

# Social Disabilities for Constructing and Establishing a Leader Identity: Group Prototypicality, Minorities, Social Stereotypes, and “Quasi-Organizational Capitalism” in Greek Primary Education

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## Abstract

This paper attempts to interpret the exclusion of minority specialty teachers from the administrative hierarchy of Greek public primary education, examining their obstacles and the intervening social, institutional, cultural, and systemic factors. Qualitative methodology was used in this research, as the researcher carried out 43 telephone semi-structured interviews from the whole country. The underrepresented subgroup, internalizing the specialty stereotypes, struggles to transform their vulnerable, susceptible, and controversial Professional, and Social Identities into powerful, positive, and influential Leader Identity, constantly hitting against a glass ceiling, thus feeling unable to confront the hegemonies formed with multiple criteria. Although there are several studies that separately explore the social status and the Professional Identity of marginalized specialty teachers, this is the first time they are considered as one social group, expressing their views about their exclusion from the administrative hierarchy. I debate the formation of the new term “quasi-organizational capitalism”, which resembles the classification of financial capitalism, from a symbolic aspect, refers to the existence of an irreversible organizational status quo, being structured in such a way as to serve the aims and interests of the privileged quasi-capitalists, reproduces their domination and impedes the administrative advancement of the deprived quasi-proletarians, even in public and non-profit organizations. Organizations and policy-makers should ensure social equality and organizational justice by focusing on strengthening the administrative role of minorities, and socially stigmatized subgroups having low Social Identity status, multiple barriers, and social disabili-

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ties for constructing and establishing a Leader Identity.

## Keywords

Headteachers, Leader Identity, Professional Identity, Specialty Teachers, Minorities, Quasi-Organizational Capitalism, Education Policy, Organizational Justice

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## 1. Introduction

Greek Primary Education, in contrast with Pluralistic Secondary Education, is a homogenous community, dominated by a large subcategory of primary teachers (78.25% in primary schools), whose sovereignty stems from course assignments. Primary teachers teach general and specialty lessons (second assignment) except for foreign languages, while minority specialty teachers (21.75% in primary schools) only teach special lessons (first assignment). Subsequently, institutional factors are binding, forming a restrictive framework, and reflecting an informal hierarchy based on specific criteria (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2017).

According to Heller and Willower's (1968) research in Pennsylvania's primary schools, specialty teachers (art, music, and physical education teachers) were not incorporated into the teachers' group due to their degraded working relationship and fragmentation. The researchers described the relationship between primary-regular teachers and specialty teachers as ambiguous and conflicting. Other researches highlight pedagogical issues and low Professional Identity status of marginalized specialty teachers (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2017) and specifically teachers of physical education (Hendry, 1975; Lux, 2010; Lux & McCullick, 2011; Paechter, 1996; Whipp et al., 2007), music (Bresler, 1994; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008), design and technology (Paechter, 1996) and art teachers (Chapman, 2005), stressing that these courses should be taught by specialists and not by general teachers (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008), as according to the dominant perception, "implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) introduced to students in schools each day" (Lux, 2010: p. 40), special courses are not core subjects (Chapman, 2005: p. 133).

The prestige hierarchy among professionals, who belong to the same social category, is a phenomenon that concerns other professional environments, such as the field of physicians (e.g. Album & Westin, 2008; Creed et al., 2010; Davis & Allison, 2013; Glazer & Ruiz-Wibbelsmann, 2011; Johannessen, 2014; Matteson & Smith, 1977; Norredam & Album, 2007). Gender, specialty, seniority, hierarchical role, working relationship, and salary are the criteria of the social hierarchy formed in the Greek context. In this respect, old male primary teachers are the dominant and the female teachers, new primary teachers, and specialty teachers are the dominated (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2017).

Leader Identity is a complex social construction (Day & Harrison, 2007: p. 363;

Odom et al., 2012: p. 54) and, therefore, this paper makes use of Social Identity Theory, Implicit Leadership Theories and DeRue and Ashford's (2010) model to interpret headteachers' profiles. Moreover, I present the headship selection framework because the Greek educational system is high-centralized, and the education policy-makers essentially mediate in the evaluation processes.

This paper empirically and theoretically contributes to the field, exploring minority issues, and highlighting the multiple obstacles of underrepresented subgroups. Although the debate about the social class of teachers is particularly extensive, for the first time, I examine the Social and Leader Identities of teachers, attempting to approach Educational Management and Leadership in terms of Identity, Sociology, and Social Psychology. Although there are several studies that separately explore the social status and the Professional Identity of marginalized specialty teachers (for example, they examined only music teachers or physical education teachers), analyzing and investigating mainly pedagogical aspects and not administrative issues, this is the first time that specialty teachers are considered as one social group, expressing their views on their position in the hierarchy of educational administration.

The underrepresentation of minority specialty teachers is a significant issue because it is compelling to explore the formulated hierarchies in an organizational context where there are not racial and ethnic discriminations but mainly social and professional regarding the specialty of teachers. The use of a qualitative approach is also a contribution because quantitative studies dominate the education, management and leadership field. Providing that Greek Primary Education is a coherent community, having dominant and dominated subgroups reflected in the administrative hierarchy, it is compelling to examine the intervening gender, social, institutional, cultural, and systemic factors. The research questions that arise are:

- 1) Why are minority specialty teachers underrepresented in managerial positions? What are their obstacles?
- 2) Did the headship selection through voting reinforce the underrepresentation of minority specialty teachers?
- 3) How do social, cultural, institutional, systemic, and political factors reproduce social inequality within organizations?

