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George Goutzioupas, George Iordanides

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“Micropolitics” and Secondary Education Teachers’ Evaluation in Greece

George Goutzioupas, George Iordanides

Chemistry teacher in public secondary education in Greece, Assistant Professor in Management and Administration in Education at the Department of Primary Education of the University of Western Macedonia in Greece

Abstract

The present research is based on the theoretical conceptual framework of Personal (the personal) Interpretation Framework, through which teachers relate their working experiences to desirable working conditions and their professional interests, define their working role and give meaning to educational policy measures. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of micropolitics, expressed by teachers through their beliefs and defense of their professional interests, regarding their views on the evaluation of educational work. The survey was conducted with 209 public secondary education teachers in the region of Magnesia in Greece. A self-report questionnaire composed of closed questions was used. The findings indicated that the development of micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work is positively correlated with teachers’ age, their educational background and their experience in the same school, while it is negatively correlated with their postgraduate studies. Moreover, teacher’s micropolitical views on a particular category of professional interests are an indication of micropolitical behaviour, generally, towards the evaluation of educational work. The findings highlighted informal and unofficial - that’s why essential - aspects of school reality, concerning the issue of evaluation of educational work. Therefore, our findings may be useful in planning (the planning) of educational policy concerning acceptance by teachers, effective implementation and (, and) achievable effects of evaluation of educational work.

Keywords: Micropolitics, Evaluation of Educational Work, Personal Interpretation Framework, Desirable Working Conditions, Professional Interests.

Introduction

The theoretical framework of organisational behaviour reveals schools as organisations full of struggle and conflict, as "arenas of political actions" and conflicting interests, where individuals or teams compete for resources and power (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993; Ball, 1987; Blase & Anderson, 1995; Hoyle, 1986; Iannaccone, 1991; Malen, 1994). The micropolitical procedures in a school organisation can be intensified when educational changes are centrally and externally imposed (Rusch, 2005). Micropolitical factors cause the resistance of teachers regarding the deterioration of working conditions

(Blase, 2005; Fink, 2000; Hoyle, 1982) and often affect negatively the implementation of any educational reform (Cusick, 1992).

Evaluation in education, in particular, has political content, as it is designed with reference to pre-defined purpose and objectives within a particular historical, political and social framework. Blase and Blase (2002) argue that “rational attempts at planned change for school improvement were driven by micropolitical considerations and processes” and suggest that “the conduct of instructional supervision in schools is replete with micropolitical content, whether it is defined in positive or negative terms”. Timperley and Robinson (1998) argue that micropolitics in school is nowhere as evident as in the evaluation of personnel. In recent years, demands for political approaches to the study of the educational evaluation have increased (Blase & Blase, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1997; Smyth, 1997). In the current research we attempt to highlight whether and to what extent teachers’ micropolitical opinions about their profession are correlated with a negative attitude towards the evaluation of educational work and, therefore, correlated with difficulties in the implementation of educational administration strategies.

In Greek education, after the 70’s the legal framework regulating the operation of our educational institutions, including the evaluation of educational work, was based on a series of Laws (Laws 309/1976, 1304/1982, 1566/1985, 2009/1992, 2188/1994, 2525/1997, 2986/2002, 3848/2010), which, however, required to be further regulated by Presidential Decrees and Ministerial Decisions. During the last decades there have been many failed attempts to establish an evaluation system of educational work. Therefore, the Greek educational system and teachers themselves have lacked any assessment, and thus incentives for improvement, for many years. The absence of an effective evaluation system has been attributed by some researchers to teachers themselves and especially to their trade unions (Athanasiaides, 2001; Doukas, 2000; Koutouzis & Hatziefstratiou, 1999). However, none of these studies have systematically examined and correlated the failure of efforts to implement an evaluation framework of educational work with “micropolitics”. In this context, the present study attempts to examine the contribution of micropolitics on the formation of secondary education teachers’ views concerning the evaluation of educational work.

Theoretical Conceptual Framework

Ball (1987) and Blase (1991a) argue that the micropolitical perspective was partly developed by theorists as a critique towards rational and systemic models of organizations, which had failed to include the complexity, instability and conflict that arise from organizational regulations. Theorists, also, suggest that these models ignore individual differences in values, ideologies, choices, goals, interests, experiences, history, motivations and interpretations, which are crucial factors in the micropolitical perspective.

