

The Case of High Unemployment Among Young Post-Secondary Graduates in Greece  
and the Context of the Greek Fiscal Crisis

by

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BA, Simon Fraser University, 2006

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Sociology

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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### **Supervisory Committee**

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**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. Amy Verdun, Department of Political Science  
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Dr. Douglas Baer, Department of Sociology  
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## Abstract

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This research focuses on an issue that has persisted in Greece over recent decades – long-term youth unemployment. The issue has worsened in the last few years, however, in particular following unprecedented historical times caused by a worldwide economic recession that hit Greece particularly hard. This recession that was triggered by events in the United States in 2008, set off a worldwide recession, the effects of which continue to affect countries like Greece today. It is in this context that the post-secondary graduate unemployment rate in the country soared to 20% in 2010 and has since continued to follow an upward trend. What is more, the Greek economy, with debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio reaching more than 140% in 2010 and 165% in 2011, is not showing signs of improvement. This situation is far from encouraging for unemployed Greek youth. Grounded theory (GT) methodology is undertaken in this study which borrows from both Glaserian and Straussian GT method approaches. A Constructivist Grounded Theory perspective is used to interpret findings as the thesis analyses barriers to employment, understandings and coping mechanisms in relation to Greek graduate unemployment and identifies prospects for the future. Six participants were recruited through convenience sampling and informed research through in depth interviews. Unemployed post-secondary graduates interviewed in this study offered uniquely grounded data to inform my analysis and shared timely information amidst the challenging context of the Greek fiscal crisis. The situation has gained much international attention and opened the door for re-thinking and new possibilities. Given that the economic situation in the Eurozone is inextricably linked to the conditions in its member states, this study considers employment policy in both Greece and the European Union (EU). The thesis concludes by suggesting some potential areas for further research.

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## List of Acronyms

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome  
CHEERS – Careers after Higher Education a European Research Survey  
CPS – Current Population Survey  
CV – Curriculum Vitae  
CVs – Curriculum Vitae  
EMU – Economic and Monetary Union  
EU – European Union  
EU 15 – the European Union 15: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.  
EU 19 – the European Union 19: Austria, Belgium, Czeck Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.  
ECB – European Central Bank  
EC – European Commission  
EEC – European Economic Community  
EES – European Employment Strategy  
GDP – Gross Domestic Product  
GT – Grounded Theory  
ILO – International Labour Organization  
IMF – International Monetary Fund  
LFS – Labour Force Survey  
R&D – Research and Development  
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
OAED – Organismos Apasholisseos Ergatikou Dynamikou a.k.a Manpower Organization  
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development  
OMC – Open Method of Coordination  
PASOK – Panhellenic Socialist Movement  
PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment  
SGP – Stability and Growth Pact  
UK – United Kingdom  
US – United States  
WWI – World War one  
WWII – World War two

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to the young graduates of Greece who informed this study and had the courage to share their experiences and perspectives with me. This thesis would not have been possible without them. Their resilience amidst historically economically challenging times is commendable and their conviction is truly moving.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

The issue of persistent unemployment in Greece, since its accession into the European Union (EU) and particularly over the past few years with the onset of worldwide recession and fiscal crisis, has drawn much attention from both domestic and European level public policy thinkers and academics. Unemployment has become a structural feature of the Greek labour market and of social life as a whole (Seferiades, 2003). In Greece high graduate unemployment is one of the unique aspects of its labour market (Livanos, 2010). Academic literature often addresses unemployment in Greece in relation to broader EU politics, economic development, wealth distribution and social policy analyses (Dell'Anno, Gomez-Antonio and Pardo (2006), Ezcurra, Pascual, and Rapun (2007), Koch (2008), Layte, Whelan, Maitre, and Nolan (2008), Lopez-Santana (2004), Seferiades (2003), and Sotiropoulos (2004). There is less research however, on the case of Greece that frames the problem in a more contextualized way; one that is experientially grounded in the personal experiences of affected individuals.

The purpose of my study is to explore the issue of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece. In my study, "young post-secondary graduates" are defined as 25 to 29 year old graduates from any post-secondary institution in Greece. I focus on young post-secondary graduates in Greece because they form a notable exception in EU and countries of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) regarding the high unemployment rates of young graduates (Liagouras, Protogerou, and Caloghirou, 2003). In 2007, the percentage of the 25 to 29 year old cohort that had attained tertiary level education and who were neither in education nor employed was 13.1% in Greece, compared to the European Union nineteen

(EU 19) average at 5.1% and the OECD average which was 4.8%.<sup>1</sup> In order to explore this issue, my research addresses three main questions: (1) what are barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece experience to full time employment; (2) how do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation; and, (3) what are young post-secondary graduates in Greece doing in response to manage and cope with their unemployment.

In this study I employ a grounded theory approach based on interview data collected to explain the high unemployment of young post-secondary graduates in Greece. Academic literature on the subject along with reported data from Greek and EU statistical and government policy sources is triangulated with interview data to provide further insight to the broader unemployment context among young post-secondary graduates in Greece and to the employment barriers they experience. Statistics and policy sources also provide information from which to reflect upon the effectiveness of employment policy in Greece and the European Employment Strategy (EES).

As a result of my research, I will contribute to academic literature specific to the subject of Greek unemployment from the perspective of unemployed young post-secondary graduates. Ultimately, my research findings will contribute to a better understanding of the unemployment context in Greece and may be used to inform Greek and EU employment policies and practices to improve opportunities for young post-secondary graduates in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Education at a Glance 2009: OECD Indicators – Table C3.3 - OECD © 2009 - ISBN 9789264024755

## **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

To explore better the phenomenon of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece, it is helpful to contextualize the problem by examining both how it is experienced in Greece and in other countries across Europe. A comparative overview of unemployment among post-secondary graduates in several European countries reveals similarities and differences between individual nations and regions, for instance in terms of factors such as: the causes of unemployment, graduate unemployment rates, and graduate labour market conditions. The identification of overall graduate unemployment patterns and observations from a wider European perspective results in an improved understanding of the experience as it is occurring in Greece.

When focusing on the case of Greece it is, furthermore, helpful to take into account a broader analysis by examining the macro level social, political and economic factors at play. Accordingly, my literature review provides a broader theoretical and analytical framework by addressing overall patterns, frequently discussed themes and factors that explain the situation of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates both in Europe and in Greece. It enables the consideration of a broader context from which to further reflect and make sense of the responses that Greek study participants shared in their interviews about their unemployment circumstances.

### **Unemployment of Post-Secondary Graduates in Europe**

It is useful to put the issue of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece into greater context by examining the wider phenomenon as it has

been experienced in other parts of Europe. A literature review of unemployment among post-secondary graduates in Europe reveals the issue of unemployment among graduates is often attributed to a 'mismatch' between the supply of graduates produced by the post-secondary education system and labour market needs and areas of demand in the economy. In times of recession, when the economy is weak and unemployment rates are high, such conditions are also associated with the issue of high post-secondary graduate unemployment.

In Europe, certain regional dynamics exist as there are areas where the issue of young post-secondary graduate unemployment is particularly pronounced, for instance, as is the case for southern European countries like Greece, Italy and Spain.

Mediterranean countries, share youth and graduate labour market characteristics and contexts as well as a common association of factors that is behind post-secondary graduate unemployment.

The literature review on European graduate unemployment reveals the role that individual attitude and behaviour have on unemployment experience and employment search.. As well, research and analysis on the relationship of graduate unemployment to 'well-being' arises in the academic literature reviewed and is a theme that highlights the psychological and health considerations and implications of young post-secondary graduate unemployment.

At the European level recent efforts have been made to improve the availability of data to study youth transitions from school to work. In particular, Eurostat introduced a topical module on transitions into the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2000 in 14 EU member states (Salas-Velasco, 2007). This module provides information on the first job, current

educational level, and unemployment experience of those aged 15 to 35 years old and completing education within the previous 10 years. However, there are not many university level information sources, such as graduate surveys, or they lack comparability, which in turn undermines their potential use (Salas-Velasco, 2007).

Most notable among recent efforts, is that in 1999 for the first time in Europe a major representative survey, *Careers after Higher Education: An European Research Survey* (CHEERS), compared graduates from post-secondary institutions in several European countries. Graduates were surveyed about four years after graduation and were sampled from eleven countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (UK) (Salas-Velasco, 2007). Using data from the CHEERS project, Manuel Salas-Velasco (2007) focuses his paper, *Transition from Higher Education to Employment in Europe* on understanding the university to work transition while focusing on European university graduates.

Other academics have addressed the issue of high unemployment among post-secondary graduates in Europe by focusing on country specific instances and/or cases. These include reviewed studies and papers that have focused on the issue of unemployed post-secondary graduates in: Spain (Fernandez, 2006, De la Fuente & Smith, 1995), Italy (Pozzoli, 2009), Ireland (Hughes & O'Connell, 1995), Holland (Schaufeli & Van Yperen, 1992, Schaufeli, 1997), Sweden (Reine, Novo & Hammarstrom, 2008) and the UK (Arnold, 1994, Bee & Dolton, 1990).

As a result of research done on the topic of young post-secondary graduate unemployment and more broadly on youth unemployment and graduate transitions in

Europe and within European countries, also because of recent improvements in data collection, comparative analysis of young graduate unemployment in Europe has become more viable.

When examining this issue at a European wide level certain patterns, similarities and differences can be identified. In particular, the literature reviewed revealed similarities in the general labour market environment, labour market characteristics and among the causes of unemployment for young post-secondary graduates during times or periods where young graduates were experiencing high levels of unemployment. The following section offers a deeper analysis into these similarities.

### **Labour market context and related causes of graduate unemployment in Europe**

Generally, European countries where unemployment among post-secondary graduates has been an issue, have cited similar labour market characteristics: an environment of either poor or no economic growth, credential inflation, a lack of job opportunities and labour market demand for graduates, and 'brain drain' or emigration of graduates.

It is widely argued, moreover, that the labour market prospects of students are affected by macroeconomic conditions such as: economic growth vs. periods of recession, low general unemployment rates, labour market supply and demand, etc. Micro-level factors explaining unemployment rate variations within the graduate labour market often refer to differences across academic or professional training areas of specialization, and also include psychological factors like job search attitudes and behaviours.

## **Post-secondary education system and labour market mismatch**

Bee and Dolton (1990) assert that unemployment is a measure of the extent of a labour market's failure, at a particular time, to clear; that is an indicator of imbalance between demand and supply. Alternatively, unemployment may be seen as a mismatch of the output of higher education with the needs of the economy (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 31). In the context of new graduates, unemployment arises from underlying structural imbalance together with short term supply and/or demand side influences on the pace at which each year's graduates are absorbed by the market (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 32). From industry's point of view, and also from that of the educational planner, the question of what kinds of graduate are needed is paramount, and graduate unemployment rates provide a key indicator of any imbalance between demand and supply in the labour market (Bee & Dolton, 1990 p. 25).

Bee and Dolton (1990) demonstrate that historically in the UK the basic trend of new graduate unemployment follows closely that of economy-wide unemployment, but that within the graduate labour market, there is a substantial and persisting variation across faculties and subjects. It is, furthermore, argued that in the long term, persistence of the observed patterns in the UK, indicates the presence of powerful rigidities in the graduate labour market which retard or even prevent the achievement of a balance between demand and supply (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 42). As a result the potential for influence on the graduate labour market to bring about a closer correspondence of demand and supply exists. In other words, opportunities exist to make post-secondary education and training more responsive to the labour market; or alternatively, for

promoting labour market development in a manner that enables increased capacity to absorb post-secondary graduates from certain fields and specializations.

The case of Ireland in the 1980s to the 1990s is another example of the unemployment impacts of recession but also of poor post-secondary graduate employment outcomes caused by in general an oversupply of graduates and enrolment levels across various academic fields and professional specializations that do not sufficiently take into account labour market needs.

O'Connell & Sexton (1994) conduct an overview of developments in the labour market in Ireland between 1971 and 1993. With the outbreak of world recession in 1980, the numbers at work fell rapidly and over the same period the population of working age continued to increase (O'Connell & Sexton, 1994, p. 77). They show that during this period Ireland suffered from acute and persistent labour market problems throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Unemployment soared from 10% of the labour force in 1981 to 17.6% in 1987 (O'Connell & Sexton, 1994, p.77). The labour market for young people was particularly unfavourable over the decade, and the unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 increased from 15% in 1981 to 24% in 1991 and 27.5% in 1993 (O'Connell & Sexton, 1994, p. 77).

In addition to the recession, graduate unemployment was a result of an increase in post-secondary enrolments and a mismatch between graduates produced and labour market demands in Ireland. The third-level education system produced university and non-university graduates in excess of the requirements of professional and skilled occupation groups; although it is important to note that the problem of excess supply was

greater for non-university than for the university sector (O'Connell & Sexton 1994, p. 89).

During this time in Ireland, more people were enrolling in post-secondary education. Interestingly, the most dramatic increase in qualifications occurred in the higher technician, technician and lower technician groups (O'Connell & Sexton 1994, p. 84). In Ireland a surge of university enrolment in the 1980s was partially a result of recession but also a culture of public belief in the value of higher education for future returns on time and investment (O'Connell & Sexton, 1994). The surge can also be explained by the preference for education versus unemployment during a period of high unemployment particularly for the youth labour market (O'Connell & Sexton, 1994).

### **Recessions**

Recessions, weak economies, and high general unemployment rates are cited as significant factors related to high unemployment of post-secondary graduates. The relationship of high post-secondary graduate unemployment to general unemployment, the 'cyclical nature' of high unemployment for new graduates, and the disadvantages of graduating from post-secondary education into a bad economy are discussed by academics.

A study by Lisa Kahn (2010) explores the long term labour market consequences of graduating from college in a bad economy, by examining workers who graduate before, during and after the recession of the early 1980s. Kahn uses the *March Current Population Survey* (CPS) data set from 1987 through 2006 (survey years 1988-2007) to see whether the subsequent recession of the early 1990s had comparable impacts on

workers. CPS evidence supports Kahn's robust finding that workers experience large wage losses that persist for several years post-college graduation (Kahn, 2010). The results of Kahn's study support the argument that for most groups of college level graduates, the wage effects of graduating into a poor economy would be sizeable, at least in the medium-term horizon. The long run negative effects of poor early labour market experience, additionally, include general human capital differences, for instance in terms of occupational attainment. The study finds that workers who graduated in worse economies end up in lower level occupations on average (Kahn, 2010, p. 312).

It is concluded that the 1982 recession was particularly damaging since it was large and followed by another recession that followed in 10 years. The 1990 recession was found to have had less of an impact on recent graduates than the previous recession of the 1980s; however, overall the business-cycle effects on recent labour market entrants are significant and persistent (Kahn, 2010, p. 312). Given, Kahn's findings, graduates entering the labour force in times of recession are vulnerable and disadvantaged and this conclusion is further validated by Bee and Dalton (1990) who explain, "new recruitment of graduates is the first thing which is curtailed in times of recession."

### **The cyclical nature of unemployment**

By reflecting on data analysing the recession of the mid 1970s and early 1980s, Bee and Dolton (1990) explain how in the UK the pattern of high unemployment for new graduates has occurred in a cyclical fashion and has been reflective of periods of cyclical adjustment (Bee, & Dolton, 1990, p. 33). They argue that the underlying pattern of fluctuation depends on wider economic forces and demonstrate new graduate

unemployment rises above the national level at the height of a recession but that it then falls faster as the economy recovers.

In the UK study, this relationship is defined by a positive association between aggregate unemployment in the U.K. economy and new graduate unemployment. Rising graduate unemployment therefore, can logically be expected to precede rising aggregate unemployment induced by falling aggregate demand. Equally it may be expected that graduate unemployment fall before aggregate unemployment when aggregate demand is buoyant (Bee & Peter, 1990, p. 33). While recognizing internal forces in the UK graduate labour market such as trends across post-secondary faculties and subjects are determinants of variation in unemployment levels within the graduate labour market, ultimately the basic pattern of new graduate unemployment has been the result of factors external to the graduate labour market (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 33). Fernandez (2006) also finds that employment prospects for post-secondary graduates is influenced by economy wide variables and the business cycle specifically, arguing that “the better the evolution of the business cycle, the higher the exit probability” out of unemployment.

Similar to Bee and Peter’s findings, the CHEERS project (1999) cited by Salas-Velasco (2007), finds that the unemployment rate in a given country is an important determinant of the university-to-work transition, hence to the graduate unemployment rate. It reports that graduates from countries of comparatively low unemployment rates such as the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, and the UK have quicker transitions than graduates from Germany; while individuals from Italy and Spain, which report the highest quota of youth unemployment, have a longer transition period from education to employment (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 337).

As participation in tertiary education has increased over the last two decades, the transition from post-secondary education like university becomes more important (Manuel, 2007). New groups of recent graduates could have a harder time finding their first 'good' job, compared to the smooth transitions experienced by graduates of the past (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 334). Nowadays, in many countries, the transition period is becoming longer and transition patterns are becoming less defined and less certain than they once were" (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 334).

### **The 'brain drain' phenomenon**

Another trend arising out of the academic literature on high unemployment among post-secondary graduates in Europe is the incidence of 'brain drain'; and the number of graduates emigrating to look for better labour market conditions and employment prospects elsewhere. In countries that have experienced high graduate unemployment a common coping mechanism and solution that graduates pursue is seeking employment outside their country of origin, to economically stronger countries.

In Europe typically graduates of peripheral countries such as Greece, Ireland, and Spain, have historically emigrated to 'core' countries like France, Germany, or the UK where unemployment rates have been comparatively lower during particularly difficult economic periods. Destinations such as North America or Commonwealth countries such as Australia are also places where Europeans, including those from 'core' countries, have sought better opportunities in challenging economic times. In Ireland for instance, the percentage of graduates emigrating to find work went from 8% to 29% during the 1980s. In the 1980s about 30% of all primary degree graduates emigrated as a result of the

recession being experienced, the oversupply of graduates and a poor labour market environment.

### **Commonalities in southern Europe**

Although southern European countries are unique in terms of their specific political, economic and social contexts and the structural underpinnings that create their labour market conditions for post-secondary graduates, they at the same time share certain characteristics, patterns and post-secondary graduate employment outcomes. A comparative analysis of unemployment among post-secondary graduates in Greece, Italy, and Spain reveals commonalities in labour market conditions; for instance, on average and over time, their unemployment rates have been relatively close and the causes of unemployment among graduates is explained by similar or common issues such as, the oversupply of graduates. The outstanding youth unemployment incidence constitutes a common element of southern European labour markets and Greece, Italy, Spain in particular compare (Pozzoli, 2009, p. 131).

Pozzoli (2009) characterizes and describes causes of unemployment for post-secondary graduates in Italy, and does so while outlining key factors that similarly explain causes of Greek and Spanish graduate unemployment. Pazzoli (2009) explains:

“The most plausible explanations for the difficult transition from university to work of Italian graduates are, among others: (i) possible mismatch between labour demand and supply, (ii) excessive insiders’ protection and new entrants’ relegation to temporary jobs, (iii) shortage of incentives and flexible active labour market policies targeted to youth unemployment (iv) insufficient economic

growth with a limited occupational content, and (v) a manufacturing system based on non-innovative, small and middle-sized firms demanding more frequently technical and executive staff than personnel with a high education” (Pozzoli, 2009, p. 132).

As mentioned previously, the transition period from post-secondary education to work in many countries is becoming longer and transition patterns are becoming less defined and less certain. This is especially the case for southern European graduates as there are clear differences between the north and south of Europe in the difficulty of getting a first job (Salas-Velasco, 2007). It is taken for granted in other parts of the world that generally, with increased education there are improved chances of becoming employed and there is a return on investment because of relatively better wages attained. It is less well known however, that contrary to what happens in elsewhere and in many other European countries, in certain countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, and interestingly Luxembourg, unemployment rates increase with the level of education (Fernandez, 2006, Kanellopoulos, 1995).

Pozzoli (2009) explains that in Italy, the youth unemployment rate increases among the young people with a university degree. In particular the university graduates face high unemployment rates especially in the first years after graduation (Pozzoli, 2009, p. 132). This suggests that the transition from school to work has become more difficult and prolonged for individuals with high levels of education (Pozzoli, 2009, p. 131). Thus, the more educated young cohorts face higher unemployment rates than less educated ones. Being a university graduate with a long degree does not enhance the chances of leaving unemployment and instead these graduates are penalized when compared with

those college graduates with a short degree or less education overall (Fernandez 2006, p. 174).

As Manuel Salas-Velasco (2007) cites from CHEERS data, the southern countries (Spain and Italy), which have the longest job search period of the nine European countries studied, share high levels of youth unemployment and an almost absence of simultaneous working and study situations (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 350). Based on this study Austria, Finland and the Netherlands share an early labour market entry, mainly due to high proportions of graduates combining studies and working, and relatively low unemployment (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 349).

Another unique feature of southern European countries is the common living conditions of the young adult and post-secondary graduate population, which relates to the role of the family in the south, acting as a safety net for unemployed graduates. It is well known that in southern European countries in the time during and after post-secondary education, many young adults are still single and live with their parents; and in a family context that acts as a social safety and support mechanism. Southern post-secondary graduates live at home for a prolonged period when compared to their northern counterparts and this is particularly the case as these graduates are struggling to secure full time employment in a labour market with a high rate of graduate unemployment. For instance, in the Spanish 'transition to employment' case study by Fernandez (2006), he reports for the period under study, 75 percent of the 16 to 30 year old age group turn out to be single and living with their parents.

**Individual variables – socio economic status, disciplinary focus, work experience and job search attitude**

Individually based determinants associated with unemployment among young post-secondary graduates include, socio-economic context as well as psychological considerations such as job search attitude and outlook, mental health and well-being. It has been widely argued that socio-economic status, field and level of studies, job search and attitude bear a significant relationship to the probability of finding a job (Salas-Velasco, 2007).

The individual socio-economic context of an individual and their social capital has an influence on job search, attitude and overall their employment probabilities. The role parents play through their educational attainment, labour networks and their employment occupation and status is significant (Fernandez, 2006). It's not just a matter of the degree of education but a matter of parents' participation in the labour market (Fernandez, 2006, p. 183). It is, furthermore, widely argued that well educated parents pass on to their children information about the conditions of the labour market, as well as skills appreciated in the workplace such as communication, negotiation, etc. (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 349). This has a direct effect on job search attitude, employment outlook and seeking capabilities. In today's world, "good information and guidance become increasingly important as the education and employment choices that face young people have changed and become more complex" (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 334).

In the UK study of high unemployment experienced by UK post-secondary graduates, by Bee and Dolton (1990) it was observed that there was a long run rising trend in unemployment; however, also noted that there was considerable short term fluctuation and wide variation demonstrated across and even within faculties. The pattern

of new graduate unemployment observed was also characteristic of variations within the graduate sector and this was explained by differing strength of demand and supply forces across faculties and subjects (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 42).

As a result, it has been argued, the more that education or training of a post-secondary graduate corresponds to labour market needs, the less likely unemployment is, and the less time is spent unemployed and seeking work. Job-search is likely to be shortest in subjects that are vocationally or professionally specific (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 34); and as Fernandez (2006) explains, this is because vocational diplomas and short university degrees are more labour market oriented than long university degrees. At the other end of the spectrum however, are graduates who may have to devote a considerable time to finding suitable permanent employment because their subjects are not career specific or because they have a strong desire to work within their field of study (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 38). The individual choices that post-secondary students make in selecting their disciplinary and educational training focus are key factors that implicate their future employability prospects.

Job experience during university studies is another factor that explains the transition from university to work (Salas-Velasco, 2007, p. 349). Younger cohorts face lower employment and re-employment probabilities because they do not have as much working experience as their older counterparts (Fernandez, 2006, p. 181). Even though university graduates spend longer studying, they lack the working experience that is necessary for a fast integration/transition into the labour market (Fernandez, 2006, p. 181).

Combining education and training with practical work experience is therefore, another individually based course of action that can help improve graduate employment chances. The role that differential job-search behaviour plays among graduates has also been recognized as an important explanatory factor with regard to graduate unemployment (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 42). Some academics for instance point to the fact that probability of receiving an offer is associated with the intensity of the search (Salas-Velasco, 2007). Graduates whose job-search is more intensive increase the probability of finding the first job. Variables such as attitudes to job-search and temporary employment, as well as the voluntary nature of unemployment also weight into individual based outcomes (Salas-Velasco, 2007). Overall, it is important to consider that unemployment trends are derived from a complex interaction of forces and circumstances and it is difficult to identify the individual impact of each (Bee & Dolton, 1990, p. 32).

### **Psychological and health considerations**

The implications of unemployment on the mental health and well-being of post-secondary graduates are psychological and health considerations that arise in academic literature reviewed. Some academic literature has argued that there is generally a positive relationship between being employed and mental health and well-being. Earlier research gives strong evidence for associations between risk of unemployment and psychological symptoms (Reine, et al., 2008, p. 159). At the same time some academics argue that unemployed post-secondary graduates are more able to deal with unemployment because they have a greater capacity to cope with unemployment circumstances when compared to other groups for instance, such as early school leavers. Additionally, the argument

(Shaufeli, 1997) that unemployment has different effects in different groups, and does not necessarily lead to psychological distress, points to the importance of group and context-specific factors.

Having secure employment, in contrast to being unemployed, is regarded as an important determinant of health. Research and theories about the negative health consequences of unemployment indicated that transition from unemployment to a paid job could lead to improved health. A longitudinal study of the German population shows that re-employment has a positive effect on health satisfaction for both men and women (Reine et al., 2008, p. 158).

In their study, Reine, Novo and Hammarstrom (2008) find an association between the lower probability of psychological symptoms and obtaining permanent employment as well as having permanent employment. A positive association was found between obtaining permanent employment after an unstable labour market position and a lower probability of having psychological symptoms (Reine et al., 2008, p. 157). Their findings, furthermore, suggest that transition from an unstable labour market position to permanent employment could be health-promoting. The transition from an unstable labour market position into permanent paid work seemed to improve psychological health among both men and women (Reine et al., 2008, p. 158).

A particularly interesting finding, supportive of the theory of latent functions, was that obtaining permanent employment could lead not only to a better economic situation but also to improved self-esteem (Reine et al., 2008, p. 158). Humanist-oriented accounts of motivation (e.g. Maslow, 1970) argue that the chance to use and develop skills in work helps to satisfy higher-order needs of esteem and self-actualization (Arnold, 1994, p.

355). Warr (1987) argues that high opportunity for skill use enhances well-being because it enables people to produce something useful and or attractive, to achieve targets and to make effective responses to novel or complex stimuli (Arnold, 1994, p. 355).

In his study, *Youth unemployment and mental health: some Dutch findings* Wilmar B. Schaufeli (1997) recognizes that unemployment research over the past decades has shown convincingly that unemployment leads to psychological distress and that re-employment improves mental health. Schaufeli's study however, demonstrates that socio-cultural and the socio-historical national contexts are important variables to consider which determine the employment status and psychological and mental health conditions of youth and post-secondary graduates.

### **The socio-cultural context**

Schaufeli (1997) finds that unemployment leads to poor mental health for school-leavers, but not for college graduates, because there are important socio-cultural differences between the two educational groups as graduates occupy a socially and culturally privileged position. The reason graduates are more self-determined, proactive and confident as well as better problem solvers when coping with unemployment is a result of their socio-economic status and the social capital they possess. Post-secondary graduates are more likely to have adequate information available to them about alternatives to paid work, like training programmes or unpaid activities; they have learned to spend their leisure time in a useful and satisfying way; they generally have broad cultural interests and so forth. In short, they have more coping resources at their

disposal that enable them to deal effectively with stress and their unemployment circumstances.

Schaufeli (1997) observes particular behavioural patterns of college graduates that stand in contrast to those of early school leavers, as graduates act as self-determined, proactive agents rather than passive victims to unemployment. Future employment among graduates appeared to be predicted by a positive attitude and an active way of dealing with unemployment. These observations led to the conclusion that sometimes self empowerment or even a degree of 'self-selection' takes place in the labour market to the extent that confidence and an active and problem-focused way of coping increase the chance of success (Schaufeli, 1997, p. 288).

He argues that since school-leavers are younger than college graduates that unemployment possibly interferes with their identity formation because he observes different behavioural patterns between the early school-leavers and post-secondary graduates. School leavers are not as positive, self-determining or proactive; and lack the same level of coping ability and resources to find employment when compared to post-secondary graduates because of their comparatively disadvantaged socio-cultural context (Schaufeli, 1997, p. 289).

The role that socio-cultural differences and related psychological and mental health predispositions are significant factors to take into account when considering determinants of successful employment outcomes for different educational groupings within youth and post-secondary graduate cohorts. Additionally, the specific societal and historical context plays an important role as well (Schaufeli, 1997, p. 290).

## **National historical and societal cultural context**

Schaufeli (1997) accounts for the national historical and societal setting when considering research findings on unemployment and interpreting its relationship to the mental health of unemployed graduates. He also examines how structural and cultural aspects of a society have an effect on the mental health of graduates. The degree to which supports such as unemployment benefits exists in a given society and the nature of individual living arrangements makes a difference to unemployed graduates. For instance, whether an individual lives at home with parents or on their own matters as when living with parents serious tensions could result within the family leading to psychological distress. Societal cultural factors such as the degree to which volunteering is socially accepted and exists, as it is in the case of the Netherlands where volunteerism is institutionalized, bears an influence as well; and, particularly because working in unpaid work increases the chances of becoming employed. The societal and cultural attitude towards unemployment is also important to consider. In the Netherlands, the normalization of unemployment has occurred whereby, it has been empirically demonstrated that a culture of public acceptance of unemployment has increased, particularly in the first half of the 1980s when unemployment rates increased drastically. This has thus led to an overall less common stigmatization of the unemployed and by extension less related psychological or mental distress and ailments.

Overall, the academic literature reviewed on the psychological, mental health and well-being of unemployed graduates has demonstrated that unemployment can be associated with psychological health and well-being, depending on what study and under which circumstances, as either a cause or effect (Arnold, 1994, Reine et al., 2008,

Schaufeli, 1997, and Schaufeli & Van Yperen, 1992). Similarly, both the environmental context and individual psychology and agency of young graduates play an interrelated role in association with unemployment circumstances. As we have seen, unemployment can be interpreted through a variety of perspectives and influenced by an individual's socio-economic, socio-cultural and national contexts or a result of an individual's positive attitude, behaviour and agency (Arnold, 1994, Reine et al., 2008, Schaufeli, 1997, and Schaufeli & Van Yperen, 1992).

### **Unemployment of Post-Secondary Graduates in Greece**

Academic literature reviewed suggests that higher than average EU unemployment rates and particularly high youth unemployment levels in Greece are related to the historical development of the Greek welfare state and economy. Presently, poor coordination to address higher education training and labour market needs, a weak business sector, tax evasion practices, large public sector, combined with the absence of an effective national employment policy in addition to the limitations of the EES are main factors identified as contributing to the issue.

#### **The Greek welfare regime**

In order to better understand the current unemployment situation among young graduates in Greece it is important to recognize the present nature of the Greek welfare state and the relationships stemming from its historical trajectory. The unemployment circumstances of young post-secondary graduates existent within an underdeveloped system of social protection; including lack of targeted employment policies, are better understood through a socio-historical analysis of developments that have taken place over

time. More precisely identifying the Greek welfare regime and its modern development further contextualizes the case of high unemployment among young graduates in Greece.

Greece's welfare state is unique and escapes easy categorization into welfare regime typologies. The Greek welfare state has been understood as a variant of the Continental welfare model as Katrougalos (1996) argues or, a typology such as the Mediterranean welfare model, as Esping-Andersen later proposed after his 1990 study, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

By contrast, Naldini (2003) argues that Mediterranean welfare states such as Greece cannot be fully understood if they are regarded as 'Conservative' or 'Corporatist' regimes. Naldini also explains that to view the Mediterranean model as a less developed or rudimentary form in a simplified perspective ignores key developments and characteristics that are integral to this welfare state model. Naldini's work, furthermore, contributes to greater understandings by undertaking a deeper analysis of Mediterranean welfare states and focusing on social policy and the role of the family in the south:

“In this cluster of countries the cultural emphasis on the family is not translated into high public economic transfers. At the same time, to interpret social policy in Mediterranean countries merely as 'rudimentary' prevents us from understanding the specific historical configurations that have affected social policy and the role of the family in the south” (Naldini, 2003, p. 28).

