

EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY DISCOURSE OF THE UNESCO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The issue of the aims and the process of education has always been a main theme in the discussions around the educational, social and economic parameters of the contemporary world. Within the framework of the globalization of the economy and the emergence of the society of knowledge, great changes take place nowadays especially in education where the content, the concepts, the roles and the structures are constantly being reformed, leading to the reconceptualization and the reframing of education both at the national and international levels.

Within this range, the issues relating to the aims and the process of education are investigated through the review of the relevant literature with special reference to the field of educational effectiveness. The paper, then, goes on to examine a number of questions which arise, using the methodologies of content analysis and discourse analysis of the relevant documents of UNESCO and EU, which are related to the theme of the education process.

The results of the analysis are used in an effort to tackle the implications that the political and educational discourse and, in most cases, the research practice related to the definitions of the production of education, might have to local settings.

1. Introduction

Education has traditionally been considered to have a major role in promoting social democracy, good citizenship and economic wealth mainly through the preparation of individuals for the future world, including the world of work (see Cowen, R., 2002 and Lawton, D., 2000). This role has been conceptualized, defined and given different weight through time and has always been related to the sets of values promoted by the different societies.

Policy makers of education would probably relate these sets of values to the “preferences of the societies” as well as to the ways education is “produced” and to the different types of education efficiency, namely to the production efficiency and the allocative, exchange or social welfare efficiency (for definitions see Mace

et al, 2000). In this sense educational researchers would realize that there have been different emphases on the issue of the production of education at different times and at different societies.

In the radically changing world of today, in which the concept of citizenship and the needs of the society are being redefined, the discussion on the ways education is produced, its aims and its priorities is very popular. Governments and international organizations deal with the issue of the production of education in diverse ways, but, usually, as the relevant political discourse suggests (see Cowen, R., 2002), aiming at the improvement of the quality of education, which is considered a major factor to social and economic wealth (see “Green paper on the European Dimension of Education”, European Commission, KOM 93, 1993).

The aim of this study is firstly to investigate the ways that the aims and the process of education have been defined at different times and to identify the educational and political discourse around these definitions as well as around the relationship between education and other socio - economic issues (e.g. the quality of life, the labor market etc). At the same time this study aims to investigate the educational and the political discourse on the favorable outcomes and on the related processes of education. All the above are studied with reference to their implications for policy formation as well as for future research.

The epistemological framework of this study is based on the main principles of what is called a comparative approach (Kazamias, Zambeta, Karadjia et al, 2001), enriched by the methodologies of content analysis, discourse analysis and policy text analysis. Through a trip in time that is presented in this paper it is made clear that the view of education by the different disciplines and theories influenced the way that its production was faced and treated. The trip in the 20th century is of more detailed description, especially when it refers to the decades after the 1960's. This choice was made because the 1960's decade was very crucial for the development of social studies and especially for the refinement of their methodologies and of their methodological tools (Matheou, D., 1997). It is also in the 1960's that the Human Capital Theory “bloomed” and found many applications in the field of economics and planning of education, mostly through the suggestions it made on the economic value of education. At the same time some of the major sociological theories (Broadfoot, P., 1999) “bloomed” and had many “followers” wishing to apply their principles to education.

In this paper there is a review of the major studies in the field of “education production”, “education performance” and “education effectiveness” in an effort to identify the parameters that influenced the views on the production of education through time. It is well known that the historians and the other researchers of education have pointed out the importance of the work of Coleman et al in Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey (EEOS) in 1966 (see Cohn and Geske, 1990 and Karadjia -Stavlioti, E., 1997), as well of the work of researchers like G. Psacharopoulos mainly with the World Bank (see Psacharopoulos and Woodhal, 1985 and World Bank, 1995), of the study by Rutter et al in 1979 and of the work of Scheerens and Mortimore in the 1990's. It

is also recognized (Kazamias, Zambeta, Karadjia et al, 2001) that comparativists of education and politicians have dealt a lot with the international tests on students' achievement, like the IEA (International Educational Achievement), the TIMSS (The Third International Mathematics and Science Study) and the PISA (Programme of International Student Achievement).

All these studies reflect the tendencies of the time (Kazamias, Zambeta, Karadjia et al, 2001 and Popkevitz, 2001) at both the political and the theoretical levels and would help any researcher reflect on the way that the production of education has been «treated». The outcome of the review of the studies in the field of the production of education, that is mainly its aims and process, informs the methodologies and the techniques undertaken for the needs of this study. The whole analysis is taking into consideration the complexity of the concept of education and its production as well as the related issue of the need for an interdisciplinary approach to its investigation (Mattheou, 1997).

More specifically, the above mentioned critical review of the studies proves the complexity of the issue of the production of education (Cowen, R, 2000) and helps explain the diversity of approaches undertaken. At the same time the identified weaknesses of the approaches used may assist in forming a theoretical framework for the analysis. In this sense, the lack of a concise theoretical framework to underlie the school effectiveness research (Scheerens, 1994) on the one hand and the lack of strength and comprehensiveness (Monk, 1992) of the Input - Output models on the other, “lead” to the examination of the education production function models, which, apart from any skepticism against their application to education, can offer a theoretical framework, some elements of which might be adjustable, under certain conditions, to the studies of the production of education.

Furthermore, the content analysis enriched with some elements of discourse analysis within the framework of political text analysis (Ball, 1994, Gale, 1999) of the relevant EU and UNESCO documents is used to isolate the main categories of discourses that describe the production of education at his level. Consequently, some conclusions are drawn for future research, especially in reference to the effective planning of education. More specifically, the study concludes, among others, that more comparative work should be undertaken on the issue of the production of education and on the related issues of school effectiveness, school quality and school improvement.

