

The Views of School Administrators and Educational Authorities Concerning the Management of Multiculturalism in a Regional Unity of Northern Greece

Apostolia Matziouri
Teacher

Konstantinos Tsioumis
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Argyris Kyridis
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

By this research –part only of the findings we expose here- we attempted to investigate the degree up to which the financial crisis that has stricken Greece the latest years and the ascension of the nationalist party “Golden Dawn” have affected the concepts of school principals on multicultural issues. Such a change in the profile of modern Greece would make a tradition of hospitality that’s been cultivated for thousands of years in this land collapse. More specifically we felt out the school principals on questions dealing with the handling of multiculturalism, given the importance of the role they play on the educational scene and the application of educational policy. It came out that the preparedness for action of the educators is connected with their high education and continuous training and results from their sensitivity, their pedagogical identity, and the contact with the local society and the deep comprehension of the social needs. We estimate that this present task provided revealing evidence on various levels and constitutes a representative reflection of the tendencies that prevail in the sector of primary education. Finally, the corollaries apply to every single regional unity of the country with similar characteristics.

Keywords: Educational leadership, educational policy, intercultural education, management of multiculturalism, organization and administration of schools, representations of members of school management, Golden Dawn, education of Roma

Introduction/ Different approaches of multiculturalism

Having as a basic target of our research to investigate the views of school leadership on issues about multicultural education and what they think of the administrative-legislative frame it’s been placed, we considered it necessary to review all those philosophical approaches of Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) that offer us a typology that correlates various models of leadership to various models of multiculturalism. Such an

analysis with help in the end of our presentation to build the profile of the leadership in the region we examine.

Conservative multiculturalism or **monoculturalism** is based on the “conviction for the superiority of the western patriarchic civilization” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 3). Overlooking questions dealing with the social inequality and the misery of marginalized groups, it shoots for multiculturalism as if it’s an internal enemy. For this reason it’s after the consolidation

and expansion of western civilization. Nieto (1996) points out that such an approach relegates to monocultural education, an education reflecting only on one aspect of reality and prejudiced in favour of the dominant group. Individuals who have adopted the monocultural mentality, often face non-white and poor children as deprived and inferior, “equalize difference to inadequacy” (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2002, p. 53) and embrace the model of “cultural deficit” (Manning & Baruth, 1996). As a result, it is attempted to assimilate anything that is “different” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), so that no one deviates from the standard (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2002). According to the assimilating approach, differences are perceived as an obstacle, “cultural differences as social divisive” (Coelho, 1998, p. 19) and the nation constitutes from a cultural and political view an integrated total (Nikolaou, 2000).

Liberal multiculturalism supports that people of different race, descent, class and sex share a natural equality and a common humanity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, and also Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Because of the interest in similarity, the fans of this approach let themselves accept *color blindness* (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) and the so-called *intellectual similarity* between the two sexes (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). Ideals like liberty and equality are defended, because they raise the hope for an unflinching coexistence of people with different values (Duarte & Smith, 2000). The inequality among groups is attributed to the deficiency of social and educational opportunities that would contribute to the fair competition in economy (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), whereas various problems that come up, constitute exclusively a personal matter; it doesn't have to do with “social or structural difficulties dealing with power” (Gray, 1995, Haymes, 1995, also argued in Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

Pluralist multiculturalism focuses on difference and the effort to celebrate human difference (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Nevertheless, just like in liberal

multiculturalism the question of policy and power is absent and the unequal current situation remains unquestionable. (McGlynn, 2008) and Askouni (2001, p. 91) describes this view as “naïve and simplistic approach of harmonious pluralism”, that faces the demand for equality among different national and cultural groups as a matter of good intention, “identifies the inequalities with biases and biases with ignorance and believes they will be renounced through the acquaintance with others”.

Finally, according to **critical multiculturalism**, people produce and reproduce meanings in a context that is formed and reformed steadily by relations of authority, while group differences are structured by these relations in the social and historical context (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Attention is not focused on evident cultural differences but on “differences that exist in relation to whether someone has access to current forms of authority or not, on differences of social standpoints and on the structurally defined differences of collective experiences” (Govaris, 2000, p. 4). In terms of mechanisms of dominance, exclusion and social inequalities, the study of the relations between civilization and politics is considered necessary (Giroux, 2003) and the course to critical multicultural action (praxis), through which the revision of actual hegemonic regulations is attempted (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). It's obvious that this approach leaves no place to neutrality. As McGlynn (2008) states, it's about a figure devoted to equality and committed to the extinguishment of social injustice and, according to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) can lead to a social, political and educational transformation. Condition sine qua non for this change both for the latter and Leslie (1998) is the self-reflection that leads people to comprehend themselves as social beings, whose political views, socio-economic class, religious convictions and racial self-image is formed by dominant prospects.

Though many aspects of these issues have been studied thoroughly, it's been remarked that the relation which may have

been developed between models of school leadership and approaches of multiculturalism have been least investigated (McGlynn, 2008).

Repercussions of social reshuffle on educational reality

The settlement of aliens in a foreign land entails a series of problems that correlate with their integration to a different social, economic and ideological system, something that results in the insecurity of natives expressed through phenomena of xenophobia, national prejudice, racism and social malaise. All these confrontations are transferred to students' population preventing them from multicultural communication. "Insecurity and conflicting multicultural relation prohibit the cultivation of positive stereotypes, something that is unquestionably reflected upon the school community" (Souridi-Batayanni, 2006).

Based on information from sources of the *Institute for the Culture of expatriated Greeks and Multicultural Education* (IPODE), the percentage of aliens and repatriated Greeks in the primary education comes up to 10%, whereas at the same time there are classes where "different" students may outnumber the native students. This turn creates new data in school actuality.

The promotion of multicultural dialogue is one of the priorities of the Council of Europe. To hit this target, the common training of children with different cultural background along with the dominant national group is rendered imperative. However the multicultural education does not concern only schools with "different" students but it is placed in the frame of the "Pedagogy for all". Through the latter the "Multicultural Preparedness" is cultivated (*openness towards the different*) and the "Multicultural Skill", that is to say the *effective handling of multicultural divergence*. (Kesidou, Papadopoulou, 2008).

