

'Reality-check': the possibilities and impossibilities for non-discriminatory principal practice in multiethnic schools

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Abstract. This paper rests on critical management literature, sociological theory and research on racial/ethnic inequalities to demonstrate the situatedness and complicatedness of day-to-day principal practice as it evolves in three actual multiethnic secondary schools in Greece. The question pursued is what makes it possible or impossible for a school principal to practice non-discriminatory pedagogy for ethnic minority students. The author works with the theoretical paradigm of Pierre Bourdieu - underpinned by analyses on racism/ethnicism in education - to question the conditions and tensions within principalship in offering an education-for-all. The concepts of institutional (Reay, David and Ball, 1995) and principal habitus (Lingard *et al.*, 2003) are used as thinking tools to analyse the ethnographic data. The research suggests that principals are involved consciously and/or unconsciously in practices of everyday inclusions and exclusions of students. The paper serves as a 'reality-check' of the constraints placed on principals by context and themselves regarding what is advocated as 'managing' diversity.

Keywords: principalship; ethnic minority students; exclusion; principal habitus; institutional habitus

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Introduction

The literature on principalship and diversity has been growing recently, and leading education-for-all is being increasingly advocated. This highlights the key position of the school principal in ensuring these educational processes. Often, however, papers represent decontextualised approaches to principalship, and so fail to address the “street realities” of headship’ (Ball, 1987, p.80). This paper considers this criticism and engages with the lived experiences of three male principals who serve in ‘actual’ multiethnic schools. The main question examined here is what makes it possible or impossible for them to practise non-discriminatory education. Working through ethnographic data my research suggests that principal practices regarding multiethnicity are shaped by vocational, institutional and familial dispositions. Eventually, these constellations involve the principals in conscious and/or unconscious practices of inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minority students, which happen through the minutiae of everyday school processes. Overall, the paper serves as a ‘reality-check’ of the contextual as well as the individual constraints posed on principalship when it comes to managing diversity in schools. I see my work as an important contribution to the subject both for the Greek and the international setting in four specific ways. First, it fills the existing gap in research on principalship and diversity in Greece. Second, it draws attention to the involvement of the school principals in the exclusion of ethnic minority students. This is particularly important since many studies place them as observers and regulators of what is happening in their schools, rather than participants in the same reality. Third, it supports those voices advocating that the exclusion of ethnic minority students occurs subtly rather than outspokenly. Finally, it adds to the growing – yet still underrepresented – international literature that takes a sociological stance on school management and diversity as a contextual, and thus complicated, issue.

Why it is so important, though, to talk about principalship *and* diversity? Agreeing with Riehl (2000, p. 60), principals are 'key agents' in meaning-making regarding non-discriminatory educational practices. Being the 'licensed authorit[ies]' (Ball, 1987, p. 82) of their school, principals bear the responsibility of the educational contents, methods and results. Considering that 12% of the student population in Greek schools have a first language other than Greek (European Union, 2013), the principal's role cannot be separated from leading schools-for-all. The European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) and the Mediterranean Migration Observatory report that there are no official Greek statistics regarding the achievement of migrant and repatriate students (Luciak, 2004; MMO, 2004). However, the ascending ratio of their drop-out rates, as they progress through educational levels, signals that Greek schools are unable to provide them with the appropriate learning environment (Luciak, 2004; MMO, 2004). 'Antigone', the Centre for Information and Documentation on Racism notes that the representation of ethnic minority students in compulsory secondary education (10.6%) drops by half in non-compulsory (5.6%) (Theodoridis, 2008). Other research has documented the gap between the achievement of non-migrant Greek and migrant students, with the latter being disadvantaged (Mitakidou *et al.*, 2008; Tourtouras, 2004). In addition, discriminatory institutional processes, working through educational policies and content, hinder the learning of ethnic minority students (Damanakis, 1997; Nikolaou, 2005; Palaiologou and Evangelou, 2003). Greek teachers fail to understand the value of intercultural education, and consequently they do not plan nor implement bilingual and intercultural practices (Chatzidaki, 2000; Gkaintartzi and Tsokalidou, 2011; Skourtou, 2011; Tsokalidou, 2005; Tsokalidou, Gkaintartzi, and Markou, 2013). Other studies note the lack of teaching material (Bonidis, 2004; Flouris and Ivrinteli, 2000) and highlight the ethnocentric school structures that reproduce – and thus reinforce - inequalities for minority students (Dragona and Frangkoudaki, 2001; Frangkoudaki and Dragona, 1997).

The above educational situation should be seen within the wider socioeconomic context of Greece. Amidst the current financial, political, social and moral crisis, the rise of the far-right has brought unprecedented implications for the Greek schools. Some of these include accusations against allegedly 'anti-hellenic' intercultural pedagogies² and student indoctrination and recruitment (Papadopoulos, 2013). The work of educators, headed by the school principal, in safeguarding schools as places of equity, tolerance and egalitarianism emerges as quintessential. However, this work is socially and ethnically charged, and thus inscribed with possibilities and limitations. These complexities that stem from the context of the principal's day-to-day practice (Lingard *et al.*, 2003) is the core of this paper.

The existing knowledge on principalship and diversity in Greece is still at an embryonic state. Current academic discourse engages with overviews of the current situation and references to the international experience (Kesidou, 2006; Papanoum, 2006). This could reflect the general failure to see principals being involved in the same exclusionary practices as teachers. There is no official educational management training (Thody *et al.*, 2007). Principals learn on site through their experiences and personal understanding of what their role is (Saitis and Gounaropoulos, 2001). Since more general training is not being provided, any special training for principals on intercultural education is also being ignored. However, the recent 'Education for Foreign and Repatriate Students'³ programme made an important and innovative contribution to

² As an example, in November 2012 a kindergarten teacher of the Lefkada island had been accused for 'anti-hellenic' teaching following the allegations of the Golden Dawn far-right party. The 'anti-hellenic' teaching was letting students from Albania draw the Albanian national flag during a classroom activity commemorating Greece's '28th of October 1940' Italian/German occupation (Papamathaiou, 2012).

³ The programme (in Greek: 'Ekpedefsi Allodapon ke Palinnostounton Mathiton') was run by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and co-funded by the EU and the Greek state. During 2011-2012 I had the opportunity to participate in the programme as a scientific associate. The

principal training on this issue. Nonetheless, substantial research needs to be carried out, and in particular qualitative approaches that penetrate into the deeper and subtler forms of ethnic inequalities in schools. In light of this, my research is one of the very few offering some elucidation on the matter of principalship and diversity in Greece.

