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"Epistemological Aspects of Social Research for the Qualitative Upgrading of Rational Systems in the Areas of Social Policy. The Greek Example"

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Abstract

The present article attempts to explore new possibilities for an effective social policy and rationalization of social services through the revision of the epistemological aspects of social research, which can assist this approach. In this context, the article analyzes the use of knowledge that contributes to reframing research activity aiming at extracting data that are more extensive in content and specifically related to (a) the organization, management and scientific strategic planning of social policy bodies (b) the elaboration of research programs and up-to-date data processing (c) their use in decision and policy-making at a national or regional level and (d) the revised perception of social research and the effectiveness of its applications. The reference point of this paper is Greece.

Introduction

The initial point of view of this article is placed critically against the dominant findings of scientific administration, according to which the political functions of the State should be gradually shifted into the realm of Administration. This is because the administrative science incorporates a sense of policy management, which directly negotiates the rationalization of means, guaranteeing good organization and immediate effectiveness. In the same way, issues relating to the pursuit of social policy should be increasingly analyzed in their administrative – organizational frameworks, strategies should be formulated and solutions should be sought in an upgraded environment of administrative structures and systems of organizations, as well as in the skills of the administrative and scientific personnel involved.

This view must be accompanied by the argument that scientific administrative analysis must be limited to factual data and not delve into approaches based apparently on ethic or normative hypotheses. Consequently, the implementation of this version of policy, seen as effective management of achievable objectives within the operational necessity of organizational systems (zweckrational) seems to be served. This policy neutralizes the background value of decisions and evaluates those approaches, which focus on internal social features of the system, as unscientific and irrational. Thus, the organizations, functioning as fields of rationally purposeful actions, assess the organizational behavior in the same way, i.e. in terms of effectiveness in achieving the objectives of a good administration for the benefit of its own structure and hierarchy [1].

In this article, we will not attempt a comprehensive political critique on exercising a social policy, which is directly affected by the crisis on the labor market within a reformatory environment of instability and deregulation of labor relations. In particular we will look at the possibilities of the new systemic applications of social science in certain fields where social policy is exercised, which relate to the adequacy of criteria for systemic quality for substantive and not merely procedural intervention policies, aiming at tackling social and economic forms of action, integrated into formal systems of organization. Our opinion is that the degraded concept of the social system - as a compact and holistic entity from a political and sociological point of view- discredits the more general political goals of good administration, as well as the necessity of social interventions within organization systems. With

regard to labour relations, this attempted depreciation extends to the collective character of representation and employees' rights. In this case, the model of methodological individualism, individualized interventions and resolution of labour issues (private contracts, part-time employment, etc.) is promoted.

Moreover, the argumentation that is unfolded in this paper attempts to dispel the confusion between the technical means and the practical purposes that is maintained within the framework of administrative rationalization and organizational structures in economic-business organization systems. This confusion indicates the dominance of a conception that is associated with the application of unified standards without the necessary feedback from the different internal problems of each organization system. This conception tackles the social dimension of problems - related for example to the participation of employees in organizational structures or of the unemployed as potentially benefiting from advisory support and employment promotion services - as being technical problems.

The reasons for defending the application of Quality Systems in any kind of organizational environment are also formulated in the same context. In the case of social organizations and in accordance with the proposal that emerges in this text, these reasons are reformulated by pointing out clearly and taking into due consideration the sociological content of these practical purposes and social cooperativeness, as well as the conditions of flexibility and the limits in applying quality standards.

This paper consists of three parts. In the first part, there is a critical reference to the reformatory framework that is being promoted as a common policy on issues of social protection and employment in EU Member States. The second part raises issues concerning the

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selection of an appropriate research framework for the projection of main policy issues in the social sector, emphasizing qualitative research methodologies. Useful conclusions are drawn from this annotation that can be utilized in the third part, where an alternative model for implementing quality standards in social institutions is presented as a suggestion that, in a complementary way, documents the implementation of flexible quality systems in this field, between the technological means and political purposes.

