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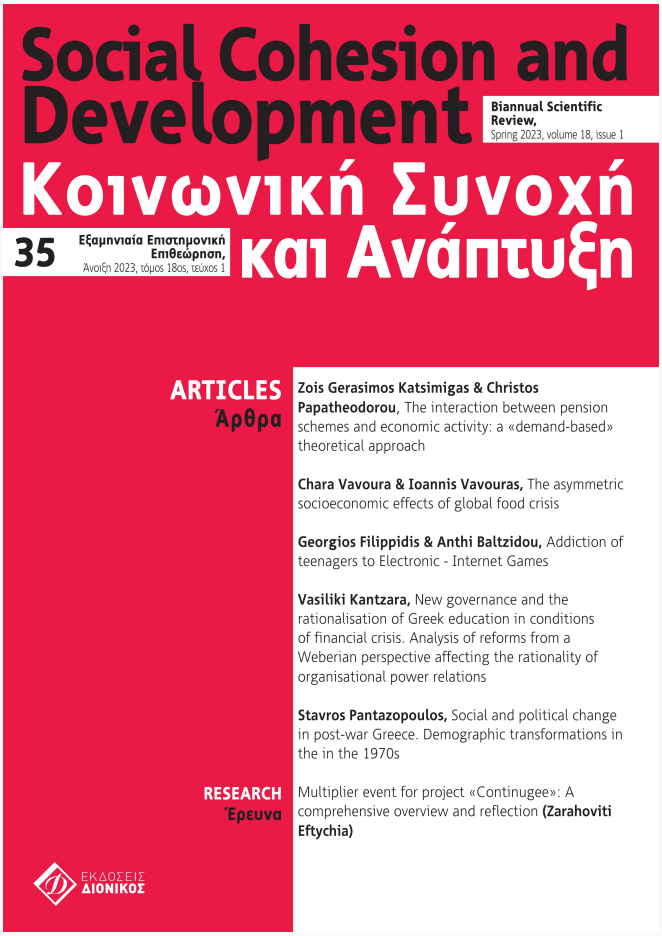

New governance and the rationalisation of Greek education in conditions of financial crisis. Analysis of reforms from a Weberian perspective affecting the rationality of organisational power relations

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New governance and the rationalisation of Greek education in conditions of financial crisis. Analysis of reforms from a Weberian perspective affecting the rationality of organisational power relations

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Η νέα διακυβέρνηση και ο εξ ορθολογισμός της ελληνικής εκπαίδευσης σε συνθήκες χρηματο-οικονομικής κρίσης. Ανάλυση των μεταρρυθμίσεων ως προς τη λογική οργάνωσης των σχέσεων εξουσίας από βεμπεριανή οπτική γωνία

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ABSTRACT

The present article aims to examine the reforms introduced by the governments in the education system in crisis conditions (2010-2015) from a Weberian perspective. To this end, firstly, we explore affinities between the notion of Weber's rationalisation to the 'new governance' approach to running institutions as it emerged after the Second Word War in the West . Subsequently, we examine the relation of the 'new governance' approach to educational reforms in Greece during the period under study and its effects in organisational terms.

KEY WORDS: Greek education, financial crisis, reforms, Max Weber, new governance, egucational reform, rationalisation.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το άρθρο εξετάζει τις μεταρρυθμίσεις, που εισήγαγαν οι κυβερνήσεις στο εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα στην Ελλάδα σε συνθήκες χρηματο-οικονομικής κρίσης (2010-2015) από βεμπεριανή οπτική γωνία. Εκτός από τα μέτρα «λιτότητας», τα δημόσια ιδρύματα υποβλήθηκαν σε μεγάλο βαθμό σε δομικές «διαρθρωτικές προσαρμογές». Ακολουθώντας τις αρχές της Νέας Διακυβέρνησης, η έννοια της «προσαρμογής» υποδήλωνε την πρόθεση οι θεσμοί με τις μεταρρυθμίσεις «να μειώσουν το κόστος» λειτουργίας, να γίνουν «αποτελεσματικοί» ενώ θα βελτίωναν και το επίπεδο ποιότητας των παρεχόμενων υπηρεσιών.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ: Ελληνική εκπαίδευση, εκπαιδευτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις, χρηματο-πιστωτική κρίση, τυπική ορθολογικότητα, Μαξ Βέμπερ, απροσωποποίηση θεσμικών σχέσεων, 'απο-σύνδεση' μέσων και σκοπών.