Acknowledging the important contribution of texts within the educational management research field, my thesis departs from managerial texts and moves towards a micropolitical analysis of principal practice (Ball, 1987; Thrupp, 1999). In this sense, my paper is located within the field of sociology of education. This is particularly important for research that engages with discussions about inclusive educational strategies and management for diversity, as it exposes the ways in which student exclusions are the repercussions of social and cultural hegemonies that permeate school structures. I start with an overview of the literature on school effectiveness, principalship and ethnic diversity that argues against a decontextualised approach to school management. I then present the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, upon which the concepts of principal (Lingard *et al.*, 2003) and institutional habitus (Reay, David and Ball, 2005) are being developed. Having set my methodological strategies, I present the three cases of principalship. The analysis argues that principal practice is a product of constellations of principal, institutional and familial dispositions, which create a nexus of possibilities and impossibilities in leading a genuine non-discriminatory education. As such, principalship cannot be reduced to instructional management, nor can it rely on 'one-size-fits-all' remedies.

programme provided within- and inter-school training as well as 'webinars', focus groups and training projects for school principals and staff.

School effectiveness, educational inequalities and principalship for diversity

Since the 1980s, when school effectiveness emerged as a concept, empirical work around the notion that 'schools *can make a difference*' (Thrupp, 1999, p. 17) still develops rapidly. Following this conviction, there was an abundance of texts about managing schools, appropriated from managerial texts regarding business organisations. This branch of educational literature relied upon the principle that schools can engineer student achievement in a similar way that an organisation can engineer its effectiveness. As such, school staff can orient their students towards achievement. Moreover, as organisations, schools can operate independent of social factors. Lauder, Jamieson and Wikeley (1998) give a detailed account of educational management literature and pinpoint the above characteristics. As Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob (1988, p. 231) put it, this literature advocates 'the mechanisms of effectiveness'. At the same time '*whole-school change*' approaches are put forward as an educational aim (italics as in original - Gillborn, 1995, p. 98). Within this discourse, educational management attributes the role of the change 'engineers' to school principals and makes them accountable for the school's success or failure. This infuses their post with more responsibilities and the burden of effective leadership (Gunter, 2003). Within this rationale, managerial texts emphasize how 'the person of the leader [...] make [s] a difference' and how to lead in the right way (Lingard *et al.*, 2003, p. 55). Leadership descriptions range from instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial and contingent forms (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999).

More recently there has been a growing attention to the everyday realities of schools and their lived environment (socioeconomic, political, cultural etc). This emerged as a 'reality-check' to the earlier statements: bringing the social aspect into perspective in order to question whether or not schools can actually make a difference and to what extent. The response of this research branch was

based on three main characteristics that have hegemonised literature so far. First, that the language it used was technicist and dogmatic (Ball, 1987; Lauder, Jamieson and Wikeley, 1998; Thrupp, 1999). Second, that it rested upon the assumption that this difference can actually be achieved through the work of schools, and thus offered recipes for success (Lauder, Jamieson and Wikeley, 1998). Third, that it ignored the socioeconomic, cultural, political, etc. factors that intersect with the practice of schools (Slee and Weiner, 1998; Thrupp, 1999). This is what has been termed the 'de-contextualisation' of educational management research. The importance of this point is obviously manifested in the enduring gaps between the academic achievement of students who are classed, racialised/ethnicised and gendered in particular ways. (Gillborn and Youdell; 2000; Lupton, 2005; Thrupp, 1999) Therefore, even though it provided the tools for talking about the potentialities of school principalship, it failed to provide the tools that explained its limitations.

Here, I briefly present examples of work that cast a critical eye on school effectiveness. Martin Thrupp (1999) has investigated the relation between a school-mix effect and student outcomes. He argued that achievement differences are 'the *cumulative* outcome of numerous smaller effects', such as group, instructional, organisational and management processes and has pointed towards the importance of the students' cultures and subcultures in shaping the educational processes (Thrupp, 1999, p. 123). Ruth Lupton (2005) has focused on schools in low socioeconomic areas, and also highlighted contextual factors that make a school appear successful or not (i.e. material poverty, charged emotional environment, students' past achievement, parental participation in school processes, etc). David Gillborn and Deborah Youdell (2000) have introduced the concept of 'new IQism'. They use the term to demonstrate how racialised and classed conceptualisations of ability, as well as league tables, construct discriminatory institutional processes for particular groups of students. They have found that mainly African-Caribbean students suffer discrimination based on their fabricated image as bad learners. This puts them

through an 'educational triage' process: their education is rationed through constitutions of race and ability (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000, p. 133). Reay (1995) elucidates the minutiae of classroom practices which exclude minority students and Mac an Ghail (1988) explores the strategies deployed by excluded students to survive or resist institutional subordination. Moreover, Gillborn (1990) unpacks how 'ideal clients' are constituted within educational institutions and Youdell (2003; 2006; 2011) how performative discursive practices create constellations of classed, ethnicised/racialised and gendered learner subjects which are identified as un/intelligible. This research engages with sociological qualitative (as well as quantitative) analyses of social micro-processes that occur within and throughout educational institutions. They offer a critical response to previous positivist quantitative-only methods used by similar research in school effectiveness (Lupton, 2005; Thrupp, 1999).

The research findings regarding school effectiveness create an important framework for defining principal practice for non-discriminatory education. The significance lies in the fact that any talk about an effective principal must involve a talk about classroom practices. In the context of my research, effective principalship is, of course, one that offers quality education equally to all students. Research on principalship and diversity has contributed interesting views on the matter. Ryan (2003) has found that principals often failed to acknowledge the existence of racism in their schools. This was both due to particular understandings they held on racism and the possibility of harming the image of their school. Henze, Katz and Norte (2000) found that principals acknowledged the complicated nature of racial conflict between students - in its direct and indirect forms - as well as the reasons for that conflict. Nonetheless, the authors portray the principals as observers of and pacifiers to the conflict, without relating with it in any way (cognitively, emotionally, politically, etc). Effectively, though, how one understands racism and relates to conflicting sides defines the practices which s/he will deploy to resolve it. Gunter (2006) brings attention to the role of the field of educational management in

portraying diversity as problematic and needing handling. As she notes 'the management are the "privileged subjects" who do the managing and "those who are diverse" are the object to be managed' (Gunter, 2006, p. 261). Riehl's (2000) research takes also a critical stance. Principals, she holds (Riehl, 2000), can orient the school towards an inclusive approach to the education provided. School principals in multiethnic schools are in key position to 'influence meaning – making' regarding diversity (Riehl, 2000, p. 60). However, as she also states, school administrators should 'bring their full subjectivities to bear on their practice' (Riehl, 2000, p.55). It becomes obvious that in order for principals to lead inclusive schools, they need to know what exclusion is, how it happens, and how to acknowledge both the overt and covert forms of discrimination. However, their understanding will rest in the personal ideologies and vested interests of the school members, which, not only make school a pluralistic space, but also an arena of conflict (Ball, 1987).