Need for development of intercultural culture at school

Under these circumstances, the role that the director of the school unit plays is of vital importance. The element that would help him to establish a climate of cultural pluralism inside school is the profound knowledge of the principles of Multicultural Education as they were defined by Helmut Essinger (1991), a German scholar:

- **Education for empathy** (to understand one another, to put ourselves in other people's shoes and see things, problems and views from their own perspective)
- **Education for solidarity** (development of a collective conscience that exceeds the limits of various groups of people)
- **Education for multicultural respect** (become communicants of other peoples' culture and render them communicants of our own)
- **Education against the nationalistic mentality** (to eliminate the national stereotypes and biases and establish the interaction with people around us regardless of their national, cultural racial and religious origin).

A very important parameter of multicultural education is the *bicultural* or *bilingual education* that contributes to the smooth development of the identity of children and gives the chance to children of lingual minorities to cultivate and promote systematically their mother tongue, the cultivation of which has been proved to be the starting point to master the second language and helps minority children to develop intellectually, as they're not *tabula rasa* (Jim Cummins).

To achieve all that, we need a multicultural administration, which will contribute to the creation of an environment "where the detection of alternative ways to organize morally the social relations will be feasible, exploiting the actual pluralism of prospects and knowledge (Govaris, 2006).

Multicultural education under multicultural leadership

By the term “multicultural leadership” we define the leadership that is capable of expressing the differentiation within school environment, verifying the cultural pluralism and the educational equality (Bennett, 2001). According to Bennett (2001, p. 173) multicultural education is based on four principles. These are:

- The multicultural pluralism
- The ideals of social justice and the end of racism, of sexism and other forms of discriminations and biases
- Confirmations of culture during the process of learning and teaching and
- Visions for educational equality and excellence, leading to academic achievements for all children

Trying to provide a theoretical frame in the application of educational administration, Riehl (2000) proves the existence of three key-actions in the determination whether school principals are sufficiently prepared to correspond to differentiation and demonstrate a multicultural leadership.

The first action is to enrich the concept of difference with new concepts, the second includes the promotion of educational practices applied in schools as a catalyst for change and the third action is correlated with the construction of bonds between school and local society.

Necessary condition for all those who exert administration and their personnel is to be aware of issues dealing with differentiation, in order to provide an education sensitive in questions of culture, free from discriminations and prejudice and which will promote the educational equality, to encourage an instruction and a teaching that include everyone or the investigation of instructional practices dealing with culture (Riehl, 2000), to have high expectations for everybody, adopting always the most suitable pedagogical approaches for every student (Lomotey, 1993).

The culturally empathic school director – taking into consideration the rapid developments in society- not only stands out by developing positive attitudes towards people of different national-racial origin –this is what the American call “walk the talk” (Georgiadou & Kambouridis, 2005) - but he tries to infuse into the Teachers’ Association, the students and parents a culture that will formulate positive attitudes towards the culturally different (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Additionally, he promotes the multicultural cooperation, informing parents on the goals of school and the expectations that teachers have from them, so that parents can be in position to assist students in the achievement of those goals (Lainas, 2004).

Moreover, the effective and contemporary school head is demanded to dispose decisiveness, insistence and persistence for the promotion and materialization of changes and the elimination of prejudices that concern other populations and civilizations (Evangelou et al. 2006).

Other useful tools he uses to facilitate the incorporating attempt of students with cultural particularities are the organization of cultural and artistic activities in school that provide a rich school life, the involvement of teachers into researching process, their updating on multicultural programs that currently run, the cultivation of critical thinking, of reflection on methods-material-practices, their professionalism (Dimitriadou & Efstathiou, 2008) and evaluation. In the addition to the pre-mentioned, he anticipates uncomfortable situations, he is on the alert having organized alternative plans in case of failure and he counteracts injustice against people from different economic, social and educational background, to deter the deterioration of the social tissue.

Quite often we hear a school principal or educator saying: “I don’t see colour. I see children”. With this statement many of them want to show they’re impartial. That’s good only in the case that doesn’t deprive children of their cultural elements but their cultural wealth, heritage and beauty are considered valuable inside the class (Gardiner, 2005).

Other researchers like Ferguson underline that, when teachers with ethnocentric ideas face alien children as culturally inferior or deprived, this may have baneful influence upon the academic achievement of children and their will to learn. Therefore, a school principal should sensitize teachers, because an early academic failure may have disastrous consequences on the professional future of those pupils.

In addition, a sensitive school director, to avoid the marginalization of children, does not hesitate to consult and be guided by superior administrative members on the involvement of those children in school life.

The multicultural director also reflects upon the question if he himself and his/her collaborators have and therefore reproduce biases and stereotypes, if they face those children on the principle of reciprocity and complementarity or they fall victims of acculturation.

Last but not least, we must emphasize that, when the leadership of a school unit sticks to the law, to the commands of the curriculum, that is to say, is under the instructions of bureaucratic rules and overlooks the composition of human potential of the school and the new social data, then both the characterization leader and the phenomenon of leadership are circumvented (Kantas 1998, Papaconstantinou, 1994).

Other gifts distinguishing a school leader

- He develops a common vision and he achieves unanimity on issues of targets
- He provides individual support
- He provides intellectual motivation
- He builds structures to facilitate cooperation
- He focuses on academic development
- He handles means and resources prudently
- He's got specialized knowledge in techniques used in the organism as well as in the way the equipment functions, so that he 's able to draw conclusions on what is possible to be materialized or not every time inside the organism.
- He disposes abstract thinking and open-mindedness

- He has developed the holistic approach and a spherical thought, for that he can perceive the organism as a total, and how the pieces affect and fit one to another, to be able to control and predict the consequences of his choices or one part's function on the total.

As a result, a leader does not follow the practice that Bass and Avolio defined as "laissez-faire", because in a school unit where the future of children and their smooth transition to the society of the adults are at stake, nothing can be left to chance.

Finally, it must be made understood that the definition of targets is what determines the frame in which the organism itself confirms its continuity and viability (Hax και Majiluf, 1991). Consequently, if in an organism's weaknesses are identified coming from vague and/or inexistent targets, then it's almost certain that the organism will soon cease to be functional.

Methodology

Our research was carried out from November of 2012 to March of 2013. To be more specific, we applied a case study, one of the most essential forms of research in social sciences, to examine a given social situation in a particular geographical area, to investigate a modern phenomenon in terms of real life, because it concerns a specific group of people, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are indefinable (Yin, 1984, p. 23) and we had the chance- researcher and research subject- to interact. Thus, we succeeded in comprehending their perceptions, their experiences, the evident or implied admissions of the participants from the group of educators in Northern Peripheral Unity, "as every case is unique but not so unique so as not to allow us to extract some lessons from it and apply them on a general level" (Wolcott, 1995, p. 175). Through this procedure we attempted the definition of models and dominating tendencies, the determination of groups of data, the emersion of contradictions and comparisons, the formation of general interpreting figures and the discovery of relations between variables and categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2000).

