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Teaching citizenship in the Greek higher educational level: talking about political socialization

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Abstract

Contemporary Greek society needs citizens with concrete skills, abilities and knowledge, partly as a consequence of the important changes that occur in the European community. Decisive factors such as the use of new technologies (ICT) differentiate European citizens' daily lives. Increasing references are made to the need current and future societies have for empowered citizens with the knowledge and the ability to utilize ICT. This paper presents the weakness from the approach of problems regarding citizenship and the need for a new methodological approach. In the framework of the existing methodological approach students - schoolteachers approach citizenship in the 'city' with difficulty and political action is not comprehended with the importance that Aristotle lends to this process.

Introduction

Modern Greek society, as with other modern European societies, experiences change in the economic, knowledge, communication and policy realms. The growth of new structures in Greek society, and their direct connection with other western European societies, aim at the redefinition of Greek education at all levels towards the development of social skills (Eurydice, 1996; Ministry of Education, 2003; PASOK, 1995). Research often addresses current questions and needs that prospective teachers have in facing a new problem or an ongoing one with which they feel ill-prepared to solve (Koshmanova, Hapon & Carter, 2007).

As a result of these societal changes and the needs of teacher that follow, the Greek University today finds itself concurrently in a process of development and transformation. The differentiation is firstly organisational and secondly concerned with the change of study content (Tsaousis, 1995). In terms of the level of study content change and more generally the level of academic scientific research, the modern pedagogic science in the Greek academic framework appears to comprehend the need to discuss issues linked with change. These issues concern questions that are related to variable power, ethnicity, race, and exclusion, and the national state in direct correlation with subjects such as citizenship, multiculturalism and teacher education (Gotovos 1998; Spinthourakis, J.A., Stavlioti-Karatzia, E., Papoulia-Tzelepi, P. & J. Karras 2005).

According to Levine-Rasky

The process of teacher education has been traditionally regarded as one of socialising prospective teachers into predominant modes of thought about such

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things as teaching and learning, the role of school in society, the teachers' role and professionalisation, the proprietary approach to knowledge and appropriate goals for student development. It is, however, more than this. Teacher education involves the production of subjectivities - that of new teachers and students. More than inculcating a way of thinking about schooling, teacher education implies an identity formation and a moral regulation in the human subjects towards which it is aimed. (1998: 89)

Pre-service teacher education is oftentimes dominated by a perspective in which academic disciplines are the focal point of undergraduate teacher education programs of studies (Goodlad & Su, 1992).

Particularly regarding the education of teachers, changes are important when seen in relation to national identity and in accordance with the European common framework. The developments are directly related to the needs that are caused by the nature of the profession the students of education departments are called to practise. The teaching profession is particularly influenced by ongoing social developments as well as in terms of those that may take place in the foreseeable future. Specifically, it is influenced by the social-cultural framework in which it is located. Changes to the social-cultural framework have as a direct consequence change of its role implementation framework (Eurydice, 1996; Stamelos & Vasilopoulos, 2004).

We posit that the designation of the aforementioned needs is centred in the discussion about institutional policy implementation in university classroom daily life (everyday politics). The insistence on subjects of a technocratic nature is not enough. We consider that the adherence to questions exclusively academic, professional or technical cannot satisfy modern social-educational needs that have to do with the education of teachers (Ginsburg & Lindsay, 1995).

Such approaches usually constitute one of the frameworks of the broader cognitive field of socialisation. However in modern western societies a series of new needs and data emerge that dictate the use of new ways of seeing things and thus focusing our attention to specific phenomena which we could incorporate in a wider unit that we call 'politics'.

This situation leads us to examine policy in the university classroom. Even if it is not readily obvious in the Greek and international bibliography, proportional analyses with the tools of political socialisation do not have particular weight in the Pedagogic Departments of Greek universities (Givalos, 2005; Kalogiannakis, 1992). We consider it particularly important for citizens of Europe, and particularly teachers, to comprehend questions related to not only the Greek higher education academic area, but also the European Union (EU) as well as for developing a framework that is concerned with the nation-state, class and citizenship (Habermas, 1992).

For decades analysts have been puzzling over and analyzing the importance of variables such as race, gender, and ethnicity at the levels of primary and secondary education. In the higher education and specifically the university area questions that would allow comprehension development of everyday politics in the exercise of the teaching profession are essentially absent. The absence of this analysis exists despite the common

acceptance of the need for the effective education of teachers who have to act in a multicultural communicative domain – the school classroom (Brown & Clignet, 2000:17-48).