Micropolitics involve actions, behaviours and strategies of formal or informal exercise of power by individuals or groups within an organization, driven by personal interest (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991a; Blase & Anderson, 1995). Hoyle (1999) notes that micropolitics is inherent in all organizations, but it takes a specific form, depending on each occasion. “It’s the gap between the structures, where micropolitics flourishes”. Micropolitics in education refer to the policy exercised in and around the school building (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991a; Malen, 1994; Marshall & Scribner, 1991). According to the same researchers, policy in education at local, regional, or national level is identified as macropolitics. Literature data (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1988a; Iannaccone, 1975) suggest that external factors at macro-level significantly affect

internal micropolitical aspects of the school. The study of micropolitics in school is complete in taking into account the surrounding macropolitics (Bacharach & Mundell, 1993; Ball, 1987; Blase, 1988a; Gillborn, 1994; Iannaccone, 1975).

Schools as "arenas of political actions» (Ball, 1987), are often dominated by real or potential conflicts between members, lack of coordination and ideological differences. The diversity of interests and goals between members and the ambiguous and contradictory demands lead to uncertainty, lack of unity and lack of criteria in undertaking a specific action to meet their goals (Blase & Blase, 2002; Hoyle, 1999).

Moreover, the daily work at school is organised so as to encourage teachers to act individually, conservatively and in an opportunistic way (Lortie, 1975), in other words micropolitically. The teacher's uncertainty due to the lack of a commonly accepted knowledge base and a technical culture (Elmore, 2004; Lortie, 1975), is central in teaching (Lortie, 1975), which takes place in an isolated room, with vague and contradictory aims, with loose coupling to learning and, therefore, with results difficult to define and measure in a unique way (Rosenholtz, 1989). On the other hand, the teaching profession is not just a matter of technical skills and knowledge of curriculum, but incorporates morality in decision-taking, political consciousness and emotional commitment to accountability relationships with students, colleagues and parents (Hargreaves, 1995). The teaching profession is "a profoundly moral activity" (Fenstermacher, 1990), as what seems to be technical decisions about teaching strategies on the use of educational material, or intervention to classroom management, is essentially a moral decision based on consequences (Oser, Dick & Patry, 1992). Issues and dilemmas in education that seemingly promote ethics, often hide questions concerning the power and interests. The inherent political nature of teacher's work is fundamentally related to educational effectiveness, job satisfaction and the quality of learning opportunities for students (Kelchtermans, 1996). Moreover, during periods of educational reform, concerning changes of teaching methods and practices, the complex reality of the teaching profession is even more apparent (Kelchtermans, 2005). These above key features of school as an organization and the teaching profession as a set of demands and activities are fundamentally associated with micropolitics, as they significantly affect the working conditions of teachers.

According to Kelchtermans (1993a) and Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe (1996), teachers, based on their work experience, form a "Personal Interpretation Framework" (PIF), a set of intuitive knowledge and representations, through which they perceive their working role, give meaning and act in every circumstance. There are two central axes on which PIF develops. First, there is a "professional self", which includes the teacher's concepts for him/herself as a teacher. Second, there is a "subjective educational theory", which entails teachers' knowledge background and beliefs about teaching and education. Furthermore, teachers do not passively accept the changes that measures of educational policy bring, but they add meaning to them, based on their PIF (Helsby, 1999; Kelchtermans, 1993a, 1996). They adopt some new ideas and practices and accept some new working conditions, while rejecting others, if they don't "fit" to their personal beliefs (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995). As school reality is perceived by the teacher as a set of working conditions (Kievit & Vandenberghe, 1993), the desirable or appropriate working conditions are not perceived as objective, structural or material conditions, but as an individual conceptual construction based on PIF, namely the teacher's "professional self" (self-image, self-esteem, work motivation, task perception and future perspective) and the "subjective educational theory". In other words, the desirable working conditions depend, both, on how teacher perceives him/herself as a

