

# **Greek Educational Policy and the European Union (1992-2005)**

## **(Influences on the decision making)**

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### **Introduction**

Our aim in presenting this research paper is to try to analyze the Greek educational policy from 1981 until now and to examine the educational reforms in the structuring of a new educational practice within the framework of the European Union and also of the international economy.

The general thesis of this work is that educational policy is the result of many factors that play a main role in the educational decision making. Consequently, the educational system has had to adapt itself in response to the international division of labor generated through the forces of globalization in innovative ways.

The work has two parts; the first analyzes the meaning of educational policy and the international and national factors that play a role in educational decision making.

Apart from these, it examines the relationship between the international knowledge economy, national economy and educational policy.

In the second part, the Greek educational policy is examined within the context of European Union decision making.

## First part

### The study of educational policy in relation to global knowledge economy / European Union policy / national economy and the state.

#### a. The meaning of educational policy

It is difficult to distinguish policy from politics: in fact, the French word “**politique**” can be translated as either. Policy formation is the core of the political process, both from the side of government policy and from the opposition side (other political parties and political groups).

**Policy** is always an expression of a relationship between an authority and the citizens. As Ph. Selznick argued, the link between “policy” and “politics” must constantly be kept in mind. To be sure, the political process always involves an actual or potential contest of wills, but it also includes the continuous redefinition of public interest and the embodiment of those definitions in key institutions. The German term *Politik*, as distinguished from *Verwaltung*, nonpolitical administration, has some of these connotations. <sup>1</sup>

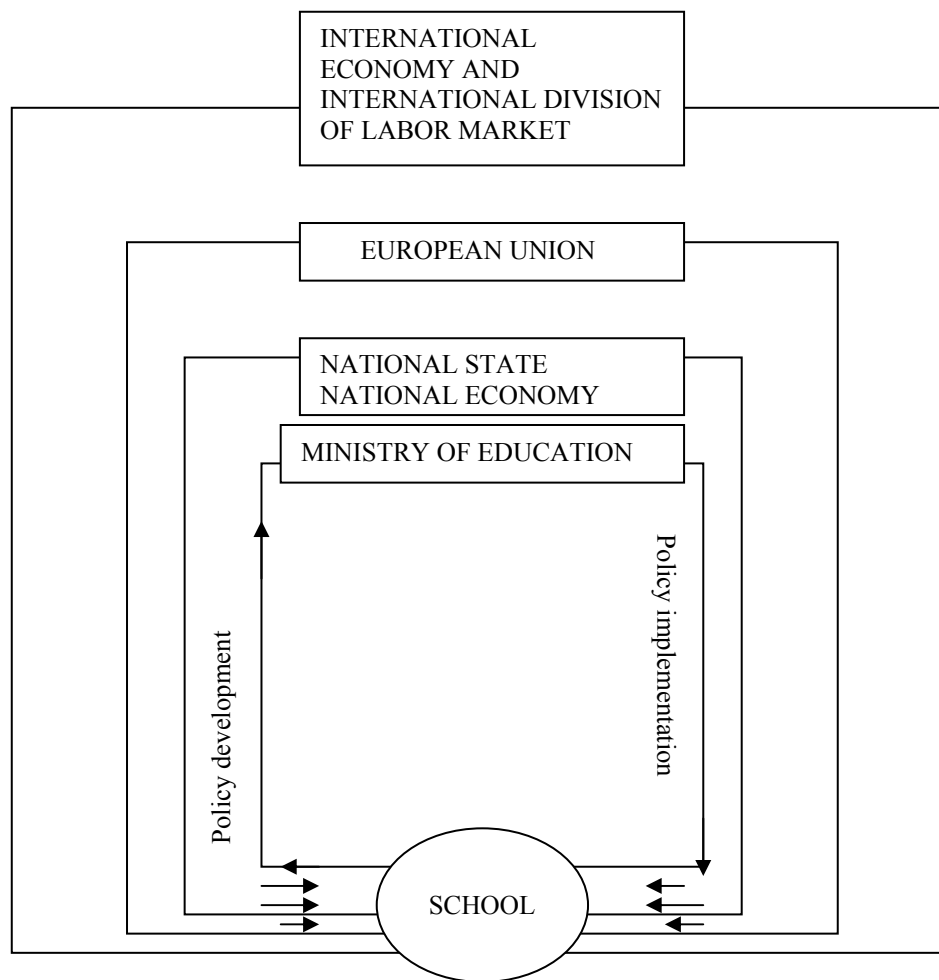
*Politik* is not so much concerned with technical efficiency as with decisions that are open and potentially controversial.

