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Education for Social Emancipation

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Education for Social Emancipation

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Introduction

Kostas Skordoulis, Labrina Gioti & Aliki Laspidou

T he 10th International Conference on Critical Education "Education for Social Emancipation" was held in Thessaloniki on July 4 - 8, 2022. It was organized by the School of Primary Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and it took place on campus. Its parallel holding with the 3rd Panhellenic Conference on Critical Education, also in Thessaloniki, shows the remarkable influence Critical Education has acquired in Greece. At the same time, it demonstrates the important contribution and representation of our Department in the Field of Critical Education internationally, as reflected by our country's participation in 5 out of the 10 International Conferences on Critical Education that have been organized to date.

The call for papers occurred within conditions of global economic and social crisis, environmental destruction, wars, fear, the rise of far-right forces, and after a two-year halt due to the COVID pandemic (the ninth International Conference on Critical Education took place in Naples, Italy in 2019). The COVID pandemic highlighted once again the inequalities that exist between dominant and disadvantaged nations and countries. Unequal access to healthcare, vaccines and medicines, unequal access to education, unequal access to life. However, it was not only disadvantaged countries that suffered. It became evident that the underfunding of the public health systems in some countries and the dominance of private health care in others had devastating results during the pandemic and lead to deaths that could have otherwise been prevented.

The pandemic outbreak and the health crisis that were accompanied by new forms of biopower as manifested by state regulations such as the tight monitoring and enforcement of quarantine and self-isolation measures aimed at coercing (or

nudging) citizens into following health guidelines. These new forms of biopower blurred the boundaries between the human body, the person as the object of regulation, and the political power while the human life turned into an object of experimentation and health from a good into a product to produce profit. Actually, the pandemic, instead of awakening the global community to claim the right to health and life, was used as an excellent opportunity for big pharmaceuticals and many other companies and private businesses to profit, while it has led to an increase in biopolitical logic, where some lives have come to matter more than others (Kalpokas, 2020; Højme, 2022). Therefore, once again we saw the tragic consequences of the commercialization of human life and its subjection to the service of big capital.

Neoliberal policies and their attempted restructuring in the post economic crisis and post covid-19 era were escalated even more and new forms of governability and public administration despite individual differences, are gradually converging with greater homogeneity in their status and operating procedures in both developed and developing countries internationally (Gioti, 2019 & 2022; Kenny, 2017; Fredman & Doughney, 2012; Lorenz, 2012). New forms of governmentality promote the commercialization of the university and the consolidation of a "corporate culture" (Giroux, 2002) that adopts corporate values and management practices, inaugurating new forms of conceptualizing subjectivity (Kenny, 2017; Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Harrington, 2017). Conformity and consent in the corporate university culture is attempted through the projection of the economic sphere as all-powerful and detached from the political and social sphere to which the latter must submit (Gioti, 2019; Harrington, 2017). In this logic, education is transformed into a marketable good and its recipients into consumers. Consequently, public interest intellectuals are replaced by commercially oriented professionals and the cost of higher education falls on individuals. Higher education institutions are tied to processes transferred from the field of management and seek to maximize (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Mayo,

2012; Fredman & Doughney, 2012): performance, efficiency, competitiveness, and effectiveness of their bodies.

The present situation and the gloomy foreseeable future leave no room for complacency. The need for strong democratic and critical forces is as urgent as ever. Education has been and always will be the essential ingredient for a just and democratic world. Not any education will do, though. The dominant neoliberal-neoconservative policies that turn education into a product, a commodity and grant technocrats the power to mold our future and our children's future will simply not do. It is our right and our obligation to act against oppression, injustice, racism, poverty, environmental destruction. It is our obligation to reify Freire's praxis in the degree that "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." (1970, p. 72) and the way is to pursue as Mayo (2012) states a critically engaging pedagogy.

This problematic is reflected in the presentations of the X International Conference of Critical Education with nearly 100 presentations from all over the globe (Cyprus, Turkey, the UK, Italy, Ireland, Malta, Hungary, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, the USA) in a time when the world was trying to find its footing after the unprecedented experience of the COVID pandemic. The presentations covered various topics: vocational training, environmental education, disability and education, primary and secondary education, higher education, rural education, teaching practices and university teaching evaluation, critical pedagogy and criticality in education, curricula, methodology of educational research, arts in education, feminist perspectives in education, philosophy of education. Specifically, analyzing the topics of the texts, 3 main categories are identified which are often intertwined. These categories are the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the neoliberal restructurings in education and the role of critical pedagogy in the current situation.

Regarding the first category, the interest of the participants is mainly focused on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the educational process. Specifically, the

issue of the separation of mainstream and special education in Greece and Cyprus, the issue of the use of private digital platforms as substitutes for the live school process, but also the issue of the interaction of teachers in online learning communities in the post-Covid-19 era. Furthermore, the effects of the pandemic on different social groups, such as the nomads of Turkey, are presented.

In the second category, the greatest interest is concentrated in the effects of neoliberal economic, social, and political management in higher academic institutions. The dimension of the bureaucratization of the Universities through the standardized evaluation procedures is studied, but also the coercion of universities to operate as private enterprises. It is further emphasized how current capitalist regulations most adversely affect lower class students. As effects of neoliberalism are also examined, the mutation of teachers' work as a form of intellectual activity but also of citizenship education, the increasingly widening gap between the privileged and the underprivileged students, the ever-escalating orientation of the children of the poor classes to their destination in the international division of labor as cheap labor, but also the inability to cover even the need for food in primary education (food insecurity in primary school). The proceedings of the conference moreover highlight the intense controversy over the evaluation in primary and secondary education in Greece (conflict on the new teacher evaluation policy), as well as the change in the relationship between work and education, which have altered particularly unfavorably in the context of neoliberalism. At the political level, the phenomenon and causes of the rise of the extreme right in the USA were examined.

In in the third category, the participants' interest is focused on the role of critical pedagogy. Some papers study how critical pedagogy can be combined with other subjects, such as History, Environmental Education, vocational training, but also Language teaching, critical literacy, combating language exclusion -with the aim of empowerment of rural education-, as well as the development of critical awareness and critical thinking. In addition, according to many presentations, the theoretical framework of critical education can contribute to the diffusion of

critical reflection within traditional pedagogical understandings of issues related to the way knowledge about disability is constructed to special education, the concepts and ideas formulated in legislative texts regarding education, such as the new Early Childhood Education and the Curriculum of Modern Greek Language in High School. In several presentations, the importance of connecting critical pedagogy with the arts, such as theater, cinema, literature, music, and fairy tales, is highlighted, which aims at social emancipation, participation, free expression, resistance against oppression and combating social stereotypes. Furthermore, according to the participants, critical pedagogy with an emphasis on the exploitation of Gramsci's theoretical concept of hegemony can lead to the struggle for social liberation and in combination with critical realism can form the creation of an emancipatory research agenda. Other presentations emphasized the role of Marxist pedagogy and radical education in education in light of the theories of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich, but also the contribution of John Dewey's liberalism and Foucault's theoretical approach to knowledge management, Hegel's perception of cognition but also of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development in it. Finally, some presentations were about the History of Science from a feminist perspective and Science as an agent of human emancipation rather than as an integral part of western civilization.

As the title of the conference suggests education is the means we have at our disposal to create a just and democratic world. It is not the enforcement, it is not the fake dead-ends, it is not the individual against the collective, it is not the submission to the market's dictates. We must commit to struggling in favor of the weak, the poor, the disadvantaged, the pariahs of our world. We must use our power ethically. And we must stay true to our words through our actions, our praxes. Those two must align.

As underlined in the Introduction of the Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Critical Education (Gounari, Liambas, Drenoyianni & Pavlidis, 2017, p.1)

> *Critical educators struggle to counter the imposition of capitalist control, paternalistic and hierarchical relations, and engage in ideological critique of practices that contribute to social reproduction. Their primary concern is the holistic development of the students' potential, listening to their voices, as well as those of the teachers who defend their existential needs. Critical educators also strengthen their ties with communities to ensure the public provision of social goods, and the democratic functioning of the school with the participation of teachers, parents and students.*

Moreover, as Rasinski, Hill, & Skordoulis (2017, p. 8) claim:

> *at a time of economic crisis, when education is under siege by neoliberal capitalism, (neo-) conservatism, and aggressive nationalism, when teachers and academics are being proletarianised, youth criminalised, schools and universities turned into marketised commodities, and when different forms of nationalist and religious fundamentalism are growing, critical education, as a theory and as a movement, is gaining in relevance. International communities of activist critical educators... together with others outside the formal education apparatuses, work to build resistance to these processes and are engaged in fostering social change leading to a more just, equal, and fair society. This [Proceedings] book is part of that struggle.*

This is the way to create trust and help people see the sincerity and determination of our efforts. This is the way to give hope to humanity and empower people to struggle to transform the rotten to the core capitalism. This is the way to fight for a better more equal and just world. Education, teachers, concerned citizens are our "weapons" and love, justice, solidarity, remembrance our "ammunition". Let's persevere...

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Vocational Training in the Critical Education Discourse*

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Abstract

Education in the views of critical educators and in some critical, revolutionary thinkers and politicians is a political and ideological process. From the understanding of "education for production" or "education for economy" to "education for political consiousnes" and "education for emancipation" shows us a radical change among the views of the thinkers who have critical, revolutionary perspectives. However, education has still a strong direct connection with the economic system at all levels through vocational and academic schools, hidden or obvious.

In this analysis, the historical roots and some critical and revolutionary thinkers' views on vocational training and vocational schools as main venues for division of labor, dehumanisation and exploitation of the youth were presented. In this context, it is discussed, if there is an understanding about the connection between schools and distribution of wealth through vocational education and division of labor as well as emancipatory skills and production skills of the youth.

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Introduction

Education is a concept and process whose influence may change depending on the conditions in which it takes place and the aims it aspires to achieve. Defining education for and with different aims may help to aims to be achieved as placed in definition. Who defines the aims of an education process for everyone? As Paulo Freire claims, education is a political process and not neutral (Freire 1997/2000). The most powerful and dominant groups of a country dominate the main features of the education and curriculum especially atmass education. However, this does not mean that there is no space for conflict and change. Education is also a conflictual space with the main political features (specifications).

Along with these discussions, the education process includes inequalities regarding class, sex, age and race/ethnicity and the curriculum depends on the historical struggles, conflicts and environmental context and so does vocational education. Education is a part of the economical system through producingskilled labor that will be placed at work. At the first half of the century, developed or less developed countries tried to connect the education system and students with the economical system at an early stage, before students graduated, mostly through vocational schools (Ainley 1990; Aksoy 2011) or politechnic schools in the socialist era (Krupskaya 1959/2013). At the end of the 20th century, it seems that this connection continues with the neoliberal capitalist principles and that it deepens from the elementary to university/higher education level through capital accumulation motivations of international companies and fiscal institutions. Education is organized for economy/ or production and aims at students gaining work skills that can be classified as vocational. The content of the vocational education may change depending on the market conditions, educational facilities and opportunities as resources. But here, there is a strong difference between general academic education and vocational education; the first one (academic) is for intellectuel jobs in which workers use their mental power –thinking skills and technological knowledge more than hands or muscles and the second one (vocational) is for manual jobs where workers use manual skills more than

intelectual skills. Another perspective, and a more complex one is what can be called a holistic approach; and it relates to critical pedagogy.

What makes an education work for humans and not for the employers or for the market? Education is a collective action and its consequences are not only individual but also social. Indeed, we can not seperate the individual and social gains from each other. In tracking the education, it is observed that academic and vocational school students are being seperated through some of their main features regarding family economic level, sex, age and race/ethnicity worldwide. Schools are preparing the students for today's and tomorrow's economical and political world and the career and income differences are being created by the division of labor through educational opportunities and schools types. In this context, critical educational discourse can be employed to inquire the educational inequalities, division of schools and division of labor through schools.

Some thinkers' views like Marx, Gramsci, Dewey, Freire on education could be considered critical and these views can shed light on critics against current vocational and technical education models, inequalities and division of labor. Views on vocational education and division of labor issues can be traced to Plato at Greece (Rattansi 1982), Dewey in US (Aksoy 2011), Makarenko and Krupskaya in USSR as a starting point of politechnics (Krupskaya 1959/2013; Pavlidis 2017). Also, Marx (Rattasi 1982), Gramsci (Lombardi 2000) and Freire (Lakes 1997) show their support for a holistic development of people instead of a division of labor in education stages. Regarding developing the market-oriented vocational schools, employers and educational authorities are generally supportive and quantitative raises for vocational schools are being supported. But realization stays behind the projections because of different reasons such as that these schools do not meet the promises and include some kind of discrimination and cause disadvantages to their students (Aksoy 2015). Critics against those non-holistic education models are not common among the educators, students and in public policy in general.

In this paper, the views of some prominent critical and radical thinkers' views related with vocational and technical education in the contex of the division of the labor and critical education discussions were inquired. In the descriptions, the focus is placed on some views about education and the economy/ class connection of historically distinguished figures like Marx, Freire, Gramsci and Harun Karadeniz', a prominent Turkish youth leader.

Vocational Training and Education in Marxist Discourse

Karl Marx has written at his early ages about the selection of a profession/work, alienation of human to self and humanization issues. (Marx 1835/1967). According to his very early writings on the selection of a vocation by youth he suggests they consider the wealth of the society as well as their interests and working for perfection. Selecting or succeeding in a school of the secondary, tertiary, and university level impacts the type of their occupations, professions and also income levels. So, the education system is a part of the distribution of income in society and also inequalities and positions in the production relations. If education is responsible for a person's income level by defining who are going to work where, then it is part of the reproduction of current social inequalities and division of labor.

The concept of the "division of labor" is not connected to Marx at the root but to the Works of Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon. According to Rattansi (1982, 1)

> The term 'division of labour' came to be widely used only in the eighteenth century when it emerged as a central theme in the writings of the school of 'conjectural history' during the period of the Scottish Enlightenment. In their discussion of the division of labour the Scots and other Enlightenment thinkers made some reference back to writings from classical antiquity and at first sight it appears reasonable to suggest that the roots of the concept of division of labour have to be sought in the social

thought of classical Greece, and especially in the work of Plato,

Aristotle and Xenophon.

According to Plato's writings, crafts, trades, military and government jobs can be suitable for some citizens but not for others. Thus, citizens are separated through their talent and occupations. It is suggested that this differentiation and specialization is also a requirement for a productive worker, other than nature and talent of the citizens. (Rattansi 1982). Still, division of labor is not a concept which can be discussed without Marx and in general it is connnected to the capitalist production mode in Marxist conceptualization.

The views of Marx regarding the discussion on education and training (vocational education) are scarce. Marx's views on education can also be traced through his views on developing holistic working capacity of workers, and the division of labor. His suggestion about the development of a worker shows a holistic labor approach which does not accept a partial one sided labor but aims to a fully capable human.

As Pavlidis mentioned in his article that "In a brief statement in the first volume of the Capital, Marx claims that the education of the future; 'will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings. (Marx 1996, 486 in Pavlidis 2017, 4). According to Marx, focusing on the productive and politechnical skills of a person along with bodily exercise (gymnastics and military exercise) and implementing some suggestions regarding the educational practices for children of the working class reflect support and are in favour of the working class youth "The combination of paid productive labour, mental education, bodily exercise and polytechnic training, will raise the working class far above the level of the higher and middle classes" (in Pavlidis, 2017, 5-6). Rikowski (2004, 570) cited Taylor's (1995) note about the politechnical education such as:

> The aim of polytechnic education was to combine physical, mental and practical training. Marx couched his proposals within the context of child labour. Instead of abolishing child labour, he believed that it should be regulated and combined with education. He divided children into three age groups. The amount of time a child could work would increase with age. (p. 20).

Both Pavlidis (2017) and Rikowski (2004) mentioned that the industry and factory sector have changed since the time Marx wrote his analysis and proposals. Those instructional proposals that may have helped people to prepare holistically for the industrial jobs and crafts a hundred years ago, today may not be suitable for the complex, computerized, globalized "business" world which aims at decreasing manual jobs.

Constructing a strong division of labor and exploiting the child labor through the apprenticeship model in the school system is a continuing problem we face under a "pedagogical veil" called "vocational education". (Aksoy 2015; 2017). With the help of the critical conceptualization of Marxist tradition, progressive educators have criticised the one-sided education of the children from working class families directing them to manual jobs. Vocational education has become the target of the critics because of its organizational structure, curriculum, process and the using of social division of labor and providing low status to participating students. (Aksoy 2011).

Discussions of A Local Student Leader Harun Karadeniz from Turkey

Discussions regarding division of labor is extended to student movements and their consciousness at the end of 1960's in Turkey. Harun Karadeniz, a student leader who is a civil engineering graduate and wrote on education and youth movements adopting the Marxist conceptualizations, supports that education is a significant process that helps develop the productive skills of individuals in his books "Capitalists without capital" (Kapitalsiz Kapitalistler) and "Education is for

Producing" (Eğitim Üretim İçindir). He makes some critical points similar to the ones that some distinguished critical educators made in their works.

In his book "Capitalists without capital" (1968/1976) Karadeniz, claimed that capitalist class have succeeded in bringing about an uneducated working class to obey them. According to Karadeniz, "fooling knowledgeble workers is more difficult". But the knowledge which Karadeniz mentioned is about "how surplus value is being created." The process of sharing values created by workers could be contolled by the workers. The requirement/need for capitalists to exploit workers by taking surplus value is something that workers should not know about. Capital is a surplus value which is created by workers.

In a capitalist society, the education system was developed to create an ignorant working class and a knowledgeable capitalist class (Karadeniz 1968/1976, 34). According to these concerns and claims the capitalists want a working class that is kept as far away from education as possible; in case they reach education, they should get a one sided capitalist minded education. Karadeniz (1968/1976, 35-36) also mentioned that, current educational institutions provide a one sided education and teachers deviating from this direction are being fired. At the end of his analysis he reaches the conclusion that, capitalism has to keep workers uneducated so as to be able to continue exploiting them.

In his second book, Karadeniz repeats and clarifies his claims that "education is for producing". Producing does not mean only raising the amount of an object, a product. According to him, "[a] new understanding, a new structure, a new design and creating a new method can also be accepted as producing". In his studies, Karadeniz shows a very high sensitivity on class consciousness and connects it with his educational analysis. He connects the education into the production system with a critical manner and supports the poor against having a discriminating education like one sided "vocational" or "technical" but suggest a questioning and productive education as a comprehensive, holistic approach.

Freire's Views on Vocational and Technical Tracking

Freire is a distinguished critical educator and his books, especially Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1969/1991) include critical concepts and approaches to formal education and adult education that have obviously influenced the educators and scholars from different fields and activists . His critical education analysis claims that there is no such thing as a neutral education and neutrality is a pedagogical myth (Freire and Macedo 1987).

Freire states that idealist and mechanistic views, which contain the elements of distinctions between academic or professional/technical, reject the dialectical tension between consciousness and the world, and turn into obstacles in accessing the intelligence of the world. Based on this determination, Freire (2000, 28), for his own life, rejects the approach that excludes the dialectical relationship between academical and technical approaches   in the context of technology.

The views expressed by Freire in the context of technology and the mechanistic interpretation of the world are combined with the views that aim to imprison the children and young citizens of a country in an education approach that focuses on gaining the skills that are thought to be necessary in the workplaces and that they are expected to be used in production in order to increase the probability of people being wanted in the market. According to him, those views relate with a fatalistic understanding of today's education.

Freire states that fatalism, which reflects the ideology of material power, which is also supported by technological advances, can be transformed in a dialectical relationship and when people see that a change is possible, then they will change their own positions. One of these changeable and transformable areas is vocational and technical education schools. He states that educational practice contains a false progressive claim when it is opposed only to the absence of social and political element in vocational schools, but not to the absence of professional and technical preparation of students in schools. In this respect, we can see a clear expression of the educational approach in Freire, which reflects the holistic discourse and makes the distinctions between intellectual and manual labor

visible by employing a critical understanding. However, it is interesting that Freire also targets radicals who are in the progressive ranks at many points (Freire 2000, 34-35). Those educators who consider that academic education alone is sufficient or connect themselves to only one side of the link between the academic and the technical/professional also face Freire's criticisms. For Freire, focusing solely on the political dimension of education and rejecting the technical preparation of students is also false progressiveness: "Technical mastery is just important for students as the political understanding for a citizen. It is not possible to separate them" (2000, 35). According to Freire (2000, 37), without limiting it to general or vocational education, "in reality, education requires technical, scientific, and professional development as much as it does dreams and utopia". Freire's views show us his negation of the division of labor in a narrow model and support a critical holistic approach. Also, his views create a model for a job training (Shor 1988).

Conclusions

Radical holistic views on education and the division of labor seem to influence the critical educators and their views were recreated depending on historical and political conditions in their times. Also, changing the production relations and production mode may influence the pedagogical approaches regarding educational tracks and division of labor which is one of the causes of the reproducing inequalities that exist in society.

The comprehensive or holistic educational approach model gets support from critical figures' views but not all views show the same construction in education. The conceptualization of the critical views specifically on vocational education starts with the division of labor, the exploitation of child labor in schools and the emergence of inequalities among the youth depending on the family features and class. But this aspect of the vocational and technical education is lacking in early critical studies. Currently, vocational education is not an education which aims at providing a holistic knowledge and skills and at developing the full capability of

the students but is mostly committed to developing their technical skills at one narrow branch related with jobs. No education is neutral and vocational education also includes a political side, conflicts, transformation and carries the possibility of being a practice of emancipation. Critical educators can be more focused on how to develop a more comprehensive, equal, holistic educational approach for the preparation of youth to enter the economic system and the contemporary working world. In the light of the historical developments and the views of the critical educators and thinkers the mechanical and technical learning process of the youth can be a base for experiencing critical holistic approaches. Considering to recreate these approaches according to changing conditions at every level can also be a part of the emancipatory and humanizing education.

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Observations, experiences, and opinions of primary school teachers on nutritional status of students' and right to food at schools

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Abstract

This study focuses on the "nutrition status of students at school" as both a right and a basic need in the context of the economic crisis, high inflation and the resulting increasing child poverty in Turkey. A total of 22 primary school teachers working in multigrade, double shift, full-day schools, and schools with a large number of refugee students (especially Syrian) in 5 cities were interviewed. Three themes emerged at the end of the content analysis process: Teachers' assessment of students' nutritional status; Teachers' strategies to nutrition of students at schools; Teachers' understanding about right to food at schools. Teachers believe that students, except Syrian students, rarely go to school hungry because of carelessness of families, students waking up late and not having time for breakfast and double shift education. Teachers generally evaluate students' nutritional

status in terms of hunger and satiety, and do not emphasize the consumption of "adequate and balanced nutrition" and "hot and juicy food". All of the teachers also see nutrition at school as a fundamental right of the student, and two-thirds consider the family primarily responsible for providing and protecting this right.

Introduction

I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for the minds and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Food is the primary, indispensable and most basic human need. This basic need is also a human right. Children's right to food was included in international human rights documents for the first time with the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924. Article 2 of the Declaration states that "children should be fed. Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child also states children's right to food for their healthy growth and development. However, global capitalism, economic crises, war and armed conflicts, unsustainable urbanization, natural disasters, increasing inequalities, deep poverty, climate changes, epidemic diseases and similar factors cause a large number of children in many parts of the world are not to be fed adequately and healthy.

Turkey is one of the OECD countries with the highest child poverty rate. In the OECD child poverty report in 2018 (Thévenon, Manfredi, Govind, Klauzner 2018), although there are large differences between countries approximately, on average, 1 in 7 children is poor across the OECD. Child poverty is the lowest in Denmark at 4%, and highest in Israel and Turkey at 25%. According to the report prepared by Pierre-Alain Fridez from the Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in March 2022, child poverty has started to increase in the world with the Covid-

19 pandemic. The report, in which it was determined that the elimination of child poverty is quite far, also refers to Turkey, and it is stated that Armenia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey are among the countries of concern regarding child poverty (Fridez 2022). According to the "Children with Statistics 2021" report of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) on April 20, 2022, the number of poor children is 7 million 378 as of 2020 (TUIK 2022).

Turkey's already high inflation rate has started to rise with Covid-19, and the economic crisis has deepened. The economic crisis has exacerbated already high child poverty. So much so that it has been frequently emphasized in the press that parents have difficulty in giving their children pocket money and that the students are not fed enough (Cumhuriyet 2022; Evrensel 2022). The study conducted by the Education and Science Employees' Union (Eğitimiş Bursa Branch 2022) with the participation of 2167 teachers working in pre-school, primary, secondary and high school level schools in 17 districts of Bursa also reveals alarming results regarding the deteriorating nutritional status of students.

Malnutrition negatively affects children's mental, physical development and social life. Insufficient nutrition (malnutrition) causes stunting (the child is short for his/her age), underweight (the child's body weight is less than his/her height) or delays in development in the long term (UNICEF 2019); increases the possibility of getting infections such as meningitis, middle ear infections, colds, urinary tract infections, various parasitic diseases more frequently, disrupts the body's defense system, and accordingly paves the way for fatal diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia (Hatun 2002). Malnourished children have difficulty in concentrating on their lessons, disrupting their academic duties, their chances of receiving quality care or attending pre-school education are reduced, and they may encounter difficulties in accessing education, purchasing the necessary materials for education, and finding suitable places to study. These children also experience behavioral problems, cannot go to school because they get sick more often, and therefore their school success decreases, they are punished more by the school administration and their dropout rates are high (Konuk-Şener, Ocakçı 2014).

School nutrition policies and practices can be grouped into two main groups: in-school nutrition, which corresponds to the nutrition of children while they are at school, and giving a certain amount of food to families whose children go to school. Free, low-cost school nutrition programs are implemented in the form of individual, regional or comprehensive (national) targeting in the whole country (Gelli 2016). While school nutrition programs in high and middle-income countries are generally more institutionalized within the framework of national policies; programs in low-income countries have less consolidation in national policy frameworks. While 86% of 94 high- and upper-middle-income countries have a policy or legal framework regulating the school feeding program; most low-income countries (52%) do not have a policy or legal framework regarding school nutrition (WFP 2013).

Although there are explanations regarding the right to food of children in international legal legislation, there are no satisfying and nutritious nutrition practices and policies in public schools in Turkey, such as free breakfast, lunch, snacks and after-school meals, except for the lunch provided in bussed education. Lunch is provided to students who are transported in bussed education, while food service is not provided to students who study at the same school and are outside the scope of bussed system. In addition, food service is not provided within the scope of bussed practice in schools that are within the scope of bussed system but where double-shift education is provided (MoNE 2014).

Although it is not compulsory, students in primary schools bring foods suitable for the weekly or monthly menu suggested by the teachers from their homes and eat break time. In some state primary schools in Turkey, education is carried out in the form of full-day, some in double shifts. In primary schools that provide full-day education the first lesson starts at 09:00 and the schools close at 15:00. Usually, in these schools a 7-20-minutes long break is held after the second lesson, and students eat the food they brought from home during this long break. In these schools, lunch breaks are held between 12.20 and 13.30. Students who wish can go home and eat lunch at this hour, eat the food they have prepared and brought

from home, pay a fee if the school has a cafeteria, or buy food from the school canteen, if available. Long break and lunch breaks are not given in schools where double-shift education is provided. Classes start at 07:30 or 08:00 in the morning shift, and between 12:30 or 13:30 in the afternoon shift. Recess time is at least 15 minutes in schools with full-day schools and at least 10 minutes in schools with double-shifts schools. In schools where full-day schooling is provied, the lunch break and meal time cannot be less than 40 minutes and more than 90 minutes. In primary education institutions with double-shift, a maximum of 30 minutes is allocated between the exit and entrance of morning and afternoon group students (MoNE 2019).

Significance of the study

Free meals at schools plays an important role in eliminating the nutritional inequality in the society. School nutrition policies are not only a social policy tool for eliminating inequality, but also an issue that needs to be emphasized in terms of diseases such as obesity and diabetes, and healthy eating habits necessary for a sustainable healthy life (Aksoy, Çoban Sural 2018). Primary schools constitute the most important education level in the life of individuals, since preschool education is not included in the scope of compulsory education in Turkey. At this level, teachers are one of the actors who care for the child outside the home. Theachers have the potential to influence students' healthy eating habits for a sustainable lifestyle, as well as teaching their right to food, food cultures and etiquette. However, there are limited studies (Aytekin 1998; Taşkaya, Yetkin, Yetkin 2015; Günaydın 2018) that deal with teachers' opinions about students' right to food in schools, and their observations and experiences about students' nutritional status. It is hoped that this study, which deals with the right to food at school and the nutritional status of students from the perspective of teachers, may contribute to the field with up-to-date information on the subject and keep the subject on the agenda. Deep Poverty Network-DPN (2022), a non-governmental organization,

also publish reports that students go to school hungry due to the deep poverty experienced by families. Besides these reports, this study may contribute to our understanding of the extent to which teachers believe schools are responsible for providing students with food and their role in this regard, regarding students' right to food and nutritional status.

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the observations, experiences, awareness and views of the classroom teachers working in state primary schools in socially and economically disadvantaged settlements regarding the students' right to food and nutritional status at schools.

Method

This study was carried out with a basic qualitative research design. The focus of basic qualitative research is to try to understand how participants make sense of and interpret events, their lives and experiences (Merriam 2009). In the study, what the classroom teachers observe, experience and think about of student nutrition, which happens every school day in their professional lives, was examined from an interpretive perspective.

Participants

Particularly, the participation of teachers working in primary schools in socio-economically disadvantaged regions was aimed in the study. Since the schools do not show atypical or unusual features, the participants were determined by typical sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types (Patton 2015). A total of 22 primary school teachers including 15 female and 7 male working in schools with multigrade schools, schools with double-shift education, schools providing full-

day (time) education and schools with a large number of refugee students (especially Syrians) in 5 cities (İstanbul, Ankara, Tekirdağ, Kars, Urfa) were reached. Teachers who participated voluntarily signed consent forms.

Data collection

The data of the study were collected through semi-structured interviews. A draft interview form with fifteen open-ended questions was created before data collection. Then, the draft interview form was evaluated by 6 experts. According to the suggestions of the experts, some questions were rewritten and the number of questions was reduced to ten. A pre-application was made with one of the researchers who still works as a classroom teacher and carries out this study. Attention was paid to conduct the interviews in a conversational style. All interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants. The face to face interviews held at the participants' schools or via Zoom lasted between 60 and 80 minutes on average.

Analysis of the data

The voice-recorded data were converted into text. The transcribed texts were read several times. Based on these readings, initial-coding was done with both the key concepts. The initial-codings were reviewed by making constant comparisons and the final codes were reached. The codes were clustered into themes, taking into account their similarities, differences and intensities. Three themes emerged at the end of the process: Teachers' assessment of students' nutritional status; Teachers' strategies to nutrition of students at schools; Teachers' understanding about right to food at schools.

Results

The data obtained within the scope of the study were grouped under three themes. These themes are: 1. Teachers' assesment of students' nutritional status at school, 2. Teachers' strategies to improve the nutrition of students at schools and 3. Teachers' understanding about right to food at schools.
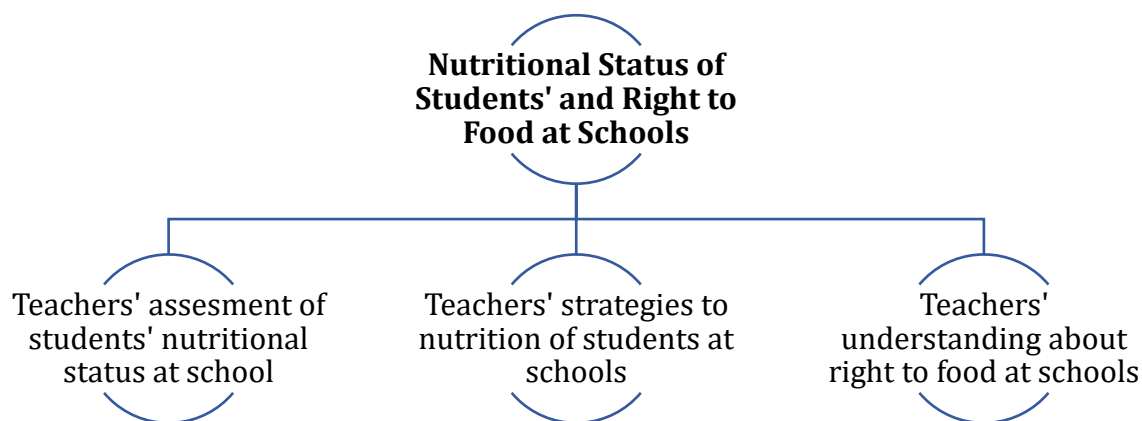
Figure 1: *The themes about nutritional status of students' and right to food at schools.*

Theme 1. Teachers' assesment of students' nutritional status at schools

Teachers' assesment of students' nutritional status at schools was examined under the theme. These categories are: assesments regarding the canteen, the situation of students coming to school hungry, the existence of break to eat, the menu content brought by students, changes in students' nutrition in recent years and the effects of coming to school hungry.

1. Assesments regarding the canteen

Under this category, the assesments of teachers about the canteens in schools were included.

Teachers generally see the food sold in the school canteens as unhealthy and inadequate in terms of adequate and balanced nutrition for the students. They stated that the main reason for this is the sale of junk food in school canteens. However, they think that if the canteens are inspected by the Ministry of National

Education and fresh vegetables and fruits are sold, it may be more beneficial for children. It was also stated that even if the food sold in canteens is healthy, sometimes there is insufficient variety.

"Of course it is not convenient. It's all ready-made food. Apart from that, only bagels and pastries. You know, all from outside. There is no natural food at all. There is only toast. Other than that, it's all packaged food."

2. The situation of students coming to school hungry

Most of the participant teachers stated that students do not come to school hungry. Teachers who stated that students come to school hungry because of family factors, individual habits of the student or the early start time of school.

One of the factors that are effective in terms of familial factors is the habits of the family. The time of waking up in the morning, nutrition routines and habits are decisive at this point. Another family-related issue is that families do not show any sensitivity to their children's nutrition and therefore are careless in preparing their children's diets. This carelessness causes children not to bring food/drink to school for nutrition or the food they do bring consists of poor quality and non-nutritious foods. Having working parents also causes students to come to school hungry in the morning. Teachers stated that children with working parents often do not have breakfast, and even if they do, it is inadequate, and that the food in the lunchbox consists of packaged junk food. Another reason for students to come to school hungry is the unfavorable economic situation of the families. A striking point under this category is that issues related to family habits, carelessness and working status are attributed to mothers rather than fathers. Regarding the habits of the families, the teachers mentioned the habits of the mothers; regarding the carelessness of the family, they mostly mentioned the careless behavior of the mothers; and regarding the working status of the family, they said that they had problems mostly because the mothers were working.

"Yes. We have students who regularly come hungry. So this is also related to this. It is not related to poverty. It's about mothers loving their sleep too much. Yes, the mother is very lazy. She says, "Hodja, we haven't woken up yet, blah blah blah.

Let's say the child comes late. Did you have breakfast? No, I didn't, teacher. Oh my God, so you didn't have breakfast? Teacher, we couldn't make it. I mean, this is not one, not two. All the time."

The reasons related to students' habits are that students sleep late at night and therefore wake up late in the morning and do not eat breakfast to avoid being late for school. Not wanting to have breakfast as soon as they wake up in the morning is also related to student habits.

"I have two students. Two of them come hungry. In general, these two always come hungry. The parents' explanations are as follows: they will eat in the second break anyway, I can't feed them in the morning, they can't eat as soon as they get up in the morning, so I put a little more in their food box. It is related to the children's diet."

3. The existence of nutrition time

According to participating teachers, the lack of a planned food break in schools negatively affects students' healthy nutrition. In order to minimize this problem, teachers combine the first or last minutes of a lesson with recess to give students the opportunity to meet their nutritional needs. However, in schools with dual education compared to full-day education, time constraints cause students to be unable to feed themselves comfortably. Teachers try to meet the nutritional needs of students by allocating a certain portion of the time allocated to a lesson for feeding them. For this reason, they did not express any concern about this lesson being taught less than the time allocated for nutrition.

"Of course there is. Honestly, we don't allocate too much time for nutrition time. We do it during the 2nd recess, but usually the children start nutrition five minutes before the end of the lesson or ten minutes at most. Because they only complete it after the bell rings, and they gradually recover as they enter the next lesson, the third lesson. It takes about fifteen to twenty minutes."

4. The menu content brought by students

According to teachers' observations, students mainly bring homemade pastries (toast, pastry, bagels, cake, pasta, stuffed bread) in their school food box.

Students may also bring ready-to-eat and unhealthy foods such as junk food.

The most striking explanation about the dietary menu brought by the students was given by the teacher at the school where Syrian students are concentrated. According to this teacher's observations, Syrian students usually come to school hungry without breakfast and bring only bread spread with tomato paste for lunch later in the day. According to this teacher, Syrian students are used to hunger. The teacher expresses these observations with the following statements.

"I don't really know about hunger at home. If our children didn't eat like them, they would starve to death. Maybe none of them eat breakfast. ... Even if I ask them in the fourth class period, they say they are hungry, so I didn't talk about breakfast much with the students. Maybe none of them eat breakfast. Obviously, the hunger situation in Syrian students is a little different. It is different. Especially one or two students can be on the verge of fainting."

5. Changes in students' nutrition in recent years

Although teachers generally observe that the majority of students do not come to school hungry, they also state that the food they bring to school has changed in recent years. Teachers stated that in recent years, students' nutrition menus have become more inadequate and consisted of unhealthy foods. When they asked their students to bring foods such as fruits and vegetables, nuts, meatballs, etc., they stated that more students than before could not bring such foods due to their economic situation. The rate of adherence to the nutrition menus created by teachers has also decreased in recent years, again due to economic difficulties. According to the observations of the teachers, families mostly send the foods that are already available at home as meals, and do not allocate a separate budget for foods that are outside the family's usual menu.

"I mean, of course, as I said, since the economic level has decreased a little more recently, the situation of bringing healthier products to the children's diets has decreased a little more. Now it has become difficult to buy even a fruit and vegetable. So children are also affected by this in terms of nutrition."

6. Effects of coming to school hungry

Teachers categorised the main effects of students coming to school hungry into two groups: academic and physical effects. Academic effects were expressed more predominantly by the teachers. The academic effects of coming to school hungry were expressed by the teachers as distraction, inability to focus on the lesson, low levels of achievement, performance and perception.

"We may lack attention in class. It is caused by malnutrition, lack of energy. "

According to the teachers, coming to school hungry also has some physical effects. It was frequently emphasised that students who come to school hungry have low energy, are sluggish, sleepy, tired and exhausted. According to the teachers, another physical effect of hunger is manifested in the form of abdominal and stomach pain.

"Nausea, drowsiness, they constantly come to complain. My stomach hurts, I feel nauseous. Can you call my mum? All of these are usually due to not having breakfast in the morning."

Theme 2. Teachers' strategies to improve the nutrition of students at schools

The second theme, teachers' strategies to nutrition of students at schools, is divided into two categories. These categories are:

1. Menu preparation process

Although public schools in Turkey do not have a nutrition plan officially determined by the Ministry of National Education, students are encouraged to bring food to school, sometimes by school administrations and sometimes by teachers, provided that certain rules are followed. However, there are different ways of determining the foods that students bring from home. The majority of the teachers who participated in the study stated that they could not create a standardised nutrition menu mainly due to economic reasons.

"I don't determine it. As I said, there are those with very low purchasing power. There are many Syrians. There are many students who make a living by recycling,

collecting paper. Therefore, we do not make any demands for this or that. We also want them to eat healthy, but unfortunately we can't do anything."

In addition to the teachers who stated that they left the students free in terms of the foods to be brought, some teachers also stated that they determined the foods to be brought by themselves. While determining the menu, teachers prefer to have accessible, filling (such as pastries), protein-based, milk and dairy products, odourless, unshelled nuts, fruits, vegetables and homemade foods in order to ensure equality among students depending on their economic status.

"In line with the means of the students' parents. Now, inevitably, not everyone has the same opportunities, not everyone has the same financial situation and income level. I prepare a list that everyone can bring."

In some schools, the food to be brought to school by students is decided in consultation with the teacher council or parents. In the case of a joint decision, it is prioritised that the food to be brought is healthy.

2. Teachers' ways of solving students' nutritional problems

The majority of the teachers who participated in the study stated that a few students came to their classrooms hungry. It has been determined that teachers do not ignore the problems of hungry students; on the contrary, they apply various solutions to feed these children. Most of them prefer to meet with the family first to solve the problem of students who come to school hungry. In these interviews, opinions are exchanged about the reasons why the student comes to school hungry, the importance of having breakfast and the quality of the food to be placed in the food box. The majority of the teachers stated that the meetings with the family worked well and that the student's nutritional problems improved within a few weeks.

"I talk to parents and ask them to be more attentive to this issue. I tell them that adequate nutrition is necessary for their children's health and better attendance. I have had a positive result."

Teachers explained that they also produced instant solutions for students who forgot to bring their own food, such as sharing their own food with the student or buying something (toast, bagel, pastry, etc.) from the school canteen.

"One of them forgot his food at home. I couldn't reach his mum, so I gave him my own banana."

Teachers stated that apart from students coming to school hungry, they also encountered problems related to the food they brought to school. These problems are mostly related to students bringing foods that are harmful to health (junk food, carbonated/fizzy drinks, foods with unpleasant odours, etc.) which are not recommended in the menu. In the solution of this problem, firstly, the teachers forbid the child to bring such foods, the student is warned, and if the problem continues, the parents are interviewed.

"In such cases, I have to warn the parents. Some even send sausage and pasta. Of course, that's why I warn the child properly. I tell the parents to follow the rules from now on."

Three teachers who participated in the study stated that in order to solve the problem of students who often come to school hungry, they sometimes offered help through official institutions (mukhtar's office, district governorship) and sometimes in cooperation with other parents. Four teachers stated that they could not solve the problem of students coming to school hungry and that there was nothing they could do about it.

"Apart from that, there is nothing much we can do. Our possibilities are also limited."

Theme 3. Teachers' understanding about right to food at schools

The third and last theme obtained from the data is teachers' understanding about right to food at schools. There are the following categories under this theme.

1. Nutrition as a right

All of the teachers participating in the study agreed that nutrition is the most fundamental right of the child. A typical statement regarding the right to food is as follows:

"Nutrition is a right and a need at the same time. It is the most basic human need. Therefore, children have the right to food."

2. Those responsible for the protection of students' right to food

Although all of the teachers state that nutrition is a fundamental right, one third of them see the family as primarily responsible for the protection of this right, and they think that the state should assume a supervisory and supportive role if the family cannot fulfil this responsibility or is unable to do so.

"Firstly, families. But the state should follow up and provide adequate opportunities for families to ensure their right to food. On the other hand, families are responsible for monitoring the preparation of the child's food and nutrition. In addition to this, the state should follow up whether families have the means to provide nutrition, and if not, the state should solve this with the necessary legislation through different sanctions and support. In other words, the state comes after the family."

The other third of the teachers stated that the state is solely responsible for protecting the right to food of students.

"I think the state is primarily responsible. Because we are a social state. When our schools are built, we must have a refectory."

Teachers, who see the protection of the right to food as the responsibility of the state, also suggested solutions such as opening a refectory and providing at least one meal free of charge, distributing foods such as milk and nuts, and a voucher system to ensure this right in schools.

"All children in public schools can be provided with quality and healthy nutrition by the state, even if it is just one meal. In the past, milk and snacks were brought and distributed. I remember them. Now it is very weak in that regard. Even a glass of milk used to make children very happy".

A group of teachers think that they are responsible for protecting students' right to food after the family. They stated that these responsibilities are mostly at the point of organising and monitoring the nutrition process of students in the school environment.

"Firstly, the family. Then it is our duty to provide an environment for them, that is, to organise the feeding time at school."

Conclusion

This study, which examines students' right to food and nutritional status in schools from the perspective of teachers, revealed different results from studies conducted recently by non-governmental organizations. Despite the studies revealing that children go to school hungry due to the poverty deepened by the economic crisis, the teachers participating in this study believe that students, excluding Syrian students, rarely go hungry. They explain the reasons why children come hungry primarily with the carelessness of families, especially mothers, with a sexist point of view, students waking up late and not having time for breakfast. Dual education is also seen as another important factor affecting the hunger of children.

Teachers believe that while determining the weekly or monthly menu for the food that students will bring to school, they will ensure that food is accessible to everyone, thus ensuring equality among students. In addition, they are sensitive that in this way, students will not be envious of each other's food and will not feel tehmselves bad. Another point that teachers show sensitivity is that although there is no officially determined feeding time in schools, they allow students to eat their food in at least 15-20 minutes by combining the last 10 minutes of the 2nd or 3rd lesson with the 10-minute break. While the teachers consider the homemade pastries brought by the students to school as "healthy", such foods are considered as "unhealthy" when students buy from the canteen. Teachers generally evaluate students' nutritional status in terms of hunger and satiety, and

do not emphasize the consumption of "adequate and balanced nutrition" and "hot and juicy food". This may be related to food culture and nutritional knowledge.

All of the teachers participating in the research see nutrition at school as a fundamental right of the student, and two-thirds consider the family primarily responsible for providing and protecting this right. In this case, the fact that families are considered as primary responsibility by the teachers may be related to the legal culture consisting of the knowledge, evaluation and perception of the society in which they live and the process of creating this culture.

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What's the problem with John Dewey's liberalism?

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Abstract

John Dewey remains one of the most important figures of progressive education. Even though critical educators emphasize some elements of his thought, they criticize Dewey's liberalism. In this paper I analyze Dewey's radical liberalism in order to understand what exactly is problematic with it. I compare Dewey's liberalism with the political liberalism of John Locke, the economic liberalism of Adam Smith and the utilitarian liberalism of John S. Mill. I claim that Dewey's radical liberalism does not include any of the basic elements of liberal thought; the logical and ethical priority of individual, the strict distinction between the private and the public sphere and the notion of negative freedom. Moreover, Dewey connects his democratic ideal with the community and socialized economy. This theoretical perspective does not lead us to liberalism, but to a communitarian correction of liberalism. Consequently, I support that Dewey's liberalism does not constitute a problem for the critical pedagogy. On the contrary, I localize the fundamental problem of Dewey's philosophical and pedagogical thought to the connection of his political philosophy with the epistemological formalism of experimentalism.

70 years after his death, John Dewey remains one of the most important figures of progressive and democratic education. Critical educators are often inspired by some of his ideas, such as the importance of experience and the relation between knowledge and praxis. At the same time, they criticize Dewey's liberalism

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(Aronowitz, Giroux 1986). In this paper, I will try to analyze Dewey's liberalism in order to understand what exactly is problematic with it. I support that the fundamental problem with Dewey's philosophical and educational thought is not his political philosophy, but his epistemology.

First of all, I distinguish two different levels of analysis; the level of politics and the level of political philosophy. At the first level, we could pose the question about Dewey's political activity as a public intellectual and an activist. At the second level – the level of political philosophy – we pose the question about the philosophical tradition which Dewey's political thought follows. Between the two levels, I will focus on the second one.

Because of Dewey's emphasis on liberalism, democracy and individual growth scholars characterize his political thought as developmental liberal democracy and include him in the broader liberal tradition (Macpherson 1977; Anderson 1990; Diggens 1994). However, John Dewey supports that if we want to remain liberal, we should radicalize liberalism and so he names his political philosophy radical liberalism (Dewey [1935a] 1987). So, we are obligated to ask in which direction we should radicalize liberalism and what this means for liberalism itself. I claim that if we compare Dewey's radical liberalism with the political liberalism of John Locke, the economic liberalism of Adam Smith and the utilitarian liberalism of John S. Mill, we will find significant differences. Dewey's radical liberalism does not include any of the basic elements of liberal thought; the logical and ethical priority of the individual, the strict distinction between the private and the public sphere and the notion of freedom.

Liberal tradition shares an individualistic departure point. It analyzes social phenomena as phenomena of individual human nature. This methodological decision is based on the idea that the individual is totally determined by the human nature and that society is just an aggregation of independent individuals. As J.S. Mill writes "*[t]he laws of phenomena of society are, and can be, nothing but the laws of the actions and passions of human beings united together in the social state. Men, however, in a state of society, are still men; their actions and passions are*

obedient to the laws of individual human nature … Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man" (Mill (1843), 879). This logical priority of the individual also forms an ethical dimension. Human is understood as a tree, "*which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces*" (Mill [1859] 1977, 263).

On the contrary, Dewey denies this individualistic perspective of liberalism. He agrees with Hegel's critique against "*abstract individualistic psychology*" (Dewey [1916] 1980, 64), which ignores the significance of social institutions in the formation of individual minds. He supports that the mind – as a basic element of human individuality – is emerged through and because of communication which is the specific way of human interaction. According to Dewey, mind "*is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches that organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication*" (Dewey [1925] 1981, 198). In addition, the mind is understood as a system of beliefs, meanings and perspectives which are related to tradition and customs. Consequently, there are no individual minds, but individuals with mind (Dewey [1925] 1981). Dewey's emphasis on communication as the peculiar way of human interaction does not mean the undermining of the significance of the individual. It means that "*liberalism that takes its profession of importance of individuality with sincerity must be deeply concerned about the structure of human association. For the latter operates to affect negatively and positively, the development of individuals*" (Dewey [1935a] 1987, 31). Therefore, the social institutions are understood as important factors of the formation of individuals.

The second basic element of liberal tradition is the strict distinction between the private and the public sphere as an answer to arbitrary decisions of men in power. For John Locke (2003), the main problem, which liberalism has to deal with, concerns the restriction of the power of the government and the protection of the individual's liberty and property according to the natural law. JS Mill is not preoccupied only with the political problem of the tyranny of majority, but also

with the social problem of the tyranny of prevailing opinion and feeling. He claims that society has the tendency to impose certain ideas and practices as rules of conduct and therefore to block the development of individuality (Mill [1859] 1977). Both thinkers support that the liberal solution to these political and social problems is the formation of an inviolable private sphere of individual independence. As JS Mill writes: "*Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest*" (Mill [1859] 1977, 226). Consequently, "*the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community against his will is to prevent harm to others*" (Mill [1859] 1977, 223).

John Dewey's radical liberalism moves in a different direction. It does not want to protect the individual's independence from the political and social authority, but to regulate the consequences of human interaction. Dewey distinguishes two kinds of consequences; "*those which affect the persons directly engaged in a transaction, and those which affect others beyond those immediately concerned*" (Dewey [1927] 1984, 243-244). In this distinction, Dewey finds the germ of the distinction between the private and the public sphere. In the first case, where the consequences concern only the persons who are directly engaged in an interaction, we find ourselves into the private sphere. In the other case, where the consequences affect persons who are not engaged in the interaction, we are into the public sphere (Dewey [1927] 1984). So, presupposition for the formation of the public sphere is the recognition of these indirect consequences and the effort or the struggle to regulate them. Consequently, the boundaries between the private and the public sphere are not strict and fixed, but flexible. They are not based on a fixed theory of natural rights, but they are dependent on the political and social struggle. If, for example, we recognized that the environmental consequences of traveling with airplane are really important, we could regulate this activity and impose restrictions to the private sphere and the freedom of movement.

The third basic element of liberal tradition is the notion of negative freedom. According to liberalism freedom is just the absence of coercion. Benjamin Constant (1819) compares the ancient and the modern notion of liberty and he supports that for ancients liberty means an equal participation to social and political power. On the contrary, for moderns liberty means the peaceful enjoyment of private independence. JS Mill expresses the same idea when he claims that "*The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.*" (Mill [1859] 1977, 226).

From his point of view, John Dewey rejects the notion of negative freedom. He supports that if we understand freedom as a certain natural right which is justified by the pre-social situation of human beings, as classic liberalism tries to, then freedom becomes an un-historical and thus an abstract concept. He suggests relating freedom to our historical and social situation. He claims that freedom is a social issue. It is related to our social and political rights and our effective power to realize our will. So, the question of freedom is also a question of the distribution of power. Dewey writes: "*Liberty is not just an abstract idea … It is power, effective power to do specific things. There is no such thing as liberty in general … if one wants to know what the condition of liberty is at a given time, one has to examine what persons can do and what they cannot do*" (Dewey [1935b] 1987, 360). Thus, "*the system of liberties that exists at any time is always the system of restraints or controls that exists at that time. No one can do anything except in relation to what others can do and cannot do*" (Dewey [1935b] 1987, 361).

For Dewey's radical liberalism the absence of coercion is an essential but not sufficient condition for the liberation of the individual. The real question is about the cultivation of a positive freedom that is the increase of the individual's power to realize his will (Dewey [1928] 1984). And for that aim we should think on our historical and social conditions. "*The conception of liberty is always relative to forces that at a given time and place are increasingly felt to be oppressive. Liberty in the concrete signifies release from the impact of particular oppressive forces;*

emancipation from something once taken as a normal part of human life but now experiences as bondage" (Dewey [1935a] 1987, 35). In earlier times, concrete liberty signified liberation from slavery or despotic regime. But in our days, in times of industrial capitalism, concrete liberty means liberation from the material insecurity and this freedom can be realized only through the organized social control of economy. According to Dewey's radical liberalism we should reverse the perspective of *laissez-faire* economic liberalism of Adam Smith and "*see that socialized economy is the means of free individual development as the end*" (Dewey [1935a] 1987, 63).

In conclusion, Dewey's political philosophy does not share the basic ideas of liberal tradition. Moreover, Dewey's critique on classic liberalism does not lead us to the defense of the welfare state, but to a more radical perspective of socialized economy. What Dewey calls industrial democracy is a democratic ideal according to which workers have an important share in the control of industrial production (Dewey [1918] 1982). Dewey belongs to a large group of non-Marxist progressive thinkers who try to move between liberal capitalism and revolutionary socialism (Kloppenberg 1986). He is liberal only in the broadest sense of the term. He recognizes that individual freedom is inextricably tied to modernity and that we cannot return to a communitarian pre-modern society. Dewey poses the question of how the idea of freedom, the idea of individuality can be reconciled with social relations. And he answers to this question through the formulation of a democratic theory which emphasizes on the significance of community and the social ethos of its members. For Dewey, the small communities, where the face-to-face communication prevails, are the homeland of democracy. In this pre-political, social sphere every member of the community participates equally to a cooperative endeavor as he contributes to the realization of common ends. Through this participation, a democratic social ethos of free communication, equal participation and social cooperation is developed. Moreover, the continuous development of the self can be achieved only through the participation in this democratic community (Dewey 1916; 1927; 1935).

I support that Dewey's political philosophy – his idea about a radical liberalism or a radical democracy - is not the main problem for a critical approach in education. Critical educators can have an open dialogue with it, and they can creatively integrate certain elements, such as Dewey's critique on individualism and the significance of community, the social regulation of the private sphere or the importance of a democratic social ethos. I claim that the fundamental problem of Dewey's philosophical and educational thought lies in the connection of his political philosophy with the epistemological formalism of experimentalism.

John Dewey attempts to formulate a philosophy of praxis which is based on the experimental practices of modern physical sciences. He claims that the experimental method offers us the model for reflective thinking in general. According to Dewey, experimental thinking does not attempt to find the unchangeable substance of being as traditional speculative philosophy tries to. It denies the possibility of an Absolute Truth. Experimental thinking tries to construct knowledge though the existential reconstruction of a certain problematic situation. So, when we deal with a problem, we make a change in order to see what follows and through this way we reconstruct our natural and social environment, and we obtain knowledge (Dewey [1929] 1984).

Moreover, Dewey supports that experimental social science is able to define the ends through the process of problem solving. «*Social Inquiry … must judge certain objective consequences to be the end which is worth attaining under the given conditions … It means that ends in their capacity of values can be validly determined only on the bases of the tensions, obstructions and positive potentialities that are found, by controlled observation, to exist in the actual situation*» (Dewey [1938] 1986, 496-7). Even though he criticizes positivism because it excludes ends from the field of inquiry, he does not totally avoid objectivism. He suggests that scientific inquiry is able to define our ends taking into account the given conditions and the perspective of general interest. So, Dewey overlooks the inherent connection of science with certain interests or values, and accepts that science is, or can be, a neutral process.

In addition, Dewey suggests that the overcoming of the democratic crisis demands the substitution of different social dogmas with the experimental method. It demands the implementation of experimental methods to the social reconstruction and to the planning of far-reaching social plans (Dewey [1935a] 1987). In this perspective, Dewey argues that the experimental social inquiry should intellectually grasp the current social problems and suggest certain solutions and the well-informed public should discuss freely about the desirable social ends and the available means and decide from the perspective of general interest (Dewey [1927] 1984).

However, values are not just certain worth attaining ends which can be defined by objective scientific inquiry. Certain values are essentially a presupposition for the definition of a social situation as problematic or the determination of the problematic elements of a social situation. The political and social struggles do not concern just a disagreement on the desirable ends based on different estimation of current conditions and potentialities. They are primarily about certain values which formulate differently the understanding of existent social situation and the possible solutions. The values are those which define an end as desirable or not. Consequently, social science presupposes a consensus on certain values and this consensus is essential for decisions about social or educational policy. So, Dewey's idea that we can decide about certain values through experimental social science seems problematic. It is based on a formalistic epistemology which ignores the inherent connection between knowledge and certain interests.

In conclusion, Dewey's radical liberalism does not share any of the basic elements of classic liberalism. In an era of post-democracy Dewey's vision of radical democracy can help us to reflect on the original meaning of democratic regime. However, the connection of democracy with the objectivist epistemology of experimentalism is highly problematic. Dewey's experimental method fails to apprehend the inherent connection between scientific knowledge and certain human interests and so it is unable to offer us conceptual tools for a critical approach of our social situation. As a result, Dewey fails to complement his

political theory with a critical social theory, which moves beyond the idea of general interest and recognizes the opponent social interests which influence both scientific process and social struggle.

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The philosophy of Praxis and psychoeducational perspectives towards a transformed and well-rounded school as factor of radical social transformation

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Abstract

The philosophy of Praxis concerns the thinking process which is everything but static; it is reflection in motion, enriched with the historical and scientific experience of the relevant literature. During an unprecedented circumstance which followed the deep health, economic, social, political, and mostly humanitarian crisis, the adaptation to new models of social organization and function is unconsciously and forcefully imposed on an individual and collective level, and thus it disturbs the existing relations of balance.

Individual and social identity formation is still relying on the perceptions of the agents of socialization, whereas it is shaped by the way in which the individual will act on a personal or collective level, by taking the ability of choice for granted. Ever since childhood, behaviors and conditions that determine the individual's

mentality in a heteronomous way and are responsible for configurating the regularity or irregularity of his/her daily function have been recorded.

The acceptance of social roles since the early stages of the life of the individual as well as the objective value of their use are considered given and non-negotiable. At the same time growth and self-development become feasible through the ongoing and consecutive class education, where the knowledge and usage of the rules of Logic, the scientific Recta ratio, the Theory and Philosophy of Praxis are the crucial factors that enable people to cope with the unceasing information and visual overload. By using the dialogue as a tool, they assume a critical stance on what they know; they experiment with a different way of thinking, out of the box, in order to support themselves, to think collectively and consequently to evolve into independent, critically thinking political beings.

If nothing else, a school that is broad and transformed, which includes all ages and every citizen, could contribute towards a radical reformation. The continuous, unperturbable, daily contact with knowledge, which will be lifelong and a prerequisite of livelihood, could shape the future of all modern societies through the tangible action of the individuals. By being active citizens, they change the social reality and reconfigure it in order to match the objective requirements of life with the subjective attainment of the individual.

The connection of subject and society

The philosophy of praxis is everything else than static. It is a continuously moving calculus, that is enriched with historical and scientific experience. From Plato and Aristotle to the empiricists, the Kantians, the critical existentialists, to the Marxists and the postmodernists, the concept of action describes the involvement as a principal feature. The content of action also involves the motivation, the application, the implementation, the management of ideas, the very specific way of reasoning, even the arguing and the revolutionary practice.

Indicatively, we refer to the Marxists' term of praxis as the necessary condition that must be applied in order to achieve the transformation, the change of the society. Action is the component that is directly interdependent by the social life (McLellan 1970). Also, the change of the individual and of the historical world in general, arises through independent, productive, and self-creative action. The social everyday life, in organized societies is essentially practical. It is the result of understanding human actions and the natural continuation of understanding the world (Marx 1981). This will arise as a result of the revolutionary actions of the subject in the direction of the benefits for the whole of society.

In a current situation, which follows a deep and long-term economic, social, political, health, but mainly humanitarian crisis, in which values and freedoms are affected, the «subjects» as described by L. Althusser (2014), seem to have fully adapted to the requirements of the existing ideology. However, the full-scale attack on labor, social, gender, democratic rights allow for almost no positive development for the benefit of society. Greece is one of the countries that have been seriously affected by the economic crisis, with the most serious consequences being the increase in unemployment and the consequent occupational insecurity (Dunlop, Mletzko 2011; Matsagganis 2013; Kokkevi, Kavanou, Fotiou 2014).

The state chooses repression and terrorism as the main tool for intimidating the citizens (https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-protests-idUSKBN2B2246). This intimidation in combination with the parliamentary work that has been produced (Voted Law in Greek Parliament 4808/21, Section 93), drives the majority of the Greek society to financial disaster and makes citizens being dependent on voucher checks of degrading amounts in order to survive.

Going through the third year of the global pandemic, Greece counts thousands of infections and deaths, even after particularly hard lockdowns. While the National Health System remains understaffed and underfunded, the Greek state opts to recruit private doctors and hospitals in exchange of exorbitant amounts (Decree of 23 March 2020 & 2 February 2022 issued by the Greek Ministry of Finance, No

73a & B3a, respectively). In the gender field, we are counting a rapid increase of femicides (Antonopoulos 2009; Kontochristou 2020). At the same time, while domestic violence is growing, in the USA, more and more states are banning or abolishing the right to abortion something that has to do with the threat to human rights (https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/24/states-set-to-ban-abortion-after-supreme-court-overturns-roe-v-wade.html).

Additionally, the ongoing war in Ukraine has already eroded its economic and social course, recording a rapid rise in inflation with prices for basic goods becoming prohibitive for a huge part of the population, affecting the world economy, threatening a food crisis (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729367/EPRS_ATA(2022)729367_EN.pdf). Of course, the above description of the current political and social conditions is indicative of what is happening locally and internationally and of how hard neoliberal policies ultimately value society and its members.

Now in the consolidated state of global integrated capitalism, there is no longer the possibility of new forces capable of turning disaster into a new cycle of productive expansion to renegotiate the control and the process of class reproduction of bourgeois societies. This totalitarian capitalism transforms its economic domination into total economic domination over the subjects, which follow patterns of actions, in which the Being has completely been separated from their Consciousness.

It seeks to intervene at the core, in the essence of the idiosyncrasy of subjectivity, redefining it as a whole, without being limited to self-evident subordination to defined social roles, as dictated by the dominant division of wage labor (Wacquant 2001).

The special role of the state and consequently the special autonomy of the various levels of power are abolished, because the special character of what we call political, ceases to exist. Politics as an activity process passes as such to the management of economic power (Hayek 1960, 217). Now the conflict has

ontological character. The conflict happens between the dominant individual spirit and the economic subject. The economic subject now, due to the development and dissemination of completely new forms, new mechanisms of social integration, subjugation, and assimilation, ended up in the uniform man of the mass intelligence, separated from logic, into a clumsy, irresponsible one. This is not the result of a mechanistic causality; it is the inevitability of the economic causality.

Thus, bourgeois powers are transformed into totalitarian powers because they derive their essence from the economy, they exist for the economy and above all for the class that dominates within the economic system, even if this means the complete annulment of even the constitutionally enshrined primitive principles. Of course, it is not clarified that this freedom only concerns the market. On the contrary, economic relations, autonomous, educate societies in a specific term with totalitarian characteristics. Despite this, the bourgeoisie is trying to sideline its political model, bourgeois democracy. It chooses to turn from the ritualistic use of its own political institutions to the enactment of the politics of enforcement within a context of social emergencies using institutional state functions of everyday violence, following the growing economic violence that through a parliamentarism can be controlled (Badiou 2005, 29-34).

As a result, the normal and right cogitation cannot be active anymore, because it no longer interprets reality as a whole. Life demands correspond to the consciousness and not the opposite. (Marx, Engels 1998, 42) Life determines consciousness but again the same material terms as an act of economic relations have led to life without consciousness.

Thus, human beings contrary to all other natural beings who simply satisfy their needs, accepted as needs, out of necessity and without problems, those constructed by the capitalist mode of production. The now alienated subjects became unable to decisively change the material conditions of their real life.

At the same time, Cogitation and Action are deconstructed. That is a type of relationship where the essence of the human being is in the essence of thought,

the separation of thought from the thinking Ego, without a doubt, in the same way the separation of man from his essence. The old philosophical problem of the subject as a problem of self-consciousness, is now posed in the absolute way of an arbitrary causation of the economic. This system is also holistic in its political organized form and the truths in general, insists on a subjectivity that cannot be a body of politics, as well as the possibility of preserving the value of the exception, of the event, of the rupture (Badiou 2006, 8).

In this context, the easier way to handle the human subjects is through the divided wage labor. Inevitably, the action of the subject gets isolated from all moral determinations or categorical commands (Hegel 2001, 141-157). The capital is totally dominant over human subjects and human needs. In this procedure, the economic relationship ends up being nothing more than the exploitation of the human labor force which ends up absorbing the other necessary relations of the subjects, disappearing them (Marx 1975, 2).

We are talking now about the human as a copy, which has been constructed to be determined and not simply to be guided by its actions. They are left to believe that they choose without being able to perceive that these are choices by default (Heidegger 1986).

At any period in history, humanity as a whole has not been able to overcome its adaptability to the concept of need. The individuals of material production and practice could not free themselves from the influence of wage labor, as this relationship changed them, dominated by the power of an ideology. (Marx 1981, 958-959).

In this way, the borders of the inner world of individualities were moved, maximizing the dynamics of anthropological transformation but at the same time the outside as a dimension beyond the borders disappeared. The insurmountable obstacle is here, as the actions fail to intervene inside an existence that is unable to transform its essence when everything outside has been vanished.

As mentioned previously, the totalitarian economy of capitalism clearly aims at the production of a new type of human subject, this non-existent subject. Now the

subject's cognitive abilities are invaded because, in particular, the subject's ability to integrate universality and necessity into the strictly individual terms of acquiring and mastering knowledge is limited. Specifically, the critical thinking ability of the subject is disorganized as the cognitive process is disconnected from the empirical data of the senses and is no longer able to rebel against new social roles.

In this way, everything collective is abolished, whether it is a process, a movement, or an act of reaction, the individuality is fully established, which of course can concern individual groups with limited collective interests and individual rewards. Thus, the structural issue from which all problems arise, is no other than the hard model of capitalism.

An important consequence, often under-examined but having a major effect on the way individuals will perceive, experience, and manage these stressful harsh events of reality is the development of depressive and anxious psychopathology, which will either be limited to a transient manifestation of some symptoms or will take the form of a serious condition, which will cause severe dysfunction (Economou, Madianos, Peppou, Patelakis, Stefanis 2013).

At the same time, as mentioned above, the oversupplied world of images produced by societies of perpetually fed consumption was organically connected to the false consciousnesses constructed by the specific modes of production and therefore corresponded to the reality in which they moved. This alienation clearly indicates a psyche wounded by the reality and its conditions, which leads to weak, irritable, and depressed adults and consequently to the formation of young people with the same characteristics (Anagnostopoulos, Soumaki 2014; Kallinikaki 2015).

The fluidization of both forms and the elimination of these activities in large population groups broke the causal link between basic conditions and fundamental activities. In this context, it is not surprising that there is an increase in suicidal tendencies manifested by individuals, which in several cases lead to suicide attempts (Economou et al. 2016), demonstrating the subject's failure to manage the life changes.

In a period where our daily life is completely dependent on our work and the salary we receive in order to survive and live, but also potentially to evolve, the ever-evolving technological progress is coming to shape new terms and modes of operation. The consolidation of social media has greatly affected communication, but especially the way we socialize. New models of operation and social structures are constantly presented and only with demarcation and critical approach, can one choose and exploit the modern trend for the benefit of society as a whole. As a result, this situation affects the general social roles and quotidien models in basic issues.

Reality itself comes to demonstrate the failure of all these social roles. The changes we noticed all these years, for example the nuclear traditional family or the role of the modern woman, describe the crisis of the crisis. The increasing number of single-parent families, with all the psychological effects they can have on children, is not a coincidence (Alipranti-Maratou 2021; Miladinov 2022).

Of course, the real time sociability has largely been affected and also replaced by its virtual form, as communication of relationships is lost among themselves, but also the role and way of functioning within a social group, resulting in the destabilization of the societies themselves.

In a general condition, where the subject's judgment is felt and distinct, where the person is unable to define the mental results, according to the rules of logic and judgment, and to turn thought into practical action, it is imperative that subjective discourse, be reconnected with empirical objectivity (Kant 2013). Only in this way will the results of the intellect have cognitive value. Individuality itself in such an environment can become interventionist, collective, with actions that are not influenced by historical time and by external factors.

Evolution and self-improvement can be achieved through continuous education, as the knowledge and use of the rules of logic in combination with the correct discourse of science in the context of theory and philosophy of praxis are those tools for the reformulation of structure and operation of society. With dialogue as the main means, the person learns to stand critically against what he knows and

experiences and think differently and collectively so to evolve into an independent, thinking political being, using the mind and the senses. With such a given, the slightest change or development could not happen apart from the educational system. The school still remains an ideological mechanism of the state and through it, consciousnesses and societies are formed (Althusser 1994). Until now, formal educational systems have managed to serve the need of industrial capitalism's mass models, with only one goal: the financial system of the capitalist market. According to this orientation of state, the role of education was formed in the same way. Organized education has always been that of the complementary subsystem of social reproduction in accordance with the imperatives of the total system of production.

Transforming education to transform society

Despite the transformations of education systems, if they continue to address only the existing ages that are considered suitable or necessary educationally, they will always end up in bitter failure, as long as education does not play the leading role in the formation of social reproduction (Ball 2007). Assuming that societies are not going to change, they will remain fixed in forms of division of labor and social roles that are oppressive, unjust, and anachronistic, preventing the necessary social change.

The aims, organization and content of education should be completely separated from the pursuits, needs and interests of any economic system both in the field of production and in the field of consumption. Otherwise, the desperate attempt of education systems to track and coordinate with capital growth-expansion-crisis-shrinkage cycles will be repeated in perpetuity.

The public school as it should be in the future would be different in size, it would appeal to all ages of people and participation in it will be compulsory for their whole life. This open school would embrace all social activities and through it everything that citizens in a neighborhood wish to organize for their education,

entertainment, and social intercourse would be accomplished. Each public space would become a part of the expanded building infrastructure that each school would have, it would be its inalienable asset in perpetuity and new spaces would be constantly added, new parts of public space for all kinds of activities as these would be decided by all members of each school. Autonomy would be complete and decisive. The grades and the different types of schools would be abolished so that everything from nurseries to universities would be integrated and assimilated into the one, generalized and lifelong school. Variety and different forms would exist within this one and indivisible wholeness. In a transformational plan like this, people would spread the educational basis they get in every social procedure in their everyday life with their friends, family, workers etc. The financing of this integrated school will be public and will be the sole responsibility of the state. It is understood that the size of the funding would be in such amounts as would be able to maintain and contribute to the continuous increase in the size that the comprehensive school should have with all citizens constantly being educated, researching new knowledge, becoming scientists and polytechnics, receiving at the same time a social wage for this activity. The generalization of new technological applications in all areas of production of material goods and the further refinement of fully automated production systems is constantly eliminating the human presence as practical wage labor.

With the release of enormous amounts of living labor both from the sphere of production and from the sphere of consumption and services, the conditions for the release of human existence as a social totality from the need for survival also emerge. If this undeniable development is accompanied by the mandatory abolition of the capitalist division of labor, it is obvious that the working people are disengaged from daily work in the way we know it until now. Volunteer work would be possible to cover any compulsory labor needs. The continuous presence of all people in all the collective activities of acquisition, assimilation, possession of knowledge and research to produce new knowledge would be mandatory. The supply of work would only be linked to the collective supply of social solidarity

and the positive stimuli that work can offer as a use value only and in no case as a commodity appropriated by an individual. We do know that this difficult and complicated procedure also financially, demands effort, time and will but mainly consciousness to build a new state in which every subject will work for the community as a part of the whole.

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'Have you got the app?'

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Abstract

Departing from this most recurrent question asked to teachers as 'the' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the present work aims at analyzing its relations with the intensive use of private platforms in public schools, especially in developing countries. Based on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 2006; 2010), it aims at grasping the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic aspects of so-called 'learning objects'. Referring to Barreto (2021), it deals with the supposed universal character and validity of the mentioned objects, offered to all students as replacement of teaching and school work. The aim is to address the educational incorporation of information and communication technologies as the deepest sort of technological substitution, regarding teachers' and students' attitudes towards critical reading, in hybrid/remote teaching ('blended learning'). In short, instead of simply paraphrasing the objects involved, the way to social emancipation is (re)contextualizing them in the struggle for hegemony. In other words, there is no definite application as 'the' answer, even when the students can equally access the target digital materials.

'What's it all about?'

The unusual title of this text intends to take that and other questions, usual and colloquial language practices, as standpoints to approach the ways information

and communication technologies (henceforth ICT) have been (re)contextualized in educational policies, especially in developing countries (Barreto 2008).

The theme is not new, as the date above shows, but it has acquired another and quite different dimension. There has been a movement from educational (re)contextualization to technological substitution. In other words, ICT are not taken as materials to aggregate value to teaching, but 'learning objects' to be used instead, delivered by platforms, as the Big Five (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon e Microsoft) and specific applications (i.e. Google Classroom), especially during the pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 , when schools have been closed in order to maintain social isolation (Barreto 2021).

To approach the new dimension of the question, critical reading is fundamental, and its base can be found in Critical Discourse Analysis, formulated by Norman Fairclough.

Critical Discourse Analysis

From a Critical Discourse Analysis standpoint, based on the assumption that language is 'a material form of ideology' (Fairclough 2010, 73), an attempt is made to approach the dialectic between structures and strategies in educational policies.

First of all, it should be noticed that the target texts (different forms of semiosis) tend to forecast a sort of Brave New World, as if technologies could solve any problems. Technical dimensions are emphasized, while political ones remain untouched. Computers by the dozens are to be distributed so as to 'grant' access to knowledge: to bridge the digital divide, as if it were the only one. Technological determinism and substitution are basic assumptions: (1) there has been a 'revolution' caused by technologies themselves (multiple determinations and the very conditions of their production denied); and (2) being the 'origin' of such a revolution, ICT are also the only way to improve education (teacher education and working conditions disregarded). The mere presence of computers stands for

'democratization' of knowledge, now regarded as a factor of production similar to land, capital, enterprise, or labor.

This attempt to analyze Brazilian educational policies must recognize they are part of concrete struggles for hegemony (Gramsci 1971) at different levels (e.g., global and local). Therefore, ideology is taken as hegemony of meaning: neither a hidden one to be unveiled, nor something missing and waiting for completion, but a sort of excess or 'over-completion' which remains unquestioned, and which is legitimized in specific conditions.

(Re)contextualization is a key concept, considering 'governance-related conditionalities' imposed by international financial agencies on Southern countries, as well as the mediations in their 'Brazilian translation', referring to 'a complex phenomenon, involving not a simple colonization, but also an active process of appropriation whose character and outcomes depend upon diverse circumstances in diverse contexts' (Fairclough 2006, 101).

In this relational approach, intertextual analysis takes the discourse of educational policies in Brazil as constrained by the discourses of 'globalization' and of the 'knowledge-based economy', emphasizing the emerging connection between them. Material dimensions, such as 'liberalization' of trade in services, are to be related to symbolic reductions: (1) teacher education to training a set of competencies; and (2) ICT's to distance learning strategies and materials to award educational qualifications.

In a discourse characterized by systematic omission of agencies/agents, nominalization, 'new' vocabulary and different grammatical features, structural problems and their concrete manifestations may be kept aside. In order to grasp the contradictory relations which constitute ICT's (re)contextualization in educational policies, the main agents (voices to be heard) are: international and national government agencies, the media and academic analysis.

Summing up, discourse is a historical instance of language and texts are ways to discourse. Texts are semiotic materials (including not only words), to be analyzed

in three dimensions: semantic (word choices), syntactic (relations) and pragmatical (people's positions in relation to what they say/mean).

As for this short text, stressing the semiotic dimension, a keyword is 'resignification'. Words may be the same, but they acquire other meanings. That is the case for 'learning', while 'teaching' tends not to be mentioned anyway. But although recurrent, 'learning' may stand for different actions in the discourse of agencies such as the World Bank. Barreto (2008) lists some of them: accessing 'knowledge', expanding 'access to learning opportunities', 'access to learning' and 'to access learning', without any qualification or additional information, as if learning did not refer to an internal process.

A synthetic critical text

During the pandemic, a text found in Facebook is an important mention.
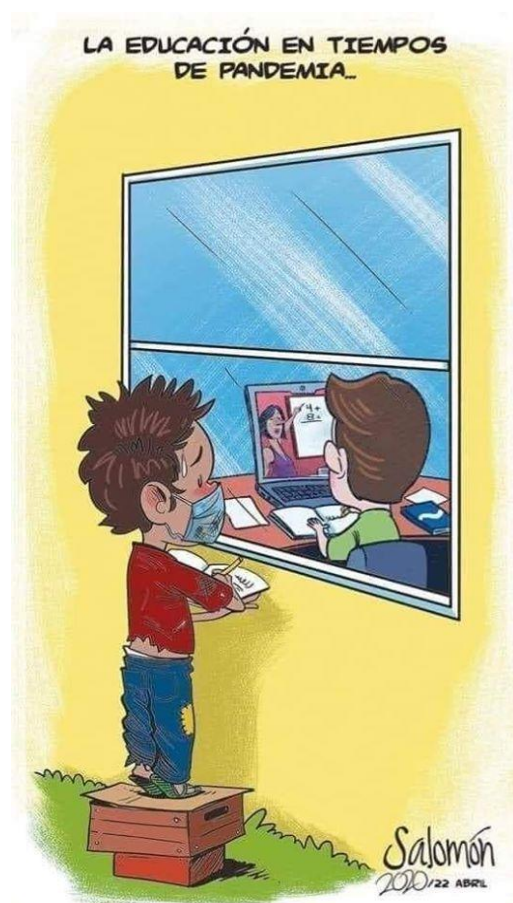
Its title could be: two boys and a window. This window separates and unites them. It is a neat, closed window. Inside the room, a white boy accesses a class. Outside, a black poor boy, standing on a wooden crate, tries to take notes, although he probably cannot listen to what the teacher in the application is trying to teach.

Of course, this text is a critical one. Many others are not. But this is precisely the reason why reading must be. In other words, texts are to be (re)contextualized in the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci 1971).

Struggle for hegemony

To approach the struggle for hegemony, most of the time harsh and unequal, means to analyze the delivery movements and resistance of the subjects to the sedimented senses and possible displacements. The search is to understand the constitutive mechanisms of the struggle for the legitimacy of the different senses, since, in the midst of historically possible senses, one tends to be more 'read' than the others: it is formalized and legitimized, while the others may not even be considered. In other words, in a discursive historical perspective, ideology corresponds to the hegemony of meaning.

There can be no unique answer or ready-made solution to any concrete problems. Critical reading implies grasping hegemonic meanings and the conditions of their production. It is not simple, but it is central to social emancipation.

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Space and social control: the need for empowering a critical rural education in Greece

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Abstract

In this paper, we assume that educational space reflects diachronically dominant social constructions of power and disadvantage as well as school knowledge and identity. Considering this reflection, researchers can understand and consider better how the historical argument for uniform education and centralized organization in Greece has been linked to the marginalization of rural childhood and youthness. At the same time, scholars are able to discuss the importance of a community based critical education for rural – regional emancipation and empowerment. Spatial theory offers a conceptual framework to examine how space is constituted through multiple power relations in social transactions and how socio - spatial education trajectories are critically related to place. Furthermore, engaging concepts and tools derived from critical pedagogy, the paper gives an overview of various educational projects that focus on the local

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communities' empowerment through critical educational practices in community-based movements and organizations. Finally, the paper substantiates the assumption that a spatio-temporal re-reading of the Greek education opens up new challenges, which are meaningful when a critical perspective is adopted.

Introduction

Urban – rural dimension, a classic topic in sociology of education, is a field of interest for scholars and stakeholders, who approach issues such as massification, educational inequalities, elite education, and education reform. Even though Greek society has been characterized by extremely high rates of rural depopulation and domestic migration, and by a well - established correlation between spatial and educational segregation, research interest in spatio-temporal relations in Greek education is limited in identifying and describing the educational phenomena as neutral, natural, and linear. In this paper, we assume that educational space is de-naturalized; it reflects diachronically dominant social constructions of power and disadvantage, school knowledge and identity. The theoretical background of the present study draws on two pillars: spatial theory and critical pedagogy. Dealing with the perspective of spatial theory, we explore how space is constituted through multiple power relations in social transactions and how social control is critically related to socio-spatial education trajectories. In such a framework, which reflects the 'spatial turn' in contemporary social theory, when discussing rural schooling in the Greek education, a narrative comes into view that seems to respond adequately to Michael Corbett's analysis of an irony of a schooling which learns rural youth to leave. At the same time, our engagement with concepts and tools from critical pedagogy, highlights a number of educational projects that focus on the local communities' empowerment through critical educational practices in community-based movements and organizations. Finally, we call for a new a transformative agenda of rural schooling in Greek educational settings, which should be both spatial and critical, creating

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opportunities for rural people who seek to find solutions to their problems based on their personal needs and desires.

Place as a site of social control

During the last decade, there is a pervasive representation in Greek mass media of the "Greek Einsteins"; a pattern, which is potentially adopted when TV shows and social media deal with the brain drain phenomenon. "Greek Einstein's" achievements seem to serve as an injection of national pride, and, in many cases, as an admission of racial and national exclusiveness and superiority. In fact, much media representation laments Greece's brain drain precipitated by a lack of opportunity and the refusal of young people to stay in their homeland. The attention focuses on the achievements of those who chose to flee without helping to overcome the difficulties faced by those left behind. Human capital flight of the "leavers", instead of human well-being of the "stayers", is high on the agenda for studies based on theories such as human capital or rate of return approach (Lazaretou 2022). Human capital arguments, thus, tend to focus on individual transformations and 'choices' as the motor of economic development. In such a context, narrations of the migration, which was one of the epiphenomena of the successive memoranda imposed by the governments, focus on the leavers.

However, the migration boom did not occur in a vacuum. The second half of the 20th century was characterized by extremely high rates of internal and international migration, alongside with rural depopulation and urbanization of the Greek society. Internal immigration led also to degradation of social and cultural life in villages and islands, while development was inadequate and ineffective in rural areas (Spyrellis 2015). Culture of immigration had been cultivated for many decades, due to the dependent development of the country as well as a series of social and spatial inequalities. At the same time, it was connected with biased stereotyped perception of rural locality and its peasant inhabitants.

Baxevanis' (1965, 94) remark that "*provincialism is an anathema to a young Greek and a social affront if he is described as 'hick'*" is still considered to be valid.

As a matter of fact, Greek schooling has played a crucial role in legitimizing sociocultural knowledge of the urban context of values and culture, representing rural childhood as inferior compared to the urban one (Betsas, Avgitidou, Tsiompanou 2020). The way that Greek schools seek to teach an urban sophisticated culture in rural areas is combined with degradation and devaluation of the rural childhood. This process takes place in an educational system that is overcentralized and concentrated on authority and bureaucracy, prioritizing social control over creativity and critical thinking.

The examination of social control is a key basis for theoretical assumptions about schooling in many analyses; analyses that are undertaken by researchers who give emphasis on the "conflict perspective" in the educational field. Rather than taking education as a mechanism of control that, according to Durkheim, narrows the gulf between individual and society or, consistent with the functionalist view, socializes and allocates to job (Shapiro 1982), conflict theorists assume that social control is an imperative in school, regulating pupils' behavior, homogenizing knowledge and value systems and consequently ignoring ideas and practices of the ruling classes (Kelly 2014). Adopting this theoretical perspective, social control through education seems to be a mechanism imposed by political and societal elites, that regulates individuals and groups. Karier, Violas and Spring (1972, 37) put it in a concise manner, approaching school as "*a custodian institution designed to maintain the social order*". It is also well-known that social control through education limits the multiplicity of students' behavior and gives the latter a linear direction through formal and informal mechanisms, such as enforcement, indoctrination, and sanctions (Brezinka 1994).

Based on the description above, it is needed to realize that in probing the "black box" of the school mechanisms of social control and social reproduction space matters.

The spatial turn in social theory and humanities

Such an under-theorized issue of space and schooling in Greece is gaining an increasing importance given the worldwide spatial turn in social theory and humanities. It is not just about the acquisition of new tools against old questions. Conception of space is considered of decisive importance on constituting social, raced, classed, and gendered relations (Ferrare, Apple 2010). According to Sayer (2000, 108), "*spatiality of society is not simply an output of social processes but is constitutive of social forms themselves and hence makes a significant difference to the nature of societies*". The study of space constitutes a necessary condition for exploring how people identify themselves, relate to the others, and experience a sense of belonging (Obadia 2015).

It was in the early 1970s when Henri Lefebvre introduced the influential concept of "social space", initiating the discussion on the processes that the space is produced and produces everyday life (Middleton 2013). Based on Lefebvre's theoretical tools, scholars pioneered concepts such as "space - time", "power - geometry", "geographies of distinction", highlighting the spatial organization of society and its decisive role in the social production. As a consequence, in recent years, a growing number of studies deriving from social sciences and humanities disciplines employ a triangle perspective centered upon 'historicality', 'sociality' and 'spatiality', to understand and represent better the social phenomena (Green, Letts 2007). This spatial re-reading opens up new dynamics that go beyond traditional perspectives. Tapping into a third dimension, that of spatially sensitive analysis, new themes have emerged, such as the neoliberal strategies of urban gentrification, neoliberal discourse about youth aspirations through geographical and socio-spatial lens, the formation of human networks as sites of power, the social and historical processes that construct the place, etc.

Spatial relations in educational contexts are also proved to be an emerging field of study. Several works seek to theorize space in order to discuss how educational qualities and boundaries are transformed by considering educational spaces (Ford 2019). With even greater density, in recent times there is an emphasis on

space related to works derived from critical pedagogy. It is in such a vein that spatial analysis is considered essential, by "*creating a more critical understanding of education and … advocating for the expansion of the types of methodological tools used by critical theorists of spatial relations and of critical projects more broadly*" (Ferrare, Apple 2010, 209).

Rethinking critically the role of rural education

Rural education has been the field where researchers starting from critical theory -especially from the perspectives of critical sociology and/or critical curriculum studies- make significant contributions and considerable refreshing works.

Peter Mclaren and Henry Giroux pioneered the enrichment of rural education with perspectives of critical pedagogy in their influential article "Critical Pedagogy and Rural Education: A Challenge from Poland". The two authors recommended to interested readers Paulo Freire's work and literacy campaigns among peasants of rural communities in Brazil and the "Third World", advocating for a critical awareness, as a necessary condition of emancipation. They also highlighted the stereotypical approaches that have prevailed towards pupils and students coming from rural contexts, their marginalization based on cultural difference and identities, and "*rural schools that appear to be the most neglected sites of learning and among the least publicized in public debates*" (Mclaren, Giroux 1990, 162). In their abovementioned article, they also stressed that critical pedagogy constitutes a pedagogy of place, addressing particularities of local experiences and specificities of identity elements (language, culture, history, etc.). Principal statutory aids of a critical perspective on rural education are students that "*can be encouraged one day to (a) take on the initiatives necessary to help their communities in developing their own economies; (b) eliminate the growing disparities among urban and rural constituencies with respect to health and environmental standards, social programs, wages, and taxes; and (c) eliminate the disequilibrium between rural and urban economies, so that industry cannot destroy rural areas by*

mercilessly pitting them against urban areas economically, eroding cultural distinction and long-term sustainability" (Mclaren, Giroux 1990, 163-164).

In the direction suggested by the article above, a study followed, several years later, carried out by Michael Corbett (2007) concerning the educational contexts in rural and urban Canada. Corbett highlighted the relationship between education and immigration. Educational policies in Canada are keen on promoting a culture of migration to rural students, which constitutes for them a basic biographical pattern of action supposedly pursuing prosperity, opportunities for personal cultural improvement and upward social mobility. Schooling tries to integrate urban oriented culture into rural areas, while the lack of flexibility in shaping educational contexts via curriculum choices and innovative teaching methods creates the need for individuals to reject their rural places and to immigrate to urban ones. Corbett utilized quantitative and qualitative data in his study to substantiate that "*rather than contributing to community stabilization, well-founded rural schools have resulted in rural decline*" (Corbett 2007, 20). In his analysis, he concludes that in rural Canada a tragic irony of a schooling learning students to leave their homelands, in order to meet success in their future life does exist. The obsession of the competent educational authorities to treat all places in the same way and to provide one-size-fits-all answers -regardless of the particular local conditions, anxieties and problems of rural inhabitants- makes a high school diploma a preparation certification for elsewhere, an internal immigration passport.

Similar positions are reached by the authors of the book "Forgotten Places: Critical Studies in Rural Education", which was edited by Reynolds (2017). In particular, scholars from different disciplines (e.g., rural studies, critical pedagogy, American Indian studies, gender studies, geography studies) contribute an interdisciplinary critical understanding on the construction of the rural identity and its ramifications. As far as education in rural areas is concerned, multi-prismatic conceptualizations of social justice lead to an interesting discussion about alternative perspectives on schooling within the context of critical -

transformational pedagogy. Various chapters of the book present the results of critical educational projects in rural areas. In these projects the discussion on raced, classed, and gendered constructions and identities signals a proposal for a critical shift from an imagined homogeneity of rural communities (Corbett 2014) to a heterogeneity and diversity. This shift demands also the appropriate radical changes in curriculum and teaching methods. Corbett's remark regarding the contribution of this particular book to rural studies deserves attention. Critical theory and critical curriculum studies urges a new consideration of "mythic constructions and conflations" about rural identity and consciousness. As Corbett (2018, 2) also stresses, "*pouring the new wine of the particularities of rural education research sites and situations into the more or less old bottles of Marxist, poststructuralist, cultural studies, deconstructive, and spatial theory is indeed important work*".

In their article entitled "Spatializing critical education: progress and cautions", Ferrare and Apple (2010) examine a reverse course, i.e., the parameters of the 'spatialization' of critical education. The authors highlight the critical and relational conceptions of space and its contribution to a nuanced critical understanding of education. In their analysis, contingency is a possible consequence of the relational property of space, configuring the degree of dedication to the principle that "space matters" in a specific context of a critical educational project. However, given the emerging theoretical discourse on space and spatial relations in educational contexts, Ferrare and Apple acknowledge that, in macro-level, "*It is simply no longer possible to think aspatially about education policy… spatialization of critical education can rearticulate existing problematics while simultaneously exposing processes that have yet to be explored*" (Ferrare, Apple 2010, 214). Furthermore, they claim that there is a promising perspective of exploiting the spatial dimension, considering space in the micro-level of classrooms and corridors. Spatial analysis can contribute to a deeper understanding of social, mental, raced, classed, and gendered spaces that demarcate relations, networks of tutelage within a school. Ferrare and Apple

conclude that spatial theories, approaches and tools can be welcome for critical educators, practitioners and scholars, provided that they facilitate the understanding of dominance and emancipatory agendas.

In general, there is an emerging field of synergy between spatial theory and critical pedagogy, when research focuses on rural education. Even studies on rural education that have not explicitly drawn theoretical and research tools from critical pedagogy, seek to derive a significant part of their theoretical assumptions on critical rural theory (Tieken 2014; Cuervo 2016), reinforcing the premise that a critical perspective on rural education is meaningful and promising especially under the impact of contemporary neoliberal hegemony.

Community-based projects of critical education for rural empowerment

At this point we want to look more closely at indicative community-based projects that applied theoretical perspectives and practices of critical education and set rural empowerment as one of their primary goals. The most important determinant of such projects is the assumption that there is a public sphere ripe for transformation. A large component of educational-cultural change relates to awareness of marginalization and focus on the changing conditions of people's lives in rural areas (Sandler 2009).

One could argue that one of the most significant critical vulnerabilities of rural education is related to gender identities, which is directly linked to traditional family norms and rural patriarchy (Agostinone - Wilson, 2017). Among the widely accepted representations in most migration narratives relate to no actors rural women who have been left behind and are presumed passive recipients of actions of immigrated men, who affect their lives. An educational project, which took place in Mexican communities, developed a range of on-site interventions to empower community women in transforming oppressive structures and ideologies. Discussing the role of space in gendered and classed identities, the educational project contributed to the assertion that "*neither the government nor outside*

experts, but the experiences of the people themselves, and their analysis of them, are the beginning point for any development. This is the privileging of civil society" (Sandler 2009, 426). The realism in that pattern of women's responses was essentially refreshing. It facilitated the realization of the contours of dominant spatial hegemony and that there is an independent right for all the members of the communities, with no exception, to make development decisions (Sandler 2009, 432).

Critical education, which has to do with people living in "forgotten places", is also indicated by a number of educational projects held in USA. Foxfire approach is a well-known community-based project, grounded in the Appalachian culture in rural Georgia. This approach makes use of active learning methods, reflection, learning communities, imagination, and creativity to enable collaboration as well as the building of community. Inferring effects from the project in outcomes is difficult. Perhaps the most significant demonstration of community responsiveness to the project is its evolutionary application in situ for more than fifty years and the creation of Foxfire networks of teachers all over United States (Bird 2017).

Democratic engagement was a basic principle of another community-based educational project, the so called "Highlanders' program". The latter held in the context of critical - transformational pedagogy in USA. In short, it was a project of community education, which connected students and teachers of the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee with the struggles of the working class of that rural region. It also contributed to advancing the conviction that satisfaction of labor interests is an essential basis for the development of the region and the well-being of its people (Lake, Blunden 2017).

In rural Colombia, several projects of community-based education pursuing to confront the alarming situation of rural inequality and discrimination, tend to create learning communities in schools, by applying principles grounded on social theories of Habermas, Freire, Mead and Vygotsky as well as a relational model of dialogic learning introduced by Flecha (which clearly alludes to principles and

techniques of critical pedagogy): "*(1) egalitarian dialogue, build on each person's (2) cultural intelligence, seek (3) transformation, (4) enhance the knowledge and basic competences; (5) are based on the value of solidarity, act as sources of (6) creation of meaning, and promote (7) equality of differences*" (Soler et al. 2019, 70). At the same time, in contrast to the above, several studies of trends in rural education choose to remain silent about the emerging, latent, or manifested, contribution of critical pedagogy in community-based projects for spatial empowerment and for understanding and alleviating inequalities. Only a few latent references can be found in the relevant publication under UNESCO's auspices, where Freirean concepts and methods only superficially are discussed throughout the book (Atchoarena, Gasperini 2003). In a same way, Biddle and Azano (2016), in their review of global research trends and practices in rural education, choose to ignore a significant literary and research output based on critical perspectives.

Concluding remarks

Analyzing the impact of the "spatial turn" on social sciences and humanities, an emerging argument of the decisive role of spatial in the production of the social is evident. However, social processes unfold in spaces over time. Placing social analysis in space and time simultaneously, in some sort of spatio-temporal context, can enlighten embedded customary social relations in education. This is a claim with considerable implications for both the theories and methods employed in contemporary rural education.

Rural education has been strongly criticized, when its spatial dimension collapses on the altar of the interests served by centralized authoritarian educational policies. On contrast, community-based projects that apply theoretical perspectives and practices of critical education seem to enact rural public spheres which are ready for transformation, and to contribute to rural empowerment and changing of people's lives in rural areas.

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In Greece, where for entire decades a historical argument for uniform education and centralized organization of schooling has been linked to the marginalization of rural childhood and youthness, there is an emergent need for local transformative agendas on rural education. Such an agenda should entail a comprehensive spatio - temporal approach of the social identities in situ. It would also have much to gain from a perspective of critical pedagogy, so that it becomes truly transformative and emancipatory.

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Film education and social emancipation based on the theoretical framework of Critical Pedagogy

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Abstract

Today movies both entertain and educate, so they are a powerful form of pedagogy that teaches behaviors, gender roles, values and creates identities (Giroux 2002, 3; 2001, 585). Therefore, the need for critical approaches is highlighted and this will make students understand how films make sense, how they influence and educate viewers, and how they impose their messages and values. The present study, using critical ethnography as a method, is part of the researcher's PhD thesis and presents a film education intervention carried out in a group of adolescents and pre-adolescent students outside the school based on the theoretical framework of Critical Media Literacy. Although the whole intervention started with the researcher's 6th grade children during the school year 2011-2012 in a school of Eastern Thessaloniki, aiming at critical media literacy through both watching and analyzing films, but mainly through the production of films by the students themselves, a core group from these children was formed that continued the intervention dealing with various issues that concerned them until June 2017 when it was completed. In a short time, three more children (pre-adolescents) were added to the core group. In the present study, this core group of children explores forms of violence and oppression in short films, and eventually creates its own alternative film on the subject. In this research, what is examined is the possible change of their attitude as well as their action and social intervention,

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that is whether they are led to social emancipation. Also, in the second year 2012-2013, a fellow teacher was added to the team as a collaborator of the researcher, who also acted as a second participant, as an observer. At the same time, a third educator and dramatist, also acted as a collaborator when during the intervention it was necessary to perform theatrical actions, making the action planning diagrams based on Boal's liberating theater or theater of the oppressed, as in the research such actions were extensively used. The intervention was carried out with the project method based on the theoretical framework of Critical Pedagogy, while the critical media literacy is based on the same theoretical framework. The role of the researcher in the group was the participant as an observer.

Movies as public pedagogy

Today, movies both entertain and teach, therefore they are a powerful form of public pedagogy which teaches behaviors, gender roles, values and creates identities (Giroux 2001, 585; 2002, 3). Therefore, there is a need for critical approaches which will make students understand how films construct meanings, how they influence and educate viewers, how they impose their messages and values, and how they shape their identities outside the school (Giroux 2011, 690; Kellner, Share 2005, 2007a, 2007b; Share 2009; Mason 2016, 81).

Critical media literacy

Critical media literacy a) analyzes media culture as products of social production, b) teaches students to be critical about media representations, c) places great emphasis on the importance of learning to use media as ways of self-expression and social activism (Kellner, Share 2005, 372; 2007a, 8; 2007b, 61).

Production of alternative counter-hegemony media

The advocates of critical pedagogy focus on the importance of alternative media production by children, and much more the film production (Kellner & Share 2007b). However, in order for students to produce alternative readings of media, they should engage in critical cultural inquiry (Kellner, Share 2007a).

Project method and critical film education

According to Freire: a) education is not neutral, b) society can be transformed by the involvement of critically aware individuals, c) the act links liberating education to social transformation (Boyce 1996, 2). The project method, emphasizing the social effect, can effectively contribute to this direction. Through the project method, students' creativity and autonomy can enhance learning and contribute to the exploration of alternative ways of thinking and being in the world; one of these alternative ways is filmmaking.

A research example of the project method in the context of critical pedagogy

During the intervention, while taking into account Frey's (1986) basic stages, however, what followed is the typology proposed by Grollios et al. (1998, 35-38) and Grollios & Liampas (2001, 14), according to whom the most important elements of the method are: a) the definition of group composition (mixed groups), b) the group selection of subjects and the division of work, as well as the frequent exchange of roles within them. Also, a crucial element is that from the beginning of the formation of the groups, the main objective is to produce a specific result at the end, which will have a social impact. In addition, special focus is given to go deeper into the processed topics, as well as to the participation in both theoretical and practical tasks.

At the same time, the intervention project is based on Freire's "problem posing" method, where teacher and students, using dialogue, try to structure a curriculum that will be based on social issues (Freire 1977; [1970] 2005). Freire's pedagogy leads students to reflect on the way it has shaped their thinking and language, to become critically aware of it and to take action to transform it and liberate themselves (Liampas 2019, 4).

Liberating theater as '*Praxis*' in film education

For Boal, theater can be used to transform and liberate everyone. In his book, "*Theatre of the Oppressed*", through the various theater techniques, he primarily aims at realizing social reality and then changing it (Babbage 2004, 35-36; MacDonald & Rachel 2001, 42). The *Theater of the Oppressed*, in all its forms, always seeks the transformation of society in the direction of the liberation and emancipation of the oppressed. In essence, it is an action in itself, but also a preparation for future actions (Boal 2006, 6).

Methodology

The research methodology used is critical ethnography and Carspecken's five stages were applied (Vekris 2010; Mills 2007, 3). Research tools of critical ethnography were: a) the researcher's self-reflexive journal and b) in-depth interviews - (at some points semi-structured questions were used). The data collection includes the children's texts, drawings, stories, music they composed, and their films. The data analysis technique applied was the thematic analysis.

The intervention

Exploring forms of violence in short films

Activities for viewing and critically analyzing films and videos about violence

This intervention took place in April and May 2015 in 8 meetings, with a total duration of 10 hours. It was part of the wider intervention on critical literacy in films, where the main theme was the financial crisis, as well as various productive issues that arose from it and brought the children to the meetings. The meetings took place outside the school and each lasted two hours. On the occasion of a conference on "*Violence and Communication in Multicultural Environments*" organized by the Polydromo group and which would take place at that time at the Faculty of Education of the A.U.Th., in one of the meetings in April, we asked the children if they wished to participate in it as a group with a proposal. More specifically, we asked them if they would be interested in investigating forms of violence in films, to see what messages are being given and why and, in the end, to create our own film with this theme. The children accepted the idea with enthusiasm, and we decided to focus on this topic in the next three meetings.

Axes/goals

• Examination of the degree of critical autonomy and critical awareness while watching films

• Investigation of the changing of attitudes in relation to dealing with and resolving various forms of violence

• Investigation of their social intervention and action to deal with various forms of violence

Materials – Means

Movies screened:

→ Movies – Videos

The following movies were shown:

• *A tale about racism* - 5:15

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPBhIzCog8s

• *The experiment of racism-Racismo en Mexico* - 3:49′

https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x35zjpt

• *Some words hurt* by the students of the 4th All-Day Kindergarten of Paroikia Paros -1:43′

https://video.sch.gr/asset/detail/l8hNoPZSf2BmbcJLqIluYffO

• *Balloons with human color* (2011) - of the students of Arch. Makarios III Dasoupoli High School in Nicosia

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtotUcawBwo

• *The masks fall* (2014) - by the students of the 2nd Primary School of Paralia, Patras, 9:17

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVcdAhI-Vxg#t=521

• *Chromophobia*, by Raoul Servais (1966) - 9:27′

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRiV-LDV8MA

• *Racist attack at a bus stop* (2015) - social experiment, 4:47′

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhIaPWvW07o

→ **Texts from the internet**

• *Do you know what the Clark Doll experiment is*?

https://thalpos.org.gr/el/nea-typos/nea-arthra/eseis-gnorizete-ti-einai-to-peirama-tis-koyklas-toy-klark

• *ActionAid's Social Experiment sends a resounding message against racism*

https://www.actionaid.gr/ratsismos3

→ **Visual / Art works**

• Gaiti's painting with the crowd and the angel

• The painting "*Angels*" by Gaitis

→ **Boal's liberation theater actions**

The first meeting started with questions about what they know about multicultural environments and what violence is for them. The children showed that they understand the concepts of multiculturalism and violence, as they had dealt with them in previous years through other actions. However, it is characteristic that they associated violence with racist attitudes.

→ **1st movie:** *A tale about racism*

Then we showed the short video-tale, "*A Tale of Racism*". During the analysis of the fairy tale, we focused on the differences between the terms Ignorance and Superficial Knowledge. In the fairy tale, the teachers together with the children

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identified the concept of diversity and the key question arose: "*is diversity something that should separate us?*". All answered "*no*". They pointed out and analyzed the symbolic elements of the film, something which, as shown in previous film analyses, they particularly liked.

Then, they focused on specific words and analyzed them: Solidarity, racism, education, learning, diversity, multiculturalism, ignorance, semi-literacy. At this point, the researcher's collaborator, referring to the words the children focused on, begins to talk about Freire's "*generative themes*", as they can "*unfold*" into many other themes (Grollios 2004, 199). Thus, we related the words the children focused on to Freire's productive themes, and then we referred to the literacy method he applied. The children listened with great interest. They concluded that the words mentioned above have meaning for them because they encounter them in their daily lives. Also, through the dialogue they were led to the importance of "*Praxis*" in their daily life.

Later, they proceeded to analyze Freire's productive themes-problems, with words that made sense to them, such as diversity, solidarity, prejudice, stereotypes, marginalization, violence, racism.

→ 2nd film: *The experiment of racism / Racismo en Mexico*

The video "*The Racism Experiment*" is shown below. First, the children were informed that this particular video was created in the context of the "*Racism in Mexico*" campaign and refers to an experiment conducted with children, who were in a trust space and responded freely. The participating children were white and light-skinned and were asked exactly the same questions. In a room, there was always a child, with two dolls in front of him, one white and one black. The dolls were identical and differed only in skin tone.

This experiment has been repeated several times in the past and is based on the Clark Doll experiment done in 1939, where although the dolls were identical except for their skin color, most children found the white one to be prettier.

During viewing, the children identified and labeled the behavior of the children in the video toward the dolls in front of them. After the viewing, a dialogue followed

where they wondered about the choices they made and tried to interpret them. They concluded that society's stereotypes lead to prejudices and ultimately these are what guide young children's choices. The children in the group were very troubled by the children's answers and asked us to watch specific scenes again to identify reactions and prejudices.