After discussing the findings of the research results, in the section of the general discussion, I go beyond the education field, debating the formation of the term quasi-organizational capitalism, thus attempting to introduce a new term related to organizational behavior and established hierarchies in organizations. In particular, using the research results and some known theories, I adapt them to the field of organizations in order to explain the existing social stratification, which is reflected in the administrative hierarchies. The social stratification of people and social groups is a global and intertemporal phenomenon, which exists in India, with castes constituting a rigid, unequal and asymmetrical social system, as the Brahmins have a Positive Identity, due to the existing social struc-

ture, regardless of their individual characteristics, while the Pariahs, a Negative, without even being given the possibility to reconstruct it and transform it into Positive (Giddens, 2009). Moreover, the social asymmetries are referred to Marx's (2013) class theory, Weber's theory about social status and class (Hughes & Kroehler, 2014) and Bourdieu's (2000, 2005, 2006, 2016) field theory, according to which the position of the individual in a field is determined by the dynamics, value and importance of his multiple capitals.

The new symbolic term, "quasi-organizational capitalism", which this paper introduces, having no financial content but is deeply social, cultural, institutional, systemic, and political, describes the existence of the privileged quasi-capitalists and deprived quasi-proletarians, thus attempting to adapt financial capitalism in the organizational context. These problematic parameters and correlations constitute a non-negotiable establishment within organizations that is almost impossible to overthrow if policy-makers do not take such measures to restore social justice and equality.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. The Headship Selection in the Greek Educational System

The prerequisites, formal qualifications and evaluation tools of the headship selection are not intertemporal but different following government policies (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2018: p. 38) in the context, which is significant (Pashiaridis et al., 2018), of the high-centralized Greek educational system (Koutouzis, 2012). We can categorize the selection criteria into three main axes: 1) years of service and administrative experience, 2) formal scientific qualifications, and 3) qualitative assessment of the candidate (Spyriadou, 2018).

Seniority emerges as a great advantage and significant asset because candidates should have at least 10 - 12 years of service to claim a position of managerial responsibility. Seniority is not only a requirement for claiming a managerial position but also a highly counted qualification, which can numerically exceed high scientific qualifications, such as a Ph.D. degree (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2017a). Specialty teachers lack seniority, as they were integrated into primary education in 1993, while the arithmetic superiority of primary teachers ensures high rates for them in all managerial positions (Spyriadou, 2018).

Regarding formal qualifications, there were some educational programs that only primary teachers had the opportunity to attend. However, they are taken into consideration in the headship selections, thus constructing a non-negotiable status quo of social inequality. Specialty teachers lack seniority, formal qualifications, and administrative experience due to the intervening institutional factors, which, however, are essential parameters for occupying a managerial position (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2017b).

Concerning the third axis of selection criteria, the interview is the intertemporal tool for qualitative evaluation of candidates, which has been established in the consciousness of teachers as a corrupt and volatile process, favoring those

who have an active Partisan Identity (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2018: p. 53). Specialty teachers are underrepresented in trade union and teachers' associations, thus not having an active Partisan Identity, which is a determinant factor (Dobbins & Christ, 2019) regarding the pursuing of a managerial position (Spyriadou, 2018). Social capital tends to be more important than the institutionalized cultural capital (formal qualifications), because social networks affect in obvious or latent ways the selection processes, such as by ensuring the approval of the social framework that is necessary for granting Leader Identity (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2017a).

However, the qualitative evaluation method for candidate headteachers changed (Law 4327/2015), as the interview (Law 3848/2010) was replaced by an "anonymous voting" of the teachers' association, where the candidate must accrue 20% of the valid votes in order not to be excluded. The selection of Primary Education directors included a mixed method as primary school headteachers, assistant headteachers, and kindergarten directors voted, while regional selection councils evaluated candidates through interviews. Nevertheless, this change did not affect the profile of the candidate and positioned headteachers, which continued to reflect primary teachers with many years of service (Spyriadou, 2018).

It should be noted that the interview returned as a qualitative evaluation method (Law 4473/2017), but this paper examines the selection through anonymous voting, as for the only time, practice of decentralized educational systems was implemented in the Greek high-centralized system, thus increasing the asymmetries, stereotypes and the underrepresentation of minority specialty teachers (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2021).

The next section refers to the handicaps of specialty teachers by making use of Social Identity Theory, Implicit Leadership Theories and DeRue and Ashford (2010) model in order to interpret their exclusion from administrative hierarchy. In particular, according to population proportions one-fifth of primary teachers are specialty teachers, but this percentage is not reflected in the administrative hierarchy due to their vulnerable, susceptible, and controversial Professional, and Social Identities, but also the legislation, as mentioned above, which favors the social group of primary teachers (Spyriadou, 2018).

## 2.2. The Underrepresentation of Minority Specialty Teachers in Managerial Positions

According to Social Identity Theory, when a member of a social category presents many differences with members of other categories and a few with members of his/her category is considered to be prototypical (Turner et al., 1994: pp. 457-458). Thus, he/she might be seen as a leader (Ferguson & Ford, 2008; Reicher et al., 2005; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004) and a reliable member, who can serve the purposes and interests of the group (Giessner & Van Knippenberg, 2008; Hogg, 2001; Karp & Helgo, 2009).

Van Knippenberg (2011: p. 1086) supports that Social Identity and its dimension prototypicality, form part of the self-perception of leaders and followers, as

followers trust leaders, having expectations about the effective representation of collective ideas and goals (Subašić et al., 2011). The importance of prototypicality—when a social group faces a social dilemma (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Van Vugt & De Cremer, 1999)—could apply to the selection of primary school headteachers, as teachers (followers) through their vote (social dilemma) selected the headteacher (leader). In this case, prototypicality is expressed by the dominant subcategory of primary teachers, as opposed to minority specialty teachers, who do not represent the culturally legitimized group prototype (Spyriadou, 2018).

DeRue and Ashford (2010: p. 628) claim that Leader Identity is not constructed solely on the basis of individual characteristics, but on the basis of the social context (Ng et al., 2021), as its formation, being a dynamic social process, is determined by the interactive relationship of leaders and followers (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012). The selection of headteachers is linked to this model because, through their voting, teachers evaluated the differentiated Identities of the candidates and then granted the Leader Identity. In this case, minority, marginalized, and non-prototypical specialty teachers had few possibilities to be voted by the dominant subgroup of primary teachers (Spyriadou, 2018).