Hallinger and Heck (Lingard and Christie, 2003) suggest that school principals can be effective, but not in a direct way. Instead, their effectiveness is indirect and mediated through the work of teachers, and therefore difficult to be attributed to the principal. Regarding principalship for diversity, this would mean that the principal's inclusionary work is reflected in the classroom processes; albeit, this is not to be read over-simplistically. Non-discriminating principals do not mean non-discriminating classrooms; nor discriminating classrooms mean discriminating principals. This relation between principals and classrooms should be understood as co-constructing inclusionary and/or exclusionary school practices and not as a-priori defining them. Gillborn's (1995, p. 109) research shows that school change towards an antiracist education has been effected through the work of a 'core group' following many hesitations, different understandings, conflicts and the constant renegotiation of meanings. The points raised above constitute the critique against prescriptive educational management texts that talk about diversity: the complexity of the issue does not allow for success 'recipes'. In line with the critical approaches

discussed here, my paper examines what principals understand about their role regarding a multiculturally-oriented education; to what extent their position as principals allow for it; and how their practice relates to the practices inside classrooms.

Thinking toolkit: institutional and principal habitus

Dianne Reay (1995; 2004) suggests that the conceptual framework developed by Pierre Bourdieu is useful in thinking about social practice. His theory has often been characterised as complicated and 'messy', however considering 'the complex messiness of the real world' a comprehensive scheme to understand it could not have been any different (Reay, 1995, p. 116). The value of his theory lies in their usefulness to unpack 'domination as everyday practice' (Cicourel, 1993, p.111). This has been the main driver for me in applying his theory to interrogating the realities of multiethnic schools and the (mostly) unseen exclusion of ethnic minority students. Moreover, it has proven particularly helpful in analysing principalship as a contextual social practice. The work of Lingard and Christie (2003), as well as Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie (2003) has been especially inspiring in undertaking this task. As the former suggest 'Bourdieu...makes it possible to explain how the actions of principals are always contextual, since their interests vary with issue, location, time, school mix, composition of staff and so on' (Lingard and Christie, 2003, p. 317). The possibilities and impossibilities of principal practice for ethnic diversity, as these are amalgamated by social conditioning operating outside, inside and throughout Greek schools, have been central in my research questions.

In this section I analyse the main components of Bourdieu's theory: habitus, capitals and fields. These describe social practice as happening based on a certain logic; what he terms the logic of practice. Various researchers have

applied one or more of Bourdieu's concepts in loyal or a more creative fashion. Following the example of more flexible readings and daring adaptations of Bourdieu's theory, I have used the concepts of principal habitus, suggested by Lingard and Christie (2003) and Lingard, Hayes, Mills and Christie (2003), developed on the concept 'vocational habitus' of Colley, James, Tedder and Diment (2003); and institutional habitus, utilised particularly by Reay, David and Ball (2005). My analysis also incorporates views of ethnicised and gendered processes by which individuals are included in or excluded from classroom processes. These issues are underplayed in Bourdieu's own writings, but have been deployed by other researchers, such as Reay's (1995) work on ethnic habitus and Braun's (2009) on gendered teacher biographies. In order to understand these concepts, I should, first, make a necessarily brief reference to the main components of Bourdieu's theory, recognising that such an account omits the depth of his paradigm.

Habitus is the most complicated, and thus most criticised, term in Bourdieu's theory. It describes, simply, how a person becomes a social actor. It is internalised dispositions, acquired from early life, which have been framed by economic, gendered and ethnicised structures as one participates in the social world. Diane Reay (1995, 2004) has offered a useful four-point platform upon which habitus can be described: *embodiment*; the compound relation between *past and present*; the solidity between the *collective and the individual*; and the blending of *agency with structure*. Habitus embodies structures starting from the family milieu (Reay, David and Ball, 2005), and extending to the present. It (re)produces social practice, and together social inequalities (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). However, even if reproduction is a central feature and patterns of similar social practice are evident when looking at the collective level, individual biographies allow countless differences to emerge (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993). Habitus has been criticised as an overly deterministic term. Nonetheless, as Reay, David and Ball (2005) suggest, it also explains how individuals override their social destinies.

Choice is possible, but at the same time 'only a limited range of practices are possible', as individuals opt for those that socially make sense to them (Reay, 2004, p. 433). As a person becomes a social actor, s/he accumulates particular resources that enable her/his participation in the social world. Bourdieu (2004) calls these capitals and can be found mainly in economic, social and cultural forms. The form that has been mostly utilised in educational research is the cultural capital. Cultural capital is the accumulation of 'linguistic competences, manners, preferences and orientations' (Reay, David and Ball, 2005, p.20). Capitals are used as resources of power in social interactions and have a 'market'-value. According to the capitals an individual possesses s/he gets access to particular fields of social action.

A field is a social arena of power-play which 'contains people who dominate and people who are dominated' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 40). Fields are innumerable and may have subfields. For example, within the field of education, as a more general discourse, there are particular institutions (i.e. schools) where social struggle is also mobilised. Lingard and Rawolle (2004) also sustain that policies are social fields. Fields and subfields can have overlapping structures, but each one keeps relative autonomy and logic of practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). This element in Bourdieu's theory I find particularly interesting for my research, since these fields can help unpack the educational domain to its constitutive structures, and thus allow for complex readings of educational practice. The logic of practice is the mastery of the rules of practice, with particular fields having particular rules. These rules are unspoken, but also agreed amongst those who participate in a given field. For example, students and teachers know particular rules concerning their position and expected behaviour within the school, but those rules have not necessarily been articulated to them. Logic is what we can observe being enacted in everyday life, and the study of it provides us with access to the habitus – the conditions of the observed practice (Reay, 2004). The habitus is manifested through its contact with fields, while fields give a particular value

to the habitus (Reay, 2004). In other words, an individual participates in a social practice only if this practice makes sense to her/him. However, 'sense' in the Bourdieusian context does not mean a conscious understanding. In Bourdieu's writings one may also find the term 'strategy' being used; again it does not imply a conscious plan of action. For him the logic of practice happens naturally, as natural as water to a fish: 'it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). It is this unconsciousness that makes social structures misrecognised as powerful instigators of inequalities and domination (Grenfell and James, 1998).

The concept of institutional habitus has been used by Reay, David and Ball (2005) following McDonough (1997). Institutional habitus is

a complex amalgam of agency and structure and could be understood as the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual's behaviour as it is mediated through an organisation (Reay, David and Ball, 2005, p. 36).

In simple terms, institutional habitus describes the ethos of a school, its working culture and customary practices. It is a collective adaptation to and reproduction of the social structures outside the walls of the schools, which are internalised by its members and manifested through their practices. The collective aspect of this habitus makes it less open to change (Reay, David and Ball, 2005). Reay, David and Ball (2005, p. 36) note that '[i]nstitutional habituses, no less than individual habituses, have a history, and have, in most cases, been established over time'. This school ethos is a constellation of curriculum approaches, educational policies, organisational strategies (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Reay, David and Ball, 2005), as well as of 'expectations, conduct, character and manners' (Reay, David and Ball, 2005 after Bernstein, 1975). As a habitus, the institutional form is built upon cultural capitals and manifested through them both in embodied and objectified ways. Such capitals

are to be found in students' 'dress, demeanour and stances' and also 'in buildings, trophies, rituals, performances and in the school staff (their histories and qualifications) (Reay, David and Ball, 2005, p.37).