The data we collected were qualitative and came out from semi-structured interviews the duration of which fluctuated between 18 minutes and 1 hour and 8 minutes and which were based on a core of 12 questions, some of which were accompanied by some clarifying sub-questions. In order to collect them we used the method of recording, field notes, interaction of the participants and stories of life.

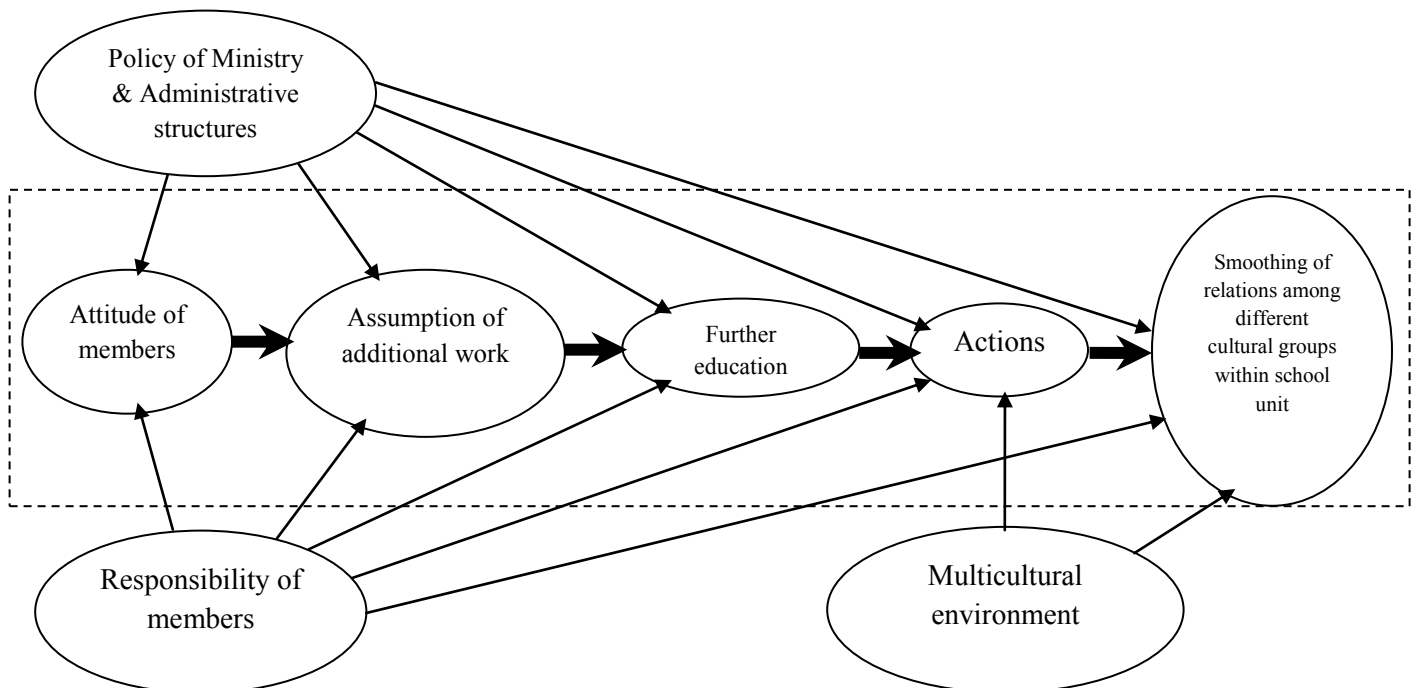
To secure a valid sample we minded to take interviews from a big number of subjects from all municipalities of the Periphery, both rural and urban areas, touristic and financially robust places and some financially feeble ones.

In our publication we shall be occupied with the sample consisting of school directors who summed up to 45, almost 70% of the total of school directors in the region. A pilot interview preceded the conduct of research for testing and successfully apply the questionnaire. Let's underline that our initial fears of paid answers were not verified.

Our tool for summarizing the conclusions came from *path analysis*, a method that –for all

we know- is used for the first time in a research of this kind. It was preferred because the research concerns qualitative variables, which are connected with one-way linear relations (see Sewall Wright, Blalock, Duncan, Joreskog etc). This is one of the reasons we consider our research to be pioneering but also because research with similar questions hasn't come to our notice.

More specifically, in this method we handle dynamic systems, in which internal variables have one-way linear relations (cause-effect) and the whole system is limited by independent external factors, which belong to the environment of the system and usually stay invariable. The internal parameters (variables) are classified in stages, in which the state of a stage determines deterministically the state of the next one. Being so, in a diagram of space or time evolution of the system, the external parameters affect one-dimensionally the system, whereas the internal ones are connected linearly and one-dimensionally to the last stage.



Analysis of the data

The “Roma” in Nestos region

The first finding of our research concerned the composition of some schools in the eastern part of the prefecture. As I was brought up there, I was astonished when I realized that there were schools with very high percentages of “different” pupils that came up to 53%. Those pupils in many cases are not Roma but as a school principal supports:

- The core of this group of people goes back to 1922 with the exchange of populations according to the Treaty of Lausanne when only 4-5 families remained here. That period and until 1990 they fraternized with itinerant Gypsies. Thus a group of 30-40 families was formed. The number of students coming to school was practically standard. Since 2002 there has been a European programme that supported the Roma financially in order to be offered accommodation. There wasn't the chance this programme to expand beyond Nestos. So, many people from Thrace –in order to take advantage of this opportunity- they moved here, where there was this core. As a result this population expanded to the point that today numbers 130-140 families. What I mean is that their purpose was to exploit the loans granted for the settlement of Roma children. It was quite a lot of money; a loan that was given for construction of houses with the guarantee of the Greek public and summed up to 92.000 euros.

A case of German students

At the same time, a peculiar group of German pupils was noticed with marked violating behavior in a certain area of the Peripheral Union. There have been disposed some outlays, part of which profit the undertaking families, in order to take care of such children. Those families enrolled the German children in Greek public primary schools, as the German legislation bans their attendance in the German public ones. However, their presence has caused a lot of speculation to

the educational leadership of schools in the area and as a school head recounts:

- “... I called the Director of Education and told him: “Mr. Director when someone reads the file of this child, he feels like banging his head against the wall!!! There is no talk about educational needs. We talk about psycho medicines, alcoholism... many many problems... and he's already 14. He said: “Let's talk about it with the School Councilors and hold the whole thing up.” The Minister intervened and threatened the Director of Direction saying: “If you don't enroll the child, you'll answer for it in the State Council”. That happened recently. The Director of Education called me and explained me everything. So, I asked him: “And what if something goes wrong one day? What if he goes mad and beats a first class child? He's 14! Who's gonna take the responsibility?” Right now he comes to school, despite the objections, and we all cross ourselves nothing to go wrong.”