The Reformatory Framework in Policy-Making in the Social Sector

Conjugating two types of rationalized options for the strategic planning and the organizational performance of bodies exercising social policy

Through an initial approach to an organizational systems level, one ascertains the existence of two types of rationalized options, depending on the emphasis as to their effectiveness. According to the first one, the choices of action depend on the critical analysis of the strategic policies, the central values and the objectives in solving structural problems, and refer to the possible consequences of these policies, whereas the second does not focus on political objectives and essential values, but on operational and procedural principles [2]. In the first case, the analysis method is based on sociological approaches and the emphasis is given to the macro-organizational strategic objectives, as well as to the openness of their systems to their external environment, taking into account broader forms of organization existing in the society and the economy [3]. Here, the interpretation of collective entities, such as the state or organization are reduced to expectations, values and aspirations of social subjects that participate and give them reason. Nevertheless, these collective entities, as social systems that produce meanings and messages and spawn from them, maintain a "super individual objective meaning", even if it is socially constructed [4]. In the second case, the success of the organizational systems is assessed mainly internally, with regard to the effective integration and implementation of appropriate quality standards into an existing organizational environment, as a result of the application of appropriate means and functional-procedural practices (scientific management) [5][1] .

The second type of rationality is connected to scientific strategic planning, as it has already been described by Taylorism with the segmented division and coordination of labor, and focuses on a) the use of time study and the methods for finding the optimal way to perform a task, namely the achievement of the highest possible average daily production rate, b) the satisfaction of employers' demands and the provision of incentives for increasing productivity and c) the introduction of acceleration methods for the process of production. In this case, technical rationality does not organically connect with the socio-political planning.

On the other hand, "critiques of the technical/rational emphasis in information system research and practice point to the significance of the social context and the political behaviours of actors involved in innovation processes" [6-9]. In this framework, the organization acquires the characteristics of a planned, rational instrument with a predetermined fixed objective and with a formal structure, which serves the alteration of the objective in mean-ends relationships. In addition, new possibilities that are offered by processing modern

scientific management systems are utilized, not only for designing but also for controlling labor.

By representing the modern scientific management in the direction of the mechanistic model of human nature, Taylorism is formulated as a trend in favor of efficiency, productivity growth and adaptation of the social division of labor in the technical division of labor [3,10][2]. Thus, rationality is defined through a business logic concerning all the organizational systems and transforms human labor in an efficient mechanism for specialized use. In other words, a self-regulative process of economic growth combined with innovative and technically usable knowledge is established, which imposes the adaptation of the social division of labor and human behavior in the rational ideotype of efficiency and technical effectiveness, as institutional commitments in the field of organizational systems.

The success of strategic planning of the business administration is examined by elevating the technical issue into an issue of value, taking social and psychological factors into account, as well as human resources stimulation theories aimed at regulating human behavior, so that it is oriented towards objectives that serve the technical specifications of production systems [11]. From the perspective of the participant, the strategic action is established in products of rational choice and is translated as orientation towards success through a desired evolution (reward promise, threat of sanctions, etc.) [12]. The afore mentioned planning does not constitute a model exclusively for the social organization of economic units, but tends to consolidate as a generalized administrative rationality in the social and political field. It is also expressed as a belief in the legitimacy of the institutional provisions, as a legalization of rational legal form of power while it maintains rational and legal order.

At the same time, through the human relations studies, the research interests for organizations are shifting to the microscopic level. The human factor becomes the focal point and gradually adapts to the demands of technical rationality, so that the value and institutional commitments of organizational systems can be shaped. Nevertheless, the technical specifications of production systems can neither rely on the pursuit of an unconditional adaptation of individuals, nor can the latter be used as an instrument to increase economic benefits, or for improving the organization as a whole [13]. For example, how flexible can the coefficients of the production machine be and how can they meet the increased needs of the technical division of labor?