Principal habitus is the accumulation of dispositions and capitals, made into the mind and body of the persons who have become the principals. They have been internalised 'through the long apprenticeship of school and university' (Lingard and Christie, 2003, p. 326). The concept of principal habitus harks back to Colley, James, Tedder and Diment's (2003, p. 477) concept of 'vocational habitus', which describes the cognitive, social and affective labour of an individual to become 'the right person for the job'. Through apprenticeship prospective professionals learn to orient themselves to 'idealised and realised' dispositions; those that have been aspired to and those that have been achieved (Colley *et al.*, 2003, p. 471). The authors have described vocational habitus as a process of 'learning as becoming' (Colley *et al.*, 2003, p. 471). Braun (2009) has used the concept to analyse teachers' processes of becoming emphasising the gendered dispositions of the profession. Principal habitus entails the mastery of the logic of the educational management field, as a precondition for someone to become and act as a principal (Lingard *et al.*, 2003). To put it simply, a principal enacts the theory and practice that has been capitalised within the profession as s/he responds to the job. In turn, the principal, as an acting field member, contributes to the shaping of this theory and practice (Gunter, 2002). Principal habitus, as a specialisation of vocational habitus, offers the tools to think about principal practice as a product of internalised dispositions and cultural capitals. Moreover, the embodiment of principal habitus by practitioners illustrates principalship (Braun, 2009).

Methodology

The research plan

My study is an ethnographic one since it provides an account of a culture (Spradley, 1980). In this case, I examine the culture of principalship within three secondary Greek schools (students between 12 and 15 years of age). I have named the three schools 'Aegean', 'Ionian' and 'Cretan' after the names of three Greek seas, in order to keep them anonymous. The Ionian school was of average size, having 300 students and 38 teachers. The Aegean school was relatively small with 200 students and 24 teachers; and the Cretan school was considered a large school with 500 students and 60 teachers. The duration of the field work was 8 months in total and took place during the 2007-2008 academic year. I collected the main body of data in the Aegean and Cretan schools, while the Ionian school was used for piloting the research. Although my analysis rests mostly on the data of the former, important elements emerged from the study of the latter that reinforced or challenged the main findings. In this rationale and in order to elucidate the data readings I have also incorporated analyses of the pilot phase. Within the 8 months I have paid 37 and 32 visits to the Aegean and Cretan schools respectively. Although this amount of field immersion may be seen as brief for a researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), the amount of data collected and the insights gained qualify it as an ethnographic study (Wolcott, 1987). The duration of my research was defined by restrictions set by the Education Institute (Pedagogiko Institouto) of the Hellenic Ministry of Education⁴, to which I applied for permission to access state schools. The sampling of the schools was based on two parameters: first, that they had a significant presence of ethnic minority

⁴ The name of the Ministry that handles educational matters has undergone multiple changes following successive government reformations. In order to not confuse the reader who is not familiar with the organisation of the Greek state, I kept the first constituent of its various names which has remained unaltered through these changes.

students of more than 20%, as identified by the project 'Integration of Repatriate and Foreign Students in School' (Greek initials EPPAS); and second that they had different policies, one being designated as 'intercultural', so that I could study principalship under two different contexts. The sampling was done to provide a balanced difference across institutions of about 20 units (%). Therefore, the Ionian school, which is a mainstream school, has 20% representation of ethnic minority students in its population; the intercultural Cretan school 40%; and the mainstream Aegean school 60%.

For the collection of data, I have used a combination of methods. I conducted observations (field notes) inside the principals' offices as well as interviews with the three principals (semi-structured and ethnographic). In the Aegean and Cretan schools I conducted observations inside the classrooms (across a variety of school subjects), the teachers' office and the common spaces (corridors and school yard); as well as 13 semi-structured interviews with teachers (7 in the Aegean school and 6 in the Cretan school). The interviews were of approximately one hour long; however, more teachers provided me with data through ethnographic interviews (impromptu conversations). I conducted 10 observations in the classrooms of the Aegean school and 20 in the Cretan; the differences were due to the access I was given by individual teachers. Overall, the Aegean school was more reserved in having a researcher observing their classrooms. Within the schools I have sampled the teachers and classrooms of Grade B (students of the ages 13-14). This was done due to the fact that in Grade A, which is the first grade of secondary school (student ages 12-13) many migrant students with no official documentation had to stop schooling by the end of the first trimester. For similar sampling reasons I rejected Grade C, the last grade of secondary school before entering non-compulsory education (ages 14-15), since it had fewer students of migrant background as they 'failed' to be promoted from Grade B. The research was complemented by the examination of school documentation and policy texts, announcements and circulars, as well as demographics.

In this paper I use the three principals (presented next) to illustrate the different ways in which principal practice for multiethnicity can be affected by limitations, and to discuss the boundaries of possibilities. The first case of principalship focuses on limitations at the policy level; the second at vocational level; and the third at school level. I treat each case independently from the other two, without drawing comparisons between principalships. The reason for this is to allow a deeper, rather than wider, examination of the processes that each case describes. This is important since the complexity of the theoretical tools I use to perform the analyses, as well as the observed practice itself, requires attention to details. Acknowledging that this paper could have been further enhanced by a comparison between principals and schools, in this instance I have decided that, given the range of complex variables between each principal and each school, it is better to let the story of each principal speak its own 'truth'.

The selection of the presented data has been based on its capacity to encompass the complexity of the issues discussed. Following the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) guidelines, all necessary steps have been taken to ensure the research ethics. The names of the participants appearing here are pseudonyms. In presenting the data, I have deployed italics (apart from adding emphasis) to underline the passages which represent my recordings (and probable interpretations) of what was being said or done. All data were collected in Greek and translated into English. The transfer of meanings from one medium to the other has been a challenging but often fascinating task. Negotiations and compromises had to be performed in cooperation with native English speakers, so that the meanings are not lost, and are still valid for an English-speaking audience. To this challenge was added the description of the structures and cultures of the Greek context.

The three principals

Yannis (Ionian School), Giorgos (Aegean School) and Manos (Cretan School) were all former male Maths teachers. This gender matching across the

principals was unintentional. Having said this, gendered processes as described by Kantaraki, Pagkaki and Stamatelopoulou (2008) and Maragkoudaki (2008) suggest that it is not coincidental that men occupy higher-status positions in a predominantly female professional field. Yannis was in his mid 50s and had been a principal for 12 years. Giorgos was in his early 60s and close to retirement. He had been a principal for 5 years, and during my research he underwent a process of principal assessment, upon which the retaining of the post is decided. On the contrary, Manos, in his early 40s, had just been appointed as the new principal. Giorgos came from a working-class rural family, which moved to Greece as repatriates from the Greek diaspora in Istanbul when he was a child. Yannis and Manos were of a middle-class background. Yannis' extended family was multiethnic, as his sister was married to an Iraqi man, and was very proud of his trilingual nephew. Manos was the only principal to have had a Masters and a doctorate degree. The three men had different daily routines. Yannis had a mostly relaxed post, while Giorgos and Manos kept busy. Giorgos, in particular, had to resolve student issues, most often male ethnic minority students who were sent in his office by teachers to be disciplined. Yannis and Giorgos embodied more traditional styles of a principal who was located inside the office for the most part of the curriculum. On the contrary, Manos would walk around the school more than he stayed inside his office; this caused some problems for me regarding data recording.

