

From Education to Lifelong Learning: The emerging regime of learning in the European Union

ANNA TUSCHLING & CHRISTOPH ENGEMANN

University of Basel; Graduate School of Social Sciences University of Bremen

Abstract

This paper investigates the role of the lifelong learning discourse in actual governmentality. Starting with a description of the origins of lifelong learning in the discussions about alternative education in the 1960s and 1970s, the current adoption of lifelong learning by the European Union is used to show its critical components. Along with the distinction between formal and informal learning it is demonstrated how lifelong learning attempts to change the field of learning from enclosed environments to a totality of learning events, while at the same time attempting to change the individuals into self-organizing learners. We show that lifelong learning has a crucial role within the strategies of subjectivation, since its mandate is to provide individuals with the necessary skill-sets. Finally the methodological prerequisites of the administration of Lifelong Learning are investigated, showing the corresponding developments in the European Union and their contribution to generating a European population.

Keywords: lifelong learning, governmentality, education, informal learning, European Union, subjectivation

Introduction

During the last fifteen years governmentality literature has extensively analyzed how current political programs interrelate with regimes of government and its subjects. Building upon the reassessment¹ that Michel Foucault undertook of his theory of power in the lectures given at the Collège de France in the late 1970s,² governmentality theory focuses on the techniques that allow the alignment of governmental interventions with self-regulative capacities of individuals, simultaneously spawning and utilizing them.

Among the authors in this field, including the late Foucault himself, it is the general consensus that the framework of relations between individuals and governments is currently undergoing a profound transition. The beginnings of this transition are located in the 1970s, with a phase of buildup in the 1980s and a general visibility in the late 1990s, especially in the social-democratic regimes of the so called 'Third Way' in Great Britain and Germany. The administrative initiatives

brought forward by these ruling parties made rich use of a political rhetoric asserting a profound change in the distribution of responsibilities between state and individuals, calling for a stronger utilization of individual 'resources' for the good of the society. Especially in the realm of social welfare, new arrangements were sought where individual action is increasingly invoked to ideally foster both individual chances and collective good. The new modes of organization—frequently labeled as neoliberal—seek to relate the conduct of one's own life to the performance of the state.³ Reflecting the notion of 'No rights without responsibilities' social rights are increasingly implemented in a reciprocal fashion. The paradox that governmentality studies highlight within these 'novel links between the *personal* and the *political*' (Rose, 2000, p. 1398), where the individual and 'its' society become ever more interwoven, is that individual freedom in handling life situations effectively grows. People are set free from the comparably rigid frameworks of the classical social welfare states, and are rather confronted with a field of incentives suggesting ways of utilizing individual skills and circumstances maximizing their own 'life-chances' while minimizing their cost to the state. This arrangement pluralizes self conduct, while simultaneously teaching hindsight to the community. In the governmentality literature these developments have been labeled as individualization and totalization (Gordon, 1991, p. 36).

In this paper, we argue that lifelong learning (LLL) plays a special role in implementing the outlined models of governing individuals. Lifelong learning aims at a revision of education, which in modern societies is assigned a central role among the techniques of subjectivation, currently shaping almost one third of an individual's life in a given population. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault (1977) used the invention of schooling and education to illustrate the advent of 'discipline'. Although we agree with the critique on discipline given by Gilles Deleuze in his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' (1990), we want to emphasize the actuality of Foucault's assertion that the analytical instruments developed in schooling institutions are important contributors in generating knowledge within and about the individual. We assume and intend to show that lifelong learning has a very similar role in the current transformation of subjectivation techniques. It is a prime venue where individuals are confronted with and have to learn to act upon new principles of conducting oneself. It is furthermore a prime venue of generating knowledge within and about individuals. We will illustrate this with the educational programs of the European Union. The focus on the EU results from two elements: (1) the EU has declared LLL as one of its most important projects, and (2) the process of European unification is necessarily accompanied by the emergence of a refined governmentality, since the EU has to integrate 25 populations into one 'new' population. With the further unification of the EU it is possible to witness an emerging and evolving statehood, trying to develop intellectual technologies that allow it to connect with *its* people. In the Lisbon European Council Presidency Conclusion it is clearly stated: 'People are Europe's main asset and should be the focal point of the Union's Policies' (European Council, 2000).⁴ Instruments of knowledge conceived within the context of Europe's lifelong learning are an important part of this process. We will concentrate our investigation on the reconfiguration of the

individual's role in this context, but still discuss parts of extensive institutional premises involved.

Lifelong Learning in the EU

The unification of Europe is a gradual process. Political and monetary union are already achieved, but other aspects of statehood, like military and social-welfare still remain under the primary rule of the member states. Building a 'social Europe' may be one of the most complicated tasks, since the social welfare frameworks in Europe differ fundamentally and are a main source of national identity.⁵ Nonetheless the influence of the EU in these fields is steadily growing. From 1995 on the European Union pushed for means of integrating the vastly different educational frameworks of its member states. While the currently most advanced part of this development, the 1999 initiated Bologna Process, led to factual uniformization of parts of the tertiary education sector, the picture is much more heterogeneous considering schools, vocational training and learning in later life.