2. Review of the literature

2.1. Early work and theories on the process and the aims of education

The field of education is very wide as it can include concepts, principles and views from many disciplines and from different types of analyses at the micro and/or macro levels. The first and major issue in the field of the production of education is the way the role of education was considered at different times and

the sets of values, which education was supposed to pursue. Beginning from ancient Greece, the great philosophers Plato and Aristotle, discussed the role of education in direct and indirect ways (see Mace, J, Lambrououlos, H. and Karadjia, E. 2000). They both pointed out the importance of what each one called “good” education (offered by “good” teachers in a “good” manner and environment) to the *development of the individuals and the society* (or, as Plato suggests “the development of individuals for the Republic”).

In the Christian world, especially that of the 3rd century, when the Church is newly established and the ancient Greek world is considered to be in a dialectic discourse to the Christian religion, the education of the young people is thought to be of major importance for their development into “good Christians” if it is based both, on the “classical values” and on Christianity.

2.2. The views on the process and the aims of education during and after the enlightenment period

The influence of the ancient Greek world is still dominant at the period of the enlightenment mainly during the movement of pragmatism/realism. It could be argued that the genealogical roots of the neo-European *paideia* can be traced at the years of Enlightenment and that it was formed by the influence of the major thinkers and pedagogists of the last two centuries.

This “turn” was very much influenced by the British philosopher Francis Bacon, who suggested that philosophy interprets nature and considered the inductive as the best methodology. Using these principles Wolfrag Ratichius and Amos Commenius - two German pedagogists - attempted to reform the German educational system and each one developed one’s own theory.

During the *Enlightment period* the pedagogical thought is “problematized” on the general idea of education or *paideia* and is characterized by optimism and faith in scientific knowledge gained through logic. The movement of naturalism, which was driven from the realism, arises with John Lock and J.J. Rousseau as its main representatives.

Since the end of the 18th century the “new” movement of *humanism* starts. This age is different to the previous humanitarian shift, which took place after the middle ages and placed an important pedagogic role to the knowledge of the ancient Roman- Greek heritage. The main principle of this new humanism was that humans should be educated in a human way, according to the demands of the human nature. The main representatives of this humanism are: the Swiss pedagogist Pestalozzi and the German Frobel.

In the 19th century there is a widespread tendency to “accept” scientific knowledge and, therefore, the *scientific system/ epistemologic pedagogies* of Freidrich Schleiermacher and Johann Freidrich Herbard arise. The theory of Schleiermacher was a great input in the development of scientific pedagogies. An important input of their theories is that they offered the foundations to Pedagogics to become a science.

This “European enlightenment” encompassed new ideas, principles and

institutions that went into the making of a new world (Kazamias et al, 2001). Key enlightenment concepts included rationality, progress, freedom and equality, religious toleration, and “scientific” knowledge. Socio-politically, the world of the Enlightenment included the nation-state, national systems of education and national cultures, and economically “capitalism”.

2.3. The 20th century main views on the process and the aims of education

In the 1960's the economic value of education was stressed mainly within the framework of the Human Capital theory (Schultz, T., 1961 and Becker, G., 1965). Within this theory Schultz examines two related ideas in human capital theory, which need to be distinguished carefully. The first is to do with the motives for spending money on education (and other human capital creating activities such as health, migration, job search etc.). The second idea, related but conceptually distinct, is that through education and training people acquire attributes that make them more productive in the labor market and that the value of this human capital embodied in them (and in societies) can be measured and help to explain economic growth.

Schultz, in a more recent article called “The Economic Importance of Human Capital in Modernisation” (1993) he claims that: “Human capital ... explains most of modern economic progress”. Becker is also most evangelical recently (1993) when stating: “The concept of human capital is relevant ... to understanding economy wide changes in inequality, economic growth, unemployment and foreign trade”

It is not, therefore, surprising that both individuals and governments “invested” in education in the decades that followed. This “phenomenon” had its strong advocates as well as opponents in the debates, which followed at either academic or political grounds. Most of the arguments opposing to this “economic rationale” placed doubt on the relationship between increased investment in education and economic growth - and sometimes on the field of the economics of education in general. At the same time, mainly due to the influence of the neo-Marxist sociologists, the issues of equity and democratization were considered, and often misunderstood, as conflicting to the Human Capital economic rationale (for a discussion see Mace et al, 2000).

It was also in the 1960's that the Equality of Educational Opportunity Study was carried out by J.S. Coleman and his associates (1966) with a major aim to document differences in student achievement between schools - which in the political and educational discourse of the times was considered a very important parameter in the production of education - see Monk, and Cohn and Geske - and then, in the light of these differences to identify policy manipulable variables, which contributed to these differences. That is, it attempted to determine the school and non- school factors related to the achievement of over 600.000 students and 3.000 schools from coast to coast. The study concluded that the differences between schools and the level of inputs to schools bore relatively little relationship to student performance: of more importance, the authors averred,

were such factors as students' family background and the characteristics of other students in the school. Of the school factors the teacher's verbal ability seemed to be of most importance (Coleman et al., 1966: 325).