1. Introduction[1]

The present article aims to examine the reforms introduced by the governments in the education system in crisis conditions (2010-2015) from a Weberian perspective. To this end, firstly, we explore affinities between the notion of Weber's rationalisation to the 'new governance' approach to running institutions as it emerged after the Second Word War in the West (Eagleton-Pierce, 2014). Subsequently, we examine the relation of the 'new governance' approach to educational reforms in Greece during the period under study and its effects in organisational terms.

After the so-called 'onset of the crisis' in 2009, Greece entered a phase of sustained disbelief in the country's potential to handle public finances by her partners in the European Union and the international financial markets. The 'bail out' Greece received during the period 2010-2015 was not help in the strict sense of the word but a loan (admittedly with low interest) that has to be paid back in due course. The public policy dictated and signed in three 'Memoranda of Understanding' with the 'troika', the three important agents in the bail out, namely European Council, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund, did not leave education outside the deal (for detailed information of this section, see Kantzara 2016, 2018, 2020).

More specifically, in Greece during conditions of financial crisis extensive, except the 'austerity measures', a number of 'structural adjustments' were imposed by the 'troika' to combat the 'malfunctioning' of institutions and restore credibility of the country in the financial markets. The framework and justification for the 'structural adjustments' were provided by the 'new governance' approach, that promotes institutional reforms in order to increase 'effectivity' of institutions and improving the quality of service at a low cost. The legitimation and justification of the imposed reforms in Greece were done by using the concept rationalisation ('exorthologismos'). This concept in Greece means making rational arrangements which persuades the public, as a dominant explanation of why institutions do not function 'properly' is that because they are 'irrational' ('paraloga').

However, that concept rationalisation in philosophy contrary to what many people think, means to design something carefully to function according to the idea we have about how it should be, that is, what form it should take, so that it can function and produce the results we aspire. Thus, rationalising means that the targets, the means, and the expected outcomes are designed carefully according to certain ideas and values. This notion of rationality was treated in Weber's work and this is how we shall employ it in this text. Furthermore, according to Weber the rationalisation prevalent in capitalism resulted in the 'disenchantment of the world' as the world loses its magic, because it becomes like a machine in which the individual occupies but an insignificant part. Thus, I became scientifically speaking curious as to what exactly the government meant by rationalisation and what were the consequences at first instance in education.

During the 'crisis', in the name of rationalisation, every social institution whose management is in the hands of the government was subject to reform, starting from local government institutions (the 'Callikrates' plan in 2010), the public health system, the education system, labour relations, insurance and pensions, taxation, and even changes in statistical data collection methods. Focusing on education, the reforms were a mixture of administrative, budgetary, and organisational measures, while relatively few changes were introduced at the level of learning and teaching. The 'Athena plan' in 2013 has been an example of 'restructuring' tertiary education focusing on merging university departments aiming at making the system more manageable but with ambivalent effects till today.

The ramifications of the reforms are complex and multiple to say the least. At first instance, the education reforms resulting in a 'shrinking' of the system as budgetary cuts went hand in hand with organisational changes, and layoffs of personnel, both administrative and teaching. At the same time, restructuring increased spending that were related to outsourcing of certain services, such as cleaning or security. This seemingly contradiction was the second reason to start digging further into the field of the institutional reforms. The results of extensive research on the subject were previously published, and the article at hand is based on them (see Kantzara, 2018, 2020).

An effect of the introduced changes was that relations of power within institutions were designed to change but also the relations of education to other public or private organisations were the subject of reform. In this, we observed that there created a room and a 'distance' between various positions and the same time these are depersonalised through by laws and other formal regulations that were institutionalised. This however influences the democratic running of institutions as relations of power are further devoid of persons and become impersonal. In this text we shall refer to the way relations between the various posts in an organisation, notably the tertiary education institutions are reformed.

The article includes seven sections. The next one, the second section, examines the notion of rationality in Weber's work. The third section examines the historical roots of the modern meaning of new governance and the way it was related to institutional reforms. The fourth section schematically refers to educational reforms in Greece and it focuses further on tertiary education. The analysis and interpretation of the reforms follows in the fifth section and the texts concludes in the sixth section.

