

The role of the School Principal through the lenses of the dominant strategy for education

DIMITRIS NIKOLOUDIS

Primary Education Department
Faculty of Education
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Greece
dnikolou@eled.auth.gr

ABSTRACT

During the last decades, in Greece and elsewhere, there has been a sharp shift in educational systems towards privatization. This move is molded within the frame of the general neoliberal policy and its strategic choices. The aim of this paper is to present the most pivotal positions for the role of school principal, as formulated within the context of the dominant political orientation. We focus on general educational changes and on the development of a "new" vision towards a counter-hegemonic realization of the educational and administrative organization of the school. This choice has been made from the perspective of a variety of theoretical prerequisites and pedagogical views, leaving the context of school legislation and the role of executives at the margins of the debate. Finally, we look at the possibilities of formulating an alternative proposal for the teacher and the organisational structure of the school. More specifically, we focused on a number of issues pertaining the role of the school principal and the role of the teaching staff, the decision making process, the social interactions within the school environment, the principles of educational planning and the deployment of the education endeavor within the context of neoliberal strategies. The critical aspect we are arguing for is the interconnection of the internal dynamics of an organizational structure with the external forces. The concept of relative autonomy here is intertwined with the concept of 'pedagogical leadership'. We believe this relationship is the key to answering the central question we have posed, since the "new" educational policy is founded on decentralization through school self-administration, on expanding the exercise of leadership of school principals, on increasing the pressure for assessment and accountability and on the transition of managerial duties from management level to demanding, "high" duties. In conclusion, to the functional patterns for school politics and to the role of the leader, we counter propose the need for the formulation of a more comprehensive response to the school social mission alongside with the collective empowerment of teachers.

KEYWORDS

Neoliberal politics, school principal, school organization, educational leadership, assembly

RÉSUMÉ

Au cours des dernières décennies, en Grèce et ailleurs, il y a eu un changement brutal dans les systèmes éducatifs vers la privatisation. Ce mouvement s'inscrit dans le cadre de la politique néolibérale générale et de ses choix stratégiques. L'objectif de cet article est de présenter les positions les plus cruciales pour le rôle de directeur d'école, telles que formulées dans le contexte de l'orientation politique dominante. Nous nous concentrons sur les changements éducatifs généraux et sur le développement d'une vision « nouvelle » vers une réalisation

contre-hégémonique de l'organisation éducative et administrative de l'école. Ce choix a été fait du point de vue d'une variété de prérequis théoriques et de points de vue pédagogiques, laissant le contexte de la législation scolaire et le rôle des cadres en marge du débat. Enfin, nous examinons les possibilités de formuler une proposition alternative pour l'enseignant et la structure organisationnelle de l'école. Plus précisément, nous nous sommes concentrés sur un certain nombre de questions concernant le rôle du directeur de l'école et le rôle du personnel enseignant, le processus de prise de décision, les interactions sociales dans l'environnement scolaire, les principes de la planification de l'éducation et le déploiement de l'effort d'éducation dans le contexte des stratégies néolibérales. L'aspect crucial que nous défendons est l'interconnexion de la dynamique interne d'une structure organisationnelle avec les forces externes. Le concept d'autonomie relative est ici étroitement lié au concept de "leadership pédagogique". Nous pensons que cette relation est la clé pour répondre à la question centrale que nous avons posée, puisque la "nouvelle" politique éducative est fondée sur la décentralisation par l'auto-administration des écoles, sur l'élargissement de l'exercice du leadership des directeurs d'école, sur l'augmentation de la pression en faveur de l'évaluation et de la responsabilité et sur la transition des fonctions managériales du niveau de gestion vers des fonctions exigeantes et "élevées". En conclusion, en ce qui concerne les modèles fonctionnels de la politique scolaire et le rôle du leader, nous proposons la nécessité de formuler une réponse plus complète à la mission sociale de l'école et à la responsabilisation collective des enseignants.

