

Ziontaki, Z. (2017). Critical pedagogy as a tool for emancipation and empowerment in the era of financial crisis: potentials and applied conditions within the contemporary school reality, *International Journal of Educational Policies*. 10 (2). 103-120.

ISSN: 1307-3842

**Critical Pedagogy as a Tool for Emancipation & Empowerment in
The Era of Financial Crisis: Potentials & Applied Conditions
within The Contemporary School Reality**

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Abstract

The aim of the current paper is to explore the theoretical spectrum of critical pedagogy, in the perspective of the contemporary educational reality in the era of economic crisis. In this context, the main frame of interest is the principles and notion of critical pedagogy and the process through which they could be implemented within the school practice, in an attempt to strengthen the students at this difficult circumstance. The paper focuses on the contemporary situation in Greece, but it deals with issues that shall be considered rather timeless for any country that is subjected to the tremendous repercussions of crisis in the school dimension.

Keywords: *financial crisis, critical pedagogy, education, school practice, empowerment*

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Introduction

The fundamental logic of critical pedagogy is the vision of the curriculum, as well as the school process from a social perspective. The critical pedagogy deals with the daily educational practice in a scientific way and tries to integrate school into a social transformation process, reversing the current socio-educational reality (Horkheimer, 1976; Jay, 1973; Agger, 1991, Bonidis, 2009) a process which is possible especially in difficult times such as the current economic crisis, when circumstances require social change (Derrida, 1974). Besides, one of the most fundamental questions raised by educators in the era of crisis is the process through which public school classroom teachers¹ might develop a certain orientation in the current underlying circumstances, which require more than ever the need for social reconstruction and transformation. Thus, the current paper deals with certain theoretical elements of critical pedagogy that demonstrate the correlation of education with the socioeconomic relations and processes and especially with power relations, which are inherent in the social, political, cultural and economic structures, as well as with the institutions and the educational practices, placing all of the above in the light of and ideological-critical discourse. In this context, of course, certain questions are arisen, such as the role of educators, the vision of the curriculum and the overall educational process.

The vision of education from a social and political perspective

In the framework of the current school reality, students are required to deal with a rather frustrated situation, where the financial conditions are blended with the political imbalance and the phenomena of corruption, a mixture that is added with the imbalance in their own family and social surroundings. Their rights and needs cannot be separated from the constant conflicting forces that govern the social and political life. In parallel, the development of the social and educational struggles is inextricably linked to the work of teaching and is shaped by the aspects of modern

¹ The current paper could be considered as an extension of a previous paper that was published in IJEP (Ziontaki & Vissariou, 2014), which dealt with the financial crisis and its repercussions on the teaching circumstances in Greece. It should be noted that there are certain similarities between the two papers, especially as far as the theoretical spectrum is concerned.

life. Gradually, it becomes apparent that the symptoms of crisis affect the educational practice through the long-term austerity policies, the reduction of the teachers' recruitment, as well as the dramatic reduction of wages. After finishing with their studies, young people face difficulties in entering the labor market, while the restrictive regulatory framework discourages investment and job creation. At the same time, the merging of schools and the increasing class size create a highly unfavorable school environment, which consequently affects the educational quality. All of the above factors are in a perpetual interaction with the social and economic reality of the European welfare state, dominated by the so-called logic of post industrialism, which puts in the center of the social dialogue the increasing income inequality and the instability of the labor markets, factors that have exacerbated the problems of poverty and social exclusion.

Hence, students are in a vital need of guidance and acknowledgement of the specific conditions and roots of financial crisis. In this context, the school process should abandon its atheoretical, ahistorical and unproblematic view of pedagogy, where assumptions are perceived as unchallenged by both the teachers and the students, in an attempt to serve- and most importantly- legitimize the mask of social construction. Especially Habermas stressed the dangers lurking behind the technocratic ideology, where science and technology “wear the cloak” of neutrality, as if they are separated from economic and political interests, since he reckoned that man is eventually unable to determine his action and only through emancipation can someone realize the “underground” authoritarian and culturally alienating relationships (Habermas, 1975). Focusing on the educational field, according to Apple, the institution of education is not neutral, since the teachers participate - consciously or not - in a political act. Therefore, there is an internal connection between the construction of knowledge and symbols organized and selected by educational institutions and the principles of social and cultural control in a stratified society. Schools reproduce important aspects of inequality, the most important of which is the economic and cultural capital they hold and distribute, creating and recreating forms of consciousness that allow the maintenance of social control (Apple, 1986:13-18).

