
The Effect of a Primary School Teachers' Trade Union on the Formation and Realisation of Policy in Greece: the case of teacher evaluation policy

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this article is to analyse and interpret the effect of the primary school teachers' trade union in Greece insofar as the formation and realisation of education policy is concerned, and, more precisely, insofar as it concerns the issue of teacher evaluation. The research material used comes from the filing and analysis of the contents of the *Teachers' Forum*, a periodical publication of the trade union, and from a field study on the role of school advisors within the context of teacher evaluation. What emerges as most telling from the findings is the impression that 'evaluation' is perceived by the Teachers' Union of Greece as a concept that arouses reactions and resistance in its implementation. Consequently, an interesting line of research enquiry would be how local education administrators and teachers could be encouraged to create a climate of trust and mutual commitment.

Theoretical Considerations: why is the trade union important?

It is commonly accepted that the nation state can make a large number of decisions, but is often incapable, despite its best intentions, of keeping track of their effects (Crozier, 2000, p. 216). Consequently, it is often the case that the distance between theory and practice is great. On a small scale, this translates as a distance which separates that which is planned for and that which is ultimately brought into effect (Dubet, 2002, p. 382). The problem lies in the fact that no society can exist functionally when the distance between what is said and what is done is excessively great (Dubet, 2002, p. 382). In addition, as long as the distance remains unrecognised, it operates unofficially and corruptively, causing social intolerance and tension. In our article, we focus on the problem of the tension which is created when the state tries to institute a mechanism for the evaluation of teachers in primary education.

Our undertaking is of interest in that it examines the extent to which social tensions and conflicts constitute a manifestation of the difficulties encountered in the implementation of policy. At the same time, they can be interpreted as the reaction of actors and groups within an organisation who are aiming to hold on to, or even improve, their positions within that organisation and not lose any of their vested interests (Crozier, 2000, p. 106). However, one cannot understand the meaning of power unless one understands the power relations within an organisation (Crozier, 2000, p. 223), as well as the historical conditions of their formation. In order to understand the power relations, it becomes necessary to investigate the margin for freedom that exists within the organisation. In other words, it becomes necessary to investigate the capacity to influence as well as the scope for action which the subjects and collectives have within the framework of the organisation – that is to say, to investigate the conduct which develops in the organisational system (Crozier, 2000, p. 231) to the extent that human relations are characterised by

negotiations, pressure, manipulation and also blackmail (Crozier, 2000, p. 288). This, however, leads us to search for the legitimacy and authority of the central organisation in the eyes of the members of the organisation (Dubet, 2002, p. 382).

But why do we focus our attention on the trade union? The influence of trade unionism on everyday activity has been ascertained internationally to the extent that it is considered that 'collective action is to a large extent predictable' (Cooper et al, 2005, p. 114; see also Macmillan, 2000; Whiddett & Hollyforde, 2003). In fact, the role of teachers' unions is considered to be very powerful and influences important issues which concern training and evaluation, and the replacement of unsuitable teachers. Research has shown how the involvement of trade unions delays or renders impossible the dismissal of incompetent teachers (McDonnell & Pascal, 1998). On the other hand, Fuller et al (2000, p. 128) conclude that poor communication and collaboration with trade unions ultimately 'has a negative effect on the quality of education'. Moreover, at the level of everyday practice, evaluation of a teacher, and of a school advisor, is influenced and directed, or at least blocked, by organised trade unionism (Cooper et al, 2005, p. 114).

With regard to our article, it is concerned with the constant and substantial problem – which has proved difficult to tackle – of the distance between official policy and its implementation in the field, and also with the factors which contribute to creating that distance. In particular, the purpose of this article is to analyse and interpret the effect of the primary school Teacher Union of Greece (TUG) in so far as the formation and realisation of official education policy is concerned. As a case study, the issue of teacher evaluation was chosen, for, as shall become apparent, it is regarded to be of crucial importance and, as such, constitutes a constant source of controversy and tension.

The issue of teacher evaluation in Greece has been much discussed in recent decades as much at a theoretical level as at the level of research, not least because every attempt to implement a system of evaluation is met with the vehement opposition of teachers (Bagakis, 1999; Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Andreadakis & Maggopoulos, 2005; Karatzia-Stavlioti & Lambropoulos, 2006; Daraki, 2007; Pasiardis, 2008). Despite the fact that the benefits of evaluation are many and varied (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2008), the successful formation and implementation of policy requires knowledge of the social context and its protagonists, as well as knowledge of the historical conditions of its formation.