The outcomes of the numerous initiatives launched during the past 10 years by the European Commission are uncertain, but one can conclude that a profound unification of education among the European member states is the most unlikely result. To this date national frameworks have proven to be extremely rigid,⁶ as the social partners, especially the Trade Unions, actively obstruct fundamental changes to local educational standards, because these are deeply interwoven with the definition of professions, which in turn are the bases of wage agreements. Currently a true European comparability of skills and competencies within professions threatens the Tariff-autonomy and therefore the power of Trade Unions and business alliances alike. Consequently most of the European Union's initiatives in the field of education either directly fail or are brought down to the lowest common denominator.

In the realm of social policy the European Commission shifted recently to an approach that tries to establish uniformity within diversity. The prime instrument in achieving this is the so called 'Open Method of Coordination' (OMC) formally initiated by the EU during the Lisbon Summit 2000. OMC is an implementation of a 'participative management by objectives' approach on the European level. Without going into detail—which remains to be done in a future article—the OMC basically is a process whereby the European Commission develops certain objectives and a corresponding timeframe in a specific area of (social) policy, which then become the basis for contracts with the member states.⁷ By signing the contract, the particular member state agrees on achieving the contracted goals within the specified timeframe—for example reducing youth joblessness by 5% in two years. The means by which this goal is achieved usually remain free to the member state. In the second step the EU can evaluate and benchmark the performance of the member states. OMC ideally should lead to a competition for the most efficient framework of social policy between the member states, although the factual impact and importance of the systems remains contended.

Lifelong Learning is a particular prominent discourse within the attempts to change and connect the educational frameworks in Europe. Although not yet part

of an OMC process, lifelong learning plays a very similar role in the educational reforms:

Lifelong learning is an overarching strategy of European co-operation in education and training policies and for the individual. The lifelong learning approach is an essential policy strategy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion, employment and for individual fulfillment. (European Commission, 2002, p. 4)

The aim is not to directly change the national approaches to education, as in the Bologna process, but to find ways to compare and evaluate the different systems on the European metalevel. It was also the Lisbon Summit where the European Commission published its outlines on the future of education in Europe in the 'Lisbon Memorandum on Lifelong Learning' (European Commission, 2000; see also Bretschneider, 2004). Three years later the European Commission declared lifelong learning as a major strategic asset in making the European Union 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economic market of the world' (Commission of the European Union, 2003, p. 3) by 2010. In the same year the Education and Culture Directorate-General of the EU Committee established the Regional Networks for Lifelong Learning Initiative (R3L) stating that:

... LLL is not seen in a holistic and strategic way, and there is not a fundamental understanding of how LLL is important for the overall regional development. The main objective of this project is therefore through inter regional co-operation and exchange of experiences, to develop policy recommendations, which will be supported by a number of good practice examples, showing examples of working methods and tools. (Commission of the European Union, 2003, p. 2)

It can be concluded that the European Union, faced with the problem of finding means of modernization and integration for the vastly different educational systems of its member states, the rapidly changing market demands on the skill sets of human-capital and concurrently the problem of maintaining the employability of its ageing populations over their whole lifespan, expresses the political will to utilize lifelong learning in order to overcome these challenges.

The New Learning Field: Informal Learning

Humanistic ideas of a free and holistic human development stemming partly from educational discourses of the 1960s and 1970s are an important contributor to the lifelong learning debate. Not solely acquiring and extending theoretical knowledge was here believed to be the primary purpose of learning and education but 'to develop one's own character, a character, that becomes reality as a result of growing experience' (Lengrand, 1972, p. 59). The scientific and technical revolution—so Edgar Faure in the first official document on modern lifelong learning, the UNESCO-report *Learning to Be—The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* has revealed the deficiency of some common training methods and made clear the strength

of others: 'they have enhanced the functions of autodidactic practice and education and raised the value of active and attentive learning attitudes (Faure *et al.*, 1973, p. 41). Active learning focuses on everyday life—the work place as well as sports, home or hobbies—viewing it as an at least equally, if not more important educational setting than organized, institutionalized contexts. Respectively Faure *et al.* criticized the habit of equalizing school and education (see Faure *et al.*, 1972, pp. 140–141). And accordingly Paul Lengrand demands in his influential work on permanent education that special attention should be paid to experiential learning, or learning from experience, outside of schools (Lengrand, 1972).

In an attempt to differentiate the various contexts of learning, UNESCO invented during the early 1970s a triad of terms that is widely used until today: formal, non-formal⁸ and informal education (see Gerlach, 2000, p. 53; Cropely, 1978, p. 13). Originally coined to signify knowledge acquirement in adult education, these terms eventually became applied to the whole lifespan and all educational phases, while likewise encompassing learning and not only referring to the narrower concept of education.

Generally non- and informal learning are declared as pristine modes of learning. Implicitly almost all authors share the assumption that the wish to obtain knowledge is basically inherent to (wo)man,⁹ but either is being ignored or ruined by current education (see as an example of such a critique Garrick, 1998): there are the 'provinces' of informal learning that need to be colonized (see Kirchhöfer, 2003, p. 220), while the Lisbon Memorandum on Lifelong Learning states: 'Informal contexts offer a vast reservoir of learning possibilities and could be an important source of innovations in the field of teaching and learning methods' (Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 10), the German Federal Ministry of Education speaks of a 'neglected basic form of human learning' (Dohmen, 2001) and UNESCO discovered: 'Learning: The Treasure Within' (Delors, 1996).