Although specialty teachers have worked in Primary Education since 1993, they could not be fully incorporated, because separate Identities are still salient (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2020). The organizational culture of primary education in conjunction with institutional course assignments and differentiated working relationship based on specialty, reinforce the existence of hierarchies of subcategories, intergroup discriminations, social stereotypes and social competition (Koutouzis & Spyriadou, 2017), confirming the strong collective perception (Stets & Serpe, 2013; Turner, 1999; Turner et al., 1994; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003), the collective self (Ellemers et al., 2002; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & Ridgeway, 2003), common habitus (Maton, 2008) and increased symbolic capital of primary teachers (Bourdieu, 2016).

Consequently, primary teachers, currently the majority, have a powerful self-image and social image and therefore are considered to be more prototypical and appropriate for managerial positions compared to the lowest prestigious subcategory of specialty teachers, who, due to their Professional Identity don't embody the ideological background of primary education (Spyriadou, 2018).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Tool**

According to Conger (1998, as cited in Odom et al., 2012: p. 54), qualitative research “can be the richest of studies, often illuminating in radically new ways phenomena as complex as leadership”. In the present research, the telephone semi-structured interview was preferred instead of another research tool, such as focus groups, as the respondents belonging to different sub-categories of teachers would possibly be difficult to express their opinions on sensitive issues con-

cerning the existing social relationships within the primary education framework (Glogowska et al., 2011; Novick, 2008). Based on the research questions, the sample questions answered by the respondents were:

1) Which sub-categories of teachers do you think are claiming positions of administrative responsibility not only in your school, but in general in the context of Primary Education?

2) Headteachers' profile is male, teacher, with many years of service. Why do you think this prototype is promoted and chosen?

3) Do you think that the selection through anonymous voting has contributed to the underrepresentation of specialty teachers in the administrative hierarchy? Why in any case?

4) Do you think this selection through anonymous voting has helped established (known) headteachers over new (unknown) headteachers?

### 3.2. Participants

In this research, 43 interviewees were involved, of whom 14 were experienced headteachers, 8 were new headteachers, 9 were candidate headteachers, and 12 were teachers. Attempting to have a representative sample, I carried out telephone semi-structured interviews from the whole country and specifically from the 13 regional directorates of education. I decided to include all the subcategories of primary education concerning the position in the educational hierarchy (headteacher-teacher), gender (male-female), specialty (primary teacher-specialty teacher) and the years of service (old-new). Most of the respondents come from Attica educational region, as most educators live and work there.

I collected 252 official documents from the "Diavgeia" program and the websites of the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and the Directorates of Primary Education, including two selections of headteachers, concerning directors' profiles in Pan-Hellenic level (gender, specialty). Specifically, I have collected information for all the claimants and positioned headteachers (Spyriadou, 2018). Therefore, finding the participating headteachers and candidate headteachers was effortless because information such as their specialty, formal qualifications, years of service, and their school was available. Headteachers and candidate headteachers in some cases proposed the participating teachers. Before telephone interviews, there was a phone communication with candidate participants, as we asked them if they want to take part in my research. **Table 1** presents the participants' profile.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

The initial text of the research findings and their analysis was 16.873 words, but in this paper, I present only the most representative answers of participants. The answers were so detailed that I could reach the necessary saturation. I applied the thematic coding following the six steps as presented by Maguire and Delahunty (2017) to produce theoretical constructs for collective experiences. At the



**Table 1.** Participants' profile.

<b>Socio-demographic Profile</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
<b>13 Educational Regions</b>	
Attika	10
Central Greece	5
Central Macedonia	5
Crete	3
Eastern Macedonia-Thrace	6
Epirus	2
Ionian Islands	2
Northern Aegean	2
Peloponnese	1
Southern Aegean	3
Thessaly	1
Western Greece	1
Western Macedonia	2
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	21
Female	22
<b>Specialty</b>	
Primary Teachers	20
Specialty Teachers	23
Physical Education Teachers	11
Music Teachers	8
English Language Teachers	2
French Language Teachers	1
Information Technology Teachers	1
<b>Position</b>	
Experienced Headteachers	14
New Headteachers	8
Candidate Headteachers	9
Teachers-Educators	12



## Continued

Age Group (Years)	
25 - 35	3
36 - 45	10
46 - 55	28
56 - 62	2
Years of Service	
8 - 15	10
16 - 21	11
22 - 35	22
Qualifications	
Ph.D.	9
Master's Degree	16
2nd Academic Degree	7
Primary Teachers' Training Degree	7
Training in Administration	4
Conservatory Diploma (in Music)	8
Equation <sup>a</sup>	9

<sup>a</sup>The equation concerns primary school teachers who have attended a two-year academy.

beginning, I become familiar with the qualitative data by reading them many times in order to find the first-order codes and to examine differences and similarities between the answers of respondents who belong to different categories (men-women, primary teachers-specialty teachers, experienced headteachers-new headteachers, headteachers-teachers, teachers with many years of service-new teachers).

After initial phases, I carefully searched for the main themes and their sub-themes, and I defined their relation not only to each other but to the main theme, too (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017: p. 11). Specifically, there were three main themes, because specialty teachers have social/cultural, institutional/systemic/political, and internal obstacles. In respect of the second research question (voting and underrepresented subgroups), I found three main themes following the corresponding procedure. Each main theme is related to many sub-themes, as presented in **Figure 1** (Data Analysis). The participants have different profiles, thus the validity and reliability of research were achieved through the exploitation of different sources of research data (triangulation of data sources) and the use of many theories (theoretical triangulation) (Sarafidou, 2011).

