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**EUROPEAN LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY AND DIVERSITY OF NATIONAL DEVICES: AN INTERPRETATION IN TERMS OF PUBLIC POLICY REGIMES**

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Over the past decade, lifelong learning (LLL) has gradually imposed itself in the European space as an essential referent in political discourse on education, skills and competences (Étienne, 2002). In France, for example, it was formally introduced into a law (albeit one addressing the wider issue of social dialogue) in May 2004.

The aim of this study is to show that the development of such a European rhetoric should not be seen as an inevitable alignment with a unique conception of repeated recourse to education and training or even a single alternative between training adapted to the demands of management on the one hand and a remedial second chance on the other. In fact, the construction of European policies, and in particular those based on the open method of co-ordination (OMC) -- in other words, the governments' voluntary choice to develop intergovernmental actions in domains of competence (Barbier, 2004) which, in principle, remain national -- is based on flexible notions and procedures which can, theoretically, be reversed after they are applied. As a result, they may include institutional constructions which were originally quite dissimilar, at national and regional level alike. Even before any possible convergence (something which cannot be decreed), what is involved is promoting a common analysis which might be applied differently in function of the initial differences. Starting out from the assumption of the strength of diversified historical legacies, such an approach recognises the overall legitimacy of multiple policy interpretations (I). This 'European hermeneutics' organises a de facto comparison between different conceptions of 'good practice'. In our view, no fewer than five public policy regimes can be identified, in function, above all, of the principles of justice informing the institutions responsible for their regulation (II).

No national situation is the pure and simple expression of one of these regimes alone. Rather, it results from a compromise between several possible regimes, even if one of these ideal types may predominate. In addition, both national reforms and European normative supervision, as flexible as it may be, help to shape developments which in certain cases give rise to new balances or compromises.

### **1. Multi-source European orientations**

To some extent, LLL thus takes up again with 'permanent education,' the dominant referent during the 1960s and 1970s. But it does so in a critical way, insofar as its construction and development reflect both continuity and disillusion engendered by this 'great founding narrative' (Radaelli, 2001). And this explains its present ambitions.

#### *The great founding narrative of permanent education*

In a report which has since become emblematic, the Council of Europe (1970) underlined 'an overall educational pattern capable of meeting the rapidly increasing and ever more diversified needs of every individual, young and adult, in the new European society', while considering that this objective is beyond the reach of the initial educational systems, in part because of the insufficient diversity of their programme offer. This report stressed the autonomy of the 'learning individual' aimed at personal fulfilment. At Unesco, the perspective was further enlarged to make permanent education, rooted in the human being's 'innate desire to learn', the ferment of a 'new humanism' (Faure, 1972). The repertory of possibilities was further diversified with the proposals of the OECD. More preoccupied with relations between education and the labour market, the Kallen-Bengtsen report (1973) stressed the importance of alternating training and employment; more generally, the semantic shift from permanent education to 'recurrent education' was symptomatic of a desire to

reconcile the creation of a second chance for everyone with the need to adapt individual skills to company needs.

In the context of the period, the state was summoned to play a major role in guaranteeing the establishment of an institutional framework consistent with these directions but the repertoire of possibilities was already diversified: insistence on the autonomy of the individual having rights over the society, breaking down separations between theoretical, technical and practical knowledge, organisation of a second chance in the spirit of popular education. This corpus gave rise to national translations with pronounced specificities. France, for example, placed the emphasis on the construction of a 'training enterprise' with the 1971 law on 'continuing vocational training within the framework of permanent education', while the Scandinavian countries focused on the second chance, necessary for creating a society with greater justice and solidarity. And this period also saw the emergence of at least three 'matrices', to borrow Dubar's term (2006): social advancement, continuing vocational training and permanent education aimed at individual emancipation.

#### *The influence of neo-liberal programmes*

Great Britain's neoliberal revolution of the 1980s gave rise to the emergence of another repertoire of continuing training action and this had all the more impact in Europe because the national schemes related to the permanent education corpus had sometimes given rise to sharp disillusion. The British White Paper entitled 'A New Training Initiative' (1980) is the cognitive referent of the 1983 Employment and Training Act, which eliminated traditional apprenticeship and introduced a new certification system, the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). Much could be said about this reform (see especially Steedman and Hawkins, 1994), but for our purposes, what should be retained is that it promoted and formalised a forceful twofold idea: setting up unique certifications for initial education and training and continuing training and focusing their skills guidelines on criteria of performance in work situations.

In 1995, the European Commission also published a White Paper, 'Teaching and Learning. Towards the Learning Society'. In the intervening decade, there had been various developments: the French situation reflected the extremely selective nature of in-company training (Dayan, Géhin and Verdier, 1986); the effectiveness of the considerable funds mobilised in Sweden to offer a 'second chance' to people with little training came up against self-selection processes (cf. Eliasson, 1996 for an overview); the success of the German dual system seemed to be on the wane, accompanied by a gradual decline in its social legitimacy (Lutz, 1992). As a result, the EU report prepared under the direction of then-European commissioner for education, Edith Cresson, was, in technical terms, strongly inspired by the British NVQs, with the aim, made possible by the new information technologies, of giving individuals access to regular, flexible validation of the skills acquired 'throughout their working life' within the framework of a European qualifications directory. The emphasis thus placed on the flexibility of the organisation of a learning society gave rise to a violent reaction against the classic diplomas of initial education and training on the grounds that these brought 'undeserved income' to those holding them, with the typical example being the title acquired upon graduation from a French-style 'Grand École'. This criticism reflected the desire to make the circulation and development of human capital on the labour market as 'liquid' as possible (d'Iribarne, 1996). Ironically, this neo-liberal turnaround (Jobert, 1994) was accomplished by a Socialist commissioner.