MOTS-CLÉS

Politique néolibérale, directeur d'école, organisation scolaire, direction éducative, assemblée

THE WIDER DEVELOPMENTS

In the recent decades, educational systems are turning, very intensely, toward privatization in the western advanced capitalist societies and the developing periphery. Usually, the choices that are being made can be justified by the need to move forward and by the need for reforms. This movement is developing within the framework of the neoliberal policy and its strategic choices. The solution proposed within this framework goes hand in hand with the opening of education to the rules of the market. In other words, it conforms to the competition among schools for the attraction of enrollments, to the parental choice of school and to the provision of new services by private and/or state agencies (Ball & Youdel, 2008). We generally observe educational institutions exhibiting intense tendencies of acquiring distinct profiles so as to appear with favorable profiles in the educational markets. The introduction of models of private administration of school affairs is accompanied by the development of roles, with the most characteristic one being that of the school manager. The bureaucratic model is giving up its place to the model of entrepreneurial mobility. Even though the term *management* can be traced back to the distant past, more specifically the 1970's, within a framework of wider reclassifications, it is used as "educational management" so as to decipher organizational changes in the domain of education, which changes are accompanied by the setting of aims, the securing of resources, the control of performance and accountability. Governmental decisions, especially in England, USA, New Zealand (countries which function as a model for educational innovations) and elsewhere, have granted authority to managers to check the school budgets and to administer the matters of employment of their educational personnel. That is, the manager – principal embodies the idea of the self – governed school, which must check and regulate itself (Ball & Youdel, 2008). The mechanisms of self – management and accountability penetrate the school life and make good use of private entrepreneurship as a model. According

to the claims of the adherents of these practices the above mechanisms make the educational processes more transparent, since someone is accountable to someone else for them. The creation of educational markets and the dynamics of competition are reinforced by the fact that parents and schools can select schools and students respectively. The principal of a school in London said: “If you want to improve your school performance, then you must keep track of your enrollments” (Ball & Youdel, 2008). These changes constitute for Apple an essential shift from a school which caters to the needs of the students to an educational model in which students will define through their performance the terms of competition among schools (Apple, 2001). In Greece, attempts to veer educational matters toward similar directions, boil down to the efforts of imposing different forms of school evaluation, the sub – financing of schools from state funds, the fragmentation of the teachers’ work, and more recently, the discussion about school autonomy.

Our attention to the aforementioned transformations constitutes an indispensable choice for the delineation of the historical terms and prerequisites for developing our line of thought and for specifying the aforementioned policies focusing on the role of the school principal. This specific focus steers our interest to the theory which studies the school domain and to the scientific positions which dominate, in recent years in our country, the discussion concerning the public school. More specifically, we will approach our subject from the point of view of the theoretical assumptions and pedagogical approaches, leaving intentionally the framework of the legislation governing the school and the role of the officials in the periphery of the discussion. Finally, we will trace the potential for the expression of an alternative/different proposition about the teacher and the organization of the educational function.

THE PREVAILING POSITIONS CONCERNING THE SCHOOL AND THE PRINCIPAL

The role of the principal and the teachers’ association, the way of making decisions, the social interactions in the school, the principles of the educational design and the meaning of education within the framework of the neoliberal strategies, constitute crucial sides of the issue we analyze. In the previous decades (since the late 1970s) the theory of school organization and the ‘educational micropolitics’ approached the school experience as a living process which sheds light on the deeper structures of education, as a field of relationships with dynamic characteristics and contrast(s). According to Noutsos (1985), the investigation of the inner characteristics of school sociability and of the identities of the acting subjects has functioned as a change of paradigm in the Sociology of Education, since the “macrotheory” has been judged unsuitable for giving convincing answers concerning the social role of the school. The theories accompanying this new orientation are known as “endogenous theories”.

The theory of school organization however, in its predominant expressions, overlooked the distinct and specific nature of the school institution. It carried ideas and proposed practices, which came from other social fields, such as the field of entrepreneurship. The theory of school organization or the sociology of school organization did not borrow only interpretational forms from other social domains but sought theoretical support turning its interest to the distant past of the tradition of Taylorism (Ball, 1993). Additionally, in the core analysis of phenomena, the element of the harmonious coexistence of the sides of the “organism” was utilized. This interpretation and the preference for models of consensus and integration dominated the idea of conflict, which was downgraded to a pathological condition. Moreover, resistance appeared as a problematic pathogenicity which the system must cure. On the opposite side of the above interpretational mode, different approaches were expressed which correspond to a different understanding of the school micropolicy and the relationships within the field. In his interesting

work Stephen Ball points out that the daily life of the school must be approached as a field of contrasts and ideological differentiations, as an “arena” of viewpoints of life in the basis of hierarchically organized relationships (Ball, 1993). The way school is organized becomes understandable as an ideological conflict which reforms the structures. This conflict is not personal. It represents different approaches of life, employment and awareness of various social groups and exists in a conscious form or in a latent one. Evidently, the issue of conflict is more complicated than a glance would indicate. We cannot answer easily whether and to which degree it always has political characteristics, whether the action of the subjects is strategic, whether it has a horizon or whether it is circumstantial and whether it is collective or individual.

