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Pedagogy of Responsibility and Morality: The Power of Emotionalization in Highlighting Power Relations in the Field of Educational History

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the latent power relations in the field of educational history, specifically in the area of teacher training. An alternative methodology is attempted through the study of the archive of the Pedagogical Academy of Heraklion in Greece (the only teacher training institution at the time) for the period of the April dictatorship (1967-1974). Its main tool is the analysis of evidence in terms of emotion, in order to clarify not the emotional reaction of students to possible authoritarian actions, but the formulation of these actions based on their ability to promote emotional models.

Keywords: emotionalization, history of education, history of emotions, pedagogy of responsibility and morality

1. Introduction

The study of emotions in historical research is a significant challenge that makes the research of our historical documents more human. In this article, we focus on the concept of emotions in the history of education. This is a field of research that studies situations, events, institutions, theories, and ideas related to the practice of pedagogy and education.

This paper attempts to examine, through a discussion of emotions, the power relations between students and teaching staff at the Heraklion Pedagogical Academy in Greece, a main institution for training prospective teachers. The period covered by the research coincides with the years of the April dictatorship (1967-1974), which was imposed on Greece by a group of colonels in a coup d'état.

This research attempts to propose something new in the methodology of historical research on power relations in education. The relevant literature has recently highlighted that autobiographical texts are an important source of evidence, as they contain assessments by the real protagonists of historical events (Lillie, Matzer, & Riettiens, 2022). Nevertheless, in this article we adopt a different methodology in analyzing a document, focusing on points that are not obvious at first reading. Usually, such approaches were associated with the methodology of microhistory, which highlights the value of marginalized protagonists in educational history. In fact, in terms of a "bottom-up" historical approach, we understand that it is not necessary to have a narrative from someone on the margins in order to change the focus of our historiographical lens and interpret a document in a different way from its main theme (Kounalakis, 2025).

2. History of emotions: a brief theoretical overview

The development of interest in emotions and feelings in historical research essentially came about with the famous 'cultural turn' in historiography in the 1960s and 1970s. However, there were some earlier attempts in this direction. Two important examples are worth mentioning. Firstly, the book *The Civilizing Process*, first published in Germany in 1939 by N. Elias, which examined how the concept of civilization was used by Europeans from the 13th to the 19th century in their efforts to impose authoritarian tendencies. Elias focused on the emotional states of shame and embarrassment to explain the changes in the social structures of the period he studied, highlighting the parameter of people's emotional lives (Linklater & Mennell, 2010). The next figure who actively contributed to this preliminary phase of development in the field was the well-known L. Febvre, co-founder of the *Annales* school. This was the first substantial challenge posed to the international historiographical debate by the French historian, who did not hesitate in 1941 to publish an article in the *Annales* journal (*La sensibilité et l'histoire: Comment reconstruire la vie affective d'autrefois?*) that clearly linked historical methodology with the concept of emotion for the first time (Rosenwein, 2002: 822-823).

These studies interpreted emotions more from a universalistic point of view, in the sense that they remain almost unchanged over time, i.e., they do not have their own history. Later, however, a group of researchers approached the issue in more sociological terms, based on a relativist perspective, studying

emotions as being culturally variables (Plamper, 2009:230). The pioneering researchers of the history of emotions from the 1980s to the first decade of the 2000s based their work precisely on this rationale and put forward two important methodological proposals.

The founder and editor of the *Journal of Social History*, Peter Stearns, developed the term *emotionology*, which highlights the catalytic role that social expectations play in shaping feelings (Stearns & Stearns, 1985: 825-826). Any study of emotions must therefore be accompanied by an analysis of the context in which they occur. A common denominator of this effort is that emotional norms are highlighted, which are interpreted based on their impact on social and, by extension, cultural functionality (Stearns, 1994).

The second important proposal comes from medievalist Barbara Rosenwein and extends Stearns' thinking into the 2000s, introducing the term "emotional community." In this methodology, the content of an emotion is not determined solely on the basis of social expectations about it, nor is it interpreted solely by issues of power and politics associated with it. Instead, it highlights the complexity of the emotional lives of individuals, who are treated as communities, and the research seeks to reveal systems of feelings. These systems concern what each community values as important, beneficial, or harmful to its emotional world. Beyond the complexity of different communities in this methodological proposal, individuals are likely to transition between different emotional communities. Furthermore, within a society, the perception of an emotional concept may differ significantly from group to group (Rosenwein, 2002:842).

3. Archival material presentation

This research aims to detect the power relations, overt or latent, in the pedagogical training provided by the Pedagogical Academy of Heraklion (PAH), Greece, during the seven-year dictatorship of 1967-1974. The main interpretative tool is the concept of emotion. First, we must identify the documentary material on which the proposed methodology will be applied.