#### b. The study of educational policy

It is generally accepted that the study of educational policy should be carried out in a multidisciplinary way and so, in addition to interpretation schemes, conflict models and legitimization theories, it is appropriate to consider the approaches available from other disciplines, such as political sciences, law, sociology, anthropology, as well as society and culture oriented philosophy.

The concept “educational policy” is not unequivocal and no less divergent are the signposts which seek to point to the external borders and the internal differentiation of this societal phenomenon.

Whilst making an analysis of national educational policy, we should be aware of the possibility of identifying the phenomenon itself. We will try to represent it as a dynamic cycle. By the use of an ideal-typical cycle, the educational policy can be related to a range of societal influences and we will try to conceptualize this cycle in four comprehensive diagrams, increasing the degree of complexity as we move from one to the next. Thus an external demarcation of the phenomenon “educational policy” becomes possible, whilst, at the same time, the four diagrams suggest a complex domain of study in which certain policy problems can be posed more clearly, either in relation to, or with the exclusion of, other problems.



Thus “educational policy” can be seen to be not only the policy of the government, but also that of international and national responsible policy makers. It is very important to understand the nature of the interactions between the different levels as well as the description and analysis of their respective roles and power relationships, regardless of whether or not they are pursuing preconceived educational objectives.

### **c. The international economy and the state**

A significant transformation of the postwar international economic order has occurred. The Bretton Woods system of trade liberalization, stable currencies, and expanding global economic interdependence no longer exists, and the liberal conception of international economic relations has been undermined since the mid-1970s.

Transformations in the real world have made economics and politics more relevant to one another than in the past.

Although economic and political factors have had a reciprocal influence on one another throughout history, in the modern world this interaction has been transformed in fundamental ways. The economic well-being of people and the fate of nations have become intimately joined to the functioning and consequences of the market. 2

The parallel existence and mutual interaction of “state” and “market” in the modern world is evident. Although neither world can ever exist in a pure form, the relative influence of the state or the market changes over time and in different circumstances. As R. Gilpin supported: “The questions are generated by the interaction of the state and the market as the embodiment of politics and economics in the modern world. Thus we need to ask how the state and its associated political processes affect the production and distribution of wealth and, in particular, how political decisions and interests influence the location of economic activities and the distribution of the costs and benefits of these activities”.3

Furthermore we need to ask how the educational political decisions are influenced by international and national economic activities.

### **d. Educational Policy within the contexts of Economy and Democracy**

The study of educational policy should be carried out in coordination with the study of the State.

Martin Carnoy and Henry Levin supported that schooling, like all the institutions of a capitalist society, operates in the context of social conflict. Schooling, in their opinion, is shaped by the nature of that conflict, and what schooling does helps shape the conflict.

Even as schools reproduce capitalist class relations, contradictions within capitalist development emerge from that very reproductive process. The state tries to help employers raise profits, but at the same time it has to legitimate itself by providing benefits to labor and making society more just. Set in the arena of social conflict, the state therefore disseminates a contradictory ideology that tries to build faith both in capitalism and in democracy. Public education is both a subsidy to employers and a way for workers to gain social mobility; it trains young people to be good workers and good democrats, reproducing a class-structured labor force to fit into a historically defined division of labor, but also inculcating aspirations about the nature of work in a democratic society.4

### **e. Educational policy and the labor market**

The relation between education and work is dialectical – composed of a perpetual tension between two dynamics, the imperatives of capitalism and those of democracy in all its forms.