#### *The Lisbon strategy and the social-democratic system of reference*

In 2000, the strategy adopted by the European Council in Lisbon for the building of the 'knowledge society' made LLL a key instrument of economic competitiveness combining innovation and social cohesion. While clearly extending the line initiated in 1996 – the link between LLL and the 'information society' as set out in the White Paper – it was clearly inspired by the macro-economic policy of the Scandinavian countries aimed at combining competitiveness through innovation in products with high added value, heavy collective investments in education and continuing training and a high degree of social protection. As of 1996, their economic and social model gradually became one of the key references for the Commission, or at least the Portuguese presidency, especially since the in-depth reforms undertaken in Sweden at the beginning of the 1990s were bearing fruit. And this brings us back to the point made by Barbier (2004) that such an activation of employment policies

followed a social democratic line which broke with the neoliberal translations often perceived, erroneously, as the one and only reading in vogue in Brussels.

At the initiative of the Portuguese Minister of Labour, the economics professor Maria João Fernandes Rodrigues, a group of evolutionist- and regulationist-inspired studies dealing with innovation and learning were drawn on to 'feed' the analysis of a group of high-level experts called upon by the president (see the resulting book, Rodrigues et al., 2002). Part of the 'software' had been proposed by the report on the 'learning society' submitted two years earlier to the Commission's Directorate-General for Innovation by the Scandinavian evolutionist economist B.-A. Lundvall (1997); it brought together several points of view, in terms of substance and approach alike, which were taken over, in appropriate political form, in the 'new paradigm' adopted during the Lisbon summit:

- making innovation a key objective but one which must be embedded in coherent social and institutional processes;
- generating learning organisations which develop technical and social skills, including a shared aptitude for co-operation and networking;
- recognising the diversity of the sources of knowledge and organisational forms likely to encourage innovation;
- practicing a contextualised benchmarking which takes into account the particular features of organisational, social and institutional forms at the origin of 'good practices'.

If the European Council in Lisbon defined the open method of co-ordination as the means of 'spreading best practices and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals', it stressed that 'its purposes in the area of education and training may be defined as a way of enabling mutual comparison and learning, and thereby of limiting the risks inherent in change and reform'. Indeed, 'knowing the critical factors that made a reform successful elsewhere is essential for the transfer of good practice, which may otherwise degenerate into the mere copying of activities and lead to disappointing results' (Commission, 2002).

#### *The increasingly central role of education and training in European strategies*

The strategic nature of this orientation emerges in both macro- and micro-economic terms. The term 'lifelong learning' places the emphasis explicitly on the multiplicity of sources and forms of knowledge. By contrast, the French translation adopted by the European Commission, *l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie* – lifelong education and training – suggests a more institutional meaning. Beyond the real semantic and political issues involved, the intention is clearly to emphasise that what is at stake is the individual's entire learning trajectory, regardless of age, from the first steps in nursery school to the senior citizen programmes at university: no institutional sanctuary, such as basic instruction, is to escape the re-examinations called for by this exhaustive view of the lasting or occasional ways and opportunities for learning.

The macro-economic importance of LLL finds even more confirmation in that fact that, beyond the Lisbon strategy, it backs up the European employment strategy – resulting from the 1997 Luxembourg summits – whose 2001 guidelines 'stress the need for Member States to set out coherent overall strategies on lifelong learning.'<sup>1</sup> Since then, education and training policy has been continuously developed and refined. The expansion and sharpening of objectives has gone hand in hand with the pragmatic taking into account of the historical diversity of the national systems. Thus, three strategic objectives – improving quality and effectiveness, democratisation ('facilitating the access of all to education and training systems') and 'opening up to the wider world' – have acquired thirteen associated objectives to be interpreted and applied in various ways: for the first, 'developing skills for the knowledge society' and 'making the best use of resources'; for the second, 'supporting active citizenship, equal opportunity and social cohesion', and for the last, 'strengthening the links with working life, research and the society at large' and 'developing the spirit of enterprise'. Here, we find both the concern for a compromise with 'liberal' approaches and a classic positioning of the Scandinavian approach, which consists of confronting the demands of globalisation. Indicators

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<sup>1</sup> Commission of the European Communities, 2001, Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe, COM(2001) 501 final, Brussels.

associated with each objective serve to set the standards for national situations in order to influence their course over time: instead of strict prohibitions combined with sanctions in case of non-respect of the benchmark, pressure is exerted by the publication of the rankings regularly established by the Commission, and this pressure increases with the extent of media attention to poor scores at national level. The objective of ‘developing skills for the knowledge society’ has turned out to be all the more crucial because it is based notably on the results of the PISA survey testing the knowledge of 15-year-old students which were widely covered by the media (see Commission 2005a). The same is true for the indicator ‘proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only secondary education achievement’.

The 2002 Barcelona summit emphasised the quality of European education and training systems in order to make them a ‘world quality reference’. That of Brussels in 2003 advocated, in the area of training, ‘the exchange of good practice’, the ‘transparency of qualifications and diplomas’ in order to encourage mobility on a European labour market, as well as quality management. A year later, in Brussels once again, the necessity of validating both informal and formal learning was foregrounded (which could be seen as an echo of the accreditation of prior experience introduced by French law in 2002). Following this definition of principles and procedures, and on the basis of a resolution adopted by the European Council and Parliament in summer 2006, the Commission is preparing to implement an ambitious group of action programmes for the 2007-2013 period (7 billion euros) in order to ‘build the knowledge-based society’. This package will cover pre-school through secondary education with the Comenius programme, higher education with Erasmus, vocational education and training with Leonardo, adult education with Grundtvig and the cross-country ‘European integration’ dimension with Monnet.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Procedural and normative channelling of the diversity of practices*

No national situation offers a pure and simple expression of one of these regimes alone. Rather, each is the result of a compromise between several possible inspirations, although one of these ideal types may predominate. In addition, the national reforms, along with the normative European framework, however flexible it may be, contribute to developments which may bring about new balances or compromises.

As ‘open’ as it may be, the OMC works to channel practices through the production of country rankings according to previously defined benchmarks. At the same time, respect for the multiplicity of experiences, plus flexibility of interpretation, can bring about the political and institutional coexistence of different interpretations; this occurs through the organisation of a competition which is all the more acceptable because it takes place over the medium long term (2010) and gives each participant the hope of ‘doing brilliantly’ in one area or another, whether in absolute terms or relative to its previous rank. As we shall see, however, the Scandinavian countries still enjoy an undeniable relative advantage.