In our research, we draw on data from the PAH archive, which includes a large number of written documents relating to: a) official documents, incoming and outgoing, describing the framework set by the dictatorial regime for the daily operation of the Academy, and b) official book records documenting the daily activities of the Academy relating to its teaching and administrative functions. In any case, there are no available documents expressing the personal opinions of students or professors, nor are there any diary entries. Therefore, detecting emotion and the role it plays in the implementation of authoritarian forms within the Academy is a difficult process.

From the numerous documents in this archive, we have chosen to analyze the operational reports in this article. These are official reports that the Headmaster of the Academy was required to compile each year and send to the competent Ministry of Education. Their purpose was to provide a detailed report on the administrative, pedagogical, and educational operation of the Academy. Thus, in each such report, the director describes in detail the following: a) the teaching facilities and all accompanying spaces related to daily teaching and other operations (library, laboratories, gym, garden, restaurant, toilets), b) the student population (enrolments, transfers, conduct, education, c) the teaching staff (courses taught per teacher) and d) extracurricular activities (events, national celebrations, excursions).

There are seven operational reports in the Academy's archives, one for each of the seven years of the April dictatorship. Essentially, these reports reflect the Headmaster view of the Academy's overall operation. Often, they include opinions from the Headmaster himself, which are considered to represent the views of the entire teaching staff. In any case, these are not the personal assessments of the teaching staff regarding the Academy, but rather the Headmaster's feedback to the dictatorial regime. It is important to note that there was no ready-made form to fill out. Therefore, the Headmaster determined the content he considered important.

4. Research results

Due to the nature of the documentary material, we are obliged to study the 'silences' of the documents in order to reveal the factor of emotion. References to emotional states are almost completely absent from the available texts, so we will detect those actions whose effectiveness is based on their emotional impact on students. It should be noted that the main purpose of the research is to highlight the power relations in the general functioning of the PAH during the period under review.

The main categories in which references serving the purpose of our research were found in the activity reports are: a) the internalization of power, i.e., the actions in which the Academy participates and which make it a co-participant in the exercise of authoritarian forms, b) extracurricular activities (excursions, lectures, speeches, anniversaries, celebrations), c) ideologisation, i.e. the promotion of specific ideological principles in the Academy's teaching and non-teaching activities. Obviously, there will be some overlap in the results, in the sense that some references are included in more than one category.

4.1. Internalization of authority

This category includes references to the stance of the Academy, either of the teaching staff or the student population, on issues concerning everyday administrative and educational reality. Extracurricular activities constitute a separate category, as we will see below.

The first issue is the Academy's stance towards certain choices made by the central dictatorial administration, specifically the occasions on which disagreement was recorded. The first concerns the dictatorial regime's refusal to continue the three-year course of study at the Pedagogical Academies

and to downgrade it to a two-year course. It is clear that the PAH is in favor of a three-year course of study, which is recorded in every operational report, and it is emphasized that two years of study are not sufficient to provide comprehensive pedagogical training. The second issue concerns the Academy's understaffing in terms of permanent teaching staff.

In relation to our research methodology, what is of interest is the argument that is used. Each report records these two needs in relation to the increased number of students and the suffocating working conditions of the teaching staff. However, the main argument used by the Headmaster to convince the central administration does not concern the actual operating data of the Academy. Instead, he exploits the power of emotion. The main reason for proposing a more comprehensive form of teacher training with three years of study and more teaching staff is, as stated in the 1973-1974 report, the reluctance of students to attend the Academy. The Headmaster expresses the view that the students are individuals with inadequate social education and cultural background, as they originate from rural families. Thus, with two years of training, they cannot fulfill the mission of raising the educational level of the Greek people. Behind these words lies an intention to link pedagogical training with the sense of responsibility that students should feel in order to meet the social expectations of the time. A possible increase in the number of years of training and the number of teaching staff will provide more incentives in this direction.

The second issue concerns the Academy's stance towards the regime's choices regarding the operation of Teacher Training Academies in general. The acceptance of the ideological principles of the regime is a given by the PAH administration, as will be seen in the second category, which concerns the ideologization of pedagogical training. At this point, we will focus on certain specific issues concerning the operation of the PA, on which PAH expressly states its agreement in its reports and which can be examined in emotional terms.