Principal understandings on diversity: institutional effects in mainstream schooling

The role of principals in leading schools for inclusion is linked to their understanding of the aim of their school. This section discusses how policies and their discourse are embedded in the school's structures, which in turn are

internalised by principals and manifested through their practices. As Ball (2006, p. 44) says 'Policy discourses [...] produce frameworks of sense and obviousness with which policy is thought, talked and written about. Policy texts are set within these frameworks which constrain but never determine all of the possibilities for action'. Here I use the accounts of Yannis, the principal of the Ionian School (20% ethnic minority students), to show how institutional dispositions have shaped his understandings about the divide of 'mainstream'/'normal' and 'intercultural'/'abnormal' educational aims. First, I provide the reader with background knowledge on the policy framework in Greece regarding intercultural education.

In 1996 the Hellenic Ministry of Education introduced the Law 2413 on 'Intercultural Education', by which it established 'intercultural schools':

1. The objective of Intercultural Education is to organise and operate school units of primary and secondary education which will contribute to the education of youths with educational, social, cultural or learning particularities.
2. The curricula of the mainstream schools will be applied at schools of Intercultural Education, which shall be adjusted to the particular educational, social, cultural or learning needs of their students (author's translation, Article 34).

Intercultural schools, such as the Cretan School of my research, are characterised as 'special' schools. The main arrangements this policy issues is the conversion of mainstream schools that have an intake of 45% or more foreign and/or repatriate students into 'intercultural' schools. Intercultural schools offer courses in Greek as a second/foreign language, can introduce modules according to the students' needs (i.e. mother-tongue teaching) and have adjusted procedures for the students' assessment. Moreover, the policy suggests that teachers allocated at Intercultural Schools have advanced qualifications and training in pedagogy. Across the country there are currently

13 Primary, 9 Secondary and only 4 Intercultural High schools (IPODE, 2013). At the same time the Law preserves earlier arrangements regarding the operation of 'Reception Classes' and 'Preparatory Language Support Classes' in mainstream schools, where migrant students with difficulties in the Greek language were offered additional support. However, the procedures for setting the classes are such that do not encourage their establishment. This results in migrant students not being properly supported with Greek language acquisition by schools structures (Tressou and Mitakidou, 1997).

These two arrangements, the 'intercultural' schools and the support classes are mainly what policy defines as 'intercultural education'. Here lies the criticism that the scheme received. As Damanakis (1997) argues, the reference to the 'particularity' of ethnic minority students together with the establishment of 'special' institutions constitutes a segregationist policy. Students are legitimised as 'us' and 'others', with the former keeping their 'normality', while the latter becoming 'special' (Damanakis, 1997). At the same time, intercultural pedagogies are linked to this special institutional model; no other arrangements are made for intercultural and bilingual education in mainstream schools. Far from being inclusive the Greek curriculum has often been criticised for its ethnocentricity (Damanakis, 1997; Dragona and Fragoudaki, 2001; Fragkoudaki and Dragona, 1997; Nikolaou, 2005). Concurrently, it is reported that teachers fail to understand multiculturalism and bilingualism as an integral part of the student's learner and cultural identities, due to insufficient training (Gkaintartzi and Tsokalidou, 2011; Mitakidou, 2001; Skourtou, 2011; Tsokalidou, 2005). Finally, the neglect of mother tongue teaching has been raised as an essential concern (Mitakidou, 2001; Triarchi-Hermann, 2000). At the same time the Greek Constitution (Article 18, Paragraph 2) states clearly which ethnic community is place at the centre of attention for State education overall:

'Education is the State's essential mission and it aims at the moral, intellectual, professional and physical education of the Greeks, the

development of *national and religious consciousness* and their moulding into free and responsible citizens' (Greek Parliament, 2010, p.30).

Greek belongingness and religion⁵ are being raised as the aims of the national educational policy, and consequently as the constituents of official knowledge. Obviously, there is a polarising effect between those referred to as 'Greeks' and nationally and religiously conscious, and those who do not fall into these categories. As Troyna and Williams (1986) support, such articulations work as discriminatory proxies, and thus particular cultural, ethnic, religious and language communities are left outside the provisions of the State.

Having these policy specificities in mind, the following field-notes extract recorded in Yannis' office offers interesting points for discussion.

Yannis shows me a pile of documents circulated across schools, concerning seminars, student activities and staff allocation, and suggests me browsing through them to get an idea of the school processes. These announcements have been designated by him as non-important, so they will not be registered or filed. Skipping through the pages, I see a seminar on 'Intercultural Education', organised by the Borough in co-operation with the Ministry of Education. Given the chance, I ask him:

E: There is this call for a seminar on Intercultural Education [I show him the announcement]. Did any of the staff attend?

Y: Uh, no... no, our school doesn't need to...We are not an 'Intercultural' school; this is what the Intercultural school does...They have a different curriculum... They focus more on the promotion of the students' cultures; they do various cultural activities, dances from various countries, theatrical plays...It is a special school [...] We don't do that here, we consider them all 'equal', we don't want to distinguish

⁵ Greece defines Orthodox Christianity as the State's official religion. Religion is taught at schools as a subject. However, the Constitution also establishes the freedom of religious choice (Article 13, Paragraph 1 of the Greek Constitution).

them from Greek students. They are not considered 'immigrants', they are almost Greeks, integrated...We follow the Greek curriculum for normal schools.

Policy text and policy discourse which divide schools in mainstream and 'intercultural' is manifested in Yannis' account of the reasons why his staff did not need to attend a seminar for intercultural education. He understands that his school is a 'normal' institution, one that does not need to incorporate 'other' intercultural pedagogies. The 'speciality' of the intercultural school does not respond to the 'commonality' of the Ionian School. His views echo the embedded bipolarity in policy, institutional modelling and teacher training, and suggest a separatist school practice for ethnic minority students that escapes the logic of the Ionian school. Taking into consideration that intercultural education has been much unattended by the State as of lower priority educational content (Damanakis, 1997; Nikolaou, 2005), these nuances also emerge in Yannis' conceptualisations. Therefore, there are various institutional elements that shape his understanding in significant ways, such as the educational aims, the pedagogical priorities, the school organisation and its status, informed through policy (and social, national, ethnic etc) discourse. The Ionian school's institutional habitus (Reay, David and Ball, 2005) is manifested in what the Ionian school is and is not for Yannis. Consequently, the institutional habitus mobilises particular principal practices; here they are ones that relate to motivating staff training about intercultural education.