The Coleman et al conclusion that the socio-economic status (factors) bear a strong relation to academic achievement proved to be extremely influential in the field of education production and stimulated a great deal of interest in the topic of school effectiveness. The Coleman report stands as a benchmark (Cohn and Geske, 1990) and was most influential in providing an impetus for theorists of all orientations to become more involved in what had previously been a very specialized and obscure branch of educational research. Although this study has been criticized on the uncertainty as to whether the measurements used are sufficient to the task involved, on the handling of the data and on the manner the regression technique was used, the Coleman's work is distinguished from most studies, past and future, by size of sample, number of variables, and the amount of data. For many years research continued to be based on the Coleman data base, albeit alternatively supporting and debunking the Coleman's conclusions (Bowles, 1970, Levin, 1970, Michelson, 1970, Mayske, 1972 and 1973, The Plowten Report, 1967 in England etc as found in Karadjia -Stavlioti, 1997). The Coleman's report is to be considered classic in the literature of educational performance and assessment.

In the period following the publication of the Coleman Report, educational research was mainly concerned with identifying the characteristics of the students that influence students' achievement, since the characteristics of the schools reportedly did not. Such works tended to be sociological in orientation and to show that students from middle class homes were more successful at each stage of education than working class children (for a review see Reynolds, et al. 1992). Rutter (1979) summed up this period stating that there was a widespread pessimism about the extent that schools and education in general could have any impact on children's development and Basil Burnstein's (1970) view that "education can not compensate for society" was generally accepted. *In this sense, the interest on educational research- based on school factors- was limited as well as the relevant policies.*

The second body of research in the field of education production is the school input - output research, which emerged in response to the suggestion that resources and other material inputs were not very significant in explaining school outputs. It was then that some researchers studied primarily exterior school characteristics such as services and classes offered, expenditures and the quality of instructional personnel (e.g. Murnane, 1975, Hauser et al, 1983 see Karadjia-Stavlioti, 1997). At the same time, more contextual characteristics, such as the concept of "significant others" were added, but again in relation to the individual.

This body of research considered education production functions (EPF) that "identified which inputs lead to more output" (Scheerens, 1990, p.65), or in an "economist's jargon" that "explained the educational output of schools as a function of various inputs" (for a review on the issue of EPF see Karadjia -

Stavlioti, 1997). Although similar to other school effectiveness research, this research is identified by the particular orientation of the input characteristics, all of which can be expressed in quantitative or monetary terms. Their basic strategy was to gather information on the attainments of very large numbers of children using standardized tests. Variations in children's achievements on those tests were then related to available measures on the children, their homes and their schools. Clearly the results are likely to be influenced by the particular measures used, by the extent to which children or schools actually vary in these measures, and by the methods of statistical analysis employed.

A review of the results of this research led to the conclusion that, when input characteristics such as teacher salary and qualifications, teacher - pupil ratio and per pupil expenditure were considered, there was little consistent relationship between educational expenditure and pupil achievement (Hanushek, 1989, p.161). The major difficulty of these research findings is that the specific concentration on inputs and outputs shed no light on the school process that linked the two. In addition a study by Thomas and his associates (see Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997) points out the importance of using the classroom and the individual student as the unit of analysis in the school productivity and school effectiveness research. Without question there may be considerable differences in learning environments across classrooms in the same school, or across students in the same classroom. So the organizational characteristics of the classroom and the instructional strategies utilized are influential to the magnitude and the distribution of learning opportunities within the production of education.

A distinguished body of research within the production of education framework on school effectiveness emerged since the mid-1970. This movement challenges the basic contention that schools can do little to influence student achievement and the research has been conducted primarily by scholars and researchers, often associated with colleges of education, who did not completely embrace the educational production function approach. The reanalysis of the Coleman data suggesting large school effects on some outcomes (see Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997 and Reynolds, et al. 1992 for a review), the appearance of the International Student Achievement (IEA) studies showing substantial system effects and the publicity in British literature given to some of the early American school differences research by workers such as McDill, Brookover and Edmonds *certainly begun to prepare the way for a change in the intellectual climate as regards to the power of school in the production of education.*

The research on school effectiveness is characterized by naturalistic inquiries involving in- depth case studies of a few individual exemplary schools. These studies usually provide very elaborate and detailed descriptions of a school's climate, its organizational features and classroom procedure, and the instructional strategies and practices employed.

This type of research often employs direct classroom observation techniques in an attempt to capture the dynamic and developmental interaction, which occurs between the teacher and the learner. The basic research strategy in these

studies is firstly to identify “effective schools”, that is schools that are successful beyond expectation in terms of standardized test scores, and then to describe those school characteristics that are associated with this high student achievement. *A comparative case study approach, usually in a matched pair design, is often used to investigate those characteristics, which appear to differentiate more effective schools from less effective schools based on some criterion of academic achievement.*

The literature on school effectiveness suggests that effective schools consistently exhibit certain essential elements or characteristics. There have been several summaries of this enormous research through time (see Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997) like for example the work of Rutter (1979), Edmonds (1979, 1982), Mackenzie (1983), Purkey and Smith (1983), Hacomb (1991), Mortimore et al (1983 and 1988) and Mortimore (1995, 1999). Along these lines eleven factors for effective schools were listed including:

- Professional leadership,
- Shared vision and goals,
- A learning environment,
- Concentration on teaching and learning,
- Purposeful teaching, High expectations,
- Positive reinforcement, Monitoring progress,
- Pupil rights and responsibilities,
- Home - school partnership,
- A learning organization.

The work of Smith and Tomlinson (1989) also contributed a lot to educational work on school effectiveness. Both, the work of Mortimore and his associates and the work of Smith and Tomlinson relate to successful, large scale and costly research projects. Both stress the importance of individual school although they present their results in different ways. It is generally stated (see Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997) that the major contribution of the British researchers to the debate on school effectiveness has been the development of the “value added” distinction in the literature. Instead of concentrating solely only on school outcomes, which is the feature in the American research, it became an accepted position for British researchers to collect data to establish the gains that students made during their time at school, rather than simply to identify where they were when they finished. A criticism that can be labeled to this kind of research, however is that it has tended to produce lists of “ingredients” of characteristics of effective schooling, typically involving a combination of: strong academic leadership; a safe and orderly school climate; high teacher expectations for all students; and a system for monitoring and assessing school performance. It may be argued that the school effectiveness movement adopted such lists and applied them as «recipes», quite often used as performance indicators measuring standards, intended to ensure school effectiveness in a wide range of different environments.