The role of the principal is crucial in the investigation of the above theoretical research. It might be him/her that proposes the changes, but also the one who poses hindrances to groups that attempt to introduce forms of educational radicalism, so as to formulate a horizontal relation between the educational process and the social milieu. The principal is referred to as the “*organizational leader*” of the micropolicy of the school. However, we should not underestimate the institutional and social parameters which shape the characteristics of this role (encyclicals, legal framework, hierarchy, parents, religious element, teachers’ associations). Ball presents a typology of roles – styles of principal:

- The *interpersonal style*: Here, the emphasis is placed on the *personal interaction*. The principal’s attempts to create personal contact with the rest of the staff. The members of the teachers’ association are encouraged to function as autonomous professionals who along with the principal will deal with the problems. Here, the informal procedures are more important. The interpersonal style veers toward the informal procedures which bond and bind persons to each other. The problems are faced as private matters would behind closed doors. Obviously this particular type presupposes special social skills and communicative proficiency.
- The *style of manager*: the concept of management points to the tradition of Taylorism. Taylor was a foreman who toured factories and observed which movements of the workers were unnecessary and could be done away with so as to increase productivity. His study *Principles of Scientific Management*, published in 1911, influenced the discussion about the design of the Curriculum, in the same time period (Grollios, 2011).

Management as an organizational practice of the school separates the design from the execution of the production process. Management in education is a model taken from the entrepreneurial field, which adopts the organizational logic of management and of the transformation of the inputs to outputs. The manager is a link between the designers and the doers. In this way, he/she secures the loss of control of the educational process that educators themselves might cause. He makes them part of a chain of actions. Management is a mechanism of bureaucratic supervision, a way of organizational control of procedures. Essentially it is about a logic which disguises sociopolitical problems into technical matters¹.

The principal – manager relies on the above framework. S/he connects with the teachers through formal meetings and committees. The roles and responsibilities of the teachers are, in a way, well-established and publicly documented. In such a mode of relationships, the emphasis does not concern persons but *roles* (person oriented vs position oriented). The purposes and aims of the school are set using terms of measuring and evaluation. The principal promotes those aims which translate into performance and can be measured. The principal can, as a person, be democratic or liberal, management as a system is not. The system is not open to the

¹That is in problems that must be solved directly with an encyclical or decision, while their roots lie in deeper social causes and constitute socio – historical problems.

negotiation of its principles and the principal is a technocrat. The “cultivated” person is replaced by the “special – expert” person.

The *political style*: that matches up two forms/types of managerial organization: a) the one of “political legalization” and b) the other of “covert authority”. In the first case, participation of members is encouraged, and dialogue occupies the center of the procedures. The different approaches are recognized, and issues are negotiated. Ideas are tried in their confrontations, since discourse is the basic medium of communication. However, this process does not always secure the willingness for participation and for common decisions. In the second case, confrontations are avoided, and no opportunities are given to stand for alternative viewpoints. The aim is the discouragement of participation in the dialogue, which appears as a threat to the authority of the “leader” (Ball, 1993).

Based on the aforementioned typology, we note that the types – styles of the managerial practice of authority share a common characteristic: *the safeguarding, in one way or another, of the means for the accomplishment of the final aim, which is the preservation of the political stability within a certain system or relationships*. The autocratic model of organization aims basically at the reproduction of the determinate order of things.

