



Despoina Valassi

University of Crete, Greece

ELITE PRIVATE SECONDARY EDUCATION IN GREECE: CLASS STRATEGIES AND EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGES

ABSTRACT

Too little attention has been paid to the school institutions intended to educate and socialize the children of the upper classes. Greece has a significant history of private educational institutions. Yet their history and role within the educational system and society has been consistently neglected. The study of elite private education and its relationship with the social reproduction of the upper and middle classes in Greece has been even more neglected. Through a study of elite private secondary schools, following the theoretical model of Pierre Bourdieu, we explored the relationship that the middle and upper social strata of Greek society maintain with specific private schools. In order to determine the above, we conducted a quantitative field survey at 13 well-known private schools in Athens, using a questionnaire. In these schools we find considerable over-representation of the social categories that are placed at the summit of the social hierarchy. A basic argument of our study was that different sections of the middle and upper classes develop different educational strategies to ensure their social reproduction and to increase their privileges. These different strategies adopted by traditional and more recently emerging social classes are reflected in the differences among the elite private schools as a “field” and they distinguished the very top private schools from the less prestigious one. Also, we have found that sections of the Greek upper and middle class provide their offspring, through certain schools and activities, with an international capital which is a necessary condition for their future participation in international educational and professional markets. The study’s central research methodology included geometrical data analysis such as correspondence analysis.

Key words:

education, elite schools, private schools, social reproduction, class strategies, Pierre Bourdieu, field, international capital, correspondence analysis

1. Introduction

In contrast with the education systems of other countries, like the USA and the UK, where the provision of education is more pluralistic in nature (school choice, voucher, mixed private – public school systems), the Greek education market might be described as more traditional. The education market in Greece is structured along two main axes: the public and private sectors. The choice between the two systems of education seems to be related to the differences between the social classes and their strategies of social reproduction.

Greece has a significant history of private educational institutions. Yet their history and role within the Greek educational system and society has been consistently neglected. In comparison with the academic traditions of other European and Western countries the study of elite private education has been even more neglected, as has that of its relationship with the social reproduction of the upper and middle classes in Greece.

1.1. Elite private secondary education: “Learning privilege”

Elite private education has been studied by many researchers. Although it only represents a small part of the educational system as a whole, its importance – both for young people and for society – is out of all proportion to its size. Sociological studies of the 60's, 70's and 80's, i.e. a period of “democratization” of educational systems, of “equal opportunities” and of “faith” in the possibilities of social mobility for a large part of the population of western societies, highlighted the social role and importance of elite private schools: namely, that they allowed particular social classes, at the top of the social hierarchy, to provide their children with a privileged and selective educational environment.

According to Cookson & Persell¹ the study of elite private schools offers the opportunity to understand the “relationship between elite education and social

¹ P.W. Cookson, H.C. Persell, *English and American Residential Schools: A Comparative Study of*

structure [...] and the role school processes play in cultural reproduction”². The role of elite secondary schools is central to the reproduction of the upper classes as they prepare their students to establish friendships and social networks leading to occupational earnings and for socially desirable colleges and universities and inaugurate them into high status groups. For American society, as well stated by Weinberg³, these schools are socially significant because they play “a key role in socializing members of certain strategic elites so that the origins of adult primary group formation may be found in the peer groups which form in these schools. There may exist institutional mechanisms, closely connected to the schools, which provide a formal structure, such as alumni associations”⁴.

Even if these schools attract both old money and new money, especially “the gifted children of the nouveau riche”⁵ they vary in line with their “enrolment pool” which is what makes certain schools particularly selective. In other words, some are more elitist than others. Thus private schools contribute to highlighting differences among members of the upper class⁶. In England, for decades, the Public Schools constitute a certain pool of leadership trainees. But by opening their doors to members of the rising middle class their pool was expanded⁷.

According to Porter⁸, the alumni of these schools are over-represented in the economic elite. But even if an alumnus does not succeed in becoming rich, he maintains all those distinctive features – the manners, the voice, the appearance, the values, and the contacts. The elite private schools not only offer a good-quality education; they also socialize their students in the culture of the upper classes, while integrating them into networks of contacts and friendly relations⁹. In the view of Lewis & Wanner, regarding the contribution of elite private schools to the later success of their alumni, it appears that private school graduates do not actu-

the Reproduction of Social Elite, “Comparative and International Education Society” 1985, No. 3, Vol. 29, pp. 283–298.

