

Greek Educational Policy: From the Collaborative Model of the School Counselor Institution of the A. Papandreou's (1981) Educational Policy towards the Model of Superintendence and Supervision of the Period 2008-2013

Kalerante Evaggelia¹

¹ Assistant Professor, University of W. Macedonia, Greece

Correspondence: Kalerante Evaggelia, Assistant Professor, University of W. Macedonia, Greece. E-mail: ekalerante@yahoo.gr

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Abstract

The present paper is concerned about the Greek educational policy throughout 2008-2013, which is related to teachers' evaluation and their teaching work, in comparison to the one implemented in 1981. The investigation is focused on Primary and Secondary Education in which the policy of intentions as well as legislation are concentrated on a form of evaluation in successive levels. In this respect, the dysfunctions or discords of the educational system, which theoretically impede or make difficult the effective educational work performance, are interpreted under different terms.

The issue of evaluating teachers is of special interest because Papandreou's educational policy, which was implemented in 1981, was conducive to abolishing any form of educators' control and superintendence. This way emphasis was placed on a policy by which the teacher was supposed to co-operate with school counselors, namely advisors who collaborated with teachers, working independently within the educational environment. Since 2008, emphasis has been placed on the teaching work superintendence by school counselors being the ones to determine the teachers' professional evolution, through an institutionalization of supervision and control procedures. This aspect is also incorporated in the education reform model aiming at its alignment with the European evaluation model.

Keywords: Comparative Educational policy, Evaluation, Superintendence

1. Introduction

The educational steps implemented in Greece during two different eras are being studied in the present paper. They are related to different interpretations of the educational objectives, and they are associated with the economic growth, social progress and prosperity. The first period commences in 1981 when a new policy is introduced following Andreas Papandreou's election as Prime Minister; the founder of the Panhellenic Socialist Party (P.A.S.O.K) in Greece. Reference is made to the formulation of education with emphasis on the new legislation about the structure and content of the surveillance instruments in education which are traditionally tied to the exercise of surveillance and discipline.

The first period schematically commences in 2008 and lasts up to 2013. Its major characteristic is the economic crisis (Allen, 2013; Dove, 2011; Krugman, 2009; Mitsopoulos & Pelagidis, 2012). The second period is explored in terms of education and in comparison to the first one, with emphasis on surveillance instruments in education and on structural features implying the educators' control and authority (Andreou & Papakonstantinou, 1994; Grolios & Tzikas, 2002; Zambeta, 1992) by certain instruments as well as the educational work supervision. The aim is to elevate educational situations within the unified context of educational policy as this is stated in the two different political periods. They are connected, within a different political content, in terms of the Greek nation state organization, the interpretation of the citizens' role within the social unity as well as broader issues related to the decrease of social inequality (Sernau, 2010). Furthermore, in the earlier period the socialist discourse had been articulated through policies of equalization and political moral in education.

The focal point of the second period is concerned with the question how the economic paradigm tied to cost curtailment affects education, through a process of oppressive panoptic supervision of the educational procedures,

under both political and economic terms. As a result another policy about control and surveillance of education is gradually being formulated. The comparative approach of the two different periods, as political models of educational policy implementation, is of special interest. This way the variety of political discourse is potentially elevated. This is conducive to directing and affecting the structure and functionality of education (Foucault & Sheridan, 1995).

2. The policy of 1981 about education: The implementation of a socialist policy

The Panhellenic Socialist Party (P.A.S.O.K.) gains the election with a high percentage of 48% (Kalerante, 2013a; Kariotis, 1992). This is a representation mainly of the middle and lower strata expectations for a change in the political scene which was basically tied to the economic blooming of households and the provision of broader educational opportunities tied to ongoing social mobility (Allesio, 2013; Boudon, 1974; Heath, 1981). The slogans of the particular period highlight the concept of “people” in combination to the concept of “authority”. At the same time reference is made to the civic principle of the people’s rights, namely of the middle and lower strata so that their life is defined in better terms.