At this point, the key question that must be posed, and which concerns every approach of the school's micropolicy, is to what degree the inner dynamics of an organizational structure are independent of outside influences. In brief, how autonomous the school is from the wider socioeconomic prerequisites of its existence, when these prerequisites are stamped by the historic uniqueness of the prevailing conditions. The answer in sociological terms is that the school is stamped by a type of “relative autonomy”. This particular analysis acknowledges that the state exercises control over schools (teacher, students, parents), however this control cannot be absolute (Giroux, 2004). Moreover, no concept can exist outside the historical framework, when it is considered controversial. In essence, it draws its content from the sociopolitical juncture, from the special conditions within which it is used and the strategic aim it serves. Keeping this limitation in mind, we claim that the concept of relative autonomy, expressed in the conditions of expansion of the systemic dead ends and the escalation of social problems, has changed. Schools are accused of not being able to reach the desirable standards and are in a dangerous correspondence with the needs of the market. In this case, the concept of accountability² is introduced in order to replace or modify radically the concept of relative autonomy. This dimension will be of use to us when we focus on the concept of educational leadership. However, the notion of accountability is uttered in the same framework with the idea of school autonomy. As it has been studied, during the last two decades, the concept of school autonomy has been associated to the dominant political agenda of the educational systems and the decrease of public cost, part of the social control imposed by the prevailed educational policies. This schema has been shaped by reports of supranational organizations (for example the OECD) as well as by the indigenous dominant discourse (Kalimeridis, 2016).

School autonomy is connected to the political decentralization and the introduction of public management in education, which is based on evaluation on the basis of the services offered to consumers – persons. Similar ideas and initiatives, which are derivatives from the core of the neoliberal ideologues, tested in national educational policies since the mid 1980. The reformation of the educational administration, of which the principal is considered a crucial factor, presupposes the fragmentation of the uniform character of the public systems to entities which will compete with each other for a better position in the educational market. The principal will be the one who will take the initiatives so as his/hers school will become attractive for

² Lately, the term has assumed a double dimension and refers to the technical accountability and prospect of the client.

enrollments. The crucial role of the principal is apparent at the OECD annual report for the 2011, where the principals must acquire practical skills concerning problem solving situations. At the same report it is pointed out that in Greece we observe the lowest percentage of responsibility on the part of the principals as far as the level of the organization of teaching and evaluation goes. Also, it is predicted that the administration of the personnel of the school entity will be carried out by the school principals (OECD, 2011).

Returning to the role of the principal, we observe that in the heart of this conversation we detect the concept of “pedagogical leadership”. The excerpt which follows can be considered especially representative of this tendency: *“In order to have exceptional schools, we need to have exceptional leaders in education, in the macrolevel as much as in the microlevel. The issues of the Educational Leadership are being discussed and investigated more and more in our time. The preparation of administrative executives who understand the framework within which education functions is considered necessary and these executives must also be able to function creatively and productively while occupying responsible/administrative positions in the educational system of Cyprus and Greece as well. We address ourselves to all the educators who want to occupy an administrative/leading position in the educational system, such as that of assistant school principal, school principal, mentor, advisor, higher official in the Ministry of Education etc. The ultimate aim is the promotion of science, knowledge, learning and education in the field of Educational Administration”* (Paschiardis, 2004).

Educational leadership lies at the center of the school’s micropolicy. It concerns a series of actions and duties of the principals to develop specific school and pedagogical tendencies. These duties can be grouped into two categories: the first one concerns the pedagogical dimension and the second one the administration of the affairs of the school entity. The high level of instruction and the profile of the executives assume a decisive importance in the organization and operation of the modern school entities as well as in the educational system. According to this specific rationale, the role of the principal under the new conditions becomes more demanding and complex since the workload exceeds the capabilities of one person. Here the need for investigation of the role of the principal in the effective operation of the school entity is pointed out. School effectiveness is defined by a number of factors, such as the type of leadership practiced, the quality of the school climate, the relationships of the school with the family and the wider community, the expectations of the educators and depends, to a definitive degree, on the way of the administration practiced by the principal (Paschiardis, 2004).