The Headmaster clearly states in each report that he seeks to train teachers with a high sense of responsibility, ethics, and national spirit. Each report states that the progress, behavior, and conduct of first-year students must be of a high standard, which was not the case in previous years when there was a different admission system. Therefore, he supports the new system that came into force under the dictatorial regime and essentially promotes the concept of excellence and the acceptance of more effective students into the Pedagogical Academies. For example, the exceptional admission of students with lower grades to the PAH is repeatedly emphasized as a problem for the Academy. In terms of emotionality, we understand the effort to promote emotional standards among students with an increased sense of responsibility and morality, and this is considered to be consistent with the concept of increased academic performance in school. Better student performance is therefore likely to lead to higher rates of compliance with the desired emotional standards that are necessary for the development of the ideal teaching profile.

The next specific issue is the general agreement and approval of the educational policy being implemented in general and in the field of teacher training in particular. In each report, the Headmaster emphatically stresses that the Academy embraces the regime's efforts to "revive" and "restructure" the state. In fact, it is explicitly stated that every effort is being made to train "worthy" future teachers with a heightened awareness of their duty in relation to the regime's current policy.

The last issue concerns the teaching aspect of pedagogical performance. Beyond the link between the increase in years of training and the effectiveness of promoting the required emotional standards, as mentioned above, clear references were found concerning the content of the courses taught. For example, the practical teaching exercises of the students were a much-discussed topic in the reports. The framework for the operation and the supervision of students was structured in such a way that the trainee student always had an increased sense of responsibility and fear. It is characteristic that after each teaching activity, the student had to present his or her work to the Headmaster, the deputy headmaster, and the teacher of the class where the trial teaching took place. In addition, a lottery was held in which one student was judged on the effectiveness of his or her teaching effort. It is characteristic that the Headmaster of the PAH also participated in the evaluation committee. From the sample evaluation report of these teaching efforts, as found in the archive, we note that the most important part of the evaluation does not concern the student's level of knowledge and the teaching methodology, but issues related to the student's image in the classroom (dress, voice, etc.) and student management, with an emphasis on discipline.

If we take into account other references in the reports that state that the training of students aims to foster 'proper' teaching standards in terms of ideology and student behavior, then we can understand the instrumentalization of courses in PAH. Mainly, due to the teaching practice, for which we have relevant evidence, we conclude that the training system was supervisory and provided little degree of freedom. It was reasonable for the increased control to cause emotional states of fear and anxiety in students regarding their levels of adaptation to the desired teaching style.

4.2. Extracurricular activities

An important category is the way in which the dynamics and power of emotional models are utilized to carry out extracurricular activities. In all of his reports, the Headmaster decided to provide a separate chapter on this issue. A common theme in all reports is the Academy's intention to demonstrate to the city of Heraklion the awareness of the teaching staff and students of the responsibility they have in the role they are called upon to undertake.

PAH students participate in numerous festive events in the city of Heraklion, as well as other activities that highlight the goal set by the Headmaster in the operational reports, which is the significant involvement of the Academy in the following areas: national, moral and religious, social, and cultural education.

The celebrations, as the first subcategory, concern the two national anniversaries, April 21, as the day of celebration of the doctoral regime, as well as the day of celebration of NATO. The Academy often collaborated with the local military training unit for reserve officers in order to have an imposing presence at these events, as is explicitly stated in the operating reports. The main goal of all these efforts, as recorded in the reports, was to stimulate the patriotic emotion of the students and to encourage their national pride.

The second subcategory concerns various actions of solidarity and social cohesion and harmony, or, as the Headmaster of PAH states, "community life actions." Every year, students participate in: a) fundraising for the Red Cross to support cancer patients, b) fundraisers organized by the Church of Heraklion to support poor people, c) the sale of tickets for charitable artistic events, d) the activities of the Society for the Protection of Children, and e) a campaign for the success of the state's bond loans.

The third subcategory concerns the involvement of students in religious events. According to the reports, the following were required: a) compulsory weekly church attendance, b) annual attendance by the Academy and its choir at the anniversary of the burning of the Arkadi Monastery, c) annual participation in church events for the celebration of the Three Hierarchs.

The last subcategory concerns the role of students and the Academy in general as an training and cultural institution for the city of Heraklion. The Academy often organized lectures on moral, religious, and national issues with speakers from its teaching staff, as well as military officials, judges, and bishops of the church. The aim of these efforts was to link the scientific work provided by the Academy with the concepts of moral, religious, and national education. Secondly, the reports note that students and society would be educated through these lectures and would form "good" judgment, while at the same time their hearts and minds would be "enlightened." The Academy's participation in the task of public education should also be included in the same context. Within the PAH, courses were organized by the King Paul National Foundation (this is an institution founded in 1958 on the initiative of the royal family, under the name Royal Research Foundation, and at the time we are examining, its goal was the moral, political, and social education of the Greeks) for the training of trainers who would educate the ordinary people in the city of Heraklion. Finally, the Academy's students actively participated in cleaning up the local coastline and planting trees in areas near the city.