The contrast of formal rationality against the practical interest and the ability of the workforce to adjust to the acceleration of the pace and rationalization of productive work becomes particularly noticeable when defining the purpose [14]. And while the rationality of the means [Mittelrationalitaet] is controlled by the effectiveness of technical performances on the recommended solutions, the purpose rationality [Zweckrationalitaet] cannot easily fall within the scope of a monistic version of a single conception of rationality of specific methods which try to speed up the production process, without violating or eliminating the democratic, political and value stakes that still retain the form of social awe.

The confusion between the technical and practical purposes indicates the dominance of a conception that treats labor as well as social problems, as technical problems. The predominance of technical

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[1]The basic foundations of scientific management had already been laid in the classic work of: The Principles of Scientific Management, New York and London, Harper & Brothers [5].

[2]It is a fact that scientific management is limited to the resolution of practical problems in the field of production without focusing on matters that concern power and dominance in bureaucratic-style organizations, as they were developed in Weber's Sociology of Domination (Herrschaftssoziologie).

interests in social technology mainly showcases the rationality of the applied and quantitative auditable means for the technical and sometimes artificial solution of social problems, as scientific, regardless of whether the latter seek a solution in accordance with the practical interest in its social dimension.

In the second type of rationality, paradoxically, the rationality of the means [Mittelrationalitaet] emerges as a process largely independent from the necessity to identify objectives and is significantly disengaged firstly from the policy - which is considered "unscientific" for explanatory interests of causal reductionism and technical effectiveness - and from the value confrontation of social and labor problems. The rationality of means seeks to identify the purposes only when they can be assimilated with certainty, rendering them rational. This is accomplished by adjusting the content of the objectives to proven applicability of the research- technical result of rational means, so that the human resources in the production process can be considered an increasingly fixed factor and, to a certain extent, an independent variable in research matters.

With the concession of a sociological approach to the development of organizations and the gradual predominance of scientific management, two significant problems arise. Firstly, the allocation of political functions at rational administrative hierarchies and, consequently, the weakening of the political responsibilities of state structures and their exclusive integration in planning procedures of technological production systems. With this development, the legal and political ideology of general interest is replaced by a technocratic ideology of efficiency, economic progress and abundance.

Secondly, and on a methodological level, relating to the relationship of purpose/means, the rationality of the means as a technology that creates needs and searches for effective ways of resolving them dominates. This development verifies the degradation of the purpose and the content of the character of policies. At the same time, the need for a synthetic rationality resulting in the inactivation of the institutions of collective action e.g. of labor, and participation within bureaucratic-administrative ensembles that are limited to managing what is technically feasible, is ignored. However, the means, which are uncontrolled for wider social usefulness, are simply rational practices in the process of resolving a social problem as to its technical dimension, while they leave open the question relating to the rationality of policy planning and the objectives set for the political and substantive resolution of those problems. In this way, the purpose of many non-flexible quality systems in the field of conducting social policy is oriented, to a large extent, as we will see below, towards instrumental applications and research needs that attempt to meet the appropriate technical means [15].

The functional adaptation and the new reformatory framework

The functional adaptation, as it is promoted in the context of the reformatory structures in exercising social policy, is exposed to the risk of becoming independent from the social dimension of the problems it is called to interpret and explain while maintaining an increased interest in the possibilities of research technology, which is used mainly in its instrumental performances and eventually largely establishes, production, institutionalization and the monitoring of knowledge mechanisms. In this sense, the functionally dominant institutions, such as the administration of organizations, are governed by the logic of efficiency in fulfilling the purposes that primarily seek to effectively satisfy the need to preserve and reproduce the existing

organizational system [16]. History shows that various forms of power are chosen in order to achieve these objectives. On the other hand, those objectives that enforce social cohesion, emancipation and social ties and relationships remain degraded because of their regulatory and value based content [17].

