

The **Frontistirio** as a latent
structural element of the Greek
educational system

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Educational system in Greece

- It is necessary for a better understanding of what follows to explain briefly the structure of the educational system in Greece

Educational system in Greece

Compulsory education is 11 years long and is divided into:

- Pre-school education (2 years), age 4 and 5 years
- Primary school (6 years), age 6 to 12 years
- Secondary (Gymnasioum) school (3 years), age 13 to 15 years

Educational system in Greece

Secondary school (Lyceum) (3 years),
age 15-18

Students can attend:

- A. General Lyceum
- B. Technical-Vocational Lyceum

Tertiary education

- ❑ The vast majority of students opt for General Education with the aim of entering tertiary education
- ❑ Tertiary education is so far public ,
 - without any tuition fees,
 - costs for textbooks, etc.
- ❑ Private universities do not yet exist in Greece

Last 3 years

Private colleges (mainly in cooperation with foreign universities) were legislated to be able to grant degrees recognised as tertiary education degrees with professional rights equivalent to those of public universities

Access to tertiary education

In order to enter the public university, students take a national exam

(on the same days and times, with common subjects)

in all schools in the country at the end of the school year in the third grade of lyceum

Frontistirio

- In Greece, in lyceum the school is 'displaced' by the “**frontistirio**”
- The word “frontistirio” does not translate exactly into English.
- We could call it preparatory school, or supplementary education

Frontistirio

Frontistirio has the structure of a classroom:

- o 5 to 10 students attend (in each class),
- o absences are counted,
- o parents are notified, etc

What is a frontistirio?

- Is an informal but functionally established structural element of the Greek educational system
- Is a parallel school, which operates legally (since 1940) for the secondary school (gymnasium and lyceum)
- It is attended by the majority of students (mainly in lyceum)

Frontistirio

- Is extended to elementary school, but on a smaller scale
- Is a 'necessity', as it is called upon to cover the shortcomings of the school in terms of preparing pupils for successful participation in the national examinations.

Frontistirio

The frontistirio has existed and operated for decades in Greece, because the issue of university admission is:

- o for students and parents the dominant problem and
- o for the state a major political issue

The only goal is the university

The massive turnout of high school students in the national examinations for admission to tertiary education was a one-way street, since the thousands of secondary school graduates had no substantial qualifications to enter the productive process and was mainly due to:

The only goal is the university

- o The reforms of the post-independence period (1974 after dictatorship)
- o The industrial development of the Greek economy
- o The limited choices of those candidates who did not succeed in the national examinations
- o The cohesive fabric of the Greek family

Role of the State

- o The existence and operation of frontistirio is maintained by the political powers and the governments of the day, because :
- o thousands of teachers who are not appointed to public education are employed
- o appointed teachers supplement their low income
- o reduces the social pressure

Role of the State

- o The state, over time, instead of trying to abolish the institution of the frontistirio as a latent structural element of the educational system, has tried to integrate it into general education:
- o with post-secondary preparatory centres (1980)
- o with 'remedial teaching' programmes (1990-today)

Higher education and Frontistirio

- The accredited frontistirio centers operating in Athens and Thessaloniki alone are approximately 335 and 158 respectively
- The number of public high schools in Athens is about 402, while in Thessaloniki it is about 200

Primary education and frontistirio

- o The centres where primary school pupils go are called study centres
- o They are less widespread
- o Private lessons are more common

What is a frontistirio?

- o Students attend frontistirio (mainly in lyceum):
- o The courses are attended from 2 to 5 or even 6 hours a day
- o starting from about 3:30 pm to 11 pm, depending on the schedule offered by each frontistirio
- o Often, some students choose to take private lessons or combine frontistirio and tutoring

What is a frontistirio?

Sum of weekly hours of tutorial + total home preparation (for school and tutorial), as reported by the respective percentages of students	Adding a 3-hour test every Sunday	Adding the 35 hours of schooling	Total weekly workload for the student(s)
2.9% have 12 - 20 hours	+3	+35	= 50 to 58
11,6 % have 17 - 25 hours	+3	+35	= 55 to 64
25.4% have 22 - 30 hours	+3	+35	= 60 to 68
39% have 27 - 35 hours	+3	+35	= 65 to 73
21,1% have 32-40 hours	+3	+35	= 60 to 78

Why is the frontistirio necessary?

Admission to the public university, which means a lot to the students themselves, their parents and society in general

- o Failure to gain admission to public tertiary education is experienced, to a large extent, as a feeling of failure and despair on the part of the students
- o And exclusion in terms of maintaining family status, or the possibility of upward social mobility for families

Parental involvement in their children's career choice

- There are parental expectations for upward social mobility of children through education or
- Maintenance of the family's social status
- Greek families spend large sums of money in order to send their children to frontistirio

Why students attend frontistirio (third grade of lyceum-survey)?

- o According to a survey in 1270 students of the third grade of lyceum:
- o "inadequate" school curriculum
- o "useless" knowledge provided to them
- o inadequate preparation for the national exams
- o teachers don't have capacity to transmit knowledge and are often indifferent

Why students attend frontistirio (third grade of lyceum-survey)?

- o the cognitive training of tutors is better than that of lyceum teachers,
- o tutors at the frontistirio excel:
 - ✓ "in teaching methodology,
 - ✓ rigorous planning,
 - ✓ creating a positive pedagogical climate", providing printed materials (photocopies of notes, etc.)

Why students attend frontistirio (third grade of lyceum-survey)?

Teachers in the frontistirio are:

- ✓ more friendly,
- ✓ patient
- ✓ with a willingness to learn and
- ✓ spend more time with each child individually

- o In recent years, since college degrees are now recognised with equal professional rights to those of universities, there are families who choose to send their children to these colleges but most of the time when their children have failed to enter a public university and after they have prepared themselves as best as they could in a frontistirio.

Teachers' views on the comparison of school and frontistirio (survey)

According to a survey in 785 teachers of the third grade of lyceum:

- o the teaching in the frontistirio is more effective,
- o the use of new technologies is greater,
- o the provision of training in the subject matter is better,
- o the preparation of students is of higher quality and

Teachers' views on the comparison of school and frontistirio (survey)

- o much more teaching material provided to students
- o the school and the frontistirio monitor the performance of students in roughly the same way
- o classroom conditions, relationships between teachers and students and the classroom atmosphere is more pleasant in the frontistirio

Teachers' views on the comparison of school and frontistirio(survey)

- o there are no problems with students attending frontistirio at the same time
- o sometimes challenged by their students because of the latter's attendance of frontistirio
- o not bothered by this behaviour and even several of them are indifferent

Teachers' views: why students seek frontistirio support?(survey)

- o to increase their chances of admission to their main preferred faculty of university
- o "students imitate their peers" and
- o "there is no trust in the school institution"

Teachers' views on the role of the State

- o the structure of the educational system is mainly responsible for the massive attendance of students at frontistirio
- o there is no strong political will
- o there is no change in the mentality of Greek society

Teachers' suggestions on how to eliminate the phenomenon

- o an appropriate reform of the admissions system
- o the implementation of a free access system to tertiary education institutions

Summary

- Frontistirio is firmly entrenched in Greek society and major changes will have to be made in the educational system in order for its necessity to cease to exist



Thank you!