Nonetheless it has to be noted that there is no homogeneous use of the terms formal, non-formal, informal. Currently common usages encompass the differentiation of degrees of the formalization and institutionalization of training—this point will be discussed below—and the question to which extent learning occurs incidentally or even unintentionally. Within the institutional context of the EU informal learning has been defined in the CEDEFOP¹⁰-Glossary as follows:

Informal learning is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can to a certain degree be understood as accidental learning. It is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time and/or learning support. Typically it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases, it is non-intentional. (or 'incidental'/random)¹¹

This disengagement of learning from organized contexts is a major factor of the so-called maximalistic view of lifelong learning. Minimalistic and maximalistic approaches have been distinguished in the discussion since early on (see Hager, 2001, p. 79; Cropely, 1979, p. 105). The minimalistic view concentrates on voluntary accessible

adult education facilities and mainly demands sufficient funding for it. This is the focus of the early OECD's concept on 'recurrent education' that frequently is cited as a precursor of lifelong learning (OECD, 1973). The maximalistic view on the other hand stresses the importance of learning outside of classical educational contexts and premises, consequently concluding that learning not only has to become lifelong but also lifewide (e.g. Cropley, 1980, p. 4, see also National Agency for Education, 2000). The two dimensions—expansion over the lifespan and extension to leisure and private spare time activities—combine to form a principal boundlessness of learning in time and space. In the maximalistic approach a process of outsourcing of learning from the educational system, into the lives of the individuals takes place. Learning expands over the adult life course and across all life spheres, demanding it as a way of life.

The activities of the European Union rank among the maximalistic views, as for example expressed in the Commission Paper on lifelong learning dating to the year 2000: 'The continuum of lifelong learning puts the non-formal and informal learning in perspective' (Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 10), moreover the Commission stresses, that the importance of non-formal learning is generally being underrated (*ibid.*).

The maximalistic view with its encouragement of non-formal and in-formal learning conjures a universality of learning opportunities and defines the new field in which learning takes place. The formation of this field, literally a totalization of learning, is the first important change that the politics of lifelong learning desire to achieve.

It is necessary to stress that this is not a perversion of the humanistic roots of lifelong learning by Eurocrats, but a development that is consistent with the original demands. Paul Lengrand's early and influential book, which played a major role in the creation of the debate, bears the name *Permanent Education* (1972), and six years later Arthur Cropley postulates in his book *Lifelong Education and the Training of Teachers* a 'totality of learning' (Cropley, 1978, p. 13).

Within this totality, individuals and not institutions seemingly become the centerpiece of learning, but totalization means also that every actor is potentially a learner regardless of being an individual, a group, an organization or an institution.¹² Moreover everything, including the actors in the field, becomes simultaneously potential learning content. Individuals become entities of the educational systems, multiplying it a thousand fold, each unit becoming a representative of education as a whole. The term 'System competency of the individual' (Kriz, 2000; in Höhne, 2003, p. 258) hints at this context. System competency means that the individual can translate its condition according to external demand, taking responsibility for the performance of the organizational context in which the individual acts. Conflicts should ideally reside within the individual and not become a disadvantage for the organizations (see *ibid.*). The relationship between the 'modernized' learners can be understood along the notion of 'distributed expertise' (Reinmann-Rothmeier & Mandl, 2000, p. 35) as a complementary one. Education as an increasingly coherent structure, where each participant is dependent on the other and only gains significance within the relation to others, was already the dream of Paul Lengrand (see Lengrand, 1972, p. 71). The structure sought here is integrative, a self-reflective technique of self-

performance ideally centered in the individual. It seeks to make learning independent from setting, from personal and financial effort. Informal learning can take place regardless of circumstances: 'Every spot can be a learning spot' (Erpenbeck, 2003, p. 28). Especially media are increasingly becoming not only an instrument of transferring knowledge but becoming a space for learning itself (*ibid.* p. 31).

Some authors called the changes that '*éducation permanente*' and 'lifelong learning' intends, a Copernican revolution of the educational system (see Hausmann in Lengrand, 1972, p. 14). Considering that it pretends a reversal in the relation of the learner and educational institution this may be all too true. The promise expressed in the omnipresent lifelong learning slogan 'learner in the center' is to make the institutions subordinate to the learner and let them act merely as supporting units, while teaching transforms to counseling, mediating and mentoring (see Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 17).

The diffusion of the labor market and education is one prominent example of such a totalization. It is no surprise that research on non-formal and informal learning predominantly was and still is conducted in human labor relations (see Hager, 2001, p. 80); the pioneering studies by Victoria Marsick and Karen Watkins were conducted on training-seminars for managers in Sweden (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Some authors speak euphorically of a 'renaissance of learning at work' (Dehnbostel, 2002, p. 37) and that work itself would be finally accredited as a medium of teaching and education (see *ibid.*). The borders of (vocational) training and professional life are vanishing alongside the borders between work and recreation. A boundlessness of learning that is an integral part to the flexibilization of work in post-Fordist organizations (see Kirchhöfer, 2000 and Voß, 1998), where lifelong learning takes the place of lifelong employment. Equally learning becomes mandatory in periods of unemployment, in the sense of using all opportunities for finding out how to manage oneself in changing living and working conditions. The management of the formation of one's own self, and one's performance in the labor-market are concurrent processes that are labeled as learning.