Then they read the article "*Do you know what the Clark Doll experiment is?*" and they were informed that the experiment they saw was based on the Clark Doll experiment that was done earlier.

→ 3rd film: *Balloons with a human color* (2011) - of the students of Arch. Makarios III Dasoupoli High School in Nicosia

A girl in the group after doing some research suggested we watched the short film "*Balloons with Human Shade*". After the viewing, the children referred to the film as an abstract creation, as the white, black, and colored balloons symbolized people. In addition, they pointed out that each protagonist in the film, where one had half his face painted black and the other half white, considered his own race to be the best and therefore popped the other race's balloons. Next the two heroes of the film engaged in a relentless race to destroy each other's balloons with the aim of annihilating each other. The film ends with the coexistence of the two races (white-black), and with the mutual exchange of elements (culture, customs). The children pointed out that the message of the film is that "*differences can unite us*". For the next time, we asked the children to suggest their own films related to our topic. So, at the second meeting another girl brought to the group two students' short films of her own choice.

→ 4th film: *Some words hurt* of the 4th All-Day Kindergarten of Paroikia Paros

It is a short stop motion animation film. The girl highlighted the message of the film: "*Support the child before he hurts before he gets hurt*" and explained at the same time that this is why she chose this film.

→ 5th film: *The masks fall* (2014) - by the students of the 2nd Primary School of Paralia Patras

This film was about intra-school violence; however, it ended up with optimistic messages. These messages were picked up by the children and they concluded that even the bystanders of an incident of school violence have a very important role to play and should take a stand instead of being passive.

→ 6th film: *Chromophobia*, by Raoul Servais (1966)

The researcher's colleague (S1) suggested that we watched a short old film going back to 1966, "*Chromophobia*". It is an allegorical film (animation), where soldiers invade a fictional city and drive away all the colors, animals, and art. The film is about the defense of diversity against authoritarianism, violence, and racism.

After watching the film, the children associated it with the film "*Balloons with Human Shade*" that they had seen in the previous session. They focused on the title chromophobia, taking it to mean the fear of different colors. They reported that those who were black, took power and expelled from society those who were of a different color. In particular, they used the words "*exterminated*", "*disappeared*", "*didn't let*", "*had no rights*", to show the form of oppression practiced by black people. The discussion progressed and led to the reaction expressed through creativity in difficult times and especially through art and culture.

The children also made a parallel of colors with the different views that people in a society may have. They identified the film's symbolisms and focused in particular on a girl, who in the end brought spring and made even the black oppressors change their minds.

→ 7th film: *Racist attack at a bus stop* (2015) - social experiment

Next, we screened a recent racist social experiment done by ActionAid that took place at two bus stops in the center of Athens, with the theme of racism. A Greek actor and a Bangladeshi actor took part in this experiment, while the camera recorded the reactions of unsuspecting citizens.

One girl (Mk2-Student girl 2) mentioned that she had seen it online and it had really troubled her. The video refers to the unacceptable racist behavior of a Greek

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towards a helpless immigrant. The children referred to people's reactions and were emotionally charged by the video.

Then we read from the internet the article 'ActionAid's Social Experiment sends a loud message against racism', so that the children could learn more about this experiment.

Next, we chose to show a painting by Gaiti (a Greek painter) depicting the crowd and an angel, as well as his painting entitled "*Angels*". The children identified the multiple symbols on the board and associated them with the film '*Chromophobia*' they had previously seen.

Later, to the researcher's question: "*How do you react to incidents of violence*?", the children responded with discussion and dialogue and that in such an incident they would react and not leave.

In the third meeting, we asked the children to write "*about a form of violence that shocked them*." In their texts, the children referred to cases of violence both at school and in the wider society. Having previously read the texts, we then asked the children to choose one of the cases they mentioned to dramatize it with frozen images, focusing on the now (incident), before and after, emphasizing the specific order of presentation. This is an action of the Liberation Theater (Boal 2006, 6) that they had done in the past, where they first highlight the event (projection of the problem), then think about what might have preceded it (search for the causes) and finally propose the ideal image where the problem is solved (solving the problem). So, they choose the scene with the schoolmates clashing, yet refer to a different incident of conflict. The problem scene (the now) highlights the conflict between two female classmates who come to blows, the scene of the search for the causes (the before) highlights the mockery and belittlement that one girl suffers from her classmates (a boy and a girl) because of her origin from another country (the before) and the problem-solving scene (the after) that through honest dialogue they can communicate and resolve their differences.

Afterwards, the children said that this action they chose to act out could also be the script for the movie for some form of violence they wanted to do. They liked

the idea and the children decided to include the above actions in their scenario, but they chose to enrich it with more elements. They concluded that the scenes would unfold in a girl's house, where the three children gather to complete a group task assigned to them. The two children (abusers) will be waiting at home for Ariona, the girl who came from another country, they will not have accepted her and will make fun of her because she is studying and trying to be a good student. The bully girl will be jealous of her. In fact, the moment Ariona goes to the bathroom, her classmates secretly search her bag. They find her poems, sunglasses and other items and make fun of her. However, Ariona returns and catches them searching her bag. The conflict begins. The girl abuser tries to apologize, while the boy abuser will become an observer and try to balance things out, asking for the truth to be revealed to her.

They proceed to shots by improvising the dialogues. However, because there was not enough time to show both the causes and the solution, the children and I decided not to show the film at the conference taking place the following weekend, because it was incomplete. At the conference, we decided to focus on all the actions we did, as well as the conclusions we reached, while for the film we would mention that it was in progress. At the same time, a boy, Ma1, undertook to bring the written script to the next meeting, including the causes and solution of the problem, since they really wanted to finish their film.

So, at the next meeting, we talked about our experiences of presenting at the conference and all the kids felt very proud that their views were heard, and they challenged the world. Then we read the script that Ma1 brought, more enriched and with the causes and solution of the problem, as promised. The shootings followed, which took place in a particularly pleasant and creative atmosphere. Some scenes were shot multiple times, as the children often used the names of the characters in the film incorrectly, which led to moments of intense laughter.

Results-Reflection

• Investigation of the degree of critical autonomy and critical awareness when watching films

The children analyzed the films they watched in depth, identified their overt and hidden meanings and messages, and came to conclusions, such as that there must be a reaction to any form of oppression (Stocchetti 2015). They realized the role that education and language communication play in both the acceptance of diversity and the non-use of violence.

They understood the symbolic elements of the films they edited, while at the same time showed that they enjoy exploring symbolisms. It is therefore shown that they were led to a significant degree of critical autonomy and critical awareness.

• Investigation of changing attitudes

The children's exploration of concepts, terms and themes that were meaningful to them and that they often encountered while investigating the films, led to reflection and awareness through the dialogue. At the same time, they pointed out that they have meaning for them because they encounter them in their daily lives. Therefore, they come from their thematic universe (Freire 2005).

From the critical analysis of the films they watched, it was shown that they were sensitized both in cases of non-acceptance of the different and in cases of various forms of violence and oppression, while at the same time, they realized the negative consequences that these bring to their recipients (Braa & Callero 2006, 357). They realized that the reasons that often lead to irregular situations of violence are not found so much in individual characteristics and causes but are part and the consequence of the social environment in which they appear. Thus, they understood and realized the powerful role of prejudices against the different, which are created because there are strong stereotypes. They thus came to the conclusion that the understanding of the different can be made possible through dialogue and linguistic communication. Also, they consider dialogue as the primary means for highlighting and smoothing out any differences and conflicts and not the use of violence. Therefore, a change in their attitude is observed as it

seems that beyond the awareness of negative situations, they think critically and seek to find ways to solve them.

• Investigation of their social intervention and action

Through dialogue, the children thought critically and explored and analyzed the productive issues-problems that were meaningful to them, because they encountered them very often in their daily lives. Thus, dialogue is shown to contribute greatly to 'critical cultural inquiry' (Kellner & Share 2007a, 8-9, 19). In other words, it seems that they reach a critical awareness of the problems presented through films (Decoster & Vansieleghem 2014, 795; Monchinski 2008, 139), investigating the causes that create them and proposing solutions, as they themselves wish to take a stand and act in order to change unjust situations in the context of a just and democratic society.

Furthermore, it is shown that in this direction, the contribution of Augusto Boal's liberating theater was very important, as it made them think beyond the problem and its causes and solutions, which were demonstrated in their film. At the same time, their film sent the message that through dialogue and meaningful communication, any differences can be resolved.

In addition, they showed a lot of concern with the concept of "*oppressed*" and concluded that the oppressed, since they realize the subjugated situation in which they find themselves, must be led to actions, individually and collectively, with the aim of changing it. Therefore, they seem to attach great importance to the concept of "*Praxis*".

Their participation in the conference was a social intervention. In particular, the teenagers of the group chose to explore and propose films related to the issue of violence both in the school and in the wider society with the aim of having a discussion and taking actions on ways to prevent and deal with it. The creation of their film was a social intervention, too, since they send their own messages to deal with violence through it.

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Foucault and school practices of knowledge management in the modern world and in Cyprus

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Abstract

In modern societies, education is very often used as a means of enforcing opinions, decisions, policies, and power. The purpose of this proposal is to try to reconstruct the social and political theory of education through the work of Michel Foucault and his proposals for school knowledge management practices. Foucault presents the way in which power manages to be exercised, through the management of this knowledge.

Many philosophers from antiquity until today, have dealt with issues related to education, especially with the systematic provision of knowledge in the school. Foucault's ideas (although only a few of his works refer to education), nevertheless enable their scholar to see beyond the image and shed light on stereotypes concerning education itself.

Additionally, this proposal is examining the transition from the policy of Surveillance to the policy of Self-Empowerment as shown by this transition from previous School Curricula to the New Curricula of Cyprus in the way in which they are applied to public schools of Cyprus from Pre-Primary to Secondary Education. Finally, it is argued that teachers have a role to play in empowering their students so that they can think critically and act to create a better world.

1. Introduction

In modern societies, education is very often used as a means of enforcing opinions, decisions, policies, and power. The purpose of this proposal is to try to reconstruct the social and political theory of education through the work of Michel Foucault and his proposals for school knowledge management practices. The knowledge transmitted through education is directly related to power. Foucault presents the way in which power manages to be exercised, through the management of this knowledge. Additionally, this proposal examines the transition from the policy of Surveillance to the policy of Self-Empowerment as shown by this transition from previous School Curricula to the New Curricula of Cyprus in the way in which they are applied to public schools of Cyprus from Pre-Primary to Secondary Education. Many philosophers from antiquity until today, have dealt with issues related to education, especially with the systematic provision of knowledge in the school. Foucault's ideas [although only a few of his works refer to education, such as Surveillance and Punishment, part C' (1976)] nevertheless enable their scholar to see beyond the image and shed light on stereotypes concerning education itself. With his work he diverges from the social class views of society until today and proposes a new perspective, through the relations of power that he reveals.

Though, who was Michel Foucault? He was born in 1926, in a wealthy family. Despite his family plans, he studied history. He also studied Psychology and Philosophy, Psychopathology and Experimental psychology and he started working at Lille's University as an assistant professor (Gro 2007). In 1961 he got a PhD from the University of Sorbonne (Georgousopoulos, Spyropoulos 2011). He taught in many universities in France, in Tunisia and elsewhere. He wrote a lot of books. Among others he wrote "The birth of the clinic", "The orders of Things", "The archeology of Knowledge", "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison", "Remarks on Marx", et al.

He was characterized as "Cryptomarxist" (Foucault 1984), anarchist and from others neoliberal, postmodern and poststructuralist (Marshall 1989), as an

intellectual who appeared from nowhere. Nobody though can doubt his unique work and the reflections that it causes.

2. Foucault and school knowledge management practices

Undoubtedly, what arouses thinking about Foucault's work, even if someone agrees or disagrees with him, is the innovative way he refers to the continuity of exercising power in every aspect of society, and the way through it people are objectified. He supports that history of knowledge, must denied supposing discourse, as the simple surface of what it meant from conscious people (Gro 2007).

He studied not language but discourse as a system of representation. By the term "discourse" he meant a group of statements which provide a language for talking about anything. Discourse is about the production of language through knowledge. It doesn't have to do with the power of mind but is the result of the relation between power and knowledge (Smith 2006). "Power creates discourse and at the same time knowledge" (Foucault 1980, 119). He suggests to always investigate the produced discourse not only its genealogy and its structure, but also its value, even if it is expressed by the "specialists", in order to come closer to the truth. By what they say they exercise their power and control (Foucault 1991).

When he refers to authority, he doesn't always have the state in mind, neither the power which is expressed through it, but he refers to power relations which are held but not expressed. He also suggests that power has the possibility to be used also creatively (Smith 2006). Power is expressed by everyone. He is more interested not only in the power that is expressed personally to other human beings, but in the power, which is expressed from the political system, the extremities and in the power expressed by nets which are trying to dominate the body, the sexuality, knowledge, and technology (Foucault 1976).

Undoubtedly, power connections are many and power is expressed in many forms. Foucault is examining the technologies which are used to impose power, that are

not always clear to see or understand (Petrou 2011b). When the enforcement of power refers to a person then discipline practices and punishment are used, but when it deals with a group of people, it uses laws and norms to gain their goals. In that way they drive people to a "normativity", convincing them that this is how everything must be. The adoption of this "normativity" is of course racist because it supposes the demolition of anything that differs, the sovereignty of the "normal", social standardization but also the punishment of those who don't comply with the rules. Additionally, to be sure that everyone follows "normativity" they observe everyone with many techniques like surveillance and evaluation.

In his work "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison" (1976), he examines the creation of prison, and the way punishment is forced. He supports that before the French Revolution punishment had to do with the body and it was usually presented in public (Foucault 1976). After the "birth" of the prison, the ways punishment is forced changed. Punishment is forced in more secret ways, and it focuses on soul (Lukes 2007).

Prison is used by the "disciplines" – new technological powers that can also be found, according to Foucault, in places such as schools, hospitals, and military barracks. Discipline and punishment can lead to the creation of humans who are useful for the authority. School is the place where this kind of humans can be created easily.

3. School, knowledge, and discipline

"Discipline produces subjugated and trained bodies" (Foucault 1976, 184). Could those subjugated and trained bodies be produced in schools? He emphasized the similarity of prison with the factories, military camps, hospital, and schools. They all use discipline systems which are legalized through the places discipline is performed (Kalimeridis 1998).

The enforcement of power is sometimes obvious but usually it uses secret mechanisms. In his work "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison" (1976),

he examines the creation of prison, and the way punishment is forced. Prison is used by the "disciplines" – new technological powers that can also be found, according to Foucault, in places such as schools, hospitals, and military barracks. Discipline and punishment can lead to the creation of humans who are useful for the authority. School is the place where this kind of humans can be created easily. All those who are parts of discipline systems such as schools, must be supervised in order not to escape the rules and what the authority orders. Bentham's Panopticon is a way for a guard to see others without being seen himself.

At the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut a madman in each cell, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy or a schoolgirl.

According to Foucault, school uses this mechanism in many ways, in teaching methods, in rules and in the way it forces the students to learn. (Petrou 2011) Someone can realize this mechanism if he/she inspects most of the school buildings. Additionally in the classrooms student's seats are set usually in lines and the teacher always stands in the front.

All the activities follow a program, the bell reminds everyone the time to move from one lesson to the other, uniform is still obligatory in many schools and in Cyprus, students have to obey the rules and if not, they are punished in many ways. In the old times punishment had to do with the body, nowadays as also in jail it deals with the psychology of the children. Additionally, exams are a way of observation and enforcement of power. Except from the student, teachers are also observed. They have to teach in a certain way, in certain time.

Foucault worries about what kind of knowledge can be produced or learned in such environments. They are observed by the authorities, the ministries, by

evaluation, by parents, by authorization programs etc. Such a program is the curriculum. In 2011 in Cyprus, the Ministry of Education has introduced a new proposal for a New Curriculum, which was by far more democratic than the previous one with more pros from the past ones (but not totally based in critical pedagogy). With the change of the government which happened in 2013, you can find the N.C. only written. It was used as it was planned only for a year.

4. The transition from the policy of Surveillance to the policy of Self-Empowerment.

If someone studies the History of Education since the last century, especially in Greece and Cyprus, they can realize not only the enforcement of surveillance to the teachers but also the enforcement of corporal punishment to the students. This is also mentioned in Greek literature (for example "Mrs. NTOREMI" of Lilika Nakos, "A child counting the stars", of Menelaos Lountemis), which show a teacher whose only thought was how to enforce discipline and he/she used all the means to achieve it.

Can we claim that all the above doesn't happen anymore? The means maybe are different but the goal? The punishment is not corporal but leads directly to the soul. Surveillance never stopped but it uses other forms. Foucault supports that school didn't change at all and that what has changed is the genealogy of the surveillance methods (Marshall 1989).

The previous School Curriculum in Cyprus was written in 1994. Its basic aims were:

- Gradual adoption of moral values by the students.
- Gradual adoption of knowledge by the students.
- Gradual development of basic psychosocial skills.
- Gradual socialization of the students.

Everything was given in doses like a medicine. Students had to obey strict rules and they had to follow a norm. Nobody had to do anything to change this normality. Everything had to stay as it was.

The New School Curriculum of Cyprus was written in 2011. Its basic aims are the offer of knowledge, the adoption of moral values, attitudes and behaviors which characterized the modern citizenship, the adoption of skills and abilities which are a demand in the 21st century. There is also a goal which refers to self-empowerment (Health Education Curriculum). Even though the curriculum of 2011 was much more progressive than the curriculum of 1994, it didn't manage to "escape" from the political environment in which it was written.

In 2011 teachers in Cyprus hoped that a lot were going to change and in 2013 a new government was elected. They didn't develop a new curriculum, but they changed the whole philosophy of it. An example is the new introductory text that informs the teachers that the philosophy of the curriculum is humanistic, and it aims to the holistic development of students. This development must lead them, when they are in high school, to choose only a category of lessons to study, according to what they want to do later. The main aim now is to produce functionable parts of a well working machine that doesn't change anything. The society continues to be unequal, and nothing can disturb that.

5. The role of teachers! Is there a hope?

Can we escape from the Panopticon? Can our students escape? The answer is yes under certain conditions. The aim of Self-Empowerment that it is still consisted in the curriculum, can be the hope we are looking for.

Teachers have the key to help students gain self-empowerment through 'hidden' curriculum. They must make them not only get knowledge but also to think and act critically inside and outside of the school. If they want this to happen, they must promote competitiveness and action. Unfortunately, the enforcement of power doesn't happen only in small communities, but worldwide through technology and

economical coercion. However, resistance against the panopticon must start topically in order to understand the structured elements of power and to 'demolish' them. Students must learn how to doubt everything and think critically. Teachers have to 'turn on the fire' and show the way.

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What do Quality Assurance indicators indicate?

Operationalizing discipline in higher education institutions

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Abstract

According to the Bologna Declaration, Quality Assurance (QA) is a crucial mechanism for governing every detail of HEI's life. However, a close reading of how QA' indicators are defined reveals a great many assumptions about how quality is methodologically constructed from this point of view. In this chapter I provide a methodological criticism on the concept of validity which sustains HAHE's (Hellenic Authority for Higher Education) indicators for measuring quality in HEIs, by means of three sections. First, I will provide methodological arguments which highlight the reasons why QA indicators, as implemented to the Greek universities, are obsolete and not in compliance with the standard quantitative procedures for operationalizing concepts in social research. Second, I will bring to light the reasons why the dominance of the input/output measurement scheme remains mute to one of the most crucial aspects HEIs' life, student engagement/experience. Third, I argue that alternative measures that take into account student engagement and the differences between social sciences and the "positive" sciences need to be forged.

Keywords: Quality assurance, validity, higher education, indicators

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Introduction

When social research is conducted with the goal of contributing to policy debates, methodology is not a mere academic question, but also a political issue because different methodologies may produce fundamentally different representations of the same evidence (i.e., different "results" or "findings").

Charles Ragin

Even though quality assurance is not new since it was originally an integral part of craftspersonship and professionalism, from the Bologna Process and onwards it has been disaggregated from the professions and it has been used as a device for evaluating higher educations institutions (HEIs). However, it has been found that it was a fairly haphazard business, with no clear demonstration of common standards and there is little evidence that the development of quality systems was in response to serious quality problems in the sector (Trow 1994). A general model of quality assessment in HEIs is composed of such regulatory mechanisms as a national co-ordinating body, institutional self-evaluation, external evaluation by academic peers and published reports. Quality assurance, through the imposition of accountability, is spreading rapidly across national boundaries and it represents a major form of educational policy. The European Union has enthusiastically supported the development of quality procedures and now almost all European countries, including Eastern Europe, have followed this trend. Critics of this trend argue that believers of neo-liberal ideology promoted the introduction of performance measurement in the universities in order that academics' power to be minimized because, according to that ideology, they treated universities as a site for their social reproduction (Scott 1988). As part of a wider blaming-bashing process directed to the public sector, this dis-respecting Discourse emphasized transparency and accountability as the sole means for responding to market pressures. Universities funding should follow students' and parents' needs and international rankings.

One of the most popular QA devices for monitoring universities is to monitor their performance. For example, the Higher Education Funding Council for England

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appointed a Performance Indicators Steering Group in 1998 and has published performance indicators since 1999. Performance indicators have been developed to serve two goals. First, it is through these indicators that funding agencies allocate resources to universities and, second, students, parents and employers were given access to statistical information regarding HEI's efficiency. The result is that business values are transferred from a business context to an educational context (ISO 2007). By emphasizing outcomes and not processes means that the information taken through measuring outcomes is that one does not know how something happens but what happens. In that way, benchmarking is seen as the only methodological way for measuring outcomes: all the HEIs should aspire to attain similar goals according to equally applied standards. The expansion of universities towards mass access has again raised the question of the relationship between teaching and research and measures of research effectiveness are sought so that funding could be directed towards 'centres of excellence' (Jenkins, Healey, Zetter 2007).

It should be underlined, however, that, even though model for research selectivity has been copied from science and engineering, there is no indication that the same logic necessarily applies in the humanities and social sciences, where a different pattern can be found, of a lone scholar or a small group of researchers, although the larger grouping is also possible. Research selectivity has done little to support the link between teaching and research, which was formerly thought to be at the heart of the quality, but it has done the most to monitor the accelerated specialization. The most serious methodological objection against the managerial kind of measurement is that one might create indices in which non-comparable entities are added. The consequence is that two institutions might be directly comparable in terms of the student population they recruited (academic performance, social background, schooling, etc.) and in resources (buildings and staff) and yet have very different performance because their student bodies develop different anticipations of what will happen to them when they graduate. This might be because one institution is in a flourishing and vibrant local economy,

while the other is in an area which is depressed and where a major industry has closed down. Any number of things might influence student expectations in this way, and without further research, there seems little point in speculating further. In the next section we present the standard way of measuring concepts in social research as it has been analyzed by Paul Lazarsfeld (Turner 2011).

Measuring concepts in social research. The standard approach.

Lazarsfeld (1958) was the first who asked how one could convert a concept into a tool of empirical research or into measurable indices through which a social phenomenon could be examined. For that purpose, he states that a phenomenon of interest presents properties or aspects which researchers have to identify so that their interrelations to be highlighted. Even though the standard term for these properties is "variables", what is underlined here is an epistemological idea, namely that the phenomena are structured through observable properties which vary across situations. The problem that social scientists face, Lazarsfeld argues, is that the properties of social phenomena are difficult to measure in so far as, for example, we cannot say that social science students' self-esteem is twice as high from the medicine students' self-esteem. In any case, however, social scientists can measure social concepts through a four-fold model comprised of four stages starting from the concept which end up to empirical indices.

The flow from concepts to empirical indices begins from the imagery, a vague image about the entity or the construct related to the phenomenon of interest which the researchers obtained through their immersion in the theoretical literature. The device Lazarsfeld offers for grasping this vague imagery is either to identify some common underlying feature presented by various disparate phenomena or by observing regularities. For instance, if one wants to measure teachers' "multicultural competence" (s)he will have to describe what this concept refers to because concepts are not directly observable. At the second stage, researchers should have to clearly state what are the components of the concept

or its aspects. This can be done either logically or by observing correlations between them (factor analysis is the standard way in educational research for the identification of the concept's aspects). Concept specification is essential because it taps the diversity of the phenomenon which the concept tries to cover. Third, researchers have to think about the indicators or the items which are clustered to each dimension/aspect. Given that each indicator has a probability relation to the underlying concept, the problem that arises is "where to stop", that is how many items should a questionnaire to contain? This is the most crucial issue in Lazarsfeld's approach because in social science concepts' boundaries are not clear-cut but sets of which the boundaries are fuzzy. In any case, the move from the abstract to the particular may be carried out by means of a theoretical beginning (deductively) or by using factor analysis through which the items are clustered and constitute concepts' aspects/dimensions (inductively). Finally, one has to form an index, which means that all the indicators which are allocated to the various aspects of the concept are added in order the big picture to be measured. In the following scheme we present an example showing the flow from the concept to the empirical indices in a concept taken from the field of educational research.
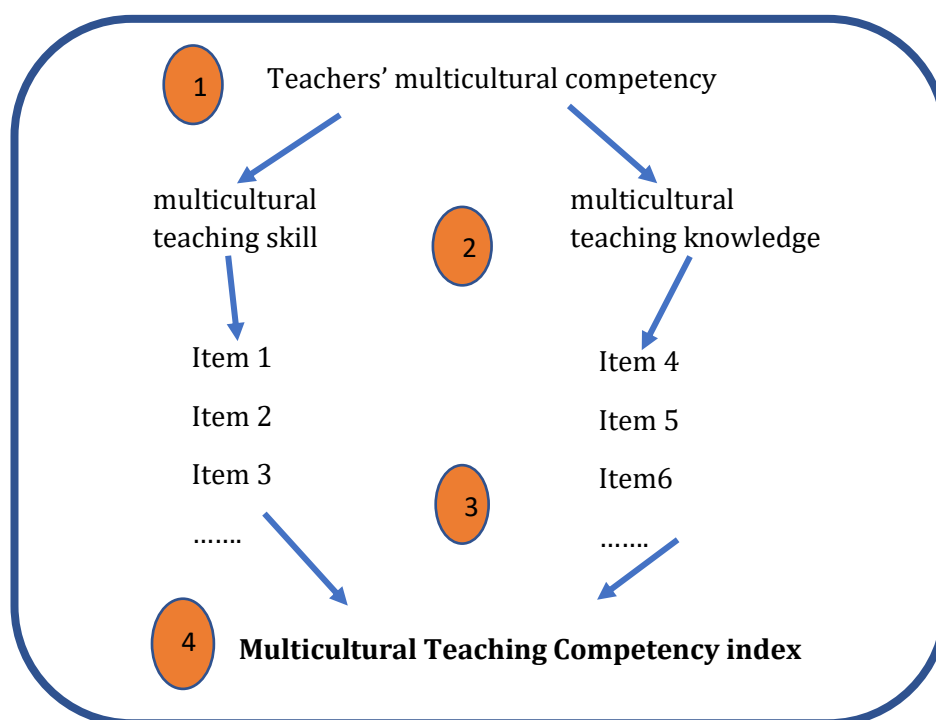
"Teachers' multicultural competency" (Spanierman et al 2011) is the concept the researcher wants to investigate, "multicultural teaching skill" and "multicultural teaching knowledge" are the two properties/aspects of the concept, the items for each property can be measured by various means (Likert scales are dominant in educational research) and, at the final stage, researchers obtain a measure of the concept by adding the scores from the summarized items.

While measurement in social research should be conceived of as a purely conceptual issue related to socio-ontological positions, as Lazarsfeld's approach attests, this is not the case when one examines how measurement is deployed in the measurement of QA indicators in Greece. The economics of higher education forces us to consider different aspects of the quality of education, not just whether it is high quality or low quality, but what sort of a thing it is altogether. Is it a public good, or a private good? Is spending on education consumption, or investment? Is the allocation of resources inside the system of higher education optimal? Instead of putting the ontological dimension into the methodological considerations of how quality in HEIs could be measured, proponents of quality assurance implement an input – output version of measuring the performance of a university Department or School. A careful look at the tables proposed by the Quality Assurance Handbook published by Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (publication 1.09.000, 2021) shows that a superficial conception of organizational life sustains them: that "records" and "documents" contain the "truth" which can be unearthed by collecting numbers. Although we do not dispute the idea that a university is first and foremost an organization whose performance can be observed, the methodological means providing access to that reality should tap the complexities and the multiple ontological levels through which this reality is structured as a whole. Although helpful and useful for administration or managerial reasons, these measures a) opt for scale measurement level for comparing changes within departments and between similar departments from various universities from various national locations but the context which makes the difference is missing (the context of the Dept of Primary Edu of Athens

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university is non comparable to the context of Dept of Primary Edu in Florina or in Rhodes) and b) do not obey to the standard methodology of operationalization as exemplified in the work of Lazarsfeld, as one can easily testify by comparing his approach with the logic of these tables. For instance, compare Lazarsfeld's approach with the following QA indicators connected with the concept "Department 's research activity" comprised of two properties/aspects, "Production and recognition of the research work" and "Funded research and research infrastructures".

Articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals (cumulatively and within the last year)

patents

Conference announcements

Monographs/books

Chapters in edited volumes

Conferences organized by the students

International awards/distinctions

Conferences organized by the dept.

Scopus and web of science citations

Items for the "Production and recognition of the research work" aspect

Active research funded from the U, EU, or other organizations

spin off and start up

Research funded from tuition fees obtained from PG studies

Research funded from tuition fees obtained from foreign-language PG studies

Research Works funded from incomes obtained from services offered by Laboratories

Centers of Excellence

Items for the "Funded research and research infrastructures" aspect

In addition to the controversial scale measuring of the items comprising the aspects "Production and recognition of the research work" and "Funded research and research infrastructures", it is difficult for one to see how the items, for example, "Articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals (cumulatively and within the last year)", "patents" and "Conferences organized by the department" are interrelated. Although feasibly collected, the indicators are technically inaccurate and conceptually invalid. In particular, what exactly is the information obtained if one adds the scores from "patents", "conferences organized by the dept." and

"articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals" from the "Production and recognition of the research work" aspect with scores from "spin off and start up" "Laboratories" from the "Funded research and research infrastructures" aspect? How one can control errors related to the collection procedures?

Instead of measuring a social concept, the end result if one is guided by the above line of measuring concepts is a fragmented and compartmentalized view of every single branch as a separate scale data, not of the tree as a whole though which the diverse dimensions of an entity could be identified through qualitative methodologies. Most indicators evolve empirically rather than rationally and are simple descriptive statistics resulting from a general record-keeping. Correlation measures among the items are missing. In addition, they tend to lack not only a specifically designed instrument (analogous to the scales we presented in the previous slides), but clearly defined constructs or even consistent operational definitions (as those proposed by Lazarsfeld). The input/output distinction is flawed and not clear cut: for example, is "Student engagement" input or output? If a regression analysis shows that the "Mean value of students' dept. preference" and the "National Base-level grade for admission (highest/lowest grade) are predictors of students' performance, is student engagement the independent, the intervening or the dependent variable?

Measuring student engagement as a QA indicator

Actually, we believe that what is left untouched to the way QA indicators are operationalized in HEIs concerns student engagement (SE), a concept which overlaps with students' learning identities, course evaluation and social mobility. Let me expand on this issue because the extent to which students devote effort to educationally purposeful activities is a critical element in the learning process.

Measuring SE is one of the major indices for understanding the extent to which a HEI can enhance learning. Indicators on SE should take into account not only satisfaction outcomes or how specific teaching methodologies or inspiring

teachers can sometimes make less well-prepared or -motivated students to get involved at higher levels of learning but also questions related to social engagement such as nonacademic interactions outside the classroom with peers, discussing ideas with faculty members or doing research with faculty. The number of degrees or credit hours completed is not, by itself, a complete indicator of SE. That is, earning a baccalaureate degree without acquiring the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to function effectively in the labor market and in society is a hollow accomplishment. The quality of the degree should be indicated by students' engagement level. Is it acceptable for a school to have a high graduation rate but low engagement and outcomes scores? Or are individual and public interests both better served by institutions where students are academically challenged and demonstrate skills and competencies at a high level, even if fewer graduate? Strong performance in the areas of engagement, achievement, and graduation are certainly not mutually exclusive, but each says something different about institutional performance and student development. Motivation is also a nontrivial factor in accounting for post-college differences in income once institutional variables such as selectivity are controlled (Lam et al 2012).

Another issue related to SE concerns how one could measure whether students have transformed their worldviews as a consequence of their passage from a HEI. Perhaps it ought to be said here that there are aspects of the student experience that are not the business of universities. There is an important boundary between the intellectual and the personal, and the university should not intrude into the personal. There is some evidence that students understand this distinction very well and resent the intrusion of universities into their social networking by using Facebook and other Internet tools for administrative purposes. On the other hand, intellectual development and personal development may be intimately linked. There are students who, having suffered terrible experiences, have chosen higher education as a way of studying those experiences, coming to terms with them, and using their new understanding as a way of contributing to society and supporting

other people who may face the same or similar difficulties (Martin 2008). This link between the personal and the intellectual can be a powerful motivation, and very moving. The previous paragraph practically invites a definition of where the boundary is between issues that concern the university and those that do not. Is financial assistance an issue for the university? Is career guidance? Is relationship counselling? And the answer is important, because it marks a difference between how such issues are normally viewed, and how they should be viewed; the boundary is wherever the student says it is. The university can provide for all aspects of the student experience, but it cannot impose any aspect on the student. 'Cannot' has a double force here. You cannot provide career guidance or financial counselling, or even instruction in mathematics or geography, if the 'recipient' of these is determined to gaze out of the window and daydream. But nor should you try to impose those things on a student. If the experience is to have any value at all, it has to be self-managed, and this is probably the defining distinction between higher education and earlier education.

Peers substantially influence students' attitudes, values, and other dimensions of personal and social development. Being in the company of highly able people has salutary direct effects on how students spend their time and what they talk about. The setting of highly selective Department contributes to the undergraduate education of at least some subsets of students. Hence, institutional selectivity is strongly correlated with completion rates, controlling for differences in the quality and demographics of enrolled students as well as factors such as per student educational expenditures. Productivity is harmed greatly by "undermatching"—the frequent failure of well-prepared students, especially those from poor families, to go to institutions that will challenge them properly. The factors associated with academic dropout and/or failure in higher education are diverse and distinct in nature. The emphasis amongst them varies according to authors (Casillas et al. 2012; Ukpong, George 2013).

A newly defined area for the sociology of education concerns how first-year university students adjust to academic and student life as a way for understanding

the transition from secondary education to higher education. What is at stake for junior students has to with time management and the new academic challenges, issues for which they have to take decisions on whether to leave or stay in university. This might be dependent on (a) their ability to adapt to university life and to the challenges or obstacles they face at university (Ainscough, Stewart, Colthorpe, Zimbardi 2017) and (b) 'the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes' (Hu, Kuh 2002). Thus, both resilience and engagement could become essential for first-year university students in achieving suitable academic performance.

Academic engagement can be connected to psychological well-being and to an intrinsic commitment towards studies which is defined by dedication, absorption, and vigor (Manzano 2002). Vigor is related to a great willingness to invest one's own efforts to study and persevere when facing difficulties. Dedication implies being involved in one's own studies with a sense of enthusiasm and challenge. Absorption points to the absolute concentration and deep immersion in one's own studies. Engagement involves a sense of dynamic and affective connection with academic activities and the student's own perception that s/he has enough skills to face the academic demands (Salanova et al. 2009).

In addition, SE is affected by social contexts such as neighborhoods and peers. Research literature on how neighborhood affects race differences as far as the involvement to school life is concerned has found that black children may socialize less with their higher-income white neighbors than white children do. If it is harder for blacks to socialize with whites, or if blacks prefer to socialize with other blacks, then as the proportion of whites in the neighborhood increases, neighborhood socializing may decline among blacks. In a study of the San Francisco metropolitan area, for example, Sermons (2000) found that Asian households avoid black neighbors, that black households avoid Hispanic neighbors, and that white households avoid Asian neighbors. Sermons also observed a decrease in racial avoidance in neighborhoods with large numbers of

own-race neighbors. This suggests that the same neighborhood may have a different effect on black and white children because socializing is mainly with same-race neighbors. If socializing also depends on children attending the same school, having the same teacher, and being personally compatible, black children in white neighborhoods may also be less likely to socialize with black children in their neighborhood, because such children are relatively scarce.

All these issues have been disappeared from the QA indicators. On the contrary, the questions of HAHE's (Hellenic Authority for Higher Education) indicators on SE do not provide information as to the reasons why students might fail a course or have difficulties to follow its demands. Compare the following five items proposed to students for evaluating the course in Greek universities with the detailed and well-structured evaluation which is implemented in another country, and which follows the logic of the Lazarsfeld approach.

1. (S)he has well prepared slides

2. (S)he succeeds in promoting students' interest

3. (S)he was precise and punctual to his/her course demands

4. (S)he is approachable and accessible to students

5. How interesting was the content of the course

Engagement Indicators

Engagement Indicators (EIs) provide valuable information about distinct aspects of student engagement by summarizing students' responses to sets of related survey questions. (Component items are listed on the next page.)

Theme	Engagement Indicators
Academic Challenge	
	Higher-Order Learning
	Reflective & Integrative Learning
	Learning Strategies
	Quantitative Reasoning
Learning with Peers	
	Collaborative Learning
	Discussions with Diverse Others
Experiences with Faculty	
	Student-Faculty Interaction
	Effective Teaching Practices
Campus Environment	
	Quality of Interactions
	Supportive Environment

High-Impact Practices

High-Impact Practices (HIPs) represent enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing. They typically demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and other students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. NSSE reports student participation in six HIPs: three for both first-year students and seniors, and three for seniors only (see below).

High-Impact Practices	First-year	Senior
Service-learning	✓	✓
Learning community	✓	✓
Research with faculty	✓	✓
Internship or field experience		✓
Study abroad		✓
Culminating senior experience		✓

Note: Survey wording is on the next page.

Coda

One main consequence stemming from the input/output scheme of the QA indicators is that it does not take into consideration how social sciences and humanities work. Two issues need to be raised at this point: first, research in social and human sciences is put in jeopardy because the criteria for research funding are dependent upon private sector's interests. Second, research processes in social science are not identical to laboratory research because the former's methodology is much more time-emotional-body consuming than the latter's: accessing samples and analyzing data in social/human sciences is a much more complicated process than accessing samples and analyzing data in the so-called "hard sciences". This means that, in comparison to social sciences and humanities, publications in the medical sciences, for example, are easier to make because a lot of researchers are co-authors and visibility is an easy task because open access can be easily paid and as a consequence, citations increase. To conclude, we subscribe to the idea proposed by Donati (2015) to see HEIs not as managerial organizations but as Relational Subjects. Donati argues that only by subverting the dominance of the market vs state system opposition (or the lib/lab as he calls it) can one depart from believing that the ethical injections into the market and the extension of citizenship rights and their beneficiaries will make the difference. Donati is in favor of what he calls as the 'third sector' which is defined not only by the relationships with the first two sectors (State and Market) but it comes into being as an autonomous identity, established on the basis of its own guiding distinctions, its own normative-symbolic code and symbolic and generalized means of interchange, linked to social solidarity. In this sense, the third sector is the privileged sphere of Relational Subjects, though not the only one in which they develop. The third sector organizations are associative entities which, far from defining themselves in relation to the State and with the Market (as 'nonprofit'), are structured according to their own project, on the basis of relational processes rather than of functional differentiation. He argues that in Relational Subjects social action is meant to be action for reciprocity and action for free giving. Acting

for reciprocity creates an exchange where the value is intrinsic, not extrinsic to the social relationship and its result is indirect and deferred over time. Free giving action consists in recognizing the otherness of the alter, whose 'existence' as a subject is endowed with his or her own dignity. The third sector combines these two ways of acting because reciprocity and free giving share a certain anti-individualism and anti-utilitarianism stance and a certain orientation to a non-hierarchical reticular action. For them the problem of identity comes first, before the question of interests, even if identity and interest cannot be completely separated.

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Critical Realism meets Critical Pedagogy. Towards an emancipatory research agenda.

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Abstract

The aim of the chapter is to highlight the main theoretical and methodological points of intersection between Critical Pedagogy (CP) and Critical Realism (CR) and to present how these points of intersection could lay the ground for an emancipatory research agenda. There are specific socio-theoretical ideas which define how CP approaches education. The most popular concerns that for CP schools' functioning depends on the socio-political structures which condition the identities and the practices of its members (teachers and students) and on the socio-historical processes which affect how educational policies transform/reproduce schools' cultures. Proponents of CP prioritize qualitative methods because they have the emancipatory potential of providing teachers and students with the methodological tools for transforming educational institutions. This is the point where CR can enrich CP's emancipatory potential through its (CR's) epistemological grounding on social research. In particular, CR may highlight how actors' reasons for action give shape to intended and non-intended outcomes. This means that one can causally explain both why subjects act in a specific way and not another and why actions' results were not what subjects had in mind before an action took place.

Keywords: critical realism, emancipation, research questions, critical pedagogy

Introduction

Although Critical Pedagogy (CP) has a vital role in educational science as one of the main theoretical traditions for framing its various sub-fields (for instance, learning identities, teacher identity, intercultural education, educational policy etc.) and Critical Realism (CR) is a philosophy of social science which presents elective affinities with Marxism and the impact of which on social theory and methodology is extremely impressive in the last twenty years, there has been no methodological argument delineating how these two traditions interact. The goal of this chapter is to highlight the points of theoretical and methodological intersections of these two currents of thought. In particular, I have structured my argument as follows. First, I will present the main socio-theoretical determinants of Critical Pedagogy (CP) and the methodological perspectives connected with them, then I will present the main socio-ontological and epistemological ideas of Critical Realism (CR) and the variety of the research designs which are implemented within this philosophical framework and, finally, I will highlight how the CR research framework might empower CP's emancipatory potential by emphasizing how a research agenda searching for causal explanations can set the stage for policy initiatives and for social change.

Critical Pedagogy's theoretical and methodological orientations.

Critical Pedagogy, although tightly related to Frankfurt School, starts to take shape through the work of Giroux (Giroux 2010) on resistance and of Paulo Freire' work (Gounari, Grollios 2010). Paulo Freire has proposed the idea that CP may enrich teachers' powers to craft critical consciousness by bringing to light the material and ideological forces which frame their lives. Within this framework, teachers do not treat their students as "empty vessels" which have to be filled by their teachers' knowledge but as agents who have the causal powers of meaning attribution, of reflexivity and of decision making. Thus, teachers have to make use of their students' lived experiences by embedding them into the school context.

Teachers do not act as superiors who monopolize scientific knowledge but as facilitators who enable students to critically reflect upon their conditions of existence and to try to transform them. CP puts at the forefront the historical and the institutional context within which schools are functioning and, in that sense, they reject positivistic criteria of knowledge production which remain indifferent to the value-laden substratum of social life (Kincheloe & McLaren 2004). By examining schools within their historical and institutional context, CP rejects positivism as a philosophical framework for educational research. CP emphasizes the qualitative aspects of school life by considering them as sites for crafting alternative ideas for educational practices which resist dominant ideology. In that way, CP is in favor of bringing back "ideology" as the main analytic category for making sense of educational phenomena. In addition, CP brings to light the hidden assumptions of the curriculum and the socio-cultural determinants of teachers' identities (Kincheloe, Berry 2004). Thus, CP prioritizes qualitative research and research designs connected with ethnography and case studies because these designs may explore what happens "behind the backs" of those who are involved into school life (parents, teachers, students). Action research is one of the most preferred research designs of CP's due to its emancipatory aspirations through which social change will take place. CP subscribes one of the main assumptions of action research, namely the idea of the "reflective practitioner" or the "teacher as researcher" ideal. According to this line of thinking, educators cannot protect their personal autonomy unless they regain their voice in the workplace and demand a role in the production of the knowledge on which the modern state and its experts ground their authority (Kincheloe 2003). The preference of CP for qualitative methods does not rest on old-fashioned dualisms on "paradigms war" but on the argument that humans' consciousness is socially shaped through structural (which could be quantitative) processes as well as through their biographical transitions and actions. In other words, what is important for educational research is not quantitative vs qualitative per se but how research on education and teaching could provide with teachers the means to critically reflect upon their

work as teachers, upon the relation of school with economic structures or political institutions in order that a social or educational transformation to take place (McLaren 2007).

Critical Realism's epistemological innovations.

CR is a philosophy of social science which has received too much attention in the last 20 years. Most of the work has been done in the field of social ontology and epistemology of social science and in particular in clarifying what are the distinguishing features of a CR position regarding social research. The most popular socio-ontological idea of CR is the iceberg metaphor of social reality.

Empirical Level
-experienced and observed events
-events understood through human interpretation

Actual Level
-events occur, whether observed or not

Real Level
-causal mechanisms within objects or structures cause events at empirical level to occur
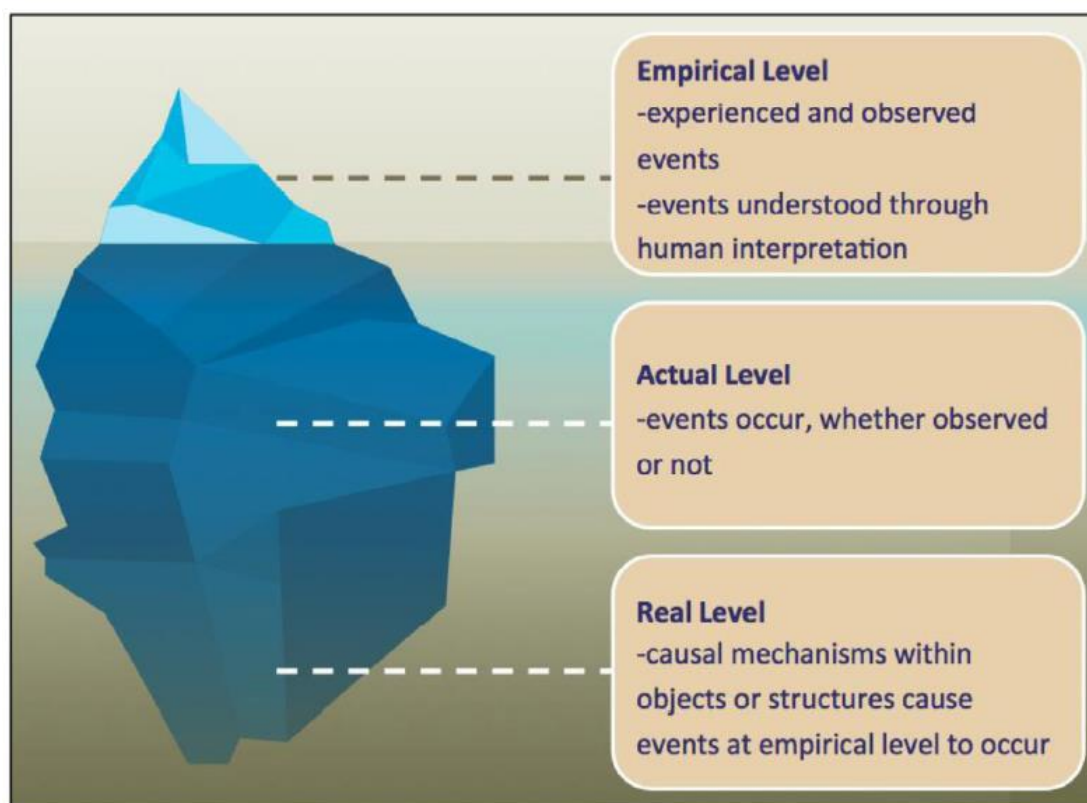
What the metaphor wants to underline is that while in most epistemological traditions (Interpretivism, phenomenology, positivism) social reality is flat, for CR reality is stratified, which means that it is one thing how humans make sense of reality (the Level of Experience), it is another thing the Events in which they live

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their lives (the Level of Actual) and it is quite another the causal powers which make events take place (the Real Level) (Bhaskar 1979). According to this epistemological orientation the reality is independent of the viewpoint and stance taken up by the observer, it has an objective dimension to it, it is not constructed in any meaningful sense by the observer, and it is not grasped through a representational view of truth. Holding a belief that an independent reality exists does not entail the assumption that absolute knowledge of the way it works is possible, but it promotes the idea that researchers' propositions are refinable by the research findings which are grounded to the social world's properties (Christodoulou 2022). Critical realism is critical then, because any attempts at describing and explaining the world are bound to be fallible, and also because those ways of ordering the world, its categorizations and the relationships between them, cannot be justified in any absolute sense, and are always open to critique and their replacement by a different set of categories and relationships. Fallibility, on the other hand, goes beyond the notion of error, and implies that social actors are positioned and, therefore, always observe the world from a fixed place (geographical, cultural and, more importantly, epistemological). There is no outsider perspective that allows the individual access to complete knowledge, including knowledge of how the world works. Frequently these two forms of fallibilism are conflated. However, no assertion is being made here that individuals can describe and thus change the world in any way they want (a solipsistic viewpoint), and this is because what is considered to be at that moment in time the most appropriate way of describing the world constitutes the reality that is external to individuals and to which they have to make reference. This implies that new ways of describing the social world are always operating and replacing old ways, even if those new ways are in a critical relationship to the old. If this is accepted, then observers and researchers are not entitled to say that there are stable and enduring relationships in society that constitute reality that is independent of them. They can only say that those relationships are constituted as stable and enduring because of the historical play of signifiers that constitutes

their understanding of the social world, which in turn impacts on historically located but evolving human practices; and this applies equally to the methods that they use to examine the nature of that social world (Danermark et al 2002).

Posing research questions through a CR perspective

For CR there is no some covering-law model explaining social facts but it is the interactions of different causal mechanisms as implemented in specific contexts that explain why some things happen in specific ways and not another. In contradistinction to positivism (which identifies explanation with prediction and prioritizes a patterned view of social life) and Interpretivism (which reduces the social to meanings), CR provides explanations of social reality by highlighting the causal mechanisms which connect conditions with outcomes. Given that for CR existence derives from relations, it follows that causal mechanisms of the social facts are relational. Relational means that the wholes present causal powers of which the effects **<u>cannot</u>** be predicted by the properties of its parts because they emerge from their configurational form. In that sense, CR prioritizes the explanatory formula "Causal conditions (context) + mechanism=outcome" in which both patterns and exceptions receive equal attention. This approach to causal explanation prioritizes not only research focusing on statistical means and correlations but also on extreme cases and outliers. To get an answer to the question 'How is X possible?' we can study various cases where the preconditions for X appear much more clearly than in others. There are at least two types of case where social conditions and mechanisms are very obvious: first, those where the conditions are challenged and the mechanisms are disturbed; and second, extreme cases where mechanisms appear in an almost pure form. As Bhaskar puts it

It might be conjectured that in periods of transition or crisis generative structures, previously opaque, become more visible to agents. And that this, though it never yields quite the epistemic possibilities of a closure ... does provide a partial analogue to the role played by experimentation in natural science. (Bhaskar 1989, 48)

The point of this kind of case study is that we can learn much about structures and mechanisms by studying pathological or critical situations. Mechanisms, which are usually hidden as they are counteracted by other mechanisms, become very clearly apparent in certain situations. In addition to studying extreme cases as an opportunity for theory development, the CR approach to causal thinking prioritizes comparative research. Researchers choose to study a number of cases which are all assumed to manifest the structure they wish to describe, but which are very different in other aspects. If researchers want to develop a theory on the barriers students face regarding their social integration, they could compare conditions in which these barriers take place for disability and migrant students in primary education. In this way it can be possible to distinguish the necessary, constitutive conditions from more accidental circumstances. What makes it so productive to compare different cases is precisely this, that comparison provides an empirical foundation to sort out contingent differences in order to arrive at the common and the more universal. This is a powerful idea for CR because it gives a different spin to causal accounts which could reorient how one crafts research questions in a CR framework (Christodoulou 2022). First, research questions have to be stated in a way which aspires to tap differences, and which can be labeled **comparative exploratory or explanatory research questions**. Exploratory questions might be like "what are the outcomes to which various configurations of causal conditions lead?". In this kind of exploratory comparative research design, researchers first identify possible causal factors of a phenomenon and then try to explore the possible causal connections among them that act as various causal conditions through which various paths lead to an outcome. Comparative exploratory or explanatory research questions might take the form "what are the outcomes to which various configurations of causal conditions lead?" and they could be depicted as follows.
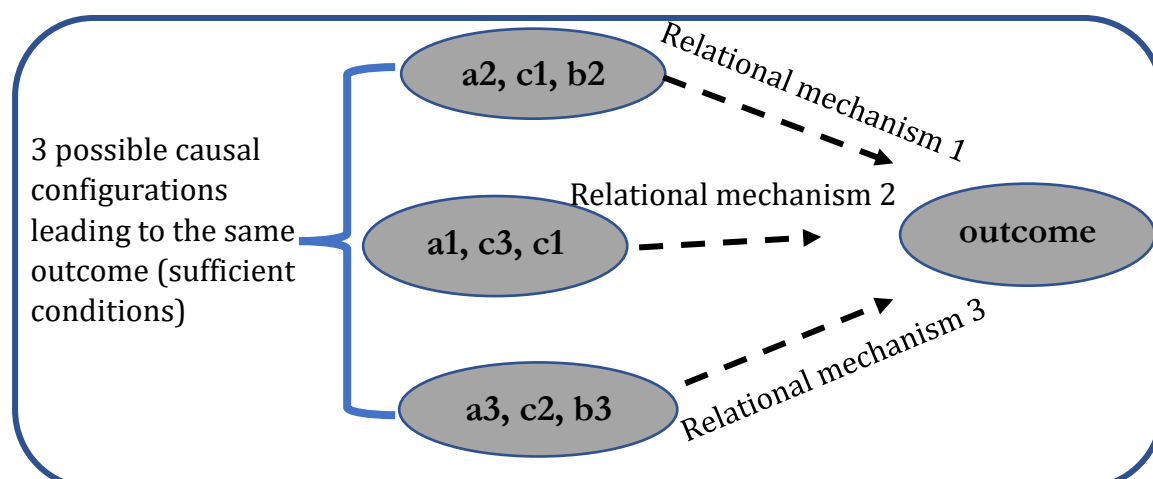
In the above graph the researcher has identified, for example, the causes A (with the properties a1 and a2), B (with the properties b1 and b2) and C (with the properties c1 and c2) connected to an outcome. Then by using truth tables (s)he might detect the relational mechanism connected with each of these causal configurations. Second, the contrastive character of research questions might concern **singular counterfactual explanations**. In particular, these kinds of questions might be like "why this specific Y outcome took place and not Y1, Y2 or Y3?". Of course, the most intriguing feature of this style of research questions concerns how one can define the space of alternatives Y1, Y2 or Y3 in so far as counterfactual reasoning should not be identified with mental experimentation. For this purpose, one could seek out two (or more) situations where the outcomes might have been expected to be related in some manner other than turns out to be the case, and to attempt to determine the reason(s). Typically, this will involve identifying at least one mechanism that operates, or does so in a particular fashion, in the one (set of) situation(s) only. As a consequence, the above remarks could lead to the idea that causal questions under a CR methodology might take the following form (I provide some examples)

Why adolescents of the X class origin decided to follow this specific Y life-course path, instead of the Y1 as one would expect to be the case according to the Z theory (Bourdieu's or other)?

Why teachers of this specific case (area, school type, age, specialty etc.) do not seem to exhibit high levels of devotion to their social role to the extent that, logically thinking, teachers' role offers a lot to society's well-being?

Why parents of the area are intolerant towards refugee and migrant students, while the opposite should be the case given their high income and cultural capital?

When one poses singular counterfactual explanations the aim is the bringing to light of the causal chains connecting conditions with outcomes. The following scheme depicts what it means to search for causal chains.
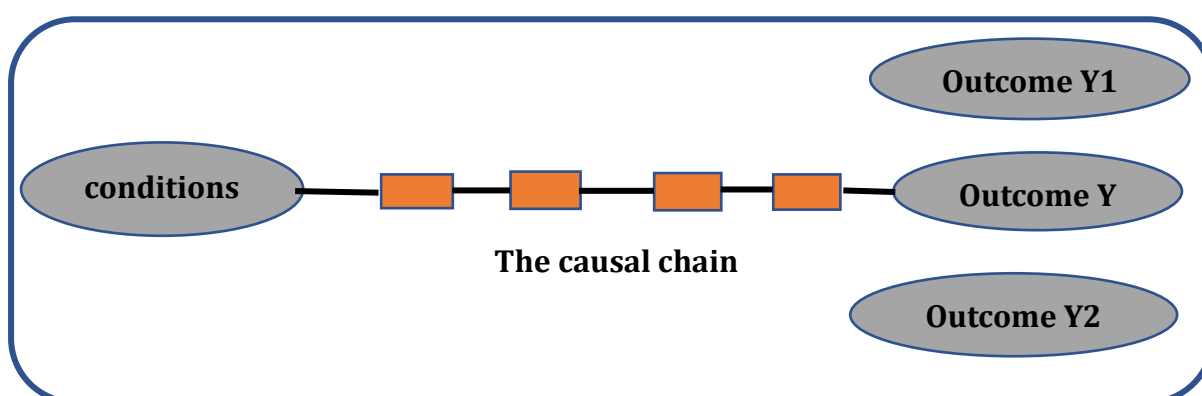
Meeting points of Critical Pedagogy with Critical Realism

The above analysis shows that both CR and CP share specific theoretical and methodological ideas regarding "criticality". For these two theoretical traditions, "critical" means bringing to light:

-the hidden mechanisms through which institutions reproduce inequalities and injustice

-the unobservable causal powers through which social phenomena are produced

-how contexts interact with social mechanisms.

The fact that both of them are context specific methodologies, meaning that they treat institutions as a whole not as composed only of disconnected and separated parts, acknowledge that reality is not populated only by humans' meanings but also by structural and cultural dynamics and prioritize qualitative research and especially case studies and ethnography. In my view the most crucial

methodological preference of CR and CP is that both reject interpretivism as socio-ontological background for research practice. The importance of this rejection lies at the fact that interpretivism, starting from the pathos of anti-essentialism, ends up erasing causality in toto as a primordial operation of social science. The assumption of this erase is that, according to interpretivism, causality is close to determinism. Critical realist scholars, on the contrary, hold that such an assumption lies at the heart of the epistemological fallacy according to which the known is identified with the discursive. Within the context of CR, it is argued that we cannot understand any kind of change – not even that produced by discourses – without implying causation, or as Sayer puts it, "emancipation is inconceivable without causality" (Sayer 2000, 93).

The main misunderstanding which gives rise to the identification of causation with determinism is the idea that causal arguments are the same as observing regularities or patterns. CR scholars reject this approach to causality because regularities are what they are because there exist some kind of law which supports them. In contrast, for CR there is no some covering-law model explaining social facts but it is the interactions of different causal mechanisms as implemented in specific contexts that which explains why some things happen in specific ways and not another. This is exactly what Tony Lawsons (1997, 54) calls demi-regularities. For Lawson, the "demi" dimension of social facts has to do with the fact countervailing factors sometimes co-determine outcomes and this explains why for CR entities' causal powers are tendential and full of liabilities. This allows for seeing the social as populated by contingencies of which the explanation is captured by identifying the multiple conjunction between causal conditions. Contingency means that people's and social groups' history could have been different than the one which has taken place and that what is actually their history and present is other than might have been expected or at least imagined as a real possibility. For CR, social facts do not take the form of "strict regularities but express phenomena to be explained, they are not the end-points of research or mere devices to be built into formal systems" (Lawson 1997, 203). It is for these

reasons that CP and CR subscribe the idea that qualitative research designs – especially case studies – are powerful means for this purpose. Case studies are powerful because they pay particular attention to how and why something is responsible for producing change. This is mutatis mutandis the conception of causation as propounded by CR. When one studies changes one seeks to identify properties that enable an object to produce or undergo distinctive kinds of changes, and indeed are a necessary condition for doing those things. In other words, causality according to the CR approach concerns the identification of causal effects produced by unobservable social relations. It is one thing to say someone has a causal power, for example, the power to bear children, in virtue of a certain (physiological) structure; but quite another to say whether that power will (or should) ever be activated or exercised. And if such powers are exercised, the results are not thereby predetermined; they depend on context, on the contingent presence of other objects with their own causal powers or ways of acting. Sayer thinks that there are therefore three barriers to determinism. Firstly, whether causal powers – such as the ability to bear children – exist depends on the contingent presence of certain structures or objects. Secondly, whether these powers are ever exercised is contingent, not pre-determined. Thirdly, if and when they are ever exercised, their consequences will depend on mediation – or neutralization – by other contingently related phenomena. If the abovementioned line of reasoning is the framework for a critical epistemology, then how is this related to an emancipatory research agenda? We are trying to answer to this issue in the following section.

The critical epistemology of an emancipatory research agenda

Setting an emancipatory research agenda is a normative issue comprised of two dimensions. The first is epistemic and concerns what we have said about how to pose research questions from a CR-CP point of view. Instead of asking "what are the points of views (or perceptions) of the X group about Z (child-rearing practice,

evaluation method, curriculum etc.), researchers imbued from the CP-CR methodology might ask why or contrastive questions. The reason is that it is only by asking "why" questions that one can expose the conditions which promote social and educational advantage and disadvantage. The second dimension is more political in the sense that such an agenda should reveal what is hidden and disrupts social values. An account of patriarchal behavior which failed to evaluate actors' assumptions regarding men's and women's abilities would fail as an explanation of what happens. Criticism of social practice in this kind of case is not an option which involves stepping outside social science but is necessary for social scientific explanation itself. Criticism becomes critique when we not only show that certain beliefs are false but explain why they are held, and what produces them. Critique is therefore intrinsic to social science. More simply, and from another angle, there is no point in social science if it does not at least offer the possibility of some kind of social improvement, even if it doesn't go beyond enlightenment and reduction of illusion, to material change (Sayer 1997, 159). These two dimensions comprising the emancipatory research agenda are tied up with the idea that values are not emotions or feelings, expressions lying beyond the scope of reason. On the contrary, values are the raw material for explaining social action. Values can therefore be assessed rationally via an evaluation of relevant explanations. As Bhaskar says, the problem is not to craft a value-free social science but whether values are science-free. Without causality any concept of responsibility, agency or freedom is meaningless, for we can only be responsible for what we can influence. Idealism makes discourse both inconsequential and all powerful: inconsequential because it refuses to acknowledge that it can be causal and that its causal efficacy depends on how it relates to extra-discursive processes; all-powerful because it also makes it seem that we can re-make the world merely by redescribing it.

I close the chapter by showing how this emancipatory research agenda might empower teachers. Teachers as researchers have to be passionate subjects: what drives knowledge is not "libido dominandi" (as Bourdieu has called the will for

power) but subjects' feelings and emotions. One cannot make sense of oppression without bringing to contact reason and emotion. Only in that way can one know how the structural forces of history shape lives. One cannot make history without this passion, without this connection of feeling and knowing, since without it the relationship between the people and intellectuals is reduced to a hierarchical formality. Finally, teachers-researchers have to consider themselves as public intellectuals. This means that they have to develop research skills and competencies not only for doing research but also for proposing educational policies which could set the stage for social change. According to a positivist version of the role of the intellectual, educational policy is exercised through "enlightened elites" who are conceived of as truth holders. In that way teachers are deprived of one of the most crucial features of their professional identity, the control of the conditions of their work. Only if teachers-researchers are in a position of not just having their voices heard but also of being conceived as a key component of a collective decision-making process, might they overcome the sense of alienation they experience in their lives.

To conclude, an emancipatory research agenda should be composed of

- ➢ comparative exploratory or explanatory research questions
- ➢ singular counterfactual research questions
- ➢ explanations of how values affect social practices
- ➢ the identification of problems needing of improvement or radical transformation
- ➢ empowering the critical reflexivity of teachers

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Online teacher communities in the COVID-19 era: A Greek paradigm

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised significant challenges for the educational community worldwide. Specifically, when the COVID-19-related general lockdown was declared teachers of all backgrounds and ages were forced, seemingly overnight and without any preparation, training, or technical support, to make a transition to emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Flores, Gago 2020; Hodges et al 2020). The latter, as reflected in both international (c.f. Alsaleh 2021; Defiantly et al 2021; Greenhow et al 2021) and domestic literature (c.f. Tzimopoulos et al 2021; Liakopoulou, Stavropoulou 2020; Manousou et al 2021), was accompanied by a massive turn to informal online professional communities created in social media to seek support. In this regard, and with online teacher communities established as part of mainstream teaching practice (Lantz-Andersson et al. 2018) well before the coronavirus crisis the need for renewed questioning in the light of the 'new' reality is more imperative than ever.

Introduction

There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has placed unprecedented restrictions on public life, affecting both the society and the economy, but also generating radical changes in education at all levels. In fact, regarding the latter, it

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is no exaggeration to say that never before have so many people been asked to change so much in so little time in the way they teach and learn, not least under conditions of an asymmetric health threat, confinement, curfews and professional, social and emotional insecurity (Anastasiadis 2020). In particular, in order to ensure the continuity of the education process that was abruptly disrupted in March 2020, when the COVID-19-related general lockdown was declared, more than 90 per cent of countries implemented some form of remote learning policy (UNESCO et al. 2020). In this regard, schools, teachers, parents and students were faced with enormous challenges, as they were forced, seemingly overnight and without any preparation or training, to adapt to a new context and make a sudden transition from face-to-face to remote teaching. The internationally proposed term to describe this process and to distinguish it from organised online education was that of Emergency Remote Teaching [ERT] (Flores, Gago 2020; Hodges et al 2020).

As expected, this new branch of distance learning has increasingly attracted the researchers' interest, leading to a plethora of primary and secondary studies that focus on various topics pertinent to the new teaching and learning context during the COVID-19 pandemic (c.f. Bond 2020; Coman et al 2020; Hammerstein et al 2021; Klapproth et al 2020; Swigonski et al 2021; van der Spoel et al 2020). One notable insight, deriving from this rapidly expanding body of knowledge that needs further investigation, is the following: despite the commonalities that cut across geographical borders, local particularities, domestic state capacities and policies, as well as national systems, can 'paint' the various aspects related to the application of ERT in different colours. These aspects include, among others, challenges, effects, and responses. Specifically, in the case of Greece what we are facing is 'a crisis upon crisis', as the new 'violent' reality of the pandemic came on top of a 12-year-long miserable condition characterised by the enforcement of extensive austerity policies. Despite the fanfare that followed the country's official exit from 'post-memorandum' supervision in August 2022, not only has the grim reality not been reversed, but it has re-emerged through the pandemic in the most

recognisable way. Thus, merely by way of example, we would mention that the context in which ERT was implemented in Greece was characterised by underfunding, lag in infrastructure and human resources, insufficient training, absence of technical and managerial support, deficient educational policies that espouse the neoliberal dogma and the fact that 72.68 per cent of permanent teachers are more than fifty years old (Grivas 2020; Sofos 2021; Tzifopoulos 2020; Tzimopoulos et al. 2021).

Despite all the differences, however, there is a common ground: Educators were urgently and in emergency conditions called upon to undertake and carry out a project that required the use of digital tools and resources and the application of new approaches to teaching and learning without any planning or time to properly prepare. The panic that this unique condition caused to teachers led researchers to introduce new terms for its approach, such as "Panic-gogy" and "Pandemagogy" (Baker 2020), but also brought to the fore the urgent matter of teacher training on the use of digital technology. However, the teachers did not remain idle. On the contrary, overcoming the first shock of transitioning to ERT, they very quickly 'found a new pace' and organised themselves in an effort to support each other, but also to retrieve, update and enrich their knowledge. As reflected thus, in both international (c.f. Alsaleh 2021; Defiantly et al 2021; Greenhow et al 2021) and current domestic literature (c.f. Tzimopoulos et al 2021; Liakopoulou & Stavropoulou 2020; Manousou et al 2021), this transition from face-to-face teaching to emergency remote teaching was accompanied by a massive turn to informal online professional communities created in social media, with teachers seeking support in the difficult task they were asked to undertake.

However, online communities are not a by-product of the Covid crisis. On the contrary, a quick search on the Internet is enough for one to see that, for at least the last fifteen years, the term has been extensively used. A decisive role in this direction was played both by the rapid and widespread proliferation of information technologies and the infusion of social media into almost every aspect of modern everyday life (Selwyn, Stirling 2016). As expected, the above

developments could not leave the educational community unaffected. So, well before the Covid-19 pandemic was declared, we knew that teachers were increasingly turning to spaces that went beyond their school community and were using the social media and online communities as a learning space, as a space for guidance and inspiration, and as recourses for sharing content and knowledge in a non-bureaucratic, peer-to-peer approach (c.f. Liljekvist et al. 2020; Macià & Garcia 2016; Tour 2017; Robson 2016). The latter was in fact confirmed to such an extent, that it has been suggested in literature that such a practice should be considered a core aspect of teachers' working lives (Lantz-Andersson et al. 2018). The difference today lies in the new research perspectives that are opening up in the field of online communities in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With regard to the above point, it should be noted that, apart from the pandemic being a crisis that has impacted teachers and their profession in multiple ways, online communities are not 'neutral environments'. In stark contrast to the instrumental perception of them as merely technical initiatives, we should not forget that online teacher communities, their presence, formation and use arise from social actions and social organisation, as a result of social, cultural, economic and political factors that shape contemporary teaching and the changing nature of teachers' work (Lantz-Andersson et al. 2018). To put it differently, starting with the assumption that the learning and professional development of teachers takes place within social contexts, we also believe that life in communities, as well as the interaction of participants, is also constructed within specific cultural, institutional, and historical contexts. Within this framework the need for renewed questioning in today's circumstances is more imperative than ever.

Towards new forms of teachers' professional development

As was mentioned above, the Coronavirus pandemic has brought to the fore, and perhaps more so than ever before, the teacher training debate. Having said that, and given the fact that teaching is an occupation that requires continuous

improvement and innovation, the process of high-quality professional development of teachers is of great importance (Yildirim 2019). However, several research studies, well before the outbreak of COVID-19, (c.f. Schlager, Fusco 2003; Sugar 2005) have emphasized that traditional professional development programs, being fragmented, disconnected, and irrelevant to the real problems of actual classroom practice, are failing to meet the professional requirements of teachers (Ball, Cohen 1999; Hatch et al. 2005; Lieberman, Mace 2010). As a response, contemporary professional development teams call attention to the replacement of traditional notions of in-service training with opportunities for knowledge sharing where teachers are given the chance to share what they know, discuss what they want to learn, and associate new concepts and strategies with their own unique contexts (Rutherford 2010, 12).

Inherent in all these initiatives is the idea not only that teachers must be involved in collaborating with one another, but also that the work needs to focus on teacher learning and the knowledge they create (Lieberman, Mace 2010). As it has already been acknowledged for more than 40 years, collegiality among teachers makes a significant difference to their learning and their overall professional development. Along those lines, at least in the higher education sector, there is a new trend towards new forms of professional development that align with a social constructivist paradigm in which learning is accomplished through the construction of knowledge blended with dialogue, relationships, and self-directed learning (Bedford 2019; Cartner, Hallas 2017; Saroyan, Trigwell 2015). We are moving towards a professional development that supports participants as producers of knowledge based on their own experience and that of their peers (Sullivan et al. 2018). It is towards that direction that online communities of teachers have a crucial role to play.

What does the literature tell us about online teacher communities?

As expected, the extension of the teachers' professional community to social media has prompted inquiry across many disciplines, and there is a general consensus

on the multiple benefits of membership in such spaces, where problem-solving, knowledge building and social and emotional sharing can be enacted (Rashid et al. 2016). Indeed, it is largely presumed that informally conceived online teacher communities are a valuable source of unofficial interaction and knowledge sharing as well as an opportunity for an informal, participant-driven and practical professional development (Rutherford 2010; Vangrieken et al. 2017) that creates social, authentic and collaborative learning possibilities (Duncan-Howell 2010).

More than all however, online communities call our attention to the fact that learning, rather than being solely individual, is also social. In that way they help us understand why and how practice and knowledge become a public contribution to be shared, used, co-shaped, and understood within a peer-to-peer structure (Sullivan et al. 2018; Wenger 1998), thus allowing members to be both users and creators (Bruns 2007, 3). In that sense, they provide the opportunity for new forms of interaction and knowledge production outside closed educational systems (Suoranta 2020, 1128; Suoranta, Vaden 2010, 2-3); that is a move towards a gradual shift from officially organized and individualized forms of learning to a new kind of open, collaborative learning (Suoranta, Vaden 2010, 2). However, it should be noted that despite their popularity and prevalence, empirical understanding of online teacher communities remains under-developed (Lantz-Anderson 2018).

In the above regard, we could almost say that our conceptions of online communities for professional development are still in their infancy (Macià, Garcia 2016), a situation that largely mirrors a lack of knowledge about teachers' informally developed learning practices in general (Greenhalgh, Koehler 2017; Robson, 2018; Tour 2017; Tsiotakis, Jimoyiannis 2016; Vangrieken et al. 2017). However, for professional learning of teachers to change, a deeper understanding of the kinds of conditions and contexts that support and encourage such learning is needed (Cochran-Smith, Lytle 2009; Lieberman, Miller 2008; McLaughlin, Talbert 2001; Wenger 1998). It is in this direction that we find hope, in the sense that, insights related to teacher learning experiences that use informally

conceived online communities present some new possibilities for thinking differently about the codification of professional knowledge, the requirements for practitioner knowledge to become professional knowledge, and by extension the ways that professional development is organized (Hiebert, et al. 2002; Lieberman, Mace 2010). For that to happen, we need to switch the focus from a static understanding of knowledge to the process of knowledge acquisition and transformational power (Pischetola 2021).

Surviving ERT trough online teacher communities?

Within the above framework we were keen to shed light on the role of informal online communities as a means of support and professional development of teachers during the transition to emergency remote teaching. In other words, as a means of a targeted, timely and effective professional development, a wider phenomenon known in the literature as "just-in time" professional development (Greenhalgh, Koehler 2017). Although at the time of writing this article the research has not been completed yet, we will provide at this point a brief overview of our key design choices.

For the needs of this holistic single case study, we investigated a self-organized, thematic (Manca, Ranieri 2013), closed group of Greek teachers on Facebook, dedicated to a specific practice, that of distance education. In addition to the great research interest this community presents in terms of its creation only a few days after the announcement of the shift to ERT, it was also chosen for meeting a number of conditions and criteria. These criteria, resulting from the specific needs of the present study, the literature review, but also ethical issues related to social media research in general, had to do with: focus, group size, presence of artefacts, lifespan and informality (Boyd, Ellison 2007; Kelly, Antonio 2016; Roberts 2015; Liljekvist et al. 2020; Selvi 2020).

As a data collection tool, in line with the quantitative method, an anonymous questionnaire was used, the creation of which was based on the international

literature, but also on a telephone interview with the creator and main administrator of the online group. It consisted of closed Likert-type or multiple-choice questions, as well as declarations of beliefs and perceptions, and was pilot-tested before distribution. It was implemented using Google Docs, so that, on the one hand, it would be easily accessible by teachers and on the other hand, the answers would be initially stored in electronic form and could later be exported in an editable format (SPSS). As for its distribution, it was sent as a hyperlink via a private message on Facebook, and its completion was voluntary. It is worth noting at this point that, although no consent was required from the participants due to the nature of the study, nor approval from an appropriate national authority or ethics committee, consent for conducting this research was requested and obtained from the creator of this closed online group (American Educational Research Association [AERA] Ethical Guidelines 2011; British Psychology Society 2013; franzke, et al. 2020; Jowett 2015; Roberts 2015). Finally, it should be noted that the research participants were a mixed group with diverse composition in terms of demographic characteristics, teaching background, level of education, years of service, employment relationship, and geographical dispersion.

Final remarks

In a sense, communities of practice are the kick-start for publicizing a profession that had until then been conducted behind closed doors. But what does this imply for the teachers themselves and what do they have to gain by opening their classroom doors to peer review by others? Beyond our firm belief that knowledge must be made public so that it can be shared, critiqued and verified, what we support is that one of the most potent results of going public are the possibilities that open up to the wider educational community for a new kind of conversation about teaching. Specifically, we are of the opinion that this sort of discussion on a new basis and data, such as those coming from teachers' own reflection on their practice but also from their knowledge stemming from actual and explicit

problems of that practice (Hiebert et al 2002, 6), can have multiple benefits. On the one hand, regarding the teachers themselves, the pre-existing gap between the various domains in which teacher learning can occur can be bridged. Indeed, this is one of the ways in which educators can understand that their learning as adults is inextricably linked to a wider research community of professional educators that can play a key role in expanding their knowledge throughout their professional careers. On the other hand, the wider educational research community gains access to the teachers' collective understanding of their work. The latter is considered a necessary condition for there to be a substantial change in the way professional development is provided and to move away from top-down, expert-led initiatives that ignore the complexities and layered nature of teaching. It therefore becomes clear that, within such a framework, teaching is not treated as a magical calling and the purpose of going public with teachers' work does not lie in developing narratives of inspirational teachers who have, despite the difficulties, "made it". On the contrary, teaching is a complex profession which, however, can be refined over time as long as it ceases to manifest in fleeting moments, largely circumstantial and impossible to reproduce (Lieberman, Mace 2010). In this direction, technological innovations and online communities of practice, not as an end in themselves but rather, as a means to an end, have a key role to play.

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Critical languages as capital and commodity in Arizona

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Abstract

This article discusses points of tension in language policies in the state of Arizona that affect English learners and English speakers differently. The authors highlight how "critical languages" (less commonly taught languages the U.S. Department of State has deemed critical for the nation's foreign policy, national security, and economic prosperity) accrue symbolic capital if they are learned by English speakers but are discounted if spoken as native languages by students who are also learning English as a second language. Critical languages are thus positioned as capital outside of the linguistic and cultural communities that "possessed" them initially. Critical languages are also racialized because they represent resources of value to the State if acquired by middle class White students, but not by native speakers of color. While there are some conceptual problems from positioning critical languages as commodified skills, Marx's theory of commodity is useful in an analysis of Arizona's contradictory and two-tiered policy approaches. The authors suggest that this analysis calls for heightened vigilance about and resistance to the accumulation by dispossession of language and cultural resources, especially from historically and disenfranchised communities where privilege, power and difference are used as justification for normalized exclusion.

Introduction

In the United States, public schools have increasingly reshaped foreign language education as a "world language" curriculum that discursively positions languages as socio-economic capital to be acquired and deployed in the interests of international commerce, foreign policy, and national security. Second language skills, and by extension the labor required to obtain them, are framed as commodities that further the political requirements of the State.

Most urban school districts in the Southwestern state of Arizona, where we live and work, also have world or foreign languages departments, but there is a socio-political twist: the state legislature frames language as a resource if it is acquired by English speakers. For example, if English-speaking high school students study Chinese or Spanish, they have undertaken an economically important task. If these students reach intermediate or advanced proficiency in the language, they have achieved something momentous. In contrast, the native languages of immigrant or refugee youth and citizens of color, are perceived as barriers to academic success or economic opportunity, even when these languages are deemed "critical" to the future well-being of U.S. society.

This article explores contradictions in Arizona's language policies with respect to English learners and English speakers. Our focus is a particular type of world language program that immerses students in critical languages. We examine these contradictions by comparing two diametrically opposed approaches to language education: its critical languages policy, called the Arizona Critical Language and Economic Development Pilot Program, and the way the state educates *native speakers* of these critical languages. Primarily, we focus on the critical languages policy, which provides English speakers with the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese or Spanish in public school immersion settings. In contrast, students who

enter schools as English learners (Els) are statutorily excluded from the pilot program, and instead, forced into segregated English-only "English Language Development" instructional blocks for two or more hours a day.

During the writing of this article, state language policies changed. For example, the compulsory four hour "English Language Development" (ELD) block shifted from four hours to two hours and there are other options for ELs that until recently did not exist.[1] In addition, the critical language pilot program law expired and was removed from state statutes only this year.[2] These modifications notwithstanding, Arizona's language policies remain paradoxical and self-defeating because of the way they upend conventional notions of linguistic and cultural capital as the expertise of a particular group. State language policies also continue to embed racial and social class discrimination, discursively constructing a socially and linguistically stratified opportunity structure for both the acquisition of critical languages *and* English as a second language. We argue that despite recent changes, state language policy encourages primarily middle-class and affluent White students to appropriate the linguistic capital of a minoritized group while simultaneously foreclosing the latter from accessing those very resources in educational settings.

What are "critical" languages?

The term "critical" refers to less commonly taught languages that the U.S. Department of State has deemed crucial for the nation's foreign policy, national security, and economic prosperity. These languages typically are spoken in regions where the U.S. has a relationship of conflict or competition. The list is fluid, but for the last few decades has included Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese,

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[1] These include a pull-out model in which English learners are grouped together for targeted English and interdisciplinary instruction, a two-hour English language development block, a secondary level "newcomer" model, and a 50/50 dual language instruction model.
[2] It may be reintroduced as a new bill (with identical language) if there an elected official agrees to sponsor it.

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Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu (U.S. Department of State, Critical Language Scholarship no date [see Table I below]).

The Arizona legislature similarly conceptualized and promoted critical languages as desirable resources, adding two languages to the federal list – Spanish and French, and a general category called "Native American languages." Native speakers of these critical language are represented in urban school districts, with relatively large concentrations of Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Somali and Vietnamese native speakers (Sugarman, Geary 2018). Public schools also serve large numbers of Spanish-speaking students from Mexico and Central America, as well as Native American students who speak Navajo, Tohono O'odham, Hopi, and Apache.[3]

Table 1: *Critical Languages Spoken at Home in Arizona (2019-2021)*

Languages	Number of Speakers
Total Population 5 years and over	6,874,061
▮ 5-17 years	1,212,381
Speak only English	4,665,957
Speak a language other than English	1,732,824
LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH	
Spanish	1,317,026
▮ 5-17 years	289,614
OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES	126,700

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[3] Current information about the number of native speakers of critical languages in Arizona schools has been difficult to locate. The Arizona Department of Education does make linguistic demographic data available on its website, if it collects this information at all. The U.S. Census Department is one source of data, but its tables on "language use at home" (one of the agency's demographic categories) provide specific information only on the numbers of Spanish speakers by state. Speakers of other languages are grouped according to vague categories like "other Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Islander" and "other languages." The Migration Policy Institute is another source and provides information on the top four languages spoken by K-12 students who been classified as English language learners. While it is likely that a sizeable percentage of school age speakers of critical languages are also English learners, not all of them are ELs, so the total number of speakers will be an undercount.

	5-17 years	13,194
ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND LANGUAGES		132,771
	5-17 years	15,507
OTHER LANGUAGES		156,327
	5-17 years	22,694
NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES		
	Navajo	83,792
	Apache	10,700
	Tohono O'odham (Pima)	6,695
	Hopi	5,660
Chinese		28,552
	Mandarin	5,135
	Cantonese	3,045
	Formosan	595
*Arabic		16,865
*French		16,511
*Korean		10,733
*Hindi		8,474
*Russian		6,602
*Japanese		6,237
*Persian (Farsi)		6,111
*Portuguese		4,400
*Urdu		2,380
*Cushite (Somali)		2,285
*Panjabi		2,285
*Bangla (Bengali)		2,185
*Swahili		1,570
*Turkish		1,030
*Indonesian		965

*Pashto	325
*Numbers are not disaggregated by age.	
Source: U.S. Census, Language Spoken at Home (2021). shttps://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S1601	

"English all day, all the time" for English language learners

Arizona's approach to the education of English learners has been unique among the 50 states (Combs 2012, 2014; Gándara, Hopkins 2010; Heineke 2017).[4] For nearly two decades the state implemented the most restrictive language policy in the United States: all public schools and school districts had to place English language learners into segregated "English Language Development" (ELD) blocks in which the curriculum was remedial, overwhelmingly focused on English grammar and vocabulary development, and strictly regimented by specific time allocations.[5] ELD teachers were also discouraged by the state Department of Education from teaching content areas like social studies, science, math and even language arts. This prohibition was upheld by a federal district court in 2013.[6] The

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[4] Arizona's strict policy originated in November 2000 when voters approved Proposition 203 ("English for the Children-Arizona"), a ballot initiative that replaced bilingual education in public schools with a program model known as "Structured English Immersion" (SEI). The proposition instantiated three unsupported claims about second language acquisition: (1) that young children learn English better than older students; (2) that total immersion in English setting would ensure the rapid acquisition of the language; and (3) that SEI was the only way to help children learn English in one year. In 2006, the State Legislature redefined Structured English Immersion as the segregated model that required "a minimum of four hours per day of English language development."

[5] The daily four-hour blocks had to include 15-45 minutes of oral English, depending on students' proficiency levels, 60 minutes for grammar, 60 minutes for reading, 60 minutes for vocabulary and 15-45 minutes for writing. Arizona Department of Education, *Structured English Immersion models of the Arizona English language learners task force:* https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2015/04/SEI%20Models.pdf?id=55257a8f1130c008a0c55ce3.

[6] In a controversial ruling, a federal district judge agreed with the State that academic content in other subject areas was not the focus of an ELD classroom. Although academic content could be used a vehicle for delivering English language development, the objective of these classrooms was to teach English, not math, science, social studies or other academic content. In fact, state law required that "compensatory instruction" be provided to English language learners and such instruction did "not include providing instruction to ELL students in academic content areas that

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state's restrictive policy has also been uniquely disastrous. During the time that the ELD blocks were mandatory for all English learners in Arizona, the graduation rate for these students plummeted to 18 percent, or about one student in five (Jung 2017). One of the main causes of the low matriculation rate was the withholding of content subjects from ELLs until they acquired enough English to be reclassified as fluent in English. Even when they learned enough English to pass the state's proficiency test, they were significantly behind their English-speaking peers in content area knowledge.[7]

Arizona's critical languages policy explicitly prohibited the participation of native speakers of critical languages if they also happened to be learning English as a second language. [8] Legislative supporters of the policy argued that to be academically successful English learners had to learn English first before they studied a critical language. They believed immersing students in all English instruction was the best way for them to acquire English and that there was no pedagogical place for the native language in an ELD classroom. English learners needed "English all day, all the time," declared one supporter of the policy. She added that the "neural networking" capacity of these learners was incomplete, so they would be confused if they added Chinese to their linguistic repertoire before

they may have missed as a result of participating in the four-hour model" (Findings of Fact, Miriam Flores, et al vs. State of Arizona, No. 92-CV-596-TUC-RCC).

[7] A full discussion about second language acquisition theory with related research on the academic achievement of English learners is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say, the research literature on Arizona's English Language Development Blocks has been nearly unanimous in its critique of state policy. Immersing English-learning students in all-English settings may be intuitively appealing, but the acquisition of English actually takes longer to acquire in immersion programs than it does in strong bilingual education programs that use students' first language and English as instruction, with the goal of developing bilingualism and biliteracy (Collier 1987, 1988, 1995; Ramírez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Wong Fillmore 1991.

[8] Senate Bill 1242 included the following section (J): "Pupils who are classified as English language learners pursuant to section 15-756 and native speakers of the critical language being taught are not eligible to participate in the pilot program." Ironically, the law permitted native or heritage paraprofessionals (teacher assistants) of the critical language to work with students and even required a signed attestation of their proficiency in the language. https://law.justia.com/codes/arizona/2016/title-15/section-15-216

becoming fully proficient in English.[9] The principal sponsor of the critical languages law agreed with this declaration, indicating that Spanish-speakers interested in learning Mandarin had to develop a foundation in English first and that fluency in Spanish would not be particularly helpful. That is, although neither language is related to Mandarin in any way, English was presumed to provide advantages over Spanish.[10] One of the more disingenuous comments about excluding EL native speakers of critical languages came from another sponsor of the policy, who argued that Arizona law required English learners to attend English Immersion programs, so exempting them from their *own* program would be illegal.[11]

Language as capital and commodity

Scholarly discussions about language policy have drawn from a variety of theoretical frameworks to explore how federal and state governments, and state supported institutions like schools, construct language policies and how these policies attach to or re-construct individual and collective linguistic identities. We analyze Arizona's language policies through a language as "capital and commodity" framework. To be sure, there are some conceptual weaknesses with these frameworks, which we discuss later. Our goal is to contribute to the debate

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[9] Lisa Otondo, a Democrat from Yuma, Arizona, whose spoke in favor of the Arizona critical language and economic pilot program during a House Education Committee hearing held on March 3, 2014.

[10] Andy Biggs, principal sponsor of the critical languages bill, in remarks made to the Senate Committee as a Whole, February 20, 2014.

[11] J.D. Mesnard, in remarks during the House Committee as a Whole, April 14, 2014. The clear implication of his remarks was that learning a foreign language was useful, but not for Spanish-speaking students who were learning English. Here is his full statement: "One of the concerns with doing a pilot was this becoming an excuse for folks who already speak Spanish – or whatever the case was, but Spanish was the prime example given -- that they could get around Proposition 203 that requires English immersion. So, it's an English immersion issue. The language was drafted to make it clear that we were not trying to bypass a voter-passed ballot measure…but at the same time acknowledging that [learning] foreign languages is something useful and starting at a younger age is a great thing and probably a useful thing."

about language commodification by addressing the value disparities created for users and learners of critical languages.

The conceptualization of language as capital both supports and complicates neoliberal policies currently driving U.S. public education. On the one hand, it rebrands bilingual and bicultural education programs, historically designed to expand academic opportunities for linguistic minority children, into "one-way immersion" programs designed to appeal to White, middle class, monolingual English-speaking parents (Heiman et al 2021). On the other, a language as capital perspective reifies language as a form of property to be purchased, for example, by parents of children in private or elite public schools, or extinguished from linguistic minority students in under-resourced public schools. In neoliberal capitalist spaces, property signals ownership. Yet, who owns a linguistic resource historically and culturally associated with a particular group? Is it the group itself? Or can language be commodified because it has a use-value for individuals who have not initially possessed the language but acquire it through intellectual or cognitive labor? Consider that in Arizona, affluent parents have the right to enroll their children in a Spanish immersion or bilingual program if one is offered by their local school district. Working class Spanish-speaking parents do not have the same right. The main option for *their* children is an English-medium classroom that prioritizes grammar and vocabulary study for significant portions of the school day.

To be sure, legal "ownership" of languages like Spanish or Mandarin is impossible. People are free to use or learn them in public and private domains, even when there is a monetary requirement. But as a matter of language policy, it difficult to consider Arizona's critical languages law as viable if it encourages an economic elite to appropriate the language of a less powerful group, while simultaneously prohibiting the latter group from advanced study in its own language.

Karl Marx defined a commodity as a thing or object "outside of us" that serves a human need, and thus has "use-value" (it is used or consumed in one way or another). Commodities also have an "exchange value," meaning that they serve a

need for *others*, rather than the person whose labor produced the commodity (Marx 2000; Winn 2021). What is key in this theory is that the value of a commodity is not so much the physical product itself, but the socially determined abstract labor that produced it. Furthermore, value in relation to the quantity of social labor is not realized until the product can be exchanged for another commodity (like, money) within the market (Marx, Engels 1999). The market is the center where a monetary token dictates value. What provides symbolic value in a bourgeois economy is how a product is priced. Not all products accrue capital, that is, their value depends on their usage in a capitalist society. For a product to be designated as capital, investment gives it latent value with the result of accumulation through profit (Colleti 1975). Applied to language policy in Arizona, what interests us here is how the state legislature attributes value to critical languages when they are deployed for profit by outsiders. Not only does a critical language have little or no value if spoken by native speaking students of color, but the state's critical languages policy actively prohibited them from enrolling in immersion pilot programs.

Some sociolinguistics have drawn from Marxist theory to ask whether language, or more precisely its deployment in the marketplace, has an economic value, and if it does, whether it functions as a commodity (Bruzos 2022; McGill 2013; Petrovic 2019; Petrovic, Yazan 2021). Heller (2003, 2010) was among the first scholars to argue that the global turn to cooperation and competition between or within national economies required the skills and abilities of a multilingual workforce. Her focus was the presence of international call centers in Francophone Canada, which relied on the French-English bilingualism of employees and positioned language as a "measurable skill as opposed to a talent or an inalienable characteristic of group members" (Heller 2003, 474). Heller suggested that this perspective sees language as a marketable commodity rather than an ethnonational identity, and that even the authenticity of language becomes commodified. This circumstance raises important questions about who defines

competence in a language, whether competence signals authenticity, or how markets construct the role of "locals versus newcomers" (Heller 2003, 474-475). In a dissent to the claim that language can be commodified, Petrovic (2019) maintains that language is neither produced nor available for consumption in the market. He argued that an orthodox Marxist analysis would theorize language as a skill used in the workplace, and while language may have instrumental value, what is really commodified is labor. At best, language is a "fictitious commodity" because it is not produced for sale, unlike labor which has both a use-value and exchange value (Petrovic 2019, 68). He points out that Heller conflates the notion of language as commodity with language as resource. He may be correct on this point, and we agree to the extent that resources can be claimed as property, and as such, converted into money. Marx's theorization of commodities existing "outside of us" would also seem to contradict the commodification of language which, after all, is an internal linguistic system but also one culturally and collectively shared by others within a speech community.

The controversy about whether language can be commodified has not been settled. It remains robust and engaging. In our sense-making of Arizona's language policies, Heller's insight informs our analysis. For instance, in the state's current linguistic landscape "locals" are native speakers of critical languages and newcomers are second language-learning interlopers. In Arizona, just as in Canada, the economic allure of bilingualism in critical languages pits native speakers who acquire the languages organically in families and communities in direct competition with students who study these languages formally in schools (Heller 2003). Heller astutely notes that the communication abilities of multilingual Francophone Canadians became "something to sell" although paradoxically call center workers remained "at the bottom of the hierarchy," To wit, their French-English bilingualism merely provided them "privileged access to poorly paid, non-unionized and mainly dead-end jobs" (Heller 2003, 482-483). The conundrum that our interpretation of Arizona's critical language policy raises

is who precisely does the selling, and what value is assigned to what ultimately is sold.

Conclusion

In the 21ˢᵗ century with the relentless force of neo-liberalism a struggle is being waged in establishing what languages have more value and are worth learning in the interest of the State. In Arizona, language policies are crafted within a historical context that has erased minority languages and damaged their social status within multilingual communities. These policies also ideologically and statutorily elevate English as the gold standard, at least for English learners. Contradictorily, critical languages like Chinese and Spanish – removed from the social and cultural language practices of native speakers -- further marginalize and oppress working class students of color through the social reproduction and racialization of language.

In the United States, dominant ideologies about the value of language skills often foreground their economic or social benefits for individual learners, particularly those who embark upon the acquisition of a new language for utilitarian purposes. Such ideologies reduce language to a tool that furthers capitalist projects. A Marxist philosophy of language counters that language is a form of historical, social, material and political praxis (Lecerle 2006). Language offers a bridge for the modeling of organized diversity which holds and reflects cultural knowledge. Bourdieu (1977) previously posited through a theory of linguistic production which comes down to an apparatus of production through metaphorical shelves on the marketplace where products of linguistic competence are offered. Language serves as a means of communication and knowledge, but also as an instrument of power within an established and social context. This particularly holds true in relation to whom epistemic privilege is granted (Susen 2013).

Eradication of the state's policy and practice of linguistic exclusion requires a critical education for social emancipation -- one that challenges the ideological

structures that maintain this exclusion and promotes the multilingual communities already present in our state as sites for language development.

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The difficult path of environmental education: between theory and practice

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Abstract

This article aims to demonstrate the difficult path that Environmental Education has been tracing since the international documents resulting from various conferences held with the support of the United Nations since the 60s began to consider it as a possible mechanism for changing human behavior, in view of the growing anthropogenic environmental degradation. It sought to point out the need for legislators to become ecologically literate through training and information of a scientific nature in order to draft legislation relevant to environmental issues, betting on dialogue with the various sectors of knowledge that produce studies and research based on science for the confrontation of environmental catastrophes that plague the planet. It analyzes to what extent the Environmental Education proposed as an autonomous, mandatory and non-fragmented subject in the school curricula of the educational systems can mean the achievement of positive results from a pedagogy that unites theory, practice, idea and action through the ecological literacy of the actors involved in the educational process, so that it can make human beings aware of how their dysfunctionality before nature results in irreversible damage to all types of life on the planet.

Keywords: Environmental Education; Constituent Power; Ecological Literacy; Theory and Practice.

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1. From international organizations recommendations to pedagogical practice: the difficult path of environmental education in school systems

Planet Earth is going through dire times as far as environmental problems are concerned. These problems started to call the world's attention, especially in the last 60 years. Environmental degradation has been consolidating in such a way that it has demanded answers from several international organizations, especially the United Nations Organization, which has promoted debates on the subject in several conferences that resulted in several recommendations that proposed the insertion of Environmental Education in an interdisciplinary and/or transversal way.

The idea was born that educational actions were the mechanisms capable of mitigating these environmental problems, being essential for man to change his behavior. Environmental education would be the tool to overcome this challenge, as it aimed to raise awareness about the numerous and growing environmental problems and build a more favorable spirit against competitiveness and the need for individual success, the human selfishness driven by a highly consumerist world.

In 1972, in Stockholm, the first conference on environmental problems was held, which resulted in the Declaration on the Human Environment, which recognized in principle 19 that it was essential to work on environmental issues not only with the younger generation, but also with adults. The document appealed to companies and communities to assume responsibilities to better protect the environment in all its human dimension, emphasizing that the media would be the channel of mass educational information that could make society aware of the serious problems environmental conditions through which the Planet passed. Even having created the International Environmental Education Program, the results were not satisfactory, considering that the issues related to environmental degradation were described in a generic way and did not give consistent

guidelines for the pedagogical training of education professionals who should deal with this issue. new challenge of environmental education.

In 1977, in Tbilisi another conference was held and brought challenging recommendations for environmental education from a theoretical point of view, but was limited in some ways, to previous studies exposed at the Belgrade Conference. About this Dias (DIAS 2002), makes an interesting observation about the Tbilisi conference, that this was "the continuation of the Belgrade seminar", providing, however, the need to use all available resources to solve environmental problems.

Bold and inefficient. This is how the recommendations made in Tbilisi can be seen, because they bet on the need to invest in training, technology and technique as prerequisites for training people who understand environmental education as an awareness-raising tool capable of making human beings rethink their behavior within a new one, without taking into account that the biggest challenge would be to promote efficient environmental education in countries where illiteracy was huge, where a large part of society had no access to basic education. Besides being concerned with training instead of formation, which contradicts what Paulo Freire taught, that "education is about formation not training" and, therefore, it is necessary to explain to whom, how and when the technology and technique should be used.

But the recommendations were not able to answer basic questions, such as: what human material should be prepared to face these challenges? What kind of training should be given to the actors involved in this difficult process of stopping consumption, the great monster of capitalism? To what extent should environmental education have to act to reclassify national and regional priorities in terms of environmental development? Would this challenge really be up to environmental education or to public policies created directly by the State, involving other sectors of the public administration? Would the actors in the environmental education process be aware of what were the common problems existing in the member states and know how to confront them? Questions that

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have not found answers, thus bold, utopian, innocuous proposals that did not excel in valuing environmental educational pedagogical practices in their applicability. Six years after the Conference held in Tbilisi, the United Nations Organization created the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, who made an urgent call to establish a global agenda of change for the environment and development through the creation of long-term strategies capable of achieving sustainable development. Of course, these proposals were doomed to failure from the start, as they called for richer countries to cooperate with poorer ones in order to build common goals, such as interrelations between people, resources, environment, and development. Illusory is an understatement to summarize Brundtland's speech.

It is enough to observe the challenges posed by Brundtland to realize that his proposals were illusory, because he combined the international community's need to recognize the principle of solidarity with the need to face the resolution of international economic problems that had been posed since 1970 and the fact that they could not find a solution to these problems favored the decline of multiculturalism, and the prevalence of the dominance of a national economy was latent, where the thought of each nation continued to be to save itself economically.

Solidarity and economic selfishness will never speak the same language. Convincing those who hold political power to recognize environmental problems as problems common to all was and continues to be fantasy, given that the large world economies have never ceased to be fully aware that the basis of development was and is natural resources and that their depletion is the failure of economic development itself. Brundtland's speech only highlighted the reality and a continuous proposal that is to do, without doing, something for the environment pretending to do something concrete.

In addition, the imagery of Brundtland's proposals assumed that laws, education, taxes, subsidies, and other methods would compensate for the economic selfishness of the rich countries, and that all of this would control harmful side

effects. In other words, polluting pays. The polluter pays principle was born. First you pollute, then you pay, and everything is fine, the way found by the public powers to pay off an ecological debt, as if the debt with the environment could be paid off with money.

Twenty years after the Stockholm Conference, Rio de Janeiro hosted Eco-92, which, in addition to a large number of heads of government, had a significant participation of civil society, NGOs, and social movements in the Global Forum. For this reason, it was considered a success and the discussions promoted in the event made it clear that either countries became aware of the depletion of natural resources for the sake of economic development, or the environmental damage would be irreversible.

From this event the so-called Agenda 21 was born, that linked education, public awareness, and training in all areas of the programs that would guide the implementation proposals for research and scientific development related to sustainable development.

What happens is that training cannot be confused with formation. Based on Paulo Freire's teachings, "to transform experience into pure technical training is to forget what is fundamentally human about the educational exercise: its formative character. (Freire 1996), because, according to Freire, "to educate is substantially to form". By giving a connotation of progressiveness in the proposals presented, reinterpreting that in order to progress at the level of environmental protection and awareness, training would be indispensable, Agenda 21 fails in its content. For Freire, pure training does not fit into the educational practice, because it gets lost in the vision of the process, considering that it prepares the individual for an apolitical practice, where the way of being in the world becomes neutral (Freire 1996), that is, training is a coldly technical proposal and therefore runs the risk of not promoting transformation.

The seriousness of using inappropriate terms in documents resulting from events of utmost importance in the search for solutions to environmental degradation can compromise their effectiveness, by putting in doubt, within the scope of

environmental education, what should really be observed, which is the training of human resources who are able to understand the extent of environmental problems.

This statement comes from an exhaustive reading of Agenda 21, which refers to the term 'training' 263 times and uses the word 'formation' only 26 times. This can presuppose that much more than training, as taught by Freire, which means training oneself as a subject to retraining and training those who are available to be trained to reread the needs and transformations that humans operate in the world and in their surroundings, the training constantly mentioned in the document seems to be linked to specializing, acquiring a single skill and this could compromise the proposals that make up Agenda 21, given that the subtlety that often entails certain words can lead to convenient interpretations, which, when it comes to containing unbridled economic development from a sustainable vision, would not be very difficult to occur.

Agenda 21 did include proposals based on perspectives aimed at preparing the world for future challenges, and the greatest of which, perhaps, was the global consensus that reflected the political commitment to development and environmental cooperation, with the alignment of programs that included actors from various sectors of society, but nevertheless, based on the training that is controversial with the proposal of an environmental education, foreseen in chapter 12 of the document that suggests it as a tool that promotes popular participation from the sharing of responsibilities, recommending the introduction of environmental education in the curriculum of primary and secondary education in the systems in order to stop environmental degradation.

To what extent have these proposals worked? Have governments seriously followed up on the recommendations? Has environmental education been able to play its role? The answer is no, since the problems are increasing dramatically, and catastrophe is much closer to humanity.

This analysis is present, just by seeing how the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015 and being considered one of the most contemporary documents has deepened the

issues related to climate change. For, even though it sees environmental education as a necessity for capacity building, awareness raising, and participation, the document addresses it in a superficial way, making it seem as if educating the individual in tackling climate change is anything but irrelevant.

In this sense, the Paris Agreement has not delivered. This is because in 2021, a study conducted by EARTHDAY.ORG, analyzing the NAPs, i.e., the promises made by each country, found that none of the Parties addressed education as a key action, as provided for in the Agreement, because, the institution, in its research, found no terms such as 'climate education' or climate literacy', having found 'education', however, addressed in a very irrelevant way. Of the 104 NDCs analyzed, not even one of them addressed education as a theme to mitigate climate change on the planet. In this sense, it can be said that the Parties have overlooked the important observation made by Capra (Capra 2003) when the author states that "the first step in the effort to build sustainable communities must be an understanding of the organizational principles that ecosystems have developed to maintain the web of life and that this understanding is ecological literacy."

This way, the international documents produced in the last decades seem to have become just another heap of suggestions that have not found positive results, but that, nevertheless, have managed to make the States, through their legislators, produce laws and more laws, as if this were the great solution to environmental problems.

2. The gap between legislators and scientific knowledge

It is enough to read article 225, item VI, of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 or article 66 letter g, of the Portuguese Constitution of 1976, to verify that the legislators of these two countries were attentive to receive the recommendations resulting from the Conferences held by international bodies regarding the need to implement environmental education within the educational systems. However, it

is necessary to clarify that these Constitutions are only examples, and the objective is not to analyze these two texts.

However, the development of legislation to protect environmental education without observing some requirements is not enough. This can be seen in the statement of Michele Carducci (Carducci 2021) when he clarifies that "despite the exponential growth of regulatory provisions and jurisprudential instruments for environmental protection around the world, the world is in full climatic and ecosystemic emergency." This means, therefore, that the legislator's decision to elaborate norms is not enough, they need to be in line with real information, and this information is provided by the scientific community, as well as other areas of knowledge.