2. The meaning of rationality in Max Weber's work

Rationalism', 'rationality' and 'rationalisation' are central concepts in Weber's work that define humans' capacity to reason and to undertake action accordingly (for an attempt to define the different concepts, see Swidler, 1973). These concepts guided his studies in ancient religions in order to understand how humans translate ideas into action in the world (rationalisation) in an attempt to shape the world according to a set of preconceived ideas about how the world should look like if these ideas (good ideas usually) governed its functioning (Kalberg, 1980). In doing so, humans modify their behaviour, and if this is done collectively, then they bring about changes first in the social world they live in and then they affect change at a larger scale in society (see Brubaker 1984). Rationality and rationalisation are concepts used by Weber to explain societal changes as well as social action undertaken by individuals as agents of praxis in order to achieve various ends – "utilities" in Weber's terminology, meaning 'goods' and 'services' (Weber 1978: 68).

It is generally understood that the exact meaning of rationality and rationalisation is difficult to pin down, according to scholars who studied Weber's work (Brubaker, 1984, Eisen, 1978, Kalberg 1980, 1990, Levine, 1981, Mueller, 1979, Swidler, 1973). In general, following Kalberg's work (1980), rationality is distinguished in different forms, such as practical, substantive, and formal. Practical refers to day to day considerations of individuals and the logical actions they undertake to fulfil a set of everyday needs. Substantive rationality refers to value orientated action undertaken by an individual while formal is related to adhering and following a set of rules. In substantive rationality, the decisive criterion of judging the course of an action is a social value,

and in Weber's terms usually this is related to religion. Formal rationality on the other hand, is characterised by a peculiar means-to end calculation that has as criterion the profit of an action (zweckrational), that is what one gains of an action perceived purely in these terms.

Furthermore, according to students of Weber's work the characteristics of formal rationality are the following: the *quantification of (qualitative) data,* a usually *'cool blooded' calculation of best means to ends*, being *concerned with ensuring predictability,* trying *to attain control in uncertain conditions* (or eliminate uncertainty), and *having irrational consequences* (see Ritzer 2000: 242). One of the effects refers to the limitation of individual freedom (see also Levine 1981).

In a certain epoch in history, formal rationality prevailed in different spheres of social life, such as in the economy, in the Protestant religion and in the administration, most notably the bureaucracy. Rationalities that permeated these institutions converged at some point as an 'ironic turn of history' and gave capitalism the grounding it needed to grow and develop further (Brubaker 1984). More particularly, the seeking of profit dimension of this form of rationality, comes from the economy, the seeking for proof of having the grace from God in the worldly activities comes from Protestantism, while the formal dimension, that is adhering to rules, originates from bureaucracy.

Formal rationality, we could argue, is embodied, and embedded. It is embodied as employees may manifest an 'ethic of conviction' prevalent, for instance, in bureaucracy: the holder of an office is persuaded and confident of his accuracy and efficiency. It is embedded in institutions, in the way they function, as for example, in the economy, politics and religion. Thus, formal rationality, just as substantive rationality, functions 'from within' the individual, motivating him/her from inside his/herself. The prevalence of this form of rationality functions also 'from without', that is, pressure is exercised on individuals, for it (rationality) is prevalent in the way institutions operate. The combined effect of both – 'from within' and 'from without' – is that individual behaviour is forced to change. As a result, societal change may be accelerated, especially when the worldview that functions at the base of substantive rationality finds a social stratum as a 'carrier' that affects individual behaviour collectively (Brubaker 1984).

Modern bureaucracy and capitalism embody the formal type of rationality. In Weber's own words:

"… Bureaucratic rationalization, too, often has been a major revolutionary force with regard to tradition. But it revolutionizes with *technical means*, in principle, as does every economic reorganization, "from without": It first changes the material and social orders, and through them the people, by changing the conditions of adaptation, and perhaps the opportunities for adaptation, through a rational determination of means and ends." (Weber, 1978: 1116).

A central key point of Weber's work is that social change entails two different levels: 'from within' and 'from without'. The first term denotes those beliefs and rationalities an individual has that affect changes 'from within' him/herself. The second term denotes that change comes from altering social conditions that affect available opportunities to individuals, thus change may come 'from without'. This distinction helps us analyse the educational reforms and the changes these impose on institutions and on individuals working in them.

