

I find very little fault in this attractive, scholarly, and very readable volume. All I can ask for is that the research project that has given rise to it be expanded and that more volumes be produced. Particularly welcome would be a volume on female religious members of contemplative congregations (in a way, the female equivalent of monks), whose interactions with secular people were very limited. Equally welcome would be a work on how religious brothers, the male equivalents of the sorts of female religious considered in the present work, responded to changes over the same period. Such consideration might also bring home to readers the complexity of speaking of patriarchy in the Church as being all about males dominating females. There is a long history of bishops and secular priests making life just as difficult and miserable for many male religious congregations as they did for their female counterparts. One wonders about the extent, if any, to which this tradition has survived. These, and many other fascinating questions are prompted in the mind of the reader on reading this excellent work by Bruno-Jofré, MacDonald, and Smyth.

Tom O'Donoghue

The University of Western Australia

Maren Elfert

UNESCO's Utopia of Lifelong Learning—An Intellectual History

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Today, our world has become educationalized, as Marc Depaepe and Paul Smeyers once contended in *Educational Research: The Educationalization of Social Problems* (2008). In political discourse, education is touted as the cure for all kinds of social, economic, cultural, and political problems. Mass enrolment has become a global phenomenon. Following the Second World War, national educational systems were marked by an extremely rapid expansion that has been described as a “world educational revolution.”¹ Although the so-called Millennium Development Goal of global universal primary education was not reached in 2015, schooling has nonetheless become a common human experience.

In this context, the concept of lifelong learning is vital. As Maren Elfert notes in the introduction to *UNESCO's Utopia of Lifelong Learning*, lifelong learning has become a global educational paradigm for educational policies, in the sense that educational policies on national and regional level usually refer to this principle of learning continuously throughout life in formal and informal settings. Proponents of this concept argue that it stands for freedom and emancipation, and enables humans to reach their full potential. For its critics, the concept highlights the precarious conditions of the contemporary labour market and the neoliberal visions of employability.

1 John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, Richard Rubinson and John Boli-Bennett, “The World Educational Revolution, 1950–1970,” *Sociology of Education* 50, no. 4 (1977): 242–258.

Elfert's book examines the concept of lifelong learning in relationship to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The main research question guiding the analysis is how the concept of lifelong learning emerged from UNESCO's humanistic worldview, and how the concept has developed from 1945 until today. Elfert focuses on how this educational idea was shaped by individuals in a wider historical context and, more precisely, how individuals working with UNESCO formulated the vision of lifelong learning against the background of UNESCO's humanistic tradition, and broader social, economic and political developments.

This book is organized into seven chapters that, beginning with the creation of UNESCO in 1945, cover the history of the concept of lifelong learning up to the present time. Following an introductory chapter, chapter 2 addresses the early years of UNESCO against the background of the Second World War, the Cold War, and the tensions between representatives of the Anglo-Saxon world, and representatives of France and her motley coalition of allies opposed to the dominance of Anglo-Saxon culture and the English language. Chapter 2 also presents the book's conceptual and theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 addresses how the human right to education became a fundamental part of UNESCO's ideology in the organization's early years. Elfert presents the background of this development by examining the emergence of the concept of human rights after the Second World War, including how this concept was related to the general concept of humanity. The chapter then examines how the human right to education was understood by those individuals who UNESCO consulted, and the debate that surrounded the formulation of Article 26 on education in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For example, Elfert notes how the statement "elementary education shall be compulsory" (60) was criticized for contradicting education as a right, questioned for suggesting that education should be organized by the state, and lamented for being too unrealistic. Finally, chapter 3 covers the educational program of UNESCO during its early years.

Chapter 4 presents the background for chapters 5 and 6, which focus on the Faure Report (1972) and the Delors Report (1996), respectively. Providing these chapters with a broader context, chapter 4 elaborates on the concept of lifelong education (*education permanente*) and how it was formulated in relation to the issue of literacy, the concept of human capital, the perceived crisis of education, the Cold War context, and the establishment of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. In chapter 5, Elfert argues that the Faure Report provides insights into the competing ideologies of the time, but also functioned as an important mechanism that promoted further academic interest in lifelong learning. Chapter 6 highlights both the continuities and the changes between the Faure Report and the Delors Reports and links them to the experiences of neoliberalism and globalization. The analysis in chapter 7 examines present-day visions of lifelong learning in the age of neoliberalism, and then summarizes the main findings of this study.

Elfert's book does have some quirks. The theoretical approach is presented at the end of chapter 2 rather than at the start of the book and, instead of providing the

reader with a full concluding discussion, a summary of the most important results is merely presented briefly at the end of chapter 7. A reader such as myself, who has only a superficial knowledge of the history of UNESCO and the concept of lifelong learning, would have preferred a more encompassing concluding chapter that discussed the extent to which this book contributes to existing research on these topics. This question, which is vital for the relevance of all academic historical research, currently remains rather unclear.

However, the main and lasting impression of this book is that it provides a very informative analysis of the history of an educational idea and its context. In contrast to an anaemic history of ideas, Elfert's analysis is filled with the flesh and blood of individuals, organizations, and broader social and economic processes. The level of analysis is also promoted by the fact that Elfert does not shy away from the conflicts of history. Instead, her analysis indicates that even the loftiest ideals are born out of human—sometimes all-too-human—conditions, where the pettiest objections could target concepts such as “compulsory” and “elementary” in Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In that respect, this book is certainly an inspiring example for the analysis of educational ideas that places concepts, visions, and ideals firmly amid the individuals that formulated them.

Johannes Westberg
Örebro University