Some researchers consider the instructional school effectiveness movement as

another area of study, which was characterized by the attention paid to the work of individual teachers or to activities in the classroom or school at an organization level. A review in the 1990's indicates the wide range of research that has been undertaken at this phase of school effectiveness research, which also identified and elaborated on many questions about school effectiveness and mostly on the theoretical and conceptual issues that underlie this type of work on the production of education (see for example Chapman 1992, White, 1999).

Within this framework, the school effectiveness concept was identified as one of what Galie called "essentially contested concepts". Since there will be a number of different perspectives on the goals of education in general, and of the role that school plays in the fulfillment of those goals, then, necessarily, the perspective of what makes a school effective will vary as well. This a critical argument, because it provides some measure of understanding for the direction the debate on school effectiveness as well as on the production of education has taken so far. Most of the research until now has been conducted with the researcher holding a particular view as to what constitutes an effective school. This view has, in some cases, structured the parameters of the research.

To many in the United States and Canada, an effective school is one whose students perform well in standardized tests. As such, the identification of more effective schools could be made by reviewing statewide or national test scores. Those in the United Kingdom were until recently, more concerned about the rate of improvement shown by students in the school and about understanding the nature of the relationship between school process variables and the individual child's performance. In this situation effective schools could not be identified without going into the school itself. In Australia there had been a great deal of debate and a reluctance to offer any definition of what constitutes an effective school, until 1991, when the Australian Effective Schools Project defined an effective school as one that achieves greater student learning that might have been predicted from the context in which it (the school) works (McGaw et al, 1992, White, 1999). In each case, the definition of what an effective school is becomes critical to any other questions that might be asked, which have begun to be related to the quality of education.

Within the above framework and as many governments and supra national organizations consider that: "Education is a major instrument for economic and social development" (World Bank, Priorities and Strategies for Education, 1995) invested money to education projects and have been involved in relevant research programs. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been involved in supporting an international program of research into school quality and school effectiveness (Chapman, 1991, White, 1999). The international perspectives have demonstrated clearly how complex the issue of school effectiveness is, and how interrelated the concept is to others such as school management, school improvement and school quality.

2.4. Some critical points to inform our inquiry

The radical pace of change in today's world, namely in science, technology, communication, work, as well as in culture, is considered to have led to re-definitions of the role and of ways that education should be provided and therefore on the ways that would make a school and an education system effective. The review of the research shows the tendencies of each period and drives us to some critical points or issues that ought to be taken into consideration during our investigation. The main points can be summarized as follows:

1. Education has an extensive range of objectives, which are very complex and depend on many factors. As a result the capability for rational inquiry in the field of education must be examined carefully. This situation influences any work undertaken in the field of the production of education and any other related one, such as the effectiveness of education.
2. There has always been a great interest in the quality of education offered and mainly in the probability to use education as a vehicle to individual wealth, social justice and national economic growth. However the stress on these parameters was expressed in diverse ways and it was given variable weight at different times in the different societies.
3. The effect that the international organizations and the so-called «globalization» have on educational policy is an issue worth investigation (see Karadjia -Stavlioti, 1997 and Monk, 1990).
4. The existence or not of the “concept” of “education production function”, which is related to the economic discourse, is an issue, which underlies many discussions in the field of the production of education, namely concerning the application of the input - output model in the school effectiveness research.
5. The effect that schools have on the achievement of their pupils is increasingly becoming not only an issue considered by researchers, but a principle guiding policy- making at systemic levels as well as at administrative practice in schools (Chapman, 1991, Karadjia -Stavlioti, 1997).
5. All bodies that are interested in the production of education are aware -one-way or another- of the “school effectiveness debate” and especially of the most recent development on “school effectiveness towards school improvement” (Mortimore, P., 1995).
7. Clear and widely accepted policy recommendations -at all levels-, however, have not followed from the search for an effective schools process (Monk, 1990, White, 1999). While school based reform efforts attempt to capitalize on the specific information available at the school level to improve performance, officials publicly responsible for overseeing education must be careful to maintain their public accountability (Cowen, 2002).
8. It is usually argued (see above) that much of what has emerged from the public debate level in the past seems to have little effect on what actually happens in the classroom and more needs to be done if we want problematic schools to improve.
9. From a policy - making perspective and based on the theoretical approach

- that views organizations from a technical / rational perspective (White, 1999), the focus on the school as a unit of change has become politically important.
10. Much less has been learned from these studies about how the school surrounding context may mediate the in school process. More attention has to be paid on schools within their environmental contexts (White, 1999, Cowen, 2002).
 11. The methodological advances focusing on multi - variant techniques have allowed advances in the unraveling of the effects of different sets of variables including demographic composition, school organization and school effects on achievement outcomes.
 12. In the countries that most of the research on effective schools has been carried out, the educational authorities appeared to have used school effectiveness research to justify decisions currently being made about the structures of education (Mortimore, 1995). There also appears to be similarity in these decisions and in the discourse around them, from country to country (Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997). For example, there seems to be a trend towards centralized control over some areas such as the development and measurement of school goals, but with increasing responsibility at the school level for structuring learning activities to achieve these goals.