## 4. Research Results

### 4.1. The Obstacles of Minority Specialty Teachers

#### 4.1.1. Social/Cultural Obstacles

Most respondents reported that the primary education system is primary teacher-centered, as this subcategory is not only the majority but also culturally and socially dominant, thus becoming a reference point, reflected in public discourse.

*Society believes that the headteacher's prototype is only the primary teachers. Even if a physical education teacher becomes a primary school headteacher, they address him as a primary school teacher. (I<sub>4</sub> (I = Interviewee) Male Primary Teacher)*

*I don't think that the director's specialty concerns society. Primary teachers may be annoyed if a specialty teacher becomes the school director. (I<sub>8</sub> Female Specialty Teacher)*

The coherence of socially stratified primary education produces the social categorization based on specialty leading to a latent and many times unconcealed competition in which the dominant primary teachers prevail. The social correlations construct an apparent group prototype which renders marginalized specialty teachers socially disabled and discriminated, as they belong to a minority and ghetto, feel guests.

*Specialty teachers cannot claim a managerial position, because we feel, myself included that we are guests in primary education. It will take a long time for specialty teachers to strengthen their position and claim managerial posts. A specialty teacher could not possibly become a primary education director. No one will vote for him/her. (I<sub>9</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Male Specialty Teacher)*

Social categorization also produces an obvious social comparison between dominant and dominated because primary teachers think they are pedagogically and administratively superior to specialty teachers. Respondents-primary teachers supported that primary teacher-headteacher prototype is preferred because they have a holistic perception through their academic studies.

*Primary teachers-headteachers have experience and good knowledge of the law. I wonder why physical education teachers want to become school leaders. They spend very few hours with the kids and have little experience. I know two of them who are headteachers, and it seems strange to me. Teaching a lesson in class is different to doing sports with the kids. (I<sub>5</sub> Female Primary Teacher)*

The dispute of the administrative capabilities and pedagogical adequacy of minority specialty teachers impedes their social integration in school.

*Specialty teachers don't know didactics. They come from secondary educa-*

*tion, where they learned to do only their lesson and many times, not even that.* (I<sub>5</sub> New Headteacher, Female Primary Teacher)

Specialty teacher headteachers should prove they are competent and effective in comparison to a prototypical primary teacher, who doesn't need to establish his/her Leader Identity in this way.

*I struggled to get social recognition. I offered a lot to the local society. If I were a primary teacher, I wouldn't have had to do so much.* (I<sub>9</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Male Specialty Teacher)

*I experienced difficulties such as: "what a physical education teacher can do for us"? There is a bias. It is evident, in the sense that we cannot crush the establishment. However, we have made many qualitative steps in this direction.* (I<sub>3</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Male Specialty Teacher)

Specialty teachers cannot socially establish their Leader Identity because they are not considered leaders by parents, too, echoing the lack of institutional support of specialty teachers and specialty lessons.

*I thought that my leading role would give me higher prestige and social status. Parents and children have not changed their behavior, and that disappointed me. I did not expect it. They treat me as they did, not negatively, but with this concept of prejudice that exists.* (I<sub>7</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Female Specialty Teacher)

#### **4.1.2. Institutional/Systemic/Political Obstacles**

Primary teachers, the oldest in primary education, have a powerful trade union and access to decision-making centers. Thus, course assignments and selection criteria are formed accordingly to them. The arithmetic superiority of primary teachers ensures high rates for them in all managerial positions.

*Specialty teachers are one-fifth of primary education. They do not have administrative experience. Thus, a primary teacher has to become the headteacher.* (I<sub>1</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Male Primary Teacher)

The dominant subgroup has acquired skills that differentiate them from specialty teachers. The main examples mentioned affecting the selection of headteachers are: 1) Teacher-training program was exclusively addressed to primary teachers, though abolished due to the financial crisis, 2) only primary teachers can claim a managerial position in small schools, 3) only primary teachers had access to an educational program for computer science, which affected their selection in 2011. Specialty teachers referred to this asymmetry.

*It is unconstitutional! It is outrageous that they evaluate candidates with different criteria. Selection criteria flagrantly favor primary teachers. Hence they are the rulers of primary education!* (I<sub>8</sub> New Headteacher, Female Specialty Teacher)

The working fragmentation that specialty teachers experience due to teaching in many schools affects their administrative advancement, as they are considered to be outsiders being less active members of teachers' associations. Specialty teachers are deprived of social capital because they are underrepresented in trade union and primary education associations, some of which are still called primary teachers' and kindergarten teachers' associations.

*In the past, we excluded specialty teachers from our assemblies. We said: You do not have to come you are a specialty.* (I<sub>1</sub> New Headteacher, Female Primary Teacher)

The selection councils and teachers' associations mainly consist of primary teachers who, being partial, vote for primary teachers. An active Partisan Identity, in conjunction with supportive social networks, highly ensures the election and reelection of candidates. However, specialty teachers being disabled because of social and institutional parameters have experienced racist attitudes from primary teachers' selection councils.

*During my interview in 2011, I have received racism. Selection council gave me the lowest score, but due to my formal qualifications, I ranked second. I believe the basic bias was that I am a specialty.* (I<sub>5</sub> Experienced Headteacher, Female Specialty Teacher)

*Parties have caused me great suffering. In the previous selection in 2011, I was degraded by the council, because I was not part of any party ...* (I<sub>3</sub> New Headteacher, Specialty Teacher)

#### 4.1.3. Internal Obstacles

Minority specialty teachers face crucial internal obstacles because they unconsciously internalize the dictated specialty stereotypes having low self-efficacy. The following responses express the connection between Professional and Leader Identity, due to which primary teachers underestimate their administrative capabilities.