² Ibidem, p. 283.

³ I. Weinberg, *Some Methodological and Field Problems of Social Research in Elite Secondary Schools*, “Sociology of Education” 1968, No. 2 (Spring), Vol. 41, pp. 141–155.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 142.

⁵ J. Maxwell, M. Maxwell, *The Reproduction of Class in Canada’s Elite Independent Schools*, “British Journal of Sociology of Education” 1995, No. 2, Vol. 16, p. 316.

⁶ D. Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen. The Making of a National Upper Class*, New Jersey–New Brunswick 2002.

⁷ R. Wilkinson, *Gentlemanly Power. British Leadership and the Public School Tradition: A Comparative Study in the Making of Rulers*, New York 1964.

⁸ J. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic. An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, Toronto 1965.

⁹ L. Lewis, R. Wanner, *Private Schooling and the Status Attainment Process*, “Sociology of Education” 1979, Vol. 52 (April), pp. 99–112.

ally achieve more than their counterparts in state schools from the same social backgrounds. It does appear, however, that private schools offer the privilege of a unique socializing experience and social contacts which give their alumni an advantage in the process of achieving status.

Another parameter in the study of elite private schools is that pertaining to their study as “total institutions”. In the past, boarding schools had more of the characteristics of a total institution (prisons, monasteries, mental asylums), as described by Goffman¹⁰. Nowadays the total character of the elite schools is achieved through promotion of extracurricular activities like sport, clubs, student responsibilities, etc.¹¹

Recent sociological studies of elite private schools point out a particular conversion of the social reproduction strategies of socially privileged families: the investment in international symbolic resources. Thus, in the ‘90s, the impact of globalization on education caught the attention of researchers highlighting a new kind of internationalized forms of education in many non-English-speaking countries – France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Greece, Denmark. In a study of a private school that recruits its students among the Athenian bourgeoisie, Panayotopoulos¹² outlines the actions taken by the establishment in order to prepare their students for educational paths and career ambitions in the European and international market. That means more hours of teaching of foreign languages, visits to European and American institutions and involving students in exchange programs. These strategies aspire to constitute a social capital and an international capital, conditions required of discrimination and distinction in today’s societies. Wagner¹³, studying a group of international schools in Paris dedicated to the children of upper echelon workers and foreign executives, claims that even if the particular families have profit expectations and despite the increase in exchanges on the international level (economic, cultural, symbolic), educational strategies have retained the national area as a framework of reference. Weenink¹⁴, in a study that explored the relationship between the upper and middle class and the secondary education in Netherlands, refers to a “new cosmopolitan form of power” unlike the “established form of power”, conditions that may lead families to make different

¹⁰ E. Goffman, *Asylums*, New York 1961.

¹¹ J. Maxwell, M. Maxwell, *The Reproduction...*, op.cit., pp. 309–326.

¹² N. Panayotopoulos, *Une école pour les citoyens grecs du monde: les enjeux nationaux de l'international*, “Regards Sociologiques” 2000, Vol. 19, pp. 29–55.

¹³ A.C. Wagner, *Les nouvelles elites de la mondialisation. Une dorée en France*, Paris 1998.

¹⁴ D. Weenink, *Cosmopolitan and Established Resources of Power in the Education Arena*, “International Sociology” 2007, No. 4, Vol. 22, pp. 492–516.

educational choices for their offspring. These two types of education in Dutch secondary education represent a social transformation in the process of social reproduction between an upwardly cosmopolitan group and an established group in the Dutch upper middle class. Although advocates of this views recognize that cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism contribute to global understanding, they believe that we have not arrived, so far at least, at a homogeneous global culture transcending national frontiers. In fact, proponents of this view believe that international educational strategies are relocated within the nation states to help the social agents with their aspirations for higher status in their own society.

1.2. Studying elite private schools in the Greek educational market

For the sociological community, the scientific field of private education in Greece – even more so the field of elite private education – is terra incognita and with a striking absence of coherent studies (historical, sociological, pedagogical). Also, for decades, there was a widespread view that, unlike other countries, Greece did not have such an educational field. As Katsillis & Rubinson¹⁵ note, “private secondary schools in Greece have traditionally played a role quite different from such schools in the United States. Not only are they few in number but they have not generally been of higher quality than public schools. Unlike the United States, there is no set of elite secondary schools which cater to families of a high social class background”¹⁶.