To our understanding non-formal and informal learning essentially disembogues in a rearrangement of the learning field. While the classical field of learning was formed by closed institutions, that were to be attended in the first quarter or third of the lifespan, lifelong learning declares any place and any time as suitable for learning. A development exactly fitting the predictions that Gilles Deleuze made in his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' (1990). With the advent of what Deleuze called 'Control Societies' institutional frameworks of enclosures and molds that Foucault had described as the fundamentals of discipline would come to an end. Schools were one prominent example of the enclosing institutions of 'disciplinary societies', whose importance would vanish in favor of 'perpetual training' (Deleuze, 1990). Non-formal and informal learning are the stratagems that set this breaking of molds into place.

The New Learner: Techniques of Self-Performance

The rearrangement of the field of learning is at the same time a rearrangement of the conception of the learners. It is a reorganization of the role of the subject in

the field of education, shifting from conceptualizing the learner as a passive container that is exposed to education to promoting an active individual that seeks to augment its attributes. At the center of attention is no longer the curriculum that learners have to master but their abilities to organize themselves and to perceive and use their circumstances as learning opportunities. It is within the individual that the newfound diversity of learning contexts unites: in its subjective learning ability, which simultaneously is its unique personality. A personality that now is faced with the task to become both staging area and director of acquiring knowledge—an arrangement, where learner and educator merge into the same person.

Mandate and authority for education shall no longer be exclusively bound to institutions and their agents, but partly shift to the learning individual. ‘Responsibilisation’ (Peters, 2001, p. 59) of the self for educational careers and outcomes ought to take place. Becoming educated is more at the disposal of the individual, a development that is two edged, providing simultaneously more freedom and more risks. More freedom since more control on learning circumstances are in the hands of the individual; more risk since the responsibility for failures in learning shifts from the institutions to the learners. Lifelong learning means self-determination and self-responsibility in educational tasks, including the financial aspects, since the learner has to ‘co-finance his own learning’ (Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 15).

But such an individual is currently an idealistic conception, strikingly similar to the modes of subjectivation described in the governmentality literature. The lifelong learning discourse identifies a broad need to teach individuals to become autonomous learners: ‘The most important change, that should be reached by this integrative educational policy approach of lifelong learning is a change of the human attitude towards learning’, writes Gunther Dohmen (Dohmen, 1996; in Gerlach, 2000, p. 179). And Christiane Gerlach reassures us that lifelong learning policies face the crucial task of their ‘internalization into the individual human being’ (Gerlach, 2000, p. 181). A rich draft of this ‘internalized educational aspiration’ (ibid., p. 189) is given by Kirchhöfer: ‘In the context of the new learning concepts the individual is not only responsible for the content, the level and the structures of his education, ... but also has to take possession of the process of acquiring and reproducing education via self-organization. It appoints the times, the measures, the media, the duration and is constructing its own learning arrangement. It becomes the “entrepreneur” of its education, managing its own self and herewith also the formation of itself’ (Kirchhöfer, 2003, p. 222). It is the recognition and subsequent fostering of these ‘subjective’ factors of learning that lifelong learning marks as its center and that is praised as progressive in opposition to older educational strategies. These are accused of oppressing the wealth of the individual strategies, now merely perceived as critical resources of individuals (see Tuschling, 2004).

Individuals are neither born with such self-technologies, nor are the existing populations already equipped with them. Lifelong learning seeks to provide tools to individuals that make them able to act in the cited manner. While knowledge remains important to individuals, ‘learning to learn’, to reorient and even to forget, when new circumstances demand it, are the challenges that a lifelong learner has

to master. Again Deleuze has very early outlined the *gestalt* of this arrangement, 'limitless postponements' (Deleuze, 1990) where not levels of acquired knowledge are the obtainable goal, but 'perpetual training' (ibid.) takes place. The frequent use of the future tense in lifelong learning concepts reveals the ideal of a technique of permanent self-performance: Self-responsible individuals learn to generate ever suitable self-concepts on the basis of what they judge as an existing demand. The ability to orientate oneself in such a manner is condensed in the second core concept of lifelong learning, the so-called 'social competencies' and 'key qualifications' (Wellhöfer, 2004; Beck, 2001): terms that point to 'basic self-organizational dispositions' (Erpenbeck & Heyse, 1999) of being able to interpret one's own circumstances, self-directed in a way that leads to learning.

