accept it. I have proposed, it's very important to propose, it's not saying: “I won't say anything more”, no, it's very important that you say your ideas, look this time it wasn't accepted, and he [the child] accepts that, and he is capable of exposing to the big group [all class], normally it's in the big group, that I like this or that, or I don't want this, or I don't want that. This **critical thinking** is very important because society is like that. We can't create children that are dependent of others, we can't create egocentric children that they are always the ones in charge. Because there is this in the group, there are 2 or 3 or 4 that are leaders, so what they **choose** the others follow, and we [adults] also have to dismantle that, “because Thomas **choose** that you also have to **choose** the same? Is it really that what you'd like or would you like something else?”, “ah, but he...” “no, but he does, do you feel the same?” It's the same as when they hit each other: “would you like that he did the same to you?” “No? So why do you do it?” “Ah, because whoever told me to do it” “Ah, but now think he's going to do it to you, would you like that?” And this is very important for the whole society. Because I think we are living today in a society... where there is no patience, no tolerance, **no respect**, and I think that these values are so important. And this passes by democracy, the acceptance”.

**Educator 4** – “It has, it has [importance].

But there; we have a group with a personality, for example here in this group I have children that only want to be them [in charge], and we [adults/educators] have to cut a little bit and we know that those [children] give an immense contribution, but **we have to give opportunity** to the others, otherwise those [the other children] stay always on that register and think that they are incapable... we have to give opportunity, it is fundamental. **There has to be democracy**, but also with some little contours, otherwise ‘the friends’ [the children] are never satisfied with anything”.

**Educator 5** – “I think so, without any doubt.

Because, and I speak for my classroom, but for what we [educators] **share** with each other I have the notion that here [in this school] we try that children feel that they in fact **participate** in the decision making, **in the choices**, **in the decisions that we make**, at the level of the organisation, at the level of the projects, at the level of what we are working on. So, I think so [democracy is influential/important]”.

**Educator 6** – “Ah, Yes!

**In the majority of things**, we try. Of course there are things that we have to transmit to children, that we are supposed to, even because of the routines and a series of other things at the institutional level that have to happen. But it also has to do a little bit with how we [adults] pass on these things, **what do we have to do and the power to decide**. For example, there are small things, mine [children], are very young, but let's see, they

have to collect the fruit [at snack time], we have to give opportunity for all of them to go and collect it, they already know that it's through their names/drawings and we follow that [order] and they start having the notion that in the next day they are the ones to follow because we stopped in a certain place, so we **give opportunity to all** [to have their turn]. Like now for example we have the book of Saint 'George' rotating [between their homes], they also know that it follows the names [alphabetic order], after that child another one will take it and 'after, tomorrow it's me' 'yes, tomorrow it's you' because it already knows that it's after that friend, so it's a question of... the older it's already 'what do you want to do?' we ask. Then some want the space ships and the girls want the princesses, we have a voting and they start understanding that it's the majority, because we are also governed like this, when we [citizens] vote it's the majority that wins. Of course the other start to understand that perhaps those who did not make part of the majority... but we have to go. I see our classroom group very much like a society in miniature, and for us to be able to *conviver* [all dimensions of co-exist/co-live] with each other on our day-to-day there is a series of rules. And these rules presuppose democracy, **respect**, knowing how to wait, not pushing, asking [permission] to speak, seat and not disturb the other, in short, a number of things. I say many times to the parents that we live in a very small society there [in the classroom] and that **we have to respect** and many times their [children's] behaviours here [in the school] are very different from [their behaviours at] home. Because it's exactly like us, I don't arrive to work and put my feet up on the desk, but at home [I do], but because we are in society and with others we have a number of *convivencia* [co-living] rules and so on that have to be followed, otherwise we risk marginalisation. And this is how children are growing here [in this school], they are children, but they are always put to deal with frustration, a number of negative things which they have to start dealing with, also how when they can do things, when they meet certain objectives, when they have proposed themselves to do something and were capable [of doing so], so these two [examples] one more positive and one more negative, but that **make part of this process** of deciding together, of seeing what we are going to do, they are little but start **understanding that they have to make a choice**, but there, as children that they are, they also have limits and from a certain limitation the choice at times belongs to the adult, and **sometimes here is where we generate conflicts, and even their capacity to see up until where they can go and surpass**. But I think **they have the opportunity of choice and have it as a right**.