The prevalence of an opinion on the functional adjustment and application of an upgraded administrative-instrumental framework as a criterion for the effectiveness of interventions and use of social resources marks a shift from the political–ideological view of social problems in specific technical terms to resolve them. For example, issues that preserve a clear political connotation, such as social inequality, are not addressed in a holistic way, nor are they based on social justice in their policy dimension, including economic restructuring and redistributive policies. On the contrary, these issues are treated in their technical-corrective dimension, as practices which do not seek to mitigate, where appropriate, the social injustice and the inequalities[4] arising from the failure to respect the criteria of functional adaptation.

Of course, this debate dominated throughout the growth of the welfare state [18,19]. Through this, the economic infrastructure required for health, social benefits and other relief services that were necessary for the maintenance of the overall political and social system were institutionally supported and founded. At the same time, the establishment and operation of bureaucratic structures in forms of centralized organization -where detailed rules and procedures are recognized as functionally necessary in order to promote uniformity, equality, as well as predictability of procedures - are dominant [20]. In other words, the dominance of Structure through management of that time focused more on issues relating to the political control of the public administration and the need to serve the structure. The interest in issues of efficiency and effectiveness was underestimated in the management of public resources, as well as in the need to decentralize the administrative mechanism, in the pluralism and rational functioning of social services [1]. Along the way and especially in the case of social services but also more broadly in the welfare State in Europe, there was intense pressure to shrink or even remove services with the simultaneous appearance of a plurality of social services that are largely taken over by NGOS and private bodies [21].

At the same time, public social services are decentralized, thanks to the involvement of local authorities. Similarly with developments that are performed on productive systems providing social services, the vertical hierarchies are replaced by horizontal decentralized structures that are more focused on the organizational culture. At the same time, quality of jobs and flexibility increasingly prevail in the marketplace, at least on a programmatic level [22]. As it will be shown below in the case of Greece, this was equal to the forms of deregulation in society and in the field of employment [23,24]. The reformatory framework in exercising a new methodology of managing public organizations in the form of social policy is shaped in this direction [25,26]. Specifically, the social services should be provided by entities and organizations that have a clear orientation and a basic value system in order to adopt and maintain a sufficient level of quality. The social service is created at the moment it is provided, as the response must be immediate but the interested person should also manifest his/her need at that certain moment [27]. Consequently, the quality of services cannot be simply limited to an administrative logic of simple technical definitions but needs to examine the interaction between provider and recipient in depth. Of course, the difficulty here is an intangible characteristic that cannot be easily measured, for example, the productivity of a production line.

According to recent reports, the satisfaction of the interested person as to a service is another parameter that should be taken into account in the framework of planning a Quality Service [28]. To this end, in 2008, the Association of European Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Social Platform, operating in the social sector, issued a set of positions, which gather all those principles that social organizations and NGOs should follow as to the provision of qualitative social services [29].

For example, the European and National Thematic Networks constitute dynamic Workgroups, which extend partnerships with organizations that develop relevant activities, with a view to disseminate information horizontally and acknowledge innovative practices in decision-making, thus contributing in the effectiveness of systems and policy-making [30]. Specifically, they recommend initiatives for broader partnerships with a view to disseminate tested and recognizable results through the application of plans specializing in sectoral and geographical field for the equal access of citizens in labour markets. In addition, they carry effective practices and the new know-how for the promotion of equality and exchange of intergovernmental experiences towards supporting employment, advancing quality and production and enhancing cohesion in labour market at national and European level.

The quality of networks and services is increasingly a key pillar of the social development process, at both national and regional level. In particular, the exploitation of social capital and financial resources at local and regional level significantly enhances the negotiating capacity of the network of all authorities and actors for the political resolution of local society problems. In this way, the development of cooperation between services and the upgrading of the operational capability of the mechanisms to solve organizational problems require the use of scientific knowledge through social research and the use of up-to-date items. The main objective of the network is to develop actions that are oriented to local problems but also in productive systems that enhance employment, social protection and coherence.

