

## Governing at a distance: The issue of lifelong learning in the age of neoliberal governance

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### Abstract

*The discourse of international competitiveness bestows a legitimate authority on lifelong learning, commanding social members to become self-improvers who continuously monitor their own competence and contributions to national economic development. In this sense, self-improvement is closely tied to national prospects. This connection embodies the features of biopolitics, in that the practice of self-improvement is based on self-regulation, and its precondition is to constitute subjectivity by having teachers to acknowledge their own accountability associated with the national future. Because reflexive government or governmentality can ensure social security in rational actions, governmentality takes populations as objects and its objective, and this situation anchors the subject as the core focus of the art of governing. As the shaping of souls is able to create the enterprising subject, neoliberal governments need to apply performativity to teachers. In the regime of performance management, teachers are judged on their competence, the definition of which is rooted in their contribution to social progression. In this way, lifelong learning conveys the language of social obligation and returns, which serves to reconfigure teachers' subjectivity, self-knowledge or self-conscience. This moral framework serves as infrastructure for delivering the ideas of neoliberalism. Teachers are thus motivated to join the game of lifelong learning or continuing professional development. This phenomenon projects a tenet that the art of governing is exercised in the tacit act of governing at a distance through governing technologies, subtly telling teachers the rules of conduct or the self of the self.*

### Key words

*Governing technology, performativity, the enterprising self, self-improvement, lifelong learning, teacher professional development.*

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## Περίληψη

*Η συζήτηση για τη διεθνή ανταγωνιστικότητα προσδίδει μια νομιμοποιημένη εξουσία στη διά βίου μάθηση, επιβάλλοντας στα μέλη της κοινωνίας να αναλάβουν τη βελτίωση του εαυτού τους παρακολουθώντας συνεχώς τις δικές τους ικανότητες και τη συμβολή τους στην εθνική οικονομική ανάπτυξη. Υπό την οπτική αυτή, η αυτο-βελτίωση είναι στενά συνδεδεμένη με τις εθνικές προοπτικές. Αυτή η σύνδεση ενσωματώνει τα χαρακτηριστικά της βιοπολιτικής, καθώς η πρακτική της αυτο-βελτίωσης βασίζεται στην αυτορρύθμιση και η προϋπόθεσή της είναι να συγκροτήσει υποκειμενικότητα, υποχρεώνοντας τους καθηγητές να αναγνωρίζουν ότι η δική τους απόδοση λόγου σχετίζεται με το εθνικό μέλλον. Επειδή η αντανακλαστική κυβέρνηση ή το έθος της διακυβέρνησης (κυβερνησιμότητα) μπορούν να εξασφαλίσουν την κοινωνική ασφάλεια σε ορθολογικές ενέργειες, η κυβερνησιμότητα εκλαμβάνει τους πληθυσμούς ως αντικείμενα και στόχο της και αυτή η κατάσταση προβάλει το θέμα ως το επίκεντρο της τέχνης της διακυβέρνησης. Δεδομένου ότι η διαμόρφωση των ψυχών είναι σε θέση να δημιουργήσει το επιχειρηματικό αντικείμενο, οι νεοφιλελεύθερες κυβερνήσεις χρειάζονται να εφαρμόσουν την επιτελεσματικότητα στους εκπαιδευτικούς. Στο καθεστώς διαχείρισης των επιδόσεων, οι εκπαιδευτικοί κρίνονται από την ικανότητά τους, ο ορισμός της οποίας έχει τις ρίζες του στη συμβολή τους στην κοινωνική πρόοδο. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο, η διά βίου μάθηση μεταφέρει τη γλώσσα της κοινωνικής υποχρέωσης και των αποδόσεων, η οποία χρησιμεύει για να επαναπροσδιορίσει την υποκειμενικότητα των εκπαιδευτικών, την αυτογνωσία ή τη συνείδηση του εαυτού τους. Αυτό το ηθικό πλαίσιο χρησιμεύει ως υποδομή για την μεταλαμπάδευση των ιδεών του νεοφιλελευθερισμού. Κατά συνέπεια, οι εκπαιδευτικοί ενθαρρύνονται να ενταχθούν στο παιχνίδι της διά βίου μάθησης ή της συνεχιζόμενης επαγγελματικής εξέλιξης. Αυτό το φαινόμενο προβάλλει ένα αξίωμα ότι η τέχνη της διακυβέρνησης ασκείται στη σιωπηρή πράξη της διοίκησης από απόσταση μέσω των τεχνολογιών διακυβέρνησης, υπογραμμίζοντας στους εκπαιδευτικούς τους κανόνες συμπεριφοράς ή και τον προσδιορισμό του εαυτού τους.*