*Specialty teachers are considered illiterate. The physical education teacher is thought to be the class's uneducated farmer. How can a physical education teacher ever manage to become a primary school headteacher?* (I<sub>4</sub> Candidate Headteacher, Female Specialty Teacher)

*Primary education is our field of specialty! Nobody can understand it the way we do! How can you be our school leader? You are merely a specialty teacher.* (I<sub>6</sub> Candidate Headteacher, Male Specialty Teacher)

Specialty teachers have difficulties in constructing and establishing a Leader Identity, as being afraid of dominant primary teachers they compulsorily incorporate the Follower Identity.

*Specialty teachers are not interested in management. We don't dare to claim a managerial position. Specialty teachers think that it will be difficult to strike*

*a balance with primary teachers as they are the dominant majorities in all schools, and this intimidates them. (I<sub>7</sub>, New Headteacher, Male Specialty Teacher)*

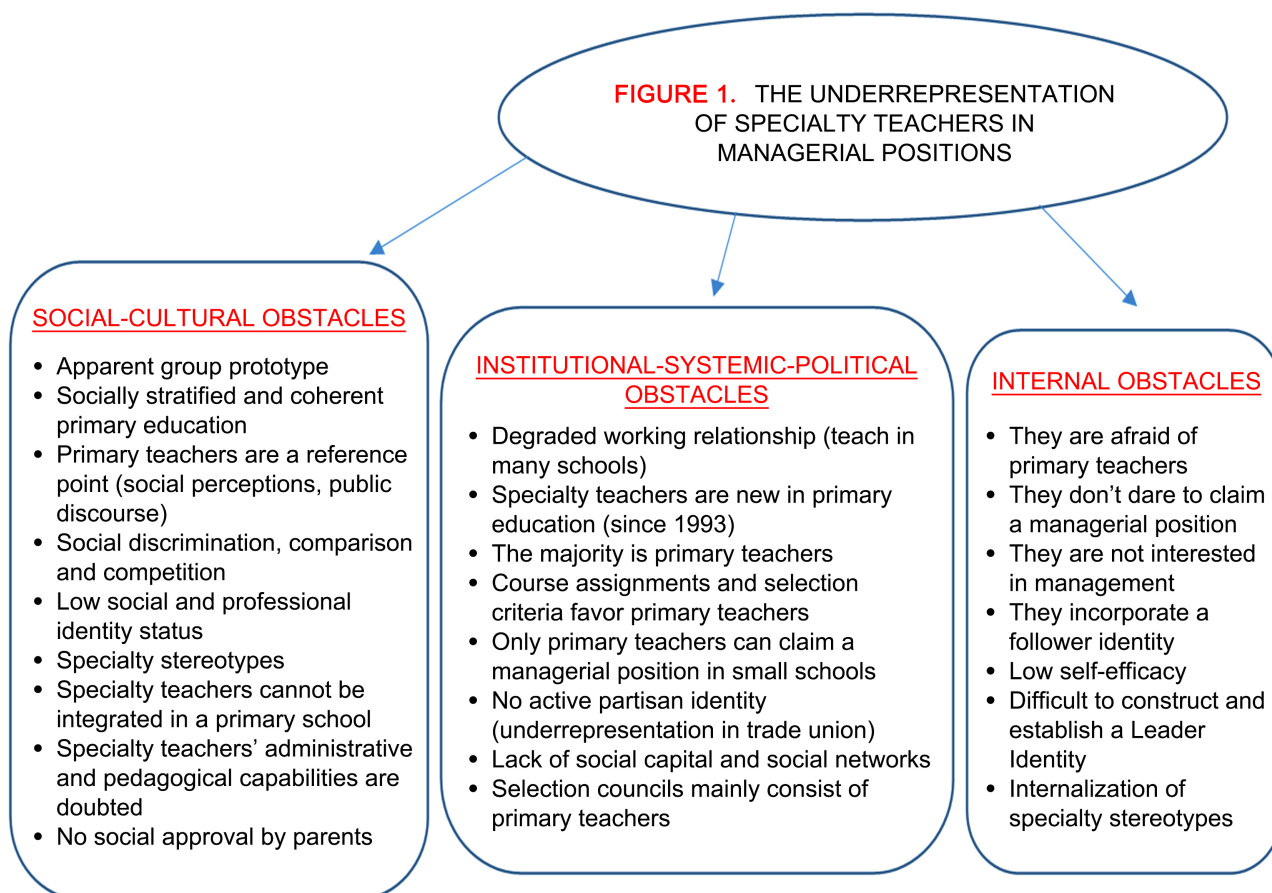
**Figure 1** presents the multiple obstacles of specialty teachers.

## 4.2. Selection through Anonymous Voting

### 4.2.1. Voting Reinforced Specialty Stereotypes

Selection through anonymous voting reinforced specialty stereotypes, as the primary teacher leadership prototype was apparent. According to most respondents, this selection favored the dominant subgroup of primary teachers. The disadvantaged Professional and Social Identity of specialty teachers have negatively affected their selection because marginalized specialty teachers did not inspire trust in associations, mainly consisting of primary teachers. Primary teachers-voters being part of “the old network” supported primary teachers.

*For some reason, we don't see specialty teachers as equal. It is unfair, but I can explain it. When specialty teachers come for 2 and 3 hours, colleagues don't know them and, they can hardly trust them. (I<sub>6</sub>, Experienced Headteacher, Female Primary Teacher)*



**Figure 1.** The underrepresentation of specialty teachers in managerial positions.

Teachers were affected either by the previous headteachers or by the hidden agendas of strong groups, pushing them to avoid conflict, confrontation, and isolation. In the case of many nominations in a school, there was a social competition among candidates as well as negotiation and transaction between candidates and voters. Moreover, there was an unprecedented conflicting climate between the subgroups that supported different candidates. The voting did not always show a preference for sufficient and competent candidates, but for those who were known, liked, and manageable by subgroups, as the major evaluation criterion was public relations.