Institutional Premises of Lifelong Learning

Although lifelong learning requires a re-evaluation of educational institutions, where a need for institutional measures to foster the 'key-competencies' is generally expressed, existing educational settings are criticized as having neither enough awareness nor as providing suitable instruments for a systematic approach to generate key-competencies among individuals. Some authors seek to demonstrate the historical roots of applicable concepts. Ancestors are identified in both Ancient Greek and medieval times, respectively in the works of Plato and Augustinus (see Aspin *et al.*, 2001, p. 17). Their forgotten insights on learning are finally reasserted in lifelong learning, is the tenor here. Lengrand declares the necessity to create environments that allow the learning individual to easily relate 'concrete' and 'abstract', to fuse theoretical knowledge and individual action (see Lengrand, 1972, p. 66). Education should be conducted as closely as possible to everyday situations, to labor practices and the like, in order to let people develop their own modes of action. The currently favored models are complex, multidimensional problem-solving situations experienced in the IT-Sector. These non-formal and informal learning settings are perceived as the primary environments in which people currently acquire and use their key-competencies—work life in general is thought to be the most important contributor; a fact that is reflected in recent EU's programs that seek to assist the obtainment of key-competencies in informal learning contexts (see Overwien, 2002, p. 13).¹³

Such a reliance on settings distant from educational establishments could be understood as a campaign for the de-institutionalization and de-bureaucratization of education. Kirchhöfer argues along this notion, claiming that the concept of informal learning implicitly provides a critique of institutions since it is 'turning against over-directed and not self-organized learning through teaching in institutions' (Kirchhöfer, 2003, p. 220). A promise that was already prevalent thirty years earlier in the beginnings of the debate on lifelong learning: 'Softening the institutions' was a statement made by Faure (Faure *et al.*, 1972, p. 251). Rigidity and dominance of educational institutions were also the central points of critique brought forward by Ivan Illich in his famous book 'De-schooling Society—The concept of a democratic educational system' (Illich, 1970). But while current lifelong

learning is partly rooted in the radical reform movements of the 1960s and 1970s, there is an important difference to note. The protagonists at that time didn't just expect a modernization but a revolution through the learning society. Students' leader Rudi Dutschke demanded in 1967 in an 'Interview about the Future' that a revolutionary and free society had to transform itself to a 'learning society' (see Dutschke *et al.*, 1968, p. 169).

Lifelong learning, if successful, will not mean a decomposition of schools, which will remain important contributors for primary education, e.g. basic literacy, numeracy and fact-based knowledge, but merely intends to invent new techniques of generating and using knowledge for the individual. Lifelong Learning intends no disorganization or a dismantling of national educational systems; instead a flexibilization of the given frameworks of education is sought after, not least in order to minimize the 'time-lag' between education and socio-economic developments (see Kraus, 2001, p. 117). The purpose is not to deinstitutionalize but rather to inter-institutionalize learning. Two of the three components of inter-institutionalization were already described: 1. changing the field of learning in order to totalize learning to all imaginable situations; 2. initiating a change in the self-performance of individuals so that they act as learners in all imaginable situations. With these two components the learning individual is configured as an inter-institutional entity traversing situations and institutions, obliged to strategically show knowledge and skills. Especially non-formal and informal learning have to be presented as accessible and manageable. This is the task of the third component of inter-institutionalization: the techniques that allow both individuals and institutions to inscribe, store, process and transfer actions as learning. The main activities of the European Union in this field are centered on these techniques. It is within them that lifelong learning is getting a density and becomes most palpable.

Administering Lifelong Learning

The inherent desire of lifelong learning to organize non-formal and informal learning raises an important paradox. As the term itself expresses, informal learning can only be defined in difference to organized, institutionalized schooling. The elements that lifelong learning aims to integrate, are differentiated along the 'Intensity of their Institutionalization' (Gerlach, 2000, p. 53; see also Erpenbeck, 2003, p. 29 and Overwien, 2002, p. 17). They are not characterized by their distinct qualities but mainly by their degree of formalization. If the elements of knowledge acquisition that are labeled as informal are to become commonly acknowledgeable, even certified, as intended by the EU (see Commission of the European Union, 2000, p. 9), a formalization of the alleged informal has to take place. The whole development of lifelong learning can be in fact described as a 'formalization of non-formal education and non formalization of formal education' (Straka, *in press*). With the latter being a result of the increased value of unconventional learning techniques in institutionalized education, where individual approaches are fostered in order to build self-assurance and key-competencies. Either formalization of the informal or informalization of the formal, both have in common that they need new modes of

inscribing the state of individuals—modes of inscription that change for both individuals and institutions alike. A twofold process emerges, individuals are destined to find new ways to represent their knowledge and skills, ever uncertain whether they are or will be recognized as such, while institutions seek to build a strategic bureaucracy able to foster, interface and process ever changing demands on individual skills.

The development in the European Union is complex partly due to reliance on competition in concept creation between member states and other actors. No common solution has yet been established; instead research on statistical tools, assessment methods and qualification schemes is underway in numerous pilot projects, as well as in the analysis of the educational frameworks of the different member states. The consolidation of the efforts into a European framework for transparency of qualifications and competences is currently projected for the year 2010 (ENSR, 2003, p. 17). Formally acquired education increasingly is recognizable among all EU member states, whereas the development of measures that may lead to the recognition of informal and non-formally acquired knowledge are a main focus of the EU since the year 2000: 'Gradually, validation of non-formal and informal learning is becoming a key aspect of lifelong learning policies' (Colardyn & Bjornavold, 2004, p. 69). Here the creation of indicators that allow statistical assessment of non-formal and informal learning is one of the most controversial topics (see Straka, in press; Eurostat, 2001; and Hoerner, 2002, p. 67f.). Since the EU follows the maximalistic approach to lifelong learning, methods that reach well beyond the limits of the educational system are a necessity. Besides attempts to mine available statistics¹⁴ for fitting data, a broad consensus exists that the individual level needs to be assessed more profoundly. The Statistical Office of European Communities 'Eurostat' has established a 'Task Force on Measuring Lifelong Learning' (TFMLLL) which stated in its recommendations issued in 2001:

The best source of information on LLL seems to be the individual (rather than education/training providers). ... (European Commission, 2002, p. 15).