At the same time, the institutional habitus, as mediated through Yannis' practices, stimulates particular meanings to the notions of difference and equality. Yannis seems to understand that being different is shaded by inferiority, and recognising someone as different is an act of inequality; consequently, schools that acknowledge difference in their aims and purposes practise discrimination. These hark back to the opposing dualities imminent in the educational policy and institutional organisation, where mainstream and intercultural educational schemes are positioned in hierarchical order, the latter

being inferiorised and placed on the periphery of the Greek State's concerns. These should be read along evidence which points at the ethnocentric process involved in school hierarchisations as 'good' and 'bad'. Institutional discrimination based on ethnocentric and/or racist assessment of minority students has been long documented (Gillborn, 2008; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Thrupp, 1999; Youdell, 2004). Such processes are reported to form particular school markets creating maps of successful and failing schools (Taylor, 2002), and schooling choices are intricately connected to class, ethnicity and gender identity works (Ball and Vincent, 1998; Reay, David, and Ball, 1995). Regarding the Greek context, Markou (2010) has elsewhere argued that ethnocentric processes, working through systemic deficiencies, attribute the failure of the educational policy and planning to the ethnic minority students and the schools which they attend. This way a quasi-school market (Ball, 2006) is mapped upon the presence of ethnic minority student population in Greek schools. Similar processes have shaped Yannis' understandings about how a 'normal' 'good' school would relate to 'difference': by seeing it as non-migrant and non-different.

A final note I should make has to do with Yannis' stance regarding the discrimination of ethnic minority students. Even if his understandings are infused by an ethnocentric discourse, he is positioned positively towards their fair treatment. This could be attributed to his experience in a multicultural and multilingual family, through his sister's marriage to an Iraqi man. His practice is therefore to be understood as a constellation of institutional and familial dispositions that work together and also often in contestation with each other.

Juggling structures: principal dispositions in an intercultural state school

In this section I share some considerations about the possibilities and impossibilities inherent in the position of a Greek principal in an intercultural

school through the example of Manos. As I argue, the interplay of principal dispositions and institutional structures, along with individual elements, form a matrix of freedoms and limitations for principalship that has been designated to serve an inclusive (by definition) school. To start with, Manos' decision to become a teacher and later a principal of the Cretan school (which had 40% ethnic minority students) was a conscious one, and he put a lot of effort into meeting the institutional purposes. Having worked in a teacher-training programme for intercultural education, I would often see Manos participate in seminars. He said this about the Cretan's pedagogical aims:

'The school has a great goal which is established by the school's policy ... the involvement of students with different cultures To offer an intercultural educational content. This is why you see many cultural events going on in the school [participation at dance festivals, visits to theatres and museums, choir events with multiethnic content]. Through this cultural exchange we pass the meaning of the contact between civilisations. That no civilisation is inferior to others and that we need to appreciate the different route of every culture in history. And of course another great goal is the learning of Greek language so that newcomers can use it as a tool for their integration in the host society.

The contact of cultures on equal terms and cultural enrichment are reportedly the core principles of the strand of intercultural theory upon which the current policy was drawn (Damanakis, 1997). Undoubtedly, the law establishment of an educational schema that advocates cultural equity, particularly given the ethnocentric context, was a great step forward.

However, this approach has also received criticisms about its superficiality and failure to provide the tools for unpacking the deeply inculcated structures of ethnocentrism that obstruct what the intercultural theory suggests (Damanakis, 1997; Nikolaou, 2005). Manos is the pedagogic agent of the field which he was appointed to serve (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). In this case,

he serves two fields of social practice: the fields of intercultural but also Greek education. This happens because intercultural education and schools are subdivisions of the main educational regime. As explained earlier, most provisions (educational content, material, methods, etc.) are similar for mainstream and intercultural schools. Having these in mind, we should understand that Manos' principal practice is informed by two different fields with contesting logics of practice (Lingard and Christie, 2003): one that suggests he resists ethnocentrism and another that he abides by the rules of Greek education. As Saiti (2009) notes, the high centralisation of the Greek educational system and state control calls for conformity leaving little space for improvisation. Following this, I would also make a case that Manos' principal dispositions are influenced more by the field of Greek education than intercultural education. In other words, Manos resists the ethnocentricity of the Greek education up to the point where this resistance does not threaten this ethnocentricity. Hence, it is worth considering whether Manos would opt for a more radical confrontation with the Greek educational system. In such a case, it would also mean that he would be jeopardising his position as a state principal. However, as Thomson (2010) suggests, the principal habitus (as any other habitus) works in ways that ensures its safeguarding and thus principals would not put their position in danger. I explore these tensions with more data in the following paragraphs.

The expectations that Manos and the interviewed teachers had for their ethnic minority students were significantly more positive than those compared to the Aegean School (more on this later). The Cretan School organised field trips to other educational institutions for their prospective studentship beyond secondary education, as well as invites to other mainstream schools in order to create student networks and boost the school's image. Research has pointed out the significance that enhancing educational expectations has to student achievement, especially for minority students who are challenged by the dominant culture (Blair, 2002; Chapman and Harris, 2004; Tomlinson, 1984).

In his efforts to offer proper support to ethnic minority students, Manos often found himself in opposition with the dominant structures. One such example is the language provisions. The Cretan School run Preparatory Classes, a similar form of language courses as those in the mainstream schools, but also taught the Greek language through the medium of subjects such as Physics, History etc. Students were divided in three levels (beginners, intermediate, advanced) and attended those classes which run at the same time as the rest of the curriculum. They then returned to their main classrooms. Teachers in the main⁶ classrooms would offer additional linguistic support where needed. Even though Manos saw this model as a positive step to helping ethnic minority students with their integration into the mainstream education, he was still disappointed by its restrictions both in implementation and planning on the part of the State:

There isn't basically anything different in the Intercultural school apart from the provisions for the Preparatory Classes. There is no [multilingual-multicultural] material support for other subjects, so students have difficulties. And of course the teaching of their mother tongue is neglected, despite policy promises.

As I presented earlier, the provisions regarding the intercultural education scheme did not live up to their expectations. I would go as far to suggest that the introduction of intercultural schools was a contradiction-closing case, expressed in terms of Critical Race Theory (Gillborn, 2008). By this I mean that intercultural education, as an approach confined to special schools, gives an alibi to the Greek state for not widening the educational rights it gives to ethnic minority students. Therefore, the contradiction is closed by an implemented 'controlled' version of education-for-all, which gives away as

⁶ Main classrooms operated on the same basis as any mainstream classroom. However, since staff offered additional support to accommodate the students' needs, I do not name them 'mainstream', in order to underline this difference.

much as it can without jeopardising the invested interests of ethnocentrism. This is most obvious in the case of mother-tongue teaching which – even though established by policy – falls into various obstructions⁷ that eventually make them unrealisable.

The above extract shows Manos being positioned between two different and contradicting logics of practice. On the one hand, while serving intercultural education and its values he criticises the shortcomings of the educational system. On the other, even if he resists its ethnocentricity, he does not override it by trying to find, for example, other ways to run such classes. This, I read, is what Thomson (2010) had earlier suggested about the risks principals are or are not willing to take with regards to jeopardising their position. Being a principal of a centralised education, and knowing possible reactions to an act of resistance, Manos' practice is limited to complaints. Therefore, I see that Manos complies with the state norms, avoiding personal detriment. His principal habitus is shaped by the tensions between the dispositions of principalship for multiethnicity and principalship for ethnocentrism.