The title of the resolution adopted by the European Council held in Brussels in 2003 – ‘Different systems, shared objectives’ – clearly attests to the need for open co-operation to come to terms with the diversity of national schemes. In the first stage, what is involved is not so much a convergence between the systems, which preserve and will continue to preserve a number of their specific features over the medium term, as the establishment of the kind of compatibility expressed through the elaboration of a ‘European qualifications framework for lifelong learning’. This instrument (in the sense of Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2005), will include eight levels of skills and learning; it is conceived as a ‘framework for co-operation’ which will function ‘as a translation device’ in order to constitute ‘a force for change at European, national and sector level’, notably by ‘supporting the follow-up to and implementation of shared objectives for European education and training systems decided in 2002’ (Commission, 2005b). In the long run, this framework is supposed to give considerably greater weight to the indicators related to the objectives of the common education and training strategy adopted in 2002 (see above).

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<sup>2</sup> . Comenius, or Jan Ámos Komenský (1592- 1670), was a Czech theologian and educator. Danish clergyman and writer N. S. F. Grundtvig (1783-1872) is considered the ideological father of popular and adult education. Jean Monnet (1888-1979), French statesman and committed internationalist, was one of the founders of the EU.

In the immediate future, the channelling of the reforms is to be accomplished through a normative focus on two basic *orientations* embedded in an evaluation principle of all education and training institutions :

- Emphasis placed on the necessary development of individual initiatives within and beyond the education and training systems. This referent encompasses, with more or less tension depending on the institutional contexts, both a desire to emphasise the responsibilities assumed by those involved through their personal choices and the encouragement of individual autonomy with regard to training schemes, notably those of continuing training, in order to revive the original spirit of the ‘permanent education’ of the late 1960s;
- Promotion of skills and competencies (rather than collective classifications). This orientation can cover quite different realities and political projects, as has been shown quite well by Lefresne (2001), but which is nonetheless supposed to encourage the combination of three qualities throughout working life: technical skills related to products and services, organisational skills resulting from greater work co-operation and market skills for satisfying customer needs (see the excellent overview by Combes, 2003).

This tandem of individual initiative and skills development is supposed to reinforce the development of employability, a notion which has itself been subject to numerous definitions (see for example Gazier, 1990). A large place has thus been left to the interpretations of national, sectoral and regional actors, which can give rise to different, and even antagonistic, systems of responsibility. As Giraud (2006) writes with regard to policies for the activation of the unemployed: ‘Training offers a key illustration of the conflicts of interpretation we are dealing with here. [It] can in fact be used, in compliance with the texts, to mobilise, stimulate or redeploy persons in unemployment.’

The OMC is thus based on a group of flexible notions and procedures which, in the European context, have the major advantage of covering practices and systems in the area of education and continuing training which are presently quite distinct. The LLL policy regimes which we are going to present here reflect the existence of multiple political responses to the double requirement of individualisation and work performance which underlie public action at community level.

## 2. Five public policy regimes for lifelong learning

These regimes are built around the responses to a series of political stakes, with a minimum coherence imposed between the different choices because of the institutional complementarities and solidarities between actors which one or the other generates (e.g., foregrounding principles of redistribution and the search for social cohesion on the one hand and relying solely on market incentives on the other would be contradictory). As ideal types, none of them corresponds strictly to a national case, even if, as we shall see, a regime generally reflects the dominant action strategy in the society in question (Verdier, 2002) .

### *The public policy regime as a combination of political principles, actors’ logics, rules and instruments*

Every LLL public policy regime entails more or less explicit responses to highly political questions:

- Which principles of justice and efficiency are to be applied in the area of education and training?
- What is the conception of the individual integrated into: a professional community, line organisation, network or social citizenship?
- Who assumes the responsibilities for qualification- and employment-related risks (unemployment, precariousness, obsolescence of skills, etc.): the individual and/or social insurance /the state?
- What kind of governance is needed: which configuration of private and public players (degree of decentralisation, role of private training establishments and the companies)?
- How should education and training be organised: continuity or break between initial and continuing training, what place for vocational training in the initial curriculum?
- Which conception of knowledge is to be applied: primacy of academic knowledge, work-related knowledge, absence of distinctions between the different kinds?

- Which institutions of regulation are called for: provision of information, schemes compensating for initial inequalities, rules for selection of individuals, negotiated collective agreements?
- What are the means of access to both initial education and training (e.g., accessibility of tertiary education) and continuing training (cf. the question of guidance)?
- What is the nature of the training to be privileged for young people: vocational, general, organised by levels?
- Who funds the different kinds of education and training (public authorities, companies, families or individuals)?

The principles of justice and efficiency underlie the legitimacy of the rules in this area, all of which depend on various forms of justification (Boltanski and Thévenot, 1991): professional or occupational vocation, academic meritocracy, solidarity, utility of the service, transparency of the quality-price ratio. These conventions, which are used by private and public players, are equipped with different cognitive, financial and organisational resources which take concrete form as instruments, rules, social technologies and so on, all of which help to stabilise the regulations at work.

This way of characterising regimes in terms of institutions, configurations of players, policy principles and organisational forms corresponds to some of the objectives of public policy analyses which seek to link up the 'three i's' (ideas, institutions, interests) in order to study 'the state in action' (see Palier and Surel, 2005), but it has the advantage of avoiding the sharp distinctions made between these three dimensions.

Notwithstanding their individual specificities, these five regimes can be grouped into two categories in terms of links with the market rules. Three of them are more and less based on de-commodification (Esping-Andersen, 1999) : « Corporatist », « Academic », « Universal » ; the two other ones are market oriented but with different conventions or principles : « pure market competition » / « organised market ». This repertoire of policy regimes draws on two kinds of typologies :

- one bears on social protection models (see in particular Esping-Andersen, *ibid.*), which is all the more justified here because labour-market-entry policies are becoming a new pillar of social protection (Palier, 2004), and lifelong learning is in some ways an extension of this;
- the other bears on the systems of initial education and training or higher education and research (see Buechtemann and Verdier, 1998 ; Aventur et Möbus, 1998 ; Maroy, 2000 ; Green et alii, 2006).