teacher and knowledge and beliefs about how the teaching profession ideally operates. Therefore, the desirable working conditions are not necessarily commonly defined by the teachers, even within the same school. Through micropolitical actions, teachers strive to develop and maintain the desirable working conditions, to defend them when they are threatened and to restore them in case, and as long as, they have vanished (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b). Any action aiming at the maintenance and reformulation of desirable working conditions is considered to be a micropolitical action (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, 2002b). In other words, the desirable working conditions represent professional interests, the defense of which favours micropolitical behaviour (Kelchtermans, 1996; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b). Kelchtermans & Ballet (2002a) and Kelchtermans (2007c) have identified five different categories of professional interests: self-interests, material interests, organisational interests, cultural-ideological interests and social-professional interests. Personal interests are related to the teachers' "professional self", which holds a prominent place in teachers' PIF (Kelchtermans, 1993). They have to do with the teachers' sense of "professional identity" or their "professional self-understanding" (Kelchtermans, 1993a, 1996, 2007c). "Self-understanding" results from the experiences teachers have during their career and it is distinguished in several, intertwined components: teacher's self-image, self-esteem, work motivation, task perception and future perspective. As Kelchtermans & Ballet (2002a) support, in the case of beginning teachers, personal interests are mainly expressed with looking for self-affirmation, dealing with vulnerability and with visibility in a teachers' job. Material interests are related to salary or wages, to availability of teaching materials and to accessibility that teachers have to infrastructural facilities for proper execution of their work. In this category, it is also included time in the sense of "organisationally available time", which means time for planning and meeting with colleagues, or time to participate in in-service training during school hours (Kelchtermans, 2007c). Organisational interests refer to procedures, roles, positions, contract conditions and formal task descriptions in a school organization. Cultural-ideological interests have to do with the set of - more or less explicit - rules, values, ideals and goals one aims for as an individual and the norms that guide life and work in the school as an organisation (school culture), as well as the processes and interactions that shape the school culture (Altrichter & Salzgeber, 2000). As Kelchtermans (2007c) supports, "these types of interests have to do with the issue of the more or less collectively shared idea about what 'good education' is". Finally, social-professional interests are about the character and the quality of teachers' interpersonal relationships in and around the school as an organisation. The distinction between different categories of professional interests is made for methodological and interpretative reasons. In fact, various categories of professional interests are synthesised and are simultaneously active in the formation of teachers' micropolitical behaviour (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a).

Research aim - Research Questions

Schools have always been places of micropolitical fight. The literature review shows that micropolitics in education, as a research area and a factor of formation of the school reality, has been the subject of numerous studies. As Blase & Blase (2002) support, one of the most recent, interesting and promising directions of this research area is to investigate the influence of micropolitics on educational evaluation. However, there have not been any citations or research results about the correlation that may exist between teachers' demographic and professional characteristics and their micropolitical views regarding the evaluation of educational work. In Greece, also, as far as the authors of this study are able to

know, micropolitics in education is a research field never examined. This creates a gap in knowledge, which the current research attempts to fill in, with the ambition to become a source of enrichment of the wider research field of organisation and management of education.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of micropolitics, on secondary education teachers' views about the evaluation of educational work. In other words, the survey aims to show whether and to what extent secondary education teachers' views about the evaluation of educational work are influenced by their intentions to defend their professional interests. Specifically, the research aims to investigate the correlation between teachers' micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work and their demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, educational background and their professional characteristics, such as their teaching experience, the experience in the same school, the type, the size and the location of the school where they work. Further aim of the research is to investigate how teachers' micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work are correlated with categories of interests (correlation between teachers' micropolitical views concerning different categories of professional interests and the evaluation of educational work.) Another aim is to investigate the correlation between teachers' micropolitical views on a certain category of professional interests and their total micropolitical behaviour on the evaluation of educational work.

Regarding the above research aims, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. Teachers' micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work are not differentiated by teachers' gender.
2. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is positively correlated with teachers' age.
3. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is negatively correlated with teachers' postgraduate studies (M.Sc, Ph.d).
4. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is positively correlated with teachers' educational background.
5. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is positively correlated with teachers' experience in the same school.
6. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is not correlated with the type of school, where teachers work.
7. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is not correlated with the size of school, where teachers work.
8. The development of micropolitical views about the evaluation of educational work is not correlated with the area of school, where teachers work.
9. The development of micropolitical views about a certain category of professional interests is positively correlated with the development of micropolitical views about any other category of professional interest on the evaluation of educational work.
10. The development of micropolitical views about a certain category of professional interests is positively correlated with the development of a general micropolitical behaviour on the evaluation of educational work.