Finally, Vlachantoni's (2010) study reflects on how the Greek welfare state combines elements of both the 'Southern European' and the 'Conservative-Corporatist' ideal welfare regimes. The main point to understand from academic literature however, is

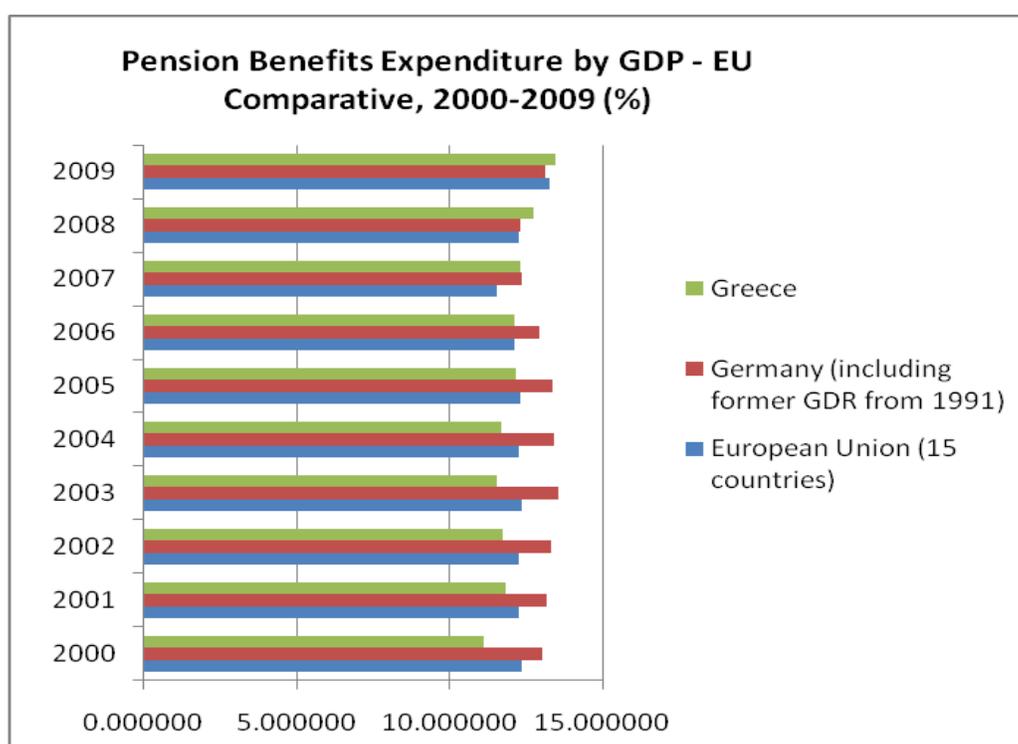
that whichever way it is conceptualized, Greece's welfare state is a distinct regime and a product of its historical development.

Katrougalos (1996) argues that the Greek welfare model is a variant of the Continental 'State-Corporate' model because it has the same institutional and organizational features; mainly financed by the contributions by employers and employees in work-based insurance schemes with social transfers in cash, related to earnings. Like the Continental model, social insurance is highly occupationally segmented and disproportionately biased towards pensions, underdeveloped social services, entitlements related to the employment and contribution record with the emphasis on the role of the family as the provider of social care (Katrougalos, 1996). Entitlement to social rights is founded on social status and work performance rather than for instance, universalistic social protection (Katrougalos, 1996). Greece's model differs however, in that it is an underdeveloped variation of the Corporate model owing to the country's relative economic underdevelopment and the related delay in ability to construct and finance a more fulsome welfare state (Katrougalos, 1996).

It is important to note some key distinctions of the Greek context. For instance, in Greece the fragmentation of the social insurance system, with the many benefits schemes and numerous regulations that exist has historically allowed for clientelistic policies. The result has been that there is considerable variance between different categories of entitlement of workers and within the retired population. Occupational groups like government employees, who are often hired in a non-meritocratic fashion based on political affiliations, are unfairly privileged with generous social insurance schemes and pensions when compared to the private sector and rest of the population (Katrougalos,

1996, p. 40). “These differentials reflect the biopolar effect of occupational affiliation in Greece, described by Ferrara as ‘a real abyss of guarantees and opportunities’ between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in terms of welfare protection” (Ferrara 1999, p. 34 in Valachantoni, 2010, p. 233). Similarly, Karakatsanis (1999) points out that Greek unemployment is characterized by significant dualism with certain groups being overprotected and other under-protected and relegated to being long term or permanently unemployed. He, furthermore, indicates that the burden of unemployment in Greece falls largely on youth and women, who are high risk groups and likely to experience unemployment for longer periods of time.

Greece also differs from countries where the Continental Corporate model exists because Greece’s pensions absorb a large portion of total government income transfers and a disproportionate amount of social expenditure is spent on old age and survivors pensions (Vlachantoni, 2010). The reason for this historically has been because one way the Greek state has attempted to deal with unemployment has been to maintain a heavy reliance and abuse of disability and other pensions to lower the size of the countries active labour force (Karakatsanis, 1999). As well, since pensions contribute to the family wage and indirectly to family welfare in general, they have been used as a tool for political manipulation and have been distributed by political parties during election years in exchange for electoral support (Karakatsanis, 1999). Despite the pension bias in terms of total social expenditure however, Greek government pension contributions by GDP since 2000 have been relatively consistent with the EU average and fiscally conservative countries such as Germany (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Pension Benefits Expenditure by GDP – EU Comparative 2000-2009 (%)<sup>2</sup>****Table 1 – Pension Benefits Expenditure by GDP – EU Comparative 2000-2009 (%)<sup>3</sup>**

GEO/TIME	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
European Union <sup>4</sup>	12.7	12.3	12.3	12.4	12.3	12.3	12.1	11.6	12.3	13.3
Germany <sup>5</sup>	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.6	13.4	13.4	12.9	12.4	12.3	13.1
Greece	11.1	11.9	11.8	11.5	11.7	12.2	12.1	12.3	12.7	13.4

Another distinguishing element of the Greek model is that the scope of social protection has been much less comprehensive when compared to other more socially developed EU states (Katrougalos, 1996). Traditionally, Greece and southern countries of Spain and Portugal, as well, Ireland have been ‘laggards’ in terms of their social spending (Katrougalos, 1996). Total government social expenditure as a percentage of GDP has

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/social\\_protection/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/social_protection/data/database)

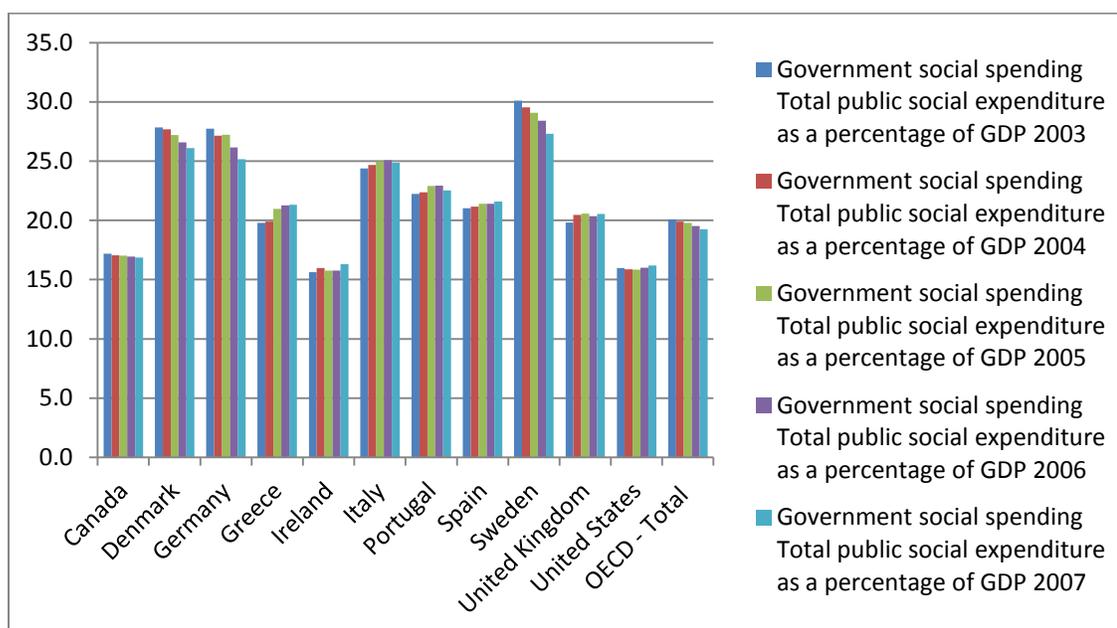
<sup>3</sup> Eurostat - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/social\\_protection/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/social_protection/data/database)

<sup>4</sup> EU 15 Countries

<sup>5</sup> (including former GDR from 1991)

traditionally been relatively low (see Figure 2 and Table 2). Greece has largely lacked funding for social provisions in areas such as the healthcare system, unemployment benefits, and active labour market programs and policies and so on. Although, in recent years, Greece along with the three other southern European welfare states have been spending a greater proportion of GDP on social expenditure (Vlachantoni, 2010) there is much room for improvement for example, in areas such as labour market policy investment.

Greece has one of the lowest levels of expenditure for labour market policies when compared to other EU countries. Figure 3 and Table 3 breakdown total expenditures by percentage of GDP for select EU countries in 2004-2009 and 2004-2010 in the following labour market policy categories: labour market services, training, job sharing, employment incentives, supported employment and rehabilitation, direct job creation, start-up incentives, out-of-work income maintenance and support and early retirement.

**Figure 2 – Total Public Social Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP<sup>6</sup>****Table 2 – Total Public Social Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP<sup>7</sup>**

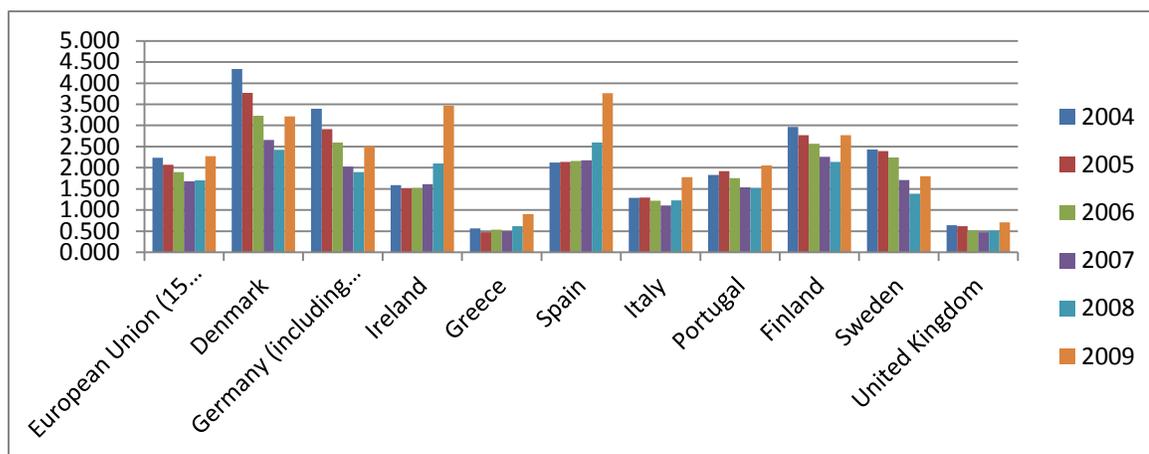
GEO/TIME	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Canada	17.2	17.1	17.0	16.9	16.9
Denmark	27.9	27.7	27.2	26.6	26.1
Germany	27.7	27.1	27.2	26.1	25.2
Greece	19.8	19.9	21.0	21.3	21.3
Ireland	15.6	16.0	15.8	15.8	16.3
Italy	24.4	24.7	25.0	25.1	24.9
Portugal	22.2	22.4	22.9	22.9	22.5
Spain	21.0	21.2	21.4	21.4	21.6
Sweden	30.1	29.5	29.1	28.4	27.3
United Kingdom	19.8	20.5	20.6	20.4	20.5
United States	16.0	15.9	15.8	16.0	16.2
OECD Total <sup>8</sup>	20.1	19.9	19.8	19.5	19.3

<sup>6</sup> OECD - [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/government-social-spending-2010\\_20743904-2010-table1](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/government-social-spending-2010_20743904-2010-table1)

<sup>7</sup> OECD - [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/government-social-spending-2010\\_20743904-2010-table1](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/government-social-spending-2010_20743904-2010-table1)

<sup>8</sup> Refers to an unweighted average of 33 OECD Countries and Estonia

**Figure 3 – Total Labour Market Policy Expenditure by GDP for Select EU Countries 2004-2009 (%)<sup>9</sup>**



**Table 3 – Total Labour Market Policy Expenditure by GDP for Select EU Countries 2004 - 2010 (%)<sup>10</sup>**

GEO/TIME	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
European Union (15 countries)	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.3	:
Denmark	4.3	3.8	3.2	2.7	2.4	3.2	3.4
Finland	3.0	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.8	2.8
Germany (including former GDR from 1991)	3.4	2.9	2.6	2.0	1.9	2.5	2.3
Greece	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.9
Ireland	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	2.1	3.5	3.9
Italy	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.8	1.8
Norway	1.6	1.6	1.1	1.0	:	:	:
Portugal	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.5	2.1	2.1
Spain	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.6	3.8	3.9
Sweden	2.4	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.4	1.8	1.8
United Kingdom	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.7	:

The Greek welfare state has been limited and largely ineffective in providing support to protect citizens from basic social risks such as unemployment and long term unemployment (Vlachantoni, 2010). The Greek welfare system lacks the existence of any kind of minimal income support scheme (aside from a minimalist non-contributory public

<sup>9</sup> Eurostat - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour\\_market/labour\\_market\\_policy/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour_market/labour_market_policy/database)

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat - [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour\\_market/labour\\_market\\_policy/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/labour_market/labour_market_policy/database)

pension assistance entitlement for elderly over 65 years age) and is the only southern European country that has not applied a universal social assistance safety net (Vlachantoni, 2010, & Katrougalos, 1996).

Unemployment benefits are dependent on previous employment and women in particular experience the shortfalls of the Greek welfare state the most strongly because of their differentiated employment patterns (Vlachantoni, 2010, p. 229 & Katrougalos, 1996, p. 40). Greek youth with enough work experience are entitled to receive unemployment insurance although, only about 6% meet eligibility criteria compared with a European average of 17% (OECD, 2010b, p. 12). Greece is among a few countries where there is unemployment funds issued to those who don't have work experience (OECD, 2010b, p. 12). Yet, only 20 to 29 year olds who have been registered unemployed for at least one year are eligible and the benefit is very small, at EUR 73 a month for a maximum of five months (OECD, 2010b, p. 12).

In Greece during the 1990s under the leadership of right wing political party Nea Demokratia Premier Constantine Mitsotakis's policies were aimed to support rapid privatization, globalization and re-structuring measures (Kofas, 2005). In 1990 parliament passed legislation to deal with tax evasion, broaden the tax base and cut social welfare expenditures (Kofas, 2005). Subsidies to various groups were also cut back, despite the fact Greece's living standards were among the lowest in the European Economic Community (EEC) and the average pension was not comparable to other European countries (Kofas, 2005). Mitsotakis introduced a host of stabilization policies in 1990, and stressed fiscal consolidation (Kofas, 2005). Policies included liberalizing the labour market however, part of this entailed that wages would be determined by free

collective and individual bargaining rather than wage indexation leaving Greece with no minimal national wage (Kofas, 2005).

In recent decades and particularly since the 1990s unemployment and long term unemployment rates have been increasingly an issue for Greece climbing to unprecedented post-war levels (Karakatsanis, 1999). Greece's youth unemployment is one of the highest among the EU and OECD countries consistently in recent years and the last decade (OECD, 2010b, Liagouras et al, 2003). According to the Hellenic Statistical Authority Labour Force Survey November 2011, youth unemployment for 15 to 24 year olds rose from 28% in 2006 to 48% in 2011 (Hellenic Republic, Statistical Themes, Labour Market, Employment-Unemployment, 2012, p. 2) . A gender gap exists in labour market activity and employment and also in terms of pension distribution. Data from 2002 indicates that approximately 80 percent of all male pensioners received an individual pension compared with one-third of all female pensioners (Vlachantoni, 2010 p. 230). This is due to women's less average pension contributions through employment and incidence of less average gross hourly earnings; and data from 2007 indicates they are one-fifth lower than male average earnings (Vlachantoni, 2010 p. 230).

Overall, in Greece there is currently a high degree of fragmentation and polarization in social insurance schemes and benefits. Universal service provision and social assistance safety nets remain extremely underdeveloped and youth and women are most affected by unemployment and elderly women are particularly vulnerable and at risk of poverty (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 41, Sotiropoulos, 2004, Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005, p. 120 and Vlachantoni, 2010). Among EU countries, Greece offers the least social protection, lacks minimum wages, the welfare state provision is overall ineffective and its

scope is far less comprehensive than in the other, more socially advanced EU states in terms of public policy significantly depending on the role that the family unit plays in providing social support (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 42).

### **Historical trajectory of the Greek welfare state**

According to Ferrera's *politico-institutional perspective*, one of two main explanations for the 'southern road' of welfare state progressions, the southern European welfare state, such as Greece, is interpreted in terms of the 'power game' resulting from the specific structure of Mediterranean polities (Naldini, 2003 p. 27). "The specific traits of polities in southern European countries include a weakness of state institutions, the pre-eminence of parties for the aggregation of social interests, and ideological polarization" (Naldini, 2003, p. 27). The second explanation Ferrera has conceived is the *developmental perspective*. It explains the emergence of social policy in Mediterranean countries by pointing to their specific paths to modernization; the characterization of which includes entrenched 'backwardness'; market and sectoral and territorial dualisms; amoral 'familialism' the strong presence of the Church, and exclusion of left-wing parties from government (Naldini, 2003, p. 27).

Both Ferrera's *politico-institutional* and *developmental* perspectives can be applied when examining the historical emergence of the Greek welfare state. The socio-historical analysis that subsequently follows, addresses the 'power game' characteristics and Greece's particular modernization path that followed the World Wars and other key events such as the Greek Civil War of 1946-1949.

According to Katrougalos (1996), the welfare state has developed in Greece in contrast to other countries of Europe because in Greece the formation of the state occurred after the formation of the nation. The new Greek state came out of World War I (WWI) from a victory and revolution against the Ottoman Empire and its basic structures were not formed within the state, rather they were influenced by the ‘Great Protector powers’ (France, Russia and Great Britain) and their chosen successive foreign monarchs that erected the state apparatus.

After the revolution against the Ottoman Empire and the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832) the economy had been ruined by a war of almost ten years so the state assumed an active and interventionist role in the economy and in the ordering of social relations (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46). ‘Statism’ and ‘clientelism’ (extensive intervention of the state in the economy and widely observed processes of creation and distribution of revenue through political – rather than market – criteria) have long been prevalent (Petmesidou & Polzoidis, 2005, p.118, Sotiropolous 2004, and Venieris, 2003). From the very beginnings of the new Greek state, the political system allowed households to direct revenue through access to the state and made traditional support networks a viable alternative in the absence of social policy (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46).

Consequently, benefit entitlements in Greece do not reflect wide-ranging social solidarities, but differential access to the state and discretionary power among various groups (Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005, p. 120 and Sotiropolous, 2004). Traditionally, market forces have been very weak and state-protected and have never challenged the paternalistic and centrist state policies (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46).

The Second World War involved shifting resources and spending to war efforts in Greece, which took priority over other government expenditures. With the occupation of Greece by the Nazi troops in April 1941 a rapid collapse of the Greek economy ensued (Vetsopoulos, 2009, p. 276). Following the Second World War, the Civil War (1946-49) further inhibited any expansion of social policy in Greece (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 48). The internal conflict in Greece was not only about pro and anti communist forces, but also about citizens who were fighting for patriotic reasons and the desire for Greece to stand independently with the capacity to exercise more sovereignty and freedom (Katrougalos, 1996). The aftermath left the state and its conscious split in two between right and left proponents, and this was a main obstacle to the creation of a genuine welfare state. Until the mid 1970s the 'dual society' that emerged after of the end of Civil War was a source of conflict and political instability (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 48). This prevented the development of the post-war golden area of the welfare state, as was experienced by other European countries.

In Greece the social contract between social actors and the state was never established as was the case in other European countries, where corporatist and social democratic welfare regimes emerged (Katrougalos, 1996). Clientelistic state policies were reflective of an active ideological role of the state favouring 'winners' of the war. "Posts in the administration were not created in order to satisfy real needs, but rather to reward loyalty to the regime" (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 48). "They were structural and persisting characteristics of a conscious effort by the dominant conservative forces to establish ideological hegemony and repress the 'communist danger' " (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 48). Extreme social polarization existed as a large part of the population was

treated like second class citizens therefore, the political climate was not conducive to any thought of a social contract (Katrougalos, 1996). During this period debate about the welfare state was absent and the rudimentary social expenses that did exist either froze or diminished (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 48).

In terms of its economic trajectory, and when examining the case of Greece by applying Ferrera's *developmental perspective*, it becomes apparent that the Greek welfare state is unlike traditional Fordist regimes reflective of post-World War two (WWII) economic patterns; and rather it has resulted from different relations of production and state provision in areas such as employment (Seferiades, 2003, Venieris, 2003 and Vestopoulos, 2009). Although, Greece shared some similarities in its modernization path since WWII, there are some key differences that help explain current structural economic shortcomings when compared to more advanced capitalist states.

Like other countries in Europe, post-WWII economic and welfare state developments in Greece were significantly influenced by the implementation of the Marshall Plan and the role that United States planners played (Vestopoulos, 2009). It is important to note that the main concern of the US administration however, was to stabilize Greece and avoid the potential for a leftist course and new civil war (Vestopoulos, 2009). "The Truman Doctrine of American aid to Greece had two specific objectives: the elimination of communist influence in Greece and the rehabilitation of the Greek economy" (Vestopoulos, 2009, p. 281). Greece's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership was also of importance to the U.S. for geopolitical purposes which included access to Middle Eastern oil fields and the control of the Soviet Union in the eastern Mediterranean (Vestopoulos, 2009).

Economically there were many key developments that resulted from Marshall Plan aid which increased production and stimulated participation in international trade, assisted with the reconstruction and development of the infrastructure of the Greek industrial sector, helped Greece decrease its deficit and increased agricultural production enormously through the mechanization of agriculture and the introduction of modern techniques (Vestopoulos, 2009).

In the context of the pre-Marshall Plan aid period, in 1947-1948, the American Mission for aid to Greece contributed the first long-term loan for reconstruction in Greece. “In this period ‘a first long-term loan for reconstruction of \$2,220,000 and 13 billion drachmas value were concluded for the establishment or extension and modernization of industries’ ” (Vestopoulos, 2009 p. 283). Although, it was determined that economic conditions in the country were unfit for the establishment of heavy industry (mainly supported by leftist intellectuals). Therefore, efforts for development focused on the expansion of existing light industries, communications and transportation in the country, electricity, and agricultural expansion. Similarly, Marshall aid planners avoided supporting the establishment of heavy industry in Greece for economic reasons, since private and state investments were negligible (Vestopoulos, 2009). Kofas (2005) maintains that uneven geographic development has been a problem for southern countries such as Greece. Income concentration and economic centralization for example has existed where it is the case that not much capital or development exists outside centres of economic activity, such as Athens-Piraeus and Thessaloniki in Greece (Kofas, 2005, p. 9).

As a result of Marshall aid planners' economic assessment and planning based on Greek economic circumstances, their decision to avoid heavy industrial development left a weak foundation for further intensification of Greece's heavy industry sector in future years. Ultimately, the post-WWII financing of the Greek economy was not based on industrially intense economic activities. Rather, the Greek government generated income largely from agricultural based economic expansion (Vestopoulos, 2009).

Despite all efforts, Marshall Plan aid could not bring about the full economic recovery of Greece (Vestopoulos, 2009, p. 295). Political instability caused by continuous changes in the Greek government, prevented the full implementation of the Marshall Plan, particularly in the early years (Vestopoulos, 2009, p. 294). The Marshall planners, moreover, found themselves in a difficult position, faced with a 'backward' economy that was different from that of any other European country (Vestopoulos, 2009, p. 295).

“The disruption of political and social life during the occupation and the emergence of civil conflict among resistance groups severely weakened the economy and had a negative effect on productivity, destroying economic foundations ... Resistance and black markets were the two basic modes of social response to the crisis of war and occupation ...” (Vestopoulos, 2009, p. 277).

In post war years, the existence of 'baksheesh capitalism,' a practice dating back to Ottoman times, involving a mixture of politics and economics that incorporated Western and Middle Eastern elements of doing business in both the public and private sectors, dominated Greek society (Vestopoulos, 2009). Academics argue that the impact

of 'baksheesh capitalism' on Greece's socio-economic development has been significant, and a serious obstacle to economic reforms and modernization efforts.

The present status of welfare provision and system of social policy can be better understood in light of the fact that in Greece, late industrialism in the 1960s and 1970s was followed by a rapid shift to post-Fordism in the early 1980s; with specialized markets and goods and economies of scope emerging, well before a culture of contractual relationships and attendant modes of social solidarity were widely developed (Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005, p. 120). Greece differs from most EU countries in that it has little tradition of contractual relations, collective solidarity and universal values upholding social citizenship (Petmesidou & Polzoidis, 2005, p. 118, Venieris, 2003).

The Greek state has never played a major role in the direct provision of social services or policy development in areas such as employment (Venieris, 2003). The residual character of social protection has occurred because of the state's inability to meet social needs and does not stem from a related societal principle (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46). In the absence of a robust welfare state, similar to those of the 'core' EU member states, the Greek welfare state has relied heavily on family and kinship ties as informal supports (Venieris, 2003).

Although, Greece has had a very unique historical economic and welfare state development trajectory, other European countries have progressed with similar outcomes. As has been mentioned previously, Greece arguably fits into what is known as the 'Mediterranean Welfare State Model' and some further consideration of this model will further define the Greek welfare regime.

### **'Mediterranean' welfare states**

The type of welfare state in Greece and high unemployment context for young post-secondary graduates can be understood by considering the Greek regime as an instance of the Mediterranean welfare state. Southern European countries of the Mediterranean 'periphery' region have experienced similar welfare state trajectories, including comparable developments related to persistent and higher than average unemployment levels.

Southern European countries have experienced a different economic pattern from that of 'core' countries (Paliginis, 2002). While the northern or 'core' countries benefited from Fordist expansion and built their welfare state upon its success, the southern or 'peripheral' countries were dominated by an unproductive agricultural sector and a small, fragmented domestic capital base (Paliginis, 2002). Their failure and inability to adopt the Fordist model deprived them of the social and financial conditions for a similarly cohesive welfare state (Paliginis, 2002). Social insurance functions best within 'Fordist' norms of long and uninterrupted careers, as in northern EU countries and North America; however developments in the European south have not reflected this model (Matsaganis, 2005). Therefore, unemployed sub-populations in countries of southern Europe, such as young post-secondary graduates in Greece, do not receive the same types and/or levels of unemployment benefits and supports available in the welfare states of the 'core' European countries. In countries of southern Europe (a.k.a the Mediterranean countries) social protection, such as unemployment benefits has been widely perceived as lagging behind the rest of Europe (Matsaganis, 2005).

## **The transition into the new European social model**

The current levels of high unemployment among young graduates must be considered in light of Greece's historically distinct production regime and welfare state development, comparably weak economic attainment in relation to 'core' EU countries and the underdevelopment of social policies including the lack of effective national employment policy and practices. As a result of these factors Greece and other 'periphery' countries have found themselves in a disadvantaged position to conform to the 'New European Social Model'; and fully benefit from the broader EU social and employment policy framework. Although, the EES and Open Method of Coordination (OMC) provide an opportunity for Greece to participate in the EU social policy framework; through working to achieve EU commonly defined benchmarks, targets, and learn best practices, there are fundamental economic challenges that arguably hinder the actualization of such goals.

Contemporary Greece can be said to be in transition from a traditional southern European welfare state model to the new European Social model (Soritopoulous, 2004). The new European Social model has been defined in most recent terms, by the Lisbon Strategy of 2000. The Lisbon Strategy, also known as the Lisbon Process (2000-2010), sets out to create from the EU a competitive and knowledge based economy, as well as shared European principles and objectives which include: the creation of more and better jobs, a new balance between individual security and flexibility, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the linking of economic performance with solidarity, the promotion of gender equality and the strengthening of social policy aspects related to eastern European enlargement (Soritopoulous, 2004). An important and central feature regarding

the implementation of the new European Social model is that social policies are attained via the OMC and ‘soft’ governance and policy approaches (Sortiopoulous, 2004).

For Greece, the transformational process involved with re-structuring its traditional Mediterranean welfare state to the new European Social model has been particularly tumultuous given its distinctive post-WWII, post-Fordist trajectory and Greece’s peripheral geo-political position within the EU. What is more is that as an EU member, Greece’s obligations to re-structure state and public policies in accordance with the EU framework have laid out a whole new set of challenges to be faced. “To put it simply, modernization brings its own peculiar challenges and difficulties. As Greek society modernizes it brings in its wake modern problems ...” (Karakatsanis, 1999, p. 260); and ones which it increasingly must address for example those presented by the present fiscal crisis.

EU membership has meant that Greece has had to adhere to strict policies of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and control inflation rates as set out by the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). This has changed traditional nation-state sovereignty – which is now pooled at the EU level; in monetary policy and to some extent fiscal policy there is not the possibility for Keynesian interventionist approaches, such as the devaluation of currency in order to encourage demand for state products (Borghijs and Van Poeck, 2002). A consequence of EMU membership and obligations under the SGP, therefore, is increased pressure on the labour market; including increased likelihood of workforce cutbacks and layoffs, given limitations around economic coping mechanisms that can be implemented during times of low growth or recession.

For instance, the Greek government's response to the current fiscal crisis – its undertaking severe austerity measures, layoffs, reducing wages and benefit entitlements, increasing taxes, rapidly selling off or privatizing state-owned enterprises and assets is a result of having limited monetary and fiscal choices and control. The fact that Greece has turned to the European Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for bailout packages to finance its debt (its loan interest on its debt) and related austerity measures, rather than implement more domestic centred monetary and fiscal policies, is arguably an implication of EMU membership.

All EU member states are bound by the provisions in the European Union Treaty to consider their economic and monetary policies as a matter of common concern. In addition those in the Euro Area need to adhere to policies related to having the euro as its currency. And again, all EU member states have the obligation to comply with the SGP which stipulates that a country should not have an annual budget deficit of more than 3% of GDP, nor a debt to GDP ratio of more than 60%. These measures were put in place to facilitate a low inflation economic policy in Europe and to maintain the strong value of the European currency and protect it against instability. Therefore, if a member country finds itself in economically or fiscally challenging circumstances, stimulating the economy by devaluing the domestic currency is not possible given the common currency and other economically active stabilization and fiscal policies, like national stimulus funding, are limited by the EMU and SGP Community criteria. Countries in challenging situations often end up looking to regional or international banks for loans to finance their troubled economies and are granted funds with high interest rates and specific conditions attached.

Although, the capacity of the Greek economy to exercise effective countercyclical expansion has also arguably been undermined by “its chronic inability to exercise fiscal discipline when the economy was still expanding” particularly between 1999 and 2008 when average GDP growth reached almost four per cent (Pagoulatos and Triantopoulos, 2009, p. 35). Moreover, “excessive public indebtedness reflects diachronic weaknesses including inefficient public administrative and budgetary structures, inadequate collection of revenues and tax evasion, high defence spending, and a tradition of clientelistic appointments in the public sector” (Pagoulatos and Triantopoulos, 2009, p. 36).

Overall, modernization of Greece and efforts to restructure the country’s underdeveloped welfare regime into better alignment with the new European Social model, have been pursued in a rapid way that arguably have exacerbated the issues of Greece’s previous state of affairs. In the case of Greece, the transformative process undertaken has not enabled enough transition time and measures to be implemented along with changes to the nature and level of social provisions in the country such as those targeted to unemployment. The shortcomings of this approach, along with the combination of a challenging Greek economic situation, strict fiscal and monetary policies and criteria required by EMU membership, and most recently the austerity measures demanded by ‘the Troika,’ have undoubtedly influenced unemployment levels and experiences of young Greek post-secondary graduates.

