Ed Process Int J

www.edupij.com

ISSN 2147-0901 (Print), 2564-8020 (Online)

EDUCATIONAL PROCESS
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Trajectories and Challenges in Educational Administration in Europe's Outermost Regions: An Exploratory Study of Research Conducted between 2020 and 2025

Nuno Fraga, Sofia Silva

Research Article

Cite this article: Fraga, N., & Silva, S. (2025). Trajectories and Challenges in Educational Administration in Europe's Outermost Regions: An Exploratory Study of Research Conducted between 2020 and 2025. *Educational Process: International Journal, 19*, e2025593. https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593

Received August 14, 2025
Accepted October 19, 2025

Keywords: Educational administration, collaborative leadership, policy implementation, inclusion, outermost regions

Author for correspondence:
Nuno Fraga
nfraga@staff.uma.pt
University of Madeira, Portugal

Abstract

Background/purpose. This study examines recent scholarship on Educational Administration in Europe's outermost regions, focusing on sixteen master's dissertations defended at the University of Madeira (2020-2025). It examines how these works reflect emerging governance challenges related to leadership, inclusion, and local development.

Materials/methods. A qualitative meta-synthesis was conducted. Each dissertation was coded against four analytic dimensions (objectives, conceptual lenses, methodology, findings) and the resulting matrix was triangulated with international literature to identify convergences and gaps.

Results. The corpus converges on four themes: the centrality of collaborative leadership, the mediating role of organizational culture in implementing policy, the growing use of mixed-method approaches to evaluate curricular and social-action initiatives, and the persistent quest for equity in marginalized settings such as prisons, social housing and senior education. Leadership style, stakeholder participation and inter-institutional cooperation emerge as decisive factors for successful innovation.

The meta-synthesis reveals convergent trends toward collaborative, participatory, and adaptive leadership, and highlights the role of educational governance in promoting social inclusion and territorial development across diverse contexts.

Conclusion. Evidence indicates that educational administration in peripheral territories is most effective when anchored in adaptive, inclusive leadership and supported by coherent multilevel policies. The review generates a four-pillar reference framework - leadership, policy-culture nexus, pedagogical processes, and equity - that can guide future research and practice.

1. Introduction

Educational administration has expanded markedly over the past decades as a field of knowledge that integrates pedagogical, sociological, economic, political, and anthropological approaches, reflecting the social and institutional transformations that affect the educational arena (Brewer et al., 2018; Fraga, 2022; Silva & Fraga, 2021). From its inception, Educational Administration has constituted an interdisciplinary domain that links principles and methodologies from diverse areas such as Pedagogy, Sociology, Economics, Political Science, and Anthropology (Bush, 2010; Morgan, 2006). This polysemic nature is mainly attributable to the educational field's historical evolution and the growing demands of contemporary societies, characterized by rapid technological, demographic, and cultural change (Dale, 2004; Fraga, 2022). Indeed, the ability to understand educational institutions as living organisms embedded in social fabrics and subject to economic and political constraints has driven the growth of research in Educational Administration in recent decades (Leithwood et al., 2019).

In the pedagogical domain, concerns center on the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, the continuous professional development of staff, and the mechanisms for supervising, evaluating, and regulating public education policies. This dimension permeates the entire development of the educational system, and specifically teaching models and methodologies. From this perspective, Educational Administration aims to define and manage resources, strategies, and methods that enhance pedagogical quality and students' academic success (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Fullan, 2021).

By contrast, the sociological domain focuses on analyzing power relations, segregation and inclusion dynamics, and the influence of social stratification on educational trajectories (Ball, 2006). Accordingly, how school leadership and organizational culture respond to the challenges of equity and diversity are directly reflected in teacher-recruitment policies, forms of family participation, and the overall school climate (Ainscow, 2020; Eacott, 2013).

From an economic standpoint, Educational Administration investigates the management of financial and logistical resources and the efficiency and effectiveness of funding models -often through a neo-Taylorist lens - alongside institutional sustainability and the return on investment in education (OECD, 2019). Issues such as the privatization of schooling, the financial autonomy of schools, and the adoption of market-oriented approaches appear frequently in the literature, fueling debate over the tensions between business/organizational logic and the equity principles that underpin public education (Dale, 2004; Keddie, 2015).

In the political dimension, the intersection of governance, state regulation, and public policy formulation takes center stage (Lingard & Ozga, 2007). The implementation of educational reforms - whether curricular changes, teacher-performance evaluation, or the decentralization of school administration and management - unfolds through political processes involving negotiation, alignment with international agendas, and, not infrequently, clashes of interest (Day et al., 2020; Carvalho et al., 2024). Accordingly, Educational Administration requires an analysis of the leadership strategies (transformational, situational, distributed) that emerge within organizations and an understanding of the power relations embedded in national, regional, and local policy arenas (Hallinger, 2016; Fraga, 2014).

From an anthropological standpoint, a meticulous examination of the identities, values, and beliefs that permeate educational organizations becomes paramount (Morgan, 2006). How each institution constructs its narrative and culture depends on bureaucratic and linguistic codes and rituals, symbols, and meanings that translate into everyday practices (Ball, 2006; Lima et al., 2024). In contexts marked by cultural diversity, educational anthropology helps to clarify how ethnic,

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

gender, and generational differences are reflected in interactions, generating both opportunities and value conflicts (Brewer et al., 2018; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010).

Recent dissertations from the University of Madeira reveal a diversified research landscape: from school leadership and curriculum autonomy to community education, senior learning, and local governance. Together, these works demonstrate the expansion of Educational Administration into multi-level and socially responsive forms of management.

Against this multidimensional background, the present study seeks to map and interpret the research produced in Educational Administration within Europe's outermost regions between 2020 and 2025, exploring how leadership, governance, and inclusion are conceptualized in these contexts. Specifically, the research addresses three guiding questions: i) What leadership and governance models emerge from research in Educational Administration conducted in Europe's outermost regions between 2020 and 2025? (ii) How do these studies address inclusion, decentralization, and institutional culture? (iii) What methodological and theoretical convergences can be identified?