Moreover, the 'iron cage' (stahlhartes Gehäuse – literally the hard as steel building) metaphor is well known, and it is an effect of excessive rationalisation: both the bureaucrat and the worker feel trapped in 'cog' and no matter what they do the world goes endlessly on. In addition, creativity is 'smothered', and emotions are intentionally set aside because they are seen as

the unpredictable factor. The emphasis is thus only on reason and what is reasonable, seen from the perspective of gain and the best means to ends. Emotions reside however in values and the eradication or the attempt to abolish emotions as irrational has as an effect that even greater irrationality arises. In addition, formal rationality has no room for considerations of 'equality, democracy or caritas' for these distract a person from her/his goals and the actions necessary to achieve them (Brubaker 1984).

Furthermore, we could say that reason, logic and rationality signify processes of the intellect that involves a certain way of thinking which guides human action. Rationalism as a process of purposeful reasoning indicates the conception of goals and means to achieve a desired end that takes place in the imagination and in the intellect. Rationality then in its course unfolds a way of reasoning that is based on calculation of for instance other people's reactions or how certain situation will evolve when following a course. Thus, rationalism indicates a syllogism (that is reasoning) that includes a calculation of ends-means in a certain context. When the context is controlled, then it follows the undertaking of a task shall have a greater possibility to succeed. To my view, a central aspect of rationalisation is to put ideas into practice in order to modify and give form to the world according to one's idea about how things should be in order to have fruitful results. In Marxian terms, we could call such an activity as objectification, that is building the blocks of the world according to the idea one has about them. It is this aspect that it is important when we analyse and try to understand recent reforms proposed under the name 'new governance'.

For the present inquiry, we now turn to the issue of governance and examine how the embedding ideas into organisations started.

3. Concepts describing relations: the emergence of the contemporary notion of governance

The notion of governance with its current meanings emerged after the Second World War and gradually dominated globally as a solution to problems of steering institution both at the public and private sphere. The word governance comes from the Greek "kyvernan" (κυβερνάν) and the latin word "gubernare" (to steer) (Merriam-Webster, 2018).

The current understanding of governance as steering rather than as giving direct orders originates from the critique that arose against the malfunctioning of multinational corporations and governments. Large companies were criticised among other things for 'foul play' and a lack of social responsibility. Governments were criticised for excessive spending of public money, nepotism and for providing low quality of services. The movement that voiced the previous critique comes from different sources, it was ideologically diverse and focused on the practical application of ideas on the proper management of large organisations, whether in the public or in the private sphere. According to Eagleton Pierce (2014), emphasis was placed on "steering" through instructions and advice within business, rather than giving direct orders to employees. This approach to human resource management, therefore, emphasised internal incentives to mobilize employees, thereby adopting mild enforcement tools (see Pal 2007). The spectacular expansion of managerial positions is to be attributed to the 'management' revolution that took place and advocated similar changes in organisation structures to improve quality of services. The transfer and implantation of similar management structures somehow makes institutions seem alike though

they may be different. The extensive changes have been criticised as they led to an "institutional isomorphism" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The characteristics of the new era and the 'new Governance' were and continue to be: 'competition', the 'evaluation of employees and services, 'transparency', 'accountability' for decisions and actions, and the outsourcing of tasks, that are not directly related to the products or services provided by a company. The new governance aimed on the one hand at the quality, efficiency and cost reduction of the services provided and on the other hand at the promotion of 'good' or 'correct administration' (that is good governance). The reforms were been spreading in the western world since the 1970s. The emphasis on 'efficiency' together with 'reducing costs' gained more ground, as these were very appealing and were associated with the notion of a 'modern' governance. At the same time, emphasis was given to motivating employees through more participatory processes in their work. 'Rigid' hierarchies were questioned, and horizontal networking was facilitated. The ideological movement in question was proposing a model of 'governing without government' (Vrinioti 2017). This meant that a system, whether it was a company or a public organisation, could be self-governed and self-regulated without the direct interference of an authority – from above – but controlled 'at a distance' (Miller & Rose 1990, Raab 1994, Vrinioti 2017). This continuous movement reshuffles relations in the workplace in the name of providing for instance 'better' services. In the northern European countries, an encompassing name used for the reforms was 'reorganisation' while in Greece was 'rationalisation'.