It appears, however, that within the Greek private secondary education sector there is a social space of educational institutions through which the middle and upper classes of Greek society offer their children educational and social privileges (such as, access to high status universities and to prosperous and influential careers), ensuring their own social reproduction and the legitimization of their privileges. As Bourdieu¹⁷ points out the educational system, by consecrating the cultural heritage it transmits, contributes to the misrecognition of its social reproduction.

In our study, the theoretical approach is based on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the role of the educational system in relation to the reproduction of educational

¹⁵ J. Katsillis, R. Rubinson, *Cultural Capital, Student Achievement, and Educational Reproduction: The Case of Greece*, “American Sociological Review” 1990, No. 2 (April), Vol. 55, pp. 270–279.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 272.

¹⁷ P. Bourdieu, L. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago 1992.

and social inequality, as well as the impact of economic and cultural capital on family strategies and educational trajectories. The most significant notions, like field, capital, strategies, have all been taken from Bourdieu's theoretical toolbox. We shall attempt to show that, first, the vast majority of the students at the schools we studied come from the middle and upper classes of Greek society. Secondly, that these schools constitute a discrete "social space", since it is possible to describe the objective relations maintained by the institutions or persons among themselves. The study of objective positions, in terms of the social field, will help to highlight the differences in the educational strategies of the various strata of the middle and upper classes. These differentiations separate the very top private schools from the less prestigious private schools. Finally, we shall attempt to show that both the cultural identity of the schools and the activities in which their students are engaged give them an "international orientation". First of all, in the sense that cosmopolitanism is related with the culture of the upper social classes and the schools and families offer the necessary skills for their children to be able to study and pursue careers abroad. However, the degree to which international capital can be acquired is dependent on the social position of the family.

In order to determine the above, we conducted a quantitative field survey at 13 well-known private schools in Athens, using a questionnaire. The study's central research methodology, apart from descriptive statistics and chi-square tests, included geometrical data analysis such as correspondence analysis. The factor analytical technique of correspondence analysis associates with Bourdieu's theoretical concerns and especially with the notion of field. As Swartz¹⁸ points out "both the concept of field and correspondence analysis permit Bourdieu to situate individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions in terms of multiple axes of differentiation"¹⁹.

2. Method

The study is divided into two main parts: the first part, which we refer to as pre-research, and the second part, which we describe as the "main research". The pre-research stage was intended, by collecting primary and secondary data, historical sources and studies, to describe as fully as possible the private education sector in

¹⁸ D. Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, Chicago 1997.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 129.

Greece. A further objective was to assist in determining the sample of schools in which the main research would subsequently be conducted. The main field research (quantitative research) involved the completion of questionnaires by students in the final class of the upper secondary education (Unified Lyceum) at a sample of private schools in Athens.

2.1. Sampling

In selecting the research sample we have not followed the traditional sampling methodologies but opted instead for “purposive” sampling. The specific method of selection of the field research sample is the main methodological step in the process of our research. The pre-research stage had shown that a sample of schools selected at random, could not be a “reliable” sample. The fact is that there are schools which “define” the social space of elite private education in Greece. Bourdieu²⁰ points out that “when it is a matter of grasping the structure of a field [...] the ordinary procedures of random sampling are completely inadequate, since, through the very operation of random choice, there is every possibility that certain crucial elements in the objective structure will be missed, and the aim is to produce an accurate picture of it, that is, a structurally homologous representation”²¹.

In order to obtain a purposive sampling, we drew up a list of criteria on the basis of which 18 schools were selected in Athens, all of them sharing certain common characteristics. Some of these criteria were: year in which school was founded; systematic production of printed material on the school; religious or ideological tradition of school (e.g. missionary schools); extra-curricular activities (sport, cultural); buildings and facilities; existence of alumni societies; existence of other societies (cultural, scholarships, etc.); provision of international educational programmes (GCE, International Baccalaureate); fees; student participation in educational and sports programmes organized with other private schools (forensics, MUN, sports championships); ceremonial occasions; links with foreign states, and so on. We excluded from the study from the outset any school or part thereof in which Greek students could not enrol (other than in exceptional circumstances).

²⁰ P. Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, Cambridge 1997.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 234.