The following section reviews the main theoretical and empirical contributions to Educational Administration, situating the current synthesis within the broader international literature.

2. Literature Review

Within this framework, the expansion of Educational Administration over recent decades has stemmed from the progressive convergence of these diverse analytical lenses, responding to challenges ranging from labor-market globalization to heightened awareness of inclusion and social justice (UNESCO, 2021). On the one hand, the emergence of international networks, reports from organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO, and collaborative research between schools and research centers have strengthened the scientific and social legitimation of the field (Hallinger, 2016). On the other hand, the adoption of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) and the use of big-data analytics in education (Jarke & Breiter, 2021) enhance the capacity to map problems and design solutions, ensuring that Educational Administration does not remain merely normative but instead acts as a driver of transformation in practices, policies, and organizational processes.

By bringing together pedagogical, sociological, economic, political, and anthropological dimensions, Educational Administration has established itself as a rapidly expanding field that mirrors the broader social and organizational transformations of late modernity, in which schools and other learning environments have become spaces of constant review and reconfiguration. This multidisciplinary and adaptive nature aligns with the imperative to investigate and intervene with scientific rigor and critical insight, making the domain especially pertinent to designing innovative and inclusive solutions that address the educational challenges of the twenty-first century.

In recent years, literature has increasingly emphasized that educational leadership must be understood as a relational, context-bound, and ethically grounded process (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2021; Shields, 2010). This perspective has led to the consolidation of three complementary currents: transformational and distributed leadership (Leithwood et al., 2019), leadership for learning (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013), and inclusive or social-justice leadership (Ainscow, 2020; Keddie, 2015). Together, these currents provide the theoretical basis for analyzing how leaders mobilize communities and resources to achieve equity, efficiency, and organizational sustainability.

In these contexts, the complexity of the challenges facing teaching-and-learning organizations - from schools to universities, including non-formal settings - demands research methodologies capable of integrating multiple dimensions, whether curricular, organizational, or policy-related (Dale, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2019). Against this backdrop of accelerated change, the concept of educational management and leadership is being reconfigured, moving beyond the narrow confines of power hierarchies and increasingly taking on a collaborative and participatory character oriented

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

towards innovation and inclusion (Bolman & Deal, 2017; Hallinger, 2016). This reconfiguration is particularly visible in outermost or small-scale regions, where schools operate as community anchors and leadership frequently overlaps with social mediation and local development (Fraga, 2022; Carvalho et al., 2024).

Simultaneously, educational actors must contend with growing curricular autonomy at the school level (Fraga et al., 2021) and with the decentralization of education policies, which call for intersectoral coordination - across education, health, social action, and local authorities - and stimulate projects aligned with local dynamics (Fraga & Correia, 2013; OECD, 2019). Studies on Portuguese and European contexts underline that decentralization entails both opportunities and governance tensions, requiring strong municipal coordination and participatory accountability mechanisms (Pont, 2017; Bray & Packer, 2020).

Within this framework, the promotion of equity and social justice has taken center stage on international agendas, as evidenced by guidelines from UNESCO (2021) and other organizations that underscore the importance of viewing education as a driver of human and community development (Ainscow, 2020; Sen, 1999). The specialized literature shows that providing resources - such as scholarships or network-based projects- does not guarantee inclusion or educational success; instead, it highlights the need for school and social leadership that mobilizes collaborative, participatory, and reflective practices (Keddie, 2015; Savvopoulos et al., 2022). Research on gender and leadership (Acker, 2012; Coleman, 2011) further demonstrates that equitable representation in management positions correlates with organizational trust and participatory culture, reinforcing the relevance of analyzing gender as a structural variable in educational governance.

In addition, the growing field of lifelong learning and non-formal education has expanded the scope of Educational Administration. Studies on universities for older adults (Field, 2006; Findsen & Formosa, 2011) and adult-education networks point to the emergence of adaptive leadership models that bridge formal schooling, civic participation, and social innovation. This aspect gained visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic (Santos, 2021).

At the same time, scholarship on family–school relations (Epstein, 2018; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) and community engagement underscores the importance of partnership governance, in which administrative leadership serves as a facilitator of dialogue and shared decision-making. These findings resonate with recent dissertations in the Portuguese outermost regions, which often focus on the dynamics of collaboration among educators, parents, municipalities, and social actors.

Against this backdrop, the present article offers a critical analysis of 16 Education Sciences dissertations in Educational Administration, defended at a public higher-education institution in Europe's outermost periphery between 2020 and 2025. Although the dissertations address heterogeneous topics - female leadership, curricular flexibility, family-school relations, education in prison settings, social action in higher education, municipal councils, ethical dimensions of educating cities, and universities for seniors, among others - they converge on the view that educational administration is constructed through dialogue with public policies, organizational values and cultures, and the specific needs of stakeholders (teachers, students, support staff, families and communities).

Rather than examining each dissertation individually, the article synthesizes and discusses their results, systematizing each study's methodological strategies, conceptual frameworks, and principal conclusions. This synthesis draws upon the meta-synthesis model proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988), which integrates findings across qualitative studies through interpretive comparison and thematic aggregation. Its purpose is to contribute to designing a reference framework for the research strand in Educational Administration. The ensuing analysis provides a unified perspective on issues that, despite their diversity, share structural factors: the centrality of leadership, the influence

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

of local and national public policies, the need to attend to organizational culture, and, inseparably, the commitment to inclusion and the linkage of education to local community development.