We would like to mention that our emphasis on the trade union does not imply a value judgment on our part, but rather recognition of the significant role it plays in the implementation of educational policy. Educational phenomena are always multidimensional and complex, made up as they are of more than one factor. In this study, we simply focus on the Teachers' Union of Greece (TUG) as one of the main protagonists in the attempt to adopt a system of evaluation and the difficulties which arose.

Some Historical Prerequisites

Teacher evaluation has a turbulent history in Greece, which is a direct result of the periods of political unrest and deviation of the past. It was used as a method to control the political and social beliefs of teachers, and could lead either to their dismissal or to criminal prosecution. Indicative of this, historical research which has taken place on the records of teachers' evaluation reports by school inspectors in the years after the Second World War up to 1974 – years which saw the restoration of democracy – reveals references such as the following:

we have consequently followed him, especially as far as the company he keeps is concerned, because we have it from a confidential source of information that he buys food for his family from a leftist grocer. (31.12.1955).

while the teacher claimed in the past to be a centrist, it seems that after the radical changes of the revolution of 21st April, 1967 [1] he has returned to a belief in nationalist ideology. (1.4.1968). (Andreou & Papakonstadinou, 1994, pp. 273-274)

As a more general picture, between 1946 and 1947, 2000 teachers were dismissed on account of their political beliefs and a further 1300 for the same reason between 1953 and 1956 (Andreou & Papakonstadinou, 1994, p. 274).

So, from 1974 onwards, the teachers' main demand was the abolition of the institution of the school inspector [2] – a demand which was finally met after 1981 with the rise to power for the first time of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). The school inspector was replaced by the school advisor, who, although responsible, according to legislative provision, for teacher evaluation, never actually exercised this duty, in accordance with the prevailing line of logic that wanted him to be an 'advisor' and not an 'inspector' of teachers. The school advisor has teaching and training experience, and is appointed to the position following a specific procedure. Each school advisor has many school units and their teachers under his jurisdiction, the precise number depending on the region he works in. The school advisor has a duty to make frequent visits to the school units and to organise in-service training, although this is not usual. There are various reasons why he cannot fulfil his duties, but they do not concern the present study (Pamouktsoglou, 2003; Pedagogical Institute, 2008).

The issue of teacher evaluation resurfaced with greater intensity in the 1990s when, under pressure from the policies being developed in the European Union, Greece was required to come into line with other member states. Nevertheless, the issue of 'evaluation' remained unsettled and continued to provoke great tension.

Method

Data

The research material used comes, on the one hand, from the filing and analysis of the contents of the *Teachers' Forum* (a periodical publication of the trade union in which it communicates its views and activities to its members and to society) from 1993 to 2008 and, on the other, from a field study on the role of school advisors within the context of teacher evaluation. More specifically, content analysis and semi-structured interviews were chosen as technical instruments. One of the thematic axes was evaluation, which we intend to present in this study.

Participants

The research was carried out during the school year 2008-2009 in the region of western Greece and concerned all the school advisors in primary education. From a total of 33 school advisors who were invited to take part in the research, 28 responded positively and thus participated. Of these, 27 were regional school advisors and one was a former school advisor and member of the government of the time, who was in a position which had direct involvement with school advisors. In order to ensure anonymity, the answers presented in the data analysis section are encoded as Interviewee 1, 2, 3, etc.

Data Analysis Procedure

Content analysis. This study places itself on the side of inductive reasoning, according to which the researcher has some general ideas in mind, and the conceptual categories emerge from examination of the material (Berelson, 1971; Krippendorff, 2004; Kiriazi, 2006, p. 289). The analysis of the written sources helped to establish the orientations and intentions of those actively involved in the field of quality in education and the field of evaluation, with which this study is concerned. It also brought to prominence the general framework in which policy for quality in education is formed, both nationally and internationally. The data analysis was based on the constant comparative method suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967). The conceptual categories of analysis emerged, through a process of constant comparison, from the examination of the data at hand, which allowed for descriptive adequacy (Berelson, 1971; Krippendorff, 2004; Kiriazi, 2006, p. 289). They are sensitised to issues raised by the relevant theory and, particularly, neo-institutional organisational theories, which refer to the function of institutions (Crozier, 2010).