As a first measure the quarterly conducted European Labor Force Survey¹⁵ was extended with accordant 'ad hoc modules' for lifelong learning in 2003 and 2004.¹⁶ The same holds true for the forthcoming European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which will include indicators tailored specially to assess lifelong learning, asking participants to identify themselves their abilities. For a more comprehensive and in-depth investigation on lifelong learning a multiyear and pan-European 'European Adult Learning Survey' (EU-AES) is to be conducted by Eurostat and national statistical offices from 2005 on. The EU-AES will have a crucial role in building the dataset and formulation of future recommendations for lifelong learning policy in Europe and will ask participants to self-report skills and knowledge. A 2001 proposal for the EU-AES issued by Eurostat clearly expresses the necessity for a totalizing approach in data collection for lifelong learning:

This notion of (lifelong) learning also encompasses *the entire population* independent of age and independent of their labor market status. It includes

in principle all kinds of activities ranging from early childhood education to leisure education for retired persons. The terms 'knowledge, skills and competence' are not limited to work related outcomes of education and learning but also to societal and personal outcomes (...). There is a general agreement that system based information is not enough in a knowledge economy and society. The data we get from educational institutions refer only to participants and focus on formal (or else 'regular') learning. Today we need information also on *non participants*, that is potential learners. Also for those who learn we want to know to what extent they are involved in *non-formal education and informal learning*. If people do not participate we need to know why, so as to increase their participation in learning and thus their potential to improve their condition in the knowledge society. The learning environment is constantly changing. As it was mentioned above we need to focus on the learner. System-based data should be complemented/enriched by learner-centered data (...). (Eurostat, 2001, pp. 8–9, emphasis in original)

Besides the outspoken intention to use the knowledge generated here in order to 'increase' the 'participation' of potential learners for supposedly their own good, we want to stress that the statistical assessment of lifelong learning: 1. calls for a inclusion of the individual level in an unprecedented amount, 2. relies highly on the active input by self-reporting of the individuals.

This also holds true for a parallel development of new accreditation-regimes that allow the reorganization of skills acquired outside of educational settings. Several member states already have working programs that are frequently referred to as viable examples. In France individuals can obtain the 'Bilan de Competences' and the 'Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle', state recognized documents showing skills and achievements of individuals. Great Britain, lacking a comprehensive vocational training system, has established a highly successful program called 'Accreditation of Prior Learning' (APL) since the early 1990s. Switzerland, although not a member of the EU, has the 'Schweizer Qualifikationshandbuch' (CH-Q¹⁷), that alongside the French example is discussed as an outstanding solution. All three systems combine an assessment-center-like exam of acquired knowledge with tools for the self-reporting of skills. The Swiss CH-Q provides the most comprehensive instruments in this respect, allowing the individual to conduct a lifetime collection of data and documents in a partly pre-structured file.

The European Union itself has established the 'Europass'¹⁸ program in 1999, originally aiming for a pan-European accreditation instrument for job-based trainings and internships. Acceptance and value of the document in commerce and public is currently comparably low. Nonetheless, for the following years the European Union has pursued the goal of making the Europass the user-side part of a 'single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences'. The corresponding proposal¹⁹ is close to becoming official and determines the inclusion of vocational certificates, higher education diplomas and certificates of transnational mobility, internship records, as well as the European CV²⁰ and the European

Language Portfolio (ELP)²¹ into the new Europass. The latter two are structured self-assessment tools for writing Curriculum Vitae and document language skills that initially were developed by separate European institutions. The European CV contains an elaborate self-description of personal skills, ranging from social skills, which include 'living and working with other people (...) for example culture and sports, multicultural environments' (ibid., p. 27), to organizational skills acquired 'at work, in voluntary work (...) and at home etc.' (ibid.), to artistic skills and competences: 'music, writing, design etc.' (ibid.) and asks the applicant to 'describe these competencies and indicate where they were acquired' (ibid.).

The Diploma Supplement of the Europass will include the ECTS credit scheme established with the Bologna process, positioning it to become a key instrument in the pan-European mobility between universities. The Europass framework is also open to the voluntary inclusion of further documents by member states, such as profession specific 'skill-passports' (ibid., p. 7). Finally the Europass is projected to be available in an electronic form (ibid., p. 39), storing all data digitally, eventually allowing access and editing through the Internet. The implementation of the Europass as a Smart Card, tailored to interact with other Electronic Government processes is also being discussed. Here a pan-European interoperability is explicitly required:

All Europass documents issued by authorized bodies are completed in electronic form and made available for retrieval—by their holders only²²—throughout Europe. (...) The parts of the Europass information system managed at national level in different countries should be fully interoperable with each other and with the parts managed at European level. (ibid.)