Therefore, this analysis is expected to deepen our understanding of emerging trends in this field and offer avenues for future research and practice in educational administration. Furthermore, its alignment with recent studies (Fullan, 2021; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020; Hallinger, 2016) and with reports from international bodies such as the OECD and UNESCO provides the scholarly foundation that situates these dissertations within the global debate on educational transformation and the renewal of pedagogical practices in favour of quality and social justice. The dissertations examined thus exemplify the richness of the dialogue between applied research and the concrete dynamics of everyday school and social life, illustrating that it is in the articulation of theory, policy, and practice that education is (re)invented as a mechanism for individual and collective transformation (Somekh, 2006).

3. Methodology

This exploratory study adopted a descriptive and interpretative methodological design to synthesize and critically analyze 16 Education Sciences dissertations in Educational Administration, defended at the University of Madeira between 2020 and 2025, and coded A through P. The research was structured as a qualitative meta-synthesis (Noblit & Hare, 1988), drawing on content-analysis procedures and data triangulation (Bardin, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Operationally, the methodological process unfolded in three key phases: (1) data selection and collection, (2) organization and preliminary analysis, and (3) interpretation and critical discussion.

Meta-synthesis was chosen as the overarching design because it allows the integration of qualitative results from multiple primary studies into higher-order interpretations, capturing both convergences and contextual specificities (Finfgeld-Connett, 2018).

In the first phase, the dissertations were identified through the institution's internal databases, drawing exclusively on works submitted within the Master's in Education Sciences - Educational Administration program. The inclusion criteria required that a dissertation: (a) explicitly addressed issues of governance, leadership, policy implementation, inclusion or organizational culture; (b) presented methodological transparency (clear description of design, participants and analytical procedures); and (c) contributed to the understanding of educational administration in formal or non-formal contexts. Studies focusing primarily on curriculum design, assessment instruments, or subject-specific didactics were excluded.

To ensure coherence and rigor, criteria such as the date of defence (2020-2025) and thematic relevance to the field of Educational Administration were applied (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Each dissertation was then fully consulted, enabling the systematic collection of elements for analysis: introduction, theoretical framework, methodological chapter, results/conclusions, and any appendices clarifying the object of study or the techniques employed.

Once the dissertations had been gathered, recording matrices were created (Bardin, 2016), organized around four predefined analytical categories: (a) Context and Main Objectives; (b) Theoretical Framework/Key Concepts; (c) Methodology; and (d) Principal Conclusions. A fifth column was later added to register emergent categories derived from interpretative coding (e.g., “distributed leadership”, “curricular autonomy”, “family-school partnerships”, “gender and management”, “non-formal education”). This strategy aimed to systematize the information and facilitate cross-comparison among the studies. For each dissertation, data were compiled on the objects of study, the conceptual perspectives adopted, and the practical implications highlighted. During this stage, each document was read holistically and selectively (Bardin, 2016), with initial open codes assigned to describe the central ideas or themes (Charmaz, 2014).

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

Upon completion of the preliminary analysis, the findings were triangulated at three levels: (1) horizontal comparison among the dissertations (e.g., studies on leadership and gender, curricular flexibility, municipal governance and social action); (2) verification of coherence between the data collected and the theoretical framing, confronting each dissertation's empirical conclusions with the reference literature (Day et al., 2020; Hallinger, 2016); and (3) final integration, which synthesized convergences and divergences and generated inferences about both the field's strengths and its research gaps.

To reinforce analytical transparency, a thematic matrix was developed to visualize how each dissertation contributed to one or more of seven overarching domains identified through the coding process: (1) collaborative and adaptive leadership, (2) decentralization and local governance, (3) evaluation and accountability, (4) curricular autonomy and innovation, (5) family-school and community engagement, (6) gender and equity, and (7) lifelong and non-formal learning.

A more granular content analysis was also carried out on specific sections - chiefly the results and conclusions chapters - to uncover patterns, metaphors, or discourses that reflect organizational culture and views of leadership, inclusion, or equity (Morgan, 2006). This interpretive step yielded emergent analytical categories (e.g., the role of pedagogical supervision or the influence of decentralization policies) that were subsequently linked to the predefined theoretical dimensions.

Through critical discussion, the empirical evidence was then assessed for alignment with international trends in Educational Administration by consulting academic databases such as Web of Science, the SCImago Journal Rank, Latindex and RCAAP. This comparison not only situated the dissertation findings within a global context but also enhanced the external validity of the analysis by illustrating parallels between local insights and recent developments in educational research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Finally, to ensure ethical and methodological rigor, the principles of confidentiality and integrity were upheld (Bassey, 1999): only documents authorized by the university were accessed, and any details that could identify individual authors were omitted unless explicit consent had been obtained. All coding and interpretation steps were carried out independently by two researchers, who then compared their work to assess intercoder reliability, ensuring analytical consistency and minimizing subjectivity (Miles et al., 2018). This approach safeguards the scientific legitimacy of the process and fosters a culture of responsible, transparent research.

4. Results

The systematic review of the dissertations reveals a thematic breadth that - far from producing fragmentation - converges on four core concerns in educational governance: (1) leadership, (2) decentralization and local governance, (3) evaluation and accountability, (4) curricular autonomy and innovation, (5) family-school and community engagement, (6) gender and equity, and (7) lifelong and non-formal learning. An initial examination shows that, although each dissertation is anchored in a distinct objective, they collectively share analytical categories that interrogate issues of leadership, teaching methodologies, organizational models, community participation and social-support policies. Among the sixteen studies analyzed, ten adopted a qualitative design (63%), four combined qualitative and quantitative techniques (25%), and two relied primarily on quantitative surveys (12%). Together, these studies thus mirror the field's complexity and confirm its multidisciplinary nature (Leithwood et al., 2019). To clarify these dimensions, we organized the analysis into four topics: (a) objectives and contexts, (b) theoretical framework, (c) methodological approaches, and (d) principal findings/conclusions.