Semi-structured interviews. In relation to respondent validation, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) highlighted three elements that the researcher has to consider. They referred to the social context,

the time of the research, and people's identities and social locations. All these three elements were considered during the data collection, and especially in the phase of the research when the interviews were being planned and the respondents were being decided on.

The TUG's Views on Teacher Evaluation: content analysis

In order to trace and investigate the stance of the trade union, filing and analysis of the contents of the *Teachers' Forum* for the period from 1993 to 2008 was necessary. This particular 15-year period was chosen for two reasons: first, the one extreme (1993) marked the onset of the institutionalisation of a European education policy via Articles 126 and 127 of the Maastricht Treaty; second, the other extreme (2008) marked a 15-year period of repeated (unsuccessful) attempts to establish a system of evaluation – a fact which is the focus of this survey due to the vehement reactions on the part of teachers.

Table I shows, in brief, the history of this particular issue during the period in question. The column 'Content of statute' consists of relevant references to evaluation procedure as it is set out in the relevant acts of legislation. The second column shows the position taken by the teachers' union on the acts, and the final column presents the union's views and proposals.

Year	Content of statute	Stance	Opinion/proposal
1993	A. Teacher evaluation reports by: (1) the head teacher, concerning reliability, responsibility, development of initiatives, and cooperation with parents, teachers and colleagues; (2) the school advisor, concerning scientific training and pedagogical and teaching capability. B. Evaluation of the head teacher by the school advisor and head of the directorate or head office.	Withdrawal of Presidential Decree 320/1993.	Evaluation should be based on a collective process and relate to policy, with the following phases: planning, realisation and review.
1994-1996		No related discussion takes place.	Reiteration of proposals.
1997	1. The head teacher compiles an evaluation report for the school unit he is in charge of, and for the teachers, concerning matters of administration. 2. The head of the directorate and department heads compile an evaluation report concerning the running of the school units and the head teachers. 3. The school advisor compiles an evaluation report on the teachers' scientific and pedagogical competence. 4. The Permanent Inspectorate evaluates the school unit and the teachers.	Rejection of the Ministry of Education's proposal (Law 2525/1997).	As above
1998	A. Granting of permanent tenure to teachers. 1. Evaluation report by the regional promotions panel on the pedagogical and teaching competence of the teachers. 2. Evaluation report by the head teacher. 3. Evaluation by the school advisor. 4. Examination of work file, by a three-member committee of the permanent inspectorate, on the completion of the scientific project which the teacher under	Withdrawal of Presidential Decree 140/1998.	Evaluation should by no means refer to the practitioner and/or influence rank progression. It must, rather, provide feedback on the quality of work within the school unit.

Year	Content of statute	Stance	Opinion/proposal
	evaluation must prepare.		
	B. Selection of teachers.		
	The above procedure applies.		
1999	As above	Withdrawal of Presidential Decree 140/1998.	The adopted system of evaluation should be the product of a bottom-up process and agreed upon by all members of the educational community (practitioners, officials, etc.). Furthermore, the product of evaluation must not be limited to a report or used as a disciplinary measure affecting the salary and rank progression of education practitioners.
2000	As above	As above	In favour of evaluation that tackles the errors, weaknesses and problems which reduce quality in education, though this cannot be the product of the evaluation report or affect the salary and rank progression of the teacher.
2001	As above	As above	Evaluation not to be undertaken by one-member bodies, but to rely on members of the school community and teachers.
2002	1. The Centre for Educational Research (a) takes on the development and implementation of standards, indicators and criteria for recording the situation; (b) checks the credibility of the education system; (c) gathers and processes the reports from the regional centres on support and educational design, as well as the self-evaluation reports from the school units. 2. The Pedagogical Institute is responsible for the evaluation of the work of the education system and teachers. 3. Before writing an evaluation report, the teacher submits a personal self-evaluation report to the appropriate evaluation body, and he is also evaluated by the school head teacher and the usual school advisor. 4. The head teacher of the school, or school laboratory centre, is evaluated by the head of the local education office or by the local head of education and the school advisor. 5. The head of the local education office is evaluated by the appropriate head of education in terms of his administrative work, and by the head of the Department of Scientific and Pedagogical Instruction in terms of his scientific and pedagogical work. 6. The local head of education is evaluated by the regional head of education in terms of his	Withdrawal of Law 2986/2002.	No connection between evaluation and either the granting of permanent tenure to teachers or their professional development.