4.3. Ideologization

The reports of the Academy's Headmaster include a section dedicated exclusively to the students each year. The main characteristics he wishes to highlight is their commitment to certain values that he considers essential for the pedagogical climate of the institution. These values are reflected in the concept of Hellenic-Christian ideals, which the Academy strives to instill in its students, as mentioned in the 1972-1973 report. These ideals, as shown by a careful reading of the seven available reports, are as follows: faith in Greek Christian ideals, healthy national feelings, national spirit, the homeland and its symbols, the virtues of the Greek and Christian educator, Greek and Christian behavior, national enlightenment, moral behavior, awareness of duty, love, discipline, and respect for teaching staff.

Several reports make specific references to the reasons why the above are instilled in students. The main reason given is the respect, trust, discipline, and order inspired by the dictatorial regime. The second main reason cited is the Academy's extracurricular activities, as well as the content of the teachings. These reasons provide a deeper understanding of these documents in relation to the methodology followed in this article. The aforementioned values require the acceptance and adoption of specific emotional patterns on the part of the students.

As recorded in the 1970-1971 report, two main emotions are considered to be crucial. The first is the responsibility that students must feel in order to fulfill their role in accordance with the above values and thus set an example for the entire city of Heraklion. It is characteristic that there is a reference to the fact that students are fully aware of the role they are called upon to play in society. The second is morality, which, according to the reports, goes together with spirituality. The development of the spirit through lessons and extracurricular activities aims at the adoption of moral standards that are consistent with the principles and values mentioned above. In the report of 1971-1972, moral and religious education, which presupposes the acceptance of specific emotional characteristics, is summarized in the concept of the students' spiritualization. The term is indicative of both the urgency of the whole process and the emotional charge it entails. Finally, the same report also mentions the main emotion that expresses and justifies this whole emotional framework of responsibility and morality. This emotion is love. Students must love not their science, but their future task. The last word is very deliberately chosen and manages to link a primary emotion, such as love, with the concept of responsibility.

The operational reports also include a section describing the teaching staff. For the most part, the courses and teaching hours per lecturer are recorded. However, there are also some sections, usually at the end of the reports, which provide an overall assessment of the teaching staff's attitude. The basic descriptive elements that are recorded relate, to the emotions they are responsible to experience in order to perform their work properly. The dominant references identified relate to love, responsibility, enthusiasm, and morality.

5. Conclusions

This article has attempted to present an alternative way of reading and interpreting evidence in the field of the history of education. The purpose of the presentation of the results above was to highlight the power relations within the PAH during the period of the April dictatorship (1967-1974).

The analysis of the archive in terms of emotion shows that the Headmaster of PAH describes an institution of pedagogical training that exercises a suppressed form of authoritarianism. The concept of suppression is crucial to our interpretation. The operational reports deliberately do not record direct practices of exercising forms of authority within the Academy, which appears to operate in a fully democratic framework based on the director's statements. However, relevant research in the PAH archives over the same period has previously highlighted aspects of indirect compliance by students with the ideological characteristics of the dictatorial regime, which constitutes a form of violent exercise of intellectual power over students (Kounalakis, 2025b).

Based on the same rationale, this study reveals the deeper purpose of the pedagogical training provided, which concerns the indirect but violent transfer of the ideological characteristics of the dictatorial regime to students. The methodology of emotionality helps us understand how this is achieved, based on two aspects. In the teaching and in the extracurricular activities. It is worth noting that in both cases students are called upon to adopt emotional models in order to more easily embrace the teaching role that is being promoted. These models are based on the concepts of responsibility and morality, which are linked to emotional states, because they are conditions that encourage students to take action rather than remain inactive.

This emotionalization of two concepts that do not constitute emotions is deliberate and relies on two elements. The first is the connection between scientific pedagogical knowledge and the responsibility to comply with the ideological characteristics of ultra-conservatism. The second is the development of a culture of moral community leader. More specifically, students are involved in extracurricular activities that show the local community that future teachers preserve the characteristics of national-religious education and are the guardians of morality. In this way, they internalize the desired teaching ideal more effectively than through simple theoretical training. The reason is that they are involved in the role they are called upon to play. The second issue concerns teaching practice exercises. From the limited description provided by the evidence, it appears that a supervisory model is being promoted, the effectiveness of which is based on the fear it instills in students rather than on the pedagogical freedom it should provide.

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