Pressure, collision and dilemmas relating with the posture of the Ministry

Quite often the school principals expressed their indignation for the inconsistency of the Ministry to apply the laws, the equivocal nature of the latter, the impression the Ministry search for scapegoats and they're not protected as professionals:

- “There is a frightening law instability that – to my mind- causes probably all these problems. That is to say the law that explains the procedure we have to follow to enroll the Roma children is far too “open” with regulations that are not applied for native children as well. For example the law (official instructions of The Ministry of Education, circular F.1T.Y./1073/117052/G1/23-9-2009) says: “The Roma children can enroll any time any period of the school year”, something that doesn't count for the Greeks, “they can enroll with any papers they have at their disposal (...) even if they don't fulfill the

conditions of hygiene” –health booklet, cardiologists, oculist, vaccines- but that triggers the first collision. So, when a colleague director has subjected the parents of A’ class to pass through this procedure to pay every single doctor to examine their child or vaccinate it etc, suddenly lets a Roma child into the class and that is considered legal, straight away that creates a negative climate for the parents whose children are already into the class: “What’s this? Why did you let it in? How did you put it in?”. Many people don’t know the legislation. They think we do what we do in an arbitrary way (...) I came in touch with the director of L... and he told me that these children have a “card of removal” -this is how they call it- that follows them wherever they go. They can’t and don’t enroll into school. (...) Unfortunately the triptych at school is teachers-parents-students. Parents are not out of the game. They’re in. Especially the latest years they’re very in. So, the legislator made a gross mistake on that. He didn’t assess things well enough. We don’t talk about multicultural schools. It’s not only them, the schools in Comotene for instance where you can find a specific group of students. We talk about a school that functions based on specific rules and all of sudden out of nowhere we let into the class such a student forcing the school director to run a race, to be in conflict with parents and the local community etc. The parent justifiably wonders: “Just a moment. What if this child carries 10 different diseases??? Who will protect my child, if it catches something???” We haven’t answered those questions so far. Neither can we convince the parent: “You know, this is what the law says.” He or she can perfectly answer you back: “Ok. Then I take my child and go elsewhere and you stay with the gypsies!!!” There are gaps...”

Another school principal adds:

- “Some Albanian, father of a student of mine, committed a crime and escaped unpunished to Albania. At the age of 17 the student

came back with a birth certificate where his name was written with double “I” demanding from me to certify the identity, because, having attended 6 years in my school, he wanted to get the Greek citizenship. That demanded written decision of District Attorney. I don’t know how but the Ministry got air of the situation and exercised pressure on me to sign at once the certificate and draw up an official note/document to them overriding this stipulation”.

The opinion of the lower leadership for the Ministry

All the pre-mentioned justify the opinion of some members of educational leadership for the Ministry:

- “Is the administrative system of the Ministry responsive to the administrative matters that may arise because of the presence of foreign students?” (question 11)
- “Now you talk about something that either they don’t know anything about or they’re totally ignorant of and they don’t have any relationship with education or they’re dangerous. Basically I dropped to the latter conclusion: they’re dangerous. What happens with the Ministry is tragic. (...) Those people have given me the impression that either they love to give me a hard time or they met me and they didn’t like my face. Do you understand? I never managed to get into the spirit of the Ministry.”

Nationalism and racism inside school: indirect and direct references to the popular front “Golden Dawn”

Quite often the school principals made a reference to the political party of “Golden Dawn” sometimes alarmed and others as a sign of times:

- “Are you informed of racist incidents or discriminations that may take place inside school? (question 4)

- *“At school I do my best to cut them off, when I get into the class and I hear...I get for instance into the 3rd class and I hear somebody calling their motto: “Blood-Honour-Golden Dawn”. I’m trying - for example at the lesson of Religion- to explain what those people stand for, that he might have shouted that at a little Gipsy who was probably persecuted. Someone else encouraged him by saying: “Shout it” without the child knowing what’s hidden behind that motto. I’m also trying to explain to the children of higher classes, including the 6th class, when our subject is Citizenship what those people stand for, that they act in a fascist way, that they inveigh against the immigrants, all those they consider inferior based on their nationality or I don’ know what.”*

The social work of the teachers in the specific northern educational precinct of Greece

It would be an unpardonable omission on our side, to talk about multiculturalism, solidarity, social equality etc, without making a reference to the social work carried out in the region. More specifically, from the very beginning of the financial crisis and more intensively since last year, there has been a lot of activity to wake up the collective conscience. All the leading members of education have united their forces and taken action in order to secure the regular attendance of pupils. This reinforcement operates in two levels: the financial- livelihood level (Network of Social Solidarity, Institute of Niarchos, Municipalities etc) and the educational one (supporting teaching).

The reason we mention all these is because we want to support in a circumstantial way that the members of school leadership in the region are close to local society, have touched the right chord of people, listening attentively their needs and confirming once again their pedagogical and humanitarian role.

- “We know that many times their problems are even bigger... we were checking sometime if a family of many members that

we have here at school could have a satisfactory standard of living. We reached out a helping hand... times are getting tougher and tougher and we see that the financial crisis leads more and more to phenomena of racism and that’s a fact.”

- “...In our days there are many financial difficulties... we also help those who are in need.
- “Through the Network of Social Solidarity?”
- The Network of Social Solidarity ...through the school along with the Parents’ Association, the messes of Municipality... we try, when we realize there’s a problem, to solve it.”
- “You said that the teachers work beyond their working-hours. That’s in terms of all-day school?”
- “No, no on their own initiative. They don’t leave at the end of their schedule but they’re occupied with those children. That honours them and –I never laid it bare, though I should have- it comes straight from their heart.”

The question of further education of teachers- the case of the nearby island

Further education in our country is considered to be –now more than ever- an important mean to resolve long-lasting problems in education or/and to introduce novelties in school. On the side of teachers themselves further education constitutes one of the most basic requests of the specific field since 1980.