Year	Content of statute	Stance	Opinion/proposal
	administrative work, and by an advisor or permanent deputy of the Pedagogical Institute in terms of his scientific and pedagogical work. 7. The school advisor is evaluated by the regional head of education in terms of his administrative work, and by the head of the Department of Scientific and Pedagogical Instruction in terms of his scientific and pedagogical work. 8. The head of the Department of Scientific and Pedagogical Instruction at the regional office is evaluated by the regional head of education in terms of his administrative work and by an advisor from the Pedagogical Institute in terms of his scientific and pedagogical work.		
2003-2004	As above	Withdrawal of Law 2986/2002.	A system of evaluation should meet with the following criteria: (1) all actors involved should have a common stance towards evaluation; (2) practitioners should be convinced about the benefits of evaluation. Education practitioners and officials are required to participate in the design of a system of evaluation and, ultimately, the improvement of the quality standards of the education system.
2005	As above	Modification of Law 2986/2002.	Reiteration of proposals of 2003-2004; no to evaluation manipulation; no connection between evaluation and salary or rank advancement.
2006	As above	As above	As above

Table I. The TUG's stance and opinion/proposal.

Based on the evidence contained in Table I, the union avoids an explicit declaration of opposition to evaluation. On the contrary, it sets out a series of preconditions or restrictions which mutate and evolve over time. Two of the union's objectives are of particular interest: first, that evaluation should not be performed by one person alone and that, in addition and as far as possible, it should be monitored by the teachers themselves (the teaching staff of the school); second, evaluation should have no impact on the granting of permanent tenure to teachers, or on their career or salary advancement. Later, this original position appears to become more flexible and, as a 'concession', evaluation is permitted to play a role for those wishing to take up an administrative position in education. In general, during the period in question, the union seems to follow a strategy of disagreement with the Ministry of Education's proposals. For instance, it emphasises evaluation of the work of the teacher rather than the teacher himself and is opposed to the role of external evaluators [3] – in fact considering their abolition to be one of its greatest achievements. It is typical that when, at times, there appears to be a coincidence of opinion between the ministry and the union – as, for example, in the necessity for evaluation to have an element of feedback – the ultimate outcome is disagreement over the who and how of evaluation in relation to the Ministry of Education's proposals. However, this finding does not imply the sole responsibility of the trade

union. It further underlines the difficulty of consensus and the lack of trust between the ministry and the trade union body.

Between 1993 and 2008, the teachers' union states, on the one hand, that it is in favour of teacher evaluation as a means to achieve the qualitative upgrading of education, while, on the other, that it is not in agreement with the legislative initiatives of the governments of the period, irrespective of which party is in power. More precisely, in 1993, the union's proposal is very general. Indeed, as a counter-proposal, it suggests that the entire education policy of the Ministry of Education should be the subject of evaluation, rather than the teachers. Later, in reaction to Law 2525/97 and Presidential Decree 140, it requests that evaluation centre on the school, and that evaluation procedure be separate from direct classroom teaching and decisions concerning teacher promotion. Its demand for the abolition of the Permanent Inspectorate [4] is met in 1999, as mentioned earlier. In the same year, the union expresses its disagreement with evaluation reports and their connection with the rank and salary advancement of teachers. The following year, the union repeats its stance on evaluation reports, but is clearly more flexible regarding the degree to which it is prepared to accept evaluation which aims to deal with mistakes and weaknesses. In 2001, it counterpoises that evaluation should not be carried out by the head teacher or school advisor, as the law requires, but by the teachers themselves. This counter-proposal appears to be a more elaborate form of the 1998 recommendation for the school unit. In 2002, it once again emphasises the importance of disassociating evaluation and promotion – a recommendation it has been repeating since 1998. It proposes the same in 2003 and 2004, with a significant concession, however, in relation to its original stance. Now, it accepts that the result of evaluation could be used, but only for filling positions in administration or where a teacher is discovered to be making a negative contribution. At the same time, though, the union restates its stance that evaluation should be undertaken by the teaching staff in collaboration with the school advisor. In this proposal, the union appears to accept the role of the school advisor as an assessor, as long as he collaborates with the teaching staff. In 2005 and 2006, the union returns to its 2004 stance, only now evaluation is associated with manipulation. So it seems that, over time, the teachers' union's position becomes more flexible and elaborated, but at its base there remains a tactic whose objective is the avoidance and ultimately non-passing or, alternatively, non-enforcement of relevant acts of legislation.