An intense, investigative interest concerning the role of the leader – principal and the connection of the educational reforms to the dynamic of this role tackles issues of school leadership (Campbell, Gold, & Lunt, 2003; Coleman & Glover, 2010; OFSTED, 2003). What is impressive is the shift from the concept of management to the one of leadership. According to an interesting work by Earley and Weindling (2004), the concepts of administration – management – leadership are distinct as far as their aim and procedures go. Here, the concept of leadership moves on to a level of building up ambitions or affecting the inner inspirations of the organization’s members. The leader does not simply administer pre-decided standards for the accomplishment of results within a narrow framework of evaluation applications but also cultivates ambitions and aspirations. He/she forges a sense of the aims. Leaders inspire and mobilize their faculty and students. The intervention of the leader in the performance of the students is indirect: it functions through the teachers. The learning results are a matter of the leaders – principals through the influences they exert on their own teachers. The model which is traced in the specific premise combines resource administration with the learning results. It veers away from the individualized roles and the individual abilities and reaches the procedures (Earley & Weindling, 2004). An inadequate leader cannot exhibit decisiveness, forge good relationships with the faculty, inspire them with the inner commitment to the aims of the organization and successfully organize the processes required for maximum performance. The

particular model considers emotional intelligence (which it defines as the ability of the leader to evaluate the emotional world of the members of an organization and to obtain their best self) as a more important factor than cognitive or technical abilities. Rewards and moral satisfaction mobilize individuals and the leader can obtain much more from them than if s/he just possessed the simple ability to administrate (Earley & Weindling, 2004).

From the above we can conclude that the concept of leadership concerns a more general framework of values which is judged to be necessary for the teachers to internalize. Here the leader is the crucial person for the internalization of value systems which lead to acceptance and mobilization. We could say that the framework is designated but cannot be based on enforcement. The mechanical application of directions is avoided as unproductive and ineffective. So, the interference of the principal leader obtains a special meaning since it customizes the philosophy of the structures to the level of the school micropolicy. The new element that is introduced here concerns the perspective of developing the interpersonal relations of an organization in a more productive open approach and avoiding the mechanistic application of directions (Barnett & Pratt, 2000). Essentially, it is about an administrative model through feelings.³

Let us examine more closely the crucial issues which are connected to the specific concept and the guidelines which it entails. In the public dialogue, we need to establish the crucial premises from which the corresponding choices are made. It is on this basis on which proposals on educational leadership may flourish.

The first premise concerns the characteristics of our time, which are stamped by great international challenges: financial competition, development of scientific discoveries, greater demands for performance, efficiency and productivity, need to capitalize on education as a medium of solving social and financial problems (Paschiardis, 2014). In the above thesis, there is no mention of the current financial (to note the least) crisis, of the historical causes which shaped its core and of its social consequences. We also observe that efforts are exerted to reverse the relation between social change and school. As if the prosperity of a country depends exclusively on education! In other words, somewhere out there prosperous financial activity is thriving, without austerity, a ready work paradise and it is the fault of education that cannot find the right way to evolve and tune into reality. However, the educational system must be considered unstable. The school is exposed to unforeseen developments, crises and contradictions which permeate the world of production and the job market.

We will now focus on the three pillars of the New Educational Policy and Administration and on the special characteristics of this proposal. The specific proposal is based on the decentralization through school self – administration, on the expansion of the practice of leadership, on the increase of parental control (through councils of administration) and on the transfer of the duties of the school principals from the level of administration to the demanding “high” duties (Paschiardis, 2014).

The above premises are framed by a number of factors which influence learning such as the characteristics of the student’s social background or the nature or the aims of educational policy. However, from the moment that the educational policy cannot influence the financial and educational background of the students, the factors closer to learning efficiency and students competence have to do with the effectiveness of the educators and their teaching practices in classrooms. That is a complex and multidimensional structural matter and appears

³ However, we should not omit to mention that the assurance of concession and internalization of the projected principles can alternate, in conditions of state emergencies, using practices of domination. Greek educators faced a similar situation when in the meetings of the teachers’ associations they rejected the framework of self-evaluation of the school entity.

as a technical problem on the microlevel of school intervention. As if the educational policy, which cannot do something about the situation, is not part of a more general policy which produces competitions, inequalities, marginalization and injustice.

The previous account of the factors influencing learning puts in order the argument concerning the crucial role of the principal in the formulation of the pedagogical relations inside the school. The principal influences the performance of the students after s/he influences the performance of the teachers. Here is an interesting case: “*Let us replace a mediocre with an able principal in a mediocre school, the performance of the students might improve above 20%*” (Barber, 2009, cited in Paschiardis, 2014). Again though, what this performance accounts for exactly, is not studied in depth at all, but is grossed over in crude percentage. Who and in which ways does s/he measure it? In which manner the sociopolitical and epistemological components have been considered?