As both a product and a shaper of social discord, the school is necessarily caught up in the larger conflicts inherent in a capitalist economy and a liberal capitalist state.

These conflicts reside in the contradiction between the unequal relationship underlying capitalist production and the democratic basis of the liberal capitalist state. The school is essential to the accumulation of capital and the reproduction of the dominant capitalist relations of production, and it is valued by parents and youth as a means to greater participation in economic and political life.

Schools exist as public institutions, subject to direct political pressures that are conditioned by the overall conflict between capital and labor, by the changing structure of the labor market and by various social movements seeking greater equality.

As M. Carnoy and H. Levin support, schools and workplaces are organized in ways that correspond closely. 5

## **f. Education and the global Knowledge economy**

One of the most common interpretations of the global economic and technological changes which have been taking place since 1980's is that they herald the emergence of a "knowledge economy" and a growth in "knowledge work" and high skill employment, as David Guile supports.6

For these reasons, policy makers have affirmed the important role of education in the knowledge society, because a "knowledge economy" is dependent upon education and training, and they also stressed that there is a positive link between investment in education and training economic growth and employability. 7

The initial interest in the relationship between economic, technological change and the increased role of knowledge in the economy originated in the sociological debate in the 1960's and 1970's and is connected with the theory of human capital.

More recently, sociologists have argued that post-industrial societies will be superseded by information or knowledge societies. 8

The same author supported that, the common theme that links these slightly different interpretations about the continuing pace of economic and technological change is that they each tend to stress that scientific knowledge is now central to most aspects of economic production, political regulation and most spheres of social and cultural life. 9

The theory of human capital and the theory of economic value of education return. The increase and the improvement of the quality of the human capital has a significant influence on economic growth in a number of ways: First, it increases productivity, as well as increasing the pool of knowledge and technological skill. Second, the school is an instrument of economic development and social progress.

But we must point out that there is a contradiction between the aims and the

objectives of schooling. On the one hand, the school is an instrument of reproduction of labor forces and for these reasons it reproduces the inequality and legitimates the distinctions between the pupils, and on the other hand education as a part of the function of the democratic state promotes democratization and human rights.

As M. Carnoy and H. Levin supported, education, as part of the functions of the state, is also an arena of social conflict. If the state, in capitalist democracies, is viewed as responsible for providing justice and equity to compensate for inequalities arising out of the social and economic system, education's role then is seen as improving the social position of have-not groups, by making relevant knowledge and certification for participation available to them. At the same time, the capitalist state and its educational system must, by their very nature, reproduce capitalist relations of production, including the division of labor and the class relations that are part of that division. The tension between reproducing inequality and producing greater equality is inherent in public schooling, just as social tension is inherent in all institutions structured according to class, race, and gender. The basis of this tension is not ideology as such, but ideology as it relates to the concrete reality of social position, material wealth, and political power.<sup>10</sup>

M. Carnoy and H. Levin argued that far from being an instrument of social progress, education was actually deadening - much more oriented to producing failure than to developing creative, critical minds that could be the basis for a more humanistic, democratic society. As schools attempt to satisfy their mandate within a capitalist economy, the public, as a whole and social movements such as the civil rights and women's movements, have made them more democratic and equal than other social institutions.<sup>11</sup>

#### **g. Educational Policy and the European Union.**

European integration continues, as does the awareness that educational policy is very important for the future of the European Union, and in most of the countries educational policy has become a political task of high priority. It touches all citizens and it influences the life perspectives of all parents and children and, because of the laws relating to compulsory education, it affects the young generation as a whole. It is a daily reality for all those responsible for the legal, financial, organizational and pedagogical shaping of education on a European, national, regional and local level and increasingly it determines the conditions for a lifelong process of learning. For all these reasons, educational policy is expected to contribute to the development of a society and a European Union in which the benefits of an ideal cultural, social and material wellbeing are available to all.

Since the 1960's, Community action in education and training has had significant results in terms of cooperation, exchanges of experience, supporting innovation and the development of training products and materials. It has also contributed to the promotion of learning Community languages and to the development of communication between European citizens.