3. Conceptual issues on the analysis of the texts on education

3.1. An introductory note on the methodology used for the analysis

The choice of a methodology is a very critical step in a study of this type. An exploration in the field shows that the use of text analysis on educational policy documents has been adopted quite successfully by educational researchers during the last decades (Jarvis, 2000). This was taken into consideration in favor of the adoption of this type of analysis for this study. However, for the needs of this study the analysis is enriched by some elements related to the public debate on the issue of the production of education.

In order to decide what is important to this investigation, Levinson's distinction on discourse analysis, which is related to the type of analysis we wish to perform is taken into consideration. In this framework, discourse analysis is essentially a series of attempts to extend the techniques of successful linguistics beyond the unit of a sentence. What Foucault (1987) wrote on the "regimes of truth" and "power", which he considers to have their own «general policy» of truth is also taken into account. More specifically an effort is made to isolate the issues/discourses of the public debate (from now on called "issues") around the production of education that are considered to be true. The mechanisms and the conditions that give the possibility to someone to recognize true statements, the means by which they are legitimized, the techniques and the procedures that make them valid and the status of those responsible or «in charge» to tell what is true. So these "issues" are treated as *"practices that form systemically the objects*

they speak about” (Foucault, 1987). They are also considered as ways “of talking about and conceptualizing policy” (Ball, 1994) and it could be argued that through this analysis light will be shed on the formation (and the interrelationships) of the public debate on: “who” produces or should produce education, “what is produced”, “why it is produced”, “how it is produced” and, most importantly “who and why are interested in this production” (Ball, 1994, Karadjia - Stavlioti, 1997).

So, the procedures applied to the analysis of the educational policy documents include: a) references to the surfaces of emergence and /or the context of influence of the “issues”. It could also be argued that there are references to the existence of chronologically identified social or cultural “birthday places” that make the appearance of a specific “issue” possible, as well as to the new conceptualization and description of what is described, b) references to the principles of description of the different “issues”, c) references to the existence of criteria of specialization of the “issues”, that is on the existence of systems with which we can distinguish, contrast, correlate, compare, group, create and produce one “issue” found in the public debate from another.

Using the above analyses the themes that are considered important in the field of the production of education are expected to be isolated. Also the categories used to construct the analyses proposed are pointed out as well as the points that are explored emphatically. At the same time, however, a task concerning the isolation of any “silences” and “hidden issues” is also undertaken in order to show the “distinguishing lines” among the various “issues” as well as to unravel the rules and the procedures that form the “issues” and the themes.

4. Analysis of the documents of UNESCO and EU

In this section the main documents of the analysis are presented in a summative form and, through this, the rationale for the choice of the specific documents becomes obvious. Then an effort is undertaken to isolate the major issues and themes that relate to the production of education and present them the way they are specified, that is in the content that every text was produced. The similarities and the differences of the issues and themes found are discussed taking into consideration the parameters that were the outcome of the critical review of the literature.

The first text analyzed is the report of UNESCO titled “Education: The Treasure within”, which is a product of the International UNESCO Committee on “Education for the 21st Century” (1996, in Greek 1998) and it was chosen because it is considered influential in the field, for reasons made more obvious in the following paragraph. The ex Minister of Economics of France, Jacques Delors, was the Chair of the Committee, which consisted of fourteen personalities from all over the world, from different cultural and occupational environments. However, there appears not to be a straight relation of half of the members of the

committee to the field of education. For the needs of their study, the Committee collected the views of individuals and organizations with an important input to the academic world as well as of people with works in a variety of fields related to education.

Although the report refers firstly to the governments, within its agenda, one can identify the influence of “globalization” since there are themes related “to the investigation of the role of international cooperation and aid and more specifically on the role of UNESCO” (UNESCO, 1998:377). It should be noted that during the 55 years of its operation and within its major purpose, UNESCO established over one hundred consultation committees and inter - governmental councils, many of which dealt with issues related to the production of education of extreme importance. The texts produced by the different committees are not obligatory for the 188 member countries, but they influence the target setting of the organization and the direction the funding goes. The national committees of UNESCO publicize the views expressed in the reports using the 73 different offices all over the world as well as through the action of the non-governmental organizations officially affiliated with UNESCO.

The question the specific Committee was called to investigate -which is closely related to the production of education- was expressed as follows: “*What kind of education will the future ask for and for which society*”. This was dealt firstly through a review related to the kind of knowledge and experience offered and to the best educational practices applied in different political, economic and cultural environments. This review was undertaken in order to tackle the strengths and the weaknesses of contemporary educational policies, and also to argue on the new roles and types of education under the light of the important developments of modern society.

In this text, although education is called a “necessary utopia”, it is treated as a universal “therapy” or “antidote” against the main issues and problems of the contemporary world: peace, freedom, social justice, social development, poverty, social exclusion, ignorance, illiteracy, social pressure and even war. It is considered that educational choices may contribute to the creation of a better world, supporting human development, promoting understanding between people and renewing democracy in practice. According to the report, educational interventions ought to contribute to the overcoming of tensions that underlie the problems faced by humanity in the 20th century. These problems are coded by seven conceptual dipoles that frame the views and the choices on the aims and process of education that politicians make: the universal vs the topical, the ecumenical vs the individual, the traditional vs the modern, the short- term vs the long- term, the competition vs the equality of opportunity, the widening of knowledge vs the human capacity to acquire knowledge.