Thus, we will present the conditions and needs that shape the framework in which teachers are educated in the Greek university. The main axis of analysis has to do with the teacher's ability, seen as a requirement by Greek society, to negotiate in the school classroom, at the formal and informal level, questions that concern thematic and social realities such as power, ethnicity, race, exclusion, and national state in direct correlation with citizenship subjects.

We posit that each discussion relative to teaching citizenship presupposes the comprehension of the social and educational reality of the university as a political domain and as comprehension of the domain we call the school classroom (Queiroz, 2000). Both the university process and the school classroom are conditioned by power reason and power discourse that makes up the variables that we referenced earlier. The forming of teacher candidates through the political socialisation processes conceptualise the importance and management of questions that are related with the variables race, class, gender, and ethnicity and the repercussions that these have in shaping the daily educational moment (Pyrigiotakis, 1991). Thus the aim of this paper is to show the importance of political socialisation not simply as a key scientific object, but as the formal and informal process that functions as the academic frameworks legitimisation core.

More specifically, this presentation's individual objectives are:

- The making known and comprehension of 'politics',
- Making known the complexity of the situation that we name 'university process of teacher education',
- Highlighting the need to adopt a new methodological framework in university education, from which we should draw our tools and techniques.

Discussion and Analysis: New skills for a new methodological framework

The case of Greek Higher Education and micro-macro 'politics'

The problem consequently that concerns us is related to tertiary teacher education and the technical character it appears to be acquiring. Specifically, tertiary education more and more appears to be cultivating technical knowledge acquisition that aims at acquiring technical administrative logic in the exercise of concrete standardised professional practices. The choice of this framework in the university domain is not accidental. The political choices that are shaped during the university process cannot but be related to the aims and strategies of pressure groups and the associated domains such as education.

To comprehend the particularities of the Greek university we need to briefly examine its modern beginnings and activities from 1975 to today. These activities have directly influenced and led to the current form of the Greek university.

After the fall of the dictatorship and the consolidation of the Modern Greek democracy (1974), new institutions were attempted; a new relationship between the university, Greek society and its powers were consolidated. The students and the student movement played a concrete and particular role in the dictatorship's fall and either in groups or as a movement played a specific role in educational and more widely social activities.

In August 1974 a related committee began to study the reformation and practice of social sciences in Greece. For ideological reasons, sociology and in general the social sciences had been marginalised until then. It is particularly important to note that the previously undervalued pedagogic sciences were upgraded and included in the faculty of sociology-psychology. However, while the 1975 proposals of Committee of Greek Ministry of Education were published they were never implemented.

Corresponding efforts were also made by the Doksiadis Committee (1976). Its members were university professors that wanted the democratisation of the Greek University with western universities as models. Groups of university professors, some with large numbers, were actively involved in pursuing the cause for democratisation.

Social sensitivity and political vigilance in particular were inherent in the institution of the university and its members. The democratisation of Greek Universities and the increase of student involvement were some of their most basic demands. Intense activities continued for many years with student protests such as the October 1980 protest of the National Metsovo Polytechnic University students.

It is within this framework that Law 1268 of 1982, perhaps the most important tertiary education law, was formulated. Greek intellectuals such as Kakridis characterised this effort as a 'radical storm'. The shaping of this policy was expressed by the generation of new collective bodies that imposed the involvement of students and instructors while denying the expertise of the past. In particular it increased the rates of student involvement differentiating itself from the past both in terms of teaching issues and structural operations.

The following years were characterised by the intense engagement of political parties in the academic process. The students advanced their claim of privileges while their reasoning became consistently more opportunistic, the logic behind action in the University ever more individualistic. Thus we note that over time, the leading action of political socialisation centring on the legalisation of democratisation appears to have receded. Economic and bureaucratic rationales undertake the role of determining subjective and institutional action.

However, observation of the predominance of instrumental-opportunistic reasoning in universities today does not concern the Greek example alone. As observed by Brown and Clignet (2000, pp.17-48), the sovereignty of individualism and opportunism wholly concerns the modern western university, and in particular those of the United States of America, where it is decisive. Many researchers consider western universities an expression whereby 'modernity is itself under threat'.

Specifically, the pressures of market economy and the wider social sovereignty of individualistic and instrumentalist appreciations of education lead the university away from the values of social legitimisation, the core of which is the process of political socialisation.