It is important that the representatives of the Constituent Powers establish dialogues as formation and information - but a permanent formation, (...) not as a vacation course, "formation of truth, scientific" - as advocated by Paulo Freire (Freire 1991), with areas that have developed studies that focus on the various bios that permeate environmental issues, whether in biophysics, biodiversity, biotechnology, among others. It will be the scientific research and studies that will allow us to "define the constitutional" or infra-constitutional determinants of environmental degradation and climate change. It will be the results of research from the various sectors of knowledge that will determine "how the constitutional or infra-constitutional structures within which human impacts on the Earth's natural systems directly affect terrestrial lives."

Science and environmental education must go hand in hand. It is in this perspective that the constituents should understand that receiving the recommendations of international documents regarding environmental education requires a specific literacy: ecological literacy. Thus, ecological literacy should be seen as a requirement for the legislator to fulfill his role and for the norms coming from the Constituent Power to produce the desired effects. Ecological literacy will be the possibility of making the constituents, as Paulo Freire taught, "remove the blindfolds from their eyes in order to better see reality"

(Freire 1991). However, it must be emphasized that ecological literacy must be proposed from various sectors of knowledge.

It seems increasingly appropriate to recognize the "sectorization of knowledge" when it comes to environmental education. Such proposition is due to the fact that nowadays it has become impossible to deal with issues related to environmental problems without the presence of several sectors or specific areas of knowledge, such as Medicine, Architecture, Engineering, Pedagogy, Psychology, Law, among many other sectors.

The dialogue between legislators and other sectors of knowledge that produce consistent scientific research as to the planet's dramatic environmental scenario, can prevent environmental education from becoming another "example of socially constructed ignorance in which legal and economic discourses are used to depoliticize the sustainability debate and colonize the future through the endorsement of socio-technical imaginaries that are implausible in scientific terms." (Carducci 2021).

The dialogue between legislators and other sectors of knowledge can produce an ecological literacy through a coherent language, universalized, elaborated by specialists with the purpose of building curricula based on scientific data. It is the promotion of this dialogue that can make us realize that the insistence of both international organizations and educational systems in proposing environmental education only in the inter, trans, multi, pluri or transversal sphere, has been holding back its evolution and effectiveness in the educational systems, since it prevents us from recognizing the need for it to become an autonomous subject.

The autonomy of environmental education in school curricula will require public educational policies aimed at teacher training, the expansion of teachers' knowledge in other knowledge sectors, promoting the abandonment of random proposals for the implementation of environmental education with characteristics of inter, trans, multi, pluri, or transversality, which clearly demonstrate that they were not, are not being, and are unlikely to be fruitful.

However, the objective is not to demonize interdisciplinarity and its linguistic variants. However, one must agree with Santomé's point of view when talking about interdisciplinarity, the author explains that "We should not forget that many times, to be fashionable or to comply with legality, only the appearance of the proposals changes, but deep down, the same thing is still being done". Still according to the author, this fad can weaken "the rich philosophy of concepts such as those we are mentioning can end up in mere routine, in technical proposals, completely unrelated to the problems that were the stimulus for their formulation." (Santomé 1998).

The paths taken by environmental education over the years have been arduous and often inefficient for not being able to make human beings aware of how much the dysfunctionality of humans with nature results in damage to the environment as a whole. All possibilities that can reverse this situation will always be welcome. Hence the proposal for environmental education to be implemented in the educational systems as an autonomous subject.

3. From theory to practice: the urgency of Environmental Education implemented as an autonomous discipline in the school curricula of education systems

The defense of a curriculum organized to anchor the autonomy of environmental education as a discipline is an attempt to prevent precisely what Alice Casimiro Lopes warns about the politics surrounding curriculum development:

Nowadays - especially in the official definitions of curriculum policies, but not exclusively in them - the defense of the integrated curriculum is developed from what has been generically called "changes in the globalized world". In these changes, science and the productive world are intrinsically articulated, as scientific knowledge and technology are increasingly presented as bases for the reproduction of the capitalist production mode. The valorization of the dynamics of the sciences often entails, therefore, the valorization of the dynamics that

sustain the relations of production....). It continues pointing to the confrontation of conflicts that occur in the field of production and socialization of knowledge, conflicts that are constituted mainly by the mode of capitalist production inherent in the socio-historical context where this work is developed. (Lopes 2008, 46).

Thus, create an organized curriculum for the subject of Environmental Education meets the proposition of its effectiveness as a spring propeller of environmental awareness and therefore cannot and should not be at the mercy of repeated claims that interdisciplinarity / transversality are ways to promote the integration of knowledge for the sake of a society that is within the universe of empathy, flexibility, equality, freedom and solidarity. Such adjectives are nothing but camouflage to sustain globalized capitalism.

Environmental Education, from its autonomy and as a compulsory subject, goes beyond its critical and awareness-raising characteristics, it should be considered a new sector of scientific knowledge, because for environmental education to be successful it must equip all actors involved in its process with the widest possible range of scientific knowledge. To be always proposed in a transversal and interdisciplinary way, as the recommendations of international organizations have been insisting, without being scientifically imbued will not make it achieve relevant results.

Using as example Portugal and Brazil, environmental education encounters obstacles such as: the understanding of some teachers who position themselves as not being their task to apply cross-cutting themes, or work within the interdisciplinary perspective. Many professionals do not understand Environmental Education as a stimulus for a reflective and conscious action in ethical changes aimed at the transformation of human mentality, not understanding that this transformation directly influences the perception and behavior so that human beings learn to think environmentally. They do not perceive it as a potential instrument to promote the readjustment of human behavior in the construction of a true harmony among human beings, society, and nature.

In this sense, also the actors involved in the process of environmental education need an ecological literacy, anchored in the data provided by the scientific community, so that they can understand that "to change the world it is necessary to understand it" (Borba 2015) This understanding must use a scientific training whose methods and acquisition of scientific knowledge are acquired through concrete tasks where theory and practice, idea and action are able to restructure school curricula aimed at a true environmental education.

However, environmental education as an autonomous and compulsory subject of the school curriculum cannot and should not be understood as a discipline whose purpose is to hold the fragmentation of knowledge, disaggregating knowledge. On the contrary, it needs to be regularized and systematized from the acquisition of concrete scientific knowledge about environmental issues, which enables the dialogical construction between teachers who respect the world experience of the students, which include in the dialectic the students' world experiences.

Ecological literacy based on environmental education as an autonomous, mandatory and non-fragmented subject in school curricula, makes environmental education the vector capable of creating a more active and prepared generation (Borba 2015), seeking scientific practices and knowledge capable of reading reality in order to be able to act in the face of issues and problems related to the environment, in a more conscious way, removing environmental education from the position of something incautious within the education systems. It is to propose a doing, doing, an acting, acting, leaving the field of theory and seeking a more fruitful environmental pedagogical practice.

4. Final considerations

The last seven decades have been a real test of the endurance of nature and all the lives that depend on it. The aggressions suffered by the environment, not in parts but as a whole, ended up drawing the attention of the civil society and many other institutions, and in response to society, international documents began to mention

with greater emphasis the need to create mechanisms that could protect and avoid the complete destruction of the means of existence of all living beings on the planet. Thus, they saw environmental education as an instrument capable of slowing down environmental impacts, in an attempt at precaution and prevention. Several conferences were held, and recommendations resulted from them, which in turn were received by many Constituent Powers around the world in an attempt to stop environmental degradation with the creation of norms.

However, one can see that it is not enough for the legislator to be willing to attend to international recommendations and produce norms that will protect the environment or recognize the importance of Environmental Education incorporated into the teaching systems. It is necessary that the legislator, as the Constituent Power, have a minimum knowledge of the environmental reality, which can only be acquired through an ecological literacy built from the recognition of the importance of studies and research conducted by the scientific community. This recognition must come through the promotion of dialogue between the Law, resulting from the actions of the Constituent and the various sectors of knowledge that deal with scientific data that measures the emergencies, be they climatic or environmental, that devastate the planet.

In addition to the need for ecological literacy on the part of the representatives of the people, who in the figure of the Constituent Power needs to give answers to society from scientific knowledge, also the various actors involved in education systems also need to pass through an ecological literacy, so that they can give a new direction to environmental education, including recognizing the need for it to be deployed as an autonomous, mandatory and not fragmented discipline. A discipline built from the scientific point of view, so that its performance is more fruitful with regard to the awareness that society's dysfunctionality in relation to nature causes irreversible damage to the environment.

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Exploring university branding in the context of university websites: the case of International Hellenic University

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Abstract

The purpose of the present paper is the critical examination of both the textual and visual language used by International Hellenic University (IHU) website producers to communicate its institutional identity while constructing a university brand in the context of Greek HE marketization. The qualitative research techniques of Critical Discourse Analysis employed revealed that the issues surrounding IHU university website promotional discourse and branding activity remain controversial.

Keywords: Greek Higher Education, University branding, Marketization, Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Neoliberal policies and their attempted restructurings have been accompanied by new forms of governance and public administration of universities internationally (Kenny 2017; Courtois & O'Keefe 2015; Gougoulakis 2015; Fredman, Doughney 2012; Lorenz 2012; Olssen, Peters 2005 in Gioti, 2022). In this context the creation of a brand name becomes a decisive parameter for the promotion of the competitiveness of educational products and services offered by each institution, while the website becomes the main vehicle for their promotion (Gioti 2019; 2022).

In the Greek context, it seems that necessity to adhere to Article 45 of the new Greek framework law on Universities[1] contributes to these institutions adopting concepts and practices of branding (Lakasas 2022b). Therefore, it is important to examine the complex interactions of language and visuals that comprise the discourse of these websites. Such an investigation will contribute to further understanding the factors involved in academic branding practices and the social structure that binds these practices.

Background Information on IHU

The International Hellenic University (IHU) was established for the first time in October 2005 with Law No. 3391 and is based in Thessaloniki, Greece. It originally comprised three exclusively Post Graduate Schools: Economics, Business Administration & Legal Studies; Humanities; and Science and Technology, which offered twenty-four (24) master programs. It was a public institution, whose language of both instruction and administration for all programs was English, as it aimed at international students as well as Greek students seeking an international perspective.

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[1] "[they] are obliged to keep an official website and apply the principles of transparency and publicity [...][which must be] at least in Greek and English" (translation by the first author)

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In 2019, with Law (No 4610/2019), the IHU was re-established as a Higher Education Institution (HEI) having absorbed the former Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) of Thessaloniki, Central and Eastern Macedonia, and Thrace.

The institution was renamed: the University Center of International Programs of Studies (UCIPS) comprising only two Schools: Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics, and Science and Technology, whose campus remained at Thermi. The remainder of the 'new' IHU, comprising seven Schools: Geosciences, Design Sciences, Health Sciences, Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering, and Economic and Business Administration, each with numerous Departments are located on campuses in the respective facilities of the former TEIs.

Literature Review

There is an increasing need to develop a deeper understanding of what exactly constitutes a *brand* and *branding* as a particular mode of objectification in the process of which a branded product is "partly a thing and partly language" (Moore 2003, 331). According to Kapferer (1992, 11) "a brand is not simply a product but instead its essence, its meaning and its identity in time and space". Brands, in the same way as identity, can be thought of as "a dynamic set of processes continually constructed through ongoing interactions and relationships between self and others" (Hatch and Schultz 2002, 991). Paden and Stell (2006) support that universities brand themselves to improve their name awareness or create an entirely new image, while for Joseph et al. (2012) university branding, through branded messages, aims to create awareness of the institution to the various target groups, be that students and their parents, teaching staff, business leaders, and the like. Additionally, a university brand is for Bennett and Ali-Choudhury (2009, 4) a "manifestation of the institution's features that distinguish it from others", while Temple (2006, 18) supports that "much of what is described as branding in HE would be better labeled as reputation management or even public

relations". To keep up with the new realities of higher education in the 21st century, universities resort to promoting their distinctiveness through the creation of websites. To this end, a university website serves as a platform for a university to distinguish itself from other similar institutions (Frazier 2003).

According to Boardman (2005, 116-7), a website is "a collection of interlinked webpages, maintained at the same URL [...] [which] has a coherent structure, centered on a default page, and is usually attempting to promote the identity of an organization or person, both in terms of style and content". Their analysis has shown that universities adopt similar approaches as they all try to establish, through the language and the visuals they use, the power and prestige of the HEIs they represent (Sachaie 2011; Hoang, Rojas-Lizana 2015; Kouritzin et al 2020; Al Qahtani 2021).

Following that current transformations in universities are, to a great extent, semiotic and linguistic (Fairclough 2002; Mitsikopoulou 2008), and that branding is encoded in identifiable linguistic and semiotic features which constitute the discursive nature of branding (Flowerdew 2004, 585), it can be argued that university branding is a semiotic process, whose purpose is social action, i.e., to inform and persuade people to buy the product or service offered by the university. To this end, university brand communication can be approached through their website as an interpretation of the university's core values presented in multimodal texts, such as the university logos and the ABOUT webpages. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the university brand construction operates in a politically and culturally complex context: marketization – the transformation of social spheres and practices into markets (Fairclough 1993; Mautner, Holmes 2010). According to Mautner and Holmes (2010, 1), "market exchange is no longer simply a process but an all-encompassing social principle" whereby citizens have become customers through an "unquestioned [...] adoption of marketized language in social domains other than business" (2010, 3) by which previously non-commercial sectors get reframed around the model of the market.

Purpose of the Study

Research on the actual language used on the HEIs' websites is definitely lacking (Hoang, Rojas-Lizana 2015, 3). As a less researched area, little is known about the discourse on the Greek HEIs' websites. This study aspires to broaden the scope of university website representation and to fill a gap in the relevant body of knowledge. Its purpose is to critically examine how the IHU uses language - both textual and visual - to communicate its institutional identity while constructing a university brand for prospective postgraduate students on its institutional websites.

The IHU website was chosen as a tool for representation, firstly because, according to Tsopani (2022, 51) it is one of the four top ranking most efficient Greek university websites with an overall performance of 70/100[2]; and secondly because, according to research conducted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens there has been an impressive increase in the traffic to the websites of the majority of Greek Universities. This is especially the case for the websites of new Universities which started to operate from 2018 onwards, which have recorded an impressive rise in user engagement. Such an example is the website of the IHU, which within seven months achieved an increase of 497 places in Greece, (from 1040th position in December 2020 to the 553rd place in July 2021) (Lakasas 2022a).

Research questions:

- Is IHU understood as a brand projecting the image of a public service institution in terms of scientific and academic contributions?

- Is IHU understood as a service-oriented university brand stressing the experiential and vocational benefits of learning?

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[2] The Panteion University website tops the ranking with an overall performance of 77/100, University of West Attica (73/100), International Hellenic University, and the University of Ioannina (70/100).

Methodology

University websites are usually very complex and contain hundreds of webpages or subpages so, in order to limit our sample, the following webpages from the institutional website were selected:

1. University Home Page/ Αρχική (https://www.ihu.gr/)

2. "About" / Το Πανεπιστήμιο [the University] (https://www.ihu.gr/# and https://www.ihu.gr/en/enhome#)

3. The webpages describing postgraduate study programs at the School of Social Sciences, IHU (https://www.ihu.gr/metaptychiakes-spoudes). Specifically, we look at the MA in "Digital and soft skills in education sciences".

The authors visited the aforementioned webpages in the period between May-June 2022 and revisited them in October 2022. What follows is offered on the basis of the researched pages on their laptops. This needs to be clarified because the university URL is highly responsive and customizable to the features of the electronic device used for navigation and because the aforementioned MA is now offered as an interdepartmental course.

In the current study, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was utilized as a data collection method attempting to explore the discourse produced from the interaction between text and image as IHU representations. Fairclough (1992a; 1995a; 2001) argued that through the close, careful study of language, it is possible to not only describe and interpret representations, but also to explain the formation of relationships, structures, and processes that affect individuals who are embedded in language, which is the main reason why CDA is adopted as a methodological tool in this study. Another reason is because CDA is also concerned with what is not said, looking for what is implied by "reading between the lines" since *text* cannot be viewed in isolation and must always consider *context*. The *critical* component lies in analyzing both textual and visual constructs in relation to social phenomena (Fairclough 2001), which implies knowing that causes and connections can be hidden as much as apparent. Through a systematic inquiry aimed at description, interpretation, and explanation of language in use, we will

attempt to uncover the causes and connections and link them to local, institutional, and societal matters (Fairclough 1993; 1995a; 1995b; 2001). We also draw on marketization (Fairclough 1993; Mautner, Holmes 2010) in an attempt to explain the integration of the university in question into the marketized Greek HE with profound implications on how the structures of knowledge have changed.

Analysis and Findings

University Home Page/ Αρχική (https://www.ihu.gr/)

Descriptive Analysis

As already mentioned, the website is a dynamic and responsive webpage whereby the information provided depends on the screen analysis of the visitor's computer, laptop, tablet, or mobile phone. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) support that the placement and sequence of the text and visuals on websites determine the way the producer wants viewers to internalize the information. On the IHU 'Home' page, there is a static plain white background where a slide-content-center is included and which changes dynamically showing photographs of the university campuses.
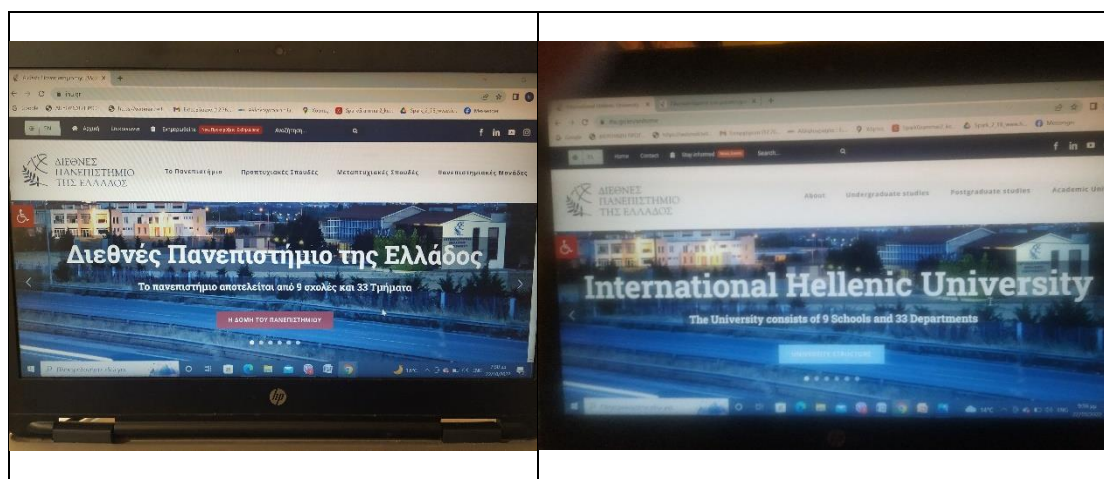
Figure 1*: University Home Page*

Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/, https://www.ihu.gr/en/enhome

To use Kress and Van Leeuwen's terminology, this IHU Αρχική/Home page presents a horizontal triptych creating three (3) zones: the ideal, mediator, and

real zones. The contents of the ideal zone are presented as essential and exemplary while the real zone at the bottom of the website presents more specific and practical information. The mediator zone, which represents the core of contents, connects the top and bottom zones. Figure1 is a good example that showcases this framework.

At the left top of this page, we can also trace IHU's logo which can be approached as a visual and textual representation designed to establish the "world-class" nature of IHU through a depiction that comprises the global and the local:

- a quarter of the globe, specifically the northern hemisphere, with its longitudinal and latitudinal lines, symbolizing the international aspect of the university, and

- an olive branch symbolizing Hellas (Greece), the local aspect of the university.

It can be traced on almost all of the 'Home' and 'About' webpages of the IHU website, both in Greek and English, in dark blue, and black and white versions. The language and image, which have been combined to form an institutional logo that IHU can project as the symbol of its "brand", are the following:

Figure 2: *University Home Page*

Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/

"About" / Το Πανεπιστήμιο [the University] (https://www.ihu.gr/# and

https://www.ihu.gr/en/enhome#)

Descriptive Analysis

It is worth noting that the ABOUT –English, and the University/Το Πανεπιστήμιο - Greek, webpages are totally different with completely different content and layout. The Greek webpage is divided into three (3) sections: Structure (Δομή);

Governing body (Διοικούσα Επιτροπή); and Quality Policy (Πολιτική ποιότητας), while the corresponding English webpage is divided into only two sections: University Structures and University Policies. What is more, comparing the information contained in the University Policies (English) and Quality Policy (Greek) webpages it can be seen that there is nothing the same about them (Figure 3):
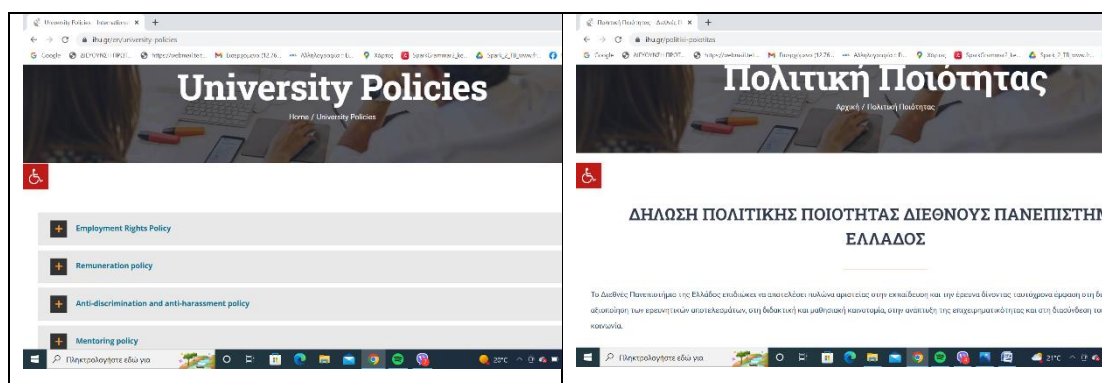
Figure 3: *University Home Page*
Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/

The language used in the Quality policy section is very general, unemotional, closer to flat bureaucratic language, not aimed at a particular audience. Hence, it can be argued that the ABOUT page demonstrates the contradictions that characterize the Quality Assurance Policies implemented by universities within the last twenty years following the adoption in 2005 of the European education ministers proposals at the Bergen meeting. More specifically, these are to be found in the report "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) for the three levels quality assurance standards and directives (namely internal evaluation, external evaluation, and evaluation of independent national principles of quality assurance (Bologna Process 2005, 5). In accordance with Gioti (2012), we contend that although the signifier "quality" contained in To Panepistimio page carries a positive emotional charge, in institutional discourse, the term appears with the emergence of the neoliberal policies of the 1980s and '90s, attempting to transfer the economic paradigm to the field of HE. It is also linked to a chain of homologous signifiers, such as,

"accountability", "modernization", "efficiency", "competitiveness", as well as to "surveillance technologies" of educational work, thus contributing to the legitimization of scientism and technocratic control of education (Noutsos in Gioti 2012; Pasias in Gioti 2012).

Under the university structure section, the seven IHU schools are presented in a row of different colored boxes followed by the Departments (Figure 1), while on the next webpage there is a second row of boxes with the University's Institutional Centers (Figure 2), i.e., the Center of International Programs of Studies (UCIPS), the University Research Center (URC), the Institute for Educational Research (IERD) and the Lifelong Learning Center (LLC). The University Home page ends with sections on Events and University News.
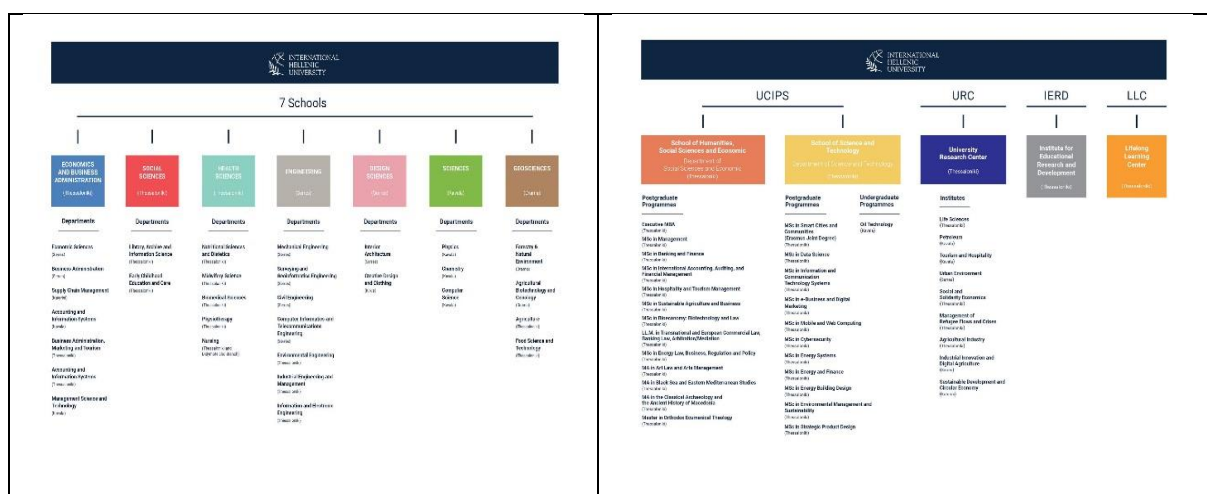
Figure 4: *University Home Page*
Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/,

Although one would expect that these colorful boxes would serve as links for further information, they, unfortunately, are nothing but simple photographs with attractive graphics, which, instead of being a hypertext linking visitors to the corresponding departmental websites, the only thing that one can do is to either magnify or minimize them.

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The webpages describing IHU postgraduate programs of study

(https://www.ihu.gr/metaptychiakes-spoudes)

Descriptive Analysis

Poock's study (2006) found that the most searched information by prospective students was department information and programs of studies. To this end, it can be said that the corresponding IHU webpage does not sufficiently provide students with information about the relevant departments. To find relevant information visitors need to know the relevant departmental URLs. However, if students cannot easily access information about the program they are interested in, they may assume that it is not offered and visit another university's website (Hudson 2018). In this respect, although IHU gives importance to presenting the large number of its schools which offer postgraduate courses, it can be observed that its webpages do not present the same information in both languages (Greek & English) needed by the prospective postgraduate students to learn about the available studies, nor do these webpages offer full organizational attractiveness.
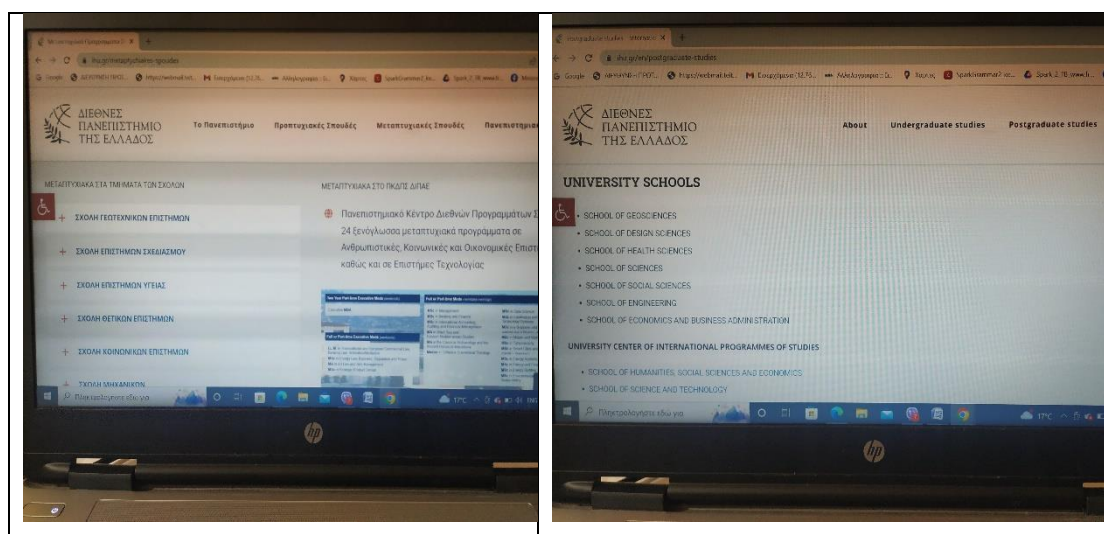
Figure 5: *University Home Page*
Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/,

Table 1 and figure 6 show that there is an abundance of corporate style website features and promotional discourse, only in English, along with photographs of (happy, smiling, 'satisfied') students in the UCIPS webpages.

Table 1: *UCIPS webpages and the information provided*

Schools	Depts	Courses	Info in Greek	Info in English	No information
Humanities, Social Sciences and Economics	1	13	—	Yes	—
Science and Technology	1	11	—	Yes	—
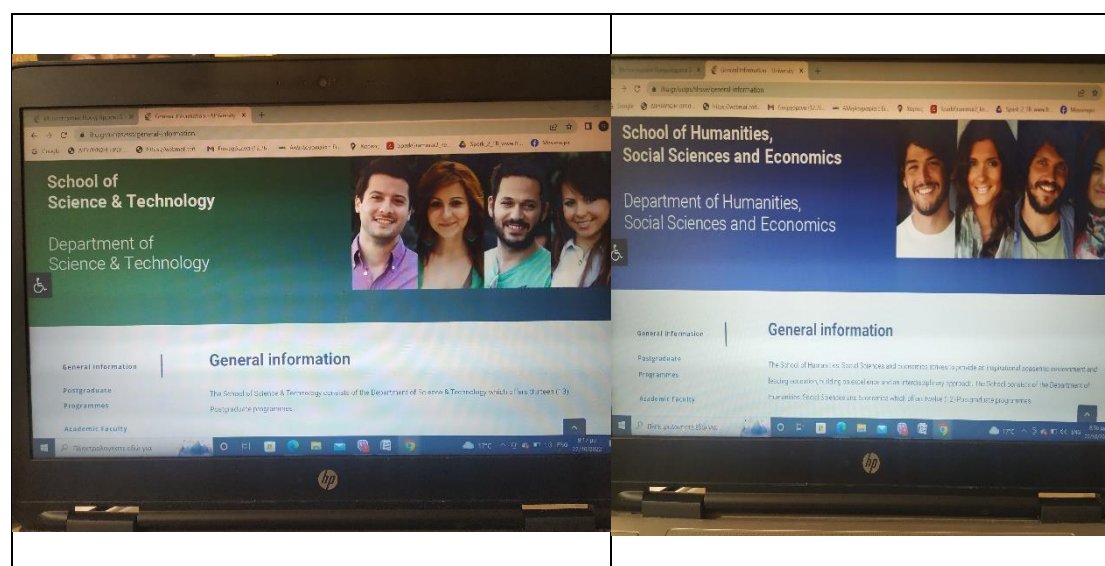
Figure 6: *University Home Page*
Source: Retrieved from: https://www.ihu.gr/

In contrast to the abundance of information provided on the UCIPS webpages, which also contain students' opinions, all postgraduate programs are presented on a list with the names of the seven Schools in bullet-form. Surprisingly, there are no hyperlinks leading to the corresponding webpages, and further information is contained only on the Greek webpages, while there is no information in the corresponding English ones. It seems that the sub-domains of the Schools and Departments are not linked to the ihu.gr domain, which is the university's website

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address. However, if visitors know the URL of individual Schools, then they have access to all the information they need, either in one or both languages. Instead of being directed to the corresponding postgraduate school website, this absence of hyperlinks leads the visitor back to the Αρχική/Home of the postgraduate studies. For example, if one visits ict.ihu.gr, the information on postgraduate studies at the website https://mscinformatics.ihu.gr/ is only in Greek, whereas the URL http://informatics.teicm.gr/msc/ provides all the information in both Greek and English. This discrepancy reflects the difficulties students may come up against when sifting through the webpages to reach the most relevant information for them.

Table 2: *Postgraduate webpages of the seven IHU Schools and the information provided*

Schools	Depts	Courses	Info in Greek	Info in English	No information
SCHOOL of Geosciences	3	6	6	5	_
School of Health Sciences	3	6	5	3	_
School of Sciences	3	10	5	5	2
School of Social Sciences	1	1	1	_	_
School of Engineering	6	16	12	2	3
School of Economics and Business Administration	7	19	7	1	11

School of Design Sciences	No information		No information	No information	

To continue our exploration, we chose the webpage for the MA in "Digital and soft skills in education sciences" as it is other than business or technology oriented, and as such, it is not directly related to the market. Nonetheless, it aspires to prepare graduates for the workforce as the basis for all their educational goals rather than as a course in a social institution promoting the critical examination and dissemination of ideas. The language used in the examined postgraduate pages tries to establish the prestige and uniqueness of the School through the rationalization of program relevancy by constructing its institutional legitimacy and its ability to propel its graduates into professional workplaces. Table 3 clearly reflects marketization through the aims of the MA, almost all of which prioritize skills and career prospects with profound implications for research, teaching and learning at university. The information is only in Greek and the translation is by the first author.

Within the thematic analysis that follows, key ideas such as 'a degree of value', 'without submitting a dissertation thesis' can be interpreted as a self-promotion method which indicates a compliance to weakening the value of academic work for the pursuit of profit. This is due to the fact that universities, which once focused on discipline-based knowledge, privileging particular modes of analysis and argumentation, based on a mastery of discipline-rooted concepts, are now turning to skills development and the professionalization of curricula for workplace readiness at the expense of knowledge, which used to be perceived as theoretical and/or academic (Gibbons et al. 1994, Zogopoulos, Gioti, 2022; Gioti 2022).

Additionally, the aims of the course to successfully meet the profession's requirements, Pedagogical and Teaching Proficiency Certification, Computer Proficiency Certification, based on the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP) regulations, feature job and career prospects very prominently,

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since their primary aspiration is to make students more employable persons. The keyword "uniqueness", we believe, can also be decoded either as a branding activity or as a sales device.

Table 3: *Promotional discourse and/or marketization keywords included in the MA in "Digital and soft skills in education sciences"*

Location	Excerpt	Keywords for promotional discourse and/or marketization
https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/	Our objective	Development of skills
https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/metaptuhiakos-titlos/	a degree of value	a degree of value Meet the requirements of their profession and the developments of their society.
https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/genika-gia-to-metaptuxiako/	Pedagogical and Teaching Proficiency Certification, Computer Proficiency Certification, based on the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP) regulations,	Certifications
https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/	Dissertation is Not mandatory	without submitting a dissertation thesis

https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/antikeimeno-skopos/	'Soft skills' is absent from the curricula of other university departments …	Uniqueness
https://digital-skills.the.ihu.gr/antikeimeno-skopos/	It addresses a field that is not overlapped by … other existing MAs	uniqueness
	'Soft skills', offered only in one postgraduate course which is not related to education.	Uniqueness

Discussion

In this paper we have attempted to show how the contextual factors may have impacted on the communication of IHU as a university brand through its official website. In essence, IHU website producers need to reflect on the "quality of information", while at the same time deal with the lack of balance in the information provided by the departments which might influence students to more easily choose one over the other. Additionally, although it seems that some IHU Schools and Research Centers embrace the branding concept and articulate their brands as offering "modern and competitive study programs" (e.g., Dept of Agriculture, UCIPS MA & MSc courses) there is limited suggestion of a uniform strategy for doing this. Although it is a dynamic site that updates the visual information on its slide-content-center-image, the subdomain of postgraduate studies lacks a practical web design and misses the hypertext that would lead visitors to the information required. It would appear that the university's branding approach has not as yet been based on the principle of homogeneity (e.g.,

the presence of the brand on all website subsections), or has it as yet acquired a homogeneous visual identity by using the same menu, unique color, and page layout. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of balance between the websites of the postgraduate programs of the seven IHU Schools and the Anglophone postgraduate programs offered at the UCIPS. However, this lack and absence of uniformity seem to imply that either the individual Schools do not succumb to the need for a comprehensive model of governance, or that central administration requires a greater degree of flexibility to respond to the need for the university's balanced portrayal.

Following Sachaie (2011) and Hoang and Rojas-Lizana (2015) we suggest that the IHU website attempts to construct its uniqueness through forms of branding such as logos, images, and text however, many of the postgraduate studies webpages of the seven IHU schools do not meet the basic criteria for accessibility due to the lack of hyperlinks and hypertexts. On the other hand, rather than perpetuating a promotional discourse based on uniqueness, and job-related skills, the IHU postgraduate departments may as well consider that society may be in need of skilled workers, but, to our mind, more pressing is society's need for critical learning and thinking which seem to be bypassed at best or ignored at worst in favor of a vocational focus. These issues need to be carefully considered as after its re-establishment, the IHU has been made one of the most populous universities in Greece with 53,000 students, changing power relations in the Greek HE map.

Conclusion

The discourse-oriented approach adopted in this paper helps us to see at a micro-discursive level how the IHU institutional website plays out in its brand development through the textual and visual choices which form its branding discourse. From a critical perspective, which lies at the heart of CDA, what our analysis reveals is that the dynamics of IHU branding activities reflected in its

logos and postgraduate webpages are constructed in a marketization discourse in its effort to participate in the competitive Greek HE marketplace.

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Translanguaging as a tool for critical literacy in the Greek Cypriot education

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to critically present the pedagogy of translanguaging in relation to critical literacy in the context of the Greek Cypriot community, which is both bidialectal and diglossic. By thoroughly reviewing the relevant literature, the paper discusses how it is possible to achieve the cultivation of critical literacy skills through the pedagogy of translanguaging in education. The pedagogy of translanguaging allows the judicious use of Cypriot Greek alongside Standard Modern Greek in the Cypriot educational context. In this way, students can foster their metalinguistic awareness and can be led to critical literacy through the educational practice as shown in different studies.

1. Introduction

The present article discusses the capitalization on Cypriot Greek through the pedagogies of translanguaging and critical literacy in the educational context of the Greek Cypriot community, which involves the phenomena of bidialectalism and diglossia. The terms *diglossia*, *translanguaging,* and *critical literacy* will be

discussed in relation to the Cypriot Greek dialect and the way that Cypriot Greek can be deployed in the educational process. It is argued that inclusion of the dialect in the educational process can be highly beneficial for the students as it may help them at different levels, that is cognitively, socially, and psychologically. The aim of the present study is to demonstrate that students can develop metalinguistic awareness and critical literacy skills through the pedagogy of translanguaging which allows the visibility of Cypriot Greek in education, in line with relevant research conducted in this context.

2. Defining notions

2.1 Diglossia

According to Ferguson (1959), diglossia is a language situation in which at least two linguistic varieties coexist in the same social context: the primary dialect(s) of the language and a highly codified superposed variety. The latter is the official linguistic variety, which is normally taught and learned in formal education and mostly used in the written and formal registers while it is generally avoided in ordinary conversation within the local community. In diglossic contexts, the superposed variety is the *high* variety while the regional dialects are the *low* varieties (Ferguson 1959).

2.2 Critical literacy

According to the theory of critical literacy, "texts are socially constructed from particular perspectives; they are never neutral" (Vasquez, Janks, Comber 2019, 306). Thus, critical literacy is viewed as having the potential to provide opportunities to change social inequities (Vasquez et al. 2019). In the context of critical literacy, genre, speech-style, and register, as found in a text, can be analyzed as "indexicals" of various ideologies and identities by the students (Tsiplakou, Ioannidou, Hadjioannou 2018, 64). Crucially, genre "as a social

product" (Ioannidou 2012, 224) as well as the structural features of the text, language forms, and vocabulary choices (Tsiplakou et al. 2018) are highly important within this framework. Moreover, in the context of critical literacy, all issues that are significant for students should be deployed in the curriculum (Vasquez et al. 2019). In particular, students' cultural knowledge should be taken into account when designing a curriculum, as pointed out by Vasquez et al. (2019).

2.3 Translanguaging

According to García ([2009] 2011, 37), *translanguaging* is "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds". It implies flexible use of a range of semiotic resources, including linguistic repertoires to which speakers have access. In the context of translanguaging, the boundaries between the linguistic varieties of bilingual or multilingual speakers are not strict thereby allowing the development of a language continuum (García [2009] 2011).

2.4 Pedagogical translanguaging

Pedagogical translanguaging can be applied in bilingual and multilingual education. Pedagogical translanguaging "views languages as dynamic and co-existing" (Cenoz, Gorter 2022, 25) and capitalizes on all the linguistic resources of the multilingual speaker including language varieties and registers (Cenoz, Gorter 2022). Moreover, in the context of pedagogical translanguaging, the linguistic repertoire of speakers is dynamic and viewed as an indexical of identities, discources, and meanings (Tsiplakou 2015). The pedagogy of translanguaging is a tool which helps to develop metalinguistic awareness (Cenoz, Gorter 2022) and to promote the cooperation among students (García, Wei 2015). In the context of pedagogical translanguaging, the "prior knowledge" of students is crucial and may concern all aspects of language including grammatical and lexical competence,

sociolinguistic competence, and metalinguistic awareness (Cenoz, Gorter 2022, 19-20).

3. The case of Greek Cypriot community

3.1 Diglossia and Cypriot Greek

The Greek Cypriot speech community is described as a case of bidialectalism (Papapavlou 1998; Yiakoumetti, Evans, Esch 2005) and diglossia (Sciriha 1995; Ioannidou 2009). Standard Modern Greek is the formal linguistic variety used in the context of education, the media, and writing, while the Greek Cypriot dialect is the vernacular spoken variety (Ioannidou 2009). According to the literature, regional varieties in Cyprus are gradually becoming obsolete (Tsiplakou, Papapavlou, Pavlou, Katsoyannou 2006). At the same time, a form of the Mesaoria/Nicosia dialect has shaped the basis of developing a common Cypriot variety (a *koine*[1]) through levelling, which has given rise to contemporary standard Cypriot Greek (Tsiplakou et al. 2006).

3.2 Cypriot Greek in education

Cypriot Greek is not used and discouraged in primary and secondary state education, while the Republic of Cyprus uses textbooks and curricula of Greece for language subjects (Tsiplakou, Kambanaros, Grohmann 2022). The *Cypriot Anthologies* include texts of Cypriot literature to be used as educational material, but only few of them are in Cypriot Greek and these are not often taught (Tsiplakou et al. 2022).

Standard Modern Greek dominates in the education of the Greek Cypriot community (Ioannidou 2009) and it "is the language of literacy almost by definition" (Tsiplakou et al. 2022, 61). Attitudes towards Cypriot Greek in the

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[1] According to Siegel (1985, 363), *koine* is defined as "the stabilized result of mixing of linguistic subsystems such as regional or literary dialect".

formal education classroom have been extensively investigated. Pavlou and Papapavlou's (2004) quantitative study shows that primary schools teachers tend to systematically correct students when they use Cypriot Greek, especially when they write. Similarly, qualitative research findings by Ioannidou (2009) in a primary school classroom also evidence that teachers correct students when they use Cypriot Greek. Moreover, the studies by Ioannidou (2014) and Ioannidou and Sophocleous (2010) indicate that both teachers and students actually use the dialect in classroom while Standard Modern Greek is linked with activities related to the lesson (Ioannidou 2009; Ioannidou, Sophocleous 2010). For example, teachers use the standard variety in order to ask students questions (Ioannidou, Sophocleous 2010). On the other hand, Cypriot Greek is linked with informal speech, e.g., joking (Ioannidou 2009; Ioannidou, Sophocleous 2010). It has been consistently observed that code-switching commonly takes place in the classrooms (Ioannidou 2009; Ioannidou, Sophocleous 2010), which, according to Tsiplakou (2015), reproduces hierarchical discriminations between the standard and the nonstandard variety and associates the dialect with specific speech acts: the dialect is associated with personal communication and is not deployed as a learning tool or as a learning target.

The Cyprus Language Curriculum of 2010 was "a critical literacy project" (Tsiplakou 2019, 33), which recognized the linguistic variation and the fact that the Greek Cypriot community is bidialectal (Ioannidou 2012). It was an innovative curriculum in the Greek Cypriot education (Ioannidou 2012), which proposed the contrastive teaching of Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek, capitalizing on all the linguistic repertoires available to students through translanguaging to enhance their metalinguistic awareness (Tsiplakou et al. 2018). In addition, it suggested language use as an indexical of ideologies, attitudes, and identities and the capitalization on social-semiotic import of regional and social varieties, of register, speech-style and language in use (Tsiplakou 2019). A goal of the aforementioned Curriculum was to release students from the negative opinions that they may have regarding Cypriot Greek (Ioannidou, Karatsareas, Lytra,

Tsiplakou 2020) and to raise awareness regarding the fact that "the dialect displays systematicity in its phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary" (Tsiplakou 2019, 34). Sophocleous (2010) suggests that there are three social factors that are considered to affect language attitudes towards Cypriot Greek: education, mass media, and modernity. In this context, therefore, the role of education in shaping language attitudes is of utmost importance.

The Cyprus Language Curriculum of 2010 did not last long due to several factors (Ioannidou et al. 2020; Tsiplakou et al. 2022). The "traditionalist stakeholders" reacted against critical literacy (Tsiplakou et al. 2018, 64) and the Church of Cyprus was intensively opposed to this curriculum (Tsiplakou et al. 2022). Regarding the reaction of the Church of Cyprus, in 2013, a Circular of the Archdiocese of Cyprus was published claiming that "the teaching of Cypriot Greek will be a threat for the Christian and Greek identity of Greek Cypriots" (Andreou 2013).

Monolingualism is thus promoted in Cyprus for reasons of "national unity" (Ioannidou 2009, 265; Tsiplakou et al. 2018, 63). When the national linguistic variety is protected, the nation is also protected, according to more traditionalist views (see Ioannidou 2009; Tsiplakou et al. 2018). Multilingualism is considered to be "dangerous" for the nation and the national variety (Ioannidou 2009). Consequently, "a value system where certain varieties are legitimate and powerful while others are weaker and often stigmatized" emerges (Ioannidou 2009, 265; Tsiplakou et al. 2018, 63).

3.3 Cypriot Greek in other domains

As widely acknowledged, Cypriot Greek "is a non-standardized variety" (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021, 4). Nevertheless, it is constantly used in social media in its written form (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021). As Themistocleous (2009, 482) observes, Cypriot Greek speakers use their dialect in chat because it "sounds more natural" and thus allows them to better express themselves. Cypriot Greek is also

used in literary works. There are two noteworthy adaptations in Cypriot Greek: "The Little Prince" (de Saint-Exupéry [1943] 2018; Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021) and "Asterix at the Olympic Games" (Goscinny, Uderzo [1968] 2007). A case of Cypriot Greek in literature is the novel of Louiza Papaloizou *«Το Βουνί»* [to vu'ni], which means "the mountain" in Cypriot Greek. Part of the novel has been written in Cypriot Greek (Antonopoulos 2021) and it has been awarded in Cyprus (Philenews 2021) and in Greece (Philenews 2022). With respect to the use of Cypriot Greek in television, in the past it was used in the Cypriot sketch, understood as "a radio and a TV sitcom that depicted rural life in Cyprus of the past" (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021, 3). Nowadays, it can be observed that Cypriot Greek is also used in TV series which are non-humorous (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021). These TV series may be related to the rural life in the past or to the urban current life (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021). We can therefore observe an important change: the visibility of Cypriot Greek in several social domains which are not related to education.

3.4 Translanguaging and critical literacy in case of Cypriot Greek

The fact that Cypriot Greek is not the target language of school in the Greek Cypriot community of Cyprus does not justify its exclusion from education. In the context of intercultural education, Cummins (2015) supports that the curriculum should recognize and affirm students' linguistic and cultural identities and knowledge so as to be connected to students' whole life (Cummins 2015). In the Greek Cypriot community, the capitalization on the native variety of students, namely Cypriot Greek, would connect the curriculum with the students' life and background knowledge. Critical literacy and pedagogical translanguaging can help in order to use Cypriot Greek in education in an informed and principled way. When students' native variety is rejected in education, students' linguistic and cultural identity and knowledge are also rejected. Intercultural education promotes the respect of human rights, the respect of all languages and the visibility of students' identities

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at school (UNESCO 2006). In a diglossic or bidialectal community, the native variety of students should be accepted, respected, and recognized. It is highly illustrative that Cypriot Greek has been linked with "authenticity" and solidarity and viewed as an important feature of the identity of its native speakers (Tsiplakou et al. 2018). Multilingualism and plurilingualism are included in the "Long-standing goals" and "Principle developments" of language education policy of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 2022). Despite this fact, the domination of national and standard varieties is globally observed (Tsiplakou et al. 2018).

From all the above, it is evident that Cypriot Greek should not be considered as an obstacle in learning the target language of school. On the contrary, if Cypriot Greek is judiciously included in the educational process, better student performance in Standard Modern Greek and the development of metalinguistic awareness can be achieved (Tsiplakou et al. 2018). "Hybrid forms" through the pedagogy of translanguaging and the use of dialect may enrich education and lead students to critical literacy (Tsiplakou et al. 2018, 64). In the context of pedagogical translanguaging, students are trained in a translingual way of thinking, which allows them to use all the linguistic capital they carry in a dynamic, flexible, and creative way (Tsiplakou 2015; see García [2009] 2011). This means that students do not just learn the target language and school subjects, but additionally they are able to gain multiple cognitive, social, and psychological advantages.

The above observations are also pertinent to younger ages. An important argument about the benefits of the adequate use of Cypriot Greek in education is how young children of preschool age use Cypriot Greek and Standard Modern Greek. As the research of Ioannidou (2017) and Sophocleous and Ioannidou (2020) showed, the preschool-aged children use the two varieties in a certain way when they play: Cypriot Greek in order to create the script of their play and then Standard Modern Greek for role-playing. Furthermore, they make linguistic choices in order to collaborate (Ioannidou 2017). The study of Sophocleous (2021) in preschool education indicated that young children use Cypriot Greek in

order to socialize, to express their point of view, to construct their identity, and to develop self-confidence.

The findings in Fotiou and Ayiomamitou (2021) also support the assertion that Cypriot Greek should be deployed in the educational process. They investigated students' attitudes towards Cypriot Greek and Standard Modern Greek and their speakers[2] as well as their opinion on the deployment of Cypriot Greek in education. The sample of the research consisted of students of four primary schools. The data from the questionnaires showed that students "had positive attitudes toward speakers of both varieties" (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021, 10; see also Ayiomamitou, Fotiou 2021). According to the researchers, their positive attitudes are probably due to their young age. As Garrett, Coupland, and Williams ([2003] 2006) support, when children become adolescents, they might develop more positive attitudes towards the standard variety. In addition, "[c]hildren who speak a nonstandard variety initially display a preference or neutral attitude towards the variety they use; however, as they grow up, they tend to prefer dominant language ideologies, favoring standard varieties" (Cremona, Bates 1977; Day 1980, as cited in Papazachariou, Fterniati, Archakis, Tsami 2018, 129). Moreover, the fact that Cypriot Greek is increasingly used in other domains, as mentioned above, may influence young students' attitudes, as pointed out by Fotiou and Ayiomamitou (2021). Regarding the capitalization on Cypriot Greek in education, students stood in favour of it (Fotiou, Ayiomamitou 2021).

3.5 Further evidence in empirical research studies

Tsiplakou and Hadjioannou (2010) report a pedagogical intervention in a primary school of Cyprus with bidialectal and monolingual students (Tsiplakou et al. 2018). The genre of texts that was used in the intervention was recipes with an approach of contrastive teaching of Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek

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[2] Fotiou and Ayiomamitou (2021) also investigated parents' attitudes, but due to space limitations, we will focus on students' responses.

(Tsiplakou et al. 2018). The students were "faced with the task of consciously code-switching/translanguaging" between two varieties (Tsiplakou et al. 2018, 70). In this way, their metalinguistic awareness was raised (Tsiplakou & Hadjioannou 2010; Tsiplakou et al. 2018), they observed that the features of Standard Modern Greek and Cypriot Greek function as indexicals, and they developed critical literacy skills (Tsiplakou et al. 2018).

Stavrou (2016) investigated translanguaging and literacy practices in a classroom of a primary school in South Eastern Cyprus. In her research, four out of eighteen students who participated had learning difficulties. Translanguaging helped students with learning difficulties to understand and to contribute to the conversation to some extent in the classroom. On the other hand, the study also revealed that students' parents had negative attitudes toward the use of Cypriot Greek in education. Nevertheless, the study showed that students participated actively, improved their way of thinking, and exchanged opinions.

Stavrou, Charalambous and Macleroy (2021, 99) investigated "translanguaging through the lens of drama and digital storytelling." The students who participated in the research were 7 years old (Stavrou et al. 2021). The study showed how the students developed critical language awareness and critical thinking by using both Cypriot Greek and Standard Modern Greek while they participated actively in the learning process and collaborated with their peers.

All the research findings mentioned above enhance the opinion that Cypriot Greek should be used in the educational process alongside Standard Modern Greek according to the principles of pedagogical translanguaging. In this way, the native linguistic variety of students will be genuinely visible in education and will contribute to shape critically literate students. The respect towards all languages including dialects and the visibility of students' identities at school are core principles of intercultural education (UNESCO 2006) and can be also deployed in a bidialectal setting such as the Greek Cypriot community.

4. Conclusions

The present study showed that it is crucial to judiciously use all the linguistic capital of students in classroom through the implementation of the pedagogy of translanguaging. Cypriot Greek can be deployed in education as a tool for the development of metalinguistic awareness and critical literacy skills. In this way, learning is linked with real life and society, and creativity through language is promoted. Rejection of Cypriot Greek from education means rejection of students' linguistic identity, cultural knowledge and heritage. By contrast, inclusion of Cypriot Greek in education in a principled way is essential in order to eliminate the negative attitudes towards the dialect.

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Analyzing official accreditation reports for the undergraduate programs in education departments in Greece: Good practices, bad realities, and ugly futures

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Abstract

This study examines the content of the accreditation reports for the undergraduate study programs of Greek education departments in the context of the accreditation effort by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE). For the purposes of this investigation, twenty accreditation reports for the undergraduate programs of primary education, early childhood, special and educational policy departments were collected and analyzed with the aim to identify and critically evaluate the assessed Programs' common features of good practice, shared weaknesses, and common recommendations for the future. The analysis of the reports revealed that the recommendations reported by the EEAP members headed towards a uniform direction: the marketization of teacher education departments. Their suggestions for follow up actions focused on the

adoption of entrepreneurial attitudes and practices which could be summarized in three key words: *Commercialization* for the programs of study, *internationalization* for the department and *productivity* for the faculty. All three of them signify the end of academic studies as we know them, as they alter the very meaning of higher education as a public good.

1. Introduction

The evaluation of Greek Higher Education programs was legislated in two stages. First the Greek Higher Education Law 3374/2005 highlighted "quality assurance and improvement of higher education institutions, study programs and degree titles" as a fundamental goal "with the aim of best meeting the needs of society and the expectations which the society places on higher education institutions." Then, Law 4009/2011 has established accreditation of academic programs in Greek Higher Education, altering to the core the public mission, vision, and goals of the Greek university. Essentially, this bill, in a clear technocratic turn, opened the door to standardization (in line with the general European Union guidelines and practices), the privatization of the Greek public university, and the commodification of knowledge through a series of new policies such as the reduction of the already minimal state funding that forces universities to seek alternate sources of money in the private sector and the business world (with strings attached, of course); the reorganization of curricula on the basis of an instrumentalist approach, so that students gain skills and competences to fill necessary positions in the job market but also in the prescribed social stratification; the introduction of tuition in what has historically been free and public education for all; and the establishment of an oligarchic management of institutions of higher education with the participation of members outside the academic community that abolishes the democratic self-governed character of the institution.

The educational reform that pushed evaluation and accreditation into institutions of higher education has a number of characteristics: a) the vision of public education as a public good, a national priority and a responsibility of the state to its citizens is profoundly changing b) there is a clear attempt at linking education with the economy and this link seems to be at the core of the reform c) the current discourse on public education is taking shape along the lines of a developing market-driven society and seems to unapologetically espouse a neoliberal dogma that turns education into training and schools into training sites where students acquire skills and competences; universities are on their way to privatization while more authoritarianism finds its way in; knowledge turns into service or commodity, and students into customers d) curricula are reorganized on the basis of "excellence" and "quality" that resonate with the "social efficiency" movement of the late 1800 in the United States, as well as with more recent neoliberal educational reforms e) all of the above is taking place following the usual tactic of what David Harvey (2005) calls "creative destruction" in the process of neoliberalization: it translates into allowing to degenerate and destroying for example a public education system, in order to prove that it can operate successfully only when it is run by the private sector and when its curricula are dictated by the market.

2. Procedure, organization, and methodological aspects

"Accreditation" (Latin ad + credere = to believe) is a word inherently related to "trust", "faith", "belief", "confidence" and/or "credible recognition". It may indicate that a product or service is credible and may be perceived as the act of providing a guarantee that a product or service meets certain predetermined requirements. Along these lines, the Greek Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) defines accreditation as *an external evaluation process based on internationally accepted criteria and indicators, which makes sure that the study program offered by a higher education institution meets quality standards.* Moreover, it is a process

which ensures that *the performance and skills of the students graduating from this specific course (learning outcomes) are consistent with the intended professional qualifications that are required by society and the labor market* (HAHE 2020).

Within this understanding and following a standardized accreditation procedure, strictly monitored, and regulated by HAHE, 242 undergraduate programs of study from 30 Greek Higher education institutions (HEIs) have been evaluated between academic years 2019 and 2022. Based on the information collected through documentation of each study program (that includes a self-assessment and other pertinent documentation) and the site visit (or the remote review) of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP), an accreditation report was compiled in a specific format following a common template and a set of ten pre-specified and common criteria on which each program's compliance was judged. As a result, the accreditation reports produced through an infinitely rigid and firmly directing procedure could be described as uniform, at least in terms of their structure. All reports were divided in three main sections, with Part A describing the background and the context of the review, Part B examining, analyzing, and commenting on the study program's compliance to each of the ten accreditation criteria, and Part C presenting the conclusions of the review and main recommendations for action.

Based on the above context, this study examines the content of the accreditation reports for the undergraduate study programs of Greek education departments. For the purposes of this investigation, twenty accreditation reports for the programs of primary education, early childhood, special and educational policy departments of eleven different HEIs were collected and analyzed with the aim to: (a) describe aspects of the accreditation process and its results, and (b) identify and critically appraise the assessed programs' common features of good practice, shared weaknesses, and common recommendations for the future. The contents of the accreditation reports were analyzed by means of quantitative and qualitative content analysis (Babbie 2011; Robson 2010; Mayring 2000). With the intention of specifying the main characteristics of the reports' contents and

developing insight into their effects approximately 685 pages of text were studied. Particular attention was dedicated to the final parts of the reports (Part C: Conclusions), that summarized good practices, weaknesses, follow-up actions and overall assessment, while the analysis was supported by data on the frequencies of thematic categories identified in the data.

3. Descriptive results

The majority of the accreditation reports examined were based on information collected through remote reviews or virtual visits of the external expert panels (External Evaluation and Accreditation Panels- EEAP). As most of the accreditations have taken place during the years 2020 and 2021 and due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, only 2 out of the 20 program evaluations (10%) were based on actual site visits (Graph 1).
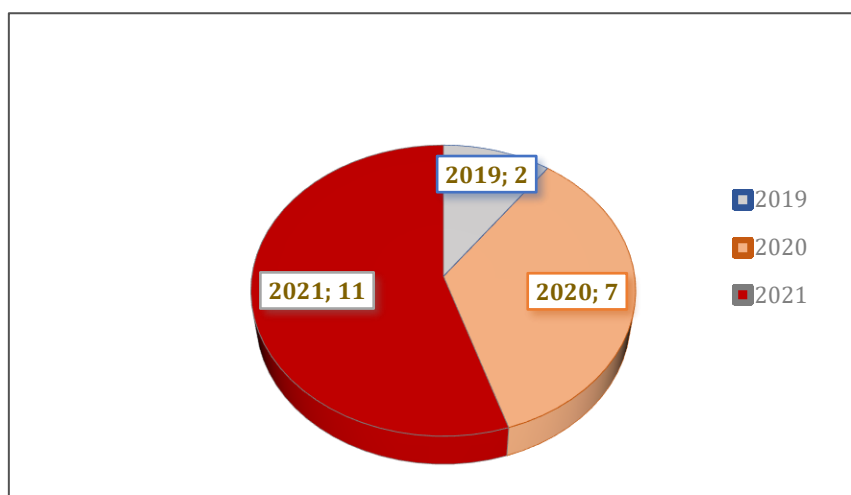
Graph 1: *Number of programs assessed by year of assessment*

The total number of the external experts participating in the external evaluation and accreditation panels (EEAPs) of all programs of study (PSs) under review was 26. Seven individuals have served as chairs on the 20 accreditations examined. In terms of panel members' country of origin, 46,1% of the experts came from USA, 38,5% from Cyprus and 15,4% from other countries (France, Austria, and Sweden). The accreditation panels consisted of 3 to 5 members each, yet only two

programs were evaluated by a 5-member panel, while most panels had 4 members. The synthesis of accreditation panels was to a great extend repetitive, in the sense that a certain number of external experts participated in more than 3 (15%) of the 20 evaluations in total. This may be illustrated in graph 2, which shows the frequencies of panel participations and chairs of the ten most active evaluators.

	Expert 1_Cyprus	Expert 2_Cyprus	Expert 3_Cyprus	Expert 4_USA	Expert 5_USA	Expert 6_Sweden	Expert 7_Cyprus	Expert_8_USA	Expert_9_USA	Expert_10_USA
Panel Participations	10	9	9	6	5	2	1	5	4	3
Panel Chairs	6	2	2	5	2	2	1	0	0	0
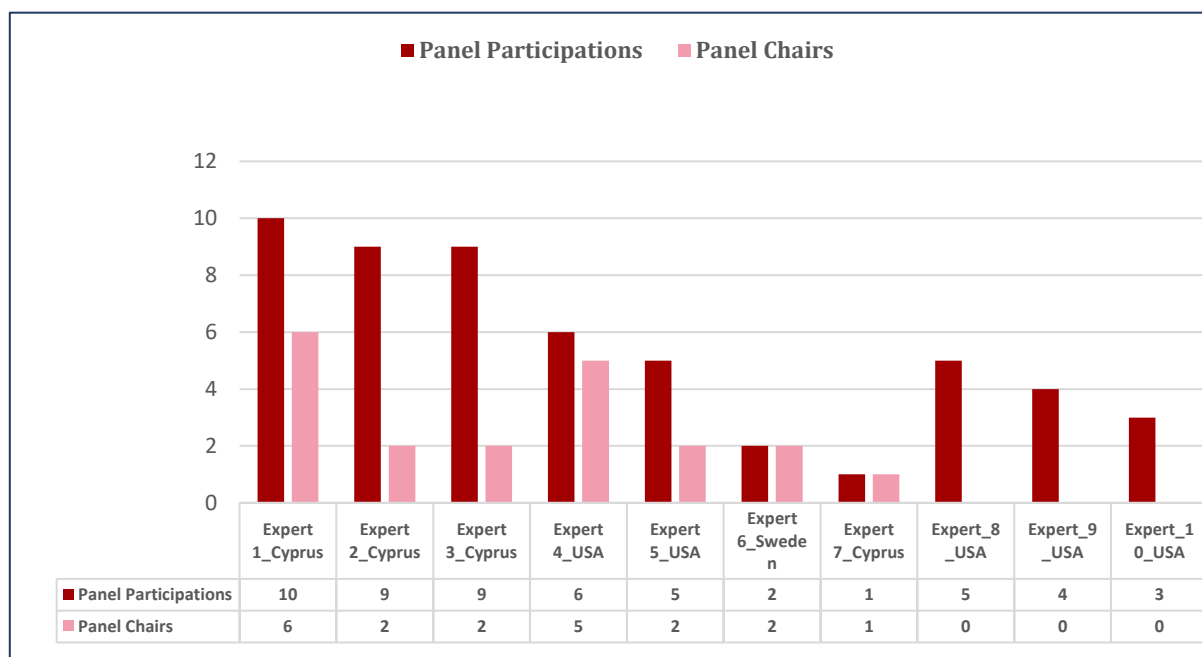
Graph 2: *Frequencies of Panel participation & Panel Chairs*

Of the 26 experts that have taken part in the accreditation process, 18 (69%) contributed to either one or two evaluations, while 11% of them seem to have undertaken the great burden of the accreditation process with evaluating almost 50% of the PSs of education departments. The fact that the same experts have participated either as members or as chairs in a considerable number of program accreditations has added consistence and coherence, as well as repetition in the arguments presented in the accreditation reports and has affected their degree of uniformity.

With respect to the 20 accreditation reports produced by the EEAP panels, nine of them (45%) evaluated programs of early childhood departments, 8 (40%) were concerned with primary education PSs and 3 (15%) were regarded with the

programs of one special education and two social and educational policy departments. Overall, all education departments have managed to achieve full compliance for their programs in terms of the HAHE principles assessed. However, 11 (55%) programs have been assessed as substantially compliant in one to three of the 10 accreditation criteria. Almost half of these eleven PSs were implemented in early childhood education departments (45,5%). Moreover, none of the special education and educational policy PSs have acquired full compliance in all ten accreditation principles and the same happened in the case of 3 primary education programs. Graph 3 presents the percentages of programs assessed as "substantially compliant" in each of the ten HAHE principles or accreditation criteria.
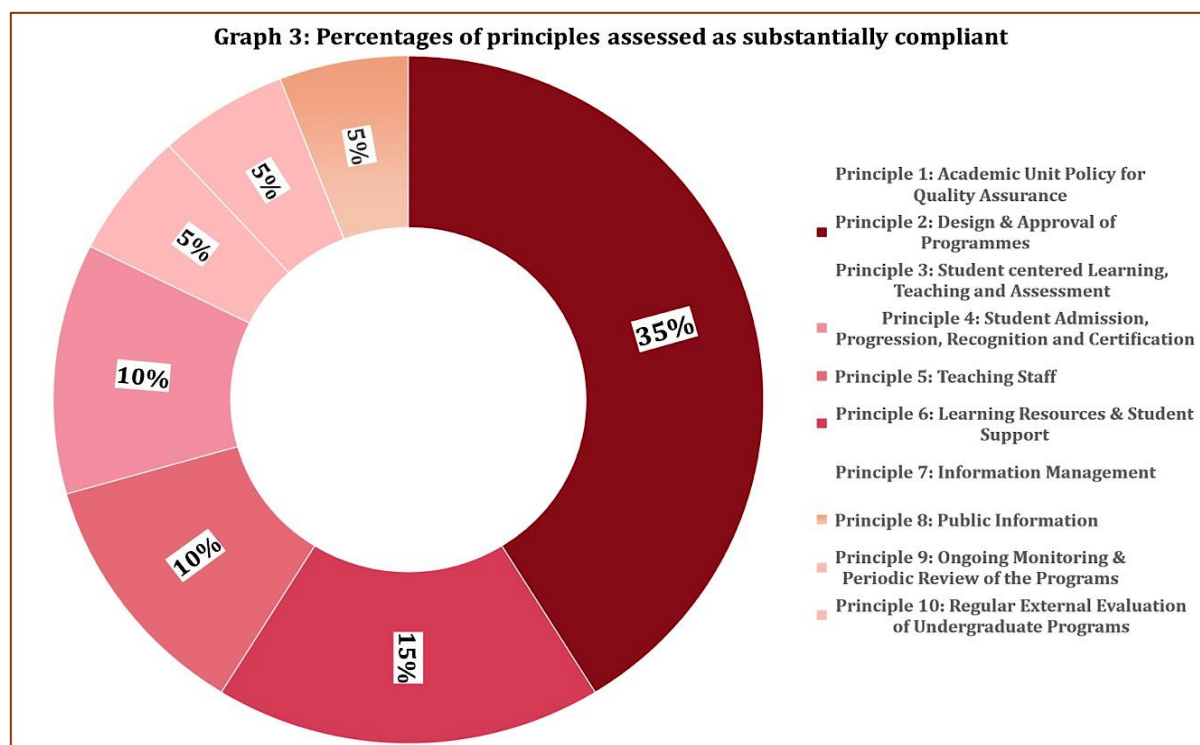
Graph 3: *Percentages of principles assessed as substantially compliant*

As illustrated in Graph 3, a third of the PSs (7 out of 20) were judged as not fully compliant on the principle addressing the processes of designing and approving their undergraduate programs (Principle 2), followed by Principle 6 (3 out of 20 programs) which referred to the quality of infrastructure, facilities and services

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offered for learning and student support. Individual cases of programs were also assessed as substantially compliant in a number of other accreditation criteria (Principles 4, 5, 8, 9 & 10) regarded with teaching staff, the processes of student progression in distinct phases of their studies, the extend and quality of public information provided by the departments, as well as the procedures of internal and external evaluation.

The main concerns posed by the EEAP members with respect to Principle 2, were twofold. The first was related to the improvement of the coverage of the curriculum and its alignment with the departments' professed goals. Within this

> *"...despite the department's expressed statement that the program of study was designed in order to place emphasis on research and to link teaching practice with research, there is still no course on research methods" (AR 2)*
>
> *"...at least one compulsory student assessment course should be added since students should learn how to conduct formative assessment especially since research reveals the strong impact of such assessment on promoting learning outcomes" (AR 11)*

viewpoint, the panels have recommended the inclusion of specific required courses to the SP. The recommended courses differed among PSs, yet most of them were concerned with research methods, student assessment and multicultural / inclusive education.

The second and most important reservation was related to the structure and the organization of the undergraduate PSs. The panels seemed to reject the idea of an open-ended program structure with a large number of electives and excessive course offerings which may cause confusion, fragmentation, and inconsistency to the PS.

> *"The EEAP notes that such an 'open-ended' curricular design seems to challenge the Department's ability to meet its stated objectives...The result is that without any mandatory courses, students end up graduating with different academic experiences and courses of study" (AR 6)*
>
> *"...there are some concerns about the equivalence of the students' degrees due to the large percentage of the elective courses in their programme guide. Therefore, it is recommended that the number of the core and obligatory courses should be significantly increased" (AR 15)*

While this is a valid and reasonable criticism, it also needs to be noted that in the past ten years, almost all departments have been pressured by the Quality Assurance Units of their institutions to increase the number of electives in their programs and to reduce the ratio between mandatory and free choice courses. Measurements of this analogy and the categories of courses offered by each PS are reported in the Quality Data Management System of HAHE on a yearly basis and represent significant indicators for the quality assurance of the structure of the PS (Quality Indicator1-I2) (HAHE 2022; HQAA 2011). Apparently, this urge of Greek governmental and institutional agencies for more optional, non-compulsory modules appears to derive from a crudely conceived and distorted interpretation of the idealized and dominant model of "flexibility" and "individualized pathways of learning", which is related to the intention of making undergraduate degrees more "relevant" to student-customer needs and thus support students' progression through the curriculum by directing them towards particular employment options (Rustin 2003; Molesworth et al, 2009; Santamaria 2020). Clearly, the simplistic idea of offering more optional and less compulsory modules alone, with the purpose of allowing students to design their own course of study, does not add decisively to the "flexibility" of higher education curricula, but it may be perceived as a first step towards this direction for it has a great effect on the consistency and coherence of the degree obtained and it may contribute to the deregulation of academic studies. The second and more strategic step towards "flexibility", alias deregulation, destabilization, and disorganization of the academic degrees, may be observed in the new Bill on Higher Education. This Bill was announced in late May 2022 by the Greek Ministry of Education and legislates the development and provision of a substantial number of multi-level and multi-faceted undergraduate and postgraduate study programs within the same academic department with the aim to serve the differentiated career needs of students and the labor market. Obviously, measures such as these may convert universities into training centers and may transform them into *"a new breed of shopping malls, where students buy their education and shop around for classes and*

majors and where the goal of the educator is to attract, delight and retain the student-customer" (Franz 1998, 63).

The use of the "student-as-customer" metaphor, where "customers are always right" may also be helpful in decoding and understanding the recommendations made by the EEAP members with respect to Principle 6 of the accreditation process that deals with learning resources and student support. Three of the 20 PSs (15%) examined have acquired "substantial compliance" in this criterion. Part of the external experts' analyses and rationale is illustrated in the excerpts below.

> *"Students report not having reliable WI-FI access, and while the opensource statistical software that is available meets their learning needs, this cost saving approach may have a long-term negative impact on the quality of the academic preparation…Given that courses are offered in the evening hours, the Department could also consider expanding its administrative services to students during those times" (AR 7)*
>
> *"Additional administrative and technical support is needed so that faculty have time to pursue teaching and research development which will ultimately lead to better teaching, learning and student satisfaction" (AR 13)*
>
> *"The students indicated that a problem they face when enrolled in the Teaching Practice program, is that in some cases they have to buy with their own funds the supplies (e.g., teaching materials, story books, etc.) they need for teaching. Currently, the Department does not provide the needed equipment or cover the student expenses (either fully or partially through a fixed amount). The Department does not appear to be cognizant of this problem and therefore further inquiry and funds earmarked for such expenses is needed" (AR 16)*

Most of the concerns presented had to do with the shortage of proper facilities, the lack of appropriate administrative and technical support, as well as a variety of other services offered to students. Almost all accreditation reports included comparable or similar concerns about infrastructure and services supporting student teaching and learning. Even though the panels' observations might have been accurate, clear, and understandable, it is equally true that none of these shortcomings can be tackled at departmental level given the lack of funding or power and discretion to make those decisions, and it is puzzling that some departments have been penalized for them. Student attendance, recruitment of administrative and technical personnel, working conditions of personnel, purchase and construction of facilities, equipment and services are regulated

through state legislation, decided, and administered by the Greek Ministry for Education. Neglected buildings, deteriorating infrastructures and shortages in equipment and facilities may be clearly observed in several institutions, due to inadequate financial support and severe cuts in state budget for education. The fact that Greek Institutions of Higher Education are public institutions, understaffed, chronically underfunded by the state, with underpaid and overworked faculty seems to have gone unnoticed by some accreditation panels. Despite these difficulties, Greek universities offer tuition-free academic studies of significant quality and provide numerous benefits to their students that may often be ignored or devalued by neoliberal approaches. In short, Greek HEIs are neither service providers nor corporate enterprises to offer immediate satisfaction to consumer needs. The fact that even in neoliberal terms and in times of extreme austerity and an all-out assault on their existence, they continue to rank among the 400-500 highest ranking academic institutions in the world, seems to affirm that the dichotomy "paid and privatized" versus "free and public" is not a fruitful one and may not be related to the quality of education students receive.

4. Features of good practice

Part C of the accreditation reports was dedicated to the conclusions of the evaluation process. The section was divided into four main subsections, the first of which identified and presented good practices of the PSs under review and/or the departments' strategies and structures of work. The total number of comments made for this subsection in all accreditation reports was 110. As it was expected, all comments had a positive direction.
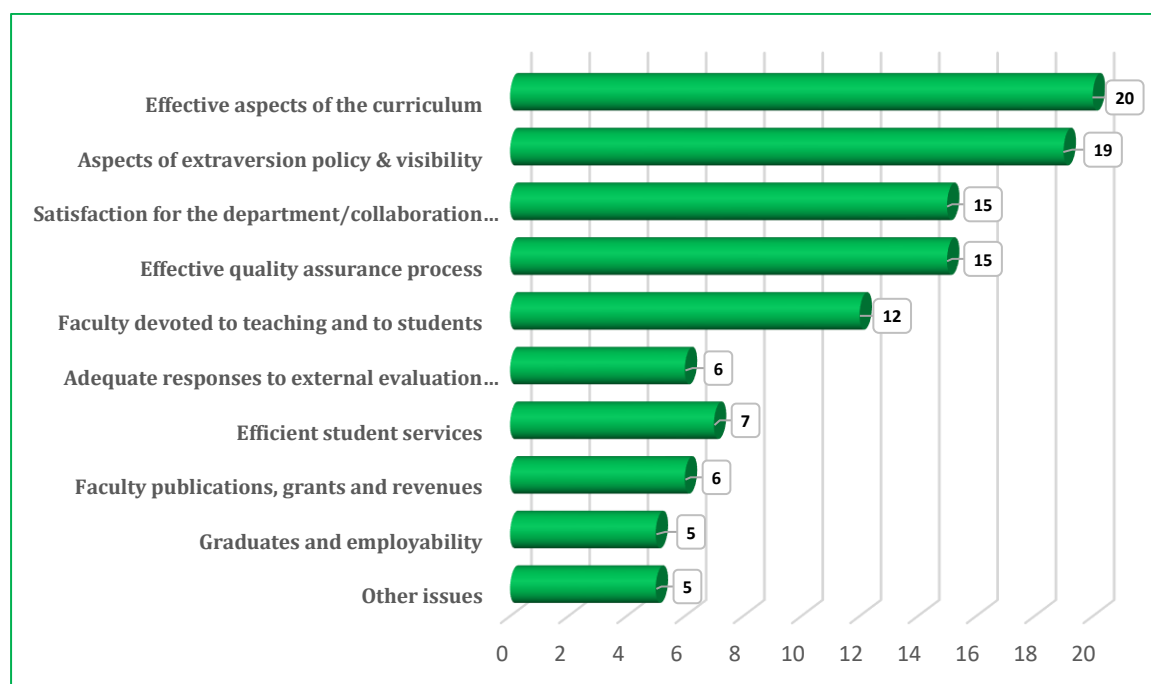
Graph 4: *Features of good practice in the accreditation reports*

Our review has identified several repetitions, which may be associated with the recurrent synthesis of the members and chairs of EEAPs that has been mentioned previously. For the purposes of the investigation, experts' references to features of good practice were examined and divided into ten different thematic categories. The frequencies of comments per theme are shown in Graph 4.

Many of the thematic categories recognized were diverse and multifaceted, in the sense that the actual statements of the panels were referring to individual aspects of the undergraduate curriculum or the academic activities of the departments. References to the undergraduate curriculum were related to features deemed interesting or noteworthy, such as the development of a coherent course of study on the basis of international standards and the provision of excellent practicum experiences. Other positive remarks addressed the departments' visibility, as well as the organization of efficient events and festivals. Faculty members were also commended for publishing and participating in conferences and for generating income from international grants. Furthermore, specialized services offered to students with disabilities were applauded, while references to graduates

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highlighted the employment of alumni and the effective connection of the PS to the needs of the labor market.

> *"The practicum model developed by the DPE is a highly exemplary aspect of program of practice. This includes intensive, clinically rich mentoring and action research approaches"*
> *"The Department has designed a course of study that is appropriate and meets universally accepted standards for teacher preparation" (Repeated in 2 AR)*
> *"We were impressed by the yearly Children's Festival, and the student voluntary work regarding the refugee children both on the Greek islands and the Peloponnese"*
> *"Faculty members have numerous publications in international scientific journals, and participation in national and international conferences. They also participate in numerous national and European research programs"*
> *"Excellent relations exist between the Department and external stakeholders from the private and the public sector" (Repeated in 3 Ars)*
> *"The existence of "Access (Prosvasi)" service for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This service provides enhanced and differentiated support to students"*
> *"…the Department has been effective in connecting its program with the needs of the labor market"*

However, some thematic categories represented less variability, as they were geared towards specific, analogous, and straightforward issues that cut across many different departments with a frequency of 60% to 70%. As a result, it may be assumed that they represented the shared and comparable features of good practice of all departments. Specifically, the foremost common observation of the expert panels was related to the support offered to the departments and their PSs by students, alumni, partners, and stakeholders. All these groups expressed their enthusiasm and satisfaction during the review meetings, while discussions with faculty have justified the existence of a collaborative culture among staff, students and stakeholders and a supportive and productive work climate. As reported in the accreditations, faculty members provide guidance and assistance, foster effective student learning and in general devote themselves often beyond required expectations.

"There is a high degree of satisfaction, support and enthusiasm for the Department among students, alumni, and external partners and stakeholders, which serves as a testament to the Department's reputation and effectiveness" (Repeated in 8 ARs)

"The collaboration and honest communication among the Department, MODIP, OMEA, faculty, staff members, administrative staff, students and alumni has generated a high quality assurance approach with the potential to generate positive outcomes for faculty and students" (Repeated in 3 ARs)

"Faculty in the department have created shared values and established a climate of collaboration, collegiality, and mutual support" (Repeated in 3 ARs)

"Academic faculty are devoted to teaching and to their students. They are accessible and provide guidance and support, as well as assistance with career orientation. They have an open-door policy and foster a friendly teaching environment" (Repeated in 3 ARs)

Another common remark dealt with the development and establishment of a quality assurance approach that seemed adequate and functional thanks to the efficient communication and collaboration of all parties and groups involved with the departmental and institutional units of quality assurance. Furthermore, departments appeared to respond and react positively to the evaluation process as they addressed and took action towards the recommendations made within the context of the previous external evaluation.

"The Department has established great quality assurance procedures and collects adequate data on students, teaching staff, organization and curriculum structure. The Department uses internal evaluation and data collection for formative program review and improvement"

"The Department provided adequate and prompt responses to the recommendations provided in the external evaluation conducted in 2013" (Repeated in 5 ARs)

In summary, the panel statements associated with the department and programs of study strengths may be characterized as balanced and well adjusted. On the one hand, reviewers pointed out individual assets and unique features in the policies, approaches, designs, and structures of particular departments related to curriculum, student services, extroversion activities, employability and research achievements. On the other hand, they identified several mutual qualities, common to almost all departments. These common features of good practice were related to the creation of an efficient quality assurance system, the provision of

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adequate responses to the 2013 external evaluation recommendations, the high degree of satisfaction expressed from students and stakeholders, the level of collaboration and mutual support among faculty, students, departmental and university bodies, as well as faculty's commitment to serve quality teaching and support student needs.

Nevertheless, it needs also to be noted that most of the comments examined appeared to indirectly inspect and certify the department's compliance to the goals, the methods and the principles of the accreditation process itself. In other words, they ensured that the departments' 'behaviors' and policies were tuned in and harmonized with the context, norms and criteria imposed by HAHE. As such, statements of good practice were directed towards submission and compliance along the specific quality assurance process promoted by HAHE, that perceive students and stakeholders as customers, universities as service providers and faculty as salespersons. Minor and insignificant was the number of statements that were focused on aspects of a different quality, such as the following.

> *"Faculty's commitment to providing quality education despite the excessive workload"*
> *"The social commitment of the Department to prepare democratic educators who understand the complexity of contemporary educational phenomena and are ready to apply their knowledge and skills in educational contexts in the direction of transforming society through the principles of equity, justice, freedom and equality"*
> *"The choice of the department to offer tuition-free graduate studies that shows a commitment to free and public education for all"*

The dearth of comments deviating from the "language of accreditation" and its framework was notable and alarming. Terms and phrases whispering the 'neoliberal jingle', like *"standards", "visibility", "extroversion", "external stakeholders", "quality control", "public information system", "student needs & interests", "employment and career options", "graduate satisfaction", "usefulness of skills", "alumni office"* appear to dominate almost all panel observations about quality teacher education and are representative of the new dogma that has been enforced upon us all: faculty, students and evaluators.

5. Areas of Weaknesses

The subsection of the concluding part of the accreditation reports that followed 'the features of good practice' was related to areas of weaknesses. In this segment the EEAP members could indicate the limitations they identified in either the PSs assessed or the departments' policies and strategies. The total number of statements reported by external evaluators was 53. The reported comments were examined in terms of their content and were divided into eight thematic categories, that are illustrated in the following graph (Graph 5).
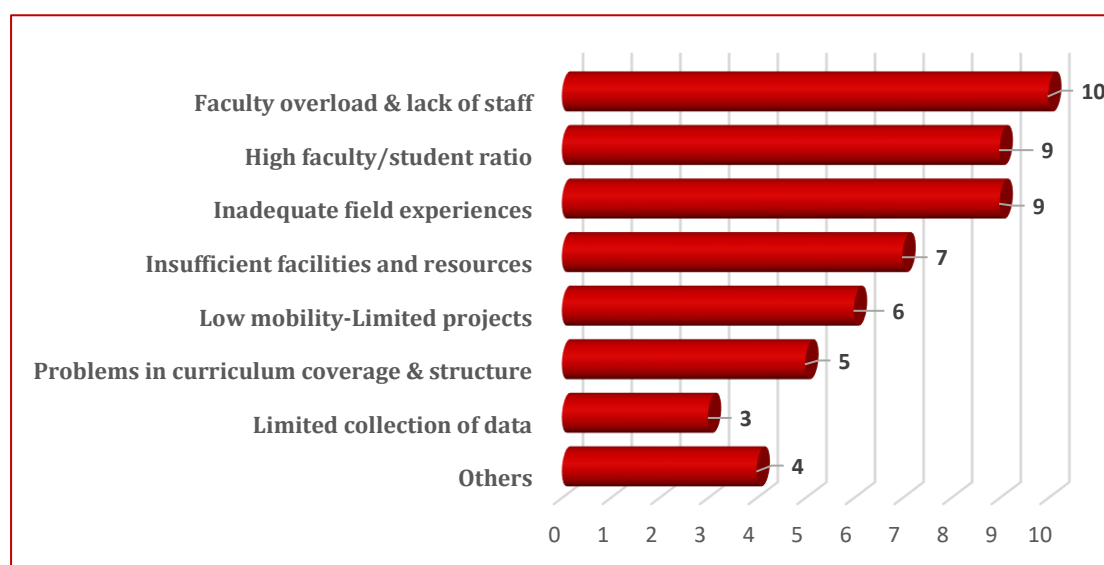
Graph 5: *Areas of weaknesses mentioned in accreditation reports*

The first two thematic categories identified were related to issues pertaining to available human resources. As panel members noted, the exceedingly high faculty/student and staff/student ratios are a severe threat to the quality of learning, affect faculty teaching and administrative workload and have negative effects on all areas of academic life. Lack of academic teachers, administrative and technical personnel exacerbate the risks and impede the departments' ability to fulfill its mission.

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"The high student/faculty ratio should be discussed between the Department and the University (MODIP)"
"The Department ends up having to accommodate increasing numbers of students that puts pressure on existing facilities and the ability of academic staff to handle the additional teaching demands. This ultimately threatens the quality of learning that all students end up receiving"
"Faculty work overload that, while needed for the functioning of the department and the delivery of the curriculum, at the same time impedes undertaking new initiatives at the department level and/or affects faculty's scholarship engagement"
"Additional administrative and technical support is needed so that the faculty could have time to pursue teaching and research development which will ultimately lead to better teaching, learning and student satisfaction"
"The continuing lack of adequate and suitable classroom space for large groups of students also needs to be addressed"
"The Department does not operate in a proper purposefully built academic campus which would have allowed for the whole School to offer better quality services to all students, staff and local community"

Apart from understaffed and overworked, departments were also evaluated under-resourced. According to experts' observations, facilities were insufficient, resources were limited, and classroom space availability was inadequate for large groups of students. Unavoidably, all these deficiencies negatively impact the effectiveness of the program of study and the delivery of the curriculum. Yet, threats to the delivery of the PS may not only derive from external factors. They may also come from the design of the undergraduate curriculum itself. As the EEAP panels reported, the 'open ended' structure of some curricula, the large percentage of either electives or mandatory courses and the lack of a clear curriculum vision may create confusion and problems in the equivalence of academic degrees. Furthermore, particular care needs to be given to the organization, monitoring, and systematization of the practicum. Field and school experiences should have a longer duration, they need to take place in diverse teaching contexts, and they require support from properly trained mentors.

"The curricular structure with its 'open-ended' concept creates curricular, student preparation and department identity issues. The current curriculum blurs the Department's identity and mission and generates different degrees for different students in the Program"
"The relatively small number of the compulsory courses and the high number of elective courses creates concerns about the equivalence of the students' degrees"
"The limited number of participating mentors and field experience placements should be remedied to strengthen the effectiveness of the students' practicum experience"
"Mentoring/Practicing teachers that host DECE students in their classrooms do not have special training in the ways in which they mentor provide students with written feedback. On the days students conduct their lessons/activities, a standardized protocol must be filled out and communicated with the students and the university faculty"
"Limited number of days and hours allocated to Practicum - school experience in comparison to the international practice, as a systemic deficiency of the Higher Education System in Greece"

Finally, a set of remarks pertained to issues of extraversion and visibility as well as the collection of quality data. Experts have indicated low percentages of Erasmus students and limited numbers of competitive projects. In addition, students' participation in course evaluations and in departmental committees was low, while data on graduates were absent.

"Small number of externally funded research projects"
"Low percentage of Erasmus students and overall student mobility"
"Limited percentage of European competitive programmes with high budget and coordination by the Department's staff"
"Students' limited participation in Departmental and University-wide committees, despite the Department's efforts"
"Absence of systematic collection of data on student employability and the career paths of graduates"

In conclusion, the external evaluators comments over the departments' and PSs' weaknesses may be characterized as accurate and valid, in the sense that they reflect several of the widely known and most frequently documented shortcomings, limitations and problems of Greek HEIs. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the way in which these inadequacies are reported gives the impression that these are problems that the departments and the institutions themselves have created and need to resolve. Only a few statements refer to the structural and

systemic barriers that create and perpetuate the harsh working conditions for faculty and staff and the insufficient learning conditions of students. On top of that, some statements directly referred to the need of addressing identified systemic weaknesses through discussions within institutional and departmental bodies, even though it is beyond those bodies' powers to address them. Thus, it would be more helpful to the departments if the external experts' statements were addressed directly to the bodies responsible for the identified deficiencies and were elaborate, explanatory, and detailed as to the actual causes of these inadequacies and their destructive effects.

6. Recommendations for follow up actions

The third section of the conclusions of the accreditation reports was dedicated to the experts' recommendations for follow up actions. In total, 136 recommendation statements were indicated. The thematic categories identified in their content are shown in Graph 6. Many of these themes and the reference statements connected to them were related to previously identified areas of weaknesses or problematic aspects. There are, therefore, statements recommending the inclusion of necessary courses to the curriculum, proposing extended and better organized practical teaching experiences, or suggesting changes in the structure of the program of studies and the balance between compulsory, mandatory and free choice courses. Similarly, references to facilities, services, and staff recruitment, recommended the expansion of the available spaces, the enhancement of services offered to students and faculty as well as the employment of university teachers, administrative and technical staff. Additionally, a small number of statements (6 references) were concerned with students' participation to course evaluations and decision-making bodies of the departments and recommended the increase of student responses to evaluation and their contribution to committees.
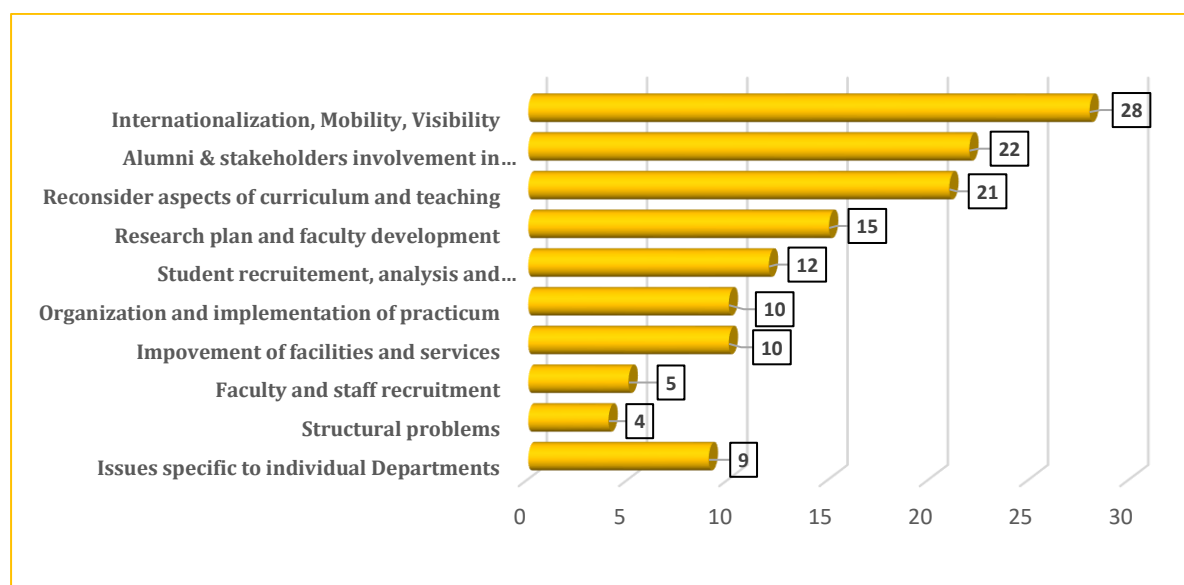
Graph 6: *Recommendations for follow up actions mentioned in Accreditation Reports*

However, it was noticeable that the number of recommendation statements dedicated to some of the most frequently identified weaknesses of the departments, such as the lack of staff, faculty's excessive workload and the large student/faculty ratio was minimal (only 7 statements). Most of them had a declarative character, in the sense that they just ascertained the problem or required from the university/department to take measures. Others suggested addressing workload issues through the employment of graduate and doctoral students as undergraduate student advisors.

> *"To address workload issues, identify ways of leveraging graduate student support (e.g. Teaching Apprenticeships for doctoral students)"*
> *"The EEAP recommends that the University take measures, as part of its human resources management policy, for better balancing the department's development and the staff's increasing workload"*
> *"Hire required faculty members needed to fulfil its mission of high-quality education. The student-teacher ratio should be improved as well"*
> *"In accordance with a better balance to the faculty/student ratio, the Department could consider assigning students to individual advisors. As noted in the report, a small number of student advisors/advocates could be hired, preferably former students, but also other people with first-hand knowledge of the graduation requirements, study habits, student concerns, fieldwork school and other site options, and serve a very student-oriented approach and advocacy"*

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Surprisingly, and in contrast to the problems of resources and workload initially identified, the great bulk of the panels' recommendations were oriented towards the development of a significant number of totally new services, units, structures, and activities that, by definition, would translate into an increase in faculty and staff workload, require more employees than already needed for the current activities and certainly do not address the problem of student/faculty ratio. In particular, more than 50% of the recommendations offered were related to three main schemes of work: (a) the process of designing the undergraduate curriculum in alignment with graduates' employability and the needs of the labor market, (b) the course of action needed for increasing the internationalization of the departments, and (c) the development of a plan towards research activities and faculty's professional development.

A significant percentage of panel suggestions recommended the collection of data on student employability and alumni career paths, as well as getting feedback for the PS from external stakeholders (e.g., employers, policymakers, social agency directors, community partners, administrators, etc.). The establishing of an Alumni Association, an Advisory Board and a Career Office, together with the publishing of an e-Newsletter would be helpful towards this direction. Feedback from graduates and external stakeholders as to the "quality" of the PS would be used for reforming, revising, and improving the undergraduate curriculum. Their perspectives could enhance the design of the curriculum by making it more "useful" and connecting it in a more direct way to the needs of prospective employers.

"Implement a systematic way of collecting data from students, alumni, external partners and policy-makers, so that changes in the programme of study can be well justified"

"It is advisable that programme alumni and pre-school teachers and administrators, especially those in the public-school domain, could certainly add perspectives that appear to not be central in the current form of the action plan. The EEAP recommends that the DECE, in addition to the OMEA and MODIP, be intentional and transparent (both in terms of policies and their implementation) in engaging alumni, practicing teachers/mentors, involving them in meaningful ways in curricular design and enhancing their participation"

"Setting up an Advisory Board (AB) which will review periodically the program curriculum and offer suggestions about possible changes and reforms. The AB may consist of current students, alumni, external experts, stakeholders and professionals"

"Alumni information needs to be systematically collected from the whole spectrum of the Department's graduates through the creation of an electronic newsletter. This would serve to enact a useful feedback mechanism between the faculty of the Department and such graduates that would inevitably lead to the improvement of the existing programme of study and the practical training modules"

Needless to say, that the risks involved in the process of designing the academic curriculum to match employer needs are immense. Would courses like "History of Education", "Sociology of Education", "Pedagogical Theories" or "Critical Pedagogy" be part in a curriculum serving the immediate needs of private or public school administrators? What may be the common needs of prospective employers in a discipline as wide and as applicable like Education? Can a single unified undergraduate program serve effectively those needs or the development of multiple specialized programs is the only possible way of addressing such diverse requirements? What may be the implications of such practices to the unity and the coherence of the degree obtained? Why do public university departments need to become the free training centers of employers? Is this the ultimate purpose of having higher education institutions?

Yet, the provision of service to the economy is not restricted to the development of immediately employable personnel. This new breed of academia is purported to transform into a new profitable sector of the economy. Institutions may evolve into fully grown corporations by selling "education" to whoever is able to buy it, by generating income from bargaining proficient training and expert research services to the free market and by competing with other similar enterprises in the

same arenas for the best buyers. The initial steps in this process of evolution are clearly described in the recommendations of the accreditation expert panels.

> *"Enhance networking with partner Universities in order to enhance the participation of students from abroad"*
> *"Create comprehensive websites for all research centres"*
> *"All material of the Greek version of the Department's website needs to be fully translated to the English language so as to increase its accessibility and promote the indeed invaluable work it produces to the outside global community"*
> *"Consider offering a Quarterly or monthly newsletter where the Department can present news on seminars, research or teaching activities and events. This will enable opportunities for interactivity and networking with alumni and the community"*
> *"Consider a comprehensive strategy and incentives for encouraging further mobility via the Erasmus+ and other programs for structured international exchanges of students: strongly recommended"*
> *"Consider delivery of mandatory courses in Greek and English to attract professors from the international academic community as well as to attract more foreign students to study at DEC through the ERASMUS program"*
> *"Invite visiting international professors to teach and collaborate on research. Develop policies to recruit highly qualified faculty members from the international community"*
> *"The Department is thus encouraged to design a process for bringing the Departmental community together to reflect and refine its areas of excellence and to explain/promote the way these are assets to the university at large and the community. This could include a promotional campaign to amplify its unique leadership in the twin areas of STEM education and the study of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity"*

Departments need first to keep their current and prospective student-customers informed of their products and their services. As such, a sophisticated website with an attractive design fully translated into English should be developed and an informative e-newsletter should be created, published, and emailed to all internal and external stakeholders. These activities may help departments to keep contact, improve collaboration and networking with all parties, as well as attract new prospective students from other countries. This may be further promoted by providing incentives and encouraging mobility of faculty and students through the Erasmus program. Furthermore, the delivery of courses in both Greek and English could attract not only students from abroad, but also foreign professors. In fact, inviting visiting professors from abroad to teach and collaborate may boost the department's visibility and enhance its international profile. In turn, the departments through building and sustaining strong community relations will

discover their areas of excellence, alias their competitive advantages, which could be intensified by a promotional campaign.

On the other hand, faculty's productivity needs to be supported and improved. Similarly to the ideal entrepreneurial workers, academic teachers should be accountable, monitored and aligned with managerial practices. Thus, the establishment of a teaching award may provide incentives for teaching effectiveness, while the development of a research policy will help in adjusting research expectations in publications and in monitoring research output in the form of funded projects and research grants. Moreover, attention needs to be brought to faculty's professional development. Support in grant proposals provided by a dedicated office, the establishment of a faculty colloquium, the provision of professional development seminars or even the creation of a faculty professional development plan have been suggested by the EEAP members as some of the necessary steps for improvement.

> *"Continue to use the stated incentives and monitor their effectiveness with respect to faculty productivity as reflected by external indicators (e.g., international refereed publications, externally funded projects) already collected by the Department"*
> *"A Faculty Professional Development Plan should be created by each faculty member at the beginning of each academic year. This, could include Faculty's plans for teaching, supervision, research, administrative and community service. At the end of the academic year the Department General Assembly could discuss and review what has been achieved. This should be compatible with the overall development strategy of the Department"*
> *"A central office to support external grant proposals was recommended in the 2013 Report. Although grant success has continued during the years since 2013, the creation of such an office or centre could* further *enhance research and grants development by the DECE faculty. If feasible, such a centre could also provide a venue for faculty development in terms of enhancing in-person and online classroom pedagogy and practice and student engagement"*

In conclusion, most of the recommendations reported by the EEAP members headed towards a uniform direction: the marketization of teacher education departments. Their suggestions for follow-up actions focus mainly on the adoption of entrepreneurial attitudes and practices which could be summarized in three key words. *Commercialization* for the programs of study, *internationalization* of the department and *productivity* for faculty. All three of

them signify the end of academic studies as we know them, as they alter the very meaning of higher education as a public good.

7. Discussion

From the above presentation of findings drawn from the twenty accreditation reports analyzed a number of issues emerge; issues related both to the rhetoric used as well as the actual material practices proposed. One can emphatically claim that it is impossible to understand the operation of Greek Institutions of Higher Education and their problems outside a strict policy and overwhelming legal framework that regulates the allocation of resources, space, faculty promotions, and many other aspects of academic life. This legal framework leaves little to no autonomy to academic units to design and implement academic experiences and fund them. May reports are put together in good faith but miss the ways academic units under review are part of a regulating system that limits them and does not support them.

Aligning with HAHE guidelines, the reports unavoidably use language included in HAHE materials and this language draws from a discourse of marketization, privatization, and transformation of the university into a service enterprise (Raaper 2016). We, therefore, see a shift from the academic to the operational; from the intellectual to the entrepreneurial; from universities as democratic, public, and social institutions to a marketplace; from education for knowledge, emancipation, and social transformation to skills-based, market-needs aligned curricula. In a sense, these reports add insult to injury by asking departments to expand more in terms of resources and faculty/staff labor that are already scarce and depleted, in order to "improve." Another dimension worth discussing is the involvement of "external stakeholders" in the design of curricula and programs of study. While dialogues with the public-school community, school leaders, alumni and others related in substantial ways to the educational process might be fruitful, inviting parties with business and/or financial interests to be partners in these

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conversations is scandalous. The focus on external stakeholders is another way to force academic unites to serve the interests of the market and an underpaid labor force.

8. Conclusions

HAHE accreditation reports are strengthening the notion of student/teachers marketplace (by redefining programs of Study, academics, student assessment, resources, communication, quality assurance etc.) while bringing into the process an "external market" (alumni, external partners and private/public stakeholders etc.) These reports rather assess the departments' compliance to HAHE standards through conformity and homogenization of their academic processes. In this way, the public mission of departments (social planning, democratic leadership, public politics, social responsibility) as public good are undermined and their cultural life is radically altered (purpose, meaning, organization, day to day running), through setting marketized priorities (Giroux 2009; Lynch 2006).

HAHE accreditation reports are fully aligned with the policy orientation embodied in the laws that established the evaluation of academic units in these terms, that is the commercialization and marketization of education and the radical shift in the character and vision of free and public higher education.

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From deschooling to problem-posing – Connecting Illich and Freire in a critique of contemporary education and society

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Abstract

This essay explores philosophies of Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich, arguing for their shared vision of radical education. With a focus on Freire's earlier period of work, especially the seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, we point to the differing reception of their respective works in Europe of the 1970s (where Illich is often seen as an incompatible and extreme case). This in retrospect seems somewhat surprising as we argue that the fundamentals of their thinking are a shared critique of banking education and a re-conceptualisation of authority and teaching in renewed education systems. Both Freire and Illich share in a renewed sense of the critical educational project of emancipation, albeit with different emphases. Moreover, the current crisis of education under late capitalism (and subject to the conditions of the Covid pandemic) returns the powerful resources of Freire and Illich to centre stage in education and politics.

Keywords: Deschooling, Problem-Posing, Illich. Freire, Radical Education

Introduction

In a recent essay, the Italian philosopher of education Letterio Todaro has contextualised the reception of Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire in Europe in the 1970s as related but distinct. The essay, entitled 'The challenging resonance of Freire's

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pedagogy: the problematic confrontation with Left-Marxist thinking in Italy in the early 1970s' (Todaro 2021), speaks of the growing attention given to the Brazilian educator in Italy across the 1970s. Freire's work wasn't alone in its influence on Italian education at this time and Todaro also points to the seminal influence of another thinker who 'pointed out the horizon of a revolutionary pathway for education. This paradigmatic radical thinker (and 'bridge') was Ivan Illich' (Todaro 2021).

In this essay, I will explore some of the affinities and disaffinities between Freire and Illich, as their respective thought systems engage with both education and politics. Having described the strong relation between their philosophies, Todaro goes on to clarify that there was an ultimate reluctance amongst the Italian educational culture to embrace the 'extreme proposal...of deschooling' made by Illich (Illich 1971). Instead, it was Freire's thought, as delineated famously in his classic text from 1968 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1996), which became the paradigmatic influence on the European Left as its politics sought to influence the educational sphere. Outside the specific historical and national contexts of Italy and Europe, this essay will take a more intra-philosophical look at the rationale for the positing of a crucial difference between Freire and Illich on education. In many respects, one can question this historic judgement as closer inspection of their key works reveals a fundamental sense of shared vision. Let us seek to explore and clarify the nature of this fundamental solidarity while first understanding those specific differences which were to be seen historically as so definitive.

The different interpretations of Freire and Illich

The differing interpretations of Freire and Illich in the context of the 1970s in Italy as outlined by Todaro are significant when we come to explore their respective relations to the approach of Critical Pedagogy (Todaro 2021). As Todaro notes, the Left-wing Catholics in Italy at the time (very much under the influence of

Liberation Theology) came to see the need for a critical thinking and a greater emphasis on democracy as a remedy to the endemic inequalities in the society. At the same time, this grouping demonstrated a reluctance to agree with the extreme proposal preached by Illich's teachings about 'deschooling society' (Illich 1971). But concerning the acceptability of Freire's perspectives and the ultimate unacceptability of Illich's ones, one is led to analyse what exactly were the specific differences between the two thinkers.