It is worth looking at a scene recorded in Manos' office, a case of dealing with the absences of a male ethnic minority student. As it is shown, Manos resists the official process of granting the student with an absence as his practice is amalgamated by a blend of institutional, principal and individual dispositions. At the same time it emerges that Manos' principal habitus performed manoeuvres around contesting logics of principal practice, so that it resolves the inner tensions of opposing dispositions. First I should provide some information of the absence-recording system in the Greek school. An absence is granted to students for every taught session (45 minutes) they are missing. When absences are excused by parents or a doctor these are characterised as 'justified'. In the opposite case they are recorded in the

⁷ Such obstructions are the lack of trained mother-tongue teachers as well as embedded ideologies regarding bilingualism, affecting both teacher and parent views on the preservation of mother tongue and its worthiness to be taught at schools (Gkaintartzi, 2012).

student's file as 'unjustified'. Absences for a few sessions are immediately recorded as unjustified; these would include reasons as being late for class, expulsion from classes or leaving earlier than the end of the curriculum. When a student makes a maximum of unjustified absences, s/he fails the grade. Research on truancy advocates that absenteeism may be deeper rooted than a surface reading would suggest as non-studiousness. Among the reasons, research has identified rigid curriculums and policies, peer pressure and authoritarian educational processes among the causes (Claes, Hooghe and Reeskens, 2009; Reid, 2003). Truancy has been often related to students from socio-economic and cultural backgrounds which are not represented by the school culture and who have low self-esteem regarding their academic abilities (Claes, Hooghe and Reeskens, 2009). Students with a migrant background are most often found with higher rates of truancy than non-migrant students (Fernández, 2002; Reid, 2003). Fernández's (2002) research supports that truancy is closely related to student disengagement with the offered education, which results in bored, disinterested learners. The implications for school management are important since such disciplining practices are mostly connected with their role. Claes, Hooghe and Reeskens (2009, p. 138) found that school principals often read absenteeism as an 'obnoxious habit' and a 'law and order problem', failing to associate it with the education their school offers.

Manos' daily principal practice did not involve much disciplining (i.e. teachers sending students in his office). This is not to be read as lack of disciplinary practice. Manos would go around the school and scold students, for example if they were running indoors. However, as he told me, behavioural issues were to be dealt inside the classrooms instead of the principal's office. The interviewed staff at the Cretan School appeared to agree with this strategy, apart from one exception, a female teacher who would have preferred Manos being more 'paternal' and dealing with 'misbehaving' student himself. The

following incident involves a case of absenteeism which I recorded in his office:

A teacher comes in Manos' office to inform him that a male student [of migrant background] in her class⁸ has many 'unjustified' absences in his record and he will fail the grade if they don't justify them somehow. Manos tells the teacher to inform the custodian, and he will also justify as many as he can.

As the recorded absences were committed during a part of the daily curriculum (a few sessions), they cannot be justified by parents or a doctor, as explained earlier. Manos has to deal with bureaucratic policy, which otherwise might result in the student terminating schooling. Even if the student was absent on his responsibility (i.e. truancy), Manos opts to justify the absences himself instead of letting the boy fail, taking advantage of relative policy that allows such practice, given the seriousness of reason behind the absences (Hellenic Ministry of Education, 1983). I read this practice as a result of institutional, principal and individual influences. The Cretan is a school which is sensitised towards equity, as is Manos who serves its purposes as the principal. Through this prism, it is possible that he saw the student's absenteeism as a result of the unfulfilling educational processes, and thus he could excuse him.

At the same time, however, Manos is the principal who has to abide by certain rules – in this case, the rules for punishing student absenteeism is the same as in mainstream schools. With this relative literature in mind, I would suggest that what is intended to be a neutral policy in fact implicates ethnicity in significant ways (Fernández, 2002; Reid, 2003). There is an inner dispositional tension for Manos, with two contesting logics: one calling him to act as a mainstream school principal and punish the boy regardless of any

excuses; and the other as an intercultural school principal who looks deeper into his absenteeism and weighs the repercussions of a possible failure. Here, he follows the latter logic resisting the mainstream one; however he does not override it. Manos still plays by the rules, using mainstream policy in such a way that assists his non-discriminatory practice. In other words, Manos had the space to manoeuvre around options in order to resolve the contesting logics (Lingard and Christie, 2003), which he is called to follow.

Principal hardships: gloomy visions, conflicts and the future of ethnic minority students

The role of the school principal in the Greek context, according to policy, includes the endorsement of an educational vision, the creation of a learning community, the balancing of staff relations and the mediation across different school groups (i.e. teachers, students, parents, communities, local authorities etc). (Hellenic Ministry of Education, 2002). This description includes the major points with which managerial texts for education have been engaged. However, as I presented in the critique of the first section, there are underlying conditions for these role aspects to evolve. Personal ideologies and vested interests affect how the educational vision is shaped, and whether a homophony is achieved (Ball, 1987). Balancing staff relations implies a neutral principal; however, principals are involved in these same relations. Finally, bridging different groups means that their interests are made explicit and that there is actually space for them to be bridged. In this section I present Giorgos, the school principal of the Aegean School that has a strong representation of ethnic minority students (60%). It will be shown how the above role requirements are faced by 'street realities' (Ball, 1987, p.80) when it comes down to the education of ethnic minority students. This part discusses Giorgos' conceptualisations about his school and students, and also presents his

contestation with teachers' practices for their multiethnic classes. The evidence suggests that negotiating understandings regarding equity and education is a challenging task, since different interests are involved. In other words, this section pins some of the 'multiple fields' and the 'competing logics of practice' that affect principal practice (Lingard and Christie, 2003, p. 327).

In the following extract Giorgos shares his views about the multiethnic composition and the low socioeconomic background of the student population:

G: I am personally very proud that our school is like this, wretched; the wretched society consists of prouder individuals [...]. Our school shouldn't have a high number of low [level] students. It's the society of those who can that condemns them to this low level.

E: What do you mean by this?

G: Those that have the means create the supposedly elite schools [...] Those who have the means and the power to wangle, they move their own children and themselves to spaces who they claim are high – in terms of life convenience [...] Of course, those low societies, like the kids in our school, they put survival first, and once they put survival first, the school comes second.

Elsewhere Giorgos has made strong statements about the difficulties and the benefits of a low socioeconomic background; as he said this makes people noble, honest and more appreciative. This is what he sees in his 'wretched' school that makes him proud. His familial background was also working class and migrant, and he empathises with the challenges faced by his students. He discusses the discriminatory social stratification and attributes their 'low level' to these processes. Giorgos appears to escape a deficit viewing of these students. In addition, he is aware of his school's position in the school market, and, consequently, the limited future opportunities for the students. After analysing the local school setting of my participating schools, I have elsewhere suggested that ethnocentric processes create maps of 'good' and 'bad' schools depending on the presence of ethnic minority students (Markou, 2010).