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

4.1. Objectives and Contexts

The dissertations' objectives reveal a dual movement: on the one hand, an effort to understand particular practices in depth - e.g., female leadership, teacher appraisal, or the ethics of the Educating Cities movement and, on the other, an ambition to determine the impact of initiatives in educational, social or family settings. The leadership-focused studies (B, C, K, P) interrogate gender stereotypes and management styles. In contrast, those analyzing curricular-flexibility policies (E, M) or private tutoring (I) examine how teaching and learning processes are being reshaped. Other theses reach beyond the strict confines of the school, investigating, for instance, the contribution of educational projects to inclusion in social-housing neighborhoods (N), the promotion of community cohesion through dignified housing (O), or the education of prisoners (A). Dissertations such as (L) and (P) add new perspectives by addressing the role of municipalities and ethics in governance and by linking educational administration with citizenship and local democracy.

This diversity of contexts substantiates the claim that Educational Administration is not restricted to traditional organizational boundaries but embraces a holistic vision connected to broader sociocultural and economic dynamics.

A further group of dissertations concentrates on specific populations, such as economically disadvantaged students (D) or senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic (L). These investigations document strategies for mitigating inequalities -whether through social-action measures in higher education or the continuation of Senior University activities under adverse conditions. Overall, approximately one-third of the studies (31%) address vulnerable or marginalized populations, highlighting the field's commitment to equity and inclusion. Such findings align with research that casts schools and other educational settings as hubs of protection and opportunity, especially during periods of heightened vulnerability (Ainscow, 2020).

4.2. Theoretical Framework

The dissertations' theoretical foundations are notable for their plurality of authors and paradigms. In studies centered on leadership, key references include Bass (1985), Yukl (2010), and Bolman and Deal (2017), which sustain discussions of transformational, situational, and inclusive leadership styles. In those addressing local development (N, G, O, P), perspectives advanced by Friedmann (1992) and Sen (1999) are invoked, emphasizing empowerment and genuine freedom of choice as vectors of social progress. National reference documents such as the Learner Profile at the End of Compulsory Schooling and Decree-Law No. 55/2018 of July 6 underpin other dissertations (E, M) that analyze how schools operationalize curricular autonomy.

The inclusive strand weaves together sociological theories (Ball, 2006) and critical educational approaches (Freire, 1970), underscoring that teaching-and-learning processes cannot be detached from contexts of exclusion and societal demands for justice (Hallinger, 2016). References to the Educating Cities movement (AICE, 1990) and models of pedagogical supervision (Alarcão & Tavares, 2013) further broaden the conceptual canvas, confirming the diversity of influences that Educational Administration encompasses. Notably, recent dissertations integrate frameworks such as social-justice leadership (Shields, 2010), governance theory (Rhodes, 2012) and lifelong learning (Field, 2006), illustrating theoretical diversification and a shift toward multilevel governance and ethical responsibility.

4.3. Methodological Approaches

Methodologically, qualitative or mixed-methods designs predominate, with most authors opting for case studies that combine semi-structured interviews, questionnaire surveys and participant observation (Bardin, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In projects such as "The School in the Neighborhood" (N) or "Social Housing" (O), field data are collected from professionals, residents,

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

project coordinators and members of community associations. By contrast, dissertations on social-action measures in higher education (D) or the private tutoring market (I) emphasize questionnaires administered to students and their parents or legal guardians.

Roughly 70% of the studies employed interviews as a primary data source, 40% used documentary analysis, and 25% combined interviews with focus groups or observation. This methodological pluralism underscores the field's interpretative orientation, privileging depth and contextual understanding over statistical generalization.

Data triangulation - crucial for achieving richer interpretation - combines participants' perspectives (teachers, students, mediators, leaders), documentary analysis (educational projects, institutional reports) and a thorough literature review. This methodological rigor rests on the premise that organizational culture and material conditions strongly shape outcomes, rendering a critical reading of official norms and discourses indispensable (Morgan, 2006). Some dissertations explicitly refer to the stages of Bardin's (2016) content analysis or to grounded-theory coding cycles (Charmaz, 2014), suggesting a gradual consolidation of qualitative research skills in the program.

4.4. Results and Main Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the investigations point to seven interrelated trends that, taken together, outline the evolving identity of Educational Administration in Europe's outermost regions. Leadership emerges throughout as the decisive factor shaping organizational processes and educational outcomes. Formal and informal leadership are repeatedly linked to the success or failure of educational initiatives, especially those that require collaborative commitment and adaptability to context. Across the corpus, leadership is portrayed not as a hierarchical function but as a shared, inclusive practice capable of mobilizing participation and innovation. Whether in projects involving vulnerable populations or in the management of crises such as the pandemic, collaborative and distributed leadership styles are consistently associated with sustained improvement and institutional resilience. At the same time, dissertations addressing on gender reveal persistent stereotypes and structural obstacles to women's advancement, even in contexts where they constitute the majority of teaching staff, confirming the endurance of cultural barriers to equality in school governance.

Closely intertwined with this first dimension is the relationship between educational policy and organizational culture. The studies examining curricular autonomy and teacher evaluation show that legislation and formal frameworks alone do not guarantee pedagogical renewal. Curricular flexibility (E, M) and appraisal policies (J) take root only when schools cultivate cultures of trust, reflection, and pedagogical supervision (Alarcão & Tavares, 2013). The data indicates that institutional resistance, evident in cases such as semester reorganization or the introduction of alternative curricular pathways, tends to diminish when leadership promotes open communication and shared planning. Change, therefore, depends as much on cultural readiness as on regulatory alignment.

A further trend concerns the growing investment in methodological innovation and pedagogical follow-up. Across the dissertations, innovation takes the form of new curricular configurations, peer collaboration and support structures that extend learning beyond the classroom. The studies converge on the importance of coordination, mentoring and collective discussion of teaching practice, identified as key mechanisms for preventing overload and sustaining motivation. Teachers' reflexivity and communities of practice emerge as central to professional development (Kulophas & Hallinger, 2021), confirming the view that innovation flourishes where dialogue and mutual learning are institutionally valued.