Two further characteristic aspects of the union's reasoning, which inevitably have an ideological/political overtone due to the lack of trust in the government, should be mentioned. On the one hand, in order to explain and legitimise its position, the union makes frequent reference to, and draws comparisons with, the institution of the school inspector and the traumatic experiences of the past. It makes a generalisation that should be noted. It places lack of democracy, the inspector and evaluation on one side and democracy, lack of hierarchy and the absence of monitoring on the other. Indeed, the union mentions a return to authoritarianism and to the arbitrariness imposed by the one-sided subjective judgment of a single monitor, thus transforming the head teacher into a monitor and the school advisor into an inspector, and criticising Presidential Decree 320/1993. There is also mention of 'authoritarianism and regression' and of 'suffocating ideological and administrative control' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 1993, p. 2). A little later, regarding the Permanent Inspectorate, which was voted in with Law 2525/97, the union's stance is that, with the Permanent Inspectorate, there would be a return to a hierarchical perception in education which 'crushes the human relationships in the educational, pedagogical learning community and which cannot be part of that which is called a democratic school' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 1997, p. 6). In order to validate this, a comparison is made between this particular system of evaluation and the Legislative Decree 651 of 1970, which 'oppressed the school and the teachers with the imposition of a network to remove pedagogical freedom and the autonomy of school life and the education community' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 1997-1998, p. 16). In fact, the response of the union's board of directors to the Minister for Education at the time notes, among other matters, that: 'the whole education system is surrendered to the excessive power of the Permanent Inspectorate and the teacher is downgraded to the position of mere executive instrument' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 1997-1998, p. 16). Later, on the occasion of Law 2986/2002, the union talks of the 'evaluation-manipulation of teachers' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 2005b, p. 15), a stance which is repeated in the following years (Teachers' Union of Greece, 2006a, p. 6, 2007, p. 9, 2009, p. 1). Finally, what is noticeable in all of the union's statements

regarding evaluation is its insistence that its design should be democratic. It is stressed each time that it is vital that the full compliance of teachers should be sought, as this is expressed in the union's views.

On the other hand, it is worth noting the feeling of power that seems to pervade the union – power which arises as much from the influence the union appears to have on political decisions, as from the implementation of those decisions in everyday school life. If one takes, for example, the case of the school advisors, three dimensions in the way the union reviews matters are apparent: first, the ongoing struggle to ensure that the school advisor does not become a school inspector; second, the attempt to control or obstruct the enforcement of official education policy; and third, the suffocating control of the school advisors by that same education policy. As far as the first dimension is concerned, the union attempts either the non-‘inspectorisation’ of the school advisor through the non-activation of his evaluation duties or, if an evaluation should occur, for it to take place within a framework of union monitoring via the school teaching staff. Characteristically, the union mentions that should the school advisor evaluate teachers: ‘he will recreate the regime of dependence, repression and alienation under which teachers had been obliged to fulfill their lofty vocation’ (Teachers’ Union of Greece, 1984). This stance is expressed similarly in 2004: ‘the education sector will under no circumstances permit a return to the past and to a system of authoritarianism, terrorism and surveillance’ (Teachers’ Union of Greece, 2004, p. 107). In fact, in a recent document to head teachers and teaching staff in primary schools in Samos (a Greek island), the union calls on them not to send the ‘Annual Evaluation of Teaching’ to the school advisors, since, as it claims, the school advisors’ job specification does not specify anything of this nature. It also states that it will extend full union cover in the case that any attempt is made ‘to undertake the enforcement of evaluation-manipulation of teachers’, to which it is categorically opposed.[5]