In Italy, this discussion took off from the provoking challenge coming from Illich's judgement of what he was indicating as the 'last chance' given to education, by way of its complete deinstitutionalization (Todaro 2021). This was effectively his call for a 'deschooling society'. While on initial inspection this call for a transformative political pedagogy would seem to have great resonance with Freire's thinking, rather on the contrary in the Italian context of the time Illich's call was met with suspicion. Left-wing journals asked a decisive question: 'cui prodest?' (Lombardo Radice 1972). In other words: to whom could the solution for 'deschooling society' be of use? Could it be taken as a genuinely advantageous path to reach the revolutionary purposes brought about by a socialist civilization? Could it really lead the humble folk, the excluded, the 'oppressed' to come to a more equal society? (Todaro 2021). Today, we can note the powerful contemporary resonance of this same question as Covid sweeps across the globe and how its attack on the most poor and vulnerable has been enabled by Rightist leaders and ideologues (Trump, Bolsonaro etc.). Moreover, it can be argued that in politics and in education, the increasing technologization of life and of knowledge under neoliberal global economy has significantly intensified the contemporary problems of inequality and authoritarianism which were described as emergent by our relevant theorists from the late 1960s onwards.

In the resulting earlier discussion, the various movements of the Left in Italy ultimately excluded the conception of Illich's deschooling ethos from any genuinely transformative potential in education and politics. Rather than bringing about emancipation, this philosophy would only have the effect of reinforcing the

power of the ruling classes whilst destroying the residual possibility of transformation for the oppressed and weak in society. In direct contrast to this negative reception of Illich's philosophy, Freire's proposals found the complete opposite reaction in Italy of the time. Despite arguably maintaining quite 'bourgeois' elements in his thought, such as Christianity (the supposed 'opium of the people') and existential philosophy (taking up the influence of Sartre and others), the Left focused on Freire's critique of banking education as a force for overturning the authoritarian power bloc of European and wider global society. In this, his work was seen (*contra* Illich) as liberating the oppressed from their condition of slavery and fear.

Understanding the affirmation in Illich's dual vision

Above, we described the very differing receptions of the work of Freire and Illich respectively in Italy and beyond of the 1970s. This differing interpretation seemed to posit Illich as very much a reactionary thinker whose proposals for a 'deschooling' of society would lead to a reinforcement of the power blocs in society. In contrast, Freire's vision of education is seen as empowering the weak and oppressed so as to overturn the very same power blocs and to lead to a genuine emancipation. This latter conception of Freire's work is especially tied to an almost eulogistic reading of Freire's early and seminal text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

While this reading has a certain persuasiveness, and above we looked at some of the specific differences between Freire and Illich's thought, nonetheless it is ultimately unconvincing. An interesting and important reading of Illich's thought is provided by Erich Fromm, in his 'Introduction' (Fromm 1971) to Illich's 1971 text *Celebration of Awareness. A Call for Institutional Revolution* (Illich 1971). Fromm highlights the radical and critical aspects of Illich's thinking which, from the beginning of his work in the Church, are set very much against the power bloc of institutions and power. For example, Illich often comments on the discursive

work of the *Center for Intercultural Documentation* (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, quoting at the beginning of *Deschooling Society* for example the influence of Valentine Borremans and of Everett Reimer in urging that 'the ethos, not just the institutions, of society ought to be "deschooled"' (Illich 1971a, 4).

Fromm, while acknowledging some of the differences in their respective approaches (and the same could be said of the relation between Fromm and Freire) nonetheless points to a fundamental congruence. Seeking a term or concept for this philosophical agreement, Fromm comes up with the term 'humanist radicalism' (Fromm 1971, 8). What does such a 'radicalist humanism' actually mean? In grappling with this definition and clarification, Fromm makes some points and develops insights that are important not simply for a specific reading of this Illichian text but for a more meta-level reading of Illich's conception of a radical education and politics. They also help us to draw Illich's vision (despite the differences) closer to that of Freire. Fromm clarifies first that he is most interested in describing not a specificity of ideas but rather an attitude, a whole 'approach' (Fromm 1971, 8) to education and indeed to existence itself (each of these thinkers we can argue are existentialists above all else). According to Fromm, the radicalist humanism that is distinctive of Illich's approach is based on the principle of 'omnibus dubitandum' ('everything must be doubted').

Crucially for Fromm, this capacity for radical doubt is not an end in itself but rather points to more positive possibilities of transformation. This leads in Illich to 'the readiness and the capacity for critical questioning of all assumptions and institutions which have become idols under the name of common sense, logic and what is supposed to be 'natural'' (Fromm 1971, 8). But while such radical questioning may appear to be wholly negative (or as was often the case in the reading of Illich, destructive) for Fromm it is precisely the opposite. It can both negate and affirm in the same approach as a way of deconstructing so as to reopen the possibilities of transformation of humanity in education and in politics. 'Humanistic radicalism is radical questioning guided by insight into the dynamics

of man's nature and by concern for man's growth and full unfolding' (Fromm 1971, 9).

In 'Deschooling Society' and in the many other essays which emerge at this time from Illich, one sees both of these tendencies at work. The radical doubt is certainly present. As well as the aforementioned call to 'deschool' the ethos of the whole society, Illich for example in the essay 'A Call to Celebration' refers to 'the demonic nature of present systems which force man to consent to his own deepening self-destruction' (Illich 1971b, 17). In the very same essay, however, he clearly contextualises this process and need for deconstruction as part of a more dialectical drive towards something more positive and affirmative; 'we can escape from these dehumanising systems. The way ahead will be found by those who are unwilling to be constrained by the apparently all-determining forces and structures of the Industrial Age. Our freedom and power are determined by our willingness to accept responsibility for the future' (Illich 1971b, 17).

We see a similar dynamic in the text 'Deschooling Society'. On the one side, the constant negative interpretation of current institutional pressures on humanity: 'Man is trapped in the boxes he makes to contain the ills Pandora allowed to escape. The blackout of reality in the smog produced by our tools has enveloped us' (Illich 1971a, 134). However, once more this negative interpretation has to be contextualised in the way of Fromm's interpretation of Illich as a 'radical humanist'. Illich is deconstructing so as to reconstruct (oftentimes, the former is stressed in the readings of Illich, and the latter missed). As Illich outlines in the same seminal text from 1971, 'On the other hand, the growing awareness on the part of governments, as well as of employers, taxpayers, enlightened pedagogues, and school administrators, that graded curricular teaching for certification has become harmful could offer large masses of people an extraordinary opportunity: that of pre-serving the right of equal access to the tools both of learning and of sharing with others what they know or believe' (Illich 1971a, 135). The contemporary resonance of this simultaneous radical critique of the existing institutional system, alongside a reconstructive and hopeful future vision, has a

strong contemporary significance for us today in 2021. With an eye to some of his critics, Fromm says of Illich's writings that 'by the creative shock they communicate – except to those who react only with anger at such nonsense – they help to stimulate energy and hope for a new beginning' (Fromm 1971, 10).

Authority through freedom - Understanding Freire and Critical Pedagogy in a postmodern context

While the stress on the chasm between Freire and Illich in the 1970s seems to overstress the negativity of Illich's vision (which is counterbalanced by an ultimate affirmation for positive change), we can say that there is in the same reading an overemphasis on positivity in Freire's vision of education and politics. Part of the difficulty here is that Freire's work is often interpreted solely in terms of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* period. In this, we might say that the Italian interpreters of the Freire/Illich divide in the 1970s may have been correct enough in their reading of *Pedagogy* but Freire's later work strikes a more discordant note (connecting it to Illich's more deconstructive dimension). We might think about this longer-term vision as 'Understanding Freire in a Postmodern Context'. This latter category returns us to the open-ended space of Freire's own interpretation of his work, focusing on how his work has been developed by specific aspects of the Critical Pedagogy tradition of thinking. Here, also, as well as Freire's own self-critique and self-reflexivity, we can see the strong connections which Freire maintains to more emancipatory aspects of postmodern thought (often a very neglected connection). In this, Illich's own work (in its relation to succeeding postmodernism) can also be seen as quite prescient.

Key to this understanding is the reinterpretation of Marx and his legacy in philosophy and politics. Freire is not unique in grappling with the complexity of the legacy from Marx. As David Mc Lellan's work has shown paradigmatically, the interpretation of Marx's original work is full of dilemmas insofar as much of Marx's work was left ambiguous at his death. In his Introduction to *Marxism after Marx*,

for example (Mc Lellan 1980), Mc Lellan outlines the myriad examples of this. Referring to these under four category headings of 'economics, sociology, politics and philosophy', Mc Lellan outlines the complex reinterpretation or interpretation after the fact required by the Marxist tradition in understanding the 'legacy of Marx' (Mc Lellan 1980, 3ff). Developing from the question of a contested legacy of Marxist interpretation, we can explore a more specific question in Freire's work which has an especial bearing on education and indeed on politics. This is the oft-cited question of 'authority and freedom'. In a similar manner to Illich's dual approach to strong critique and simultaneous affirmation, we can see how Freire also develops an ambiguous interpretation of authority in education and politics. Again, this is an interesting point of convergence which goes against the conventional interpretation that Illich is, for example, simply anti-authority. Key to this more nuanced reading of Illich is Fromm's understanding that we need to look on a more meta-level interpretation of Illich's 'approach' rather than abstracting some essence from more specific comments or radical critiques.

In turn, Freire's approach to the question of 'authority and freedom' in education and teaching (as well as in the political sphere), takes its cue from his early and radical approach to literacy education in Brazil in the 1960s. However, the radical democratic thrust of this educational vision meets very significant political resistance in Brazil and Freire spends 30 years in exile. The Freirean approach needs to be contextualised in the specifically Brazilian context. However, this theme also explores his original contribution to the wider problematic of authority and freedom in the Philosophy of Education. In Freire, there is a simultaneous critique of traditionalism and progressivism (not dissimilar to Dewey's in *Experience and Education* [Dewey 1970]) and this allows Freire to reconceptualise the relation between authority and freedom in education. We can explore how Freire's 1968 text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1996) articulates this understanding very clearly and from a very strong conceptual-philosophical perspective. This question also evolves in Freire's later work, in for example *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1992), which

represents a return to a more experiential analysis of the question of authority and freedom in education. Nonetheless, while recognising the need for a philosophy of education to develop 'in a manner in keeping with the times', there is also a very strong continuity between the early and later work in this understanding. In brief, in both his earlier and later work, Freire develops an understanding of an 'authority through freedom', a co-dependent relationship between these two variables in pedagogy, as also in political life. Again, one can make a similar claim for Illich's work that, somewhat contrary to existing impressions, that his work is seeking to reconstruct possibilities for education, politics, and social life beyond the first (more obvious) stage of vehement critique of the status quo of institutional life.

The misuse of authority in education and wider society is described by Freire in *Pedagogy* under the example of what he refers to famously as 'banking education'. In looking at banking education, Freire pays particular attention to what he calls the 'Teacher-Student contradiction' and the 'A-J of Banking Education' (Freire 1996; Irwin 2012; Cowden, Singh 2011). Thus, traditional forms of education set up an opposition or 'contradiction' between the omnipotent power of the teacher as authority and the passivity and powerlessness of the student. This represents the value of authority as *authoritarian* – authority is only itself when it is one-way; 'the teacher presents him or herself to the students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he or she justifies his/her own existence' (Freire 1996, 53).

But there is another dimension to this critique of authority in Freire, alongside the critique of traditional authoritarianism. We already can discern this aspect in Freire's 'A-J' of banking education. In the first principles of this conception, we can see the traditional authoritarianism clearly evident:

(a) the teacher knows everything, and the students know nothing

(b) the teacher talks and the students listen - meekly

(c) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined (Freire 1996).

Here, the authority is all-encompassing and unquestioned, students reduced to powerlessness and meekness, and the suggestion of force or even violence is present in the descriptions of discipline (one thinks of the usage of corporal punishment in traditional education and of the use of violence in colonial society, the latter described vividly by Freire here). But, in the developing principles of banking education, one also sees a different emphasis, on what might be considered a more hidden or ideological form of authoritarianism.

> (d) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
>
> (e) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students (Freire 1996)

Here, the concept of 'illusion' is used for the first time, and we see Freire's foregrounding of a certain kind of deception or 'ideology' which can be at work in the use of authority. Freire's own conception of 'ideology' owes much to Gramsci's conception of *hegemony* (Eagleton 1994, 197), which allowed for the notion of ideology to become more subtly connected to 'lived, habitual social practice' (Eagleton 1994, 197). In this context, the situation itself under capitalist society and education was no longer simply false but *subject to contestation.* It is the latter view which is most influential on Freire, and which leads him to also address some complicities between progressive education and politics and more traditional authority.

In the case of principle (d), Freire is suggesting that nonauthoritarian or progressive forms of teaching, ones where the students are supposedly given freedom to 'act', can sometimes mask a more hidden authoritarian aspect; there is just the 'illusion' of freedom, of the possibility of action. Here, Freire seems intent on focusing on residual aspects of the banking mindset in education and politics, which can continue to determine even attempts to move beyond and transform traditional approaches. In his later work, for example in *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire 1992), we will see how this critical

analysis of progressivism turns into an unsparing self-critique, but here his critical analysis is more at the conceptual level. Freire makes an important distinction between what he refers to as 'sectarianism' on the one side, and 'radicalisation' on the other. The 'rightist sectarian' attempts to domesticate the present and hopes that the future will simply reproduce this domesticated present. The 'leftist sectarian', in contrast, considers the future pre-established. Both are caught within a fatalistic position or a 'circle of certainty' and both 'negate freedom' (Freire 1996, 19). Thus, such 'sectarian' approaches are not sufficient to go beyond traditional forms of education and politics but rather simply reinforce and repeat them.

Certainly, the critique of the more obvious forms of banking education and politics must be made, where a clear binarism exists between teacher authority and student passivity – thus, (a) the teacher knows everything, and the students know nothing (Freire 1996). However, such an objectifying and authoritarian mindset and politics can also be present when we seem to have gone beyond such authority completely. The banking mentality and ideology may also be a hidden component of a progressive education and politics. Of course, here in a very different context, we see Freire connecting with Dewey's critique of progressivism in *Experience and Education* (Dewey 1973). But if we critique the traditional authority of education while simultaneously critiquing the emphasis on a supposed freedom in progressivism, what is our third alternative and what happens to the value of authority per se? Here, the last principle cited above of Freire's analysis of banking education becomes important: (e) 'the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students' (Freire 1996). This statement from Freire is significant because, as with Dewey, Freire is seeking to defend a conception of 'authority' in education and politics – 'the authority of knowledge' – while eschewing the simple identification of this authority with professional authority. It is this latter which must be far more suspiciously critiqued. But the danger of this professionalization of authority ('the circle of certainty') applies not

simply to traditional forms of banking education but also to forms of supposedly emancipatory education, where its repressiveness may be hidden.

For Freire, as later for a thinker such as Jacques Rancière (Rancière 1991), this tendency to a hidden authoritarianism can thus be fatal for the progressive educator, or at least the one who wishes to be radical rather than sectarian: 'the radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a "circle of certainty" within which he also imprisons reality. On the contrary, the more radical he is, the more fully he enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he can better transform it. He is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled. He is not afraid to meet the people or to enter into dialogue with them' (Freire 1996, 21). Freire adds here a reference to Rosa Luxembourg, thus allowing also a more feminist perspective: 'as long as theoretic knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of academicians in the party, the latter will face the danger of going astray' (quoted Freire 1996, 21).

Crucial to this notion of radical education, then, is the notion of authentic communication and a critique of the paternalism which destroys all authentic communication. This was a paradigmatic theme of Freire's work even before *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* In his early text *Extension or Communication* (Freire 2005b), he demystifies all aid or helping relationships. He sees an implicit ideology of paternalism, social control and nonreciprocity between experts and 'helpees', and refers to the oppressive character of all nonreciprocal relationships (Freire 2005b). Of course, this sets up a major dilemma for radical education or education and politics which seeks to go beyond banking education and beyond oppression. Too often, the previously oppressed can become the future oppressors, where there is simply a role reversal rather than any authentic transformation of the oppression into real freedom and hope. The question thus becomes: *how can a more authentic practice of authority emerge in radical education which does not simply return us to a newer form of oppression, a more subtle version of authoritarianism and misuse of power*? This is the dilemma which Freire's later work seeks to resolve. As we have suggested above, it is also the complex dilemma

which the work of Illich seeks to deconstruct (often leading him to a more throughgoing critique of institutions as such in the effort to avoid residual power formations and 'backwash').

Concluding remarks

Freire's progressive work in education and in politics in the early 1960s in Brazil was singled out as socio-politically 'dangerous' (threatening a redress of endemic injustice and illiteracy for the poor), and he was to spend nearly thirty years in exile. Perhaps one of the unintended offshoots of his exile was that his work and influence spread to a much wider public internationally and including Europe. In 1968, when he published his seminal *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in English, a footnote on the very first page notes the seismic revolutionary events of May '68 happening outside his window. These events seem to mirror the very conflicts and dilemmas (social and psychological) which he delineates in the book's very pages. The footnote could be translated as 'Look, I told you so!' with a Leninist question 'What is to be done?'

But what about now, the contemporary situation? We write this at an extraordinary time in contemporary world history. We are currently in 'lockdown' again and the successive waves of the Covid 19 pandemic show no signs of abating, although we are also witnessing the first vaccinations of our country's populations. In Freirean language, we might say there is genuinely *hope* on the horizon. And yet this pandemic has only highlighted more than ever the extreme disparities in power and resources which weaken our societies immeasurably. The shocking impact of the pandemic on our poorest communities has also been accompanied by the rise of political movements and figures who seem intent on widening this divide, while claiming to be 'populist'.

Despite the specific differences in the work of Illich and Freire respectively, we have argued in this essay that the fundamentals of their thinking are a shared critique of banking education and a re-conceptualisation of authority and teaching

in renewed education systems. Both thinkers reject the two most obvious positions post-May '68. On the one hand, there is the New Right perspective, represented by the *Philosophes* in France, who view all Leftist thought as Stalinist. On the other side, we have what might be termed the 'Deleuzian-Guattarian' alternative, represented most crucially by the 1974 text, *Anti-Oedipus*. Here, the whole conception of a possible 'revolution' (the whole '68 dream), is deemed to be an impossibility. Instead, both Freire and Illich share in a renewed sense of the critical educational project of emancipation, albeit with different emphases. Moreover, the current crisis of education under late capitalism (and subject to the conditions of the Covid pandemic) returns the powerful resources of Freire and Illich to centre stage in education and politics. It can be argued that, in politics and in education, the increasing technologization of life and of knowledge under neoliberal global economy has intensified and significantly deepened the contemporary problems of inequality and authoritarianism, which were described as emergent by our relevant theorists from the late 1960s onwards. But whither the radical and alternative educational-political visions of Freire and Illich today? This is a question full of suggestive potential for those of us committed to progressive change within society, but a question which also maintains an open-ended aspect which is fraught with challenge and difficulty.

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Popular education as a tool for democratising and decolonising participatory performing arts training in Merseyside, UK

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Abstract

This paper was initially given in presentation form. It is a narrative account of Collective Encounters' emergent practice in the field of popular education using embodied creative methodologies. It examines the development of the 'Radical Makers' training programme, which is geographically located in the North West of England, and places it in the context of a discriminatory Arts and Culture Sector. The practice of embodied popular education is not common in the UK, and this paper examines how Collective Encounters link it to their theory of social change. Finally, it addresses what has been learned in the course of delivering the programme. The paper incorporates topics that were discussed in the questions that followed the presentation in order to present a full picture of the proceedings.

Introduction

Collective Encounters is a professional arts organisation specialising in Theatre for Social Change. Based in Liverpool, in the North West of the UK, we work strategically to find platforms for our participants to have their voices heard and speak directly to power. We are committed to research and on-going learning, and our Centre for Excellence in Participatory Theatre offers training, sector

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development and support. While our process is theatre driven it borrows many approaches from community development.

The arts sector in the UK is characterised by the hegemony of privileged elites, who exhibit a high degree of networked social capital, educational and generational advantage. The conditions that underpin this work prevent people from subaltern communities gaining entry to the arts through recognised pathways and career opportunities (Daboo 2018). Institutional and structural intersectional discrimination occurs at all levels through 'meritocratic' and target focussed educational paradigms; aesthetic assumption and policing of form and content; privileging and 'mainstreaming' of already dominant forms; discriminatory funding policies; fragility, and a professional managerial class based liberalism that performs an 'official' equality whilst acting as gatekeeper (Liu 2021): an 'intersectionality of the right' that celebrates diversity while erasing discourses of class, creative agency and power.

In 2019 Collective Encounters set up the Radical Makers Training Programme to address these issues in Merseyside. Merseyside is one of the most contested spaces within the 'problematic' North of England (Martin, Schafran, Taylor 2018). We use a mixed, open, methodology based on radical rather than liberal models of transformative social change. Key features of this approach are: the use of the Spiral Model of Popular Education; an understanding of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, Wenger 1991); situated and embodied learning; a mixed in-person, online, and hybrid synchronous course delivery coupled with extensive use of bespoke asynchronous resources; an approach informed by intersectional understanding, from recruitment to active participation in the course curriculum, to continued long term support after the course end; and the building of alliances and partnerships with other arts and culture organisations sited within subaltern communities.

The course is linked into active debate and learning throughout the whole organisation regarding climate justice, unlearning of racism, and the decolonisation of the course curriculum and resources.

This paper will provide a narrative account of our work so far, with particular reference to our outcomes, and pedagogical learning of relevance to training and education within the arts generally.

The company

Collective Encounters was founded in 2004, initially to research community theatre in the north of Liverpool, and address identified lack of provision. The company has grown, and we now run Participatory Theatre Programmes that work with adults in areas of the region where there is still little opportunity to participate in the arts (Above and Beyond); with women, particularly the radical contribution women have made to the region (Women In Action); young migrants (Where You're At); Looked After Children; and Older People (we have researched and published a guide to dementia-friendly arts activities). Our Centre for Excellence provides training and sector development nationally and internationally, and our Radical Makers programme reached people who would normally be excluded from such opportunities. It is now being evaluated.

Collective Encounters is one of the few creative organisations in the UK that have an explicit Theory of Social Change (Thornton 2014), and a participant led Manifesto. A key element of this is the intent to demystify the 'system' and enable participants to understand that it IS a system, which is based on capital accumulation, and is not inevitable or natural. The practice of Theatre for Social Change uses drama techniques to make this theory of social change accessible to participants. It draws eclectically on emancipatory theatre practices ranging from Theatre of the Oppressed and its evolutions, to documentary and 'agit-prop' forms, and also ceremonial and ritual performance techniques rooted in global communities of resistance (Boal 2008; Mccarthy and Galvao 2004; Nicholson 2005; Preston 2016; Foster 2016).

It is an 'embodied' practice which allows for somatic, non-verbal and direct lived experience to be placed at the centre of communication with participants and

audiences, and questions normative aesthetics (Bharucha 2011). It also blurs the distinction between participants and audiences (again, drawing on Boal's concept of the 'Spectactor'). It distinguishes between liberal/individual changes, that leave systems of oppression intact, and radical change, that seeks to overturn these systems. Thus, it stands apart from much of the practice of 'applied theatre' which often measures change through individual outcomes related for example to health, recovery from addiction, or reducing 'offending behaviour'.

We are also developing expertise in research, using creative methodologies. Commissioned research has included reports on the Social Impact of the Arts In Merseyside; Rough Sleepers; Delivering Participatory Theatre During Social Distancing: What's Working?; and insights into how Covid 19 impacted young people and then Ethnic Minority Communities in the Liverpool City Region. We engage with academic institutions and research that informs our practice and have supported a number of staff members and participants in accessing higher education and research degrees. We have collaborated with universities such as De Montfort, SOAS, Goldsmiths' College London, Liverpool Hope, The Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, and Edge Hill University. Research also informs our creative drama methodology and with participants we have co-created an ethical research policy that guides our practice. Our 'Radical Researchers' project, which was part of Aidan Jolly's Masters by Research, investigated community centred knowledge as co-produced by a participant group.

The region

Merseyside, also known as "Liverpool City Region (LCR)" is located in the North West of England with a population of 1.4m. It is made up of 6 Boroughs, Liverpool City, the Wirral on the left bank of the Mersey Estuary, Sefton in the north, Knowsley and St Helens in the east, and Halton, which straddles the south of the Mersey. The region is more deprived than the average for England: over a third of

the City Region's neighbourhoods are in the top 10% most employment deprived nationally (LCR 2020).

Much of the public narrative concerning LCR is that of deficit. Historically and currently, it has been portrayed as unusually unruly, violent, and ungovernable. In some ways the UK central government behaves as though LCR is an 'internal colony' (Jolly 2022), and former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson famously described its residents as exhibiting 'an excessive predilection for welfarism' (Scraton 2019).

It is currently largely governed directly by the Department for Communities, a central government department, in a process that is expensive and not subject to local democratic oversight (Halliday 2021). In fact, LCR has vast cultural assets, such as a wealth of diverse communities dating back at least 250 years (Zack-Williams 1997), and the largest number of museums, galleries, parks, and historic buildings outside London (Visit Liverpool 2022[1]). This is reflected in the number of grass roots organisations making art (in the widest sense) in the region (an umbrella organisation, Creative Organisations of Liverpool[2], has 31 members, and a further 5 delivery partners, and this does not include the major museums and galleries).

Privilege in the arts in the UK:

This work takes place against a background of elitism unchanged since the Committee for the Encouragement of the Arts (CEMA) was set up in 1940 and subsequently integrated into the post-World War Two social settlement. A key figure in this was the Liberal economist John Maynard Keynes, who at the time was involved in developing the new international economic paradigm at Bretton Woods (Davenport-Hines 2015). CEMA established the modern UK arts funding system, based on patrician conceptions of artistic excellence. "The Arts Britain

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[1] https://www.visitliverpool.com/things-to-do/arts-and-culture (Accessed 20th October 2022)
[2] https://cool-collective.co.uk/members/ (Accessed 21st October 2022)

Ignores" (Khan 1976, 1980) showed how funding under the successor to CEMA, the Arts Council of Great Britain, was racist, gendered, and class based. The CEMA was led by white educated upper class men, whose conception of 'the transcendence of high art', more recently echoed by Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell (Department of Culture 2004), was used to define what kinds of work would be given state support. These assumptions have been carried through all subsequent iterations of arts funding in the UK (now under the aegis of Arts Council England). Currently, this has evolved into more nuanced forms of oppression where the 'Intersectional Right' set the agenda, embracing diversity and individual equality, but not issues of power and class, a phenomenon reported in "The Arts Britain Still Ignores" (Daboo 2018). This systemic failure to redistribute public funding in the arts more equitably has been widely studied and reported:

"The recipients of the largest grants, which account for a very substantial proportion of the available funding, have pretty much remained the same as they were in Keynes' times" (Belfiore 2021, 107).

The Radical Makers Programme

As a response, Collective Encounters inaugurated the Radical Makers Programme for training in Facilitating Participatory Theatre. It was aimed at adults over 25 who have faced significant barriers to accessing arts training, but who have relevant life experience, transferrable skills, and some creative experience. Initially, it was run as a three-year pilot, with an additional evaluation period which will run until March 2023. The methodology is based on The Spiral Model of Popular Education (Arnold et al. 1991) and can also be described as a 'community of practice' (Lave, Wenger 1991). Embedded within this is a commitment to continuing decolonisation of the curriculum, and to developing positive anti-discriminatory practice in recruitment and throughout the course. Early on we learned that it was necessary to distinguish between the process of

decolonisation and the process of diversification, recognising that Collective Encounters still has work to do in both areas, and that progress can be made in each independent of the other. As our Artistic Director at the time noted, this involved deep reflection within the team:

"I had still been very much rooted in a Western almost canonical approach to community arts and I think the Black Lives Matter movement and work across company, personally looking at unlearning racism and rethinking programming, has been a massive change for me".

[Sarah Thornton, Artistic Director of Collective Encounters, Interview, 17/12/20]

The course was reviewed early on (in February 2020), both because of feedback from the first cohort, and also because the onset of the Covid 19 Pandemic required a radical re-think of the technical aspects of our pedagogy. At this point the emphasis changed from a linear account of the 'evolution' of Community Theatre/Participatory Drama in the UK to a more complex and 'spiral' paradigm reflecting international movements and the specifics of "The Arts Britain Still Ignores" (see above). A shift in language took place: the definition of theatre came to include 'performance' in its broadest sense. This allowed for the deconstruction of the 'canon' referred to above by Thornton, and a recognition that if the definition in the UK of 'Theatre' is in itself colonised, then this has to be changed to be led by the decolonial practice of for example, Black and Brown artists, disabled artists, queer artists, and hybrid genre breaking forms such as ceremonial or ritual performances. Some participants felt also that the approach was too similar to a university course in Applied Theatre:

"Some felt the material was too demanding and we wanted a lighter approach. They modified the syllabus a bit to be less serious, academic, more hands-on. ...he listened, took on board, and changed things... being given tasks, wasn't keen on homework, more hands on, the practical side rather than theory...."

[VB, Radical Makers participant cohort one, Interview, 10/08/20]

This new 'non-linearity' is illustrated in the course structure (Diagram 1). This illustrates the various ways in which participants' existing knowledge, skills, and lived experience can be integrated into the knowledge exchange between the course facilitators, each cohort as a whole, and each individual within the cohort.

RM Course flow chart

Entry Point Must have either:	What Is Participatory Theatre?	Progressions	
Getting Creative Online		Making Theatre	Digital Participatory Theatre
Or	Or		Access to some module content will also be possible through Artist/ Sector Development courses. Individual students may be able to study some content through self directed learning to enable them to take a module further along the progression route, and then do the whole of the missed module the following year
Relevant Digital Skills	Relevant Drama Experience		
	Working With Groups		
	Or		
	Relevant Community Work Experience		
			Working Professionally In The Arts

Diagram 1*: Course Structure*

The course was re-imagined as containing six modules, which participants could access in a number of ways, over one or two years. Each module addressed a recognised area of training need but was designed to be flexible and responsive to participant led course design, and the rapidly changing conditions during the progress of the Pandemic. So, in the first year, for example, there was a great need for support for participants to be able to access the course wholly online. This meant carrying out a digital needs and skills audit with each of them, providing necessary equipment such as tablets, and sometimes providing them with internet access through provision of a dongle or a pre-paid sim. The second-year cohort, however, had already had time to gain such skills before joining, and the emphasis became more about supporting access to the course and its resources in a way that

suited each participant, particularly during the onset of the Omicron Variant of Covid 19 (during the third year of delivery). The impact of this new variant, coupled with the confused messaging around public health from the UK government, meant researching and developing pedagogies appropriate to delivery in hybrid environments, with some participants attending online and some in person. Ultimately this required the company to invest in, and research techniques for working with, technologies such as the 'Owl', which greatly improved communication between those attending online and those attending in person[3].

Facilitation skills also had to adapt and change. We found it necessary to have two or event three facilitators for each session. One would lead the session, and work 'in the room'. Another, also present in the room, was responsible for the social and emotional aspects of facilitation, including paying travel expenses and bringing refreshments. The third facilitator was present online and supported all those attending virtually. Our practice prior to the Pandemic had been entirely presence-based. Working in virtual environments threw up new issues – for example, many neurodiverse and disabled people found that the Zoom environment enabled them to attend, free from issues with transport or social anxiety. However, for people with conditions such as complex PTSD, the Pandemic created greater anxiety, (Dutheil F, Mondillon L, Navel V, 2021; Vigouroux M 2020) and the Zoom environment was perceived as additionally threatening due to the lack of non-verbal and pheromonal communication between the group, or 'co-regulation'[4].

The popular education methodology employed allowed all these issues to be expressed, and for mitigation and adaption strategies to be explored. An

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[3] The Owl and similar technologies allow for clear audio-visual communication between a group in a room, and an online group, through the use of wide-angle cameras, and sophisticated microphone technology and software that supresses the noise and feedback familiar to anyone using Zoom in such contexts early in the 'return to the room' that followed the introduction of vaccines.

[4] This podcast, https://accidentalgods.life/sarah-schlote/ looks at the implications of the pandemic and conferencing platforms for people who have experienced trauma (Accessed 22/10/22).

interesting comparison can be made between my experience as Director of this course, and my experience of completing a Masters by Research degree, which was also delivered online. I have lived experience of CPTSD, so initially I found Zoom extremely tiring, but after a period of adjustment, the technology proved adaptable, and strategies for integrating missing non-verbal information were developed[5] (although not everyone found these useful). By contrast, the University systems (Collaborate) were flawed and functioned poorly, but also the pedagogical aspects of the course were still those used prior to the Pandemic. The University appeared to lack the capacity to respond both technologically and pedagogically to the crisis, and appeared to offer little or no support or advice to lecturers about online education. By contrast, there is evidence that certain aspects of the conscientisation process within popular education can readily be adapted for use in 'the Zoomscape' (Breen 2021), and this was certainly our experience.

Diagram 2 illustrates how the course evolved so that five parallel "Responsive Learning Pathways" were available to participants. Where possible, people were given placements in other areas of Collective Encounters' portfolio, or with other companies, although this was often hard to broker in the Pandemic. Also, participants were offered free access to all training available through the Centre for Excellence. The course was externally validated through the Open Awards scheme, which meant it gave participants an accredited qualification, but success on the course was not measured by attainment in this context, and it was possible to take the course, but not to do the assessments.

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[5] This related podcast https://accidentalgods.life/finding-heartfelt-connection/ explores strategies for reconnecting on online platforms so as to try to replace missing physiological cues that would normally be picked up with physical presence (Accessed 22/10/22).
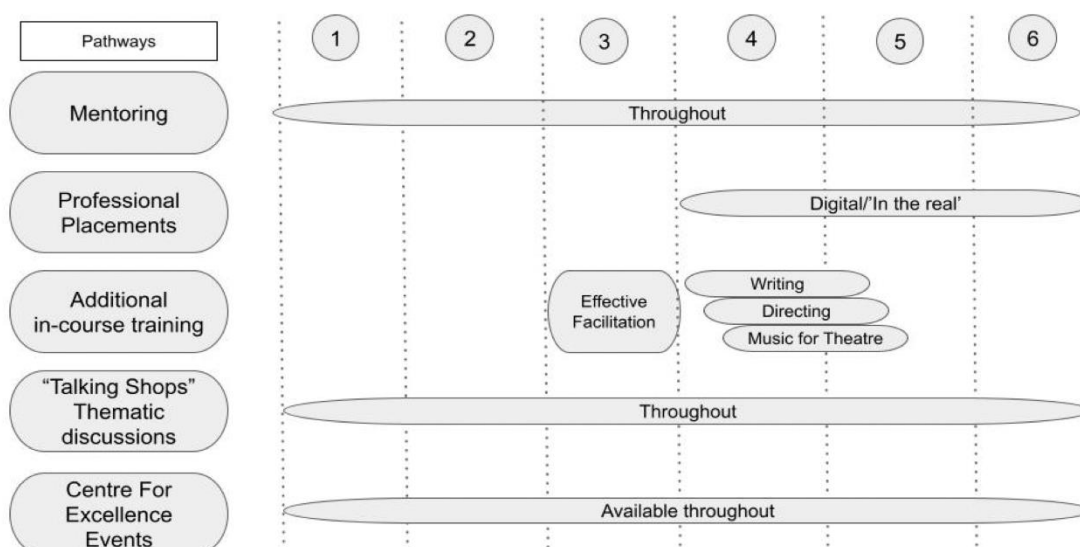
Diagram 2*: Learning Pathways*

Another important aspect of the course was the techniques employed to curate learning resources. We recognised, through the process of recruitment and access auditing, that our participants used many different learning styles. Consequently, resources were made available in a number of formats and at a number of levels, from video summaries of topics to full academic articles for those interested. There was no compulsion for people to use any specific resource, and also, participants were encouraged to share resources they had identified independently. Diagram 3 illustrates this. Most important was the distinction we made early on through research (and consultancy with digital pedagogy specialist Dr. Erinma Ochu) between 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' resources. This meant that sessions delivered in person were recorded and made available to all members of the cohorts even if they were not able to attend the live session in person or online. For the fifth module, Digital Participatory Theatre, a specific set of videos was commissioned from Maya Chowdhry, an expert artist in this area, and these have become our most watched online resources.[6] Through the Centre

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[6] https://collective-encounters.org.uk/digital-participatory-theatre/ (Accessed 22/10/22).

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for Excellence, we have also been able to curate and disseminate case studies for working in the hybrid environment[7].
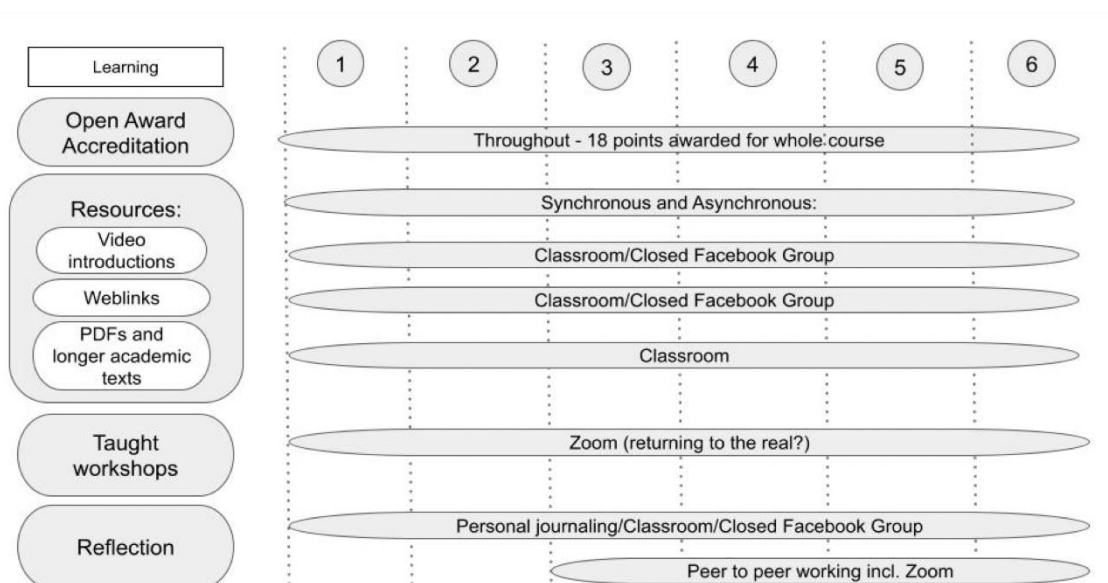
Diagram 3: *Learning Resources*

Inclusion

Parallel with our development of popular education in the specific context of creative education, we adopted an interdisciplinary approach informed by emancipatory understandings of intersectionality. We regard our learning in this area as a continual process, subject to review, and informed by our connections with campaigning organisations and academic research.

Firstly, and most importantly, the course was free to attend, and we were able to support participants with travel costs (and where necessary taxi travel), childcare costs, equipment costs, and other training costs that they had identified as relevant to their development. Because of our history of working with impoverished working-class communities, we have developed an understanding

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[7] https://collective-encounters.org.uk/library-resource/blurring-the-lines-six-short-case-studies-on-hybrid-participatory-theatre/ (Accessed 22/10/22).

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of socio-economic barriers not usually applied in monitoring and evaluation in the UK arts sector, which is still not fully recognised by Arts Council England.

Our recruitment and training (as well as our practice generally) are informed by explicit understandings of intersectionality, the Social Model of Disability, Neurodiversity, and Trauma Informed Practice (see for example Crenshaw 1996; van der Kolk 1994). As discussed above, the course is participant informed and flexible (and we aim for it to become participant led). We have piloted an "Inclusion document" which allows participants to identify and describe how they wish to participate, and what barriers may prevent their full participation.

Outcomes

21 People have completed the course

44 attended at least one module

6 other people are receiving continuing mentoring

4 are volunteering long term in arts or social change organisations

3 are in further study at degree or Master's level

10 are in employment or self-employment

8 also participated in our Radical Researchers programme

Case studies

A case study serves to illustrate the manner in which people access the course and then progress through it:

Person A is a working-class single parent, physically disabled, who is also a survivor of domestic violence with PTSD. They joined our women only "Confidence through Creativity" programme, then progressed on to the Radical Makers programme in 2020, completing the course in 2021. They now work for CE and other organisations as well as playing a role in advocacy for their

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community and various Survivor led support groups. They have also returned to their interrupted University Degree in Drama.

A common theme for participants was that for many of them, the impact of events in their daily lives, connected to issues with benefits, work, housing, the Pandemic, and health, could to some extent be managed, but for some different approaches were required. At least 2 chose to withdraw from the Radical Makers course but continue to access other Collective Encounters programmes. 3 more withdrew from the course but maintained mentoring relationships that have enabled them to continue to develop as artists.

Conclusion

The Radical Makers course was delivered in an immensely complex and shifting landscape affected by unprecedented questions of public health, the UK Government's contradictory and ultimately laissez faire approach to the Pandemic, and a neo-liberal funding environment, which does not fully recognise the aesthetics of participatory theatre. The UK Government's pandemic response immediately prior to and after the first lockdown period (26th March to 23rd June 2020)[8] placed the burden of decision making around safety measures firmly on organisations and individuals. In essence, it became necessary for everyone to become their own epidemiologist. Despite this, Collective Encounters was able to continue and develop its programmes, deliver the Radical Makers course, and support all our participants. A key reason for this was that the course was extremely flexible and responsive to participant needs:

"It's tricky at the moment [with the pandemic] because things are so uncertain, but people can dip in and out if they need to, so if it doesn't work for them, or certain modules don't work this year, it might next year... It's just **trying to respond to how peoples' lives work** and how diverse people are and that they

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[8] https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/charts/uk-government-coronavirus-lockdowns (accessed 24/10/22).

have different interests and ambitions." [Annette Burghes, Executive Director of Collective Encounters, Interview, 04/02/21]

As the course developed, certain contradictions emerged. The ethos of the course created a tension between facilitation for radical change and the need for participants to be able to survive as independent artists. This was explicitly addressed in two modules. Module 3 (see Diagram 1 above) introduced various aspects of ethical practice to the participants, giving them space to consider these issues, while Module 6 gave them individually tailored skills necessary to managing as self-employed artists. Another tension was that between our popular education methodology and that of the accreditation body, Open Awards. Although this system of accreditation is designed for the kind of participants with whom we work, the need for some work to be assessed did not suit everyone. 'Success' on the course was not defined by this process; however, some participants still felt intimidated by it, and it created a large administrative burden. For this reason, it is unlikely that future iterations of the course will use it.

Finally, the course pioneered an explicit combination of popular education and drama that is possibly unique in the UK. The learning from this is informing the rest of our practice and programmes. A key emergent concept is that of 'embodied' popular education which acknowledges the co-construction of knowledge not only through discussion but also through the somatic and emotional exchange that takes place. The last word in this paper should go to a participant:

"Theatre is not only about making money, opening peoples' eyes, certainly community theatre and social change has brought a whole new meaning to the word theatre for me - it's a sharing experience"

[BS, Radical Makers participant cohort one, Interview, 13/08/20]

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Graphic novel in Holocaust education. A critical toolkit

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Abstract

The key idea of the research highlights the relation between the teaching of Holocaust graphic novels in literature classroom and the response of the learners. The main research questions are the following: a. How do the learners familiarize themselves with the central notions and concepts of the Holocaust attributed and represented in graphic novels? b. In which ways do the learners comprehend the similarities and the differences between History and personal story through written and visual representation of the graphic novels? c. Which are the critical responses of the learners in respect of the universal meaning of the Holocaust and the emergence of the Trauma? The qualitative research was conducted using the ethnography method and more specifically the participant observation. The study focuses on 56 recorded literature lessons which are transcribed and coded with MAXQDA and analyzed using the qualitative content analysis.

1. Description of the project and research questions

The research project builds on the academic arguments that the teaching of Holocaust is not only a matter of teaching facts, but also a difficult matter both to be assessed and to translated into pedagogical practice. The first stage of the project concerns the designing of the principles and educational scenarios about the teaching of the Holocaust in secondary education in literature classroom

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(Kalasaridou 2018a; Kalasaridou 2018b). The second stage was the implementation of the educational scenarios in lower secondary education. The third stage is the analysis of the data. The paper will focus on the meanings the students have come across during the teaching of graphic novels. Emphasis will be also given to the coding schemes used to analyze selected teaching sequences. The material that was taught in classrooms put the students in touch with as many as possible literary and cinematic genres that represent the Holocaust. The literary genres and cinematic works as taught material in total were a. Digital Exhibitions of Museums regarding Holocaust, b. Oral Testimonies, c. Graphic Novels, d. Motion Pictures, e. Poems, f. Short Stories, g. Chapters of Novels, h. short documentaries, i. Chapters of diaries or written testimonies.

The main research questions of the project are the following: a. In which ways do the students comprehend the similarities and the differences between History and personal story through written and visual representations? b. Which are the approaches to develop mechanisms against stereotypes and prejudices on the one hand and mechanisms of acceptance of the diversity on the other? c. How do the students familiarize themselves with the central concepts of the Holocaust as these concepts are attributed and represented in literature and cinema? d. In which ways do the students comprehend the meaning of the emergence of the Trauma through literary and cinematic works? e. Lastly, in what way do the students conceptualize the universal meaning of the Holocaust not only as a historical event, but also as a 'cultural' event?

2. Theoretical framework

This research is based on both the theoretical framework of the Pedagogy of Trauma and Critical Media Literacy Pedagogy as well as the results and findings of empirical research, which are related to the teaching of the Holocaust within a global context (Kellner 1995; Caruth 1996; Schwarz 2002; Gorman 2003; Critchell, Sharples 2015; Eckmann, Stevick, Ambrosewicz – Jacobs 2017).

The notion of Trauma is directly connected to the notion of representation, hence with that of Memory, as far as the Holocaust is concerned. The traumatic Memory constitutes version of cultural Memory. The traumatic events take place within a cultural context and on the account of the fact that the events under question are represented through Memory. This depends not only on the experience of the Trauma, its description and narrative, but also on the reception of the Trauma's narration by 'others' and especially their ability to listen to the survivor's account with empathy (Caruth 1996; Brison 1999).

Simultaneously, teaching texts which recount atrocities and, in consequence, contribute to the establishment of the Pedagogy of Trauma, seems to be a competent and essential practice for the teaching of the Holocaust (Kidd 2005; Wolf 2014). This happens because the texts that represent the Holocaust, be they literary or visual ones, deconstruct the preexisting conceptual frameworks of the students as well as those of the teachers, while they similarly negate our ideas in respect of the ways which our knowledge is constructed and passed on. Thus, we are led to reconsider and redefine the texts' impact regarding their ethics as well as their pedagogical value (Caruth 1996).

3. Method

The qualitative research was conducted using the ethnography method and more specifically the participant observation. The observation was held during a period of six months in four different literature classrooms - two classrooms of the Grade 1 and two of the Grade 3 of lower secondary education (N= 84 students in total, 40 males and 44 females). The study focuses on 56 recorded literature lessons. The recorded lessons are transcribed and coded with MAXQDA using the qualitative content analysis. The procedure outlined was based on the prototype of teaching sequences. The individual teaching sequences were selected and analyzed using the Discourse analysis and focusing on the subject learning (Bredel, Pieper 2015).

The steps of the content analysis are the following: a. Segmentation which is related to the changing of topic in responses and the indication of depth of topics. b. The topics: i) Notions and neuralgic symbols of the Holocaust. ii) Ways in which the texts bring into conservation in classroom controversial issues of the Holocaust. iii) The definition of the meaning of "Auschwitz" interpreted in a universal and cultural framework. iv) The impact of the "personal story". v) The impact of the different genres of literary and cinematic works. vi) The students' familiarizing with the written and visual texts in Holocaust teaching. c. The dialogic strategies and questions starting with "Why?", "Can you explain", "Can you interpret", "What is the meaning" d. The group discussion of four students in which we try to explore the reading strategies, namely the ways in which the learners are dealing with many literary genres, and the transformative reading indications. The development of the coding system: a) offers connections between theoretical framework and methodology, b) corresponds with the theoretical underpinnings, c) offers links between teaching strategies and the first results of the analysis. The protocols' abbreviations of the teaching sequences are composed as follows: i. Type of school, ii. Grade, iii. Class, iv. Number of students, v. Gender and numbered student. e.g., GYM_1_A_22_f1.

Table 1: *The structure of the coding*

Label	Code	Abbreviation	Explanation
a. Chronology	a1. Confused Chronology	COC	The main historical events of the Holocaust are putted in wrong order.
	a2. Historical understanding through narration	HUN	The historical understanding of the Holocaust is more feasible through the literary or cinematic narration.

b. Characterization	b1 Characterization of protagonists	CHOP	The students define the protagonists as "victims", "bystanders", "perpetrators", "heroes" and, "anti-heroes"
c. Anti-Semitism	c1 Underdeveloped Anti-Semitism	UNANSE	Learners articulate opinions based not on knowledge but on stereotypes.
	c2 Anti-Semitism as cultural event	CUANSE	The students reconsider the current anti-Semitism through the teaching of literature and film.
d. Metaphors	d1. Metaphors and Symbols	MES	The students deal with the concepts, notions, metaphors, and symbols of the Holocaust using the images.
e. Culture- Art	e1. Cultural Framework	CUF	The role of art as means of cultural conceptualization of the Holocaust.
	e2. Comparison	CO	Comparison between the cultural and historical context.
f. Discussion	f1. Small- group discussion	GROUDI	Interpreting the ideas of the students which are articulated in groups
	f2. Development of empathy	DE	The personal stories give opportunities for the development of empathy.

4. The teaching sequences: Teaching strategies, learners' responses, and the material taught in classroom

a. Teaching sequence: "The Chronology"

The first coding variable / scheme is about "Chronology" of Holocaust and is dual fold. The first part of the code is the "Confused Chronology", namely the main historical events are put in wrong order and the second one is about the "Historical understanding through narration", meaning that the historical understanding of the Holocaust is more feasible through the literary or cinematic narration. It follows an example from the Grade 1 class and is related to the coding of "Confused Chronology". The teacher shows a text on the projector, a proclamation of the association 'National Solidarity of Athens', which is part of the archive of the Jewish Museum of Greece – Research Center. Teacher and students - as reading community- read the proclamation. Teacher is asking questions and using the dialogic teaching to explain the deportation process. On the other hand, students seem rather confused about the time and the place of the deportation of the Jews from Thessaloniki to concentration camps.

[Example]

T1: […] What is the meaning of the word 'deport'?

GYM_1_A_22_m8: They were gone many Jews from Athens.

T1: They were not gone, they were deported. And they are not deported from Athens, but from Thessaloniki.

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Are they deported from their city?

T1: Yes, from Thessaloniki.

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Yes, but when, why?

T1: Let's read a document, the proclamation has been published in 1943 in Athens.

'A tragedy is taking place in Thessaloniki' What is the tragedy?

GYM_1_A_22_m3: The persecution of the Jews.

T1: Yes, let's go on. 'The monster wants victims". Who is the monster?

GYM_1_A_22_m7: Hitler?

T1: Hitler, and the Nazis. Let's continue the reading and the projection. […]

As we can read above the students demonstrate a confused chronology of the Holocaust. This is, in part, a result of a lack of key events' contextualization which were crucial to the development of the 'Final solution', and eventually, the Holocaust. On the contrary the further analysis shows that students seem less confused when they must integrate in the historical context the narration of a literary or a cinematic work.

b. Teaching sequence: "The Characterization"

The second coding scheme of the analysis is related to the "Characterization of the Protagonists", meaning how the students do define the protagonists as "victims", "bystanders", "perpetrators", "heroes", "anti-heroes". We can see here an example from the Grade 3 which certifies that the students' responses are quite analytical, coherent, and sharply focused on the characterization. The material taught in classroom was the graphic novel titled *The Boxer* written by Reinhard Kleist and it is a biographical story of Holocaust survivor Herzko Haft. Let's read the response of the learners.

[Example]

T4: Is Hertzko a more positive or negative protagonist? What do you think? How would you characterize him?

GYM_3_B_19_F9: At the very beginning we can see a child with tender feelings. He saved his brother and that means he is a tender-hearted man who cares about the people he loves. But after he was sent to the concentration camps it was normal of being a cruel and heartless man because of the circumstances. Moreover, after all the cruelty he experienced it was expected to change his behavior.

GYM_3_B_19_f5: Hertzko was a weak boy, unhappy. That situation has changed when he met Lea. Meeting Lea he did rejoice, he wanted to share his life with her. After he was sent to the concentration camps his personality has changed, he lost his strength, all the hope to see again his family and Lea. He did try hard to survive and escape. I believe Hertzko is a positive protagonist, because although he did kill

people in order to win the boxing matches, he did that because he wanted to live, to survive and to escape. […]

We realize that the students respond well and analytically when they deal with the characterization of protagonists or when they have to define the notions of "victim", "perpetrator", "hero" and "anti-hero". On the contrary, the notion of "bystander" is the most incomprehensible notion in respect of the literary or cinematic protagonists.

c. Teaching sequence: "The Anti-Semitism"

The third coding scheme/ variable is about "Anti- Semitism", and this coding variable is also dichotomized into the "Underdeveloped- Semitism", and into the "anti-Semitism as cultural event". The material taught in classroom was from the comic book *Second Generation* written by second generation Holocaust survivor Michel Kichka. The teacher focuses on the panel in which the protagonist's teacher demonstrates a rather peculiar treatment, namely he calls all the Jewish students by the names of the Patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaak. The teacher draws students' attention by making a short introduction into text and asking students' interpretation. Students are expected to analyze textual features (verbal and visual ones). The responses are rather impressive.

Figure 1: *The teacher calls the Jewish students using nicknames in classroom. From the comic book titled "Second Generation" written by Michel Kichka.*

[Example]

T2: As we already know Michel is a second-generation survivor, namely the war ended long ago. Michel attended not an exclusively Jewish school. Try to explain, give your interpretations regarding Michel's relationship with his teachers.

GYM_1_B_21_m6: As we can see and read the teacher intentionally pronounces wrongly the last names of the Jewish children, namely he mocks their identity, and he does not apologize.

GYM_1_B_21_f17: The school life of the hero in respect of his teachers was not very good and tender, because our protagonist was Jewish, and not Christian one. Moreover, the relationship between the protagonist and his teachers was wild and racist because they did not call him by his name but by names of the Jewish Patriarchs. […]

Considering the selected example, we could say that the underdeveloped concept of prior and contemporary anti-Semitism reflected upon issues raised in class through discussion. On the other hand, students begun to acquire a better understanding of the anti-Semitism in a cultural framework through teaching of literature. […]

d. Teaching sequence: "The Metaphors"

The fourth coding scheme concerns the Metaphors and Symbols and how the students can deal with the notions of Holocaust through images. In the classroom a short film was shown which is part of the archive of the Jewish Museum of Greece – Research center. If we want to understand the role of the Holocaust terminology in classroom, we have to get into meanings. The teacher uses the dialogic teaching strategy to comment specific scenes of the film. The students on the other hand as we can read, they get in touch for the first time with the Holocaust horror. They also have to deal with their trauma shock, which has been provoked.

[Example]

T1: Suddenly, think, you are forced to be naked in front of people, it is humiliation, you do feel shame! What else do you observe? What else did they do to them?

GYM_1_A_22_f22: Their heads are shaved!!!

T1: Their heads are shaved, also a huge humiliation.

GYM_1_A_22_m3: Especially when you are girl!

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Totally bald?

T1: Totally, as you can see.

GYM_1_A_22_m8: And the girls as well? Why the girls?

T1: Yes, such a humiliation! And then what? Look!

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Bath//

T1: Bath, but it was like a torture// Look this! (a specific scene). This was the process of selection. Look, they did put them in lines. Per how many people? Tell us please f13.

GYM_1_A_22_f13: Per five.

T1: Separately?

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Yes! Separately men from women.

T1: Women with what? What do you see?

GYM_1_A_22_m8: Women with babies! Oh Lord with babies! [...]

We could highlight two conclusions if we try to comment the selected data above. Firstly, the students' engagement with the Holocaust terminology, metaphors, and symbols such as 'victimization', 'selection', 'concentration camp', 'gas chambers', and 'crematoria' was linked directly to the utilization of the image. Secondly, we could say that the students' Holocaust shock when they have to deal with the atrocities of the Nazis in the concentration camps shows the power of the "text" and the lack of Holocaust education in Greece.

e. Teaching sequence: "The Culture and the Art"

The fifth variable is about the role of "Art and Culture" and is divided into two coding schemes. The first one is regarding the cultural framework and the second one concerns the comparison between the cultural and historical context. The material taught in classroom was from the comic book written by second generation survivor Michel Kichka, *Second Generation*. The teacher tries to entry

the students into the task asking responses focusing on a picture which depicts a boy, a child holding a train toy. The students do respond combining the story features and the historical context. Let's read a selected quote.

Figure 2: *The child holding a toy train. From the comic book titled "Second Generation" written by Michel Kichka.*

[Example]

T2: Do consider the story of the comic book and try to observe the child with the train toy. What do you think? Tell us m7.

GYM_1_B_21_m7: I think um symbolizes that this train leads to Auschwitz. And um this is bad because Auschwitz is a death camp. It will always be.

T2: Very good, another mind? Yes, m2.

GYM_1_B_21_m2: I think he is holding the return train, but he is not happy. He has suffered a lot, um um he is sad, he has no relatives. But through this image um we do realize how strong all that people who managed to survive are.

T2. Excellent, who else? / um f16, tell us.

GYM_1_B_21_f16: Symbolizes the terror which the child has. We can see um that in his face, um the face expressions I mean. The terror and the fear which are behind the concentration camp. [...]

It is obvious that the students tended to conceptualize the Holocaust not only as a historical event but also as a cultural one with timeless meaning. Secondly, teachers and students focused on comparison between the past and the present, similarities and differences on both cultural level and historical context based on the personal stories of the literary and cinematic protagonists.

f. Teaching sequence: "The role of discussion"

The sixth coding scheme is about "discussion" and is dichotomized into the "small - group discussion" scheme and into "development of empathy". We will examine how we can interpret the ideas of the students which are articulated in groups and how do the personal stories give opportunities for the development of empathy. The material taught in class was the graphic novel *The Boxer* written by Reinhard Kleist. The teacher did prepare a task for small group discussion around a 15- 20 minutes time frame. The students had to work in groups of three or four, responding to the question "Why Hertzko is a violent man and a cruel father?" The task had to be written and to be presented by the student groups to classmates.

[Example]

T4: Why Hertzko is a violent man and a cruel father? Please work in small groups of three or four.

GYM_3_B_19_f7, f9, f19, f16: Hertzko Haft is a violent man because of the cruel circumstances he has suffered as a boxer in the concentration camps. The difficult moments he experienced have affected him. This is the reason why he is a violent and not a tender father […].

GYM_3_B_19_f8, f12, f5, f11: Hertzko Haft could be characterized as a violent and cruel father because of the ghosts of the past. Haunted by these ghosts he cannot forget his violent and cruel past. That's why he bursts in on his innocent son. At the same time his son supports him mentally. […]

Given the selected data classroom we can underly that the students respond well when they are given the time to reflect upon issues raised in classroom through small-group discussion as opposed to predominantly teacher-led discussion. The

contrast between History and personal story offered students, working in groups, opportunities for deeper understanding of the literary or cinematic characters and for the development of empathy.

5. Findings, results, and key trends of the research

The findings of the research show that the theoretical underpinning is in the foreground and reinforces the interactive nature of reading and the work that readers do when they engage with texts. Given the fact, we will try to present the main findings and key trends of the research (Kalasaridou 2020).

a. Using material of a digital exhibition of the Jewish Museum of Greece teachers aimed primarily to highlight the role and the participation of the Greek Jews in everyday life and in National Resistance. Students seem to be confused and quite often unable to understand the meaning of photographs which are presented sporadically and without a simultaneous use of the written text. On the contrary, students acquire a better understanding about the prior Jewish life and the contribution of the Jews in everyday life and culture when teachers engage a discussion in classroom about these photographs.

b. Students demonstrate a confused chronology of the Holocaust, especially when they deal with pictures randomly and without any explanation. On the other hand, learners seem less confused when they have to integrate the narration of a literary, a cinematic work or a sequence of entitled photos in the historical context.

c. Students respond well when they try to define both orally and in writing the notions of the 'victim' and the 'perpetrator'. On the other hand, they did not respond well when they had to define the notion of 'bystander'. Simultaneously, students feel free to discuss in the classroom questions about controversial issues of the Holocaust through the teaching of graphic novels and films. They respond well when they try to define a hero and an anti-hero protagonist.

d. Students developed an access of interpretation of the visual sings which are related to the general meaning of a sequence or a panel of the comic book. On the

other hand, students did not demonstrate decoding skills of the cinematic techniques. They are interested in the films but their engagement with the meaning of the visual representation is rather weak.

e. The teaching of Holocaust through personal stories, mostly through graphic novels, reduced the students' prior predominant perception that Holocaust was only German Nazis responsibility. This misconception was linked directly to the concept of victimization, namely learners did comprehend that responsible for the Holocaust were not only the German Nazis but also the local people and regimes within the occupied lands and of course within Greece.

f. The students observed tended to acquire a better understanding of the meaning of the Holocaust embodied in a cultural framework through the using of a dialogue between students leading by teachers. The students were free to express not only their sentiments but also their questions and quite often their doubts about crucial dimensions of the Holocaust such as the stages of "Final Solution" in comparison to the personal struggle of surviving. This contrast between History and personal story gave them opportunities for deeper understanding of the literary or cinematic characters and for developing of empathy.

g. Students had been given opportunities to comprehend the meaning of the Holocaust in contemporary times. Conducted discussions by teachers, students focused on comparison between past and present, similarities and differences on both cultural level and historical context based on the personal stories of the literary and cinematic protagonists. The art works were the basis on which the students not only tented to resolve the misconception that Holocaust is not an exclusive historical event but also to conceptualize the Holocaust as a cultural event with timeless meaning. Students agreed that the conceptualization of the Holocaust is being better and easier understanding through the teaching of literary works and mostly through the comic books and graphic novels.

h. In respect of response, differences between genders have been observed. The differences are based on writing and the way that they respond in groups of four. The female students tend to be more analytical in writing and more creative in the

way they incorporate in the written responses' elements of the teaching process. On the other hand, male students mainly recontextualize central elements of teaching process without important changes e.g., they use teachers' phrases or words. Lastly, there are no differences between genders about the way in which they express their thoughts and sentiments, namely both males and females seem unafraid to expose their beliefs, thoughts and, sentiments in the classroom (Kalasaridou 2020).

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"Fixing other people's children": Disability knowledge construction in Greek Higher Education

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Abstract

Starting from the premise that knowledge is historically and socially constructed, this paper asks critical questions about disability knowledge constructions in Greek Higher Education. This analysis is necessary for understanding how special education is constructed as a field of knowledge and, more generally, how this field of knowledge is presented in teacher education on issues of disability. To explore these questions, we looked at the descriptions of compulsory modules as they are presented in the module handbook synopses of Primary Education departments in Greece. Using the tools of content analysis, the disability module synopses from nine (9) higher education departments were analyzed. These synopses distil what knowledge about the field is important to convey. They include information about the module's aims, what to cover and learn, and the learning outcomes to be achieved. They also include information about the textbooks used to support pre-service teachers' learning. The issues that are highlighted in this study demonstrate the ways that an individualized, deficit-oriented perspective on the education of disabled students is normalized through knowledge legitimacy.

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Introduction

Knowledge is historically and socially defined; it is never neutral as in its essential fabric, diverse interests, and power demands intertwin in its essential fabric. What knowledge emphasizes and what omits is the product of a connective and powerful logic (Apple 2010). It could be the product of agreement and consensus or conflict, depending on historical conditions and social relationships in specific contextual and temporal circumstances (Apple 2010; McLaren 2007). Starting from this position, this paper explores critical pedagogy questions on how disability knowledge is constructed in Greek Higher Education. It also questions why some aspects of perceived reality are privileged and normalized while others are not (Apple 2010; McLaren 2007). Institutions are directly concerned with the transmission of what is considered legitimate knowledge.

Davis (1995) argues that "a socio-political process is always at work in relation to the body" (xvi). In this constant questioning of the body, disability always produces a demand for a response and the response -what to do with disability- produces the disability. How disability is approached as knowledge for teachers is part of this question/response process. It influences not only a response to disability but also the scope of teachers' work, their professionalism and their practice in being part of that response.

Like other countries, in Greece, teacher education moved to universities in the early 1980s, with four-year degrees entirely replacing the two-year qualification from the old 'teacher academies' by the mid-1990s (Karagianni 2014). Greek Higher Education -and compulsory education- are highly centralized and state-controlled in terms of purpose, structures, context, and employment arrangements. This centralized approach extends to the school curriculum with state-produced textbooks, but there is relative autonomy in what universities teach. The transition of teacher education in universities coincided historically with increased attention to disability as an educational issue of general education. Greece has had laws since 2000 that refer to inclusive education, and it has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Karagianni 2019).

Nevertheless, responses to disability are firmly located in a deficit model, driven by medical diagnosis and a proliferation of specialists. Consequently, special education, once predominantly perceived as a distinct system of education, is now firmly embedded within regular education. In that sense, the rhetoric of the disability response in Greece claims an inclusive education orientation, but the actual response is driven by and reinforces a special education authority (Vlachou-Balafouti, Sideri 2000). This study examines how the response to disability is expressed in the module handbook synopses of the compulsory subjects related to disability in Primary Education departments in Greece. The brevity of these synopses, with a length of 150-300 words, distil what knowledge matters for teachers to know.

Methodology and findings

Critical discourse analysis has been used in numerous humanities and social sciences studies since, as a framework of reference, it focuses on discourse in educational, social, and political issues. It gives the tools to researchers from different fields, regardless of their starting points, to approach discourses and to focus on how these are structured and get meaning in the different areas of their interest. In this study, we used the process of identification and interpretation of keywords and content in the module handbook synopses in three areas of analysis: a) learning outcomes, b) subject content, and c) proposed textbooks. We initially identified the compulsory and elective modules related to disability in 2020-2022 of the nine Primary Education Departments. In this paper, we focus on the compulsory modules offered (Table 1). Seven out of the nine modules include special education in their title. Of the other two (Universities of Thessaloniki and Thrace), one was developed by the first author of this paper (University of Thessaloniki). All except one department offer a compulsory module. The University of Thessaly module is semi-compulsory because students can select it

amongst other modules, but if they do, they have the same requirements and credit as compulsory modules.

Table 1

	Department / University	Code	Module title	Semester	Source	Area of Study
1	Department of Pedagogy & Primary Education, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens	A012	Special Education	3	http://www.primedu.uoa.gr/fileadmin/primedu.uoa.gr/uploads/Pdfs/Odigos_Spoudon/Odigos_2020_2021.pdf	Special Education and Psychology
2	School of Primary Education, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki	YM21	Pedagogy of Inclusion	1	https://www.eled.auth.gr/eng/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/study_guide_eng_20_21_revised-2.pdf	Education and Social Exclusion
3	Department of Educational Sciences and Social Work, University of Patras	ESW_302	Special Education	5	http://www.elemedu.upatras.gr/index.php/%CE%BF%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82-%CF%83%CF%80%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%B4%CF%8E%CE%BD	Division of Natural and Theoretical Sciences and Didactics
4	Department of Primary Education, University of Thessaly	ΨΧ1209ᔆᶜ	Introduction to Special Education	6	https://pre.uth.gr/odigos-spoudon/	N/A
5	Department of Primary Level Education University of Thrace	6E23	Pedagogy of Inclusion	5	https://eled.duth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82-%CE%A3%CF	Education and Psychology

					%80%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%B4%CF%8E%CE%BD-%CF%83%CE%B5-pdf-20_3_20.pdf	
6	Department of Primary Education, University of Western Macedonia	Y 102	Special Education and Learning Difficulties	1	https://eled.uowm.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%97%CE%93%CE%9F%CE%A3-%CE%A3%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%94%CE%A9%CE%9D-%CE%A0%CE%A4%CE%95-2021-22.pdf	N/A
7	Department of Primary Education, University of the Aegean	YA0006	Introduction to Special Education	3	http://www.pre.aegean.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/%CE%923_%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%97%CE%93%CE%9F%CE%A3-%CE%A3%CE%A0%CE%9F%CE%A5%CE%94%CE%A9%CE%9D-2021_22.pdf	Educational Sciences and Psychology
8	Department of Primary Education, University of Crete	BO5	Special Education/Developmental Disorders	6	http://ptde.edc.uoc.gr/eng/page/undergraduate-studies	Educational Psychology & Research methodology
9	Department of Primary Education, University of Ioannina	DEY020	Introduction to Special Education	3	https://ptde.uoi.gr/wp-content/uploads/dey020.pdf	N/A

Notes: SC: Semi-compulsory

The semester that these modules are offered vary. Three departments offer the module in the 3rd semester of studies and two in the 1st, and 6th semesters respectively. In the departments that follow a structure that organizes modules under areas of study, the modules and instructors belong either in Education or Psychology. These compulsory modules are grouped with other compulsory ones, such as psychopathology, neuroscience, developmental disorders, learning difficulties, etc. The academic staff responsible for the nine modules have expertise in Psychology (five) and Education (four). Across the departments, the number of elective modules is between two to five, following predominantly a categorical approach to specific impairments. Examining the three areas, we identified seven axes that show the commonalities in most module synopses areas of analysis regarding the understandings of disability and the teaching of a disabled student. We discuss each

1. *Terminology and Conceptualization*

The orientation of almost all modules is in special education. "Special" is the most common term with 109 references. Of those, 45 are of "Special Education". The term Special Education is presented as multi-dimensional and defined as 1) scientific field, 2) policy framework, 3) structures of educational provision and 4) special population. An example that includes the first three dimensions is:

> *Special education is a demand and challenge of the modern educational world, and at the same time, it constitutes a very important interdisciplinary branch of pedagogical science. (University of the Aegean)*
>
> *Special Education: philosophy, purpose and aims. A short historical review and founders of special education. Policy and legislative organization of special education. Special Education in Greece and other countries. (University of the Aegean).*

While 'special' concerning "Special Education" implies a scientific and technical distinctiveness, it is characteristic that only one module refers to "Special

[education] pedagogy", and there is also worth noting that there is no reference to special educational practices. The University of Ioannina Synopsis refers to "special [education] pedagogy" four times: "[Students] will acquire the basic knowledge of the scientific field of Special [education] Pedagogy". Considering that teachers' role is primarily pedagogical, the synopses present "Special Education" as, to a large extent, detached from teachers' everyday practice and reinforce that "Special Education" isn't general teachers' business. The main reference to educational practice is the seven mentions to "individualized educational programs", which are discussed later.

Again, with one exception (University of Thessaloniki), inclusion is presented as a sub-element. References to inclusion are noticeably less, with 16 references in our extended sample. Inclusion is mentioned in five compulsory modules (Universities of Ioannina, Patra, the Aegean, Western Macedonia, and Thessaloniki) and three elective ones (Universities of Crete, Thrace, and Thessaly). Inclusion is presented as one model (amongst many) of educating students with disability:

> *[Students to be able] to refer and comment on the dimensions of education integration-inclusion and the part of educators in the 'building' of inclusive schools. (University of Athens).*
>
> *Inclusion-coeducation. (University of Western Macedonia)*
>
> *Contemporary trends: inclusion, integration, a school for all. AND [Students] will become familiar with basic concepts like special education, disability, inclusion, coeducation. (University of the Aegean)*
>
> *The module is a basic introductory module on Special Education and the concepts of inclusion and participatory education. (University of Patras)*

In the Greek language, there are a plethora of terms to translate "inclusive education", including terms that translate to integration, coeducation, unified education, and participatory education. New terms have been introduced over the years as academics and policymakers aim to make their mark in the field and tame "inclusive education". The power dynamics of 'translating' terms are complex in

the discursive relations between languages (Spandagou 2013) and, as the synopses demonstrate, within a specific language.

2. Legislation -policy framework

In terms of the legislation and policy framework, the relevant references focus on "special education". This emphasis indicates the political power in establishing a specific discourse on disability. In other words, Greek policies on disability and disabled people have embraced a 'special needs' and 'special education' discourse:

> *[Students] to know [...] the legislation that informs special education. (University of Thessaly)*
>
> *Policy and legislative organization of special education. (University of the Aegean)*
>
> *[Students] to understand specific policies, pedagogies and political dimensions of special and unified education and the policy framework of special education in Greece. (University of Western Macedonia).*

As the legislation introduced in 2008 and amended in 2013 and 2018 is entitled "Special Education of Individuals with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs", it is somewhat understandable that the "special education" language is reproduced in the synopses. The combined power of disciplinary discourse and legislation reinforces the dominance of special education discourse. Maintaining an emphasis on inclusive education as a critical project (Armstrong, Armstrong, Spandagou 2010) requires a foundational reform of educational systems (UN 2006), and there is plenty of evidence internationally that this cannot be achieved from a special education basis.

3. Identification-diagnosis

This axis of analysis reveals a medical orientation in the way disability is being identified in most pedagogical departments. There is a pronounced tendency for

future teachers to be able to distinguish between different impairments (categorization) as well as to diagnose them. The extracts below are indicative:

[Students] to distinguish the different types of disability. (University of Ioannina)

Introduction to the basic categories of students with special education. Characteristics of the population of students with special needs -disabilities. AND Categorization, aetiology, prevalence, diagnosis, assessment. (University of Patras)

[Students] to identify the characteristics of the student population of special education. (University of Thrace)

Definition and categorization of special education needs. (University of the Aegean)

Acquisition of knowledge for the basic types of educational needs. (University of Western Macedonia)

[Students] to be able to identify and describe the basic, distinctive difficulties presented by students with specific disabilities/special educational needs, and later in the text, identification, and assessment of special educational needs. (University of Thessaly)

[Students to be able] to mention the learning and psychological characteristics of students with disability and special needs; to participate as educators in processes and teams of diagnostic evaluation of special needs. (University of Athens)

None of these references takes a critical stance on the medical model presented nor counterpoint it with a social model perspective.

4. Educational programs

The axe of individualization is also a permanent characteristic of the module synopses discourse:

University students will learn the meaning of individualized educational programs, and they will see examples related to the planning and

---

implementation of programs for students with special educational needs. (University of the Aegean)

Curricula of special education study and adapted books (University of Ioannina)

There is an emphasis on an education with individualized character (individualized program) and, therefore, on the individualization of the responsibility of learning. Contracts and individualized programs were proposed in the context of progressive education at the beginning of the 20th century. Their critique concerns the fact that students were treated as future workers. Individualization then was considered a better response to learners as future workers. In this way, we have a causal connection of school failure with individual impairment, and thus a silencing of the fact that disabled students belong to broader social groups and are subject to social relations that define success or failure at school. Furthermore, in this perception, the educational experiences of disabled students are not directly connected with their family's socio-educational level and the hierarchical structure of society.

The one-sided emphasis on the methods and strategies silences the importance of the purpose and the content of learning, which reproduces particular social hierarchies. Disability is presented as an individual problem, which at an educational level, is resolved with the development of necessary skills for integrating the individual in the neoliberal market. The social oppression of disabled people is not discussed and instead of solidarity, what is proposed is the logic of a humanistic understanding and tolerance. What is missing is a critical literacy about understanding the world based on the concepts of justice -injustice, and power-oppression with the aim to overturn these oppressive arrangements completely. According to Brantlinger (2006, 127) individualized instruction still dominates the thinking of educators and parents as an ideal. Nevertheless, it is consistent with "commonsense or experience-near theories about learning" as an unknown skill and fragmented element of knowledge. 'Essential' skills are considered necessary for disabled students, reinforcing a functional approach to disability.

5. Specialists as "significant" actors in education

The process of diagnosis, management and resource allocation of special education is located outside schools in the Centers for Differential Diagnosis and Support (K.E.D.D.Y.). Specialists from K.E.D.D.Y., along with special coordinators, are responsible for diagnosis, educational settings, and approval of support for disabled children. These specialists play a significant role in the education of disabled students and have no real relationship with the school curriculum or teaching work.

> *Structures of Special Education and contemporary perspectives related to the provision of special support services and the educational treatment of children with special educational needs AND Structure and operation of K.E.D.D.Y. (University of Thessaly)*
>
> *Structures and institutions of Special Education (University of Western Macedonia)*
>
> *Developmental disorders and diagnosis. Structure and operation of K.E.D.D.Y. (University of Crete)*

K.E.D.D.Y. follow a medical approach to disability based on diagnostic, clinical and standardized assessments with limited educational input. Students in these modules learn to accept the knowledge and authority of specialists and leave the education of disabled children in their hands.

6. Specific groups of student population and interventions

In terms of the student population, special educational needs is the most common term (30 references to people, children or students with special educational needs). In four modules (Universities of Patras, Thrace, Thessaly, and Athens), it is used with disability (or disabilities). Thus, the term is presented either as broad (all students who require special education) or as a sub-category of the students who require special education -those who do not have a 'disability'.

[Students] critically examine the policy categorization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs. (University of Thrace)

[Students] to know contemporary educational interventions for the treatment of learning difficulties and adaptations of students with disability/special educational needs. (University of Athens)

Historical overview. Society and people with special needs. Disability-Sickness or Difference? Sociological and medical perspectives. (University of Patras)

7. Required Textbooks

From the bibliographies provided, we can identify which textbooks are used in teacher education on disability issues in the Greek context. Required textbooks are distributed free of cost to students. Two required textbooks dominate. The first is the textbook by Polichronopoulou (2012), Children and Young People with Special Needs and Abilities, received by students in three education departments. The second is Heward's (2011) Children with Special Needs received by students in three departments. At the University of Ioannina, the textbook by Soulis (2020), Study on Intellectual Disability, is provided, while at the University of Thessaloniki, the required textbook is Karagianni's (2017) Disability in the Greece of Crisis and chapters from the collective book Studies for Disability by Barnes, Oliver and Barton. At the University of Thrace it is Oliver's (2009), The Politics of Disablement.

Discussion

Slippage of meanings

What becomes evident from the above analysis is that there is slippage in the meanings of the different terms used by the academics who designed the modules. The terms are not used as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities or the disability movement, nor are they based on a

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particular theoretical or policy perspective. It is evidence of the confusion between impairment and disability, and there is clearly the influence of The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in the terminology. The suggested textbooks used by most of the departments are reprints from the publication from the '80s for the American one and the 90s for the Greek one, blurring even more the terminology landscape. From the above, it can be argued that there is no historical recognition of the terminology around inclusion. The relationship between the Greek context and the international debates around "integration" and "inclusion" are complicated further by the tendency to introduce different terms in the Greek language.

Utilitarian medical-oriented description of impairments

Large proportion of the modules are covered by two points: a) the history of special education within the context of structures and legislation, and b) the categories of impairments of the student population. What is important here is that the social scientists of Education underestimate -or even ignore- the socially produced barriers, segregations, the othering of disabled people, isolation, discrimination in work, the guardianship and paternalist emphasis of the medical and educational professions, the under-education and institutionalization, the removal of the citizen's capacity, and so on. They generally do not acknowledge and address the pervasive nature of disability ideologies and practices.

Educators' skills and de-professionalization

In the modules' synopses (with the exceptions of the Universities of Thessaloniki and Thrace), we didn't identify references that relate to the political and economic conditions which have defined the two different educational systems (general and special education), nor any references to the specific theoretical, ideological, historical, and sociocultural conditions that shaped these two systems.

We also didn't find any references to the existence of special schools as structures with economic, political, and cultural implications. In this way, the conditions that define, assess, and categorize the student population based on their social position are not named. On the contrary, conditions that create a dominant culture and a hegemonic ideology around students without a disability are expressed emphatically, legitimizing, the existing unequal social structures.

For future teachers, the way that the skills required to acquire are presented bring to mind Apple's (2010) central concept of de-professionalization. Preservice teachers are called to "forget" any sense of pedagogy when it comes to students with disability. They are trained in the acquisition of skills for identifying impairments, become familiar with assessment tools, learn the logic of individualization, "slimmed down" curricula and the management of students' behavior with behaviorist terms. In this way, a central separation occurs between the planning of teaching and its delivery, alienating teachers from their scientific discipline and consequently making them dependent on special psychologists and therapists. In addition, it blocks the development of a critical overview of the world since it focuses its thinking on technical issues. Teachers' nature of work is transformed as they become "public servants", controllers of activity that can be replaced at any time.

The proposed teaching methodologies of special education are bare from a critical examination. Individualized programs constitute loans from different perspectives on learning that at different periods and educational contexts were effective in one way (Karagianni 2019). In this reasoning, technical solutions of the type: "analysis of the teaching methods for the identification of barriers'', "individualized teaching methods" without the theoretical framework that informs and defines them usually fail, stigmatizing with failure the students and teachers who implemented them.

Lack of the knowledge domain of inclusive pedagogy

Except for the Universities of Thessaloniki and Thrace, which have the subject of Inclusive Pedagogy as a compulsory module with no connections in Special Education, three more departments were identified that offer elective modules; three modules at the University of Thrace, one module each at the Universities of Ioannina and Crete.

Inclusion is treated solely as a linear, process issue and barely a social, multi-faceted concern. Inclusive Pedagogy, of course, isn't a linear progress from special education but a fundamentally distinct 'paradigm' (Karagianni 2019). The intrusion of special education through its discourse and its practices constructs the reality of disabled people's education on the basis of essentialist beliefs about normalcy and abnormality, establishing hierarchies of those who are (able to be) included and those who aren't in social life. Inclusive pedagogy argues for the necessity to use disability as an exemplar for challenging and struggling against unequal social structures and discrimination based on class, nation, gender, sexuality, and impairment within their corresponding categorizations. It also proposes to employ critical pedagogy to combat issues of segregation for disabled students to become central concerns of education (Noccela 2008).

Conclusion

This study questions the knowledge discourses presented in the synopses of the selected modules. It is a small study but adds to previous critical work (e.g., Brantlinger 2006; Freedman 2016). There is a paucity of research that looks at the content of teacher education programs. There are challenges in engaging in such research as the researchers are part of the contexts they research in complicated interpersonal relationships. We acknowledge these complexities but also the importance of such work.

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Constructing spaces of identity, agency, and scholarship in the classroom using a critical integration approach

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Abstract

The study explores the possibilities and constraints of a critical praxis in the classroom given the structural, pedagogical, and individual tensions inherent in critical teaching for social change by strategically acting on ways in which the curriculum and pedagogy merge a variety of instructional approaches that at their core seek to construct inclusive and expanded spaces of learning and scholarship for all students. I defined a unique critical integration approach where students built upon their prior knowledge generating a collaborative pedagogical space within which students and teachers constructed a thematic curriculum by co-mingling student experiences, cultural wealth and resources and interpretive frameworks. The implications of the use of the critical integration approach as an example of critical praxis demonstrates ways to navigate constraints and offer concrete possibilities to create radical changes for greater justice in underserved public schools.

Keywords: praxis, teachers, critical integration approach, critical dialogue, critical pedagogy

Introduction

Becoming a critical teacher researcher entails mindfulness. This requires a sense of consciously looking for what is relevant and inclusive and reflecting on what one knows by questioning preconceived ideas and adapting and modifying where needed. It is about seeking a deeper understanding of the literacy practices in the classroom by matching pedagogical approaches and content to student abilities and cultural backgrounds so that possibilities for all learning is expanded in a context of mindful attention—a process journey of continued searching, discovering, and modifying. It is a process of taking back the space of teaching and learning in the classroom by publishing teacher insights and understandings (Cochran-Smith, Lyle 2009). Moreover, many researchers (Camarrota, Romero 2014; Gay 2010; Gonzalez, Moll, Amanti 2005; Paris, Winn 2014; Yosso 2005) have concluded that students become more confident and engaged learners when involved in educational experiences in which their social realities are valued and used as academic artifacts as they find learning meaningful and are invested in their learning and future. As a critical teacher who conducts mindful inquiry can challenge current assumptions about literacy, theory, and practice. Scholars describe this as creating a teacher voice that addresses educational theory, practice, and policy by developing teachers as public intellectuals who recognize how traditional schooling works against the interests of students who are most vulnerable in society by reproducing a historically unjust system of class differences and racialized inequality. How might a critical teacher strategically act on ways in which the curriculum and pedagogy merge a variety of instructional approaches that at their core seek to construct inclusive and expanded spaces of learning and empowered scholarship for all students? Inquiry gives teachers and students a tool for thinking about and talking about learning in their classroom and by humanizing the processes in everyday learning choices, students and teachers can take back the learning and teaching spaces in the classroom creating a path to critical praxis.

Conceptual framework for a critical integration approach

Today's diverse elementary and secondary classrooms with differing student needs require different and varied content and pedagogical approaches. A relevant curriculum structured with learning activities that promote student choice in content, projects of study, encourages real-world skills such as decision-making and planning, the use of students' funds of knowledge, varied process, and product, contain creative and critical thinking potential and additionally encourage group interaction among students broadens the classroom environment by stimulating and engaging all students' talents and prior knowledge (Bagnoli 2009; Gardner 1983; Gutiérrez, Rogoff 2003; Ladsen-Billings 2014; Kingore 2013; Latz, Adams 2013; Moll, 1992). Using a pedagogical approach that is both integrated and critical, students and teacher, together, create a collaborative space and construct a curriculum by co-mingling student experiences, cultural and linguistic resources, and interpretive frameworks. Under a thematic curriculum model, instructions are as broad as possible which enable students to structure the activities in their own ways (Bagnoli 2009) which lends itself to more depth and complexity in the teaching and learning process and relevancy in the curriculum (Kaplan, Guzman, Tomlinson 2009). Moreover, a pedagogy that offers ways to highlight different forms of learning (Gardner 1983; Ladsen-Billings 2014) tends to be culturally sustaining (Paris 2012) and by fashioning experiences that allow students to see and construct things in new and often unexpected ways, a metaphorical "third space" is implemented inclusive of student identity and ways of understanding and knowing (Gutiérrez, Rogoff 2003). These spaces of reciprocal and collaborative learning are shared spaces of academic power between teacher and student (Freire 1996). Teachers and students co-construct a critical integration approach by blending these different concepts and the line between the pedagogical roles is blurred creating spaces where students share their voices and experiences as they navigate the myriad of pathways of learning. To be able to take students for a "walk" of discovery and to harness creativity using intentional, theme-based curriculum and teaching

practices in the classroom is to encourage students to slow down and to see the world around them so that they can recognize not only the complexity of it, but also, the nuance beauty of it and their place in it. Cultivating student agency and self-efficacy and creating space for students' voices to flourish allows their stories to come to the forefront of the curriculum, communicating to students the relevance and power of their stories and scholarship. These elements work synergistically to form the heart of a Critical Integration Approach (Kiser-Chuc 2018), a critical methodological framework wherein multiple modalities are implemented in the classroom to transform student learning experiences (See Figure 1 below).
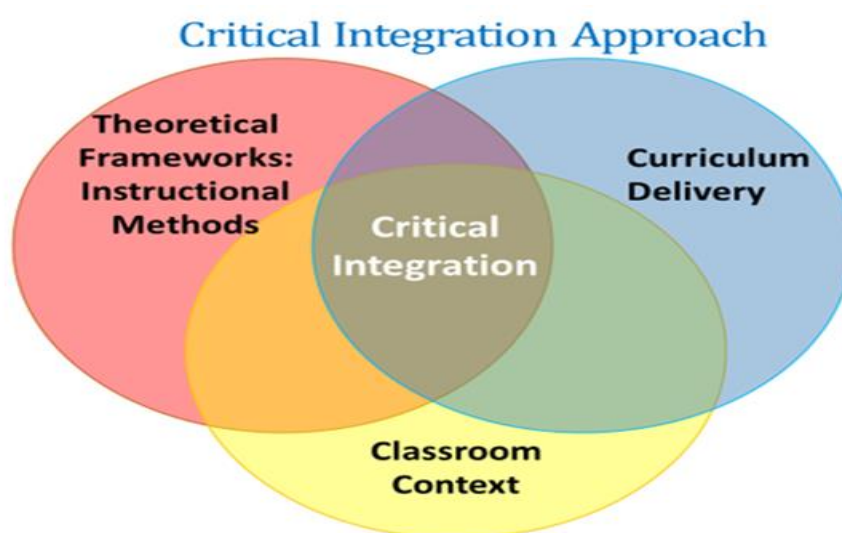
Figure 1: *Critical integration of theory, curriculum, and classroom context.*

Methods

This article derives from snapshots of larger qualitative case studies over a period of months and within several school terms. My critical teacher-research involved a Funds of Knowledge orientation, the use of a variety of pedagogical tools influenced by the theory of Multiple Intelligences, gifted methods, community cultural wealth, emancipatory education, culturally responsive pedagogy, and visual arts aesthetics. I developed curriculum units on the theme of Exploration of

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Identity and of Place using a critical integration approach to cultivate students' developing epistemologies and scholarly voices. I taught students and mentored teachers over a period of several years in classrooms of multilingual and marginalized students of color who ranged in ages from nine to thirteen in schools where demographics are 90 to 95 percent Latinx, Native American, and mixed-race and with diverse social economic status in proximity to the southwest political border of the US. My pedagogical goals for the students were to have them create their own learning by developing awareness of the different forms in which creative and critical thinking manifest and of various types of learning and modes of production. Language use and meaning making in context was explored in which the processes in learning and product outcome offer interwoven representations of children's literacy practices and aesthetics. Students engaged in inquiry-based projects and discovery through collaborative grouping, and they participated in multiple ways of acquiring, expressing, and sharing knowledge. To assess the outcomes of my approach and how well I addressed my question, I 1) observed the participants, 2) conducted semi-structured interviews, and 3) analyzed their classrooms by collecting the data over a period of four months during fall and spring semesters. I observed how students responded to the use of expressive arts, multimodal literacies, in-depth thinking strategies, daily dialogue, and responsive teaching practices under a thematic unit of instruction. They explored their cultural identities in conjunction with their sense of place, their interest and curiosity, their reflections of self-identity, and their aspirations for the future. Students created varied scholarly products that were then presented to authentic audiences of peers and community members.

Findings

In this section I will discuss the underlying themes as students explored and exchanged ideas on their concepts of self, identity, and community using a critical integration approach.

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Unit 1: Self-discovery Collage – Welcome to My World

Students explored issues of personal and social identity by constructing a multimodal, visual representation of themselves. Students' voices and perspectives are essential in the interpretation of their multimodal portraits as they are responsible for and understand the personal choices they have made in their self-representations. The creation of the self-portrait in the form of a collage allows them not only to represent themselves culturally and linguistically, but also visually to take on identities of competence as creative and talented beings who can speak with authority about their experience and knowledge through expressive possibilities that juxtapose a variety of pictures, drawings, words, and phrases which can access and represent different levels of experience (Bagnoli 2009). With that a "third space" is opened in the process of creating a work of art allowing for the interaction of students' experiences and imagination to express itself in a variety of forms of communication and meaning making through the ownership of the creative process and learning. This builds students' self-efficacy (Gutierrez, Rogoff 2003). I can encourage thinking "outside the box," by generating new ways of inquiry and understanding the social worlds of children through exploring a broader range of student experiences and interpretations. Creating original works of art demands sophisticated intellectual engagement from students which include observing, envisioning, innovating, reflecting, stretching, exploring, engaging and persisting-all required in critical and creative thinking. Students' use of their funds of knowledge from their family and cultural backgrounds (Moll 1992) convey to an audience what they envision and what they know also empowers their voice. These flexible and accessible visual methods allow children to contribute to community dialogue (Bakhtin 1981) and meaning making on their terms. In addition, the use of visual and creative methods can generally facilitate the investigation of layers of experience that cannot easily be put into words.

 I chose the method of collage as a process and product form of expression for my students to create a community for us by encouraging them to explore their lived

worlds by symbolically making sense of them and sharing them with others. I invited students to talk about themselves using a free narrative approach. Students used a variety of media as well as incorporating words and symbolic images that represented the relationships of their worlds in that moment. The artwork materials were laid out randomly allowing for the students to interact which permitted instantaneous viewing and reflecting on their creations. Each student was invited to choose a part of their collage that they particularly liked and to talk about what it represented to them. Many images within the collage captured territories that could only be revealed as significant through dialogue. The images and the conversations about them revealed some surprising perspectives and certainly challenged many notions about students' construction of identity, their academic voice at a young age and their sense of the world and their place in it.

Student Narratives

In the following exchanges, the students and I have engaged in a dialogue about what inspired the images in their collages. Excerpts from these interviews come from larger, ongoing dialogues during class, in the process of making the collage.

Angela: "I can defend myself" (3rd grade).

Angela was a kind and reserved student, and as I quickly learned, also possessed an inner toughness. With her amicable nature she always attempted to complete her work and had shared that she tried to be the best in her classes. She routinely color coordinated her freshly pressed school uniform—a white blouse and blue skirt—with pink notebooks, bejeweled purses, or sweaters. I suspected at the beginning of the year that she might be an emergent bilingual who had a hidden linguistic resource that wasn't acknowledged in the regular classroom. I decided I would speak to Angela in Spanish at times. At the start of our relationship, she would respond only in English. I know she understood me as she would immediately respond with a correct response, as so many other students before her have as they negotiate the sociocultural and political power structures of

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language use in schooling. It wasn't until around the holidays, when I met Angela's mother and younger brother one day after school, that we held a long conversation in Spanish. At the time, Angela's mother had bought a few tamales to class, and we talked about how delicious they were. After hearing us speak Spanish, Angela felt comfortable enough to speak with me and in my classroom in Spanish. As months went by, Angela began coming in early to class, sometimes eating lunch in our room and dialoging in Spanish with me. One day, she confided in me that she had an older brother in Durango, Mexico and that she was sad the family couldn't go see him or for him to come see them. I could tell that the separation troubled her heart. I also shared with her that I had family in Durango, Mexico and that my father had lived there for a while. I encouraged Angela to talk to her brother on the phone or over the internet. She smiled, sharing that the family would talk with him every week and that he was going to college there. I never really knew whether the family was undocumented or the reasons for the separation, but I could only imagine the stress family members were under in a state so unwelcoming to undocumented people.

Below, Angela explores her ability to "stand up for herself" through her collage. The dialogue also represents Angela's skill at channeling the voices of some of her teachers.

Figure 2: *Angela's collage.*

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Me: Talk to me about your collage.

Angela: Well ... I like the color pink. Pink like my Hello Kitty (pointing to her purse). "This is art (pointing to color palate). We do a lot of art in math. I like to draw.... I draw many things.

Me: What about this here? (pointing to the paper with scribble and pen represented on the collage)

Angela: I drew two of them ... it shows ... shows ... explores about yourself ... I can stand up for myself.

Me: español?

Angela: Yes ... Sí. Porque mi mamá no quiere platicar en inglés y en la casa yo le ayudo. [Because my mom doesn't want to speak in English and at home, I help her]. Teachers have told me ... 'Angela, you should talk to your mom in English so your mom gets used to it ... so your mom can defend herself if somebody is talking back at her. Yo le ayudo. [I help her].

Me: So, these two represent what for you? (pointing to the paper and pen with scribble drawing on the collage).

Angela: My English and Spanish ... Sí [yes]

Me: Pues, sabiendo dos idiomas vales por dos [Knowing two languages you are worth two]

Angela: Sí. [yes]

In her ongoing identity development Angela is a young student who straddles two socio-cultural and linguistic worlds. Angela and others would arrive before class and would explore the materials that were available to them to create a collage, look at materials or books or to just chat. It is in this comfort space and unstructured time where our cultural and linguistic stories would unfold. As a primary student Angela had defined her socially constructed world of relations both personal and institutional through a binary lens where her hidden bilingual language resource is valued at home, but neither validated nor valued in school. Nevertheless, she learned early on that her resource of knowing two languages was imperative to the well-being of her family as she served not only as translator

but also having the responsibility as mediator and intermediary for the everyday social and cultural needs and transactions of her family. She could "stand up for herself" and her family and she recounted a dialogue with a teacher recommending her to assist her mother in learning English so that her mother could "defend herself." Her visual representation of a scripted paper and a pen on her collage is her framing the importance of the symbolic resource of bilingualism to sustain her cultural and linguistic competence within her family and the surrounding community. Through creativity and the multimodal expressive nature encouraged in the art collage, Angela was able to explore and rearticulate ideas, interests, personal experiences and feelings, through a culturally cognizant pedagogy that was sensitive and encouraging. This pedagogy, this critical praxis gave voice to her stories and everyday socio-cultural practices.

Jesus: "The gamer" (5th grade).

After several months of quiet observation, Jesus volunteered to take on a leadership role in the class as he was one of two 5th graders in our multi-aged enrichment group. He enjoyed the open-ended puzzle challenges and math brainteasers but struggled with his writing. Many times, he arrived at my class before the scheduled time and was interested in first working my visual puzzles and later polishing his written work with my assistance. As his confidence grew with me, he shared that he was Native American from the Tohono O'odham tribe and had a family of five brothers and sisters. He liked riding horses with his family and playing video games. Many an afternoon he would be the "go to" person when his fellow classmates or I were having difficulties with the Project Amigo blog or at times, the school computers. He always enjoyed the puzzle enrichment activities I gave out at the beginning of class that would challenge his way of thinking spatially. He would transform and manipulate them creating new designs or completing a figure.

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Figure 3: *Jesus' Collage.*

Me: Talk to me about your collage.

Jesus: Well, I like to imagine things. I think it is important to be creative. That is why I have this here (pointing to the word imagine). I love animals and nature. I have naturalist intelligence. Here I have the tree and different animals. I like to draw, too. These emojis here make me think of my video games and technology. My family is kind of important. They get mad at me when I give up sometimes.

Me: What else can you tell me?

Jesus: Here I put math. I am a problem solver. I like to solve problems better (…) better ways (…) brainstorming solutions … Thinking what would happen if I chose that solution or thinking of other solutions and what would happen.

In his collage, Jesus reveals a solid academic voice and identity. It shows symbolic representations of himself as a naturalist and spatial thinker and that he enjoys thinking. His many representations of the natural world are evident throughout his collage with drawings of trees, bushes, horses, dogs, chickens, colorful birds, butterflies, tortoises, and a fish tank with many kinds of fish. He regards himself as a problem solver and thinks about coming up with "better ways" of solving problems. We see this in the ways he uses varied materials to represent his facial emojis and letters for the word "imagine" and letters and symbols for "math." He articulates a technique in thinking that he uses called 'brainstorming' to approach

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different ways and solutions to a problem. He also speaks to processing skills of divergent reasoning as he predicts what possible outcomes there would be in other solutions. Jesus reflects on the influence of his family as he ponders the scolding he receives sometimes when he "gives up." They are important to him as shown in the large, bolded word "Family" on the left side of his collage. He knows they are "there for him" and ever present.

With the arts-based multidimensionality method of a collage self-portrait the aim was to encourage a dialogue first with self and then with others of a holistic picture of students' identities. Instructions were as broad as possible, with the intent of enabling students to structure the tasks in their own ways. I wanted students to go beyond a verbal mode of thinking as this could help include wider dimensions of experience and engagement. A creative task like this would encourage thinking and literacy in non-standard ways and in turn could assist students who had difficulty expressing themselves with words. The approach gave students permission to move beyond text while rekindling their prior knowledge and opening opportunities to express their ideas and ways in the world creatively and successfully.

Unit 2: Inquiry-Projects on the theme of Place

Having a sense of place evolves and grows by identifying the human experience in relation to a landscape, the local knowledge, community, and folklore making it unique and special. A sense of place requires time, energy, and attentiveness. A sense of place is how we make the world meaningful and the ways we experience the world not only through maps and graphs, but also stories, poems, aesthetics, and other evidence of the human experience in each landscape (Cresswell 2014).
At the beginning of the unit on Place, students and I brainstormed ideas and discussed what a place is, what kinds of places there are, and what it meant to explore or inhabit a place. I asked the students what is unique in a place, what would they want to explore or what might they explore where they live. Students

participated in lively discussions, making connections on each other's ideas and understandings. One student said that sometimes "you had to dress a certain way" and "speak a certain way" or "be a certain way" and another spoke to what "tools" were needed to explore and understand a place. Others spoke to the uniqueness of "where we live" and the "history, good and bad" of where we live. Students were encouraged to think deeply and journal about what we do when we inhabit a place, what mindset is needed to have or what tools might help us better the process of exploring or inhabiting a place and being responsible for it. They investigated cultural commonalities as well as differences in communities. Students reflected on their place within the local and global community. During the thinking and research process, a few of the students began to share their knowledge with each other while a few considered how place, power and communities interact. Here is one discussion exchange:

S1: Here are some other words ... inspection, examination, study, to observe, to occupy, to dwell is looking at place.

S2: We really need to know what our place is…….it makes a difference in understanding and for us.

S3: Sometimes place is forced on you……. like living on a reservation. (12-year-old Native American student)

Me: Can you tell us more?

S3: We had a lot more land before. All of this…. (motioning with his hands)

S4: Wow! I didn't know that.

After research, class discussions and sharing of ideas on their understandings of place and the historical and power structures affecting it, students shared their interpretations on place. This process allowed the students to make sense of their thoughts, their funds of knowledge and new knowledge by manipulating concrete materials, interpreting discussions, and written notes. The following are some examples of the depth and creativity of the students' thinking processes which students expounded upon in both their art and written poetry:

Figure 4: *6th grade student visual representation of the importance of water for all in the desert.*
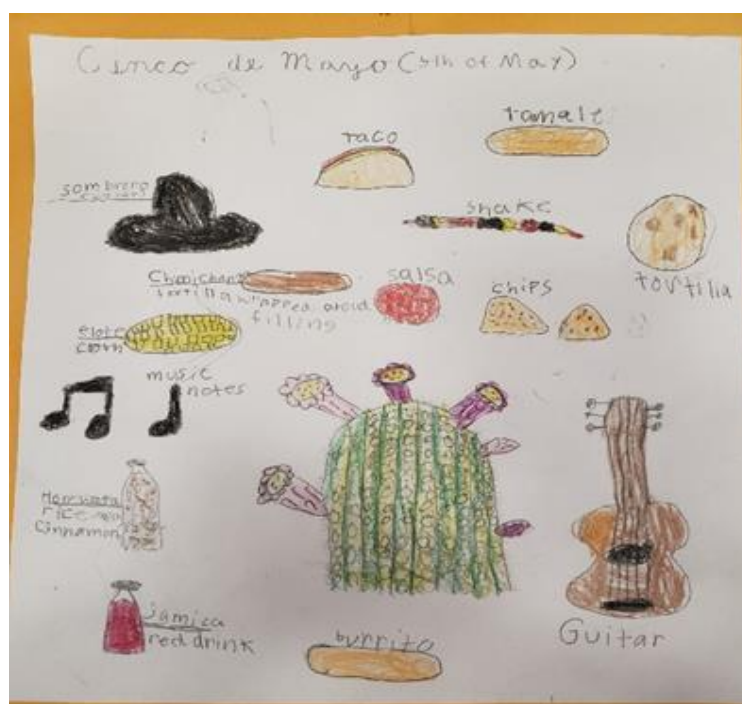
Figure 5*: 3rd grade student visual representation of unique cultural attributes of the southwestern US for a Pen Pal exchange in a post-Covid world.*
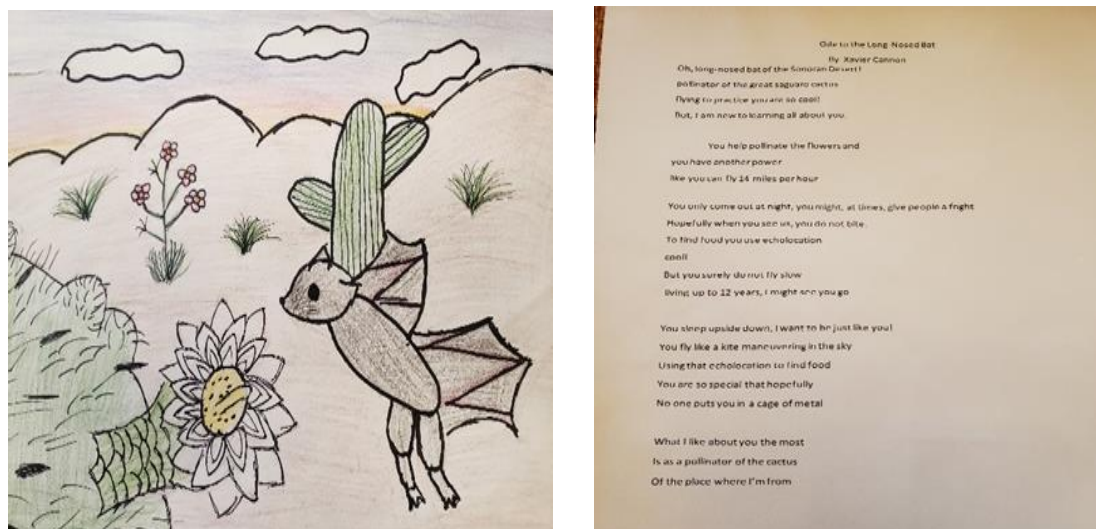
Figure 6: *5th grade student visual representation and poem of bat pollination of plants in the Sonoran Desert.*

Student response: "If we didn't have these bats there wouldn't be our flowers."