## Λέξεις-κλειδιά

*Τεχνολογία διακυβέρνησης, επιτελεσματικότητα, ο επιχειρηματικός εαυτός, αυτο-βελτίωση, διά βίου μάθηση, επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη των εκπαιδευτικών.*

## Introduction

With globalization fusing many countries into an interlocking body, competitiveness has leveled up into the sphere of the international arena. Human capital is viewed as a gateway for ensuring international competitiveness of globalization's member countries (Chiang, 2011, 2013). In this sense, human capital is closely tied to national economic development, and this linkage transforms lifelong learning into a social discourse commanding social members to update their own abilities or competences. For Foucauldians, self-improvement can be successfully accomplished through the art of the self's intention to constitute self-knowledge or self-conscience. As subjectivity is the point of contact between self and power, creating the enterprising subject is the key mission of neoliberal government, which is telling us the rules of conduct creating the mechanism of steering at a distance (Dean, 2010). This is because schooling is able to shape people's souls (Rose, 1999) and construct docile bodies (Foucault, 1991). Therefore, the art of governing is to form subjects (Foucault, 2010) who think and act according to the instructions of neoliberalism (Popkewitz, 1994). In this way,

biopolitics takes populations as both its object and its objective. Its strategies are to identify educational crises and to sell solutions. Teacher-as-problem becomes the core theme of education policy (Thompson and Cook, 2014) and its best solution is to transform teachers into self-improvers who acknowledge their own competence is associated with social progression. Performativity plays a key role in this transformation because performance management judges individual teachers' status and value, and their contributions become associated with social returns including honor and shame (Ball, 2003). These correlations highlight how lifelong learning can be viewed as a governing technology, and this essay sets out to illustrate this connection.

### **Biopolitics and Governmentality**

Foucault (1991) argues that as thoughts direct actions, the best way of exercising social control is to rely not upon coercive force but schooling. This is because schooling exerts its influence in a natural form, depriving people's minds of their critical faculty, and rendering it difficult for them to discern the political intentions embedded within schooling. This situation facilitates ruling classes to instill certain forms of ideas into people. When they internalize such ideas or values, they become docile bodies, who strongly support the existing social structure and values. According to this tenet, the key component of this power array is to transform the public into disciplined subjects. For Foucault (1990), the issue of sexuality echoes this biopolitics. He argues that medical knowledge was invented to reshape labour workers' attitudes towards sexual activities. They eventually acknowledged a creed that sexual activities during the daytime would jeopardize their health, and this acknowledgement strengthened their commitment to work. This phenomenon indicates that medical knowledge is able to coordinate and integrate the labour force into the production mode of capitalist society. Furthermore, disciplined subjects are able to curb their instinctive impulses and to enhance their own productivity. Middle class culture ushered in recognition of a principle that sexual behaviours belonged to the aspect of personal matters, so that not making love publicly was a civilized behaviour. This shift of the locality of intercourse from public to private domains reflects a situation in which middle class culture has been successfully inscribed within labour workers' minds, creating disciplined subjects that subscribe to capitalist society.

These correlations reveal the axiom that power determines legitimate knowledge, the value of which is its ability to mold people's minds or to create disciplined subjects (Foucault, 1972). According to Foucault (1975), the development of positivism illustrates this principle. At one time, diseases were defined as a huge threat to social operation. However, when the clinic had accumulated sufficient knowledge to be able to cure or at least control diseases and thus ensure social progression, medical knowledge won social recognition. Because diseases are visible, describable and calculable, their symptoms can be precisely allocated into the language of the clinic. Such rational calculations underpin scientific grammar, so that by acquiring a predominant role in one field, positivism comes to direct our philosophy towards daily life.