Methodology - Sample

The methodology adopted in the present study follows the principles of quantitative research applied to social sciences. The basic instrument of data collection was a self-report

questionnaire composed of closed type questions. In educational research the probability sample is not always feasible, although it is more precise as it allows the possibility of generalisation. In this research we use non-probability sampling and, more specifically, convenience sampling (Creswell, 2011). The participants were selected due to their willingness and availability to participate. We cannot assume that these participants represent the whole teaching population. However, the sampling can provide us useful information. The study was conducted in September 2010, with 209 secondary education teachers in the region of Magnesia in Greece (N=209).

95 of the participants were men (45.45%) and 114 were women (54.55 %). The sample consisted of 17 teachers up to 30 years old (8.13%), 68 teachers from 31 up to 40 years old (32.54%), 84 teachers from 41 up to 50 years old (40.19%) and 40 teachers from 51 years old and above (19.14%). Moreover, the sample consisted of 92 teachers holding a first degree in theoretical sciences (eg. Greek language teachers, foreign language teachers, sociologists, religion teachers) (44.02 %) and 101 teachers holding a first degree in applied sciences or technology (eg. mathematicians, biologists, chemists, physicists, computer scientists, economists) (48.33 %). There were 16 teachers holding a first degree in physical education, music or arts (7.66%). In relation to the participants' postgraduate studies, 28 teachers had acquired a master degree (13.40%) and 2 teachers had a Ph.D. degree.

In relation to their professional profile 115 participants were employed in Gymnasiums (55.02%) and 94 participants were employed in Lyceums (44.98%). 26 participants had up to 5 years working experience (12.44%), 50 participants from 6 to 10 years (23,92%), 49 participants 11 to 15 years (23,44%), 29 from 16 to 20 years (13,88%), 32 participants from 21 to 25 years (15,31%) and 23 participants had 25 or more years of working experience (11,00%).

In relation to the participants working conditions, 46 of them were employed in schools with less than 100 students (22,01%), 99 were employed in schools that educated 100 to 250 students (47,37%) and 64 employed in schools with more than 250 students (30,62%).

Finally, 107 participants were employed in cities (51,20%), 56 participants in towns (26,79%) and 46 participants were employed in rural areas (22,01%).

Findings

The findings showed that the development of micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work is positively correlated with teacher's age [$F(3,205)=12,047$, $p<0.001$] (Table 1), their educational background [$F(5,203)=12,121$, $p<0.001$] (Table 2) and their experience in the same school ($r=0,592$, $N=209$, $p<0,001$) (Table 3). An age of 40 years, a teaching experience of 15 years and an experience of 5 years in the same school, seem to be teachers' turning points regarding the development of micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work. Furthermore, the development of micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work is negatively correlated with teacher's postgraduate studies [$t(207)=-4,501$, $p<0,001$] (Table 4), while it does not correlate with teachers' gender [$t(207)=-0,352$, $p=0,725>0,05$], school type [$t(207)=1,007$, $p=0,315>0,05$], school size [$F(2,206)=0,631$, $p=0.533>0,05$] and school location [$F(2,206)=0,261$, $p=0.770>0,05$].

Table 1: Age

Age	Up to 30 years (N=17)		31-40 years (N=68)		41-50 years (N=84)		Over 50 years (N=40)		F	P
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D		
Micropolitical behavior	2,8	0,754	3,01	0,638	3,49	0,667	3,66	0,879	12,05	<0,001
Personal	2,63	0,864	2,86	0,701	3,26	0,739	3,42	0,922	7,704	<0,001
Material	2,84	0,664	3,03	0,667	3,5	0,715	3,66	0,972	9,955	<0,001
Organizational	3,26	0,637	3,47	0,586	3,81	0,591	3,94	0,888	7,757	<0,001
Cultural-ideological	2,78	0,91	2,96	0,814	3,61	0,797	3,79	1,023	13,14	<0,001
Socio-professional	2,82	0,728	3,03	0,639	3,52	0,679	3,69	0,82	12,8	<0,001