Equity, inclusion and social action also stand out as defining concerns. Several dissertations highlight the limits of fragmented responses to social inequality and underline the need for integrated

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

strategies that combine psychological support, tutoring, vocational training and partnerships with external entities. Examples such as higher-education social-action programs (D), prison-education initiatives (A) and social-housing projects (O) demonstrate that the impact of educational policies is maximized when they articulate learning opportunities with community development. In these contexts, education operates simultaneously as a right and as a means of empowerment, enabling citizens to negotiate their own pathways to participation and dignity.

The studies further suggest that decentralization and local governance constitute a structural dimension of effective administration. Research on municipal councils, local educational projects and community partnerships (G, N, O, P) reveals that cooperation between schools, local authorities and civil organizations enhances the sustainability of initiatives and the responsiveness of policies to territorial realities. However, discontinuity in municipal planning and limited coordination across sectors often constrain long-term impact, echoing comparative findings in European literature (Pont, 2017).

Another salient finding concerns the extension of educational administration into lifelong and non-formal learning. Dissertations on Senior Universities and civic-education projects (L, P) illustrate how leadership in non-school settings adopts an adaptive and ethically grounded character. Lifelong learning is interpreted not merely as a policy objective but as an ethical commitment to inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and the democratization of knowledge.

Finally, family-school and community engagement appear as a transversal axis connecting all previous dimensions. Studies focused on parental participation (I, H) and local collaboration (G, N, O) demonstrate that when schools act as hubs of community interaction, relationships of trust are strengthened, stigma diminishes and collective efficacy grows. Approximately half of the dissertations reference partnership governance, underscoring that participation is no longer peripheral but central to administrative identity in these contexts.

Taken as a whole, the sixteen dissertations converge toward a model of educational administration that is participatory, context-responsive and ethically anchored. Leadership, decentralization, evaluation, innovation, equity and community engagement are not isolated variables but interdependent processes that reinforce one another. This synthesis thus portrays a field in transformation, one that seeks to balance institutional accountability with human development, and policy compliance with the democratic potential of education.

Table 1 below summarizes the focus, methodological orientations, theoretical foundations and conclusions of the sixteen dissertations, highlighting both their diversity and their convergent emphasis on inclusive, community-based forms of governance.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Sixteen Dissertations: Focus, Methodology, and Implications

Category	The focus of the Studies	Trends/Implications
1. Research Problem / Objective	- Impact of the prison context (A) - Female leadership and equity (B, C) - Social action and academic success in higher education (D) - Inclusive education and pedagogical supervision (K)	The dissertations concentrate on specific educational and social contexts - from prison education and social housing to family participation and senior learning - addressing emergent issues such as leadership, inclusion, and community development. There is a clear emphasis on adaptive leadership, participatory governance, and territorial equity in the Autonomous Region of Madeira (RAM).

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

Category	The focus of the Studies	Trends/Implications
	- Family participation and school-community relations (F, H, I) -Curricular autonomy and flexibility (E, M) - Local educational projects and municipal governance (G, N, P) - Housing policies, social cohesion and development (O) - Lifelong learning and Senior Universities (L)	
2. Methodologies Used	- Predominance of qualitative case studies (A, C, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, O, P) - Use of mixed-methods approaches (B, D, I) - Quantitative descriptive design (L) integrating survey data on senior learners	The qualitative case-study approach predominates (approx. 75% of the corpus). Mixed-methods designs add triangulation through surveys and interviews. Interviewing is the most common instrument (70%), followed by questionnaires (45%) and document analysis (40%). This methodological pluralism reflects an interpretative orientation that privileges depth, context and meaning.
3. Theoretical Framework	- Educational Leadership Theories (Yukl, Bass, Bolman & Deal) - Governance and Decentralization (Pont; Rhodes) - Inclusion and Social Justice (Ainscow; Keddie; Shields) - Lifelong Learning (UNESCO; Field) - Educating Cities (AICE) - Sociological and Critical Frameworks (Bourdieu, Foucault, Freire, Bronfenbrenner)	Most dissertations combine theories of leadership, participation, and inclusion, grounding Educational Administration in social and ethical concerns. A growing presence of governance theory, lifelong learning and civic participation frameworks signal theoretical diversification and maturity. Authors such as Paulo Freire, Foucault, and Bourdieu frame education as a process of emancipation and power negotiation.
4. Main Conclusions	- Need for shared and distributed leadership across institutions - Relevance of social-support measures (social action, tutoring, housing)	The dissertations converge on the view that collective mobilization, inter-institutional collaboration and shared autonomy yield more sustainable outcomes. Leadership is most effective when dialogical, ethical and community-oriented. The studies further emphasize the need for continuous professional development, reflective

Category	The focus of the Studies	Trends/Implications
	- Value of curricular flexibility and inclusive pedagogies - Importance of municipal partnerships and local governance - Emergence of ethical, community-based leadership in non-formal education - Recognition of gender disparities and barriers to female leadership	supervision and cross-sector coordination to foster equity and innovation.

As the table shows, leadership-oriented research dominates the corpus, followed by studies on community engagement, decentralization and curricular innovation. The coexistence of qualitative, mixed and quantitative designs underscores a methodological maturation within the program, while the growing integration of governance and lifelong-learning theories signals theoretical renewal. Together, these tendencies provide the empirical basis for the discussion that follows, in which the results are interpreted through the lens of international literature on educational leadership, inclusion and organizational change.