The main field research took place during the school years 2006–2007. One of the main problems – identified by many researchers²² – was that of access to the schools. Permission and approval of the research by the competent authorities (Ministry of Education and Pedagogical Institute) was not in itself enough. Contact with the schools involved regular communication with their administrations and, in some cases, with the association of parents and guardians. Five schools declined to take part in the survey. The Athenian schools which finally allowed us access were as follows: Athens College (Hellenic American Educational Foundation), Psychico College (Hellenic American Educational Foundation), Pierce College, Moraitis School, Geitonas School, Ziridis School, I.M. Panagiotopoulos School, St. Paul, Jeanne D’Arc, Leonteios (Patissia), Leonteios (N.Smyrni), Francohellenique (Lycée Francohellenique – LFH), Germaniki Scholi (Deutschen Schule Athen – D.S.A.).

2.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 75 questions and more than 250 variables, including such sections as: social and demographic data, information on the factors leading to the choice of the particular school, study habits (e.g. time spent on homework, attendance at extra coaching schools), leisure activities and interests, participation in extra-curricular activities, educational and professional aspirations, contacts with foreign countries. In all, 1,003 questionnaires were collected, representing 99% of the students of the schools sample in Athens.

3. Results

Then, we shall attempt to show that first, the majority of the students at the schools we studied come from the middle and upper classes of Greek society. Second, the study of objective positions, according to the notion of “field”, highlights the differences in the educational strategies of the various strata of the middle and upper classes and, as a consequence, separates the very top private schools from the less prestigious private schools. Finally, we shall attempt to show that the families of the higher social strata choose schools and extra-curricular activities for their

²² I. Weinberg, *Some Methodological...*, op.cit.; P. Bourdieu, *The State Nobility...*, op.cit.

children in order to provide them with international capital, as the necessary qualification to be able to study and pursue careers abroad.

3.1. Socio-economic status of the families

As we consider that the majority of the students of our study derive from the upper strata of the Greek society, we shall attempt to describe their Socio-Economic Status²³ studying father's occupational background²⁴, residential area of the family and father's educational background²⁵. The combination of these variables is the key indicator of the social position of the individuals. In the end, we shall compare

²³ The study did not include the collection of data regarding the economic capital of the families. But previous examinations of the income of families sending children to public or private schools has demonstrated a clear link between level of income and enrolment in private schooling, even if the decisive factor would appear to be the position of the family in the social space, which determines the way in which income is spent and is linked with both profession and level of education (D. Valassi, *Choosing a Private School in the Greek Education Market: A Multidimensional Procedure*, <http://www.unige.ch/fapse/ggape/programme/progsamedi14/Valassi2.pdf>, 2009 [access: 10.12.2012]).

²⁴ Without going into more detail than we have space for here, the "occupation" as defining element in the individual's position in terms of social stratification has been used *ad nauseam*, at least on the empirical level, in those studies related to social structure and mobility. There has been particularly keen academic debate on the extent to which occupation and occupational categories relate to social classes. In brief, for Marx and the neo-Marxists occupational categories do not produce social classes. Occupations are understood more as positions related to technical relations of production, while classes are defined by the social relations of production. Moreover, while his position differs significantly from that of the Marxists on social class, Weber too believes that social classes are more than just occupational categories. Goldthorp, despite his systematic use of occupation and position within a occupation, with the emphasis on social status, came to believe at a later stage in his research that the occupational categories he had defined and their equivalence with social classes should be seen as a research tool. However, the fact is that the usefulness of occupation is widely acknowledged today as a way of recognizing lifestyle in contemporary societies – and for this reason its use is now common practice. Within this context, occupation was chosen as a variable showing the social position of the individual in society, on the grounds that it provides information about income and consumer patterns, level of education and skills, lifestyle, values, attitudes and political behaviour – in other words the identify of the individual and his prestige and status in the broader social space (D. Valassi, op.cit.).

²⁵ The educational qualifications, and broadly the "credentials", constitute, according to Bourdieu (P. Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, [in:] J.G. Richardson, *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York 1986), the *institutionalized forms of cultural capital*, playing a crucial role to educational choices and strategies. This is a very important element for the study of private education systems as the established standpoint is that the choice of private school depends largely on the economic capital of the families. This concentration on the economic dimension of school choice and educational inequality is particularly limiting, because it overlooks a range of social factors, such as the issue of cultural capital, which may contribute significantly to a family's framing of its educational strategies.

these figures with those of the Greek social structure (Census 2001) in order to determine the position of these families in the social hierarchy.