Table 2: Educational background

Educational background	1-5 years (N=26)	6-10 years (N=50)	11-15 years (N=49)	16-20 years (N=29)	21-25 years (N=32)	Over 25 years (N=23)								
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	F	P
Micropolitical behavior	2,94	0,792	2,88	0,58	3,23	0,623	3,7	0,813	3,68	0,664	3,82	0,698	12,12	<0,001
Personal	2,76	0,887	2,7	0,634	3,04	0,652	3,52	0,864	3,5	0,789	3,44	0,771	8,687	<0,001
Material	2,93	0,716	2,89	0,606	3,28	0,692	3,72	0,812	3,7	0,742	3,8	0,848	10,8	<0,001
Organizational	3,4	0,666	3,36	0,543	3,61	0,617	3,96	0,696	3,96	0,65	4,14	0,736	8,396	<0,001
Cultural-ideological	2,98	0,95	2,84	0,768	3,25	0,783	3,77	0,941	3,78	0,763	4,09	0,858	11,68	<0,001
Socio-professional	2,93	0,755	2,94	0,639	3,25	0,614	3,73	0,817	3,69	0,622	3,88	0,609	12,42	<0,001

Table 3: Experience in the same school

Experience in the same school	1-5 years (N=96)		6-10 years (N=38)		11-15 years (N=30)		16-20 years (N=20)		21-25 years (N=16)		26-29 years (N=9)		F	P
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D		
Micropolitical behavior	2,84	0,63	3,37	0,49	3,86	0,619	3,88	0,633	3,76	0,789	4,16	0,296	25,29	<0,001
Personal	2,67	0,69	3,14	0,58	3,65	0,683	3,73	0,737	3,54	0,888	3,71	0,523	17,54	<0,001
Material	2,89	0,64	3,36	0,62	3,86	0,68	3,71	0,794	3,79	0,863	4,3	0,487	18,49	<0,001
Organizational	3,31	0,58	3,78	0,5	4,07	0,583	4,06	0,645	4,04	0,832	4,48	0,371	16,4	<0,001
Cultural - ideological	2,79	0,78	3,44	0,64	4,04	0,644	4,02	0,716	3,84	0,911	4,62	0,268	27,15	<0,001
Socio - professional	2,89	0,65	3,39	0,51	3,86	0,682	3,89	0,567	3,85	0,694	4	0,369	21,89	<0,001

Table 4: Postgraduate studies

Postgraduate studies	Yes (N=30)		No (N=179)		t	P
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	Std.D		
Micropolitical behavior	2,71	0,587	3,41	0,746	-4,889	<0,001
Personal	2,48	0,651	3,21	0,79	-4,811	<0,001
Material	2,78	0,514	3,42	0,804	-4,213	<0,001
Organizational	3,24	0,47	3,76	0,696	-3,898	<0,001
Cultural - ideological	2,72	0,771	3,47	0,913	-4,289	<0,001
Socio - professional	2,73	0,633	3,44	0,729	-5,016	<0,001

Discussion

Both men and women teachers seem to define the desirable working conditions and their professional interests in a similar way, and they behave in the same micropolitical way towards the possible implications of the evaluation of educational work. As for women, the findings do not meet earlier findings (Lortie, 1975) which indicate that the teaching profession attracts women, who due to factors of their personal life (such as children and family), define themselves professionally in a different way than male colleagues and are less interested in professional matters.

The research data showed that the more teachers' age increases, the more micropolitical beliefs they express on the evaluation of educational work. Teachers older than 40 years express more micropolitical opinions, to defend professional interests of all types,

than teachers under the age of 40 years. Lortie (1975), argues that teachers are conservative and conventional, attached to the present and to the status quo. Therefore, it is expected that older teachers are more conservative, compared to younger ones, and act in favour of the status quo concerning the implementation of an educational evaluation project. Moreover, younger teachers may be more familiar with the concepts and the procedures of evaluation and accountability and more ambitious, perhaps recognising that through evaluation procedures they may achieve professional advancement. There are research findings showing that newly appointed teachers are in favour of evaluation (Taylor, 2005). In the field of education, according to Conley & Glasman (2008), positive evaluation results are associated with benefits, such as better work duties or professional promotion. However, the relatively flat professional structure of the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975) makes benefits, such as promotion, less available. This is possibly a reason, why teachers, in course of their professional career, devalue the process of evaluation of educational work and behave more micropolitically. Moreover, Schempp et al. (1993) found that micropolitical issues at school press new teachers to change their views about education and to comply with the existing school working conditions and norms.