**Educator 7** – “Within what is possible and within what we can work democratically with young children.

But we always try to be very fair/just. **listen to all the parts, listen to them** try to understand a little. Of course there are situations in which we cannot be absolutely democratic. For example, you want to **choose** something in the classroom and ask in the big group [all class], here it happens very frequently, even though we privilege the work in small groups to be able to work with such big groups, but I think that almost all classrooms already have that moment which we call 'the meeting' exactly to debate problems linked to citizenship and democratic education. **Taking decisions together, learning to live in group**. I think they leave here [the school] very well worked in this aspect.”

**Educator 8** – “Yes, of course, yes, of course!

Democracy for me is based on **the acceptance of freedom**, the space of the other. Democracy emerges from that premise. A democratic life is a life in which we are all embedded in society, in which there are values and there are patterns, rules and limits which should be met. Many times there are some people who are more democratic, others that are less democratic and here democratic life is in this way, in the way of **partnership** and **respect**, of understanding and mutual aid, of team work. I think in democracy all of these things have to function, so we can live in consonance and **respect with each other**

**Emerging themes and Codes:**

Choosing

Sharing

Making Decisions

Resolving Conflicts

Expressing Opinions

Participating

Listening

critical thinking

Freedom

Respect



**Underpinning all the above**

## Appendix H: Limitations/barriers to the enactment of democracy in ECE classrooms:

**Table H1: Barriers to the enactment of democracy in the Public School**

<b>Public School</b>	<p><b><u>Personality/Adult</u></b> – for some educators, democracy was directly related to a person’s character, personality, some educators mentioned that sometimes it was easier to have democracy between children than with adults. For these educators the adult’s ‘personality’ could be a barrier to democracy, for example, if it was an adult that could not work in a team and was self-centred.</p> <p><b><u>Money/Funding</u></b> – for some educators if there was no money to buy resources their action became limited and as such seen as a barrier to democracy.</p> <p><b><u>Different beliefs</u></b> – Some educators mentioned they found challenging to respect different religious beliefs when the public school academic year was organised by a catholic calendar where they celebrated Christmas and Easter and there was not much knowledge from the educator’s side to deal with multiculturalism and diversity.</p>
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**Table H2: Barriers to the enactment of democracy in the Private School**

<b>Private School</b>	<p><b><u>Adult</u></b> – the biggest obstacle is the adult. Participation and democracy born and die in the attitude of the adult. If the adult is himself democratic, who promotes democracy within the classroom and institution then democracy happens. If the adult is an authoritarian professional which is self-centred then participation and democracy die.</p> <p><b><u>Lack of respect for the ECE as a level of education</u></b> – fomenting the group spirit when there is disrespect such as arriving late.</p> <p><b><u>Non-institutional barriers</u></b> – such as family philosophies, according to some teachers sometimes families do not believe in democracy or in the possible democratic work which the school can develop and do not understand negotiation.</p>
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**Table H3: Barriers to the enactment of democracy in the IPSS School**

<p><b>IPSS</b></p>	<p><b>Adult</b> – Some of the educators mentioned that if the adult is inflexible, authoritarian, centred in itself, and who does not understand education of young children. They referred to people who think ECE is a recipe that you can apply and collect the results in the end are missing the point. Adults who decide that things have to be done in a certain way and that do not allow the child to say no, or to explain why not, or to argue, or to suggest other ways to do it. Adult-centric educators who do not think they learn as much from the children. Educator’s preach is to help how to learn, is not merely to teach.</p> <p><b>Fear of innovation</b> – some educators referred the fear to try something new as a possible barrier to the enactment of democracy. As it meant they were not prepared to be open and challenge their ways, beliefs, pedagogies.</p> <p><b>Educator’s experience</b> – for some educators the more experience an educator had the easier it became not to take control of everything that happened in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Children’s age</b> – There was a sense of responsibility attached to the idea that children are in many ways ‘vulnerable’ and as such the adult needs to take responsibility of certain choices.</p> <p><b>Being part of the minority</b> – some educators felt that if a person (whether it is an adult or a child) does not belong to the majority then he/she is automatically limited. As such democracy as a form of representing the wishes of majority is seen as a barrier to itself.</p> <p><b>Parent’s beliefs</b> – Parents values need to be taken into attention. Children may want something that parents do not agree with and educators need to manage that. It is difficult to respect the beliefs of each person; all you need is a parent to not agree with something for you to have a decision which may limit the democratic enactment in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Things that are outside the educator’s control</b> – weather, logistics, room availability on a specific day/time children want to perform an activity  “our goal is to surround the situation and apply democracy according to the possibilities”</p>
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