Especially the teaching of history should be implemented in a way that will allow students to realize the vicious circle of history that repeats itself, first as tragedy

and second as a farce, according to Marx (Marx, 1851).² History in Greece can be a fertile background that will give an insight into historical periods of landmark, in which Greece had an immediate need of the military, economic and political involvement of foreign countries in the period from 1930 onwards. This period is marked by the events of the Asia Minor disaster, the Second World War, the Civil War and the Cyprus issue. In this context, the aim is to examine the economic and political factors and interests, as evidenced by the "neutralized" image of each of the foreign forces, which sealed-positively or negatively- the great moments of Greece. And most importantly, students should obtain a thorough insight into the historical moments, when Greece faced bankruptcy, such as in 1893 under Charilaos Trikoupis, as well as in 1932, under Eleutherios Venizelos. In any case, teachers should make an effort to deal with and unveil certain myths regarding Greece, such as its so-called long-standing habit of borrowing vast sums of money with painfully large interest rates, only to fork it right back over by buying various goodies from the West. This process should be done in the view of an ideology-critical analysis.

The ideological clarification of the issue can center on ways in which the ratio (in the sense of discourse) of school textbooks are used in such a way that gives a specific role to the foreign forces, attributing particular characteristics, qualities and agendas. At the same time, the school process should focus on whether and how elements and roles are attributed to an external force in times of crisis, which could be perceived as false consciousness, as one distorted, ie, reflection of reality, which is not shown in detail events, but by stereotypical images. Moreover, school should be interested in the analysis of ideologies, with the aim of finding the specific interests of the dominant social groups, mainly the demonstration of how the specific ideologies strengthen and legitimize the current

² *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (German: *Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon*) was an essay written by Karl Marx between December 1851 and March 1852, and originally published in 1852 in *Die Revolution*, a German monthly magazine published in New York City and established by Joseph Weydemeyer. This book is the source of one of Marx's most quoted statements, that history repeats itself, "the first as tragedy, then as farce", referring respectively to Napoleon I and to his nephew Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) Later English editions, such as an 1869 Hamburg edition, were entitled *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

power structures. This type of historical chronograph can attribute a political nature to the educational practice, a type of paradigm, as Thomas Kuhn has called the shared images and assumptions, which can be related to the broader social and cultural spectrum and are mainly illustrations of various theories in their conceptual, observational, and instrumental applications. Kuhn identifies them as community's paradigms, revealed in textbooks, lectures, and laboratory exercises and considers them as means for the community to learn their trade) (Kuhn, 1962: 43).

What should be primarily done is for students to be invited to raise questions regarding the current situation in Greece. Moreover, students should develop and express their own "voice". However, this process requires an understanding of the world, what Freire calls "reading" of the world. In this context, "students must be willing to risk and get into adventures. Otherwise, they cannot create anything neither recreate" (Freire, 2009:107-109). In the framework of the classroom, teachers should be brave enough to talk explicitly about the specific notions and surroundings of the current situation, such as the role of the politicians, the long-term structural policies and the phenomena of nepotism and corruption. Also, education can no longer be restricted on the ground of the social effectiveness, since the current conditions raise the demand of a new type of education, through a curriculum that has its orientation to the investigation and acknowledge of the prevailing social deficiencies, such as unemployment and social inequalities. Most importantly, it is of crucial interest to identify the mechanisms through which ideology conquers (Schiro, 2008: 133).