In Greek secondary education, more specifically, during the recent decades there has been total absence of any kind of evaluation. It is expected thus, that older teachers, having spent perhaps their whole working life without even some basic evaluation of their educational work, have formed a different "Personal Interpretation Framework" (PIF) (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996) than their younger colleagues. For this reason, they give a different meaning to every new working condition. Due to such experiences, older teachers might form stronger micropolitical opinions than their younger colleagues do, regarding the impact of evaluation of educational work, so as to defend their professional interests. In particular, concerning their personal interests, older teachers are used to form individually their working conditions and work in a "safe class environment" with closed doors (Lortie, 1975).

So, in this case, they feel more weak and insecure toward the process of evaluation of educational work (Kelchtermans, 1996, 2005) than their younger colleagues. Older teachers, support that the evaluation of educational work will bring about the exposure of their teaching practice (Blase, 1988a) and, consequently, it will contribute to the development of a sense of vulnerability (Kelchtermans 1996, 2005). Therefore, older teachers desire, more than their younger colleagues, to avoid criticism made by principals, colleagues, parents and students (Kelchtermans, 1993a), as a possible consequence of the evaluation of their educational task. They, also, pay more attention to the maintenance of their existing and well-established social recognition, to reinforce their self-esteem in a process of "obtaining political identity" (Kelchtermans, 1996).

The statistically significant difference of micropolitical views on the evaluation of educational work concerning the cultural-ideological interests indicates that older and younger teachers give a different content to the concept of "good education". It seems that there is a different approach and ideology of the "definition of a school organisation" between older and younger teachers (Kelchtermans, 2007c). It's about different perceptions of processes and interactions shaping school culture (Altrichter & Salzgeber, 2000). In the past, most of older teachers, aligned with the views of their trade union, have systematically denied educational evaluation in general, considering it at the "imposition of an ideological control over the educational function, to convert teachers to docile executive organs of government options and orders" (Papaconstantinou, 1993) or "correlating it with control mechanisms and

reciprocation" (Koutouzis & Chatziefstratiou, 1999). Taking into account these considerations, we may explain their micropolitical opinions about lack of meritocracy and unsuitability of the process of evaluation of educational work. It, also, possibly explains the fact that a high percentage of older teachers, compared to younger teachers, believe that socio-professional interests, such as positive school climate, interactions with colleagues, and professional working conditions associated with effort, working time and autonomy in the teaching practice, are in danger because of the evaluation of educational work.

According to the findings of our research, secondary school teachers holding a Master's or a PhD's degree express less micropolitical opinions in all categories of professional interests related to the evaluation of educational work, than their colleagues without postgraduate studies. Generally, teachers with postgraduate studies, in the context of their further academic studies, may have come in contact with evaluation of their working tasks and are familiar with the concept and exercise of accountability. Moreover, they are usually at the beginning of their career and, as they are better qualified, they consciously choose not to reject the procedure of evaluation of educational work; perhaps they hope, through the procedure of educational evaluation, to upgrade their professional status.

The results showed that the more teachers' total working experience increases, the more micropolitical opinions they express about the evaluation of educational work. In fact, teachers with more than 15 years working experience develop more micropolitical views than teachers with less than 10 years of working experience. The total educational experience of 11-15 years appears as a transitional stage in teachers' development of micropolitical views. Teachers with more years of teaching experience are usually elder. More experienced teachers seem to be more conservative and act in an individual basis without seeking for opportunities for professional development (Lortie, 1975). Furthermore, more experienced teachers express stronger micropolitical views in the evaluation of educational work compared to less experienced teachers, probably for the same reasons, such as those mentioned earlier in relation to teachers' age. Moreover, the meaning of working life depends on the subjective importance each teacher gives to it, according to his "subjective working experience" such as his personal experiences during his professional life (Kelchtermans, 1993a, 1993b). On the basis of their working experiences, teachers form the "Personal Interpretation Framework" (PIF) through which they perceive their working role, give meaning and act in all circumstances (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996). Moreover, Lortie (1975) argues that teachers' political conservatism partly derives from their earlier socialisation experiences in schools or training before their employment. Therefore, teachers with more total working experience, having more intense working experiences of not being evaluated as for their educational work will develop more micropolitical opinions towards a possible implementation of evaluation, in comparison with their less experienced colleagues.