If knowledge becomes increasingly important in terms of producing disciplined subjects, as Foucault (2003) suggests, the state needs to evolve its deployment of power and authority. This can be observed in the case of the French magistracy, which was created as a buffer for reducing the conflicts between the king and members of the royal family who were attempting to share power with him. Although its initial purpose was to eulogize the king, the system of magistracy gradually took over the king's power and empowered civil society, so that state sovereignty changed its presentations, no longer belonging to the king in the form of despotic absolutism but serving the common good in a social will. The case of the Norman monarchy also projects a similar picture, showing how civil society waged rebellion against the laws of the Saxon regime that repressed the voice of the people. People eventually installed social justice into the law that protected the rights of citizens, and state sovereignty is now anchored by civil society.

According to Foucault (2010), too much government based on juridical domination had stimulated a political problem since about the middle of the sixteenth century. In order to reduce this crisis, an art of governing was required, and this situation facilitated the state to install rationality into government through liberalism. Reflective government able to calculate social risks now took populations as its object, so that the core element of government was to create the subject through civil society, bridging political and economic aspects:

*... for the art of governing not to have to split into two branches of an art of governing economically and an art of governing juridically... the art of governing must be given a reference, a domain or field of reference, a new reality on which it will be exercised, and I think this new field of reference is civil society... Civil*

*society is, I believe, a concept of governmental technology, or rather, it is the correlate of a technology of government the rational measure of which must be juridically pegged to an economy understood as a process of production and exchange. (Dean, 2010: 295-6)*

This change indicates that power has evolved forms from autocratic to pastoral in order to meet the requirements of modern society for exercising the governing technology. The function of pastoral power is to shape the subjectivity of the subject through remolding knowledge of the subject or the conscience of the subject in schooling because subjectivity is the nexus between self and power. Therefore, the practice of governmentality is to form the subject's rationality, which acknowledges his or her responsibility. This correlation implies that shaping the self is the focus of the art of governmentality because the self directs the conduct and manners of itself and others in particular ways.

The above arguments address the interplay between power, knowledge, subjectivity and disciplined subjects. Rose (1999) further elaborates such biopolitics by illustrating the relation between docile bodies and self-regulation in the notion of soul or subjectivity. Although the government has greatly lost its control over social operation in modern society, governance now takes people's souls as its new object. The basic assumption is that if ideas can shape souls that engender the expected patterns of behaviour, molding the subject is the core assignment of a governing technology. In this regard, the constitution plays a key role in shaping subjectivity because it articulates personal rights, obligations and commitments. As freedom is viewed as the fundamental base in exercising the constitution, democratic ideas become a political device reshaping people's souls. More specifically, when people internalize democratic ideas, they underwrite the constitution that formulates their subjectivity. These correlations indicate that shaping people's souls creates their subjectivity and this connection is a powerful governing technology in modern society.

For Dean (2010), this governing technology highlights the transformation of governance from government to 'reflexive government' (Dean, 2010: 207) or 'governmentalization of government' (Dean, 2010: 222), which is able to calculate social risk in governmental rationality for governing the conduct of individuals, collectives and populations. More specifically, social control is no longer reliant upon the bureaucratic system but ethics in modern society, which enables the state to create governable subjects. Therefore, governance is to let people acknowledge 'rules of conduct' or

‘conduct of conduct’. In this way, they become self-regulators responsible for their own actions. Self-regulation hereby commands them to securitize their own behaviours constantly, so that government is concerned with constructing the self that extensively directs thoughts and actions. As the regime of truth defines knowledge that shapes self and identity, we tend to use our knowledge to govern others. In this sense, automatic surveillances require the practice of the art of the self, installing calculative rationality into the self. As rational minds ensure liberalized subjects, government is the engineer of biopolitics concerning the administration of life of populations or lifestyle. This situation shows that authorities have found a way of ‘governing without governing society’ via the constitution of self-responsible subjects that make ‘governing at a distance’ possible. In order to secure social security, the governing technology is to socialize the targeted population into the enterprising subject underwriting the ethics of self-improvement stimulating their active participation in a free market. Such subtle governing techniques reveal that governmentality takes population as an object and objective of government. In short, the subject of the subject is the core focus of biopolitics.

### **The Enterprising Subject**

According to the above theories, the exercise of governmentality needs to firstly identify social crises that interlink targeted populations, and to secondly sell out solutions that are able to transform them into self-regulating subjects. With respect to educational crises, some researchers argue that international institutes act like ideological apparatuses, disseminating a new global discourse to the international community that the knowledge economy has increased the influence of human capital on international competitiveness of a given country in the globalized system. More importantly, such educational crises highlight the notion of teacher-as-problem undermining international competitiveness.