Apart from the above, from the 1970's until now European Union educational policy has had to solve the problem of unemployment. Much of the effort made in recent years to stem the rise of unemployment in Europe has not had lasting effects.

Long term unemployment continues to increase and the spread of social exclusion, particularly among young people, has become a major problem in our societies. For these reasons, as “white paper on education and training” supports: “if the states - members of Europe are to hold their own and continue to be a reference point in the world, they have to build on the progress brought about through closer economic ties by more substantial investment in knowledge and skills.

Nevertheless, the Commission supports, that it is unfair to expect education and training alone to make up for every failure, because education and training cannot solve the employment problem on their own or, or more generally, the problem of the competitiveness of industries and services. The Commission established the general framework for its analysis in its White Paper, “Growth, competitiveness and employment”, drawn up on the initiative of Jacques Delors, which stressed that the development of education and training is one of the conditions for the development of a new model of more employment intensive growth. 12

The Essen European Council of December 1994 confirmed this in its conclusions and re-affirmed it next in Cannes in June 1995, in the light of the report from the Advisory Group on Competitiveness.13

But, if we want to describe the activities of the European Union in education and training over the last years, we must refer to the aims of the Lisbon special European Council of 23-24 March 2000.

Two recent developments are changing the economy and society profoundly.

Globalization means that Europe must set the pace in all the sectors where competition is intensifying. The sudden arrival and growing importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) in professional and private life call for a radical overhaul of the education system in Europe and guaranteed lifelong learning opportunities.14

Finally, the Union’s Education and Training 2010 work program sets the framework for national policies and European Union -funded programs. This recognizes the central role of education and training in the EU’s jobs and growth agenda and the vital social dimension of education and training. Education and training improve our understanding of the values of solidarity, equal opportunities and social participation.15

A lot of programs promote educational opportunities for pupils and students, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus Comenius, Lingua. They also promote life-long learning and training. The central question in the European Union now is how to move towards greater flexibility in education and training systems, taking account of the diversity of people’s demands. Debate within the Union focuses now on this priority issue.

Also important for European integration and for the knowledge society is the role of universities. European universities are characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity, which is reflected in organization, governance and operating conditions, including the status and conditions of employment and recruitment of teaching staff and researchers.

But despite these difficulties, the regions of the European Union are therefore called upon to play an important part in strengthening European cohesion through the development of technology centers and science parks, the proliferation of regional cooperation structures between the business sector and the universities, the expansion of university regional development strategies and the regional networking of universities.16

The central question in European educational decision making, over the same period and until now has been how to move towards greater flexibility in education and

training systems. Major developments in the adaptation of education and training are taking place in the following three main areas: greater autonomy for those involved in training; awareness of the need to evaluate the effectiveness of education; and the realization that disadvantaged groups need special attention. 17

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4. M.Carnoy and H.Levin, Schooling and Work in the Democratic State, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1985
5. *ibid*
6. D. Guile, "Skill and work experience in European Knowledge economy", Journal of Education and Work, Vol.15, No 3, 2002
7. European Union, (EU), Employment in Europe, Brussels, 1998
8. F. Green, "The Market Value of Generic Skills", Skills Task Force Research, Paper 17, Suffolk, DFEE
9. *ibid*.
10. M.Carnoy and H. M. Levin, Schooling and Work in the Democratic State, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1985
11. *ibid*
12. Commission of the European Communities, "White paper on Education and Training" 1995
13. *ibid*
14. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon\\_strategy/pdf/2004-1866-EN-complet](http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/pdf/2004-1866-EN-complet)
15. [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/communique\\_minister/index.htm](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/communique_minister/index.htm)
16. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education>
17. *ibid*

## **Second part**

## **The Greek Case Study**

### **Greek educational policy and the influences of European educational policy**

In the Greek case study it is important to examine carefully the influence of the European Union on educational policy and decision making.

It is evident that the focus of this research must be the educational policy of the Greek government, especially during the period 1992-2006.