In this direction, the institution of "one-stop-shop" is a modern and effective means for the social and financial inclusion of vulnerable groups in specific countries of the European Union. "One-stop-shop" is the physical or other type (e.g. electronic) concentration of services in a specific area, aiming at minimizing the barriers that limit the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market as employees/self–employees or as business men/women. In this framework, "one-stop-shops" should be in a position to provide, according to the needs of each member of vulnerable groups, consultation services, guidance, welfare services (e.g. accommodation, caring of dependent members, etc.) and services to support employment or businesses.

The Contribution of Social Research in Remodeling the Quality Objectives of Social Policy

Qualitative research approaches of the objectives and means of social policy

The contribution of a revised epistemological social research is particularly significant in this new reformatory framework of pluralism in exercising social policy. Social research attempts to address and detect problems that arise through the logical structure and the intra-subjective relevance of the social space, the structures and institutions which reflect meaningful actions and decisions, with social semanticity and content; both are amenable to qualitative investigation in their differentiation and to quantitative analysis in their uniformity. In this

context, even if the social-scientific methodology renders the rationality of scientific research ideotypically unified and in the meantime independent from the diversified cultural systems to a great extent, their successful implementation consists in efficient conjugations of methodological approaches. These approaches adopt new research methodologies that focus on the one hand on the explanation and understanding of social acts and processes in social change, and on the other hand on the comparability of societies, thus facilitating the exploration of value systems [31].

In this sense, the new synthetic methodologies attempt to elucidate all epistemological aspects of social research and especially to amalgamate and complement the methods into a new complex undertaking of validity and reliability, which is recommended not only on the level of process and conclusions, but mainly on a level of original planning of social research. The original planning includes the political characteristics of purpose whereas the application includes the technical characteristics of the selected means. On a practical level, such a synthetic approach links social (purpose) with administrative (means) coherence as well as the political utilization of human resources, taking both quantitative and qualitative factors into account that presuppose a new developmental social policy, while maintaining the basic research principle that contributes to the removal of incompatibilities with the creative or dysfunctional element of diversity.

In this way, the new synthetic social research can contribute to strengthening the social cohesion in the various fields of application, while social policy, social protection and solidarity are acquiring a new dynamic in separate geographic regions and different populations. In this context, the usefulness of social research consists of a) a better understanding and interpretation of the epistemological issues that are fundamental preconditions for carrying out scientific approaches that are modern and demanding in terms of data content b) increasing information material with rich conceptual content (c) the comparability of data and focusing on more unseen aspects of social action and its meaning, which influence social developments that are not particularly accessible through conventional surveys.

Based on the above, the choice of an enhanced qualitative methodological approach affects or shapes research planning, objectives and the formulation of research questions and processes for collecting, recording, analyzing and interpreting data. Such qualitative surveys help us have a better and more direct knowledge of the spatio-temporal, communicative, social and cultural framework, where the subjects live and work. In addition, they complement the quantitative measurements and statistical analyses which are insufficient for a full research of individuals and for an organized framework of action. Such approaches render necessary the use of qualitative research methods that explore the characteristics of human subjectivity, the formation of personal and social identity, the ways in which the social reality is perceived and given reason to and social relations as well as the intermediation methods of social structures.

The critical reflection of theoretical and epistemological issues raised in relation to qualitative research (e.g. ethnographic, phenomenological, interpretative, biographic, narrative research, action research, discourse and conversation analysis, participatory and non-participatory observation, collaborative research, interview, case study, focus groups, grounded theory), as these are applied in the social sciences in recent years, provide an expanded approach to methodology and to research planning in the social sciences [32].

