

Critical Review

Using Governmentality as a Conceptual Tool in Education Policy Research

by Olena Fimyar (ohf21@cam.ac.uk)

PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Abstract: *This paper analyses how governmentality as a conceptual tool is used in empirical social science research and, in particular, in education policy studies. The discussion starts with a cursory examination of the main definitions of governmentality first put forward by Foucault (1991) and further advanced (in connection to liberal Anglo-American and Western European states) by Dean (1999), Gordon (1991), Larner and Walters (2004), Lemke (2000, 2001), and Rose (1996, 1999). It is maintained that in these diverse studies governmentality does not constitute a closed theoretical framework, but rather is operationalised as a generic analytical tool. The 'uneven' perception of governmentality in education studies is discussed in the second part of the paper. Foucault-inspired studies which explicitly work with governmentality include works by Ball (1990, 1994), Peters (2001a, 2001b, 2003), Edwards (2002), Tikly (2003), Andersson and Fejes (2005), Christie and Sidhu (2006), Pongratz (2006), Masschelein (2006) and Simons (2006, 2007). However, the examples of educational studies that extend the application of governmentality to illiberal (post-colonial or/and post-communist) contexts are scarce, with the exception of the work by Tikly (2003). This indicates a clear gap in the study of education policy through the perspective of governmentality. Taking Tikly's research as a point of reference for my study in progress, I attempt to apply the concept of 'emerging governmentality' to an understanding of policy-making, as technologies of government, in post-communist Ukraine. The possibilities and limitations of this theoretical endeavour are discussed in the final part of the paper.*

Contextualisation

The critical review presented below is a part of an ongoing PhD study which examines the secondary-level education assessment policy formation on the level of a post-communist state, using Ukraine as a case study. This research, therefore, focuses on the national context of policy-making, the external influences and their agendas, the interaction and the balance of power between these internal and external factors and discourses. The external factors include economic globalisation forces combined with neoliberal ideology, international educational and donor agencies, and global educational discourses, while the internal factors are the lack of democratic history, ambivalences of post-communist transformations, governmental monopoly over policy-making, the official discourses of Europeanisation, democratisation and state- and nation-building coupled with legacy of Soviet mentality. In its attempt to understand policy developments in the area of assessment policy during 1999-2006, this study employs 'emerging governmentality' concept (cf. Foucault 1991) and is based on Foucauldian discourse analysis of key policy documents and semi-structured interviews with national policy-makers, officials, academics and representatives of international educational donor agencies and organisations.

Analytcs of governmentality: main definitions

In the 1990s Michel Foucault's works provoked enormous cross-disciplinary interest in social and political sciences. The 'Foucault Effect' (using Burchell *et al.*'s 1991 title) has influenced diverse studies in history, psychology, criminology, politics, sociology, education and policy research. However, during his lifetime Foucault's thesis more often than not was met with

scepticism, lack of understanding, and uncertainty (Gordon, 1991). Even nowadays the growing importance of Foucault's works in sociology of education stems first of all from their far-reaching methodological (rather than theoretical) implications for genealogy and discourse analysis. In the majority of studies that gravitate to post-structuralism Foucault is frequently introduced 'as a methodological authority figure'. Yet, along with the greater acceptance of Foucault's ideas, there are existing misreadings and (ab)uses of Foucault's terms, primarily that of discourse (Soylans and Kendall, 1997).

The analysis that follows attempts to assess the theoretical significance and limitations of 'governmentality concept' and its perception in education policy sociology. Prior to discussing the main definitions of governmentality, I will briefly delineate the areas of analysis of governmentality studies, which by surpassing their diverse disciplinary boundaries and by creating 'refreshing' discourse enable 'fruitful cross-fertilizations' of ideas and methodologies (Stenson, 1999, p.49). As first suggested by Foucault (1991), governmentality as a tool or 'guideline' for analysis focuses on the link between the forms of government and rationalities or modes of thoughts (about governing) which justify, legitimise and make the exercise of government deem rational (Lemke, 2000). Studies on governmentality, inspired by two of Foucault's courses entitled 'Security, Territory, Population' (1977-1978) and 'The Birth of Biopolitics' (1978-1979), draw attention to the complex relationships between thought and government (Larner and Walters, 2004).