Figure 7*: 4th grade student visual representation of his jubilation of receiving the summer monsoon rains cooling off the desert and himself.*

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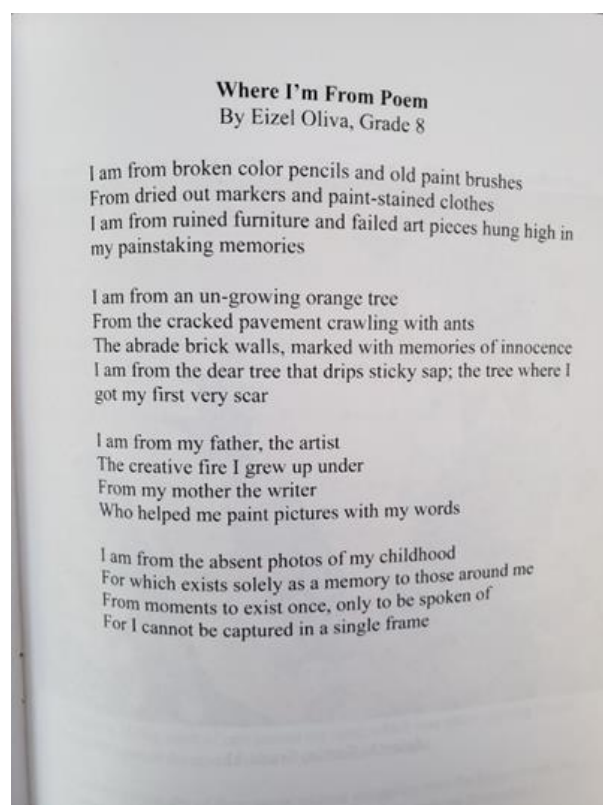
Figure 8*: 8th grade student poem on place.*

Discussion

The praxis of employing a Critical Integration Approach encourages students to tell their own stories, to share their discoveries from research with confidence, and to experience multimodal ways of learning. The strategically merged variety of instructional approaches and pedagogy at their core seek to construct enhanced forms and modes of expressing thinking and ideas both critically and creatively and expand inclusive spaces of learning and possibilities for student agency. Along the way, students locate their resilience and strength in becoming academic scholars. By creating and cultivating spaces for students' voices to flourish, and by facilitating those voices to come to the forefront of the curriculum, underrepresented students' stories, prior knowledge and authentic academic efforts and labor communicate the relevance and power found in those students' scholarly voices and demonstrate ways to navigate constraints and offer concrete

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possibilities to create radical changes for greater justice in underserved and underfunded public schools. Students who had been previously marginalized within the schools discovered that the environment they co-created with each other and with their teachers developed their abilities to apply a critical lens to their everyday schooling experiences through critical observations, thoughtful dialogue, polished writing pieces, artistic representations, and increased student agency-all creating a path to critical praxis.

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Perceiving, receiving, reflecting trauma in an urban primary school in Athens: a teachers' response

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Abstract

The demanding situation we faced in the urban primary school we were working raised our awareness on trauma and provoked our curiosity on trauma-informed practices. Everyday confrontations and interactions led us to the formation of an informal "reflective circle" – a group where teachers, involved in different teaching practices, have been sharing incidents and knowledge hoping to jointly perceive the school reality. We taught to refugee, second-generation migrant, at risk and precarious urban youth – students bearing palpably profiles of traumatisation. And yet, this localised experience is telling of how trauma can appear practically irrelevant and unrecognisable in school presenting, thus, a paradox of how students' trauma is anywhere but at the epicentre of pedagogy. In this light, what interested us actively is how we encounter trauma in school; how it blends within the emotional landscape of school; how we perceive it as a "speaking wound". We observed and analysed our own behaviours (via vignettes that we collected) and how the daily confrontation with trauma in a generalised form challenged our role as teachers.

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Introduction

The following text attempts to document our experience as "substitute" teacher at a public primary school in the center of Athens, where we were recruited to teach Greek language at the so-called *reception classes,* which facilitate the integration of children in the mainstream classes. In the school we created an informal group of teachers to talk about our students and support each other. Additionally, being aware of the characteristics of the neighborhood – a neighborhood marked by historical political memory and action, nowadays under the threat of gentrification: a neighborhood of housing squats and solidary neighbors, but also a neighborhood with gradually no children – we took this parameter into consideration. Three primary schools coexist in the area having distinct characteristics and serving the needs of different communities. The school in which we have been working might be seen as the "deprived" one. It features all the characteristics of a "difficult" school context (Berkovich, Grinshtain 2022) including:

- students from families coping with poverty, precarity or unemployment,
- a student population of multiethnic composition,
- a high ratio of students who have not mastered the teaching language,
- parents who struggle to support students' learning,
- and a challenging urban socio-spatial location.

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that teachers in a country like Greece are practically dealing with the victims of the inhumane policy of the EU and bourgeois governments in the refugee and immigration field. We teach to children, the youngest victims of uprooting, mandated by capitalist and imperialist brutality and try to make sense of the positions we find ourselves. As vigilant educators and citizens, we realize how the European Union and NATO are responsible for the global crisis and how they cooperate on the one hand to prevent the movement of populations and on the other hand to treat immigrants and refugees as "factors of development", favoring, in fact, their labor exploitation (Lyons, Stathopoulos 2001; Menéndez 2016).

The school had minimal structures, and a noticeable number of students who spoke almost no Greek (and some of them neither English). Moreover, the years of the pandemic caused stagnation and little opportunity for our students to keep up with effective learning. The way the school principal referred to the refugee students reflected a lack of scope and meaning instilled by the wider system. Or better a lack of *care*. And by "care", we mean a holistic approach: a combination of interest, solidarity, and pedagogical professionalism.

As a reaction to the situation, we decided to structure the thick communication that a group of colleagues had and arrange meetings with an explicit agenda that was trauma. From our early experiences, a first question that occurred was whether positions like ours are constituting a "mental health front-line", as the international trend calls it. We evoke trauma, but instead of taking pride in just identifying it and somehow responding to it (Barker, Mills 2018), we bring forward some of the contradictions of such hybrid roles and psychologized pathways. For our usual meetings we were writing some vignettes – stories which reveal what we encountered in school. Subsequently, these provoked research in academic terms and papers that allowed us to navigate in the discourse, pose some relevant questions and establish some bottom lines. Excited and overwhelmed by the "wealth" of trauma vignettes, it almost felt compulsive to attempt reflections on our experiences and explorations of theory, while our concern has been to be supportive both to our students and each other. We realize now that we worked as collectors of stories. From the most mundane –like the new flavor of refreshments a student sells at his family's convenience store, to the most complex –like the experiences from bombings in Syria. Some days children were telling us what they want to become in the future, other days we were sharing our views on trap music.

We taught to and interacted with refugee, second-generation migrant, at risk and precarious urban youth – students bearing palpably profiles of traumatization. We came across full front with an overwhelming array of problems that have been tagged as "adverse childhood experiences", namely the coupling of traumatic life

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events and chronic adversity, including poor health, family poverty, conflict, maltreatment, violence, abuse, neglect and experience of discrimination, not only as individual problems but also as collective life experiences in the community (Zolkoski, Bullock 2012; van Breda 2018, cited in Larkins et al. 2021). And yet, the localised experience we share is telling of how trauma can appear practically irrelevant and unrecognisable. This paradox of how students' trauma is anywhere but at the epicentre of pedagogy motivated this project. Especially in the case of our school's great majority refugee and migrant children, palpable stress and misery, painful separations, frustration with lack of control and choice over life and abrupt deteriorations in livelihoods made discussing trauma feel mandatory – or, more aptly, made not addressing trauma feel odd. We describe how we perceived this context as one where trauma is not readily and adequately addressed given its pervasiveness for our students.

Perceiving, receiving, and reflecting trauma

Shouldn't we be talking about trauma? The group, a self-initiated teachers'
response

The formation of our group stemmed from our need to communicate our experiences to feel temporally "relieved" from the tough situations that we –but mainly our students with their traumas particularly evident– were going through. This group soon adopted the characteristics of a "reflective circle" (Southall et al. 2021) or a "worry conversation" (Knudsen 2021), we were involved in some sort of "corridor casework" (Røn Larsen 2019) but without the institutionalized character. The discussions were initiated by us with no formalities and without us communicating our procedures to the principal or other teachers in the school when this was not needed.

The "reflective circles" provide a structured group process for teachers to collectively explore their experiences and broaden their perspectives by integrating theory and practice. As a model it was initiated in three schools that

have been categorized as social-educationally disadvantaged in 2019 in Australia. This university sponsored project's purpose was to inform teachers about the impact of trauma at a young age as well as to "educate" teachers to be aware of it and recognize it by introducing a model of critical reflection. The concept of critical reflection and the discussion aiming to raise awareness of our own emotional responses as well as the introduction of theoretical concepts to explain practice seemed familiar to what we were intending to do. We initially tried to distinguish the various types of trauma that might affected our students.

Unsurprisingly, action on cases that felt urgent occurred. For those cases we mobilized interventions from the principal, the school psychologist, and in some cases the social workers that already knew the families. As we studied manualized responses, we were apprehending how official protocols tend to extract issues from the school and delegate solutions outside of the school community. How to repose trauma pedagogically rather than as an external issue has become one of our unresolved questions. A rather theoretical point of departure has been the critique of social emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed practices (TIP); frameworks developed and applied in educational contexts deemed as "advanced". This trauma gaze "positions children as somehow in need of correction, "healing," or "fixing", the bottom line of which is that they are being "damaged" (Pyscher, Crampton 2020, 3). In the Greek school system such frameworks do not exist. We were expecting sentimental and superficial "trauma-talk". But not even that was the case. Trauma is nonexistent in the discourse.

The "worry conversations and network meetings" are a Scandinavian practice (Knudsen 2021). The term "worry conversation" originates from the practices of the Norwegian police, that used them as preventive method when alarmed. "Network meetings" assume the existence of an actual network – a frame around the child in need. Here, what we found particularly interesting is a sort of barrier to caring for children marked by the end of the school day. Where are the limits of our involvement? How are we and the children included in a community that

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exists beyond the school program? And could it be possible that such a community is actually supportive?

School as a figured world

The "figured world" as a concept allows us to conceptualize the school context. Introduced by Holland et al., (1998) it is an attempt to understand human activity and identity. Figured worlds "function as contexts of meaning within which social encounters have significance and people's positions matter", they are "socially organized and reproduced [...]; in them people are sorted and learn to relate to each other in different ways" (Urrieta 2007, 108). The school is, therefore, a context of action for everyone related (like teachers and students), as well as a horizon of possibilities shaped by and for concrete persons.

Moreover, the "figured world" is a landscape that has human voice and tone. The landscape is sculpted by the voices – by what is heard in it. The tones provide significance. Equally, we see trauma partly as a voice – as something that can be heard. Regarding its tone, its strength, it modifies the landscape. As a figured world school has an "as if" quality: it feels both real and artificial, authentic, and fake. This quality led us to an array of questions that are also reflected in the vignette that follows. School's bonds with real life are under question: how present are real things and experiences in this detached environment? How present and loud are real voices? And how important are people when they fail as figures of this performance? School matters, but does it matter enough? To what extent is it and its "figures" (people, place & space, processes etc.) a place to bring things that deeply matter, including traumatic ones? Which parts of their social realities do students feel they can address to school and to us? Are their traumatized voices allowed? And what do they need in order to feel safe and articulate their existence?

> I am writing something, while he is drawing on the blackboard with chalks. We are alone in the classroom. He draws a little boy laying down. A clear sketch of a boy with sad face and tears in the eyes that looks like a cartoon. He

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says "κυρία [teacher], this is me yesterday" and I say "why? Have you been crying?" He replies "yes, because my mommy died", it took me some time to understand, and I ask "you mean in the drawing? Not really? Right?". Because I have seen his mom, I know her…

No, he says, for real. "But I have seen your mommy, X." I reply. "Yes, κυρία, I have two mommies. The one that took me out of her belly and the other one", he answers, and I freeze. His mom died at some point – "and now she is with god" and from the sky she watches him, "she has a better life there". Last night, he remembered her, and he was sad. The other mom comforted him and reminded him that his mom is there for him. I agree and add that she would be happy and proud watching him becoming such a lovely child. He agrees smiling, returns to his sketch on the blackboard, erases the tears and the sad face. He draws a smile and says "μετά είμαι έτσι [afterwards I am like that]". I remember clearly that he said "I have a picture of her. We have the same here [showing his mouth]. The rabbit teeth [pointing at the gap between his teeth]". I laughed and said, "this is super cute". He laughed too.

The emotional landscape

The story of X. and the way he chose to speak reveals the different tones that voices have – voiced softer or louder stories have an impact. We encountered traumatic experiences, we observed them, and we tried to understand them. What interested us actively was how trauma, spoken or silenced, blends within the emotional landscape of school.

As *figures* existing in the figured world the school is, we were recipients of stories and emotions, and observers of various trauma manifestations. The school in which we worked was a relatively small one; it was easy to get to know almost every child. Therefore, we attempted to map the emotional landscape of school by using what was around us:

- things that we saw: incidents, behaviors, and needs. Everything that was visible was brought in school and needed attention,

- things that we were told: stories like X.'s, fears and worries shared by children, or problems that parents communicated with us,

- things that we "somehow" got to know by blending in with the community: how life conditions worsened day by day for specific families, what resources are available, and

- more global ideas such as what it means to be a refugee. These influenced the way we observed or reacted to the things that we saw or were directly told.

Emotions are inscribed in space. By living in the school one could sense how these emotions colored the space: you enter a classroom and feel the sadness, or the tension – a fight was about to start. After the months we spent in the school, we could empirically divide it into emotional zones. Between these zones we created a safe space: two classrooms that were not exactly classrooms. The space where we taught the *reception classes* was an in-between space, a place where those who did not belong anywhere could belong. This in-between, transitional condition probably facilitated the sharing and the bonding that occurred. The following vignette confirms this claim:

A. came around November. At first place, what one could notice was the adult gaze he possessed. And having such a gaze was kind of normal for a kid like him. He had gone through all the clichés that could move all us Europeans: he forced his way from Syria to Turkey – fortunately with his whole family (parents and 4 young children under 10), stayed there for a while, then he went to Lesvos by boat ("not the good one"), where he stayed for 1,5 years in a tent – in what is described as the "hell of Moria camp" and then ("with the good ship now...very big one") came the redemption... Athens!

He had never been to school before. It was one of the first things he told me, because when he went to school in Syria for a short time, his school was bombed... "Only the teacher died to save all the children" (a fake story as I was

informed by his mother, since all the children and the teacher died. A. didn't arrive in class "on time" that day). His behavior at the first days of our acquaintance was somewhat hostile. Who was I, the privileged European to tell him what to do in a country he didn't even choose to be in? "You know, I wanna go back to my country but the problem is that if I go back, I die". I certainly represented for him some kind of oppression, or perhaps I had to because I was a "teacher". Apart from being aggressive towards me, he was obviously also aggressive towards the other children in his class and the school in general. He saw an enemy in all of us. And potentially we could have been.

Step by step and with a lot of effort, a lot of patience, negotiation and "bribing" A. started to want to come with me to the "reception class", which was supposed to be his only class by the end. Besides, in his "normal" class he was just another one who "will leave in a while, who doesn't speak Greek and is the absolute trouble-maker"! Somehow, after the Christmas break, he told me "I missed you so much", and I knew he meant it. He had not done his homework and had forgotten many of the letters of the Alphabet. But he was a different child because he began to manifest all that childishness he had. He didn't need to play the tough one! He was beginning to feel safe. And even though "miss Dimitra was always late", "it was ok for him"!

The "speaking wound" metaphor

A. was a loud kid. He was fighting and usually refused to follow the rules. But he was also caring and fun. His presence confirmed the assumption that traumatized voices have different tones. Trauma blends within the emotional landscape as a voice, as a voice softer or louder – as a speaking wound.

The speaking wound metaphor coined by Cathy Caruth (1996) "applies to the identifiably difficult experiences that kids carry into school, but they soon realize are *not for school*" (in Dutro, Bien 2014, 23). This definition –experiences that are

not for school– was given by a child who participated in the study of Dutro and Bien and it summarizes our concerns on receiving and perceiving traumatic accounts.

Trauma theory illuminates two ways trauma can be conceptualized in school. Firstly, trauma that children carry in the classrooms should be considered as a potential source for deepening the connection with school. In these terms, school is significant, and it is a place where experiences and voices matter. The *figures* involved are present and bonds of trust can be established. We believe that such a consideration is important since it recognizes the worth of relationships. This opens the discussion about the kind of pedagogical responses that are possible in schools when trauma is or when it is not "factored in" pedagogy. Secondly, trauma should be recognized as something that occurs just by positioning some children in school. This happens because school is made to exclude. Not all children fit in it. School traumatizes children because it does not respect them and their identities. Because it systematically reproduces inequality. By not making space for everyone to exist school constitutes trauma.

We wonder what school is going to be without trauma. Is such a concept realistic? Are all the figures involved in school aware the trauma exists and blends inevitably in its emotional landscape? At the same time, we problematize the possibility of psychologization of children's problems and rights which could follow the recognition.

Conclusion

Choosing to care – or choosing for whom to care and what to care about?

O'Connor (2008) explains that "by making the choice to care for their students" teachers are able "to construct and maintain a sense of professional identity which cohered with their philosophical or humanistic beliefs about the teaching role" (117). We teach in conditions that caring is not encouraged – yet it seems to be the only way (The Care Collective et al. 2020). According to our basic ideas about our

role as teachers, we felt that caring was the only weapon that we had against hostile conditions. Schools as part of welfare policies provide for basic goods and skills, while at the same time reflect hostility employing what has been termed as affective deterrence (Mills, Klein 2021): they discourage demanding more (which is dramatic when what they offer is hardly enough). They can be unwelcoming places (when for instance parents do not understand the language and practices are vague). They are places that push children away.

One of our empirical conclusions is that schools essentially put children in front of morphing dilemmas of the type "adaptation or drop out". Dilemmas which subsequently entail for us teachers the dilemma *to triage or not to triage* trapped in semi-official case-working. These are real challenges that undermine public education in difficult socio-economic contexts and reduce everything back to a vague individual accountability.

Since teaching and learning are socially situated practices that are deeply embedded in emotional experiences (Hargreaves 1998), our emotions guide the formation of identities and justify commitment (Nias 1986; Zembylas 2003). We recognize that being proactively sympathetic to our students could be compensatory stemming from our powerlessness to effectively change things for them (Osterkamp 1999). In this light, it is us who choose to care. And it is us who perform a type of "corridor casework" as street-level bureaucrats (Røn Larsen 2019). "Corridor casework" is a term "chosen to emphasize the flexible and unpredictable ways in which problems find their solutions in social practice" (Røn Larsen 2019, 833–834), while street-level bureaucrats are the frontline workers in public services, like teachers, who are usually the ones who solve problems. We, as teachers, were accessible – but this was our choice. In a school that was at times collapsing, doing the minimum (e.g., caring in practical ways) appeared to be enough. We do not wish to reduce the importance of such work, but to call for collective responses that are needed to make this choice affordable for more teachers.

Saying goodbye

One of the things that repeatedly drew our attention was *order* as a means of finding meaning in everyday school life. Following Simone Weil (2003) we conceive it as a basic "need of the soul", a texture of social relationships that prevents the violation of needs and obligations. We realized that an environment that did not provide for order was additionally traumatizing children by neglecting some of their needs and by making things less predictable and approachable. Jo Freeman (n.d.) argues that when there is no order the powerless are not protected from those who have the power. Their voices are not heard, and they remain marginalized. The reduction of routines makes things meaningless and harsh. It creates and perpetuates a feeling of uprootedness. It has been difficult to say goodbye, to feel that you belonged in the community and that your experiences and progress are valued. Being rooted is the result of the natural participation in the life of the community; it preserves not only the values of the past but –more importantly for educational environments– particular expectations for the future (Weil 2003). Having expectations for the future and feeling that you belong in the school are two interdepended ideas.

We felt that saying goodbye and addressing the sense of not being welcomed in the place that you spend your days was important. Therefore, a summer celebration was organized, and the parents were invited. The school yard was full; various emotions were added to the landscape. The establishment of such a ritual appeared to be healing and hopeful. It has been a way to say goodbye and reflect.

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The promise of neoliberal education system to the poor in Turkey: Building cheap labor force

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Abstract

As a result of the elimination of access to qualified public education, the exam focused education system, the reduction of the budget allocated to education, and the erosion of secular education, which are all the reflections of neoliberal, education in Turkey has become increasingly marketized and religious. Today, quality and secular education has become a commodity accessible to the upper middle classes. Undoubtedly, neoliberalism has caused destruction in education all over the world, but its impact has been much deeper and more destructive in countries like Turkey, which are periphery capitalist, developing and are in intense economic crisis. As a matter of fact, Turkey has become a real garbage dump of the central capitalist countries today, because Turkey imports garbage from developed countries and ships that are no longer used are anchoring in Turkish ports for dismantling. While the educated workforce is leaving the country or looking for ways to leave, Turkey is on the one hand becoming the last stop of irregular illegal immigrants, and on the other hand, it condemns its lower class and poor children and unemployed youth to be unskilled labor. At this point, the education system, which has been marketized and religiousized with neoliberal policies, comes into play. Because the policies implemented to raise poor lower-class children as cheap labor force them away from formal education and direct them to vocational high schools, imam-hatip schools, and mostly vocational training centers and vocational training courses. Increasing

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religiousization policies also serve to make young people consent to work as cheap labor and to become obedient individuals. In this context, in this study, how young people in Turkey have been made a cheap labor force in vocational training centers and how education has become a device that serves to the market is discussed.

Introduction

In the last 20 years, education in Turkey has been removed from its secular, scientific and public character, and a religious, reactionary and market-oriented education system has been established instead. The two main determinants of this education system are marketization and religiousization as processes that feed each other. Of course, this process did not start with the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/AKP), which has been in power for the last twenty years. The neoliberal policies and free market economy put into practice with the 1980 military coup paved the way for commercialization and reactionaryism in education as well as in all public services. However, especially during the AKP period, marketization and religiousization have become the pedagogical logic of education (Keskin Demirer 2012; Yıldız 2013; Yıldız, Korkmaz & Doğan 2019; Eğitim-Sen 2020).

AKP is a political Islamist party, and therefore it is quite understandable that it is anti-secular and in favor of religiousization in education, but the destruction in the education system is not limited to this. In the conjuncture Turkey is in today, its economy has collapsed and its education system has rotted like all its public systems (Eğitim-Sen 2020). Today, Turkey's goal in education is to train cheap and obedient workforce, and the way to do this is to build a generation that does not criticize and object but just obeys, give thanks for their religion and hatred. As a matter of fact, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that they want to raise a "vindictive" and "religious" generation in many of his speeches for young people[1].

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLzqB876I7M

Today when we look at Turkey's situation in the world system, we can see that the role assigned to Turkey is to produce cheap and obedient labor. The way to achieve this is the religiousization and commercialization of education and giving it to the service of the market. Because, when we look at the education and employment relations in the general picture in Turkey, the image we face is very clear. A political and economic system fed by cheap labor was created. In this system, there is hostility to qualified education and educators. In this system, which says "Go abroad" to the doctors who claim their rights, which boasts exporting engineers to other countries and which devalues all qualified educational institutions of the country such as Boğaziçi University[2] and Anatolian High Schools[3], there is a systematic attack on qualified educational institutions and qualified people such as doctors and teachers. This has to be so, because the face of the transformation and orientation in education is aimed at raising cheap labor. In order to grasp this transformation, it is necessary to look at global trends and the way the government relates to these global trends. In addition to this, it is necessary to look at the proposed roles and development paradigm for peripheral countries such as Turkey in the international division of labor. When we look these points, we see that it is aimed to create a cheap and obedient labor regime in the country. Therefore, Turkey has become a country that imports the immigration of

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[2] Boğaziçi University protests are demonstrations that started on January 4, 2021 and continued until July 15, 2021, against the appointment of a rector by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Boğaziçi University, except for the selection of university components, from outside the University staff, as the rector. Boğaziçi University faculty members and students demanded the resignation of the rector and the election of the new rector. During the protests, many students' homes were raided and many students were detained. During these protests, many incidents such as the closure of the university by the police, the putting of handcuffs on its door, the clashes between the security guards and the students, and the refusing to let the faculty members in took place. Since the beginning of the protests, the protests of both students and faculty members still continue with different actions in the campus.

[3] Anatolian high schools were qualified academic secondary education institutions in Turkey that accepted students through examinations and teachers were appointed on the basis of examinations. Because the phrase "Anatolia" was added to the signboards of the schools, but no changes were made to increase the quality of education.

the Middle East[4] and the garbage of the West[5] inevitably and incoming refugees and asylum seekers are also employed as cheap labor (Güller 2021, 19). Under these conditions Turkey has become a country where young people who refuse to enter this cheap labor swirl try to flee to other countries and migrate at the first opportunity they find. As a matter of fact, according to studies, 4,583 doctors have left Turkey in the last five years. In January 2022, 197 doctors applied to work abroad, and it is estimated that this number will reach 2,500 by the end of the year (Genç 2022). Similarly, engineers are leaving the country in search of better working and living conditions. Those who remain in the country are forced to work in precarious, temporary and low-paid jobs. Those who are members of the union and seek their rights are dismissed. Today, there are actions of workers who are dismissed because they are unionized all over the country.

When we look at the growing sectors recently in Turkey, the jobs for blue-collar workers are processing of imported waste and ship dismantling that the central capitalist countries do not want to do and that are shifted to Turkey. Jobs such as cashiering in chain markets, working in call centers, private security guards or motorcycle courier services are becoming more common for white-collar workers, that is, young people who cannot be appointed as university graduates. All of these jobs require a cheap and obedient workforce that will tolerate that cheapness. There are two dominant tendencies in Turkey in the creation of this cheap labor force: The first is to send their own qualified and educated young people abroad and instead get unqualified cheap (labor refugees and asylum seekers) from other countries (Güller 2021, 19-20, 56-58) and employ refugees and asylum seekers from war zones informally and without security. But it is not possible to ensure its permanence. The second tendency is that the system

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[4] According to United Nations Refugee Organization (UNHCR) data, Turkey hosts approximately 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees as well as 320,000 other nationalities of interest to UNHCR. (https://www.unhcr.org/tr/turkiyedeki-multeciler-ve-siginmacilar) .
[5] Türkiye is the largest destination for waste exported from the EU, with a volume of around 14.7 million tonnes in 2021 - more than three times as much as in 2004 and almost half of the total exports of waste. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220525-1

reproduces itself and cheap labor force with a religiousized, unqualified and marketized education system.

In order to produce the cheap labor force needed, the education system in Turkey has been unqualified, commercialized and religiousized. In this system lies the logic of obedience, not merit. As long as this system continues, unless someone says stop, the practices of religiousization and commercialization of education will increase, because the system has to increase in order to sustain itself. For this reason, the education system largely serves to train the cheap labor force needed by the market and it creates institutions that will build cheap labor within itself or strengthens the existing ones. These institutions are: (1) Vocational High Schools, (2) Vocational training centers and (3) Vocational training courses[6].

Vocational High Schools

In high school level in Turkey, schools are divided into two types: schools that accept students according to the results of central exams and schools that receive registration by address. Only 10% of the students can enter the schools, which accept students according to the central exam results, called "qualified school". However, 5% of the qualified schools are vocational high schools and imam hatip (religious education-oriented schools) high schools. Children of middle-upper class families who cannot get into a qualified school with these exams mostly attend private schools. In other words, qualified, secular and scientific education becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold. The remaining students from the poor and lower classes are placed in the schools closest to their addresses and these schools are mostly imam hatip schools and vocational high schools. Today, four out of every 10 high school students receive vocational training. There are only 307 science high schools compared to 1,452 imam hatip high schools and 3,792 vocational high schools in Turkey. The ratio of students who receive

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[6] Vocational training courses are courses opened for adults in non-formal education institutions and are out of the scope of the study, but these courses also serve to train cheap labor force.

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vocational and technical education among all students who reach the age of secondary education is 35 percent. As seen in Table 1, 3 million 920 thousand 83 of 6 million 318 thousand 602 secondary school students receive education in general high schools, 1 million 731 thousand 556 in vocational and technical high schools, and 666 thousand 963 in imam hatip high schools.

Table1. Type of High Schools and Number Of Students[7]

	Schools	Number of Students
General High Schools (Anatolian High Schools and Science High Scools)	3 483	3 511 399
Vocational High Schools	4 027	1 731 556
Religious High Schools	1 673	666 963

Source: Ministry of National Education Statistics, 2021

Research (see. Çelebi ve Gökmen 2014, 142; Freire ve Giang 2012; Gelişli, Beisenbayeva, Sultanbek ve Ussenova 2016) show that vocational education is seen as a type of education in which students with low socio-economic level and insufficient academic achievement continue not only in Turkey but also in many countries of the world. Studies (see. Aksoy 1996; Cengiz, Titrek ve Akgün 2007; Nartgün ve Yüksel 2009; Serdar 2016) revealing that socio-economic status is determinant in school choice at high school level in Turkey also show that children from families from lower socio-economic classes prefer vocational education. However, it is clear that this is more of an obligation than of a choice, since central exams are decisive in transitions between educational levels, the children of poor families, who cannot make sufficient investment in education and cannot adequately prepare for the exams, are forced to enroll to vocational high schools. It is not very possible for these children to be placed in a qualified school with the exams, because their families' socio-economic conditions are not enough to meet the private lessons, courses and private teaching institutions required for the

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[7] Private schools are not included.

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exam. In addition, the fact that the cultural capital of the families does not clearly comply with the curriculum has a negative effect on the success of the students. This situation compels these children to go to vocational high schools and therefore to be cheap labor force.

Vocational high school students face many problems during their education. As they cannot receive a qualified and holistic education, they are employed as cheap labor in enterprises under the name of internship. As a matter of fact, during the pandemic period, vocational high school students are condemned to work when all schools are closed and while doing distance education; vocational high school students whose lives were endangered were driven to the streets by exploitation called "internship". Vocational high school students who continued to work at workplaces or at school were employed in the same conditions as the workers who had to work in the factory. At the same time, they continued to produce masks and disinfectants in workshops in schools. They were exempted from the curfew imposed for those under the age of 20. In this process, while only one third of the minimum wage was paid to the students in vocational high schools that continue production, the revolving funds of the schools founded on the labor of the students are increasing every day.

However, when these students graduate, they either cannot find a job related to their field of education or they have to work for very low wages. Also they cannot be succesful in the university entrance exams because they don't get a qualified academic education in vocational high schools. A study conducted by the Ministry of National Education (MEB 2020) revealed that only 22% of vocational high school graduates work in the field they graduated from, and 80% of them work at or below the minimum wage.

Vocational Training Centers

Apprenticeship training given in Apprenticeship Training Centers, one of the schools operating under the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical

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Education of the Ministry of National Education, was included in the scope of compulsory education with the Law No. 6764 published in the Official Gazette dated 9th December 2016 and these centers were structured as vocational and technical high schools. With the regulation made in the Vocational Education Law No. 3308 on 25th December 2021, Vocational Training Centers (VTC) started to be established as educational institutions that give certificates, documents and diplomas, where formal and non-formal vocational and technical education programs will be implemented together. With the same regulation Vocational Training Centers have been given the opportunity to give high school diplomas. In other words, VTCs are designed as institutions where students receive theoretical education at school 1 day a week, practical training in enterprises 4 days a week and receive formal vocational education diploma when they complete it. So under these circumstances they are not real education institutions or high schools, they are just centers to produce cheap labor force.

The conditions for enrolling in VTCs are listed on the "My Profession is My Life" website[8], specially prepared for Vocational Training Centers by the Ministry of National Education:

• To have completed at least secondary school or imam hatip secondary school.

• Being conducive to the education of the relevant profession in terms of health status. This situation is documented with a health/health board report when necessary.

• Signing a contract with a workplace related to the profession to be registered (There must be a master with a "Master Teaching Certificate" in the workplace where the contract will be signed).

• There is no age limit for registration.

• Student registrations continue throughout the year.

• Applications can be made in 81 different branches.

• Apprenticeship training lasts for 3 years, overseership training takes 1 year.

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[8] https://meslegimhayatim.meb.gov.tr/

• 9th, 10th and 11th grade students attending the vocational training centers receive at least 30% of the minimum wage, and 12th grade students receive at least half of the minimum wage.

• Vocational training center graduates can open their own businesses by obtaining a "Mastery Certificate" and a "Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School diploma".

• Those who have mastership certificate have "Business pedagogy training" and "Master Trainer" certificate for apprentice student employment.

• Theoretical training is given at school 1 day a week, and skills training is provided in enterprises 4 days a week.

• A class hour is 40 minutes in school and 60 minutes in businesses.

• Vocational training in enterprises is 8 hours a day.

The following information is given on the website as the conditions of transfer from formal education to VTCs:

• Students who are in intermediate classes with 9th grade students and want to transfer to a vocational training center program from the same field will be able to transfer from their class level without losing a semester, regardless of time

• 10th, 11th and 12th grade students who want to transfer from a different field or other school types will be able to continue their education at the 10th grade level if they have transferred until the beginning of the second semester. After the beginning of the second semester, students who want to transfer will be registered for vocational training only in the enterprise in order to prepare for vocational training and these students will be included in the total number of students of the relevant school.

Vocational training centers are formerly known as apprenticeship training centers. With the changes made in the laws, these institutions have been accepted as high school education institutions. In vocational training centers, students who have completed secondary school go to work for 4 days and go to school for one day. 30 percent of the minimum wage for 9th, 10th and 11th grade students and 50 percent of the minimum wage for 12th grade students is covered by the state

(Özer 2020, 147). Business owners employ child labor without any financial obligation. The children of the poor and lower classes, on the other hand, are obliged to enroll in these institutions in order to have a short-term job and contribute to the family budget, as they cannot afford their formal education expenses.

Although enough field studies for VTCs have not yet been carried out, it is possible to say that increasing poverty and deep inequalities played a role in the fact that the number of registered students, which was 87 thousand in 2016, when the regulation was changed, reached 159 thousand by the end of 2021 and 920,000 as of October 2022.

The economic crisis in Turkey and the deepening of poverty, as well as the government's encouragement of student enrollment in vocational training centers through formal and non-formal education institutions, also contributed to this increase. According to the data of the Social Security Institution in Turkey, 42 percent of registered workers, i.e., 6 million 390 thousand people, are working with minimum wage in 2020. While 98 percent of them work in the private sector, only 2 percent are employed in the public sector. When these figures are compared with European countries[9], Turkey has the highest rate of employees with minimum wage. In other words, a large part of the workforce in Turkey today works for a wage below the poverty line, and children growing up with these families are forced to become workers at a young age, because they cannot afford their education and school expenses or because they are forced to attend vocational high schools within the central placement system. Picture 1 is just a simple example of the advertisements about VTCs. The advertising slogans of the Ministry of National Education "School once a week!", "Salary and insurance!", "Job guarantee!" prove that VTCs have nothing to do with education in reality. In

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9   https://tr.euronews.com/2021/11/12/turkiye-ve-avrupa-ulkelerinde-asgari-ucretle-cal-san-oran-ne-
kadar#:~:text=Sosyal%20G%C3%BCvenlik%20Kurumu%20(SGK)%20verilerine,42'si%20asgar
i%20%C3%BCcretle%20%C3%A7al%C4%B1%C5%9F%C4%B1yor.

reality, child labor is encouraged by the state with vocational training centers, and formal education is virtually put to an end. The children of the impoverished people are encouraged to work, and the impoverished people welcome their children to contribute to the home. Poor workers' and laborers' children are forced to enroll in this program involuntarily due to the financial difficulties of their families.

"I BOTH HAVE A SCHOOL AND A JOB."

The questions on the poster adressed to the children say:

*Is high school curriculum heavy for you?

*Do you have absenteeism problem at school?
*You have a job but don't have a document?
*Do you find it difficult to go to school every day?

THIS PROJECT IS JUST FOR YOU

Picture 1: *An advertisement about Vocational Training Centers*

Training and Working Conditions of Children Enrolled in Vocational Education Centers

Apprenticeship education should be a kind of compensatory education for people who are out of the compulsory education age but have not completed their education, or it should be a training for individuals who have completed their compulsory education and want to acquire a profession. However, in this form and with the conditions and practices determined by the Ministry of National Education mentioned above, VTCs have become institutions that replace formal education in a sense. High school diplomas are given to those who graduate from

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VTCs. It is envisaged that students attending VTCs will receive theoretical training at school 1 day a week and skills training 4 days in the workplaces or enterprises. However, researches and news reflected in the media reveal that this situation creates deep inequalities and problems that are difficult to compensate. First of all, students who attend VTCs fall behind their peers academically, as they only receive education one day a week. Because it is not possible to complete the curriculum applied in academic high schools and even vocational high schools in one day. Even if these students have the right to take the university exam when they receive a high school diploma, it will not be possible for them to be successful in the university entrance exams and go to university. Another problem is related to the fact that these students receive skills training in enterprises. There is no one who has pedagogical knowledge to provide skills training to students in enterprises. The presence of a foreman is sufficient for an enterprise to receive interns from VTCs. These foreman trainings are also carried out by obtaining a certificate through distance education (Özer 2020, 251). In other words, the supervision of the working conditions and training of the students in the enterprises is not carried out by the teachers, but by the foremen who have no pedagogical training. In fact, these children are employed as direct workers under the name of skill training in enterprises.

In a study conducted by Kösesoy and Oğuzöncül (2020), students work an average of 12 hours a day, start working at the age of 14-15, most of them think that "the working situation harms them physically and mentally" and are exposed to physical or verbal violence by employers/other employees. It has been revealed that some of the students have had a work accident at least once despite receiving training on occupational health and safety. According to the aforementioned research, the majority of the students stated that their rights in the contract were violated by the employer; they did not go through a health check while they were taken, all of them defined their job status as paid, and the majority of them stated that the wage they received was not enough to meet their monthly needs.

In addition, some news reflected in the media reveal that children working in organized industrial zones or in various workplaces, registered with VTCs, do not get education in workshops and under the supervision of their teachers, as in formal vocational education institutions, and are fully employed as workers.[10] Children are forced to work longer than eight hours every day of the week in unsupervised workplaces.[11] Their statements in the media and newspapers that they are employed in heavy works that are not suitable for their own constitution and physical structure, almost without seeing the sun, and that they are exposed to violence and exploitation, are quite striking.[12]

Children who cannot receive adequate education at the school where they attend only one day are pushed out of education, their friendship relations are frayed and their dreams for the future disappear. It is aimed to raise these children, who are excluded from formal education, as individuals who are alienated from their future, uneducated, ignorant of their rights, culturally deficient, and accepting the life imposed on themselves. These adolescents will be cut off from their peer groups and deprived of the ability to be a social being, to share with their peers in the school environment, to establish friendships, and to solve the problems they encounter.

Child labor and labor exploitation is getting widespread in society, children are exposed to intense exploitation in the workplace, exposed to violence and become vulnerable to harassment. These children, who cannot act like adults when it comes to claiming rights, will turn into slave workers at the hands of the bosses. Children at this age cannot protect themselves against the violence, harassment and ill-treatment they are exposed to in the workplace.

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[10]   https://www.medyaport.net/cocuk/cocuklar-mesleki-egitim-adi-altinda-10-saatten-fazla-calistiriliyor-h39258.html; https://www.birgun.net/haber/cocuk-calistiginda-cocukluk-calinir-yoksulluk-surer-402269; https://www.evrensel.net/haber/462174/doc-dr-taner-akpinar-cocuk-isciligi-sinifin-mucadelesiyle-onlenebilir

[11]   https://www.evrensel.net/haber/460755/iste-mesem-gercegi-ucuz-iscilik-agir-kosullar-siddet

[12]https://www.evrensel.net/haber/392359/ostim-cocuk-emegi-somurusuyle-ayakta-kalan-sanayi-havzasi

These children face many negativities in the businesses they go to under the name of internship and there is no control mechanism in this regard. Children are completely left at the mercy of their bosses. Although it is forbidden to employ workers under the age of 18 in the law, the employment of 14-15 year old children who have just finished secondary school is legitimized by the state under the name of education. Because 46 percent of the students enrolled in VTCs are under the age of 16.

Employers' Interest in Vocational Training Centers (!)

Children in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades who are registered with the Vocational Training Centers and work in a workplace or enterprise are paid 30 percent of the minimum wage, and those in the 12th grade are paid half of the minimum wage. This situation leads the children of poor families, who cannot afford their formal education, to go to vocational training centers with motivations such as "having a short-term job, contributing to the family budget by both working and studying". However, it is not only the children of poor families who are "interested" in vocational training centers. All payments for students working as apprentices and journeymen within VTCs, namely accident and occupational disease insurance premiums and monthly wages, insurance expenses are covered from the general budget, unemployment insurance fund, not from the enterprise where the child participates in production and generates surplus value. The fact that there is no age limit for enrolling in VTCs causes employers who want to employ unpaid workers in their workplaces to take advantage of this situation. Employers who want to turn this situation into an opportunity either make the workers who are already working in their own workplaces register to VTCs and incur all costs to the state; or dismiss the workers working within its own body and choose to employ child labor registered in VTCs instead of them.[13] As such, It is possible to

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[13] https://www.evrensel.net/haber/455658/patronlar-mesem-onunde-kuyruk-oldu

say that VTCs do not serve to the public and children with the public budget; but serve the employers and provide them free workers.

Conclusions

Various studies are carried out to prevent child labor all over the world. In addition to international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and ILO, national organizations at the country level draw attention to the increasing number of child workers as a result of poverty and inequalities, and carry out various studies to prevent this. In Turkey, on the one hand, while the number of child workers is increasing, on the other hand, children are taken out of the education system through VTCs and are made into child workers by the state.

The VTC program has been put into practice with the objectives of enabling students to get a job quickly, reducing the youth unemployment rate, offering alternatives to students who are academically unsuccessful or whose right to education has expired, and creating employment. However, in practice, the expected goals have not been realized, and VTCs has become an option offered to all students in formal education, and as such, they have become an alternative to formal education.

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expected goals have not been realized, and MESEMs are an option offered to all students in formal education, and as such, they have become an alternative to formal education.

Almost all of the students attending vocational high schools are children from the poor lower income group. In a period when school expenses have become a serious burden on families, the idea of students leaving formal education as soon as possible and 'getting a job' and 'earning money' seems attractive at first, but there are many negative aspects in practice.

By leaving the students at the mercy of the employer and the strict rules of the market at a young age when they are still at the age of compulsory education, and this is done by the Ministry of National Education, the students' right to learn in the 'school' is actually taken away, and a mechanism that operates as cheap labor exploitation is created. It is not possible to evaluate this mechanism as an educational practice.

For the students who have not yet fully developed their self-discipline and self-preservation skills, it is not suitable for their spiritual, psychological and physical development to work under the orders of foremen, employers or older workers who have no pedagogical formation. The environments in which they work carry the danger of making them vulnerable to harmful habits, exploitation and violence. Gender inequalities become more visible as this age group is more vulnerable to exploitation.

Students who are protected from negative behaviors, harmful habits, peer bullying and discipline problems in the school are completely unprotected in workplaces and enterprises. Teachers' responsibility to supervise students is limited to one day per week. Due to the lack of teachers, these inspections often fail.

The continuation of children's ties with school depends on their continued employment in a workplace. For this reason, they have to do whatever is asked of them for fear of being dismissed despite the negativities they experience.

Compulsory education in Turkey is 12 years, but with VTCs, compulsory education actually decreases to 8 years. From the point of view of education, although vocational training centers are accepted as equal to high schools, students who will receive a high school diploma from these programs graduate with less course hours than students in formal education. This makes it almost impossible for them to be successful in university exams.

Since VTCs will work on a full-time, full-year basis, flexible working, irregularity, drudgery become normal, and the concept of overtime and the definition of the job become unclear. Weekend and evening work will become the new normals of life.

Public resources are transferred to the capital by the government under the logic of "they are paid for these children". Child workers are employed for wages below the minimum wage. This fee and insurance expenses are covered by the state. This situation leads the capital owners to these programs because the labor cost of employing an apprentice is zero. As a result of this, workplaces and enterprices go to reduce the number of paid workers, which means an increase in unemployment. Public resources through VTCs are used not to improve the quality of education, but to support labor markets and employers. Public education should be invested with the budget allocated for VTCs, and students at the age of compulsory education should be guaranteed access to education and completed their education. Because, as well as building a healthy and safe future, the way to raise a qualified workforce is not to make children workers at an early age and transfer public resources to the market, but to provide qualified public education to all the children of the country.

It is not possible to consider education problems independently of the country's general policies and employment policies. Vocational and Technical Education is structured from a point of view that takes into account the needs of the market with the perspective of the current government. Ultimately, the fact that vocational education serves to the interests of the private sector shows that the process is handled with a marketist logic. In these institutions, applications that

will contribute to the academic development of students are gradually reduced. Moreover, job guarantee is only at the level of discourse. VTCs are institutions that produce cheap and obedient workforce output in terms of the system. Fundamental changes are required in vocational education, focusing on the best interests of students and society, with a public education approach, not a market-oriented one.

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Monitoring educational interventions to trigger significant changes in the learners' lives.

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Abstract

This paper aims to present research on how the narratives of learners can be used as an active tool for monitoring the dynamics of educational interventions, such as Theatre in Education (TiE) Projects aiming to trigger significant changes in the learners' lives. The research was conducted in 2019-2020 in 4 Greek Secondary Schools following a TiE Project about identity, belonging, and fitting in during the years of adolescence. The research tool was based on the Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique. The learners' narratives and stories were collected after the intervention of the TiE Project and were analyzed following the MSC Technique stages as well as content analysis. The research concludes that educational interventions, especially these using the performing arts, can not only trigger significant changes but also bring about the achievement of the metacognitive competence of the individuals to recognize the change. An interesting discussion on the issue of the dynamics of education is initiated and more research in school environments is needed.

Keywords: education for change; Most Significant Change (MSC); Theatre in Education (TiE)

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1. Introduction

This paper presents theoretical and practical research data on the "Most Significant Change"(hereafter written as MSC) (Davies, Dart 2005) evaluation method implemented after a Theatre in Education (TiE) program. A core issue of an intervention using TiE as a pedagogical method (Jackson 1993) is the evaluation of the results and effects of the interventions on education. Despite TiE being an educational form of theatre with a global application, there has been a lack of thorough and consistent research into an evaluation of this method. Lack of funding, mainly from the public sector, may have contributed to a dearth of long-term and large-scale research projects despite governments making arts-based education as one of their top priorities (Jackson, Leahy 2006). Nevertheless, there are some notable research attempts that have taken place in the field of participatory educational theatre where both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been employed. Quantitative tools, popular for gathering hard, demographic data are rarely applied as a whole process. The structure of TiE programs, requires more interpretative and visible evaluation methods thereby making qualitative research methodologies more appropriate and accurate for this type of program (Gallagher 2008). Case studies of varied TiE programs have supplied the required particularity and detail arising from their complex operating systems and diverse cultures, ranging from countries such as South Korea and South Africa to Belgium (Chinyowa 2015; Kim 2009; Winston 2003). Action research methods, popular in their classic form as well as the use of tools such as focus groups and interviews with students, teachers, and teacher/actors, provide the experience from multiple perspectives and are a means of personal and group evaluation (Jackson, Leahy 2006; Koukounaras-Liagis 2011).

This paper argues that the MSC evaluation technique can be an applicable and effective tool for monitoring and assessing this type of initiative in educational contexts. Findings from a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, far from being intimidating, constitute both a relevant and appropriate tool in pedagogy and socio-political contexts.

2. Most Significant Change technique

MSC, invented in the 1990's for a rural development program in Bangladesh (Davies 1998), is a qualitative method of monitoring and evaluating the changes caused by a program or intervention, based on the collection of stories/narratives of the most significant changes in the lives of the participants due to the specific program. A participatory approach is taken since project stakeholders are involved in the procedure, firstly by deciding the sort of change is to be monitored and, secondly in analyzing the collected data (Davies, Dart 2005, 8).

Certainly, a wide range of qualitative methodologies and theoretical frameworks for collecting and interpreting data already exist. However, there has been a noted innovation in evaluation methods, mainly because of a) the inappropriateness of many traditional means of evaluation (Vanclay 2015, 551), b) the effectiveness, which has not only been a questionable issue but also involves the main interest of the stakeholders, and c) story-based approaches to evaluation which came to the fore after 1990s and where empirical attribution may have been insufficient (Mayne 2004, 49-50). Performance Story Reporting (PSR) (Dart, Mayne 2005; Roughley, Dart 2009) and Collaborative Outcomes Reporting (COR) (Dart 2008) are similar techniques and are related to MSC. The latter approach places more emphasis on the integration of empirical and qualitative data. Three more narrative or story-based evaluation approaches are like MSC: a) Participatory Narrative Inquiry (PNI) (Kurtz 2014), b) Community Engagement (CE) (Dare, Vanclay, Schirmer 2011; Hughes, Huby 2002) and c) Critical Incident Technique (CIT) (Wilson, Starr-Schneidkraut, Cooper 2001).

MSC was invented by Rick Davies in 1992 as part of his PhD research in Bangladesh. He and his friend and colleague Jess Dart subsequently wrote the MSC Guide in 2005 (Davies, Dart 2005). It is a research tool that provides summative evaluation which aims to facilitate program improvement. Hence, although the technique helps to evaluate the processes and the outcomes of a program, it is not a "stand-alone technique." Components of the technique are Dynamic Values inquiry and stories, the former concerned with the value of individual outcomes

of the participants that are revealed explicitly by the second. Since MSC is not based on predefined indicators that are countable and measurable, it can identify unexpected changes, while at the same time monitoring and evaluating bottom-up initiatives. Thus, it can deliver the whole picture of an intervention, what is really happening and what kind of changes are occurring, rather than the presentation of simplified numbers (Davies, Dart 2005, 12). Essentially, a "complete" MSC process involves 10 steps with the first three concerned with the design and implementation of the intervention as well as the preliminary stages of the search:

1. How to initiate and raise interest,

2. Defining the domains of change,

3. Defining the reporting period,

4. Collecting Significant Change stories,

5. Selecting the most significant of the stories,

6. Feeding back the results of the selection process,

7. Verification of stories,

8. Quantification,

9. Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring,

10. Revising the system (Davies, Dart 2005, 10).

It is important to note that a) in step two the stakeholders have to identify broad domains related to the purpose of the intervention. Changes are not precisely defined by the stakeholders thereby allowing the area to be defined by the participants, b) the stories are to be collected by asking the following question: 'During the last month, in your opinion, what was the most significant change that took place for participants in the program?'. The participants respond with a story explicating at the same time why they consider this change to be the most significant, c) the process refers to organizations and groups of educational programs that follow a systematic procedure based on hierarchy. Therefore, from the lower levels to the higher, distribution of the stories is undertaken by the staff who subsequently send them to the next level where further screening takes place

based on criteria which have been decided on by all participants; c) The related reports are examined and detailed reasoning on why the specific stories were picked in each domain is given. The program managers collate all the material and, based on the stories that show the most significant change, they return to the participants to verify the change and collect more information; d) the quantification consists of the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information, the aim being to quantify the extent to which the most significant changes have been identified; e) monitoring concerns the process and the system itself and f) the last step is to reflect on the process and the results of the use of MSC and to proceed to revisions (Davies, Dart 2005, 10-11).

Currently several publications exist showing the implementation of the MSC technique and which indicate its effectiveness a) to uncover unexpected findings and changes especially in community contexts of students where they have been encouraged to critically evaluate their experiences and their immediate impact on them (Choy, Lidstone 2011, 16-17), b) to shine a light on each individual's approach and provide an insight into what people value (Fehring, Pettenon, Fagan, Goyen, Connor 2006) without there being any feeling of threat since there are no correct answers and all the cultural perspectives are recognized (Choy, Lidstone 2013, 224), c) in programs with diverse, context-specific outcomes due to its function to uncover valued outcomes not initially specified (Dart, Davies 2003, 153), d) to identify student perceptions of teaching quality in Higher Education (Klopper, Drew 2015, 257)(Klopper, Drew 2015, 257) and school education (Major, Swaffield 2014, 21-2), e) to contribute to debate about the effectiveness which is embedded in the MSC technique (Willetts, Cheney, Crawford 2007, 66), f) to function complementary to the quantitative indicators since stories may add value to indicators by providing meaning and interpretation (Vanclay 2015, 567; Wilder, Walpole 2008, 536), g) to improve project quality (Kraft, Prytherch 2016, 35-36) mainly because of the involvement of beneficiaries and the stakeholders in the evaluation process (Limato, Ahmed, Magdalena, Nasir, Kotvojs 2018, 109) and

especially projects with participatory and empowering objectives (Polet, et al. 2015, 80).

This function may be especially pertinent to evaluation, assessment and monitoring of Theatre-in-Education programs which function as educational and social interventions in formal and non-formal education. One such TiE program was used for the present research.

3. Research and methodology

The hypothesis of the research is: To ascertain whether the MSC technique is an effective evaluation technique for Theatre in Education programs for secondary education and in general for educational programs implemented outside the school timetable.

The research was conducted by Assistant Professor Marios Koukounaras Liagkis at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and PhD candidate Iro Potamousi at the University of the Aegean. In the specific Most Significant Change process the researchers' experimental pedagogy group 'Ideatro' took part. The group consists of 35 members in total including the two coordinators. The TiE Project was implemented by a group of 5 – including the two researchers/coordinators of the group - and in the MSC process the wider group of 35 members participated.

The specific TiE project was designed and aimed at 13-16-year-old students (Year 7-Year 9). The core of the project was the theme of identity formation during adolescence and the role of others - peers and family- during this process. Using a specific story concerning a boy in his early teens, students explored critical questions of self-identification, confidence, and belonging and through the safety of fiction, they were asked to put themselves in the characters' shoes and actively make difficult decisions, discuss, and evaluate the impact of these decisions on the characters and potentially, on themselves. The project was entitled "Ston kosmo tou" – "In his World", which in Greek has a double reading: it might mean that we

enter the psychological world of a boy or that generally someone has lost contact with reality so that they seem to exist in a world of their own. Other central issues of the project were the themes of the relationships of a teenager with peers and family, the fear caused by victimization and exclusion at school, bullying and the inclusion of students with special needs.

The expected learning outcomes were for students to be able:

• to address the complexity of teenage life and explore questions about identity as a stage of self-consciousness in everyday life

• to understand that in the process of searching for identity, the decisions the teenager takes and the choices he/she makes, have consequences

• to analyze the impact of the family, school, and peer environment on the phenomenon of bullying and the dynamics of the relationships between the people involved in the relevant incidents as well as the ones that are witness to them

• to explore the attitudes that one can face towards bullying, and the taking of responsibility and action

• to feel intimate with diversity and the "other" with his/her special characteristics, from minor difficulties in social contact to more serious difficulties in behavior (spectrum of autism)

• to critically examine their personal attitudes and reactions to diversity in their everyday lives

• to develop critical and social skills by cultivating and practicing imagination, creativity, and expression.' (Koukounaras Liagkis, Potamousi 2015, 58).

The project, which ran for three years, was trialed in 38 schools in the wider Attica region, where the MSC Methodology was applied and researched in the final year (2017-1018), involving 2185 students. The present paper focuses on 4 case studies where the data from the implementation of 4 TiE projects at 4 different Secondary schools has been analyzed to argue that the MSC is a suitable research methodology for such projects. The choice of schools for the case study was made to consider the variety of socioeconomic, educational, and ethnic backgrounds of

the students. To this end, we selected the following schools: an average Greek school in Eastern Attica, a school in a multicultural part of the center of Athens, a school in Western Attica which has a large representation of Roma children and, a Model School [1] that students can choose to go to. More specifically the demographic characteristics of each school/area are presented below (table 1). All the groups of the case studies were in Year 7, and all were Secondary schools (Gymnasium). Table 1 shows the number of students (column 1, table 1) as well as the number of boys (column 2, table 1) and girls (column 3, table 1) in each group at each school.

Table 1: *Number of students (boys and girls) at each school*

Secondary School Center of Athens			Model Secondary School			Secondary School Western Attica			Secondary School Eastern Attica		
total	Boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total	boys	girls	total	boys	girls
29	17	12	24	14	10	28	17	11	23	9	14

The Eastern Attica school is used as an example of an average middle-class school where unemployment rates are low, average income levels are average and more than half (53,3%) of the population of the area have acquired a higher education degree according to the Hellenic Statistical Authority. The Western Attica school is a deprived area with a high rate of unemployment (24, 23%) - the highest in the region of Attica - among its residents are a large percentage of Roma residing in the specific area. According to the 'Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion and Fight against poverty' Report of the Region of Attica (Regional Operational Program of Attica 2015) this specific area faces numerous problems facing normal inclusion of students in school and social life and deals with issues of difficulty arising from unemployment, xenophobia and racism. According to the same report, the area in the center of Athens in which the third school is located, is considered deprived, high in criminality and it presents higher rates of low-income families or poor residents (Regional Operational Program of Attica 2015). In this specific school

more than half of the students are of different ethnic backgrounds (1st, 2nd generation immigrants or other) -the demographic data does show a higher percentage of residents of multicultural backgrounds (immigrants, refugees or other) in comparison to other areas of Attica, however, due to the diversity of socioeconomic levels in the different areas of the specific Municipality, the statistical data does not show the true picture. In addition, in 2016 the area was also included in the UNHCR refugee accommodation program and thus, refugee children started attending the schools of the area. In our specific case/group there were two refugee children (a boy from Afghanistan and a girl from Syria). Finally, the fourth school was a Model Secondary School where there is fierce competition to acquire a place; for the year 2017- 2018 there were 607 applicants for 96 places at this specific school (Poimenidou et al. 2014). Even though there is no statistical data pertaining to the backgrounds of the students attending such model schools, they are usually from higher and middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds.

4. Analysis

There are some special characteristics that should be taken into consideration regarding this study. In this case the MSC was applied to Year 7 secondary school students, during the morning school schedule in cooperation with one or two teachers. In addition, it was applied once, at the end of the educational/TiE program and it did not include the submission of results after the selection process. The main aim of the implementation of the MSC was to evaluate the expected learning outcomes of the program.

4.1 The steps of the MSC process

An adjustment to the steps of the technique was made based on the above differentiating features and each step was deemed as an activity with different actions:

4.1.1 Defining the domains of change

The two researchers defined the domains of change (table 2) based on the Expected Learning Outcomes of the program, mentioned above. The domains were deliberately broad to include a wide variety of stories. An important element was for stories to refer to personal changes and not changes on the fictional part of the program. [2]

Table 2: *Domains of Change*

1. Issues concerning adolescence/ identity	2.Issues concerning bullying	3.Issues concerning diversity	4.Issues concerning education

4.1.2 Defining the reporting period

The TiE program was divided into three phases (a, b, and c). The options to decide when changes would be monitored were either at the end of the first visit/phase, at the end of phase b and before phase c or, at the end of phase c, therefore the end of the program. Various reasons account for the final option. Firstly, time constraints and secondly our belief that students would benefit from having an overall sense/understanding of what the program entailed while deciding on their Most Significant Change.

The MSC was applied in two stages: In stage one, at the beginning of phase c/2nd visit, the students wrote down a list of possible changes that had occurred in their lives up to that point of the program. Guidance was provided through printed material which offered tips to help them assess the impact of their participation in the TiE program thus far and to record the personal changes already made that were a result of stimulus engendered by this specific program, while simultaneously combining them with events, people, incidents, situations, thoughts, and feelings that illustrate and explain them. Consequently, in the second stage, at the end of the program, students were given a second sheet of

paper where they were asked to think about the overall experience, using the first stage as a possible means of expression and organizing of their thoughts and finally, deciding on the most significant change that they had experienced. The change could be major or minor, negative, or positive; it could relate to a theme of the program, a teaching methodology, the relationship of the students with their teacher and amongst themselves, with their peers, family or other people in their lives, and their own beliefs and ideas. After choosing their MSC, students were asked to express/record it in writing, with details about specific events, people, feelings, results, and a full justification of their particular choice of MSC.

The purpose of the evaluation related to the whole of the educational intervention, to encourage the students to write their narratives in as much detail as possible, considering the difficulty at that age in being able to present events with characterizations, feelings, details of place and time and without resorting to generalizations. Students were given about 10 minutes in the first stage and 20-30 minutes in the second.

4.1.3 Collecting Significant Change stories

All the members of the TiE group (5), (who had answered any queries concerning the writing, i.e., when the students were reading the introductory questions and were thinking about the notion of change that applied to them) were present when the stories were collected.

4.1.4 Selecting the most significant of the stories

The first step of the analysis and filtering up of the stories was a process which involved a group of 35 members. During this process all the stories of each school (1st column, Table 3) were read by two members who sorted the stories into two categories: Valid and invalid. Valid were considered the stories which included changes for the writer himself/herself and the people around them (2nd column,

Table 3). The stories deemed invalid were those that referred to the plotline or the fictional characters of the TiE.

Table 3: *Number of stories at each school (valid and invalid for evaluation)*

Secondary School Center of Athens			Model Secondary			Secondary School Western Attica			Secondary School Eastern Attica		
29	17	19	24	23	22	28	14	22	23	13	22

The second step was for a 7-member team of judges, including the two researchers, to re-evaluate the rejected stories on the criteria above, thereby demonstrating that reassessment is of great importance and can lead to safer conclusions. The stories, derived from this process (3rd Column, Table 3), were finally evaluated and it is a remarkable fact that about the same percentage of re-evaluated stories (80-90%) emerged from each school, taking into consideration that the Secondary School located in the center of Athens had, due to the higher number of non-native Greek speakers, issues with the Greek language.

The third step was for each member of the 7-member team to read all the stories from each school. For every school the stories were divided in 4 categories (Table 1), and after negotiation and discussion regarding the categorization of the stories, a final distribution was made. Every story was subsequently read aloud by a member of the group and other members evaluated each story with grades 1-5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. The criteria, providing a common ground between the 7 members, were as follows:

1) Does the narrator feel this is the most important change? 2) Does the story have a personal criterion and personal exposure of thoughts and feelings? 3) Is it thoroughly analyzed and justified by the person who narrates it? 4) Does it include details on events, people, feelings, results?

By totaling the given grades for each story in the categories, the Most Significant Changes stories emerged. Some of these stories are analyzed below.

4.1.5 Quantification

The most significant changes of each category were analyzed based on each school's framework and a comparison was made between the four schools. The findings stress what Jessica Dart and Rick Davies emphasize about the stories: "it is possible to include quantitative information as well as qualitative information. It is also possible to quantify the extent to which the most significant changes identified in one location have taken place in other locations within a specific period" (Davies, Dart 2005, 11).

4.1.6 Secondary analysis and meta-monitoring

It is not only the Most Significant Change stories that give us data; the rest of the valid stories are a fruitful source of information. A content analysis of all the stories of each category of each school and its context, bring to the fore the issues that the TiE program also deals with. The aim is also to study the individual view and the level of understanding of the participants and to highlight all the issues that emerged and concern them, apart from the 4 preset domains of change.

4.1.7 Revising the system

An evaluation of the program was then made, based on the feedback.

4.2 An example of analysis of the most significant changes

As is expected, the criteria by which the most significant changes were judged meant that the stories shared some common characteristics regardless of which school the story originated from and the number of stories from each school (table 4). The common characteristics are as follows: a) the change in the story is obvious b) it is explained by the narrators themselves c) includes details. Even though it was a relatively small sample, and an interpretation of the results would not be

deemed safe, it is important to make some observations. For instance, in the category "Education" it is noteworthy that there are 5 stories in that category at the West Attica School while at the Model school there was only 1 and at the East Attica school none in the specific category. A probable explanation could be that in the last two schools the students are more familiar with the alternative ways of teaching and learning of such programs and they did not experience major changes on that level. On the other hand, a first experience of learning in an experiential way, might have been a revelation to the West Attica students. It is also of interest to note that most changes recorded from the majority of schools were listed under the category "Adolescence/Identity", with the school of Western Attica making a difference with fewer entries in that category. It is possible that this is due to the different perception that the Roma population has, regarding social notions like family, adolescence, adulthood, and identity. According to the Roma culture within the framework of marriage the young assume responsibilities from a young age; Roma girls are accustomed to marrying at the age of 12-13 and boys at 15-17 years old.

Table 4: *Sum of stories according to school and category/issue*

Categories/ Schools	Adolescence/ Identity	Bullying	Diversity	Education
High School Centre of Athens	10	5	2	2
Model High School	16	4	0	1
High School of Western Attica	4	10	2	5
High School of Eastern Attica	10	9	3	0

Here are some extracts from the most significant changes and their justification for their choice in each category since the evaluation method is being studied. The analysis of the significant changes in each category highlights the common

features of stories despite the different contexts of schools and the individual differences of narratives, an element that is a concrete feature of that MSC.

Category: Adolescence/Identity

1. Title: My change

When the program happened, I learned a lot of things, such as helping others when they want help, being friends with more people and being more united among us and no violence. I had fought with another child, but after the program we both understood that we had to be friends again.

Justification: I chose it because it changed me in character.

Male student: High School, Center of Athens

2. Title: Changing my thinking about other children

Having attended the educational program at my school, I kept a lot of things. One of them is that if I see one of my classmates who does not socialize with the other children in my class then it's good to get close to him and make him as much as I can. 1 month ago, I realized how a child in my class is too introverted and is not socializing with other children. So, I tried through a discussion to find our common interests. After that day, with that child, we became inseparable friends.

Justification: I chose this change in me because it concerns the social and communication fields that are among the most important in people. I also chose it because I think it is of great importance for a person to acquire a friend.

Male student: Model High school

3. Title: Wrong groups of friends

When I wase (sic) with a particular company, a girl from a specific group of friends (E) fancied (X) to whom I have been trying to make them a couple from the beginning of the year. After many efforts and several months, I managed to make them hook up. (E) never said thanks for what I did and plus she always looked out for herselfe (Sic) and never the others even if I wase (sic) blue someday she said we should only deale (sic) with her. And the other thing that bothered me is that she said thank you to another guy instead of me.

Justification: From the program I realized that many people are not so good and I left people who I thought instead of making me happy they were making me feel bad.

Boy – High School Western Attica

4. Title: The change of my thoughts and actions.

I re-experienced and went back to the place of a child who experiences bullying. X accepted a kind of boullying (sic), and I participated as did the whole class but after our encounter faced the situation differently ... I was at his side and sometimes I just did not participate. And even though I express to my family, I felt the need to open up and say the slightest detail.

Justification: I have changed behavior due to the meeting and way of thinking. I see my relationships differently and I'm facing situations thinking about what we said.

Girl – High School Eastern Attica

The stories of adolescence, self-identification and hetero identification are the most important part of this developmental period. The collected stories about others and the relationships with them, bring to the surface, through the different levels of relationships, the image of the dialogical self who tries to formulate his/her identity to confront the uncertainty that the world causes them. According to the dialogical-self theory of Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010, 3-4), our adolescents, living in the globalized world, attempt to tackle this uncertainty by adopting pre dialogical types of certainty. Stories 1, 2 and 4 can be classified as at a stage before tackling uncertainty which means that the teenager increases the voices of the self that can be rewarded. Story 3 is at an earlier stage than the other stories, as it puts boundaries between the student himself and the other as different.

The others, therefore, are a means of self-determination and friends are a source of feelings of security and stability (Koukounaras Liagkis 2015, 61-7). Friends are a key issue of the three stories that come from boys, and others and the family, in the girl's story. It is worth noting that the story of the Western Attica school refers

to a friendship between different sexes thus showing that in this context, friendly relations with the other sex start earlier (13 years) than research shows, usually after 15 (Feldman 2011, 518). The words that are repeated in the stories of the three boys is "group of friends" bringing to light what research has shown that the company of people with common characteristics at that age works positively in the process of self-certification (Koukounaras Liagkis 2015, 62- 3). To evaluate the program, stories show that they relate to their core theme, the transition to adolescence and the Expected Learning Outcomes while revealing the two poles of the crucial relationships for teenagers: friends and parents, and also the teenage appreciation of these notions and their role in their lives with expressions like: *I think it is too much too great too important for a person to get a friend.*

The changes should highlight real changes; this has been noted by the 7-member group of evaluators, as they commented that the small personal changes in the stories are most probably true simply because the changes are small and personal. Using narratives/stories as a result of reflection and their justification would seem to eliminate the possibility of the participants presenting fake or impressive stances and attitudes just to be 'correct' or 'right' within the educational context, as is usual during the period of adolescence. The slight changes are to be valued as probably true in statements such as the following: *I was at his side and sometimes I just did not participate* (bullying).

4.3 Findings of the secondary analysis and meta-monitoring of the stories

Since the TiE program is a program outside of the school curriculum, the MSC technique offers us valuable information about the schools participating, students' lives and their concerns. As mentioned above, our adjustment does not include the stage of verification of the stories and their turning back to the participants. Thus, it has been proven both useful and beneficial to evaluate all the data provided by the stories to revise the program if needed. To maintain accuracy in our findings, our study attempted to triangulate date by asking teachers to fill in evaluation

sheets and give feedback while simultaneously requesting two researchers to keep a personal research journal.

The secondary analysis and meta-monitoring of the stories also indicated other issues that emerged via the wider context of the stories. Content and discourse analysis were made by both researchers, and the issues – apart from the 4 domains - that most frequently arose concerning both boys and girls are presented at table 5 below:

Table 5: *Other issues that derived from the stories*

Schools/ Issues	Secondary School Center of Athens	Model Secondary	Secondary School Western Attica	Secondary School Eastern Attica	TOTAL
Approach towards the other	6	10	2	12	30
Friendship	3	4	1	7	15
Empathy	3	5	3	3	14
Relationship with school	1	5	4	2	12
Autism	2	1	1	5	9
Confidence	0	0	2	4	6
Family Relations	0	3	0	2	5

It was noted that each story referred to 0-3 extra issues apart from the domain of change. It is safe to consider that teenagers in all four schools focus on changes about themselves and their behavior toward others, proving that peers and friends are the most important others during this period (Feldman 2011). The difference in schools is particularly noticeable regarding the issue of family and it

is obvious that in the schools where students encounter hard living conditions, as mentioned above, adolescence develops prematurely at a younger age and, furthermore it seems that parents come second in line after the importance of identity issues, a feature that emerges during middle adolescence (Koukounaras, Liagkis 2015, 62).

The most important aspect is the learning effectiveness of TiE in the lives of adolescents and the changes they realized as most significant based on the Expected Learning Outcomes. The change is a result of the learning, and it is this actual knowledge for which education exists (Biesta 2014). What is obvious is that the students noted changes that fell within the expectations and aims of the TiE. The stories cover the 100% of the Expected Learning Outcomes, with fewer stories mentioning family and autism as diversity. The students focused on adolescence, identity, peers and 'the other' on issues of conflict resolution, relationships, and behavior.

The teachers involved in the program's 2nd phase with their students, also reported that the issues they dealt with were as follows: moral dilemmas and adolescence (Centre of Athens), love and justice (Model Secondary), adolescence and diversity (Western Attica) diversity and bullying (Eastern Attica). It appears that three of the four schools dealt with the themes of the program. In addition, the researchers noted that in the Model School in the 2nd phase of the program, students did not work at all on the plotline and the themes of the program. The same is recorded in the teacher's feedback sheet. Therefore, this may go some way towards explaining why the stories were mainly concerned with adolescence and identity, and not bullying and diversity. Finally, the teachers considered – as the students did too - that students during the program were more concerned with the following issues of: adolescence, identity, bullying (Centre of Athens), bullying (Model Secondary), adolescence, bullying (West Attica), bullying, diversity, autism (East. Attica), which are shown on the table above. The changes of the students were thus not proved through the teachers' evaluation form.

From the reports and the journals kept by the researchers recording the results of the implementation of the program, it becomes clear that the changes in the students were, on some occasions obvious while on other occasions the students did not realize the changes had taken place and as a result did not write about the changes that the researchers themselves had observed. Another observation was that the students from deprived backgrounds (Centre of Athens, West Attica) tended to apologize for their spelling mistakes and were enthusiastic but still hesitant when they were told by the implementation group that spelling did not matter. Furthermore, in discussion with the teachers it emerged that they were taken aback by the level of participation and good behavior of most of the academically challenged and usually disruptive students. Some teachers also noted that they were impressed by the "i*nvolvement of all students, even those who do not speak Greek at all; the work in groups functions perfectly (Centre of Athens); worked very well on team spirit (Model Secondary). They were activated and addressed issues of understanding and personal responsibility (East Attica)."*

The difficulty of students not to choose violence as a "solution" and to act collectively was also mentioned (West Attica), a norm that was being cultivated throughout the program (collective participation and team spirit), and the limited time for reflection on both the issues raised by the program itself and the changes since it requires more time (Centre of Athens). Finally, it is important to note that teachers who were asked to evaluate the participation of the children on a scale ranging from: very poor, poor, moderate, good, very good, all of them noted that the impression they had of the participation of the children in the program could be rated as very good, while concerning the receptiveness of students, and regarding the Expected Learning Outcomes of the program in the two schools with elements of multiculturalism and diversity (Centre of Athens and West Attica) the teachers rated this as good while in the other two schools it was very good.

5. Discussion

Following the processes of analysis, secondary analysis, meta-monitoring of the process and meta-analysis of the stories, consideration was given as to what could have been done differently. It was decided that it would have been more effective if more time to conceptualize change had been given as well as developing the stories with more information, facts and details, and through this to ask the participants to narrate changes at the end of both visits; in other words, after phase A as well as phase C. In this way students may have had a clearer view of the change that had occurred due to their participation in the TiE program.

In conclusion, it can be argued that MSC can be used as an evaluation technique of participatory educational programs based on the principles of experiential learning even for programs implemented outside the school timetable. Not only can the Expected Learning Outcomes of a program be assessed and evaluated, but also the most significant and other changes that occurred through the intervention, can be in revealed and explored in depth. The whole process is proved to be very beneficial for the members of the implementation group regarding the revision of the program, their work, and its improvement. Due to the fact that the application of the MSC of this research was in education and, more specifically because there was not a return back to the participants, as the original MSC suggests, the findings of the analysis of the data provide us with rich material for new interventions.

In order to have safe data, it is recommended that the MSC technique be combined with other techniques in the case of an application of TiE programs and especially when assessing Expected Learning Outcomes. What may be of interest would be to return to the same groups with an extension of the TiE program to monitor the impact of both the TiE itself and the process of the Most Significant Change. After all, the ultimate objective is to develop a culture of meta-cognitive skills of identifying changes – if any - in education.

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Notes

[1] Model Secondary Schools have teachers with a higher level of formal qualifications and teaching experience. Students attend the specific schools after sitting special exams.

[2] The Fictional Part of the program is the story on which it is based; Students watch this part as a theatrical play and follow the story of Giannis, a young boy that has always been 'good' but starts to face a series of dilemmas on the matters of family, peers and self-identification and needs to take crucial decisions that will affect his future.

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The relationship between labour and education in the modern world through European Commission documents

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Abstract

This paper attempts to approach the crucial issue of changes and interaction between education and labour, as presented in documents of the European Commission that aim at education policymaking.

Technological development, using and exploiting knowledge and scientific research for productive goals alter the importance of education in modern societies. The rapid and dynamic changes constitute the radical shift in the role and importance of knowledge and the transformation of education into a field for the formation of professional qualifications. Education tends to form a set of job qualifications that are adaptable and constantly flexible under the demands of the labour market. Ongoing changes in the socio-economic context of modern societies transform the entire educational process and enhance cooperation with non-educational institutions and entrepreneurial associations.

Consequently, education does not aim at the pedagogical ideals of developing well-rounded individuals and critical thinking subjects. The educational process turns out to be an individual, lifelong skills and qualifications search for adaptable employees.

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The relationship between labour and education in the modern world

The rapid and dynamic changes of the contemporary world also constitute a radical shift in the role and importance of knowledge as a fundamental element of the new social reality. Technological development, the use and exploitation of knowledge and scientific research for productive purposes alter the role of education in people's working and social lives.

Thus, ongoing changes in labour transform not only the way people work but also the required education. In this context, the convergence between education and the business world affects, at the same time, the content of knowledge and the function of educational institutions.

Knowledge is now becoming a crucial element of all human activities, so the European documents aim at transforming the educational process into a field of accreditations and work qualifications. Requirements of the labour market for strictly defined working skills tend to reshape the function of educational institutions and transform knowledge into a goal-oriented procedure based on surface learning. Consequently, the capitalist socio-economic system commodifies knowledge, and thus education tends to shape professional competencies that are constantly flexible and easily adaptable to the needs of the labour market.

As stated in European Commission documents, the pace of technological and digital change has a profound effect on modern societies, so schools need to respond better to this new reality (European Commission 2017a, 3).

At this prospect, countries are working in a coordinated way on "employment" and skills development based on political priorities to promote a skilled, trained, and adaptable labour force responsive to economic changes (European Commission 2014, 10; 2018a, 18). Therefore, as noted in other documents, the commercial exploitation of education is becoming an increasingly important element in modern societies. This thesis focuses on the importance of education for the economy since it shapes the mindsets of young people and provides them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are central to developing an entrepreneurial culture (European Commission 2016, 9). As a result, such skills

required by the business world contribute to the "employability" of young people in the labour market (European Parliament 2020, 19).

In modern society, the close relationship between knowledge and labour poses several challenges pointing to the objective tendency of the educational level to raise and the accumulation of knowledge. In this context, education policy-making by various European and international institutions aims at coping with several challenges arising from the rapid development of science and technology. Education thus becomes one of the most significant aspects for developing strictly defined and marketable labour skills with a new type of employee formed according to the standards of capitalist production.

Economic changes, nowadays, play a significant role in the educational process and tend to define its content and aim. Educational institutions, consequently, alter radically to develop and form the skills needed by the labour market. In this prospect, the perception of knowledge shifts from the effort to developing well-rounded and critical-thinking individuals and degenerates into shaping the labour force needed by the capitalist economy. That kind of education pursues the development of people's basic, flexible and easily adaptable skills according to the labour market standards.

As a result, the orientation of education toward the development of measurable skills poses difficulties in creative engagement with knowledge. Inevitably, the strict standardisation and specialisation of knowledge and the reduction of the educational process to the transmission of information degrades teaching and pedagogical practice (Pavlidis 2019β, 29).

On the other hand, educational activity can contribute to people's learning process with motivation to develop a cognitive personality. However, as long as the labour market dominates education, methods and pursuits of the capitalist economy determine the educational process and administer people as a set of practical abilities.

Cooperation between the business world and educational institutions

At this point, the European Union's education policy-making basis and intentions to influence and transform the entire educational process are worth mentioning. As stated in many European Commission documents and guidelines, policies for the convergence of education systems with the labour market also constitute the framework for ensuring the quality of the educational process required in modern competitive societies (European Commission 2019a, 39). This assurance means, in essence, that the concept of education tends to be skilled-oriented with strategies for adapting curricula to the demands of the labour market.

Consequently, economic factors affect curriculum development, the organisation of the learning process and its assessment. More specifically, the cooperation of educational institutions with non-educational organisations, external partners (public and private), businesses, employers and trade organisations is strengthened (European Commission 2012, 3; 2017a, 10; 2018a, 18-19; 2018b, 12; 2019a, 39; 2019b, 9-10). In essence, these policies orient the curricula towards adaptation strategies to the expectations of the economy and involve the business world in the educational process to shape the workforce employers are looking for.

As mentioned in various documents, the learning experience has to be more reinforced and converged with the reality of the working environment (through career talks, virtual interviews, visits to workplaces, practical training in the context of vocational guidance, business competitions, etc.), adapting to the inevitable changes in the labour market.

In particular, specific opportunities for entrepreneurial experiences, internships, entrepreneurs visiting educational institutions and practical business experiences, such as creativity challenges, start-ups, entrepreneurial learning etc., could be beneficial for young people and play an essential role in disseminating entrepreneurship education (European Commission 2018b, 12; CEDEFOP et al. 2021, 16-17).

In addition, as stated, countries through education should encourage entrepreneurship and a sense of initiative by promoting opportunities for young students to have at least one business experience before completing compulsory education (European Commission 2012, 4; 2018b, 4). Thus, the school's objectives tend to be limited to developing a basic range of skills (writing, reading, foreign languages, science, etc.) (European Commission 2012, 2; 2017a, 5).

Moreover, the relationship between business and education is initiated and further strengthened by cost-sharing models between various partners in the education process (state, enterprises, individuals, institutions and graduates etc.), with the investments of the private sector making a decisive contribution to the education financing (European Commission 2012, 15).

This extensive report helps us understand that the capitalist economy and its pursuits for competitiveness and profit have extensively penetrated all educational institutions altering their function. As a result, ongoing changes, as stated in European Commission documents, concern and aim at the essence of people's education. In other words, what knowledge is providing, how it is transmitted and how it can ultimately be connected with the economy in modern societies.

Consequently, we can observe that the direction of changes in curricula aims at linking them to market needs, as well as shaping educational programs based on developing measurable and easily adaptable skills.

Education, ultimately, becomes market-oriented and fails to involve people in the learning process in a meaningful and creative way. The educational process tends to develop working skills and create a qualification market for diverse and multi-categorized programs. As a result, this prospect contradicts the comprehensive education people need in modern society and undermine the educational process to brief training according to economic needs.

In addition, the various investments and financing models of the business world in educational institutions increasingly reflect the need of the capitalist economy for a predetermined content of learning, as education becomes a field open to the

intervention of business interest. The educational process does not aim at developing well-rounded individuals and ultimately orientates people towards limited and fragmentary knowledge, as well as flexible training for the acquisition of ephemeral skills.

As a result, the needs and competitiveness of the capitalist economy determine the content of education on an economic basis according to the interests of investors and businesses. Inevitably, this involvement of investors and business associations in the learning process removes education from its pedagogical dimension and enhances competitiveness between institutions, teachers, and students.

Education as a field of competitiveness in modern economies

A brief examination of the phenomena that alter the educational process in modern societies and aim at the acquisition of strictly defined and flexible qualifications provides not only for the employability of graduates but also for the competitiveness of economies on a European and international level.

As noted in the documents we examined, skills needed by businesses are a vital direction in modern society since the relationship between economy and education requires adjustments to the labour market and enhancement of productivity and competitiveness on a European and global level (European Commission 2012, 2; 2014, 34; 2017a, 2; 2017b, 1).

Europe, in a changing and rapidly growing world, depends on a highly qualified workforce to sustain high levels of innovation and productivity (European Commission 2018c, 28). Thus, the priority given to innovation, which heavily relies on advanced knowledge required in modern societies, is a crucial contributing factor to productivity growth and competitiveness for all European Member States (European Commission 2019a, 5).

Moreover, the business world aims at entrepreneurial skills through different ways of learning and teaching from the very early years of students' lives. On this

basis, European policy-making documents state that providing employees with the right skills enhances their efficiency and business investments and prevents mismatches between professional qualifications and the needs of the business world. As a result, skills required by the labour market play a crucial role in the productivity of all kinds of businesses and are, therefore, a key factor for their competitiveness (European Commission 2020a, 2).

Given this prospect and the need of the labour market for highly skilled employees, all countries should confront early school leaving and ensure that young people complete compulsory education (European Commission 2018c, 29). Furthermore, based on the above, the scientific fields that are most important for the economy and students' choices are now more prioritised. The economy's demand for strictly skilled employees in research and technology-intensive sectors remains a priority for competitiveness in modern societies, so the skills required are relevant to these sectors (European Commission 2012, 5). Besides, as mentioned, only with the right skills in the labour market can Europe strengthen its role in global economic competition and achieve its social goals (European Commission 2012, 2; 2017a, 2; 2020a, 2).

As a result, the field is shaped in a rapidly changing world by new technology prioritises schools since they play a crucial role as places where these competencies are shaped (European Commission 2018c, 13-14) through flexible learning processes in a wide range of institutions and activities. In particular, a more personalised vision of knowledge can be a core element of the new educational approach in which Europe should play a leading role in global competitiveness (European Parliament 2020, 14). Moreover, as stated, education can contribute to the development of the economy only if it focuses on the knowledge, skills, and abilities trainees should acquire and are needed by the labour market (European Commission 2012, 9).

Education responds to economic needs and eventually tends to orient knowledge toward strict and constantly updated qualifications. Limited and fragmentary knowledge and ephemeral skills on the concept of lifelong learning are becoming

core elements for employees in modern societies. Thus, the needs of the labour market nowadays determine the content of employability, which features prominently in the aims of the educational process and the range of knowledge provided.

However, it is worth mentioning that these kinds of ephemeral skills required by the economy do not necessarily guarantee employability. People should be constantly updated on their strictly defined skills and trained their whole lives through flexible, individual learning choices. Different kinds of qualifications, certificates and various forms of non-formal and informal education constitute employees' portfolios and consider to be work experience, even though these are, in essence, new types of unpaid work.

Therefore, education as a process of developing well-rounded individuals alters and focuses on whether and to what extent specific skills fulfil the requirements of a particular job. In addition, in modern societies, the rapid evolution of production, technology and science renders skills and knowledge obsolete in quite a short time. Consequently, education transforms its context to respond to the needs of the labour market and pursues through lifelong learning a multitasking employee on the ground of objective changes in the production process.

Knowledge is, ultimately, transmitted fragmentarily so that the educational process cannot function as a cognitive activity stemming from social needs.

On the contrary, different types of qualifications and certificates constitute the portfolio of modern employees that are supposed to be their ''knowledge'', degrees and work experience, even though they are emerging forms of unpaid work and replace well-rounded education in modern societies.

Flexible contexts in the learning process

Moving on to our analysis, it is worth noting that the European Commission's documents converge on the fact that the educational process, as shaped in the

modern world, tends to be an individual, lifelong effort for skills and qualifications in the uncertain professional arena.

As mentioned in many documents, every individual needs a wide range of skills and competencies in modern societies according to the requirements of the economy. These skill types should be developed throughout people's lives, even from pre-school age, through formal, non-formal, and informal learning. At this prospect, people try to update their skills and knowledge required to remain competitive and productive in the rapidly changing work environment (European Commission 2018c, 16-17).

In particular, the possibility for employees to upgrade their skills throughout their working life should also include the accreditation of all the learning experiences they managed to take. Employees attend, increasingly, short and personalised courses and programs almost equal to the education process and offered by a wide range of educational and training partners (higher education institutions, vocational or research institutions, industry, social partners, etc.).

European Commission documents state that these kinds of programs can personalise learning to the needs of each individual, promoting more innovative and inclusive approaches to the labour market. Thus, people can accumulate learning outcomes and credentials over time and beyond institutions, sectors, and borders, as well as through e-learning programs (European Commission 2020a, 22-23). Knowledge extends beyond the school context and transforms the learning process through non-formal and informal forms (European Commission 2018c, 16; 2019a, 6; 2020b, 34).

In addition, cooperation between educational institutions and the business world through formal, non-formal and informal forms of learning can effectively develop the required skills and contribute to the transition to the labour market (European Commission 2018b, 13).

At this prospect, it is worth mentioning that documents aim at policy-making in line with global competitiveness standards state that the possibility for employees

to upgrade and retrain their skills throughout their working lives should include all the learning experiences they have managed to gain.

Inevitably, the learning process is gradually being replaced by flexible learning pathways in different formal and non-formal education sectors, as young people nowadays try to accumulate qualifications and skills that will make them employable (European Commission 2014, 4; CEDEFOP et al. 2021, 8).

At the same time, other studies state that education alters, or at least attempts to be, from a deliberate and systematic transmission of knowledge, an individual matter since governments and employers expect employees to take responsibility for their education and training (CEDEFOP et al. 2021, 10). Technological development now offers the possibility of learning anywhere, anytime and through flexible and personalised channels (European Commission 2012, 11; CEDEFOP 2019, 5). Therefore, new personalised ways of learning are emerging, as the trainee chooses and creates the learning content (European Commission 2012, 11-12).

This prospect of the European guidelines, as described in the educational policy-making texts and reflected in flexible learning environments, comes as a response to the need of the capitalist economy for conveniently and constantly adaptable employees to the needs of the labour market.

As a result, a framework of qualifications assesses and categorises the learning outcomes, the various skills, certificates, and other types of dubious training out of the educational process according to the needs of the capitalist economy.

Knowledge is ultimately based on individual choices and personal paths in various lifelong learning environments. Consequently, education contradicts the pedagogical ideals of developing cognitive personalities and the creative engagement with knowledge is replaced by short training courses, voluntary activities, and all kinds of ''learning'' experiences.

Contradictions and perspectives in modern societies

In case we consider the purpose of education as the progress of people and society, as well as the development of well-rounded individuals, that contradicts the pursuit of skills as a required education. The commercial and temporary choices imposed by the close relationship between education and entrepreneurial activity are inconsistent with the character that the educational process should have as a cognitive activity stemming from social needs.

As a result, the orientation of the educational process to the preparation of the workforce consequently contradicts the well-rounded development of people's intellectual powers, their comprehensive perception of the world and their creative engagement with learning.

This prospect, in addition to the individual flexible learning paths, replaces the crucial role of teaching in modern societies. As a result, the educational process fails to build bonds between teachers and students and degrades into a transmission of fragmented knowledge. This degradation of teaching and the educational process alters the aims and disfigures education, although teachers have a decisive role in the learning process.

On the other hand, teachers can contribute to developing people's knowledge and attitudes through the learning process as a cognitive and creative involvement with learning in modern societies. Developing cognitive interest and people's social attitudes are crucial issues for contemporary society, where knowledge is involved in almost every working and social activity. At this prospect, education can create bonds between society and young people and also develop attitudes to improve and change society's frameworks (Pavlidis 2019a, 42). However, the dominance of private interests in the whole context of society and the economy restricts people's interest in short-term and profitable purposes according to the market needs.

Consequently, in the context of the capitalist socioeconomic system, education tends to aim at forming replaceable, constantly trainable employees without critical abilities. In essence, since the existence of people as employees is based on

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the transformation of their labour forces into a commodity, education plays a decisive role in the creation of their working capacities.

Otherwise, only when knowledge creatively engages people can it contribute to their cognitive learning and functioning within the production system as real subjects of their work (Pavlidis 2019a, 38).

Based on the above, we can conclude that a fundamental contradiction characterises the rapid and constant evolution of the modern world.

On the one hand, the development of science in modern societies makes people's knowledge and intellectual abilities a decisive factor in societal progress.

The scientific progress and the importance of knowledge in all human activities transform the production process into a scientific procedure where the intellectual powers of people play a crucial role. Scientific and technological development nowadays enables people to improve their working and living conditions and to be educated and critical-thinking individuals.

On the other hand, these are ultimately unable to be developed within the exploitative and competitive relations of production. People learn to be disinterested in their future and the future of society, as well as in the grave challenges facing humanity. Education forms trainable and easily adaptable employees through individual learning paths in contrast with any creative engagement with learning.

The aim is not only to increase the intellectual powers of people but also to develop social consciousness for people to perceive themselves as real subjects of their work and social lives (Pavlidis 2019b, 32).

Consequently, education in the modern world can play a decisive role in creating critical thinking and understanding of the evolution of human history and society. As a result, based on the social needs and possibilities of the modern world, education that contributes to the perspective of social emancipation can only be a purposeful, systematic, and organised process. Education, thus, has the power to develop critical and dialectically thinking individuals as well as cognitive

personalities and real subjects of social relations who assume the responsibility to improve and change the social contexts.

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Dissecting the corrido: Cultural affirmations of the narco-corrido as an interactive piece on cultural identity, historical value, and sustainability in the borderlands

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Abstract

Objective: The paper explores the benefits of using oral storytelling in ethnic studies classes as a methodology for self-reflection for student empowerment in providing a sense of place where language, culture and identity are accepted. *Method*: By utilizing secondary research I focus on how traditional education has been biased and on a targeted attack on the Chicanx community. *Results*: This work suggests that macroaggressions and obvious targeting are consistent to the historical traumas of these communities in and out of the education system. *Contributions*: Thus, I call for a furthering of place-based pedagogy/teaching that utilizes corridos showing how cultural hegemony expression has been revoked by these tyrant attacks and accepted by mainstream society.

Keywords: Identity, language, cultural expression, corridos, corrido pedagogy, critical pedagogy

Introduction: The Mexican corrido (ballad)

The purpose of my presentation is to understand how narco-corridos have been historically and presently demonized. The contemporary narco-corrido has been a subject of controversy in regard to the content of this music. It narrates tragedy or an event that is preserved through the telling of an oral history through music.

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This particular kind of music is usually listened to by the working poor of Mexico and borderlands inhabitants and continues to serve as a testimonio to their lived experiences.

Why a Critical Pedagogy

I argue for the benefits of a critical pedagogy curriculum by analyzing and dissecting the lyrical artistry of corridos through a critical conversation that will problematize the messages *narco- corridos* convey based on the following research questions. 1. Do narco-corridos connect what it is to the realities and experiences of students in the borderlands? 2. Do *narco-corridos* assist in the preservation of language and culture? One of the most important questions to ask is why not the narco corrido. Helena Simonett has been able to document *corridos*, in particular, the *narcocorrido* (drug ballads) and her personal immersion into this world has provided a deeper knowledge for my own focus on the *corrido* world. "As has been pointed out by communication theorists, the easy access to mass media and modern recording technologies in Western society, and increasingly in every society, aids the expansion of the plurality of voices and, thus, encourages the process of democratization. Yet, we ought not to forget that popular music is a cultural commodity disseminated by the media and, thus, succumbs to the hegemonic power of the culture industry" (Simonett 2006). But, the reinforcement for this cultural phenomenon is not just through a popular commodity, or because it is popular at the moment. This type of storytelling has been around for years and has been the best documentation for stories of the peoples of the borderlands. Paredes (1963) supports this by stating that *corridos* that emerged along the Rio Bravo Valley in Tejas and spoke of resistance by Mejicanas/os against the atrocities committed against them by the Texas Rangers. The contemporary *narco-corrido* has been a subject of controversy in regard to the content of this music. It can be in relation to a tragedy or an event that is preserved through the telling of an oral history through music. This particular kind of music is usually

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listened to by the working poor of Mexico and serves as a *testimonio* to their lived experiences.

Critical juncture in education

This leads me to propose and call for a critical pedagogy. Corridos allow us to find resistance to the realities of the oppression, racism, mistreatment and the silencing of our voices and people. Yet, the corrido allows us to find our identities, embrace the chaos and express our sentiments by connecting and expressing our traumas. Wald states (2001), "*the Narco-corrido encompasses the significance and most importantly why this sing-song narration continues to grow, expand and evolve. But above all stays consistent beyond Mexico and the borderlands...." This comes at a time that we are at a critical juncture in education. The* Immigration and Trauma has created a culture of *Acculturative stress - the psychosocial strain induced by their assimilation to a new culture and language (Lopez Levers & Mancilla 2013). And thus, through an analysis of how different artists use compositional techniques and historical references to support their intent I have been able to connect both corridos and identity as a tool of resistance.*

I consider that this juncture shows us that people of the borderlands look for belonging. As such, spatial belonging has been found through sounds, smells and things that remind us of 'home.' Sharing narratives with others is a piece of the experience for many POC's. Music is a tool that does the same. Corridos in particular are deeply connected to the borderlands and its inhabitants. Those who can enter both lados (sides) and those who are left on one side. "However, such acts of storytelling are moments of world making. They are how we as individuals fit ourselves into our communities and make our communities fit us. They are how we include or exclude and thus how we make, unmake, and remake belonging", Flores (2021).

Why corridos

The pedagogical use of corridos tells us that sustainability at the Borderlands - though music is a direct result of historical exclusions of belonging along with who is a citizen and who is not. Critical education through a corrido focus allows for culturally based teaching. That allows teachers of color to provide a deeper analysis of the content for their students of color. And in turn through the richness of the content in corridos, this allows for bilingual speakers to connect to the lyrical artistry in the sounds they hear, thereby, allowing them to connect to their communities, find identity within their educational settings. We know that language matters and the benefit of bilingual teaching is important for the successes of students of color. According to Martinez-Rolden & Malave (2004), it is imperative for educators to look beyond the classroom and to look for diverse cultural artifacts that will reinforce children's development of biliteracy in early education, including the role of language ideologies. Martinez-Rolden & Malave established that complex relationships exist between literacy, language and ideologies. This cause-effect of bilingual education is the link to socially constructed discourses that place value or deficiency on a language. According to Showstack (2012), students will position themselves according to the symbolic messages that society upholds in regard to their language skills and cultural background being viewed as either valued or deficient. These factors influenced students on how they would come to view themselves in relation to others.

Conclusion

This work aims to remove the stigmas of colonized education, which is rooted in systematic racism. This historically has been a tool for integrating Americanized ideologies to assimilate and remove all cultural identity and customs from ethnic students. My work intentionally aims to de-colonize "traditional education" with the intent to make a place of belonging for students of color, creating space for a

corrido pedagogy curriculum. "Similar to how we narrate our worlds, how we act in them matters" Flores (2021).

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The role of prayer as a means of national education in Greek school. A critical approach

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Abstract

In Greek schools, national education is one of the main goals of education, a principle which stems from the constitutional framework, the privileged position of the Orthodox Church as a national institution, the reproduction of the dominant ideology and the educational policy. Traditional practices such as prayer in school is a powerful formal and symbolic tool used to affirm collective identity and reproduce the dominant ideology. A questionnaire survey, in the context of doctoral thesis, of 1271 teachers contained specific questions in order to capture the views of teachers on the study of prayer as a national education element showed that, although teachers have an open-minded view, in practice they reproduce the ethnocentric perceptions with which they have been nurtured. However, data shows that many teachers with specific social and demographic characteristics adopt a more critical approach and a more secular model that is appropriate to a modern pluralistic society. They perceive their role as an active co-creator that enables students to engage in a critical discussion. The

multiculturalism of Greek school creates the need for a transformative education, which will change the content of education.

Religion and State in Greece

Greece, despite the large wave of migration that has received in the last two decades from the Balkans, Eastern European countries and from Third World countries, is still considered one of the most homogeneous countries in Europe in terms of national and cultural factors (Hirschon 2009; Makrides 2004). The cohesion of Greek society is considered to stem from religious homogeneity and the ubiquitous presence of Orthodoxy. The main characteristics of the Greek nation are the Greek language and the Orthodox religion, which give the "Greekness" that separates them from non-Greeks and turn religious beliefs into national feelings (Triandafyllidou, Calloni, Mikrakis 1997, 4). This constant involvement of religious and national identity is a special feature in the modern history of Greece. The nation and Orthodoxy have become virtually synonymous concepts in the Greek conscience, which together constitute the Helleno-Christian civilization and stand as an obstacle to the secularization of the state (Sotirelis 1998, 71; Karamouzis 2008; Molokotos-Liederman 2003). National identity is considered decisive, marginalizing other fundamental aspects of social existence (Askouni 2001, 85).

Historical and sociopolitical reasons testify to the indisputable coexistence and close cooperation between state and church in modern Greece. These reasons should be understood in the context of the emergence of the nation-state in Greece in the 19ᵗʰ century, when it gained its independence from the Ottoman state (Hirschon 2009, 3).

The strong relationship between state and Church gives the Church the right to intervene in matters of education. This is reflected in the Constitution, but also in the legal framework that governs religious education. (Sotirelis 1998; Zambeta 2003, 19; Karamouzis 2015b). Thus, the education system contributes to the

reproduction and preservation of national identity, following a rather ethnocentric policy (Zambetab 2000).

As it becomes obvious, the specific perception of the Greek identity excludes any other collective identity. Greece, as Perselis argues (2011), "is one of those European countries in which religious education has not succeeded in overcoming the difficulties arising from the long tradition of those cultural and religious ties".

Greek school and national education

School is an educational institution designed to provide learning environments for the teaching of students and has clear socializing and pedagogical responsibilities. Thus, students learn about religion, geography, origin, language, traditions. It is also the place where national identity is formed, consolidated and reproduced (Dragona, Fragoudaki 1997; Zambeta 2003).

Fragoudaki and Dragona (2012, 258) argue that "all educational systems are ethnocentric. They socialize children by teaching them a symbolic code of representation of society, which shapes the sense of belonging to that society. The process of socialization leads to the identification with the national group and the construction of the national identity". The nation-state uses education as a means of cultivating the national consciousness and creates the national identity and culture (Avdela 1997, 31-33).

In recent decades, Greece is one of the countries that welcomed a significant number of immigrants with different religious backgrounds. However, the Orthodox culture that dominates religious education and the school environment has remained unchanged, although the number of students from different religious and cultural backgrounds is constantly increasing (Efstathiou et al. 2008; Sotirelis 1998; Chrysoloras 2004; Zembylas et al. 2018; Karamouzis 2015b). The reason is that national education is one of the main goals of education in Greek school, a principle which stems from the constitutional framework, the privileged

position of the Orthodox Church as a national institution, the reproduction of the dominant ideology and the educational policy.

Article 13 of the Greek Constitution guarantees the freedom of religious conscience and the freedom of expression of personal beliefs. Nevertheless, the restrictions on the exercise of religious rights in Greece stem from the ideology of Greek national identity. The education policy employed follows the Constitution (Article 16 § 2), which states that education should aim at the development of "national and religious consciousness". According to Sotirelis, (1993, 207, 309) the term "religious" as used in Article 16 should be interpreted in the light of religious freedom, which is guaranteed by Article 13 and not in the context of Article 3 of the Greek Constitution.

The building of the national identity in school is done in various ways. In these circumstances, religion can be perceived as an element of a nation's national or cultural identity, part of its historical memory, becoming a tradition and culture. Traditional practices such as prayer, church attendance and school holidays offer students the opportunity to experience them as part of the same culture and as a social gathering.

Prayer in school

Prayer in school is a powerful formal and symbolic tool used to affirm collective identity and reproduce the dominant ideology. It is an educational practice that expresses the respective cultural system of the country. It contributes not only to the formation of individual and collective identity, but also to cultural, religious and national identity. It can even be used as an element of separation from a neighboring country or to try to unite religious and ethnic needs of different religious and cultural groups (Lytsiousi, Tsioumis 2018).

Moreover, the fact that morning prayer is massive, raises the issue of national education (Dragona, Fragoudaki 1997; Zambeta 2003). At this point, if it is taken into account that, historically, prayer has already played a distinct role in the

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process of homogenization, one realizes that this process has taken on an increased symbolic burden (Zambeta 2000a; 2000b; 2008).

In Greek school, morning prayer is obligatory and is performed according to the ritual of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The role of teachers

Teachers are a key component of the dominant ideology in education (Therianos 2015). Their role is determined by ideological context, which makes them responsible for a unified cultural and national identity formation (Avdela 1997, 34). Especially in Greece, where there is a centralized character of the educational system, teachers do not have much room to differentiate in terms of the exercise of national education of their students.

However, their views, beliefs and behavior, in the context of teaching and interaction with their students, largely determine their practices in the classroom, in addition to the regulations of educational policy. This means that they can apply or change and adjust the content of education policy (Karamouzis 2015b, 121).

The strength of the hidden curriculum recognized by the educational community is significant. The hidden curriculum is defined as the informal forms of teaching and learning aspects that are often unconscious and take place in the classroom. The way the school is organized and operated such as its rules, the school culture, the morning prayer, the interpersonal relationships between the students and the students with their teacher. At the same time, it is the silent teaching of perceptions, ideas, values and behaviors by the teacher and the students, the parents and the society (Sakellariou 2010). It acts in parallel with the official curriculum and often in discrepancy with it. The curriculum has a greater impact on students than the normal curriculum.

Research

A questionnaire survey was conducted during the school years 2016-2018 on a sample of 1271 teachers, kindergarten teachers and students of pedagogical departments about their views in relation to the management of religious diversity and the practice of prayer in school as an element of national education (Lytsiousi 2021).

The Cronbach Alpha index for the thematic axis "prayer and national education" was .953.

Prayer and national education
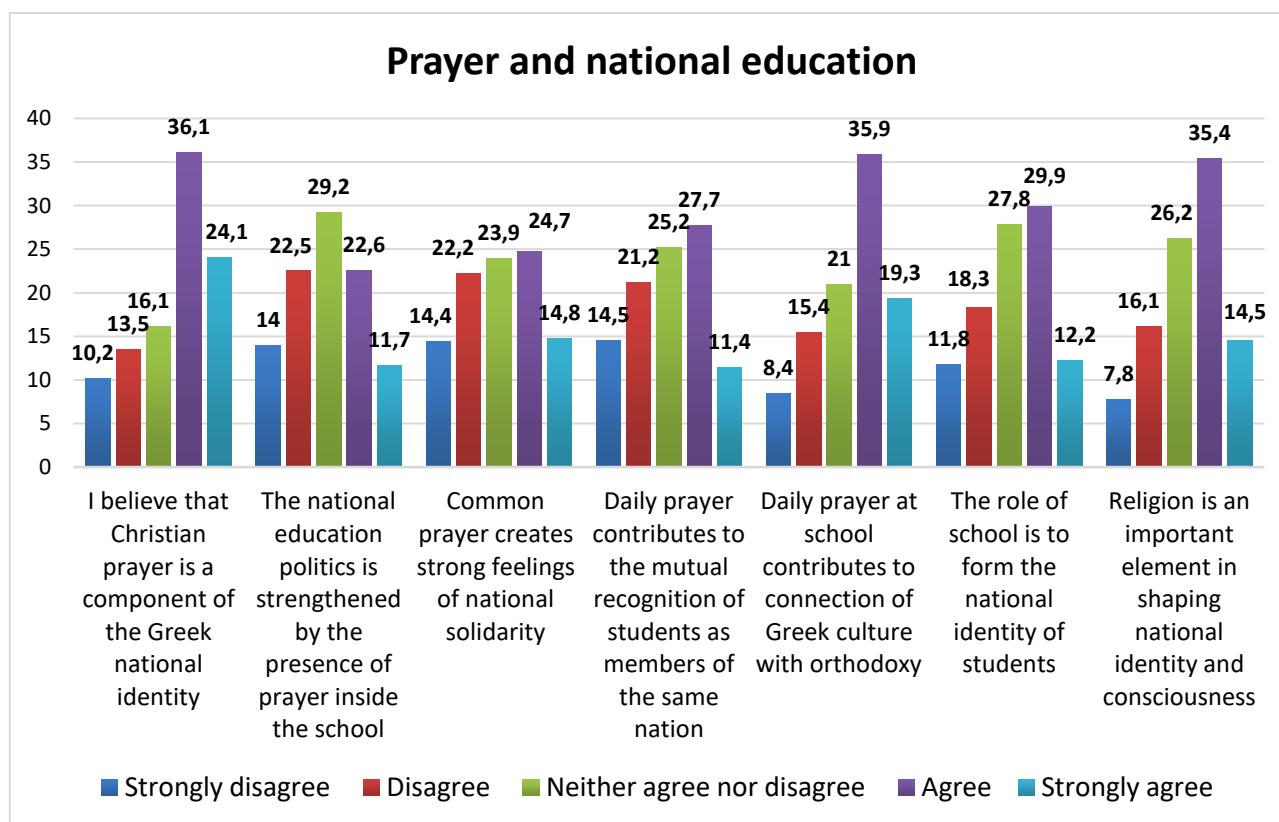
	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I believe that Christian prayer is a component of the Greek national identity	3.50	1.27
2. The national education politics is strengthened by the presence of prayer inside the school	2.95	1.21

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3. Common prayer creates strong feelings of national solidarity	3.03	1.28
4. Daily prayer contributes to the mutual recognition of students as members of the same nation	3.00	1.23
5. Daily prayer at school contributes to connection of Greek culture with Orthodoxy	3.42	1.20
6. The role of school is to form the national identity of students	3.12	1.19
7. Religion is an important element in shaping national identity and consciousness	3.32	1.14
8. I believe that every student should be free to choose his or her own prayer	3.74	1.23
9. The presence of other religions in the school space undermines the national composition	1.93	1.50

As we can see from the table above, the teachers' averages express the highest degree of agreement on the eighth question, which refers to the student's free choice of prayer. This is followed by the first question, which examines whether teachers believe that Christian prayer is a component of Greek national identity, and the fifth question, which asks whether daily prayer at school contributes to the connection between Greek culture and Orthodoxy. In terms of standard deviation, we observe the smallest value in the seventh question, which refers to religion as an important element in the formation of national identity and consciousness. The standard deviation is larger in the third and first question.