It is obvious that this specific categorization may easily be attacked, or at least doubted (UNESCO, 1998:71), but it can be useful in organizing the arguments made by the Committee. The first three categories are closely related to the issue of globalization, which on its own is very controversial, mainly regarding the

individual and the nation participation in the contemporary “globalized” world. The Committee, however, sees the role of education as very important “in the creation of a new type of humanism, which will place great importance on the knowledge and on the respect of the political elements and of the conceptual values of the different civilizations. This is necessary if societies are to compensate for globalization” (ibid: 72).

The traditional discussion on the contribution of education to economic and social development (see the section on the review of the literature), is again an issue in this text, since the committee, on the one hand agrees to those that support the view that any development based only on the economic factor, was basically injustice and on the other, it justifies the increase of the economic value of education. It also pays attention to the importance of the quality of human interventions and to the necessity of structural investment on the continues training of the human power. Basic education is, according to the committee, of major importance for this investment. It is defined as the one including the basic cognitive skills of reading and writing, communication, arithmetic and problem solving as well as the learning content with knowledge, skills, values and concepts necessary for the “survival” and development of the individuals (ibid: 171). It seems that, although the committee calls for the abandonment of the view of education as just a tool, it does not suggest anything substantially different.

The tension described by the “conceptual vs material” is presented by the committee as being the same in all civilizations, although it has become a point of controversy between the western and the eastern way of living and facing things. Behind the treatment of these tensions as described by the dipoles, there is an underlying view that education “provides for culture and values” as well that it “offers an environment for socialization”, that it is a factor of social cohesion, that it is a cause and a therapy to different types of social exclusion and that it is a vehicle towards “ideological development” as well as towards democratic participation. However, this view seems sometimes hypocritical or with no meaning, because of the esoteric controversies, obvious or hidden, found in the text (i.e. see the intervention of Zhou Nanzhao on the extreme political regimes of Asia and their contribution to the economic development of the region, UNESCO, 1998:359, discussed by Rousakis, 2002).

The Committee, then goes on to identify the four “types of learning” (which may also be identified as the aims that the production of education might have) needed in the learning society of today, or, the so called “pillars of learning”: *learning to learn, learning to do, learning to live with others and learning to be, to exist*. The means towards these aims are described through both, the old and new teaching materials and ways. Although the individual is in the center of the “story” on the education for the 21st century, it is for the society to guarantee the equality of opportunity offered to the individual in the duration of the individual’s life.

The school as an institution plays an important role in offering basic education, but its importance and ability is questioned in matters of lifelong

learning. In this sense, the education of the individuals will have to deal with issues related to the treatment of free and leisure time, to the role of the family, of the community and occupational environment, of the cultural institutions and media (that is the role of the official - typical and the unofficial - non typical educational institutions). The Committee actually focuses the debate on the possibilities that the individuals have to access the different types of educational institutions. The educational routes of the individuals are defined in accordance to the certification of the skills obtained by the various “educational programs” as well as to the interchange between periods of study and work. *In this sense the educational routes towards that aims of education suggested by the committee are to a high extent identical to the proposals of the “White Bible” of the European Commission, with which we deal in the next section.*

In summary the Committee “mobilizes” the thought and the language of the human capital theory in the references to the production of education and at the same time it does not abandon the rhetoric over the equality of opportunity. More specifically it points out that the *human capital* of the teachers should be well trained, through their initial and in- service training; that there must be control over the teachers’ *performance* and over the achievement of their students; that attention should be paid on the *management and the administration* of education; that there is little capability of the nation states to be effective towards this direction; that *the economy plays an important role on educational priorities and educational funding.*

The educational “story” described presupposes that lifelong learning will “cure” all “educational diseases”. There exists a positive vision for the production of education in this “story”, which is composed by, not necessarily the same, components, which, some years ago, the Faure (UNESCO, 1972) Committee proposed for a democratic society. An important difference is that this «story» is formed by the parameters of the society of information, of the globalization of the economic activities and of the emerging of the society of knowledge. Finally, the Committee calls UNESCO, which is considered as a *key institution*, to play the role of a spiritual guide and of a moral authority that produces international rules over the production of education and pays attention to individual development, as well as to the general material progress and wealth (Cowen, 2002). As it will be obvious in the section below, the way the analysis in the text takes place as well as its content and the proposed solutions are either identical or similar to the ones found in the “White Bible” of EU (1996), especially in the cases that the references include the development of the “human resources”. It must be stated, however, that the rhetoric of UNESCO produces a debate of a more complex problematic and suggests more “human - centered” and less “euro - centered” or “western - centered” choices on the aims and process or the production of education.

The second text analyzed is White Bible of the European Commission (EC) on Education, training and employability of the European in the economy of knowledge called “Teaching and learning: towards the society of knowledge” (EU,

1996). This text is analyzed with references to the major related texts that followed. The important role that this -first official text on educational policy- might have on the general development of the educational policy is probably obvious to all European countries, especially to the member states. It must be noted that the policies on which the White Bibles are produced usually refer to topics that are on the focus of the goals and the mission of the EU. This text was produced mainly with the initiative of the Counselor on Education and Training E. Cresson and the Counselor on Training and Social Affairs R. Flynn, with the agreement of the Counselor on Industry M. Bangenmann.

Jean - Louis Reiffers, Professor of the University of The Mediterranean- an advisor of E. Cresson, was the Chair of the Committee. The Committee or Working Group was composed of 25 members, who did not represent any nation state, but were chosen on the basis of their expertise and their fame in the academic world, as well as in the world of policy and practice (EU, 1997). The members were from a variety of fields such as enterprises, unions, schools, institutes of training, adult education, universities. Although the recommendations of the White Bible are not of obligatory nature to the member states, the call made in it for “The society of knowledge” could be considered as an «engaging» factor for the policies on education (Field, 1998). The critical way by which the European Council (OJC,6/7/96) accepted this text, is not based only on the “economic directions” found in its content, but it is also related to the powerful role it introduces for the European Commission on issues of educational policy.