The key concepts in the analytics of government (ie, studies into governmentality) are those of *political reason and technologies of governance*. While the former constitutes an ideology and discourse that was created as a response to problems of a definite historical period, the latter relates to the instrumental level and embraces the means by which particular policies are devised and implemented (Olssen, 2006). Governmentality studies also explore the relations between the forms and rationalities of power and the processes of subjectivation (ie, formation of governable subjects/citizens) and subjectification (formation of individual existence) (Foucault, 1991; Rose, 1999; Lemke, 2000) by problematising, or calling into question, the particular aspects of who can govern, what governing is and what or who is governed and how (Foucault, 1991, p 103; Gordon, 1991, pp 2-3). Yet, at the same time these studies are not sociologies of the rule of a particular organisation or locality, but rather are studies of 'a particular "stratum" of knowing and acting' (Rose, 1999, p 19). The analytics of governmentality explore the practices of government in their complex relations to the various ways in which 'truth' is produced in social, cultural and political spheres. Therefore, the role of analytics of government is that of diagnosis; what Rose calls 'seek[ing] an open and critical relation to strategies for governing, attentive to their presuppositions, their assumptions, their exclusions, their naiveties and their knaveries, their regimes of vision and their spots of blindness' (Rose, 1999, p 19). Most importantly, governmentality studies show that practices of government might be done differently by unravelling the 'naturalness' and 'taken-for-granted' character of these practices (Dean, 1999). Thus, to use governmentality as a conceptual tool is to problematise the normatively accepted accounts of the state and deconstruct its various inconsistent practices and components (Petersen *et al.* 1998, p 8, cited in Marston 2002, p 305).

Genealogy of governmentality

In the literature two broad meanings of the term governmentality are present (Dean, 1999). The first meaning (sometimes referred as 'the art of government') is more general, while the second is a specific historical variant of the first (Foucault, 1991). In its broad meaning governmentality identifies an approach towards thinking about the state and different mentalities of government. As the titles of the Lectures at the College de France (1977-1979) imply, initially Foucault sets the task of retracing the shift in governmental gaze in the 'early modern period' in Western European states from the problems of territory to the problems of population, from administering resources to administering 'power over life' (ie, bio-power),

from the threats external to the state to internal risks that emerge in relation to population. However, in the course of the lecture this genesis of 'power over life' was overshadowed by the analysis of liberal governmentality and as a result 'the latter almost entirely eclipses the former' (Senellart, 2007, p 370). What Foucault comes to analyse are the interdependent processes during which in the course of the last few hundred years repressive and centralised forms of state power exercised by the sovereign evolved into more decentralised and diffused (but not necessarily democratised) forms of power exercised by myriads of institutions and by the subjects themselves, which Foucault will term governmentality.

Governmentality comes into existence as a distinct activity of the art of government of the state which rationalises its exercise of power drawing on areas of knowledge of human and social sciences which become integral to it (Dean, 1999). In Foucault's words:

We pass from an art of governing whose principles were derived from the traditional virtues (wisdom, justice, liberality, respect for divine laws and human customs) or from common skills (prudence, reflected decisions, care in surrounding oneself with the best advisors) to an art of governing that finds the principles of its rationality and the specific domain of its applications in the state. (Foucault, 2007, p 364)

By merging 'governing' ("*gouverner*") and mentality ("*mentalité*") into the neologism 'governmentality', Foucault stresses the interdependence between the exercise of government (practices) and mentalities that underpin these practices. In other words, governmentality may be described as the effort to create governable subjects through various techniques developed to control, normalise and shape people's conduct. Therefore, governmentality as a concept identifies the relation between the government of the state (politics) and government of the self (morality), the construction of the subject (genealogy of the subject) with the formation of the state (genealogy of the state) (Lemke, 2000, pp 2-3).

The genealogy of governmentality as 'the art of government' in Foucault's terms stems from the constituting triangle of sovereignty-discipline-government (Dean, 1999, p 102). Government here is conceptualised in its general meaning as 'conduct of conduct', and not necessarily in political terms as we tend to understand government nowadays. For example, in the course of history, the problem of government was analysed not only in political texts, but also in philosophical, medical, religious and pedagogical tracts (Lemke, 2000). In this regard, three fundamental and interdependent types of government - self-government, governing the family and ruling the state - gave rise to the disciplines of morality, economy and politics.

New (liberal) governmentality

The second meaning of the term *governmentality* or *new (liberal) governmentality* marks the emergence of distinctly new modes of thinking about the ways power is exercised in certain societies (Foucault, 1991, pp 102-4). The societies under discussion here are Western European societies since the eighteenth century onwards, the government of which acquires more pronounced early-liberal features. Importantly, however, the sovereign power of the ruler in these societies under the new modalities of power does not disappear, but rather it merges with the special instruments of 'police' that were devised in the sixteenth century for securing a state's internal stability (Foucault, 1991, p 104). Historically the problem of government emerged alongside the mechanisms of sovereignty, which signified the ongoing process of 'the governmentalisation of the state' (Foucault, 1991, p 91; Dean, 1999, pp 102-6), which Rose defines as an invention and assembly of a whole array of technologies that bring together the calculations and strategies of the constitutional, juridical, fiscal and organisational powers of the state in an attempt to manage the economic life, social habits and health of the population (Rose, 1999, p 18). To put it differently, 'the governmentalisation