Still, this part of the proposal merely outlines the prospects of such a system, while carefully avoiding touching on the delicate problems of national sovereignty concerning the management of individual data and educational policy. But it contains far-reaching consequences with hindsight to the development of a human resource management on the European level, because within this data, which are generated separately from statistical panels, comparability and therefore the possibility of evaluation and benchmarking is given. Within these datasets, fed by individuals in their own interests, a representation of a European population could arise, that is of strategic value for the EU policy makers. It is this knowledge of its people that is to become an asset for the EU, making 'government at a distance' possible. With this knowledge standards can be established that will influence learning opportunities and outcomes for the European population, despite vastly different settings throughout the EU in which its learning takes place.

It nevertheless has to be noted, that with hindsight to our assessment of earlier attempts of the EU to unify the different learning cultures of its member states given in the introduction of this text, the obstacles to success of this system are very high. Europass is the current political attempt to overcome these obstacles.

Our account of developing instruments of knowledge-generation in respect to lifelong learning in the European Union is far from exhaustive, but we intend to show that the individual is assigned a critical role in the whole process. In preceding educational organizations knowledge about the individual was predominantly

generated outside and handled separately from the individual. The arrangement of lifelong learning in contrast seeks to animate the individuals to take a crucial part in the generation of knowledge of themselves. It furthermore builds conditions in which the individuals need to struggle to present their knowledge of themselves, making visible their capabilities. For the individuals the core challenge of lifelong learning is the internalization of the 'knowledge of the individual' into themselves, while simultaneously they need to tactically externalize it in order to make it recognizable. Reorienting oneself as a learner in almost every conceivable situation is not sufficient; the self performance of the new learner includes making one's efforts visible and recognizable. This translates into a new regime of documentation of oneself. While in the disciplines described by Foucault the individual was the object of documentary power exercised by institutions like the school (Foucault, 1977, p. 188), in lifelong learning the individual becomes the subject of its own documentation. One has to format one's situation in a form that is presentable. Official certificates of acquired knowledge need to be accompanied by comprehensive accounts of individual achievements. Portfolios of accumulated skills have to be generated. A curriculum vitae is a basic part of such a self-representation, while on a more sophisticated level individual websites and web logs enable individuals to deliver near real-time assessments of individual situation awareness and judgment. Not merely institutions alone but the individuals are tasked to organize their situation, rendering it to an analytical space (Foucault, 1977, p. 143) by themselves, documenting that they are able to eliminate confusion (Foucault, 1977, p. 145). In conclusion this means that the individuals themselves are increasingly responsible for formalizing learning, especially when it occurred 'incidentally' or 'accidentally' or outside of defined institutional premises. The subject itself has to formalize the non-formal and informal by self-reporting skills and by self-describing its own condition. Self-assessment and concurrent self-profiling is the relationship one ought to have to oneself in a society of lifelong learning. Furthermore a limitless effort of translation arises, because with each new set of requirements encountered, one is obliged to name and communicate individual capacities accordingly. Factual knowledge and the competence to coin one's own condition as skills might become equally important, since only knowledge and skills made visible and communicable can be turned into an advantage. While 'in discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen' (Foucault, 1977, p. 187), in this arrangement the individuals are urged to develop the wish to be seen. It is no longer the architecture of the enclosing institutions which exposes the individual to the gaze of power as described by Foucault (*ibid.*); the individual tries to attract the gaze in an open field of competitors, where everybody simultaneously tries to present him/her self as ideal for a given task. The first step in this development is that the individuals themselves contribute the critical data necessary to erect the 'regulated transparency' (Drummond, 2003, p. 59) that allows control in such systems. Inscribing oneself is the first sign of taking responsibility and the necessary precondition for later accountability. In their own interest, to gain recognition and advantages, the individuals have to become secretaries of their own being, diligently having to document their life-course. In the same time they are burdened with the decision to balance what to cover and what not, never sure what turns out to be a

disadvantage and what not. In lifelong learning the individual becomes simultaneously subject and object alike of his/her learning documentation. These documents are a crucial part of the self-performance of lifelong learners, as they give evidence of the synthesizing abilities of the individual, ideally representing its learning abilities and unique personality in an accessible format.

This change in the mode of inscription of individuality is part of the bigger shift in responsibility from institutions to the individuals. While in the age of education the institutions had responsibility for providing circumstances for the learning of the individuals, in the age of lifelong learning the individuals increasingly have to present their circumstances as learning environments. The institutions do not primarily produce education anymore *ad loco*, they rather certify that learning has or has not taken place, regardless of the position in time and space that the individual occupied. The lifelong learning literature (see Bjornavold, 2000, p. 58) discusses this as the shift from input oriented to output- and efficiency oriented education.

While primary education is and will still be state provided—although to what extent may differ between nations—state subsidized secondary and tertiary education is comparably less laden with thoroughly pre-defined learning goals and forms—which at least were part of the right to be educated—but with assessments that oblige individuals to communicate the own status as learning. The final step of this process would be to detach the interfaces for documenting the own ‘progress’ from physical institutions that individuals have to visit, to interfaces that travel with the individuals and allow connection anytime, anywhere. The new field of learning and the individual as a learner as we described above become both reality and manageable with such a system. To designate events as learning anywhere and anytime presupposes tools at the disposal of the individual that allow him/her to label them as such. The closer in space and time that methods of inscription and storage are to the individual, the more likely is the chance that such a process of designation happens. The Europass proposals for a framework for transparency of qualifications and competences already contain the basic elements for such a system.