5. Discussion

Thus, the overall analysis supports the view that the Educational Administration is experiencing a renewed dynamism, reflecting local contingencies and international directives on decentralization, inclusion, and the adoption of active, collaborative methodologies (UNESCO, 2021). Although situated in diverse contexts - public schools, senior universities, neighborhood projects, and prison institutions - the sixteen dissertations consistently identify leadership, participation and organizational culture as indispensable to the success of any educational or social initiative. This convergence underscores a key assumption shared by global frameworks on school effectiveness: sustainable improvement depends less on structural reform than on the capacity of institutions to learn collectively and exercise adaptive leadership (Fullan, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2019).

The findings reveal that leadership in peripheral contexts tends to be distributed and community-based, aligning with Hallinger's (2016) model of collaborative instructional leadership. Rather than authority concentrated in formal positions, effective leadership emerges from networks of trust between teachers, families, municipalities and social organizations. Such leadership operates as a connective tissue that binds policy to practice and fosters a shared sense of purpose, precisely what Fullan (2021) calls "coherence making." This pattern is particularly evident in projects that link schools with local development, where heads and coordinators act as facilitators of social inclusion and territorial cohesion.

At the same time, the dissertations demonstrate that decentralization and autonomy, although promoted in European and national policy documents, require strong local governance mechanisms to be effective (Silva & Fraga, 2022). Research on municipal educational projects and curricular flexibility illustrates that autonomy, when not supported by professional development and horizontal accountability, risks becoming an administrative burden rather than a catalyst for innovation. These results echo Pont's (2017) argument that decentralization must be accompanied by capacity building, participatory planning and transparent evaluation to avoid reproducing inequalities between territories.

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

A third strand of interpretation concerns evaluation and professional learning. Several dissertations show that performance appraisal, supervision and feedback processes function best when conceived as formative rather than punitive mechanisms. This orientation resonates with international evidence (Danielson, 2016; OECD, 2019), which highlights that reflective supervision and peer coaching are key to building professional capital. In the analyzed corpus, the most effective initiatives combine pedagogical follow-up with a culture of shared accountability, where evaluation supports growth rather than compliance.

Innovation and curricular flexibility emerge as complementary pillars of this process. The studies examining the implementation of Decree-Law No. 55/2018 reveal that innovation thrives when teachers are given time and autonomy to experiment collectively, and when leadership provides guidance without imposing rigid templates. This mirrors Hargreaves and Fullan's (2020) advocacy of "professional collaboration with moral purpose," where innovation is both context-sensitive and ethically grounded.

Equity and inclusion, meanwhile, constitute transversal priorities. The dissertations focusing on social action, prison education and housing projects make visible how leadership and policy interact to reduce structural disadvantage. Ainscow's (2020) notion of "inclusive improvement" is particularly relevant here: inclusion is not a separate agenda but a criterion for judging the quality of any reform. The empirical evidence from Madeira's outermost context reinforces this idea, equity-oriented leadership is not supplementary but central to administrative effectiveness (Silva & Fraga, 2025).

Community participation and inter-institutional collaboration further expand the scope of Educational Administration. When schools act as community hubs, linking education with health, social work and local governance, the effects extend beyond student outcomes to broader social well-being. These results align with the Educating Cities framework (AICE, 1990) and with the OECD's (2019) emphasis on integrated local governance. Participation ceases to be a rhetorical value and becomes an operational principle of educational management.

Finally, the dissertations focusing on lifelong and non-formal learning indicate that Educational Administration is progressively detaching itself from the exclusive sphere of formal schooling. Leadership in Senior Universities and civic-education initiatives shows how administrative functions acquire ethical and humanistic dimensions when directed at intergenerational solidarity and active citizenship. This trend converges with UNESCO's (2021) concept of learning as a lifelong human right and with Field's (2006) call for learning societies that link education to democratic participation.

Taken together, these insights position Educational Administration as a field that mediates between policy and practice, institutional structures and community life. In Europe's outermost regions, where socio-economic asymmetries and insularity shape educational realities, administration cannot be confined to bureaucratic management, it becomes a form of social leadership. The studies reviewed thus illustrate how governance, leadership, and inclusion are intertwined in the daily fabric of schools and local institutions, providing evidence that educational change depends on the relational, ethical, and collaborative capacities of those who lead it (Silva & Fraga, 2025).

In this sense, the meta-synthesis not only systematizes recent research but also contributes a conceptual framework centered on four interdependent pillars - leadership, policy-culture nexus, pedagogical processes and equity - which together define the contours of a renewed educational administration. Future research may build on these foundations by exploring comparative perspectives across regions, refining methodological approaches, and further investigating how local governance models can foster equity, innovation, and social cohesion.

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

6. Conclusion

The corpus of sixteen dissertations defended at the University of Madeira between 2020 and 2025 attests to the growing conceptual maturity and methodological diversification of the field of Educational Administration, confirming that leadership structures, organizational cultures and public policies intertwine to build more inclusive educational and social environments (Fullan, 2021; Hallinger, 2016). Taken together, these studies demonstrate that the administration of education is no longer reducible to bureaucratic management but rather constitutes a complex, value-driven process that articulates ethics, participation and governance. While these investigations address diverse issues - from female leadership and social action in higher education to prison education, social housing and curricular flexibility - the dissertations collectively underscore the transformative potential of education as a means of promoting local development, equity and social justice (Dale, 2004; OECD, 2019).

On the one hand, the dissertations centered on leadership, particularly through the lenses of gender and inclusion, reinforce the need to revisit classical conceptions of power and authority (Yukl, 2010; Bolman & Deal, 2017). They portray leadership not merely as positional but as relational, dialogical and adaptive, emphasizing collaboration as a condition for institutional learning and professional growth. On the other hand, studies concerned with curricular dynamics and teacher performance appraisal highlight the organic nature of schools, in which the capacity to innovate depends on how each organization interprets and contextualizes legal frameworks (Alarcão & Tavares, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2019). Accordingly, public policies that grant institutional autonomy must be coupled with pedagogical supervision, reflective practice and continuous professional development to consolidate genuinely transformative and sustainable practices (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Likewise, projects linking educational action to community development - such as The School in the Neighborhood, the Local Educational Project and social-housing initiatives - demonstrate that schools and social agencies can act as catalysts of social cohesion and empowerment for vulnerable populations (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). The presence of sensitive, ethical leadership and coordination among local authorities, mediators and specialized technicians confirms that transformation does not arise solely from material investment but from processes of participation and co-construction of shared goals (Friedmann, 1992; Sen, 1999). This relational dimension transforms administration into a form of social leadership, where the management of resources intersects with the cultivation of meaning and community identity.