However it does not seem to have massive character, nor is it provided on a continuous base, nor is it planned on scientific terms. It either shoots for filling the gaps of the essential education or it has occasional character or it depends on the internal motivations of teachers and it’s not taken into account in (the formulation of) their working terms (Papanauom, 2008, p. 5).

In one way or another, in order to make sure that this new knowledge and skills that will be acquired will be applied, there should be planned procedures of guidance, support, reinforcement and feed-back in all stages of the

training intervention, that is to say, before, during and after that (Intrah/PRIME II Project 2002, Chatzipanagiotou, 2001). Read carefully the complaint expressed beneath by a school leadership member:

- “What’s your opinion on the multicultural interventions in your sector? “(Question 7)
- “They have certainly positive results. Presumably not those we expect but they do have results.”
- “What makes them ineffective?”
- “Quite often those interventions are applied for their own sake and not really for solving problems. They make use of some European programs ... but their interest is temporary... as long as a program lasts. ”
- “So, you think it’s all about absorbing outlays...”
- “Not 100%. Just to make the programs run. They are on your side as long as the program runs. Once the program is through you never see them again.”

More specifically, on the island there’s intense discontent and a profound complaint on behalf of teachers, as the poor transportation deprives them of many chances to advance and be further instructed. The itineraries of the ships are limited. All developments take place on the continental part of the Periphery and, when a seminar begins, the last ship to the island is on the way back.

- “What do you think of the programs applied in the sector of the multicultural education at schools in your area? “
- “I surely consider them effective. At least they’re better than nothing... The point is that all of us here in ... I shouldn’t be saying that, right? ... Not enough things are done here in the island. So beautiful things happen across in ..., very strong but we don’t have the opportunity to attend them, given that there is no mean of transportation to return to the island, there is serious problem of removal. Some seminars start at 17:00 pm, when the last ship returns at 19:00 pm. So, we can’t be back to our posts and we lose –not for our self confirmation or

serf education - many many things but I can tell you for sure that anything that happens in terms of multicultural education - seminars, further education, conferences- are surely effective, something surely stays back. ”

Another sad phenomenon is the fact that the teachers from the island who were attending courses and were being examined for two years in different pedagogical faculties of the country, in order to achieve the so called “equalization”, when they came back home in the island and they had to pass their last subject to take their degree from the closest University (that still is far away from them), as they confessed, they realized with indignation that the authorities of the University did not recognize their previous successes and they had to be re-examined at the same subjects. That was pure mockery! One of them trusted me that he gave up, as he couldn’t afford the constant removals, he couldn’t cross long distances and sea, they’re not enough itineraries and ultimately he didn’t have the courage to start all over. Someone else, who wasn’t willing to compromise with the bottom, was forced to re-sit exams in all subjects, suffering the consequences that stem from this decision.

Further data

Answers to the 1st question were separated in three categories. In the 1st one school directors are positively disposed towards alien children and at the same moment they are sentimentally involved in the process of their incorporation at a percentage of 64,4%. In the 2nd category we placed answers that hide some discontent on their part at a percentage of 11, 1%, whereas in the 3rd category school principals are positively disposed to alien pupils but their answers, contrary to those of the 1st category expressed a technocratic perspective (24,4%).The latter stand by them because this is what dictates their post and their duty as it is shown in the following quotes :

- “The presence of alien students at school is not easy. Quite often they adopt an

aggressive behaviour and we always excuse them saying that there is a different, tough and unbearable situation at home concerning the relationship between parents or relating their behavior to their financial status. No matter what happens we say: “But he’s alien, he’s Albanian”, we attribute it to that. It’s hard to deal with the presence of such children. Nevertheless it’s my conviction that we’ve done much better than ever before as a society, as people, as an educational system. A lot of efforts have been made”.

- “Favourably. My father was an immigrant. There wasn’t Greek school to send us and when a child is born here or comes here at its early childhood and participates in Greek culture, I really don’t see the reason why we should marginalize it. They’re members of our society.”
- “...But those children have a cultural background...”
- “Do they really have? That’s a big question! Their mothers and fathers came at the age of 19-20 and very soon they got absorbed in Greek society. How can they possibly have a different cultural background from ours? So, it’s how you see things, right? An Albanian for instance who’s now 40 years old and he arrived from the very first- we talk exclusively about Albanian students, not those we call Russian-Pontiac, right? But now that I’m thinking of it, they’re not differentiated either...”

To go on with the 2nd question, a percentage of 15,5% stated that there is no reason to take up any initiative as far as the alien students are concerned, 2,22% expressed negative mood to take up action, 2,22% did not answer or answered they did not know, when, on the contrary, the overwhelming majority -80%-expressed their willingness to take up action in many different sectors. 19,44% of school directors out of this 80% supported that the action they take every single time depends on the problems coming up, 22,22% the initiatives would regard the social sector, 53% the educational one, 2,77% all three sectors and,

finally, 2,77% answered indefinitely. The following quote sets this picture:

- “When I teach I respect some particularities like religion or maybe some other things. I consider I have across me some Greek student –I don’t think human values differ from one person to another. So, I try to teach them the same things. Neither do I discriminate him on a level of administration or any other level. He’s not different to me on the supposition -as I said before- he has the will to be incorporated.”

As far as the 3rd question is concerned, the answers come under four categories: 66,66% of school heads are interested actively and resist sturdily to the appearance of embarrassing situations in various ways and for various reasons, 20% leave the first word to the teacher if the class or to the Teachers’ Association, 11,11% intervene only when the rest colleagues cannot cope with the problem and 2,22% was taken as negative, because we questioned its honesty. That is to say the subject gave us the impression that he was not really willing to take up measures or give guidelines for anticipating embarrassing situations at school for the sake of alien students. In one way or another, the general estimation is that there is mostly fear of alarm than cause for it. It’s also remarkable that some school principals attributed the embarrassing situations to the academic failure of those children or their violating behavior for several reasons.

- *“When something comes under my notice, we search for the reasons and we cut it instantaneously at the right time. We don’t let it acquire huge dimensions, because we don’t want racist tendencies to prevail.”*
- *“I wouldn’t say I give directions but we talk a lot. We decide in common on the policy of our school. We talk a lot. We try to anticipate situations.”*
- *“What’s usually the content of the pieces of advice you give?”*
- *“Our school is a school for all children and they have all the same rights. Additionally*

they must anticipate situations, where the dominant group suppresses the rest.”