Existing structures are no longer considered as granted and stable

while their impact is not absolute in identifying and organizing the behavior of individuals. Undoubtedly, these structures are created by people, constitute a created world, which is reproduced and transformed into daily actions and interactions of members of society, emphasizing on the active role of social subjects, processes that give meaning to social interactions. The approaches in question have their roots in Weber's [3] "verstehende Soziologie" (interpretative sociology). Weber emphasized on studying the conceptual background, the ideal incentives of social action of people as subjects, the social utility of the produced knowledge.

Furthermore, open-ended questions and collecting qualitative data can be incorporated in a qualitative research in the light of experience of the subjects, the participants [33]. In a way, qualitative research is carried out in real, not in artificial, experimentally controlled conditions, as is the case with quantitative research [34]. The most important qualitative data collection techniques are observation, interviews and focus groups, as well as a variety of ways for analyzing qualitative data, such as systematic and standardized coding and analysis on the basis of specific techniques [35,36][3] .

The procedures of social research aimed at uncovering and researching causal mechanisms, either at a level of social structures or at a level of social action, relationships between them and their relations to other possible or coincidental factors, can be explored both by quantitative as well as qualitative methods of social research, while in several cases their combined use is preferred. This multi-methodological approach doe not derive from some kind of methodological eclecticism but from a deeper motive associated with efforts to disconnect quantitative methods from the positivistic/empirical tradition, as well as with the efforts to disconnect qualitative methods from the relativistic and reductive approaches.

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods should not be radical or acquire a strictly epistemological character but it is more practical and relates to the nature of the problem under investigation. Qualitative-intensive research usually contributes to the deep understanding of processes in a small number of cases and in exploring the activities of those acting socially, whereas the quantitative-extensive research contributes to the disclosure of regularities, standards and the distribution of basic social characteristics [37].

Applications of quality standards in social services organizations. Organizational structures and systemic functions

In this context, social research can contribute to the implementation of quality procedures ensuring the compliance with these standards and controlling system processes in terms of the quality of services that are offered. At the same time, it redefines the objectives for capturing and reforming basic standards of change and corrective interventions to upgrade the functioning of social organizations. Through coordinated collective efforts and innovation, it can also meet the expectations, needs and requirements of all those who contribute to the organizational system [38]. In this sense, the organizations, apart from their survival and self-preservation, have the possibility to differentiate and alter their outputs.

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[3]Many researches take to using electronic programs for processing the data of social research (indicatively we mention the programs as : The Qualitative Data Analysis & Research Software (ATLAS ti), a networking project for Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) as well as AQUAD, HyperQual, Hyper RESEARCH, Kwalitan, QUALPRO, MAX qda. Regarding this issue see M Pourkos and M Dafermos [32] : as above.

In addition, social research should clarify that the organizational system must balance between the internal structure, the processes, the technological sections in employment and human resources. Achieving this balance is particularly difficult if the organizational system provides services, since the latter are harder to be defined in terms of quality and standardization, but also as to the analysis and processing of quality processes with precise operational conditions. This makes qualitative research particularly essential.

In this way, the new objectives of social research redefine the concept of organizational Quality System; at least when it is focused on the services provided by the social organizations. Such a quality system can be characterized as a grid of integrated intervention functions with approaches to issues of networks and structures, as a complex and highly interconnected network of parties, which exhibit cooperative and complementary qualities in a relation, where the whole exceeds the sum of its parts [39].

In those cases of social organizations, where the system as an organizational concept does not receive any feedback, it usually acquires a self-assertion character and along the way it runs the risk to be proven ineffective and unreliable for wider use. For this reason, the concept of feedback from the implementation of Quality Systems in social organizations is of particular importance and at the same time highlights the importance of its contributors in the necessity and certification of its flexibility.