The study revealed that the more teachers' experience in the same school increases, the more micropolitical opinions they express on the evaluation of educational work. Secondary education teachers with more than 5 years experience in the same school have more pronounced micropolitical behaviour towards the evaluation of educational work, from their colleagues with less than 5 years experience. Several studies have found that structural and cultural working conditions in schools play a key role in the way teachers give meaning to their working experiences, as well as to educational changes and reforms (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). Furthermore, the characteristics of a particular school, such as the concept of teamwork, the style of leadership, the innovation climate etc., may mediate or filter the change impacts (Helsby, 1999). Therefore, continuous experience in the same school is a

powerful factor of formulating teacher's PIF. This means that the more a teacher remains in the same school, the more "intuitive knowledge and representations through which he perceives his working role, gives meaning and acts on every occasion" (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1996) are shaped and influenced by this specific school's reality. The experience in the same school makes teachers accustomed to certain school working conditions and indirectly indicates their acceptance.

In other words, the more a teacher chooses to work in a particular school, the more accepts the established working conditions and behaves micropolitically, in order to defend them.

According to the research findings, secondary education teachers' micropolitical opinions about the evaluation of educational work do not differ regarding the school type, the school size and the school location.

Finally, the study shows that teachers who have micropolitical views in relation to a particular category of professional interests may have micropolitical views in relation to any other category of professional interests and, therefore, a general micropolitical behaviour towards the evaluation of educational work. This means that the existence of teacher's micropolitical views on a particular category of professional interests is an indication of micropolitical behaviour, generally, towards the evaluation of educational work, even if the absence of stimuli or the following of a personal strategy make it not easily observable or evident.

Conclusion

Secondary secondary education teachers seemed to believe that the implementation of evaluation of educational work will affect some of their professional interests and behave consciously in micropolitical terms, in order to protect them. The findings could be useful to teachers themselves, in order to conceptualise micropolitics and be aware of the micropolitical influence on their beliefs, in relation to the evaluation of educational work. Moreover, the findings highlight informal and unofficial - that's why essential - aspects of school reality, concerning the effective implementation and the achievable effects of evaluation of educational work policy measures. Therefore they could be useful to educational policy makers as well.

As the research issue is quite complicated, with the parameters involved being numerous and their relations rather complex, a questionnaire on its own cannot be fully effective. There are dimensions of teachers' micropolitical views regarding the evaluation of educational work, which have not been detected by the questions of the questionnaire. Therefore, a more complete research would require a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, which may enrich the study with more data. Moreover, regarding the possibility of practical implementation of the research findings, as well as the usefulness of micropolitical perspective, in general, one must take into account that "micropolitics should be considered more as a theory for understanding and not as a theory for practice" (Hoyle, 1999). It's easy to highlight issues for discussion, but it's not easy to find ways to improve the educational administration or the quality of teachers' working life in a school (Hoyle, 1982). In other words, micropolitics should be used mainly for understanding aspects of teachers' professional life and school reality, when school managers initially attempt to implement a program to evaluate educational work/teaching.

The personal or collective interpretation of these micropolitical procedures is important, as they affect the organisation of members' choices, values, interests and

motivation, and correlate with their professional attitude and personality, their working career and their professional development. Many researchers have argued that, although the implementation of a micropolitical perspective in the study and practice of educational evaluation cannot solve a series of its complex problems, significant benefits can be expected from its use (Blase & Blase, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1997; Smyth, 1997; Smyth & Garman, 1989). The study of unsuccessful efforts to implement educational evaluation projects, the correlation with teachers', as well as evaluators', micropolitical behaviour and the interpretation of the causes and results through a micropolitical perspective, seem to be very promising. The documentation of the micropolitical aspects of educational evaluation, combined with conceiving teaching and school micropolitics, provides a solid base to develop in depth perceptions and practices of evaluation with theoretical and practical importance, especially pertaining to teachers' professional development and students' learning.

Our findings highlighted the need for further study of the policy of educational evaluation, as well as the importance of micropolitical knowledge and skills by those who manage and practice educational evaluation.

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George Goutzioupas graduated from the Department of Chemistry, University of Athens (1992) and the Faculty of Oenology, University of Bordeaux 2 (1996). He holds a Master's degree in Educational Organization and Management, University of Thessaly (2012), with research interest in the evaluation of educational work. He works as a chemistry teacher in public secondary education in Greece.

George Iordanidis is Assistant Professor in Management and Administration in Education at the Department of Primary Education of the University of Western Macedonia in Greece. He

has published one book and many articles in Academic journals. He has participated in many conferences in Greece and abroad (United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, United States of America etc). His main interests include school management, conflict management, innovation and management of change in schools.