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WebEx and Socio-Technical Imaginaries in Greek Education: Between Infrastructural Continuity and Pedagogical Degradation

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Abstract

This study analyzes the adoption of the WebEx platform within the Greek education system through the lens of "socio-technical imaginaries." Initially introduced as an emergency tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, WebEx has since been normalized as a crisis-management mechanism for addressing disruptions such as extreme weather events or school strikes and occupations. The research employs a critical analytical approach to digital policy and the pedagogical practices of platformization. The findings indicate that the use of WebEx shapes an imaginary of the future of education in which technical continuity and institutional stability are prioritized over the quality of the learning experience and meaningful pedagogical relationships. The normalization of "uninterrupted learning" transforms the conventional classroom landscape into a high-risk digital environment—one that perpetuates technological inequalities, the commercialization of student data, the surveillance of teachers' work, and the neglect of socio-emotional and ecological dimensions. The article argues for a policy correction, advocating for an emphasis on humanistic values (*Bildung*), student data sovereignty, and sustainable public digital governance.

Keywords**:** WebEx, Socio-Technical Imaginary, Digital Pedagogy, Platformization of Education, Crisis Governance.

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic forced education systems worldwide—including in Greece—to adopt digital platforms to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning. In Greece, the Ministry of Education selected and implemented the WebEx platform on a mass scale. Although the global health emergency has passed, the use of WebEx has not ceased; instead, it has evolved into a permanent solution for crisis situations, such as school occupations by students or disruptions caused by extreme

weather. This shift from an emergency tool to a standard mechanism raises fundamental questions regarding the long-term implications of the "platformization" of education. A study by (McCarthy et al., 2023); (Martini & Sgambato, 2025) suggests that the transition from physical classrooms to digital spaces has simultaneously hindered progress toward the 2030 targets for reducing educational inequality. Limited access to technological equipment and poor internet connectivity have emerged as major obstacles for both teachers and students. Socio-technical imaginaries play a key role in shaping how policymakers envision the future of education. (Shen et al., 2025); (Kosta et al., 2025) highlight the need to critically examine "promissory imaginaries"—the assumption that technological innovation can, in a linear fashion, resolve educational challenges.

Digital tools do not merely solve problems; they also create new, complex ones. Furthermore, (Wang et al., 2025); (Schultheiss & Backes-Gellner, 2024) argue that while imaginaries are essential for navigating uncertainty, they must be accompanied by an evaluation of pedagogical practices within their specific historical and material contexts (Gouseti & Shaw, 2026); (Díez-Gutiérrez, 2026). Without such an evaluation, educational policy risks becoming trapped in a superficial, technocratic approach. The reliance on private, commercial platforms accelerated significantly during the pandemic, both in Europe and across the globe (Szász et al., 2022); (Holl et al., 2024). This acceleration has facilitated the entry of commercial interests and the commodification of data into the realm of public education. The data accumulated through the use of WebEx raises critical ethical and privacy concerns for both students and educators. Consequently, such platforms should not be viewed merely as neutral technical intermediaries (Criveanu, 2025); (Pitorac et al., 2025). Instead, platformized work practices are inextricably embedded within the specific order of the educational sphere (Hönigsberg et al., 2026); (Litchfield et al., 2021). Platformization has the potential to intensify productivity demands while simultaneously expanding surveillance and control over teachers' work (Lousada et al., 2026); (Nichols & Dixon-Román, 2024). Technically, platforms are often defined as intermediary media that can be programmed and governed by algorithms (Zhang & Li, 2026); (Löfving et al., 2025)

However, within the school context, platformization exposes educational practices to the commercial exploitation of both school-generated data and the digital labor of teachers (Alieto et al., 2024); (Moreno-González et al., 2026); This positions the platform as an agentic actor that actively restructures school competition and operations (Alizada et al., 2025). The core problem statement concerns the government’s tendency to prioritize technical continuity without addressing the underlying pedagogical and institutional issues. There exists a significant gap between the government’s claims that "schooling continues normally and smoothly" and the reality on the ground, which reveals a degradation of pedagogical interaction, passive participation, and the loss of group dynamics. The novelty of this research lies in its critical analysis, which frames WebEx not merely as a technical teaching aid, but as a socio-technical mechanism that constructs a vision for the future of Greek education—one detached from meaningful pedagogical relationships. The purpose of this article is to examine the role of WebEx in shaping crisis-related policies, map the implications of invisibility and alienation in learning, and formulate a direction for education grounded in humanistic values and ecological sustainability.

Methodology

This article employs a critical-qualitative approach, utilizing a descriptive-analytical case study method to examine the implementation of the WebEx platform within the Greek education system. Data and reference materials were gathered from secondary literature, educational policy documents, and empirical research concerning the use of digital platforms in Greece and across Europe. The analysis focuses on the theoretical framework of "socio-technical imaginaries," data ethics, and the sociology of digital education. This framework is used to evaluate how the narrative

of "uninterrupted continuity" was formulated by the ministry, and to assess its impact on the daily teaching and learning practices of educators and students in the field.