of the state' created the new matrix of rationality which combined military diplomatic technology in dealing with external challenge, 'police' as a set of instruments for securing the internal growth accounted for widening commerce and monetary circulation and coincident with redefining 'population' as an object of governmental techniques. Henceforth, the emergence of the population as 'a datum, as a field of intervention and as an objective of governmental techniques', or in other words an 'entity' (distinct from the family) to be governed, brought about the isolation of economy into a specific reality and political economy as a discipline and technique of intervention into that reality (Foucault, 1991, p 100).

The birth and evolution of the contemporary meaning of liberal governmentality took place alongside further mutations of the state, its powers and meanings. Likewise, historically liberalism was first assembled as a critique of any type of government or powers of authority and later became the rationality of government itself, however distinct from the previous or succeeding forms of government (Gordon, 1991, p 15; Dean, 1997). In a liberal state population, its welfare, health and efficiency are perceived as the ends of the government of the state. In order to govern properly and to ensure optimisation of the population as the state's resource government must become *economic* government, both in the way it uses monetary resources and in the way it exercises power (Gordon, 1991, pp 3, 8; Dean, 1999, p 19). Consequently, liberalism as a new governmental rationality views the *security* of the economic and social development of the population as its fundamental concern, because security of the population is the basis for the state's prosperity. To achieve these goals liberal state enframes its population in the *apparatuses of security* (the army, police and intelligence services on the one hand, and education, health and welfare on the other).

Returning to the problematics of population, it should be stressed that the discovery of 'population' led to the discovery of 'an individual member of the population' as a living, working and social being. The population-individual linkage introduced a somewhat paradoxical meaning of life as both an autonomous domain and as an object of systematic administration (Dean, 1999, p 99). This way of thinking gave rise to *bio-power* (*power over life*), and - exercise of this power on part of government - *bio-politics*. Bio-politics is characterised by administrative intervention aimed at the optimisation of the health, life and productivity of the population (Foucault, 1994). In other words, bio-politics is a broad terrain of politics entailing the administration of the processes of life of population, the domains of influence of which are:

[S]ocial, cultural, environmental, economic and geographic conditions under which humans live, procreate, become ill, maintain health or become healthy, and die. From this perspective bio-politics is concerned with the family, with housing, living and working conditions, with what we call 'lifestyle', with public health issues, patterns of migration, levels of economic growth and the standards of living. It is concerned with the bio-sphere in which humans dwell. (Dean, 1999, p 99)

For the purposes of more effective administration of life on the level of population bio-politics divides population into sub-groups (children, workforce, elderly, employed/unemployed, refugees, criminals, mentally or physically ill, etc.) which either contribute to the collective prosperity of population or constrain it. The dividing practices of bio-politics seek to prevent, sustain or eliminate certain groups within population. Foucault warns us against these practices, which can clearly lead to bio-political racism or modern racism of the state whereby race appears as a defence mechanism of the life and welfare of the population against internal and external threats. Within the liberal mode of government the unlimited operation of the norms of optimisation of life, ie, bio-political imperative, can be constrained by at least two other dimensions of rule: economy and sovereignty, which both provide liberalism with the possibility for critique (Foucault, 2007). In contrast, within illiberal (authoritarian, national socialism, (post-)colonial, (post-)communist) governmentalities the constraints against bio-political absolutism are limited if non-existent (Dean, 1999, p 131).

The particulars and implications of illiberal governmentality are discussed in more detail in the third part of the paper.

Classical liberalism, which is, according to Dean (1999, p 113), at one level, a version of biopolitics and, at another, is its constant critique, creates unique governmental techniques, which are both individualising, and totalising. In other words, liberalism becomes 'government of all and each', by showing concern for every particular individual and population as a whole. This line of thought about government on the level of an individual requires the exercise of a certain kind of freedom or self-government in order to assure individual and collective prosperity (Gordon, 1991, p 19; Rose, 1999, p 63). In other words, a liberal state governs through freedom and in the name of freedom, however, the exercise of this freedom is submissive to what is considered 'normal' within a society. This 'Foucauldian paradox' Garland names critical and revelatory in explaining why choice and individuality are now all-intrusive cultural themes in contemporary societies with entrepreneurial-consumerist 'regimes of truth' (Garland, 1999, p 29; Foucault, 1991)