The theoretical and empirical validation of the arguments for the principal – leader is evident in the European (EU’s) programs aims. More specifically, the LISA (Leadership Improvement for Student Achievement) program espouses a *comprehensive model*⁴ of Paschiardis and Brauckman. According to this specific model, the style of leadership in a school ought to be placed within the frame of the wider variables which influence the educational system. A frame that puts forward: a) the subjects and the domain of decision making from which arises the choice of centralization or decentralization, cooperation of public – private cooperatives, parental choice; b) evaluation and accountability (technique and client prospect); c) the technical data of each school: size, ratio of students to educators, characteristic of the leader and school resources. Thus, the radius of action of the school leadership depends on the information assembled from the traits that define schools in any given educational policy adopted (Brauckman & Paschiardis, 2011).

Brauckman & Paschiardis (2011) prompt educators to encounter five manners of leadership:

- a) The pedagogical style, which emphasizes innovations and various programs, delineate the educational aims and expectations, controls students and educators.
- b) The structural style, which refers to the leader who will take on risks, will have a vision and a mission, will define with clarity the rules of operation and will be responsible for their application.
- c) The participatory style, which concerns decision making, the mechanisms involved in decision making, the participation of educators in them, their cooperation and the development of a feeling of devotion.
- d) The style of the development of the faculty, which has to do with the staffing of the school, the provision of opportunities for further education, recognition and rewards.
- e) The entrepreneurial style, which is characterized by the ability of the leader to ensure resources, establish partnerships between the school and the community and to involve parents.

Apparently, in a number of EU countries the entrepreneurial style prevails (LISA)⁵.

⁴ *Comprehensive* in terms of the rationale adopted, correlating factors which shape the total of the schools’ network of relations.

⁵ The results were presented in a conference organized by the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus, the Cypriot Association of Education Administration and the Program Sciences of Education of the Open University of Cyprus in December 2014 in Nicosia.

This is the result of a shortage in resources, which requires support systems and the creation of alliances to gain influence⁶.

A tendency toward the adoption of the “structural style”, is been considered due to the established of clear roles generated allowing the everlasting restructuring of the school. The structural style can provide the required stability demanded by an “organization”. The structural style is crosschecked “formative evaluation”. Formative evaluation sends messages to those involved concerning strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, this becomes important when the agents seek feedback, in an effort to achieve an optimum outcome.

Certain questions arise from the argument in favor of formative evaluation related to:

- The rights of educators as citizens.
- The rights of children for equal opportunities.
- The rights of the State to determine what to do with public education since it pays for it (Paschiardis, 2014).

A CRITIQUE OF THE PREVAILED ARGUMENT

The sociopolitical, cultural, and educational issues are complex historical problems alien to approaches of the administrative type since the numerous ideological and political factors that mould peoples’ needs and requirements, cannot be managed. The accounting view, for example, which often characterizes the educational decisions of the governmental authorities for the conservation of funds, assumes an administrative view of the educational operation, attuned with the management “morality”. Here the social good of education – as a possibility to form the relationship of the educated with the social and natural world- is replaced by the perspective of balanced budgets. Within such a framework, the contrasts, the interests, as well as, the ideological content of the choices in education disappear. Essentially, it is about the apotheosis of the hypothetical scientific and instructional neutrality which has led the educational systems of other countries to treacherous dead ends. The paradox is that in Greece, the administrative style of leadership for school principals has been launched as an innovative initiative par excellence.

In the case of the *political – participatory style*, autonomy has a powerful ideological function. It is about a kind of pseudo – participation which cuts off the subjects from collective action. This results in the fragmented – partial freedom of the educator. The weakness to put together a complete view: a specific point of view from which to face things and a theoretical starting point. Participation in meetings is not always accompanied in taking essential decisions, since the crucial issues are not highlighted. For example, no participatory procedure on the level of the local particular school unit could be involved in the decision on the ratio of students to teachers as said by the national policy.

