

Corruption in Education and Public Policies: The case of Greece

Emmanouil Gkaravellas

Informing public policy with social science research is a complex process which manifests power relations. Whether we refer to the local, regional, national or transnational level, designing public policy remains a convoluted and intricate series of actions and dynamics. Corruption is one of the major challenges public policy faces today. In the framework of the current globalised economy and the recent global economic crisis, developing and establishing public policy towards corruption is undoubtedly affected by a multitude of factors. A plethora of international organizations and agencies, namely the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Transparency International, the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe, are systematically fighting corruption. The result of this truly impressive global engagement is the creation of a wider contractual framework - both at European and international level- which aims at unifying the national practices and their methods of action. In education, which covers an average of 12.9% of public expenditure (OECD report, 2015), corruption occurs at all levels (basic, average, highest, public and private). The main causes of its occurrence are the lack of transparency and accountability.

The institution of education in Greece constitutes a major part of the public administration; accordingly, public policy planning concerning corruption in the field of education is a process of major importance, though the corruption phenomenon in education is not as extended as in other areas of world.

Nowadays, Greece has to face an unprecedented crisis. The main problem is the operation of the state, the restructure of the administrative system and the monitoring of the decentralized/local entities, such as regions and municipalities. These entities are involved with the funding of schools through their specific agencies, called School Committees; quite often corruption stems from the way local entities manage school budgets. Efforts to restructure these entities on a new basis have been made and are still ongoing (Kallikratis/2010) and the results show that there is significant progress regarding remedial action towards the corruption phenomenon in school funding.

However, many things still need to be done. Following a survey conducted in Primary School Committees (9/2015), the results showed that up to now there are some loopholes and black spots in the law, which must be addressed directly if corruption in education is to be tackled more effectively and the institution of the School Committee in Greece is to improve.