Thus to conclude an introduction to the meanings of governmentality is to reiterate that new (liberal) governmentality captures the birth of the new forms of reasoning about exercise of government (on state level and on the level of the self) in Western societies organised around interlinked modalities of power: pastoral power of the state (sovereignty), the rise of disciplinary power and 'power over life' (bio-power), which is constrained with their critique (power of freedom) and at the same time rationality of government (liberalism). The interplay of these modalities of power in its turn is internalised by the subjects in the form of self-government. Governmentality in its broad meaning stands for the activity of the government which rationalises its existence through the knowledge of sciences integral to the state and through the forms of sovereign power modified in the course of history and delegated to the variety of institutions and mechanisms. In its both meanings, governmentality stresses the interdependence between governmental practices and mentalities of government that rationalise and often perpetuate existing practices of 'conduct of conduct'.

According to Dean (1999), we govern ourselves and others by exercising our thinking about 'what we take to be true about who we are'. To put it differently, we govern according to what we consider to be the truths about our existence. As a result the particular ways in which we govern give rise to producing truth about society, education, employment, inflation, taxes, trades and so on. In governmentality literature these organised practices, through which people are governed and through which they govern others, are defined as *regimes of practices* or *regimes of government*, which involve practices for the production of knowledge and truth through various forms of practical and calculative rationality. Using governmentality as a conceptual tool implies that the rationality of government, whether it is concerned with the production of truth or the creation of reality (in which the exercise of power is deemed to be rational), can be investigated and exposed.

Perceptions of governmentality in education policy studies

Until the 1990s, there had been few policy studies working with the concept of governmentality. This was partly because the underlying methodological tenets post-structuralism offers challenge the possibility of an objective analysis of the social context (ie, the very foundations of positivist social research). Yet, the increasing number of recent post-structuralist policy studies by Ball (2006), Edwards (2003), Fairclough (2000) Olssen (2006), Peters (2004), Simons (2006) and Tikly (2003), with their focus on language, power, discourses and locality, show the powerful explanatory force of post-structuralism in general, and governmentality in particular. In this regard, although post-structuralist policy studies are highly diversified in their problematics, there is one major similarity. They all attempt to capture the complex 'genealogy of the present' (Foucault, 1991; Dean, 1999) in an attempt to

understand how this particular form of the present has come into 'being' and what conditions have accounted for particular 'regimes of truth' being prioritised among other competing truths.

Anglo-American context

The rapidly growing influence of Foucault's works on educational research at the turn of the century is undeniable. The studies of Ball (1990), Marshall (1990), Peters and Wain (2002), Edwards (2002), Tikly (2003), Andersson and Fejes (2005), Masschelein *et al.*, (2007) and Simons (2006, 2007) are some of the governmentality-concept-inspired examples in education research and policy sociology. Among existing studies which build upon Foucault's other concepts of power, knowledge, discourse, subjectivity, technologies of self, normalisation and genealogy, are works by Ball (1990, 1994), Codd (1988), Fairclough (2000), Olssen (2006), Peters (2001a, 2001b, 2003), Peters and Humes (2003), Walkerdine (1986) and others. There is an extensive account and further discussion of Foucault's influence on educational research in Popkewitz and Brennan (1998), Ball (1990), Peters (2004), Marshall (1996, 1998) and Masschelein *et al.* (2007), the discussion of which goes beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I will primarily refer to selected studies by Ball (1990, 1994, 2006), Trowler (1998), Edwards (2003), Peters (2000, 2001, 2003, 2004), Tikly (2003) Christie and Sidhu (2006), Pongratz (2006) and Simons (2006, 2007), which, in focusing on practices and discourses generated on the national and/or transnational level, bring new important dimensions and insights into policy-making process as technologies of government. Furthermore, this scholarship clearly indicates a new area of governmentality studies which analyse how education policy discourses and practices on the level of the state become internalised and embedded on the level of the self. During the discussion, primary attention will be given to the studies that grasp the behaviour or if you wish 'conduct of conduct' of the nation states in response to external modes of power such as pan-European governmental strategies, challenges posed by economic globalisation or global discourses of learning society, performativity, competencies, etc.