False or reversed consciousness and ideology

The notion of ideology plays a fundamental role in the process of the cognition of the various authoritarian powers. The term of ideology can be linked with the discourse which prevails in particular types of society (Lefort, 1986: 16). What is of great interest is the fact that the types of society that are most likely to interfere in the ideological process are mainly the developed industrial societies of the East and the West, which are based on the ruins of feudalism. We are referring to the 'discourse on the social', which is located within the social; Hence, we can no longer refer to a type of discourse which lies beyond the social sphere. It is of

vital need to re-determine the discourse on the basis of the social spectrum, in the framework of a production, which has the power to transform social relations, in a society which can be first and foremost characterized as historical and open: “ideology is the sequence of representations which have the function of re-establishing the dimension of society "without history" at the very heart of historical society” (ibid: 16). The fact is that ideology cannot be perceived as a straight-forward process, but as a constantly altering one, on the basis that it is organized through the principle of occultation which does not derive from its activity, but holds within a folding process. Also, ideology is ensnared within a historic reality and thus cannot be perceived as ahistorical. Ideology cannot operate without disclosing itself, meaning without revealing the forces that govern the hidden discourses, without allowing the gap between what is considered as reality and what is considered as the reflection of possibility that can actually lead to the social transformation.

Moreover, we are dealing with the important context of critical theory's concept of false or reversed consciousness, where we accept something as correct, but we do not have a deep look at the messages that are hidden and usually have to do with the ideology of the hegemony. Marx reckoned that we cannot accept social institutions as naturally given, since they are historic creations (Pines, 1997: 24). Under the inverted consciousness (*camera obscura*), we know that the dominant ideology, as an inverted representation of reality, is not leading its force in the slave classes of society in a direct way, but by a mediated transformed form. One of the basic concepts of early Marx thought in the “German Ideology” is ideology. Marx states that ideology is a “*camera obscura*”, which converts the image of reality in the person's head, representing an opinion or idea that derives from the common belief as a common logic: «Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process» (Marx, 1845). Marx’s core thinking is mainly the real, practical dimension of life-process, through which the various ideological powers are developed and demonstrated. In other words, Marx argues that ideology reflects an inverted image of social reality, which is distorted and false. According to

Marx, ideology is the product of material reality and the distorted image of reality represented by the ideology due to social and economic conditions (Marx, nd: 76-88; Marx & Engels, 1947). As Agger states, critical theory aims to ways in which the various discourses of the political, economic and social organizations become "vehicles" of hegemony within an advanced stage of capitalism (Agger, 1991: 153-154). Ideology is, therefore, an aspect that is not autonomous, but it is first and foremost an aspect that is "the very *milieu* in which our lives are embedded. It seeps, as Althusser suggests, right into our personal relations" (Kaufman, 1999).

In the framework of the classroom, teachers and students should make an effort to create a terrain of resistance towards the so-called "common logic", that is perceptions and attitudes towards the current situation, that are not based on facts, but are a result of ambiguous rumors. In this context, we can refer for example certain misconceptions about the crisis in Greece, such as the link the failure of economic measures imposed by the Troika, ie the representatives of the European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with the poor performance of the Greek government and the implemented specific economic policy. Certain school lessons, such as the "principles of economic theory" can provide specific scientific notions that will allow students to consider crisis in a more objective way. The welfare state itself has contributed to the fiscal crisis of the state, due to its various failures, including huge deficiencies in vital sectors, such as health, education and pensions (Matsagganis, 2011). In our case, the economic crisis has led to significant changes that often cannot be controlled by the teacher, such as the reduction of funds for the operation of schools, the reduction of the parents' incomes and teachers' salaries, the reduction of teachers working in schools. We also have cases that apparently have not occurred before, such as children who do not feed adequately. According to a UNICEF report (Papatheodorou & Papanastasiou, 2017), based on the broadly used Eurostat's definition of relative poverty, the poverty line is estimated to have risen to the 60% of the national income. Thus, children in Greece face a noticeably much higher poverty risk than adults. Specifically, the child poverty risk has increased from 23% in 2009 to 28.8% in 2012 and then in 2014 it rose to 55,1 %. As indicated in the report, certain social policies are required, in order to support families that deal with poverty.