- *“No, the colleagues are so sensitive and capable that there is not really need for. I think they know to deal with such problems. They help these children in any possible way.”*

In reference to the 4th question, 51,11% of the subjects denied that come to their ears incidents of racist violence, 40% responded positively (the term violence includes even incidents of verbal attack or psychological violence) and 8,88% defined this violence as school violence and not as racist violence. Its worth also to add that people who inform the school leadership on these matters are usually teachers, parents or pupils, witnesses or victims of attacks as this quote clearly shows:

- *“I had an incident. Some parents considered that the presence of a Roma child spoiled the good climate of the class. The situation was dealt with a weird way –never before had I known of such- by the teacher of the class: she taught –I think Maths- and she invited the parents of the students to find out themselves the participation of the specific child and the whole picture gave during the lesson and I think they were convinced and never again did they cause any problem. They got so convinced (that the presence of aliens could exercise only positive influence) and that was proved in a very impressive way; if you want, I can tell you the story that took place in 2009.”*

In connection with the above mentioned, 75,55% of school leaders stated that they would take the responsibility themselves to iron out the difficulties (we have the feeling that this high percentage derives from the conviction that they would fall into discredit, if they disclaimed their responsibilities or maybe it’s an indication of secrecy-they don’t want to be exposed to the higher leadership of education that they can’t handle situations), 2,22% admitted that they handle only a part of the questions that emerge and refers the others to the General Direction,

4,44% gave the first word to the teacher of class, as they didn’t want to overshadow him/her, 11,11% supported that that they would resolve matters of dispute in collaboration with Teacher’s Association, wanting to show a more democratic profile, 4,44% they would cooperate with the educator to resolve a matter or crisis in children’s’ relations and, finally, 2,22% would inform straight away the General Direction

Regarding the question who they would address for the resolution of racist incidents, 53,33% named the Educational Consultant or the General Director of Education, 26,66% were absolute or almost absolute that they would arrange it all by themselves no matter how serious that would be, 6,66% mentioned some social service, 11,11% more than one factors and ,last but not least, 2,22% replied in a vague way.

Finishing with the 5th question, examining the parameter of the content of the action taken by the subjects, we would argue that the vast majority of them would act in terms of compromise and consent. Additionally, subjects were found who proposed as a sort of resolution the organization of seminars or theatrical performances and educational games or the research into what is happening in the family environment of the child-victimizer. The following dialogue from an interview indicates that:

- *“No. I would be the first to take up the initiative to resolve the problem and depending on its evolution, if it was necessary, it would be referred elsewhere.”*
- *“Who would you refer to such incidents?”*
- *“To some social service... to propose some kind of solution.”*
- *“Which would be the content of your own initiatives?”*
- *“Firstly to shed light upon the issue where it started from, who caused it but, fortunately, I haven’t faced such troubles so far.”*

Through the 6th compound question we undertook the task to investigate the interest of school leadership in the latest evolutions in the field of Multicultural Education and, indeed, the outcomes were very encouraging. To be more specific, only 13,33% have not attended or organized such seminars, 62,22% have attended

more than one and have taken some kind of action and 24,44% have attended and organized in cooperation with some factors such meetings.

In the 7th question, where we sound out their views on the programs, replies varied but they constitute a very useful tool of evaluating and revising them. To be more precise, 6,66% admit that the programs of educating and feeding the Roma children called a halt to their drop-out but they have not led to academic achievements, 2,22% of the subjects preferred not to express an opinion, 4,44% believe that programs are a very handy tool, the use of which depends on the teacher, 4,44% expressed their bitterness for the fact that seminars for further education of teachers take place far away from the place the latter work, a fact that renders their access to them unfeasible, 8,88% believe that they are important on certain conditions, 4,44% that these interventions shouldn't consist a separate object into the already overburdened school schedule and the teachers should carry out multicultural interventions and make references through the curriculum that already exists, 6,66% estimate that such interventions are carried out on grounds of expediency, 6,66% do not consider them necessary, because there are not enough alien students in their schools to justify them and 17,77% consider them fragmentary or too theoretical or old-fashioned or that they do not come up to their expectations for some other reason. Finishing with the 7th question, we find the categories where the subjects pass a positive judgment on them. 20% made only positive comments but talking generally and indefinitely, subsequently we found that 11,11% expressed positive comments on the *Welcoming Classes* or the *Classes of Incorporation* or the *Classes of Supporting Teaching* or the programs under the leadership of School Consultants, 2,22% were positive towards the Minority Training in Thrace which they consider more systematic and well-organized and 4,44% that they expect to see and hear more. In their own words:

- “Yes, they're very helpful in their socialization, in their incorporation into the school environment than in learning the language. That is to say, to adopt behaviors,

to acquire skills... they mostly help in that, to incorporate themselves into Modern Greek society. I wouldn't say they help that much in the acquisition of knowledge.”

As far as the 8th question is concerned, which investigates teachers' interest in the application of multicultural programs, 35,55% answered that they don't apply such programs, given that they don't face difficulties with their incorporation, 13,33% apply programs with or without the surveillance of the School Consultant, 15,55% referred to program *Diapolis*, 17,77% are in favour of the *Classes of Incorporation* and the *Classes of Supporting Training*, 4,44% gave an indefinite answer, 6,66% supports the object occasionally through other subjects, 6,66% apply the program bound for the Roma in the region of Nestos and finally 2,22% apply Comenius or e-twinning or local history programs. The keen interest of teachers was verified by the large majority of school principals. Parallel to that, it's remarkable what one of the subjects underlined; he didn't omit to say that there are conditions and standards in everything, in order to avoid the humiliation and ridicule of Multicultural Education. Some of the answers containing opinions like the following:

“No, not in the specific school, because there is no stimulus.”

Or

- “Yes, they materialize to the point they consider it necessary and the data of every child. That is to say, they intervene either by specified teaching or specified handbooks... many times... different curriculum... They address these children and help them as much as they can.
- “Do they show interest?”
- “Yes, they do, because their conscience dictates so and because the class advances this way, though there are not dividing lines. Everybody helps everyone. Both children and teachers. There is very good cooperation.”

By the 9th question we tried to find out if the school directors would support teachers to take up multicultural action and in which way. 91,11% answered positively whereas 8,88% negatively. The ways varied (by informing them on the programs that run, technical support and material, seminars organized inside school, financial support, instructions, ideas, knowledge, books, planning of subjects of Supporting Teaching, organization of Welcoming Class etc), but most of the times the subjects of research gave a combination of methods and strategies. In their own words:

- “Definitely. With anything he’d ask for. I could even support him with the knowledge I’ve got, because, as I told you, I have received training as an animators. I’m an animator. I could also help in the planning of such a program.”
- “Of course. First of all I’m pleased and lucky to announce to you that our school has a well-equipped computer centre both inside classes and in a laboratory that gives them a free hand in every project not only of multiculturalism. Apart from that I could get in touch with some people who specialize in that –university teachers, school supervisors, other teachers who have carried out similar projects- so that they come and make a presentation and help the colleague in things he finds hard to put into practice or does not know enough about.”