### *LLL decommodified regimes*

Well beyond compulsory schooling, these three regimes make initial education and training a central focus of the collective action which is determinant for both individual and collective destinies, but they draw on quite dissimilar rules: selection, calling and cohesion. They also support a more and less strong de-commodification of education and training.

The academic regime is built around two processes: first of all, school-based competition between individuals whose equity must be guaranteed by a public actor invested with incontestable political legitimacy. It also relies on an objectified criterion, academic performance, which, in principle, is not sensitive to local market influences (Duru-Bellat, 1992). Diplomas therefore identify different levels of general studies and constitute rules which are above all internal to the educational system (Méhaut, 1997); The independence of such rules is to be preserved from influences which might compromise the integrity of the merit principle. It is up to the individuals to enhance the value of these ability signs on the labour market, where legitimate positions in hierarchal organisations are established through the degree of 'academic nobility' they have conquered for themselves. Within this framework, continuing training is above all a means of adapting to technical and organisational changes. The 'training enterprise' assumes most of the funding during working hours. The main risk is an aggravation of academic, and later, social inequalities which are all the more serious because academic competition has lasting effects on the labour market.

The corporatist regime (see Vinokur, 1995) entails, as Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre (1982) have shown, a reliance on professional identities sustained by individual commitments in the context of a calling, but also on highly involved social actors. The latter are in fact called upon to make a

political commitment to the creation of vocational training qualifications so that these can benefit from high social esteem and become the rules of an occupational labour market (Eyraud, Marsden and Silvestre, 1990). This configuration generates social and economic legitimacy for skills which is based on the mastery of a ‘trade’ or occupation, composed of a group of indissociable capabilities. Contrary to what prevails with meritocracy, there is thus no scale of study levels to standardise the training programmes associated with a single occupational field. Within this framework, the organisation of work is based on professional legitimacy attached to a growing mastery of the ‘trade’, as might be attested, in the course of working life, by occupational branch certifications. The intervention of professional academies does not exempt the individuals concerned from making the efforts which demonstrate their desire for promotion and peer recognition.

**Table 1. “De-commodified”LLL regimes**

<i>REGIMES</i>	<i>CORPORATIST</i>	<i>ACADEMIC</i>	<i>UNIVERSAL</i>
<i>Principle of Justice</i>	Access to an occupational or craft community (vocation)	School-based merit system (‘rank’ and selection)	Compensation of initial inequalities (‘solidarity’ and social inclusion)
<i>Conception of skills in initial education and training</i>	Overall mastery of a trade or profession	Education levels	Reconciliation of basic knowledge and practical skills
<i>Certification</i>	Recognised qualification	Certification by an academic authority	National diploma
<i>Nature of programme</i>	Contents determined by negotiation	Discipline-based standards	Interaction between different kinds of knowledge
<i>Area of recognition</i>	Occupational labour market	Internal and hierarchical market	‘Multi-transitional’ labour market
<i>Key actor in initial education and training</i>	Company	Academic education institutions	Community of partners
<i>VOTEC objective</i>	Professional rules	Signs of abilities	Social citizenship
<i>Main risk</i>	Stigmatisation of those without qualifications	Sharp inequalities in schooling	Increased collective costs
<i>Key actor in institutional regulation</i>	Social partners at industry level	Educational institution	Public authorities
<i>Continuing training objectives</i>	Higher levels of professional mastery	Short term adaptation of skills	Social autonomy
<i>Political responsibility for employability</i>	Collective agreements at occupational branch level	Companies and public bodies	National tripartism
<i>Funding of continuing training</i>	Professional academies and individuals	Companies and employers’ groups	Public agencies and mutual funds
<i>References</i>	Weber (Beruf)	Spence	Grundtvig

The universal regime is based on a principle of solidarity which attempts to compensate early on for inequalities stemming from a disadvantaged social environment. Pre-school education, like the new European Comenius programme, is well anchored in the precepts of lifelong learning. Thus, early, irreversible tracking towards a vocational pathway is excluded; conversely, individualisation based on the construction of pathways adapted to the diversity of expectations and career plans not only avoids repeating school years but also and above all limits the weight of academic knowledge. Such a regime is aimed at ensuring a linkage with other kinds of knowledge and notably the capacity to translate what is transmitted into competences: the ability to work in groups or set up economic and social projects of collective local interest. In this spirit, the opening up of the training establishment to its environment also calls for the involvement of different partners (non-profit general interest organisations, trade and industry, users’ representatives, etc.) in the regulation of the establishment itself. In the area of continuing training, it is important for collective actors to organise a second chance for returnees in hopes of diminishing the original inequalities which have been inherited or engendered by the earlier sequences of initial or continuing training. In addition, adults in continuing training should be ‘actors’ in their own training; as Merle (2006) puts it, this means restoring favourable conditions to the ‘desire to learn’ and giving substance to the exercise of a subjective right



which, ‘as a legal category, is inseparable from individual empowerment’ (Maggi-Germain, 2006). One of the risks of this form of collective action, however, lies in the excessive costs of generous compensatory schemes. Evaluation is thus an essential instrument of regulation for justifying the allocation of means to a given person or group.

#### *LLL market regimes but which market?*

Both of these regimes, that of the pure competition market and that ‘organised’ around networks associating public and private actors, approach training in utilitarian terms. For the former, a price sanctions the encounter of service supply and demand on the labour market; for the latter, work can be an alternative to training in function of a double trade-off for the individual involved: which skills does on-the-job training, in a work situation, offer? How is time to be divided between leisure, training and work, in function of the utility/disutility of the different activities? The answers to these questions vary considerably from one regime to the other depending on the distribution of responsibilities between private and public choices.