As far as the other two dimensions are concerned, a couple of excerpts from union local education authority decisions are characteristic. For example, the board calls on school advisors to agree to the proceedings and programmes that are dispatched to them, which do not include the ‘flexible zone’ [6], because otherwise

the union board will proceed directly with signed and specific complaints and will call on the elected representatives of the KYSPE [Primary Education Central Promotions Panel] [7] to do the obvious and to take into serious consideration the specific conduct [of school advisors] in the next round of appointments for education posts. (Teachers’ Union of Greece, 2005a, p. 12)

Union recommendations to school advisors are also apparent in its decision which ‘considers self-evident the collaboration with all school advisors ... for the resolution of problems which they face, always within the framework of branch decisions’ (Teachers’ Union of Greece, 2006b, p. 10).

Findings of the Survey

The question which arises, based on the findings of the effect of the teachers’ union, is the following: Within this context, how does the situation take shape on an implementation level and, in particular, in the everyday activity of school advisors insofar as evaluation is concerned?

From our interviews with school advisors, what is apparent in the majority of cases is either a reluctance to refer to the issue of evaluation or a tactical avoidance of conflict, which is attributed more to the government than to the school advisors themselves. In both cases, this leads to merely a formal fulfilment of their duties. Indeed, insofar as the former is concerned, we received responses such as:

Interviewee 1: It’s a great burden for the school advisor.

Interviewee 2: Even today, if the school advisor says ‘I’m here to evaluate you’, reactions will certainly be intense.

Interviewee 4: Do you know many school advisors who have gone in [to the classroom] and followed a lesson? They avoid it.

Interviewee 5: Nobody does it! What am I supposed to do? To clash with them?

Interviewee 11: I’m afraid that ... to say something negative ... it’s difficult and I’m not so sure that a Greek teacher will agree to it.

As far as the latter is concerned, we received responses such as:

Interviewee 23: They don't come into conflict with professional teachers' groups, nothing. A situation like that ... evaluation won't take place. It's a political issue.

Interviewee 27: There, the state is to blame ... because they don't want to risk upsetting those who voted for them.

Interviewee 28: I believe that the trade unionists don't want it ... every government leaves it and the issue has stayed that way.

These comments take on their full implications, demonstrating the conflict between legislative provision and reality in the field, if one compares them to the provisions of Law 2986/2002 [8], according to which evaluation of teachers' work will contribute 'to the improvement and upgrading of all involved in education and to feedback on teaching practice aimed at the continual upgrading of quality'. In addition, the evaluation of teachers will lead

to self-knowledge, to the formation of a fundamental model for efficiency, to the identification of weaknesses and the attempt to obliterate them, to the satisfaction of having their work recognised, to the provision of incentives to those who wish to advance in the discovery of the need for in-service training and to an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. (Law 2986/2002, Article 5)

However, beyond the depiction of the inconsistency in question, interest lies in the fact that this is attributed by the school advisors questioned to a 'political issue' and, in particular, to the fact that the likelihood of evaluation of teachers will provoke strong reactions from them, which would have repercussions for the governing party. The message is clear: either the government (whichever it is) appears to be extremely weak or the teachers (their union) are extremely strong. In fact, this assessment holds for both parties in power. This would be easy to understand with regard to PASOK, the socialist party, which controls this particular trade union, but not with regard to the Conservative Party. Consequently, the undifferentiated connection made by the interviewees, in the second case, is not immediately comprehensible. This might only be understood through a review of the historical context and the perception of the Conservative Party indirectly as a descendent of the government of the country during its abnormal political periods.

Of course, one question could be: Why should the version of the questioned school advisors be substantiated? Why should their criticism of a lack of political will be true? The answer may be found if one examines the provisions of the legislative framework and the corresponding shortcomings. Characteristically, the following reference is made in the most recent effective law:

By decree of the Ministry of Education, Life Long Learning and Religious Affairs which was issued following recommendations from the Department of Evaluation and In-Service Training at the Pedagogical Institute, the procedure, form, terms and content of evaluation, as well as all other issues relevant to the evaluation of teachers, are specified. (Law 2986/2002, Article 5, para. 9)

However, despite the provisions of Law 2986/2002, its implementation never took place. As a result, the school advisors do not have any evaluation tools to use! As they themselves say:

Interviewee 5: The school advisor makes no written evaluation, with reports on the pedagogical and teaching competence of the teacher. It hasn't been legislated for.