*I think that public relations and connections played a major role. We want a headteacher who does not oppress us, someone easy to handle. (I<sub>2</sub> Female Primary Teacher)*

#### **4.2.2. Voting Didn't Affect the Results**

Nevertheless, some respondents believe that voting didn't affect the results, because teachers evaluated the personality and abilities of candidates, and consequently candidates of underrepresented subcategory, who were socially accepted, were selected. As noted, there are specialty teacher headteachers "in close contact with older primary teachers and the locals". Moreover, voting had positive outcomes leading to the rejection of some authoritarian and hegemonic headteachers.

#### **4.2.3. Voting Led to the Reelection of Experienced/Established Headteachers**

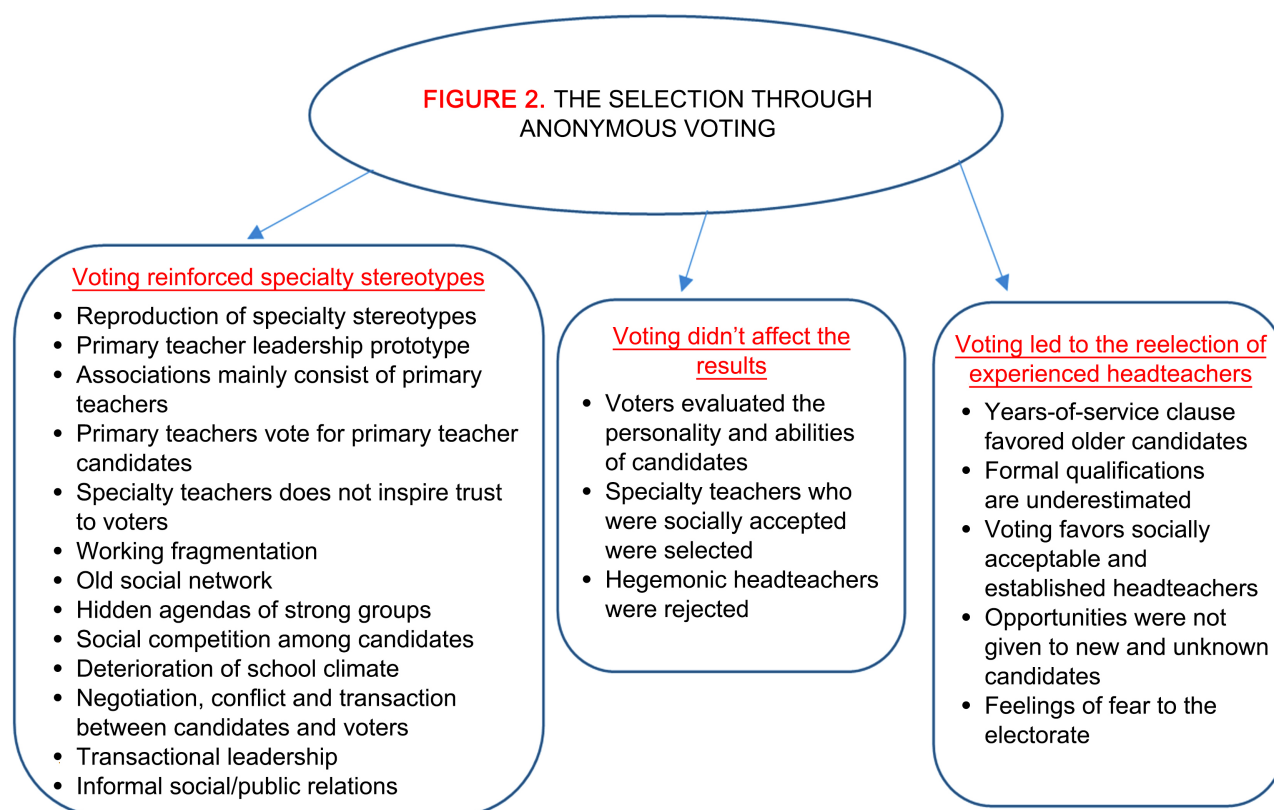
All respondents supported that voting reinforced the reelection of previous headteachers, as the years-of-service clause favored the older and the required profile did not require scientific qualifications. Voting led to the reelection of socially acceptable headteachers and did not give any opportunities to new and unknown candidates. It is stated that this selection created feelings of fear to the electorate as "headteachers did not change, even in places that they were no longer wanted".

*Teachers felt uncomfortable because headteachers could understand. So, teachers voted for the existing headteachers to avoid conflict. (I<sub>12</sub> Female Primary Teacher)*

**Figure 2** presents the views of participants about the selection through anonymous voting.

### **5. Discussion of Research Results**

The profile of primary education directors and primary school headteachers involves primary teachers with many years of service, resulting in the underrepresentation of specialty teachers in such a position. The respondents confirmed that this is the headteacher's prototype, thus revealing the existence of this hegemony and specifically of primary teachers, who exercise symbolic violence with concealed ways.



**Figure 2.** The selection through anonymous voting.

According to findings, primary education is a coherent community, a primary teacher's field because this specialty being numerically and socially dominant, due to institutionally delimited course assignments, expresses group prototypicality, thus resulting in claiming and occupying most of the managerial positions regardless of the existing population proportions. Specialty teachers are a low-status subgroup, seen as the minority, outsiders, guests, and ghetto because they don't express the Collective Identity and the group prototype, due to which they are excluded from managerial positions, irrespective of their capitals and individual characteristics. The degraded working relationship of specialty teachers forms a precarious and vulnerable Professional and Social Identity, confirmed by specialty stereotypes regarding their pedagogical inadequacy and leadership ineffectiveness, impeding the construction of a Leader Identity (Spyriadou, 2018).

These perceptions are linked to the theory of Social Identity and specifically to the social categorization (Reicher et al., 2010; Stets & Burke, 2000) which, by sharpening the boundaries between subcategories, enhances the production of inequality and stereotypes on the basis of which hierarchy is shaped (Hogg et al., 1995; Romani et al., 2019; Tajfel, 1963, 1970). In this context, social comparison results to competition, conflict (Ferguson & Ford, 2008) and degrading members of lower-ranking groups, as subcategories attempt to preserve their prestige, power, and resources (Haslam, 2001).