3.1.1. Father's Occupational Background

The first factor which appears to be related to the choice of one of the private schools of our sample is the parents' occupation. From the data yielded in respect of father's occupation (Table 1a), 43% fell within the socio-professional category "Legislators, senior officials and managers" and 41% within the socio-professional category "Professionals". As one would expect, the percentages of more junior employees and workers (skilled and/or unskilled) are dramatically lower. So, 84% of the fathers fall within these two occupational categories.

Table 1a. Father's Occupational Background

Socio-professional categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Armed forces	12	1	1
Legislators, senior officials and managers	425	42	43
Professionals	401	40	41
Technicians and associate professionals	67	6	7
Clerks	37	4	4
Service workers, shop market sales workers	2	0	0
Skilled workers	26	3	3
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	5	1	1
Unskilled workers	1	0	0
Total	976	98	100
Missing System	27	3	
Total	1003	100	

These socio-professional categories comprehend such occupations as businessmen (industrialists and owners of big trading businesses), politicians, diplomats, small businessmen, senior executives in the private and public sectors, academics, artists, teachers, freelance professionals (lawyers, doctors, economists, engineers), judges – in other words “the occupations which require knowledge and qualifications – which are some of the most important middle class assets”²⁶.

If we compare the stratification of occupational categories of the schools in our study with that characteristic of the country as a whole (in the economically active population) (Table 1), according to the figures from the 2001 census, we see that:

²⁶ K. Macdonald, *The Sociology of the Professions*, London 1995.

across the country these two socio-occupational categories account for just 21% of the population. On the other hand, if we focus solely on the area of the capital of Greece (Athens), then the two categories account for 24% of the city population.

Table 1. Social structure of the schools (according to socio-professionals categories)

Socio-professional categories	Our study (%)	Country (%) *	Athens (%)*
Legislators, senior officials and managers	43	10	11
Professionals	41	11	13
Total	84	21	24

* Census 2001 (Economically Active Population).

3.1.2. Residential Areas of the families of the students

The study of the residential areas of the families of our students it provides indirect evidence of their economic and social status. Using Residential Area Typology²⁷, we establish that 19% of the families of the students live in districts where the “upper middle class” tends to concentrate, 32% live in districts which might be described as “traditional middle class”, and 8% live in “new middle class suburbs” (Table 2). Thus a total of 58.9% of the families live in districts characterised as middle or upper class areas.

It is significant that a high proportion (22%) of students live in districts described as “lower middle class areas”. A closer analysis of this figure has shown that the districts in question are mainly areas of Piraeus where there has been substantial development in the section of construction (small businesses) and trade. Also, 3 of the 13 schools in our sample are located in neighbourhoods in Piraeus).

Table 2. Residential Areas of the Families of the Students

Residential Area Typology	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Upper middle class suburbs	189	19	20
Traditional middle class suburbs	308	31	32
New middle class suburbs	79	8	8
Lower middle class areas	219	22	22
Working class and lower middle class areas	142	14	15
Traditional working class areas	33	3	3

²⁷ Th. Maloutas, *Middle Class Education Strategies and Residential Segregation in Athens*, “Journal of Education Policy” 2007, No. 22, pp. 49–68.

Table 2. cd

Residential Area Typology	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
New working class	7	0	
Total	977	97	100.0
Missing System	26	3	
Total	1003	100	

* The table illustrates the composition of the different social types of residential areas with reference to the percentage of managerial and professional jobs and skilled and unskilled manual jobs outside agriculture in each type²⁸.

3.1.3. Father's Educational Background

Examination of the educational level (Table 3) of the father of our students highlights the very high level of education they have enjoyed. In the case of the fathers 45% have a university degree (bachelor), 16% a master degree and 14% a doctorate. In other words 75% of the fathers have some sort of university degree, and 30% have a postgraduate qualification.