The success of the proposed model of 'New Government' according to a point of view was dependent on whether these reforms were continuous, that is, always 'on the go' (Pal, 2007). Part of these reforms that referred to management was subsumed under the name 'New Public Management' (NPM). The specific objectives of the reforms were formulated in such a way that seemed quite neutral, that is to 'improve performance' and 'efficiency' in companies, organisations, or governments; these were legitimised on the basis of 'improving the level of the services' provided to citizens by being more 'client centered' (Pal 2007). In the relevant vocabulary, slowly by slowly other concepts were incorporated such as 'excellence' and 'innovation' to further boost this reform movement. This development in turn has accelerated processes of privatization as it promoted the development of the 'private' initiative and accelerated the processes of private and public sector cooperation in financial terms. Participatory democracy, which was seen as a way of solving administrative problems, was translated as a reinforcement of the 'private' initiative. That is why we often hear today that the 'cure' of public problems will come from the 'private sector' or the 'private initiative'.

Moreover, Pal (2007), who examined the role of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in promoting a certain form of governance, argues that privatisation has been part of a wider reform movement, part of which was also the manager's movement. This movement, which led to a spectacular increase in managers' positions (called 'managerial revolution') in all businesses and services, whether in the private or public sector, has relied on famous at the time managers and their work, around the 1960s (Rizvi 2016).

These ideas were translated into public policy, and the new governance necessitated 'structural reforms' or 'adjustments'. These reforms use a framework that includes concepts such 'transparency', 'efficiency', 'accountability', 'improved level of service quality'. The reform movement started more than thirty years ago, and the aforementioned ideas were embedded and implanted as it were in all public institutions. Though application of these ideas varies according to context, the literature on this subject is very critical as to the societal effects.

The connection of the new public management with the doctrine of neoliberalism goes through the World Bank. The financing of developing countries was associated with terms of "good governance", that is, democracy, transparency and accountability as procedures for the administration of a state. An aspect of this policy worth noting was the fight against corruption in the administration and nepotism. Later, the financing of the states of the developed world was linked to the conditions of good administration. This policy was also adopted by other international organizations. In particular, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been adopting a similar policy in education since the 1990s (OECD, 1995).

Governance, in short, has been the notion as a vehicle for promoting changes with the term 'structural adjustments' in the institutions of the state. In education similar efforts have been established and promoted through the Bologna Declaration (1999) and the Lisbon Treaty (2001). Many of the changes introduced in Greek education are dictated by the above conditions and by the so-called "White Paper" of the European Union (Prokou, 2013, 2014).

Ball (2009) claims that the ongoing transformation of the state constitutes 'de-regulation' and 'recalibration' of the state. These processes have so far questionable consequences for the management of public goods in terms of equity and justice, the reasons for which the state as an institutional entity was established in the first place.

Parallel to this, it is worth mentioning here the growing literature on the effects of applying the current conception of governance in education. The concern expressed by social scientists refers to the growing privatisation of education, called also 'academic capitalism' (see e.g., Ball 2009, Burch 2006, Busch 2017, Jessop 2017, Wilkins 2022).

4. Education changes, formal relations of power and rationalisation in Greece (2009-2014)[2]

In education, the policy followed was characterised by a mixture of measures on budget, personnel, study programmes, and management. In relation to our inquiry in this text, I shall refer only schematically to the changes and focus a little more on the management changes in tertiary education. The changes introduced started with the famous by now Law 4009 (in 2011) followed by a number of laws and ministerial decrees (for detailed info, see Kantzara 2020). The law 4009 foresaw several new measures in administration and management level and followed by other legislation.

The research material used includes education policy texts and legislation (2009-2014), reports of international organizations and statistics, relevant literature, discussions with colleagues, and auto-ethnography from my workplace as I experience the changes from within. The research questions posed were: *What kind of changes as part of the education reform were introduced in education? And what do these institutional reforms change in relation to the organisation in terms of rationalisation?*

Taken as a whole, educational reforms are based on 'austerity measures' but include management changes as well as changes that influence learning and the possibility to study.