Conclusions

It might be too early to speak about an age of lifelong learning in contrast to an age of education, whose end we probably witness currently. However, our descriptions of the endeavors underway in the European Union were intended to outline critical features of the ongoing process of implementing lifelong learning. On the one hand we wanted to stress that this is a field where the EU increasingly gains leverage over its diverse people, having both instruments that affect whole populations, as well as establishing circuits at the individual level. On the other hand we wanted to show that within the arsenal of social technologies currently conceived by nation-states, lifelong learning promises to become one of the most universal tools. While other transitions in the life course where individuals link up to state entities, like joblessness or sickness, are comparatively temporal conditions, lifelong learning encompasses by definition the whole life. Furthermore learning is not a condition that has to be overcome; it is an activity that has to be conducted endlessly. The

individual has to prepare for this: 'Learning to learn' is both an offer and an order to develop motivation and ability to do so. Among the 'strategies where the state enables rather than provides' (Edwards, 2004, p. 69) this is where the 'enabling' is practiced, starting in the kindergarten, overarching the whole life and extending—at least in the vision of some officials of the EU—well into retirement. While it seeks partially to overcome school, lifelong learning aims at rendering nothing less than the whole society into an omnipresent classroom where one is given the task to develop the 'responsibilized' self suitable for modern welfare regimes.

Notes

1. Overviews are given in *The Foucault Effect, Studies in Governmentality* edited by Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, as well as by Thomas Lemke in *Eine Kritik der politischen Vernunft, Foucaults Analyse der modernen Gouvernementalität*.
2. Between 1977 and 1979 Foucault's lectures were centered on the notion of governmentality. Parts of these lectures were gradually published during the 1990s (see e.g. Burchell, 1991) and have been completely available in French and German since 2004 (Foucault, 2004).
3. The theoretical framework built by Foucault originally for analyzing the state has been applied to other organizational entities like businesses as well, see for example Bröckling, 2000.
4. HTML-Document can be accessed here: http://europa.eu.int/european_council/conclusions/index_en.htm
5. For an introduction see the book by Gosta Esping Andersen *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1989).
6. This is also, but exclusively, the effect of the political compromise among the founders of the European Communities. Article 150 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) explicitly states that the responsibility for content and organization of vocational training lies with the member states. See: <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/amsterdam.html#0145010077>
7. OMC Processes have been initiated for social insurance, health care and labor market regulation.
8. The Term 'non-formal-education' was already coined in 1947 by the UNESCO in a report on education in the third-world: 'Fundamental Education: Common Ground for All People'.
9. The influential German neuroscientist Gerhard Roth even speaks of a 'natural will to learn' (*Weser Kurier* 14 September 2004).
10. The CEDEFOP is the European Center for the development of vocational training, a major think-tank involved in the development of European strategies on education. See: <http://www.cedefop.eu.int>
11. Further explanations of informal learning, especially concerning the relation of informal learning to—in the sense of being an umbrella term—experiential learning, everyday learning, implicit learning etc. can be found in Günther Dohmen's extensive work (2001).
12. We will spare the discourse on learning organizations here but would like to point out that there are similarities to the discourse of lifelong learning that deserve more attention. Both share a conception of ever-learning entities in an open field.
13. Straka, G. A. (in press) *Informal Learning, Conceptual Outline, Strategic Contexts: The demanding search for the lieu, direction and results of informal learning*.
14. For example to investigate the European Time Use Survey (TUS) in order to see how much time is dedicated to activities that can be described as education and learning.

15. See: Commission Regulation (EC) No 1313/2002
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/l_192/l_19220020720en00160021.pdf
16. See: Commission Regulation (EC) No 1313/2002
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/l_192/l_19220020720en00160021.pdf
17. See: <http://www.ch-q.ch/>
18. The Europass was initially outlined under the name 'Personal Skills Card' in the 1995 Whitebook by the European Commission called 'Lehren und Lernen—auf dem Weg zur kognitiven Gesellschaft'. The current Europass is administered by the member states, the German version can be accessed under: <http://www.europass-berufsbildung.de>
19. Proposal for a Decision of the European parliament and of the council on a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass): <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2003/com2003_0796en01.pdf>
20. The European CV can be found here: <Http://www.cedefop.eu.int/transparency/cv.asp>
21. See: [http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/...&L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/introduction.html](http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/...&L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/introduction.html)
22. The clause 'by their holders only' hints at a complex problem underlying the whole effort of E-Government: the problem of authentication within open electronic networks like the Internet. Authentication means that a person can undeniably prove its legal identity and therefore the right to access, alter or transfer a certain document, e.g. certain data. While in a real-world environment this can be achieved by personal signature, legal proof of identity within the digital domain is a non-trivial task involving major juridical and technical challenges. Since proof of identity is a necessary prerequisite for many administrative as well as commercial processes, all E-government projects center on building an authentication infrastructure for the Internet. These systems usually consist of a government-approved smartcard that enables to verify the identity of transaction-partners on the internet. See Engemann, 2003.

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