The dissertations addressing prison education and private tutoring expose tensions between formal schooling and remedial or compensatory mechanisms, warning that without systemic, inclusive policies, such initiatives risk reproducing inequality and marginalization (Ainscow, 2020). Conversely, when articulated within coherent public frameworks, they can provide genuine opportunities for reintegration, learning and empowerment.

At the epistemological level, the overall analysis confirms a predominance of qualitative or mixed methodologies, underscoring the importance of triangulating data from interviews, surveys and document analysis to capture the complexity of educational phenomena (Bardin, 2016; Morgan, 2006). This methodological pluralism not only enhances the validity of findings but also reflects a maturing research culture capable of balancing empirical depth with theoretical reflection. The articulation of participants' voices (teachers, managers, students, parents and support staff) with institutional and policy frameworks demonstrates the discipline's ability to bridge micro-level experiences and macro-level structures (Dale, 2004; Keddie, 2015).

Ultimately, the convergence of findings legitimizes the view that leadership, organizational culture, community participation, formative assessment and inclusion constitute the structural pillars

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

of socially just and pedagogically coherent education systems. The attention given to the vulnerabilities of students, families and groups at risk of exclusion (A, D, O, K) underscores the urgency of integrated policies that combine financial support, psychosocial assistance, professional training and interinstitutional collaboration (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Initiatives such as curricular autonomy, semesterization, alternative pathways and social-action measures in higher education prove effective only when anchored in ethical leadership and a systemic vision of educational governance (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

In essence, the field of Educational Administration has advanced toward an integrative paradigm that reconciles strategic management with human development, administrative accountability with pedagogical creativity, and institutional autonomy with collective responsibility. The contexts examined - prison, university, housing, family, and school - illustrate the plural, adaptive, and interdisciplinary character of the discipline, projecting future research paths that deepen its engagement with real-world complexity. By refining methodological approaches, strengthening comparative studies and co-constructing solutions with communities, future investigations can further affirm education as both a universal right and a lever for democratic, sustainable development (Freire, 1970; Sen, 1999).

7. Proposed Reference Framework and Implications for Future Research

The meta-synthesis of sixteen dissertations allows the construction of a reference framework for research in Educational Administration grounded in four interrelated axes: (1) Leadership; (2) Public Policy and Organizational Culture; (3) Pedagogical and Training Processes; and (4) Equity and Social Development. Each axis integrates theoretical, methodological and empirical dimensions observed in the dissertations and supported by the international literature.

Leadership is reaffirmed as a decisive condition for educational improvement. Effective leadership in the analyzed contexts tends to be transformational, situational, and inclusive, fostering collaboration, reflection, and professional learning (Hallinger, 2016; Bolman & Deal, 2017). It extends beyond hierarchical positions and becomes a shared social process that mobilizes trust and purpose within communities.

Public Policy and Organizational Culture form the structural layer through which educational innovations are filtered. Decentralization, curricular autonomy and local governance initiatives succeed only when accompanied by a participatory and learning-oriented culture that aligns institutional practice with broader policy objectives (OECD, 2019; Pont, 2017).

Pedagogical and Training Processes highlight the role of supervision, formative assessment and continuous professional development as mechanisms that connect autonomy to accountability. Effective innovation depends on time, support and reflective supervision, allowing teachers to integrate reform into daily pedagogical practice (Leithwood et al., 2019).

Equity and Social Development represent the ethical foundation of Educational Administration. Inclusive leadership and intersectoral partnerships extend the administrative mission beyond the school, linking education to housing, employment, health and citizenship (Ainscow, 2020; Sen, 1999). In this sense, administration becomes an agent of social transformation.

Together, these four axes constitute an integrated model for guiding both research and professional practice. They reaffirm that sustainable educational change depends on ethical, collaborative and context-sensitive leadership supported by coherent public policies and an inclusive organizational culture. Future research may apply this framework comparatively across regions or use it as a diagnostic tool for evaluating governance and participation in educational systems.

https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.19.593 Published online by Universitepark Press

Declarations

Author Contributions. NF: conceptualization, data curation, validation and writing - original manuscript preparation; SS: methodology, and writing - review and editing.

Conflicts of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding. This work was carried out within the scope of the Project UID/04083/2025, "Center for Research in Education of the University of Madeira", funded by FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia: https://doi.org/10.54499/UID/04083/2025.

Ethical Approval. Not applicable (document review study).

Data Availability Statement. Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Acknowledgments. The authors thank the master's students for their contribution to advancing the field of educational administration research.

References

AICE (1990). *Carta das Cidades Educadoras*. Associação Internacional de Cidades Educadoras.

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16. https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587

Ainscow, M., & Sandill, A. (2010). Developing inclusive education systems: the role of organizational cultures and leadership. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(4), 401-416. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110802504903

Alarcão, I., & Tavares, J. (2013). *Supervisão da Prática Pedagógica: Uma perspetiva de desenvolvimento e aprendizagem*. Almedina.

Ball, S. J. (2006). *Education policy and social class: The selected works of Stephen J. Ball*. Routledge.

Bardin, L. (2016). *Análise de conteúdo*. Edições 70.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Open University Press.

Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2008). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press.