The Working Group believes that the major goal of all educational systems is the preparation of the youths to enter and integrate successfully in a society based on the acquisition of knowledge in a lifelong procedure. Within this framework education is treated as the last solution to the problem of unemployment and to the need for competitiveness. In this way education will help nation states to continue their progress towards economic growth with an important investment in knowledge and skills. At the same time we can identify references -in the introduction of the White Bible- to the importance of the cultivation of the “European citizenship” and to importance of the role of education “to the social consciousness and social and personal development”. However, some researchers (Kazamias et al, 2001) comment that, given the strength of the “economic argument” in the field of the production of education, the references to the contribution of education to the political and social development may seem as hypocritical. It must be noted that the Working Group points out that any society claiming that it can “teach” good citizenship to youths without, at the same time, being able to offer to them - through education - the prospect for employment, would shake its own ground or basis.

The Working Group uses the language of a crisis in this text in a similar way as in the text of UNESCO (Field, 1998). It goes on to describe a “picture of a crisis for the member states” and mainly to support the view that the “European institutions” should take action in the field of education. References are made to

the problem of unemployment, to the need for the use of technology and to the emergence of a new type of society (mainly through the cultural “developments” due to that multi - cultural character of the contemporary society). The text goes on to describe another “picture” of a transformation for the member states “towards a new society, the society of knowledge”.

The phenomena that make the “birth” of this knowledge society even more “painful” are described in detail in the text and refer to: a. The coming of the society of information, within which the nature and the organization of work are transformed influencing the activities connected to both education and training. b. The globalization of the economy, which is characterized by free movement of capital, goods and services and c. The radical development of science and technology, which is related to the need for specialization and it also, creates dilemmas that are related to the developments in biotechnology and to the non - controlled flow of information in the internet. Within this framework the route towards the society of knowledge should be taken with the assistance of education. This route is considered as the only way that could make EU competitive (see The Lisbon Treaty). EU member states will have to invest, through education and training, in their human resources and at the same time they will use education as a means against social exclusion.

According to the producers of the text there *are two answers to this “globalization” crisis*: the access of every individual to general education and the acquisition by the individual of skills necessary and sufficient for employment and economic activity. General education is clarified as that type of education, which is based on general knowledge, acquired in schools, and includes the ability to learn beyond the facts, to understand and create and to be able to make rational choices. To face this challenge, the school ought to adjust the content and the methodologies of teaching and learning and to “open” for co-operations. The school ought to prepare the youths for employment without stopping to guide them towards their personal development. The skills needed for employment include firstly the basic skills, which are part of the official curriculum and form the basis for any development of skills. Secondly, they include the technical skills, which are acquired partly in typical education and partly in on the job training (these include the skills referring to the technologies of information). Thirdly, they also include the social skills of cooperation, group work and creativity, which may also be acquired in on the job training.

An important issue in the debate concerning the production of education is the certification of the skills acquired by formal and non - formal institutions. According to the Working Group the individuals might have the skills needed for the society of knowledge certified, either through the *traditional route* or through the *modern one* by the adoption of a system of certification for basic and occupational skills. The Working Group expresses the view that the established networks of educational institutions and enterprises will, from now on, play an important role in the production of knowledge and technology and, as a result in the production of education. Within this framework, this Committee of experts

expresses a “strange” position on educational matters. They support the view that we have come to the end of the discussions on the general principles of education and more specifically, on the relationship between general education and training, on the access from school to the world of work, on the equality of opportunity and on the links between education and the society of information.

The Working Group argues that new questions -very important for the production of education- have emerged for the member states. These questions refer to the ways by which the structures of education can become more flexible contributing to life-long learning, to how the quality of basic education, suitable for the society of knowledge, might be improved, to the best ways of funding education and training at a time of public financial constraints, to the ways that reliable performance indicators may be produced in order to “serve” rational distribution of funds and to which measures ought to be taken for social groups in need. We should note, however, that even if new discussions appear in the field of education, the discussions on principles and aims ought and will never be abandoned as they underlie any debate in the field of education (Rousakis, 2002, Alahiotis, 2001, HPI, 2003).

The lines of action suggested by the Working Group included the encouragement of the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, the link between school and enterprise through promotion of programs of apprenticeship and the encouragement of initial and on the job training, the fighting of social exclusion through the “schools of second chance” and programs of voluntary training, the acquisition of three community languages and the equal treatment of material investment and the investment in training by the European industries. The Working Group supports the view that the production of this book is just an effort to promote the agreement among the different education actors towards the new directions of such an education policy that could shortly be transformed to practical measures.

A critique of the White Bible, must firstly point out that the aims set by the Working Group are not clearly met. Although there is an argument that the movement towards knowledge needs deep transformations, there exist no specific suggestions on this issue. The text has been characterized as conservative (Field, 1998) with “reforming outbursts” that are sufficient neither to face the challenges nor to assist the transformation of the European societies. More specifically, the references made to education are mostly related to the training for “economic and financial life” and concern mainly the “instrumental knowledge” necessary for economic development. It must also be noted that the text appears to be “xenophobic”, sometimes giving the impression of wishing to create to the reader feelings of “euro - patriotism” (Mattheou, 1997). There is no clear support to the “European social model”, since it promotes individual rather than social responsibility in the route towards the society of knowledge.