Ball's contribution to policy studies and to the understanding of Foucault's scholarship is enormous. Starting with his studies on educational management in 1990, which clearly demonstrate Foucault's influence, Ball proceeds with a much-cited dual theoretical conceptualisation of *policy as text* and *as discourse*. The impact of the concept of governmentality can be traced to Ball's (1994) definition of neo-liberal education policy as a discourse justified through already established 'regimes of truth' such as marketisation, performativity and standards. Moreover, it is through these 'regimes' that people exercise power and govern themselves and others (Ball, 1994, p 22). Drawing on Ball, Trowler suggests that discourse does not just represent and help to create reality but also disguises the created nature of social reality by denying the alternatives. He argues:

Policy-makers, then, can and do constrain the way we think about education in general and specific education policies in particular, through the language in which they frame policies. The use of discursive repertoires drawn from business, marketing and finance is one of the ways by which this is accomplished. Franchising, credit accumulation, delivery of learning outcomes, the possession of skills and competencies, skills audit and the rest can become part of everyday discourse and begin to structure the way people think about education. Perhaps most important, they work to exclude other possible ways of conceptualising the nature of education. (Trowler, 1998, pp 132, 133)

The above quote suggests that political and policy discourses in modern societies apart from concealing the possibility for reaction and critique, work to construct amendable and easy to govern individuals. Hindess (2000) extends this idea even to democracy, by claiming that discourses of democracy are just another means of disciplining and normalising individuals and 'making them compliant subjects of the liberal democratic state' (Hindess, 2000 cited in

Dryzek, 2002, p 17). With its focus on language, power and discourse, Fairclough's works (1992, 2000, 2006) are worth mentioning here. Although not focusing on education policy explicitly, these studies provide an advanced theoretical framework for using critical discourse analysis (cf. Foucauldian discourse analysis) to expose discursive tactics utilised by power elites in gaining control over public perception. These tactics include, but are not limited to, calculative manipulation of language, the work of 'spin doctors' and 'impression-makers', who together with the New Labour policy objectives are targets of Fairclough's sharp critique.

In similar vein, Ball's approach provides a critique of the neo-liberal turn in education policy by showing that the effect of policy is primarily discursive as it changes and deconstructs the possibilities for thinking otherwise, thus limiting our responses to change (Ball, 1994, p 23). However, Foucault sees an opportunity for opposing strategy within any discursive formation:

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not that of criticising the ideological content [...] [b]ut of knowing that it is possible to constitute a new politics of truth. The problem is not one of changing people's 'consciousness' or what's in their heads, but the political, economic, institutional regime of production of truth. (Foucault, 1979, p 47)

Taking this claim on board, Peters (2000 and 2001) connects Foucault's notion of governmentality to a neo-liberal paradigm of education policy, by raising questions of managerialism and self-governance in education, entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial self. Yet, Peters claims the 'most fertile land' of Foucault's research proved to be the connections between the genealogies of the self and governmentality, in producing 'truth-telling as an educational practice of the self' (Peters, 2003, 2004). Edwards (2003) in his turn works together with Foucault's 'panoptic mechanism' and governmentality and applies this tool to the analysis of contemporary policy initiatives aimed at young working-class women in Australia. The study by Christie and Sidhu (2006) conducted in the same national context discusses the regimes of practices of the Australian government in dealing with asylum seek children. The authors call into question governmental technologies, which neglect and make rights of children invisible in a democratic state. Christie and Sidhu warn us against the tendency when these sometimes repressive practices become normalised and find justification in the eyes of ordinary citizens.

The context of the EU

The focus of the following studies is the construction of education policy discourses in different member states of the EU and in particular in Sweden, Germany and Belgium. The rise of the governmentality studies in continental Europe can be attributed to the processes of 'governmentalisation of Europe' (cf. 'fabricating Europe' Novoa and Lawn, 2002) and seen as member states' responses to the mechanisms of the soft power of euro-governmentality. Thus, for example, Andersson and Fejes' study (2005) focuses on the construction of an adult learner as a subject in Swedish education policy. Drawing on Foucauldian governmentality and genealogy the authors trace the shift in assessment policy discourses in the last fifty years from general knowledge and experiences to competences and performance which are to be evaluated. Pongratz's paper analysis the discourses which accompany the emergence of audit cultures in education and an intense political debate which sparked in Germany in relation to the results of international comparative study PISA. The analysis shows that audit cultures become a stimulus and a way of normalisation, through which techniques of political domination become internalised by the practitioners into technologies of the self in the forms of 'voluntary self-control' (Pongratz, 2006).

The recent collection of studies 'The Learning Society from the Perspective of Governmentality' (Masschelein *et al.*, 2007) brings together the European and Anglo-

American scholarship on the learning society concept which is propagated in national policy documents and advocated by world policy agencies. It is shown how 'learning society' overarching discourse is further translated into 'life long learning', 'space for European higher education', 'performativity' and other related discourses. The studies featured in the volume demonstrate novel approaches to the questions of governance and governmentality by presenting educational ideas and programmes as the elements of the government and self-government accorded to specific 'truth games'. By unravelling contemporary regimes of truths and by providing multi-dimensional analysis of the learning society concept the studies stress the link between political power wielded in our societies on the one hand and the educational ideas and practices which play a constitutive role in the process of subjectification (ie, creating governable subjects) on the other hand. This collection is a compulsory reading for every researcher who sets the task of understanding the interplay between the power over knowledge, political power and power over life in advanced liberal democracies.