Robertson (2012), for example, argues that international institutes have devoted themselves to constructing linkages between teacher quality and quality education since about 2000. What they want is to present a strong relation between teaching quality and student performance in comparative results of international tests, telling the international community that teachers have been failing in the mission of cultivating student performance, which further undermines national economic development. This

new global ideology attempts to foreground the issue of teacher-as-problem so that in order to secure quality education, teachers are the main target of education policy.

For Thompson and Cook (2014), there is a global trend in education policy towards the use of student testing as a means for auditing teacher performance. Regarding this global convergence, international institutes, particularly the OECD, that provide comparative student tests scores such as PISA, have disseminated a global discourse addressing the linkage between standardized testing, human capital and international competitiveness. The lexicon of international competitiveness reflects that the OECD is capable of creating a new logic of education reform emphasizing a principle that poor teacher quality is the core element in deteriorating quality education. Such an international discourse further provokes many countries to take teacher-as-problem as the top priority on educational reforms, as evident in the quality education policy in Australia. In a similar vein, Singh (2015) argues that the regime of statistical testing data, obtained through the evaluation system including the international testing, singles out teachers as the crucial factor impeding educational quality. In order to sustain educational quality, bad teaching needs to be terminated. When teachers are viewed as the targeted population, the government acquires a legitimate status to urge them to be self-improvers.

Ball (2003) further points out that the common strategies of these international organizations are to blur the boundary between the public sector and the private sector, so that they can apply the logic of entrepreneurialism to the public sector. Through three interrelated policy technologies, the market, managerialism and performativity, the OECD and the World Bank are able to construct neoliberalism into an epidemic that aligns public sector institutes with entrepreneurial logics. This alignment creates the infrastructure for delivering education services in commercial forms so that solutions of educational problems provided by international institutes are limited to the scope of free market logic, as evident with the idea of performance management. In addition, such global solutions have five interrelated features: 'standardisation of education, focus on core subjects, search for low risk ways of teaching, use of corporate management models and test-based accountability policies for schools' (Ball, Junemann and Santori, 2017: 2). All these indicate that while performance management is taken as the key mechanism for monitoring educational results, it derives from the logic of entrepreneurialism (Ball, 1998). Because performativity consists of a series of strategies including devolution, empowerment and accountability, it is able to shape teachers into

the enterprising subject. More specifically, as devolution creates independent units, they are empowered to decide their development plans leading to the goals. Accordingly, they are responsible for their action outcomes. Furthermore, there are competitions between them and this situation engenders honor and shame. Such social recognitions become incentives steering their attitudes towards their own performances, as exemplified by the case of higher education institutes in Ireland, the senior administrators of which were in favor of performance measurement provoking psychological perceptions such as excellence, pride and honor (Morrissey, 2013). From this perspective, performance management represents a new form of governing technology, the exercise of which is carried out by the combination of rewards and sanctions in measurable and comparative meters of performance judgement. As performances serve as the yardstick for judging someone's ability or productivity, social returns, including rewards or sanctions, denote psycho-social perceptions, such as dignity or shame. These perceptions engender a self-regulating mechanism operating individually and collectively. As a result, social members become reterritorialized subjects, determined by their contributions to organizational or social development. In this case, performativity is the rhetoric of belief and commitment, enabling the government to manipulate the care of the self, the principle that people dedicate themselves to constantly maximizing their output (Ball, 2003).

In this way, performance management not only monitors teacher performance but also constructs the enterprising subject. As the notion of performativity exercises technologies of agency and technologies of performance, it becomes a vital instrument for creating the enterprising subject in the age of neoliberalism. Dean (2010) argues that market freedom performs as the technology of agency, empowering people to be active citizens through self-improvement. Agency is able to stimulate the identity of the normalized subject and its new identity leads to self-government. As this empowerment expects them to optimize their outputs, they are accountable for their performance. Therefore, technologies of agency generate the technologies of performance. Through the combination of empowerment and responsibility, the state is able to fuse the political conduct and the moral conduct into an entity creating the enterprising subject acknowledging its own identity and responsibility.