Thus, the knowledge and abilities addressing candidate teachers are disassociated from the wider socio-cultural framework with serious repercussions not only for the educational process but for the candidates as social subjects as well. It is consequently especially important that we promote this instrumentalist specialisation opposed to the expected culture. The above determination constitutes only one part of the criticism of modern western universities' development.

Of course, we shouldn't ignore the fact that at this moment in time, universities are perhaps the most democratic workplaces in modern society. Discriminations against weak social subjects, women and minorities exist but are of course limited compared to the corresponding discriminations in the wider social and particularly labour areas.

In conclusion, comprehension of the university framework, particularly that of pedagogic departments, and thereafter comprehension of future teachers' role requires investigating the dominating character of institutions and formative repercussions that this power has on future schoolteachers. The phenomenon is particularly complicated insofar as we are referring to the formation of future teachers in a complex, interdependent, and internationalised socio-cultural framework.

The political dimension of teacher education: attempting a definition

In 1884, when philosopher and educational reformer Victor Cousin was asked if the right to academic teaching is a public virtue, he answered that the right to teach is power. Referring to the student's role in this dominating pedagogic framework, he adds that students, through their apprenticeship, return to society as citizens in absolute harmony with it (Rigos, 2000: 150-151). Max Weber answers similar questions in the same manner while one could also recognise the reasoning of Emile Durkheim in his definition of the educational process itself (Stedman, 2001).

We are hard pressed to see this agreement of classical intellectuals of western sociological thought as being random. An accumulation of power, produced and controlled ideologically expressing the wider correlation of social and political forces, exists in academic auditoriums. Consequently, power is present in all educational processes including the university. The university as an educational institution shapes ways of understanding reality as well as behaviours. During the course of his action at university, the social subject shapes political perceptions, internalises means of legitimating social reality, internalises the requirements of his role in society and acquires the discipline of science. These characteristics are particularly important regarding future teachers' tertiary education. Comprehension of the processes and awareness of the existence of power are particularly important to the formation of the personality of subjects who are future classroom power brokers. The guidance of future schoolteachers in the detection and comprehension 'politics' in education is particularly important in the formation of their 'habitus', creating a collective identity, which will

distinguish them as schoolteachers. The pedagogic relationship with knowledge passes immediately through this process (Bourdieu, 1988). Through detection 'politics' skills as pedagogic action, future teachers can make comprehension of the school classroom as a dominating process a pedagogic objective. Such a decision renders the teaching of citizenship regarding the European society of citizens a political process, at the local and world level.

With the term political process we mean the total process of active involvement of the citizen in the polis. We consider that involvement in the polis, as in the school classroom, presupposes the social skills of comprehension and power management. This is in line with what Weber (1948:180) states where, 'the possibility of a single social subject or a number of social subjects, to realise their own will as being a communal action despite the will of others participating in the action'.

Consequently, politics is produced from structural and ideological power that is inherent in the educational process. Of course, the power in education is not exclusively a factor imposed by force and which leads to sovereignty. On the contrary, many times power imposes collaboration and support of one another. The content and institutional implementation politics are dependent on these processes. As Foucault (1980) points out, power is inherent in human relations and consequently in the pedagogic relationship.

From the aforementioned emerges the political side of the teacher education process. For that matter the role of the teacher results from a position of power. The structural determination of the position can be found in the micro and macro level; power in the interpersonal pedagogic relation (micro) and structural determination that results from the exercise of policy (macro).

The symbolic control of means and the content of instructive action are shaped through these processes and are shaped in direct interaction with actions taken in the process of educational action; thus, allowing for the reproduction or transformation of educational data and situations relative to policies. These transformations don't happen suddenly, but constitute part of teachers' daily practices, through pedagogic evaluation, and curriculum processes as well as formal and informal processes (Ginsburg & Lindsay, 1995).

In a linearly hierarchical and bureaucratic Greek educational system, future teachers should have the scientific tools needed to critically realise that this reason is structurally produced (Kamarianos, 2002). While not directly dependent on the State, the educational system must however demonstrate in moments of crisis its relative autonomy in policy formation. In this case we need to cultivate comprehension of the subjects that participate in the structure; comprehension oriented towards active participative citizens. This is also the meaning of political socialisation. Comparable collective signals compose what we name political culture. From the aforementioned we see that political socialisation is of little concern of those governing or of the knowledge of political party processes. It essentially concerns the wider socio-cultural sphere of everyday routines (Ginsburg & Lindsay 1995: 27-28). These signals in the case of teacher education are not addressed in passive subjects. Rather, the aim of educational process is the critical activation of future teachers to manage power in their school classroom and lead to the participative political culture of their students. By participating in this social collective

process, teachers and students restructure their own identity, thereby redefining the relationship structure–subject.