These attitudes and behaviors result in exercising of symbolic violence by the socially dominant primary teachers, who, although they seem to provide benefits to the dominated specialty teachers (teaching lessons) (Bourdieu, 2006: p. 205), simultaneously they impose a system of rules and values in the context of a “cultural arbitrariness” (Bourdieu, 2007: p. 17), since the field structure of primary education (Bourdieu, 2000) ensures their domination (powerful Social Identity) regarding their educational (Professional Identity) and managerial roles (Leader Identity) (Spyriadou, 2018).

According to DeRue and Ashford (2010: p. 643), the social and cultural organizational framework is binding on the intention to claim a managerial position (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012), as confirmed by institutional factors because selection criteria favor the governing elite of older primary teachers, in terms of Political Sociology (Bottomore, 1980). Dominant subcategory has multiple powerful capitals, which are crucial factors, catalytically enhancing leader-self-concept (Hirst et al., 2009; Van Quaquebeke et al., 2011) and self-efficacy (Paglis & Green, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004, 2007). These factors empower Leader Identity by contributing to the successful access of candidate headteachers to the field of Educational Administration (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2017a).

Minority specialty teachers who claim a managerial position, face social/cultural (group prototype, specialty stereotypes, social comparison/discrimination), institutional/systemic/political (working fragmentation, selection criteria, deprived social capital), and internal (low self-efficacy, incorporation of specialty stereotypes and Follower Identity) barriers hitting against a peculiar glass ceiling. This exclusion is reflected in their difficulty to establish a Leader Identity because compared to a prototypical primary teacher headteacher, they must make a great effort to receive social recognition (Spyriadou & Koutouzis, 2017b). In case of the political primary education director’s position, the systemic barriers are even more because specialty teachers, being underrepresented in trade union, do not have an active Partisan Identity.

Specialty teachers internalize the stereotyped and socially determined characteristics of their low-prestigious subgroup, categorizing themselves as followers (Reicher et al., 2010; Turner et al., 1994). Stigmatized specialty teachers are up against a peculiar “glass ceiling” when they claim a managerial position. It seems that the specialty stereotype is stronger than gender, as confirmed by male specialty teacher headteachers’ responses, who, though possessing a strong Gender Identity, have struggled to establish their Leader Identity, being non-prototypical in the context of the primary teachers’ hegemony (Spyriadou, 2018).

## **6. Going beyond the Education Field: The Term “Quasi-Organizational Capitalism”**

As mentioned in the introduction, I attempt to introduce a new term, “Quasi-Organizational Capitalism”, related to organizational behavior by adapting

Marx's (2013) class theory, Weber's theory about social status and class (Hughes & Kroehler, 2014) and Bourdieu's (2000, 2005, 2006, 2016) field theory in the field of organizations in order to explain the existing social stratification, which is reflected on the administrative hierarchies.

Concerning minorities and socially stigmatized subgroups, it seems that the existence of an apparent group prototype renders leaders' and followers' Identities almost non-negotiable. Consequently, being a specialty, racial, and ethnic minority is a quasi-social stigma in the context of the existing dominant hegemones. The dominant majorities construct this social stigma within organizations, considering that minorities are ghetto, guests, outsiders, and second class. In this respect, they marginalize minorities regarding social and professional relations, by literally or symbolically excluding them even from decision-making processes. This exclusion derives from the socially and culturally legitimized perceptions according to which minorities are professionally incompetent and ineffective compared to the capable and accomplished majorities.

The superiority statements of dominant subgroups and the passivity statements of the stigmatized and minority subgroups reveal that socially constructed stereotypes not only exist but also essentially affect the self-perception and self-efficacy of the parties involved. The concealed, but extreme, social and professional stratification, reproduces the social comparison and competition which result in the social discrimination of minorities having a priori low social status and a vulnerable Social Identity. In this respect, minorities cannot fully integrate into organizations, and thus they struggle to empower their voice, professional roles, and social status, realizing that it is difficult to overthrow the establishment.

Dominant majorities are considered the reference point by the actors not only from internal but also from external environment of organizations, which, essentially empowering their social image, results in the reproduction of their dominant social position. These dominant social perceptions, which socially establish the superiority of the majorities, connote that minorities are inadequate, deficient, and even inferior. Consequently, minorities find it difficult to construct and establish an influential and powerful Leader Identity, as being considered second class employees. But even if they manage to undertake a leadership position, usually low in the hierarchy, they should prove that they are effective leaders because it always lurks a hidden and prejudiced social comparison with a corresponding leader who belongs to the dominant majority.

However, except for the social stratification, social, and cultural perceptions, the institutional, systemic, and political factors further empower the domination of the majorities by strengthening their professional roles, facilitate their working conditions, and constructing a selection framework which favors them. The seniority of the dominant majority also reinforces its voice and control practices, as reflected in the selection criteria and processes. There are also latent political criteria affecting the selection processes which ipso facto favor the privileged

majorities, having active Partisan Identities and the significant support of powerful social networks. Moreover, the selection committees mostly consist of the dominant majorities, which voting for them, ensure their election and reelection. Consequently, minorities lacking social capital, Partisan Identity, and supportive social networks have little possibilities to occupy a managerial position, thus being unable to confront lobbyist majorities, as reflected in racist attitudes manifested by selection committees against them. Minorities internalize the existing stereotypes about themselves, believing they cannot exceed the multiple obstacles formed by dominant majorities. As a result, they do not dare to claim a managerial position because they cannot transform their vulnerable Identities into a powerful Leader Identity.