In this text, indicatively, we mention the following changes (for extensive references and data, see Kantzara, 2020):

Changes of a financial nature:

- Increasing costs for outsourcing of services and institutionalising of new measures (e.g., evaluation, but also cleaning and security services).
- Budget cuts across the whole education system, and in tertiary education between 50% -70%) (Effect: infrastructure deterioration, and lack of necessities, as for example no heating oil in schools)
- Cost reduction due to digitization of services (e.g., The 'Evdoxos' platform to manage the free distribution of textbooks to students, and the 'Apella' platform for managing new appointments and promotions of academic personnel)
- Establishment of a Company for the 'exploitation' of the property of university institutions
- Depriving higher education institutions from their cash reserves, in the context of 'debt restructuring', known as 'haircut' that was meant for the private, the Private Sector Involvement (PSI) in 2012, but it took place in the public sector.
- Salary cuts and allowances up to 30%-40% depending on category of teachers and administrative personnel
- Cuts in spending on educational material students were receiving for free. (Effect: transfer of state responsibility on individual students).

Changes in labour relations:

- Increase of working hours and tasks
- Layoffs of personnel (administrative and teaching) (e.g., up to 20.000 secondary education teachers out of 170.000).
- Longer service years to pension
- Instituting the analogy of 1/10 for new personnel: for every 10 employees leaving service only 1 new is appointed. After 2015-16, it was reduced to 1/5.
- New appointment and promotion procedures for academic personnel, presumably better as the department's involvement was reduced.

Changes in school management, especially in tertiary education

- Merging of schools and new rules for administration
- Establishing by laws and other regulations that institutions had to set up
- Introduction of vocabulary from business administration: 'transparency', 'accountability', and 'effectivity' to run institutions in tertiary education
- Introduction of management structures from business management: In 2011, the Council of Institution and Secretary of Institution were established as two new organisational posts at the top of the management positions (see below Fig. 1).
- Ramification of institutional power relations: Establishment of Schools or Faculties (union of departments), Provost and Provost Council, while there was a reduction of student participation and representation in the decision-making committees and institutions of the university.
- Autonomy of Institutions: it was promoted by making them gradually responsible for finding funds for their function
- Introducing the measure of 'evaluation' as a means of governance. The quality of education acquires quantitative indicators of analysis, thus converting qualitative data into quantitative.
- Revamping the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) to carry out the tertiary education evaluations (it was founded in 2006).[3]

In relation to the new posts, and to make clear what I mean, a figure follows:

Figure 1: Management changes in tertiary education

Management structure before the reform	Management structure after the reform
Senate-Rector-Rectors' Council	Council of Institution
	Senate and Rector – Adjunct Rectors
	Secretary of Institution
	Provost – Provost Council
Department	Department (or Study programme)
Section (of Dept.)	Section (of Dept.)

Note: The management structure before the import of the changes was simple and linear. Following the changes, the structure of the institution as an organisation became more complex, and hierarchical. Communication takes place in writing and therefore there is an increase in bureaucracy, while the administrative personnel was paradoxically reduced.

It is worth noting that the government in 2015 brought about changes in administration, and the Council of the Institution was abolished. This however is restored again, with a new conservative government in power that passed a law in 2022 that foresees again the 'Council of Institution' as the highest position in the management structure of tertiary education institutions.

Returning to the reform: the formal positions created should from now function according to the distinction of competencies and responsibilities that would be based on the Internal Regulation of the Institutions. At each level of administration, the adoption of a regulation was to be drafted that would provide the basis for the relationships of students, teachers and administration. It took almost 10 years to effectuate these regulations. At Panteion University, for example, the Internal Regulation was passed by the Senate at the beginning of 2021. The regulation, however, for postgraduate studies seemed easier to establish and it was applied soon after the legislation imposed it.

The reasons, according to the official discourse on the reforms were similar to those in other countries, namely the 'structural adjustments' were 'rationalising' the education system, in order to 'improve education', 'aligning' it with other European countries education systems', promoting 'excellence', and 'innovation' gearing it towards employment serving the 'needs of the labour market'. At the same time, education policy is geared at making tertiary education responsible for its own funding.

The discourse on the necessity of reforms is expressed in the Governor of the Bank of Greece speech when presenting the annual report (2015):

"The road to growth entails knowledge, research, innovation and lifelong learning. The exit of Greek society from the crisis can only be achieved through its transformation into a society of creative citizens, capable of preserving and expanding its human capital stock. In this context, the education reform currently being debated, which forms an integral part of the national growth strategy, must be based on five pillars: (a) evaluation of the Greek education system at all levels with a view to enhancing innovation and entrepreneurship; (b) rationalisation of curricula across all educational levels, as well as of the functioning and governance of higher education institutions, while enhancing the efficiency and autonomy of public educational units; (c) break-

ing the hold of corporatist interests on the education system; (d) increasing funding, which still remains low; and (e) transparency at all levels" (Bank of Greece 2015: 26-27).