This indicates that the leadership of schools has to face an unprecedented situation that has not been recorded before. Nonetheless, when we say objective, we do not mean an objectified knowledge, that reproduce the authoritarian relations in the contemporary crisis. We are referring to an open process, where students can achieve self-reflection and communicative interactions. Students should be invited to ask questions regarding crisis, to express their own experiences when it comes to the repercussions of the financial recession, to clearly express their true feelings. Even in case their attitudes and opinions are characterized by false consciousness, they should be more than welcome to express them, so that they can learn how to uncover the distorted images of reality. There would be probably cases where students will come to doubt opinions and attitudes that were transmitted to them by their parents. Also, there will be times when students may have to re-organize and even eliminate the categories that shape their own learning experiences. The concept of discourse in critical theory is associated with a critical dialogue, constructive, democratic, with the aim of exposing the false consciousness of the dominant ideology. This is a political dialogue aiming to a different interpretation of the world (see Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972; Agger, 1991: 7, 174-196, 66-70). Besides, according to Freire, the alternative forms of pedagogy should be accompanied by dialogue, questioning and communication. This type of dialogue can help students realize and comprehend vital notions of the contemporary social and financial situation, such as capitalism and its authoritarian relations. Depending on the age of students, teachers should represent the ways through which curricula, knowledge and educational policy are in an inextricable link with the marketplace and the interests of the economy. Especially in Greece, this type of correlation can be easily seen in the constant need for private education and private tutoring. Students are once again more than welcome to transmit their experiences of a family environment where most parents struggle, in order to fund the ongoing educational needs of their students, within a school reality that is allegedly non-cost.

The notion of praxis in the educational field

This type of school knowledge synthesizes and demonstrates the relationship between meaning, critical thinking and democratized classroom

encounters. Equally important is the fact that the construction of knowledge is a social action and teachers must be considerate and sensitive to cultural, social and historical conditions that students bring with them to school (Giroux, 1988: 159). This means that it is vital to confirm and legalize any knowledge and experience related to the lives of children (ibid: 165). Education should primarily raise questions about how we can transform society and achieve human freedom. This process can be related to the notion of praxis, a concept important in the liberating theory of Freire, which is a theory about knowledge and learning. Freire presents the processes by which we can achieve awareness of the interests of the dominant ideology. This awareness can gradually be converted into a form of political empathy, where we can reconcile theory with practice, in order to systematically be released from the nets of false consciousness. It is a complex process, where "the acquisition of critical perception of the world, knowledge about the process of knowledge and knowledge itself and recognition of themselves as contemplating and assets, humanizes them, while helps them to form the mental components of social reality (Freire, 2009:13). Based on the above, we can understand why critical theory is inextricably linked with the liberating act. This is because the process of emancipation and liberation leads to disillusionment and revelation of reality, free from artificial consciousness that can dazzle and distort facts.

In our case, financial crisis, beyond its theoretical elements, has very specific conditions, which are tangible and evident by students. The financial deficiencies that families face highlight the financial support that school can offer to pupils, whose parents are facing financial problems, so that they can participate in the entire school life. In some cases, it is emphasized that this process should be done with discretion, owing to the fact that financial crisis is still considered to be a taboo subject. This idea seems to be an evidence of false consciousness, since teachers convey the common belief that we should face crisis with discretion, but at the same time they seem to search for ways to deal with its consequences in the educational environment. Nonetheless, this procedure requires a more powerful and radical attitude. The above opinion is vital in the context of critical education, since, as Apple states, we should always seek for organized action and we should try not to be lost in the utopian dreaming. Of course, such a utopian dreaming can provide a starting point, but our first and main duty as educators is to educate in

relation to these very conditions (Apple, 1988). On the other hand, teachers should indeed show discretion in some cases. As Giroux states, the educational process is considered to be a social process. Thus, teachers are required to show sensitivity and discretion towards the financial and social background of each student (Giroux, 1988:159). Most teachers recognize the fact that the economic crisis has a tangible impact on the economic and family background of students, reckoning that in many cases, families of a high or middle socio-economic stratum have suddenly lost their jobs and therefore their high social status. In these cases, there is an inextricable link between the family context and the students' performance.

In this framework, the concept of praxis should be accompanied with the necessity to acknowledge the background of students, and mainly the social inequalities that hide within the so-called equality of opportunities. According to Bourdieu, schools reward students based on their cultural capital, defined as “means of symbolic capital of wealth” (Bourdieu, 1974). Teachers allegedly communicate more easily with students from the upper classes, treating them as more "gifted" than the students from the lower or middle classes. Above and beyond economic indicators, cultural habits and dispositions (*habitus*) that are inherited by the pupil are essential for success in school. In the contemporary school of financial crisis, Bourdieu's theory seems to be more credible than ever. This is because economic inequality can be addressed by providing financial grants, but the inherent inequality is largely subjected to cultural predisposition and family heritage which is hereditary, because frequent interaction between parents and child creates a complete way of life, an entrenched behavior, a "custom", which is legitimized within school. Of course, for the acquisition of such cultural heritage, not only the right environment is required, but also the comparable ability of the student to internalize all those standards and norms that contribute to a better integration in the norm of school (Dumais, 2002: 44). The poverty of inspiration is as devastating as the poverty of opportunities and it's time to replace a culture of low expectations for many with a culture of high standards for all (Brown, 2007). Such "low expectations" have been commonly reported as one of the most significant obstacles to the working class educational achievement by both researchers and makers of educational policy (Demie & Lewis, 2010). Children living in deprived communities face a cultural barrier that stands in very