The market competition regime is confronted with the nature of the public good which is attached to education and, partially at least, to training: given the positive externalities attached to this resource, the state’s intervention to impose compulsory schooling is considered legitimate, but its duration should vary according to the market configurations involved: work can be an alternative to school, even at an early age, depending on the job opportunities proposed and the quality of the training services provided by the training establishments (see Bougroum and Ibourk, 2004, on the Moroccan case). What is involved in the case of a market agreement, then, is not the regulation of a pure initial education and training market but rather that of a near-market, whose operating rules, especially in the financial domain, are aimed at guaranteeing the pre-eminence of two principles: competition, notably between training establishments, and the individual’s free choice between different training methods, ranging from structured versions to the informal varieties of on-the-job training, as well as the compromise situation of apprenticeship, all of which eliminates the need for the prior determination of initial vocational education and training programmes. In continuing training, what comes into play is the classic rule of the market confronting service providers and seekers: in the case of general training, the latter will be individuals; when specific skills are to be acquired, the main responsibility will fall on the companies (Becker, 1964).

**Table 2. Market LLL regimes**

<i>REGIMES</i>	<i>PURE COMPETITION MARKET</i>	<i>ORGANISED MARKET</i>
<i>Principle of justice</i>	Utility of services provided	Fair price for quality
<i>VOTEC objective</i>	Human capital	Social capital
<i>Conception of skills in initial education and training</i>	Meeting a demand (possibly on the job)	Portfolio of operational skills
<i>Certification</i>	Level of remuneration (matching)	Attestation of skills
<i>Nature of programme</i>	NA	Quality procedure
<i>Area of recognition</i>	Immediate transaction (spot market)	External ‘organised’ markets
<i>Key actor in initial training</i>	Individuals as consumers	‘Guided’ individuals
<i>Main risk of failure</i>	Under-investment in training	Inefficient incentives
<i>Key actor in institutional regulation</i>	Visible hand	Public agencies of regulation and accreditation
<i>Conception of continuing training</i>	Utility of service provision	Diversified skills portfolio
<i>Political responsibility and employability</i>	Individuals	‘Active’ individuals and agencies
<i>Funding</i>	Direct payment or loans of individuals (firms for specific training)	Training vouchers, individual training accounts
<i>References</i>	Becker	Giddens

The organised market regime gives the market or quasi-market a predominant role in regulating the access, use and further development of the training, whether initial or continuing. But their workings are subject to a body of rules intended to guarantee the transparency of quality-price relationships for all the protagonists in order to control possible information distortions and arrive at the fair price. In this case, we can speak of a market ‘organised’ by public intervention, which then

has to guarantee the reliability of the information and the quality standards supporting the transactions on the market or near-market. The two cardinal principles of competition and individual choice come into play but they are backed up by rules aimed at eliminating, or at least reducing selection bias and moral hazard, which might compromise the transactions: the quality requirement for the information system (notably based on certifications) is the responsibility of the public authorities. Individuals are guided in these choices so that they can make the best possible assessment of the consequences (e.g., exiting initial education and training to privilege on-the-job learning, even if this means returning to structured programmes afterwards) with the idea of making them aware of the potential risks for their employability. Incentives are thus developed in the form of individual training accounts which the individuals themselves, public agencies or employers can contribute to (on this issue, see Giddens, 2001).

This approach involves constituting a market for individual skills, which has as its first virtue the transparency of the quality-price ratio: it is necessary to equip the functioning of the external markets institutionally, so to speak, for however free they may be of long-term commitments, they nonetheless require standards. In addition, the organisation of this skills market must be flexible so that individuals can validate experiences which have been acquired in a wide variety of ways, from on-the-job learning to programmes in training establishments. These signs, along with the individual training accounts, permit individuals to move through networks of private and public organisations which are linked together by the standards developed under the aegis of the public authority. The individual user is thus called upon to be a vehicle for the management and evaluation of initial and continuing training policies.

### **3. From policy regimes to national models<sup>3</sup>**

A national lifelong learning model is the result of a specific compromise between different typical regimes supported by specific coalitions of public and private actors. This societal arrangement may be more or less sustainable according to the endogenous social dynamics and the capacity to face to the external changes. This comparative presentation is based on a set of quantitative indicators that seeks to reflect the various schemes and on a comprehensive approach that strives to take into account the institutional settings and the commitments of a social coalition of actors<sup>4</sup>.

*Sweden: one of the " good pupils " of the lifelong learning orientation.*

If we consider the education and the initial training, it turns out that Sweden accumulates a set of features corresponding to a lifelong learning regime with an universal dominant orientation : high rates of access to the various levels of education ; financing and organisational modalities of education and training which witnesses of a political will to channel the effects of the market, the academic selection and the corporatist closure ; performances of the pupils rather less uneven than in the comparable countries. Thus the Swedish education system offers a uniform structure, from elementary level to secondary and adult education, which has understandably predisposed it to lifelong learning<sup>5</sup>. One of the basic objectives of the Swedish education system is to reduce as much as possible the gulf separating vocational training from general education. Furthermore, there is no social hierarchy between practical and general knowledge; as a result, there are no distinct vocational training establishments within the school system. Adult education is part of the public education system, like compulsory schooling and upper secondary education.

In terms of access rates (see table 3 at the end of this paper), the Swedish results are ones of the best in Europe : 1. It is high for the pre-primary school that is an efficient factor for reducing the

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<sup>3</sup> . In this section we can only sketch out the approach to national situations since a fuller examination would go beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>4</sup> From this point of view, our approach joins the much more sophisticated analysis which is provided by Mons (2007b) : it aims to understand "the complexity of educational policies," in combining "typological indicators", which "allow the identification of institutional configurations " and " statistical indicators "(p. 419).

<sup>5</sup> 'Some countries like Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway are well on their way to achieving a national approach which is coherent and comprehensive, and are making strong progress on implementation' (European Commission, 2005).

educational inequalities due to social conditions of family and to gender disparities 2. Like Denmark, Sweden is characterized by the lowest ratio of early school leavers (who only reached the end of the 1st cycle of secondary education) 3. A fairly good level of access to tertiary education, higher than the European mean : the enrolment rate of 20-29 years is growing rapidly in the last ten years and is exceeded only by that of Denmark. Furthermore, it is very striking that this country is characterized by the lowest share of private expenditures in education and the lowest difference between the individual expenditures for tertiary education and those for a primary student (see table 4), knowing that the mean covering all levels, are significantly higher than in Germany and France. Also in terms of student performance in 15 years in PISA tests (see table 6), the results are less unequal than elsewhere according to the impact of the economic, social and cultural status of the parents, although more remains to be done, as evidenced by the poor performance of young immigrants (OECD, 2008).