Brewer, C., Okilwa, N., & Duarte, B. (2018). Context and agency in educational leadership: framework for study. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 23(3), 330-354. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1529824

Bush, T. (2010). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Carvalho, M. J., Fraga, N., & Almeida, A. P. (2024). Racionalidades, Produção Normativa e Desafios Autonómicos Pós 25 de Abril: o caso da Região Autónoma da Madeira. *Revista Lusófona de Educação*. 63(63), 85-99

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.

Dale, R. (2004). Globalização e educação: demonstrando a existência de uma "Cultura Educacional Mundial Comum" ou localizando uma "Agenda Globalmente Estruturada para a Educação"? *Educação & Sociedade*, 25(87), 423–460.

Danielson, C. (2016). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). ASCD.

Day, C., Sammons, P., & Gorgen, K. (2020). *Successful school leadership*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED614324

Eacott, S. (2013). Rethinking' leadership' in education: a research agenda. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 45(2), 113–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2013.768971

Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429494673

Field, J. (2006). *Lifelong learning and the new educational order* (2nd ed.). Trentham Books.

Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2018). *A guide to qualitative meta-synthesis*. Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975)

Fraga, N. & Correia, C. (2013). O Projecto "Eu participo". Uma Estratégia da Política Local para a Educação na Cidadania. *Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social* (RIEJS), 2(1), 93-118.

Fraga, N. (2014). As lideranças e os processos participativos: uma reflexão sobre a cidadania democrática. REICE. *Revista Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, 12(5), 151-171.

Fraga, N. (2022). A Teoria da Administração Educacional na Universidade da Madeira. Alguns percursos caracterizadores da sua identidade disciplinar. In M. J. Cardona & M. J. Linhares (coord.), *Investigar para intervir na administração educacional*. (pp. 7-25) Instituto Politécnico de Santarém.

Fraga, N., Pereira, G., Gouveia, A. I., & Gouveia, F. (2021). Processos de liderança no Projeto de Autonomia e Flexibilidade Curricular. *Revista Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas de Educação*. 30(113).

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. Paz e Terra.

Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment: The politics of alternative development*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Fullan, M. (2021). *The right drivers for whole system success. Centre for Strategic Education*. https://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Fullan-CSE-Leading-Education-Series-01-2021R2-compressed.pdf

Hallinger, P. (2016). Bringing context out of the shadows of leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(1), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216670652

Hallinger, P., & Bryant, D. A. (2013). Mapping the terrain of educational leadership and management in East Asia. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(5), 618–637. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-05-2012-0066

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2020). *Professional capital after the pandemic: Revisiting and revising classic understandings of teachers' work. Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 5(3–4), 327-336. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-06-2020-0039

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1982). *Management of Organizational Behavior*. Prentice-Hall.

Jarke, J. & Breiter, A. (2021). *The Datafication of Education*. Routledge

Keddie, A. (2015). *School Autonomy, Accountability and Collaboration: A Critical Review*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1047769

Kulophas, D., & Hallinger, P. (2021). Does leadership make a difference in teacher learning? A contextual analysis of learning-centered leadership in rural Thailand. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 27(6), 1494–1514. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.1980911

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2019). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077

Lima, L. C., Carvalho, M. J., Fraga, N., & Almeida, A. P. (2024). A gestão democrática das escolas e das universidades, nos 50 anos de Abril. *Revista Lusófona de Educação*. 63(63), 65-69

Lingard, B., & Ozga, J. (Eds.). (2007). *The Routledge Falmer reader in education policy and politics*. Routledge.

Mintzberg, H. (1993). *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organizations*. Prentice-Hall.

Morgan, G. (2006). *Images of organization*. SAGE.

OECD (2019), *Education Policy Outlook 2019: Working Together to Help Students Achieve their Potential,* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/2b8ad56e-en.

Pont, B. (2017). *School leadership for learning: Insights from TALIS 2013.* OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264258341-en

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

Savvopoulos, D., Saiti, A., & Arar, K. (2022). The role of the school head in inclusion and culturally responsive leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 56(2), 107–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2022.2122419

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.

Silva, S. & Fraga, N. (2022). O regime de autonomia e administração das escolas: do plano das intenções declaradas ao plano das ações. O caso da Região Autónoma da Madeira. *Revista Lusófona de Educação 55*, 109-125. https://doi.org/10.24140/issn.1645-7250.rle55.07

Silva, S., & Fraga, N. (2021). Autonomia e Flexibilidade Curricular como Instrumentos Gestionários. O Caso de Portugal. REICE. *Revista Iberoamericana Sobre Calidad, Eficacia Y Cambio En Educación*, 19(2), 37-54

Silva, S., & Fraga, N. (2025). From Legal Innovation to School Reality: Leadership Perspectives on Inclusive Education in Portugal. *Education Sciences, 15*(10), 1309. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15101309

Somekh, B. (2006). *Action research: A methodology for change and development*. Open University Press.

UNESCO (2016). *3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

UNESCO (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO.

Wilkinson, J., & Eacott, S. (2013). 'Outsiders within'? Deconstructing the educational administration scholar. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 16(2), 191–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2012.750762

Yukl, G. A. (2010). *Leadership in Organizations* (7th ed.). Pearson.

About the Contributor(s)

Nuno Fraga is an assistant professor with habilitation at the University of Madeira (Portugal). He is the Director of the Master's Degree in Educational Sciences, specializing in Educational Administration. He is the current Coordinator of the Comparative Education Section of the Portuguese Society of Educational Sciences. He is a Voting Member of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). His most recent studies have focused on the processes of school autonomy and the dynamics of territorialization of education.
Email: nfraga@staff.uma.pt
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3382-6357

Sofia Silva is a visiting assistant professor at the University of Madeira (Portugal) and the deputy coordinator of the Comparative Education Section of the Portuguese Society of Educational Sciences. Her areas of interest intersect educational policies with community intervention. Her most recent studies have focused on the processes of autonomy and curricular flexibility in schools associated with learning assessment.
Email: sofia.silva@staff.uma.pt
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4649-307X