In addition there seems to be an underestimation of the role of the member states, which will have to materialize the European policies. The European Commission seems to be the major actor of power in this route towards the

society of knowledge. The citizens of Europe are faced mainly as individuals wishing to enter the labor market and not as members of a “society of citizens”, worried about issues on education, democracy and personal development.

The arguments and the proposals made in the text are, more than necessary, school - centered, although it is supported that the school of tomorrow will have to face the challenges of the internationalization of the information and of being competitive to i.e. the media and the internet. Although there are proposals in the text that refer to the role of the school environment, there are no specific references to those responsible to adopt the proposals in practice, the teachers. It seems that the above-mentioned critique influenced the educational planning and policy of the EU, which, in the years that followed the publication of the White Bible, undertook some measures towards this direction (see Agenda 2000, e-Europe etc).

The year 1996 was called the year of Lifelong Education and Training aiming to the promotion of the personal development of the individuals, of their “integration” in the place of work and in the society, of their participation in the democratic procedure of decision-making and of their ability to adjust to economic, technological and social changes. Recognizing the role of education and training in facing the changing needs of both the school place and the work place, because of the influence of the society of information, the European Council in Florence in June 1996, asked the Committee to produce an Action plan on learning in the society of information (COM (96) 471, Brussels, 2/10/96). The importance of education and training in promoting the “society of knowledge” was officially certified in the Amsterdam Convention, which “strengthened the institutional - legal role” of the European Parliament, recognizing the procedure of joint decision in education and training with article 250.

In the Agenda 2000 (COM (97) 2000, Brussels, 15/07/1997) a common framework towards the European integration is given. At the same time there is a suggestion for the development of specific policies -within the next decade- on education and training. In this text there is a clear reference to the production of non material goods, which will have to be developed transferred and utilized in Europe, as they are connected directly to economic growth, competitiveness and employment. So, since technological research, education and training are non-material investments, the “policies of knowledge” (referring to research, education and training) become of decisive importance for the future of Europe. Within the Agenda 2000, the European Commission places great importance to the strengthening of the economic and social cohesion through the development of a strategy for human resources by the member states. The content of the Agenda 2000 is clearly connected to all the recent White and the Green Bibles.

Additionally, it is worth noting that a special study group formed by E. Gresson on Education and Training produced a report in 1997 titled “Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training”. This study group, worked as a “think tank” and “spoke” of a European vision to be shared by all

member states. Within this vision the concepts of the “European citizen” and of the “European competitiveness” are placed in the center of any European policy. It is not surprising that in 1998 the European Commission publicized a text on “Education and Active citizenship” in which the relationship between the construction of the European citizen and the construction of “The Europe of Knowledge” is analyzed.

Following the Lisbon European Council, which set the strategic target of “eEurope”, in May 2000, the Commission publicized another text on “eLearning - Thinking of the Education of tomorrow”. This text was produced in order to motivate the educational and cultural communities, as well as the European economic and social actors towards the development of the systems of education and training and the transfer to the society of knowledge. These would be accomplished through the general development of “digital learning” by all citizens and through the empowerment and support with the “human power for innovation” of the quality of lifelong learning.

5. Some concluding comments

Through the review of the literature and the analysis of these main documents of the international debate on educational policy, the main issues that form the themes in the field of the aims, process and generally the production of education have been identified. Taking into consideration what Foucault (1980) calls “regimes of truth” and “power” it seems that the surface of emergence of the debate on the production of education nowadays is the so-called globalization, which is considered to have its own “policy of truth”. Within this “policy” the theme of the debate regarding “the society of knowledge” is of major importance and is considered to be true. It is legitimized by the publication of reports and books on education and training that make the appearance of this theme possible. It is conceptualized in such a way as to describe the main “object” it refers to, which is “lifelong learning”. UNESCO and EU are, in this sense, considered as well formed institutions/agencies - carriers of power that establish and describe the “object” and the theme of the debate as their own responsibility. The fact that there are differences in the “identity” of these institutions might help identify and explain some of the differences in the debate and the themes produced.

Taking the analysis a bit further, we can identify systems with which we can distinguish, compare, contrast, group, create and produce one theme from another. For example, the issues that seem to “assist the production” of the theme “society of knowledge” are linked in a discrete way and related to the issues concerning “employment”, “social coherence and inclusion”, “active citizenship and democracy” and “eLearning”. These issues are treated in the debate as practices that form what they speak about and that become valid through certain procedures and mechanisms. At this level of analysis more specific issues that form the basis of the debate on the production of education nowadays appear:

“school/formal education”, “informal education”, “flexible certification in education and training”, “sources of funding education and training”, “education linked to work”, “education actors”, “basic skills”, “quality in education” and “performance indicators”.

Within this framework, the legitimization of the educational choices by the nation states is based on a group of concepts that gradually acquire the characteristics of a pedagogic discourse. Words like “quality”, “accountability”, “performance”, “effectiveness”, “scarcity”, “evaluation”, “efficiency” and “flexibility” are being used to describe educational reality as if they are “international education actors”. Some even speak about the emergence of an “international pedagogic discourse”, which makes more use of the language of economics than the language of social policy (Kazamias et al, 2001). However, it can be easily identified in these texts, the main conceptual axes of the post-war reform movement, which were: educational *modernization* and *democratization*, the main emphasis being on the “educational”, that is on school-centered or system-centered readjustments. It has been argued that these texts will be used in the future as references for the legitimization or not of specific nationally based educational choices (Mattheou, 1997, Roussakis, 2002). Any analysis of local policies nowadays may not and has not ignored the “power of influence” of the above - mentioned texts. However, a deep investigation in the field acknowledges the strength of the parameters that form the “local educational settings”, which may “transform” the international discourse accordingly, both as ideology and as practice.

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