It is therefore noted that there is a contradiction in the views of teachers. Although they claim that Christian prayer is an integral part of the Greek national identity (60.2%) and contributes to the connection of Greek culture with Orthodoxy (55.2%), they do not consider that national education politics is strengthened by the presence of prayer in school (37.4%). Therefore, they significantly adopt the concept of "Greek Christian culture", but they do not integrate it into the school

system and disconnect it from the role of group prayer at school. Moreover, teachers cannot decide whether religion is an important element in shaping national identity and consciousness, even though almost 50% of them agree with this statement.

Questions of special interest
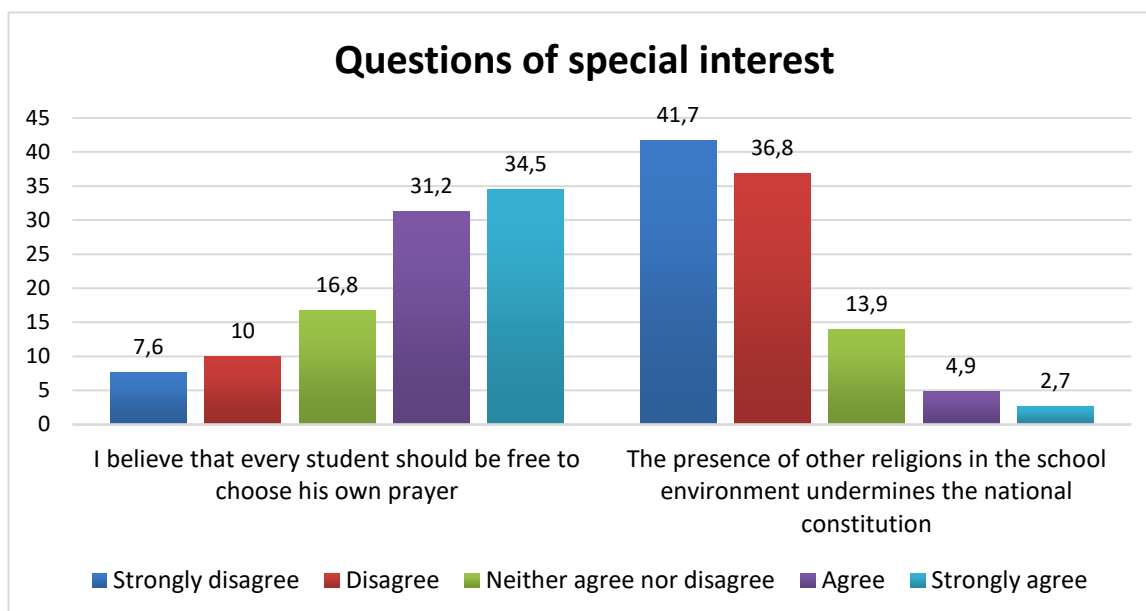
	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe that every student should be free to choose his own prayer	3.74	1.23
The presence of other religions in the school environment undermines the national constitution	1.93	1.50

Two questions of the same questionnaire are indicative of the transformation in teachers' views and attitudes about prayer and the connection of religion with national identity. A large percentage of teachers believe that every student should be free to choose his own prayer. Also, only a small percentage considers that the presence of other religions in the school environment undermines the ethnic composition.

ANOVA test showed that many teachers with specific social and demographic characteristics adopt a more critical approach and a more secular model that is appropriate to a modern pluralistic society. These teachers understand the scientific controversies and conflicts regarding perspectives on pedagogical theory and educational practice (Marsh in Tsafos 2014, 102).

Cross-tabulations of age-related variables lead us to the conclusion that pedagogical students and younger teachers do not believe that schools have the responsibility to shape students' national identity. Instead, they express a more secular approach to the school's nationalizing role. Furthermore, they believe that every student should be free to choose their own prayer and that the presence of other religions in the school environment does not undermine ethnic composition. Older teachers and teachers with more years of service express more conservative attitudes regarding the contribution of the school to the formation of national identity. They appear to be attached to national education policy and the influence of religion and defend the presence of prayer in school for reasons of religious and national consciousness.

In terms of years of service, teachers with more than 31 years of service in schools believe that daily prayer contributes to the mutual recognition of students as members of the same nation. Students and teachers with 0-5 years of service have more progressive views on the role of prayer as an element of connecting Greek culture with Orthodoxy. Teachers with 0-5 years of service show statistically significant differences from the other groups. This could be attributed to two main factors. On the one hand, they grew up in a more multicultural environment and on the other hand, they have little experience in the field of education.

In terms of teachers' specialty, teachers seem to defend the role of prayer in the formation of national identity and believe that religion is an important element in the formation of national identity and consciousness. They embrace the requirements of current educational policy and implement them in school. On the contrary, kindergarten teachers disagree with the issue of mutual recognition of pupils as citizens of the same nation just because they participate in a common

prayer. They do not believe that religion is an important element in the formation of national identity and consciousness. They also seem to reject the presence of religious practices in school as elements of stimulating and shaping national identity. Furthermore, they believe that every student should be free to choose their own prayer.

 In terms of gender, men are more attached to the laws and regulations of educational policy and embrace the idea of "Greek-Christian culture". Furthermore, women agree with the students' free choice of prayer.

It can be seen that, although teachers have an open-minded view on these issues, in practice they reproduce the ethnocentric notions with which they have been nurtured.

Discussion

Teachers' and students' views seemed to be heavily influenced by the laws and regulations of education policy. Despite the critical attitude with which they evaluate the applied educational policy, a significant percentage of teachers adopt these regulations. They adopt the concept of 'Greek-Christian culture'. The positive element that emerges is that teachers are beginning to question the presence of prayer in school and its role in the cultivation of national identity. A large percentage of them even question the identification of religion with national identity and consciousness. Teachers' views are presented as contradictory, as they try to be consistent with two very contradictory value systems. On one side there is the personal value system and on the other side there is the social value system.

The cultural tradition with which teachers were nurtured and the context of formal education they received at school contribute to the strengthening of religious and national identity and consciousness. The family and the wider social and school environment largely determined the extent of this influence.

Modern multicultural societies have separated the issue of identifying religion with national identity. Consequently, educators are on the cusp of an upcoming change that will be in line with the imperatives of modern society.

In recent years, religious education has moved away from a purely confessional approach and the curriculum has also changed. However, the management of religious diversity remains on a traditional basis. The field of education, of course, still retains the institutional part of prayer and does not question it. Its retention is a mono-religious approach, which does not contribute to the management of religious diversity.

According to some studies, a large number of teachers in schools are possessed by "strong ethnocentrism, with discriminatory and xenophobic tendencies and views that seek to apply absolute values and ideas through sociopolitical measures to anything considered "foreign" or "different" (Zoniou-Sideri, Charamis 1997). This is consistent with the findings of the present study. Moreover, the difference between teachers' perceptions and daily attitudes towards diverse students is a common finding of other studies both in Greece and in other countries (Zoniou-Sideri in Magos 2005). While teachers seem to understand and accept inclusion in theory, they find it difficult to put it into practice.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 34 countries (13 May-2 October 2019) showed that Greeks consider Christianity as a key part of their national identity. Significantly, a recent survey, which studied the views of the majority of teachers working in minority schools in Thrace on issues related to the management of ethnocultural differences in the classroom, found that more than one-third of the sample ranked Greek identity as more important than other ethnocultural identities, feared its alteration and desired the assimilation of other identities into it (Magos 2005).

The promotion of Greek identity in Greek schools seems to be a priority and the religious education lesson plays an important role in this. Zambeta (2003) argues that national identity is identified with religion, not only through the course but

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also through daily public prayer. He stresses that the daily practice and culture of the school advocates for the identification of religion with national identity.

However, social cohesion cannot be realized through religious practices, but through the basis of the diversity of cultural traditions and ideas, which claim, in the context of democracy, their equal presence in the contemporary Greek social space (Karamouzis 2008, 41). Besides, the religious practice of prayer is nothing but the imposition of the prevailing religion with an experiential character.

The presence of an ethnocentric orthodoxy does not preserve the culture of a nation. On the contrary, it hinders new ideas and the acceptance of otherness, which is a characteristic feature of modern intercultural society. The concern is whether the role of education is to reinforce national identity or to facilitate social cohesion in pluralistic societies (Antera 2020, 22). What is rather needed is openness to new ideas and adaptation to the new reality of multicultural societies.

Transformative education

The formation of Greek identity was based on the creation of an ethno-religiously homogeneous society that identified the people with the nation, an element that led to ethnocentrism, introversion and the devaluation of cultural diversity. Therefore, the Greek school aims, among other things, to foster a sense of belonging to the Greek national identity in all students, regardless of their cultural capital. However, the multiculturalism of the school creates the need for a transformative education, which will change the content of education.

Modern society is changing due to the challenges of globalization, secularization, multiculturalism of schools and citizenship, which create the need for transformative education. A transformative education based on human rights, respect for diversity and the development of critical thinking that responds to the current social and political environment (Vassiliadis, Tsioumis 2015, 808). Civic education offers freedom, democracy, justice, solidarity and dignity which are necessary for peace and social justice (Vasileiadis, Tsioumis 2015, 808).

Transformative education is inclusive and intercultural, as it is based on the consolidation of interculturalism (Chatzisotiriou & Sorkos 2022; Arvanitis 2015). It is inclusive because it is interested in the active and collaborative engagement of the student's personality and changing the pattern of understanding diversity. Inclusion is made possible through careful intercultural dialogue. This inclusive and transformative intercultural approach involves all three levels of educational design: the school learning community, the curriculum, pedagogical practice and differentiated instruction. Thus, today's multicultural reality marks a move away from ethnocentric curriculum and pedagogical practice; the inclusive and intercultural approach can contribute to the transformation of school education (Chatzisotiriou, Sorkos 2022).

Consequently, educational policy should move away from the formalistic reproduction of ethno-religious ideology, where the only criterion for social inclusion is the reproduction of the dominant national narrative. This notion of national identity excludes any other collective identity. It would also be important to abolish school-based religious practices, as they reproduce religious exclusion and discrimination. It is important to show respect for students' right to self-determination. Education systems must be reoriented to equip students with the knowledge, values and skills to act for the betterment of all people and the planet as responsible citizens of a global community.

The problem is that teachers are not prepared for the challenges they face in today's multicultural classroom. They therefore need to transform their teaching, ensuring that curriculum, pedagogy and learning environments make sense in their physical, political, economic and cultural contexts. They should adopt educational approaches and practices based on the principles of multicultural education and critical pedagogy (Vassiliadis, Tsioumis 2015, 801). Very importantly, transformative education contributes to changing the relationship between the teacher and the student, as the latter also begins to possess intercultural values, such as respect, solidarity, changing stereotypes, intercultural exchange and reciprocity. Education can only be 'transformative'

when students feel valued, recognized, safe and included in the learning community as full and active members. This starts with preventing and addressing discrimination against students. Teachers are therefore called upon to act as a force for change and transformation (Kalantzis, Cope 2013).

A new vision of education is slowly beginning to be built, aiming at both its own and society's transformation. The need for social change leads us to the discussion of transformative education, which is based on the contemporary society's awareness of the skills and knowledge needed for students to become active and democratic citizens in a globalized, cosmopolitan society and to develop into well-balanced personalities (Kalantzis, Cope 2013). According to Arvanitis (2015), the ethical dimension of transformative education looks forward to social citizenship that goes beyond the traditional notion of citizenship.

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Designing curricula for learning outcomes as a democracy-enhancing strategy

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Abstract

In this article, we study the relationships that learning outcomes have with the overall structure of education and in particular with the activation of the democratic reflexes of graduates of upper secondary and post-secondary education. Through this analysis, we examine the importance of learning outcomes in education for critical pedagogy. The added value of this analysis lies in the fact that the learning outcomes are linked on the one hand to the design of the curricular programs, and on the other hand, to the strategy of strengthening the democratic ethos of the graduates. As a case study, we highlight the study programs of technical vocational education. The relationship of learning outcomes

with the development of the democratic consciousness of the graduates is mainly studied from the point of view of the social functions of education. From the assessment of the learning results, we attempt an immersion in the role and mission of the educational institution. The analysis is addressed to all educators, pedagogues, and explorers, but also you, every citizen, and every citizen who is interested, in understanding education issues through a critical point of view. The added value of the article lies in the proposal to review and redesign the syllabi and to strengthen the democratic reflexes of the entire educational community.

1. Introduction

Learning Outcomes are descriptive statements about knowledge and skills a student is to acquire upon completion of a curriculum. They may refer to content, skills, capacity, long-term behaviors, and desired values and focus on the framework, context, and readiness to apply (Lim, Morris 2009). They stress the implementation and integration of knowledge and utilization of learning material both within the context of a classroom and elsewhere (Taylor 2008). Learning Outcomes are not presenting themselves in singles. They are always plural, organized in hierarchies of cognitive skills (Anderson, Krathwohl 2001), and expressed with appropriate verbs as prescribed by the revised Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl 2002). Student assessment methods can be identified with a mind to usefulness and helpfulness instead of mere student grading (Myers 1980). With a mind to personalized instruction (Veenema, Hetland, Chalfen 1997), formative assessment, self-assessment, and peer assessment may be qualitatively stronger and more specific based on learning outcomes being attained fully, partly, or not at all. An interesting byproduct of making them known to students and using them constantly in instructional design is that they help with instructional clarity, evaluation of both instructions, and the level of attaining the desired results (Galbraith et al 2012). It is fair to say that students are thus empowered in that they know both their goals and the benchmarks they are evaluated with, and they

are also enabled to assess the curriculum and teaching process themselves (Feldman 2007).

Working with Learning Outcomes when designing curricula, especially with an Instructional Design approach like Backward Design (Wiggins, McTighe 2005) minimizes the possibility of hidden curricula at this level (Kurt 2015). Clearly stating them in a language specifying levels of cognitive processes and categories of knowledge, as per the revised Bloom taxonomy, makes the process too apparent for political stealth and convenience. Furthermore, the existence of Learning Outcomes provides an internal structure for assessing curricula against fulfilling their stated intentions. A clearer evaluation than comparing with arbitrary benchmarks set from the outside, often within a different context of values, utility demands, and intentions (Reiser, Dempsey 2002).

The article is divided into three main subsequent parts. Chapter 2 refers to the general position of transportation education, Chapter 3 refers to the specific structures of vocational education and training, and finally, Chapter 4, refers to the conclusions and in what ways exactly the design of the analytical programs and the learning outcomes highlight the democratic ethos in the graduates.

2. Education and society

The relationship between education and society was explored using the term "function" as a key concept. The relevant problem was established and developed as a part of scientific research in education, in the last decades. The reason for this was the integration of IT and communication technologies at all levels of education. Although technological developments are relevant today, the integration approaches developed and changes in educational curricula are mostly based on the works of 19th-century educators. Of course, the intervening period is neither historically nor politically inactive, with the result that even this concept of democracy has changed too many times. The subject matter of the problematic article refers to the intended functions of education from certain

aspects of educational institutions, not so much from a historical point of view, as from the point of view of the planning of interventions or the restoration of detailed curricula. Education in the 21st century faces challenges and dilemmas, as a result of history and the change in its role and social mission. Historically the educational institution was charged with the task of contributing to the maintenance of the existing form of social organization, and at the same time contributing, to a certain extent, to the intended social change. The question of whether education aims more at maintenance or social change, including the question of which direction the intended change will be, runs subliminally in today's public debates and all scientific concerns.

At the level of policy and curriculum management, the image of education has acquired coherent qualities, in a world characterized by differentiation, fragmentation, and multiple social conflicts. The structures of education are permeated by strong social cohesion, and strong democratic norms, cultivating different abilities at the intellectual, social, and professional levels. All forms of public education transmit knowledge, tradition, and culture to create a single identity in societies characterized by multi-ethnic and multi-cultural consciousness. The most important thing is that the existing education system and the education provided within it is linked to the rights of citizens, social development, appropriate preparation, and integration of new members into society. Its population is structured and operates based on the principles of equality or the principles of democracy, the pedagogical principles in education aim to promote and implement the principles of democracy through education. In addition, the education suggests teaching principles of Social Solidarity and tolerance, as well as the elements of a global citizen identity that transcends local and national boundaries (Kamali, Jönsson 2018).

Although nowadays it is disputed and some indications turn it upside down, the educational institution, the structures of education, and education as a whole are ahead of society in terms of its guiding role and the directions set for it to promote a more just and equal society. The previous statement does not mean that

education is provided to change important aspects of society or to subvert social and labor relations from the existing structure and form of social organization. But it may mean that the commitments of teachers, especially teachers of critical pedagogy, can bring courage, political clarity, and the struggle for social justice and equality. These elements are the only solid foundations for democracy and are a constant source of motivation and inspiration for the renewal of social and political efforts in the struggle for equal rights, decency, and justice (Maria del Pilar, Wong, Torres 2018). As a case study of the application of what we had already mentioned, we will consider the special case of higher vocational education and training.

3. Vocational education and training

The systems of education that have operated historically show that every organized society took care of the transmission of its culture, arts, and professions, looking to the maintenance of social organization at the social, biographical, temporal, and transgenerational levels, context and all (Gonon, Deissinger 2021). Education systems were closely linked to the prevailing form of social organization. In past centuries, education in the arts, like artistic education, was acquired by the method of apprenticeship, close to an experienced craftsman. Technical, Religious, and Philosophical education are known forms of education provided throughout the previous centuries (Wollschlager, Guggenheim 2004). The boundaries of vocational education and training are widening between vocational guidance and vocational education, employment counseling, vocational guidance, and career counseling. But beyond that, the students of vocational education and training, by completing their studies, have already formed their professional orientation, and are aware of the modern terms of inclusion in production as professionals (Herr 2013).

In our days when properly set in real life and workspace too, besides merely in class, they deter viewing curricula as autonomous units, independent of past

studies and future needs, as if operating in vitro. This in itself is an accomplishment; it is the relevance to Technical / Vocational Education and Training that makes the results more appealing (Lu et al. 2007). A note should be made against a narrow application, in which case outcomes, seen only within a specific context – be it classroom or laboratory – and as autonomous from social context, can be used to pervert the very nature of the concept.

4. Designing curricula for learning outcomes enhances democracy (conclusions)

Historians of education, sociologists, and researchers argue that education contains elements that look forward to social change. With certainty, we can assert that beyond imparting knowledge, controlled to a great extent, teachers could contribute to the provision of social resources and the development of the democratic ethos. Even if at times the examples from education give the image of opposed functions, we believe that teachers could design reforms not only to improve the quality of school education but to build a new curriculum, which will mobilize the world of education as a whole regarding a new type of emancipatory pedagogical reflection, in the direction of the expansion of democratic rights. Designing Curricula for Learning Outcomes enhances democracy must include three basic points:

Point 1: Since the aim is to be able to ascertain that Learning Outcomes are fulfilled and thus knowledge and skills are acquired by students, such a design includes catering to varying needs and, personalized instruction.

Point 2: Student empowerment via both design transparency and stated aims promote democratic relations among students and teachers.

Point 3: Students and curricula are assessed on the same basis, without hidden agendas on the part of curriculum designers.

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Hegemony, education and flight. Gramscian overtures

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Abstract

This paper throws into sharp relief the Capitalist induced situation of mass flight of people from the world's 'southern' regions to the more economically powerful 'North'. This tragic situation is forcing the wretched of the earth and sea to risk life and limb attempting to circumvent mind forged obstacles to seek that kind of dignified life to which all breathing human subjects are entitled. It is however one from which a lopsided world economic and political order thwarts many in the interest of advancing a discriminating Capitalism. Mass migration is the main feature of the present flight scenario as this paper seeks a Gramscian way of explaining and exposing its underlying features. Special, though not exclusive, reference is made to Gramsci's writings on the Southern Question.

Introduction

The old continent's former colonies and protectorates are points of origin for several migration flows. Fears of immigration often lead people to project the image of an invasion which will threaten the existence of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1993), any sense of 'collective ethos' and the hitherto accepted social relations of production. All this shifts focus from the changing exploitative relations of capitalism itself, characterised by the threat of or actual realisation of the flight of capital and labour, and places emphasis on the hegemonic discourse

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of 'invaders at the gates' of the city, region or country. The threat varies according to colour of skin, and it remains to be seen how Ukrainians, fleeing from the ravages of war, will be treated in this context in comparison to others, such as, to provide one example, Syrians, in similar situations. The chapter is written from the perspective of someone ensconced in a country which once saw flights of thousands of people, providing labour power, to different corners of the world, notably North Africa in the distant past and to Britain and British colonies of settlement in historically more recent times: Australia, Canada, and the United States, less so New Zealand. The country subsequently shifted from being an exporter of labour power to becoming an importer of such power as flight took on a different trajectory with the country developing a relatively strong postcolonial economy and being located on the Central Mediterranean migration route. The economy which experienced a boom required foreign workers, in jobs at all ends, and because Malta finds itself in the midst of a migration route, employers have been taking advantage of this. What are the implications of this flight scenario for education?

Ideology

The alarmist ideology described at the outset can lead to misgivings about or hostility towards people from the 'southern' part of the world's 'North' - 'South' division. This is fuelled by a decline in real wages and deterioration of social conditions for the autochthonous working class, the decline of militant trade unionism and workers' parties, the latter often taken over by elites. What constitutes 'North' and 'South' is, to my mind, a construct and a relative one at that, as tapestries representing Arab eyes in an Alcazar in Andalusia would make abundantly clear. They become relative concepts. Arabs are represented by Arabs, in what they consider, not without a touch of romanticism, the 'Golden period' of the flourishing of Arab culture, as descending towards what is nowadays European territory. This was a time when there was no real demarcation between

'North' and 'South'. The conception of what constitutes 'North' and 'South' strikes me as gravitating around the axis of power. This applies, as Edward Said (1993) has shown, to Central, Middle East or Far East and so forth, with their constructions and exoticisations, or flagrant falsifications, by those who construct the 'other', normally from the 'positional superiority' (Said 1978) of the recently, in historical terms, colonising West. The same can apply to conceptualisations of the West on the Arab side. One must be wary of the sense of *victimisation conveyed* by people such as Said, no matter how valuable is his exposure of Western constructs and the lense he offered regarding the way certain people have been represented in different forms of cultural production.

The ideology of which I spoke about earlier in this section has not only political economic roots but also unmistakably cultural ones. The two, as Raymond Williams ([1958] 1990) showed, are intertwined with the latter ignored at one's peril. Put briefly, the ideology with regard to immigrants as 'invaders at the gates of the citadel', taking us back to the (archetypal?) '*reconquista*' or blockbuster images of El Cid, or the hordes, ironically from the 'North', threatening Rome, obfuscated the reality that the immigrants and 'autochthonous' workers are both members of an international class exploited by another colonial international class acting as the driving directional force of international capital. This situation is mystified by a variety of means, including the fear of dispossession by the 'Other' and a 'Nationalism' peddled by those who operate internationally across the globe, the universe of capital, leading people to engage in strange and misplaced alliances (Mayo 2016; 2015) with those whose class interests are dialectically opposed to theirs.

Exchange and Fortresses

The French *annales* historian Fernand Braudel (1995) wrote that exchange was, for a long historical period, a prominent feature of life in and around the Mediterranean basin - the *long duree* (long term). Despite different wars and

national and international antagonisms, all manners of goods and services were exchanged. People transacted on the ground and at sea in one large *suk* or network of *suks.* The onset of Western imperialism seems to have changed all that, more so in very recent history. Movement of people began to be restricted as the graphic images of fortresses, harkening back to European defences against the spread of Ottoman and other forces, notably 'Saracen' forces, were re-conceptualised in terms of visas and other controls. Coastal guards and immigration officers act as the new sentinels of what have become 'fortress' territories, notably 'fortress' European territories. In keeping with neoliberal hegemonic policies, consumer goods and financial capital move freely from outside and within the guarded territory, while humans are kept in check. The EU's 'fortress' policies, regarding denial of visas and travel restrictions, are compelling beleaguered people from Sub-Saharan Africa and more recently North Africa and the Middle East, especially Syria, to take a gamble on their lives. They pursue some of the most hazardous routes in fleeing countries in their quest to reach the perceived *El Dorado* that is Europe. This 'fortress' policy, centering on the issue of security, realistically or ostensibly because of the threat of militant Islam, while also to exert control over cross-border 'extra-communal' labour mobility, adjusting policy restrictions according to labour market needs, is also the target of social movement protests and action. This is couched in terms of greater and genuinely inclusive social justice. The degree of success of these movements varies according to the political nature of the authorities being dealt with. Names such as those of Matteo Salvini and Umberto Bossi in Italy are bywords for stiff resistance to and clampdowns on inward migration flows with draconian legal measures to boot, as in the case of the notorious *Bossi-Fini* law. Others such as Malta have been leaving migrants at sea and out to dry (literally). This was intended to hold a European Union to ransom because of the latter's perceived lack of solidarity with regard to responsibility sharing in light of Dublin II and its stipulation that the convicted intruders be relocated to their first port of call in Europe - all this, irrespective of the receiving country's size and population density.

While such protests have been levelled by the country from above, in the corridors of European power, there have been protests across the region from below, as part of a globalisation from below, or a sense of global or globalising solidarity, concerning the plight of the bleeding 'wretched of the earth' (Fanon 1961) and seas (les damnees de la mer - Camille Schmoll). There have been successful protests in my country against government-intended pushbacks and refoulement. There have been protests against racist treatment of, and specifically violence against immigrants, including some alleged cold-blooded murders (Mayo, Vittoria 2021). The protests become more vociferous in the latter cases, expressing widespread indignation. They connect with the globalising (from below) force of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. The protests take on a more regional dimension in the wake of news of rickety boats capsizing off the coast of Libya, resulting in thousands of migrants drowning in such tragedies across the Mediterranean in the last twenty years. The sea has taken on the appellation of a mass watery grave. Parallels with the situation around the Mexico-US border are invited. The hazards of flights through dangerous borderlands and at the mercy of unscrupulous *coyotes*, involving migrants creeping through rat infested sewers (see the film, *El Norte*), are freely compared to travelling through the Sahara, the 'hell on wheels' that is contemporary anarchic Libya and the raging sea that is the Mediterranean (many migrants from landlocked territories in Africa would have never experienced a sea and its vagaries).

The main reasons for massive migration from 'South' to 'North' and 'East' to 'West' include climate change and heat rises owing to the 'greenhouse effect', which will increase exponentially by the end of the century, and depletion of resources that can lead to wars, existing and long drawn-out ones at that. We have seen the outbreak of such wars in places such as Sudan, more recently Syria and of course the Ukraine. There are also the matters of female genital mutilation, massive subsidies for farmers in Europe and the US which have a deleterious effect on farmers in Africa, and the quest for low-cost labour by corporations and other businesses. Hegemonic globalisation makes migration necessary. Meanwhile,

several partakers of this process are 'illegal' and criminalised for responding to this necessity. The shifting of Southern populations against their will and under terrible conditions has been standard European imperialist policy. Politics of this kind have recurred throughout history, repeating themselves over and over again, ending in tragedies and never in farce, contrary to the situation decried by Karl Marx in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon (Marx, Engels 1978). Southern and oppressed populations, the wretched of the earth in Fanon's words, or the 'poveri Cristi' (poor Christs) according to Danilo Dolci, can be moved at will to suit imperial interests.

The rise in voracious capitalism contributes to the 'greenhouse effect '. The impact of individual efforts in sustainable living is relatively small contrasted with that expected of corporations and other powerful entities. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted an increase in heat of 1.5 degrees centigrade. This is unbearable for people in the South (Empson 2016). 20 to 30 percent of the planet's species would be at risk of extinction. As climate change gets worse, millions will face famine, extreme weather, floods, and heath waves; wars over resources will occur and diseases such as malaria will spread to places hitherto unaffected. Many will risk life and limb to evade their situation, escaping wars over resources, droughts, and the spread of diseases. (Empson 2016) It is expected that heat will increase to 4.5 degrees centigrade by the close of the century.

Hegemony and National Popular

In this context, it would be worth referring to Gramsci's concept of 'national-popular'. What is 'national' reflects the culture of hegemonic ethnic groups (Mayo 2015). It plays a key role in the structure of hegemony and its apparatuses. Hegemony is the key concept. I would interpret this concept as referring to a situation in which most arrangements, constituting a particular social reality, are conditioned by and tend to support the interests of a particular class or social grouping. Concepts such as 'national identity' and 'national culture ' are contested

as relations of hegemony are renegotiated time and time again (Mayo 2015). This entails the renegotiation of relations among different groups within a single nation state. Subaltern groups, such as the proletariat and peasants, in Gramsci's time, needed to form a firmly entrenched and deep-rooted historical bloc, which is not to be confused with a mere alliance. This is a deeply rooted connection which comes across as being 'natural'. It signifies a convergence of interests that enables the components to close ranks when under pressure.

Gramsci: Misplaced Alliances

Gramsci makes reference, in his Southern Question piece (Gramsci 1995; 1997), to a proposed alliance involving the exploited Sardinian peasants and their offspring on the island and mainland and the offspring of the exploiting Sardinian landowning class who he represents as the overseers of capitalist exploitation. Gramsci argued that the 'North' was an octopus that enriched itself at the expense of the 'South'. The same can be applied to Europe and its colonial centres vis-à-vis the larger 'South'. Migrants from sub-Saharan Africa attempt to reach the centres of Europe and often end up on the continent's periphery. The intermeshing of cultures that ensues can lead to hegemonic contestation, depending on how strong and well developed are the lobbies representing migrants. Old hegemonic arrangements are questioned. The concept of 'national popular' develops a new meaning in this context. 'National identity' and 'national culture' are called into question. The greater the presence of different ethnic groups and the stronger their lobby, the greater is the challenge they pose to the established hegemonic arrangements. Migrants who establish themselves and hone their lobbying skills as a visible ethnic group or specific community would, in the long term, demand certain rights which can be obtained following a lengthy process of renegotiation, persuasion and activism. They would thus be challenging established hegemonic relations. One can refer, in this context, to the right to build mosques, secured by

Muslims, or synagogues, secured by Jews, alongside the historically hegemonic Catholic churches in Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain.

Gramsci's Southern Question writ large

Gramsci, for his part, insisted that Turin's communists, in his time, had the task of bringing the Southern question to the attention of the workers' vanguard. He sets this as a key task for the proletariat. This can take on a broader and global 'North'-'South' significance at a time of 'South' to South' mass migration. Bringing the Southern issue to the forefront of political debate is a key task for genuine contemporary socialist politics.

He goes on to refer to developments having an effect on Southern life. These include, as far as the post-Risorgimento Italian state is concerned, the economic protectionist strategies undermining the Southern economy. Tariff wars with France were waged which had a negative impact on Southern Italian agricultural life. Italy witnessed the de-industrialisation of Southern cities and territories such as Naples, once famous for its heavy industry of locomotive production. Country and city are interconnected, as Raymond Williams ([1973] 2011) posited with regard to his homeland on the border between Wales and England. I would say that they connect dialectically. Earlier I hinted at the impoverishment of the geographical global south as one of the many causes of migration. Blocs such as the European Union adopt economic and agrarian 'closure' policies detrimental to the economic development of Africa and other regions. Almost daily, wealthy countries provide billion-dollar subsidies to their farmers. As a result, Southern agricultural workers find it hard to survive and maintain their families, hence migration, as opposed to hanging on the next tree, appears to provide the only way out with often equally tragic outcomes given the various obstacles mentioned at the outset of this essay.

Global working-class solidarity

One important antidote to the above is the strengthening, through a long process of education among other variables ('long revolution', to adopt Raymond Williams' [1961] 1984 term), to foster global working-class solidarity. This would necessitate an alignment of an inclusive working-class education, organisation, cultural production, and many other often context conditioned variables. It entails understanding and rupturing misplaced alliances. The type of alliances to be avoided, for which Gramsci provides instruction in the Southern Question (Gramsci 1995; 1997) piece (the *Giovane Sardegna* and the *Brigata Sassari* episodes), would be, for instance, the much called for one between ' labour' and 'management ' against 'the competition'. Hegemonic neoliberal globalisation has engendered misplaced alliances exacerbating racist, labour-market segmentation. Workers are segregated on ethnic, national and religious lines, and on the bases of being refugees, black, asylum seekers, Muslim, Arab, 'economic migrants ' or worse 'illegal migrants.' They are *otherised*.

Education

As indicated, education has a key role to play in this long revolution without any guarantees. It is no panacea on its own. It is not an independent variable and has to be allied with a whole range of complementary activities involving a variety of media. There is need for a profound anti-racist programme rooted in political economy (this would include economic history) and cultural engagement. It would also have to be rooted in a deep understanding of colonialism. These elements are all brought to bear on Gramsci's analyses of the Southern Question, both in his specific tract on the subject and the relevant notes in the *Quaderni*. There would be a need for a bicultural education in the language and culture of the context of settlement or resettlement and the migrants' primary culture. This would be conceived as a two-way educational relationship whereby they teach and learn at the same time. They are bearers of not simply, and reductionally so, labour power

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but also of culture - portability of cultures- which invites genuine interchange fostering learning possibilities. This can be the staple of a well thought out and carefully organised multiethnic international socialist project. It would involve research and learning about the original contexts from where migrants hail, contexts understood in all their complexity wherein the migrants themselves can be the teachers. This, as expounded on by Gramsci in his trenchant criticism of those popular writers he denounces as Fr Bresciani's progeny (a jesuit and his followers who reinforced stereotypes by falsifying the historical events), entails understanding the complex situations that made different people migrate in the first place. The learning process must cover the migrant persons' point of origin and not simply their point of arrival. Gramsci felt that a proper understanding of their complex origins might serve to avoid facile stereotypes and caricatures which he feared would percolate through to and across the public schools, given the declared attempts to make the study of the different cultures in Italy an integral part of teacher education programmes. Unless rigour is introduced to learning about migrant groups, teachers might continue to perpetuate existing stereotypes and falsehoods, as in the popular novels Gramsci denounced (Apitzsch 2016).

Other goals, for a widespread educational effort in this context, include learning to identify forms of knowledge and epistemicide: knowledge that has been destroyed, hijacked, or patented by dominant colonising forces. This is knowledge which was once generated by subaltern groups, but which has been dismissed or appropriated by these powerful forces. It also entails learning to identify to whom we are indebted and to avoid what the Italy-based Egyptian scholar, Mahmoud Salem Elsheikh (1999) calls the *debtor's syndrome.* This refers to the denigration of those cultures to whom presently hegemonically powerful cultures are indebted for developments which the latter appropriate as their own. We think here, for example, of what the West owes to Persians, Indians, Arabs and Islam or what Bernal (1987) calls 'the Afro-Asiatic roots of classical civilisation' in his *Black Athena*. Such an education would, in short, entail going some way towards

decolonising the mind (Ngugi 1981). This would necessitate a huge personal and collective effort to dismantle ethnocentrism and learn from Indigenous and the rest of the many subaltern peoples in existence, without romanticising anything. No culture, hegemonic or subaltern, is to be romanticised in a genuinely democratic education.

Transformismo

One would expect this education to be part of an all-embracing education for a party seeking to change consciousness beyond the given capitalist framework, that is to work for transformation in a manner rooted in the current existential situation but guided by a vision that transcends it. Gramsci saw things this way, with the party assuming the role of the Modern Prince (Gramsci 1958), in the Macchiavelli sense of unifying the country or context. Alas, we often see one-time socialist parties shunning their responsibility of fostering inter-ethnic solidarity among workers. They are often accused of acting this way because they fear losing electoral votes. This situation highlights the limits of bourgeois representative democracy for a genuinely socialist politics involving *workers' solidarity* across a whole array of different subjectivities/identities including gender and ethnic ones. The lengthy process of consciousness-raising required exceeds the usual five-year electoral period. This is why genuinely socialist thinking must be holistic in scope and transcend the given bourgeois framework.

Storming Fortress Europe

One would therefore learn to think and act globally and not simply nationally regionally or continentally. A social Europe at the expense of a social world will not suffice. Every action in one part of the globe has ramifications for others far removed geographically. Social solidarity must transcend human-made borders. The flight of the imagination predicated on critical consciousness must extend

across the global context. There is the need to storm 'Fortress Europe' in search of a Social World.

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Translanguaging as a critical pedagogy of praxis

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Abstract

In this paper I examine the relationship between Critical Pedagogy and Translanguaging -an association little explored. I argue that these two theoretical frames conceptualize language in a similar way. Both *Critical pedagogy* and *Translanguaging* perceive language as a sociopolitical construct and a means of power, domination, and submission. *Critical pedagogy* calls for resistance to the discourses of power through their conscious deconstruction by the same oppressed people who are subjected to them. To take such emancipatory action, people need a critical (language) education, which goes beyond knowledge transmission, aiming at cognition, empowerment, and trans-formation. I contend that *Translanguaging* can be a tool for critical educators to accomplish that transformation. Its focus on language as a dialogical meaning making process, which emphasizes the role of the language user rather than the use per se, accredits people as purposeful users of a multimodal, hybrid system and acknowledges their personal contributions to it, their personal repertoire. Thus, *Translanguaging* enables all students to make sense of the world and thereafter articulate and reshape it in a form that serves their active and meaningful participation in it. Consequently, teaching language with *Translanguaging* can be the *praxis* following and supporting the *theory* of a Critical pedagogy.

Introduction

This paper is about Translanguaging as a holistic method of teaching language through a critical pedagogy lens. At first, I define Language as a means and a result of ideology and power, hence as a political entity. Subsequently, I contend that language teaching is a political act and as such it is an act of significance and substance, which can either weaken or empower the students in their lives. I continue with a discussion on Critical Pedagogy and the notion of empowerment, which is central to the critical theory. Then, looking for the actual application of the theoretical conceptions of Critical Pedagogy, I introduce Translanguaging. I argue that it is a practical critical theory of language in general, and language teaching in particular, as it accredits and empowers all speakers and, thereafter, all students in practice. In this perspective, I consider Translanguaging to be the praxis making the implementation of the theory of a Critical Pedagogy possible. I conclude with making suggestions on the matter of implementing Translanguaging in a holistic, programmatic, and systematic way in the language classroom.

Ideology and Language: The Theory and the Policy of Power

Language is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, which is difficult to define. A functional definition that faces language as a simple code, a mode of communication, is quite limitative, narrow, and partial. Such a definition does not include various aspects of the concept that are central to it (Fairclough 1999, 80). First of all, in a code the cipher is always in absolute agreement with the message, whereas language is characterized by expressive variability, as it has the potential of delivering the same message in many divert ways of coding. Moreover, language is much more than an instrument of coding, in the sense that -as Austin showed- not only does it carry and announce information, but it also makes certain acts happen by simply uttering them (Austin 1962, 6). Language is not a simple code, and it is certainly not the sole prerequisite for attaining communication. This is

made clear by the fact that mutual understanding is not possible even in cases of speakers with a common knowledge of the language grammar (Hymes 1992, 38). That is because knowing the grammar does not necessarily coincide with knowing the context in which a certain language is used. The context is something wider and it is all about the shared beliefs, the values, and the common sense of a community (Hymes 2005, 5; 10-15).

Language is, therefore, of a social and practical nature, it is communication in praxis. Communication is not just a goal as far as language use is concerned. It is the trans-action of active social agents embedded in a specific social, political, financial, and cultural context (Bourdieu 1977, 646; Hymes 1992, 39; Sayers [1992] 1998). Halliday defines language as a *social semiotic* (1978), a form of semiosis that not only depicts and articulates the world, but it also interprets, forms, and constructs it (Halliday, Martin [1993] 2014, 9). Paraphrasing Halliday, I argue that language is a sociopolitical semiotic, as it shapes human civic life and the world by organizing and imposing not only social structures, but symbolic power as well (Bourdieu [1982] 1999, 49; Baynham [1995] 2002, 12; Fairclough [1989] 2015, 55; Hasan [1996] 2006, 180; Janks 2000, 175). Thus, language becomes the policy and the politics of power, articulating the dominant political theory that is inflicted on the people as a common sense -an ideology (Gramsci [1948] 2008).

Such a conception of language is fundamentally critical, since it integrates language into a social framework of action, by defining it as a political act, as a practical process of creating and constructing knowledge, which starts from and ends in action through a course of understanding and theorizing (Darder, Baltodano, Torres [2002] 2017; Gramsci [1948] 2008, 45, 61; Freire [1970] 1996, 35, 47; Li 2018, 27).

Language in a Critical Pedagogy

Language as a process is far from being a static and delimited entity; on the contrary, it is dynamic, in a way that ensures its constant alteration, transformation and reconstruction through its use by different users (Arhakis 2020, 72). Through this course of creation and recreation of material, physical and mental substances, language creates and recreates the world as a field of imposing power or submitting to it. Nevertheless, such a critical conceptualization of language is in no way -nor could it ever be- monolithic and mono-directional. That is, language and language use do not only signify inequitable power relations and domination of the oppressors over the oppressed. At the same time, language potentially provides all with equal accessibility to understanding how the word structures and shapes the world (Freire, Macedo [1987] 2005; Hooks [1994] 2010). Thus, language can be both disenfranchising and empowering depending on our perspective, and therefore language teaching signifies a political act and a choice. Teaching language in the prospect of employing a critical pedagogy means teaching for empowerment and emancipation. A crucial precondition for being this possible is the teacher to acknowledge the diversity, inherent to language, as a resource and to accept the power of the users to utilize a wide variety of discourses, while adapting them to their own objectives in ways that help them make their world meaningful. Hence, students become agentive language users in the sense that they are recognized as active social and political agents, who are able to transcend semiotic forms in order to transform their world (Baynham [1995] 2002; Gramsci [1948] 2008; Grollios 2019; Grollios, Gounari 2016; Cummins, Sayers [1995] 1997; Gee [1996] 2006; Giroux, 2005a, 2005b; Fairclough [1992] 1998, 1999; Freire [1970] 1996; Macedo [2006] 2010; Tsiplakou 2015).

Translanguaging: Transcending "language barriers" and practicing critical pedagogy in language teaching

Translanguaging: The crossing of language borders

Translanguaging -as the prefix *trans*- suggests- is a conceptualization of linguistic performance (languaging) as a constant movement between languages. At first, the term was used by Williams -a Welsh teacher- to name the systematic switch between two absolutely discreet and different languages -Welsh and English. This code-switching process was utilized in the classroom as an easy-to-use practice for supporting bilingual Welsh students in their literacy in English and at the same time reinforcing Welsh -the minority language (García, Lin 2016, 118; Williams 2002, 42; Jaspers 2018, 2; MacSwan 2020, 1; Vogel, Garcia 2017, 3). The term was made widely known, when Baker translated it from Welsh into English in order to name a common tactics employed by bilingual students to enhance their understanding and performance in various studying tasks and learning modes (reading, writing oral practice, listening etc.) (Hornberger, Link 2012, 242; Tsokalidou 2017, 40). During the last decade, Translanguaging has been enriched and broadened as a concept -as it has been widely talked about- and it has brought up issues concerning linguistic theory, pedagogy, as well as political theory and practice. The act of switching between seemingly different languages or even different codes has foregrounded the active users as agentive subjects, who can control their communication by purposefully adjusting their languages and their languaging. As a consequence, language, instead of being divided and fragmented, can be seen as a whole, as an entity of semiotic forms available to the user. It is perceived as *heteroglossic*, that is as the product of a constant dialogue and negotiation between space, time, and the subjects of linguistic performance (Bakhtin [1975] 1981; Garcia, Li 2018; Sanchez, et al. 2017; Skourtou 2017; Tsitsipis 2004).

Such a notion of language questions any kind of monoglossia and, thereafter, starts an ontological conversation concerning the concept of specific, concrete, fragmented, perfect, and autonomous named languages, like English, Greek,

German etc. (Garcia, Li 2018, 5-6; Makoni, Pennycook 2005; Pennycook 2017, 276). Named languages are revealed as being just the surface, the external level of linguistic performance and, even though they are instantly visible, they correspond to a second order languaging, in the sense that they are no more than secondary resources for expanding & enriching the user's repertoire. This personal repertoire, on the other hand, although it is not apparent, being the internal level of linguistic performance, equals to first order languaging (Garcia, Li 2018, 8; Otheguy, et al. 2015, 293; Otheguy, et al. 2018, 13-14; Turner, Lin 2020; Vogel, Garcia 2017). In other words, and despite all appearances, the first and most important factor in communication and meaning making is the speakers' personal discourse, their *idiolect*. This idiolect is in fact a whole language, a social and dialogical semiotic, related with and shaped by the wider chronospatial context, whereas the apparent named languages are a mere product of nation, race, gender and class, a socio - political construct. If they are not confronted as such, withal, they become established and seemingly unchangeable cultural constants that can affect and ultimately curtail the speakers' idiolect, by shaping, articulating, and imposing on the language users a given perception for their own languaging (Otheguy, et al. 2018, 3, 12; Palmer, et al. 2014, 759; Turner, Lin 2020, 424; Vogel, Garcia 2017, 5).

Translanguaging as a practice liberates the language users from the oppression of named languages and their artificial boundaries. Moreover, it highlights the crucial role of language in the distribution of labor and the construction of social status and power, thus promoting social and political cognition. Consequently, all speakers are empowered and emancipated, because they are able to understand and control their position in the meaning making process. Languages as named entities seize to exercise power and political dominion over people and, as a result, language as a whole is no longer connected with power. Every language / semiotic recourse is legitimate as a means of meaning making. Hence, translanguaging is a liberating, emancipating and empowering practice that reveals and undermines the connection of language with ideology and power. This means that the

pedagogical aspect of translanguaging goes beyond than just being a popular and easy-to-use language practice that can be handy for assisting and contextualizing language teaching. It can also and most importantly work as a structured pedagogical method applicable in the language classroom in general, as it addresses not only bilingual but also monolingual speakers -and this is an interesting and promising aspect which is not yet systematically studied (Canagarajah 2011, 401-402; Tsiplakou 2015, 151-154).

Pedagogical Translanguaging: Activating the critical theory in language teaching
Translanguaging has a clear pedagogical aspect, due to:

➢ a commitment to acknowledge and pedagogically utilize all of the students' linguistic/semiotic resources, whether they be visible or invisible, and

➢ a potential to develop:

- the linguistic and semiotic repertoire of all the students,
- their capacity to actively make meaning of their world and to communicate with it in their own terms (Garcia, Li 2018, 7).

Moreover, it is by its nature a practical theory of language in the sense that translanguaging is first of all a practice, which implies and presupposes a perception of language and language use, a theory. This theory in turn supports and evolves the practice, resulting in a dialectical interchange of and interrelationship between practice and theory and vice versa.

As for the theory supporting the practice, it is the theorization of action seen through a critical lens, as it promotes agentive communication, active participation, meaning making and the use of linguistic/semiotic repertoire as a resource. In other words, translanguaging has a critical theoretical framing, as it represents:

- an active, agentive, cooperative, bidirectional (from the student to the teacher and back), dialogical & equal learning process,

- a dynamic transformative practice with language as the principal means of structuring and conceptualizing the world,

- a quest for embedding social justice,

- a political act

(Cummins [1996] 2005, 2017; Fairclough [1992] 1998; Flores, Rosa 2015; Freire [1970] 1996; Garcia, Li 2018; Garcia, Kleifgen 2019; Kleyn, Garcia 2019; Lau 2019; Li 2018; Luke, Dooley 2011; Therianos 2010; Tsiplakou 2015; Vogel, Garcia 2017). Additionally, the structured character of translanguaging as a (language) teaching method can not only be seen in the fact that it is a theoretically supported practice, but in the kind of qualities a teacher should have as a precondition in order to apply it. The teacher, that is, has to combine a certain attitude towards his/her students with a certain manner of organizing and applying his/her teaching. To be more specific, he/she is expected to adopt a positive view of the students, their abilities and the various linguistic practices used by all of them (*stance*). At the same time the teacher has to organize and prepare the teaching process along with a purposeful assessment (*design*) and always be ready to redesign and readjust the teaching course promptly, or even to alter his/her whole teaching approach, depending on the students' feedback (*shift*) (Vogel, Garcia 2017, 10). It is obvious then that in order to use translanguaging one has to be conscious and prepared, capable of intellect as well as of action and reflection -resembling Freire's reflective *dialogical teacher* and Aronowitz & Giroux's gramscian approach of the *transformative intellectual* (Aronowitz, Giroux 2010; Grollios 2005; Freire [1970] 1996; Noutsos 1987) - and, finally, one has to be aware of a specific modus operandi, a structured praxis -the praxis of translanguaging.

Critical pedagogy and Translanguaging: from Theory to Praxis

From the above discussion we deduct that there is common ground between critical pedagogy and translanguaging. On the one hand, critical pedagogy as a pedagogical theory calls for a dialectical combination of theory and action in the

struggle to achieve emancipation and empowerment against oppression, thus attaining social and political transformation (Gounari, Grollios 2010; Grollios 2019; McLaren, Farahmandpur 2013). In that effort, language, being connected to ideology and power as a sociopolitical semiotic, holds a key role and is considered as both disenfranchising and empowering. On the other hand, translanguaging is a *languaging* practice that aims to maximize the empowering potential of language as semiosis by crossing/overstepping the constructed language borders/barriers, by accrediting all speakers (and writers) as purposeful users of a multifaceted, multimodal, hybrid semiotic system and by acknowledging their personal repertoire -the so-called *idiolect*. In that perspective, translanguaging is a theory in use, a sociolinguistic theory, whose practical character is unmistakable due to the dynamic prefix *trans-* and above all the *-ing* suffix. In other words, translanguaging in itself is a combination of theory and practice -which is essential in a critical thinking- but, at the same time, its predominant practical aspect makes it a useful teaching method, a suitable tool for applying a transformative critical pedagogy, the *praxis* of a critical *theory*.

Conclusion

In this paper I tried to connect translanguaging to critical pedagogy on the basis of their similar conceptualization of language and language use. At first, I attempted a definition of language as being interconnected with ideology and power in a dialectical relationship of cause and effect. I argued that it is exactly this character of language -the character of a sociopolitical semiotic- that makes the act of language teaching a political act and a quest for empowerment and transformation. I continued to discuss the notion of empowerment and emancipation in the light of a critical pedagogy, which seeks to connect theory to praxis. In this respect, I proposed translanguaging to be the proper teaching method for implementing the theory of a critical pedagogy -the praxis in accordance with the theory. I suggested that a systematic implementation in the

typical language classroom is possible, although it is an aspect of translanguaging that has not been sufficiently studied yet.

I conclude with some observations concerning the difficulties of such an attempt and with some suggestions for future research.

In the attempt of systematically applying critical translanguaging pedagogy one should take under consideration that:

- Teaching language in a typical secondary education classroom is a structured and externally controlled procedure, with many prerequisites and predetermined goals (both linguistic & pedagogical). This makes the systematic implementation of Translanguaging more difficult and calls for a detailed teaching design.

- The planning of a suitable assessment is indispensable and there is no previous experience on this for one to utilize.

- Translanguaging as a constant movement back and forth, not only between named languages but all possible & available forms of semiosis, renders the redefinition of the term *linguistic repertoire* necessary (Vogel, Garcia 2017).

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Pre-service student-teachers' reflections on the Greek early childhood education curriculum

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Abstract

An increasing fragmentation of learning subjects has been formed throughout the recent Greek Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum reform. This way, ECE focuses on developing challenging student identities based on demanding educational activities. We support the idea that critical curriculum studies highlight a major role in informing pre-service teachers' analysis regarding the emerging discourses that prevent young children from participating in high-quality ECE for all. This study aims to map student-teachers' reflections on teaching objectives by exploring the tensions between the 'abstracted-oriented' discourse that emphasizes an academic, cumulative and neutral form of content knowledge and the 'everyday-life' discourse that supports children's daily experiences, collaboration and active participation in seven disciplines of the Greek ECE curriculum (e.g., Language-based curriculum, Mathematics, Arts, PE, Science, Social Sciences, ICTs). Content analysis has been implemented in N=284 teaching objectives of the Greek ECE curriculum that emerge from related student-teachers' educational activities. Data collection has been carried out in two consecutive academic years (N_1=124 for 2019-2020, N_2=160 for 2020-2021)

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within the course "Applications of critical pedagogy in education practice" at School of Early Childhood Education of the University of Thessaly. Furthermore, it is supported that student-teachers' reflections appear to have limited imprint in identifying outdated teaching strategies focused on cultivating demanding academic mindsets for young children (i.e., *"Be able to describe whether an event is certain, possible or impossible"*). To conclude, analysis results highlight student-teachers' advanced transition in developing teaching objectives related to the educational activities' redesign and thus, supports children's daily experiences and active participation in ECE for all (e.g., *"Be able to use the phone for emergency calls"*).

1. Introduction

Critical curriculum studies highlight aspects of the 'legitimized' curriculum content that indicates certain teaching objectives of learning subjects (such as Language, Social Studies, etc) (Grollios 2009). This way, young children's learning practices are formed by education authority agents through the related curriculum discourses; that is, the 'abstract-oriented' and the 'everyday-life' discourse (Koukouridis, Siatras, Pechtelidis & Chronaki 2021; Merika, Siatras & Chronaki 2022; Mokias, Siatras & Michalopoulou 2022). On one hand, the 'abstract-oriented' discourse emphasizes an academic, cumulative and neutral form of content knowledge to be taught to young children (Avgitidou 2008; Freire 2006). On the other hand, the 'everyday-life' discourse cultivates children's daily experiences, collaboration, and active participation in education by assuring high-quality education outcomes for all (Apple 2010; Cook-Sather 2009; Paraskeva 2011).

Recent studies on Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum analysis have pointed out that particular learning subjects, such as Mathematics and Science, include major aspects of the related 'abstract-oriented' discourse (Koukouridis, Siatras, Pechtelidis & Chronaki 2021; Merika, Siatras & Chronaki 2022; Mokias,

Siatras & Michalopoulou 2022). It is supported that throughout the 'abstract-oriented' discourse, subject-focused curricula emphasize an academic, cumulative and neutral form of content knowledge that reflects authoritative ECE frameworks in order to transform young children into merely knowledge-receivers (Pechtelidis & Stamou 2017). On the contrary, the 'everyday-life' discourse aims at cultivating knowledge and key-competencies to all young children based on cross-curriculum approaches in order to empower student-teachers' learning identities by taking into consideration their needs, interests and experiences (Freire & Shor 2011; McLaren 2007).

Student-teachers' involvement in transforming ECE curriculum imposes a powerful effect on teacher education programs (Grollios 2009). That way, student-teachers acquire the opportunity to communicate their views and ideas on educational designs developed by their peers as well as reflect on their own work in order to focus on implementing teaching objectives merged through the 'everyday-life' discourse (Hodson 2011). Through this perspective, student-teachers undertake the role of agents of change against the static, predictable and standardized curriculum requirements (Ax, Ponte & Brouwer 2008; Oliver & Oesterreich 2013; Pechtelidis & Stamou 2017).

This study aims at pointing out the interaction among the 'abstract-oriented' and the 'everyday-life' discourse that appears within student-teachers' education designs (Moran-Ellis & Sünker 2018; Pechtelidis & Stamou 2017). Specifically, the target is to analyze student-teachers' reflections and views on curriculum discourses in order to observe the relocation may take place from the initial to final educational designs developed by student-teachers in order to enhance the presence of the 'everyday-life' discourse in final student-teachers' educational designs (Lee & Ginsburg 2009). This way, educational designs may transform curriculum content by allowing student-teachers to observe their own teaching practices, critically engage in young children's praxis, as well as constantly experiment with curriculum content in order to deconstruct the regulatory, competitive, and controlling features that the 'abstract-oriented' discourse

highlights in curriculum context (Apple 2010; Clements & Sarama 2009; Lee & Ginsburg 2009).

Taking all the above into consideration, the study's research questions are: a) What discourses appear in the student-teachers' initial and final educational designs? b) What learning subjects of student-teachers' educational designs, presented in the Greek ECE curriculum (I.E.P. 2014), highlight the presence of the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse? c) What interactions are observed between the highlighted discourses and the learning subjects within the student-teachers' initial and final educational designs?

2. Method
2.1 Research Design

This paper refers to qualitative research, focusing on the content analysis of the student-teachers' educational designs. It is supported that educational designs' analysis can bring out the interaction between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse. In this way the analysis contributes to strengthen the student-teachers' critical reflection on the development of high quality educational project, suitable for every child (Siatras & Christidou 2018; Siatras, Tsokas & Premetis 2021).

2.2 Sample

The sample of this research concerns papers of student-teachers' that took part in the course "Applications of critical pedagogy in the educational action" which was conducted during the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 by the Department of Early Childhood Education of the University of Thessaly. More specifically, during the academic year 2019-2020, 62 student papers were developed referring to 124 (N_1=124) teaching objectives, whereas during the academic year 2020-2021 80 student papers were developed referring to 160 (N_2=160) of teaching objectives of educational designs. The data analysis is

realized for the total (N_T=284) of the teaching objectives educational designs that refer to two (2) academic years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021).

2.3 Data collection

The student-teachers developed 2 (two) educational designs that concerned different disciplines, e.g., Language-based curriculum, Information and Communication Technologies-ICTs). In this framework the student-teachers could negotiate the Teaching Objectives of the Greek Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum (I.E.P. 2014) and design educational activities, based on their initial viewpoints on the educational project in pre-school education. Afterward, experiential feedback was realized for six (6) consequent weeks and the student-teachers worked in small groups where they discussed about their educational designs, realized micro-teaching and reflected on the interaction between the two discourses – 'the abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse - that appear on their projects. By completing this feedback, the student-teachers revisited and reviewed their initial educational designs and also moved on to necessary alterations in order to make the 'everyday-life' discourse stand out in their final educational designs (Siatras & Christidou 2018). It must be noted that during the academic year 2020-2021, the student-teachers' participation in the course's experimental actions (discussions, micro-teaching, and feedback) was obligatory, whereas during the academic year 2019-2020 student-teachers' participation was optional.

2.4 Data Analysis

Every paper of the student-teachers' that completed their course was set as an analysis unit. Then, content analysis was realized where analysis codes, categories and their linking interconnection were defined, and all these were pointed out in the educational designs and had to do with the research questions (Bazzul 2014;

Bryman 2012). Primarily, the two (2) members of the research group proceeded independently to their data analysis. Afterward, reflective meetings were conducted by the research group during a period of three (3) weeks. In these meetings the discussions were thorough and referred to the data processing, the differentiations and the similarities that supervene through the analysis, concluding to common paradoxes of the results concerning the research questions (Tsafos 2021). More specifically and as far as the first question is concerned, we examined if the teaching objectives of the educational designs focus on abstract notions and specialized information or if they refer to basic knowledge and everyday life abilities of the children. As far as the second research question is concerned, we examined the interaction that is pointed out between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse at the disciplines observed in the initial and final educational designs (I.E.P. 2014). Finally, for the third research question, we examined and compared the data analysis that came from the two (2) academic years.

3. Results

Table 1 portrays the results of the teaching objectives analysis that the student-teachers negotiated during their initial educational designs. As it arises from Table 1, 124 teaching objectives refer to the academic year 2019-2020 and 160 teaching objectives are included into the academic year 2020-2021. More specifically, from this analysis can be observed the interaction between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse with the former one being predominant in almost all disciplines (Language-based curriculum, Mathematics, Arts, Science, Social Sciences and Information and Communication Technologies-ICTs).

For the academic year 2019-2020, 91 teaching objectives focus on a demanding and specialized conceptual content that presupposes the young children's critical knowledge cultivation (e.g., "To understand the importance of the senses and the

sensatory organs for humans and animals", Student Paper 1.1). Contrastively, 33 teaching objectives seem to include experiences that children draw during their everyday life (e.g., "To understand the body's abilities in relation to motion", Student Paper 25.2). Also, for the academic year 2020-2021, 115 teaching objectives emphasize more on the context's memorization (e.g., "To detect and describe positions, addresses and routes in the setting over different anaphoric systems by using simple or peasant notions", Student Paper 1.2). However, 45 teaching objectives in the initial educational designs are integrated into the 'everyday-life' discourse, supporting the practice through the children's continuous interaction with the content (e.g., "To use materials in different natural circumstances and to express, as they can, their differences", Student Paper 10.2). It is supported that in both academic years, the student-teachers during the design of their educational activities used more the teaching objectives that refer to the 'abstract-oriented' discourse (e.g., "To discern between alive – non-alive organisms", Student Paper 20.1). Nevertheless, there appears a minority of teaching objectives that focus on the children's cultivation of empathy (e.g., "To acquire positive attitude toward living human beings, plants and animals", Student Paper 20.1).

With respect to the individual disciplines, from the academic year 2019-2020 data analysis occurs as it follows; Language-based curriculum, Mathematics and Science, focus on the capitalization of demanding conceptual content that shapes the 'abstract-oriented' discourse. More specifically, 21 teaching objectives for Language-based curriculum, 23 for Mathematics and 20 for Science refer to pre-school aged children's need to understand and assimilate a demanding content (e.g., "To familiarize with the structure of business texts", Student Paper 02.1). In contrast, 1 teaching objective in Language-based curriculum, 1 in Mathematics and 4 in Science, seem to take into consideration the children's 'everyday-life' discourse (e.g., "To track down and describe positions, addresses and routes over different anaphoric systems by using simple, peasant-like notions and terms", Student Paper 14.1).

Subsequently, concerning the disciplines of Arts and Social Sciences, 8 and 9 teaching objectives respectively, integrate the 'abstract-oriented' discourse into the initial educational designs (e.g., "To come into contact with the notion of biodiversity and its crucial meaning for the environment and for human's life", Student Paper 57.1). Nevertheless, 6 and 8 teaching objectives refer to 'everyday-life' discourse, shaping educational actions that focus on active participation (e.g., "To use the drama elements, like role, motion, speech, place, time and symbols, in order to express themselves and communicate with others", Student Paper 53.1). In ICTs, it is observed that the teaching objectives refer both to the children's 'abstract-oriented' discourse and 'everyday-life' discourse. More specifically, 8 teaching objectives focus on an academic content that aims at the development of theoretical knowledge of computer literacy (e.g., "To understand that the PC forms an undivided system that is connected with peripheral devices used for specific purposes-for example, it is connected with the printer in order to print", Student Paper 12.1). At the same time, 6 teaching objectives seem to capitalize the 'everyday-life' discourse, because there is provided the chance for the children to instantly contact and interact educational software (e.g., "To use digital media to develop and express their ideas", Student Paper 46.1).

Finally, in Physical Education for the academic year 2019-2020, 9 teaching objectives are used for the two kinds of discourse. From the analysis's results, it is noted that 2 teaching objectives are integrated into the 'abstract-oriented' discourse (e.g., "To name the fundamental moving abilities that every body part performs", Student Paper 58.1). It must be clarified that the 'everyday-life' discourse appears by a majority in 7 teaching objectives of Physical Education (e.g., "To describe simple movements'', Student Paper 01.1).

As far as the academic year 2020-2021 is concerned, it results from Table 1 that 21 teaching objectives in the Language-based curriculum and 25 teaching objectives in Mathematics aim to the elucidation of academic terms (e.g., "To acquire speech sounds and phonemes of the Greek language", Student Paper 05.2). In contrast, 2 teaching objectives in the Language-based curriculum and 3

teaching objectives in Mathematics give prominence to the 'everyday-life' discourse (e.g., "To characterize a lucky game as fair or unfair", Student Paper 45.2).

The analysis results from the initial education designs in Arts, Science and ICTs, seem to focus on similar things. More specifically, in Table 1 and for the academic year 2020-2021 we observe; 17 teaching objectives in Arts, 16 teaching objectives in Science and 16 teaching objectives in ICTs. All these reproduce an 'abstract-oriented' discourse, which is enriched with academic content that provides a predetermined knowledge (e.g. "Being able to get informed by educational close-ended software (navigation software etc.) about multimedia applications (websites, search engines, software, etc.)"), Student Paper 08.2). In contrast, 9 teaching objectives in Arts, 8 teaching objectives in Science and 5 teaching objectives in ICTs aim at young children's active participation and involvement into the educational procedure through their constant interaction with the content (e.g., "To explore ideas, feelings, relationships, attitudes, values and notions", Student Paper 66.2).

In Social Sciences, we observe the predominance of the 'abstract-oriented' discourse over the 'everyday-life' discourse. More specifically, it arises that 12 teaching objectives require that young children should perceive – through predetermined directions – matters that have to do with citizenship (e.g., "To recognize the country's national symbols, like the flag and the national anthem", Student Paper 23.2). On the other hand, 9 teaching objectives contribute to social values growth, so as to reinforce the young children's cultural identities in order to reassure equal high quality educational results (e.g., "To form rows when needed, concerning everyone's needs in the team", Student Paper 45.2).

Finally, for the academic year 2020-2021, in Physical Education, 9 teaching objectives form motives for the growth of autonomy, teamwork and creativity (e.g., "To hear and move according to the daily sounds", Student Paper 48.2). In contrast, 8 teaching objectives bring out an abstract content into a discipline that

is expected to focus on all the children's abilities (e.g., "To name the basic moving abilities that every body part performs", Student Paper 43.2).

Table 1: *Analysis results of initial students-teachers' educational designs*

Discipline / Academic year	Academic Year 2019-2020		Academic Year 2020-2021	
	Abstract-oriented discourse	Everyday discourse	Abstract-oriented discourse	Everyday discourse
Language-based curriculum	21	1	21	2
Mathematics	23	1	25	3
Arts	8	6	17	9
Physical Education	2	7	8	9
Science	20	4	16	8
Social Sciences	9	8	12	9
ICTs	8	6	16	5
Subtotal	91	33	115	45
Total	124		160	

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis of the teaching objectives that student-teachers negotiated in their initial educational designs and there is featured the interaction between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse. From this interaction occurs clear predominance of the 'everyday-life' discourse in the teaching objectives that are deployed in the total of the disciplines (e.g., Language-based curriculum, Mathematics, Arts, Physical Education, Science, Social Sciences and ICTs).

More specifically, for the academic year 2019-2020 we can observe in Table 2; 68 teaching objectives are relocated toward the 'everyday-life' discourse that responds to pre-school aged children's needs and interests (e.g., "Being able to

discern their toys inside a room and to put them into boxes as well as to their correct place'', Student Paper 3.1). However, 56 teaching objectives show the 'abstract-oriented' discourse (e.g., "To familiarize with one of the most basic forms of digital information, the image", Student Paper 10.1). Similarly, for the academic year 2020-2021, 112 teaching objectives bring out the 'everyday-life' discourse, which is based on young children's daily life and aims to form educational actions (e.g. "To create their own poster with pictures, which would mainly focus on the children's daily dialogue with their family", Student Paper 65.2), but 48 teaching objectives of the initial educational designs cannot be achieved from 'abstract-oriented' discourse (e.g. "To understand the movements of these two celestial objects – the sun and the moon", Student Paper 67.2).

Concerning the individual disciplines, we get from the data analysis for the year 2019-2020, 14 teaching objectives in Language-based curriculum, 17 teaching objectives in Mathematics and 14 teaching objectives in Science, combine demanding concepts (e.g., "To understand their difference from non-alive organisms", Student Paper 60.1). On the contrary, 8 teaching objectives in Language-based curriculum, 7 teaching objectives in Mathematics and 10 teaching objectives in Science point out the 'everyday-life' discourse, in order to engraft phantasy and creativity (e.g., "To familiarize with the weather phenomena and the meteorological observations so as to know how to act and cope in case of anything happens", Student Paper 37.1).

Furthermore, for the disciplines of Arts, Physical Education and Social Sciences, 11, 8 and 15 teaching objectives are used cooperative methods to help children construct sociocultural identities (e.g., "To create the class's scrapbook with our own photographs", Student Paper 271.) Nevertheless, 3 teaching objectives in Arts, 1 teaching objective in Physical Education and 2 teaching objectives in Social Sciences feature the 'abstract-oriented' discourse (e.g., "To recognize their city's basic monuments", Student Paper 38.1)

Finally, for the academic year 2019-2020, 9 teaching objectives in ICTs contribute to the 'everyday-life' discourse's designation through the cultivation of basic

digital abilities (e.g., "To use any type of camera (cellphone, camera, tablet, etc.) in order to capture and portray a daily moment", Student Paper 36.1). On the contrary, 5 teaching objectives contributed to the 'abstract-oriented' discourse development, focusing on memorization tactics (e.g., "To develop and express ideas through the digital media (PC, camera)", Student Paper 46.1).

For the academic year 2020-2021, 11 teaching objectives in Language-based curriculum, 8 teaching objectives in Mathematics and 10 teaching objectives in Science, aim to the clarification and understanding of academic terms (e.g., "To familiarize with possibilities and a defined order of things, through random experiments", Student Paper 26.2). On the other hand, in the Language-based curriculum, 12 teaching objectives are reshaped and show elements of the 'everyday-life' discourse (e.g., "To illustrate in pictures the rules of a healthy diet that they have to abide by and later to write on them, using writing tools and PCs", Student Paper 55.2). In Mathematics, 20 teaching objectives focus on the young children's support in getting themselves practically involved into arithmetic concepts (e.g., "To decorate the classroom with paintings and decors that they will make by using flat and stable shapes", Student Paper 09.2). At the same time, 14 teaching objectives in Science refer to the 'everyday-life' discourse, contributing to the educational actions' design that developed phantasy and creativity of young children (e.g., "To create their own planet just as they imagine it", Student Paper 63.2).

Afterwards, 23 teaching objectives in Arts are relocated in order to provide motives for the young children to participate (e.g., "To reflect their body expression through various acoustic stimuli", Student Paper 2.2). Nevertheless, 3 teaching objectives keep their focus on the 'abstract-oriented' discourse, requiring the children's familiarization with general concepts (e.g., "To discern different kinds of lines through a particular piece of art", Student Paper 11.2).

Furthermore, 15 teaching objectives in Social Sciences and 15 teaching objectives in ICTs are relocated in order to simplify specific concepts (e.g., "To form rows when is needed, taking into account everyone's needs in the team", Student Paper

45.2). On the contrary, 6 teaching objectives in Social Sciences and 6 teaching objectives in ICTs keep their focus on the 'abstract-oriented' discourse, aiming at the teaching of demanding academic concepts for the acquisition of sociocultural and technological knowledge (e.g., "Being able to find information online about matters that interest them", Student Paper 8.2).

Finally, as it arises from Table 2 which refers to the final educational designs, for the academic year 2020-2021 in the discipline of Physical Education, the 'everyday-life' discourse appears in 13 teaching objectives, which are relocated in order to cultivate the young children's perception of their body's protection with daily practices (e.g., "To understand their body's moving abilities through games", Student Paper 28.2). However, 4 teaching objectives focus on simple memorization of specialized terms (e.g., "To understand the function and the usefulness of different body parts", Student Paper 13.2).

Table 2: *Analysis results of final student-teachers' educational designs*

Discipline \ Academic year	Academic year 2019-2020		Academic year 2020-2021	
	Abstract-oriented discourse	Everyday discourse	Abstract-oriented discourse	Everyday discourse
Language-based curriculum	14	8	11	12
Mathematics	17	7	8	20
Arts	3	11	3	23
Physical Education	1	8	4	13
Science	14	10	10	14
Social Sciences	2	15	6	15
ICTs	5	9	6	15
Sub-total	56	68	48	112
Total	124		160	

4. Discussion

From the comparative validation of the results concerning the discipline "Applications of critical pedagogy in the educational action" for the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, the interaction between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse is pointed out, data that have also been pointed out in one previous research of ours (Siatras & Christidou 2018).

More specifically, from the present research results occurs that in the students' initial educational designs for both academic years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021) the 'abstract-oriented' discourse outweighs the 'everyday-life' discourse (see Table 1). It can be claimed out of this data that the student-teachers don't move away from abstract and general concepts. There, young children are called to memorize specialized information, intensifying the cognitive demands that the learning identity of pre-school aged children requires (Siatras & Christidou 2018). Furthermore, from the research results it is referred that in the initial educational designs the 'abstract-oriented' discourse stood out in almost all disciplines (Language-based curriculum, Mathematics, Arts, Science, Social Sciences and ICTs) that were used in both academic years (2019-2020 and 2020-2021). However, there is not special association of the research results with the so-called "difficult" disciplines (e.g., Science) (Shamos 1995). The only discipline where the 'everyday-life' discourse stands out is this of Physical Education. In this way, it contributes to the young children's active participation into socio-scientific matters that deal with the development of an active way of living and of moving (I.E.P. 2021).

As for the final educational designs, from the research results that were presented in the previous unit (see Table 2) arises essential relocation of the teaching objectives for both academic years (2019-2020, 2020-2021). It is supported that the element that stands out in the academic year 2019-2020 the 'abstract-oriented' discourse seems to be predominant in the disciplines of Language-based curriculum, Mathematics and Science, whereas the 'everyday-life' discourse refers mainly to the disciplines of Arts, Physical Education, Social Sciences and ICTs.

Nevertheless, we get from the results that during the academic year 2020-2021 the 'everyday-life' discourse in the final educational designs is deployed in all disciplines (Language-based curriculum, Mathematics, Arts, Physical Education, Science, Social Sciences and ICTs). Thus, it contributes to the development of young children's agency and autonomy in the educational procedure.

5. Conclusions

The paper aimed to the designation of the interaction between the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse in the initial designs that the student-teachers developed (Bazzul 2014). From the research occurred that the students-teachers' involvement is crucial for the design, the feedback and the redesign of educational action. This aims at the development of the pedagogical identity of the future educators in order to boost the critical feedback of the socio-educational reality and to recognize the young children's different needs for the formulation of high-quality education for everyone (Bencze & Carter 2011). It is supported that in this way, the reformation of the educational designs can be accomplished, contributing to the educational procedure's distancing from traditional methods that focus on the teaching of ready-for-delivery knowledge through the children's conquest of demanding cognitive processes (Dymoke & Harrison 2008).

This paper investigated the students-teachers' interaction with the Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum (I.E.P. 2014) through the initial designs' growth. There was realized analysis of the projects' content, from where occurred the projects classification into the 'abstract-oriented' discourse and the 'everyday-life' discourse (Mokias, Siatras & Michalopoulou 2022). The critical analysis of the educational designs contributed to the formulation of what is needed in order to develop student-central educational actions (Siatras & Christidou 2018). By doing so, the educational designs take into consideration the young children's knowledge and experiences, reforming the traditional pedagogy into a liberating

practice that appoints the young children's vigorous action in the shaping of the content with which they interact (Freire & Shor 2011).

In conclusion, students-teachers came into contact with critical educational strategies through which the content can be reformed and lead to dialectic, feedback-like and experiential educational actions (Gounari & Grollios 2016; Paraskeva 2011). It is claimed that the formulation of a high-quality education that focuses on the construction of fundamental knowledge and abilities presupposes the assurance of equally high educational results and the development of critical learning identities for all the participants in the educational procedure (Kincheloe 2008).

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Hegel's concept of cognition and its significance in education

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Abstract

In this article, I stress the importance of Hegel's understanding of the process of cognition in the scientific study of the educational process. Hegel's systematic account of the process of cognition is found in his major work *The Science of Logic* and more specifically in the last part entitled *The Idea*. In this part, Hegel distinguishes three moments, the analytic cognition, the synthetic cognition and the absolute idea. These three moments represent the developmental process of cognition from immediacy and living contemplation to systematic and rigorous conceptual thinking. After dealing with these three moments, I examine the conditioning of the relation between the teacher and the learner by the specific causalities which govern each fundamental stage of cognition. In this context, I attempt to interrelate the contradictory and developmental character of the teacher-learner relation to Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Thus, I stress some hypotheses about ZPD's qualitative changes depending on the passage from one stage to the other throughout the cognition process. In this way, I present key features of the dialectical approach to education and draw some hypotheses for further research in that specific scientific field.

Introduction

The study of the cognitive process lies at the heart of Hegel's philosophy. However, the cognitive process is examined more systematically in the *Science of Logic* and more specifically in the last part entitled *The Idea*.[1] In this part, Hegel distinguishes three moments, being the analytic, the synthetic and the speculative cognition which correspond respectively with the trinary division of the logic in the sides of the understanding, the negatively rational and the speculative.[2] From an epistemological point of view, these three moments depict the basic stages of any cognitive process as well as the formation of the cognitive process from the aspect of ontogenesis and phylogenesis. In this context, the gradual upgrading of the subject's agency in the learning process is depicted. Hence, these three moments are fundamental for a dialectical approach to education and for understanding the transformations in the teacher-learner relation. However, the Hegelian analysis of the cognitive process can provide only a general epistemological and methodological framework for a systematic approach to the educational process. The transition from the philosophical conceptual framework to the concrete scientific study of the educational process is defined by many mediating stages. These mediating stages are linked to the critical consideration of the science of psychology and its acquisitions. In the following, I will deal only with the general epistemological framework provided by Hegel's philosophy, without discussing in detail the transition to the concrete analysis of the educational process.

Analytic cognition

Analysis is the moment of immediacy in the process of cognition. For this reason, analytic cognition is in proximity to the sensuous perception of the subject matter. Analytic cognition starts from an immediate manifold and external object. Throughout analysis, the content of the external object becomes a conceptual

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[1] For an analysis of the role of thinking in the broader Hegelian system see Kalatzis 2018.
[2] For an account of understanding (germ: Verstand) and reason (germ: Vernunft) in Hegel's philosophy see Limnatis 2006, Nuzzo 2010.

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content of the subject of cognition. Analytic cognition aims at the immediate determinations of the subject matter. At this stage, cognition analyses the object by separating its parts and conceives it as immediately identical to itself. Thus, its activity consists in the production of conceptual universality in the form of abstract identity. Hence, analysis lies in the transformation of sensuous immediacy into logical determinations.

Analysis starting from the manifold of the presupposed external and concrete material proceeds to the dissolution of this manifold and the distinction and separation of the particular elements and determinations. This process consists also in the transition from the sensuous immediacy to conceptual thinking. Every logical determination is produced by abstraction from the particular and inessential elements of the subject matter and corresponds to its universality, which is related to the genera and the species. Thus, the negation of the sensuous immediacy leads to the conceptual apprehension of the subject matter from the viewpoint of its universal features. Therefore, the result of the analysis consists in the conceptual understanding of the object from the aspect of its universality. However, to separate aspects and elements which are unified means to isolate sides and features from their initial identity. In this context, the logical determinations are external to the other's lack in mediation. Analytic cognition corresponds to the stage of understanding that Hegel describes as a stage of every logical reality (Hegel [1817] 2010a, 194).

According to the above, analysing means abstracting, namely, dissolution of the particulars and production of the general. Thus, the first and immediate moment of cognition is characterised by the lack of mediation and by the focus of cognition on the rigidity and fixity of the logical determinations (Pavlidis 2010, 86-95). The movement of thought that features analytic cognition has the form singularity-particularity-universality (S-P-U) where the singularity is the concrete and immediate while universality is the result of the analysis and the negation of the sensuous immediacy. Hence, analytic cognition starts from the immediate and

concrete and leads to the abstract universality. In this way, analytic cognition captures what it is, namely the object as given and fixed.

Synthetic cognition

If the analytic cognition starts from the immediate and concrete and has the universal genus as the point of arrival, the synthetic cognition on the other hand has the starting point of the universal genus, that is, the result of the analysis. Therefore, the second moment of cognition follows the reverse course and corresponds to the syllogistic structure U-P-S.[3] Synthetic cognition aims at grasping conceptually the manifold of the analytically produced logical determinations and its stages are the moments of the concept, namely, universality, particularity and singularity. At this moment of cognition, everything is articulated by the logical medium of reflection (cf. Bowman 2013, 183-186). Synthesis represents the association and mediation of the logical determinations. Logical determinations no longer appear in their isolation but in their interconnection. Synthetic cognition is the transition to reflection. Hence, synthetic cognition aims at proving the necessity and the laws of the object. However, the limitation of synthetic cognition lies in the fact that the various logical determinations are not deduced immanently but rather their relation is externally imposed. In synthetic cognition, the cognition of the object's singularity remains immediate and external. Therefore, the transition from one determination to the next takes place through an external principle and by turning to the immediacy of the subject matter. Synthetic cognition is distinguished in three basic moments, being the definition, the division, and the theorem.

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[3] Hegel points out that in synthetic method, "the concept proceeds from universality back toward singularity" (Hegel [1817] 2010a, 222).

Definition

In definition, the object of cognition is taken as an immediate given and is determined based on its proximate genus and specific difference. Definition, as the first moment of synthetic cognition, is related to the stage at which the cognition of the object's essence is at stake. Hegel claims that at the level of the definition, the concept "is a universal presented in an understandable manner" (Hegel [1831] 2008, 223). Definition can be determined as the unity of the genus and specific difference, that is, the unity of the universality and particularity. We have noted that synthetic cognition grasps the manifold of determinations in their unity. The first moment of this comprehension of the manifold takes the form and the task of reduction of the entire wealth of logical determinations to a fundamental universal determination. Hegel in his lectures on *Logic* gives the example of gold. He notes:

Gold is metal and that is the genus. The specific difference is its weight. But gold has still many other determinations. The definition of it would be that it is metal of a specific weight. If all its other determinations could be led back to the one determination of specific weight, that would be the one definition (Hegel [1831] 2008, 223).

In the definition, the unity of the universality of genus and particularity is transformed into the identity to which the other determinations are reduced. The manifold determinations are unified in the identity of the definition. Hence, the object of cognition is revealed as a universal which is essentially determined. However, universality, which is the ground of definition, has resulted through analytic cognition, that is, through the negation of the immediate particulars. But since universality is the simple negation of the particular, it is not but another particular. Given that the definition results through the reference to the immediacy of the object, its content is contingent and corresponds to the formal determinateness of the essence of the given subject matter.

Division

At the stage of the definition, the universality of the subject matter was determined through a particular that was its specific difference. Yet, universality is not related exclusively to a unique particular but rather to a multitude of them. Therefore, the particularity, which was the specific difference, stands out in its relation to other particularities. This moment of synthetic cognition is division, which consists in cognising the object as an articulation of conceptual determinations. What is cognised in the division is the particularisation of the universal. In this way, the object of cognition is seen as a totality of articulated logical determinations associated with the universal genus. Division, having universality as its ground, moves to particularity and relates the determinations of the object. It can be realised that with division thinking begins to acquire systematic features. Hegel stresses that "the advance from the universal to the particular characteristic of the concept constitutes the basis and the possibility of a synthetic science, of a system, and of systematic cognition" (Hegel [1832] 2010b, 713). With division, the classification of the various sides of the object comes to the foreground. Nevertheless, the interconnection of the universal with the particularities remains external. In this context, the various determinations are still apprehended as immediate and given, and their classification is done through external reflection.

Theorem

The last moment of synthetic cognition is the theorem. The theorem is characterised by the transition to singularity. What is discerned here is the object of cognition in its forms of real existence, that is, in the totality of its determinations of reality. The object of cognition is now a synthetic relation of different determinations. However, the connection of the abstract determinations with the concrete ones remains more or less external. In this way, what becomes necessary is the proof of this connection. According to Hegel, the proof is the

external mediation of a conclusion. In the theorem, the relation of the determinations must be based on necessity. Since the articulation of the various determinations remains external in synthetic cognition, proof is the medium through which the necessity of the determinations is displayed. Hence, with proof, the transition to cognition of the necessity and inner motion of the object comes to the foreground.

Absolute idea and dialectical thinking

According to Hegel, in both analytic and synthetic cognition, the gap between subjectivity and objectivity remains. For this reason, these forms of cognition are finite. The idea, as subjective, confronts the objective idea, that is, the idea as an external and immediate world. Therefore, the idea is not yet aware that it cognises itself, when it cognises the external and seemingly immediate world. On the contrary, in absolute idea, the unity of the subjective and the objective idea is achieved. The idea cognises itself, which means that the subject and the object of cognition are identical. The content here is the entire system of logic while the formal aspect consists in the universal form, namely the speculative method which is "the dialectical process of development as subjectively re-enacted" (Hegel [1831] 2008, 230). At this moment of cognition, the three moments of the concept, that is, universality, particularity and singularity are internally connected. This means that the particular and singular aspects of the subject matter are conceived in their unity with universality. Speculative or dialectical cognition has analytic and synthetic cognition as its implicit moments. The immanent progression inherent in the dialectical development of logical categories can be defined as both analytic and synthetic (Hegel [1817] 2010a, 301). As every subsequent category exists in a latent form within the previous one, the logical progression renders explicit what was previously implicit. In this way, thinking is analytic because it posits something that was already contained in the initial category (Houlgate 2005, 38). On the other hand, each subsequent category does not simply disclose

what is already contained in the previous one because the transition from one category to the next represents the self-differentiation of the subject matter. Accordingly, the logical progression constitutes a process of emergence of new categories (see Houlgate 2005, 36-43). Dialectical cognition is thus the sublation of analytic and synthetic cognition.

For Hegel, the systematic structure that features speculative or dialectical cognition is inextricably intertwined with the identity of subjectivity and objectivity. For Marx, however, systematic cognition can exist insofar as the subject of cognition depicts a concrete self-developing object in mind (Marx [ms. 1857-58] 1973, 101).[4] In our view, Marxist dialectical methodology corresponds, in its basic features, to the speculative method. Dialectical methodology consists in the ascent from the abstract to the concrete through which the inner necessity and self-movement of the object are represented.[5] Therefore, the object of cognition is apprehended as a system of internal coherence. The various determinations are internally linked to each other and constitute a system of ordered categories through which the object's self-movement is reproduced in the mind (Vazjulin [1968] 2006, 29). At the level of dialectical cognition, the object under consideration constitutes an "organic whole" (Marx [ms. 1857-58] 1973, 100), namely a self-subsistent totality of unified and interpenetrating parts. Hence, both for Hegel and Marx, speculative or dialectical cognition constitutes the highest stage of cognition since the subject matter is represented as a totality that reproduces its presuppositions, namely as a self-reproducing entity (Reuten 2014, 244-245).

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[4] The question of the identity or non-identity between subjectivity and objectivity is fundamental to understanding Hegel's and Marx's different approaches to cognition. This issue is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

[5] It should be noted that Hegel is not so far from Marx's view. In the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* he stresses that "scientific cognition ... demands surrender to the life of the object, or, what amounts to the same thing, confronting and expressing its inner necessity" (Hegel [1807] 1977, 32).

The functions of knowledge and the educational process

The above three moments of cognition are associated with different degrees of correlation of the fundamental functions of knowledge, that is, description, explanation and prediction. Although Hegel rejects the function of prediction, his analysis can be seen from the perspective of the correlation of the three fundamental functions of knowledge. The three fundamental functions of knowledge are always in unity and are mutually interconnected. Thus, the three functions of knowledge coexist at each moment of cognition. However, different functions of knowledge prevail in different moments of the cognitive process. As we have already argued, analytic cognition is associated with the transition from sensory intuition and immediacy to rational thinking. Analysis is thus predominantly related to the function of description. As a function of knowledge, description is nothing but the representation of the immediacy of the subject matter. Hence, description is a function of knowledge in which the senses and sensory intuition play a major role. For example, positivism, as a discipline in science, is limited to the movement from sensuous immediacy to abstract thinking. In this way, knowledge in positivism lies in the description of the aspects of the given subject matter while its inner relations are not revealed (Dafermos 2018, 274).

The stage of synthetic cognition is associated with the course from abstract concepts to conceptualised concrete immediacy. In synthetic cognition, the study of the relation and mediation of the logical determinations depicts the connection of the object's sides and reflects its necessity. This moment is strictly associated with the function of explanation. To explain a given subject matter means to reveal its internal relations and display the laws and causalities that govern it. Explanation consists in the representation of the causal association of the sides of the object. This interconnection depicts the association of the internal and external sides of the object. Henceforth, the description of the object is grounded on the fundamental structural and causal relationships that govern it. Based on the above, in synthetic cognition, the functions of description and explanation are

more mutually intertwined. However, in synthetic cognition, the object under investigation is mainly conceived as given and fixed. This implies that the interconnection of the sides takes place within a predominantly static consideration of the object. Consequently, it becomes impossible to examine the transformation of the different sides through a static view of the object. From the perspective of the interconnection of the sides, synthetic cognition does not reveal how the effect reacts to the cause and how the overall interconnection of the sides constitutes a dynamic developmental process.

The moment of speculative or dialectical cognition is mostly associated with the function of prediction in spite of Hegel's rejection of any possible knowledge of the future. The fact that in dialectical cognition the object is depicted as a self-moving whole enables the depiction of its inner movement and consequently its potential future. This means that in dialectical cognition the function of explanation is increasingly interlinked with the function of prediction. Explanation becomes necessary not only for understanding the present state of the object but also for understanding the process of its transformation into a qualitatively different object. Hence, the explanation of the present object is internally linked to the scientific prediction of its future. In dialectical cognition, the three fundamental functions of knowledge (description, explanation, prediction) acquire a higher mutual interaction while the function of prediction becomes prevalent (Ninos 2021, 470-480). In this way, the study of the object's internal movement is linked to the understanding of its overall development and the tendencies of its future.

The above dialectical approach to the cognitive process is of high importance for the educational process. Thus, we can see certain parallelism between the moments of cognition and the educational process. Both from the point of view of every new cognitive process and child development, cognition starts with the senses. Sensory immediacy and the function of description are fundamental aspects at the beginning of the educational process; albeit are not limited to the sensory relationship with reality, but also include more complex cognitive functions. In the initial stages of educational process, the relationship between the

teacher and the learner is mostly based on fixed and given didactic contents. In other words, the main goal is for the learner to capture what it is and assimilate already established knowledge. The second moment is related to conceptual thinking and the use of various established cognitive contents. The function of explanation means that the learning process aims to convey the essential relations of the various phenomena. Through the understanding of the essential relations and laws, the various phenomena can be grasped in their concreteness. From the point of view of child development, this moment is associated with the transition to higher psychological functions and school education. At this stage, definitions, proof and theorems play a crucial role since the learner can reproduce the internal logic of the acquired cognitive contents. Definitions become an important aspect of the learning process since they favour the distinction of the universal and essential aspects of the object from the secondary ones. At once, the deepening of the interconnection of the universal with the particular sides sets out the conditions for systematic knowledge. Moreover, the assimilation of theorems makes cognition operate through principles which are increasingly detached from a given empirical reality. Cognition acquires universal characteristics while the empirical relations are perceived in light of assimilated knowledge of the various aspects of reality. This establishes a relationship of comparison/interaction between acquired knowledge and reality, which, in the context of overall human activity and practice, leads to the creation of new knowledge. Accordingly, reproducing the internal logic of cognitive contents means in a way creating new cognitive contents and critically questioning the established ones. The learning process aims at shaping the skills for autonomous problem solving and for creation of new knowledge. Finally, the moment of dialectical cognition is associated with adult life and more specifically with highly complex philosophical and scientific thinking. In this stage, critical reflection on established knowledge is linked to the production of qualitatively new scientific knowledge. Additionally, systematic scientific knowledge is inextricably linked to the function of prediction. Predicting the movement of a given subject matter requires a systematic

understanding of its structure and its history. This cognitive moment is also internally interwoven with critical reflection upon the cognitive methodology and the very means of cognition.

Upon escalation of the three moments of cognition, the subject's agency and creative participation in the production of knowledge are upgraded. Hence, the very relationship between the teacher and the learner is changing. In the initial stages of the educational process, the learner has, more or less, a passive role while in the later stages his or her active role is radically enhanced. In this context, Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) can be seen in light of the Hegelian analysis of cognition. ZPD represents the range of tasks that the learner can achieve with the guidance of others. It is a concept that enables reflection upon the relation between the type of instruction and the different stages of development of psychological functions. Vygotsky highlights that "the zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state" (Vygotsky 1978, 86). The support that the learner receives for achieving a goal with the guidance of others is changing qualitatively throughout the different stages of the educational process. During the later stages of the educational process, the guidance of others becomes more and more mediated so that the very relationship between the teacher and the learner becomes a sort of relationship between peers. Alternatively, to the extent that the production of new knowledge comes more and more to the fore, the relationship between teacher and learner becomes gradually a kind of mutually collaborative relation.

According to the above, we argue that cognition, learning, education and the development of psychological functions are intimately linked. Issues such as the development of higher psychological functions (memory, speech-thinking, attention, etc.), teaching methods and the various stages of the educational process, learning process and didactic contents, can be considered through the spectrum of the dialectical process of cognition. Hence, the epistemological

framework provided by the Hegelian analysis of cognition enables a holistic account of the cognitive, learning and educational process favouring the transition to the concrete research of the developmental process of psychological functions.

Conclusion

Hegel's analysis of cognition, although developed in a metaphysical framework, captures its basic laws and causalities. We argued for the interdependence of the cognitive, learning, and educational processes. In this way, the Hegelian analysis of cognition can provide a useful theoretical/methodological framework for the systematic understanding of the law-governed causalities of the learning process and for further study of the relationship between teacher and learner that features each stage of the educational process. In this context, the assimilation and further development of the acquis of Hegel's analysis seem to be crucial for the scientific examination of the educational process. Furthermore, the conflation of Hegel's analysis and Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory acquisitions is shown to be of decisive importance for solving contemporary issues surrounding education.

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The Covid-19 epidemic and the nomads in Turkey: an ethnographic case study

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Abstract

Communities that live in tents without being attached to a fixed residence make their living through animal husbandry and migrate according to the season to increase the productivity of herds are called "nomads" in Turkey. The main economic activity in nomadic communities is animal husbandry. Winter life in the villages and summer living in the plateaus has different difficulties for these "semi-nomadic" communities, which generally consist of families connected by kinship and migrate with large herds of animals in the spring and autumn and live in tents. The Covid 19, left deep effects on the economy, health and education system in Turkey as well as in the whole world; it affected all disadvantaged groups more than the others. The lives of nomads are thought to be greatly affected by such a social phenomenon. This research aims to reveal how the lives of Nomads, both in their settled villages and in their temporary tents in the plateaus, have been affected by the Covid 19, and how their educational needs have been shaped in this process.

In line with the general purpose given, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How was the (1) daily, (2) economic, (3) social, and (4) educational life of the nomads before the Covid 19?
- How is the (1) daily, (2) economic, (3) social, and (4) educational life of the nomads during and after the Covid 19?

This study was designed as an ethnographic case study in the context of qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998) ethnographic case study makes it possible to deal with social phenomena more intensely and holistically. The cultures, economic and social lives of the Nomads, who are the subject of the research, were aimed to be revealed through participatory observation, and unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In the ongoing research, the temporary accommodation of Nomads in the rural area of Bitlis and Erzurum was determined as the research place for participant observations and interviews. Research findings will be analyzed using the descriptive analysis approach.

According to the first results obtained from the preliminary interviews, Covid 19 harmed the economic life of Nomads. Although their earnings have fallen, their income has not increased as expected. Students had problems attending distance classes. In addition, during the Covid 19 process, Nomads continued to go to the plateau and continued their economic activities.

Introduction

The nomadic lifestyle has a historical significance for Middle East geography. Nomadic communities formed an important part of society until the emergence of modern nation-states played an important role in politics and economy, and even became powerful enough to determine the establishment and collapse of dynasties.

The founding dynasty of the Ottoman Empire, one of the historical states in Anatolia, was also of nomadic origin. The land that the empire was founded on and —controlled for centuries, from the Balkans to the Persian Gulf, cut across one of the five major areas of nomadic pastoralism in the world. However, before the

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Turkish influx into Anatolia, there was no true nomadism there. In order to create a long-lasting presence in the newly conquered lands, one of the most efficient policies for the Ottoman Administration to use was to settle nomadic tribes there. Following the Ottoman conquest of Thrace and the Balkans mass migration of semi-nomadic Turkomans into these regions changed the demographic structure of the newly conquered lands (İnalcık 1994, 34).

The nomads had constituted a considerable part of Ottoman society from the emergence of the state until almost its end. Their number according to estimations constituted about 27 percent of the total population in Anatolia as late as the 1520s, proving a considerable nomadic presence in Ottoman geography. This rate was much higher, especially in Eastern Anatolia and in the Arab provinces (Kasaba 2009, 18). The nomads' contribution to the Ottoman economy was indispensable for the state. This was why they were given certain privileges and allowed to function to some extent autonomously in the imperial system. Starting with the turn of the 16th century, the Ottoman central administration began the sedentarization of nomads. During the nineteenth century, the state followed a more systematic policy to settle nomadic tribes. Especially during the Tanzimat period, this policy gained momentum. Political, social, and cultural improvements followed the reforms started particularly in the administrative and financial spheres. In this century, apart from the efforts of centralization, the state, through the sedentarization of nomads, aimed to increase the agricultural output, protect the life and property of its subjects as promised by the Tanzimat Edict, and increase the source of incomes taxation; and finally, through the sedentarization, the state aimed to recruit soldiers (Dede 2011, 95).

Today, there are pastoral nomadic communities that have been living in the settled world for centuries and have become a part of the settled world. Although they exhibit the cultural practices and traditions of the past, to understand these communities, it is necessary to evaluate them in the modern sedentary world. Although the nomadic lifestyle has lost its historical importance, it is possible to talk about today's conditions that make nomadism possible or attractive. The

concept of post-nomadism, which expresses this situation, is mentioned. The concept of post-nomadism reflects the cultural condition of a whole range of societies over many centuries, which were without fixed parameters and boundaries, and which had changed identities (Wink 2001, 295).

There are some nomadic communities that live in tents without being attached to a fixed residence make their living through animal husbandry and migrate according to the season to increase the productivity of herds in Turkey today. The main economic activity in these nomadic communities is animal husbandry. Winter life in the villages and summer living in the plateaus has different difficulties for these "semi-nomadic" communities, which generally consist of families connected by kinship and migrate with large herds of animals in the spring and autumn and live in tents. There are some nomadic communities that live in tents without being attached to a fixed residence, make their living through animal husbandry and migrate according to the season to increase the productivity of herds in Turkey today. The main economic activity in these nomadic communities is animal husbandry. Winter life in the villages and summer living in the plateaus has different difficulties for these "semi-nomadic" communities, which generally consist of families connected by kinship and migrate with large herds of animals in the spring and autumn and live in tents.

The Covid 19, left deep effects on the economy, health, and education system in Turkey as well as in the whole world; it affected all disadvantaged groups more than the others. The lives of nomads are thought to be greatly affected by such a social phenomenon. This research aims to reveal how the lives of Nomads, both in their settled villages and in their temporary tents in the plateaus, have been affected by the Covid 19, and how their educational needs have been shaped in this process.

In line with the general purpose given, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How was the (1) daily and social life, (2) economic life, (3) educational life of the nomads before the Covid 19?

- How is the (1) daily and social life, (2) economic life, (3) educational life of the nomads during and after the Covid 19?

Method

This study was designed as an ethnographic case study in qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998) ethnographic case study makes it possible to deal with social phenomena more intensely and holistically. The cultures, economic and social lives of the Nomads, who are the subject of the research, were aimed to be revealed through participatory observation and unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In this research, the temporary accommodation of Nomads in the rural area of Bitlis was determined as the research place for participant observations and interviews. Research findings were analyzed using the descriptive analysis approach.

The study group of this research was chosen from Semi-nomadic tribes living in Batman, in the south-east of Turkey, who migrate to the Ahlat region of Bitlis province, on the northern slope of Mount Nemrut towards the end of May. Data were collected through interviews held between 24 June and 30 July 2022. The demographic information of the study group is as follows:

Study Group	F1	F2	F3	M1	M2	M3	M4
Gender	female	female	female	male	male	male	male
Age	19	32	60	17	26	34	53
Graduate Degree	Secondary School	Primary School	-	Primary School	Secondary School	Primary School	Primary School

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How many years in nomadic life	4	9	45	6	3	14	43
Number of household	8	7	17	7	8	10	12
Household income (Month, Turkish Liras)	7000	7500	7000	7500	7000	8500	8000

Findings

Research findings on the social, economic life and education of nomads are given under this title.

Daily and Social Life

The nomads stated they lived in Batman (Beşiri) in October, November, December, January, February, March, and April and came to Bitlis (Ahlat) countryside towards the end of May. Return journeys, which start again at the end of September, take approximately 40 days. During this period, the adult men who stay with the sheep return to Batman on foot, while the children and women return to Batman by car.

> *The sheep are being brought in trucks. We also come with trucks. We all come together in the truck's box. On the way to Batman, we go by minibus. The men come with the sheep. Children are coming with us. We came here again when the disease came out. We made cheese (F1).*

> *Every year we bring the sheep in trucks. While taking it, we go to Batman on foot. Women and children go by minibus. The mountain is where we always sleep. We go in 30-40 days. We always sleep outside in the rain and cold (M3).*

After breakfast, women do laundry, lunch, cleaning, and bread making. They take milk from the sheep in the afternoon and evening. They make cheese from milk every day. They only make yogurt and butter for their own needs. Young children often play games. Each individual over the age of seven has different duties. While men are mostly shepherds, women are busy with cooking, bread, cleaning, cheese making. Most of the women stated that the nomadic life is hard and therefore they do not want to be a nomad.

> *We have sheep. Men take them to the mountain. We milk the sheep, make cheese, sell the cheese. All summer, we are here. At nine o'clock, I go to bed. I get up at four in the morning and prepare food. After the meal, the men follow the sheep. Then I make bread. The tandoor is the place where I cook. I do dishes and laundry and cleaning. I'll prepare lunch. Children take the food to the mountain. I milk at noon and in the evening. In the evening, I will cook. The men deal with the sheep, but we do all the rest (F2).*
>
> *In the winter, we are in Batman. Every day, we feed the sheep. We give water. We feed. There is not much milk in sheep when we in Batman. Here, we get up at five in the morning. I am having breakfast. Then I take the sheep to the mountain. I milk every day at noon and in the evening (M2).*
>
> *We stay at home in Batman in winter. I do the cooking, laundry, dishes, and cleaning there. I give water and feed to the sheep (F1).*

They stated they did not experience significant health problems as they continued their nomadic life on the plateau during COVID-19.

> *I didn't get sick. When my grandfather got sick, the ambulance has arrived. Then he went to Batman. I've been vaccinated. This place is far. I also work when I am sick. We don't get sick here. We have never been sick in COVID-19. I'm out of date.*

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I told my relatives to get vaccinated as well. For two whole years, only my uncle got sick. He doesn't come here anymore either (M1).

They stated they experienced a minor change in daily life before and after COVID-19. They came to Bitlis during the COVID-19 process and continued their lives there. Women get up at 04:00 in the morning. They do things like preparing breakfast and making bread. The men get up at 05:00 in the morning. After breakfast, they take care of the sheep. Most of the males stay with the sheep on the mountain slope, about 5 km away. Young men and women bring breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the shepherds.

Economic Life

Nomads are engaged in small cattle breeding. They continue their lives with the cheese they produce every year. All the families living in fifteen tents are relatives. There are about 4000 sheep here.

They stated they did not experience serious economic problems before COVID-19, but they stated they had problems in selling the cheese they produced during the COVID-19 process. They bring the sheep from Batman to Bitlis by trucks. The fee for transportation in 2021 is 17.000 TL. In 2022, they gave 48.000 TL for transportation. Every year, nomads also pay a certain fee to the headman of Taşharman village, which is the closest village to their accommodation. Despite this, they stated they had problems with the villagers from time to time.

We have 4000 sheep here. My family has 700 sheep. We come here at the end of May every year. Our ancestors have always been here. We take the sheep to the mountain. Some days I sleep on the mountain with the sheep. We milk at noon and in the evening. We will make cheese with milk. They buy our cheese from here. Sometimes we also sell sheep. Our work has no value. I sold a lot of sheep last year and bought a bait that money. I will sell sheep this year as well. The government should help us. Everything is very expensive. We gave 48 thousand

to the trucks. We gave 17 thousand last year. Cheese is very cheap. Meat is cheap. If it goes on like this, we won't be coming here anymore (M3).