The victory of the socialists in Greece signaled the end of a period when the right conservative governments were prevailing. Therefore, the first socialist government, after the fall of dictatorship, should prove that they hold a different political discourse, which was also articulated in education. Besides, they should provide proof of being able to shape and determine a different educational model tied to reinforcing policies about the right in education for broader population groups with a simultaneous increase of education expenses as support to the 9-year compulsory education. This way new prerequisites would be generated for the middle and lower strata so that they could define, in a different manner, their professional orientation, also tied to their social status. Politically speaking, it could be said that the socialist party aimed to change the educational paradigm through the creation of opportunity structures for the unprivileged ones of the educational system. Thus, they would be given the opportunity to set their objectives and define their choices beyond the boundaries of lower social strata. In other words, it was a process of educational reorganization in which the issue of inequality limitation and humanism were defined under different terms. Arguably, A. Papandreou’s government aimed at the promotion of progressive educational steps such as the establishment of the Greek demotic language, the single-stressed system and the democratic function of Higher Education, according to Law 1268/1982, along with the participation of the educational carriers and students in the operation of the institutes (Bouzakis, 1991).

Within this context, one of the first legislative steps of the socialist party was the functional reorganization of education so that the bureaucratic structures could work under different terms. The focal points are both content and organization of education as well as the function of those carriers tied to the formulation and implementation of the educational policy. The policy apparently focuses on a democratic model of authority in which the effective function of educational bureaucracy is pursued. This way educators and activities of educational institutes are discreetly supervised by educational carriers while their intervening role is counseling as this is exercised by the educational administration. Thus, emphasis is placed on the collaboration between the administration of educators and the broader society towards the formation of a model which would fulfill the expectations of the educational community and contribute to the progress and prosperity of the entire society (Bouzakis, 2003).

The educational objectives were stated through Law 1263/1982 and Law 1304/1982 in which superintendents and supervisors in Primary and Secondary Education are abolished whereas school counselors are appointed. A semiotic analysis (Semetsky, 2010) of the two terms, supervisor and school counselor, is distinctive of the different educational content (Kalerante, 2013b). A supervisor is associated with monitoring and panoptic supervision of educators and educational institutes. His role is to guide educators towards discipline and responsibility. Throughout the history of education supervisors were tied to exercising authoritative policies. Moreover, their election and appointment across the country were distant from meritocracy. On the contrary, they reflected old models of executives’ climbing the career ladder; actually the close collaborators of the political system.

A school counselor, on the contrary, is the educator’s fellow-traveler and collaborator (Andreou, 1986; Greek Teachers’ Union [G. T.U.], 1982). Together they concentrate on emerging problem solving. This way the educator can feel secure when collaborating with the school counselor within a broader sense of educational reformation. In order to establish confidence in school counselors, it is important to change the system of election in which emphasis should be placed on quantitative and qualitative election criteria.

There were dissents about the school counselor’s role, due to the educational system’s lack of preparation to accept a functional educational model the main standpoint of which is the absence of violent and oppressive choices (G. T.U., 1987). There is a gradual articulation of viewpoints about assuming responsibilities and supervision by the school

counselors with a possibility of evaluating educators. This possibility will be tied to penalties or dismissal, which are tentative and conflict - provoking issues with the educators' unions. Yet, the socialist policy managed to meet the educators' requests about other forms of education as it was stated in Law 1566/1985 about the "Structure and function of Primary and Secondary Education and other stipulations" which was published in the Government Gazette 167A. In this respect, Law 1566/1985, about the "Structure and function of Primary and Secondary Education and other stipulations" underlines the objectives of education. It is the first time that emphasis is placed through a long text on the role of school concerning the shaping of the citizen who will show respect to the democratic principles and contribute to the reinforcement of democracy and humanism. Thus, collaboration will prevail and educators will be acknowledged within an environment of mutual acceptance. Besides, they will collaborate with special carriers who will be more likely to associate education with the new scientific reality and society, under political terms. The foundation of the Pedagogical Institute serves on a first level of the special scientific sector towards the educational reformation. It undertakes broader initiatives on teachers' training, school books writing and the promotion of the scientific work. On a second level the association with society is made through the National Council of Education. The basic prerequisite is the function of prefectural and municipal committees of education. The government obviously aims to provide functional education, in which the educational community and the citizens' society collaborate within an effective educational procedure. According to Law 1566/1985 about the Pedagogical Institute and the committees of education, there is special detailed reference to the work and responsibilities as well as a general framework about the political role of the corresponding carriers.

3. The economic crisis period 2008-2013: Educational policies and objectives during a transitional period

Schematically speaking, 2008 is the starting point of the economic crisis. Penalties are enforced on Greece about the financial choices of the former period. Education is faced with these consequences, namely cost curtailments on education and a gradual change of the educational functional model. Cost curtailments were implemented within the context of schools shrinking or abolishment in all educational grades while the educational personnel (Kalerante & Kontopoulou, 2012) was simultaneously dismissed or transferred elsewhere. Decreased expenses resulted in limiting costs on school materials. Besides, middle and lower social strata were detached from the possibility to access knowledge and educational goods tied to life improvement and decreased inequalities.