### **Macro-economics of the Greek labour market**

A key population in Greece facing a significant degree of unemployment is comprised of young post-secondary graduates. Greece stands at the top in terms of

relative unemployment rates of graduates within the OECD<sup>11</sup> (Liagouras et al., 2003). This is partially a result of the fact that the Greek economy has not been successful at absorbing the number of highly educated young Greek graduates coming into the paid labour force (Liagouras et al., 2003, Sotiropoulos, 2004, and Venieris, 2003). Several explanations for the economy's inhibited ability to absorb educated young graduates have been cited among academics (Dell'Anno et al., 2007, Liagouras et al. 2003, Saiti & Prokopiadou, 2008, Seferiades, 2003, Patrinos, 1997, and Venieris, 2003) and a frequently identified cause is attributed to labour market inefficiencies in Greece.

Labour market inefficiencies - weak business sector, tax evasion and bloated public service

*Weak business sector*

The limited demand of the Greek economy for young post-secondary graduates is largely due to the weak private sector and the generally poor economic performance of the country in recent decades (Liagouras et al., 2003). A significant proportion of the business sector in Greece is comprised of traditionally family-run enterprises, which typically employ less than ten people and are characterized by low productivity (Liagouras et al., 2003, Seferiades, 2003). These establishments are not viable job sources for young graduates as they do not require highly trained professionals for their operation and, moreover, cannot afford to pay for a large number of post-secondary trained employees (Liagouras et al., 2003). The Greek private sector is not strong or diverse enough to provide the number and types of jobs that will be satisfying for young post-secondary graduates (Patrinos, 1997).

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<sup>11</sup> OECD (2000 and 2001) *Education at a Glance* (Paris, OECD).

Related to the issue of the weak private sector, is Greece's lack of economic competitiveness, stemming from underinvestment in Research and Development (R&D) and technological innovation and the relative failure to focus such research on strengthening economic and labour market conditions.

*Lack of R&D and technological innovation*

Another explanation for the unemployment situation in Greece is the current lack of competitiveness of the Greek economy in comparison to its European counterparts, in part the result of lack of R&D and technological dynamism in the past (Lambropoulos, C. & Psacharopoulos, 1992 in Patrinos, 1997).<sup>12</sup> Many Greek firms are small to medium sized businesses that are specialized in low-tech, industry or service activities (Liagouras et al. 2003, p. 414). The Greek economy is characterized by an enterprise structure with a high share of traditionally family owned businesses that produce “often relatively unsophisticated goods and services for local markets” (OECD, 2010a, p. 15).

Academic literature has cited low levels of technological innovation and underdeveloped R&D activities as two key factors related to the lack of diversity in the private sector and weak economic performance of the country (Liagouras et al., 2003). Greece's performance in innovation as measured by many standard indicators is low and R&D investments in Greece are negligible (OECD, 2010a). The country also has one of the lowest business sector R&D expenditure (as share of GDP) in the EU; moreover, public research has not co-evolved with industry and is weakly linked to domestic demand, especially detached from domestic business firms (OECD, 2010a). Lastly, developments in green technologies and infrastructure programs have been limited and

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<sup>12</sup> “Report for Selected Countries and Subjects.” *World Economic Outlook Database, April 2011*. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved: 13 July 2011

Greece's environmental expenditures are less than 1% of GDP (OECD, 2010a, p. 15). Progress that has been made in this regard is due to related investments because of EU supportive financing. For the period 2007-13, 25% of EU funds available to Greece have been earmarked for green investments (OECD, 2010a, p. 15). Exploring ways of stimulating economic growth and increasing job creation through R&D as well as technological innovation, while ensuring responsiveness to labour market needs, is of paramount importance in the Greek case.

#### *Black economy*

Greece is also characterized by high levels of tax evasion and the largest 'shadow economy' in Europe (Dell'Anno et al., 2007 and Sotiropoulos, 2004). Many of the small businesses, prevalent in Greece, hire illegal immigrants who are paid cheap labour under the table (Dell'Anno et al., 2007). These businesses make up an informal economy that has been estimated to be close to about a third of GDP (Schneider, 1999 in Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005). Given the relatively small number of personnel required to run such businesses, tax evading practices can be easily negotiated between staff and employers (Dell'Anno et al., 2007 and Sotiropoulos, 2004).

The shadow economy and business sector tax evasion in Greece contributes to the high unemployment problem in at least two fundamental ways: first, it undermines the availability of legitimate job opportunities in the labour market for young graduates; second, it deprives the government of tax revenues that could be allocated as funds or programs aimed at supporting the unemployed.

*Inefficient public sector*

The fact that there has traditionally been a large public service in Greece, as a result of post world war politics, and that this sector consumes government revenue rather than generating it, contributes to an unproductive or inefficient labour market environment. From the beginning the state has been an employer of first choice for Greeks; Comte de Gobineau, a visitor to Greece in 1905 when the modern Greek state was in its infancy reported, “all Greeks seem to believe that, since the state is the only one which has the finances, one should take advantage and work as a civil servant.” At the end of the nineteenth century the number of civil servants was seven times higher than that of the British Empire (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46).

The OECD (2010) reports that, “Greece has one of the highest disparities between the number of public servants as percentage of the workforce and their compensation as percentage of total compensation” (OECD, 2010a, p. 13). This trend of a bloated public service has continued today as have clientelistic policies of recruitment to the civil service. Governance approaches have not been compatible with the role of state as “neutral arbiter,” indifferent to social cleavages and interests. Public employment has neither historically nor presently fulfilled any welfare state function; instead it achieves the clientelistic policies of the principal political parties (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 46). Although the left leaning Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) government was elected in 2009 on a strong mandate to fight corruption, Greek people lack trust in their government (OECD, 2010a). This is related to the lack of progress in improving the functioning of public administration and services, perceived lack of transparency, politicization of public services and weak accountability (OECD, 2010a).

### Post-secondary education and labour market mismatch

It is often argued by academics and other research or statistical sources that in Greece, there is a mismatch between an overly educated population and a low demand from the domestic labour market for highly trained professionals (Liagouras et al., 2003). The number of individuals with third-level education in Greece is very impressive but this accomplishment has only contributed to a sharp increase of unemployed young graduates, since the structure and curricula of higher education do not satisfactorily match with the demands of the job market (Liagouras et al., 2003, and Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005). There are also shortcomings of the education system that include weak Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) scores, pointing at quality problems at primary and secondary levels (OECD, 2010a). In later years, moreover, it is often the case that curricula for students pursuing vocational and technical education do not adequately prepare graduates with the competencies required for post-school life (OECD, 2010a). Over the last decade vocational training programmes have expanded (mostly due to available EU funding) however, a large number of students are placed in the programmes without employment prospects (Petmesidou & Polyzoidis, 2005, p. 131). According to the OECD (OECD, 2010b), "...[n]one of the vocational routes currently available within the Greek education system combines class-based learning with work-based training despite this being regarded internationally as the most effective learning method in vocational education" (OECD, 2010b, p. 7).

The effectiveness of these programmes therefore is very limited without responsive student to employment transition strategies and practical training opportunities. The only route to substantial on-the-job training is available through apprenticeships run by the public employment service the 'Organismos Apasholisios

Ergatikou Dynamikou,' (OAED) which is the Greek Job Development Organization also known as the 'Manpower Organization of Greece' (OECD, 2010b). It is a two year program that includes off-the-job training and work practice however, there are few placements available (OECD, 2010b). Opportunities to expand this program to areas beyond traditional trades have not been explored (OECD, 2010b).

The post-secondary education system has, furthermore, been criticized for contributing to the high unemployment situation for young graduates because of its allegedly slow response to the continually changing technological environment of the labour market (Liagouras et al., 2003, and Patrinos, 1997). The Greek university system lacks well developed performance evaluation indicators or mechanisms and "requires increasing responsiveness and flexibility to changing demand conditions" (OECD, 2010a, p. 13).

### **Young Post-Secondary Graduates in Greece**

#### Demographic snapshot

The situation for young post-secondary graduates in Greece has progressively worsened in recent years. For example, Eurostat reports that unemployment, for Greek post-secondary graduates having achieved first and second stages of tertiary education aged 15 to 39 years old, rose from 11.9% in 2007 (Q4) to 18.2% in 2010 (Q4)<sup>13</sup> compared to the EU (European Union fifteen (EU 15) ) figures starting to rise from 4.9 % in 2007 (Q4) to 7.4% in 2010 (Q4)<sup>14</sup> (See Table 4). Taking a further look at data from Eurostat on Greek post-secondary graduates 25 to 29 years of age, between the 10 years

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<sup>13</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfqs\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfqs_urgaed&lang=en)

<sup>14</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfqs\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfqs_urgaed&lang=en)

of 2000 to 2010, reveals a pattern of first, a gradual and modest decrease in unemployment levels beginning in 2000 to 2006, and later an upward escalation of unemployment in 2006/2007 to 2010<sup>15</sup>. During this time there is a sharp rise in unemployment; where the increase for females is from 18.4% in 2007 to 21.7% in 2010 and for males is 13.1% in 2006 to 20.7% in 2010<sup>16</sup>. Figure 4 illustrates the 10-year trends for males and females. Figure 5 illustrates a comparative cross section between 25 to 29 year old post-secondary graduate unemployment levels in the EU, within the EU 15 and in Greece between the years 2000 and 2010.

**Table 4 – Unemployment Rates by Sex, Ages 15-39 and Tertiary Level of Education Attained 2007-2010 (%)<sup>17</sup>**

Unemployment rates by sex, ages 15-39 and tertiary level of education attained <sup>18</sup> (%) 2007-2010				
AGE	From 15 to 39 years			
GEO/TIME	2007Q4	2008Q4	2009Q4	2010Q4
European Union <sup>19</sup>	4.9	5.4	7.2	7.3
European Union (15 countries)	4.9	5.6	7.3	7.4
Greece	11.9	10.8	12.3	18.2
Ireland	3.0	4.8	8.5	8.9
Portugal	12.0	9.1	8.5	10.7
Spain	6.5	9.4	13.0	14.6

<sup>15</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en)

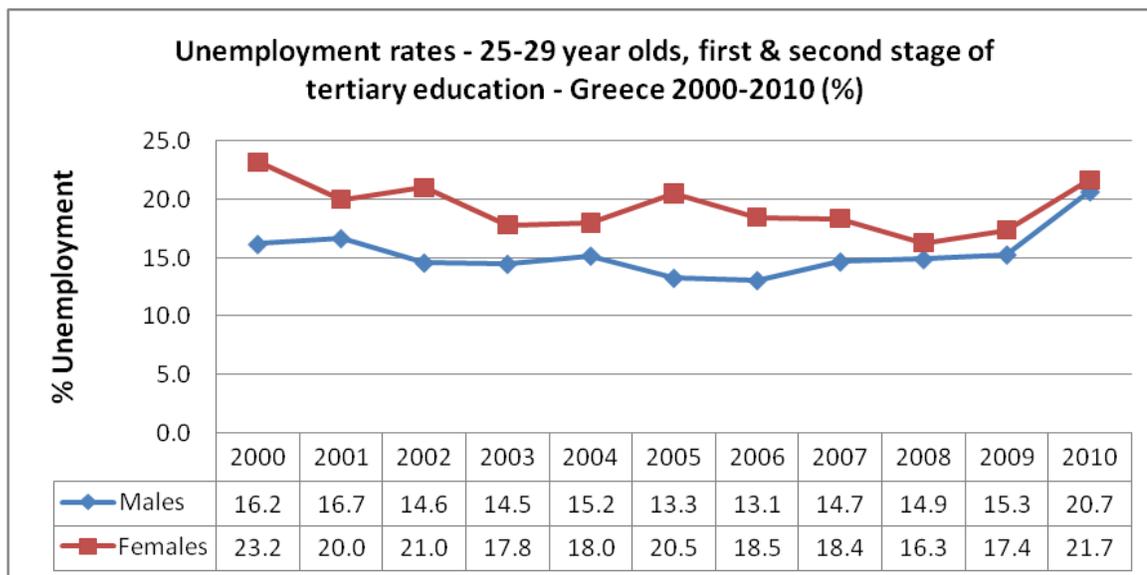
<sup>16</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en)

<sup>17</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsq\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsq_urgaed&lang=en)

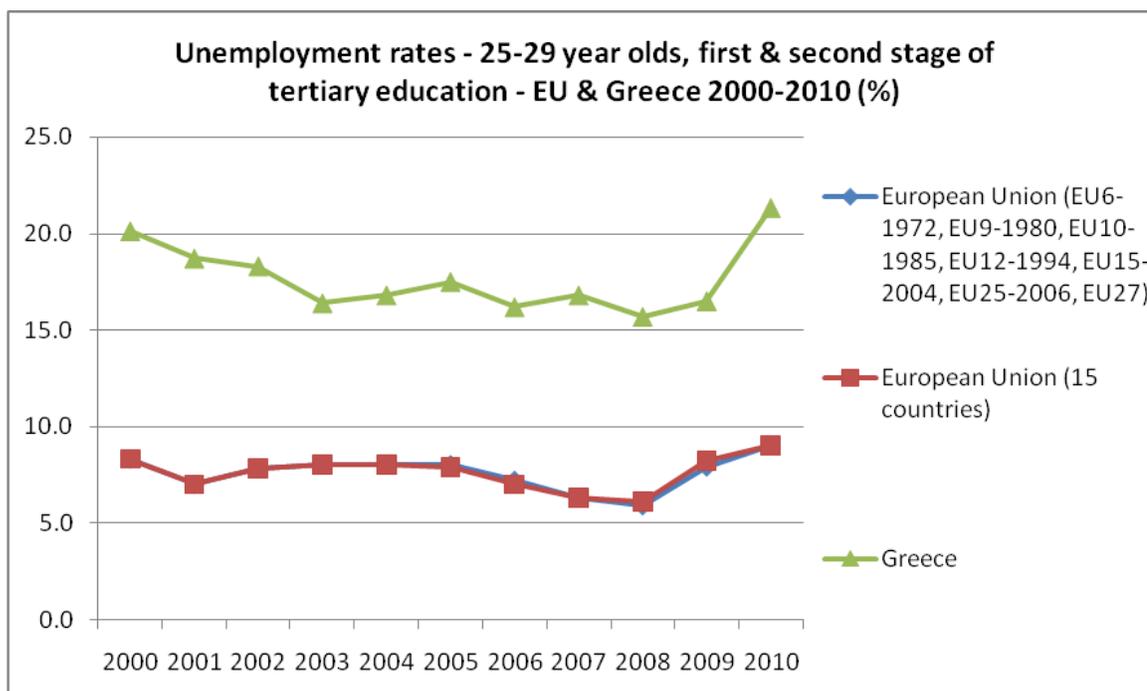
<sup>18</sup> Tertiary education - levels 5-6 (ISCED 1997)

<sup>19</sup> (EU6-1972, EU9-1980, EU10-1985, EU12-1994, EU15-2004, EU25-2006, EU27)

**Figure 4 – Unemployment Rates 25-29 year olds, First & Second Stage of Tertiary Education in Greece 2000-2010 (%)**<sup>20</sup>



**Figure 5 – Unemployment Rates 25-29 year olds, First & Second Stage of Tertiary Education in the EU & Greece 2000-2010 (%)**<sup>21</sup>



<sup>20</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en)

<sup>21</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa\\_urgaed&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_urgaed&lang=en)

Eurostat reporting is consistent with what other statistical sources such as the OECD, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Hellenic Statistical Authority report on the unemployment of youth and young post-secondary graduates in Greece.

According to the OECD in 2007, the percentage of the 25 to 29 year old cohort that had attained tertiary level education and who were neither in education nor employed was 13.1% in Greece, compared to the EU 19 average at 5.1% and to the OECD average which was 4.8%<sup>22</sup> (See Table 5). The ILO reports that Greek men and women aged 25 to 29 made up 24.1% of the unemployed<sup>23</sup> in 2007 and 23.6% in 2008<sup>24</sup> (See Appendix A). The ILO also states that between the years 2005-2008, the 25 to 29 year old cohort of the total unemployed Greek population aged 15 to 75 & over, consistently represented the highest unemployment rate<sup>25</sup> (see Appendix A).

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<sup>22</sup> OECD Education at a Glance 2009 Table C3.3 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/664770480457> ISBN 9789264024755

<sup>23</sup> of the total Greek population aged 15-75 & over.

<sup>24</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

<sup>25</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

**Table 5 – Cohort Population not in Education and Unemployed by Level of Educational Attainment, Age Group 20-24, 25-29, 2007 (%)<sup>26</sup>**

Percentage of the cohort population not in education and unemployed (2007) By level of educational attainment, age group and gender			
Indicator measured: How successful are students in moving from education to work?		Tertiary education	
		20-24 <sup>1</sup> (7)	25-29 (8)
<b>Greece</b>	Males	c	11.5
	Females	27.9	14.4
	<b>M+F</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>13.1</b>
<b>OECD average</b>	Males	6.3	5.7
	Females	9.4	5.4
	<b>M+F</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>EU19 average</b>	Males	6.3	5.8
	Females	10.4	6.0
	<b>M+F</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>

These statistics are alarming for many reasons not least of which is because, as the EU recognizes, youth unemployment and low participation of young people in the labour force raises concerns as to their integration into society overall (European Commission, 2007). Using the full potential of youth is, furthermore, a requisite for future economic growth and social cohesion (OECD, 2010b). A special report released in 2010 by the OECD titled, *Jobs for Youth/Des Emplois pour Les Jeunes: Greece 2010* illustrates the problematic state of integration of young Greek graduates into the labour force. It states that upon leaving education, the unemployment rate of tertiary-educated youth is higher than that of youth without any qualifications, and it takes two to three years for this situation to invert (OECD, 2010b).

Further validating this point is evidence from the Hellenic Statistical Authority that reports in their *Survey On the Entrance of Young People into the Labour Market:*

<sup>26</sup>OECD Education at a Glance 2009 Table C3.3 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/664770480457> ISBN 9789264024755

*April-June 2009*, that a significant amount of the respondents, 30.7% reported they found a job four or more years after they had stopped formal education (Hellenic Republic, Statistical Themes, Labour Market, Special Survey Labour Force, 2011, p. 2). According to the survey results the majority of young people, 40.5% found a first job as employees and in a position that was full time but temporary in nature (Hellenic Republic, Statistical Themes, Labour Market, Special Survey Labour Force, 2011, p. 2). What is more, the phenomenon of ‘over-qualification’ is widespread in Greek society with many tertiary graduates working in retail sales positions and not using their knowledge, skills and full potential to contribute to society (OECD, 2010b).

#### Gender inequality

Data for the unemployed in Greece has also indicated that men and women experience a substantial difference in their respective unemployment rates. This is clearly demonstrated by the OECD’s Country statistical profile of Greece for the year 2011-2012. It reports that the unemployment rate for women and the female civilian labour force is 16.2% which is in stark contrast to the rate for men or the male civilian labour force at 10% (OECD, 2012, p. 2). This trend is also apparent when considering the young graduate population.

The ILO reports the unemployment rate of 25 to 29 year old women, as a proportion of the total population aged 15 to 75 & over, in 2008 stood at 13.6%<sup>27</sup> (see Appendix A). Comparatively, males 25 to 29 years old represented 10% of the total Greek unemployed aged 15 to 75 & over in 2008<sup>28</sup> (see Appendix A). Another indication of the level of gender inequality in the young Greek work force is observed in the labour

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<sup>27</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

<sup>28</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

force participation rate of 25 to 34 year olds in 2009 (See Table 6). As stated by the ILO in 2009, the labour force participation rate of 25 to 34 year old women was 76% compared to the significantly higher male labour force participation rate for 25 to 34 year olds at 94%<sup>29</sup>. The gender gap can also be reported in terms of long-term unemployment in percentage of unemployment in Greece. Eurostat found that in 2009, 34.4% of men were long-term unemployed whereas, 45.6% of unemployed women were unemployed long-term that year<sup>30</sup> (see Figure 6, Table 7).

In 2008, men and women who had attained a tertiary level of education (in a theoretically or practically oriented program) represented 22% of the total unemployed Greek population (aged 15 to 75 & over and based on educational attainment) (see Appendix B). Of the above mentioned 22%, men made up 8%, and women 14%<sup>31</sup> (see Appendix B). The respective figures reported for women and men indicate a considerable difference in unemployment conditions between men and women of this age group.

**Table 6 – ILO – Labour Force Participation Rate By Age Group and Sex in Greece 2009 (%) and ('000)<sup>32</sup>**

<b>ILO - Labour Force Participation Rate (%) By Age Group and Sex – Greece 2009</b>				
<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Labour Force Participation Rate (%)</b>	<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	<b>Population ('000)</b>
15-24	MF	29.6	358.2	1210.9
15-24	M	33.0	206.34	626.1
15-24	F	26.0	151.8	584.8
25-34	MF	85.3	1428.1	1673.7
<b>25-34</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>94.0</b>	819.7	872.1
<b>25-34</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>76.0</b>	608.3	802.0

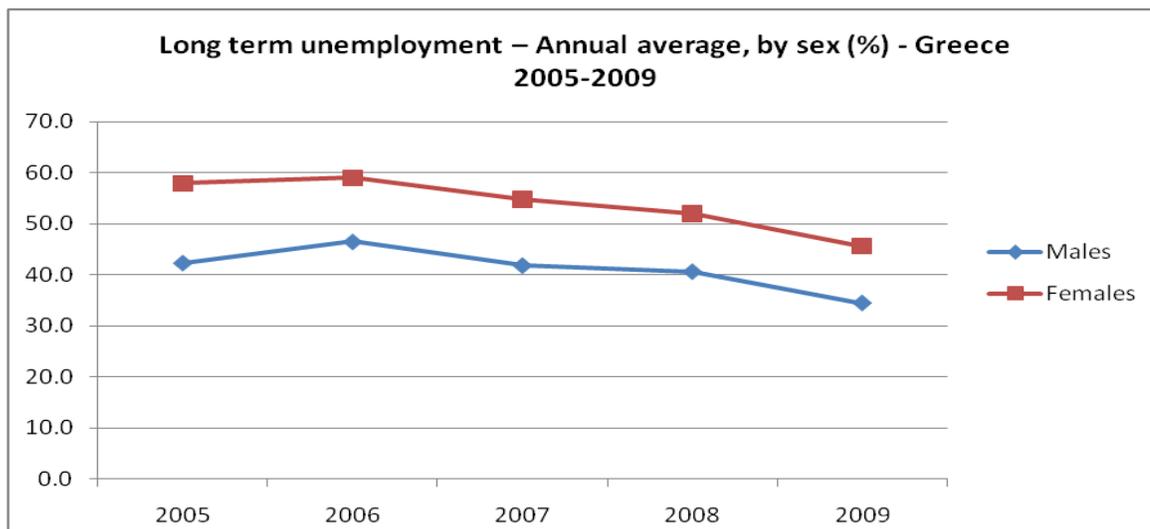
<sup>29</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

<sup>30</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une\\_ltu\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_ltu_a&lang=en)

<sup>31</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

<sup>32</sup> ILO LABORSTA Database - <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

**Figure 6 – Long Term Unemployment Annual Average by Sex in Greece 2005-2009 (%)<sup>33</sup>**



**Table 7 – Long Term Unemployment Annual Average by Sex in Greece 2005-2009 (%)<sup>34</sup>**

Greece - Long term unemployment – Annual average, by sex (%)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Males</b>	42.3	46.5	41.8	40.6	34.4
<b>Females</b>	57.9	59.0	54.8	52.0	45.6

<sup>33</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une\\_ltu\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_ltu_a&lang=en)

<sup>34</sup> Eurostat - [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une\\_ltu\\_a&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_ltu_a&lang=en)

### Chapter 3 – Methodology

My study employs grounded theory<sup>35</sup> as the methodological approach to explore the issue of ‘high unemployment’<sup>36</sup> among ‘young Greek post-secondary graduates.’<sup>37</sup> The method of grounded theory is a process of inductive theory building aimed at understanding social action in an interpretive and flexible way; as opposed to research practice that is framed by rigid and pre-determined criteria or definitions at the outset. Given that the primary goal of my research is to gain greater understandings about unemployed young post-secondary graduates in Greece – their personal, varied experiences and daily life – grounded theory has enabled a bottom up or organic approach suitable for capturing wide ranging and contextual information. I chose this methodology because it is conducive to analysing, describing and explaining data collected from qualitative research, characterized by in-depth interviews with persons sharing information of a subjective nature.

Epistemological beliefs behind grounded theory methodology are that data concepts and themes that emerge from information collected during the research process are considered in an interpretive manner. The interpretive and constructivist perspective adopted by this study acknowledges the relative, contextual nature of reality and assumes that unique and varied data cannot be fully measured by quantifying or objectifying, without losing varying degrees of intrinsic meaning.

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35 Grounded Theory is a method that involves developing emergent theories of social action through the identification of analytical categories and the relationships between them (Ritchie and Lewis 2007:12).

36 Defined according to Eurostat.

37 An individual 25-29 years old who is a post-secondary graduate in Greece.

## Sample and Sampling Technique

The target sample size for this study was 6 to 10 participants and my sample ended up consisting of six individuals who were selected through convenience sampling.<sup>38</sup> During the recruitment phase of my study I tried to ensure that selected participants contributed to symbolic representation<sup>39</sup> and satisfied the definition of my target population.<sup>40</sup> Five of the six participants in my study fulfilled the following selection criteria: they were (1) between the ages of 25 to 29 years old, (2) of Greek descent, (3) currently living in Greece and (4) unemployed without full time work for at least six months. There was one participant out of the six included in my study that met all criteria except the age definition, as he was 31 years of age – a little older than the desired target population. Despite, this limitation the 31 year old participant was included in consideration of financial and timing constraints; and because I was dealing with a hard-to-reach population as a result of the stigma of being unemployed.

In December 2010 while living in Greece, I received ethics approval from the University of Victoria Research Ethics Board to begin recruitment of participants and data collection by conducting in-depth interviews. Given the short time frame and limited financial resources that I was working under, convenience sampling was the most efficient participant recruitment technique to employ. I used my existing network of

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38 Convenience Sampling lacks any clear sampling strategy: the researcher chooses the sample according to ease of access (Ritchie and Lewis 2007: 81).

39 In striving for Symbolic Representation (use of prescribed selection criteria) a unit is chosen to both 'represent' and 'symbolize' features of relevance to the investigation. (Ritchie and Lewis 2007: 83).

<sup>40</sup> An individual 25-29 years old who has graduated from any post-secondary institution in Greece and is currently unemployed in Greece. The individual has been recruited through convenience sampling and agrees to participate in my study by being interviewed about their experiences.

family and acquaintances in the Greater Thessaloniki Region of Macedonia, Greece as a starting point for recruiting participants and to begin sampling.

Participants fitting my sampling criteria were contacted by a third party, a friend or family member within my personal network in the greater Thessaloniki region of Greece. This was done either in person or by phone and via word of mouth to inform potential participants about my study and who I was (i.e. my relationship to the third party). It was determined whether the individual wanted their information to be passed on to me or alternatively, if they preferred to reach me via email or phone to discuss matters further. Family and friends were given copies of 'Participant Consent Forms' and 'Interview Questions' (see Appendices C & D) in order to assist them with the recruitment process and describing the initial parameters of my study. This also enabled individuals to review information in more detail and familiarize themselves with what would be required of them in the study, ahead of my first conversation with them.

Once potential participants were identified and a couple days had passed since they were approached and had expressed interest in being interviewed, (unless otherwise arranged), I made contact through email or a follow up telephone call. I introduced myself, explained who had referred the prospective participant to me. I asked whether he or she had had the chance to take a look at study documents provided, and discerned whether or not there was still interest in participation. Part of the initial discussion involved a general explanation of how my study was part of Master degree requirements, how findings would be used, and an overview of anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any point during the interview. The specific site where the interviews took

place was negotiated with each individual and ranged from a private area in a community library and accessible office space to a semi-private coffee shop environment.

While in Greece, I managed to recruit and schedule four interviews. I returned to Canada two participants short of my target sample size as a result of time constraint experienced between having received 'Ethics approval' and my plane departure leaving Europe. Before leaving Greece however, I learned of potential participants, who would be willing to take part in an interview online via 'Skype' when I was back in Canada. Accordingly, after having received approval for a 'Modified Ethics Protocol' in March 2011, I completed Skype interviews with two additional study participants and reached my target sample size.

## **Data Collection**

### **Interviews**

The primary means for data collection has been to audio-record four face to face in-depth interviews in Greece and two online Skype interviews in Canada. I used a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix E) that consisted of open-ended and close-ended questions to answer the overarching research questions of my study. The interview guide I used was made of four components: the overarching research questions, corresponding semi-structured interview questions listed underneath, probes for each set of questions that could be readily used to capture richer accounts and a space for observations and notes. During each interview I took notes to capture body language or to note relevant observations. The personal notes assisted with data analysis and strengthened the internal validity of findings. The use of an audio-recorder was helpful

during data collection as it freed up some of my focus to concentrate on managing the flow, tone, and depth of interviews. An audio-recorder made it easier to document all that was said without the timely process of writing everything down; and in a paraphrased manner that is less accurate. Post-interview notes were taken to document personal feelings about the interviews, which later contributed to overall study reflections and considerations. I engaged in theoretical memoing throughout the research process; during my time in ‘the field’ and particularly during data collection, analysis and writing stages in order that I noted critical reflections, thoughts and conceptualizations about daily situations, particular incidences, relationships or subject matter related to my study in general.

### **Data analysis/interpretation**

My overall approach to data analysis was to look for emergent themes from data collected by following the steps of an analytical hierarchy. Analyzing data involved several steps such as translating two interviews from Greek to English (with the assistance of a professional company), transcribing all six interviews, summarizing each of the interviews according to emergent themes, and consolidating data from each of the interviews into one master document of main interview themes and concepts. The use of qualitative research analytical software, ‘HyperResearch,’ a code and retrieve program, assisted me with more specifically tagging data from each interview and creating 87 codes reflecting the breadth of concepts that were raised across all of the interviews. By tagging data in this way, I was also able to produce frequency charts; reflecting how often a code or concept was raised (see Appendix F). The software also enabled me to retrieve

particular quotes or segments of data with relative ease to support data analysis and reporting.

As a result of having coded concepts and themes based on ‘open coding’<sup>41</sup> I produced a conceptual framework of main emergent themes and sub-themes (see Appendix G). This was a document intended to further clarify and organize my data set, however it was not meant to be the ‘final’ assortment of concepts and themes. Throughout the process of interpreting participant responses, I re-fined and re-thought categorizations; coding, concepts and the meanings attached to the data, including the connections between them via a mental process of axial coding.<sup>42</sup> As I moved onto the reporting and writing phase of my research, I used my conceptual framework of main emergent themes and sub-themes to guide the body of my data analysis section. In the analysis, I summarized data and quoted interview responses that supported my interpretations, noted distinctive patterns, characteristics and associations under each theme listed. At all times I tried to frame data in a coherent and transparent manner; and based on my interpretation of the meanings interviewees were sharing in their responses and our interview dialogue.

### **Ethical Considerations**

My research involved careful ethical considerations and procedures which included: obtaining ethics approval, ensuring the research process did not result in harm to individuals participating, and informing participants of the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Anonymity was guaranteed in the dissemination of results by the use

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<sup>41</sup> **Open coding** a way to generate an emergent set of categories; by examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data (Kendall, 1999).

<sup>42</sup> **Axial coding** is the process whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding; of relating codes to each other and making connections between categories and sub-categories (through inductive and deductive thinking) (Kendall, 1999).

of fictitious names in association with participant responses. Limitations to complete anonymity have been explained because I the 'researcher' am able to associate interview responses with the individual participants and therefore, study participant identity is not entirely anonymous.

To address the issue of confidentiality, all research data collected has been handled and kept in a confidential manner by storing audio recordings, and electronic documents and files in a password protected computer. Interview notes, consent forms and other sensitive documents, have been locked in a filing cabinet in a private location. I have used fictitious names to associate data collected from the participant and his or her responses which further contributes to the confidentiality of responses. I explained to study participants that a limit to complete confidentiality in this study exists as the recruitment method of convenience sampling involved their identification as a potential participant by someone in their personal network, which in itself compromises the complete confidentiality of their participation in the study. Plans to store all data collected in a confidential and anonymous manner for up to seven years after the completion of my thesis report were explained. Participants were informed that when the disposal of data occurs, data on paper will be shredded and electronic audio recording files will be erased.

Ethical considerations and procedures have been approved in writing as participants read and signed informed consent forms for the study. The written consent form outlines all ethical considerations and is officially documented agreement and expression of participants' willingness to participate in the study according to the parameters outlined.