Table 3. Father's Educational Background

Education Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Doctorate Degrees	138	14	14
Master Degrees	161	16	16
Higher Education Degrees	448	44	45
Technological Institutes	66	7	7
Secondary Education	143	15	14
Compulsory Education	11	1	1
Elementary Education	15	2	2
Less than Elementary Education	0	0	0
Other	4	0	0
Total	991	99	100.0
Missing System	12	1	
Total	1003	100.0	

Comparing (Table 2) the structure of the education levels of the schools in our study with that characteristic of the country as a whole (in the economically active population), we see that: across the country the graduates of higher education

²⁸ Th. Maloutas, *Middle Class Education...*, op.cit.

consist the 14% of the population and in the area of Athens account the 19% of the city population.

Table 4. Social structure of the schools (according to education level)

Education Level	Our study	Country *	Athens *
Higher Education Degree (Bachelors)	45%	12%	16%
Postgraduate Degree (Masters & Phds)	30%	2%	3%
Total	75%	14%	19%

* Census 2001 (Economically Active Population).

The data show that the percentage of fathers with higher education is particularly high. It is definitely higher than the percentage of graduates of higher education for the population as a whole and for Athens as the nation's capital.

Therefore, the schools of our study have a higher representation of certain social categories than is found in the economically active population. The high level of education of the families choosing these schools for their offspring is directly linked with their position in the professional world. In other words we are referring to families which are at the top of both educational and professional hierarchies and which succeed in reproducing their social privileges through these institutions of private education.

3.2. The “social space” of the elite private secondary education in Greece

The foregoing analysis has shown that the majority of students in the schools in our sample come from the upper social strata of Greek society. We shall now attempt to show that the position of these schools inside the educational social space of Greece is determined by the position in the social structure of the students' families. This will allow us to show that the objective positions in the social world occupied by the families and the schools are related in such a way as to form a “social space”, as defined in the theory of Pierre Bourdieu. The relations of closeness or distance between the positions that the social subjects and agencies occupy in the social space will highlight the similarities or differences among the schools, enabling us to distinguish the very top private schools from the less prestigious private schools and also to distinguish the different groups within the upper and middle social strata.

Bourdieu's thesis is that social space – the structure of classes and class distinctions created by differences in education, employment, wealth, age, sex, and paren-

tal occupation, among others – shapes and is itself constituted in part by cultural space – the structure of preferences in music, painting, and the arts²⁹. Correspondence Analysis is the proper statistical method for the construction of the social space of the schools of our research. In order to construct the social space which may present relatively the way in which the occupation and educational level of the father is related to the school, we have tried to convert the data (Tables 1 & 3) into a plot of points in two dimensions. The word relatively is very important in describing the association of a pair of row – column categories. These categories are more strongly associated if they are close together than a pair of categories that are further apart³⁰.

In Figure 1 we see that points defining the farthest distances in the geometrical space we have constructed are, first, in respect of the father's occupation, in the upper left of the table, university professors, and in the upper right of the table, skilled workers. Second, in respect of the father's educational level, in the upper left we find holders of PhD's, and in the upper right of the table primary school graduates.

Axis 1 separates the social subjects on the basis of the total volume of capital (social and cultural) they possess. Thus in the upper left we find those with a large quantity of capital, and on the right those with a small quantity of capital. In other words, the axis separates the upper from the middle social strata. Likewise, the placing of a school in the left or right hand side of the table defines its position in relation to the social position of its "clients". Axis 2 defines the differences between various groups within the same social classes.

Of particular interest is the upper left quadrant where we find university teachers, senior managers in the public and private sector, businessmen (industrialists, shipowners and wealthy merchants) and artists, as well as all those with a high level of education (postgraduate, PhD). These are professional categories which enjoy a very high position in the social structure, both socially and culturally. The categories are not distributed equally among the schools. On the contrary, it appears from the proximity of the points that they are to be encountered at specific schools: Moraitis School, Athens College (HAEF), Psychiko Colleges (HAEF) and Panayiotopoulos School. In fact, the economic elite (businessmen) seems to prefer Athens or Psychiko Colleges, while the cultural elite (academics) tend to opt for Moraitis School.

²⁹ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Cambridge 1987.

³⁰ D.J. Bartholomew, F. Steel, Ir. Moustaki, J.I. Calbraith, *The Analysis and Interpretation of Multivariate Data for Social Scientists*, New York 2002.