Going on with the 10th question, we inquired if the school heads consider that the presence of foreign students increases the volume of their administrative duties or not. 40% answered “yes”, 33,33% “no” and 28,88% a little. Some examples of their answers are given below:

- “No, all procedures have been standardized. Those 1-2 documents we have to send concerning statistical data for alien and repatriated students, it’s not really trouble.”
- “Yes, they have particularities.”

-“Yes, it increases not because of the pupils but because of the services.”

The 11th question (by which we wanted to know if the administrative system of the Ministry of Education responds positively to the administrative problems due to the presence of alien students) seems to have puzzled most of the subjects of the research, because, as they claim, they never address the Ministry for the problems they face but to the Administration Service of the Prefecture or in heated circumstances to the Peripheral Administration Service of the County. This is how it is justified for example the high percentage of the subjects having expressed their surprise to the question posed, 40%. Additionally, another high percentage of participants in the research, 44,44%, responded positively, substantiating in some cases their opinion and also describing the consequences that arose from this laxity and tolerance of the laws and the system towards the foreigners concerning the insufficient producing of documents. Finally, we received responses that referred to various shortages of the system, 4,44%, when at the same time some other school heads gave a totally negative answer, 11,11% , substantiating their opinion again. Here are some varieties of their answers:

- “The hierarchy to us goes as far as the Direction of the Peripheral Unity. Now, what goes on the scales...? I can’t tell for sure. O.K. I suppose the General Director of Education communicates with the Peripheral Director, the Peripheral Director with the Ministry and the problems are solved. ”
- “The general guidelines of the Ministry show –at least theoretically- a particular sensitivity. Nevertheless, bureaucracy and other similar parameters of the system, prevent the solution of these problems at once. But on a theoretical level we move to the right direction. ”
- “More than is necessary... to the point that we’ve overdone it. (...)”

At the end of our research we posed the 12th and last question by which we asked the subjects

to express their opinion on whether the administrative system serves or not and why the solution of relevant questions. 31,11% of the school principals find it sufficient, while some others -6,66%- underline that no serious problems have come up so far to test it. Moreover, 6,66% believe that the role of school director has been overburdened, so that quite often they can't manage to meet their duties, 4,44% support that the school leadership should take up initiatives for these people all by themselves, 11,11% seemed rather confused to give any answer, 13,33 stated that it's a highly centralized system, 20% that it serves only the very essential matters to be arranged and, in the end, 6,66% answered negatively, such as follows:

- "Well... the administrative system... I think we find the answer in the phrase: "The school must approach the families of alien children". The administration in many cases is very categorical towards the "different". Quite often we interpret the absence of alien parents as indifference, while we don't know the real reasons for that. Maybe for instance they feel at a disadvantage, as they do not know the Greek language and they're afraid that they may be judged negatively by the school principal. So, when the administration acts this way, there is a serious problem. I think there will be results only when administration of school gets closer to them. School should not create stereotypes. The school itself must approach these students and their families."
- "The present administrative system at primary schools is not only centralized but over centralized. Every single administrative matter in one way or another passes from the school director to be arranged. Consequently, not only as far as the management of alien students and their incorporation to the school body is concerned but also for every school matter, especially the educative ones, it doesn't help."

Throughout the conduct of interviews we heard quite many times school principals

mentioning the term "integration". All the more so, in many of these cases particularly ardently. Therefore we had a legitimate reason to wonder why school principals judged that was necessary.

If the justification was that it's imposed by circumstances for example, that wouldn't prove the development of multicultural or pedagogical conscience. The good doesn't have genuine motivations. Besides, in this case, when the external pressure stops, the action for integrating these people stops automatically as well. If the real reason was because this way the situation inside class is more viable, then the good is bound for the teacher and not the student. In case of that being justified as a way that leads to the academic progress of students, it would certainly indicate a positive action. Here the teachers are not incited by individual profit but at the same time a technocratic mentality is implied. Perhaps, that results from the fact that the teacher always felt accountable to the rest of society. That came out from the subjects' say time after time. Thus, if the presence of foreign students causes suspicion or is considered to disturb the normal conduct of lesson, it is more than sure that everyone will point at the teacher for this failure and bring a cause a wave of protest against the alien student. Finally, if the school directors judged this should happen for humanitarian reasons that would be very encouraging and promising for the future. At this point the point of reference is neither the Ministry that decides without the consent of teachers nor society, nor the teacher.

We ran this analysis, because we attempted to sketch the profile as you will see beneath and that was a basic element.

From the data we gathered –because we had not planned to pose this question from the beginning and it wasn't necessary in every situation but only when they laid emphasis on that- we can contend that the majority of the subjects -57,14%- claimed that the motives are humanitarian and derive from the sensitivity of teacher for these children, 28,57% because, if their incorporation is impeded, there will be consequences to the teaching procedure and 14,28% that this is a demand of today's reality. Still in this latter occasion, it is very important

that even so, they don't name the imposition of the Ministry but they recognize it as a sign of times, a need of school etc. One more important thing is that the proportion of those who speak with terms of humanitarianism is 2 to 1 to those who speak technocratically and 2 to 1 of the latter to those who state that it is imposed by circumstances.

- "Should we integrate them for humanitarian reasons or because you consider that unless they're integrated, they will be marginalized?"
- "Exactly! I expected that .That's a very topical question. Yes, I don't want those children to stay in the margin. Any kind of margin, social margin, class margin etc. Generally I want them to profit by the privileges that all the Greek students profit by."
- "Do you believe they do it because it's a need of our times, out of drudgery or because they want to?"
- "I believe they do it because it facilitates their job. If the integration of alien students is not done smoothly, then the educator's job gets really tough."

The profile of the school leadership

The Peripheral Unity we examined constitutes a typical sample concerning the composition and the traits of the educational leadership. As it was recorded in the international bibliography (Marshall Catherine, 2004), while the large majority of the educative personnel teaching inside classes are women, the biggest part of educative leadership consists of men. In a total of 65 school directors only 14, 21,53%, are women. It's not known if it's due to phobias and insecurities that women may have or to stereotypes and biases that perpetuate and guide the woman to be a teacher and replace the maternal model at school and the man to patronize the school unit as a more powerful being.