Two studies by Simons (2006, 2007) require some special comments here for they revitalise and modify Foucault's terms in somewhat new and thought-provoking ways. In the earlier paper Simons uses Foucault's notion of 'bio-politics' to map 'European Space for Higher Education' as an infrastructure for entrepreneurship or an area of 'constant economical tribunal' whereby the economic invades every aspect of the social by breaking down the distinctions between them. The study shows that within the emerging regime of economic terror fostering 'learning as investment' can be turned into a mechanism that can 'let die' or even 'make die' (Simons, 2006). Another study introduces the concepts of 'euro-governmentality' and 'synoptical power' to examine the changing role of the EU member states in construction of education policy. Euro-governmentality enables the analysis of new modes of 'governmentalisation' and 'conduct of conduct' both on the level of the EU and member states. Synoptical power (cf. 'panoptical power' Foucault, 1991) signifies the power arrangements when the many (policy-actors, member states, etc.) watch and observe the few (practitioners, schools, the optimal performing member states, etc.) and 'the conduct of conduct' takes the form of 'feedback on performance'. In other words, the strategies of euro-governmentality ensure the optimal performance of all and each and act upon the 'need for feedback' and 'will to learn' of the actors involved (Simons, 2007).

Limitations of governmentality studies

However, alongside the advances in governmentality studies, there are some serious limitations. For example, Garland raises criticisms of the language used in governmentality analysis, whereby some of the concepts are neologisms (eg, 'governmentality', 'bio-power'), others are historical terms (eg, 'police', *raison d'Etat*), and others are conventional terms with somewhat unconventional meanings (eg, 'liberalism', 'security'). This terminological confusion is present in Foucault's discussion of 'liberalism' for describing the present, which leads to uncertain linkage between 'liberal', 'welfare' and 'neo-liberal' (state) since some of the governmentality writers counterpose 'liberal' to 'welfare' while others emphasise that liberalism is a characteristic of a welfare state. Similar concerns are raised about the distinctions between the 'governmentalised state' and 'interventionalist state'; 'governmental' and 'political'; 'state' and 'non-state' in governmentality studies (Garland, 1999, pp 26-38). I see shortcomings of governmentality as a concept due to the fact that everything can potentially be gathered under its banner, as it is hardly possible to delineate a single process in society or self which is not influenced by the 'conduct of conduct' be it liberal or authoritarian (Dean, 1999, pp 10-16; Foucault, 1982, pp 220-21; Gordon, 1991, p 2). Stenson also targets the categorical ambiguity of governmentality studies. For example, he maintains, it is misleading to separate technologies of governmentality from discipline and sovereignty, because they are 'not equivalent entities'. Instead it is more productive to perceive 'governmentality as a broad framework of governance, within which discipline and the sovereign control over territory operate simultaneously' (Stenson, 1999, p 54).

On another note, Garland (1999, p 28) addresses the incomplete nature of Foucault's genealogies of the mentalities of government, which, in his view, do not grasp the present-day practices of government in contrast to Foucault's other genealogies: of the prison, asylum or sexuality, for example. According to Hindess (1997, cited in Larner and Walters, 2004), the analytics of governmentality written in the post-Foucault period fail to adequately distinguish between the governmental and the political following Foucault's tendency of avoiding the 'ideological' aspect of government and instead focusing primarily on the technical and knowledge-based practices that directly shape subjectivity. Another limitation of governmentality, according to Kerr (1999), is that it attempts to explain political processes without identifying political actors (cf. Larner, 2000). O'Malley is critical about the under-estimation and under-representation of the accounts of grass-roots/non-elite politics in governmentality research (O'Malley, 1996, pp 310-26; Stenson, 1999, p 57). That is something I will need to be aware of and take into account in my own research on educational policy-making in post-communist Ukraine, where grass-root politics gradually but increasingly influences public perception of governmental discourses.