The logic of the *definition of the roles* by the principals, condensing the principal’s role into a personal style of administration and decision making, is an idea chiefly popular in various analyses and interpretations on school administration and leadership. Such thoughts cannot avoid a kind of psychological conceptualization of the problem. The significance of attributes apparent in the personal style mode of leadership cannot be considered neutral, unbiased postulations. It does not develop in the void neither is a mere individual quality, as the analysis of the school micropolicy on the whole allows us to realize. In it, we can distinguish the

⁶ Elsewhere it will be claimed the sources of financial resources in facing the needs of students are the community and the business world. School entities must be flexible in order to secure resources and business resources, which will create new programs in the framework of separate budgets for every school (Paschiardis, 2004).

perspective and the possibilities given in a particular historic period of time, for the preservation and the reproduction of the relationships in any given work allocation. It is an expression of the disparities which characterize the essentials at the micro level of a school community. In essence, the option to portray the school principal within the typology of 'styles' promotes the psychological factor and personal responsibility as opposed to the socioeconomic element as well as to the necessary educational restructuring. In brief, it emphasizes the individual characteristics of those who will implement entire pedagogical guidelines and aims, rather than focusing on the quality and sociopolitical prerequisites of such principles and aims, not to mention the general historical constraints and possibilities apparent at the time in this combination.

The theoretical arsenal of the above arguments draws their dynamics from the theoretical tradition which exhibits a tendency to place human sociability within a biological framework of analyses. It points to the prototype of the biological organism, the members of which are obliged to attune themselves to a center of decisions, the brain, with all the consequences this specific symbolism carries as far as the possibility for developing collective forms of action and self-organized societies. The school is treated as an organism, the members of which must cooperate harmoniously for the accomplishment of specific aims decided in advance.

Finally, if the formative evaluation, that is letting the employee know the degree of his efficiency, contributes to the improvement of students' performance, and since the state carries the burden of paying salaries, the rights of the educator will not determine the relevant policies. What remains unanswered however is the abolition of any procedures of practices to address critiques on the educational models sustained by the reformatory policies asserted by the dominant blocs of power. To apply any formative evaluation model is neither naturally given nor serves the common good. To put it differently, the discussion about the essence of the state stops at the admission of a fantasy beyond class boundaries. Our position is that the state, as a modern structure for the organization of societies, is a cadre of financial and political reforms with specific political – ideological characteristics.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

The educators under these conditions have the right to doubt practices which establish forms of administration and to choose the pedagogical criticism and the collective contemplation. Their action presupposes an overall proposition about society and the school. At the same time they will develop collective procedures of design and practice in the policy of the school entity and a wider network of cooperation, in which schools will exchange experiences. In such a version of schools' organization, in contrast to the evaluation which quantifies and classifies the educational sociability, we propose the deep study of this sociability through the correlation of numerous factors and processes for its understanding, with the ultimate aim being the intervention for its transformation. We oppose to the claim of many that if we do not do it someone else will as mechanistic and deterministic. If the educators themselves do not take on the school management then specialized technocrats will⁷. We think that this half-way blackmailing dilemmas which waste their dynamic on the person who will be accomplish the problem solving situation rather than the problem itself. They do not have a place in the discussion about the school and the perspective which it opens up in our time. This can be further sustained by practices in which the informal observations, focusing on the development

⁷This argument is dominant as far the administration goes in the pertinent discussion about the administration of school issues.