The economic problems experienced in Turkey in 2021 negatively affected the lives of nomads. Especially when they live in Batman, they had great difficulty in getting feed for their sheep. Feed prices have increased by approximately 400% in one year. Despite this, the increase in cheese prices was only 60%. The increase in meat price is 30%. Nomads stated they could not meet their expenses because of a lower increase in their incomes in the face of the enormous increase in their expenses. They stated that if this continues, they will sell a significant part of the sheep, and if these economic problems continue, they will completely end their nomadic lifestyle in 2023.

At this rate, we will come here last in 2023. We would not do this again. We have no money to buy barley or feed. Our cheese and meat are not worth any money. But feed prices have gone up. We sell a sheep, buy 3 bags of feed. If the government doesn't support it, we can't survive this winter. We learned about the nomadic lifestyle from our ancestors, but this is no longer the case. Everything we buy is very expensive. Everything we sell is cheaper than water. We were fine before the illness. Then everything paid off. The food has increased a lot. The cheese increased little. We sold a lot of sheep last year and bought feed. Our condition became worse with the disease. Forage and hay increased a lot. Government should help us (M3).

Education Life

All children of nomads go to school, but they cannot go for the last week of May, the whole of June and 3 weeks of September. While there were no students going to high school and university in the past, now a student attends university. Especially the women support children's education. Students stated they had difficulty in participating in distance education in COVID-19.

Children do not go to school here. He goes to school in Batman in the winter. When the school closed, there was no lesson. The children could not study. No computer. The children are coming with us before the school closes. They don't go to school in June. They go to school late in September (M2).

There is no internet at the top of the mountain so that the children can study. We can't make a living if we stay in Batman for the children's school. Now what happens if children are studying? There is no job. What should the children do? My daughter is studying at a university. We can't make a living after the illness. My daughter will study and become an engineer (F3).

It's hard to live here. I get up early every day to work. I don't want to come here anymore. My uncle's daughter studies in Istanbul. I want to study too (F1).

Results

This research, which was designed as an ethnographic case study, aimed to reveal how nomads were affected by COVID-19. For this purpose, it has been tried to reveal the changes in the economy, education, daily and social life of the nomads before, during and after COVID-19. In the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with seven nomads. Women work actively between 04:00 and 22:00 in their daily lives. Every day, they do very hard work such as preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner, catering to the needs of children, making bread, cleaning, washing clothes and dishes, milking sheep, and making cheese. The women talked about the difficulties of the nomadic lifestyle and expressed that they wanted to move to a settled life. One woman said, "Men are only interested in animals. We do all the rest." As can be understood from their expressions, it can be said that the nomadic lifestyle is quite challenging for women. Men start their day between 05.00 to 22:00. They mainly work as shepherds, milking and making cheese. Men and women share some works like milking sheep and making cheese together.

The nomads earn their living by raising sheep and goats. Nomadic families, all of them relate to each other, come from Batman to the rural areas of Ahlat district of

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Bitlis every year in May and return to their permanent settlements in Batman's Beşiri district in September. About 4000 sheep are brought by trucks each year and the return journey takes about a month, which is carried out on foot. Women and children come and go back by transportation. The COVID-19 process has negatively affected the nomads economically. Especially in 2021, the economic problems in Turkey affected the nomads more negatively. Despite the limited increase in cheese and meat prices, the four-fold increase in the transportation fees of the nomads and the price of feed, which is the principal expense item, caused them not to be able to meet their expenses. This is a situation that seriously threatens the continuation of the nomadic lifestyle.

Nomadic children continued their education life in the Beşiri district of Batman, where they lived, before COVID-19. They could not continue their education for a few weeks only in June and September. However, during the COVID-19 process, children faced serious problems in participating in distance education. Lack of computer and internet or insufficiencies of these tools stand out as the biggest factors in their inability to take part in distance education.

Although its importance and dimensions have decreased, the nomadic lifestyle in the post-nomadic ages with narrowed borders is a continuing phenomenon in the world. Today, nomadism has become a bit more comfortable compared to the past with the use of communication and transportation opportunities brought by the modern world. However, especially COVID-19 has negatively affected nomads all over the world.

The nomadic lifestyle is a culturally, socially, and economically unique way of life. Since it is built on delicate balances, the nomadic lifestyle is impacted negatively from COVID-19 process and even this lifestyle is about to disappear. For this reason, it is necessary to raise awareness about the nomadic lifestyle, to educate children through public facilities, to have the state support and encourage nomads economically, and to help them in marketing their products.

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Introducing pedagogical practices of the commons in/to Critical Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the emergent paradigm of the 'commons' as an alternative value and action system in/to Critical Education. In particular, the transfer of logic and ethics of the 'commons' in official public education presupposes pedagogical practices that have the potential to shape horizontal ways of thinking and acting, escaping established social practices, habits and relationships. Also, there is a need to promote children's agency and citizenship through the process of 'commoning' in everyday life at school. Many epistemological and partially political divergences emerge through by comparing Critical Pedagogy to educational commons. Both share core values such as democracy, egalitarianism, emancipation and social justice as well as a struggle against policies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism in education.

Introduction

In the recent past there has been a growing acceptance that children should be more active in their learning (Kirby 2020) and more engaged in decision-making (Baraldi, Cockburn 2018). Through micro-political actions, it is possible to construct alternative ways of perceiving the learning space, negotiating knowledge, and promoting a more democratic experience in everyday life at school.

Concerning conventional teaching, Buscaglia and Short (1982, 13) formulate the dominant notion that says: 'I don't care about your uniqueness. I care only to impose my own self to you and then I will consider myself as a successful teacher'. Paulo Freire (1996) criticizes convential teaching on the grounds that students are reduced to objects and the teacher–student relationship becomes that of the oppressor and the oppressed. Instead, he suggests spaces where teaching and learning take place in dialogic form; where learning, rather than knowledge transfer, occurs; where knowledge is produced, not simply presented, or imposed on the learners (Grollios et al. 2015).

The alternative to conventional teaching that this paper proposes is the logic of the 'commons' which involves the triptych of 'resource– community– rules'. This aspect is related to educational 'commons' which is a new interdisciplinary field. Within this logic we could attempt to prefigurate a bottom-up education, shifting the paradigm concerning our relationship to teaching and learning (Pechtelidis, Kioupkiolis 2020).

This paper challenges the dominant perceptions about children's inability to make political decisions and their right to participate in public life. Children are conceived as trustworthy beings who make choices so as to be actively involved in what concerns them. These new modes of self-governing operate as an attempt to promote new forms of subjectivity in the field of education in relation to the current critical, political, and social context (Pechtelidis 2022).

This paper is part of my ongoing doctoral thesis, which is funded by IKY Scholarship Program (for more details see the end of this paper). Briefly, this thesis is an action research that explores the experiences of children's participation in an effort to share and co-manage a common resource, in this case, a sixth-grade class of a public elementary school. It is important to emphasize that in this paper we will not be concerned with the results of the empirical study.

Indicatively, the first part of this article, I intend to analyze the meaning of the 'commons'. In the second part, I will introduce the connection between 'commons' and school as well as crucial pedagogical practices of the 'commons' about

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learning and self-governance. Last but not least, I mention the divergences and convergences between educational commons and Critical Education.

What are the commons

Criticism to the 'Tragedy of the Commons'

First of all, it is important to refer to what does not constitute 'the commons' and in particular to the 'tragedy of the commons'. The deconstruction of the 'tragedy of the commons' is one of the most important pieces of critique that the theory of the 'commons' promotes. The term 'Tragedy of the Commons' was coined by Garrett Hardin (1968) and used to describe the inability of people to act collectively in terms of managing shared natural resources. This (paradoxical) logic dictates that when some goods do not belong to specific individuals but to all, they are considered as 'a common(s)'.

In such a case the 'thought experiment' of a fishery can be an enlightening example. Imagine that there is a small village that depends on the local fishpond for food. For this reason, locals share the pond. However, the problem of the indiscriminate fishing where each person catches as much as they can, arises. The fish dwindle day by day, making the situation irreversible. Possible solutions are state intervention (laws, enforcement, etc.) or private individual (fencing, individual exploitation). Here, the issue of person's utilitarian and individualistic nature' is addressed by third party solutions, thus falling into the trap of non-engagement and transfer of responsibility. Are these, however, the only ways out? Through the example of the 'tragedy of the commons' a specific political orientation that of neoliberal capitalism is legitimized and normalized. In particular, it is a logic that promotes privatization, free market logic and an emphasis on competition and profit. It also conceives and thereby naturalizes human nature as individualistic, selfish, and utilitarian. It consists of individuals and resources as commodities and devalues collective action by establishing the Thatcherian slogan 'there is no alternative' as a worldview. Neoliberalism has

moved beyond a set of hegemonic discourses and practices to achieve an accepted worldview (Bourdieu, Passeron 2018) or an unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as if it were the objective truth.

The extension of a neoliberal market-based logic is to seek maximum profit by exploiting public assets from land to water supplies, hospitals, and universities. Private individuals have a strong incentive to appropriate public or common goods in order to turn them into new sources of profit when they can be exploited. In various cases they are thus driven to attack the commons. They do so increasingly in the context of the current neoliberal hegemony, which intensifies pressures on public and common goods (Kioupkiolis 2019).

The 'commons' as a form of self-organization

In the logic of the 'commons', we do not wait for the state or the individual, but we all act as a community. Residents come together, co-organize, co-create, and set rules for a material resource, as could be the case with the pond. The resource can also be intangible. For example, in the well-known website 'Wikipedia', everyone can have an equal contribution in shaping the articles. This co-organization assumes that despite the different roles we may acquire in a community, there is parity among its members, giving a new perspective to collaborate, share and build trust with each other.

For Hardt and Negri (2009) the common is distinct from public and private forms of property: *'the political project of instituting the common… cuts diagonally across these false alternatives —neither public nor private, neither capitalist nor socialist—and opens a new space for politics* (Means 2014, 127).

Even today, in the mainstream schools of thought of economic there is a vast literature that views 'commons' as resources that people have free access to use. That is, in this view anything we share that is free is characterized as a 'common'. De Angelis (2003) points out that this is the 'resource-centric' view of the 'commons'. The emphasis is on the resource rather than the community. In

particular, he supports that we could not label anything that involves public or non-public wealth as a 'common'. This wasteful overuse of common goods is not a 'tragedy of the commons' but a 'tragedy of unregulated resources' (Ostrom 1990). Ostrom (1990) challenges this logic of (failed) collective action by refuting that the 'commons' are not in fact an unregulated resource open to all. Rather, they are collective goods managed jointly for mutual benefit. To support her view, she conducted multiple case studies to identify specific empirical conditions for collective self-management to flourish.

In line with these studies, in 1990, Ostrom formulated an innovative hypothesis on avoiding the 'tragedy of the commons'. In her book 'Governing the commons', she demonstrated the invalidity of some of the implicit assumptions of the model developed by Hardin, based on her research on how communities succeeded or failed in governing the 'commons'. Thus, she considered a particular kind of 'commons', which she calls 'common-pool resources': a natural or manufactured resource system that its users (the commoners) maintain a framework through processes of self-organization, co-management, and co-decision in the interest of the sustainability of the resource and of society in general.

In the philosophical and political sphere, as opposed to mainstream economics, the general concept of 'commons' finds its logic through the notion of 'common-pool resources' and it has been applied to the management of natural resources (such as forests, fisheries, irrigation systems) as well as intangible resources (such as knowledge and the Internet). The emphasis shifts from the resource (resource-centric) to the community. To characterize something as 'a common' we focus on the relationships of individuals, their practices as well as their community functions. A prerequisite is the existence of different social relations between subjects, more equal and just (De Angelis 2003).

Put simply, the 'commons' are a dynamic between the triptych (resource, community, relationships/rules). We focus our attention on the third element which is the verb 'to common/common' that means to share and commune. A process that creates and reproduces the 'commons'.

According to Kioupkiolis (2019), Ostrom fails to grasp the contradictory logics that bring the 'commons' into conflict with the modern state and capitalist markets. Especially for the modern state, the public sector has centralized tendencies and hierarchical structures in the way decisions are made and there is no co-option of individuals as peers. As far as school education is concerned, these decisions do not include the voice of teachers and children who are the essential 'consumers' of information. Usually, they are passive receivers of decisions made from above.

Promoting 'commons' logics in education

The public school as a common

In this section it is necessary to further analyze these concepts in order to consider how to transfer this discussion to the field of education. Compared to education, it is different to refer to a lake, a forest or a digital resource where whoever wants is involved. To engage in 'commoning' education, we need to 'establish fundamentally new ways of learning and thinking in relation to our global community and our shared fate' (De Lissovoy et al. 2014, 66).

The difference between educational commons and other kind of 'commons' such as environmental, digital, cultural 'commons' is that we focus more on how to learn and educate, together with children. For the purpose of establishing a model of social practice of self-organization and co-decision making for the governance of educational context (classroom, school, etc.). Community members cooperate, co-create and participate in safeguarding of the democracy that has been established.

The creation of a framework in which time and space are used by children and the teacher in order to learn experientially about democracy, equality and solidarity. Moreover, knowledge management and education become a collective process and educational communities organize and coordinate with each other on the basis of democratic participation (Pechtelidis, Kioupkiolis 2020).

Compared to the 'commons', there are specific limits about who can participate in the everyday life of the classroom. The school facilities and specifically the classroom are not public spaces where anyone can get involved. Rather, it already has closed borders. The school's enclosure and the refusal to open it to the community resembles the closedness of the Ostromic logic's model of community which Kioupkiolis (2019, 44) considers a threat to egalitarian democracy, i.e., Ostromic logic which she realizes 'commons' 'as *an imagined 'ideal' of closely knit, homogeneous community that (…) erect(s) walls around' children.*It is imperative that learning transcends the individual teacher and the school walls, bridging the enclosed world of the classroom, with the community and in commons space, for children to gain experience participating in society (Burton 2021).

At school, no matter how much time we spend together, usually, there is no homogeneity –in the sense of community– beyond the age of the children. Some students –usually with higher cultural capital– compete with each other in the classroom in order to educate themselves and meet their own needs or else to… 'secure more fish than the rest'. At the same time other students –usually with lower cultural capital– express indifference for the educational process. Competition and emotional resignation are elements that they are developed within the schools.

The educational process is conducted for a small group. Those who possess the language codes and cultural capital to cope better (Blackledge & Hunt 2019). Thus, social inequalities are maintained and reproduced because some children have the capacity to act more, to make group decisions more easily than some other group members who are physically present and mentally absent at the same time. Some children may be in the same classroom every day and have the exact same teacher, but inequalities persist among them.

Finally, the issue of compulsory attendance in school is opposed to the voluntary participation that is usual in "commons". In every school are involved some children who, based on their age and their location are obliged to be present. It is therefore a legal obligation for parents or guardians to ensure that their child

attends the school in their area. A child cannot be excluded because he or she does not follow the rules of the school classroom. However, an effort is made to learn the rules and to be adjusted to the school context.

Classroom is understood as a defined space that is used within a certain time frame. It is a space where knowledge is reproduced, transmitted, and potentially constructed. In the classroom, relationships are formed, values are internalized, skills are practiced and sometimes meaning is produced for the participants. 'When students and teachers gather in the classroom, they gather in order to place something in attentive focus – in order to put something on the table' (Masschelein, Simons 2015, 88).

In school life there is a strong focus on predetermined educational objectives, which can lead both teachers and students to overlook the fact that learning occurs as a result of interactions with each other. The logic of learning goals and school textbooks gives teachers and students the impression that they know where they are when in fact they are under illusions (Kolesnik 1974). Learning methods become visible as a 'technical-professional' approach by treating a course that instead of being an opportunity to promote lived experiences of democracy, it is promoted as a means of acquiring specific global knowledge.

The classroom fosters a passive attitude in the children, who are obliged to be glued to their chairs throughout the lesson and are otherwise disrespected, punished or reprimanded. Children do not participate actively and equally in the learning process; they do not decide on key issues in relation to the planning and course of instruction and above all, they do not have a say on the basic meaning and importance of their education.

The actions that take place in the school environment are often done through coercion and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, Passeron 2018). This violence stems from the structure of a certain enclosed social situation, that of the classroom. The structural symbolic violence of formal education is imposed through socialization the arbitrary cultural constants, the codes of thought and perception, of the

dominant bourgeoisie on all children, aiming at their indirect subjugation and control (Pechtelidis 2020).

The nature of the educational process itself is hierarchical which limits the possibilities for pedagogical subjects to develop meaningful relationships with each other (see Figure 1). Formal education is structured hierarchically, since the perspectives, beliefs and behaviors of some people –especially that of adults– are valued. On the other hand, those of children –particularly children who deviate from the 'ideal' child classified with 'appropriate' developmental stage– are ignored.

Consequently, in the traditional conception of education, the teacher is the one who decides what happens in the classroom/potential common to a large extent. Of course, this does not exclude institutions, textbooks and people who act as levers to pressure the teacher in a certain direction.
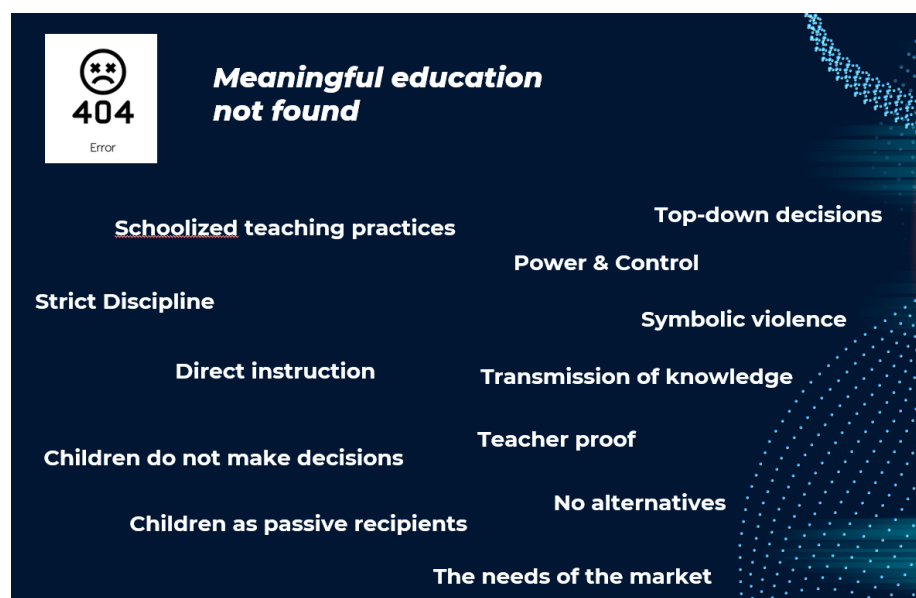

Figure 1

In these terms, exploiting the common requires action by the subjects. That is, their participation and involvement in the processes of maintenance and development of the common resource. The existence of subjects without meaningful participation does not imply their action.

Pedagogical Practices of the commons

The last decade in Greece there has been an obsession with skills in the educational process to prepare children for the labor market. While many of the skills are useful, they are tools to promote political and economic agendas as well as future profit in the market. In particular:

- *Problem solving;* for future problems of the market
- *Collaboration;* for personal interest and not for solidarity
- *Creativity;* for innovation and entrepreneurship
- *Critical thinking;* without political thinking & ideology
- *Communication;* for manipulation and imposing someone's perception

The teacher in the logic of the 'commons' does not seek to educate heteronomous and disposable consumers, but to help children become autonomous and responsible. For this reason, he/she uses collaborative and interactive practices for a more democratic experience of school life.

In the effort towards this goal, self-organization is the most important skill for both individuals and the group. However, 'teaching' self-organization becomes, in a sense, paradoxical. As Rau & Koch-Gonzalez (2018, 24) state:

'We want groups to decide how to self-organize. Isn't it ironic to tell individuals how to self-organize? I wonder how we can help and share our experiences without imposing an established framework?'

In the figure below (figure 2), an attempt is made to categorize the 'pedagogical practices of the commons' into four themes. I support that all of them have political and pedagogical value and they can contribute to different aspects of community in school life.

Practices discussed are only those that address issues of knowledge and learning as well as issues of governance (Pantazidis 2020; 2021). The rest of the issues refer to communication and the identification of needs. Specifically, all 'pedagogical practices of the commons' can contribute dynamically not only to formal instructional interactions, but also to the parameters of the hidden curriculum, i.e., to intractable issues of dependency relations that significantly

impact the rules, routines, and coordination of the classroom. These are introduced in Figure 2 and below:

- Co-creation of knowledge: *how we collectively create knowledge*

- Peer learning: *how we promote children's self-organization in learning*

- Children's assemblies: *how we decide with children*

- Peer responsibility: *how we share power with children*

- Peer dialogue: *how we communicate with children on an equal footing*

- Conflict resolution: *how we find a peaceful solution to a disagreement*

- Active Listening: *how we listen and respond improving mutual understanding*

- Pedagogical Documentation: *how we observe and take advantage of children's interests* (Pantazidis, 2020· 2021· forthcoming).
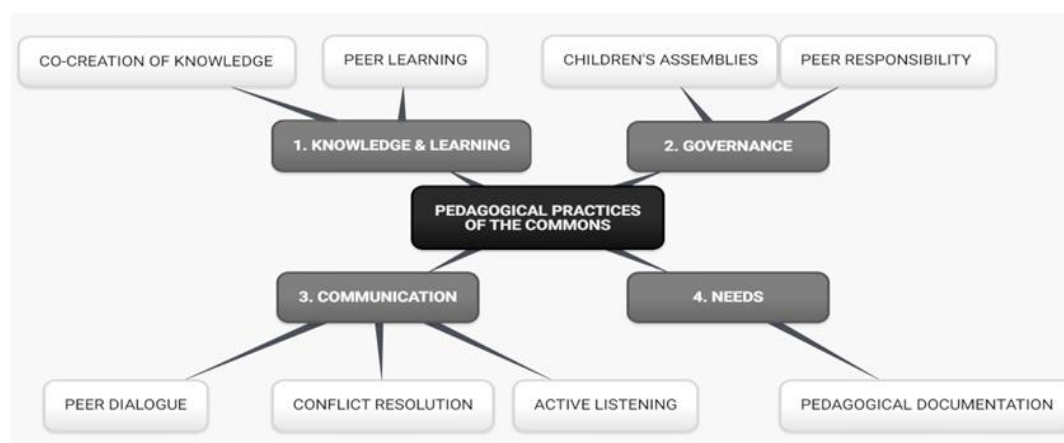
Figure 2

'Peer dialogue' is primarily concerned with the more equal relationship between children and the teacher. It can also be characterized as an applied Sociology of Childhood. Meaning, how we perceive children and childhood as a process of strengthening voice of children and, to a great extent, as a tool for listening and talking to children as equal citizens without belittling them.

'Assemblies of children' focuses more on the children's relationships. Moreover, it is a practice of recognizing, strengthening, and practicing children's intentional action, and fundamental ways of collective decision-making and democratic citizenship of communities. Moreover, it challenges dominant perceptions and ideas about children's inability to make political decisions and recognizes their

right to participate in public life on their own terms. In particular, the idea of the participating child brings to the surface political dimensions of the concept of proactivity (Wyness 2018). Children are treated more equally by teachers and take part in co-decision processes to address school issues, from everyday dilemmas to philosophical issues.

Regarding issues of 'peer learning', it is important to underline that in neither case knowledge is primarily transferred from the teacher to the children in formal teaching but is structured from below and treated as an opportunity for self-organization, exploration, collaboration, sharing and harmonious coexistence. In this practice, there is no need to change the content of knowledge, but to approach it in alternative ways.

In 'co-creation of knowledge', school textbooks can be used as a folder of themes, a compass for selecting topics, in which knowledge can be identified, recorded, interpreted, presented, and evaluated by groups of children. The reason for separating knowledge issues (necessary and interesting) in this way is not to create a hierarchy between them but to highlight the pedagogical practices by which they can be approached.

It should be stressed at this point that the connection between school knowledge and power, i.e., the curriculum as an ideological practice (Whitty 2012), is not overlooked. Furthermore, the existence of the school institution leads in explicit and implicit ways to defined patterns of behavior, while requiring the participating subjects to 'master' the school material (knowledge) without further intention of critical negotiation. The proposed alternative educational practices of the 'commons' promote social change, can redefine power and intervene in issues of knowledge and pedagogical relations (see Pachtelidis 2020).

Critical Pedagogy & the Commons

What distinguishes an educational activity from other practices is that it is motivated by predetermined goals of 'other' people, not the learner. In

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other words, it is a process by which the students become subject to the guidance of other people rather than doing something based on their own initiative.

The goal of Critical Education deriving from Marxist theory is to eliminate the imposition of the dominant class ideology on the working class. It also prepares individuals for economic and social change. The teacher is not there to provide knowledge, which his/her students will passively receive. For Critical Pedagogy the school is a context in which teachers and students co-construct knowledge.
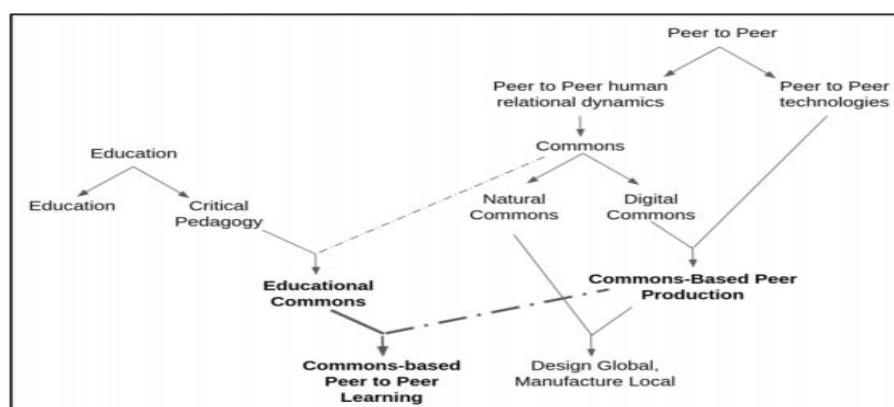
Figure 3

Ultimately, what is the correlation between Critical Pedagogy and educational commons? We can distinguish two different positions regarding this relationship. The first, advocates the entry of the educational commons into Critical Pedagogy, while the second, acknowledges the influences of Critical Pedagogy. However, fundamental differences appear between Critical Pedagogy and educational commons.

In his PhD thesis, Pantazis (2020) designed a diagram to depict the above relationship. Educational commons are presented as a subcategory of Critical Pedagogy (Figure 3). '*Freire proposes that traditional education, in which students are considered a blank board, should be demolished and subsidized by democratic education, in which students would have a voice, and teachers would also learn from them. In these logics peers (students and teacher) exchange knowledge under different forms of coordination based on openness and autonomy. Gradually, one-way learning is replaced by a richer interaction between peers. In this way, each person operates not only as a passive receiver but, depending on the circumstances,*

shifts from learner to teacher, chooses from a multitude of stimuli, integrate or reject knowledge and skills, chooses learning groups and partners, and shares knowledge in personal, unique ways' (Pantazis 2020).

In his article entitled *'Towards an elaboration of the pedagogical common'*, Bourassa (2017), following a critical pedagogical trajectory, supports that schooling is a key space of conflict wherein the struggle over knowledge and democracy unfolds. The school is essentially a mirror of the political struggle over the ownership of the hearts and minds of its citizens.

A diametrically opposed view was expressed by Koorsgaard (2019) in his paper *'Education and the concept of commons. A pedagogical reinterpretation'.* Korsgaard proposes 'to reclaim the school as a common space of study where we make things together, rather than as a political project or a means of struggle against capitalism' (2019, 6). To differentiate my position here, it should be mentioned that education is inescapably connected with politics as it is involved in the struggle between commoning and enclosures and it is relevant to the significant question of what kind of society we want (Means et al. 2017).

Pechtelidis and Kioupkiolis (2020), in '*Education as Commons, Children as Commoners: The Case Study of the Little Tree Community'* argue that educational commons derive elements from many educational approaches, Critical Pedagogy is among them. However, they have some objections about this correlation. Specifically, they support that, we cannot promote the 'commons' in the sense of imposing it in a context:

'(...) *the aim of [critical] education is to emancipate students from oppressive practices and structures in the name of social justice, equality, and freedom. Therefore, in the critical pedagogy tradition, it is imperative to provide children with a critical understanding of the workings of power. Only when people grasp how power operates can they question its influence and, in a sense, liberate themselves from it. This line of thought conveys the impression that emancipation can only be attained from a position which is not influenced by the workings of power. It echoes*

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the Marxist notions of 'ideology' and 'false consciousness' and Bourdieu's notion of 'misrecognition'.' (Pechtelidis, Kioupkiolis 2020).

Furthermore, they adopt Rancière's approach to emancipation instead of Freire's. This emancipation reinforces a dependence on 'truth' which is revealed to the people by the emancipator (Pechtelidis, Kioupkiolis, 2020). According to Biesta (2010), this is a pedagogy in which the teacher is the one who holds the knowledge, and it is the task of explaining the world to the students belongs to the teacher while it is the student's objective to ultimately become as knowledgeable as the teacher. Although emancipation is oriented toward equality, independence, and freedom, it actually installs dependency at the very heart of the act of emancipation (Biesta 2010). This is a similar paradox to the one that was raised in the beginning of this paper concerning how to tell individuals to self-organize.

In his book 'The Ignorant Schoolmaster', Rancière (2003) supports that those educational practices animated by this logic of emancipation result in stultification rather than in emancipation. Besides, he claims 'where one searches for the hidden beneath the apparent, a position of mastery is established' (Rancière 2010, 49).

Conclusion

This paper has tried to present educational commons that involves alternative ways of participating in the school context. Even if there are many divergencies between educational commons and Critical Pedagogy, especially in the ways of perception and application of emancipation. Both struggle against policies of neoliberalism and neoconservatism. Moreover, Critical Pedagogy can operate as a foundation for thinking about deeper political and social aspirations.

Educational commons coupled with their Pedagogical Practices promote the idea that educational change can start from below, at the microlevel. Causing a radical change in the dominant concepts such as school, learning, teacher, children as students, childhood. This shift can contribute to the creation and reproduction of

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a different reality which can operate against orthodox thinking, dogmatism of knowledge, standardized learning, the omniscient teacher, the child as a passive recipient and the hegemony of 'no alternative' in education.

When it comes to a systemic change in education policy, these logics and practices not only strengthens the school context as a common(s) in the here and now, but also, they give structural support for commoning in the future (Bollier, Helfrich 2019). Creating small, independent projects that embrace democratic fellowship and ethical practice equates to steps to wider educational change. To conclude, the future dimensions of this paper can be summarized as follows: 'we cannot wait 'for a sudden revolutionary rupture' to call us to transform education, but that transitional practices must be initiated, bringing with them hope, ideas, and new learning and releasing the imagination of what could be' (Fielding, Moss 2010, 149).

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Ideological perspectives and discourses in the language curriculum for secondary education: a critical approach

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Abstract

The purpose of the present research is to study the character of the 2011 Curriculum of Modern Greek Language in High School utilizing tools of Critical Discourse Analysis. In particular, in this paper we firstly attempt to analyze the Discourses that coexist in the Curriculum and that are associated with the nature of language learning and teaching, the pedagogical practices the Curriculum suggests and the teachers' and students' identities it promotes and secondly the planning perspectives which are included in the Curriculum. Based on the analysis we are able to detect Critical Literacy and Multiliteracies Discourses as well as Communicative and Genre-based ones. Regarding its planning perspectives, although not explicitly stated, the curriculum draws elements mainly from the perspectives of social efficiency and child-centered approach, which are in line with the perspectives of genre-based and communicative approaches.

Keywords: Curriculum, Discourses, Functional and Critical Literacy, Multiliteracies, Perspectives on Curriculum Planning.

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Introduction

The syllabus or curriculum, as usual in recent years, is a set of social and cultural practices and ideologies (Aronowitz, Giroux 2010) which harmonizes with the official state ideology for the content and purposes of education, registers ideological assumptions and choices of social nature (Kavvadias 2000), and shapes the identity of the citizens of the future (Apple 1990). Therefore, the issue of curriculum planning is one of the most important in pedagogy and education (Grollios 2016).

According to Critical Discourse Analysis (in the following CDA), education is a social practice, and the curriculum belongs to the educational institutional discourse (Roberts 2011; Fairclough 2014; Mayr 2015). In line with Fairclough (1991, 22), discourse is "language as a form of social practice", while "discourses are ways of representing aspects of the world … Different discourses are different perspectives on the world" (2003, 14). The distinction between discourse with lower case d and Discourse with capital D is Gee's (2005, 26) proposal: "Such socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting, … I will refer to as "Discourses", with a capital "D". … I will reserve the word "discourse", with a little "d", to mean language-in-use …. Big "D" Discourses are always language plus "other stuff".

From this point of view, the Curriculum will be treated as an ideological text that, with its choices expresses the language teaching Discourses that coexist in it, as well as its planning perspectives. Language teaching Discourses (such as Discourses of functional literacy of Communicative and Genre-based approaches, Critical Literacy and Multiliteracies Discourses) are knowledge about what it means to teach a language at a specific time and in a specific place (Koutsogiannis 2010). The term 'perspectives on curriculum planning' refers to specific ways of viewing curricula (such as the child–centered perspective, the perspective of social efficiency, of social reconstruction and Freire's liberatory perspective), which are not ideologically neutral (Grollios 2019).

Theoretical framework: Discourses and planning perspectives in the language curriculum

The theoretical framework of our research is based on the concept of literacy. The conventional concept of literacy as a neutral set of linguistic macro-skills (reading-writing) that can be used independently of social contexts is inconsistent with the cultural diversity and variety of literacies in the modern globalized social landscape. Although literacy is a charged word associated with a variety of concepts and ideologies and not easily and clearly defined (Baynham 2002, 16), reference will be made to the concepts of functional literacy, critical literacy and multiliteracies, which are key concepts in our research.

According to Unesco, functional literacy "refers to the capacity of a person to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development".[1] Critical literacy is conceived "as the capacity to participate as an active citizen in a democracy, to critique institutional practice, to claim rights and to challenge power structures" (Unesco 2003, 9).[2]

Multiliteracies is a broader concept of literacy based on the assumption that "individuals 'read' the world and make sense of information by means other than traditional reading and writing. These multiple literacies include linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, and gestural ways of meaning-making. Central to the concept of multiple literacies is the belief that individuals in a modern society need to learn how to construct knowledge from multiple sources and modes of representation" (Seel 2012 in Unesco glossary).[3] According to the programmatic manifesto of New London Group (1996), which proposed this term, the word "multiliteracies" was chosen in order to include two important changes in the modern globalized societies: the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity (plurality of discourses and texts that circulate) and the multiplicity of communication channels and

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[1] http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/functional-literacy
[2] https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000131817
[3] http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/m/multiple-literacies

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media (variety of text forms), which relates to the multiplicity of significant modes of meaning-making (textual, visual, audio, gestural, spatial, multimodal). (New London Group 1996; Cope, Kalantzis 2009; Mills 2009).

The theoretical framework is also based on curriculum planning. The concept of curriculum planning refers to "a process of organization and synthesis of its structural elements ", i.e., the aims, its content, the way of teaching (i.e., the method and form of teaching), as well as the procedures and forms of evaluation which promotes. This process is implemented by specific subjects individually and/or collectively (Grollios 2016). The term curriculum planning perspective refers to a "specific way of theoretical and practical approach to the issue of its design" (Grollios 2011, 25; 2016). It refers to positions that concern the process, i.e., the succession of the phases of the design, the subjects that determine it and the necessary structural elements of the syllabus "that are chosen to be used. It is "a set of positions that are intertwined with each other which are not ideologically and politically neutral" (Grollios 2019). The perspectives we will examine in our research are the child–centered perspective, Dewey's liberal progressive perspective, the perspective of social efficiency, of social reconstruction, and the perspective of the Pedagogy of/for Liberation by Paulo Freire.[4]

The term child–centered perspective has a variety of meanings and versions. The child-centered views of Stanley Hall based curriculum content on children's impulses in order to promote their physical development. He also advocated curriculum differentiation based on children's mental and genetic characteristics without questioning the social wealth hierarchy. In this paper, the term at the level of teaching purposes and methods will be used based on the emphasis given to the needs and experiences of students and their placement at the center of the educational process.

The political purpose of Dewey's liberal progressive perspective was social and political reform that would lead to a society of economic stability and prosperity with more democracy and social justice without socio-political conflicts. The

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[4] For a detailed presentation of curriculum planning perspectives, see Grollios 2005, 2011.

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educational purpose of Dewey's liberal progressive perspective was that students would be able to adjust to existing social functions and to participate actively in the community in order to reform society by changing themselves with education, science and technology.

The primary purpose of the perspective of social efficiency, as established by Bobbit and developed with Tyler's model and Bloom's classification of teaching objectives, is to cultivate skills and values in order for students to adapt to the functions of society. This means that in social efficiency, education aims to maintain the existing social order.

The main goal of the perspective of social reconstruction is to change the world on the basis of equality of all people. It aims at exploring social relations and solving social problems in the direction of building a new culture with proper distribution of cultural capital to all children and their equal access to knowledge. In contrast with Dewey's perspective there was interest in social conflicts and solving social problems. However, the political purpose of this perspective was not expanded to the abolition of relations of domination.

Despite their differences these perspectives belong to a diverse movement, progressive education, and have two points in common: they were opposed to traditional education, and they did not aim at radical social change. On the other hand, more radical than the perspective of social reconstruction is Freire's pedagogy of/for Liberation. According to this perspective, the aim of education is the radical socio-political and educational transformation.[5] As we will show below, these perspectives are related to different concepts of literacy based on their goals for students and society.

The purpose of the research

In this light, the purpose of the present research is to study the character of the 2011 Curriculum of Modern Greek Language in High School. Approaching the

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[5] Grollios 2019.

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curriculum as an official scientific pedagogical and ideological text we will firstly attempt to analyze the Discourses–perspectives that coexist in it and that are associated with the nature of language teaching and learning, the pedagogical practices the Curriculum suggests and the teachers' and students' identities it promotes and secondly the planning perspectives which are included.

Corpus and methodology of the research

The corpus of the research

The corpus of our research is the text of the Curriculum of Modern Greek Language in high school, prepared by the Pedagogical Institute in 2011 in the framework of the implementation of the act "New School" NSRF (National Strategic Reference Framework) 2007-2013. The Curriculum in the first part consists of a short introductory text and four chapters: aims and objectives, content, methodology and evaluation, while the second part describes the expected learning outcomes, the main topics/text genres, the activities, and the suggested educational material in four columns for each skill (comprehension and production of oral and written texts).

The methodological tools

The present study is qualitative research which utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Therefore, in order to answer the research questions, a critical investigation of the structural elements of the Curriculum will be attempted utilizing relevant quotations of its authors in combination with a quantitative recording of the relevant terminology. This means that the Curriculum will be treated as an ideological text that, with its choices (strategies of displaying or silencing terms and concepts, expressive formulations) expresses the position of the editors towards the nature of language learning and teaching, as well as the

teachers' and students' role and identities in it and reflects their perspectives on language teaching practices in its social dimension (Kostouli, Stylianou 2015).

The results of the research

Taking into account that language choices, and more specifically, terminology is an indicator of ideologies (Kostouli, Stylianou 2015), it is noteworthy that there are no references to *Discourses* (representations of reality), while at the same time there is only one reference to *power relations* and one to the *relations of equality and inequality*. Regarding the term *voice-voices* in the sense of ideological perspective, no reference is found, while *multivocality* is found three times in the Curriculum of 2011 and twice in the revised Curriculum of 2014. Regarding *intertextuality* (the dialogue of the text with other texts, text genres) no references are found. We also often come across the term *multimodal (texts, elements, means, ways, discourse, presentation)*: forty times in the curriculum of 2011 and forty-two in the curriculum of 2014. Finally, the term *communication* is repeated very often in both the general and the specific objectives, in contrast with the terms relevant to critical literacy, thus confirming the focus of the curriculum in the cultivation of "communication skills". The search by the word gives one hundred twenty-six results in the curriculum of 2011 and one hundred thirty in the curriculum of 2014.

As we can see in the following quotations, most of the proposed objectives and pedagogical practices refer to the functional literacy of genre-based and communicative approaches, as they mainly focus on the cultivation of linguistic, communicative, and textual skills in a socio-cultural context that is not sufficiently defined and lack their connection with meanings and power relations in various fields of social life (functional literacy of Communicative and Genre-based Discourses).

> *To acquire the necessary skills that enable the comprehension and production of oral and written speech, so that they are able to understand and transmit language messages in a differentiated way depending on the communication situation and the text genres.*
>
> *To master the necessary communication rules of Modern Greek Language, so that they are able to differentiate their speech depending on the communication situation.*

On the other hand, most of the objectives associated with multiliteracies are general, as they are not related to negotiating meanings and ideologies. There is lack of critical investigation of multiliteracies in the sense of critical analysis of the semiotic choices of the author of the texts and consequently of the ideology and power relations reproduced through these choices (functional multiliteracies[6] Discourse).

> *Understand the relationship between visual and verbal literacy in the direction of multimodal literacy.*

Moreover, the objectives related to students' creativity are general and take the world for granted, not as a field for negotiating various power relations:

> "*to become ... creative citizens*"
>
> *The language curriculum... is based on the principles of enhancing innovation and creativity ...*

Although connected with the "process of redesigning, commenting on and evaluating their oral and written speech", they refer to a limited concept of

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6 The term functional multiliteracies is suggested by analogy to the term functional literacy.

creativity, since they include the ability of individuals to "redesign and evaluate their speech", but not to stand critically against codified ways of constructing meanings (functional literacy of Communicative and Genre-based Discourses).

> *The production of oral and written speech is a collaborative and creative process, so that they are able to redesign, comment on and evaluate their speech.*

In addition, in the aims and objectives of the curriculum in both its versions (2011, 2014) the clear references to the relationship between language and ideology (critical literacy Discourse) are limited.

> *… to identify the communication context and the social roles of the participants as well as the social distance/equality/intimacy/solidarity etc.*

Although the curriculum in both its versions (2011; 2014, 14) aims to "act as researchers", in order to "identify the secret messages, … attitudes and ideological elements" of the texts, students appear to explore the critical dimension of language without a clear ideological character and with a superficial connection to social reality (limits of critical and functional literacy Discourse), since "intentions and hidden messages" of the communicators are not related to "power relations", as they appear only once in the whole curriculum.

> *Identify hidden messages, perspectives, attitudes, and ideological elements based on the content and style of oral speech.*

Also, although they are given the opportunity to bring material to class, students do not appear to participate in the co-formation of the thematic units, which are predetermined by the authority of either the teacher with pre-designed scenarios or the textbook. This choice leads to teachers' identities as facilitators and students' identities as followers of pre-designed scenarios.

Educational material: Parts of the teaching scenarios of modern Greek with ICT concerning the comprehension of oral speech.

In this direction lesson plans (scenarios) can be used, which are posted on the internet for the use of teachers.

In relation to its planning perspectives, although not explicitly stated, the necessity of the curriculum in both its versions (2011 and 2014) is founded in the context of social, economic, and political changes on the world stage since the 1990s, as well as in the rapid development of technology, which has brought new practices of expression and communication and not in an evaluation of the previous curriculum, which remains valid, since the new curriculum operates "in addition to the current".

In the 90's there were significant changes on the world stage … with climate change, with globalization, … with the forced movement of populations due to political and religious conflicts, … with the widening of economic inequality. At the same time, technology has created the conditions for an unprecedented communication and exchange of information, products, and services to a huge range of population".

Regarding its objectives and content, the curriculum includes knowledge and skills that will allow students to "move in a working and social environment with increased and changing demands" and socio-political values, such as "democracy and equality of citizens" but without references to social classes, solutions to social problems and change of society (perspective of social efficiency).

School is required to develop in students a range of skills that will allow them to move flexibly and creatively in a working and social environment with increased and changing demands.

As far as methodology is concerned, it includes forms and methods of teaching, which "put the student at the center of the educational process" and aim at exploring the "political, social and ideological dimension of language and its role in shaping the socio-political reality". Moreover, the utilization of students' interests" and "experience, "the coordinating role of the teacher and the use of projects are some other suggested principles. However, the socio-cultural context is not sufficiently defined, while at the same time the interconnection of pedagogical practices with ideologies and power relations in various fields of social life is absent. These methodological principles lead to child–centered perspective, as students are at the center of the educational process and Dewey's liberal progressive perspective, which aims at the change of society without conflicts.

> *The methodological framework in which the curriculum moves is a combination of modern linguistic and pedagogical views, which put the student at the center of the educational process.*
>
> *Elements from the experience of students are used in teaching.*
>
> *The teacher has the role of coordinator and equal interlocutor during teaching and various language activities.*
>
> *The modules designed for the cultivation of literacy have the form of action plans (projects) that utilize and enrich the literacy knowledge of students. …*

Regarding evaluation, as we can see in the following quotations, its feedback role is highlighted as "a means of obtaining information for the reformulation of teaching, pedagogical choices and the curriculum" in order to "improve the learning process". For this reason, "alternative forms of evaluation, such as language portfolio, systematic observation, evaluation through projects and self- and peer evaluation" are suggested (child–centered perspective).

> *Evaluation is a very essential educational process and a means of extracting information for the reformulation of teaching, teaching and pedagogical choices and the curriculum.*
>
> *In this direction, alternative forms of evaluation such as: the language portfolio, systematic observation, evaluation through projects and self- and peer evaluation seem to serve more effectively the new framework for language teaching/learning.*

However, the control of "achievement of the didactic and pedagogical goals and the effectiveness of the curriculum" prevails, as there are no procedures for co-formulation of evaluation criteria by students and teachers and for reflecting on culture and power relations in and outside the classroom (perspective of social efficiency).

> *The final or summative evaluation allows the expression of an overall judgment on the degree of achievement of the didactic and pedagogical objectives and on the effectiveness of the curriculum.*

Finally, regarding the teachers' role in curriculum planning, it should be noted that its design was implemented by a team of experts without the substantial participation of teachers and students. Furthermore, the role of teachers in the determination of teaching methods is degraded because the methods were designed based on the objectives by a committee of experts and not by the teachers. Although they are given the opportunity to intervene "in the content and the method of teaching", i.e., in the selection of texts and activities, their interventions must be in line with the objectives set by experts, which leads to the perspective of social efficiency.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the curriculum in both its versions (2011 and 2014) is polyvocal, as, based on the analysis, we are able to detect Critical Literacy and Multiliteracies

Discourses as well as Communicative and Genre-based ones. Most of the proposed objectives and pedagogical practices refer to the functional literacy of genre-based and communicative approaches, as they mainly focus on the cultivation of linguistic, communicative, and textual skills in a socio-cultural context that is not sufficiently defined and thus leading to "a dry or school-type version of critical literacy" (Kostouli, Stylianou 2015). In addition, with regard to multiliteracies, most formulations in the curriculum are general, as they are not related to negotiating meanings and ideologies (Papadimitriou 2010, 22-24; Fista, Papadimitriou, Fista 2015). Communicative and genre-based approaches contribute to shaping teachers' identities as facilitators of a number of linguistic and communicative objectives, while students, although cooperating with each other and their teachers, follow the pre-designed scenario in order to acquire the skill of being sufficient language users in order to communicate effectively according to the communication circumstances in a neutral world. Regarding its planning perspectives, although not explicitly stated, the curriculum in both its versions (2011 and 2014) is polyvocal, since it draws elements mainly from the perspectives of social efficiency and child-centered approach. These perspectives are in line with the perspectives of genre-based and communicative approaches, as the linguistic objective of "effective communication" functions as a necessary condition of "moving in a demanding working and social environment". At its core, however, the perspective of social efficiency is dominant and, as shown by the investigation of its structural components, it aims at maintaining the existing organization of society and the adaptation of individuals to it (Grollios 2011: 121, 134-135) rather than transforming society or shaping critically conscious citizens as Freire argues (Grollios 2005, 269). So, although it would be expected to represent the perspective of social reconstruction, because it is critical literacy oriented, as stated in the introduction, in reality this is not exactly the case. It can be characterized as a limited version of critical literacy, since a critical literacy curriculum aims not only at exploring social relationships, but at solving social

problems as well for the ultimate purpose of changing society (Grollios 2011, 156; Kostouli, Stylianou 2015).

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Capitalism in academic environment: micro evidence from sociology discipline of Khulna University

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Abstract

Capitalism in the academic environment implies the reflection of capitalist nature in a classroom which forces students to drop out of the institute. Addressing this literature gap this study aims to seek "why and how students at the tertiary stage chosen to drop out?" and how different groups used to form within a classroom where each of the members of this level used to enter via public examination with nearly similar IQ. Using the participatory observation technique, the researcher has explored four steps to do a dropout. Findings show that students from well-off families generally take part in leadership activities and act like a classroom elite who used to be followed by most of the students in the class. Again, with a time dimension based on some similar characteristic, several sub-groups have been raised and as soon as the group consciousness has been raised then the domination of the leading group has increased. Side by side, a deviant group has been raised who did not like to follow the command of the academic elite and are gradually being alienated from the class. Overall, through this study, the researcher would like to portray an image of tertiary-level literary culture in a capitalist society that needs to improve.

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Introduction

Due to the fact that a sizable number of students leave the academic environment each year, research on the reasoning and consequences of academic abandonment has gained prominence since the postmodern era's commencement. Around two million students, for example, according to the US Department of Education, left the classroom alone in 2020 owing to the global trend of academic abandonment, which has seen a reduction in the percentage of students aged 16 to 24 from 7.4 percent in 2010 to 5.3 percent in 2020 (IES 2022). It was also evident that the male dropout rate was higher than female students (IES 2022). In some cases, the scenario could be different like teen parenthood where a higher dropout rate has exampled in Chile among teen mothers than among teen fathers (Salinas, Jorquera-Samter 2021).

The situation might be critical in developing nations like Bangladesh. For example, 15% of higher secondary students' abandonment has been addressed in the latest report of UNICEF Bangladesh (2020). Similarly, about a decade ago Islam and Pavel (2011) reported a 21.4% to 40% dropout rate at the undergraduate level, to date which might same, no latest report has been found in this regard. Thereafter, exploring the negative consequences several scholars (i.e., Ghignoni, Croce, d'Ambrosio 2019; Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, Palma 2009) have highlighted lower employment outcome results of dropping out. Due to this circumstance, it is difficult to achieve SDG 4 and the aim of inclusion in education.

Why do students leave academia? Since the modern era, scholars have placed emphasis on various facts and reasoning from different points of view in an effort to find an answer to this ubiquitous problem. For instance, using problem dimension reasoning Cope and Hewitt (1969) have tried to present the typology of dropout. Their classification was consisted of 'selective expulsion' or 'self-

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selection out', the student believes he was not for this environment and the student decides to move out, which also linked with 'cosmopolitans' that represents failing to keep pace with the existing norm of the institute (Cope, Hewitt 1969). "A feeling of being lost at the University because it is so big and impersonal" was the primary hypothesis of Cope and Hewitt (1969) to understand the motivation of abandoning academia but doubt "to what extend this feeling happens in student's mind" remains vague which will be the key argument of this paper.

Howsoever, Cope and Hewitt's (1969) explanation and the typology of the rejection of the conventional academic life have not been as clear as Ogresta, Rezo, Kožljan, Paré, and Ajduković (2021). Browning's idea from earlier researchers (e.g., Bowers, Sprott 2012; Fortin, Marcotte, Potvin, Royer, Joly 2006; Freeman, Simonsen 2015; Kronick, Hargis 1998; McDermott, Anderson, Zaff 2018; McDermott, Donlan, Zaff 2019; Ogresta et al. 2021) have highlighted simply four types of drop outers such as the poor academic achievers, the quiet drop outer or those who have physical or psychological problems adjusting in the academic environment, the maladjusted drop outer or that who doesn't like to follow academic rules, and the stressed drop outer or that who has experienced a sudden extreme event in life. Such an analogy indicates that failing to structural adjustment used to be the key reason for this dropout.

In another way, dominating scholarship (e.g., Godor 2017; Mann 2001; Nicoletti (2019; Ogresta et al. 2021; Tinto 1975, 1988) implies academic departure as a voluntary or rational action of an individual through omitting institutional responsibility or liabilities. For instance, Tinto (1975, 9) using Durkheim's suicide model, particularly 'egotistical' suicide, justified the student's dropout by blaming students 'malintegration' that he defines as "one's holding values highly divergent from those of the social collectivity" and "insufficient personal interaction with other members of the collectivity". But why the student fails to integrate with their institution remains unanswered. To do so, revoking Tinto's idea and linking it with Spady (1971), Godor (2017) tried to justify the system of academic abandonment

again by using Durkheim's suicide model where he found the institutional fatalistic reason for drop-out.

Here, Spady (1971) believed that academic departure depends on relations between pupils' ''dispositions, interests, attitudes, and skills'' and ''influences, expectations, and demands from a variety of sources including courses, faculty members, administrators, and peers'' (p. 77). He further asserted if there have insufficient friendship support from the academic community and then the ties with the social system would be broken (Spady, 1971). Nevertheless, emphasizing the functional point of view, each of these endowments has ignored their foci on structural attributes that could guide us to answer "how the academic departure happens?", "how different student groups formed and play a different role in the same place to faculty members, and administrators?".

This study aims to present old scholarship with new evidence to seek the logical ground for such questions. Doing so, an exploration of the characteristics of "Capitalism in Academic Environment" (tertiary level) is presented built upon the Marxist theory of education. And to construct a more suitable analogy for student departure some ideas of neo-Marxists scholars have also been presented with a micro-level example. Unlike "Academic Capitalism", a post-modern concept that argues the way of production and reproduction of knowledge according to new market needs and generates revenue (Münch 2020), this study postulates "Capitalism in Academic Environment" as the practice of typical capitalism in the classroom environment which generates class differences in existing academic structure. In line with this perception, the conclusion of this study would be designed.

Conceptual Model

The "Marxist Theory of Education" views conventional education and the institutional structure as an important element of the capitalist superstructure that serves to replicate and legitimize (rationalize) the class disparities to develop

in the economic foundation of all capitalist societies (Anyon 2011; Hill 2018). To justify society while Marx has portrayed a big image of the capitalist education system in this study, the capitalist approach would be exemplified at a micro level. Besides, the term "Alienation" would also be used metaphorically for this study to characterize the academic departure.

In a direction with this view, further, the arguments of Althusser (1971), and Bowles and Gintis (2003), prominent Marxist scholars, can assist to explain the scenario in a better way. According to them education system is an "ideological state apparatus" that reproduces class inequality, legitimizes class inequality, and works in the interests of capitalist employers (Althusser 1971; Bowles, Gintis 2003). The 'myth of meritocracy, a way of feeling that everyone is equal and each one able to do better according to their effort and ability (Althusser 1971), could be another important term for this study to draw conclusions. Side by side, Bowles, and Gintis (2003) have also criticized the educational structure as "Passive subservience", "Acceptance of hierarchy", and "Motivation by external rewards" which could lead us to explain the process of dropout.

Again, for this study, Paulo Freire's ideas, another Marxist thinker, could help the researcher to draw the existing tertiary educational structure critically. Though Freire (1970) in Pedagogy of the Oppressed has critically examined the teacher-student relationship, which was not this study's aim, rather this study lines up examining the student-student relationship. To do so, Freire's (1970) idea of a "culture of silence" could be useful for justification of the characteristics of rich and poor students.

Methodology

Following the qualitative approach, the primary data have been collected through a participatory observatory method from the Sociology discipline of Khulna University, Bangladesh. The subject of this study was a batch of Sociology Discipline identified as the '14 Batch', in Khulna University each batch of students

was identified according to their admitting year, which consisted of 50 students but finally, 31 students were able to receive a degree. The pupils who have succeeded through a public selection examination process and are given a chance based only on their merit and not on their age or any other factor comprise the unit of analysis for this study.

The observation process happened from April 2014 to June 2018 where the first author, being a student observed his classmate's activities without interrupting. Whereas the second author playing a supervisory role has guided the first author. To capture real images none of the members of the batch have been informed about this study. During the observation, an observatory diary was maintained by the first author after discussing with the second author of this study addressing the question "who does what?". The findings of this study have been summarized into four sub-themes. Under these sub-themes, the whole student's activities have been presented and justified without revealing any student's identity.

Capitalism in classroom environment

Observation 1- raise of elite

The findings of this study show that in the first semester all students emphasized knowledge and resource accumulation to adjust to the new academic atmosphere. To do this, each of the students has tried to maintain their connection with more experienced people like seniors of that discipline and tried to access the external networks. Those who failed to maintain a connection with seniors have tried to maintain a connection with those classmates who have a strong connection with seniors. Academic achievements and exposure largely depend on such connections, and initially, the recognition of the classroom elite depended on these academic achievements. In a similar vein, academic achievements rely on a strong student-teacher connection which has been found important to hold the most elite posting in the classroom environment.

It has been found that students from strong economic and political background were able to grab more attention from senior and academic staff with low efforts. Besides, in another observation, it was seen that spending time with the seniors who have higher academic achievement was another way to improve connections and accumulate resources. Though in the very initial days each of the fresher's somehow connected with seniors and academic staff, students from weak economic backgrounds had used this connection to get a part-time job and some monetary benefits instead of intending to be elite as well as a classroom leader.

Two important personality traits were also observed to belong to elite and classroom leaders, such as outfit style and the ability to express feelings in front of academicians at the first attempt. It had been observed that students from well-off families and/or village elite families, who had experienced the big city life and had schooling in famous colleges were in an advanced position in terms of fashion and outfit selection than those who came from villages or small towns having relatively poor knowledge about big city life and economically weak family background. The economic background has guided the student to be extroverted or introverted in the classroom.

The findings of this study show that within a few days in the academic arena students with the above-mentioned characteristics used to act as a role model in the classroom environment. At this point, it has been observed that a group of students with the elitist posture used to form a subgroup in the very initial days. For each decision made they supported one another, and the class leader was also chosen by them. In such a manner, group consciousness is raised in the classroom atmosphere where each of the groups became aware of their position and the value of their opinion in the classroom.

Observation 2- Group consciousness

By the end of the second semester of the first academic year, seven subgroups have been observed in the class, but the group recognition happened at the

beginning of the second academic year. The list of groups and their characteristics have been sorted in the following Table 1.

Through observation it had been found that most of the group members have similar characteristics in terms of family economic status; past-living and schooling status; the need for a Part-time job for the fulfillment of graduation; relation with seniors; communication with academician/s; spending time between and after class in campus area; extrovert/introvert gesture; participation in lecture and academic affairs; participation in co-curricular activities; religious customary consciousness; career consciousness; interest in the inter-personal affair. The number of group members was not constant.

Usually, the group consciousness starts after the first academic year's results publication. Each group is now aware of their position in the class and is ready to advance academically in the following years. For example, most of the members of Group-A had cut short a brilliant result in the first academic year and had continued to the next coming years. Whereas Group C, D, and E have had average results in their whole academic seasons. Very little mobility was observed in these positions. Each group member was straggling to hold their positions for the whole academic season.

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Table 1: *List of the group according to various social features*

Groups	Feature													
	Family Economic status	Past-living and schooling status	Need for Part-time job for fulfillment of graduation	Relation with senior	Communication with academician/s	Spend time between and after class in campus area	Extrovert/ Introvert gesture	Participation in lecture and academic affairs	Participation in co-curricular activities	Religious customary consciousness	Career consciousness	Interest in inter-personal affair
Group-A	Well off	Almost same	Not at all	Strong	Active	Regular	Extrovert	Active	Active	Less conscious	Passive	Strong
Group-B	Well off	Almost same	Not at all	Weak	Weak	Not at all	Both	Passive	Not interested	Did not care	Not interested	Not interested
Group-C	Well off	Almost same	Mixed	Moderate	Moderate	Rarely	Introvert	Mixed	Passive	Highly conscious	Active	Not interested
Group-D	Well off	Mixed	Needed	Strong	Strong	Rarely	Extrovert	Active	Passive	Less conscious	Active	A little bit
Group-E	Neither well off nor ill-off	Mixed	Strongly needed	Strong	Weak	Rarely	Introvert	Passive	Event specifically active	Less conscious	Active	Not interested
Group-F	Ill-off	Almost same	Badly needed	Moderate	Weak	Rarely	Introvert	Passive	Not interested	Highly conscious	Active	Not interested
Group-G	Ill-off	Almost same	Badly needed	Strong	Relatively weak	Rarely	Introvert	Passive	Not interested	Less conscious	Passive	Not interested

(Observatory Note, 2014-2018)

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Observation 3- Group performance and domination

It was found that after being conscious about their belonging groups each of the students has played their role perfectly. For instance, most of the Group-A members have recognized themselves as classroom elites due to having excellent academic results with the good support of seniors and the trust of academicians. Thereafter, the critical discussions and classroom policies were generally influenced by most of the members of this group. Likewise, the member of the rest of the groups used to follow their order. Overall, the discussion flow generally happens from Group A to Group G and the obedience flow happened from Group G to Group-A.

At this point, it had been observed that at the very initial stage of the "group consciousness" most of the members, except Group-A, used to believe that members of Group-A were better at any discussion-making, monetary affairs, and other student affairs. While it was also observed that most of the discussions taken by the members of Group-A have protected the Group-A members' interest instead of protecting the majority's interest.

Between the second and third years, most of the students in the class realized the group domination process but they were not raising their voices against them due to having the teacher's support. Observing some conflict, it has been found that some students from the Group C, D, and E have raised their voices against the member of Group-A but it didn't change any situation; rather those students have been recognized them as norm-violating members of the class. It was also observed that, if one of the members of the other groups has been nominated as a class representative (CR) then they are also guided by Group-A. If s/he didn't follow the instruction or failed to protect Group-A and Group-B members' interests then s/he was replaced by saying s/he failed to protect/ uphold the class interests.

Observation 4- academic abandonment

It has been found that 50 students have begun their classes with that batch but at the end of the first semester, 12 students have either changed their discipline or the university failed to cope with the academic environment that used to belong to Group D and E. Some of them believed that they have arrived at the wrong discipline according to their career interests while some of them were not able to follow the existing norm of that discipline.

However, by the end of the fourth year, thirty-one students have received their graduation. One student has gone abroad by exchanging his credit with a foreign university with the help of an academician's direction. Due to extreme poverty, one student was not able to continue his study with their classmate. In this case, it has been observed that when after the group's consciousness stage, students have received a couple of stipends and donations both from their classmates and the academicians. Later, it was observed that the student also felt dependent on others and generally he tried to hide from all other classmates by sitting at a corner desk isolated. Besides, two other things were noticed in his case. During the decision-making process, for example, most of the members hardly cared about his opinion and he also was not eager to give any opinion. Subsequently, he left the classroom by the beginning of the second year.

The pressure of the dominant subculture created by Group-A prevented some students from imposing their values like the elite students, and as a result, they were labeled as value-violating students. This pupil, who was also labeled like that, likewise exited the classroom after a certain period of time. Besides, a norm-violating group, according to the dominant group/s, has also been observed in the class which also left the discipline permanently. Norm-violating students generally belonged to Groups C, D, and E and wanted to shift the power either through increasing their academic scores or increasing external expertise. The drop-out rate among these students hardly could be seen but a cold conflict used to exist until finishing graduation. At the same time, some members of Group B and G did not like to follow the command of Group-A but did not like to engage in

public debate either. The tendency of class abandonment has been high in these groups.

Concluding remarks

A classroom is a setting where a group of students closely interact and work together to achieve a common goal. Notwithstanding, to understand why and how a drop out occurs, the researchers have followed Marxist perception and found the influence and practice of capitalism in the academic atmosphere, especially the tertiary level. Observing classroom activities, the researcher has found that failing to adjust to the existing structures, produced and reproduced by the academic elites that is the students who have control over much of the academic resources, led several students to leave the classroom. Supporting earlier studies (i.e., Fortin, Marcotte, Potvin, Royer, Joly 2006; Freeman, Simonsen 2015; Kronick, Hargis 1998; McDermott, Anderson, Zaff 2018; McDermott, Donlan, Zaff 2019), this study found the students rationally decided to drop-out, this study has also found there were external forces which have influenced these student's internal sprite to drop-out. External forces were taking part in discussion-making, freedom of expression, ability to control academic relationships and resources.

This study has found that such academic external forces have been controlled by a group of people who have been characterized as an elite group of the class. Other people especially students of vulnerable economic conditions used to follow Freire's (1970) idea of a culture of silence. Likewise, this study also showed that the 'myth of meritocracy (Althusser, 1971) is just a product of capitalism because after having good academic achievement in the third and/or fourth year several students had not been able to take over the power. At this point, this study support Bowles and Gintis's (2003) idea of "Acceptance of hierarchy", since slow mobility between one and another group's members has been found in this study.

How do these micro-groups form in the classroom? According to the findings of this study they used to form in a time dimension. But most of the members of the

group used to have the same characteristics and personality traits (Table 1). The group consciousness was a novel finding that led the students to select their role either being oppressed or ruling over others. Overall, this study has investigated the process of academic abandonment in a few steps, where the first phase was identified as the rise of the elite, followed by group consciousness and group domination, which eventually results in academic abandonment.

Overall, this study has explored the causes of academic drop-out at the tertiary level where each of the students entered with similar quality but later due to several external factors, predominantly the economy; some students take over the power and control other students' decision. Nevertheless, the lack of longitudinal data has made it difficult to produce a strong logical explanation for such cases. In light of this, the researcher would like to invite future researchers to use the framework for a longitudinal study using multiple sources. Further, it has been observed that publishing students' results publicly was an important way to recognize academic elites. Thus, the researcher would like to call upon the policy maker's attention to revising the policy instead of exposing students' academic achievements publicly so it can be shared in close media.

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The conflict on the new teacher evaluation policy in the context of political discourse in Greece

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Abstract

This inquiry aims to uncover the political discourse for teacher evaluation in Greece. For this purpose, the political discourse is studied as reflected in the minutes of the Parliament from the respective sessions for the voting of the bill 4823/2021 "Upgrading of the school, empowerment of teachers and other provisions".

Research has shown that policy for teacher evaluation plays a crucial role in educational procedure by providing a template for what effective teachers are expected to do (Warren & Ward 2019, 531). In Greece, teacher evaluation is shaped by the imposition of a network of one-person and collective bodies hierarchically from above for the teachers' evaluation and control (Grollios, Liambas 2021, 18).

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon current theories of evaluation. The study was conducted within critical discourse analysis. The analysis was performed through a content analysis. The choice of the methodological analysis tool was based on the secondary analysis and the content analysis of the speech of the deputies in the Minutes of the Greek Parliament.

The findings demonstrate that the differentiation in the reports by the deputies of each party highlights the differentiation on the ideological background. These findings suggest that the new settings of the new teacher evaluation policy from the latest bill aim to oppress teachers and restrict their autonomy.

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Introduction

The education policy determines the framework in which the respective political decisions will be implemented. Recently, the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs decided to formulate and propose the passing of the bill regarding the evaluation of the teacher's work.

Research has shown that policy for teacher evaluation plays a crucial role in educational procedure by providing a template for what effective teachers are expected to do (Warren, Ward 2019, 531). The need of teacher's supervision and control during the program design is a primary element in evaluation.

In Greece, teacher evaluation is shaped by the imposition of a network of one-person and collective bodies hierarchically from above for the teachers' evaluation and control (Grollios, Liambas 2021, 18). In Greece this policy of inspection has a long way to go. From the abolishment of inspection and for more than 30 years the political debate of teachers' evaluation is open, and many bills are inactive. Throughout this time, the debates, and conflicts in the political scene about education were numerous, which are part of the whole social, political and ideological of confrontations and conflicts that took place and are taking place in Greece and which, of course, were and are being affected by international developments.

However, in public discourse there is a conflict regarding whether teachers' evaluation is necessary and effective and how this evaluation could be applied because there are various political actors that influence the implementation of the national teacher evaluation policy (Yoo 2019, 94). There is no strong consensus on the centrality of teacher evaluation policy due to the different ideologies in political parties. It is interesting to see the current political debate and how the political parties express their ideology through the politicians' speech.

The perceptions of the new teachers' evaluation policy draw on neoliberal politics. The Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs supports the need to evaluate the teachers' work and to establish a system for evaluating their work. The new policy for teacher evaluation seems to be influenced by OECD (PISA) and

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European Union strategies. As OECD promotes through the research TALIS, the system of appraisal and feedback has an extremely positive impact on teachers and teachers have a positive view of the process and its connection to their work and their careers (OECD 2009). It is a new era in educational accountability policies, with federal policies increasingly promoting accountability-based systems that hold teachers responsible for improved student achievement results (Close, Amrein-Beardsley & Collins 2020). The plan of these institutions and official bodies is to set controlled policies in order to have a better supervision of the educational policies of the countries.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon current theories of evaluation. In order to consider different approaches to teacher evaluation and different policy contexts that affect teachers' appraisal, theories of evaluation are mentioned below.

Based on the dichotomy, control - development, educational evaluation is based on two models, the technocratic, which mainly adopts the philosophy of quantitative evaluation, and the developmental which almost exclusively adopts the principles of qualitative assessment (Charalambous, Ganakas 2006; Pedagogical Institute 2009).

Technocratic model

The technocratic model emphasizes teacher training and skills, focusing on the processes that lead to the successful transmission of knowledge and skills. The teacher has an obligation to implement the syllabus and the legislation and for this reason importance is given to the result and actually to a measurable and quantitative assessment. Key features of the model are control, hierarchy, and external evaluation. Compliance with specific bureaucratic functions facilitate

control and administrative function. The definition of clear goals with measurable characteristics and the control of their achievement through evaluation characterize the successful operation and effectiveness of the educational process (Vougioukas 2003).

The evaluation of teachers and the educational process through the achievement of goals is presented as the objective. The practice of evaluating the teacher by an external agent outside the school unit (inspector) was a tactic that was applied in the past (Grollios et al. 2002). However, through this process, the qualitative characteristics of the pedagogical practice were not taken into account, since not all of them can be measured, as many of them have long-term dynamics.

Humanist model

In the humanist model, the teacher has a central role in the educational process not as an executor but as a researcher who participates and understands the conditions and intervenes to improve them. The model does not focus on the result, but on the process, taking into account the factors that influence and shape the school's reality.

The basic principle is the developmental and not the hierarchical and administrative function of the school. In this way, the teacher is developed, improved, and empowered through processes that enhance interaction and communication. The continuous feedback reinforces the redesign of the teaching framework and through a spiral process the educational practice as well as the teacher evolve.

In this way, the ability of self-evaluation is cultivated. However, critics of this model focus on the subjectivity and the non-objective determination of the evaluation criteria, which would otherwise be determined by an external evaluator (Katsarou, Dedouli 2008).

From the two opposing aforementioned evaluation theories a correlation could be made respectively with the different ideologies that are distinguished in the

discourse of politicians. On the one hand the Technocratic model has a strict and measurable frame for what teachers should do in order to be successful and efficient. On the other hand, the Humanist model has a different approach for what is essential for teachers' goals. The frame is more lenient, and the importance is given to the quality of the pedagogical process. From these two different approaches, it could be said that the technocratic one is more correlated with Neoliberalism. As Rodríguez (2008) states the technocratic model is more pervasive in neoliberal societies. The technocratic tradition asks teachers to implement the knowledge developed by educational experts. On the contrary, the Humanist model is more correlated with socialism, because it is not hierarchical and administrative but improves the pedagogical frame through collective and common collaboration.

As Hill (2001) stated "*Ideology can be undressed as a more or less coherent set of beliefs and attitudes that is regarded as self-evidently true, as common sense in opposition to other belief systems. When political parties disagree about how society, schooling should be organized they justify their views with a particular version what is right and what is wrong*".

The Discourse -even by critics of the evaluation of teachers' work- is framed by the logic of capitalist production presented as the only acceptable and logical discourse even in the realm of the political party that is supposed to oppose the policy of the ruling party (Au 2021, 125). Capitalism sets as a priority a different type of education that aims at mechanization, automation, and quantification of the educational process, and imposes a new regime of oppression, authoritarianism, and loss of autonomy for both students and teachers (Gounari 2021, 114). That process of categorizing, sorting, and classifying teachers based on their effectiveness, is also presented in the bill 4823/2021.

The minutes of the sessions were searched from the official website of the Hellenic Parliament. The search was carried out with key words "evaluation" and "educational" as keywords, whole, compound or derive. The time frame of this specific investigation was 26-28/07/2021.

Research methodology

This inquiry aims to uncover the political discourse for teacher evaluation in Greece, the characteristics that shape the evaluation of the teacher's work. The political discourse is studied as reflected in the minutes of the Parliament from the respective sessions for the voting of the bill 4823/2021 "Upgrading of the school, empowerment of teachers and other provisions".

In qualitative research the collection and analysis of data aims to provide an in-depth, socio-contextual and detailed description and interpretation of the research topic.

The analysis was performed through a content analysis having recording, coding and classification as its main parts. The qualitative content analysis is classified under the qualitative descriptive design. The key characteristic is the systematic process of coding, examining of meaning and provision of a description (Zhang, Wildemuth 2009; Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, Snelgrove 2016). Also, the study was conducted within critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1995; Robson 2002). Discourse analysis not only allows for a clearer understanding of how policy differs in the political parties, but also allows us to appreciate the nuances.

The choice of the methodological analysis tool was based on the secondary analysis and the content analysis of the speech of the deputies in the Minutes of the Greek Parliament during 26-28/07/2021. The Political Parties that participated in the Greek Parliament were:

New Democracy (NEA DIMOKRATIA)

Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)

Movement for Change (KINAL)

Communist Party of Greece (KKE)

Hellenic Solution - Kyriakos Velopoulos (ELLINIKI LYSI)

DIEM25 (MERA25)

Analysis

During the analysis of the practices, themes were formed based on the themes of the speakers' speech. The resulting themes are eleven. The theme is related to the context of the speaker's utterance and not to the point of view she/he expresses. On the same theme there are opposing views, but they are grouped together.

2 Themes and 12 sub-themes submerged from the coding. The themes are: 1. evaluation as an improvement process and 2. evaluation as a mechanism of control and manipulation.

The sub-themes of the 1st theme are: 1.1 meritocracy, 1.2 quality assurance, 1.3 Improvement, 1.4 Reward, 1.5 Professional qualification

The sub-themes of the 2nd theme: 2.1 Control mechanism, 2.2 flexible working arrangements, 2.3 Bureaucracy, 2.4 External evaluation by private companies, 2.5 punitive, 2.6 cost reduction, 2.7 hierarchical organization - Neo-inspection

Coding

1. evaluation as an improvement process:

    1.1 Meritocracy,

    1.2 Quality assurance,

    1.3 Improvement,

    1.4 Reward,

    1.5 Professional qualification

Codes

-Improvement mechanism

-Reward

-Constant improvement of the provided project

-Procedure, quality evaluation criteria

-Meritocracy

-Progressive learning benefits

-Guarantee the provision of high-quality work by trained people

-Education / training/professional qualification

-Flexibility of the program

-Quality assurance

-Fairer distribution of resources

-Autonomy school

2. evaluation as a mechanism of control and manipulation:

   2.1 Control mechanism,

   2.2 Flexible working arrangements,

   2.3 Bureaucracy,

   2.4 External evaluation by private companies,

   2.5 Punitive

   2.6 Cost reduction

   2.7 Hierarchical organization - Neo-inspection

Codes

-Pressure, control, and manipulation mechanisms

-School authoritarianism

-Internal / external evaluation

-A falsified evaluation

-Examination

-Bureaucratic

-Stigmatization

-Model of neo-inspection

-School = supermarket

-Vouchers in education

-Cheap school for the state, expensive for the family, competitive for the market

-Criteria to find financing from the market

-The external evaluation in private companies

-Flexible working arrangements

-Assignment of control over the observance of labor relations to the Ministry of Labor, instead of the Ministry of Education.

-Strikes/trade union movement

-Dissolution of labor relations

-Deprivation of work / dismissal

Findings

1. Evaluation as an improvement process

From the analysis it is obvious that there is a different approach due to the different ideology. On one hand the evaluation is expressed as a means of improvement. The Parliament Members' (MPs') reports on the evaluation concern the performance of teachers based on criteria and the impact that the evaluation has on their work. The education and training are considered as a guarantee for the provision of high-quality educational work. Those who embrace this view consider external evaluation as a necessary condition with objective criteria relating to teachers' performance, effort and work. They believe that data can only be trusted when they are based on structured figures and results, such as those presented in the PISA program. They state that the vast majority, about 90%, of European countries have introduced an evaluation system for their teachers. The value of PISA, an OECD-roofed mechanism that allows countries to draw conclusions about the education system, has emerged internationally over the years.

1.1 meritocracy

The supporters of the evaluation consider that the establishment of meritocratic criteria is the safest means for teacher evaluation. When teachers receive a positive evaluation, they will have the possibility to rise in the hierarchy.

"A positive evaluation is taken into account in the selection for positions of responsibility, while the non-positive evaluation leads to a training program. This evaluation has a corrective and non-punitive character."

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"Educational actions are needed for professional development. The goal must be excellence, modernization, extroversion, and evaluation, which by extension means meritocracy."

1.2 quality assurance

Also, MPs who support the bill claim that the teacher's work quality can be valued only through evaluation. The effectiveness of the school and the educational policy in general is significantly determined by the quality and effectiveness of the teachers who serve it.

"No education system can improve if not evaluated. The effective school and educational policy in general are significantly determined by quality and efficiency."

1.3 Improvement

The teacher's evaluation concerns the efficiency and is delimited by the criteria-based performance, highlighting the impact that the evaluation has on the educational work provided and on the upgrading of the teacher and their work.

"The evaluation must be linked to the score; it must be linked to the payroll. Apart from the advisory role, self-improvement, and teaching, without motivation you cannot have better teachers."

1.4 Reward

The perspective of reward in teachers' evaluation presents a potential for positive, systematic, acknowledgement and reward. It has a purely improvement nature, aiming to reward teachers for their work and to identify weak points, where there is room for improvement.

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"The majority of teachers seek evaluation as a means of improving their performance, as a reward for their efforts, but also knowing that without evaluation, any pathologies of the educational process cannot be identified and corrected."

1.5 Professional qualification

Also, there are MPs who support that evaluation is an empowerment process for teachers and makes them better professionals. Teacher's evaluation is connected with the digitization of the labor market and with entrepreneurship. It is also presented as a necessary professional qualification for strengthening and improvement for the better absorption and performance in the labor market. According to the bill, the result of the teacher's evaluation will be the qualification to claim a higher position. In case of a positive evaluation, a reward is provided to the teachers who can be transformed into educational executives.

"We bring back the logic of meaningful recognition for the work of our teachers. Because we restore the recognition for their abilities and their qualifications and reward them through evaluation."

2. Evaluation as a mechanism of control and manipulation

On the other hand, there are MPs who support that teachers' evaluation is a process in which teachers are checked for their attendance. The MPs' opinions express that internal-external evaluation is a control mechanism for education. It is an educational elitism that is cultivated, and the falsified excellence prevails. It is an anti-democratic and neoliberal process that creates a complex bureaucratic system leading to a devaluation of the teacher's role.

2.1 Control mechanism

The teacher's evaluation can be introduced as a part of the professional development mechanism for managerial control (Su, Feng & Hsu 2017). Through procedures of administrative control of teachers and an accountability mechanism, the teachers lose their autonomy in their pedagogical work.

"Establish mechanisms of pressure, control and manipulation".

2.2 Flexible working arrangements

The specific bill proposes the reduction of state interventionism in education, with the aim of enhancing the flexibility in the organization and the operation of school units as well as in the evaluation of the teacher. It is suggested that educational units acquire the right and opportunity to develop individual strategies related to the specificities of local communities and the capabilities of school units in order to have school autonomy and freedom of choice in public education.

"In other words, they agree that evaluation should be the basic tool for a school that is decentralized, differentiated, and therefore categorized, willing to the wishes of the market and sensitive, with its doors open for the pedagogy of businesses, with the certainly corresponding flexibility of a business in terms of its staff, hence the tens of thousands of substitute teachers. In short, the school of the market."

2.3 Bureaucracy

The evaluation-led approach can be transformed into contrived and bureaucratic control if it dismisses teacher professional development from 'within' (Korthagen 2009). Carrying out administrative procedures dominated by unnecessary actions slows down teachers and distracts them from their pedagogical work.

"The assessment of the New Democracy is to establish a harshly bureaucratic, complex and expensive control mechanism in schools, so that the model of neoliberal

development preached by the establishment becomes the ideology of the state and normality in the consciousness of the teachers and citizens."

"This creates bureaucratic superstructures, reduces creativity, and devalues the role of the teacher, but it is a very good career opportunity for the promotion of various party-backed executives. It's partisanship, divide and conquer, all against all in all its glory."

2.4 External evaluation by private companies

The MPs' who reject the external evaluation refuse the proposal that the external evaluation will highlight all good practices and help to correct wrong handlings and that measures will be taken for more efficient staffing of school units.

The process of external evaluation will be assigned to private companies and the control will be external bodies disconnected from the school unit.

"A mixture of internal and external assessment, which shouts from miles away that you are ready to create a new market. Do not be surprised, ladies and gentlemen, if in a few months private companies are assigned the external evaluation of the public school."

2.5 Punitive

Accountability in teacher evaluation is viewed as punitive. The strict hierarchical administrative structure together with the system of punitive evaluation aims to control all teachers by returning to inspectorism to the classroom.

"Non-participation in the evaluation process constitutes a disciplinary misconduct resulting in sanctions and penalties such as deprivation of salary. This treatment highlights the punitive nature of the bill."

2.6 Evaluation as a cost reduction

There is a connection between the teachers' evaluation and economic policy. Teacher's evaluation is related to the further dramatic reduction of expenditures in education sector that will occur as well through the forthcoming evaluation. Also, this is a strategic choice of alignment with the European Union and OECD's choices for education.

"T*here are no selfless sponsors either and of course donations are always made free of charge. There is the dry soul of the technocrat, there is the class stamp of the OECD and the European Union."*

2.7 Evaluation as a hierarchical organization / Neo-inspection

A very stifling individual control is provided by a complex hierarchical administrative mechanism of education, which includes the completion of data in electronic forms and platforms. The administrative pyramid will be a systemic framework, in which one will evaluate the other and all together the teacher.

"Teachers will be evaluated for their work, but also for their service consistency by: the principal, the scientific council and the pedagogical responsibility advisor."

"It is a hierarchical and authoritarian one-way system, a vertical, from the top-down assessment with the teacher viewed as a simple implementer of any administrative instructions."

Conclusions

The findings demonstrate that the differentiation in the reports by the deputies of each party highlights the differentiation on the ideological background.

The discourse, even by critics of the evaluation of teachers' work, is framed by the by the logic of capitalist production presented as the only acceptable and logical discourse even in the realm of the political party that is supposed to oppose the policy of the ruling party (Au 2021, 125).

As Grollios and Liambas (2021) support "*The neoliberal-neoconservative socio-political restructuring is an international attack by the forces of capital against the forces of labor, the main characteristic of which is the reduction of the social character of the state and the strengthening of its repressive role*".

The process of categorizing, sorting, and classifying teachers based on the teachers' effectiveness, is presented in the bill 4823/2021. As Gounari claims "*Capitalism sets as a priority a different type of education that aims at mechanization, automation, and quantification of the educational process, and imposes a new regime of oppression, authoritarianism, and loss of autonomy for both students and teachers*" (Gounari 2021, 114).

Enforcing acceptance of the neoliberal revolution and weakening opposition to it is partly carried out through the importation of 'new public managerialism' into the management of schools and education services (Hill 2007, 207).

The teacher evaluation is a cornerstone of the pedagogical process and affects not only the produced work, but mainly those who transform the sterile educational act into pedagogical. In light of the recent critical research, observational systems used for similar teacher evaluation purposes, were also deeply criticized and subsequently spurred many governments to reform (Weisberg et al. 2009; Kraft & Gilmour 2017) and redesign teacher evaluation systems (Ross & Walsh 2019; Close, Amrein-Beardsley, Collins 2020). It is not surprising that so many teachers believe that the current evaluation system, and the absence of meaningful feedback it produces, does them a disservice (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, Keeling 2009).

For these reasons it is crucial for MPs to pay attention to teachers' requests. There are many differences and contrasts in the ideological framework, but the golden ratio could be found if government funding responded to the needs of education and teachers were treated as responsible for the pedagogical process taking into account their views.

The only thing that the imposition of measures and laws with authoritarianism and without dialogue brings about is a bad framework for education within which

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neither teachers can operate with autonomy, nor students can reap the benefits of the pedagogical relationship with the teacher.

To conclude, the pedagogical act is influenced by various variables and parameters of the respective political decisions. These decisions most often take into account only technocratic elements and not the human factor.

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Science and politics in the context of antagonistic civilizations

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Abstract

Huntington in his book "The Clash of Civilizations" (1996) writes, that global politics are being reconfigured according to cultural lines (Williams 1983), with peoples and countries from similar cultures coming together and those of different cultures separating. Huntington believes that as the relative power of other civilizations increases, the appeal of the western culture fades and non-western peoples acquire increasing confidence and commitment to their indigenous cultures. The main problem in the relations between the West and the rest is, consequently, the discordance between the West's efforts to promote universal western culture and its declining ability to do so.

This paper argues that within a theoretical framework of antagonistic civilizations, science can be understood not as universal objective knowledge about the natural world, but as an ethno-construct of western civilization. Therefore, there is a risk to consider science as an integral part of western political despotism, which the "outsiders" ought to confront at least by promoting their own ethnic sciences. Thus, potentially a new two sciences doctrine may appear undermining science's role as an agent for human emancipation.

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The clash of civilizations - Huntington's Version

Huntington's article "The Clash of Civilizations?" published in 1993 and the homonymous book published three years later (Huntington 1996) resulted in heated criticism and controversial debates among academics, while entering successfully mainstream political discourse. The appeal of Huntington's theory lies in his attempt of developing an all-encompassing theoretical construct, which aims at explaining the international interstate and inner state conflicts of the era. At the center of Huntington's theory stand the concepts of civilization and culture[1]. Civilization is the people's broadest level of cultural identity. As a term it appeared for the first time in print, in 1776 in the work of Victor de Piqueti Marquis de Mirabeau titled "L' Amis des Homes" (Nobert 1978). For Huntington, religion and language are the two most important characteristics defining civilizations.

Huntington rejects the idea that any form of universalization among civilizations is occurring. Instead of universalization, global politics are being reconfigured according to cultural lines with peoples and countries from similar cultures coming together and those of different cultures separating. The relationship between differing cultures tends to be antagonistic. At a micro-level the antagonism takes place between different civilizations[2]. At the macro-level the dominant division is between the West and all other civilizations (the rest). Among civilizations, the West alone has had a major impact on every other civilization.

Huntington claims that as the relative power of other civilizations increases, the appeal of the western culture fades and non-western peoples acquire increasing confidence and commitment to their indigenous cultures. The central problem in the relations between the West and the rest is, consequently, the discordance

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[1] Sociologists have counted at least 168 different definitions of culture. Raymond Williams (1983) suggested three broad definitions. First of all, culture can be used to refer to "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development". A second definition culture might be to suggest "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group". Finally, according to Williams, culture could be used to refer to the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity.

[2] The most important civilizations for understanding international politics are defined as Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, Orthodox and Japanese

between the West's (particularly America's) efforts to promote universal western culture and its declining ability to do so. The universal aspirations of western civilization, the declining relative power of the west and the increasing cultural assertiveness of other civilizations insure generally difficult relations between the West and the rest.

In addition, Huntington prescribes the elimination of the multiculturalist agenda in the US that seeks according to him to reduce the nation to a conglomerate of civilizations without a single cultural identity. His firm belief that the "American Creed" should be the centerpiece of American policy leads him to fear "the dangers of racial, sectional, ethnic, economic and cultural diversity". He firmly rejects multiculturalism and contends that the real clash in American society is the clash between multiculturalists and the defenders of Western civilization and the "American Creed".

In his attack on multiculturalism, he states explicitly:

"The multiculturalists are very often ethnocentric separatists…their mood is one of divesting Americans of the sinful European inheritance and seeking redemptive infusions from non-western cultures…they are a dangerous force, which may damage and even destroy the relationship of the US with Western civilization." (Huntington 1996, 305-307)

Huntington appears to advocate a xenophobic and very often a racial attitude towards other cultures in the US. His arguments against the multiculturalists imply that the European cultural heritage of the US is what determines its current prestige, wealth, and power and that the presence of other cultures will only serve to accelerate the decline of the US.

Huntington's rejection of multiculturalism is pursued from an ideologically conservative standpoint. Evidence of Huntington's ideological affiliation can be found in his definition of American "core values". He writes explicitly:

"Historically, American national identity has been defined culturally by the heritage of western civilization and politically by the principles of the American creed on which Americans overwhelmingly agree: liberty, democracy,

individualism, equality before the law, constitutionalism, private property."
(Huntington 1996, 305)

When Huntington speaks about the heritage of western civilization he refers precisely to the classical heritage: Greek-Roman Philosophy and the rationality of the Enlightenment tradition. These are the cornerstones of western (mainstream) civilization and consequently science.

Modern science and technology have indeed developed within western civilization. But does the fact that modern science developed in a western content means that it bears the imprint of the civilization in which it emerged? Is there a western cultural bias built into the method of modern science? To what extent Huntington's theoretical analysis of the international relations landscape may affect the attitude of the non-western peoples towards science universality? And in the last analysis, ***can science be considered as a part of a civilizational clash?***

The idea that modern science encodes western social-cultural values and is therefore hostile to the interests of non-western peoples unites some of the most "avant-garde" scholars in American and European universities with the cultural nationalists and other postcolonial intellectuals from the third world. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations", by portraying science as an integral part of western civilization and simultaneously placing it in an antagonistic context, in practice undermines the universal dimension of science which in theory defends with his claim for the preservation of classical heritage.

In the next chapter, the "progressive" side of the multiculturalist debate is considered: the highly controversial "ethnosciences" project and the social constructivist critique of science rationality. Both these aspects are interlinked. In fact, the constructivist theories of science by making the content and rationality of science an epiphenomenon of the wider cultural and social structures clear the way for the so called "ethnosciences". Cobern (1996) is very clear when he says that science education efforts in non-western countries can benefit by adopting a constructivist view of science and science learning.

The "Ethnoscience" project and its implications for Science Education

Proponents of the "Ethnoscience" project claim that modern science is an ethnoscience of the west with no more global dimension than any other culturally specific, local knowledge system.

For Harding (1998) and for many other advocates of multiculturalism in science, knowledge systems cannot be classified in terms of better or worse accounts of reality. They are simply different accounts of reality, that different social orders produce coping with their culture - and language - bound perceptions of reality. She believes that in order to coexist with other cultures in a multicultural world we have to abandon the idea of "one true science" and begin to live in a "borderland epistemology". That means an epistemology respecting the distinctive understandings of nature, that the world's different cultures have the ability to produce.

Harding (1998) claims that a new kind of comparative ethnoscience movement emerged from the older "Eurocentric" colonial frameworks which had represented other cultures knowledge traditions as the products of "savage minds". She believes that other cultures had local knowledge systems, but only modern science produced claims that were universally valid according to the Eurocentric view. She believes that the anti-Eurocentric comparative ethnoscience movement began to reevaluate the sophistication of other cultures scientific and technological achievements and the contributions these had made to the development of modern sciences in Europe, that have gone unmentioned in the conventional histories of science. Her conclusion is that modern western science has to be reevaluated as a local knowledge system.

Challenging the so-called "Eurocentrism" is a characteristic feature of the ethnoscience movement. In a collection of articles published on "Ethnomathematics" (Powell, Frankenstein 1997) various authors depart on a journey of challenging "Eurocentrism" in Mathematics Education. S. Amin confronts "Eurocentrism" by presenting the central contributions of the Arab-Islamic cultures to world knowledge. He claims that the Eurocentric version of

"humanist universalism" negates any such universalism, since Eurocentrism has brought with it the destruction of peoples and civilizations, who have resisted its spread.

In the same collection M. Bernal, author of "Black Athena: The Afro-Asiatic roots of classical civilization", insists that the Greek foundations of European knowledge are themselves founded upon black Egyptian civilization. He disputes the originality of Greek mathematics and argues that Eurocentric ideology has distorted the history of the development of scientific and mathematical knowledge. According to him, "Eurocentrism" developed in 18th century Europe as the rationale for various forms of European slavery and imperialism.

Despite the efforts of the above-mentioned avant-garde intellectuals, it's beyond any doubt that the so celebrated ethnoscience movement has eased the ground, for the appearance of religious fundamentalism and a return to traditionalism in education. The so called "Islamic Science" is perhaps the most ambitious ethnoscience tradition ("the islamization of knowledge is at the heart of Islamic self-assertion" (Loo 1996)) and has already spawned a large amount of aggression in an enterprise that claims entirely to be based on the love of "Allah". Islamic Science is a "science whose processes and methodologies incorporate the spirit of Islamic values" (Loo 1996). Although one can distinguish various currents within the Islamic ethnoscience tradition, the more dogmatic sees Islamic science as a self-enclosed activity that in some way can separate its own ethnoscience from others. In this context, in countries like Iran and Pakistan there is an unfolding process to develop more or less complete non-Western scientific institutions.

The clearest manifestation of the contradiction of the ethnoscience project is in India where Hindu nationalists have heeded the call for "decolonizing" science and responded with aggressive propaganda for "Hindu ways of knowing" which they present as alternative to the colonial western science. Meera Nanda (1997) gives two examples of the religious right's "Hinduization" of science: the introduction of "Vedic Mathematics" in public schools and the spread of "Vastu Shastra" (ancient Indian material science).

In such a climate, the prospects for science education are questionable. The Penang Declaration on Science and Technology signed by prominent proponents of ethnosciences in 1988 was only first evidence. This declaration called for an education that should appreciate the value of indigenous scientific and technological culture and that the teaching of science should never be divorced from the value system of the indigenous civilization. The students should also develop a critical faculty so that they may judge the "cultural and ideological bias of western science and technology".

In another article Josette Adda (1998) discusses the issue which is at stake here: Scientificity and Universality. She states her view very clearly:

"Many local actions or innovations may be interesting, politically important and so on but have no universal value; they are providing a momentum for the local educational system without contributing to the growth of universal knowledge. It is an error to call them 'science'". (Adda 1998, 53)

The author of this article and others in the field of education share the view, that it is not wise to make decisions about education on the basis that local ethnosciences are cognitively equivalent to western science. Of course, traditional knowledge systems ought to be addressed in multicultural situations and teaching is greatly facilitated if it is conducted in a native language or dialect. But it is an altogether different matter to suggest that traditional sciences ought to be cultivated as science (Matthews 1994).

Some authors (Siegel 1997) have the belief that the differences in the multiculturalist debate can be reconciled. For Harding (1998), the Enlightenment philosophy of universality defined the growth of scientific knowledge in ways that devaluated women, nature and "backward cultures"[3]. She believes that the new

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[3] Cultural backwardness was a term used by Soviet politicians and ethnographers. Members of a "culturally backward" nationality were eligible for preferential treatment in university admissions. In 1934 the Central Executive Committee declared that the term should no longer be used. The People's Commissariat for Education listed five official characteristics of culturally backward nationalities:
- ✓ An extremely low level of literacy
- ✓ An extremely low percentage of children in school
- ✓ Absence of a written script connected to a literary language

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philosophies of knowledge and power emerging from the gender, environment and sustainable development discussions and the analyses they draw, signify the return of the Enlightenment's "others" (women, nature, "backward cultures"). Harding's article takes us to the root of the problem, which is no other than the politics of "identity" being closely associated with the postmodern assault on reason.

The postmodern attack on reason

The leading postmodernists reject "Enlightenment politics", which can be defined as the project of a world according to the principles of universal reason. They follow Nietzsche in being suspicious of all claims to universality and reason. They believe that such claims always mask the power interests of those making them. Imperialist nations, ruling classes, males, Caucasians, heterosexuals, doctors, psychiatrists, and criminologists have all claim, that their perspective defines a universal and rational outlook. By doing so they have effectively silenced other nations, other classes, other genders, other races, those of other sexual orientation, patients etc.

The leading postmodern theorists do not conclude from this, that we should simply replace one claim to universality and reason with another. They proclaim, that reason is inherently manipulative and dominating and that claims to universality necessarily involve the subjugation of what is "other".

For Lyotard (1984) the postmodern condition is marked by a crisis in the status of knowledge in western societies. Postmodernism is said to signal the collapse of all universalist metanarratives with their privileged truth to tell, and to witness instead the increasing plurality of voices from the margins, with their insistence on difference, on cultural diversity and the claims for heterogeneity over

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✓ Existence of "social vestiges" (oppression of women, racial hostility, nomadism, religious fanaticism)
✓ An extremely low level of national cadres

homogeneity. Lyotard's particular focus is the function "of narrative within scientific discourse and knowledge". His interest is not so much in scientific knowledge and procedures as such, as in the forms by which such knowledge and procedures claim legitimacy. Science is important for Lyotard (1984) because of the role assigned to it by the Enlightenment: its task, through the accumulation of scientific knowledge, is to play a central role in the emancipation of humankind. *Science has thus assumed the status of a metanarrative, organizing, and validating other narratives.*

A very comprehensive analysis and critique of the postmodern agenda has been given by Meiksins-Wood (1997). This critique focuses on the postmodernists' main preoccupations: language, culture, and "discourse".

According to one version of postmodernism, human beings and their social relations are constituted by language. Language is all we can know about the world, and we have no access to any other reality. In its extreme "deconstructionist" version, postmodernism has adopted those forms of linguistic theory, according to which our patterns of thought are limited and shaped by the underlying structure of the language we speak. This means that society and culture are structured in ways analogous to language, with underlying rules and patterns that govern social relations. As Meiksins-Wood rightly points, for the postmodernists, society is not simply like language, it is language. And since we are all entrapped in our language, no external standard of truth, no external referent for knowledge, is available to us outside the specific "discourses" that we inhabit.

Another postmodernist current does not give language such an importance but insists on the social construction of knowledge[4]. The most vivid illustration of this

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[4] The thesis for the social construction of scientific knowledge traces its roots to the tradition of sociology of knowledge, that includes K. Marx, K. Mannheim and R. Merton. The crucial difference between these prominent figures of the past and contemporary postmodernists, is that none of them was an anti-realist. None of them ever denied that science although situated in specific social contexts, it provides knowledge of reality independent of our social practices. It is therefore necessary to draw a clear distinctive line between social mediation of knowledge and social construction of knowledge.

epistemology is the claim that western science, founded on the belief that nature is governed by universal mathematical laws, is just an expression of the imperialistic and oppressive principles on which western society is based.

The social constructivists confuse the forms of knowledge with its objects. They say for example that not only the theories of Physics are a historical construct that has varied over time and has taken different forms in different social contexts, but that the laws of nature themselves are socially constructed and historically variable (Newton 1997). This is the consequence of the epistemological position that human knowledge is enclosed within particular languages, cultures and social interests and therefore science cannot comprehend or approximate the physical reality. If the standard of scientific truth resides not in the natural world itself but in the particular norms of specific communities, then the laws of nature might as well be nothing more than what any particular community says that they are at any given time. Within this context it is a natural consequence of postmodernist epistemology to support particular "knowledges" including sciences particular to ethnic groups.

Koertge (Koertge 1996) in her article "Wrestling with the Social Constructor" identifies the ideological[5] component in the debate on the social construction of knowledge:

"There is no question that social epistemology can be a valuable enterprise. Unfortunately, much of what goes by that name today consists of barely disguised ideological initiatives. One attempt begins with a discussion of the role of values in science and then attempts to incorporate political values into the construction of science" (Koertge 1996, 268)

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[5] Ideology is a crucial concept in the study of the cultural forms of any social formation. Therborn (1980) quotes R. Johnson arguing that ideologies always work upon the ground of culture. Like culture, ideology has many competing meanings. An understanding of this concept is often complicated by the fact, that in the field of cultural studies the concept is used interchangeably with culture itself. For reasons of clarity, we will adopt a very broad definition according to which ideology refers to a systematic body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people. Since ideology is bound to the interests of a particular social grouping it produces a distorted image of reality, thus coming in an uncompromising antithesis with science.

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This is in the best way exemplified in the writings of Luce Irigaray (1989), one of the leading postmodern feminists. In her book "Le temps de la difference", Irigaray speaks of a male dominated culture and after having declared that sciences are not neutral, she criticizes the natural sciences not on the basis of scientific criteria but from the point of view of the masculine sex of the scientific thinkers. And as men for her are on the side of death, their dominance results in the following situation in the field of knowledge:

"Science and knowledge are today a real apprenticeship of the negative without a positive vision" (Irigaray 1989, 50).

Apart from the fact of incorrectly identifying the natural sciences with the human sciences, which are obviously a lot more permeable to ideology than other fields of knowledge, the reasoning of Irigaray is perfectly comparable to that developed by the supporters of a "proletarian culture" and later of "proletarian science" as opposed to "bourgeois science"[6] in Stalin's era.

A new two Sciences doctrine?

The unprecedented phenomenon of the ideologization of the natural sciences themselves, which does not seem to be alien to postmodernist thought, first appeared in the USSR under Stalin.

The Cold War conjecture of confrontation between the two blocks led to clampdowns and ideological monolithism on both sides: witch-hunts of the McCarthy type in the west and Zhdanovism in the east.

By generalizing the ideological confrontation in all spheres of intellectual life, Zhdanov reduced culture to a narrow political battle dividing everything along class lines. Zhdanov denounced the genetics of those days as bourgeois science,

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[6] M. Lowy (1984) correctly - in our opinion - claims that the idea that the existing natural sciences are bourgeois is quite alien to classic Marxist thought. It is a Stalinist theoretical innovation that might be described as an inverted positivism.

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which provided fideism and clericalism with new arguments that have to be mercilessly exposed[7].

Whereas positivism wanted to "naturalize" the human and social sciences, Stalinism some fifty years ago and recently postmodernism attempt to "politicize" the natural sciences. All of them have failed to recognize at least the methodological differences between social and natural sciences.

The argument that ideology no longer counts, lies at the core of Huntington's thesis. Cultural differences in themselves do not produce conflicts by definition. It is the approach to cultural questions that plays the most significant role. This approach is largely determined by ideology and Huntington's theory is not an exception.

As an epilogue

In our epoch, the dominance of ideology over matters concerning science, either through the acceptance of Huntington's schema or through the imposition by the religious fundamentalists in the third world of ethnosciences products like Islamic Science and Hindu mathematics, ease the way for the emergence of a new two sciences doctrine.

A doctrine of this type may easily become dominant taking advantage of the existing confusion concerning the relation between culture, ideology, and science. The author of this paper refers to science as a cognitive process, which establishes a conceptual autonomy from the forms of social consciousness existing in a social formation. This conceptual autonomy of science signifies a clear discontinuity between scientific discourses and those cultural forms whose patterns of conflict constitute the social conjuncture.

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[7] In mentioning the Lysenko Affair, it is difficult to avoid comparing the accusations made against soviet geneticists with Galileo's fate at the hands of Inquisition (and several authors have done so). In both cases, a dominant social order integrates a doctrinal interpretation of natural phenomena into its system of ideological hegemony and uses its secular arm to crash any scientific attempt to challenge that interpretation.

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Nevertheless, the relation between science and culture is not entirely unproblematic: historically cultural and social conflicts have developed over the appropriation and/or suppression of new scientific knowledge.

In Western Europe, since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the special cognitive authority of science has caused social conflicts over the cultural appropriation of scientific innovations by competing social forces. Since new scientific concepts are potentially subversive, they have always constituted a potential challenge to the prevailing ideological configuration.

According to Benton (1979) the dominant cultural forces could control new scientific ideas given the discontinuity of scientific discourses from popular forms of social consciousness. But in the case where scientific ideas attained a popular diffusion, the dominant political and cultural power had to adopt a strategy of suppression over the appropriation of the new scientific ideas. Sometimes this appropriation has taken the form of a one-sided elaboration and articulation of scientific discourse to render it coherent with the dominant cultural forms.

From the standpoint of the oppressed, new scientific ideas served as a major source of ethical legitimacy. They furnished new resources for the critique of the established order since frequently scientific advances remove the irrational bases of the established forms of social and political authority. Very often the governing institutions were the objects of forms of opposition deriving much from both the content and the rational methodology of science.

Depriving science from its rational content can only pay invaluable service to those governing institutions seeking the ideological appropriation of scientific knowledge in order to prolong their dominance.

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Who is vulnerable and why? Comparing dominant discourses about disability and education in Greece and Cyprus during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Abstract

This paper reports on a comparative study concerned with the dominant discourses about disability and education developed in Greece and Cyprus during the COVID-19 pandemic. These discourses were developed as a result of the emergency policy measures and sparked debates among education stakeholders who were interested in the education of disabled children. Two data sets were created, one for each country, comprising of emergency policy measures (Ministerial circulars and Decrees) and other documents (e.g., press releases, opinion papers, newspaper articles, reports, etc.). Critical Discourse Analysis guided the analysis of the documents. The findings indicate that despite some differences in the discourses between the two countries, ableist discourses dominated. These discourses differed according to the time period (i.e., first and second lockdown), and they presented disabled children as vulnerable and as children who needed therapies/individualised specialist support, rather than quality education. The discussion considers why these discourses generally

followed the dis/ability complex, even though they were shaped from stakeholders whose views about what consisted quality education for disabled children during the pandemic varied.

Introduction

Worldwide, the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic led to emergency policy measures which sought to regulate education. On the one hand, these measures sought to provide education during periods of lockdowns, and on the other hand, aimed at protecting teachers and children from the virus when schools opened. During lockdowns, many countries moved to distance education. When back to school, measures were taken to restrict infection from the virus (e.g., COVID-19 tests, protection masks, distance between desks and chairs in the class, etc.).