The proposed reforms in this excerpt are organised around the notions of 'efficiency', 'autonomy' or 'transparency' that seem neutral enough and are self-explanatory. The notions are presented furthermore as instruments and results of desired change. Except the low funding there is no reference to social conditions, or to the world of education from inside and to the multiple functions it performs. Education becomes abstracted from its particularities and its diverse aims; it is presented only as a medium to acquire employment as though nothing else matters. The proposed reforms conform to the new governance approach to education as it is expressed by international and supranational organisations, most notably financial organisations. And this is very problematic, but the space does not suffice to articulate in more detail our criticisms as to why financial institutions speak on matters best approached from a pedagogic, political, and social aspect.

A note on impact: some of the effects of the measures to respond to the crisis combined with the education policy during the period under discussion were the following: first of all conditions of work have deteriorated adding to a feeling of precariousness due to layoffs and severe salary cuts. Gradually, things start lacking, from stationary material to heating oil. Infrastructure maintenance was left to itself. In addition, tasks have multiplied, and work has been intensified, due to new regulations, evaluations, combined with layoffs of personnel and increased bureaucratic work. The functioning of committees, new councils, and new procedures required more time to digest the regulations and more written documents were produced than ever before.

On the whole, one could argue that public education is being gradually privatised as education costs are rolled over to families who have to spend more for their offsprings and to teachers as they have to find other means to support themselves because of their diminished income. Teachers at all levels of education have to spend more money of their own in order to do their work and in this way, they contribute directly to funding of the education system by covering up expenses.

There were many more changes as well as effects than sketched above. For the purpose of this paper, I would like to focus on three: the new posts created in the administration, the reduced budget, and the evaluation of work performance.

5. Analysis and comments on changes in tertiary education

The education system in Greece underwent changes that affected the structures of administration and the managing of education, especially tertiary education. The changed affected the way formal institutional relations of power (within institutions) are organised. At the same time, the way institutions relate to other institutions also underwent changes.

Within institutions, we notice that new posts are created. This structure of steering denotes a distinction in competences and the same time decision making is ramified between different institutional organs. There is a certain ramification of formal positions and communication is multiplied, that is the 'paperwork' is increased while the personnel, both administrative as well as teachers, is reduced. The institutionalisation and the communication via written document between the different posts makes them more ***distant*** on the one hand and on the other, more necessary to each other. Formal relations become more ***distant*** and more ***depersonalised***, while

the reference to each other for decision constitute each other indispensable. Institutions are required to introduce formal procedures at every step of their functioning by introducing bylaws and statuses. The new arrangements make personal contact in vivo less important for decision making, minimising perhaps the possibility of conflict or deals 'under the table'. In a certain way new 'check and balances' in the management structure were introduced by creating new posts and by instituting the following of certain bylaws at every level of the administration. In my view, these measures also facilitate control of decision making within institutions by the government, that is, 'from a distance'.

However, institutionalising various bodies, adding posts to an organisation, distinguish competences, to my view, create a network of relations through which governance is carried out. In the literature this process is called 'coupling' and 'decoupling' strategies or processes to steering organisations according to new institutional theory (Hasse & Krücken 2014). In Greece, *the introduced changes make the system of governing opaque instead of more transparent, because among other things the lines of command become longer.* A side effect of this network of decision making is that the responsibility of decisions is thus diffused: no one is personally responsible, though everyone as part of an institution is accountable.

The organisational changes were imposed not only by legislative but also by introducing evaluation as a policy instrument that has been associated with budgeting. Authors named this phenomenon 'decentralised centralism' (Karlsen 2000). In a few words, though the state gradually withdraws from direct steering of education it is still prevalent through regulations and laws that institutions have to conform to, in order to secure their public funding. These new organisational structures change the ways domination is exercised, it becomes *more impersonal, more formal, and more distant* than before but also closer in a way to institutions and individuals though evaluating their work-related activities.