Finally, during the last 15 years, the desire to upgrade vocational training in the second cycle of secondary education has resulted in the establishment of a common set of educational objectives for opening to all pupils the access to the tertiary education. All of these findings and practices are inseparable from the "individualized model of integration" which regulates the long common core of teaching by combining "the integration by the common objectives and the differentiation of the pathways" (Mons, 2007a, p.119). On the whole, Sweden continues to reinforce the universal orientation of its initial education system but what about continuing training ?

Inequalities in access to continuing training according to educational level remain high in Sweden (see table 5) and recall the limits of the 'second chance' policies. Nevertheless a very dense network of public centres devoted to adult education (Abrahamsson, 1999) limits the disparities by gender and age. Moreover, in the last decade, training public policies are focused to the less educated people : for instance, from 1997 to 2002, a large public programme - called "Knowledge Lift" – aim to bring the recipients to the level of the end of secondary school, allowing them, in addition, to access to tertiary education : it has concerned 230 000 people, equivalent to 75 % of the youngsters in second cycle of secondary school. Knowing assessment is in Sweden a key instrument of policy making, the effectiveness of this very ambitious programme remains controversial from one evaluation to an other one (see Stenberg, 2003). Finally, the introduction of individual learning accounts that could be related to the implementation of an "organized market" logic has failed because of Union's resistance (Ericson, 2005).

*Germany: maintained societal coherence of apprenticeship but growing limits of a lifelong corporatist regulation.*

In Germany, till the 90's, the predominant corporatist regime of the branch-level 'private governments' (Hilbert and Weber, 1990) linked apprenticeship to occupational certifications during working life through the intermediary of the *Berufsakademien* ('business academies'). From the outset, it has been based on a market of apprenticeship places which is itself highly regulated by quality standards constituted at federal level in a tripartite context – unions, business organisations and government - (Koch, 1997). In addition, since the mid 1980s, the German-style 'primacy of professional know-how' has sought to integrate the growing versatility of competences by considerably diminishing the number of diplomas. Over the past fifteen years, if it remains attractive to young people (see Table 3), the dual system as a whole has faced increasing pressures from 1. The orientation of young people towards more advanced levels of general studies, especially in higher education 2. The erosion of promotion prospects for holders of qualifications acquired in the course of their careers in the continuity of their training apprenticeship. This trend has been accentuated by the low outcomes of young Germans in the first OECD's PISA surveys (in 2000), which tends to delegitimise the validity of an early orientation of the majority of the young people towards vocational education, especially given its poor integration of students from immigrant families. This societal situation features a model of separation opposed to models of integration of secondary education (Mons, 2007a).

This worrying situation, which was strongly debated in the political sphere, generated both federal and regional retraining programmes for young people excluded from the dual system. In addition, the relative lack of access to children in pre-elementary school (in 2000, it was 4 points

below the EU average of 25, 18 points less than in France or the United Kingdom – see table 6))<sup>6</sup> will reverse the European objectives of "facilitating access for all to education and vocational training" and of reconciling working life and family life (see Salzbrunn, 2007). The predominance of a corporatist regulation contributes to explain the stagnant rate of university graduates among the younger generation while the increases were very fast in many other European countries : unlike countries such as Denmark, the German education system still refuses to allow access to tertiary education to the qualified young people after apprenticeship.

As for the continuing training of the unemployed, recent reforms (Hartz IV) are clearly based on a regulation in 'organised market' terms on the model of changes in the UK during the eighties. The upgrading training provided to the unemployed by the federal agencies were sharply reduced (Bosch et al, 2007). The weakening access to the recognised further qualifications (federal certifications like "Meister" and "Techniker") explains the current low rate of access to education during working life, now at the same level as in France (see Table 5 for 30-39 years), which contrasts with the equivalent situations in the eighties (see Géhin and Méhaut, 1993). In the future the inequalities in access to continuing training could strongly increase although companies are totally free to organize or not training of employees. These trends could break one of the structural characteristics of the German variety of capitalism (Hall and Soskice, 2001), namely a strong occupational identity based on both initial and continuing vocational training (see Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre 1982).

*Denmark: a virtuous compromise devoted to the permanent education?*

The Danish Education system is an original compromise between an historically rather corporatist regime (especially for the vocational education) and an universal one (namely for the continuing training). Apprenticeship predominates in the second cycle of secondary education (see table 3), but unlike the German neighbour, is associated neither with high rates of early drop out (on the contrary) and unequal achievements at Pisa test (see table 6), nor barriers to access to tertiary education - regarding the rate of university graduates, the Danish situation is still better than the Swedish one (see Table 3) - ; we must say that the apprenticeship is accessible after a comprehensive secondary education (like in Sweden, it shapes an "individualized model of integration") and get an access to tertiary education. Moreover, unlike France, the extension of higher education has not been accompanied by a deterioration of quality (see the high levels of funding through the table 4). Besides all the young people receive an allowance which constructs a "flex-independence" in permitting varied combinations between studies and jobs (van de Velde, 2008, p. 213).

Furthermore, as in Sweden, the share of private funding, both in secondary and in higher education, is very low, reflecting the strong universal principles promoted by the State, including training for which funding is essentially in charge of public authorities. The result of all this is high levels of access to continuing training and education, significantly more egalitarian than in the whole OECD even though a relative powerlessness to counteract the long-term effects of the corporatist regulation of training persists : "the number of unemployed people furthest from employment (without qualification, ethnic minorities) and under the assistance, is quasi-stable since 1994 "(Lefresne, 2005). However, the relationship between on the one hand a corporatist regime that support occupational markets and on the other one effective universal principles with redistribution of resources and opportunities, is without doubt one of the main reasons for the success of Danish macro-social model. Thus it remains a reference for the societal benchmark on the issues of training and unemployment. The peculiar concept of folkeoplysning (literally "light of the people") is representative of this success story : "tying personal development, sense of community, education, vocational training and individual responsibility in the democratic process" (Meilland, 2006), it bears a complex alchemy close to the initial model of 'permanent education'".