*If the former (technologies of agency) allow the transmission of flows of information from the bottom, and the formation of more or less durable identities, agencies and wills, the latter (technologies of performance) make possible the*



*indirect regulation and surveillance of these entities. These two technologies are part of a strategy in which our moral conduct and political conduct are put into play as elements within systems of governmental purposes. (Dean, 2010: 202)*

The exercise of this combination is boosted by the scheme of devolution because it creates 'responsible autonomy' (Dean, 2010: 258) and authorized units are required to prove their abilities in performance. The logic of self-management thereby transmits risks and accountabilities from the government to these units and this situation legitimizes governmental interventions such as auditing actions. Through the combination of the technologies of agency and that of performance, the targeted population can improve themselves and step away from the status of social risks or burden. This combination opens up a huge space for the government to undertake invisible surveillance or the exercise the art of government through rules of conduct.

### **Ethics and Subjectivity**

The art of government is accomplished through the practice of social moralities, the ethical elements of which are able to shape people's souls. Through the practice of the self of the self, teachers will scrutinize their own behaviours and those of others. In this sense, 'technologies of the self lead to teachers influencing themselves and each other in more subtle ways' (Perryman, Ball, Braun and Maguire, 2017: 2). This relation implies that surveillance and its reproduction are created by participants who possess similar ethical mindsets (Perryman, Ball, Braun and Maguire, 2017). With respect to this production and reproduction, engagement is viewed as an agonist for performing the art of self-formation that carries out dual functions, inward self-recognition and outward critiques on others, the combination of which activates the mechanism of individual and collective surveillances. These correlations suggest that engagements embody ethics, reconfiguring self-formation, and the government of self leads teachers to envisage appropriate manners and conducts (Ball, 2016). As ethics is the core element in configuring self-knowledge, biopolitics is to produce the moral language through truth-telling, as proved by the findings of Perryman, Ball, Braun and Maguire (2017), suggesting a principle that shaping the self or care of self is to let teachers be committed to something or believe themselves in need of change. In this regard, morality is the key to forming the subject of the subject.

## **Performativity and Responsibility**

If ethics lead to the creation of engagement that cultivates self-knowledge and surveillance, according to governmentality, the art of self is to constitute the self of the self. Performativity plays a key role in this biopolitics because it functions as the tactic of truth-telling that transforms teachers into the enterprising self. It can be observed in schools, in which through pastoral guidance and effective and inspirational leadership, teachers become enterprising and responsible subjects who are new technicians of behavior in the context of competitive performativity. This enterprise model articulates both moral and technical meanings, valuing performative and managerial concepts of educational practice. Its goal-driven agendas and technical solutions encapsulate a neoliberal governmentality that sells a way of looking at the world, at oneself and at others. Therefore, the commercialization of education requires the transformation of people into commercial and enterprising subjects (Olmedo, Bailey and Ball, 2013). When truth-telling is able to constitute the subject of the subject, biopolitics needs to reconfigure its subjectivity, self-knowledge or self-conscience. In this regard, performativity is manifested in truth-telling, creating the enterprising subject. The regime of truth, created by power, forms the terrain of the will to know, so that subjectivity is the point of contact between self and power. In this power array, neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality need to deploy the tactic of truth-telling, enabling the government to transform the social discourse of performativity into a truth for producing the enterprising self accepting scientific notions of measurement, judgement and comparison, which underpin the value of accountability and performance management (Ball, 2016).

The accomplishment of accountability involves the strategy of public managerialism, which empowers individual units. These are expected to be efficient and responsible for their outcomes (Chiang, 2016). In order to improve efficiency, the priority is to develop corporate culture. Instead of the Taylorist approach of implementing low trust methods of employee control, public managerialism accommodates high trust approaches in order to proceed with innovative actions. Through this change, managerial responsibilities are delegated to organizational members. In order to secure this design, devolution needs to be espoused by the auditing system (Ball, 1998). Different countries normally adopt different approaches for performing the auditing system. The New

Zealand government, for example, is inclined to apply a collaborative culture to monitor teachers. In contrast, performance management is a key means of examining educational outcomes in the UK. Despite these variations, their common strategy is to interlink teacher accountability and student performance (Locke, Vulliamy, Webb and Hill, 2005).

In the regime of performativity, accountability is further boosted by psychological and social perceptions, such as honor and shame, provoked by the competition between teachers (Ball, 2004).

*Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation... that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change. The performances – of individual subjects or organizations – serve as measures of productivity or output or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within the field of judgement. (Ball, 2004: 143)*

By using the logic of competition, performativity is able to create a moral system demanding teachers be responsible for their own performance and for the performance of others. Responsible and irresponsible aspects carry out dual technologies, agency and performance, that create governable subjects who are proud of making contributions to their institutions. In this sense, morality comes to rationalize performativity and this alignment underpins the desire for initiating self-governing actions (Ball and Olmedo, 2013). Teachers are motivated to win social recognition in their productivity (Ball, 2003). Accordingly, representing ourselves becomes the gateway for acquiring social honor. Governing technologies now can be interpreted as non-interventionary intervention because performativity allows the state to use the method of steering at a distance through the combination of target setting, accountability and comparison. As authority and autonomy are delegated to individual educational units, the strategy of devolution asks schools and teachers to be responsible for their outcomes. In this regard, performativity carries out a dual form of control, liberating organizational members from bureaucratic constraints but simultaneously rebinding them in the mechanism of self-monitoring (Ball, 1998).

### **Self-improvement and Lifelong Learning**

Self-monitoring also refers to other related meanings such as self-regulation and self-improvement. The combination of commitment (identity) and accountability creates the

sense of self-regulation, inspecting the gap between someone's ability and the expected outputs. This ontological insecurity motivates teachers to become self-improvers, so that performativity is able to create the self of the self through which the linear relation between self-monitoring and self-improvement is secured.

*We become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent. (Ball, 2003: 220)*

Self-doubt implies emotional uncertainty, so that performativity leads to the sense of values 'schizophrenia'. In this case, a new subjectivity is required in order to restore teachers to a normal type. This attempt highlights the value of self-transformation that can be achieved by self-improvement (Ball, 2003).

Self-improvement embodies the sense of creativity and ownership. Ownership engenders the recognition of responsibility, so that teachers feel they are responsible for both their students' performances and their school's competitiveness. Examples of good practice are shared, to demonstrate the participants' excellent competence and contributions to school development, setting them up as models for others to emulate. The combination of ownership and emulation gestates a collective culture that in order to have better practice, it is teachers' responsibility to be engaged in continuing professional development. Now individual perceptions and collective accountability are closely tied. In this situation, good practice delivers vocabularies constituting a new form of ethics, commanding teachers to become self-crafting agents, and this relation projects the art of self-conduct, the exercise of which is completed by pastoral power. In this sense, teachers are targeted as the ethical subject. As this collective accountability interlinks with collective surveillance, care of self and truth-telling are fused into an entity, reshaping teachers into governable subjects who are willing to join the game of continuing professional development (Perryman, Ball, Braun and Maguire, 2017). This ethical project is to form the care of the self, about knowledge of the soul, and subscribes the formation of an art of teaching, so that even an outstanding teacher is in need of improvement, which can possibly be achieved through continuing professional development (Ball, 2016).

As lifelong learning can secure teacher professional development, this route may embody the discourse of self-improvement driven by performativity, as evidenced by the case of adult education in Sweden. The Swedish government claims that because employability affects national development, it is necessary for the state to apply an

assessment system to validate competences associated with employability. Like auditing in the UK, such a validation in Sweden comes to identify and target the main sectors of the population who need to update their competence. Because talented people have the right of access to reeducation, under-represented groups are not treated equally. In this talk, reeducation (lifelong learning or adult education) navigates the language of social justice. However, motivation is the key to developing their personal aptitudes, so that self-regulation is the core element in practicing social justice. In this way, by opening up their inner desires, adults will automatically become aware of and measure their own competence and seek reeducation (Andersson and Fejes, 2005). When competence is tied to national prospects, lifelong learning becomes an ethical assignment. As the Swedish government has announced, the lifelong learning program promises to update participants' abilities, so that they can be good citizens making contributions to the national future. Violating this premise means being left behind by society. In order to avoid becoming social burdens, social members need to be self-improvers (Säfström, 2005).