## Validity of Findings

### Internal and external validity

My study took measures to strengthen the validity of findings by addressing issues of internal validity<sup>43</sup> (credibility) and external validity<sup>44</sup> (transferability or inferential generalisation) in various ways. In terms of internal validity, I acknowledge that as the researcher I have held a position of power in terms of analyzing data and reporting findings based on my interpretations and documentation choices. I have done my best to correctly convey the intended meaning behind interview responses and the context from which meanings originated. I ‘checked the accuracy of fit’<sup>45</sup> of interpretations by constantly comparing codes and concepts in relation to raw interview data; to validate or re-think and re-conceptualize their classification and corresponding relationships with main themes found. I also employed ‘deviant case analysis’<sup>46</sup> by including a sub-section of the discussion chapter called ‘ambiguities’ with the purpose of considering inconsistent and ambiguous data, or miscellaneous findings in further detail. Familiarity with the ‘Greek context;’ as a result of Greek heritage, language competencies and having lived in Greece for three months during the research process

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<sup>43</sup> Concerned with whether you are ‘investigating what you claim to be investigating’ (Arksey and Knight, 1999 in Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273).

<sup>44</sup> Concerned with the extent to which ‘the abstract constructs or postulates generated, refined or tested’ are applicable to other groups within the population (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982 in Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273) and to other contexts or settings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 in Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273).

<sup>45</sup> Constant comparative method (Silverman, 2000 in Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273) or checking accuracy of fit (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 in Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273) involve deriving hypotheses from one part of the data and testing them on another by constant checking and comparison across different sites, times, cases, individuals etc. (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273).

<sup>46</sup> Ensures that deviant cases or ‘outliers’ are not forced into classes or ignored but instead used as an important resource in aiding understanding or theory development (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 273).

has strengthened my interpretive capacity and has guided reporting choices regarding the topic under study.

The methodological choices to strengthen external validity included undertaking: ‘triangulation of sources,’<sup>47</sup> ‘methods triangulation,’<sup>48</sup> ‘theory triangulation,’<sup>49</sup> ‘member checking,’<sup>50</sup> and probing for ‘thick description.’<sup>51</sup> The triangulation of sources between data reported from interviews and personally recorded observations and thoughts while in the field have helped to make sense of potential ambiguities. Methods triangulation comparing the qualitative data rendered from the detailed interview accounts of participants with secondary quantitative data from statistical databases and figures in reports has enabled a more balanced perspective with which to report findings. Theory triangulation offers additional information to inform my study through the integration and application of previously established concepts and theories which strengthens my analysis and act as another platform from which to compare and assess research findings.

Interview techniques included member checking; repeating questions, re-phrasing them to ensure clear communication and checking back with respondents to confirm I understood their answers. Using of a set of pre-planned probes related to each cluster of questions in the interview guide, in combination with ad hoc probes employed naturally

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<sup>47</sup> Comparing data from different qualitative methods (e.g. observations, interviews, documented accounts) (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 276).

<sup>48</sup> Comparing data generated by different methods (qualitative and quantitative) (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 276).

<sup>49</sup> Looking at data from different theoretical perspectives (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 127).

<sup>50</sup> Consists of taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account (Creswell and Miller, 2010, p. 127).

<sup>51</sup> Sufficient detail of observations, commentaries, the researched context and phenomena found (views, processes, experiences etc.) and the environments in which they occurred to allow the reader to gauge and assess the meanings attached to them (Richie and Lewis, 2003, p. 268).

in conversation, generated thick descriptions and contributed to more detailed accounts during interview discussions.

### **Reflexivity**

The practice of reflexivity during the research process is another methodological technique, often used in sociological studies, and one that I have employed with the intention of strengthening the validity of findings in my study. The act of reflexivity is an ongoing process of critical reflection regarding the ‘self’ and subject matter being studied; it enables the location of one’s position or stance and identification of perspective by allowing for the expression and documentation of personally centred observations, thoughts and emotions. By employing the technique of reflexivity one also takes note of particular challenges experienced as a researcher adding depth and new meanings to the study.

Part of reflexive practice is to be aware of the inherently power-laden dynamics involved with conducting research; involving the role of ‘researcher’ and the interpretive power this holds. It is also to acknowledge the limitations that personal biases and assumptions bring into the research process. By acknowledging particular value judgements and perspectives brought into the research process, the context from which study findings are interpreted and produced becomes more transparent.

### **Balancing researcher’s voice with the voice of participants**

Throughout the entire research process the researcher battles with the personal biases and assumptions that he or she brings to it. As a researcher one brings one’s own

set of value judgments and one is motivated by a set of objectives and an overall purpose. One of the most difficult tasks involved with this study has been to balance the voice of ‘the researcher’ with the voice of participants. The task of interpreting and conveying information that originates from a multiplicity of perspectives, made up of different life experiences, political beliefs, social and cultural contexts, and at the same time reconciling these factors with my personal worldview, perspectives, values, beliefs and context, has been a challenge.

It is by having critically reflected on my own philosophies and beliefs systems and having identified when personal biases or assumptions have arisen during this study, that I have managed this challenge. The deeper one goes into the research process, reflecting on new information discovered and experiences having taken place, the more obvious and apparent one’s values, motivations, and worldview become. In this way the researcher moves to greater consciousness and accountability.

### **Politics of research**

The act of conducting research is inherently political for many reasons. Research is subject to interpretations, value judgements and motivations stemming from the researcher, which must be acknowledged. Research is political also because conduct of research occurs with the knowledge that findings will be publicly disseminated and available for future reference in academia, possibly to be used to inform public policy.

Mills (2000) points to the power social scientist have in controlling the political meaning and use of their work by the very research practice and decisions they undertake. He, furthermore, supports the agency of the researcher in defining and shaping

the research process. Mills (2000) writes in his chapter of the *Sociological Imagination*, “On Politics:”

“There is no necessity for working social scientists to allow the political meaning of their work to be shaped by the ‘accidents’ of its setting, or its use to be determined by the purposes of other men. It is quite within their powers to discuss its meanings and decide upon its uses as matters of their own policy. Such determination requires that they make explicit judgements, as well as decisions upon theory, method, and fact” (Mills, 2000, p. 177).

The researcher can harness the political potential of their research by using it in contexts intended to influence or persuade a target audience. He or she considers for instance, which audience the study might appeal to and how they could use it for a particular purpose. The political meaning that social scientists create through their work however, must be acknowledged openly and transparently and engaged with in an ethical way.

Mills suggests it is, only by making these influences (implicit moral and political judgements) matters of debated policy that men (and women) can become fully aware of them, and so try to control their effects upon the work of social science and upon its political meaning (Mills, 2000, p. 177). The practice of reflexivity, therefore, is a very powerful tool for the researcher in terms of the validity of findings and transparency of the overall report. It has been an important process throughout my research.

Reflections and observations that have resulted from this practice are discussed in the next section, “Reflective practice - within the ‘field.’ ”

## Observations and Reflections

### Reflexive practice – within ‘the field’

Discussions with young Greek graduates and citizens with whom I engaged in conversations during my stay in Greece, enabled a greater understanding of different world views. Consequently, these experiences have assisted my interpretation of data collected and analysis undertaken by counteracting previously taken for granted assumptions and biases.

I would not be doing my research nor the personal lived experiences of young Greek graduates interviewed justice, if I did not discuss the research context I experienced living in Greece for the two and a half months I was there. Although not in the original research plan for my thesis, I found myself in Greece much earlier than planned and as a result immersed in Greek society where I experienced a day to day life that was very different from my life in Canada. Due to the context and circumstances in which I lived in Greece, I was introduced to many new perspectives and ideas which would never have been accessible without physically being in Greece. Conversations with locals, events and social phenomenon often made me realize how “western” my pre-conceptions of society were, and to borrow a term from Edward Said how I very much viewed “through western eyes” (Jhally, 1998).

Before living in Greece and having conducted the interviews, I was unaware of the extent to which my pre-conceptions, personal biases, and Canadian culture made me blind to many issues being experienced in Greek society. The observations, conversations, and lived experience I engaged in Greece for the time I was there, made

me realize that despite having been raised in a Greek Canadian culture, there were many elements of life in Greece that escaped my upbringing and socialization. This was likely the most valuable source of information that could inform my thesis research and assist me with interpreting the issues that came up in my interviews with research participants.

Some key events that I witnessed while in Greece were municipal and regional elections, news media coverage of the Greek Socialist government PASOK and the Prime Minister George Papandreou communicating the vision towards Greece's economic recovery and re-establishment of credibility throughout the EU. I was witness to and affected by the strikes and general mass social movement in Greece in opposition to the wage cuts and other fiscal measures impacting the daily lives of Greek citizens. At the municipal level of governance I witnessed a historical instance of municipal and regional elections that re-defined previously held regional/provincial boundaries. I observed patterns of party organization in a rural town of Greece, and the emergence of party alternatives which formed in resistance to the entrenched governance structure and coalition of networks which predominated and currently exists today.

Through conversations with Greek citizens living in towns and cities alike, I heard many stories about unemployment issues being related to government problems such as political corruption and public scandals. I was told of the distrust that Greeks had for politicians and the bureaucracy; and for the clientelism and patronage that is the social norm in Greece which many resent. The historically adversarial relationship between Greek citizens and government in modern times is documented by Professor Langrod, an expert who was invited by the Greek government in the 1960s to suggest reform of the civil service. During his visit to Greece he cited one of the most serious problems to

reform was ‘the inherent hostility of the Greeks towards the authorities’ (Langrod, 1965, p. 71 in Katrougalous, 1996, p. 46). Another topic that came up was that of the black economy. Through conversations with Greek people, I learnt about the prevalence of the black economy and particularly how tax evasion is common and for many who choose this practice it is a choice made in order to survive and to make ends meet.

I also heard about the challenges Greece and Greek citizenry face as a result of the country’s required adoption of the EU’s open boarder policy for immigrants. EU immigration policy has resulted in further challenges for the country and Greek citizens alike. Drug and sex trafficking and prostitution issues have worsened because of Greece’s required adoption of the EU’s open boarder policy, given Greece’s geographical location and vulnerability as a key crossroad and entry point into Europe for Asian, Middle Eastern and African migration flows.

“The main problem consists, however of the much greater number of irregular migrants who are victims of exclusion. The illegal foreigners cannot claim any social rights and are more vulnerable to exploitation in the labour market” (Katrougalous, 1996, p. 57). In particular the influx of disadvantaged and poor illegal immigrants and refugees contributing to rapid urbanization and the emergence of ghettos in the metropolis has resulted in higher rates of crime, prostitution and incidence of disease. For instance the prevalence of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in major cities like Athens has increased because of the greater number of jobless, poor and illegal immigrants seeking to make money through illicit activities such as prostitution. For instance Omonia square in Athens was once an affluent area bustling with tourism, however, because of

the number of poor immigrants that have been ghettoized in this area it has transformed into a city slump and an area dependent on prostitution and crime.

Katrougalous' (1996) argument that matters have worsened since Greece changed from a migratory country to an immigratory one, receiving poor and illegal immigrants mainly from Eastern Europe is consistent with what was discussed by Greeks I spoke with. As mentioned, it is the case however that in more recent years the numbers and sources of poor immigrants has increased and includes those who originate, not only from Eastern Europe, but also places like the Middle East and Africa.

It was argued that in the face of regionalisation and globalisation with industrial operations being relocated to more competitive environments, illegal immigration created an even scarcer labour market environment. De-industrialization has created massive unemployment in many regions of Greece and is responsible for new levels of poverty (Katrougalous, 1996, p. 56). Illegal immigrants were said to worsen this situation because they serve as a cheaper source of labour often undermining job opportunities for Greek citizens. Illegal immigrants primarily from the Middle East and Albania were mentioned as taking local jobs away from Greek citizens in villages, towns and cities. Since the worsening of the crisis however, Albanians and other immigrant populations have begun returning to their homelands or seeking opportunities elsewhere.

In Greece's modern history, since the country's liberation from military rule, there has been a degree of political instability and repeated accusations of corruption and scandal which has lead to political disenchantment of the public. For some, this has been accompanied by a loss of hope for the future of Greece economically, socially and politically. The Greek citizens I spoke to view their political system as impotent in terms

of bringing about desired changes. They felt that in general and over time Greek government has not been responsive to the will of the people and has largely acted in self interest rather in the interest of the country and its citizenry.

The direction the Greek government has taken towards the fiscal crisis by accepting a series of financial aid packages and implementing them by law in parliament; while public opposition was at 70% to 80% against this (Prontzos, 2011) and associated aid financial stipulations, in the eyes of many represents a lack of political accountability to the Greek citizenry. The Greek government has been criticised for accepting harsh austerity measures imposed by the IMF and the European Central Bank (ECB) to meet financial bailout terms instead of coming up with a solution that has the support of the Greek population at large; for instance a plan that includes options for real economic growth versus one that results in the continuous contraction of the economy.

The average Greek does not feel they are responsible for bringing Greece to this financial point and crisis in the first place; in fact, they blame political corruption, unaccountable governments, tax evading elites and poor public policy decision makers; including those in the international financial sector. In addition, although they want to be part of a solution that is realistic and manageable, they perceive themselves as being shut out of meaningful dialogue about major public policy decisions and left without the choice to determine their own state of affairs and future.

Tilly (2006) speaks to the sentiments and views of Greek citizens who find their government is acting ineffectively, without public consultation and popular support, putting into question the legitimacy of its actions on the question of the fiscal crisis. Tilly (2006) points out that, “although many rulers have claimed to embody their people’s will,

only governments that have created concrete preference-communicating institutions have also installed binding, effective consultation” (Tilly, 2006, p. 25). In the case of Greece it seems the institutional framework for binding and effective consultation with respect to management of the fiscal crisis is absent, and a large reason behind the popular social unrest demonstrated in reaction to government decisions.

Being in Greece reminded me that the meanings behind democracy and freedom are not given definitions that should be taken for granted. Democracy means different things to different people and to those living in different parts of the world. The social unrest in Greece over the duration of the current fiscal crisis is a testament to how democracy and the role of government in society are characteristic of contested conceptions. What democracy is and how governments go about achieving democratic ideals and upholding associated principles and values are concepts at the centre of public debate and scrutiny. These concepts and meanings, moreover, vary across jurisdictions; evolve over time with history and in different cultures.

For instance in the case of Greece, the overall notion of democracy may be similar to how someone in Canada understands it however, there are important conceptual nuances and differences associated with what democracy means to Greeks. The particular democratic values of an electorate and nation are important to consider and not take for granted when trying to understand motivations behind social movements, such as the protests and demonstrations in Greece over the management of the crisis. World leaders and citizens alike vary in agreement about what constitutes a democratic society. It is not a static term and concept; and it has clearly evolved over time and continues to do so today. What is important for decision makers to acknowledge and

understand is the worldview and democratic will of citizens: the citizens of Greece like the unemployed young graduates, to which government must be accountable.

It is also important for both decision makers and citizens in Greece to realize that their actions today and tomorrow define the democracy and country they live in. One of the most compelling of comments made during an interview with study participants, which will forever resonate within my mind, was when Marina reminded me that as a society, as the people who make up the society we live in, *“we are the politics”* –

**Marina.**

It was within this context and with new insights that my research perspective was informed as I conducted interviews and collected the data for my study. My environment in Greece and the interactions I had added new meaning to information gathered; and formed a more solid foundation upon which to interpret and analyze data while adding to the validity of this study.

## **Chapter 4 – Research Findings**

My study set out to understand the issue of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece by collecting primary data, through semi-structured questions in an interview format with participants. The first set of questions were the most structured and close ended and focused on obtaining information about the social demography of interview participants. Accordingly, the first section of my research findings reports on the data collected regarding the social demography of study participants.

The subsequent sections of my research findings chapter, report on the information gathered from semi-structured interviews and open ended questions discussed with participants. Interview questions asked correspond to this study's three overarching research questions: (1) What are the barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece face to full time employment; (2) How do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation; and, (3) What are young post-secondary graduates doing in response to manage and cope with unemployment. The interviews conducted rendered research findings that inform the three overarching research questions of my study and also resulted in additional discussions and information regarding possible changes and solutions for the future of young post-secondary graduates in Greece.

### **Demographic Overview of Interview Participants**

Research participants in my study were somewhat typical of young unemployed post-secondary graduates as described by academics and in the literature reviewed on this

subject. The demographic information collected about participants and their families identified characteristics consistent with what is widely known to be true about the social demography of the young unemployed Greek post-secondary graduates, their family and household contexts. Participant background information collected in preliminary interview questions included recording age, educational attainment, sex and gender, and family income sources. A comparison chart of demographic data collected (see Appendix H) which breaks down demographic characteristics of participants person by person, provided a basis from which to consider the contexts of unemployed post-secondary graduates in Greece and their unemployment circumstances. My observations and analysis cannot be generalized to represent all unemployed young Greek graduates or Greek families because of the nature of my sampling methodology and sample size; however, they can be considered in light of previous studies and academic literature.

### **Sex, gender and the family unit**

In terms of observed sample characteristics related to sex and gender, there are a larger proportion of women represented among the young unemployed graduates I interviewed; and which is consistent with findings of the European Commission (EC) in 2009 and 2010 that report Greece, Italy and Malta had the lowest labour market participation rate for women in the EU. Interestingly, as well, most mothers of study participants were stay at home moms. Study participants demonstrate characteristics consistent with what academic sources that cite, that the family unit is a fundamental part of social welfare in Greece and that the gender gap is still significant in the labour force as women continue to behave according to traditional gender roles. In Greece, the

extended family is typically representative of the family unit and traditional gender roles still predominate where the father is the breadwinner and wife is the stay-at-home mother. All of the participants lived at home with their parents except for two individuals who were a couple living together, although they admittedly relied heavily on family support. In Greece, the traditional family unit and a strong sense of solidarity among family members has long served as a social and economic backbone of society; compensating for the lack of a strong formal social safety net provided by government and the economy.

### **Study participants – age, sex and educational attainment**

The sample of six research participants (see Appendix B) consisted of two males, “Alexandros” 31 years old and “Nikos” 25 years old and four females, “Tasoula” 29 years old, “Kassandra” 28 years old, “Marina” 27 years old and “Athena” 27 years old. The individuals interviewed represented a variety of post-secondary education attainment and specializations: Master degree in Economics, Bachelor degree in International Trade, Bachelor degree in Philosophy & Linguistics, Bachelor degree in Life Long Learning followed by a Master degree in Consulting for Unemployed Women, Bachelor degree in Physical Education & Sports, and a Bachelor degree in Journalism. In total, four Bachelor level and two Master level graduates were interviewed. Of the six participants, one individual, Alexandros had completed studies outside of Greece, in the UK. This participant finished a Master degree in Economics.

Interestingly, the two males interviewed had concentrated in economics and international trade whereas, the four females represented educational concentrations that

were in the social sciences and arts, or related to health and well-being all concentrations unrelated to politics, economics or business that tend to increase employability in traditionally male dominated occupations and positions. This finding is consistent with what has been reported by the EC, *Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010. The gender balance in business leadership*. The Report finds that in the EU, gender balance is lacking in business leadership and decision making positions and women are greatly underrepresented. Social norms in the labour force and gender equality in the world of work still remains an elusive goal, and women are absent from key political and economic positions.

Regardless of differences in educational concentration and related employability and occupational prospects, the demographic data collected also reflects information consistent with the literature review in this study, regarding the fact that many unemployed young adults are highly educated and form an overly qualified labour force. All of the research participants interviewed had a minimum Bachelors level education, and had been seeking 'official' full time employment for at least six months; one participant was unemployed for over one year and another was unemployed for over two years hence, represented the long term unemployed.

### **Family pension incomes**

The most notable characteristic of the occupational background of participants' parents was the proportion of parents retired and living on pension income. Out of 6 sets of parents (a possible 12 responses), 6 responses indicated that a parent was retired and living off of pension income. Further details of the occupational background of parents

are that: 3 out of 12 were housewives (put another way, 3 out of 6 mothers were stay-at-home housewives). Overall, mothers of study participants were either housewives or retired, with the exception of one mother who was actively employed in a factory. The fathers of the participants were mostly retired (4 out of 6). Of the other two fathers, one was a farmer and one was actively employed as an engineer/contractor in what seemed as the only non-precarious job among the 12 parents.

Before delving into the specific findings of my study pertaining to the three main research questions: (1) What are barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece experience to full time employment; (2) How do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation; and (3) What are young post-secondary graduates doing in response to manage and cope with unemployment, it is useful to further contextualize the data collected by putting Greece's 'fiscal stage' into context. An important backdrop behind the findings discussed that significantly influenced the environment of unemployed post-secondary graduate participants.

### **A Greek Drama – Introduction to the Fiscal Stage**

During the course and development of this study there have been intense and evolving social, economic and political changes simultaneously occurring in Greece, shaping the context within which the issue of high unemployment among young graduates is embedded. For instance, unemployment rates in Greece soared from an already high rate of 13.9% in November 2010 to 20.9% in November 2011 representing a drastic 7% increase in overall unemployment in one year alone (Hellenic Statistical

Authority, 2012). Since the time when preliminary thought and research was undertaken on this study, historic developments and transformations have taken place. These changes have not only occurred in Greece but also within the EU and globally.

Of great consequence on the international stage has been the “American housing crisis” which peaked in 2007 impacting the American banking system, the world economy and leading to the subsequent collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Both these crucial events triggered a historic worldwide economic recession; the ‘Great Recession’ of the late 2000s, considered to be unparalleled in modern times and comparable in degree to the post WWI ‘Great Depression’ of the 1930s. Although in July of 2009 economists declared the United States (US) officially as being out of recession, and indeed moderate economic growth was recorded, the US and many other developed economies around the world remain fragile and sluggish in terms of growth to date. It is against this backdrop that the slowdown of the Greek economy began in 2008 and the ‘Greek fiscal crisis’ first emerged in 2010, and why it has re-appeared in 2011 and 2012. The Greek fiscal crisis has occurred at least in part as a consequence of the greater global economic context, namely the ‘Great Recession;’ which affected the Eurozone and Greece most visibly.

Approximately, three to five years since the beginning of my research, such historic developments and transformations have taken place and without a doubt have influenced the current set of circumstances that Greece as country and its citizenry, including young graduates experience today. Whereas three to five years ago the issue of high unemployment among young graduates in Greece was among the top public policy matters, in today’s context it has been further complicated and to some extent

overshadowed by the Greek fiscal crisis and the slowdown and contraction of the Greek economy. This is also indicated by feedback from participants as when discussing my thesis research Marina explained, *“I find the topic very interesting and a few years back, it was a major issue your topic here in Greece. I mean in the news, there were, they talked about it a lot ... But, right now the issue here in Greece is ...it’s you know getting a job in general”* – Marina.

High unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece today is not only related to issues pre-dating the Greek fiscal crisis but is also inextricably linked to problems associated with the current fiscal crisis. As the OECD reports: “Labour market conditions in Greece deteriorated significantly during the global economic crisis ... the current deterioration in labour market conditions is exacerbating pre-crisis imbalances in the Greek labour market” (OECD, 2010a, p. 11).

Although the economic implications of the fiscal crisis have further complicated the issue of high unemployment among young post secondary graduates and the crisis situation has dominated the public policy debate, in doing so it can also be said to have provided a new opportunity. The crisis has enabled a reframing of the issue and platform from which to consider high youth unemployment embedded in the larger unemployment and fiscal crisis context.

It is perhaps due to the commonality and interrelatedness of issues at the root of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece and the Greek fiscal crisis, that the crisis was the most discussed theme raised by study participants. The Greek fiscal crisis was cited as the most immediate barrier experienced to employment

for study participants and the most apparent consequence of the underlying issues that explained their unemployment context. Following discussions of the Greek fiscal crisis and poor government and public policy, namely shortcomings of the post-secondary education system, the third most frequent issue discussed was the black economy; and the impact that unofficial employment and tax evasion has on the prospects of a healthy labour market and securing official employment.

The historical weakness of Greece's economic development and the current contraction of the Greek economy were discussed as having a negative impact on employment. Several other factors such as past work experience, lack of technical/occupational competency and the existence of patronage in hiring practices in the labour market were also cited as affecting young post-secondary graduate unemployment. The study findings outlined above, which correspond to my overarching research questions, are discussed in further detail in the next sections.

### **The 'Situation' – Barriers to Employment**

Each of the participants interviewed had their own story to tell about the road they travelled after graduating from post-secondary education. Their experiences varied in terms of how long it took for them to find employment, whether employment was related to studies completed, the type of job; full-time, part-time, temporary or contract, and if they were able to find 'official' employment outside of the black economy. Particular barriers to full time employment discussed were substantially framed around macro-level phenomenon such as the economy and major events such as the onset of the "global economic and Greek fiscal crisis." The overall weak business sector and economy and poor government & public policy planning; most notably referring to post-secondary

education & training issues including unresponsiveness to the labour market context, were important structural barriers discussed by participants. Young graduates perceived these macro-level barriers were responsible for the lack of work opportunities they experienced.

Participants also answered with reasons and explanations that centred on a micro-level that was a more personal and practical analysis of their immediate situation. Being a young graduate and lacking past work experience and technical or job related training were also cited as obstacles to securing employment in the labour force, as was finding employment in a labour market overrun with clientelism and patronage.

### **Greek Fiscal Crisis**

The Greek fiscal crisis was cited by each participant as a major barrier and sometimes referred to as “the biggest barrier” to finding full time employment in recent years. The crisis was seen as a significant cause of young graduate unemployment because as a result of it, “[a] lot of businesses have gone down” and “so it’s hard to get a job” – Alexandros. As explained by Tasoula, it was due to “[t]he crisis of course” that “there are no jobs.” Likewise, during her interview Athena a journalist, said, “[a]s time passes and especially this year, or say the last two years, it (the fiscal crisis) has affected me personally. A lot of newspapers have closed and a lot of radio stations don’t pay; the media, the magazines, and generally, I see from all my friends, they are all unemployed, nine out of ten.”

One participant, Nikos, stressed several times that, “[t]he only barrier yes, is the crisis, because the industries are afraid to take you in” ... “Now these days with this

*year the industries are afraid they are going to close. Because there is no money, they don't think they are going to survive because there is no money."*

Uncertainty and lack of resources and profits in the business community because of the fiscal crisis has meant businesses are uninterested and unable to hire new workers. Nikos explained that people in Greece, moreover, afraid to invest in an industry or a product and this undermines business activities contributing to growth in the economy. Marina and Cassandra similarly pointed out that the lack of confidence in the business community as well as on the part of consumers stemmed from the Greek fiscal crisis, and had negative consequences affecting the hiring of young graduates.

*"It affects us (young graduates) a lot. The businesses are not going well, people don't have the money they had, they are cutting down their expenses so it affects a lot, the unemployment. There are no jobs in Greece right now" – Marina.*

*"There is nothing to do, related or not to what I've studied" – Tasoula.*

*"Right now, everything is frozen. We don't know what will happen tomorrow. So, no one is investing. No one will open a position in their company, or do something extra to bring in money, because...they don't know...there is no security" – Cassandra.*

As a result of the fiscal crisis community organizations, in addition to businesses, were described as having to "close their doors." Cassandra, who was previously employed at a "learning skills centre," explained that learning skills centres were private schools funded by the EU for some of the programs they delivered. Although, now:

*"...because the European Union has a gun to our head (Greece's 'head') this has been cut off for a year and a half now ..."* *"The programs were terminated and they started firing people. For every ten people they were keeping one, the oldest and best employee" – Cassandra.*

Some participants such as Nikos and Alexandros felt that before the crisis it was easier to find work because, *"[t]he industries were not as afraid as they are now" –*

Nikos. Nikos explains of his work search efforts, *“I’m going to find a job and going to the industries and the only thing that they say is we are firing people we don’t want to take people in order to work with us.”* He further explains it is because, *“they (industry and business) want to complete their works with the smallest amount of people possible.”*

According to Alexandros, after he graduated, his ability to find a job was in his words:

*“... easy to be honest because I started working immediately. I worked for a consultant company here in Greece. Then I stopped that and started working a few months for a chain supermarket. So last year they decided to fold and move out of Greece. Since then on I’m basically looking for a job ...Straight out of university was ok but now I am finding it hard to find a job.”*

As discussed, the biggest employment barrier in the current context of unemployed post-secondary graduates was explained to be the fiscal crisis because of its negative consequences to hiring in the graduate labour market. However, another barrier identified and closely related to the crisis, was Greece’s historically weak economy which has been a longer standing issue, pre-dating the country’s current state of affairs.

### **Greece’s Historically Weak Economy**

Although participants blamed the current fiscal crisis for the *“bleak”* and *“black”* employment situation and prospects that they were facing, they also acknowledged that in fact Greece has never had a strong economy in comparison to, for instance, Germany or the UK, and unemployment has long been an issue for young graduates. Athena explained that, *“I know it’s not my fault, whatever I have been able to do, I have done...the economic crisis in Greece might be intense right now, but in previous years it*

*was also like this, Greece was not a rich country, we were not England ... There were never wages of EUR 1500.”*

The productivity levels in Greece have been historically “low” because of the type of economic development that Greece experienced in the post-World War era, as explained in the literature review section of this study. Greece did not follow an economic trajectory like its northwestern European counterparts and as in North America with Fordist style capitalist expansion. Since liberation from Ottoman Rule and the reinstating of democracy in the modern era Greece has always been a ‘peripheral’ country relying on economic strengths in mainly low productivity areas such as its ship building industry, tourism and agriculture sectors. One interview participant pointed out how in her view,

*“[t]here is no real economy in Greece. We are not actually producing anything, very little things. We don’t have a strong economy to support us. We have come to this place (pause) to have all these problems. It’s not that if you are an employee, that it’s your own problem alone, it’s a society wide problem” – Marina.*

In addition to the low productivity in Greece, respondents also explained that in pre-crisis times there was typically a low wage standard that applied to most workers. Participants described the absence of a ‘middle-class earner’ wage and compensation level in labour market occupations. The fact that everyone is offered basically the same low wage regardless of their education and training has been disappointing to post-secondary graduates seeking employment.

Alexandros explained unemployment among young graduates pre-economic crisis has been partially a result of the fact that “... in Greece the employment status was that you know, you work for minimum wage regardless of what qualifications you had.” Some young graduates would choose to be unemployed because they didn’t want to settle for a

lower wage job, due to expectation for wage compensation given their educational qualifications and credentials. The attitude of young graduates, moreover, has been, “*they don’t want to for example go to work in a building (construction) ...they say I studied, I am educated, I want to do something with, in the subject I’ve been educated*” – Nikos.

This coincides with what Liavanos (2010) suggests in his study’s findings that some graduates (PhD and Master) are supported financially by their families and may decide to remain unemployed until they find an employment of their preference. Bee & Dolton (1990) and Fernandez (2006) similarly argue that some graduates will prolong job search and devote their efforts until they find suitable permanent employment that fits within their field of study.

Participant responses are also interesting to consider in light of what academics including Pozzoli (2009), Fernandez (2006), and Kaneelopoulous, (1995) have argued, that contrary to what happens elsewhere and in many other European countries, in certain countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, and Luxembourg, unemployment rates increase with the level of education. Livanos (2010) for example points out according to data in his study that in the Greek labour market whether someone (aged between 15 and 35) has a PhD or a vocational qualification does not alter the chances of employment (relative to unemployment) (Livanos 2010, p. 482). The findings and arguments that these academics and other like them have made support the paradox of the Greek labour market that study participants describe unemployed post-secondary graduates are situated within. That in Greece, contrary to findings in many other countries, young graduates are no more and even arguably less likely to find employment than those who have not completed post-secondary education coming into the labour market. As Liavanos argues, in Greece there

is no negative relationship between the level of education and chances of unemployment (Livanos 2010, p. 482).

It is extremely difficult to find a decent paying job according to Nikos, especially, *“[n]owadays if you are going to find a job in Greece they are not able to afford to pay you for the certificates you have. For example the more certificates you have, the more difficult it is to find a job. Because they (the employers) are not going to pay you, they don't have the money to pay you.”* As a result of a weak economy, where employers cannot afford to hire and pay qualified employees, securing legitimate employment is difficult.

*“They (employers) prefer those without degrees, or qualities, over the over qualified, to pay them less money. That's why people with degrees or qualifications, qualities, cannot find work. If I go with two degrees or two masters they will say, will you work for EUR 200 to EUR300 (a month)? You won't stay”* – Athena.

This is especially the case with vulnerable professions where employment prospects have been traditionally challenging. Athena explains how her field Journalism is particularly vulnerable to the hiring of uncertified or under qualified workers and that a weak economic climate makes matters worse.