Applications of Governmentality to non-Western (Post-Colonial and Post-Communist) States

Up to this point the discussion on applications of governmentality has been mainly concerned with Western European and Anglo-American liberal and neo-liberal states. However, the openings suggested by Dean (1999, pp 131-48) on illiberality of liberal government and authoritarian governmentality although finding continuation in social sciences (see Blake, 1999; Kalpagam, 2000; Sigley, 2006; Trankell and Ovesen, 2004) is only now tentatively beginning to find its place in education policy studies. Before commencing the concluding discussion on illiberal governmentality, let me give a brief account of the three major points raised by Dean in relation to underlying similarities between liberal and illiberal forms of power important for the argument developed further in the paper. First, there are pronounced continuities between the authoritarian governmentality and liberal or social form of rule, because illiberal governmentality, as well as liberal, is assembled from the elements of sovereignty and bio-power. Moreover, authoritarian governmentality can also be located along the trajectory of 'governmentalisation of the state'; however, the construction of subjects under the authoritarian form of rule does not imply the attributes of responsible freedom and possibility of critique, but is based on the subject's complete obedience to the forms of authority. Secondly, the illiberality of the liberal government is rooted in practices that divide the population into certain groups and in doing so exclude some categories of the population from the status of autonomous rational and free individuals. In this example liberal rule is consistent with the exclusion politics of authoritarian rule. Thirdly, the bio-political imperative aimed at perfection of the population through various programmes ranging from eugenics to 'justified' extermination of certain groups or nationalities shows the hidden threats of bio-power unconstrained by any other forms of power or critique. Foucault (1979, pp 136-7) refers to this dark side of bio-politics as the new, more sophisticated killing machine of the twentieth century. Continuing this line of argument, Dean admits that:

It is true, perhaps that many of our worst nightmares tend to be realized when these elements of sovereignty and bio-political rule are articulated somewhat differently from the way they are in liberalism... [Furthermore,] [T]he continuities between authoritarian and liberal governmentality, together with the recovery of the illiberal components of liberalism, remind us of the dangers of not calling into question the self-understanding of liberalism as a limited government acting through the knowledge of the processes of life yet, at the same time, safeguarding the rights of the political and juridical subject. (Dean, 1999, pp 145-6).

In education policy studies there is a clear gap in research that adapts governmentality to a non-Western context, the rare exception being the work by Tikly (2003), which actively engages with this concept in his analysis of post-apartheid educational policies in South Africa. The partial explanation for this uneven perception of governmentality in a non-Western context may be that the local researchers in post-colonial and/or post-communist countries were isolated from the Western theoretical tradition for a number of decades and would more eagerly interact with positivist or critical theory traditions (the results of which can be generalised and used for policy recommendations) than with uncertain and vague post-structuralist concepts. Western researchers, in their turn, although showing some interest in post-colonial and post-communist developments, tend to focus more on the transformations in their own countries triggered by trans-national policy actors like the EU, World Bank and the like.

Tikly, being a rare but so needed exception from this tendency, claims that the governmentality approach is beneficial for explaining the evolving policy discourses in the region. In his study, governmentality has a more specific meaning as it stands for the various ways in which power is exercised in certain societies, whereas education policy is defined as the forms of political programme that use the technologies of government and are consistent with the underlying rationality of government (Tikly, 2003). In a similar vein, the research in progress on educational policy-making in post-communist Ukraine draws on the governmentality approach in an attempt to unravel the process of secondary-level education policy formation on the level of the state. A brief introduction to Ukraine is important here in order to understand how this country's particulars can challenge the applications of governmentality concept.

Introducing post-communist Ukraine to governmentality studies

Ukraine is a large and diverse post-communist country with strong regional, linguistic, social and religious divisions, the causes of which are rooted deep in the history of this 'unexpected nation' (Wilson, 2000) that was stateless until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, according to Krawchenko, the most prominent contemporary social divide in Ukraine is not ethnic but along the rural-urban lines (Krawchenko, 1993). The name Ukraine comes from the word 'borderland', which in fact reveals much of the country's history: this territory has been a frontier where the geographically open steppe and protective forest meet, culturally it has been an intersection point between Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam, politically this land was on the border between the Russian Empire, Habsburg Empire and Crimean Khanate and later between the Soviet Union and its satellite states, and now between two mega-powers Russia and the EU (Yekelchuk, 2007, p 4). These multiple contemporary and historical influences on the one hand prevented post-communist political Ukraine from reverting to strong authoritarianism (Way, 2005), but coupled with the weak commitment of the new (but in fact 'old') leadership towards political, social and economic reforms on the other hand led towards huge disparities between policy declarations/discourses which acquired distinct democratic connotations and practices which remained almost unchanged from the Soviet times. The Soviet legacies include multi-layered state policy-making which is diffuse and unconstrained by public consultation and is characterised by the duplication of authority, whereby various branches of government produce a large number of 'quasi-legislative' policy documents, which are poorly coordinated and their implementation is hardly ever monitored (Sundakov, 2001, p 10). Kuzio summarises this common practice as 'All CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] states – Ukraine included – have a penchant for drafting long documents that are then ignored or only partially fulfilled. These are more akin to letters of intent than contractual obligations' (Kuzio, 2004, p 18). The policy process is not piloted or monitored, but a 'control' over the process is undertaken. However, the 'control' objectives are to test the policy procedure but not the policy outcomes. Hence, the 'chaotic administration' of the policy-making process in Ukraine is

dominated by a 'fire-fighting' approach, ie, the focus of government is on immediate problems with little capacity for sustained policy-making (Krawchenko, 1997, p 12).