Results and Discussion

Constructing an Imagined Future for Education and Uninterrupted Access

The post-pandemic implementation of platforms like WebEx during emergencies—such as severe weather or strikes—has fostered a social imaginary in which learning can and must proceed without interruption, regardless of physical space. This construct creates an expectation that students will automatically become digitally literate, autonomous learners, and that teacher are capable of designing synchronous or asynchronous instruction, irrespective of technical or pedagogical constraints (M. Alshehri, 2024); (Jemetz & Motschnig, 2026). Such anticipatory assumptions project a future that appears both predetermined and natural (Sanova et al., 2022). Yet, this technical continuity comes at a high cost: the surrender of public space to private platforms. Data management on cloud servers lies beyond the institutional control of schools (Dong & Xie, 2025); (Okai et al., 2014). Furthermore, this approach overlooks the ecological footprint—including energy consumption and carbon emissions—generated by digital infrastructure that operates incessantly.

Invisibility, the Dissolution of Pedagogical Space, and Shifting Power Relations

In digital classroom practices—such as those on WebEx—a new norm has emerged: cameras and microphones are frequently turned off. This condition dissolves the traditional pedagogical framework. Teachers are compelled to instruct without seeing their audience, while students are present yet remain unseen. This fundamentally alters concepts of attention, engagement, and responsibility for learning (Amirbek et al., 2026); (Mawgoud et al., 2025). The platform's inability to replicate group dynamics and non-verbal cues often leads to student passivity and indifference. Academic integrity becomes compromised, as it is often unclear whether students are completing work independently, with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI), or through the help of external tutors. Peer-to-peer interaction is severed, fostering an individualistic learning model where each person studies in isolation, devoid of genuine social connection (Hazreeni Hamzah et al., 2017); (Wieczorek et al., 2026).

The Normalization of a Pseudo-Reality and the Burden on Teachers

The government has leveraged the discourse of digitalization as a social tool to embellish the situation—masking the crisis and diminishing its own public accountability. Claims such as "schools are not closed" or "digital schooling facilitates learning" are employed to project an image of a seamless, well-functioning educational system (Wong et al., 2026); (Aviram & Shoshana, 2024) . The consequences manifest in the form of inconsistent policies, such as fluctuating procedures for recording attendance and conducting evaluations. Meanwhile, the role of teachers has undergone an intensification; they are expected to be adept at troubleshooting technical issues and participating in various remote training sessions outside of working hours—all to cultivate the image of a "lifelong learning educator." The solutions proposed for these challenges are often superficial and technocratic (such as the use of digital quizzes or games), failing to address the root issues of the learning process (Pedroso et al., 2024); (Adiatma et al., 2022).

Reconstructing Learning

Toward a Humanistic Digital Governance. To address this degradation, reliance on private platforms must be curtailed and redirected toward the use of eco-friendly, open-source software. Regarding data ethics, (Hooshyar et al., 2023); (Mameli et al., 2023)proposes that students be granted the agency to analyze and make decisions concerning their own data. This speculative-critical

approach has been shown to foster students' ethical awareness regarding platform usage (Nieminen et al., 2025); (Sandoval-Ríos et al., 2025). Education should not be reduced to mere one-dimensional technical management. Dependence on private platforms runs counter to the concept of *Bildung* (holistic self-formation), which emphasizes humanistic principles and values (Sjöström et al., 2017); (Autio, 2017). Therefore, ecological, pedagogical, and technological sensibilities must be developed in an integrated manner through the collaboration of all stakeholders.

Conclusion

Initially introduced to navigate COVID-19 disruptions, WebEx has gradually been normalized within the Greek education system as a permanent crisis-management tool. This research critically reveals a dominant socio-technical imaginary that privileges operational continuity, administrative surveillance, and technical resilience over student well-being and pedagogical quality. The uncritical reliance on proprietary platforms exacerbates digital inequalities, risks student data exploitation, and compromises social-emotional learning. These findings demand urgent policy corrections, emphasizing humanistic educational principles (*Bildung*), student data sovereignty, and public digital infrastructure over technocratic fixes. While this study provides a robust policy critique of the Greek context, its qualitative scope lacks direct longitudinal empirical data from classrooms. Future research should conduct mixed-methods empirical studies involving students and teachers, alongside comparative analyses of sovereign, open-source platform alternatives across other public education systems.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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Author contribution

Georgios Alexandropoulos: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing, Project Administration.

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In compliance with publication ethics, the author declares the use of Claude to refine the English terminology and stylistic flow of this article. The AI tool was restricted strictly to language editing; no AI was used to generate core arguments, formulate research data, or substitute critical academic analysis. The author has thoroughly reviewed, verified, and endorsed the final manuscript.

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