*“All the mass media is closing down, the newspapers close, they do not pay, they cannot maintain themselves...”* and *“...basically in Greece, the way things have become, because, my industry my job is difficult, they do not pay, or they pay you a little bit of money, very little money, or they cover their needs with “children” who have not got a degree. To be a journalist you do not have to have a degree, to write somewhere – we're in danger a lot”* – Athena.

Similarly, Nikos raised the issue of the prevalence of precarious work in a weak economy and that in Greece:

*“[t]here is no steady salary ... the only jobs that there, that you can find, it's in promotions and the salary with promotions...they ask you to sell for example five instances and if you don't you are not going to be paid.”*

The next most frequently identified barriers to employment discussed following the fiscal crisis and Greece's traditionally weak economy, were an overqualified post-secondary graduate labour pool and post-secondary education system shortcomings for the labour market.

### **Poor Government and Public Policy Planning – Over-qualification and Post-Secondary Education System Shortcomings for the Labour Market Context**

Interview participants were all consistent in expressing that in Greece there is a problem with an over-qualified and saturated work force competing for credentialed jobs. Marina explained, unemployment in Greece is a big issue that has to do with “politics.”

*“Young people study, they get a degree I mean from university; it is very common to have a degree and many people also have Masters degrees. One bad thing is that (pause) it's the politics of the country for young people who have studied. There are many graduates, too many graduates, so not all of them can get jobs”*  
– Marina.

*“I believe, I truly believe that less people have to study in university. We cannot have that many graduates, because there are thousands of graduates in Greece, in all disciplines. There are thousands of doctors, thousands of lawyers, there is thousands of everything so they (institutional planners) should, they have to reduce the (student) places (enrollments) in the universities ...”* – Marina.

Similar points were raised by other participants:

*“... (there are) too many people for the same jobs...you have loads and loads of graduates that can only work in so many places”* – Alexandros.

*“I suppose that (with) lots of (people) being unemployed they (employers) are getting better Curriculum Vitaes (CVs) for the things (job responsibilities) that they want for the job criteria. So, I suppose there are lots looking for work ...I think it's that to be honest. A lot of businesses have gone down so it's hard to get a job”* – Alexandros.

*“And of course the fact that we, that there are many graduates ... for no jobs”* – Tasoula.

*“Because there are a lot of us, there are not that many magazines, there are not that many positions ...” – Athena.*

A key criticism made of the Greek government and post-secondary education planners was that they have not properly regulated how many university applicants that are granted admission. Alexandros explains how in Greece out of high school there is a national university entrance exam given to the whole country on the same topics and depending on your grades you are admitted into university. The base grade for admission varies from year to year. *“This (2011) is the first year they are trying to reduce these numbers” ... “they want to reduce the number that goes to the universities so they are upping the base grade, so you have to score the same or better, so they are trying to reduce the people going in ...” – Alexandros.* In fact, Alexandros pointed out that the lack of regulation in the past was done on purpose to hide unemployment so that there were more people in the education system and less unemployed in the labour market where they would show up in unemployment statistics. The government and post-secondary education institutions have not only failed to plan adequately by restricting the number of student entrants into post-secondary institutions but there are neither applicable limits on degree completion times.

*“You see in Greece that thing goes back to the mid-1980s or something or the 1990s. You see to reduce the unemployment was to put everybody in universities when not having to finish your degree in four years and then maybe go for six or seven or eight or I don’t know how many (years)... it was at least to reduce unemployment... (people) not being unemployed and not working and it not showing up in the stats (statistics) ... The universities were taking on more people than they could, not only afford but that they should put out in the market” – Alexandros.*

In addition to government’s post-secondary institutions planners’ poor management of student enrolments, many students admitted end up completing their

education and training with inadequate knowledge or misinformation about the employment prospects in their area of study. Tasoula complained that, “... [t]hey (government and educational institutions) have to warn people (what) to study. (For example say) that sector is full, go and do something else. Or say we need doctors. Say we need doctors so I can become a doctor and be useful ... .”

For instance, some fields of study are not well recognized in the labour market such as the field of ‘Lifelong Learning.’ Kassandra mentioned that in Greece her field of study, lifelong learning is found in very odd jobs. In government or the social services sector, where they haven’t acknowledged this field of study they hire “their own people” internally. Kassandra explained that to fill a position for which she is trained, “for example, they (the public service or social sector) may hire a gymnast, language professor, or whatever” and that she had “given up on that subject and looking in to it...” despite the fact that to find steady employment in this area she “worked hard for many years.”

Kassandra was an example of a graduate that regretted her chosen field of study because it did not result in a satisfactory level of employability and in the end she was disappointed with what little recognition there was in the labour market for her profession. During her interview with me she acknowledged,

*“... [i]t was a bad decision to study the degree I did. I chose a subject/school that they didn’t recognize. It doesn’t have a place in the public sector” ... “and also, I am not a doctor, for example. No matter what happens, you will still go to the doctor. They are cutting the wages of doctors too of course, but most of them will still have jobs” ... “you graduate as a doctor, you go work in a hospital. You graduate as a lawyer; you know you will find work in a law office. You graduate with my degree, and you don’t know what you can do” – Kassandra.*

Tasoula explained that she didn't feel it was her fault that she was unemployed because she had done everything she could do in her life to become employable; she studied, actively sought out work experience in newspapers and job banks, consistently sent out her Curriculum Vitae (CV) etc. Tasoula expressed that in her experience there was poor labour market demand for teachers after graduating and that she and other young graduates in a similar position were unprepared by government and educational planners for the lack of jobs available in particular fields of study. In her interview

Tasoula stated,

*"I don't want to blame myself because I think I did what I had to do and more than I had to do ... it would be easier to blame Greece ... the policies, the government ... because if I knew I couldn't get a job as a teacher, because that is what I am considered to be, I would have studied something else ... Cause they kept saying come, there are many positions, come, come. We (students) studied; we studied but then nothing in the end, in the end nothing."*

Tasoula also explains how in her view the Greek government has not prioritized educational policy:

*"There are places, towns, villages in Greece (that) they do not have teachers but (also) they do not hire them. There are schools that have no teachers or they have one teacher that has to teach the whole school, but they (schools) do not hire because they do not have the money to pay (teachers)."*

*"There is no care. There is no, they (government) do not foresee in a way ... They don't plan ahead because, and their excuse is that they have more serious things to handle. Which means umm, education I don't know why it does not seem very serious, it's not umm, a priority. You (students and young graduates) do not seem (to be) a priority to them (government and educational planners)."*

The lack of trades and technical training in Greece was also mentioned in the context of post-secondary education shortcomings. The fact that trades and technical training in Greece is under-developed was discussed by Cassandra as a major failure of government public policy and the post-secondary education system.

The government's and post-secondary institutions' failure to more appropriately plan how many high school graduates are admitted into the post-secondary education system, and more specifically plan to train students in applied occupational areas was an important issue raised. Poor public policy in this regard was a factor identified as having contributed to the high unemployment situation for young graduates in Greece.

Kassandra explains,

*"[m]any people have gone to university, and, Greece, as a country – we don't have technical training. I mean, we don't have degrees for plumbers, electricians, builders. We don't train them ... it is really, what you call it, under-developed."*

### **Lack of Work Experience and Professional Training**

Macro-level barriers for unemployment of young graduates were also coupled with more personal level responses and reasoning expressed by interview participants. The young graduates in my study felt that their relatively young age, lack of relevant work experience and an absence of technical skills or onsite work competencies contributed to their disadvantage in the labour market. Nikos, for instance, discussed how employers view young graduates as a "risk" and a burden if they have to train them:

*"I think the experience is the key, you know. The more experience you have the better it is in order to find a job. If you have experience I think it is easier to find the job."*

Other respondents also shared Nikos's view and added their view of how it is difficult to attain experience as a young graduate:

*"Most people want you to have experience. The question is how can you have experience when you are 22 or 23 years old? There is a problem generally, the problem of age, and experience they are looking for" – Marina.*

*"... they (employers) always want the best and most-experienced, who will work for very little money. I would accept such a position for low pay, but I can't prove that I have enough relevant experience ..." – Kassandra.*

Participants who had secured work in their past expressed how little on-the-job-site training they had experienced both in school and at their jobs. Cassandra explained how when she worked at the lifelong learning centre the conditions were terrible; she hadn't received the proper training in school because her education had been more theoretical, and at work there was no training either.

*“No one will sit and train you. They say, “Good morning, here’s your desk. Figure it out. Do what you can... no training at all.... So the ball falls in your lap, and you have to know everything on your own” – Cassandra.*

Kassandra strongly felt that there should be more practical “applied” training available to students and recent graduates in the work force. *“When you do practical/hands-on training, as well, (in addition to theoretical), it is better... and we (young graduates in Greece) don’t have that” – Cassandra.* She furthermore, explained her view that efforts to provide the unemployed with practical, job-oriented training (referring to her experience working at the partially EU funded, lifelong learning centre), have produced extremely poor outcomes. Cassandra criticized public policy and program administration practices in Greece, at least from her experience at the centre where she was previously employed.

*“We, as Greece (policy and program administrators), didn’t properly use these funds (for employment initiatives). We made sure that those in high places were getting them, and those who had the so-called learning skills centres ... All of this was “fake.” All of it. Like, from the one hundred programs, maybe two were normal. So, not even relevant construction was done or properties were created. Not even the people who came from there (out of the learning centres) had any real professional guarantee basis” – Cassandra.*

Both the Greek government and post-secondary institution planners are criticized for poor policy regarding student enrollment levels and education and training shortcomings. Participants communicated that consequently there is an overly educated

work force that lacks new or young professionals with practical applied skills. This has seemingly resulted in the unemployment of educated and trained workers and gaps in areas of labour market demand.

Thus far, the Greek fiscal crisis, Greece's weak economy and poor government public policy and planning with respect to the post-secondary educational system have been discussed as key barriers to employment identified by study participants. The next most discussed barrier was the issue of clientelism and patronage. Some respondents emphasized how unless you know someone in a position to hire you, it is near impossible to secure employment in Greece.

### **Prevalence of Clientelism and Patronage**

In Greece, informal practices of preferential hiring based on social obligations within networks of friends and family and patronage or clientelism have been described to predominate society and undermine the existence of a strong meritocracy. The way this system of practices operates in Greece has acted as a barrier to employment for post-secondary graduates interviewed.

Biased hiring that takes place in both the private and public sectors disadvantages unemployed young post-secondary graduates in the labour market who are equally, sometimes more qualified candidates for a position yet lack the social capital and these types of 'connections.' Study participants explained:

*"In Greece, there is a lot of use of connections. Like, if I work somewhere, I will hire my friend. Someone who can help me. Not necessarily someone who is worthy of the position"* – Cassandra.

*“Exokratia<sup>52</sup> do you know what it is? ... It means that we are two candidates you and me. You have the qualifications and I have the PR. Public Relations. In Greece, they will choose me because I have the PR, cause they want to choose the people as my friends. I’m not qualified at all. You have the degrees but they will pick me. This is what has been happening since 1820 in Greece...this has to stop...This is called exocratia...pick me because I’m proper (suitable), do not pick me because you know my father...” – Tasoula.*

*“It’s connections, how can I say this. It’s not just you are going through the paper and you are looking for a job and you are going to make a phone call. It is easier if you have connections and someone (that you know to help you)... Here in Greece there is something called corruption and it’s you know, you are going to hire somebody you know, a relative, a friend, somebody you have to hire because you have, you know (a) social obligation to do (so)” – Marina.*

As Karakatsanis (1999) explains, the phenomenon of personal influence and connections, a.k.a the “meson” in Greece, comprised of family members, extended family members and friends helping to locate prospective employers, is so widespread that there is virtually an economy of influence that exists. It is personal acquaintances and connections that often serve as the most reliable route to gainful, and usually public sector, employment. For example, according to a survey done of Greek workers by the OECD in 1996, less than 10 percent of those surveyed indicated that the government run job placement office, OAED, had actually helped place them. Instead, most workers relied on their informal networks. It is commonly the case therefore, that the job a person holds often has more to do with whom one knows rather than with the merit, experience or skills of the job-seeker.

In sum, the barriers identified to employment by study participants have been Greece’s fiscal crisis, a historically weak economy, poor government public policy and the post-secondary education system and labour market needs mismatch, lack of practical

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<sup>52</sup> Exokratia – “Exo” outside, “Kratia” power, might; rule, sway; power over; a power, authority.

work experience and training for post-secondary students and the prevalence of a system of clientelism and patronage.

The findings reported in the upcoming section inform my second research question: How do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation? Data gathered related to this research question sought a more personalized understanding of how post-secondary graduates rationalized their unemployment situation and aimed to gather information about participants' everyday life and the daily realities they faced.

### **Understanding the Personal and Daily Life of Unemployment for Young Graduates**

Discussions about how post-secondary graduates rationalized their unemployment and understood their circumstances referenced some of the barriers to employment already discussed namely the fiscal crisis and post-secondary education system shortcomings in Greece however, more specifically focused on the personal and daily life realities and implications of unemployment. Key findings regarding how the daily lives of participants were affected by unemployment were that they found themselves caught in a cycle of dependence on the black economy to satisfy immediate needs; they could not afford the basics in life and were generally deprived of personal choices and freedoms. In discussing their perspectives and daily experiences, some participants provided my study with a deeply intimate level of insight by sharing with me how being unemployed affected them psychologically and emotionally.

## The Black Economy

A key barrier to employment discussed but also way young post-secondary graduates made sense of their unemployment was attributed to the black economy. Post-secondary graduates located themselves and their unemployment circumstances within Greece's deeply embedded black economy. Given, the black economy undermines the availability of legitimate job opportunities and also weakens Greece's overall tax base impeding the possibility of government investment to support economic activity and job creation, most respondents commonly understood their unemployment in this context.

All respondents except one said that the prevalence of the black economy was related to their struggle to find official employment because most employers did not have the money to hire a post-secondary graduate and pay a living and legal wage. Most employers cannot afford to pay employee-related insurance and pension contributions that they are responsible to pay to the government on behalf of their employees if they are employed officially on record. Study participants explained how it is widely known that mutually beneficial working arrangements are commonly negotiated in the black economy where employers pay employees under the table to save on labour overhead costs and employees work under the table to net more income. For instance, some participants explained:

*“The black economy in Greece is a reality. I mean everybody knows that. Even the politics speak about it” – Marina.*

*“My experience is that it's hard to find the legal job in Greece. I mean one that is “official” because most people (employers) want to pay you under the table. (Pause) They pay less of course” – Marina.*

*“In general, at this moment in time, during the crisis, people (employers) don't have money to give to employees ... – Cassandra.*

However, one of the individuals interviewed didn't see that high unemployment among post-secondary graduates was completely linked to the black economy.

Alexandros stated,

*“[y]es and no. I would say that it (unemployment) relates to the black economy. I suppose it does to some point but not especially important in (unemployed) young graduates.*

*It's just, well when that (unofficial employment) happens people (employers) may pay you something more (than if it was official employment on their payroll or what salary you are worth) but they (employers) are only going to ensure you, (additional) money in the amount that they would have (otherwise had) to pay to the government (employee related deductions) or (in) tax. They are going to make it look (on payroll) like they are paying you less, to reduce taxes and contributions to the government i.e for employment insurance. They (employers) could (afford to) be paying you 1000 dollars but (if they do) they're going to give government contributions, for your (employment) insurance, (so) you are (or end up) being paid a minimum wage of 600 dollars. So (overall) they (employers) are finding a middle ground between the employee and the government, so they save some money and you get some more money. But (it is) not the money that counts towards your retirement.*

*Usually graduates from university don't usually go for jobs that are totally black market, black economy. Usually because you can't really use it going forward in the future. If that makes any sense.”*

Alexandros explained that young post-secondary graduates are not only limited to working in jobs and occupations that are completely unofficial or ‘under the table.’

Rather, when it comes to post-secondary graduates and certain positions of employment, employers and employees also negotiate salaries which are underreported and subject to less tax in this manner. Alexandros expressed that post-secondary graduates tend to try to gain employment that is not “totally black market” so that at least some money earned is being officially reported and some contributions are made that count towards pension retirement and social security.

Yet, Alexandros did also acknowledge there was an indirect link between unemployed young graduates and the black economy because of how it undermines government revenue and the potential for revenue to be directed into the economy and for job creation.

The black economy was described by most interviewees as a double-edged sword. Although, it satisfies workers immediate needs, it undermines their wages and benefits entitlements.

*“Most people in Greece, I don’t know what happens outside of Greece, everyone (here) works “black” without benefits ... Benefits do not exist anywhere – and generally, even if you work, you appear to be unemployed. You do not get a lot of money; it’s like being on unemployment” – Athena.*

A fundamental aspect of the black economy, tax evasion deprives government of much needed revenues; in order to finance the economy, implement policy or initiatives addressing for example, unemployed young post-secondary graduates. Participants explained, furthermore, that:

*“There are many people that consider this (unofficial employment) is normal. Many people work like that for many, many years so they get paid but they don’t have social security, they don’t pay taxes, so this is bad for the economy” – Marina.*

*“ ... country has, doesn’t have the taxes they need so then the economy cannot work properly (pause) because of all the, all the people that don’t pay taxes (pause) and the businesses don’t pay the taxes they should, all is under working....It’s a vicious circle, cycle, this thing...It’s one of the problems of the economy. The economy is not good, so then there are no jobs. It goes on and on and on” – Marina.*

*“The government can’t support the little shops, the small businesses, so that they can produce something that will help the country progress” – Kassandra.*

Despite, their knowledge of the crippling effects that the black economy has on the government’s capacity, the economy, and the development of social policies that

impact their daily lives; there was only one participant that had never participated in the black economy in the past nor was currently working in it. This was because nearly all of the graduates I spoke with felt they had no other choice to meet their immediate daily needs.

*“I contribute to that (the existence of the black economy), I am afraid I do, but I have no other option. The fact is that if I had the money I would pay the taxes, but I don’t so I feel no guilt. They force us to do that. They make us because if I had the position I wanted to, if I had the security in order to feel, I would pay the taxes, it would be ok. I am not a criminal and I don’t like what I am doing but when you get EUR 500 a month (from only being able to secure unofficial employment) what can I do?... I have already moved in with my parents...I pay EUR 200 a month for my transportation ... and I get what EUR 300? Do what? Do what? Get cloths, drink a coffee, pay my bills cause I’ve got my phone bill? Contribute to the house? Do what? I have no money, I never have money. Even if I try to have some, I don’t. And I don’t spend on silly things, I think I try to be careful for a moment of bills (unexpected bills or expenses)” – Tasoula.*

*“... I can’t find that (a secure and official job with social security deductions and other benefits) ... so I will focus on the now, and right now, I need to get clothes, right now I need to eat, and right now I need to do something for myself, so I will accept it (the “black” money)” – Cassandra.*

*“Now a days people want to have money. They don’t, they are not interested in having insurance in order to retire as soon as possible. They want money...it’s money and I think that more and more people now a days are going to the black economy. More and more because if you are going to work with (contributing) insurance (working officially) they (employers) have to pay insurance too so you are not going to take the amount of money that you want to. For example, if you’re going (working) for EUR 500 (a month in) the black economy, when you work with insurance (working officially) you are going to take (home) EUR 300. So they (employees) want as more (much) money as they can. I am trying to find a job in the black economy because I want money” – Nikos.*

*“... For example, (if) you don’t have (work) experience in your subject (related to what you studied) for example in black economy, the only thing you can do is work in cafes or in internet cafes” – Nikos.*

*“I have to chose the black economy. Jobs that are referred to the black economy” – Nikos.*

Participants also explained how the black economy is an overall common solution for many working class Greeks in order to pay for basic necessities. “... *[M]any are working two, three jobs at once. It is all part of the black economy. Two, three jobs, but everything is under the table. But they aren't steady (jobs)*” – Kassandra. In the case of those who have been laid off or fired, and especially in Greece's current fiscal situation, the black economy has been a last resort for those who have families to support. As Marina explains, “*you know if you have a job and you get fired and you have two or three children to feed, you have to do something.*”

Government financial mismanagement, recent austerity measures as well as poor social policy, were seen as detrimental for all unemployed Greeks and young graduates alike.

*“These are tough times for a lot of people. For young people, and what about someone who has four kids, what's going to happen for him, if he's lost his job and no one is going to hire him? That's how things are here in Greece. They have to take away his pension money and everything else and in many things he was getting before”* – Alexandros.

*“It's not the crisis, it's the policies ... cause we had some Prime Ministers that, who were technocrats. They focused on the policy, and not to the people ... They focused on the financial things...and they watched (paid attention to) people outside (of Greece). What we (young graduates and Greeks in general) felt and we needed (did not matter), the social policy does not exist in this country. There is no social policy”* – Tasoula.

In a context where social policy and benefits are minimal, people heavily rely on work they can find regardless of whether it is formal work or not. The result is a difficult cycle to break – employers and employees dependent on the black economy for survival.

## Unaffordability of life

Generally in Greece, and at the best of times when the economy has been growing, wages are relatively low. The minimum wage statistic *reported* to Eurostat for Greece, as of February 2011 was EUR 863 (gross) per month, compared to the minimum wage incomes reported to Eurostat for ‘core’ countries such as: EUR 1139 (gross) per month in the UK, EUR 1365 (gross) per month in France, EUR 1415 (gross) per month in Belgium, EUR 1424 (gross) per month in the Netherlands, and EUR 1750 (gross) per month in Luxemburg.<sup>53</sup>

For young post-secondary graduates working in the shadow economy in unofficial, low wage, low skilled, precarious jobs often in the service industry, makes them financially vulnerable and puts them at greater risk of poverty compared to others. Work in the black economy results in less pay than the already low wage standard in the “official” labour market in Greece and there are no social security benefits.

Regardless, as Marina explains, “[o]fficial (employment) or not, it’s not easy for a young person in Greece to live on his, their own with the money they get from their jobs.” – Marina. Despite the fact that most study participants lived at home with their families they were burdened with not being able to afford basic necessities in life like medicine and in some cases expressed worry about having enough food to eat. “*You cannot afford basic things like coffee. You could say it’s luxury, you could live without it but I have no medical treatment, I have no job, I have no future, that’s how I feel in this country*” – Tasoula.

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<sup>53</sup> Eurostat –

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Minimum\\_wage\\_statistics#Further\\_Eurostat\\_information](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Minimum_wage_statistics#Further_Eurostat_information)

*“It makes me nervous; I got stomach aches...because of anxiety until three months ago or five before I met my boyfriend I was like I want to die because I have no personal life. I had no money, I was way too anxious, I couldn't sleep, I didn't want to go out, I didn't want to do anything. Neither study nor read a book. Watch TV, no way because I was watching the news and was like oh my God, I'm going to cry now cause what depressed me most was it didn't make me feel better that other people are in the same situation as I am. It was worse because I knew there was no way (no hope)... It was the opposite effect” – Tasoula.*

Socially, participants were restricted because they had to think about whether they could afford to spend money for coffee with friends. Tasoula explains how, *“... if I buy that and I spend EUR 50 for example, I don't know what the next day reveals. If I can eat, for my medicine ...”*– Tasoula. Tasoula went on to tell me how she saves whatever money she can in case of a health emergency because as she said, *“It's happened twice this year. I got ill and I needed medication and I needed a doctor... I have no healthcare”* – Tasoula.

Long and medium term life planning was another big problem for unemployed young graduates because their future was uncertain without a job. Unemployment had, in Alexandros's words,

*“[w]ell a big effect, I suppose. My everyday life it's not totally but kind of depends on you know or revolves around it (being unemployed). I am applying for a job and I'm thinking about what I am going to do next, if I am going to find a job here in Greece, or if I need to move away from Greece, pretty much everything I suppose. At least mid-term or long-term ... thinking forward and being almost a year out of a job, I mean, ya ... it has a major influence in any decision I make. That I have to make.”*

The question of when participants could afford to raise a family was a key concern, in particular for the women who were interviewed. In her interview Athena said, *I can't have a family this minute; I do not know if I can have a family without a job”* Cassandra shared these worries when she explained, *“I can't have a normal relationship, since I don't have somewhere to live. I can't make my own family, I don't have the*

*money.” Marina also shared concerns about not being in the financial position to have a family as a result of unemployment, “... when you grow up and you are around your 30s it is that it’s not easy to make a family of your own because a job is the most important thing...so you cannot make any long-term plans for a future.”*

### **No personal choice and freedom**

Another daily reality of being unemployed commonly identified by participants was a lack of personal choice and freedom in several aspects of life. Participants depended on their parents for money and were reminded of the financial restraint they had to live within everyday because of parental scrutiny about any kind of spending choice they made in the present or had planned for the future.

*“... [M]y parents intervene with everything in my life, from what I am wearing to what I’m going to eat. Something that makes me frustrated all the time” ... “I can’t dress the way I want, I can’t buy things, I can’t go out where I want ... you just don’t have money ... you can’t go back to university and study something more. Your parents would have to pay for it, and they would have to approve” –* **Kassandra.**

Similarly, Athena describes how being unemployed and dependent on your parents *“you have not got the money to do the things you want, generally you cannot organize your personal life ... .”*

Being unemployed has meant individuals lack choices and freedoms in their immediate lives and with each day that passes in their circumstances the young graduates I spoke with are deprived of opportunities and left with future uncertainty. Unemployed young graduates are not able to make major life decisions because they are financially dependent and lack autonomy. For instance, when and how they can raise a family of their own is largely out of their control because of their unemployment circumstances and

the challenging economic climate within which they live in Greece. The lives of young unemployed graduates have been frozen or seized in a state of intense financial restraint (like Greece is itself). As Nikos explains, *“I think it (Greece) is occupied. Yes, Greece from that (the IMF and European Central Bank loans) and from other European countries too because you know, I think Greece is (perceived as) the ‘sinner.’*

The crisis has meant that Greece is in a financially vulnerable and dependant situation and as the country’s situation continues down its current path, worsening further into economic unsustainability, unemployed young post-secondary graduates embedded in this environment are directly impacted. The way fiscal and economic matters have developed young post-secondary graduates in Greece are presently unemployed, with little to no options.

### **Little to no options**

When asked what types of resources or options are available to young unemployed post-secondary graduates in Greece to find employment and get into the labour market; through programs or initiatives in the public or private sector Marina answered:

*“No. There is nothing. I mean it’s difficult for someone who is not Greek to understand the situation. I mean Canada is very, very how can I say developed country; very sophisticated country in comparison to Greece. Well, (in Greece) there are no programs, no initiatives, there is nothing, the economy is going bad.”*

The general view among respondents was that they had exhausted most, if not all options to find full-time employment; other than working in the black economy or moving outside of Greece to seek opportunities. For instance, participants expressed:

*“The fact is that you try to get a job and you search the articles in the newspaper, you send your CV, you have no response. You don’t have the chance to go to the interview” – Cassandra.*

*“I don’t believe there are that there are options anymore. I mean, I’m sorry to say this, but I don’t believe there are options” – Cassandra.*

*“... And it’s not just that I don’t have money now, but there isn’t hope that I’ll have money in the future” – Cassandra.*

*“Things are not going to change until 2060 because we (Greece) got a loan...so we have to take the loan, repay the loan, so there is no future. What will it be? 50 years of what?” – Tasoula.*

*“And I keep wondering why the hell did I study and did I pay all those years? I am almost thirty. I have no security, nothing. I feel like (pause) there is nothing to hope for, to make you feel alive, to wait, to wait for” – Tasoula.*

*“Give me the chance to get older. You don’t give me the chance ...” – Tasoula.*

*“Now-a-days with the situation we have here, they don’t give you the opportunity to have experience...The industries are afraid to take you” – Nikos.*

*“The choices? Barman, server, dj (pause) those (are the choices)” – Athena.*

*“... for me to dump the whole economics aspect (what was studied), flushing that down the toilet and working somewhere totally in a different area, like I don’t know, fixing TV’s or whatever... I know a few people that after five years working in one sector they went away (from that) because they couldn’t really find employment. They just started working in something else, just “work” because they needed money” – Alexandros.*

Despite poor employment prospects and a lack of options it was very clear how much participants wanted the chance to work and participate in society with more choices, opportunities and freedoms. Behind pessimism and discouragement regarding the unpromising labour market situation, there were responses indicative of positive thinking and hope.

*“As I said, I am average, in the profession of my degree, but I have potential with the right training, because I want to learn and I am honest and I want to help” – Cassandra.*

*“... [C]ause it’s not just the money and the safety, it’s (also) that we want to contribute (to society) ... This is the most productive time of our lives and we do nothing. I sit and use Facebook and do nothing ... That’s what hurts the most” – Tasoula.*

*“I think we are heading towards political change ... But this has to come from everyone” – Cassandra.*

Participants expressed they had a desire to work, that they had potential to work and that they saw political change on the horizon. For the time being, however, individuals employed different ways of managing and coping with their unemployment and had various strategies to find employment, which is the subject of the next section.

### **Firewalking: Coping and Managing with Unemployment**

Participants shared the variety of tactics and strategies they had been employing and planned to undertake in order to “survive” what was going on in their environment and to manage their unemployment. However, the two most frequently referenced coping mechanisms and pursuits were either to work in the black economy (as has been discussed) or to seek employment opportunities outside of Greece.

### **Leaving Greece**

One of the most viable options left to deal with unemployment and identified by all study participants was to leave the country and seek employment opportunities and a better life elsewhere. The unemployment situation was so severe that many young post-secondary graduates in Greece would leave their own country. According to participants, young graduates have been put in a position where they are forced to move. For instance, Tasoula explained, *“I am thinking of going out ... cause there is nothing to do here (in*

Greece).” Similarly, Nikos asserted, *“I think they make us to go out ... I think that if everyone here goes out, this will be an alarm for them (the government) ... Now if you want to work you have to go out (of the country). You have to go in England, in Italy, in Canada, everywhere else except from Greece.”* Alexandros also explains, *“[a] lot of people are moving away from Greece. Just leaving.”*

It has come to this point, because according to Marina, *“young people don’t know what to do. We are frustrated. The reality is that most people think about emigrating ... I have in mind that I might go live in another country. That’s an option. I mean, I don’t want to but if the situation continues to go that bad, I might have to.”* Participants stated that they themselves and friends that they knew of were considering leaving the country and in fact many in their social networks had already done so. For instance as Cassandra put it, *“I think most people are just leaving, and going to countries like Australia, Canada, Dubai, where the economy is still strong.”*

### **The uncertainty of tomorrow**

For some unemployed post-secondary graduates however, even the prospect of leaving the country was not a viable option as it was beyond financial reach. Tasoula explained, *“[y]a my mom told me of a seminar in Ireland which pays EUR 1500 per month. I said hello mom, I don’t have the money to fly there and I don’t have the money to rent a flat. What am I supposed to do?”* As a result there were other coping mechanisms discussed by interview participants who could not leave the country. The other options were more viable some, such as looking for all types of employment, related or unrelated

to studies, re-orientation of education and occupational training; starting a business, protesting, or simply waiting out the recession.

For the moment

Kassandra explains how, “... *for the moment, I’m just working at different little jobs left and right. Jobs for example that tell you, ‘write this piece, and you’ll receive this money’ but that’s only for that particular day, for that particular project. Just so I can be getting a little money ... so I can survive.*” Similarly, Alexandros also raised how tactics employed by his friends have been to leave the sector they were trained for and experienced in, and find any kind of work, related to their studies or not. “*I know a few people that after five years working in one sector they went away because they couldn't really find employment. They just started working in something else. Just "work" because they needed the money*” – Alexandros.

One participant thought that re-focusing her post-secondary education and training in another occupational area would make her more employable and this was an option. She felt that re-training which was more practically oriented to a position in higher labour marked demand would be effective and increase her employability. Kassandra explains, “*I personally am thinking of studying something more technical, to find a profession that will be essential no matter what happens... .*” Another way Kassandra was working to improve her circumstances was that she was trying to improve and upgrade her current skills. “... *I am trying to find traits/skills that I have – for example, when I was little I was involved with music. At some point I was taking English, even though I don’t speak it now. I’m trying to use – remember these things, so I am not just relying on my degree, so I have other abilities*” – Kassandra.

Starting your own business as a way to get out of being unemployed was mentioned by two out of the six participants I spoke with; although, it was not a popular choice because it was perceived as ineffective and the most unviable given the current economic climate in the country and immediate personal financial circumstances of participants. Athena explains how, *“you can make your own work ...”* but *“... you need money to do that. You can start with your own very small amount of money. Do it via email or your own website but there is risk involved.”* Alexandros made a similar point: *“people cannot find a job so they borrow money to start up a business ... but probably (they) will fold ... .”* It was interesting to note however, that there was a *“but”* pause at the end of his statement. Perhaps this expressed hope for success in businesses.