*France: 'scholar gentry' and regulation at industry level*

The academic regime ("everything is played before 25 years" and then the firms adapt the individual skills to their needs, with the active support of public authorities) is still prominent. First,

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<sup>6</sup> Since then, the situation has improved but remains significantly different from that in European countries more universal.

"the French meritocracy" is set on a strong permanent selection throughout the school career. Unlike Sweden, the second cycle of secondary education is structured by a three-way segmentation (vocational / technological / general) and by an high exit rate at the end of the 1st cycle of secondary education (see Table 3) knowing that the situation is worse when taking into account 1. the exits without qualifications (over 20% of a generation) and 2. the failures in the first year of higher education. Since 1971, the training is supported by a tripartite governance (government, unions and employers) which results in short courses more accessible to the most skilled employees. Thus the role of business for organizing training - is predominant and is characterized by a large attendance - higher than in Sweden - but the rate of access to education during the working life is less than half the European average (see Table 5). If inequalities of access to continuing training by gender are relatively under control in France, differences by age testify to the strong exclusion of old workers from employment. However, the French model has become significantly more complex than it is a quarter century ago.

Thus although undeniable progress, the democratisation of the education system is so much ambiguous that some authors speak of "segregative democratisation" (Duru-Bellat, Kieffer, 2001). Access to higher education has significantly expanded (table3) so that the proportion of graduates amongst young French aged 25 to 34 years, is as high as in Sweden and Denmark, but thanks to the development of short higher education tracks (France remains behind many European partners regarding the rate of graduates at master or PhD levels) and without changing the predominance of very selective "Grandes Ecoles" which still forms the "scholar gentry" (analysed by Bourdieu) : indeed, according to the highest degree of diploma, the influence of social origin is higher in France than in the United States (Meuret, 2007, p. 17).

Since the 80s, under the explicit influence of the German dual system (see Verdier, 1995), the French policy has greatly developed the alternating vocational training and especially apprenticeship (table3), including for diplomas of higher education with an undeniable success. Thus the corporatist regime has played a greater role in regulating initial education and training, albeit within the framework of the hierarchy of academic levels which still predominates.

The recent industry-wide agreement (2003) on 'lifelong learning', which was written into law in May 2004, ultimately gave the industry bodies more than their due, while the negotiations had begun in 2001 on the basis of employers' proposals based on a regulation in terms of an organised market (Méhaut, 2006). The emblematic new rule is distant from those of corporatist regime and even more than one mode universal: an individual right of 20 training hours per year was indeed created but on the one hand the transferability of this right is limited, on the other hand the duration granted, in spite of a possibility of office plurality over 6 years, confines de facto the recipients with the short term adaptation of their skills.

It is undeniable that the European 'lifelong learning' referent influenced national negotiations in 2003 but without re-shaping the French model. In addition, the poor positioning of France vis-à-vis emblematic benchmarks of the European strategy, namely the proportion of young people leaving initial education without a degree, contributes to structure the national debate on the necessary individualized support to disadvantaged students and to emphasize the limits of a "uniform model of integration" in secondary education that France shares with other Latin countries (Mons, 2007a).

#### *Great Britain: development of 'organized Market' and universal principles*

Inside an academic regime and secondly corporatist, Margaret Thatcher's reforms had promoted a quasi-market logic (the educational costs supported by households are very high, twice the United States - see Table 4 -)<sup>7</sup>, but one which was organised from the outset around standards for certification. The NVQs were the figurehead, in terms of both initial and continuing training, and the programmes themselves were thus left to the free initiative of the training providers. The flaws of the system (Steedman and Hawkins, 1994) led to the reintroduction of a more explicit link between the objectives pursued in initial education and training and the organisation of knowledge in initial training establishments with the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ). Since 2000,

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<sup>7</sup> After the Employment and Training Act of 1984 (see above), the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced in England the free choice of school which the parents of consumers of educational services, while schools compete on a quasi-market (see Mons, 2007a).

moreover, the Labour government has invested in the development of initial education and training within a 'redistributive' logic devoted to the people without qualifications but inside a logic of 'organized market'. Certainly the aim is notably to reduce the share of young people who, at the end of compulsory schooling, find themselves unemployed, inactive, and outside of any training programme to the point of plunging into social exclusion (Ryan, 2001); but in the same time, these youngsters are the privileged target of a 'first work' policy.

In order to stimulate individual pathways on the labour market and provide them with ongoing support, New Labour's policy has given the 'organised market' a growing role, with the public authorities responsible for its good working order (Giddens and Blair, 2002). This promotion of a "social patrimonial state" (Gautié, 2003) resulted in the creation of individual learning accounts: created by the banks, they were supported by the government to the tune of 150 pounds per person and also the contributions of companies and employees were not taxable, but due to suspicions of fraud, the system was abandoned in 2001 (Gautié, *ibid.*). But during the last years, the public policy introduced some accommodations to this logic of 'organized market' for instance by substituting a training fare to the Thatcherian "workfare". Thus by mixing loan facilities and public funding, the training policy develops strongly the access to a qualification or a diploma during the careers, clearly above the European average (Table 4). More generally the attendance in continuing training (see table 5) reaches relatively high levels (27 % of employees in 2003 against 18% for the OECD average), particularly because of a new system of formal and informal learning recognition, which is combined with the introduction of a label "Investors in People" awarded to companies that implement effective skills development (Tessaring, Wannan, 2004).

Concerning the initial education, the academic regime remains predominant with a strong polarization between numerous flows of drop out and the famous "Oxbridge" but an active public policy has significantly increased the funding for ensuring a basic quality of education for all pupils what the results to Pisa test seem to attest.