Furthermore we need to examine the Greek state, because, as we have explained in the first part of this paper, the study of educational policy should be carried out in coordination with the study of the state.

Strident demands for educational reform have often occurred in Greece after 1981, when Greece joined with the European Union. Such demands came from all directions and with varying degrees of emphasis, directed to different issues. There were various motives behind the calls for educational reform. As with previous reform movements, political groups saw political advantages in espousing the cause of change in education, a public sector that had always touched upon so many sensitive areas of interest.

As A. Kazamias support: "It argues that the different politically-sponsored reform efforts-Right, Left or Center-were constrained by similar contextual and structural socio-economic political and cultural-institutional factors as well as by internal ideological contradictions. Among the contextual factors emphasis will be placed on such structural and cultural-historical continuities as the centralized and bureaucratic Greek state, the deformed character and the international location of the Greek socio-economic formation, and the relative autonomy of an entrenched conservative, inert and refractory educational system and educational culture".<sup>1</sup> It is important to point out that all demands for reform were addressed to the government as the sole authority responsible for initiating and implementing policy. The Greek education system, like all the other education systems of the European Union countries, had the goal of trying to prepare the pupils, especially those in vocational education, and the students at Universities, for the needs of the labor market if they wanted a more efficient education, as set out by the Lisbon strategy.

### **The Greek economy, the state and the labor market**

After World War II and until the 1980's the Greek state had all the characteristics of a state, of the semi-periphery, according to Immanuel Wallerstein's theory.

More recently, as I. Wallerstein argued, the world system is unequal, and this is related to its capitalist character. The inequality resolves into a hierarchy of three kinds of "state or regions"- the periphery, the semi-periphery and the core {metropolitan center}, where a state or region is located. This hierarchic system is, for Wallerstein, essentially conjectural, related to a number of contingent forces coming together in time and place. But once located it tends to become fixed, thanks to the operation of world market forces which not only accentuate

the differences but also institutionalize them.<sup>2</sup>

The Greek economy, as many Greek socialist authors supported, has followed a distorted and unequal model of development which reflects Greece's position in the semi-periphery of capitalism and whose main characteristics are: hypertrophy in the primary and tertiary sectors, limited industrial development, expansion of other sectors like construction, tourism, commercial, intermediary and parasitic activities, and intensive economic dependence on the metropolitan centers.<sup>3</sup>

According to these authors, the Greek economy was characterized by a technologically advanced, highly dynamic, foreign-controlled manufacturing sector, enjoying enormous privileges granted to it by the Greek state, and not being organically linked with the rest of the economy so that the beneficial effects of its growth were not sufficiently diffused over the small commodity agricultural and artisan sector but were to a large extent transferred abroad.

Paralleling the above, the employment structure has been characterized by a large number of self-employed persons in the primary and tertiary sectors, a relatively small number of industrial wage-earners, and a relatively large number of persons employed in construction, tourism and the para-economic sectors.<sup>4</sup>

From 1981 the Greek economy as a member of European Union, is following the changes of the European and international economy. If this world changes, then so too must education if it is to continue to be effective.

The most dramatic issue that has arisen since the 1980s is the emergence of a persistent problem of unemployment, particularly of youth unemployment in Greece. The government has had to respond to this problem, with educational reforms especially with reference to technological and vocational education.

The link between economy and education will help to solve the problem of unemployment. On the logic of the labor market, the education systems accept some responsibility for preparing young people for the world of work.

But all the above, in the case of Greece, were on a theoretical level, within the framework of educational law, without a design of appropriate education and training strategies to address work and employment issues although this is a central preoccupation for European educational policy.

During the period of 1992-2006, the Greek government's educational reforms had a lot of problems to solve.

On the one hand, the feeling that Greece is lagging behind the other European countries is a severe blow to Greek pride, which creates a tremendous pressure on the government to adopt a policy that will build the image of a state which is forward-looking and greatly committed to progress and European co-operation and integration. On the other hand, the Greek government face the contradictions that arise from the conflict of interest between the traditional culture and social characteristics and the logic of the labor market.