Alexandros added to his reply that he had observed an increase in the number of small businesses opening selling basic foods, and opening pastry shops and bakeries. Even though a lot of businesses in the retail industry like clothing stores are folding, *“... a lot of bakeries and small convenience stores are opening”* ... *“because the demand for food is always there ... everyone is going to buy bread and things like that so it’s (people are) cutting out things like clothes and shoes and whatever but buying some bread and sandwiches, which are what is left (to buy as necessities) so we’ve got a lot of businesses starting up in this industry”* – Alexandros.

What tomorrow will bring

Those who had not already left, like the young graduates I interviewed in my study, were waiting to see what will happen next in Greece. Waiting out the recession was another way to manage being unemployed in the current context, but was perceived as viable only for the short to medium term. Participants expressed:

*“Until now most people just, you know, wait to see what's going to happen” – Marina.*

*“So far I haven't done much. I've been waiting to find something you know” – Alexandros.*

*“Things are black. Bad. I'm just waiting to see what will happen tomorrow. I believe we haven't reached a final point, changes are still happening. So, I'm waiting another year or two to see what will happen. And when I turn 30, I don't know what I will do” – Cassandra.*

### **Strikes and protests in Greece**

Strikes and protests were identified as coping mechanisms and tactics for people to change the circumstances behind unemployment, for instance demonstrations regarding the government's measures to solve the “crisis.” Participants however, had varied views about differences between strikes and protests in Greece. There was a clear distinction made by each participant between strikes and protests; and overall, strikes were regarded as more disruptive to society and interfered with other people's lives. One participant described a negative and unintended consequence of strikes in that although they are intended to protect people's rights, the act of striking infringes on the rights of others at the same time:

*“I think this is a right. I mean it's my right. I can do it (strike). This is a right but sometimes they (strikes) are not very democratic. For example, you want to demonstrate, ok. I am sure that you are right (you have reason) so that you demonstrate, ok. Think of me that I want to go to my job and I get late and you make my life difficult and you give me a hard time, this is not democracy” – Tasoula.*

Strikes were described to interfering with business activities in society and an obstacle to non-striking groups and individuals that wanted to go to work. The financial damage inflicted by strikes, moreover, was described as detrimental to Greece as a country overall:

*“They (strikes) affect me in a bad way, because I have to pay more in order to transfer (transit). I have to re-arrange my schedule because of the interruptions and that affects my job (unofficial) too because I’m not punctual and that’s not okay ...” – Tasoula.*

*“I was watching the news the other day, you know Crete? ... Crete is a rich place. With the strike of the ports, they cost them troubles ... troubles to the whole country ... What I’m saying is ... we are right with the means to choose, we use our rights ... we try to show (demonstrate) our rights but with the moment of choice we do (the moment we do), we lose our rights at the same time ... by harming other people ... that’s unfair... ya, because it’s daily” – Tasoula.*

*“About the strikes, I don’t believe that it is a good thing to do. I agree with the protests. But there have been so many strikes lately in Greece ... So there are days here in Greece that nothing works, because of the strikes ... Even the airports, trains, buses, banks you know so, I don’t agree with that because you only cause problems to the civilians. So I don’t think that’s a good thing to do ...” – Marina.*

Some described striking as ineffective in addressing needed macro-level reforms in Greece. Kassandra explains her view that:

*“We must, some day, stop thinking about our wages, and about how we are working too many hours, because that is something we are all going through. We have to pursue more serious things for there to be change, for example, a change in our political system. I don’t mean particular people, or the government. New people will just do the same. We have to change the way we govern the country. And this won’t be accomplished by just asking for higher wages” – Kassandra.*

To strike was also criticized as unnecessary at times and the right to strike was said to have been abused or used as a tool for political manipulation and for the gain of few people. Tasoula the most critical of “striking” out of all the respondents stated:

*“... the fact is for example, let’s take the railway workers, ya. They say they want cheaper tickets (more affordable ticket rates for transit users), the fact is this is what they approach the public opinion (this is the argument that they convey or approach the public with). The main reason (motivation) is that their salary is getting smaller, cut, ya. This is unethical, trying to convince the public that you are on strike or demonstration (for public interest), but in fact, it is yourself you are thinking of ... But at the same time they (the railway workers) have been having as a salary EUR 5,000 per month, some of them. And now they’ve (government has) cut the salary down (of the railway workers) ... but they (the railway workers) don’t think about when they (the government) cut my salary, his*

*(a fellow citizen's) salary and the fact is that the trains could be very, be a very nice (more efficient) business. I mean it's a good way to ... earn money for the country. Ya, but (instead) what they (railway workers) did was to they used the (extra) money they earned (negotiated) for themselves. They take the money, and they play with it themselves and they waste it" – Tasoula.*

Overall, two participants held a generally negative view towards striking, another two had both positive and negative opinions and two were strongly supportive of striking action.

#### Protesting for democracy

In contrast to strikes, protests were viewed more positively and in particular they were favoured if they were unobtrusive, because they did not infringe on the rights of others, in the way strikes did. Respondents advocated for ways in which the unemployed or those hard hit by the crisis could express themselves however, also warned against the danger of strikes and protests causing more damage to the lives of fellow citizens, for example those who were trying to work for a living, access transportation, or get to a service. Participants expressed:

*"... On the one hand you need to show it... you need to protest what you're upset about. (If you) are on a main road, the businesses on the main road cannot work (do business). So the people who work there may have a problem ... Yes you need to protest (but) with measure, do it differently, not just walk somewhere and close a road. You need to get in a central location in a way that doesn't bother others; in a way that you really do protest (without negatively impacting others)" – Athena.*

*"... I agree with the protests. People have to show that they don't agree with the politics of the country right now. They have to get, go out in the street and you know protest, that's the only thing we can do; instead of accepting passively everything that happens" – Marina.*

*"... You reach a point when you are so angry that you want to go out (to protest) and say so and as I said, I believe we have to all participate together" – Cassandra.*

One respondent in particular, Alexandros was very supportive of both striking and protesting as coping mechanisms and ways to manage unemployment, he stated, *“I am all for them. I am pro.”* Alexandros felt there should be more protests because it was a direct way society could communicate dissatisfaction with the government and their public policy choices; and in particular was referring to the Greek government’s adoption of the austerity measures associated with Greece’s European emergency bailout package in May 2010.

*“(Protesting is a good thing) because of this business with the European Union business, and the EU bank you know. It’s just the Prime Minister (had his own agenda) decided by himself, even before he was elected ... and he didn’t bring anything to the Parliament, just decided by himself so without considering the polls (and the public’s opinion)”* – Alexandros.

Alexandros’s understanding of recent protests was that they were a necessary way to express the public’s views and message on the austerity approach of the ‘Troika.’ The protests were supported by Alexandros because he argued that citizens should be consulted and heard especially when it comes to critical public policy issues.

*“We have to do that (protest) because everything is and all the things are happening here without the consultation of the people so we have to do something ... I don’t know if you saw what happened in Spain?” They are making fun of us here ... They were saying don’t be too loud or the Greeks are going to wake up and see what is going on ... They even make fun of us in Spain (Greece is a mockery even in Spain), and they have 25 percent unemployment. This is big”* – Alexandros.

Interviews with participants not only informed my study’s three main research questions, however information gathered also resulted in data about participants’ conceptions for changes, solutions and future prospects. There were various rationalizations put forth by study participants and these ranged from respondents reporting changes need to include: a change in societal mentality, economic and labour

market reforms, post-secondary education system reforms, and a future of political and collective will and action. The following section reports these findings in more detail.

### **Solutions for Change and Future Prospects**

Study participants raised several ideas and possible solutions that would result in better employment prospects for young graduates in Greece. Participants explained what they thought would be effective in addressing the problem of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates and the most popular issues discussed included the need for: economic reform, post-secondary education system reform, changes in the mentality of Greek society and government and the attainment of political change through collective action.

### **Economic, labour market policy and post-secondary education system reform**

Solutions identified for better post-secondary graduate employment outcomes also included economic labour market policy and post-secondary education system reforms. Participants concluded that re-examining ways to make the economy stronger for instance by taking advantage of Greece's traditionally strong sectors and improving on them would result in economic growth and more jobs. In addition, focusing professional development and skills training in areas of labour market demand was advocated as a more efficient approach to harness human capital.

*“We have to go back and see what we can produce in this country. Like we have agriculture ... tourism is our number one industry. It is our number one product. We have to take advantage of it ... we have to have a better quality about our tourism ... But you know we have to start producing things. We cannot (all) be lawyers and doctors and mathematicians, I don't know. We have to you know, produce with our hands” – Marina.*

*“Greece is a place that has what? Sea, so tourism. Agriculture. We do not take advantage of that” – Tasoula.*

Alexandros added that labour market incentives for business to hire young graduates are helpful but there are not enough in Greece. He states, *“[w]ell, they (government) could do a lot I mean, they could give incentives to businesses to hire young people. I mean they don’t do it enough, there are some programs in Greece but they are not able to do that now (because of the fiscal climate) so ... (pause)”* – Alexandros.

Presently, there are labour market programs offered through the OAED. The task of OAED is to promote the acquirement of and improvement of vocational skills for workers through training and employment programs. The organization aims to develop vocational skills and match them with the continuously changing conditions of the labour market. The organization also administers social security benefits and allowances as well as work placements for the unemployed. But these types of initiatives are rare in Greece and often lack enough funding and resources to qualify many people for admission. The small amount of programs and efforts that do exist are not impactful enough considering the numbers of unemployed and the magnitude of unemployment in Greece. As Athena explains, *“[w]hat we (Greeks) call OAED, it’s a service for the unemployed, but you have to met certain criteria to get into OAED. There are people who cannot get in, to get in, to get work or to be helped to find work.”*

In terms of post-secondary education system reform participants felt it was crucial that there was regulation in terms of the amount of high school graduates admitted to post-secondary institutions and that there should be time limits placed on degree

completion. Aligning the post-secondary education system to labour market needs to fill occupations in high demand; through educational programs and training offered, as well, integrating practically oriented training and building experience into curricula was important to better employment outcomes. Participants communicated:

*“In education they have to be more practical not only teach in theories. We (post-secondary students) have to have (applied work) practice” – Nikos.*

*“I don’t know if now there is something that can be done, (for) the already existing graduates. I mean the graduates have to find, they have to find the new orientation, professional orientation” – Marina.*

### **Change in mentality**

When the need for a change in “mentality” was discussed, overall participants were refereeing to the need for more principled practices in society and government. Responses pointed to promoting a stronger culture of responsibility, accountability and transparency to combat issues such as financial mismanagement, corruption and abuse of power, or problems like clientelism and patronage. Tasoula explains the problem with everyone in the country striving for a ‘comfy’ public service position, because in her view most people want to work as little as possible with as much benefit as possible. Tasoula’s argument was that this general attitude has implications for the economy and the public in general. Overall, Tasoula expressed her concern with perceived societal attitudes that she characterized as:

*“The whole nation wants to become a public servant, if you know what I mean. It’s not possible ... Working as a public servant you’ve got the safety, you can leave your job for a month and the other will cover you and it’s ok ... We are lazy. We want to get benefit and do nothing. We are lazy. We are. Germans work much more than we. All the others work more than we do” – Tasoula.*

During her interview Marina spoke about how the unemployment situation post-secondary graduates are currently facing in Greece is in part due to the credit bubble burst that followed financially irresponsible choices made by the government, banking sector and public consumers; a result of banks employing lax lending requirements and consumers overextending themselves with credit card and other loans they could not afford. *“Before we were living in this dream, living with, you know plastic money, with loans, and right now all this has collapsed and we are facing reality right now”* – Marina.

The state itself, with its greater borrowing capacity as a result of EU membership, overextended its ability to pay back its debts and contributed to the country’s extraordinary debt to GDP ratios in recent years, 145% in 2010 and 165% in 2011 (Eurostat, 2012, p. 5). Marina pointed for the need to change this type of general attitude and ‘mentality’ in society that lacks realistic financial planning.

Kassandra, Athena and Tasoula each pointed out that societal practices of patronage and clientelism have to stop because they are unfair and unjustly disadvantage post-secondary graduates who are denied the opportunity to compete for employment in a more meritocratic labour market environment:

*“I think that our entire mentality would have to change because each person is trying to gain at the other’s expense. This, as a mentality has to change, or else nothing will happen ... in Greece there is a lot of use of connections ... like if I work somewhere I will hire my friend ... not necessarily someone who is worthy of the position ... and that has to change”* – Kassandra.

*“ ... Us the simple people, even if there is an intervention in Greece, sure new positions will open up, but still only very few will get in, and it will be those who are connected to those intervening”* – Athena.

*Exocratia has to stop* – Tasoula.

The government's failure to establish an effective labour relations framework and support system for workers' rights, were problems related to outdated 'state mentality' that needed to be addressed. Athena argued that if the state re-evaluated its mentality and approach towards workers' employment and unemployment rights, it would help improve employment outcomes of young post-secondary graduates.

*"The government needs to do something. I feel like no one is controlling. The government does not have different privileges for the unemployed; the government does not give incentives to employers, those who have positions vacant to take on those unemployed people. It starts from there. It doesn't review the employers who have workers, it doesn't check if they are really paying them correctly and if they have sure wages. The mentality of the state needs to change"* – Athena.

### **The future - political change and collective action**

To a considerable extent, study participants viewed their futures in Greece in uncertain terms and as "black and foggy" expressing their pessimism about anything changing much in the near future. As Athena put it, "*[m]y employment situation in the future? I don't see it being good. It is very bad*" – Athena.

*"Sometimes I feel embarrassed I am Greek ... I shouldn't have to because of our civilization ... I am very pessimistic." ... "Things are not going to change because we got a loan ... so we have to take the loan. Repay the loan. So there is no future. What will it be, 50 years of what?"* – Tasoula.

Responses also included cynicism and expressed distrust of Greek politicians:

*"I believe that Greek politicians are trying to destroy the country. I don't think we should have joined the EU and accepted the EU loans. I don't believe that they (the EU leaders) weren't aware of our debt ... So, since they want to destroy a country, they will most likely succeed ... The problem goes high up ... Some people are protesting, are saying no, but this has to come from everyone and that's hard to make ..." ... "If something very serious doesn't happen ... if we don't become very poor, as a country, if we don't cut away from the Euro, or if there isn't some war, so that everything will shut down completely and we'll have to start over... there is no way for anything to change." ... [A]nd I think we are heading towards political change" ... "We have to change the way we govern the country"* – Cassandra.

In the end however, not all responses were characteristic of pessimism, cynicism and pointed to a bleak future. Rather discussions about the future also included the opportunity for changes in Greek governance and the need for a strong public will to move towards new societal goals that better serve the needs and aspirations of young post-secondary graduates and Greek citizens alike. Respondents mentioned how there were already actions, including political taking place and societal changes in progress.

*“People start to get off their couches and their houses and they start getting out in streets, protesting about the situation here. There have been some protests all around Greece. We are starting to wake up. I believe that young people are going to fight more about their future and the future of their country” – Marina.*

Considering the proposed solutions; for the economy, labour market policy and post-secondary education system reforms, and towards a societal mental shift, together with the expressed will for political action, positive messages can be taken from participants’ comments. Although, employment circumstances are very challenging there are encouraging prospects to be found for the future of young post-secondary graduates and citizens in Greece. In order for success however, Marina stresses that, *“[e]veryone’s mentality (has to change). I mean we are the politics. Everyone’s mentality” – Marina.*

## Chapter 5 – Discussion

There were several findings in my study that supported and corresponded to themes and data that arose from my academic literature review. Greek post-secondary graduates interviewed described their labour market context as: embedded in an economic climate of no growth (in fact one where the economy was contracting), which stifled job opportunities, as well, indicated unemployment was related to problems due to: an overqualified labour pool, post-secondary education and labour market mismatch and the phenomenon of brain drain.

Some participants also pointed out that their unemployment circumstances were related to their educational disciplinary and training choices and discussed how in their experience employment prospects vary depending on education and training background. For instance, as a journalist Athena explained she was particularly vulnerable to economic cycles and downturns. Cassandra also discussed how her choice to pursue advanced education in lifelong learning did not result in favourable employment chances because her credentials in this area was never recognized by public service employers or the social services sector.

Variation in terms of psychological and related factors such as attitude, emotions, and behaviour such as motivation or agency among study participants who were unemployed was apparent. At the time interviews were being conducted some participants displayed more motivated job-search attitudes — for example Cassandra, who despite the circumstances was looking for ways to improve her employability; build on current skills and obtain training in areas she believed would be of greater labour market demand. On the other hand for instance, Alexandros expressed he had not been

doing much lately to pursue meaningful full time employment in Greece. In particular, Alexandros felt it was pointless and nearly impossible to find desired employment in the current labour market environment. He decided it was more realistic and practical to wait out the recession for the short to medium term. He also expressed an interest in eventually leaving Greece to seek work outside the country, as he felt that was a more viable employment option and tactic. Others expressed that according to their perspective they had already done all they could do and there were little to no options for them.

The relationship between unemployment and one's attitude and emotions was demonstrated most clearly in the interview with Tasoula. Her unemployment meant that she was worried every day about not being able to afford basic necessities, such as medication and food, which caused her much stress and anxiety. Tasoula's tone during her interview was indicative of an individual that was fighting depression and despair. She also expressed hopelessness often feeling like she literally "wanted to die" because of how difficult it had been searching for full time work after graduating, not finding employment and not being able to do what she went to school for to teach. Collectively, participants were socially alienated and struggled with feelings of powerlessness due to their unemployment. In the case of Tasoula, however, her unemployment was a source of personal alienation as displayed by her self-estrangement and transformed notion of 'self.' This was evident in her expressed embarrassment for being Greek and how she critically equated 'being Greek' (ethnically) as being a member of a 'lazy' and 'shameful' society.

Generally, study participants communicated that they wanted to find employment and be productive in life. However, they felt they lacked work and skill acquiring

opportunities. The inability to find employment and a means to earn a living left them immensely disappointed and dissatisfied in their everyday lives. These findings compliment what was referenced in my literature review about humanist-oriented accounts of motivation (e.g. Maslow, 1970), which argue that the opportunity to utilize and acquire skills in work satisfy higher-order needs of self esteem and self-actualization. Humanist accounts of motivation as well as concepts of alienation can be used to understand better the relationship between unemployment and depression, self-critical states, emotions like embarrassment and lack of self-esteem.

Psychological distress as a result of unemployment and life restrictions living at home in adulthood with parents was also expressed by participants. In Greece because unemployment benefits are very low and inadequate to support living independently, it is understood by society that many unemployed young post-secondary graduates live at home with their family for financial support or are subsidized by their parents. As a result, study participants in this situation discussed how their everyday choices were constrained because of obligations to conform to parental expectations. Their financial dependence on parents also meant a lack of self-determination in many aspects of life such as future education goals or marriage and child rearing hopes. This finding can be considered in light of Schaufeli's (1997) argument that the national historical and societal setting is important when analyzing research findings on unemployed graduates and interpreting its relationship to their mental health. Schaufeli maintains the particular socio-cultural environment of unemployed graduates is a significant mental health determinant for graduates.

The Greek welfare regime context also came up in discussion with participants and was described consistently with what academics have argued is the case in Greece and with Mediterranean typologies. Marina discussed for instance how there is very little if anything at all in terms of social policy and unemployment social spending and programs in Greece. She explained it is because they are undeveloped in the country; and, furthermore, that currently there are not any programs or initiatives especially because of the economic and fiscal situation in Greece, which has worsened previous matters. In Greece there is neither legal minimum wage nor a universal social assistance safety net. The fact that the family unit acts as a safety net to fill social gaps was apparent in data collected as four out of the six participants interviewed lived at home with parents and the other two were a couple living together that were largely financially supported by their parents.

Another finding common to what academics and others have reported is with respect to pensions in Greece. The literature among academics and data reported by various statics agencies point to the argument that Greece's pensions absorb a large portion of total government transfers. This can be considered in light of what participant answers related to their household demographics. The large degree to which pensions were a source of family income was evident among the six participants interviewed because of the number of participants' parents who reportedly received pension income. Although, this finding is also considered in the context of broader statistics with regard to the total government social expenditure as percentage of GDP, and with respect to the type of welfare state that exists in Greece. This is further discussed subsequently.

## **New Findings**

Although, many findings addressed frequent themes arising in academic literature, there were several new findings that came up as a result of my study and epistemological approach. The biggest accomplishment of my research and inherent in the study's design is that my research is framed from the unique perspectives and experiences of young unemployed post-secondary graduates in Greece. Having conducted in-depth interviews to gather rich and detailed data, my research offers a uniquely grounded analysis that is connected with the daily lives of young post-secondary graduates.

Data collected from participants sought to answer my three main research questions: (1) what are barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece experience to full time employment; (2) how do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation; and (3) what are young post-secondary graduates in Greece doing in response to manage and cope with their unemployment.

As outlined in the findings section main barriers identified were: the fiscal crisis, the overall weakness of the economy, post-secondary education and training shortcomings for the labour market context, lack of past work experience and technical or job related training, and a labour market culture of clientelism and patronage. Graduates understood their unemployment situation within the context of: the fiscal crisis, a post-secondary education and labour market mismatch, a cycle of dependence on the black economy, personal constraints; lack of freedom and self-determination and few future employment options and prospects. Main coping strategies were: finding employment in

the black market, living with family, leaving Greece, looking for all types of employment, related or unrelated to studies, re-orientation of education and occupational training; starting a business, protesting, or simply waiting out the recession. These coping strategies were particular tactics that young Greek post-secondary graduates employed to practically deal with unemployment, and such information has not been substantially explained by academics in the same way as my study has done.

Also unique to my study was the time in history and context within which research was being undertaken, amidst historically unprecedented times as the European sovereign debt and Greek fiscal crisis were unfolding. The Greek phenomenon began in 2009 and continues to evolve during the present time of writing, over two years later since the beginning of my research in 2010. Greece's economic and fiscal situation has worsened since the onset of the worldwide recession with the country's climbing debt to GDP ratio for example, in most recent years at 145% in 2010 and 165% in 2011 (Eurostat, 2012). During the time interviews were being conducted, Greece was in between having been approved for an IMF and Eurozone emergency loan bailout package of EUR 110 billion in May 2010 and a second Eurozone bailout package of EUR 130 billion approved in February 2012. Data collected on the impact that the Greek fiscal crisis has on young unemployed graduates in Greece is therefore, the timeliest issue discussed in this study. Having conducted research during this period provides a rare snapshot and valuable set of information and analysis to contribute to academia.

Although findings about the psychological and emotional impact of unemployment are not new to academic literature, my study reinforced academic literature by contributing to this knowledge with greater detail of the unique conditions of

unemployed Greek post-secondary graduates interviewed. Unemployment has immediate and long term material disadvantages associated with it, such as the unaffordability of life and inability to financially plan long term. The potentially negative psychological and emotional impacts however that it has for instance, on one's self-esteem and mood as exemplified by Tasoula are less widely understood by society as these factors are more individually experienced. My research provides an opportunity to acknowledge and highlight such aspects of unemployment based on the personal experiences shared. Participants interviewed added further insight to the psychological and emotional context of unemployed graduates. The common frustration, anger, stress, uncertainty and in some cases anxiety and depression shared by those interviewed because of expressed causes and consequences of their unemployment pointed to the personal extent to which unemployment affects people who suffer from it.

### **Ideas for Change**

New findings also came up in terms of ideas for change and potential solutions for the future. The recognition that changes in governance and societal mentality on the part of the Greek government and citizens alike are needed; and specifically in terms of fighting clientelism, patronage and corruption, is important and informs a better economic path towards greater employment opportunities. Discussion about the overall way participants identified with the recent strikes and protests in Greece revealed new information and directions for moving forward. There was a clear distinction that young graduates made between protesting as opposed to striking; and protesting was generally favoured to bring about change if it was done while also respecting other workers' and employers' rights. Finding economic solutions that build upon Greece's strengths in areas

such as shipping, tourism, and agriculture, and supporting incentives for new businesses were also mentioned. Overall, the suggestions including governance and policy directions that young unemployed post-secondary graduates communicated in my study are valuable recommendations that can be considered by academics and policy makers alike.

## **Further Accounting of the Black Economy and Role of the Family Unit**

### **The black economy**

The black economy was an issue that arose both in my academic literature review and in my research therefore, does not neatly fit into either category of previously covered academic or new study findings but nonetheless deserves to be discussed in more detail. As a result of the research process it became very apparent to me that at the onset I had largely underestimated the degree to which the black economy is a part of the post-secondary graduate labour market context.

The significance of the black economy and how it relates to the high unemployment of Greek post-secondary graduates became most apparent to me during the participant recruitment stage of my research as I set out to find study participants who fit my sampling criteria. Despite having studied topics related to my thesis research over the past several years in university, I was unprepared for a major sampling challenge that came up ‘in the field.’ In Canada, for example, when one looks to sample the unemployed<sup>54</sup>, a researcher would expect to find those that are officially engaged in precarious work and/or engaged in part-time employment. For the most part in Canada

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<sup>54</sup> Unemployed – An individual who is available to work and seeking full time employment for at least 6 months

however employment status reflects official employment and there is less of an issue with the number of workers in the black economy.

In Greece, I quickly found that for the most part the participants referred to me via friends and family assisting in third party recruitment, were registered with the government as ‘officially unemployed’ but in reality were ‘unofficially employed’ in the black economy. I learned that ‘unemployment’ in Greece often means that you are unemployed because you are not ‘officially’ employed on record yet, are working ‘unofficially’ in the black economy. The prevalence of the black economy therefore, undermines official state categories. In Greece, ‘under the table’ work is so widespread that it creates an alternative definition and sense of what it means to be unemployed.

It is also important to note that based on discussions with study participants and locals during my time living in Greece, I gained a better understanding of how the black economy in Greece is a coping mechanism for the unemployed. On the one hand, the black economy must be addressed in order for a ‘healthier’ economy to arise in Greece, most significantly as it undermines the government’s tax revenue base to fund among other things public services and long term employee social security. Yet, on the other hand, without it and the income it provides, and in the absence of the new generation of wealth in Greece and opportunities for legitimate full time living wage jobs, Greeks could not afford the basics.

### **The family unit**

The family unit as well as the large informal sector in Greece, have both played key roles in providing income to those that would otherwise, be underemployed or

unemployed and have made a difference in the living standards of Greek people (Katrougalos, 1996). The family unit has traditionally served as a main social safety net in Greece for vulnerable groups like unemployed young post-secondary graduates. Historically, poverty did not always turn into exclusion and misery because of the major role that family had in alleviating economic pressure (Katrougalos, 1996 p.56) and this continues to be the case for the most part although, is beginning to be undermined by modernization and societal shifts.

The demographic data collected in my study indicated that four out of six participants lived at home with family and the other two interviewed were a couple living together, but were financially dependent on family support. Further to this point, the topic of a strong family unit that provided social support in times of need, such as during unemployment, was briefly referenced by a study participant who explained: *“there is a lot of unemployment in most fields and even if you get a job, official or not, it's not easy for a young person in Greece to live on his, their own with the money they get from their jobs. [Therefore,] usually parents have to help the situation...”* and *“...right now, there is not a big problem because of family structure in Greece”* – Marina. In general it was felt that for the time being, family served as somewhat of a safety net amidst unemployment and the current fiscal and economic conditions in Greece. Although, it was also pointed out by Marina that the future was uncertain and *“...family cannot support you forever”* – Marina.

Despite the traditional role the family unit has played in providing social support and acting as a ‘safety net’, in recent times societal changes have taken place which have undermined this function. A transformation of the Greek family and a cultural revolution

is beginning to occur as there are declining marriage rates, later ages at which young people marry, rising divorce rates (even though still low), attitudinal shifts concerning sexual relations before marriage, women beginning to challenge their traditional role, and increasingly attaining higher levels of education and entering the formal labour market (Karakatsanis, 1999).

In contemporary Greek society the traditional one breadwinner model is eroding because of rising female participation in the labour market and this has implications for things such as day care. For instance, one basic reason for the general underdevelopment of social services such as day care and child care is because these services have been provided traditionally within the family by housewives (Katrougalos, 1996, p. 41) however, with rising female labour market participation this traditional source of support is beginning to diminish. Yet, the state has not put public policy into place to address the implications of such shifts, it will however, be inevitably forced to do so in the future (Katrougalos, 1996).

Both of these coping mechanisms - obtaining income via the black economy and traditional reliance on the family unit - are being undermined by certain transformations that are taking place in Greek society; for instance, those stemming from EU membership and modernization. Changes are a result of new governance, policy approaches and societal shifts towards the greater adaptation of neo-liberal ideals; emphasizing personal economic interest as opposed to focus on the 'greater good' of the family collective. At the same time, however, there is nothing planned to resolve the root problems or underlying issues causing citizens to depend on the black economy and family unit, for current labour market and public policy shortcomings in Greece. Continuing to neglect

important factors behind unemployment will result in negative consequences impacting the state and people's lives unless further thought is put into transitional or corrective processes.

### **Ambiguities**

Some of the findings in my study, such as those related to Greek pension incomes, particular conceptions of Greek culture and the meaning of democracy and its political contestation and the recent fiscal crisis in Greece, deserve further attention in order to gain clearer understandings of them. Without further explanation and examination of these mentioned findings they may be interpreted in a misleading way without full account of their complex nature.

### **Greek pension incomes**

Pension income is a major financial resource for Greek families and this is indicated in my study with the notable percentage of retired parents among the unemployed graduates in my sample. The average Greek family tends to rely considerably on public pension income. However, it is important to understand this finding within a larger context and not be misled into assumptions about the type of welfare state that exists in Greece. The fact that early retirement is widespread and only 44% of workers aged between 55 and 64 people are still at work in Greece compared to an OECD average of 52%<sup>55</sup> is not indicative of a "generous" Fordist welfare state typology or welfare state capitalism. As mentioned in the literature review although, the

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<sup>55</sup> OECD "Greece at a Glance Policies for Sustainable Recovery" p. 5

Greek welfare regime must be reformed to address imbalances such as the fact that pensions account for over 50 percent of government income transfers, this finding is not indicative of a robust welfare state apparatus in Greece and any reform must address shortcomings in a holistic way.

The Greek Mediterranean model is not characteristic of a welfare state such as those found in 'core' continental European economies led by socially democratic or socially liberal governments. Greece's lacks similarly organized mechanisms to redistribute to the working class and low-income earners. Regardless of the political ideology of governments elected in Greece, (whether left, centrist or right), no modern Greek government has developed an economy with the same re-distributive capacity to meet social safety net standards such as those in economically stronger countries; or where welfare capitalism exists in its full form. In Greece, generally jobs are low paying; in January 2011 Eurostat reported the minimum wage income was EUR 863 (gross) per month,<sup>56</sup> consequently monthly public pension contributions are correspondingly low. Greece also has the largest shadow economy in Europe with an estimated two-thirds of workers 'unofficially' employed (Dell'Anno, 2007), which means the majority of working class people do not qualify for the public pension earnings-related scheme; the minimal level of income is based on 15 years' contributions,<sup>57</sup> and rather they may qualify for the "minimum pension;" a small entitlement that leaves them in poverty. As the OECD reports in 2010 in Greece, "...old-age poverty is currently widespread. In the mid-2000s, 23% of people aged over 65 were poor compared with 13% on average in OECD countries. This is partly explained by the fact that a large share of workers are in

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<sup>56</sup> Eurostat Minimum Wage Statistics – February 2011 p. 1

<sup>57</sup> Pensions at a Glance 2011: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD Countries p. 1

the informal sector, and thus have no other pension rights than last-resort, relatively low safety-net benefits.”<sup>58</sup>

The *main minimum pensions* are: the “old age and disability pension” which was EUR 486.02 per month from January 2008 to September 2008 and EUR 495.74 per month from October 2008 to December 2008 and, “survivor’s pension” which was EUR 388.80 per month from January 2008 to September 2008 and EUR 396.58 per month from October 2008 to December 2008.<sup>59</sup>

The *minimum supplementary pensions* for the same year were: for the “old age and disability pension” from January 2008 to September 2008, EUR 119.17 per month and from October 2008 to December 2008 EUR 121.55 per month and, “survivors pension” which was EUR 95.33 per month from January 2008 to September 2008, and EUR 97.24 per month from October 2008 to December 2008.<sup>60</sup>

The bottom line is that although Greece may benefit from pension reforms such as those announced in February 2010 by the Greek government to make the system more sustainable and align more closely with European standards; “[t]his would need to be complemented by sound policies to address poverty, notably through the implementation of better targeted income support mechanisms” (OECD, 2010).