In this period of uncertainty and fear, a number of countries took separate policy measures for the education of disabled children. The nature of these measures suggests that disabled children were perceived as objects of therapy, rather than as children that need to be educated and supported emotionally. Research papers from different countries report that disabled children and their families faced a number of difficulties during the pandemic, including difficulties with distance education and poor support from school and social services (see Damianidou and Georgiadou 2022 for Cyprus; Dickinson et al. 2021 for Australia; O'Connor Bones et al. 2021 for Northern Ireland; Berasategi Sancho et al. 2021 for Spain).

In many countries, segregating and unjust approaches in the education of disabled children were in place before the pandemic. In particular, countries adopting ableist thinking (Campbell 2009) develop education policies and practices for children who are considered the 'norm' in the particular culture (e.g. the non-disabled, able, independent, skilled and knowledgeable child), and think of compensatory policies and practices for disabled children (e.g. policy that regulates education in special schools or special units, use of standardised test to exclude children who do not meet the pre-determined standards, etc.). Both in

Greece, and Cyprus, ableist thinking is reflected in the policy framework for special education and integration, instead of the policy framework of inclusive education (Karagianni 2014, Liasidou 2016; Symeonidou, Mavrou 2020), 'special needs' labelling that justifies reasonable accommodations (Koutsoklenis and Gaitanides 2017), etc. It is also reflected in the shared understanding that teaching practices do not need to adapt to children's different readiness levels, interests and profiles; rather children need to adapt to monolithic teaching, and if they cannot, then they need to receive special education in segregating settings (Sideri et al. 2020).

Ableism and ableist thinking lead to disablism, which is defined as the form of racism towards disabled people (Bolt 2019). Disablism can be intentional or unintentional, but the consequences towards disabled people are the same. To extend the examples given in the previous paragraph, it is disabling to deny a disabled child placement and quality education in the mainstream school, because the law allows his/her placement in a special setting and professionals believe that this is the most appropriate educational setting for the child. It is also disabling to label a child as having a particular syndrome or 'disorder' in order to approve support in learning which had to be in place in every class and school. Education stakeholders in both Greece and Cyprus exhibit disabling attitudes and rhetoric which oppresses disabled children and their families. At the same time, in both countries, there are voices that expose disablism through research and engagement in public dialogue.

Within this context, we sought to examine the emergency policy measures for disabled children in Greece and Cyprus, and identify the discourses, relevant to ableism or disablism, that emerged due to public dialogue among the education stakeholders. The research question guiding the study was: What kind of discourses were developed by the different education stakeholders in Greece and in Cyprus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a result of emergency policy measures for the education of disabled children?

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Methodology

We conducted a comparative study, seeking to identify the similarities and differences of the discourses developed among education stakeholders during the pandemic in relation to disabled children. Prior to engaging in the study, we discussed the cultural responses to disability primarily as a personal tragedy rather than a social construct in both cultures, the dual system of education (mainstream and special school paths of education), regulated by a policy framework that promotes segregation rather than inclusion, and the use of Greek language in the two education systems (Karagianni 2014; Symeonidou, Mavrou 2020).

The study sought for data published during the first two school years of the pandemic (2019-2020 and 2020-2021). We created two data sets, one for each country. The data sets included education policy documents published during the pandemic (retrieved from the Ministries of Education), as well as responses of education stakeholders to these measures (retrieved from online new sites and websites of NGOs, such as parental organisations, organisations of disabled people and teachers' organisations). We used keywords such pandemic and COVID-19, combined with disability, disabled children, special education, special needs.

We conducted Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, Wodak 1997; van Dijk 2001), and sought for the forces of power that created, gave rise, or challenged discourses concerning the education of disabled children during the pandemic. In doing so, we considered previous research in both countries which documents oppressive education policies for disabled children, through laws that safeguard special schooling/attendance in special settings, labelling that justifies specialist support, and violation of disabled children's right in quality education (Jones, Symeonidou 2017; Karagianni 2014). We read the data for their content and analysed them considering the time they were produced (e.g., ministerial circulars regulating the education of disabled children in the first/second lock-down in the two countries) and the discourses they initiated around policy decisions that attracted public attention (e.g. discussions around the opening of some schools

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and the closure of others on the basis of disability, discussions about minimizing the risk of infection in special schools, etc.). We attempted to see the discourses within each document and the relevance of the discourses developed in consecutive documents.

Findings

The findings are divided into two sections, to report on the discourses in each country during each lockdown.

First lockdown

In both countries, the first lockdown lasted between March and May 2020. Policy decisions for distance education were taken in different time periods, and since the education system did not use any technology for online communication or teaching, it took a while for teachers, children and parents to adjust. When schools opened in May, both countries decided to keep special schools closed. The discourse from the Ministries of Education equated disability to vulnerability, suggesting that disabled children suffer from underlying diseases, and they also have difficulties in understanding and applying health rules. Furthermore, in Cyprus, disabled children were also denied attendance in the mainstream school and their parents were expected to undergo a special procedure before being allowed to take their children to school. This section reports on the discourses in the two countries.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, the decision to 'accept' disabled children in mainstream schools after they applied to a special committee in which they submitted a doctor's assessment and other paperwork, initiated a strong debate. On the one hand, the discourse expressed by the Ministry of Education highlighted the need to 'protect' disabled children from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is why the ministerial circular

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referred to the need for 'special and fortified measures' (Ministry of Education 2020, May 20) for disabled children before being 'accepted' in the mainstream school. Symeonidou (2022) describes this as the 'naturalization of vulnerability' discourse. On the other hand, the discourse initiated by parents, academics and two Commissioners (i.e., The Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights) challenged the Ministerial discourse by pointing out that not allowing disabled children to attend the mainstream school alongside their peers without disabilities constituted discrimination on the basis of disability. Apart from the issue of violating disabled children's right in education, criticism towards the Ministry of Education pointed out the fact that disability was equated to illness, vulnerability, and incompetency. Some statements supporting this finding are:

> [The Ministry of Education] reminds us of the dangerous and obsolete medical model of disability, and creates false impressions to society that disability is a synonym for illness (Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2020, May 21).

> Disability does not indicate that a person is vulnerable to COVID-19; parents and families have the judgment to decide, just like the families of children without disabilities (Symeonidou 2020, May 21).

> How did you [in the Ministry of Education] reach to the conclusion that a child with dyslexia […], behavior problems, learning difficulties, sensory impairments or autism is in high risk to be infected from COVID-19? (Phtiaka 2020, May 21).

The Ministry insisted on its rhetoric for the protection of disabled children, and thus, it did not withdraw the policy. However, the severe criticism expressed by the Commissioners, parents and academics forced the Ministry of Education to gradually facilitate the process in the following days.

Greece

In Greece, there was no debate concerning the above issues. The underlying logic of the Ministry of Education to consider all disabled children as ill was not commented upon. In a policy discourse that was characterised as a 'war frame', using words such as 'frontline', 'enemy', 'weapons against the virus', 'battle', 'sacrifices', 'target' (Aspriadis 2021, 398), the government considered the way it handled the pandemic campaign a 'success story'. Daily announcements referred to vulnerable groups such as the old and chronically ill, but with no reference to disabled students and adults. Parents of disabled children were not included in the legal act for the leave of absence (Karagianni 2020). There has been no reference about protection measurements for state institutions for disabled residents. Despite the fact that poverty is closely related to disability, disabled people were not included as beneficiaries (Karagianni 2020). Once again, disabled children and adults were invisible and misrecognised.

Second lockdown

The second lockdown in Greece was between November 2020 until February 2021, whereas in Cyprus it was between January 2021 until end of February 2021. During this lockdown, the two countries took similar decisions in relation to the education of disabled children which differed from the decisions on the education of non-disabled children. This section elaborates on the extent to which the discourses in this period presented the inequalities in the education of disabled children as natural (in Cyprus), and disabled children as vulnerable and intellectually unable to protect themselves (in Greece).

Cyprus

In Cyprus, the decision to open special schools and early childhood settings was followed by the discourse that disabled children cannot participate in distance education because of their inability to follow. Teacher unions initially stated their disagreement for the opening of special schools and early childhood settings, but

they did not strongly oppose to the decision. On the contrary, they made suggestions that would minimise the danger of being infected from COVID-19. For example, the primary education teacher union (known as *POED*) stated:

> We completely understand that this Decree regulates the functioning of the state as a whole. However, we have reservations and dilemmas about the way that pre-primary education and special schools are treated differently than the other levels of education. At the same time, since the decisions are already taken, we call the government to implement our suggestions, which will support the functioning of schools which will provide education with physical presence (POED 2021, January 12).

Some of their suggestions were: the immediate appointment of staff in cases that the existing staff could not respond/was infected from COVID-19; more school-bus routes to serve small groups of children and reduce the possibility of infection; less students in the class; frequent rapid tests by teachers and other staff, etc. POED did not use disabling language when making suggestions, in the sense that it did not present disabled children as unable to protect themselves. Perhaps, this is explained by the public debate that took place after the first lock-down, in which parents and academics accused the Ministry for excluding disabled children and using a disabling discourse. However, POED accepted the ableist assumption behind the decision, that while it was considered risky to re-open all schools, special schools and early childhood settings could open.

Parents whose children attended the mainstream school and received individualised support by special teachers or speech therapists campaigned for their children to return to school for part of the day/week to receive special education support. The Commissioner for the Administration and Protection of Human Rights (2021, January 12) supported parents' demands. In her Report, she characterised distance education as 'difficult' and 'impossible' for disabled children and concluded that it consists 'less favorable treatment' and 'discrimination'. The Report referred to disabled children using the ableist terms 'special unit children' and "children with special characteristics". Eventually, the

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Ministry of Education accepted the claim and disabled children could go to school for specialist support.

In the case of Cyprus, disabled children were not considered 'vulnerable' in the second lockdown, as they were considered in the first one. In addition, the provision of therapies in special schools and, later on, the demands for specialist settings in the mainstream school convey the message that this is the only important aspect in disabled children's learning. The issue of learning with their peers was not an issue for parents and the Commissioner at this point of the pandemic.

Greece

In November 2020, it was decided that special schools in Greece remained opened when all other schools were closed, as the second lockdown had just started. Teacher unions did not oppose to the decision. On the contrary, the secondary education teachers' union, known as *OLME*) asked for the provision of free COVID-19 tests for teachers and students, using a disabling discourse which did not highlight the vulnerability to COVID-19; rather it underlined their inability to protect themselves.

> We ask from the Ministry of Education to provide free tests for COVID-19 for teachers and students of special schools. We should refer to the fact that the majority of students who attend special secondary education (Schools for Special Vocational Education & Training and Special Secondary Gymnasiums) could not implement measures of protection (keeping distances, cleaning hands, wearing masks) inside the classroom or even in break time, because of their mental status/functionality (autism, serious mental retardation, behavior disorder, and other deficits). We should also refer to the fact that measures are not taken during their transportation with school buses (OLME 2020, November 12).

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The national umbrella organization of disabled people (known as *ESAMEA*) also held the view that special schools should be open. However, it immediately criticised OLME for the use of stigmatizing language.

> Disabled students are excluded from society and often school is their only escape, with the therapeutic treatments offered by special schools when they are offered. The, state, during the second lock-down, heard our claims, and decided the opening of special schools so that families and children are not further affected by the consequences of the pandemic. [...] OLME's letter, dated 13.11.2020, which asks from the Ministry of Education to provide free tests for teachers and students would have been in the same line with the disability movement if it did not stigmatise [disabled children]. Our question is how this kind of language was perceived by teachers who work in special schools and are trained to work with disabled students. The letter is rife with inconsistencies and stigmatizing language, which is unacceptable for teachers (ESAMEA 2020, November 13).

Both the Teacher Union (OLME) and the umbrella Organization of disabled people (ESAMEA) hold the same view, albeit the former uses disabling language. It is important to note that the umbrella organization of disabled people criticises the quality of therapies in special schools, at the same time that it welcomes their opening.

Parents of disabled students refused COVID-19 test for their children, considering that it is a hurtful process with unpredictable repercussions acknowledging inability:

> Despicable demand on the part of OLME regarding students with disabilities! OLME deals blows with unprecedented recklessness, targeting the Special Schools and putting them in the crosshairs of the fear creeping inside us...
> Teachers themselves, who have proposed this with various justifications related to the lack of protective masks and the children's functional shortfalls, know deep down that carrying out a COVID test to children with disabilities is

a painful and extremely burdensome process for the child's psychology: even if the children consent, the imposition of a very long cotton swab that will surely hurt their nasal system will cause crisis, with unpredictable health repercussions (even epilepsy in some cases) (Katsabalakou 2020).

Parents also stated that "The way of operation of the Special Schools has been known all along AS THE SINGLE POSSIBLE WAY OF OPERATION", and they added:

What were you thinking, my dear Special Educator, when you co-signed this demand for the new school year, when you were taking up a duty in a Special School? THAT THEY WILL CLOSE WHEN PANIC BREAKS OUT? Well, they have not closed, and you are now expected to perform your duty, WITH FEAR AND FAITH. You are not a teacher, you are a healer! You chose it (Katsabalakou 2020, capitalization in the original).

The above text signed by 31 Parents' Associations and 11 network groups reinvigorates the medicalization of disability as it refers to teachers as healers and special schools as the only possible way for educating disabled children. This kind of disabling discourses usually justify harmful policy responses. Government communications and the mainstream media have been more harmful for disabled people than the pandemic itself.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysis provided evidence to suggest that ableist discourses dominated during the pandemic, both in Cyprus and in Greece. Whilst we recognise the local similarities and differences in general, and we are aware of the fact that there is not a simple way to interpret discourses, we argue that although the Ministries of Education are the powerful actors, at the same time, other education stakeholders walk the line of the "dis/ability complex", which occurs when «ableism and disablism feed off each other» (Goodley et al. 2022, 6).

After the end of the first lockdown, the "naturalization of vulnerability" discourse (Symeonidou 2022, 7) was evident in Cyprus, when disabled children were not allowed to return to school, unless a special committee decided so. The argument that this ministerial decision aimed to protect them was strongly challenged by the Commissioner for the Protection of the Child and the Commissioner of Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, parents, academics, and the umbrella organization of disabled people. These reactions employed a combination of communication strategies, which included irony, legalistic language (e.g. refences to rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – UN CRPD), and references to the literature. In Greece, although academics and the Greek Ombudsman did not react to any Ministerial decisions (the report of the Greek Ombudsman – Independent Authority, 2020 highlighted risks only for particular groups of disabled children, mainly the ones that were institutionalised), some Greek academics reacted in relation to the broader situation in regarding disabled people in the pandemic, and also highlighted the fact that disabled people were seen as vulnerable, but at the same time they were not protected enough (e.g. in institutions, in communication) (Karagianni 2020). An explanation of the different reactions between the two countries might be the fact that Greece has a long tradition of special education university courses, departments and degrees which rely to the medical model of disability. Academics with a clear inclusive orientation are less (see Karagianni and Spandagou, in the present volume). Whereas in Cyprus, the universities have a shorter history in tertiary education (the first public University operated in the early 90s). Today the universities which offer pedagogical degrees have inclusive education courses and postgraduate degrees, and no special education departments are in place. This does not mean that they all have a true commitment to inclusive education, but in combination with the fact that Cyprus is a very small country, the small community of academics felt the need to respond to oppressive discourses.

During the second lockdown, education stakeholders on both countries were engaged with the "naturalization of inequalities" discourse (Symeonidou 2022, 10), which indicated that specialist individualised provision/therapies, rather than quality education alongside their peers, is what disabled children need. Our comparative study shed light to the two aspects of this discourse, which particularly emphasised that disabled children are unable to participate in distance education (this was an argument mainly developed in Cyprus), and that what they really need is therapies provided in special schools and specialist individualised provision provided in the mainstream school (this argument was developed in both countries). In Greece, the demand of the secondary education teacher union that disabled children attending special schools should take a COVID-19 test and the ableist discourse they used to justify it, sparked the reactions of parents whose children attended special vocational rehabilitation schools. Parents used irony to criticise teachers for not being aware of their role and the characteristics of the children they were supposed to serve. In Cyprus, both parents whose children attended the mainstream schools and teachers agreed with the implementation of health measures, without blaming disabled children in their positions.

What is striking is that in both countries, education stakeholders accepted unequal opportunities for education regardless the placement of their children (i.e., in special or mainstream school). Parents who chose special schools had already accepted that therapies are what their children need (in both countries), while parents who fought for inclusive education and the Commissioner of Administration and the Protection of Human Rights who is responsible for the implementation of UN CRPD (in Cyprus) were also satisfied with special provision and therapies, and they did not hope/campaign for equality of opportunities in education. This reflects the dominance of the ableist way of thinking which led education stakeholders to disabling positions. As Goodley et al. (2022, 6), explain, "ableism and disablism feed off each other" creating "the dis/ability complex". At the same time, it can be argued that the dissatisfaction of parents from their

children's engagement in distance education, without any discussion about the digital divide (e.g., ownership of digital devices, internet access, etc.), led to the internalization of the belief that anything that could be provided in physical presence is welcomed. Parents' dissatisfaction with distance education was recorded in other countries (e.g., Couper-Kenney, Riddell 2021; Signal et al. 2021), which may explain why parents pursued specialist provision. Disabled children were again faced with a paternalistic focus on their needs. Their parents outweighed their voices. Serious questions remain about the degree to which the governments took adequate vs necessary steps to safeguard the rights of disabled children.

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Transformation and Critical Reflection: Comparing Brookfield with Mezirow

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Abstract

Transformation and critical reflection are two adult and higher education terms related to transformative learning and action. In this paper we compare Brookfield and Mezirow, two scholars who present extensive work on the specific issues. Brookfield views power analysis, hegemony uncovering, and ideology critique as integral parts of critical reflection and transformative learning. He argues that all interactions in adult education are framed by power and that ideology does not concern just our beliefs about economic, social, and political systems but also shapes interpersonal relationships and the way we perceive and make sense of the world. Mezirow, on the other hand, argues that critical reflection can be implicit, and he distinguishes critical reflection of assumptions between many categories with systemic critical reflection being closer to Brookfield's perception. Moreover, for Mezirow, making a decision constitutes an action and his perspective focuses more on the individual, pursues self-realization and progressive societal change, while Brookfield claims that critical reflection is an intentional and collaborative endeavor, his view is critical/radical, and aims at profound and drastic social change where collective action is essential.

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Introduction

Critical reflection is a term often met in the context of adult education and is inextricably connected to transformative learning as it constitutes a necessary condition for transformation. Many scholars have explored critical reflection and transformative learning, influenced by various traditions, and having different ideological backgrounds. As a result, the way each approaches critical reflection and transformation is varied and nuanced. In this paper we compare Brookfield and Mezirow, two scholars who present extensive work on the specific issues.

Mezirow's transformative theory is a theory that has deeply influenced the field of adult education, educators, and scholars. Transformative learning refers to the process of perspective transformation, through which problematic frames of reference-assumptions, beliefs and expectations are reviewed, challenged, and transformed to become more inclusive, discriminating reflective and emotionally able to change (Mezirow 2000, 1990; Zarifis 2009; Gioti 2018). Our belief systems and consequently the way we define and construe reality, make judgements and act are formed by dominant ideologies, context (social, economic, political) and our experiences (Gioti 2010; 2018). Integral in the process of transformative learning is the process of critical reflection (Brookfield 1985; Mezirow 2003, 1997, 1990; Zarifis 2009; Gioti 2018) which also constitutes a prerequisite for empowerment and emancipation that are the ultimate goals of adult education.

If we attempted to give a definition of critical reflection based on common elements of different definitions, we could say that critical reflection is a process adults adopt in order to: 1) improve their practice and attitudes, 2) detect and understand which assumptions affect them, 3) discern how these assumptions were created 4) evaluate their functionality and validity and 5) take action to change them. If we take a closer look at the different scholars' approaches, we see

that their different theoretical and ideological backgrounds are manifested in the different goals and prospects they appoint to the aforementioned processes. The main criterion to categorize what critical reflection stands for is to see its perspective and intended transformation concerning the sociopolitical and economic structure. It is obvious that scholars do not all necessarily mean the same thing when they refer to critical reflection and the transformation it may trigger, nor do they envision the same kind of education and society through these processes (the role of critical reflection in social, cultural and economic transformation) (Gioti 2022). In the following section we examine Brookfield's approach.

Brookfield

Several traditions have influenced the way Brookfield approaches and defines critical reflection and transformation but the most prominent is critical theory of the Frankfurt School (and its theorists Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Habermas, Fromm). Brookfield was also influenced by Freire, Foucault, pragmatist constructivism, analytic philosophy and logic, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy (Brookfield 2018; 2016; 2010; 2009; 2005; 2000b;). Let us now take a closer look on how Brookfield defines critical reflection and its role in transformative learning. For him critical reflection is the intentional process of identifying and checking the accuracy and validity of teaching assumptions that inform our practice and focuses on three mutually linked processes: 1) the process by which adults challenge and substitute untested accepted assumptions 2) the process through which adults adopt alternative perspectives and 3) the process by which adults recognize the hegemonic aspects of dominant ideologies and realize that they benefit a small minority (Brookfield 1995). Brookfield differentiates between three types of assumptions (Brookfield 2017):

- Paradigmatic
- Prescriptive

- Causal

Paradigmatic assumptions are those that help us arrange the world into basic categories. We don't recognize them as such, but we consider them as accurate depictions of reality. Prescriptive assumptions refer to what we think should be happening in a specific situation and we use the word *should* to express them. Finally, causal assumptions concern the way parts of the world work and are usually expressed in predictive terms. The easiest assumptions to uncover are prescriptive while paradigmatic are the most difficult to identify and critically examine and it takes a great effort and amount of negotiation to change (Brookfield 2017).

The notion of critical and the task of critical reflection as perceived by Brookfield is twofold (Brookfield 2017; 2016; 2010; 2000a; 2000b):

1) To illuminate and analyze power and power dynamics that permeate all aspects of life.

   In order to accomplish this, adults need to engage in ideology critique that is to analyze and examine assumptions that are considered as natural and reasonable ways to make sense of the world and are created by dominant ideologies such as capitalism, positivism, democracy, patriarchy and so on.

2) To expose hegemony.

   Hegemony, a term developed by Gramsci (Brookfield 2018, 2017, 2016, 2010; Leonard, McLaren 2002), is the process through which concepts, arrangements and actions that serve a small minority in power are considered by the majority as natural, fated and working for their own good when in fact they keep an unjust and oppressive system intact (id). Brookfield argues that all interactions in adult education are framed by power, a view consistent with Freire (1977) who supports that no (educational) action is neutral (Gioti 2018).

Brookfield proposes four lenses that teachers can use to become critically reflective (Brookfield 2017; 2010; 2002; 1998): students' eyes, colleagues' perceptions, personal experience, and theory. He argues that these lenses offer a

detailed understanding of teacher's teaching and of the power relations that infiltrate and influence what is happening in the classroom. Brookfield agrees with Freire that education is never neutral and has either an emancipatory or an oppressive and preservative nature. He also argues that critical reflection should be an intentional and collaborative endeavor and that it is a culturally dependent process, as our actions, language, feelings are framed by the context - social, historical, political, economic (Brookfield 2017; 2000a).

Brookfield's perception of critical reflection in the context of transformative learning, apart from perspective transformation, is inextricably linked to different ways of perceiving reality and to collective action towards drastic social change and emancipation (Brookfield 2017; 2016; 2000a).

Let us now turn to Mezirow to examine how he perceives critical reflection and its role in transformative learning.

Mezirow

Mezirow - like Brookfield - is influenced by critical theory (mostly Habermas), Freire, Pragmatism (Dewey), Constructivism and cognitive psychology. His approach, however, presents differences as compared to Brookfield's. Critical reflection according to Mezirow refers to challenging the validity of presuppositions in prior learning, to addressing - in other words - the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems are raised or specified to begin with (Mezirow 1990).

For Mezirow critical reflection can be "either implicit such as when we mindlessly choose between good and evil because of our assimilated values" (Mezirow 1998, 186), or explicit when we knowingly and consciously question and assess the reasons that led to a specific choice. When the object of critical reflection is an assumption, he differentiates between critical reflection of assumptions (CRA) or objective reframing and critical self-reflection on assumptions (CSRA) or subjective reframing (id). Critical reflection of assumptions consists of narrative

CRA and action CRA. Narrative CRA examines the validity of concepts, actions, and feelings communicated to a person through speech, writings, art and action. Action CRA examines one's own assumptions when defining a problem so as to act more effectively towards its solution. Critical self-reflection on assumptions (CSRA) on the other hand underlines critical analysis of the psychological or cultural assumptions that lead to an individual's psychological constraints and to the fundamental circumstances that form one's experiences and beliefs (id). It involves critique of a premise upon which the learner has defined a problem and its aim is to effect major perspective transformations.

Mezirow (1998) differentiates between different categories of critical self-reflection on assumptions (subjective reframing). He mentions: Narrative, Systemic, Organizational, Moral-ethical, Therapeutic, Epistemic. Of the above categories Systemic CRSA is the one that mostly resembles Brookfield's critical reflection since it involves reflection on the principles, paradigms, ideologies (economic, educational, political, religious, bureaucratic) that create roles and relationships and on the way these have molded and constrained the development of our point of view, our attitudes, our actions.

Mezirow, influenced by Habermas' communicative learning, describes a learning process that is rational, analytic, and cognitive with reason as an inherent characteristic. Transformation theory supports that human learning is grounded in the nature of human communication and that to understand the meaning of what is being communicated one should engage in critical reflection of assumptions and critical self-reflection on assumptions which constitute "the emancipatory dimensions of adult learning, the function of thought and language that frees the learner from frames of reference, paradigms or cultural canon that limit or distort communication and understanding" (Mezirow 1998, 191-192). Mezirow distinguishes between instrumental (focus on procedures or methods in the context of problem solving) and communicative learning (critical discourse validating meaning) (Mezirow 1997; 1996; 1985; 1981). Transformative learning

whose core elements are rational analysis, critical thinking and critical reflection can happen in both areas of learning (Mezirow 2003).

As far as transformative action is concerned Mezirow (1992; 1998) is of the opinion that making a decision constitutes an action and that after critical reflection one may decide not to change their behavior or change may delay due to several reasons (specific situation makes action impossible, lack of information, mental and emotional state of individual) (Gioti 2018). Mezirow focuses on the communicative aspect of critical reflection and his transformation focuses on the individual and aims at self-efficiency, self-development, self-regulation, and empowerment. The ultimate goal of adult education for Mezirow is to help adults realize their potential and become more emancipated, socially responsible and independent learners (Mezirow 1981; 1997).

Comparing Brookfield with Mezirow

Brookfield and Mezirow approach transformation and critical reflection differently and as a result the goals and prospects of their approaches are different. Brookfield only recognizes critical reflection on assumptions and claims that it is an intentional process. Mezirow on the other hand argues that critical reflection can also be implicit and distinguishes between different categories with systemic critical self-reflection closer to Brookfield's perception since it involves reflection on the ideologies and hegemonies that have shaped our perspectives and attitudes. Every category that Mezirow considers distinct in relation to systemic critical self-reflection involves some form of ideology critique according to Brookfield (2000a).

The most striking difference between the two is that Brookfield views the analysis of power, the uncovering of hegemony and ideology critique as inextricable part of critical reflection and transformative learning (Gioti 2018). Mezirow was influenced mostly by Habermas and pragmatism (mostly Dewey) and these influences are evident in the fact that he focused more on the communicative

aspect of critical reflection, on establishing the optimal conditions for communication that is prevented by power and ideologies, on discourse where use of power is discouraged while participation, pluralism and self-development are encouraged. Power, ideologies, are distortions that prevent unhampered communication. By overcoming these distortions and through constant communication people preserve and recreate social life.

Another divergence concerns the prospect of critical reflection. For Brookfield critical reflection and transformation have an emancipatory/activistic prospect that requires collective action and challenging of power, whereas Mezirow's transformative learning focuses on the individual and the reconstruction of the notion of the self" and power is examined only to the degree it prevents the true realization of the self (Inglis 1997 in Gioti 2018, 124-25). Inglis (id) supports that transformative learning is learning for empowerment that relates to people acquiring skills that will help them act and adapt to existing conditions while emancipation has to do with challenging power and the status quo.

From all the above it is understood that Brookfield's approach is critical/radical aiming at drastic social change while Mezirow's is progressive seeing change more as an adaptation within existing conditions (Gioti 2018). However, there is a social trend within Mezirow's theory that focuses on empowerment that transforms social conditions through action towards a more open, fair, and democratic society (Gioti 2018; Toka, Gioti 2021). Nevertheless, it lacks the prospect for revolutionary and profound change that underpins Brookfield's radical approach.

Conclusion

The most striking differences between Brookfield and Mezirow's approaches concern their perception of criticality and transformative action, the prospect of critical reflection and the way they separate and distinguish the process and the assumptions relating to it. Brookfield's position in relation to critical reflection is simultaneously narrower and broader than Mezirow's. Narrower because his

interpretation of critical reflection has power and hegemony as its focal point and broader because this interpretation pervades every aspect of life and human action. Our perception agrees with Brookfield's because we too feel that power dynamics and hegemony indeed influence and shape our interactions, our actions, our relationships and consequently our societies and cultures. We believe that critical reflection is truly critical when it challenges power and hegemony, when it aims at emancipation, when it tries to free the oppressed and lead to drastic social change in favor of the weak.

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The modern fairy tale as a myth in the society of the 21st century

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Abstract

Myth or fairy tale? The myth in its time is usually ambiguous. People who believe in it, consider it a reality while those who do not share its ideas, classify it in the context of the myth, as fictional. This fact gives it a local power, with potential dangers of fanaticism, in contrast to the fairy tale and its universality.

Focusing on the modern fairy tales that do not follow the dominant motifs of the last three centuries, we observe that they are radical, unusual, and unpredictable. The meanings behind their stories and images reflect their creators' critical view of the society in which they live and how they would like to improve it. Thus, they play their part towards utopia, contrary to the mythical utopia.

This paper aims to examine and highlight the ability of the modern fairy tale as a powerful educational and impactful tool on its audience, regardless of age group, and how this is achieved. The modern fairy tale has gained its power from its inseparable connection with the myth. A power that can become "magical" in the hands of writers and illustrators away from the patriarchal and sexist stereotypes of classic fairy tales.

A fraternal connection

Myth and fairy tale are mimetic acts of the human imagination. Imitation is a virtual enlargement of reality that follows the logical structure and meaning of

specific events. According to Aristotle, "*imitation seeks to represent human action in a magnified manner*". Fiction thus leads to the essence of the real world through the unreal, bringing true stories of the past into the present and future (Alker 1987).

Although their subject matter is different, myth and fairy tale belong to the same genre of discourse as they share a similar structure (Reid 1974). The driving force behind their creation is imagination and they share a common origin: dreams and dream narrative (Langer 1954; Nikolajeva 2003). They also identify with a mental symbol and take advantage of the human inability to connect the imaginary with the real (Bidney 1949) by placing great emphasis on their semiology. Although they have a common purpose, they follow different paths, both in terms of functions and the way they are formed but also in terms of their means of expression.

The beginning of the creation of myth is placed when the mental state of the wild prevailed in the world, when the dominant emotions were fear, joy, or sadness. Myth also had a particularly important role in the civilized world, of which it became a part during the Middle Ages (Bidney 1949). But regardless of the era, the creator of each myth is always the pragmatic man, who is forced to incorporate abstract concepts into material events (Tylor [1871] 2010) to cover his need of explaining what happens in nature (Boas 1944), that is, the documentation of random phenomena that lead to specific events with divine intervention and which ultimately explain the very existence of the myth. Myth is therefore treated with a religious seriousness either as historical fact or some mystical truth (Langer 1954) as it represents a metaphorical image of the natural world and life in general. And so, it can be considered a kind of primitive philosophy or metaphysical thought (Bidney 1949). In its essence, however, it is a product of ethics, culture and aesthetics that is presented as a natural event (Zipes 2002) and turns imagination into reality, incorporating real historical events or natural phenomena into its story.

The typical theme of myth revolves around the acquisition of power (Reid 1974). It is usually a tragic and not utopian theme. The characters of the myth become fixed figures of the mythical world (Bidney 1949). By reappearing in other mythical stories, they build their own fixed reality in relation to the natural rules that govern the mythical world, rules that derive from the real world. When a myth is connected to the central institutions of a society, then it increases the chances of its survival over time (Bremmer [1987] 2014). Something similar happens with the folk tales and how they survive.

As Bidney (1949) states, "*myths deal with a transcendental, prenatural, or supernatural realm of reality in some prehistoric age*" and he goes on to define myths on this premise as "*stories of anonymous origin, prevalent among primitive peoples and by them accepted as true, concerning supernatural beings and events, or natural beings and events influenced by supernatural agencies*". Burkert's ([1982] 1997) definition is also crucial for a better connection with the fairy tale, "*a myth is a traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance*".

Partially, something similar also applies in fairy tale with the exception of its determination in time. In the fairy tale, the concept of time is fluid and its placement in a specific period of time is not necessary. Unlike myth that was once considered as a reality, a fairy tale is never accepted as such by adults (Bidney 1949; Somoff 2002), even if it is based on realistic concerns. This "hypothesis of disbelief" comes from the a priori disbelief of people, which often predetermines the understanding of the meanings of a fairy tale (Somoff 2002). According to Propp ([1958] 2009), this very disbelief led to the origin of fairy tales as the people lost their faith in mythical events.

The fairy tale is motivated by wishful thinking and reflects the cultural frustrations, fears, and needs of a given society (Bettelheim [1976] 1995; Bidney, 1949) or in the case of modern fairy tale, the author's wants. However, it doesn't give rational explanations for what is happening in it. Thus, the fairy tale to "get through" with its meaning must suspend the disbelief of the reader so the reader

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perceives the fairy tale world through his own perspective as "true". The skillful imagination must create a secondary faith, contrary to that of the myth (Nikolajeva 2003), so that the reader can identify with it and bring out his personal anxieties, fears and desires and be able to discover the relationships between fictional story and his own story (Silverman 2004).

Myth should be seen as the recognition of the drama of human existence (Bidney 1949) by conveying the fear of inevitable failure despite the valiant efforts of its heroes (Alker 1987). It always begins with a loss or a problem so as to emphasize the human drama and the negative connotation that everything "human" has, as opposed to the supernatural, which is always positive (Reid 1974).

When man begins to deconstruct the meanings of the myth and examine them with a critical eye by investigating the true elements hidden behind it, then philosophy and science replace myth (Bidney 1949). As long as the myth is active, i.e., the people of a society perceive it as a reality, it is based on a temporary way of thinking that will inevitably be replaced when faced with philosophical or scientific answers. After all, myth acquires the status of "Myth" only through the perspective of those who do not share its beliefs (Bidney 1949). For the rest, myth remains a reality or a "belief". It is also pretentious, it tends to distort the utopian essence while hypnotizing and reassuring its audience (Zipes 2002).

On the contrary, a greater timeless way of thinking is found in the fairy tale because the fairy tale is never perceived as a real historical event by anyone, even during its first telling. Propp recognizes many elements in common between myth and fairy tale such as miraculous births, suspensions, and reward with magical elements, which in active myth seem real because of belief. But the fairy tale guides the reader to a prescribed happy ending, usually marked by the acquisition of a "magical" object (Propp [1958] 2009). The fairy tale makes the reader happy and restores his faith in life, while the myth with its usual tragic ending provides a kind of emotional catharsis (Alker 1987). As Luthi (1986) also states, "*in the true folktale world, God needs not to be troubled to put everything in order, but this order comes about by itself*".

Active myth fulfills a human need and is therefore necessary for human civilization at all stages of its development (Malinowski 1948). According to the psychocultural approach, a story can sometimes be characterized as a myth and sometimes as a fairy tale (Bidney 1949). This is because the object of the myth varies according to the social level, the capabilities of the people of a given society, and the degree of credibility with which they relate to each other (Tylor [1871] 2010). The divine authority of the active myth, rooted in the archaic poet, assures his audience of the fidelity of his story. When divine authority begins to wane, the myth appeals to tradition as a legitimizing agent of its tellings, and the reconstructions that may need to be made are no longer divinely inspired but historical records (Bremmer 1987).

According to Zipes (2002), for whom the folktale chronologically precedes the myth, within the myth, which is artificial but seems natural because of its essence that touches upon the tale, there is something historically indelible about the utopian desire for a better life. That is why "*the contemporary myth is not only an ideological message but also a fairy tale that cannot totally abandon its ancient utopian origins*" (Zipes 2002).

Spreading the message

According to Alker (1987) "*troubled times breed reflective thinkers*". The authors of modern fairy tales could be considered thinkers since "*a fairy tale fulfills the role of a social utopia*" (Jakobson 1966).

Every example of socioscientific research or theoretical traditions have mythologizing or moral-ideological elements, explicitly or implicitly, embedded in "standards of people" and what they should do. This happens when they try to interpret historical events in a consistent, understandable, and instructive way (Alker 1987) because the human need to spread the message across is very difficult to bend.

Zipes (2002) states, "*the fairy tale is a myth*", because the classic fairy tale has undergone a mythologizing process in order to remain eternal. In terms of its essence, however, it is purer, especially in its first form, because it is spontaneous, honest, and closer to the utopian truth. This also happens in the modern fairy tale as it doesn't go through ferments and controls to take its final form. In short, the original is the purest form of a fairy tale while each retelling adds the point of view of the "mutator".

Despite the fact that storytelling has shrunk to the domestic and family environment, modern fairy tales can be used to convey messages and attitudes without distorting historical reality or creating ideological biases in those who read or hear it (Alker 1987) and this because it continues to have a ritual logic (Reid 1974). Each fairy tale is a unique narrative that inherently belongs to the people (Mollet 2013). The fact that it is aimed at audiences of all ages leads writers and illustrators to better understand the ways in which they could "meaningfully silence" (Alker 1987) ideas and functions and create the need for readers to discover for themselves the deeper meanings that affect the moral force of the tale. The simpler a fairy tale is, the greater its penetration into different cultures. It hides messages with special meaning, in simpler forms and is structured in such a way that everyone remembers it more easily (Alker 1987). The values inherent in it derive from a long oral and literary tradition of retold stories that are constantly transforming and each has its own historical frame of reference and distinct values (Mollet 2013). If one analyzes the example of Zipes's Sleeping Beauty (2002), one will understand that whenever a classical story is re-approached through the reworking of fairy tale material (Harries 2015) with modern thought and will, a hidden mythic aspect must be revealed. An aspect that fits the modern world and in a way was timeless as it was looking ahead of its time.

The process of retelling, however, is always complex and requires an active reading in order to be understood anew. Each traditional fairy tale along with its variants form a semantic substrate that is updated with every new adaptation. At other times it leaves some faint traces of its presence while at other times, it

emerges highlighting its continuous presence (Harries 2015). Writers of retellings relate to each other through mutual enrichment and keep a fairy tale updated by refreshing it and giving it back its lost vitality by exploiting symbols and cultural history in new ways (Beaumont 2003). They discover new stories within the old ones that are relevant to the present.

From folk to contemporary, all fairy tales manage to incorporate local color through references to local social customs and habits as they engage the culture and ideology of their time, always being influenced by their creator's views. Clear references to a society's culture also serve to connect the reader more easily with the tale and its messages. A prime example of this is Disney's remakes of classic fairy tales in the 1930s that were based on the existing American culture of that era.

Changing the norms

In the modern western world, the word fairy tale brings to mind popular classic fairy tales. Classic fairy tales, like classic myths, have been ideologically mythologized, dehistoricized, and depoliticized to maintain the hegemonic interests of the bourgeoisie (Zipes 2002) with meanings and behaviors that do not follow the modern world. Classic fairy tales have transmitted archaic ideologies because their "roots" belong to archaic societies (Nikolajeva 2003), hardening over time their script into religious and patriarchal models. In this way, classic fairy tales which become tools of a bourgeois power (Zipes 2002), went through the same evolutionary path as myth (Bremmer 1987) until the last had become a weapon of religious power. Until they evolved into their final form, there were modifications of revision and refinement in the name of a bourgeois class, which is not named, because the fairy tale must appear harmless, natural, eternal, ahistorical, therapeutic, and untainted by power relations (Zipes 2002).

Classic patterns have influenced society from generation to generation. Patterns that dominated the past, such as the helpless and naturally strange woman who

only a man can come and save her from her problems, or the bold and capable man who will rescue and marry the princess and bring everything back to normal, no longer exist (Zipes 2002). In modern fairy tale retellings, patriarchal motifs give way to new or old but well-hidden meanings. For example, the awakening of Sleeping Beauty may indicate the awakening of people against their tyrant, or the awakening of the oppressed woman. These new perspectives can transform women from objects of the tale to its subject, creating new facts and thoughts (Lochhead 1990).

Other modern fairy tales raise questions about gender roles and challenge outdated cultural assumptions about social norms (Harries 2015) and all kinds of human discrimination. A truly meaningful narrative must speak both to the child and the adult, in a different way to each. If the distinctions between a fairy tale's characters are eliminated, then these distinctions will seem strange to the child both in the natural world and later in his adult life, and thus society will take steps forward towards its improvement.

But for this to happen, a modern Romantic movement will be needed. As Romanticism rejects the primal rational thought that dominated the world until then (Nikolajeva 2003) the modern fairy tale has to overcome the norms and patriarchal, rational patterns of the classical fairy tales which prevent the fairy tale from evolving and leave it stagnant.

However, one motif remains timelessly constant in fairy tales: the notion of frozen time between the different and non-specific chronotopes that coexist at the same time (Bremmer 1987). The so-called heterotopia indicates the ambivalent and unstable spatial and temporal conditions in their fiction (Nikolajeva 2003). The fairy tale is therefore independent and remains in "isolation" in contrast to the myth that takes place in the natural world with a regular flow of time and causes further myths by creating a chain of relationships between them (Bremmer 1987). It is this chain of "ingredients" that keeps the myth true and if it is broken, then the danger of being rejected becomes true.

Unlike the classics, modern fairy tales and especially those that are innovative and radical, do not conform to the old patterns (Zipes 2002). That makes their creation difficult and unpredictable afterwards because the artist will have to go out from the path of the dominant motifs of the fairy tale and commit fully to the unknown (Silverman 2004). The difficulty lies in the fact that the artist, despite the new insight he creates, always has the anxiety of abandoning old patterns, even those he considers wrong (May [1975] 1994). As far as the reader is concerned, the new patterns must appear gradually so as not to create the same anxiety and eventually to their rejection.

Modern fairy tales resist the wave of mythologizing the classic by posing existential questions (Nikolajeva 2003), modern social concerns, not necessarily about main events but also about the small and everyday concerns in the context of the self-improvement of man and society, capturing the views of the author and not those of a controlling ruling class. Ultimately, they leave the reader with an aftertaste of more than one truth, creating an ambiguity that encourages him to think for himself and adopt the subjectivity of the modern characters thus touching on postmodern thinking (Nikolajeva 2003). Each fairy tale hides a different treasure for any reader willing to dig enough, in order to find it (Silverman 2004). In a manner of speaking, each fairy tale may have been modern at some point based on the concerns it raised.

Also, in the modern fairy tale, depending on the solution it is looking for, the heroes have been transformed from passive to active figures. According to Meletinsky (1974) this passivity of classical fairy tales is due to the classic motif of a weak protagonist meeting a powerful adversary with the ultimate goal of overcoming the hero and surrendering power to him. This transfer of power is part of the context of passivity. An additional element that emphasizes the active role of the hero in the modern fairy tale is the concept of magic. While in the classic fairy tale magic is something possessed by few and the hero searches for something magical to achieve his goal because he is unable to do it alone, in the modern fairy tale magic is a natural condition of the fairy world and not something

supernatural. One could say that magic is replaced by pure imagination and the hero takes matters into his own hands.

Real possibilities for action in life, as in the imaginary world, can only be adequately appreciated when the context of the circumstances surrounding them is well understood. The power of all poetic forms comes from their ability to invoke the deepest self of human, taking him out of his everyday life, and fulfilling the promises they make through context (Alker 1987) either verbally or figuratively. To do all this, the reader/viewer must perceive the hidden meanings on a first, second or even third level.

In modern fairy tales, the illustration accompanying the text can have three functions: a) decorative, b) analogous to the text, and c) commenting on the text. Its suggestive meaning as a commentary that makes references to concepts outside the text (Zipes 2002) is the intended purpose of the modern fairy tale, since as a simple decorative element it offers nothing more than an aesthetic pleasure and as a result the reader often passes it by, and quickly forgets it. The essence of illustration is not to show to the public how capable the artist is but to strengthen the fairy tale, to help spread the messages and pass on some of his own. The illustration in order to be considered of high quality and successful must be substantial not just beautiful.

The happy ending of fairy tales can be seen as the ultimate miraculous event since its hero is the one who breaks taboos in the given fairy tale society. Something that can only happen in a fairy tale, since in the real world as well as in the mythical one, the taboo violator is stigmatized (Somoff 2002). The more intense this fairy tale taboo breaking is, however, the greater the message that passes on today's reader in relation to taboos of other times that negatively affect today's society.

Achieving the fairy tale utopia

As long as the myth fetishizes the fairy tale as a commodity (Zipes 2002), the fairy tale will not be recognized as capable of influencing the world. To do this, the myth

must be "unfrozen" through innovative stories that will dismantle and reuse the components of knowledge and wisdom contained in it in order to create new antimythical stories (Zipes 2002). In a way remythify the myth through the modern fairy tale so that the fairy tale can return to its former position.

Unfortunately, the mass public is treated with "cheap" versions of classic fairy tales that are intended to confirm the pretended meaning that is considered true and natural by the ruling class (Zipes, 2002). But the modern fairy tale that combines the personal happiness of the classical hero and society's communal improvement of the myth (Meletinsky 1974) must be treated differently, as something greater, perhaps even as a work of art.

In order for the fairy tale to become timeless and take on the status of a classic, surviving the passage of time, its meaning must be connected to central institutions and not rebuke the ruling class. But if this happens, the fairy tale will not be truly free.

Just as philosophy forced the myth to change so that it could remain alive, as something true, so the fairy tale necessarily evolved and changed its meanings from their social point of view. The patriarchal stereotypes of classic fairy tales are eliminated by their modern descendants. Both the fairy tale and the myth are two living entities that must evolve to continue offering to their audience.

As Claude Calame (1983) observed, the diminishing role of the Muses in archaic poetry gave a more secular role to the poet himself, increasing his influence. So even today, the author and by extension the modern fairy tale, does not need to keep up with his audience but through the power of the meanings that come from both the text and the image, force the reader/viewer to keep up with him in changing the pieces of society little by little, one by one, until the ultimate society change happens in a smooth way.

It is not Sleeping Beauty that must be awakened from hypnosis, but we as readers and creators of fairy tales must "wake up" if we really want our imagination and our eyes to see new horizons qualitatively different from the fairy tale scenes we have been used to (Zipes 2002). Paraphrasing the words of A. S. Byatt in the book

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"The children' book" modern fairy tales can talk about things that society does not allow one to talk about and from which man cannot be freed and become stories that they will survive, precisely because no one has told them until now.

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Critical Pedagogy, history education and democratic competences: Children reflect on educational inequalities in the past

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Abstract

Critical pedagogy is related to educating students to discover new paths of knowledge and become agents of social change. In history education, making alternative assumptions is the beginning for approaching different aspects of the past. Multiperspectivity and complexicity of history can be revealed in a pedagogical context which supports critical understanding, dialogue, and reflection on the past. An inclusive history presupposes the study of social issues and understanding the diversity of the past.

This research paper aims to present the attitudes developed by 10- to 11-year-old pupils during a historical inquiry critically approaching and reflecting on children's education in the Byzantine society. Furthermore, pupils reconsider their own experiences, in terms of social equality and justice, concerning the period of distance education due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was used as a tool for the evaluation of democratic competences which the pupils acquired and particularly: a. Critical thinking in analyzing different primary and secondary historical sources. b. Respect of otherness, focusing on gender and social differences. c. Valuing human dignity and human rights especially the right to education and d.

Valuing social justice and the importance of equal opportunities in education by a comparative examination of the Byzantine and the contemporary society.

Introduction

Critical pedagogy relates teaching and learning with the values of social justice and democracy. Fundamental is the idea of critical consciousness which mobilizes a critical approach to reality and taking action to bring about change. Motivation is intertwined with action and is linked to a learning process that is meaningful to students' lives and feeds back on it (Freire, Shor 2011, 29). An important educational practice for strengthening a critical approach to social issues is the dialogue process in which teachers and students interact equally. In addition, dialogue can be creative, contributing to the challenge of the dominant knowledge, to the formation of the new but also to the transformation and empowerment of the participants in the educational process (Freire 1998). This transformative effect can cross the borders of the school class turning it into a social, liberating process.

Individual empowerment is the necessary condition for the process of social transformation. In this dialogue that promotes critical consciousness, all learners participate equally regardless of their gender, social class, or cultural origin (Breuning 2011; Kincheloe, Steinburg 1997). The teacher's role is mediating by providing the appropriate stimuli, that allow students to gain autonomy and create their own knowledge through a process of inquiry and problem solving (Kincheloe 2008, 17).

Actually, useful knowledge derives from the needs of all learning groups and not only of those of dominant social and cultural descent. It mobilizes criticism and change in pedagogical strategies and curricula, in order to overcome difficulties both in the short and in the long term (Johnson 1983, 11-23). Knowledge of the past strengthens the language of criticism but also the language of possibility, so

that decisions can be made reflectively about what is possible in the present (Apple 1998, 8-23 in Gounari, Grollios 2010, 22).

In history education, useful knowledge can be paralleled with "powerful knowledge", which includes equal access for all to knowledge and the empowerment of students to act in and on the world with confidence. Powerful knowledge allows pupils to discover new ways of seeing the world today (Chapman 2020, 43). Equal access to knowledge resources is related to the values of democracy and social justice and also implies social changes (Young 2018).

In history education using historical sources which depict multiperspectivity can lead both to a more genuine version of the past and to a less biased historical knowledge. However, social history is often underestimated and restricted in history curricula and textbook history. History is usually written with a heroic aspect and actions of great personalities are mostly highlighted; therefore, pupils cannot truly perceive ordinary people as agents of important attainments too. In addition, examining social history issues allows highlighting the effects of the macro-history on the ordinary people's life (micro-history).

Multiperspectivity conduces pupils to approach critically the already written aspect of the past and ask for alternative explanations. The inclusion of different perspectives incites pupils to empathize with the situation and views of persons who were deprived of power to write history, such as women, children or people who belong to minority groups. A wider historical consciousness can be developed which recognizes otherness and includes an understanding of variability and change (Kölb, Konrad 2015, 21).

Furthermore, in contrast to a traditional or an exemplary aspect of historical consciousness in which the past has a normative and limiting effect on the present by providing general rules, a genetic historical consciousness is aimed that is linked to a multidimensional critical and reflective approach. Historical knowledge should be acknowledged as a construction that changes over time according to the context in which this construction is created and the community of inquiry by which it is made (Rüsen 2006, 50; Seixas 2006, 146-149).

The comparison among the past and the present is crucial in history teaching. Historical reality is intertwined with social reality (Pandel 1987). Using contrasting, descriptive concepts such as "yesterday/today" (time), "real/imaginary" (reality), "static-variable" (historicity), "we/you" (identity), "up/down" (politics), "poor/rich" (economy, society), "right/wrong" (ethics), students can understand in depth historical time in linear and multiple dimensions (Figure 1).
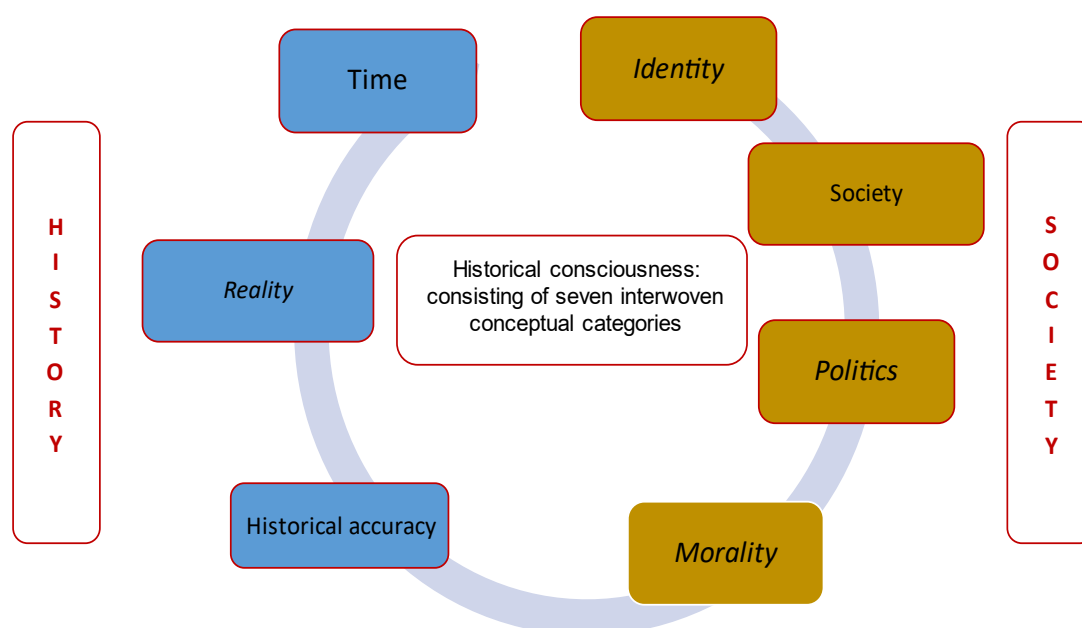

Figure 3: *Historical Consciousness, Pandel H.J. (1987)*

Furthermore, this social dimension of historical consciousness acknowledges the multivocality of the contemporary societies and the importance of recognizing otherness in its different social expressions, especially in terms of gender, social class, ethno-cultural origin, contributing to interaction and intercultural communication.

Pupils can critically understand similarities or differences among the distant and the contemporary societies. They can argue for common values such as justice, equality, community, freedom in order to both personal and social transformation be succeeded according to a critical democratic pedagogy (Mac Laren 2015: xiv).

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) of the Council of Europe relates history education and critical knowledge to the development of abilities which are necessary for promoting democratic values and active citizenship. It provides a systematic and comprehensive framework for implementing Education for Democratic Citizenship, Human Rights Education in formal education systems. It comprises principles and guidelines for establishing democratic, diverse and inclusive history curricula and pedagogy. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive resource to plan and implement teaching, learning and assessing of competences for democratic culture (CDC) (CoE 2018).

Historical background

In the Byzantine medieval society (330 – 1453), children were not in the center of attention. Childhood wasn't recognized until the last centuries of the empire. Girls from 12 and boys from 14 years of age were considered to be prepared to undertake responsibilities which adults had (Armenopoulos 2006).

They suffered the consequences of long wars and painful diseases. They lost their lives or their family. Boys of lower social classes were introduced to the world of work early and they were deprived of the right to education. In the case of girls, even if they derived from upper social class or had noble origin, they got married at a young age. Girls were taught by private teachers at home, and they couldn't continue their studies despite their competences (Lymberis 2013, 136).

Education was recognized in Byzantium as an important value and was closely linked to spiritual culture to a considerable extent due to the influence of the christian religion. However, schools were private, and many children did not have access to them. In some cases, emperors undertook to establish schools for orphaned children and to facilitate the protection children from different social and ethno-cultural backgrounds, but this occurred in the last centuries of the over-thousand-year duration of the Byzantine Empire (Talbot Rice 1988, 257).

Research aims

This research paper aims to present the attitudes developed by 10- to 11-year-old pupils, examined comparatively during a historical inquiry process of different primary and secondary historical sources while reflecting on children's life and education in the Byzantine society. An important dimension of the described action research was the critical reflective approach of their familiar experiences of inequalities in education and their causes and consequences. Much of these experiences of educational inequalities concern the period of distance education due to Covid 19 pandemic.

The effect of a historical inquiry to life practice is important to be discernible according to Rüsen's Disciplinary Matrix (1993) conducing to the identity construction nowadays (Shaw, Debra 2021, 3). An additional aim was to enrich the school text with new historical sources that describe inequalities in Byzantine education.

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture was used as a tool for the evaluation of democratic competences which the pupils acquired during the historical inquiry. Specifically:

a. Critical thinking skills analyzing different primary and secondary historical sources.

b. Respect of otherness, focusing on social differences.

c. Valuing human dignity and human rights especially the right to education.

d. Valuing social justice examined comparatively in Byzantine and the contemporary society the importance of equal opportunities in education, each person's self -efficacy and social sustainability.

Methods

As a main research strategy, critical action research was applied aiming through equal, dialectical interaction both to the critical approach of educational inequalities in the special context of Byzantine society and the educational

inequalities in the present by empowering the voice of pupils especially those who derived from deprived social backgrounds. In the educational and research process twenty - five children participated actively. The substantial use of their perceptions and experiences in the learning process enhanced their interest and critical thinking (Shor & Freire, 2011: 56). During the research process pupils analyzed primary and secondary sources, which were written both by men and women authors who lived in byzantine period or subsequently (Komnini-Anna 11 A.D.; Spyridakis 1954; Nikolaou 2005; Poulakou- Rebelakou 2007; Tsabis 1999; Tsandilas 1993).

The historical sources were included in specific activities which were used as research and educational tools too. Pupils were asked preliminary as for their aspects on children's education in Byzantine society through semi-structured questionnaires. In addition, pupils were interviewed on the same topic during and in the end of the research process (formative and summative evaluation).

Especially for the evaluation of historical knowledge and critical understanding during the particular action research the following descriptors of Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture were used as criteria (Figure 2). The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) of the Council of Europe relates history education and critical knowledge to the development of abilities which are necessary for promoting democratic values and active citizenship.

Knowledge and critical understanding

KNOWLEDGE AND CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING	
1	**Knowledge and critical understanding of history**
ID	*Descriptors*
2055	Can reflect critically on processes of historical investigation
2051	Can reflect critically on the fluid nature of history and how interpretations of the past vary over time and across cultures.
2044	Can reflect critically on global inequalities
2	**Knowledge and critical understanding of the self**

ID	Descriptors
1805	Can reflect critically on his/her own values and beliefs
1806	Can reflect critically on himself/herself from a number of different perspectives
1809	Can reflect critically on his/her own perspective(s) on the world
1810	Can reflect critically on his/her own prejudices and stereotypes and what lies behind them
3	**Knowledge and critical understanding of politics, law, and human rights**
ID	Descriptors
2002	Can explain why everybody has a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.
2003	Can explain the meaning of basic legal concepts, including justice, equality, the need for laws and regulations, and the rule of law
2004	Can reflect critically on the concept of human rights
2009	Can reflect critically on the human rights challenges that exist in his/her own community and society

Figure 2: *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture – Volume 2*

The results

At the beginning of the first phase of the action research, the previous views of the students about children's education in Byzantium emerged through semi-structured questionnaire. Highlighting preconceptions are important in order to be transformed and new views of the past and the present be made as a part of a "historically literacy" (Lee 2011).

Students didn't know that many children in Byzantium hadn't access to education. Also, they weren't aware of the reasons for this distinction. They justified the non-access of children to education in Byzantine society as an expected particularity of the specific historical context in the past generalizing and mostly wrongly

estimating. Some of the characteristic views of the students: "People didn't pay attention to education back then". (School) knowledge wasn't necessary for their jobs." "There were constant wars, and they had no time for education".

Two pupils also expressed the view that work was an alternative for children from lower social classes who couldn't attend school. "Since they didn't go to school, the children should have to work to help their poor family".

Then the visual sources that showed boys working in construction and girls weaving at the loom, were discussed. Labor is described either as an apprenticeship with experienced craftsmen or as an intergenerational transfer of knowledge in the family environment according to the textbook. Students commented on the photographic sources and noted with empathy that they would not engage in those tasks were they in the shoes of the Byzantine children. So, learning this form of labor cannot replace training in a school setting. "Even if the teachers are very strict," as a pupil humorously noted.

In the second phase, students were provided with new primary and secondary written sources in which specific cases of unequal treatment and exclusion from education were presented in Byzantine society, describing each case's specific conditions. History became more people-centred and students were motivated to learn about the causes of discrimination through different examples. "Anna Komnini, daughter of an emperor, did not go to university because she was a girl and women were only meant to engage in house related activities for the home. But she studied on her own and had a very good knowledge of medicine". "Theoktisti was from a poor family. When she was orphaned, her relatives sent her to a monastery to receive congregational training". Pupils understand individual categories of discrimination according to gender (boys - girls), economic status (children of emperors, merchants, farmers), social origin, family status (orphaned children, with many siblings). Comparison is enhanced through the understanding of social differences. It also allowed students to recognize the multiplicity of the past through the highlighting of differences.

It is important in the historical literacy process students be encouraged to approach critically historical sources. In particular, it is meaningful to distinguish the emphasis or silence of persons, events and situations, the description or subjective interpretation of events, the political and social conditions in which the text was created, the identity of the author (Moniot 2004, 269).

In the third phase students are encouraged to describe cases of discrimination and unequal opportunities in education that they know of. The biographical approach is used and both the experiences of relatives in the recent past and the exclusion experiences of the same children during the quarantine are highlighted. First-order historical concepts are used to describe the differences and inequalities of access to education in the past are used more consciously, while highlighting the more specific conditions in the present. In particular, one student mentioned that her mother, who came from a mountain village in Xanthi, in northeastern Greece, did not go to the University, because she was a girl and her family wanted her to marry early.

Of particular interest are the experiences of the children during distance education. A student mentioned that he could not attend classes because there were four children at home and they did not have the respective same number of computers. Thus, his older brothers were prioritized in using the necessary means to attend their lessons. It was also discussed that some parents did not know how to use the e-learning platforms in order to help their children. A refugee pupil of Syrian origin reported that although he had a mobile phone and could connect to the platform, it was not easy to attend the lesson for a long time. The non-access to education of children who lived with their families in refugees' camps was also discussed under the scope of current affairs. Students sought more information about specific conditions. "Refugees children did not go to school at all for an entire year, because there were no buses for transportation". "They were believed to be contagious to those living outside the camps. "There was also no internet connection". The issue of discrimination in education is related to the present and the experiences of exclusion from education that they themselves had during the

quarantine. The connection with their identity strengthens their interest in the critical approach of the past but also their reflective perspective in relation to the present. In that case, knowledge of the past conduces to critical consciousness. Thus, educational process empowers students to understand in depth their social-cultural reality (Pavlidis 2015, 26).

In the fourth phase pupils created captions for the pictures in the book section showing boys and girls working. They used first-order historical concepts such as (un-)justice and (in-)equality, specializing in the most specific historical context. In addition, they attributed the lack of access to education to the unequal treatment of girls and those from lower social classes. Added to the same texts, they compared the distant past with the recent past that they themselves experienced, pointing out similarities and differences, continuities and changes. Understanding of second-order historical concepts is evident (Stradling, 2001: 95-96). "In Byzantium many children did not go to school, because they were poor or because they believed that girls should stay at home to have a family. Today things have changed. Everyone goes to school. But there are sometimes exceptions, because even today there are people who are poor." "School is for everyone now compared to the Byzantine period". Not like in the past, but there are nowadays children who cannot go to school, like the refugees."

Students' texts were enriched with contemporary photographic sources which they collected themselves and concerned children who work and do not go to school (i.e., children in Asian cloth and carpet industries, in building constructions, beggars). Their texts were posted on the school's website. Also, as part of the rewarding recycling of old devices, two tablets were purchased and given to refugee schoolmates who didn't have a computer for the distance learning during the Covid-19 quarantine period. Pupils reflected on inequalities in education and on human rights in their community but also more widely. At the same time, they were motivated to correct an injustice which their schoolmates experienced.

Conclusions

In the described research, the learning process based on historical inquiry is reinforced with the objectives of the critical action research. The selection of the appropriate historical sources can conduce to the enrichment of the historical narrative with new perspectives of the past. Furthermore, aiding pupils to interpret historical sources can motivate them to be interested in the past and empower them to search and approach it critically. Students acknowledge the importance of people's voices which were excluded from the already recorded history.

The Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture of the Council of Europe can be a useful tool for the evaluation of critical understanding of history and promoting democratic values and active citizenship. But its implementation presupposes flexible curricula and interactive pedagogies in order to include different and possibly conflicting historical narratives.

The comparative approach of educational inequalities in the distant and recent past strengthens students' historical consciousness, as they are exposed to history multi-chronologically (Thorp 2014, 21). Students interpret educational inequalities by understanding the particular context of conditions and values. Furthermore, they reflect critically on themselves and strengthen their identity. Pupils' experiences of restrictions and exclusions in education during the recent past of distance education due to the Covid 19 quarantine were utilized and recognized as important historical knowledge as well.

Historical concepts of the first order such as equality, justice, rights were examined comparatively in different historical contexts and reinforced critical understanding. In addition, they were enriched in terms of their meaning by including different aspects of inequality and at the same time strengthened the awareness of discrimination.

The comparative approach of educational inequalities in the present and in the past has also allowed the development of second-order historical concepts such

as the causes that give rise to inequalities, the continuation of injustice in different forms or present changes.

Multi-perspective historical knowledge can enhance the development of critical consciousness allowing both the critical reflection of the past and the orientation to the present. It can provide new perceptions and arguments to the community dialogue as well as raise awareness and change both individually and collectively. According to Freire (1972) "Conscientisation" indicates a process of becoming aware of one's own context and identity.

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6th - Grade Students' Interest in Computing for Social Purposes After a School-Year Computational Thinking Practices Course

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Abstract

Computational thinking (CT) refers to a universally applicable problem-solving skill set that involves expressing problems and their solutions in a way that an information-processing agent, such as a human, a machine, or a combination of both, can efficiently execute. Lately, there has been an increase of researchers suggesting that we must place CT in a new, more participatory context in which programming is a means of contributing to and participating in the real world. Our study aimed to investigate the impact of a CT course on primary school students' interest in computing. More specifically, we focused on their interest in using computers to create new technologies to solve global problems. We conducted a one-group pre-test–post-test and collected 37 valid questionnaires from 6th-grade students who worked collaboratively in Scratch, a visual programming environment, during a school-year course. The data were collected using a Likert scale. Despite our study's limitations, the results suggest that a course based on the social dimensions of CT and involving an online community can improve students' interest in computing and especially for social purposes.

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1. Introduction

The term *computational thinking* (CT) became popular and triggered extensive academic debate in 2006 when Jeanette Wing defined it as "a universally applicable attitude and skill set everyone, not just computer scientists, would be eager to learn and use" (Wing 2006, 33). According to Wing, by utilizing the core ideas and the mental tools of Computer Science (CS), CT aims to solve problems, build systems, and understand human behavior. Since computational methods enable us to handle issues that otherwise would not be possible, Wing (2006) argued that we should add CT to every child's abilities, together with reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Although the roots of CT can be found in the '40s (Polya 1945), the term CT was first used in 1980 by Seymour Papert in his book *Mindstorms* (Papert 1980). Papert described CT as a mental skill acquired by children through programming, but he did not provide any more explanation. Nevertheless, Papert's development of CT can be described as the result of his constructionist educational theory, in which the social and affective aspects of learning are as significant as the technical ones. Although multiple definitions of CT have been proposed since Wing's statements, according to Lodi and Martini (2021), who made an extensive analysis of Papert's obscure description of CT and Wing's definition of CT, both views are extremely useful. Consequently, we need to focus not only on the usefulness of computing as an interdisciplinary learning tool for the modern digital world but also on the social and affective aspects of students' participation in the creation of every computational artifact. This study aims to examine the effect of a CT practices course on students' interest in computing for dealing with real-world problems. First, we present the latest framings regarding CT and relevant research regarding students' interest in computing. The following sections address

methodology issues and the last sections present our findings and their discussion, along with the limitations that need to be taken into consideration.

2. Towards new framings of CT

Friedman and Kahn (1994) suggested that "CS education should not drive a wedge between the social and the technical, but rather link both throughout the formal and informal curriculum" (Friedman, Kahn 1994, 69). Recently, Gomes et al. (2019) argued that computer scientists not only can but also should make significant contributions to addressing the major socioeconomic and environmental issues that humanity is facing. These initiatives are combined under the new discipline of *computational sustainability*. According to Resnick and Rusk (2020), we are at a crossroads where we should support students, for them to become proficient with new technologies and contribute to shaping the society of the future. In other words, they need to have opportunities to use computing to directly improve their lives and the lives of others in their communities, thus taking *computational action* (Tissenbaum et al. 2019). These views have a direct impact on current CS education and subsequently on the approaches regarding students' CT development.

According to Kafai et al. (2020), we can identify three framings of CT in K-12 education (see Table 1), each of which represents different scales of analysis. The first one, *cognitive CT*, is the dominant framing and focuses on the skills and competencies needed for living and working in the modern, digital world. Cognitive CT is focused on students' understanding of the CT dimensions, as they have been defined by the various CT models and frameworks proposed by researchers. According to the CT model of Brennan and Resnick (2012), for example, on which the following CT models and frameworks were based, CT consists of a) CT concepts (sequences, loops, events, parallelism, conditionals, operators, data), b) CT practices (experimenting and iterating, testing and debugging, reusing and remixing, abstracting and modularizing), and c) CT

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perspectives (expressing, connecting, questioning). In this context, CT is regarded as a problem-solving skill set and is usually identified with it (Grover, Pea 2018; Kale, Yuan 2021). Nevertheless, although many researchers have recently investigated the effects of pair programming in the development of CT (Fagerlund et al. 2022; Leow, Huang 2021), the problem-solving process in the context of cognitive CT is often viewed as a solitary process, applied by each student independently.

Table 1. *Overview of the CT framings in K-12 education*

Frame	Priorities	CT
Cognitive	Measurable skills and competences acquired by individual learners	CT concepts and practices
Situated	Equity, interest, and creativity through communities of practice and computational participation	Expansion to creating shareable applications, to communities, and to remixing
Critical	Justice, ethics, computing for social change	Understanding and critical analysis of existing computational infrastructures, creating applications for awareness and activism

The second framing, *situated CT*, emphasizes the significance of personal creative expression and social participation in digital media as a means of becoming computationally proficient. In the context of situated CT, the students need to design and program digital artifacts that are shareable to authentic audiences, thus gaining computational fluency. Situated CT is based on Papert's work (1980) and connected learning theories (Ito et al. 2013) and is also known as *computational participation* (Kafai 2016). The latter refers to the expansion of CT

from creating code to creating shareable applications, from tools to communities, and from "from scratch" creation to remixing.

The *Creative Computing Curriculum* (Brennan et al. 2014) created by Harvard's Graduate School of Education Creative Computing Lab, which we used for our research presented in this paper, constitutes an example curriculum within the context of situated CT. The guide's activities take place in the Scratch programming environment, which emphasizes the socio-cultural context of the activities and the students' creativity. This emphasis is supported by the Scratch online community, where students can provide and receive feedback, reuse and remix projects created and shared by other users and consequently enable them to create something that may be much more complex than they could on their own (Dasgupta et al. 2016; Xing 2019). Although in situated CT we continue to focus on students' development of skills and abilities, we emphasize how computers can be used to convey students' interests and identities to others in their communities (see Fig. 1), thus advancing equity in the field.
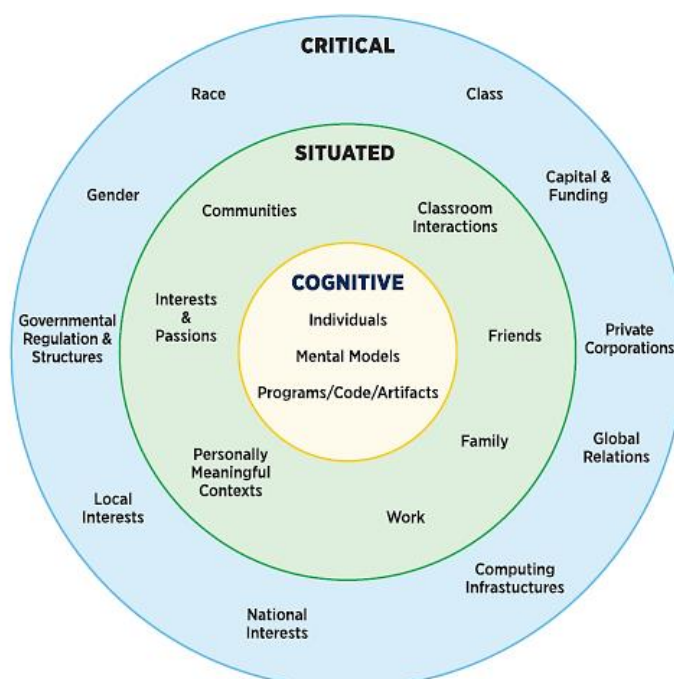

Figure 1: *Different scales of analysis, according to CT framings (Kafai et al. 2020, 50)*

Finally, the last framing, *critical CT*, acknowledges that computing is not a universally beneficial social good. As a result, it suggests an analytical approach to the principles, practices, and technical foundations of computing as a component of a broader effort to promote education for justice and address the global concerns regarding politics, morality, and ethics. Students' objectives include using computers for social good, analyzing the computational elements of social challenges, and committing to future ethical computing behavior (Kafai & Proctor, 2021). Loe and Soep (2016) adopted the framing of critical CT and applied a collaborative project in which young people partnered with adult colleagues to create an interactive map of gentrification. According to the researchers, the youngsters emerged as critical problem-solvers, producing a sample of the use of digital tools for social transformation. According to Vakil, critical CT has to be broadened, to help us understand "how new technologies are subtly, but deeply, embedded in systems of power and therefore carry significant implications for questions of equity and justice" (Vakil 2018, 46). For example, crime-predicting software, technologies for the thorough investigation of immigrants, and mass media surveillance software can pose threats to social equity and justice. To sum up, critical CT focuses on coding and programming skills but highlights their critical use. Finally, we need to point out that these three framings need to be considered "in dialogue with one another rather than in opposition" (Kafai et al. 2020, 46).

3. Related work

The cognitive framing of CT, as mentioned above, remains the dominant framing in the context of CS education. As a result, little research has been conducted regarding students' interest in computing for social purposes and social change, following the situated and critical framings of CT. Kong et al. (2018) conducted a survey with 287 primary school students in grades 4-6, in which they applied CT and programming concepts and practices to address community problems in their

projects. The researchers found that students with greater interest in programming viewed it as having more impact on both the technological world and on people's lives. The scale's items regarding programming's impact included the use of programming to help solve problems in the world, to make people's lives better, and to make daily life easier. Iversen et al. (2018) worked with students of 11-15 years in the FabLab@School project, which focused on computational empowerment, which is related to the digital skills needed to understand digital technology and its effects on their lives and society. The researchers argued that a computational empowerment approach improved students' understanding of digital technology and strengthened their design literacy according to the program's philosophy. The meta-review of Hsu et al. (2018) concluded that it is crucial to adopt the cross-domain teaching mode when teaching CT skills to increase students' understanding of cross-domain knowledge, provide them with experience using cross-domain knowledge and computing to solve challenging issues in real world and foster their interest in various scientific areas.

4. Materials and methods

4.1. Research questions and design

This study aims to investigate the effect of our CT-related course on primary school students' interest in computing. More specifically, our research question is the following:

1. Does our CT-related course affect 6th-grade pupils' interest in computing for social purposes?

We used a one-group pre-test–post-test design to examine our research question, since we tested the effect of an independent variable (CT-related course) on a dependent variable (interest in computing) that was measured at Time 1 (pre-test) and Time 2 (post-test) (Cohen, Manion, Morrison 2007; Knapp 2016). A one-group pre-test–post-test constitutes a form of pre-experiment, often conducted

before a true experiment, so that the researchers may determine whether an intervention has any effect on a small sample. This type of design is similar to a within-subjects experiment, as each participant is assessed first under the control condition and then under the treatment condition. Nevertheless, it differs from a within-subjects experiment because it is impossible to test a participant in the treatment condition first and then in the control condition. In other words, the order of conditions cannot be counterbalanced (Price et al. 2017). As a result, even if a significant effect is found during a one-group pre-test–post-test, the researchers cannot rule out alternative explanations.

4.2. Participants and setting

Our study sample consisted of 37 students that attended the 6th grade of two public primary schools in Athens (Greece) during the 2018–2019 school year. We selected our participants after employing a convenience sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling where the sample is selected from a group of people that the researchers can easily access (Clark 2017). We collected 74 valid questionnaires, 37 pre-test and equal post-test questionnaires regarding participants' interest in computing, but we did not collect any additional demographic characteristics of the participants, since the investigation of potential differences or correlations related to their interest in computing and their demographic characteristics does not fit within the scope of our study.

The first author collaborated with the students' ICT teacher to teach the CT-related course during the regular school hours devoted to Information Technology. In total, the course required approximately 28 teaching hours, one per week, and was taught in the school's ICT room.

4.3. Procedure

The course's activities were based on the Creative Computing Curriculum, which was created by Harvard's Graduate School of Education Creative Computing Lab (Brennan et al. 2014). Our participants worked in pairs using Scratch (Resnick et al. 2009), a block-based visual programming language, to create a wide range of interactive media projects. The first author chose the students' partners at random, and they stayed the same throughout the 28-week course.

At the end of the first, introductory lesson, we asked the students to complete the scale regarding their interest in computing for social purposes. The following two lessons were also introductory and helped the students familiarize themselves with the programming environment and the course's objectives. Although the two classes of students worked at slightly different pace, they required approximately 25 more lessons to complete the course's units. The first unit (Exploring) focused on sequences (CT concept), and experimentation and iteration (CT practice). The next one (Animations), was arts-based and aimed at students' experimentation with loops, events, and parallelism (CT concepts). During the unit's activities, the students practiced debugging Scratch programs in addition to designing and programming animations. The next unit (Stories) included digital storytelling activities, focusing on events and parallelism (CT concepts) as well as experimenting and iterating, testing and debugging, and reusing and remixing (CT practices). Finally, the last unit (Games) focused on conditionals, operators, and data (CT concepts) as well as experimenting and iterating, testing and debugging, and abstracting and modularizing (CT practices) through the creation, debugging, and remixing of games-related Scratch projects. Finally, one of two classes created a personal project, that included many of the CT concepts and practices they had mastered during the previous units. During the last lesson, the students completed once more the scale regarding their interest in computing for social purposes.

4.4. Data collection and analysis

We collected our data at two time points, during the first and the last lesson of our course, using a 4-point Likert scale (*1*=Not at All Interested to *4*=Very Interested). Our instrument makes part of Rodriguez's (2015) instrument that measured 7th-grade students' computing interest, confidence, outcome expectations, career knowledge, and intent to persist in CS after participating in unplugged CS activities. We asked our participants to answer the 8 questions of the scale that regarded their interest in computing for social purposes. More specifically, the scale's items assess students' interest in artificial intelligence, algorithms for optimizing computers, data representation, computer game design, networking, new applications of computer science, and technological solutions to world problems using CS. However, before each administration of the scale, we had a short discussion with the students about the challenges regarding the use of technology in solving real-world problems and we pointed out that the scale's items are placed in the same context. Students required no more than 5 minutes to respond. Finally, the value of Cronbach's α coefficient ($\alpha > 0.60$) suggested that the scale is acceptably reliable both for the pre-test and the post-test (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994).

We used a paired-samples t-test, to investigate whether the mean difference between the students' interest in computing for social purposes before and after our CT course is statistically significantly different from zero. We conducted our analysis for each question that comprised the scale regarding students' interest as well as for the students' overall interest. The test met the assumption that the distribution of the difference scores between the instrument's pre-test and post-test scores is approximately normal since we found the Z scores for skewness and kurtosis to be less than 1.96 (Kim 2013). Finally, we did not detect any outliers in our data and calculated Cohen's *d*, as a measure of effect size.

5. Results

We conducted a paired-samples t-test to determine whether the mean difference between the students' interest in using computers for social purposes before and after our CT course is statistically significantly different from zero. The results (see Table 2) showed that our participants' interest is higher after the completion of the course (M= 2.92, SD= 0.30) than before it (M= 2.84, SD= 0.39), a statistically mean increase of 0.08, 95% CI [0.15, 0.01], $t(36)$= 2.295, p= .028, d= 0.37. The value of Cohen's d coefficient indicates that the effect of the course on students' interest is small but close to medium and that approximately 64.4% of the post-test scores are higher than the pre-test scores.

Table 2: *Paired-samples t-test results for pre-test and post-test regarding students' interest in computing.*

Regardless of whether or not you have actually tried it, how interested are you in…	Pre-test		Post-test		$t(36)$	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Pair 1 Making computers more intelligent (more like people)?	3.19	0.52	3.30	0.46	-1.071	0.291	0.18
Pair 2 Creating algorithms to make computers faster?	3.41	0.60	3.46	0.51	-0.627	0.534	0.10
Pair 3 Understanding how computers represent data and images?	2.38	0.72	2.24	0.68	1.709	0.096	0.28
Pair 4 Designing computer games?	3.62	0.49	3.73	0.45	-2.089	0.044*	0.34
Pair 5 Computer networking (for example, the internet)?	2.54	0.51	2.51	0.65	0.329	0.744	0.05

Pair 6	Thinking of new ways to apply computer science (for example, new apps or software)?	2.62	0.49	2.76	0.55	-2.372	0.023*	0.39
Pair 7	Programming computers to create new apps (in other words, writing code)?	2.73	0.61	2.97	0.73	-2.165	0.037*	0.36
Pair 8	Finding technological solutions to world problems using computer science?	2.22	0.71	2.38	0.55	-2.233	0.032*	0.37
Pair 9	Total Interest	2.84	0.39	2.92	0.30	2.295	0.028*	0.37

*p<0.05

We also conducted a paired-samples t-test for each one of the items that comprise the scale that measures students' interest in computing, to examine possible statistically significant differences from zero. We found that our participants are more interested in designing computer games after attending the course (M= 3.73, SD= 0.45) than before it (M= 3.62, SD= 0.49), a statistically mean increase of 0.11, 95% CI [0.21, 0.01], t(36)= 2.089, p= .044, d= 0.34. We also found that our course resulted in higher score in their interest in thinking of innovative approaches to applying computer science, a statistically mean increase of 0.14, 95% CI [0.25, 0.02], t(36)= 2.372, p= .023, d= 0.39 as well as in their interest in coding to create new applications, a statistically mean increase of 0.24, 95% CI [0.47, 0.02], t(36)= 2.233, p= .003, d= 0.38. Finally, our results show that our participants are more interested in using computer science to provide technological solutions for global issues after the course (M= 2.38, SD= 0.55) than before it (M= 2.22, SD= 0.71), a statistically mean increase of 0.16, 95% CI [0.31, 0.02], t(36)= 2.233, p= .032, d= 0.37. The value of Cohen's d coefficient for the items whose scores were statistically significantly increased from pre-test to post-test ranged from 0.34 to

0.39, indicating that our instructional intervention had a small, but tending to medium, effect on students' interest.

Lastly, although our students showed high interest in artificial intelligence and the development of algorithms to optimize computers' performance, we found no statistically significant differences between their pre-post and their post-test scores. Furthermore, our students' interest in understanding the representation of data and graphics by computers and in networking declined, but we did not find any statistically significant differences between pre-post and post-test scores.

6. Discussion

During the last few years, many researchers argue that we are at a critical point, where we should not only support students to become computationally proficient but also use these skills to shape the society of the future and address the major socioeconomic and environmental issues that humanity is facing (Gomes et al. 2019; Resnick, Rusk 2020; Tissenbaum et al. 2019). These views have direct implications for current approaches to the development of students' CT. Our study investigated the effect of a CT practices course through the use of a visual programming language on students' interest in using computers for social purposes. Our course is placed in the context of situated CT (Kafai et al. 2020) and computational participation (Kafai 2016), given that we emphasized personal creative expression, social participation in the Scratch online community, and reusing and remixing activities. Analysis of the collected data suggested that a CT course based on its social dimensions and involving an online community can help improve pupils' overall interest in computing and especially for social purposes. We also found that the course can help improve the participants' interest in thinking of new ways to apply computer science programming computers and create new apps. We should note that students' interest focused on finding technological solutions to world problems using computer science and not just making computers more intelligent or faster. The main contribution of our study

is the fact that it focused on the social dimensions of CT, which have not been sufficiently investigated. Furthermore, our research focused on novice programmers– primary school children who participated in CT-related activities during their regular school day and worked in pairs. Finally, our study has some limitations that require careful interpretation of our findings. First, we cannot ignore exogenous factors' influence on the dependent variables and difficulties in quantifying the phenomena under investigation. Furthermore, the sampling process and the small sample size may reduce the power of the study and increase the margin of error.

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Teaching the American far right white to Canadian undergraduates: "Thoughts and prayers"

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Abstract

The January 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol by the "far white" was an alarming reminder that in the U.S., white supremacy is alive and malignant. A senior seminar, "Extremism in America" offered at Canadian university interrogated the roots of the current "far right." The seminar probed the root of the current flowering of Richard Hofstadter's "paranoid style in American politics." While the violent elements of far-right extremism in some respects is *sui generis*, earlier flowerings of xenophobia in America's 1870s Reconstruction; the 1920s Ku Klux Klan, and 20th-century resistance to African American civil rights were interrogated for possible antecedents for the recurrence of what historian Richard Hofstadter termed "the paranoid style in American politics." Students' analysis of Michael Kimmel's *Angry White Men* with its study of a sense of "aggrieved entitlement" among many white men facing economic marginalization and perceived multicultural assaults, and James Aho's *Far Right Fundamentalism*, are presented as we worked to untangle the strains in 21st-century white American's "aggrieved sense of entitlement" that culminated in the January 2021 failed coup in Washington, D.C.

How does one make sense of the rise of extremist white nationalism and fit the last unsettling decade into the larger framework of American history? In Fall 2021, I taught a senior seminar that looked at, to paraphrase Richard Hofstadter, the

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Extremist style in American politics. (Hofstadter 1964). After four years of the Orange One, culminating in 2021's failed putsch, this seemed an opportune time to explore the roots of violent xenophobia and assess the parallels and dissimilarities between current rightists and earlier radical movements.

As Panayota Gounari has documented, social media have disseminated a narrative of white rage that culminated in the storming of the American Capitol by those whom Michael Kimmel calls "Angry White Men." (Gounari 2021; Kimmel 2015). In our seminar, though, we interrogated the deeper roots of such extremism, looking at similarities and dissimilarities between today and earlier movements such as the Ku Klux Klan or segregationist White Citizens Councils. I took my Canadian students through a tour of the highlights (low lights?) of American history going back to Redeemers such as "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, who helped violently suppress America's first stab at biracial democracy in the 1870s Reconstruction South. (The parallels between the rage the election of the first black congressmen evoked to the anti-Obama frenzy are apparent.) We also explored the 1920s Klan, alarmed by supposed "foreign" Catholic, Jewish, and black domination of America – grandfather of "Replacement Theory"?

But the 21st century's far white right was always our endpoint – how could it not be? We ended by reading two works, Michael Kimmel's *Angry White Men* and James Aho's *Far-Fight Fantasy* to look into those who, as Kimmel put it, exhibit an "aggrieved sense of entitlement," a conviction they have been "dispossessed" by insidious, undeserving outsiders (Kimmel 2015; Aho 2016). This, then, is a Canadian classroom's assessment of the far white right and some observations on its place in Hofstadter's *Paranoid Style in American Politics*.

As Kimmel notes, "Scapegoating the 'other' always looms large in the analysis of one's own plight," even among those who remain relatively privileged (Kimmel 2015, 24). The marchers at Charlottesville's infamous 2017 rally shouting "You will not replace us!" were not, analysis revealed, from the dispossessed downsized working class, but relatively affluent university graduates and scions of the small entrepreneurial class. Their idol, who quickly proclaimed them "very fine people,"

was comfortably ensconced in the White House, with conservative, primarily white male Republican majorities in Congress (Wiener 2017; Howard-Woods et al. 2019). Nevertheless, that some prominent Americans – even congresspeople – were Latino/a or Muslim caused paroxysms of doom on the right. Any Muslim or Latina presence in even the side chambers of power is recast as an impermissible invasion by the illegitimate. Ironically, a few years after Charlottesville it was angry white men who invaded the Capitol, with fatal assaults on law-enforcement officers. Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and others were "guilty" of nothing more than simply being, being in a place the white male elite felt they had no business occupying – just as black congressmen taking seats in 1870s Washington once held by Confederates were *prima facie* proof of "Negro misrule" (Du Bois 1985; Foner 1988).

Paranoid suspicions of 21ˢᵗ-century replacement are amplified by Fox and the Orange One. As Kimmel notes, this echo chamber exercised a cathartic effect: "We feel outrage and we're told it's not our fault and that we have plenty of company." Such feedback loops allow angry white believers in Replacement Theory "to both claim dominance and victimhood" Such dominant-victimhood, Kimmel argues, may be attributed to a relative shrinkage in white male privilege. Some few people of color now hold office, and white monopoly seemingly is no more. "It's hard if you've been used to 100 percent of all the positions of power and privilege in the world to wake up one morning and find people like you in only 80 percent of those positions," Kimmel writes. "Equality sucks if you've grown so accustomed to inequality that it feels normal" (Kimmel 2015, 34, 38, 46).

Even when enraged, the far white espouses a return to an idyllic time when "America was great." In this they parallel earlier movements harkening back to a moment of innocent egalitarianism that was stolen. The first "Populists" worked to restore a time when Jeffersonian farmers could earn a competence – a small material bounty guaranteeing economic and political independence. Lawrence Goodwyn argues the original Populists – agrarian radicals of the 1880s and '90s enrolled in the National Farmers' Alliance and People's Party – built a movement

culture looking to restore the nation to its mythic Jeffersonian roots to defeat the "Gilded Age" robber barons. The "Pops" correctly targeted the national government's complicity with monopolists and built a sophisticated program that would have eased farmers' pain. Still, other scholars have shown the "Pops" were just as prone to point to "immigrants" as the source of their woes. And while the "Pops" endeavored to reach out to black members (albeit in separate, segregated units such as the Colored Farmers' Alliance), with the movement's collapse, vicious scapegoating of black Southerners ensued. The original Populists exhibited a volatile mix of racial grudges and economic grievances that may resonate with our era, even as they offered tangible policies designed to restore their egalitarian birthright (Goodwyn 1978; Postel 2009; Gerteis 2007).

Still, our class questioned how "equal" things were then or now. Few 1890s agrarian radicals noted the cognitive disconnect in asking blacks to enrol in a movement embracing the vision of Jefferson. Nor did Populist politicians reflect that Jefferson's economic self-reliance depended on unfree labor of hundreds of slaves, or that even after clearing the Northwest Territories of indigenous nations, patterns of inequality among white settlers quickly recurred. In retirement, Jefferson mused, "I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of monied corporations which dare already to challenge our government to a trial of strength and bid defiance to the laws of our country." The moment when America was great or egalitarian (even for all white men) recedes further into the past, elusive, and mythical the closer one examines the country's history.

Students noted, too, how elusive the American Dream was even in the prosperous postwar days for which angry white men pine. We examined the tenuousness of life for many Americans, with seasonal downturns still the norm in 1950s unionized steel or auto plants; while creature comforts were a vast improvement over the devastating Great Depression, family budgets were still marginal in steel and auto cities (Metzgar 2000; Clark 2018). One student even cited Michael Harrington's *The Other America*, which pointed out how unequal America was

even in Kennedy's sunny days, with poverty still the norm for many (Harrington 1962).

The myth that America once offered "the promise of economic freedom, of boundless opportunity, of unlimited upward mobility, what they believed was the terra firma of American masculinity," even during 1945-1973, has been interrogated by Jefferson Cowie and Jack Metzgar. I was elated to see students keying in on this shaky foundation of the far white's fantasies (Kimmel 2015, 13; Metzgar 2000; Cowie 2016; Cowie 2010).

The picture of 1945-1970s America as a land of milk and honey grows even more fanciful when we move beyond white men's experience. In his exploration of racially exclusionary redlining, Richard Rothstein demonstrates the government measures that benefited millions of white Americans such as home mortgage assistance programs were explicitly designated "whites only" well into the 1970s (Rothstein 2018). Aho astutely argues such angry white patriots may know all too well their selective nostalgia is itself a form of violence. Several states have recently enacted laws prohibiting teaching or even mentioning race, in a frantic bid to sweep inconvenient Jim Crow truths under the rug. As Aho points out, "What Patriots forget is that the 'sister' of nostalgia (to use Carl Jung's term) is brutality. And the more nostalgic one is, 'the closer you are to violence.' Christian Patriots are blind to the despoliations, enslavements, rapes, and murders of the past that have provided them with the rights and privileges they enjoy today" (Aho 2016, 44-45). Perhaps *willfully* blind.

With this skewed, coercive nostalgia in mind, some students asked me an unsettling question: Was the underpinning of that "terra firma of American masculinity" in the prosperous postwar decades predicated on somebody else's subordination (women, Latinos, African Americans?). Hyper-segregation, and white vigilantism to keep marginalized communities from the good life were prevalent parts of the "good old days" to which MAGA hats pay homage, students noted. Perhaps that is what the right *really* pines after: Those good old white male #MeFirst days.

For all the postwar's inequities, however, things have been trending in a more Dickensian direction since Reagan's reign, and I don't know how far we get with "welcome to my low-wage, down-sized world" *Schadenfreude*. Wage stagnation, plummeting union density and the end of dedicated pensions have been amply documented (Katz 2012; Linkon 2018; Linkon, Russo 2002; Highsmith 2015; High 2003; Barlett, Steele 1996). But Jason Hackworth has noted, too, deindustrialization's jagged edges have been sharpened by government policies and rhetoric stigmatizing minorities as undeserving dream stealers from the "truly needy" (coded as white.) It was Reagan, the "Great Communicator," who communicated the lie that "welfare queens" were living the life of Riley on welfare checks and food stamps (Hackworth 2019).

Racialized diatribes of makers and takers have only amplified since then. Kimmel's *Angry White Men* was published before Trump entered office. Nevertheless, his analysis of the "aggrieved entitlement" exploited by later actors is prescient. He notes after 40 years of deregulation and neo-liberalism economic inequality has widened into a chasm, a new Gilded Age of opulence for 1% and precarity for many. He analyzes a widespread sense the American Dream has vanished, even as he notes the dream stealers who are identified are not hedge fund managers or Wall Street-friendly congressmen.

Kimmel argues "While race and gender are certainly the defining features of today's angry American, it is the growing chasm between rich and poor that is the engine of that rage." He also argues a "double hierarchy" is at work, with many white men knowing of their own precarity, which renders it irrelevant that it is still overwhelmingly *other* white men in positions of economic and political power. "Although white men still have most of the power and control in the world, these *particular* white men feel like victims" (Kimmel 2015, 25, 184-185, 112).

Economic status anxiety for many is real. But is it all about economics? The Tea Party movement and MAGA have turned to "saviors" who hastened a reverse waterfall of trillions of dollars in tax breaks to the very people "right sizing" the life chances of far-right foot soldiers. These dream stealers are not vilified but

lionized. Instead, it's immigrants who are the reliable culprits for economic and cultural anxieties. Vigilantes policing the border with Mexico or celebrating Trump's odious Muslim ban cheered on this racist wall building, Kimmel argues, with warnings of "a 'cancer' threatening the healthy body from within, a foreign, invading army … eating at the very heart of our nation" (Kimmel 2015, 53). Similar rhetoric, my students noted, was expressed by immigration restrictionists and the second Klan, raising alarms about an invasion, a swarm and a plague of Sicilians, Jews, and Slavs imperiling the culture and jobs of "real" Americans. Metaphors of disease and filth abounded, with sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross in 1914 asserting "A Pole can live in dirt that would kill a white man" (Ross 1914).

Today it is those seeking to cross the Mexican border blamed for taking "our" white male jobs. Ignored in anti-immigrant rhetoric (both a hundred years ago and now) is that most migrants enter conditions of super-exploitation – wage theft remaining endemic for today's "undocumented" migrants, and union protections as scarce in 21st-century America as they were in the sweat shops and coal mines of yesteryear. A Slovak loom tender or Litvak pants presser was no threat to the Klan's supposedly imperiled American way of life any more than a Mexican migrant in a pork-rendering plant today is killing some Proud Boy's wage standard. Ethno-racial scapegoats did not engineer the crashes of 1929 or 2008.

In the 1920s economic facts did not prevent the revitalized Klan from denouncing immigrants, Catholics, and Jews as cultural and economic perils (Gordon 2017). Today immigrants, not captains of industry, are blamed for the pain of "real Americans." But ironically, many formerly stigmatized, alarming Slavs have avidly embraced the nativist rhetoric now that they are part of the great white MAGA community. To return to Charlottesville's "You Will Not Replace Us!" rally: The torch-carrying, angry young face of the march to defend a statue of Confederate General Lee was Peter Cvjetanovic. After his photo was circulated, he lost his job, and his return to university was questioned. Without endorsing Facebook vigilantism, what interests me is why a Croatian American whose family likely was not in America in 1865 avidly embraced the Confederacy as part of *his* heritage? If

General Lee thought of Cvjetanovic's ancestors at all, he might have agreed with the sociologist Ross, who around the time these Confederate monuments were erected, wrote his best-selling anti-immigrant screed.

In the shaky recovery from 2008's Wall Street crash, it was not hedge fund managers on the receiving end of angry white men's venom. Instead, Kimmel notes anti-immigrant activism "directs the blame for your predicament away from the actual institutional sources of our problem and onto other groups who are less powerful" (Kimmel 2015, 24). My students noted parallels to an earlier era's xenophobia. Just as today Muslims and Latinos aren't running, or ruining, America, in the 1870s "Negro Misrule" was a fiction bloodily exploited by the "Redeemers" of a whites-only South. Ben Tillman in 1876 launched his political career by leading vigilantes in a murderous assault on a black rally at Hamburg, South Carolina. Like today's demagogues, "Pitchfork Ben" claimed to be the champion of the working man, although as governor and then U.S. senator, he also defended lynching of any black who dared vote (Kantrowitz 2002). Southerners as well as 1920s nativist Klansmen had no desire to see *any* African American presence in "their" America, just as the very presence of Ilhan Omar or the fabulous Ocasio-Cortez sends angry white men into toxic overdrive.

Evidence, however, seems to be rejected out of hand as part of the conspiracy and dream-stealing against which the far white marches. Another piece of the crusade fueling Trump's pledge to build a "beautiful" wall on Mexico City's dime is the conviction President Obama had lost control of the border, allowing millions of "aliens" access to the white American homeland. Actually, much of the infrastructure of detention under the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency was developed under Obama, with more migrants deported under his administration than under all 43 predecessors. And the mounted ICE officers weaponizing horses to ride down migrants were operating under Joe Biden, who has kept in place the deportation policies of his predecessors. Vice President Harris, demonized for her alleged leniency toward migrants, recently visited Guatemala, where she lectured those seeking to migrate stay the blazes home.

"You won't get in," she bluntly said. While Democrats have dropped the Orange One's references to "shithole countries," the message is clear: No "wretched refuse" need apply (Brotherton, Kretsedemas 2017; Sampaio 2015; Piper, Alaniz 2018; Walia 2021).

Still, in a political milieu in which Trumpists believe Biden, like Obama is coddling "illegal aliens," facts are irrelevant. As Aho notes, faith has replaced evidence. Of "Birthers" convinced Obama was not born in the United States, Aho says they "have shown themselves unwilling to accept as valid any document or witness that might conceivably contradict their belief, including publication of Obama's birth certificate ... In effect, denial of President Obama's American birth is an article of faith ... an amazing story of immeasurable psychological significance but not a historiographic (i.e., testable) assertion" (Aho 2016, 56-57). Added to this childlike faith in Obama's illegitimacy, we now have the credence a majority of Republicans place in the lie of an election steal. No empirical evidence can shake the dogma. When facts conflict with the far white's *credo et absurdam*, there is no introspection. Rather, more rage results, as we saw in the Capitol assault.

From such certainties – backed, like the John Birch Society's 1950s assertion President Eisenhower was a Communist, by hundreds of self-referential foot notes in the far-right media-sphere – it is only a short leap to the conviction an orchestrated campaign is afoot to replace white, "real" Americans with black and brown foreigners. Purveyors of Replacement Theory see their imagined racially pure America in imminent peril.

Perhaps Democrat's complacent assurances states such as Texas would soon be majority minority, invariably becoming "blue states," have been spun in the far-right blogosphere into plots to "replace" Euro-Americans[1] (Judis, Teixeira 2014). But Replacement Theory echoes, too, the rhetoric of segregationists who warned of a mixed-race America. Mississippi's Theodore Bilbo warned of the "mongrelization" of America if Jim Crow ended. Any "threat" to segregation earned a diatribe from the Mississippian, who like Tillman advocated lynching any black

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[1] Thanks to Michael Zweig for this suggestion.

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trying to vote. But in the 1940s, Bilbo also believed Slavs, Italians, and Jews diluted the American gene pool. He used ethnic slurs when referring to Italian or Jewish colleagues in Congress, and in 1947, published his defense of "racial purity," *Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization* (Bilbo 1947).

Today, many white extremists are taking Bilbo's choice. The "solution" to multicultural menace manifests in violence toward people of color. The recent mass-shooting in Buffalo is no longer unexpected but no less appalling, the outcome of toxic aggrieved entitlement fetishizing assault rifles as a cure-all for white male victimhood. Already in 2015, a far-right believer told Kimmel, "Let's load up, honey, it's time for the race war" (Kimmel 2015, 235). The celebration of violence in a coming race war is never far below the surface, so it's not surprising mass-shootings at schools, malls, workplaces, and churches have metastasized since the 1990s. Kimmel's call to de-toxify such spaces resonated with my students, and they agreed "Is it possible that it's not just the shooters that need profiling, but also the schools?" (Kimmel 2015, 75-87). In an America where violent humiliation of any outsider is endorsed by "responsible" political figures, maybe we should be offering more than "thoughts and prayers," and start profiling the real culprits. Instead of gun control, how about Ted Cruz control?

A growing movement to secede from the multicultural menace has also been building in the Pacific Northwest. The American Redoubt seeks to carve from five states a "White Aryan Bastion" free of what some refer to as ZOG – the Zionist Occupied Government. The Black Rifle Real Estate Company solicited white Christians to buy land near Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, and other utopias where they hoped to create an imagined community of libertarians far away from people of color. Ads referencing white customers for the Redoubt were later removed or altered to comply with Civil Rights Act prohibitions on racially exclusionary realty (Kimmel 2015; Aho 2016; *Times* documentary 2021).

Paradoxically, "voluntarily exiling themselves to armed enclosures within America's borders" and calls for armed insurrection against the government are seen by Redoubt adherents as fulfilling, not abandoning, the country's heritage.

Aho interrogates the messianic blending of Aryan racism, Christian identity and a cafeteria-style fetishization of the Founding Fathers' supposed libertarianism in the *Brüder Schweigen* and other separatist groups espousing a Redoubt (sometimes dubbed the new state of Jefferson.) The *Brüder* seek to foment a race war to "purify" a corrupt multicultural America and thus remain true to the original country (Aho 2016, 2, 23).

So, we come to 2021. The failed putsch was the end point of a righteous faith, a paranoid *and* extremist style in American politics, a certainty *their* America and now their election was stolen by a shadowy cabal. So far, neither the Orange One nor any of his enablers have been held to account. And we have entered the bizarro world where we're supposed to rely on the FBI and friends of freedom like Mike Pence to stop America's slide into fascism.

Again, parallels with the past, the seed beds of earlier movements that blossomed in far white 2021 were there all along. Armed angry white men bent on toppling a duly elected government? How could such a thing happen? Ask citizens of Chile, who in 1973 saw thousands of people disappear in Pinochet's coup, heartily and militarily endorsed by Nixon's regime. We can go back 75 years further, to Guatemala, Nicaragua, or dozens of other sites of gunboat "diplomacy," American interventions to overturn the will of the wrong kind of voters. Major General Smedley Butler eventually came clean and confessed he had been a gangster for American corporate interests; across 30 years and much of Latin America, war was a racket. In such a scenario the sanctity of elections was always selective. As Henry Kissinger said of Chile, "We don't think we should allow a country to go socialist because of the ignorance of its own voters." In 2021, in Washington, the chickens almost came home to roost (Kornbluh 2004; Butler 1935).

My question to my class at various moments in our assessment of the 21st-century far white was: Do facts matter anymore? If an armed vigilante group is convinced Joe Biden is a socialist, there's a plot to "replace" white Americans, and armed American Redoubt is the fulfillment of the Spirit of 1776, all empirical evidence to the contrary, where do we go from here? Kimmel argues the solution to angry

white men is a new New Deal to soothe economic pain. But the Green New Deal gained no traction with even "responsible" right-wingers like Mitch McConnell. After 40 years of neo-liberalism and race-baiting, Aho wonders if "any capacity American institutions once may have had to moderate the frothing rage of authoritarian demagogy ... has collapsed – some fear, forever" (Kimmel 2015, 284; Aho 2016, 18).

It may be apparent I'm somewhat inclined to agree. To be sure, as early as 1964 Richard Hofstadter mused, "American political life ... has served again and again as an arena for uncommonly angry minds. Today this fact is most evident on the extreme right wing, which has shown ... how much political leverage can be got out of the animosities and passions of a small minority" (Hofstadter 1964, 3-4).

Nevertheless, earlier rightists – Redeemers, the Klan, segregationists – had to contend with forces even within their own regions and parties countering conspiratorial extremism. The Democratic Party of mid-century contained both Bilbo and Franklin Roosevelt; 1890s saw segregationists and earnest Populists clamoring for the allegiances of sharecroppers. Imperfect as these actors were, such figures endeavored to, in Dr. King's words, "bend the arc toward justice." Now, however? "Thoughts and prayers."

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