The construction of a Leader Identity is a complex and multilevel process, as gender, age, social, cultural, racial, and ethnic accordingly to the organizational context—stereotypes catalytically, but mostly implicitly mediate by sharpening the social categorization of dominant and dominated as reflected in the administrative hierarchy in any organizational context. The institutional, social, cultural, systemic, and political factors in conjunction with the distinctive organizational characteristics construct the subgroups with heterogeneous and hierarchized Identities, thus resulting in the emergence of the socially and professionally “competent” and on the contrary of the “disabled”, of the quasi-capitalists and quasi-proletarians in organizational terms.

In this regard, the term quasi-organizational capitalism emerges, describing from a symbolic aspect the a priori classification of employees within organizations. This arbitrary and autocratic hierarchization resembles the corresponding classification of capitalism which, by separating people based on their social class, financial, and family background, produces the capitalists and proletarians. Similarly to financial capitalism where the higher social classes control the financial resources and means of production, in organizations, the preponderant subcategories obviously or covertly determine the selection processes, the implemented policies, and government policies, especially in case of public organizations. The privileged subcategories arbitrarily become the aristocrats, in terms of feudalism, the Brahmins, in terms of caste, the capitalists, in Marxist terms, the dominants, in Bourdieu’s terms, having, in Weberian terms, a high social status and prestige, thus being an emerging bourgeois because of their social, professional, cultural, racial, and political background.

Capitalism, a system of categorization and classification based on the social, family, and class backgrounds, has deeply penetrated humans DNA, being incorporated in the collective consciousness as a socially and culturally legitimized archetype. The shaping of a non-negotiable classification within organizations reflects the unconscious integration and implied approval of the taxonomy practices of capitalism, as confirmed by the informal social stratification and the administrative hierarchy that primarily consists of the quasi-capitalists of each context. Each organizational status quo structured in such a way as to serve the aims,

objectives, and interests of those who are quasi-capitalists, in social, professional, cultural, racial, and political terms, a priori reproduces their domination. Similarly to a poor who has little possibilities to get rich due to the existing obstacles originating from his low social class, the quasi-proletarians of organizations, such as women, minorities, and stigmatized subgroups have little possibilities to openly confront the hegemonies and quasi-organizational capitalism, becoming the leaders of organizations.

This biased social categorization and classification within organizations continuously reproduce the latent and artificial exclusion of leadership positions for those who have not powerful Identities and increased multiple capitals—but mostly social capital—being non-prototypical and thus not influential. This social arbitrariness originates from the established social correlations within organizations, as the assessment of the personal and leadership characteristics of the dominated, socially, culturally, professionally, and racially disabled, the quasi-proletarians, is explicitly partial and prejudiced because the entrenched stereotyped perceptions formed by the structure of organizations unavoidably mediate in the evaluation processes.

Apart from the stereotyped perceptions, the quasi-capitalists seeking for maintaining their dominance and the organizational establishment which serves their aspirations and interests, consciously impede the administrative advancement of the quasi-proletarians, even if they believe that some of the quasi-proletarians have leadership characteristics. In this regard, the privileged quasi-capitalists, having access to the decision-making centers, can catalytically affect the organizational policy and government decisions, especially in the case of public organizations. Quasi-capitalists of organizations strengthen their professional roles and social image—as reflected in social perceptions of the internal and external environment of organizations—adapt the selection criteria to them, and control the selection committees, thus marginalizing the deprived quasi-proletarians and empowering their domination.

Although there are some examples of social and administrative mobility within organizations, it seems that limited, binding, and restrictive correlations originating from social, cultural, professional, racial, and political factors reproduce quasi-organizational capitalism, which emerging as an irreversible establishment, determines the administrative advancement and the stagnation of the quasi-capitalists and quasi-proletarians respectively. However, some of the quasi-proletarians have more opportunities to play a leading role, occupying mostly low hierarchical administrative positions, due to their additional powerful Identities, which empower their Leader Identity.

Recent scientific research highlighting the multiple social discriminations, inequalities and asymmetries against those who have vulnerable Identities, susceptible social, cultural, racial, professional, and political backgrounds, confirms the maintenance of hegemonies and quasi-organizational capitalism at the administrative and organizational level, which still surfaces as a social and cultural

archetype even in public and non-profit organizations.

## 7. Conclusion—Social and Political Implications

This paper proposes the abrogation of various asymmetries and social stereotypes in public and private organizations and generally in public life. The administrative hierarchy and generally the social, professional, systemic, institutional and political hierarchies should be composed not only of the dominant quasi-capitalists, who have multiple capitals that ensure the successful access to each field. On the contrary, minorities, and quasi-proletarians should play a leading role, as even if they belong to low-status social categories, some of them have leadership characteristics and increased human capital.

Decision-makers of organizations and policy-makers should do their self-criticism, conceding that social correlations, working conditions, selection criteria, and committees are not completely neutral, though they ought to be. In addition to the necessary social sensitization, organizations could implement quota policies both on the composition of selection committees and the appointment of managers-leaders, eliminating discrimination against candidates belonging to minority groups. This reformation can empower the voice, social status, influence, the professional and administrative role of the underrepresented quasi-proletarians, thus establishing social justice and equality.

In conclusion, institutional, organizational, social, cultural, and political factors, which are external parameters, form the concealed and internal social correlations, affecting the self-perception, self-image, and aspirations of quasi-proletarians. Minority and stigmatized subgroups being afraid of various dominant hegemonies, emerging in the context of quasi-organizational capitalism, refrain from claiming a managerial position and a leading role. This fact is pessimistic, confirming that social categories are deprived of capital, which is socially delimited and have few opportunities to become leaders. It is also optimistic because we have as a society the potential to devastate this adverse establishment by reforming the collective unconscious, and emancipating it from biased stereotyped perceptions. Finally, we need to study and approach management and leadership from an anthropocentric and sociological point of view and not entirely in technocratic and instrumental terms, which dominate the field, thus constructing the Sociology of Educational Leadership.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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