There are an increasing number of students per classroom while a negative educational environment for both educators and students is being formed as they experience, insecurity and uncertainty (Bauman, 2006). This is the outcome of a structural condition, on a macro-level, and the inefficient political choices, on a micro-level. The "transmuted" socialist governments and the subsequent conservative ones proceeded to the implementation of educational measures which have resulted in social exclusions and marginalization. The issue of supervising the educational work is again under examination through the gradual establishment of a policy concentrated on the educators' monitoring and the association of evaluation with their promotion and increase of salary.

Educators' evaluation and the function of schools have been put forward since 1984 under different terms (Athanasίου, 1998; Mavrogiorgos, 1993). In this respect emphasis was placed on the counseling nature, so that the educational community is able to contribute to the materialization of the educational work. In other words, it would be incorporated in the broader plan of education reconstruction in which the political discourse about democracy and humanism was tied to the political discourse of the state reformation and reconstruction by putting forward the demand for social equality.

During the economic crisis period educators' evaluation is incorporated in the broader model of symbolic violence. In this respect the syndrome of fear, uncertainty and insecurity is dominant in the Greek state which does not seem to formulate a policy based on the broader political plan of reorganization. Thus, the issue of a severe function of hierarchy with responsibilities about supervision, monitoring and penalties upon the lowest level of hierarchy, namely educators, is not based on a rational form of educational organization. It rather brings back former roles and dominating models prior to 1981 when the political party model and the cliental system were prevailing through the imposition of choices against meritocracy (Touloupis, 2013). Besides, the work of educators who were independent from political parties but part of the educational intellect was obstructed.

4. Conclusions

Based on the comparative analysis of the legislation of 1981 and after that year, it can be argued that the period of 1981 is more optimistic towards a form of education conducive to economic growth and prosperity. A. Papandreou's educational policy which was implemented in 1981 is concentrated on socialist ideals about the reformation of society through education. More specifically, social inequalities bluntness and the creation of opportunity structures for lower social strata are pursued. Authority-related hierarchy becomes looser as the objective is centered round the

emphasis on co-operation instead of the carriers' imposition of power and authority through fear and penalties. The school counselor is regarded as the educator's collaborator and not as supervisor, who provides assistance to problem-solving situations aiming at the maximization of performance generated by the educational system through the collaboration of all educational carriers.

In contrast to the above conditions, a new educational reality is shaped by the economic crisis (2008-2013) resulting in the development of an environment in which previously formed progressive choices, are cancelled. Discipline orders are put into force. The outcome is the reinforcement and naturalization of symbolic violence. As regards the educational environment, there is a transfer from the school counselor of 1981 reform to the school counselor-supervisor who is given administrative authority according to legislative regulations. Besides, he does not seem to be aligned to the counseling nature of his role about the educators' instructional work.

Within a society in which the economic measures have been conducive to social instability and political deregulation, education and its functioning do not contribute to society's reformation and enhancement of the educators' self-confidence. Moreover, democratic patterns are not effectively promoted and their function is being supportive to the elite's education being able to access a variety of educational "packages" mostly from various forms of informal education. The Primary and Secondary Education teachers' community feels powerless and enfeebled within a political system in which their educational work is not acknowledged. School operation has become poor due to cost curtailments on education. At the same time, the teachers' panoptic supervision is gradually imposed. In this respect, it is possible to meet former "narrations" of the educational history in which intellectual educators were persecuted for their ideological discourse (Noutsos, 1986) and their vision for education.

Within an environment of oppressive monitoring and uncertainty, the educator is unable to implement innovative pedagogic principles. Furthermore, there is no possibility to experiment with educational tools, to co-function with his students in a creative educational environment. There is a consensus that the evaluation of both the instructional work and schools is important as long as rational criteria are set and provided that the state is willing to invest more money on education which could eventually be the solution to the economic problem. Within a period of economic crisis, the re-examination of the educational model and the selection of effective policies are put forward by the economy of knowledge so that the educators feel safe, rather than disdained or marginalized. As a result their work at school is qualitative.

The educational policy of the economic crisis period represents a falling back to more conservative choices in which the increased number of students per classroom due to schools abolishing, cost curtailments, educators' dismissal and enforcement of the panoptic instructional authority is conducive to canceling democratic functioning, humanism and political moral.

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