different ways than material poverty. It is a kind of cultural barrier, which includes low expectations and skepticism about education, a sense that education is for other people, and that is likely to leave someone who is standing in a low social position. Especially in Greece, private tutors and private schools for the preparation for school are considered to be inextricably linked with the educational process.

An example of an educational practice that could help students realize the underlying authoritarian powers in the era of crisis is the theatre of the oppressed. It is mainly a theoretical framework and set of techniques developed by the Brazilian director, artist and activist Augusto Boal. It is a social tool on the reconfiguration of power relations and the revolution of the theater. In his book "The Theatre of the Oppressed" ("Teatro del Oprimido", 1974) Augusto Boal³, influenced by Aristotle, states that since man is a political being, then everything, every human act is political. He states: "As we know, to speak is to take power: whenever we become the speaker we are empowered. Even in Brecht, it is the dramatist, not the citizen, who chooses the word" (2008: 21). It is a theater in which social transformation takes place and power roles are redefined. The viewer becomes an actor, is involved and participates. Recognizing that humans have a unique ability to take action in the world while simultaneously observing themselves in action, Boal believed that the human was a self-contained theatre, actor and spectator in one. Given the fact that we can observe ourselves in action, we can amend, adjust and alter our actions to have different impact and to change our world: "Now the oppressed people are liberated themselves and, once more, are making the theatre their own. The walls must be torn down. First, the spectator starts acting again: invisible theatre, forum theatre, image theatre, etc. Secondly, it is necessary to eliminate the private property of the characters by the individual actors: the 'Joker' System" (Boal, 2008: 95). Theatre of the Oppressed engages people in discovery, critical reflection and dialogue and the process of liberation, whilst it allows participants to stretch the limits of their imaginations, demechanize habitual behaviors and deconstruct and analyze societal structures of

³ He established a Center for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro (CTO), whose aim was to study issues concerning citizenship, culture and various forms of oppression using theatrical language.

power and oppression. People are invited to intervene, ask and participate in the performance, while the content of the events are related to conflicts, oppression, inequality, injustices and other phenomenon that we face daily around us, issues in which we learned to face, without ever wondering how to solve them. Boal presents a theory that is mainly an “amalgam” of different theoretical approaches, from ancient Greece to Brecht and Freire. He seems to be very interested in the word “catharsis”,⁴ as was used in the ancient Greek theatre: “Brecht proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the character who thus acts in his place but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself, often in opposition to the character. In the first case, a ‘catharsis’ occurs; in the second, an awakening of critical consciousness. But the poetics of the oppressed focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place” (ibid: 98).

A specific technique is the Forum Theatre, which is a performance that functions to transform one from spectator (one who watches) to a spect-actor (one who watches and takes action). An actor presents an issue of oppression and represents the world as it is. Consequently, audience members are then encouraged to stop the play and take the stage to address the oppression, attempting to change the outcome through action. The show engages Forum actors and audience members in a process where they are invited to detect and feel the oppression, leading to a form of empathy: “Maybe the theatre in itself is not revolutionary, but these theatrical forms are without a doubt a rehearsal of revolution. The truth of the matter is that the spectator-actor practises a real act

⁴ According to Aristotle, in the *Poetics* (1449b21-28), theatre can release from negative feelings through the eliciting of emotions, as a means of purifying related bad memories. Theatre is supposed to arouse feelings by allowing the audience to express them passively. Boal has a more practical overview in his essay “Aristotle's Coercive System of Tragedy” (2008), reckoning that the audience actively engages in the play by proposing solutions after an introductory scene: “Tragedy imitates the actions of man’s rational soul, his passions turned into habits, in his search for happiness, which consists in virtuous behavior, remote from the extremes, whose supreme good is justice and whose maximum expression is the constitution”.