Giorgos describes this 'institutional triage', a term introduced by Gillborn and Youdell (2000, p. 133) to describe the discriminatory selection against educational institutions, which were looked upon as second-class educational providers due to social processes.

The social class, as well as the ethnicity, of the student mix is mediated through the institutional habitus; Giorgos knows that, for its students, survival comes first and education second. Therefore, the purpose of his school – contrary to 'elite' ones – is not, necessarily, to offer advanced qualifications. The following quotation reinforces the above readings, where Giorgos expresses his vision regarding ethnic minority students.

The principal tries to help these children, but it is only occasionally that he succeeds. My personal aim is to make them get the secondary school certificate. [...] If someone doesn't have this certificate and hasn't completed the 9-year compulsory education, he cannot obtain the licentiate not even for becoming a house painter or a hairdresser. [...] You fight for the children just to get the secondary [compulsory] education certificate. You fight. They don't always succeed [in a very disappointed tone].

Giorgos adjusts his expectations and educational aims for his students to what he sees as most important for them. In this case, he understands that gaining the secondary school certificate is a high priority – even if the students do not gain as much in knowledge – since they will use it to acquire access to vocational education and enter the labour market as skilled workers (i.e. car mechanics, hairdressers etc) instead of unskilled ones (i.e. builders or domestic services). According to recent data, the percentage of early-school leavers in Greece was 14.8% and 14.5% for the years 2008 and 2009 respectively, when the EU aim for the 2010/2020 agenda is to be less than 10% (Europa Rapid, 2011). The workings of the institutional habitus emerge through Giorgos' underlying thoughts about how the Aegean is a school that has to respond to

the ethnicised and classed rules of the educational and job market. He has come to the conclusion that his school (and consequently his role) may not produce academically successful graduates.

Giorgos expresses his disappointment about the limitations of helping working-class ethnic minority students get through schooling and better job options. He understands the reality and the structural restrictions of his principal role. This is particularly manifested in his articulation '*you* fight'/'*they* don't succeed always' (emphasis added) and its deterministic nuances. Things seem to have a particular irrevocable way; students are most likely to gain fewer qualifications, and 'success' will be to get the lower compulsory education certificate. His principal habitus, formed also by the institutional habitus, participates in the reproduction of this order. 'He' might fight within his available practices, but most likely 'they' will not succeed.

This final extract shows Giorgos' struggle to find common ground with teachers at the Aegean school regarding the assessment of ethnic minority students, which he attributes to his limited power as a principal and state negligence on the matter of staff assessment.

Nothing is judged. Nothing is assessed. Whatever happens, it happens because of good will; from both sides [Principal-teachers]. I urge my colleagues to see the [ethnic minority] child more positively, to not fail it, to help it pass to the next grade, if possible ... to encourage it. Because, the more years a child stays next to you, the better it is; whereas if you fail it once and then twice...the third time the child will quit you. And then, if you don't have it close to you, how are you supposed to help it? It's just that you become trouble-free. My colleagues, they wished their classrooms didn't have a single child, so they could come [to teach] once a month. Of course this is an exaggeration, right? In everyday life it's not exactly like this, but in this exaggeration you can see that there are many truths.

Giorgos' narration shows his resentment toward teacher tactics regarding the way they grade ethnic minority students. Being the 'licensed authority' of the school (Ball, 1987, p. 82), he bears responsibility for what happens inside the classrooms, and as well as his self - image as a successful (or at least not failing) principal. He feels that the lack of educational assessment for schools creates a loose working framework for teachers and their supervision by the principal. In contrast to schools, principals, however, undergo assessment every 5 years in order to retain their position. At the time of my research in the Aegean school Giorgos was being assessed. Therefore, I see that his account reflects his anxiety regarding a situation where he is assessed for something he has no control over. Giorgos perfectly articulates the clash of two contesting logics (Lingard and Christie, 2003) in the school, the teachers' and the principal's. In his opinion, teachers are interested in running carefree classes, while he is focused the students' graduation. Observational data from inside the classrooms of Grade B, as well as teacher accounts, suggest that the teachers of the Aegean school are faced with their own challenges specifically by a group of 'tough boys' (all of migrant background). These challenges, I argue, are caused by the 'tough boys' trying to include themselves in the classroom processes and thus survive the exclusionary practices. However, teachers fail to read their actions as such; therefore they are excluded further through through the everyday minutiae. Teachers misrecognise the 'tough boy's' behaviour as disrespect, and reproduce the exclusions throughout their assessment of the boys. Giorgos asks teachers to take a more lenient approach to grading; however, this tactic appears to be unsuccessful. In his principal practice, I can discern the influence of familial dispositions. As mentioned earlier, Giorgos appears to mostly sympathise with ethnic minority students and he often relates his family experiences with theirs. This passage demonstrates that principal and familial dispositions work together in producing principal practices regarding the education of ethnic minority students, but their implementation is diluted through the interests of conflicting sides.

Concluding remarks

This paper engaged with the realities of three cases of principalship and has argued over contextualised readings of their daily social practice. Having offered the literature setting within which this research sits, I have presented the theory of Pierre Bourdieu and the concepts of principal and institutional habitus, which have been used as a thinking toolkit. Collecting data with the ethnographic paradigm I have discussed three cases of principals (Yannis, Giorgos and Manos), in three different schools (the Ionian, the Aegean and the Cretan). I have used each case to elucidate the matter of possibilities and limitations of principal practice for diversity from different angles. The first utilised mostly the concept of institutional habitus to discuss the ways in which policies and their discourse are internalised by institutions and embodied by members of the school - in this instance, the principal. Yannis' account highlighted how institutional dispositions have shaped his understandings about the division of educational aims into 'mainstream' and 'intercultural', 'normal' and 'abnormal'. The case of Manos was useful in unpacking the freedoms and limitations inherent in the dispositions of a Greek principal in an intercultural school. I have shown how the interplay of principal dispositions and institutional structures, as well as individual factors, have formed the nexus of possibilities and impossibilities of principalship for an education-for-all. The final case of Giorgos was an opportunity to discuss the "street realities" (Ball, 1987, p. 80) of principalship. Pessimistic visions and conflicts with teachers regarding the education of ethnic minority students shed light on the way understandings with regards to equity in education are challenged and often contested. I have noted that this paper has not drawn comparisons between principalships, as its focus was to unpack the density and complexity of practices. However, differences across schools (i.e. ethnic composition, school policies) and individuals can provide us with further insights in future writings by the author. Nonetheless, all cases were underlined by a common

denominator: that principal practices were shaped by constellations of principal, institutional and familial dispositions. As an overall conclusion, the research suggests that principals are involved mostly unintentionally and unconsciously in practices of everyday exclusions of ethnic minority students. Additionally, it underscores the difficulty of giving successful prescriptions for how to manage diversity, particularly when discrimination happens through the minutiae of everyday practice and thus goes undetected. As this paper is one of the few that deals with this issue in the Greek context, it invites more 'reality-checks' from relevant research, as well as constructive criticism on possible theoretical and analytical developments on this paper to be taken into consideration.

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