The results of my earlier MPhil study on the educational policy-making in Ukraine, which were based on Foucauldian discourse analysis, revealed a number of different ways in which the Ukrainian policy-makers use global 'travelling policies' (Jones and Alexiadou, 2001) to fill 'empty' post-communist discourses with an external democratic rhetoric. The Ukrainian government's perpetuation of the official discourse of Europeanisation has made the state extremely receptive to external aid and advice, while on the national level strong centralism and the state monopoly of the policy-making process has remained almost unchanged since the Soviet or even pre-Soviet era. National government shows its two-faceted character, when at the transnational level government becomes a receptive agent of external influence and transmitter of this influence, while at the national level it intensifies its central control of education. These strong external influences and persisting legacies as well as disparities between discourses and practices make Ukrainian educational policy-making a very interesting case for the analysis of governmentality studies.

Concluding remarks: overcoming conceptual and methodological limitations

However, applying the governmentality concept to a post-communist context might be limited for several major reasons. The first and most important is that Foucault's concept was originally developed and utilised for liberal states, which is not the case in post-colonial and/or post-communist countries. Foucault puts into question even the existence of socialist governmentality:

Is there an adequate socialist governmentality? What governmentality is possible as a strictly, intrinsically and autonomously socialist governmentality? In any case, (...) if there is a real socialist governmentality, it is not hidden within socialism and its texts. It cannot be deduced from them. It must be invented! (Foucault, 1981, p 95 cited in Foucault, 2007, p 371)

To overcome this methodological and categorical limitations Tikly (2003, pp 163, 166) develops the concepts of 'illiberal governmentality' and 'governmentality-in-the-making'. 'Illiberal governmentality' can be defined as a form of the rationality of government that reinforces the division between the governors and the governed and the domination of one group over the other based - in the case of South Africa - on 'symbolics of blood' (an element of monarchical sovereignty). This rationality becomes internalised by the citizens and leads to the emergence of bio-political racism.

However, the practices of state racism do not always speak the language of race. In the case of a communist country the masses were mobilised in the name of class and the division was based on the 'symbolics of party membership' and the fabrication of a particular form of history (eg, 'liberation of the working class', 'equality for all Soviet people', 'building the communist future', 'following the laws of dialectics and Marxism-Leninism') that justifies the *status quo* of political intolerance and totalising surveillance via the apparatuses of security. The concept of 'governmentality-in-the-making' captures the form of political rationality (in the aftermath of political and social change), in which the discursive space has acquired liberal connotations, while the practices and legacies of the previous regime still persist on the level of government and on the level of the self. As Tikly (2003, p 166) puts it, 'governmentality-in-the-making' consists of complex and often contradictory elements 'which provide both continuity and discontinuity with what went before'. I think this conceptualisation of governmentality-in-the-making will be applicable for the study of post-communist Ukraine.

Another possible limitation of governmentality theory is that the policy concept confines itself to a definition of government programmes and/or technologies, leaving such dimensions of *policy as discourse* and *policy as process* under-conceptualised. However, this will be addressed by the fact that my PhD study is in a post-structuralist vein with its views of policy as text, action and discourse. Therefore, I will utilise governmentality as a conceptual tool in conjunction with more general post-structural notions of policy as discourse and policy as process. Finally, I am aware of Foucault's generous invitation to use and adapt his concepts to particular empirical contexts rather than treating them as closed theoretical frameworks.

To sum up, governmentality as a conceptual tool opens up a new area of research, which is neither historical nor sociological *per se*, because it does not seek the answers to what happened and why. Rather, to operationalise governmentality is 'to adopt a particular point of view which brings certain questions into focus: that dimension of our history composed by intervention, contestation, operationalisation and [the] transformation of more or less rationalised schemes, programmes, techniques and devices which seek to shape conduct so as to achieve certain ends' (Rose, 1999, p 20). Governmentality helps to interrogate the questions of how 'being' has been 'shaped into thinkable and manageable ways' (*ibid*), what discursive techniques were involved in the creation of reality and how the modern operations of power/knowledge are established. That is exactly what I will attempt to achieve in my study of post-communist Ukraine.

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