Given the peculiarities in the field of the provision of social services and the special regime governing social organizations, methodological approaches must recognize the interactive undertone of complex problems, including flexible and alternative, as appropriate, confrontation. This happens because the problems that the quality system can manage in this particular field exceed in most cases a sound and rational administrative solution using appropriately planned standard specifications. The problems usually seek an in depth recognition with emphasis on the social labor psychology and structural conditions that create them. The regulation of interactive relations is documented in this context.

The connection of problems to the interpretative and consequently their social extensions, as well as attempts to attribute and include them in the technical conditions of performing processes, could be described as a serious attempt at innovation for the implementation of a Quality System in providing services in the social sector. This is because, although applied processes follow tested and proven systemic methodologies, they can be connected to findings from the sociology of action [40]. Consequently, observance of these conditions makes it possible to select a proper methodology of Quality Systems, depending on the way their dimension and the social content of the problem is perceived, combined with the requirements of the organizations, the objectives set by the executive staff and expectations of the recipients of benefits from the provision of services.

In addition, the strategic planning of a flexible Quality System of social organizations is not fully in line with these personalized approaches although, as an official instrument, they run through the active policies for employment. These approaches, even though they are necessary at a methodological level, theoretically contradict networking and collectivity strategies and are limited to a case by case solution of the individual problems [41].

Social Policy in Greece: Problems of Effective Organization

The objectives and policies set by the European Union triggered the creation of social organizations, which in the framework of pluralism in the area of social policy, promote and implement measures concerning: combating poverty and social exclusion, equal opportunities for accessing resources, rights, goods and services, the adoption of preventive policies against labor exclusion, the provision of aid to the more vulnerable groups of population on a national, regional and local level [42,43]. Moreover, the European Employment Strategy (EES) has set full-time employment, the promotion of quality and productivity of labor, supporting the cohesion and better governing as basic aims, especially through a greater involvement of the social bodies, and through consultation which is promoted with the political institutions by the statutory bodies and the structured groups of civil society.

Greece, already having a bad history on the socio-welfare sector, was asked to follow the new developments exceeding its long-term deficiencies, which mainly originated from fragmentation, irrational planning, verticality and insufficient coordination of the existing social policy. The organizational weaknesses of the Greek welfare state can be summarized in the following three principles: a) lack of general programs for income support of those stricken by poverty, b) inequalities between employees and insured persons c) development of forms of customer administration of social programs and benefits and d) absence of connection to scientific social knowledge. Moreover, the residual character of welfare in Greece was combined with the problematic structure of the economy, which until nowadays preserved high percentages of unemployment and inflation, thus abolishing any benefits of allowance policy that may have been preferred, against quality upgrading of the provided services.

Furthermore, the following question remains: whether the welfare pluralism, which is combined with the gradual distance of the state from controlling the social protection system, may also function as a weapon against the crisis of the society. While, for instance, according to the European institutional framework, special emphasis is laid upon the adjustment procedures of interventions, the profile and needs of the vulnerable groups, the support of their participation and activation, as well as in the educational and the wider implementation procedure, the overall operation of the measures does not seem to systematically support the particular orientation and, despite their persistent promotion at the level of institutions and bodies, they do not seem to constitute a dominant practice.

Until now, the integration of the demands in question seems to be limited mainly in the planning of the related institutions and actions and in their rhetorical emphatic reproduction, without being relatively promoted at a level of implementation, observation and evaluation. Looking into the formation of the conditions for the conjunction from the declared objectives and the applied practices in some of the most basic developmental procedures of interventions (choice of subject, choice of trainees, diagnosis of needs, promotion of employment, educational work, observation-evaluation system), it is apparent that a series of the structural characteristics of the system do not facilitate the application of highly participative models during the implementation of actions.

In light of the above, it is clear that social policy in terms of social science - both interpretative-explanatory and systemic - is not applied in Greece This has two evident negative consequences: firstly, Greece takes great distance from the other E.U. Member States regarding the use of available social resources for exercising social policy, as well as with regard to positive results in the restriction of social inequalities[4]; secondly, there is weakness or lack of political will to replace customer relationships on the one hand and on the other hand the use of simple functional systems in order to tackle complex and thorny social problems with applied scientific practices, in the area of social policy, that can utilize results from the systemic social knowledge and research.

