



EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Knowledge Transformations And The Subjectivities Of Professionals In The Field Of Education: Greek Responses To European Policies

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Contribution

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The Greek Government has recently introduced a series of measures concerning the management of the teaching staff and education executives, considering them as key factors for the implementation of changes envisaged. The government promotes policies according both to special guidelines and programmes emanated from the European Union

(E.U.), e.g., the European Framework of Qualifications (E. C, 2009) and the Lisbon Strategy, and to general discourses, promoted by transnational organizations, e.g., , OECD's Skills Strategy.

This paper focuses on policies indicating that the Greek authorities, responding to international discourses, prioritize the management of education and the development of professional skills for teachers and education executives, thus purporting to cover the functional needs of the education system, and, simultaneously, to regulate the professional development of teachers and education executives. These priorities in turn affect other changes in the educational field and, as documented by many studies (e.g. Alexiadou 2011), impact upon school practices, the professionalism of teachers and the structure and content of knowledge (Ball, 2010).

Two independent research studies form the background of this work, trying to explore comparatively the initial education of teachers and their training when selected to serve as education executives. We look at the consequences of these processes on education and, furthermore, on the subjectivities and the professionalism of different categories of education professionals. As a first step, we focus on the selection procedures and training of the education executives, emerging from the core of the teaching staff. We consider them to be crucial in shaping the educational process and, decisively, the content of knowledge, since, according to the official texts, executives will implement and assess the new policies, aiming to harmonize to E.U. directives and policies.

This collaboration seeks a creative cooperation of two theories that can function complementarily or antagonistically. We employ Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (1990, 2000) and more specifically his notions of **introjection** and **projection**, used to describe the orientation of pedagogical texts and subjects towards the *inner*, i.e., towards a system of symbolic meanings articulated *within* the academic field, or towards the *outer*, i.e., towards specific functional meanings, utilized in contexts of work and life. At the same time, to explore forms of power and discourses behind the administrative models and the forms of subjectivities promoted, we draw from the theory of Foucault (1988) the notion of **governmentality**, which as the intersection between the technologies of power and the technologies of the self, attempts an "ascending" analysis of power; i.e., an analysis of the evolution of the minimal mechanisms of power to ever broadening and generalizing practices. This twofold choice is justified by our goal to investigate procedures of education, training and selection as discursive practices shaping "legitimate" ways of thought, consciousness, desire and action, and helping to consolidate discourses (Foucault, 2001).

Hence, our basic research question: how policies, deriving from dominant international discourses, identified at the selection procedures and the training materials for the executives of education, affect the construction of professional identities and subjectivities of teachers/executives of education.

Method

This presentation explores the connections between policies for the management of education, administrative models for education and the identities of education executives they promote. We study 121 case studies/scenarios, which are included in a Bank of Test Items used at the selection for Heads of Peripheral Bureaus of Education during the summer of 2010. These scenarios were submitted to content and discourse analyses, studying also the recent legislation and official documents, and the materials for the training of education executives. To study this material, we have developed an analytical grid utilizing a wide range of bibliographical sources (e.g., Gunter & Forrester, 2009). The grid maps on the one hand the relationships of power and knowledge and on the other the organizational principles of pedagogical discourse and practice (Bernstein, 2000). Each case study is given a place on this nexus, allowing interpretations on knowledge and subject positions. Subsequently, the analysis is extended, with the contribution of Foucault's theoretical

approach, according to which a person is transformed to subject by incorporating dominant discourses and endorsing prevailing practices of the totalities to which (s)he belongs (Foucault, 1991).

Expected Outcomes

Our approach can advance the debate about the potential of educational research on three levels. On a first level, the identification of the complexities of the procedures for the selection of education executives allows us to identify the web of the expanding and crisscrossing discursive practices through which knowledge is divided, distributed, sanctioned and generally disseminated and utilized. On a second level, the scrutiny of the trajectories of recontextualization of the globalized discourses on legitimate forms of administration, and their transformation to national policies for education management, allows us to perceive the multiply complex connections of power to diverse discourse regimes and subjectivities (Ball, 1998). Finally, the development of a methodological tool for the analysis of the ways in which power and control are translated into communication principles that function as regulative frameworks for the action of subjects (Bernstein, 2000), is expected to shed light, theoretically and empirically, on the topic of the research, which in a final analysis is about the exploration of changes in governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Peters, et al., 2009) and its effects on knowledge and subjectivities, with reference to a range of professionals within the field of education.

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