Moreover, the character of the Greek bureaucratic and paternalistic state is a problem to European integration and to the adaptation to new economic environment of knowledge society.

The Greek State has all along been highly centralized, highly bureaucratized, authoritarian and paternalistic. The Greek bureaucratic system in an over centralized state has been, an elaborate, state-organized socio-political control system which combines both authoritarian and parliamentary controls and acts for the protection of established interests.

But, as A. Kazamias, supports, as with the Greek state, so with the Greek system of education.<sup>5</sup>

The educational system, being a mechanism of the Greek state, is interlined with the bureaucratized and centralized apparatus of the state, because the Greek state is a bureaucratic state.

The idea that the state is becoming more and more bureaucratic is true, as increasing areas of social and economic life have been taken over by the state, and consequently huge administrative machines have necessarily been created, which tend to develop a dynamic of their own.

All state-members which belong to the same region, have, according to I. Wallerstein's theory, the same bureaucratic characteristics, and for these reasons, several authors take a political approach to them, and draw on Wallerstein's world - systems analysis, with its emphasis on centro-periphery relations.<sup>6</sup>

The Greek state is thus in the semi-periphery region and for this reason has the same characteristics with the other state-members of the European Union in the same region. The kind of the economic development has a great influence on the other political factors and on my opinion on the kind of bureaucracy. This kind of state bureaucracy is an apparatus of control.

### **The Greek educational policy and the educational system**

The educational system, as a mechanism of the state, is interlined with the bureaucratized and centralized apparatus of the state. As such, it is itself centralized, bureaucratized and hierarchically structured.

At the top of the bureaucratic control system is the Minister of Education and the central organs of educational government. Below him, in descending rank order of decision making and responsibility, is a set of other hierarchies reaching down to the micro-level of the school hierarchy. Each link in the chain of authority is associated with the exercise of certain decisions within the purview of its responsibility. But fundamental decisions about the goals, the processes and the means of carrying out the educational process are taken.

In this system, the central state, the government controls and regulates every aspect of the educational system. It approves and publishes all school textbooks, it defines the objectives of each subject. It regulates the school councils and all matter pertaining to the organization of school life.

Until the 1980s, this centralized pattern of state steering in education was reinforced by another mechanism, that of the school inspectors. School inspectors were state functionaries who combined both administrative and supervisor responsibilities. In the 1980s the school inspectors were abolished and were replaced by "school counselors". However this change did not weaken the central government's power of supervision and control over the teachers as well as over what is taught in the schools and how it is taught.

In the 1980's the socialist government of PASOK, sought to restructure the political context of schooling and by implication to restructure the state, through a much publicized policy of democratic planning. Educational reforms in Greece have always been a hot political issue.

From 1981 and especially from the Treaty of Maastricht, in 1992, Greek governments of Pasok and New Democracy, have been trying to reform the educational system in

accordance with the European decision making and to the aims of the Lisbon Special European Council, of 2000.

But there was a contradiction between the aims and the actions. The core of the curriculum in both primary and secondary education has been humanistic but not sufficient to educate Greeks as European citizens. On the contrary, the main tools of humanistic learning, such as Ancient Greek and History, serve to underline the distinction between Greece and the other Balkan countries.

The “Hellenization” makes the orientation of the educational programming very crucial for the survival of the Greek nation.

In the 1990s, the educational reforms were supposedly applied as a consequence of Greece’s commitment to the new European idea and the construction of a new European space.

In the period 1992-2005, all the efforts at reform emphasized to more democratic education, with teachers participation, with students participation and generally an attempt at the evaluation of the school. Furthermore, the Greek government has been trying to change the curriculum of technological and vocational education to a more useful one suited to the labor market needs.