of the students (naturally not for their categorization), meetings and interviews, theoretical analysis of structures and possibilities prevail at the expense of managerial data diagnostics. In such an agenda, the priority is on issues such as school failure, racism, the pedagogical relationship, the professional/scientific development of the educators, the nexus of learning with social problems. Keeping in mind the above, we deem that it is necessary to investigate the potential, even within the dominant paradigm, at the same time with the action for structural change, replacement of the institution of the principal by collective agents the composition of which will change periodically. In such a frame, the dominant role will be played by the school assembly (Grollios, 2016). The administrative persons will be chosen by it. The assembly will have the total supervision of the administration of the educational matters as well of every school and also of school networks. This specific proposal is part of a more general framework of structures which will empower the theoretical conception of the educational problems and they will also familiarize the protagonists of the educational process with the collective action practices. The educational experience of Porto Alegre would be a useful data basis for the change of the compliant and autocratic terms of the social operation of the school. However the idea of an assembly as the dominant tool for the design and application will be subject to specific limitations and commitments. The assembly of the school, as an organized expression of the popular action, will be structured on the basis of principles, which will concern the essential understanding of social contrasts, the setting of pedagogical aims of social liberation, the abolition of exploitation and repression, the collective control of all levels of life, the development of solidarity and camaraderie. The above framework will function prohibitively for forces with reactionary, nationalist, fascist orientation. Such worldviews will not find an objective ground to grow. These issues, however, will become arenas of realization by organized collectivities (inside and outside education) through systematic actions with a total subversive orientation and not partial administrative interventions. Of course, wider restricting, changes in the special field of the organized educational process. The assembly as the dominant organizational structure is an aspire, it orients toward a direction which requires total strategy. In concluding, we would like to sum up the discussion about the role of the school principal, posing this issue in the wider development requirements of organized education. In this way, if the educational institutions of all levels are verified on their methods to inquire for knowledge in the form of raw materials of the goods, we are referring to the creation of “surplus value” in schools. The school generates profit and the market realizes it. In this way, education is transformed into a productive power for the acquisition of profit in a widened control basis. The inability of state funding sets the conditions to call for private funding, hence transforming education into a commodity in capitalist societies (Edwards, Hill, & Boxley, 2018). For example, the new system of teachers’ appointments triggers a market of credentials in order to secure qualifications for a better placement, in a ground of antagonisms and self illusions. The funding of these programs even in grade school creates conditions of dependence building up for businesses a philanthropic profile which covers up the speculative motives. However, the inadequacy of public funding creates conditions for the placement of funds that are stagnant in our time. These observations are not novel, they however veer toward direction. They strengthen the critical rejection of policies which continually return to the confrontation for the total subsumption of the educational experience to the system of the global market.

REFERENCES

Apple, M. (2001). Comparing neo-liberal projects and inequality in education. *Comparative Education*, 37(4), 409-423.

- Ball, J. S., & Youdell, D. (2008). *The secret privatization in Public Education*. Athens: IPEM-DOE. (In Greek).
- Ball, S. (1993). *The micropolitics of the school: Towards a theory of school organization*. Routledge.
- Barnett, C. K., & Pratt, M. G. (2000). From threat-rigidity to flexibility: Toward a learning model of autogenic crisis in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(1), 74-88.
- Brauckman, S. & Paschiardis, P. (2011). A validation study of the leadership styles of a holistic leadership theoretical framework. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(1), 11-32.
- Campbell, C., Gold, A., & Lunt, I. (2003). Articulating leadership values in action: Conversations with school leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 6(3), 203-221.
- Coleman M., & Glover D. (2010). *Educational leadership and management: Developing insights and skills*. New York: McGraw Hill – Open University Press
- Earley, P., & Weindling, D. (2004). *Understanding School Leadership*. Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Edwards, G., Hill, D., & Boxley, S. (2018). Critical Teacher Education for Economic, Environmental and Social Justice. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 16(3). Retrieved from <http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/16-3-1.pdf>.
- Giroux, H. (2004). Critical pedagogy in the postmodern/modern divide: Towards a pedagogy of democratization. *Teacher Educator Quarterly* 31(1), 31-47
- Grollios, G. (2011). *Progressive Education and teaching curriculum*. Greece: Epikentro. (In Greek).
- Grollios, G. (2016) *About some issues of a radical education transformation program, 1*. Retrieved from <https://tetrada-marxismou.gr>. (In Greek).
- Kalimeridis, G. (2016). *School autonomy and the capitalist restructuring of the school*. *Tetrada Marxismou*, 2. <http://tetrada-marxismou.gr>. (In Greek).
- Noutsos, C. (1985). Sociology and Education. *Diavazo*, 119, 42-47. (In Greek).
- OECD. (2011). *Better performance and successful reforms in education. Proposals for the educational policy in Greece*. Retrieved from <http://ww.esos.gr/sites/default/files/articles-legacy/oosa.p>. (In Greek).
- OFSTED. (2003). *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2003/04*. London: The Stationery Office
- Paschiardis, P. (2004). *Educational Leadership: from the period of favorable indifference to the new age*. Athens: Metaixmio. (In Greek).
- Paschiardis, P. (2014). *The pedagogical leadership as reformatory mechanism for the improvement of the school*. Retrieved from <http://koed.logmedia.com/myfiles/conferences/2014-12-13-imerida/2014-12-13-keynote2-Paschiardis.pdf>.