### **Internalized conceptions**

During one of the interviews a very peculiar comment was made when a participant was discussing what she thought would improve the unemployment situation

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<sup>58</sup> OECD “Greece at a Glance Policies for Sustainable Recovery” p. 5

<sup>59</sup> Pensions at a Glance 2011: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD Countries p. 2

<sup>60</sup> Pensions at a Glance 2011: Retirement-Income Systems in OECD Countries p. 2

in Greece. A general change in societal mentality and work ethic was identified as something that must occur in Greece because as Tasoula explained,

*“The whole nation wants to become a public servant, if you know what I mean. It’s not possible ... Working as a public servant you’ve got the safety, you can leave your job for a month and the other will cover you and it’s ok ... We are lazy. We want to get benefit and do nothing. We are lazy. We are. Germans work much more than we. All the others work more than we do.”*

Having made sense of her point about issues regarding the bureaucracy in Greece I was very surprised to hear the generalization that all Greeks are lazy. What was even more interesting about Tasoula’s comments was the comparison of Greeks firstly to Germans and then to “all others.”

Reflecting on these comments during the research process led me to critically examine conceptualizations resulting from the international scrutiny and blame towards Greece and Greek people for economic shortcomings and the current fiscal crisis. There has been intense criticism of Greece because the state has not met acceptable EU community fiscal and market criteria and Greek people have been judged and perceived as operating outside of social norms.

It is possible that certain ‘outside’ conceptions have been internalized by some Greek people themselves. The perspective that all Greeks are “lazy” is an unfounded value judgement and blanket statement that cannot be inferred to an entire ethnicity and population. In light of Tasoula’s claim it is interesting to consider moreover, that the OECD reports<sup>61</sup> that Greeks have shown a consistently higher trend of average annual hours worked per worker than Germans and other developed European countries. Between 2005-2010, Greeks worked more average annual hours every year when

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<sup>61</sup> OECD Statistics “Average annual hours actually worked per worker” (<http://stats.oecd.org>) Retrieved: July 13, 2011.

compared to Germany. For instance, reportedly in 2005 Greeks worked 1811 hours a year, (7.55 hrs per day in a 5 day work week), on average per worker compared to the German statistic, which was 1354 hours a year, (5.64 hrs per day in a 5 day work week), on average per worker. In 2010, the Greek statistic reported was 1754 hours and the German figure 1340 hours. (For further country comparisons see Appendix I).

### **Contested democracy and freedom**

Another set of interesting findings were contested meanings about democracy and freedom. When asked about their views and identification with recent strikes and protests in Greece, and whether they were viewed positively or negatively in the context of their unemployment, participants raised interesting points about the meanings of democratic rights and freedoms. As was mentioned in the data analysis section of this paper, most participants were opposed to striking or protesting activities that interrupted their daily lives; most importantly when getting to work or accessing public transportation was involved. Exercising labour rights or freedom of expression through striking and protesting was not viewed favourably when they infringed upon the civil and political rights and political freedoms of other individuals. All six participants were in favour of protests, three participants were opposed to strikes, two participants were in favour of both protesting and striking, and one participant was supportive of protesting but ambiguous about striking.

Of course how one understands civil and political rights and political freedoms varies depending on political ideology for instance, a classic liberal stance versus one that reflects social liberalism. Some would argue, that the generally mixed responses about

the recent strikes and protests in Greece and the varied identification with certain political ideals is because in liberal societies:

“What passes for liberalism in contemporary politics is a crude ideology of consumer choice, individual rights and an uncritical view of “market-driven politics” ... [Liberalism] has largely abandoned its vision of the society of fully self-determining individuals” (Schwarzmantel, 2005, p. 89 in Carroll, 2006, p. 15-16).

The different associations and levels of support for striking and protesting was likely due to varied political beliefs and personal meanings attached to the notion of democracy, civil and political rights and freedoms. The most passionate expression for both striking and protesting came from Alexandros who seemed to hold more a socially liberal or democratic viewpoint whereas, Tasoula displayed the most animosity towards infringements of her personal right to mobility, and to work, which superseded the principles that were behind strikes and protests.

### **Politics of the fiscal crisis**

The most contested public issue in Greece today is the fiscal crisis as seen in social movements that have arisen to defend certain democratic ideals in the face of austerity measures taken to manage country finances. The fiscal situation in Greece is being dealt with by the adaptation of particular neoliberal policies the consequences of which, according to some academics work to “amplify the impact of global market forces on working people and communities, thereby shifting the balance of class power toward capital” (Teeple, 2000 in Carroll, 2006, p. 13). Greeks who support this viewpoint are clear through their resistance and in the messages behind recent protests and

demonstrations opposing government decisions to continue imposing deep austerity measures.

Since the first bailout package deal of May 2010 (EUR 110 billion), a second bailout in February 2012 (EUR 130 billion) and in March 2012 a debt swap deal with private sector lenders where 50 percent of debt was written off for Greece, deep and severe austerity measures have been required in association with the loans or deals. Successive credit downgrades, piling debt and loan interest accumulation have characterized the catastrophic financial circumstances of Greece, the management of which and has been the source of much political contestation and public demonstration. With each successive instalment of bailout package funds and associated austerity measures passed in parliament, Greeks have increasingly expressed public discontent and lack of support for government and IMF, ECB and EC imposed measures, as have been implemented, in exchange for Greek debt financing loans.

There has been much political and academic debate over how best to get Greece and vulnerable populations such as highly unemployed graduates out of the dire financial and unemployment situation that has evolved since 2008 when recession first hit the country. Nonetheless, there are many Greek people; including vulnerable populations such as unemployed graduates that do not believe that the proposed austerity plans provide the right formula for economic growth and job creation. “These drastic measures will, in fact, only worsen the crisis and cause the Greek economy to contract even further, just as the first round of cuts did” (Prontzos, 2011). Citizens and academics alike are critical of austerity measures and debt financing stipulations that have proven to be ineffective and unrealistic; resulting in the further contraction of the economy and higher

unemployment levels especially for already hard hit populations such as unemployed young graduates. Some have even suggested a Greek default is the solution. There are others however that do not support defaulting because they argue this would result in detrimental economic conditions and view that going back to the drachma would be worst:

*“Personally, I don't disagree with the IMF/EU plans. I can't see any other alternative - if we default and go back to the drachma, the cuts are going to be considerably more severe. Nevertheless, I can understand why people are furious. The government has completely failed to deal with the main causes of this mess – tax evasion and corruption. It prefers to go for easier targets like private sector employees and pensioners, who can't possibly evade tax because of the equivalent of pay as you earn (PAYE). These people are understandably angry about having to pay all the cost for a mess they didn't cause. Not only do they feel stupid for having been honest citizens and paid all their taxes, but they are also constantly vilified by the international media, who portray us all like lazy cheats”* (Guardian, 2011).

Greek people have protested and spoken against the lack of legitimacy behind decisions to continue accepting IMF and ECB loans. As political scientist, Peter Prontzos explains, “despite unprecedented opposition by the vast majority (70 to 80 percent) of the population, the Greek Parliament surrendered its national sovereignty by giving in to the harsh and unjust demands of “The Troika” – the IMF, ECB and EC.” He also points out that “while the situation is complex, one point is clear: the great majority of Greeks were not responsible for the enormous debt that had built up over the last decade” (Prontzos, 2011, p. 1). Prontzos (2011) argues that part of the responsibility rests with political corruption and mismanaged public finances, including of the government overextending itself financially with borrowing and debt to GDP levels. Economic elites are also responsible for mismanagement and in particular those in the banking sector. Decisions made by international lenders and domestic creditors put Greece in a more vulnerable

financial position, their policies also created a credit bubble which artificially spurred the economy temporarily but contributed to the Greek fall out and currently abysmal financial state of affairs.

Greek protesters do not agree with how their government is shifting its debt burden onto the average Greek worker, who is paying a huge financial and human cost as a result of the unaccountable decisions of previous governments, bankers and lending institutions, which Greek people were not responsible for making. The poor decisions that have led Greece down this path have huge implications for unemployed young graduates and their future as Marina explains:

*“I mean the debt of this country is that big that they are talking about selling Greek property to other countries ... I feel bad. I feel angry. I feel so angry to all these people that have brought my country to this situation and young people to this situation because there is no future right now in Greece. No jobs for no one, even the immigrants. This situation is that bad, the immigrants steal, kill, because they have not to eat. I don't know maybe the Greeks will start to do these things as well” – Marina.*

The lack of democratic legitimacy Greek people are experiencing can also be understood as a result of what Dr. William Carroll describes as, ‘insulation through market liberalization’ which is an aspect of neoliberalism that excludes dissident social forces from the field of policy formation (Carroll, 2006, p. 13) and includes insulating key state agencies from popular will as is occurring within Greece during the fiscal crisis currently being experienced. The absence of meaningful input from Greek citizens about government decisions in the past and present, and regarding policies that directly implicate their lives and futures for generations to come and the historical lack of government accountability for public policy decisions is undemocratic. Rather, achieving

shared policy solutions at the EU level and in Greece with the engagement and support of Greek citizens would be more principled. As C. Wright Mills explains:

*“In essence, democracy implies that those vitally affected by any decision men make have an effective voice in that decision. This, in turn, means that all power to make such decisions be held publicly accountable”* (Mills, 2000, p. 188).

### **Employment policy in Greece and considerations regarding the European Employment Strategy and Open Method of Coordination**

The establishment of effective employment policy in Greece and for the unemployed, including vulnerable groups like young post-secondary graduates is of central importance and has been greatly debated. Part of the debate includes the question of how EU member states like Greece can best benefit from employment policy at the EU regional level. With greater development of the EU's governance and policy capacities and because functional spillover has occurred over the years, policy debates have expanded to include areas like the social arena that were not traditionally considered in the past. The strong position of EU member states in retaining their jurisdiction and authority over social policy has been clear in the past and remains the same today. Although, there is tension between proponents who differ between two main views; as some believe effective employment policy for member states would be best attained by EU regional efforts, while others believe effective employment policy rests within member states and the exercise of national sovereignty.

Currently, employment policy in the EU is addressed by the EES and OMC. Rather than harmonizing social policy in the EU, the aim of the OMC is to achieve member state policy convergence of objectives, performance and policy approaches (Jacobson, 2004, p. 357). As mentioned however, the effectiveness of 'soft' law in achieving employment policy objectives has been highly debated. Critics of the OMC

particularly from the left argue that although there are increasingly areas of overlapping competence and joint responsibility, this limited coordination does not constitute any substantive shift of responsibility to the regional level (Preece, 2006, p. 1). They consider it problematic that the EU does not have any legislative mandate for social policy nor the organizational capacity to operate a European-wide social policy, granting individualized entitlements, a social budget, or a welfare bureaucracy (Preece, 2006, p. 1).

For instance, Seferiades (2003) argues that the traditional side-supply manner and apolitical nature of the EES and OMC is currently not effective at addressing Greece's unemployment needs. He argues that the supply-side manner in which the problem of unemployment has been framed by the EES leads Greek policy making away from the real roots of the problem and towards minimally beneficial and even damaging outcomes. By depoliticizing unemployment, the particular contexts of member states and the underlying causes of unemployment remain unaddressed.

Seferiades points out that the OMC tends to depoliticize the issue of employment as this soft governance tool is by its very nature mainly procedure driven without the legal authority to enforce compliance by member states. He maintains that EES policy content remains elusive and its implementation through the non-binding OMC approach is problematic as it merely recommends voluntarily participating member states to reach particular employment performance measures or targets (Seferiades, 2003).

Conversely, others argue that soft governance is effective because it enables national governments with unique welfare traditions to: (a) jointly define initial objectives, (b) determine the most appropriate way to achieve EU directives and targets, (c) produce national reports on performance (d) enable peer review, policy learning and

the discovery of best practices and (e) re-elaborate individual plans in light of the experience gained in initial policy implementation (Trubek and Trubek, 2005, p. 348).

The OMC is effective according to intergovernmentalists and those advocating a decentralized approach, as it involves 'new' governance modes of coordination, negotiation, peer review, and shaming to achieve results.

The emergence of new modes of governance, moreover, have been associated with movement away from the classic or traditional 'Community Method' involving hard law and binding regulatory approaches to more flexible methods that shift from hard law to soft law (Cram, 2009, p. 87). New modes of governance are characteristic of a shift in the balance of power away from supranational top down approaches towards shared solutions reached by deliberative problem solving and participation with a range of actors from different policy levels in the intergovernmental realm (Cram, 2009, p. 87). What is more, some academics further support modes of governance that depart from the traditional Community Method because they argue deliberative problem-solving that raises the profile of civil society involvement in the policy process and accords a democratizing and legitimizing force (Cram, 2009). "... Instead of being unaccountable 'integration by stealth,' the incorporation of a wide number of actors through new policy methods is increasingly viewed as a model of 'good governance' (Cram, 2009, p. 99).

Trubek and Trubek (2005) argue that the debates regarding the OMC centre on beliefs both about the OMC and the Community Method as well as assumptions concerning the proper role of the EU in social policy. Rather, than talking past each other proponents of key debates regarding the OMC and the role of the EU in social policy should focus on the relative capacity of different modes of governance. Trubek and

Trubek encourage the exploration of relative governance capacities and their relationship to policy goals. EU and Greek policy makers should therefore be asking questions like: What are the relative capacities of particular modes of governance at the EU level and in Greece? How can they be improved to better achieve employment policy goals for post-secondary graduates? What would new innovative approaches in Greece entail? Within the EU over the last 25 years, no real breakthrough has been achieved in reducing youth unemployment<sup>62</sup> and young post-secondary graduate unemployment remains a large issue. It is therefore, very important to reconsider ways in which effective employment policy can be implemented at both the domestic and EU level.

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<sup>62</sup> Ten Years of the European Employment Strategy pp. 26

## Chapter 6 – Summary and Conclusions

My study on high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece has shown consistency with previous work done on the broader subject matter of high post-secondary graduate unemployment. Academic literature on the issue across different countries in Europe and in Greece point to core themes and factors which exist on the subject of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates; and some have been clearly identified and demonstrated as a result of my research. In addition to further validating findings within academia my research addressed three key research questions: (1) what are barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece experience to full time employment; (2) how do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation; and (3) what are young post-secondary graduates in Greece doing in response to manage and cope with their unemployment.

As mentioned previously, the barriers identified to employment by study participants have been Greece's fiscal crisis, a historically weak economy, post-secondary education system policy and training shortcomings, lack of practical work experience and training for post-secondary students and the prevalence of a system of clientelism and patronage. Graduates understood their unemployment situation within the context of: the fiscal crisis, post-secondary education system policy and training shortcomings, a cycle of dependence on the black economy, personal constraints; lack of freedom and self-determination and few future employment options and prospects. Main coping strategies were: finding employment in the black market, living with family, leaving Greece, looking for all types of employment, related or unrelated to studies, re-

orientation of education and occupational training; starting a business, protesting, or simply waiting out the recession.

It is particularly interesting, moreover, to look at study findings in another light and in relation to the concepts of structure and agency. For instance it is worth noting that central explanations behind unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece have been predominantly macro-level and structural in nature: Greece's historically weak economy, a post-secondary education system and labour market mismatch, the issue of an overqualified labour force of young graduates, the lack of technical and occupational training in the post-secondary education system, an informal system of hiring practices based on clientelism and patronage, as well as a lack of social policy in Greece.

It was also the case, however, that some key findings related to the unemployment of post-secondary graduates were characteristic of more individually centred explanations such as motivation and personal educational disciplinary and training choices. These explanations made it apparent that individual agency also plays a role in employment experiences. For instance, participants described motivated and empowered behaviours such as job seeking tactics, political will favouring expression through protesting or striking. As well, participants having spoken to their worldview and unemployment perspectives and about their emotions and feelings in the context of their unemployment circumstances pointed to psychological aspects behind unemployment.

Overall, as a result of my research and study findings there are some important policy considerations that are useful to highlight at both the domestic and EU level. There

are also areas where further research can be undertaken to address gaps in academia or further build on areas briefly addressed due to my study's scope.

### **Policy Considerations**

EMU membership, structural adjustments and recent austerity measures have added huge pressures and new issues for Greece to deal with. The rapid changes brought about by EU integration and the austerity approach to the current fiscal crisis has been challenging for Greece. Changes and new policies, although well intended, have not worked out as planned and in some cases have arguably further compounded issues such as the high unemployment rate for young post-secondary graduates in Greece.

Although hopes behind joining the EU were aimed to 'bridge' the comparative gap between Greece and other EU countries, the transition towards a more 'Continental style' European economy has been slow. Since Greece first joined the EU there has not been sufficient effort made on the part of Greece (or the EU) to address the many comparative structural shortcomings of the Greek economy. Until recent attempts, "shifts in perceptions have not been accompanied by structural shifts away from the traditional characteristics of the Greek welfare system" (Sotiropolous, 2004, p. 271). It is important to remember that, "whatever the convergent pressures from Europeanization and globalization, and whatever the convergent policies adopted by member states, individual countries nevertheless continue to exhibit very different patterns of adaptation. Long-established institutions and processes are not so easy to change, whatever the seeming rationality of the politics and however powerful the actors pushing reform" (Schmidt, 1999, p. 179).

Countries are different in terms of their history, politics, and culture and these characteristics implicate economic conditions and should be factored into public policy planning and implementation. Some EU driven policy changes related to integration and managing the fiscal crisis have not occurred in a contextually specific manner that is responsive to Greece's contemporary circumstances. Changes have been pursued without a full understanding and recognition of the historical, economic and social trajectories that have resulted in its modern day state of affairs. A 'cookie cutter' one size fits all approach and imposing public policy approaches better suited for economically stronger 'core' member states in the EU does not work for all countries as is the case for Greece. This type of approach to-date has arguably contributed to unintended consequences and some socially, politically and economically detrimental outcomes in Greece.

There is much controversy surrounding the OMC concerning whether or not it is an appropriate or effective means by which to address the issue of employment in the EU. The question of whether or not the OMC is an appropriate 'tool' for social policy in the EU, concerns underlying assumptions regarding the place of social policy on the EU agenda; whether it should be addressed at the EU level or remain at the national level of competence. The question of whether or not the OMC is an effective or powerful enough 'tool' with which to implement employment policy in the EU is also debated because there is no legal requirement involved with the OMC. Rather, the OMC involves 'soft governance' approaches.

Thinking about how the EES and OMC, can be strengthened and further improved to meet challenging contexts like in the case of countries such as Greece could be a more responsive policy approach. Although, the OMC was originally conceived of

as a 'tool' to deal with the common problems member states were experiencing in the employment arena, in recognition of the reality that crafting common solutions or passing uniform rules would be unfeasible given country specific contexts (Trubek and Trubek, 2005, p. 348), is it worth exploring whether countries might benefit from more than a 'soft' governance tool or what other alternatives exist than current policy options today.

### **Potential for Further Research**

Existing academic literature mainly offered a backdrop from which to better understand the high unemployment context of young post-secondary graduates in Greece. It provided the basis from which my research began a deeper analysis into the case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece. I studied the subject from a grounded perspective and obtained more personal accounts of barriers graduates experience and how they make sense of their unemployment and go about coping in their situation.

My research linked the challenges young post-secondary graduates experience to the broader labour market context and political economy of the Greek state. In addition, the data collected shed light on very recent political, economic and social developments that have occurred internationally, regionally within the EU and in Greece; specifically pertaining to the Greek fiscal crisis and the spill-over effects this has had on unemployed post-secondary graduates in Greece. As such, my research can be used to increase awareness of present employment barriers, rationalizations of unemployment, coping mechanisms, and the challenging labour market and unemployment context in which young post-secondary graduates in Greece are faced with. It is with this knowledge that

the development of more informed employment policy and practices is possible. Improving the unemployment situation requires more detailed policy coordination, planning and action, in both private and public spheres, and could focus on possible solutions such as those raised by participants and my analysis in this study.

Although my study has addressed some clear gaps in academia, it has also paved the way for new or further building upon areas of research pertaining to: the demographic characteristics of unemployed post-secondary graduates in Greece, the role of the family, specific workings of the black economy, Greek and EU employment policy frameworks, design and implementation, and theoretical considerations related to Greece and the uneven development of capitalism.

Despite having briefly addressed demographic characteristics of the young unemployed post-secondary graduates in my sample, further research making stronger linkages between the social demography of young graduates and their unemployment circumstances would shed further light into this area of study. One of the limitations of my research is not having included a specific interview question that would render in depth data from study participants about the role of the family unit as a coping mechanism to their unemployment. It was not until after conducting interviews that I realized the degree to which participants were dependent on their families and that their reliance on the family unit was a coping mechanism to unemployment. Despite the insufficient focus on the role of the family, my research did, however, address it in a cursory way. There is room, however, for academic research to probe deeper into the extent to which the family unit supports or acts as a coping mechanism for unemployed young graduates.

Similarly, with respect to the black economy although, this study led to new insights about: the extent of the black economy in Greece, how it is a predominate coping mechanism for unemployed young post-secondary graduates, the employer-employee negotiating climate, and how complete or partial tax evasion and underreporting occurs, deeper probing about the underground network would have rendered more details. For instance on answers to questions like: How do the unemployed find under the table work? Through family or friends? How easy is it to negotiate such jobs and salaries? Do employers actively seek out informal employees? If so, how do they go about this?

Further research on the topic of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece could also engage in closer critical analysis of Greek employment policies for young post-secondary graduates by specifically mapping out or identifying institutional and policy frameworks and how they can be improved. Similarly, the ways that the EES policy and the OMC can be made more effective, responsive and contextually appropriate to the case of Greece and the high unemployment of young post-secondary graduates is also recommended.

Finally, future research could also consider the ways in which high unemployment in Greece is a reflection of broader systemic relations related to the uneven development of capitalism. It is interesting for instance to examine the case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates and the fiscal crisis as a consequence of Greece's 'peripheral' development trajectory and the EU's uneven development path. Kofas (2005) maintains that 500 years after the birth of capitalism in northwestern Europe, the way that the system creates poverty at the same time it creates wealth, social inequality, unequal exchange and uneven world development have

continued to be the most gripping political issues in the post war era. Problems with periphery or semi-developed and underdeveloped countries, moreover, have been that:

“Regardless of integration models, common characteristics of semi-developed and underdeveloped countries include high defense budgets, chronic balance of payments deficits arising primarily from lack of economic diversification and unfavourable terms of trade, high percentage of debt to GDP ratio, and lower private consumption in comparison with advanced capitalist countries. Besides high levels of structural unemployment and underemployment semi-developed and underdeveloped countries historically have relied on indirect taxes, and have difficulty with collection and controlling the subterranean or informal economy that includes everything from street vendors to narcotics trade (Kofas, 2005 p. 7).

It is also interesting to consider how the issue of high unemployment among young post-secondary students in Greece as it is today can be associated with the existence of “protective democracy.” William Carroll (2006) argues that as a political paradigm, protective democracy has been projected from core to periphery and is distinguished by a strict separation of economic and political spheres. With the former responding only to the logic of the marketplace, and the latter restricted in its rule to allowing that logic to proceed without interference (Neufeld, 2001, p. 102 in Carroll, 2006, p. 14). Protective democracy is pursued in different ways of which include through liberalizing conditionalities attached to IMF initiatives (Carroll, 2006, p. 14). In the case of Greece, the issue of unemployed young post-secondary students and their labour market conditions within the context of the fiscal crisis are affected by the country’s financial state of dependence on emergency bailout funding. Ultimately, bailout loans

come with very high interest rates that further constrain Greece's financial and economic capacity and are accompanied by state obligations that solely account for arguably short sighted and restrictive banking and market interests, achieved by the political practice of protective democracy. In this manner, the complex underlying issues behind post-secondary graduate unemployment in Greece have remained unresolved and have worsened during a time of recession and fiscal crisis.

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**Appendix A – International Labour Organization Table 3B –  
Greek Unemployed by Age Group 2005-2008 (Thousands)**

Sex	Age Group	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Men &amp; Women</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>466.7</b>	<b>427.4</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>357.143</b>
Men & Women	20-24	86.8	78	66.5	59.082
Men & Women	25-29	98.9	93.9	95.8	84.313
Men & Women	30-34	72.5	65.6	64	60.165
Men & Women	35-39	64.2	55.6	49	39.852
<b>Men</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>166.8</b>	<b>160.9</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>136.641</b>
Men	20-24	32	28.6	23.3	24.385
Men	25-29	35.4	37.1	40.2	35.745
Men	30-34	25.3	21.2	21.6	21.963
Men	35-39	20.2	17.3	12.4	10.632
<b>Women</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>299.9</b>	<b>266.6</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>220.502</b>
Women	20-24	54.8	49.4	43.3	34.697
Women	25-29	63.5	56.9	55.6	48.568
Women	30-34	47.2	44.4	42.4	38.202
Women	35-39	44	38.2	36.6	29.22

**Appendix B – International Labour Organization Table 3C –  
Greek Unemployed by Level of Education 2005-2008  
(Thousands)**

Sex	Level of Education	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Men &amp; Women</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>466.7</b>	<b>427.4</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>357.143</b>
Men & Women	X	1.9	1.2	1.8	3.745
Men & Women	1	82.6	71.6	68.1	55.326
Men & Women	2	61.2	52.8	48.6	43.486
Men & Women	3	171.5	160.5	145	125.013
Men & Women	4	60.3	55.4	47.8	49.508
Men & Women	5A	60.4	51.7	51.9	48.309
Men & Women	5B	28.6	33.2	33.9	31.013
Men & Women	6	0.3	1.1	1	0.743
<b>Men</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>166.8</b>	<b>160.9</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>136.641</b>
Men	3	59.6	56.4	51.3	51.397
Men	4	15	17	14	13.996
Men	5A	19.6	18.5	19.3	17.128
Men	5B	9.6	11	10.1	11.382
Men	6		0.7	0.2	0.317
<b>Women</b>	<b>Total (15-75+)</b>	<b>299.9</b>	<b>266.6</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>220.502</b>
Women	3	111.8	104.1	93.6	73.616
Women	4	45.3	38.4	33.9	35.512
Women	5A	40.7	33.3	32.6	31.18
Women	5B	19	22.2	23.8	19.631
Women	6	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.427

<b>Table Key - Level of Education Classification</b>	
<b>X</b>	0
<b>1</b>	Primary education or first stage of basic education
<b>2</b>	Lower secondary or second stage of basic education
<b>3</b>	Upper secondary education
<b>4</b>	Post-secondary, non tertiary-education
<b>5A</b>	First stage of tertiary education – theoretically based
<b>5B</b>	First stage of tertiary education – practically oriented
<b>6</b>	Second stage of tertiary education

## Appendix C – Participant Consent Form

### *Participant Consent Form*

**The case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece.**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled, “The case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece” that is being conducted by (me) Katerina Anastasiadis.

I (Katerina Anastasiadis) am a Master’s Sociology student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Victoria (UVIC) and you may contact me if you have further questions by email at [Katerina@uvic.ca](mailto:Katerina@uvic.ca) or on my cellular, 00-1-778-319-2085 in Canada.

As a Master’s Sociology student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in my Master of Arts program in Sociology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. William Carroll and Dr. Amy Verdun. You may contact my supervisor Dr. William (Bill) Carroll in the Sociology Department (UVIC) at 00-1-250-721-7573, Email: [wcarroll@uvic.ca](mailto:wcarroll@uvic.ca) and my supervisor Dr. Amy Verdun in the Political Science Department (UVIC) at 00-1-250-721-7491, Email: [averdun@uvic.ca](mailto:averdun@uvic.ca).

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this research project is: to explore the issue of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece from a grounded approach that gives voice to the personal lived experiences of research participants. High unemployment is substantially higher among young post-secondary graduates in Greece when compared to other European Union and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. It has been a major societal issue in Greece for the last decade and it is also important to better understand this problem in consideration of the recent fiscal crises in the EU; as Greece’s unemployment levels are related to it.

#### **Importance of this Research**

Research of this type is important because it will help to create a better societal understanding, particularly at the international level, of the barriers that young Greek graduates face to full time employment. The research will be used by academics and policy makers as a source of information from which to inform their work.

#### **Participants Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified by a relative, friend or acquaintance of mine as someone who fits my sampling criteria; or, in other words you fit within my definition of “young Greek post-secondary graduate” and

are the type of person that I want to interview for my Master's research. You have also identified yourself to me (the researcher) as a willing participant and interviewee interested in participating in my study.

### **What is involved**

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include being interviewed by me, Katerina Anastasiadis, for one to two hours either online via msn/skype or by telephone at a date and time that is agreed to and scheduled by both of us and that is as convenient as possible for you. The interview will be recorded with a digital audio recorder and written notes and observations will be taken by me (the researcher) in order to assist me with the research analysis portion of my study. Transcription and translation after the interview will occur with the assistance of a professional company that specializes in these services.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including:

- a) The amount of time you devote to participate in my study;
- b) It may be challenging to schedule a time or location for your participation, depending on your availability;
- c) You may run into difficulties with the technology involved with participating in an online or telephone interview; or
- d) There may be other inconveniences that arise which are not currently anticipated.

### **Risks**

It may or may not be the case that at some point during the interview you become emotionally or otherwise uncomfortable. Should such feelings arise you may decide to take a break, or to stop and reschedule the interview, or to stop the interview altogether with no explanation. The interview will not proceed without verification that you are willing to continue.

In order to prevent such risks from arising, you will have been given the interview questions in advance and more time to prepare yourself for the discussion. Additionally, if interested you may request potential support resources from me (the researcher).

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include: you will have the opportunity to express yourself, as well, share your knowledge and experience through your contribution to my research.

Your participation will enable a better societal understanding of the personally lived unemployment experiences of young post-secondary graduates in Greece. It will also

promote societal and cultural understandings of Greece at the international/global level. Your contribution to my research will also make possible new information from which policy makers may be informed to make better decisions.

The information you share as a result of your participation in my study will expand the state of knowledge in academia, on a subject matter that has not been previously studied in great detail. Your contribution to my research will help pave the way for further academic thought on the issues raised in my study.

### **Compensation**

There is no monetary or other compensation associated with participating in this study.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used only if you give your permission by signing a consent form allowing me (the researcher) to use the collected data up to that point.

### **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will use fictitious names in association with your interview and interview responses. As well, your assigned fictitious name will be used during all stages of data analysis, reporting and dissemination as well as during the data research storage period. Moreover, this study's number of 6-10 participants is large enough that in combination with the use of fictitious names, that I (the researcher) will be less likely to associate you (the interviewee) and your identity to your responses during data analysis and the research processes thereafter.

You are advised that there is a limit to your anonymity in so far as during the interview process I (the researcher) will be able to associate you (the interviewee) with your responses. This is an inherent limitation due to what is practically involved with conducting an interview.

### **Confidentiality**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by my following written statement that: I (the researcher) will not divulge information shared by you (the interviewee) to any other persons, in ways that are not consistent with the understanding of this original disclosure, or without your explicit permission to do so.

The confidentiality of your participant consent form and all data collected during the interview will be ensured by: locking associated forms and papers in a briefing case, and by personally password protecting my laptop and all related electronically stored data, for instance word documents or interview audio files.

You are advised that there are limits to your confidentiality as I am unable to guarantee that your participation in this study is completely confidential. Due to the small number of individuals involved in the study, as well as the word of mouth and third party recruitment; and as you were recruited via a common network of friends and acquaintances (where some individuals may be from the same community as you), it is possible that others will be aware of your participation.

### **Participant Privacy**

Respect for your (interviewee) privacy; when, how and to what extent information about you (the interviewee) is communicated to others, will be upheld in a manner consistent with what is outlined in this participant consent form's confidentiality and anonymity sections; and unless otherwise stated in this participant consent form, in a manner agreed to by you (the interviewee/research participant).

### **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

Definitely – Master's Thesis Research/Final Report.

Possibly – Directly to participants (if they request either a copy of the final report or an executive summary), published article, chapter or book, presentations at scholarly meetings, internet, and media (i.e. newspaper).

### **Commercial Use of Results**

This research will not lead to a commercial product or service.

### **Future Use of Data**

Data will be stored strictly in the confidential and anonymous manner agreed to in this participant consent form for up to 7 years after the completion of my final Master's Thesis Report. It is possible that either myself, or my co-supervisors Dr. William Carroll and Dr. Amy Verdun will use the data to inform current or future research and/or academic endeavors.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed of at any point before or up to 7 years after the completion of my final Master's Thesis Report. When the disposal of data occurs, data on paper will be shredded and electronic audio recording files will be erased.