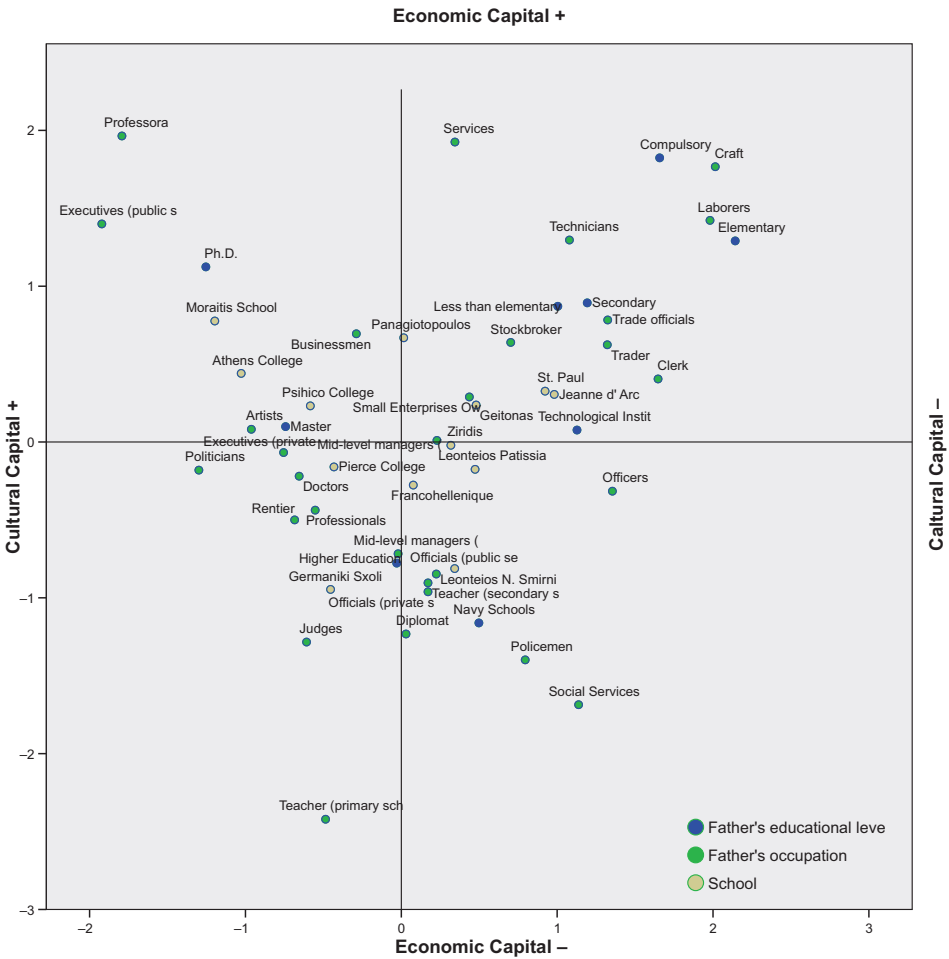


Figure 1. The social space of elite private secondary education in Greece

In the lower left quadrant we find freelance professionals (engineers, lawyers, doctors, and economists), middle-ranking managers in the public or private sector, judges or diplomats. These are university graduates who tend to prefer the German School and Pierce College.

It is in these two quadrants of the left-hand side of the table that we find the professional categories with the highest rank in the social structure. These upper social strata choose specific schools for their children (Moraitis School, Athens College, Psychiko Colleges, Panayiotopoulos School, German School and Pierce

College) which are at the top of the hierarchy of private secondary schools. However, the preceding analysis showed differentiations within the above social strata. Industrialists, Shipowners and Wealthy Merchants, Executives & CEOs, University Professors and Artists make different choices of school than Professionals (engineers, lawyers, doctors, economists), Middle-ranking Managers, Judges and Diplomats, which create a discrete school space representing the “elite des elite” of the private secondary schools.

At the other extreme, in the right-hand quadrants we find the less selective schools. Here the parents have been to technical college or only completed secondary education; they work as shopkeepers, own small factories or are employees in companies or public sector offices.

3.3. Elite private secondary education: cultural identities and international orientations

One of the basic assumptions of our research was that families and schools from the upper social strata engage their offspring/students in activities which will equip them with skills that will allow them in turn to meet the requirements of “international markets” (educational, professional, social). We shall now show that in the case of Greece, the inculcation of “cosmopolitanism” begins with the choice of school itself and continues with activities and practices that have an international orientation, reflecting the social position of the families. This means that the higher the position of the family or school in the social structure, the more numerous the international strategies and practices.