Another very important feature of the educational leadership is their high educational level (...) that combines characteristics of transformative-participative, moral and

interpersonal leadership. More specifically, those people have cultivated an internal post of responsibility, they have a coherent concept of things, they're active on many levels and they do not expect from the central authority or other factors to solve their problems in a magical way. They've built themselves a vision for their school units they share with other colleagues (thus, they avoid the so-called "cognitive disagreement" and in the long run the tension), they proceed to what we call "analysis of the gap" and they draw up a plan, based on which they act deciding all together. They leave nothing to chance, they don't act erratically.

Additionally, it seems that the leadership trusts the simple colleague, recognizes his/her value and they don't try to overshadow him/her. Decisions are taken collectively, and the one elevates the other on higher levels of motives and morality (Sytziouki, 2011:52). This coalition to achieve a higher goal contributes to the avoidance of "social comparison" and once again the tension and friction in the work place.

Moreover, they aim high for ideal performance and do their best supplying individualized help to the school personnel, encouraging them for further cultivation and formation.

Another virtue that seems to distinguish the leadership is their flexibility to adapt the schedule, the curriculum and the educational material and means according to the needs, the circumstances etc. In addition, their basic concern is to have the local society participate to the school reality and share the same vision (Gardiner, Enomoto, 2006).

Furthermore, we cross-checked their vivid interest of all members to formulate a school culture that reflects in all its aspects the system of values the school unit has adopted. Solid proof for that is that the school leadership in this very specific periphery has elements of moral leadership –not in the religious sense but as it was defined by Gold (2002)- with the social work they perform by offering financial support to economically feeble students and their families individualized teaching off-duty. That is because they don't want those children to regress and in this way they restore the social injustice.

Concluding our report we would say that we didn't find any evidence that proves the existence of postmodern or laissez-faire leadership in the region, whereas grains only of manipulating leadership have been marked to the degree that it is demanded in order not to come in opposition with the higher leadership and all those malicious, external factors who are looking for a pretext to interfere into the operation of the school unit. In any case, generally speaking we wouldn't characterize them as formalists or technocrats.

References

- Bondy, E., Ross, D.D., Galligane, C. & Hambacher, E. (2007). Creating Environments of Success and Resilience: Culturally Responsive Classroom Management and More. *Urban Education*, 42(4), 326-348.
- Brannick, T. M. (2012). *Path Analysis*. Retrieved from <http://luna.cas.usf.edu/~mbrannic/files/registration/Pathan.html>
- Bush T. & Glover, D. (2003). *School Leadership: Concepts and Evidence*. Full report, NCSL.
- Evans S. D. & Vergnaud, S. (1998). Pedagogical engineering in intercultural teams: critical success factors. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 12(4), 149 – 153.
- Fterniati A. & Spinthourakis J.A. (2004). National Curriculum Reform and New Elementary School Language Arts Textbooks in Greece. *The International Journal of Learning*, 13(4).
- Gardiner E. M. & Enomoto K. E. (2006). *Urban School Principals and Their Role as Multicultural Leaders*. *Urban Education*, 41, 560 – 584.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53, 106-116.
- Gorski, P. & Covert B. (2000). Multicultural Pavilion: Defining Multicultural Education. Available Online: <http://curry.edschool.Virginia.EDU/curry/centers/multicultural/initial.html>
- Gropas R. & Triandafyllidou A. (2011). Greek education policy and the challenge of migration: an 'intercultural' view of assimilation. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 14(3), 399-419.
- Hammersley-Fletcher L. & Brundrett M. (2005). Leaders on leadership: the impressions of primary school head teachers and subject leaders. *School Leadership and Management*, 25(1), 59-75.
- Hearnden, M. & Sundaram V. (2012). Education for a Diverse Society: The Multicultural Classroom in the UK (187 – 197). In: Spinthourakis et al. (eds) *Cultural Diversity in the Classroom. A European Comparison*. Amsterdam: VS Verlag.
- Howard K., Sharp J. (1996). *The scientific study. Guide of planning and leading university research tasks*. Athens: Gutenberg.
- Kaye, P. & Thomas Hamilton L. (2002). Making a change: the effects of the leadership role on the school climate. The effects of the leadership. *Learning Environments Research*, 5, 155-156.
- Leithwood K. & Jingping S. (2012). The Nature and Effects of Transformational School Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of Unpublished Research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48, 387 - 423.
- Maina F. (1997). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: First nation's education in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, XVII(2), 293-314.
- Marshall H., Arnot M. (2008). *Globalising the School Curriculum: Gender, EFA and Global Citizenship Education*. RECOUP Working Paper 17, Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty.
- Marshall, C. (2004). Social Justice Challenges to Educational Administration: Introduction to a Special Issue. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40, 3 – 13.
- Mpungose J., (2010). Constructing principals' professional identities through life stories: an exploration. *South African*

- Journal of Education*, 30, 527-537, j.mpungose@sanbi.org.za
- Palaiologou N. (2009). (ed): *Intercultural Education: Paideia, Polity, Demoi*, Athens: Hellenic Migration Policy Institute.
- Paul A. D. (2006). *Path Dependence - A Foundational Concept for Historical Social Science*, Stanford University and the University of Oxford, Retrieved from URL : <http://ecohist.history.ox.ac.uk/readings/dauid-pathdependent206.pdf>
- Place, A.W., Ballenger, J., Wasonga, A.T., Piveral, J. & Edmonds, C., (2010). Principals' perspectives of social justice in public schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 24(6), 531 – 543.
- Saiti, A. (2009). The Development and Reform of School Administration in Greece-A Primary School Perspective. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37, 378 – 403.
- Spinthourakis, J.A. (2006). Developing multicultural competence through intercultural sensitive. *International journal of migration studies*, 163, 641-656.
- Wasonga A.T., (2005). Multicultural education knowledgebase, attitudes and preparedness for diversity. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 19(1), 67 – 74.
- Webley, P. & Stephen, L. (1997). *Path analysis*. Retrieved from URL: <http://people.exeter.ac.uk/SEGLea/multvar2/pathanal.html>
- Weinstein, C.S., Tomlinson-Clarke, S. & Curran, M. (2004). Toward a Conception of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55(1), 25-38.
- Wuensch, L.K. (2012). *An Introduction to Path Analysis*. East Carolina University, Retrieved from URL: <http://core.ecu.edu/psyc/wuenschk/MV/SEM/Path.pdf>