Interviewee 22: The enforcement of the law is still unsettled. The PDs [Presidential Decrees] haven't been issued, with the result that ... in effect, no one has any responsibility.

Interviewee 28: Possibly, for me, the state is to blame for not providing ... for not passing the law on evaluation ... now we have the school advisor to advise, but we don't have a say, in other words ... we're without a subject matter.

A further point of interest concerns the duty of the school advisor to prepare an evaluation report at the end of each school year (Ministerial Decree 353.1./324/10567/D1, 2002, Article 13). However, the advisors themselves consider this to be a formality, without reciprocal contact and collaboration. The following excerpts from their interviews illustrate this:

Interviewee 24: A government comes along and brings in its own law. Along comes the next and the same thing happens. Everything changes and, by the time they start over from the beginning again, years go by and it's all just the same.

Interviewee 26: I believe that many matters sent out in government circulars are ... rhetorical phrases ... I don't know how much real meaning they have ... I mean ... qualitative upgrading ... it's not enough just to bandy concepts about, but to provide concepts that are measurable, and to provide the tools as well.

Interviewee 26: I don't think that there is the necessary communication with the base ... I would expect, after the reports, for us to isolate some central issues, and have a meeting.

On the other hand, an interesting point which arises from the interviews with the school advisors is the perception they have of their activities, which reveals a significant inconsistency. When referring to their role, they avoid mentioning the issue of evaluation, yet when they attempt to explain why they consider their activities inadequate, and unsatisfactory, they make reference to (non-)evaluation! This brings to mind the choices of the union, which either does not want the school advisor to be an inspector or will agree to it, but only if the advisor is under the union's control.

For their part, the school advisors maintain that they cannot be effective because they lack valid jurisdiction.^[9] It is up to the teacher whether or not to follow their advice, and the advisors essentially cannot do anything, even when problems have been observed. More specifically, they say:

Interviewee 12: You invite him [the teacher] to seminars, to in-service training courses, and he doesn't come, or if he does come, it's only for a laugh ... after that there's not much else you can do.

Interviewee 22: If asked, he [the school advisor] can intervene in some matters, but he doesn't check, he doesn't slap wrists or anything, you can't even administer a mild rebuke.

Interviewee 24: Besides, the manner in which we ask ... we leave him [the teacher] at the mercy of God! Why should he do it? And why should he feel nervous, since that suits him better and he's not going to suffer any consequences?

Discussing the Findings of the Survey

The tension which is created around the issue of evaluation is understood in this text as a struggle for power. The analytical model that we adopted leads us to search for the power relations and, indirectly, the scope for a collective's freedom like that of the TUG within that organisation. These are made up of the ability to influence and the scope for action.

The reactions of the TUG are based on an appeal for democracy and on its allusions to the democratic school. The TUG maintains that democracy means the absence of hierarchy and the absence of control. On the contrary, the absence of democracy is characterised by controls and evaluation. The legitimisation of the argument derives from the past, which is why the characterisations that are used should come as no surprise: authoritarianism, terrorism and surveillance.

According to the theoretical model we have adopted, the absence of control and evaluation could be considered a weakening of the capability of the central authority to realise its decisions, while, on the other hand, it increases the scope for freedom of those active within an organisation – here, the teachers and, ultimately, their union body in the context of the educational system. Hence, it is only to be expected that the demand for a return to some form of monitoring by the central authority is perceived as a threat by the teachers' union. No doubt it is, in part, justified in this, as the comments made by the school advisors bear out. They, for their part, claim that their authority is limited because they cannot effectuate evaluation! In other words, they claim that their reduced ability to monitor detracts from their authority. Here, we clearly have proof of the power games within organisations that are referred to in the relevant literature (Crozier, 2000).

It is also interesting to focus on what it is that really bothers the TUG and provokes such vigorous opposition. According to its writings, there are two important points: the connection of

evaluation with promotion and classroom teaching. The first leads, on the one hand, to differentiation and, consequently, to the creation of an internal hierarchy and, ultimately, to the limiting of its ability to influence, and, on the other, to a differentiated pay scale which will not be based exclusively on seniority. The second is consistent with the global tendency of teachers to consider their classroom as a place where access is forbidden to others – something which has been described in the specialist literature as a 'black box' (Schiller, 2002). In other words, it is connected to the teachers' scope for freedom of action. Ultimately, the TUG associates evaluation as much with a restriction of teachers' capacity to influence as with their scope for action – that is to say, with the limits to their freedom. This leads to a disturbance in the power relations within the organisation – in other words, the transfer of power from the central authority to the internal hierarchy.