3.3.1. Cultural identities

One parameter of the study of private education in Greece that is often overlooked is that of the “cultural identity” of the private schools, particularly those catering for the middle and upper classes. Unfortunately we do not have the necessary time here to explore this theme in more depth.

In respect of the “cultural identity” of the elite private schools in our study, we may observe the following (Table 4): 70% of the schools are not originally Greek, despite their long history here in Greece. These are American, French or German schools, with either religious or secular origins. They lay great emphasis on foreign languages – those of their country of origin – and on the promotion of the culture of the country of origin, retaining links with that country.

Table 5. Cultural Identity of Schools

Schools	Cultural Identity	History	Percent (*)	Percent (**)
HAEF – Athens College	American	Secular schools with roots	24%	70%
HAEF – Psychiko College				
Pierce College		In the Protestant movement of American missionaries in the Minor Asia & Middle East		
St. Paul	French	French missionary schools Orders of the Roman Catholic Church	38%	
Jeanne D’Arc				
Leonteios (Patissia)				
Leonteios (N.Smyrni)				
Francohellenique (LFE)		School of the French State		
Germaniki Scholi (D.S.A.)	German	School of German State	8%	
Moraitis School	Greek	Greek owner (founder by French educator Charles Berzan)	30%	30%
Geitonas School		Greek owner & founder		
Ziridis School		Greek owner & founder		
I.M.Panagiotopoulos School		Greek owner & founder		
			100%	100%

(*) Percentage of schools with regard to their cultural identity based on country of origin and reference.

(**) Percentage of schools with regard to whether they are foreign or Greek cultural identity.

3.3.2. International orientations

In order to study the importance and degree of international orientation of schools and families in the upper social strata we focused on six parameters: the participation of students in extra-curricula activities such as the M.U.N. (Model of the United Nations), Forensics (debates in the English language), the preparation for studies abroad after graduation, visits to universities abroad, communication with contemporaries abroad and the existence of relatives living abroad.

Here too the data were processed using the method of Correspondence Analysis. We see in Figure 2 that almost all the international activities and practices are located in the upper left quadrant. An exception is the case of M.U.N., which is located in the lower left quadrant and very close to the Germaniki Scholi, which has a long tradition of organizing and participating in this activity. On the right-hand side of the table there is no international activity or practice. If we examine the data more closely we see that the professional categories in the upper left quadrant are: Diplomats, Businessmen, Executives & CEO, Politicians, University teach-

social structure and the reproduction of distinctions and inequalities. The school institutions intended to educate and socialize the children of the upper classes are a privileged object for the study of social reproduction, of the differences between the social classes and the differentiation within those classes. In fact, we might comfortably claim that the study of elite education offers a real sociological insight into the upper classes of a society.

The purpose of our research was to contribute to the debate on the relationship between educational systems and cultural reproduction. Through the study of elite private secondary schools, following the theoretical model of Pierre Bourdieu, we have explored the relationship that the middle and upper levels of Greek society maintain with specific private schools.

To summarize, we might make the following observations:

- The social composition of the schools we have studied is not representative of the social structure of the country. In these schools we find considerable over-representation of the social categories that are placed at the summit of the social hierarchy: businessmen, executives, academics, freelance professionals, artists, state functionaries, judges. At the same time, new middle classes are gradually entering the arena of the elite private schools: owners of small businesses, merchants, middle-ranking managers, teachers.
- A basic argument of our study was that different sections of the middle and upper classes develop different educational strategies to ensure their social reproduction and to increase their privileges. These different strategies adopted by traditional and more recently emerging social classes are reflected in the differences among the elite private schools as “social space”. The construction of the “social space” of the elite private schools, according to the notion of “field”, is an original way of approaching the subject of our research. On the whole studies of elite private secondary education, on the international level, have presented these schools en bloc, as if they were all much the same. We, however, have tried to show that within the space of elite private secondary education there are differences that distinguish the very top private schools from the less prestigious, differences that parallel those we see within the upper and middle social classes.
- Finally, we have shown that a significant section of the Greek upper and middle class opt for schools which have historical and cultural ties with some foreign country (US, France, Germany), or try to offer their children an environment – school and family – with an international orientation, a necessary condition for their future participation in international educational and professional markets.

5. Acknowledgements

Given that this paper derives from my doctoral thesis, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Prof. Nikos Panayotopoulos for his help and support.

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