Acquiring the teaching skills

Despite the politically turbulent modern life of the Greek university, teacher education deals very little with the detection politics at the micro level. Power is analysed mainly in educational policy spheres, institutional action, and government, political decisions of the Greek Ministry of Education or EU bodies (European Ministers of Education, 1999; Savaidis, 2005). The analysis is often focused on pedagogic analysis of power that is diffused in daily educational practices.

In the cognitive object of socialisation, the methodological mesh that is usually adopted does not appear to be enough as the political element emphasis is insufficient. Power is not placed at the epicentre of interest. In most socialisation textbooks published in Greece and which constitute part of our discussion, citizenship education as a social skill is absent, while the study of power as a social relation management axis is infrequently an autonomous research field (Terleksis, 1975; Papanoum, 1989; Nova-Kaltsouni, 1998; Bitsaki, 2007).

New fragmentary proposals that are adopted by the institution of education such as the Flexible Area (Evelekti Zoni), or the cross-thematic approaches (Diathematikotita) and the group centred processes (Greek Ministry of Education, 2003), have their starting point in the research, implementation and consequently in the contesting of power. It appears to constitute the beginnings of a new conception of the pedagogic relationship.

We consider that an effort to identify an effective systematic approach needs a new methodological framework. This is needed since neither the content of the educational process that draw elements from the traditional descriptive pedagogic approach nor the methodological frame of teaching socialisation are capable of doing so.

The schoolteacher that will be educated with foundations that emanate from the traditional framework cannot comprehend the modern dynamics of the school classroom. They will be unable to comprehend the dominating layout of the school classroom and therefore be unable to find their place in the educational field. Such schoolteachers, that consider themselves either as the epicentre or the periphery of the educational process, are unable to functionally comprehend the reality they will find themselves in. Consequently they will be unable to advance in what Durkheim defines as education, in other words they are unable to lead the young social subjects towards their active place in society.

However, the young subjects that the future teachers are to educate have the need for the cultivation of those cognitive representations that will allow developing their personal criteria for the collective life. The future teachers should be taught to share their power with their students; to practise dialogical discussions and open communication and to seek the various forms of exchange of criteria and experience. They need to be able to critically place themselves on moral issues and practices and to involve and listen to their students. The students should be taught the construction of instructive frameworks

but not as a technique that results from the sovereignty of techno-scientific reason, but as the comprehension of their student's daily life insofar as the dynamics of their everyday routine allows them to do so. The creation of teaching situations should not be the result of discipline in the scientific reason but as result of political thought. Only through processes of comprehension and critical involvement can both teachers and students contract a pedagogic relationship that in due course will enable both the structure and the subjects to act as well as effect the necessary social conventions.

Conclusion: The benefits of a new methodological framework

Seeking the benefits from an approach such as the one we propose, the dynamics not only of Modern Greek society but globally with respect to western societies imposes on us a new cultural, economic, social and, naturally, educational approach. We argue that the democratic future of our societies will depend on this.

The recent history of the Greek university, from 1975 and onwards, indicates that comprehending the needs and materialising the new approaches exist. They do so with, as their axis, questions that are also urgent in Greek society with regard to the diffusion of power, ethnicity, race, exclusion, and the national state in order that these are identified as citizenship issues. This change to the framework will, we believe, greatly redefine the role of the teacher and their place in society.

Deductively, it is particularly important that the new schoolteacher be educated in the analysis and the comprehension of school classroom politics, practice and discourse, which is clearly in line with the educational needs of all European citizens. This is needed so as to make them capable of participating in the economic, social and political everyday routine in European societies as well as globally.

The adoption of a methodological frame of political socialisation in the teaching of citizenship will allow the comprehension of the school reality in direct connection with the social reality that shapes it.

Finally, we posit that it is at the university education level and in the domain of pedagogic science, that it will be particularly feasible for us to see the real acquisition of social skills of involvement in social situations and events. To do so means drawing elements from the 'reservoirs of thought' of such notable scholars as Marx and Weber, but also among others, of Althusser, Foucault, Laclau, Moufe, and Habermas. Comprehension and the teaching of citizenship are potentially feasible through the adoption of the aforementioned methodological framework, as an important social need but also as an interesting new scientific field. We hypothesise that by doing so, daily life in the university classroom will be a place where the politics of equal, functional, unhindered coexistence are the basic democratic objects being sought after and one of the sovereign arguments of our technological societies.

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