The above findings suggest a principle that guidance provided by the government functions as a pastoral technique that is able to shape teachers' souls, leading to the expected patterns of behaviour. Furthermore, in order to create governable or self-crafting subjects, subjectivity is a precondition of doing biopolitics. For some researchers, subjectivity is constituted by the discourse of international competitiveness promoted by international institutes. Tsatsaroni and Evans (2014), for example, attributed this situation to the OECD because it is able to bestow the meaning of international competitiveness upon lifelong learning through its Project for the International Assessment of Adult Competences that conveys the global grammar viewing lifelong learning as being able to simultaneously benefit individual social members' prospects and national economic development. By linking this with PISA, the OECD intends to provide comparable and measurable data on competence development over the life-course. When data becomes the yardstick measuring the quality of human capital, lifelong learning becomes a national mission certifying international competitiveness of a given country. This collective interest transmits an ethical framework for the government to engage in political interventions binding lifelong learning with international competitiveness. The EU Lisbon Declaration and the EU 2020 Strategy produce a similar discourse encouraging its member countries to introduce related programs that can monitor progression towards international targets.

As comparisons are able to create the mechanism of looking in and looking out, individual social members need to constantly improve their own competences (Tsatsaroni and Evans, 2014). In a similar vein, Singh (2015) argues that talk of international competitiveness foregrounds the issue of teacher-as-problem. This discourse intends to link learning to human capital development. This situation thus identifies teachers as the key problems, allowing lifelong learning to acquire the legitimacy to command teachers to participate. In the name of national prospects, self-improvement fosters the state to refabricate teachers into enterprising subjects. They become self-regulators and need to be self-improvers, who can prove their market value by means of employability, adaptability and trainability. Accordingly, the discourse of the learning society is able to reformulate teachers into enterprising subjects whose thoughts and actions correspond with the expectations of the state, so that the governing technology of the knowledge economy steers at a distance. Related studies further unveil how this governing technology is steered by neoliberalism, as evident in the issue of parental education. Gewirtz (2008) argues that learning to live and living to learn come to constitute self-governing actors, and such a principle can be observed in the issue of child development. In order to obtain commercial profit, neoliberalism needs to shape parents into economic subjects who govern themselves automatically. More specifically, commercial organizations repeatedly appeal to parental care as the best way of securing child development. Under commercial pressure, parents undertake parental education that molds the knowledge of the self, viewing education products such as toys and other education resources as the gateway for fulfilling their duty. Therefore, parents are subject to permanent surveillance created by commercial intentions, and neoliberalism is able to reeducate parents in how to think and act towards commercial activities of education through the strategy of emptying the self.

## **Conclusion**

Governing technologies in contemporary society are no longer reliant upon coercive force but instead make use of schooling, a process which is able to incubate docile bodies that strongly support the existing social structures and values. Populations thus become the objects of government as well as the objective. This principle indicates that the strategies of education reform are to identify the teacher-as-problem and then to refabricate self-knowledge or self-conscience. As the subject is the core focus of

biopolitics, subjectivity is the point of contact between power and self. In this regard, performativity functions as the device of truth-telling, constituting subjectivity. Comparable results creating competition between teachers carry out the mechanism of incentive and sanction, which conveys moral messages commanding them to be self-responsible. More importantly, managerial performativity subtly exerts the art of the self in entrepreneurial ethics, emancipating teachers from the centralized control of the state through the strategy of devolution, but simultaneously rebinding them with the collective responsibilities of organizational development using the methods of market competition and corporate culture. When self-knowledge is reshaped, the state is able to engage in non-interventionary intervention or governing without governing society through the art of the self.

Regarding this biopolitics, the discourse of international competitiveness creates a linkage between competence, employability, human capital and national economic development. In this context, the definition of a good citizen is one who is able to make contributions to social progression and be responsible for the national future. As lifelong learning articulates personal responsibilities and social recognitions, this issue can be viewed as another form of performativity exercising a governing technology through the conduct of the conduct. In the regime of performance management, teachers are motivated to improve their competence through lifelong learning in order to win social recognition. As a result, they are constantly refabricated into the enterprising subject concerning their competence and performance. In order to demonstrate their abilities, they need to be self-improvers and self-regulators. Self-improvement hereby embodies the icons of self-awareness, diligence and dedication. All these sublimate lifelong learning into a sacred status that invisibly forms the social matrix of social returns, distributing individual social members into specific locations according to their competence and contributions. This situation facilitates the government to promote the linkage between lifelong learning and the common good, and this discourse is able to create the enterprising subject. In this way, governing at a distance can be exercised with the enterprising subject constantly recognizing its own responsibility and undertaking self-improvement. It is an art of governing achieved through creating the subject of the subject.

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