It is not by chance that while, with the passing of time, the TUG's tactic may have become based on more flexible and elaborated positions, its goal remains the same. Hence, even when it appears to agree to evaluation, it is firmly opposed to it being put into practice by the hierarchy of the institution which it wishes to see abolished or at least weakened. It counter-proposes, then, that evaluation should be handled by the teachers themselves, and should be carried out by the teaching staff of the school. This makes its battery of legitimising arguments all the more timely, since it links the union to contemporary, globally accepted tendencies associated with internal evaluation (Van Petegem, 2011). In fact, it appears initially to yield on the issue of the connection of evaluation and promotion, to the extent that it agrees to evaluation as a means of bringing the school hierarchy into prominence.

Of course, this last issue needs to be seen within the context of the TUG's way of thinking. This is connected to the feeling of strength it draws from the existing power relations within the organisation, which is expressed in an open show of power, as in when, for example, it announces to the school advisors that they should not send in the 'Annual Evaluation of Teaching' or it proceeds to blackmail them, as in the case where it directly threatens the school advisors not to implement various legislative provisions concerning the 'flexible zone', with the direct threat that, in the next selection procedure for school advisors, the TUG trade unionist who participates in the supreme selection body will vote against anyone who does not comply with its announcement.

This latter point, which accurately depicts the kind of conduct that can develop in the existing organisational system, concurs with the provisions of our analytical model, which fully anticipates it (Crozier, 2000, pp. 231, 288). More precisely, what depicts the show of strength on the part of the TUG is, on the one hand, the power to control that it is able to wield in the promotion of a weakened school hierarchy, with the direct supervision and control of the selection of, for example, school advisors and others, and, on the other hand, the feeling of domination it has with regard to the central government and legislative provision. This leads us, however, to what Dubet (2002, p. 382) maintains – namely, that no society can exist in a functional manner when the distance between what is said and what happens is excessively great.

Yet, in the case examined in the present survey, it bears more resemblance to a weak state whose governments (of both parties) appear unable to realise their political choices. Better, they seem to exhaust their power in passing laws for which the preconditions necessary for their implementation do not exist or have not been ensured. Consequently, the question could be whether, ultimately, this is a weakness or a choice. This may only be understood if the historical context and lived social and political reality are taken into account.

Notes

[1] The Greek military junta of 1967-1974.

[2] Together with the demand that teachers receive a university education.

[3] PASOK, in the first half of the 1980s, met both of the primary school teachers' demands. Ever since, the bonds between PASOK and the TUG have been strong, as is illustrated by the TUG's comment that: 'the government of Change realized this dream' (Teachers' Union of Greece, 1985, p. 20).

[4] The Permanent Inspectorate was abolished in the next reshuffle of the same government with the *Official Gazette* fascicle A' 24 Law 2986/2002.

[5] See <http://www.doe.gr>

- [6] The 'flexible zone', according to the recommendations of the Pedagogical Institute, is defined as a flexible and adaptable framework within the educational process, in which teachers and pupils work together, investigate and learn. With the introduction of the flexible zone, school working hours and timetables were changed.
- [7] Its elected representatives are active on various boards and in selection procedures for members of the education executive.
- [8] The law on evaluation that is in effect today is N.3848/2010 (OGFA71/19.05.2010). This law makes provision for the evaluation of each school unit (Article 32) in collaboration with the school advisor.
- [9] It should be mentioned here, even though it is beyond the bounds of this work, that the few school advisors who are productive and are an active presence in the field – that is to say, who have escaped from the merely formal carrying out of their duties (good practice) – have as a common characteristic the fact that they operate beyond the limits of the 'evaluation–non-evaluation' binary. Through cooperative methods and techniques, they try to improve both teachers and the education they offer through the development of a culture of quality, communities of practice and professional development. It is also important to note that good practice on the part of school advisors can only develop when there are teachers with similar concerns – in other words, when there is a coordination of sensitivities and goals.

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