This new compromise between an organized market logic around the policy of "first work", a well-established academic regime and an emerging universal public policy notably in initial education, does not prevent the European Commission (2005c) to consider that these strategies remain unbalanced and that there is a tendency to focus the public policy either on individual employability, either on the workfare for people excluded of training and employment.

## **Conclusion.**

Anchored in a predominant regime of lifelong regime, the societal features of each national model remain important. But the institutional path dependency seems to weaken due to increasing hybridization of the different national models. The Danish case is emblematic of a virtuous compromise between the corporatist regime and the universal one. It is not new but it points out two crucial stakes for each national lifelong learning regime. The first one concerns the reversibility of educational choices and guidance : could be an early entry in vocational education socially fair if it is impossible for these youngsters to access to tertiary education at the following steps of their education career and if it involves strong social segmentations (it is one of the main problems of German case) ? The second stake is linked to the social stigmatisation of educational devices which favours a strong hierarchy of different knowledge (academic versus practical) with corresponding segmentations in the business organizations (it is clearly the main problem of the French model which combines academic regime and corporatist one).

The hybridisation of the national models is encouraged by European policy promoting the comparison of national experiments and favouring the circulation of 'good ideas and practices'. We might suggest that it shall continue to increase but it is difficult to predict its course, however: for one thing, path dependencies vary from one country to another and, for another, the European rhetoric itself is ambivalent, insofar as the influences of 'universalism' (cf. the knowledge-based society in Rodrigues et alii, 2002) and the 'organised market' of the 'third way' are on the rise, while references to the corporatist model, judged insufficiently 'flexible', are declining.

This study illustrates a point of view which is, a priori, paradoxical: 'ideas' can be that much more influential because they defend the co-existence of varied interests and interpretations which in

turn reinforce each other<sup>8</sup>. In this respect, the making of European public action in the area of LLL has in fact permitted the Community level to intervene in a field of action – education and training – which in principle comes under the competence of the national level, especially since it is related to the most pronounced societal specificities (Maurice, Sellier, Silvestre, 1982). Barbier (2004) has already shown, with regard to the European Employment Strategy, that this intergovernmentality is inseparable from a procedural invention, the open method of co-ordination, officially introduced by the Portuguese presidency at the time of the Lisbon summit. Thus, ideas impose themselves, or, in any case, become an unavoidable reference, for both their content (i.e., their consistency with the Union's priorities in terms of objectives) and their ability to generate, or at least permit, the development of theatres of dialogue at the different levels – Community, national, territorial – where 'discussion groups' and 'negotiating arenas' overlap (Jobert, 1998).

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<sup>8</sup> As rightly Merle (2006), "who can be against life long learning?".

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*Annex 1 Tables***Table1 : Main Characteristics of National Models: Access to different kinds and levels of education (2005)**

Countries	(1)% of basic education	(2)% of a cohort in apprenticeship	(3)% of vocational education	% of 15-year-olds who have repeated at least once	(4) Ratio of early school leavers	(5) % of tertiary graduates 25-34 olds (55-64)
Germany	39,7	45	60,3	20,3	12,1	22 (23)
Denmark	52,1	47,7	47,9	3,4	8,5	41 (28)
France	57,6	11, 3	56,4	38,3	12,6	41 (16)
Sweden	94,8	-	52,7	3,4	8,6	39 (25)
UK	43,6	Very weak	72,2	(2,1)	14,0	37 (24)
EU 19	68,0	16, 3	50,3		14,9 (UE 25)	30 (18)
US	100	-	-	11,3		39 (38)

Source OECD, Eurostat

(1) Part of enrolments in programme of upper secondary « theory oriented » (3) % in upper secondary (4) 18-24 olds with only lower-secondary education and not in education or training

**Table 2 Expenditures in education (2005)**

Countries	(1) Expenditures per student from primary to tertiary education (US dollars)	Expenditures for tertiary education / Expenditures for primary (per student)
Germany	7872	1,55
Denmark	10108	1,41
France	8101	1,43
Sweden	9156	1,10
UK	7741	1,39
EU 19	7036	1,15
US	12788	2,31

Source OECD

**Table 3 Access to training**

Countries	% of 30-39 olds in education	Expected hours in job-related education and training between the ages of 25 and 64	Access to continuing training HE graduates / No qualified
G	2,5	398	5
Dk	7,8	934	1,7
F.	2,6	713	2,3
Sweden	13,3	622	2,6
R-U	15,8	315	3,1
EU 19	5,7	389 (OCDE)	nd
US	5,2	471	nd

Source OECD

**Table 4 PISA Results : inequalities of performance (pupils 15 old)**

Countries	Performance at PISA 2003 Reading performance Maths	Variation of performance (in points) between pupils with high economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) and pupils with low ESCS (2006)	Total variance in maths Perf. due to differences between Programmes (2003)
Germany	491 503	111	50,2
Denmark	492 514	78	Non applicable
France	496 511	115	41,5
Sweden	514 509	78	Non applicable
UK	523 519 (2000)	86	Non applicable
US	495 483	101	Non applicable

Source OECD

**Table 5 Characteristics of vocational education – employment relationship in 2006**

Coun.	Earnings of HE graduates (100= E. of . Secondary school graduates)	% of 18-24 inactive and not in training	Unemployment rate of no or low qualified people 25-64 years old (tertiarygraduates)	Employment rate of no qualified males 25-64 (F) fait	Unemployment rate of 15-24 olds (%) (U. of youngsters /active population)
G	164	8,4	16,7 (5,7)	54,0 (34,4)	15,2 (1,4)
Dk	125 (2005)	4,5	5,5 (3,2)	54,3 (45,8)	7,6 (2,0)
Fr.	149	5,9	11,0 (5,1)	52,2 (42,2)	22,8 (2,1)
Sw.	126 (2005)	4,7	7,3 (4,2)	65,5 (45,7)	22,3 (2,9)
UK	159	11,1	5,7 (2,2)	ND	12,2 (3,3)
US	176	10,6	8,3 (2,5)	72,8 (40,0)	11,3 (2,2)

Source OECD