even though he does it in a fictional manner. While he rehearses throwing a bomb on stage, he is concretely rehearsing the way a bomb is thrown; acting out his attempt to organize a strike, he is concretely organizing a strike. Within its fictitious limits, the experience is a concrete one” (Boal, 2008: 120)

In the framework of the crisis, an example would be drawn from the cases of unemployment and poverty which is a form of structural violence. In the framework of school, students could be engaged in a forum theatre, where they could represent different aspects of structural violence in the market-place of Greece. For instance, they could depict the severe working conditions and the oppression that employees face nowadays, struggling to find an occupation and when so, eager to tolerate every type of inequality from their employers. Students could act from both sides, both from the side of the employee that is in a constant fear of unemployment and from the side of the employer who tries to exploitate the current situation in the era of financial crisis, in order to have the most desirable profits. In this way, students could act upon feeling the real empathy of insecurity from the one hand and viciousness on the other hand, realizing that there are different roles, embodying into different life paths that a man can follow in any circumstance.

Conclusions

In the era of crisis, it is more than evident that teachers deal with new responsibilities that develop a more complicated profile. This could be combined with what Giroux and Aronowitz defined as the role of the intellectual reformer, who uses the pedagogical act in order to direct the political sphere (cited in Gounari & Grollios, 2010: 179). The term was originally used by Gramsci, who analyzed the social function of intellectuals around the following categories of teachers: the reformers intellectuals, the critical intellectuals, the ensconced intellectuals and the hegemonic intellectuals. In this context, we are interested in the reformers intellectuals, because they are the ones that lay the foundation for a critical pedagogy, perceiving school as a continuous struggle for what is perceived as legal and what is seen as marginalized knowledge. From this point of view, what is required is an ongoing reflection in combination with the appropriate action, so that students realize that they themselves are part of this struggle.

Above all, the intellectual reformer enables students to develop their own voice and system of beliefs, in order to be able to share their personal experiences and personal history (ibid.: 180). This procedure requires a great deal of effort, in order to produce a new stratum of intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971:43). It becomes apparent that teacher is now required not only to convey knowledge to children, but in parallel to empower them. Schools can not only be plain classrooms but also cultural fields, where teachers are invited to actively contribute to the personal and social empowerment of students (Gounari & Grollios, 2010: 282). School education should give priority to the moral dimension, with a view to engaging in social transformation and solidarity. According to theorists of critical pedagogy, teacher should consider the school education in the light of race, social class, power and gender (Schor, 1980; McLaren, 1995; Giroux, 2007). It is the role of the teacher, who wishes to impart what Habermas calls emancipatory knowledge, the kind of knowledge that will help students understand the relationships of power and privilege, which largely distort the perception we have of world and social relations (Habermas, 1972; 1974). In this context, teacher has the duty to talk about issues such as oppression, irrationality, social injustice and structural violence. It is teacher's duty to talk about politics, about the tremendous financial measures in the era of crisis, about the consecutive governments.

Mainly, pedagogy seems to be perceived as the key-factor for the emancipation and empowerment of students and teachers. It seems to be the main element that can guide students in the difficult path of the financial crisis, where the financial reductions have deteriorated every sector of the educational process. In any case, education is a field, where beyond any other element, the most vital role is played by the human factor. Especially teachers should develop a powerful role, in order to be opposed to the neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideology that is characterized by the constant effort to undermine the teacher's role. In the era of crisis, teachers should now -more than ever -develop their own critical voice and identity. What interests us in this context, is the teacher's and scientist's empowerment from any kind of coercion, materialistic or other, aiming to maturity, empowerment and self-determination (Klafki, 1976; 2000)

As Gramsci states, "the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence ... but in active participation in practical life, as

constructor, organiser, “permanent persuader” and not just a simple orator...” (Gramsci, 1971:10). His question in his Notebooks “Is it better to “think”, without having a critical awareness, ... or, on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one’s own conception of the world?”, can be identified as the most crucial question that a teacher can ask to himself, since “the starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is ...” (Gramsci, 1971: 323).

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International Journal of Educational Policies

ISSN: 1307-3842

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