These changes are 'from without', part of the system of governing, the question is what makes individuals to abide, follow or accept on the whole the introduced changes. The means to eradicate resistance has been a combination of the threat of discipline measures and internal motivation. The latter was succeeded through the measure of evaluation of work performance. In the relevant discussions with colleagues in and out of the university I am employed, I noticed that some academics perceived evaluation of their work as 'recognition of their value as scientists', which to their view was not adequately done by their colleagues or departments. Others saw evaluation as liberating them of the pressure and influence of the department on their promotion opportunities. And some others in high administrative position saw it as a means to enforce control and compliance to colleagues. In a few words, the compliance of employees and institutions was facilitated by external control and the threat of disciplinary measures and internally by the meanings evaluation carries as recognition of one's value.

At the same time, because of severely reduced funding and salaries, institutions and teachers were asked to become more 'opportunistic' in their behaviour and seek actively to find the funds needed, either by applying for funded projects or 'exploit' the assets they have at their disposal.

From the above it becomes apparent that formal rationality found its way to be imported in the education system in Greece. However, the changes introduced clashed with pre-existing forms of how relations were organised based more on a traditional, and pro-capitalist form of rationality, that were based more on personal rather than impersonal contact.

The rationalisation of action and of the relations in education introduced by the public policy including education had by no means the desired effects. The education system did not turn overnight into an 'easier' to steer institution, and traditional relations of power retained their character albeit having now a more 'neutral' and objectified status based on formal rules. It is worth examining how the application of ideas borrowed from international policies receive a meaning, and how when applied these get different connotations by the actors whom the changes refer to.

6. Concluding remarks

Though there are certainly good intentions behind policies in education, it seems this does not suffice to have the desired effects. A reason lies in the fact that policies of any kind disregard that they are conceived through ideas that are rational in their own special way, for they are influenced by ideology, cultural origins, religion, and interests and they do not constitute a 'neutral' instrument.

The application of even good ideas does not necessarily mean that they would produce good results. There are many steps between conception and application, and both are mediated by numerous social processes.

The way policies in education are applied have as an effect that formal relations of power become more *distant and more complex,* creating a governing structure without a governor; that is *a structure of domination and a hegemony without a hegemon,* or a master to whom one can directly oppose, resist, or cooperate with. Relations of power become more distant, for new posts are created and added in the existing hierarchy. They become also misleadingly more transparent, for the following of rules does not necessarily mean the absence of various deals 'under the table'.

The network of relations that support this new form of impersonal (or personless) hegemony means that no person is really responsible in an institution, but everybody somehow becomes accountable. The point of responsibility and who is rendered more or less responsible is important, but the space does not permit me to elaborate (see Peeters, 2013).

It is worth noting that the 'area' of higher education, as it is called, constitutes a network of relations that become more complex at every turn of educational policy. The 'iron cage' turns into a glass tower not accessible to outsiders and not being able to leave when insiders wish to. The institutional control is expanded and expanded so that it can be exercised by "distance". At the same time, it is observed that institutions are beginning to look like each other, a development that analysts called Institutional Isomorphism" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

In addition, analysts say that the state is "recalibrate" (Ball & Youdell, 2008), as its functions are assigned to civil society organizations, which also falls within the concept of privatization. At the same time, the tendency of impersonal forces of money and power to interfere with more and more dominating the private sphere falls within what Habermas (1989) called colonization of the lifeworld".

Education has been subject of rationalisation according to ideas and worldviews that turn it into an institution geared to opportunism rather than to serving ideals that promote the collectivity and contribute to human emancipation. In my view, we need to study these developments to uncover mechanisms, regimes, resistances but also unintended consequences and or hidden empowerments.

Perhaps as a positive note, policy does not always turns into practice according to the letter of the law. Implementation of laws and regulations are mediated by different understandings and vested or not interests. Thus, the new governance approach has been to a great extent interpreted in certain ways, not initially perhaps planned, or meant. Thus, it is more fruitful to recognise the complexity of the institutions and their functioning. In this, Weber's work provides a starting point for designing an inclusive framework in order to study and analyse the recent changes at a global scale.

Notes

1. The article is based on work previously presented in conferences and published texts (see Kantzara, 2018 2020). It contains new ideas not presented or discussed before in relations to the concepts of 'new governance' and 'rationalisation'.
2. All data in this section are accounted in the following publications (Kantzara 2016, 2020).
3. On data see footnote 2.

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