As the Minister of National Education and Religions put it in a publication entitled “Education 2000 – Toward an Education / Paideia of Open-Horizons”, their aims in the years to come, are to construct an educational system that is modern and of higher quality. One that will provide wider educational choices for all citizens irrespective of age, and, at the same time, capable of laying the foundation for the progress of Greek society and the development of the country. Finally, “Paideia” will confirm the goal of European Integration. 7

As A. Kazamias supports, these efforts could be interpreted to mean that the intent of the Law makers was to restructure the state steering and control mechanisms in Greek education in the direction of decentralization in decision - making, as well as a greater degree of “teacher autonomy”. 8

However, the character of Greek education, at the first and second level, continues to be theoretical and far removed from labor market’s needs. Trade unions and employers’ organizations are often critical of the over-theoretical and over-academic education which is provided in schools.

One of the strongest arguments which they can use in this connection is that many of the young people who are taken on the new training (stages) have left school with either no or very few qualifications. Many of these young people left because they felt school had nothing more to offer, and yet they are willing to work and study in a new setting in which training and future employment are closely linked. The technical and vocational education in Greece, does not provide a stronger incentive for secondary school pupils to study those subjects which are economically most useful

The government has also made efforts to stem the rise of unemployment, especially to due to the fact that vocational and technological education were have been inefficient.

No consideration of the relationship between education and the economy in Greece has assessed the technical education carefully at the appropriate level and the way in which this education is developing. Furthermore, an Open University has been established and, at the same time, there is considerable pressure to change the Constitution to allow for the establishment of private universities.

The secondary technical schools, in Greece are called “Technological and Professional Lykea”.

A large number of the pupils in the “Technological and Professional Lykea” have enrolled because they were unable to gain admission to the “General Lykea”. This means that pupils are conscious that, for many of them, the Technological and Professional Lykea are second best.

Furthermore universities have an important role to play in forging the connection between the economy and the European aims for developing the knowledge society, but are essentially organized at the national level and seem to have difficulty on the one hand in relating with the labor market needs and on the other hand in finding a truly European dimension.

During the period 1992-2005 many students who were finishing their studies, couldn't find a job close to their fields of interest, in spite of the fact that the Greek government has tried to promote the connection between labor market, universities and research.

Some critics of recent government policy on the left disapprove of attempts to link education more closely to the economy. Left political parties critics argue that there is little point in improving technical education if many of those who leave schools have no jobs to go to. They argue also that much that is not economically useful in education is nevertheless extremely valuable, and that education and educational institutions ought to enjoy some real independence so that they may resist the demands of employers and governments who are too narrowly interested in economic success.

It is evident that these critics argue that there is more to life than high pay, and that it is the business of the school especially to make young people aware of these other values.

According to the above, it is conceded, schools should prepare young people for the world of work, but they should also prepare them for their role as citizens in a democracy, for leisure and for their role as family members.

This stress on human values was supported by many on the left but also in the center of political life.

According to the above, there is, in my opinion, a contradiction between the human values and the labor market's logic, thus promoting the debate about educational aims.

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4. Ibid
5. A. Kazamias, "The Curse....."op. cit
6. F. Yahir, The Mediterranean Between-Autonomy and Dependence, London, Zed Books, 1989
7. Ministry of National Education and Religions, Education 2000-Toward an Education/Paideia of Open-Horisons, Athens, 2000
8. A. Kazamias, "The Curse....." op.cit.

## **Conclusion**

According to the above, the Greek educational policy serves two contradictory aims: It strengthens national identity and, at the same time, it tries to encourage the Greek people to open a cultural and employment dialogue with the other European nations which will allow for greater understanding and co-operation and for greater integration with them.

However, all the reforms have been inefficient and without due regard for global economic changes and the internal market's needs, on the one hand, and on the other the core of the curriculum in both primary and secondary education is humanistic but not sufficient to educate Greeks as European citizens.

But as N. Mouzelis supports: "In the context of growing European integration it is not only national educational systems, but also a variety of other systems, cultural, racial or ethnic, that are brought into closer temporal and spatial proximity, and this generates unprecedented levels of cultural and social complexity.<sup>1</sup>

1. N. Mouzelis, "Multi-Culture Europe: Conceptualizing Complexity on the Socio-Culture and Educational Levels", in A. Kazamias and M. Spillane(edit), Education and the Structuring of the European Space, Athens, Seirios Editions, 1998