A typical example for the depreciation of quality and effective organization of functions of the State is the very low ranking of Greece, according to Euro stat figures, as to the redistributive impact of social benefits, and consequently to their effectiveness for tackling poverty. At the same time, Greece is the only country in Europe where, until recently, there was not a safety net in terms of "minimum guaranteed income" [44,45].

Conclusions

This paper has focused on the re-planning of a new rational strategy in social organizations, which is part of a system of participatory governance and should operate in accordance with the social, environmental and scientific terms of development. This plan promotes a new approach to solve the structural and social problems by consolidating economic activities, with emphasis on the social characteristics of regional social development based on democratic decision-making in matters of perception, on the improvement of social trust and the development of social capital. The lack of social participation and cooperativeness in regional or national planning shows that policy making cannot be applied effectively in the absence of organizational commitment and broader policies or without the activation of all available resources and opportunities offered at these levels. In this context, this paper has highlighted and examined the need for scientific and social research institutions to contribute to the reallocation of priorities for the development in specific sectors of social policy and innovation.

Moreover, the success of strategic planning is, to a certain extent, defined by the response to the terms and conditions of systems, taking into account social and psychological factors as well as new human resources incitement theories (in this case "Active Employment and Social Protection Policies "), aiming at regulating human behavior, so that it is oriented towards objectives that serve the technical specifications of organizational systems. Thus, with a critical view one could argue that at a level of organizational systems, the management of complex social problems is often undertaken through performance strategies that impose the adaptation of the human factor in the requirements of a technical-administrative rationality. In this case, the emphasis given to increased efficiency through a maximizing process may ignore the fact that the decision-making process as a collective activity also constitutes a balancing mechanism of social conditions of those participating in organizational structures and those who potentially may benefit from them.

In such a socioeconomic reality - even in a flexible Quality System- the social status, the collaborative abilities of executives, employees and beneficiaries come first, without degrading the technical and material resources of the operation of technological systems. Thus, relations between the organization, the technology and the human factor are

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[4]For comparative data regarding the performance of E.U. members in the field of exercising social policy, see the publications of the National Action Plans of the member states as well as the Common European Action Plan that constitutes the indicated unified interventional Framework for meeting targets.

upgraded, reshaping the motivation theory, which looks forward to the personalized benefit and to the problems concerning overall democratization of labor and employment support, in political and social terms. In the same reformatory framework, the contribution of qualitative social research can go deeper in aspects of problems arising from the traditional function of organizational systems and mainly from those carried out in social organizations. These shortcomings are particularly evident in the case of Greece, whereas the weakness to overcome them demonstrates the difficulties in using scientific knowledge and research to identify ways to solve problems, under the conditions analyzed above.

Finally, it should be stressed that the use of qualitative social research, including its modern means and tools, has great potential. Its advantages should constitute the stepping stone of social science and research, with a double objective: on the one had to give more credibility and validity to social science and its methods and on the other hand to identify better and more precisely the dimensions and content of social problems. For this reason, it is necessary to redefine epistemologically social sciences so as to be able to confront the current challenges, not only in an environment of excellent technocratic performances and best operational efficiency but also in an environment of qualitative social aspirations, prevention of social risks and crises. This redefinition requires that problems are addressed not only as technical ones but also as complex and social problems, where focus should be given to their different connotation and the value systems where they emerge. The level of independency from the common standards set by the organization systems, as well as their way of harmonization, often defines the quality of the final result. This is the qualitative leap that the modern social sciences should take, between uniformity and difference; where the simple operational adaptation does not necessarily lead to effectiveness; where diversity and reflexivity serve the society but not absolute anti-conformist behaviours.

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