### **Contacts**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Katerina Anastasiadis – Researcher  
00-1-778-319-2085 (Canada), Email: [Katerina@uvic.ca](mailto:Katerina@uvic.ca)

Dr. William Carroll – Co-supervisor  
Uvic Office: 00-1-250-721-7573, Email: [wcarroll@uvic.ca](mailto:wcarroll@uvic.ca)

Dr. Amy Verdun – Co-supervisor  
Uvic Office: 00-1-250-721-7491, Email: [averdun@uvic.ca](mailto:averdun@uvic.ca)

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (00-1-250-472-4545, or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

---

<b>NAME</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE</b>
<b>DATE</b>	

*A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by me, Katerina Anastasiadis (the researcher).*

## **Έντοπο Συγκατάθεσης Ερωτηθέντα**

**Η περίπτωση της υψηλής ανεργίας μεταξύ των νεαρών πτυχιούχων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα.**

Προσκαλείστε να συμμετάσχετε σε μια έρευνα με τίτλο «Η περίπτωση της υψηλής ανεργίας μεταξύ των νεαρών πτυχιούχων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα. η οποία διενεργείται από (εμένα) την Κα Κατερίνα Αναστασιάδη.

Εγώ (η Κατερίνα Αναστασιάδη) είμαι φοιτήτρια Μεταπτυχιακού επιπέδου στο Τμήμα Κοινωνιολογίας του πανεπιστημίου της Βικτώριας (Καναδά) (UVIC) και μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε μαζί μου εάν έχετε περαιτέρω ερωτήματα με email στο [Katerina@uvic.ca](mailto:Katerina@uvic.ca) ή στο κινητό μου στην Ελλάδα, 698-317-2852 ή στο κινητό μου στον Καναδά, 00-1-778-319-2085.

Ως φοιτήτρια, απαιτείται να διεξάγω μία έρευνα ως κομμάτι των απαιτήσεων για να αποκτήσω το Μεταπτυχιακό μου στην Κοινωνιολογία. Διενεργείται υπό την επίβλεψη του Dr. William Carroll και της Dr. Amy Verdun. Μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τον επιβλέποντα καθηγητή μου Dr. William (Bill) Carroll στο τμήμα Κοινωνιολογίας του πανεπιστημίου της Βικτώριας (Καναδά) (UVIC) τηλεφωνικώς στο 00-1-250-721-7573, Email: [wcarroll@uvic.ca](mailto:wcarroll@uvic.ca) και την επιβλέπουσα καθηγήτριά μου Dr. Amy Verdun στο τμήμα Πολιτικής Επιστήμης του πανεπιστημίου της Βικτώριας (Καναδά) (UVIC) τηλεφωνικώς στο 00-1-250-721-7491, Email: [averdun@uvic.ca](mailto:averdun@uvic.ca).

### **Σκοπός και Στόχοι**

Ο σκοπός αυτής της ερευνητικής εργασίας είναι: να εξερευνήσει το θέμα της υψηλής ανεργίας μεταξύ των νεαρών πτυχιούχων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα από μία προσέγγιση από τη βάση η οποία δίνει φωνή στις προσωπικές εμπειρίες των ερωτηθέντων. Η υψηλή ανεργία είναι σημαντικά υψηλότερη στην Ελλάδα σε σύγκριση με άλλες χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και του Οργανισμού Οικονομικής Συνεργασίας και Ανάπτυξης (ΟΟΣΑ Είναι ένα σημαντικό κοινωνικό ζήτημα στην Ελλάδα την τελευταία δεκαετία και είναι επίσης σημαντικό να κατανοήσουμε καλύτερα αυτό το πρόβλημα λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την πρόσφατη δημοσιονομική (οικονομική) κρίση στην ΕΕ δεδομένου ότι τα επίπεδα ανεργίας της Ελλάδας συσχετίζονται με αυτή.

### **Σημασία της έρευνας**

Η έρευνα αυτού του τύπου είναι σημαντική επειδή θα βοηθήσει ώστε να δημιουργηθεί μια καλύτερη κατανόηση της κοινωνίας, ιδιαίτερα σε διεθνές επίπεδο, των εμποδίων που οι νέοι Έλληνες πτυχιούχοι αντιμετωπίζουν όσον αφορά την πλήρη απασχόληση. Η έρευνα θα χρησιμοποιηθεί από ακαδημαϊκούς και διάφορους φορείς χάραξης πολιτικής ως πηγή πληροφοριών από την οποία θα ενημερώνονται για την εργασία τους.

### **Επιλογή Ερωτηθέντων**

Καλείστε να συμμετέχετε σε αυτήν την μελέτη επειδή έχετε επιλεγεί από έναν συγγενή, έναν φίλο ή έναν γνωστό μου ως κάποιος που ικανοποιεί τα κριτήρια δειγματοληψίας

μου ή, με άλλα λόγια ταιριάζετε με τον ορισμό μου του «νεαρού Έλληνα πτυχιούχου τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης» και είστε ο τύπος του ανθρώπου που θα ήθελα να πάρω συνέντευξη για την έρευνα του Μεταπτυχιακού μου Τίτλου. Έχετε επίσης προσδιοριστεί σε μένα (την ερευνήτρια) ως πρόθυμος συμμετέχοντας και ερωτηθέντας και ενδιαφέρεστε να συμμετέχετε στη μελέτη μου.

### **Τι περιλαμβάνεται**

Εάν συμφωνήσετε να συμμετέχετε εθελοντικά σε αυτήν την έρευνα, η συμμετοχή σας θα περιλαμβάνει να περάσετε από συνέντευξη από εμένα, την Κατερίνα Αναστασιάδη, για μια έως δύο ώρες σε μια περιοχή και σε έναν χρόνο που θα συμφωνηθεί και θα ετοιμαστεί και από τους δυο μας και που θα είναι όσο το δυνατόν καταλληλότερο για εσάς. Η συνέντευξη θα καταγραφεί με ένα ψηφιακό ακουστικό όργανο καταγραφής, θα γίνει μια καταγραφή και θα γραφτούν σημειώσεις και παρατηρήσεις από εμένα (την ερευνήτρια) προκειμένου να βοηθηθώ αργότερα με την ερευνητική ανάλυση της μελέτης μου.

### **Δυσκολίες**

Η συμμετοχή σε αυτήν την μελέτη μπορεί να σας προκαλέσει κάποια δυσκολίες, που περιλαμβάνουν:

- α) Το χρονικό διάστημα που αφιερώνετε για να συμμετάσχετε στη μελέτη μου
- β) Μπορεί να είναι δύσκολο να βρούμε έναν κατάλληλο χρόνο ή τόπο για τη συμμετοχή σας, ανάλογα με τη διαθεσιμότητά σας
- γ) Μπορείτε να δυσκολευτείτε στην πορεία προς τον τόπο συνέντευξης ή στο να βρείτε την ακριβή τοποθεσία ή
- δ) Μπορεί να υπάρξουν και άλλες δυσχέρειες που ίσως προκύψουν που δεν αναφέρονται εδώ.

### **Κίνδυνοι**

Υπάρχει περίπτωση σε κάποιο σημείο κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης να μην νιώσετε άνετα συναισθηματικά ή αλλιώς. Εάν προκύψουν τέτοια συναισθήματα, μπορείτε να αποφασίσετε να κάνετε ένα διάλειμμα, ή να σταματήσουμε και να ξαναπρογραμματίσουμε τη συνέντευξη, ή να σταματήσουμε εντελώς τη συνέντευξη χωρίς να δοθεί κάποια εξήγηση. Η συνέντευξη δεν θα προχωρήσει χωρίς τη δική σας συγκατάθεση ότι είστε πρόθυμοι να συνεχίσετε.

Προκειμένου να αποτραπούν τέτοιοι κίνδυνοι, θα σας δοθούν οι ερωτήσεις της συνέντευξης εκ των προτέρων καθώς και αρκετός χρόνος για να προετοιμαστείτε για τη συζήτηση. Επιπλέον, εάν ενδιαφέρεστε, μπορείτε να ζητήσετε υλικά υποστήριξης από εμένα (την ερευνήτρια).

### **Οφέλη**

Τα πιθανά οφέλη της συμμετοχής σας σε αυτήν την έρευνα περιλαμβάνουν: θα έχετε την ευκαιρία να εκφραστείτε καθώς και να μοιραστείτε τη γνώση και την εμπειρία σας μέσω της συμβολής σας στην έρευνά μου.

Η συμμετοχή σας θα επιτρέψει μια καλύτερη κοινωνική κατανόηση της προσωπικής εμπειρίας ανεργίας των νεαρών πτυχιούχων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα. Θα προωθήσει επίσης μία κοινωνική και πολιτιστική κατανόηση της Ελλάδας σε διεθνές επίπεδο. Η συμβολή σας στην έρευνά μου θα παράγει επίσης νέες πληροφορίες από τις οποίες οι φορείς χάραξης πολιτικής μπορούν να ενημερωθούν για να λάβουν καλύτερες αποφάσεις.

Οι πληροφορίες που μοιράζεστε ως αποτέλεσμα της συμμετοχής σας στη μελέτη μου θα επεκτείνουν τη γνώση στον ακαδημαϊκό κόσμο, σε ένα θέμα που δεν έχει μελετηθεί προηγουμένως με μεγάλη λεπτομέρεια. Η συμβολή σας στην έρευνά μου θα βοηθήσει ώστε να προετοιμαστεί το έδαφος για την περαιτέρω ακαδημαϊκή σκέψη σε ζητήματα που προκύπτουν από τη μελέτη μου.

### **Αποζημίωση**

Δεν υπάρχει χρηματική ή άλλου είδους αποζημίωση που να σχετίζεται με τη συμμετοχή σας σε αυτή την έρευνα.

### **Εθελοντική Συμμετοχή**

Η συμμετοχή σας σε αυτήν την έρευνα πρέπει να είναι απολύτως εθελοντική. Εάν αποφασίσετε να συμμετέχετε, μπορείτε να αποσυρθείτε οποιαδήποτε στιγμή χωρίς οποιεσδήποτε συνέπειες ή οποιαδήποτε εξήγηση. Εάν αποσυρθείτε από τη μελέτη, τα στοιχεία σας θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο εάν δώσετε την άδειά σας υπογράφοντας μια συγκατάθεση που επιτρέπει εμένα (την ερευνήτρια) να χρησιμοποιήσω τα συλλεχθέντα στοιχεία μέχρι εκείνο το σημείο.

### **Ανωνυμία**

Όσον αφορά την προστασία της ανωνυμίας σας, θα χρησιμοποιήσω φανταστικά ονόματα σε συνδυασμό με τη συνέντευξη και τις απαντήσεις σας. Επίσης, το φανταστικό όνομά σας θα χρησιμοποιηθεί και κατά τη διάρκεια όλων των σταδίων της ανάλυσης, της υποβολής της έκθεσης και της διάδοσης καθώς επίσης και κατά τη διάρκεια της αποθήκευσης των στοιχείων. Επιπλέον, ο αριθμός των 6-10 συμμετεχόντων αυτής της μελέτης είναι αρκετά μεγάλος και σε συνδυασμό με τη χρήση των φανταστικών ονομάτων, εγώ (η ερευνήτρια) θα είναι λιγότερο πιθανό να συνδέσω εσάς (τον ερωτηθέντα) και την ταυτότητά σας με τις απαντήσεις σας κατά τη διάρκεια της ανάλυσης στοιχείων και των ερευνητικών διαδικασιών έπειτα.

Πληροφορείστε ότι υπάρχει ένα όριο στην ανωνυμία σας κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης αφού εγώ (η ερευνήτρια) θα είμαι σε θέση να σας συνδέσω με τις απαντήσεις σας. Αυτός είναι ένας έμφυτος περιορισμός που περιλαμβάνεται στην πραγματοποίηση μιας συνέντευξης.

### **Εμπιστευτικότητα**

Η εμπιστευτικότητα σας και η εμπιστευτικότητα των στοιχείων θα προστατευθούν από την ακόλουθη γραπτή δήλωσή μου ότι: Εγώ (η ερευνήτρια) δεν θα αποκαλύψω τις πληροφορίες σας (ο ερωτηθέν) σε οποιαδήποτε άλλα πρόσωπα, με τρόπους που δεν είναι σύμφωνοι με την κατανόηση αυτής της κοινοποίησης, ή χωρίς τη ρητή άδειά σας.

Η εμπιστευτικότητα της αίτησης συγκατάθεσης ερωτηθέντα και όλων των στοιχείων που συλλέγονται κατά τη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης θα εξασφαλιστούν από το: κλείδωμα των αιτήσεων και των εγγράφων σε ένα χαρτοφύλακα, και από την προσωπική μου προστασία με κωδικό πρόσβασης που θα προστατεύει το lap-top μου και όλα τα σχετικά ηλεκτρονικά αποθηκευμένα στοιχεία, για παράδειγμα έγγραφα ή ακουστικά αρχεία από τη συνέντευξη.

Πληροφορείστε ότι υπάρχουν όρια στην εμπιστευτικότητά σας δεδομένου ότι δεν μπορώ να εγγυηθώ ότι η συμμετοχή σας σε αυτήν την μελέτη είναι απολύτως εμπιστευτική. Λόγω του μικρού αριθμού ατόμων που συμμετέχουν στη μελέτη, καθώς επίσης και από την ‘στόμα σε στόμα’ στρατολόγηση τρίτων και καθώς και εσείς στρατολογήθηκατε μέσω ενός κοινού δικτύου φίλων και γνωστών (όπου μερικά άτομα μπορεί να είναι από την ίδια κοινότητα με εσάς), αυτό σημαίνει ότι και άλλα άτομα ίσως γνωρίζουν τη συμμετοχή σας.

### **Ιδιωτικότητα Ερωτηθέντων**

Ο σεβασμός της ιδιωτικότητας σας (του ερωτηθέντα) όταν, πώς και μέχρι ποιο σημείο οι πληροφορίες για σας (ο ερωτηθέντας) διαβιβάζονται σε άλλους, θα υποστηρίζονται κατά τρόπο σύμφωνο με αυτό που περιγράφεται στα τμήματα εμπιστευτικότητας και ανωνυμίας αυτής της αίτησης συγκατάθεσης ερωτηθέντα και εάν δεν είναι δηλωμένα διαφορετικά σε αυτή την αίτηση συγκατάθεσης συμμετεχόντων, με έναν τρόπο που συμφωνείται από σας (τον ερωτηθέντα).

### **Διάδοση των αποτελεσμάτων**

Αναμένεται ότι τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας θα μοιραστούν και με άλλους με τους εξής τρόπους  
Σίγουρα – Διατριβή Μεταπτυχιακού Τίτλου – Τελική Αναφορά.

Πιθανώς – Άμεσα στους συμμετέχοντες (εάν ζητήσουν είτε ένα αντίγραφο της τελικής αναφοράς ή μιας ειδικής περίληψης), δημοσιευμένα άρθρα, κεφάλαια ή βιβλίο, παρουσιάσεις σε ακαδημαϊκές συναντήσεις, διαδύκτιο και ΜΜΕ (πχ εφημερίδες).

### **Εμπορική χρήση των αποτελεσμάτων**

Αυτή η έρευνα δεν θα οδηγήσει σε ένα εμπορικό προϊόν ή υπηρεσία.

### **Μελλοντική Χρήση των δεδομένων**

Τα δεδομένα θα αποθηκευτούν αυστηρά σύμφωνα με τη διαδικασία που περιγράφεται στο ειδικό τμήμα και για μέχρι και 7 χρόνια μετά την ολοκλήρωση της Διατριβής του Μεταπτυχιακού μου. Είναι πιθανόν ότι είτε εγώ ή οι επιβλέποντες καθηγητές μου Dr. William Carroll και Dr. Amy Verdun θα χρησιμοποιήσουμε τα δεδομένα για να ενημερώσουμε τωρινή ή μελλοντική έρευνα και /η ακαδημαϊκές προσπάθειες.

#### **Απόρριψη των δεδομένων**

Τα δεδομένα από αυτή την έρευνα θα απορριφτούν κάποια στιγμή πριν ή και μέχρι 7 χρόνια μετά την ολοκλήρωση της Αναφοράς της Διατριβής του Μεταπτυχιακού μου. Όταν συμβεί η απόρριψη, τα δεδομένα σε χαρτί θα κομματιαστούν και τα ηλεκτρονικά ακουστικά αρχεία θα σβηστούν.

#### **Επικοινωνία**

Τα άτομα με τα οποία μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε περιλαμβάνουν:

Κατερίνα Αναστασιάδη - Ερευνήτρια  
698-317-2852 (Greece), 00-1-778-319-2085 (Canada), Email: [Katerina@uvic.ca](mailto:Katerina@uvic.ca)

Dr. William Carroll – Συν - επιβλέπων  
Γραφείο Πανεπιστημίου: 00-1-250-721-7573, Email: [wcarroll@uvic.ca](mailto:wcarroll@uvic.ca)

Dr. Amy Verdun – Συν - επιβλέπων  
Γραφείο Πανεπιστημίου: 00-1-250-721-7491, Email: [averdun@uvic.ca](mailto:averdun@uvic.ca)

Επίσης, μπορείτε να επιβεβαιώσετε την ηθική έγκριση αυτής της έρευνας, ή να αναφέρετε τα ερωτήματα που μπορεί να έχετε, επικοινωνώντας με το Γραφείο Ηθικής Ανθρώπινης Έρευνας στο Πανεπιστήμιο της Βικτώριας (00-1-250-472-4545 ή στο [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)).

Η παρακάτω υπογραφή σας βεβαιώνει ότι κατανοείτε τις άνω συνθήκες συμμετοχής σε αυτή την έρευνα και ότι είχατε την ευκαιρία να λάβετε απαντήσεις στις απορίες σας από την ερευνήτρια.

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**ΟΝΟΜΑ**  
**ΗΜΕΡΟΜΗΝΙΑ**

**ΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΗ ΕΡΩΤΗΘΕΝΤΑ**

*Ένα αντίγραφο αυτής της συγκατάθεσης θα κρατήσετε εσείς, και ένα θα κρατήσω εγώ, η Κατερίνα Αναστασιάδη (η ερευνήτρια)*

## Appendix D – Participant Interview Questions

### *Participant Interview Questions*

**The case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece.**

#### Group A:

1. How old are you?
2. Are you male or female?
3. What type of post-secondary training/education have you completed?
4. Did you complete your post-secondary training/education within or outside of Greece?
5. Have you been unemployed<sup>63</sup> for at least 6 months?
6. Are you looking for full-time work?
7. In what occupation(s) are you seeking employment?
8. Have you been looking for all kinds of full time employment or only those that are related to your field of study, or both?
9. Do you live in a village<sup>64</sup>, town<sup>65</sup>, a city<sup>66</sup> or metropolis<sup>67</sup>?
10. Did you grow up in the same village, town, city or metropolis that you currently live in?
11. Do you live on your own or with your parents or relatives?
12. What is the occupation of your mother and father?

#### Group B:

13. What has been your experience finding full time employment after graduating from post-secondary training/education in Greece?

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<sup>63</sup> Statistics Canada Unemployment Definition – Being able and wanting to work, looking for work, but being unable to find it.

<sup>64</sup> Village – a population of less than 2,000 people.

<sup>65</sup> Town – a population of 2,000 - 9,999 people.

<sup>66</sup> City – a population of 10,000 to 1 million people.

<sup>67</sup> Metropolis – a population of over 1 million people.

14. Have you experienced any particular barriers to finding full time employment after graduating from post-secondary training/education? If so how would you describe them?
15. How does unemployment impact or affect your personal and daily life?

Group C:

16. How do you rationalize or make sense of your unemployment situation?
17. What do you think are main factors causing the high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates like yourself?
18. Would you say that high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates is related to the black economy<sup>68</sup>? If so, how?
19. How does the Greek “fiscal crisis” relate to or affect your unemployment situation as a young post-secondary graduate?
20. How do you view your employment situation as a young post-secondary graduate in Greece in relation to the average young post-secondary graduate in the EU?
21. How do you foresee your employment situation in the future?
22. What do you think can be done to address the problem of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in this country (Greece)?

Group D:

23. In your view could you describe what options there are available for young post-secondary graduates such as yourself to find full time employment?
24. What are you doing to manage or cope in your unemployed circumstances?
25. What have you and your friends/peers been doing in response to the unemployment situation?
26. Do you or have you participated in the black economy?
27. What do you think about the recent strikes and protests?

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<sup>68</sup> The black economy – Is trade, goods and services that are not part of the official economy of a country; this may be legal activities where taxes are not paid, or illegal activities, such as drug dealing and prostitution.

- i. What do you think are the main messages and motivations behind them?
- ii. How do you relate to them (identify with them)?
- iii. Do you see them as helpful or as an obstacle to the unemployment situation?
- iv. Have you participated in a strike or protest?

Group E (other comments):

Is there anything else that you would like to share or say in this interview?

## ***Ερωτήσεις για τους συμμετέχοντες στη συνέντευξη***

Η περίπτωση της υψηλής ανεργίας μεταξύ των νεαρών πτυχιούχων τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα.

Γκρουπ Α:

28. Πόσων χρονών είσαι?
29. Άντρας ή γυναίκα?
30. Τι τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση είχατε?
31. Ολοκληρώσατε την τριτοβάθμιά σας εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα ή στο εξωτερικό?
32. Είσαστε άνεργος<sup>69</sup> για τουλάχιστον έξι μήνες?
33. Ψάχνετε για δουλειά ολικής απασχόλησης?
34. Σε ποιο επάγγελμα ψάχνετε εργασία?
35. Ψάχνετε για οποιαδήποτε εργασία ολικής απασχόλησης ή μόνο για εργασίες που σχετίζονται με τον τομέα σπουδών σας, ή και τα δύο?
36. Κατοικείτε σε χωριό<sup>70</sup>, κωμόπολη<sup>71</sup>, πόλη<sup>72</sup> ή μεγαλούπολη<sup>73</sup>?
37. Μεγαλώσατε στο ίδιο χωριό, κωμόπολη, πόλη, μεγαλούπολη που ζείτε τώρα?
38. Ζείτε μόνος σας ή με γονείς ή συγγενείς?
39. Ποιο είναι το επάγγελμα της μητέρας και του πατέρα σας?

Γκρουπ Β:

40. Ποια είναι η εμπειρία σας όσον αφορά την εύρεση ολικής απασχόλησης αφού ολοκληρώσατε την τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα?
41. Έχετε συναντήσει κάποια συγκεκριμένα εμπόδια όσον αφορά την εύρεση ολικής απασχόλησης? Εάν ναι, πως θα τα περιγράφατε?

<sup>69</sup> Ορισμός της Ανεργίας σύμφωνα με τη Στατιστική του Καναδά– Το να μπορείς και να θέλεις να δουλέψεις, να ψάχνεις για δουλειά αλλά να μην μπορείς να βρεις.

<sup>70</sup> Χωριό– με πληθυσμό λιγότερο των 2000 ανθρώπων.

<sup>71</sup> Κωμόπολη – με πληθυσμό από 2000 έως 9999 ανθρώπων.

<sup>72</sup> Πόλη – με πληθυσμό από 10.000 έως 1.000.000 ανθρώπων.

<sup>73</sup> Μεγαλούπολη – με πληθυσμό άνω του 1.000.000 ανθρώπων.

42. Πως επηρεάζει η ανεργία και τι αντίκτυπο έχει στην προσωπική και καθημερινή σας ζωή?

Γκρουπ Γ:

43. Πως εξηγείτε ή κατανοείτε την ανεργία σας?
44. Ποιοι νομίζετε ότι είναι οι λόγοι που προκαλούν τόσο υψηλή ανεργία στους αποφοίτους τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας όπως είσαστε και εσείς?
45. Θα λέγατε ότι η υψηλή ανεργία ανάμεσα στους αποφοίτους τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας σχετίζεται με τη ‘μαύρη’ οικονομία<sup>74</sup>? Εάν ναι, πως?
46. Πως η Ελληνική ‘Δημοσιονομική Κρίση’ σχετίζεται ή επηρεάζει την ανεργίας σας ως απόφοιτος τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας?
47. Πως συγκρίνετε την επαγγελματική σας κατάσταση ως απόφοιτος τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας σε σχέση με τον μέσο απόφοιτο τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας στην ΕΕ?
48. Πως προβλέπετε την επαγγελματική σας κατάσταση στο μέλλον?
49. Τι νομίζετε ότι μπορεί να γίνει για να αντιμετωπιστεί το πρόβλημα της υψηλής ανεργίας στους αποφοίτους τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας σε αυτή τη χώρα (Ελλάδα)?

Γκρουπ Δ:

50. Κατά τη γνώμη σας, μπορείτε να περιγράψετε τι επιλογές υπάρχουν για να βρουν δουλειά απόφοιτοι τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης νεαρής ηλικίας όπως είσαστε και εσείς?
51. Τι κάνετε για να τα βγάλετε πέρα με την ανεργία σας?
52. Τι κάνετε εσείς και οι φίλοι / συνομήλικοι σας ως απάντηση στην ανεργία?
53. Συμμετέχετε ή έχετε συμμετάσχει στη ‘μαύρη’ οικονομία?
54. Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας σχετικά με τις πρόσφατες απεργίες και διαδηλώσεις?
- v. Ποια νομίζετε ότι είναι τα κύρια μηνύματα και κίνητρα τους?
- vi. Πως σχετίζεστε με αυτά (πως ταυτίζεστε)?
- vii. Πιστεύετε ότι βοηθάνε ή αποτελούν εμπόδιο στην ανεργία?

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<sup>74</sup> Μαύρη οικονομία — ανεξέλεγκτες, αφορολόγητες νόμιμες ή παράνομες οικονομικές δραστηριότητες.

viii. Έχετε συμμετάσχει σε μια απεργία ή διαμαρτυρία?

Γκρουπ Ε (άλλα σχόλια):

55. Υπάρχει κάτι άλλο που θα θέλατε να μοιραστείτε ή να προσθέσετε σε αυτή τη συνέντευξη?

## Appendix E – Interview Guide

### *Interview Guide*

**The case of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in Greece.**

#### GROUP A QUESTIONS - Preliminary Socio-demographic Interview Questions:

1. **How old are you?**
2. **Are you male or female?**
3. **What type of post-secondary training/education have you completed?**
4. **Did you complete your post-secondary training/education within or outside of Greece?**
5. **Have you been unemployed<sup>75</sup> for at least 6 months?**
6. **Are you looking for full-time work?**
7. **In what occupation(s) are you seeking employment?**
8. **Have you been looking for all kinds of full time employment or only those that are related to your field of study, or both?**
9. **Do you live in a village<sup>76</sup>, town<sup>77</sup>, a city<sup>78</sup> or metropolis<sup>79</sup>?**
10. **Did you grow up in the same village, town, city or metropolis that you currently live in?**
11. **Do you live on your own or with your parents or relatives?**
12. **What is the occupation of your mother and father?**

#### OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

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<sup>75</sup> Statistics Canada Unemployment Definition – Being able and wanting to work, looking for work, but being unable to find it.

<sup>76</sup> Village – a population of less than 2,000 people.

<sup>77</sup> Town – a population of 2,000 - 9,999 people.

<sup>78</sup> City – a population of 10,000 to 1 million people.

<sup>79</sup> Metropolis – a population of over 1 million people.

GROUP B QUESTIONS - Research Question I:

What are the barriers that young post-secondary graduates in Greece face to full time employment?

**13. What has been your experience finding full time employment after graduating from post-secondary training/education in Greece?**

ALTERNATIVE PHRASING: What have you encountered, what has the journey been like? Reflecting on the time since you've graduated to now and being unemployed what has been your "story"?

PROBES: How did you feel about that? Where did you go? What happened after that? Could you tell me more about that? How good would you say it has been? How bad would you say it has been?

**14. Have you experienced any particular barriers to finding full time employment after graduating from post-secondary training/education? If so how would you describe them?**

ALTERNATIVE PHRASING: Have there been specific barriers? Have there been main barriers?

PROBES: Can you explain the main obstacles in more detail? Why would you say they are main obstacles? How bad would you say it has been? What happened after that?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

**15. How does unemployment impact or affect your personal and daily life?**

ALTERNATIVE PHRASING: What does unemployment mean for your everyday life? What affect does it have in your life?

PROBES: What did you mean by? Could you explain that a bit further? How did that feel? What are the pros and cons of the situation? Are you saying that ...?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

GROUP C QUESTIONS - Research Question II:

How do young post-secondary graduates in Greece understand or make sense of their unemployment situation?

**16. How do you rationalize or make sense of your unemployment situation?**

ALTERNATIVE PHRASING: How do you understand your situation and how you got into this position?

PROBES: What makes you think that? Why do you view it this way? Could you tell me more about that please?

**17. What do you think are main factors causing the high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates like yourself?**

PROBES: What makes you think that? What is the root cause/are the root causes of all this?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

**18. Would you say that high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates is related to the black economy<sup>80</sup>? If so, how?**

PROBES: What exactly do you mean by? What makes you think that? How does it relate to that? Could you explain a bit further? Can you give me an example?

**19. How does the Greek “fiscal crisis” relate to or affect your unemployment situation as a young post-secondary graduate?**

ALTERNATIVE PHRASING: How does the fact that Greece is in high debt, in a recession, and experiencing a great level of international scrutiny relate to the high unemployment situation for young graduates such as yourself? How does it contribute to the situation of high unemployment?

PROBES: What exactly do you mean by? What makes you think that? How does it relate to that? Could you explain a bit further? Can you give me an example?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

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80 The black economy – Is trade, goods and services that are not part of the official economy of a country; this may be legal activities where taxes are not paid, or illegal activities, such as drug dealing and prostitution.

- 20. How do you view your employment situation as a young post-secondary graduate in Greece in relation to the average young post-secondary graduate in the EU?**
- 21. How do you foresee your employment situation in the future?**
- 22. What do you think can be done to address the problem of high unemployment among young post-secondary graduates in this country (Greece)?**

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

GROUP D QUESTIONS - Research Question III:

What are young post-secondary graduates in Greece doing in response to their unemployment situation?

**23. In your view could you describe what options there are available for young post-secondary graduates such as yourself to find full time employment?**

**24. What are you doing to manage or cope in your unemployed circumstances?**

**25. What have you and your friends/peers been doing in response to the unemployment situation?**

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

**26. Do you or have you participated in the black economy?**

**27. What do you think about the recent strikes and protests?**

- ix. What do you think are the main messages and motivations behind them?**
- x. How do you relate to them (identify with them)?**
- xi. Do you see them as helpful or as an obstacle to the unemployment situation?**
- xii. Have you participated in a strike or protest?**

PROBES: What exactly did you mean by? Could you explain further please, how do you feel about? Why do you think that? How does it relate to? Who benefits from this? What are the pros and cons of the situation? How good would you say it is? How bad would you say it is? How did you do that?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

GROUP E - Other Comments:

**28. Is there anything else that you would like to share or say in this interview?**

PROBES: Is that all? Is there anything you have missed out?

OBSERVATIONAL NOTES:

## Appendix F – Theme Frequency Chart

Sub Theme or Concept	Frequency Total
1.1 The Greek Fiscal crisis	18
1.2 Greece's Weak Business Sector	10
1.3 Post-Secondary Education & Training mismatch with Labour Market	11
1.4 The Role of One's Age & past Work Experience	5
1.5 A System of Clientelism and Patronage	4
2.1 The Inability for Long Term Life Planning	4
2.2 The Infringement of Individual Personal Freedoms and Choices	8
2.3 The Unaffordability of Life	11
3.1 Lack of Work Experience	3
3.2 Lack of Technical Training	5
3.3 No Job Opportunities or Options	20
3.4 Poor Government & Public Policy and Planning in Greece	13
4.1 The Nature Intensity and Duration of the Crisis	8
4.2 The Nature and Prevalence of Tax Evasion & Unofficial Employment	17
4.3 Employer-Employee Rights	7
4.4 Inadequacy of Social Policy	5
4.5 The Contraction of the Greek Economy & Austerity Context	7
5.1 The North-South Economic Divide	5
5.2 Differences in Politics and Employment Policy & Practices targeted to Young Graduates	4
5.3 Comparative Quality of Life	4
6.1 Working in the Black Economy	9
6.2 Moving or Seeking Employment Outside of Greece	14
6.3 Under Declaring Qualifications	1
6.4 Re-Orientation of Education and Occupational Training	3
6.5 Starting Own Business	2
6.6 Waiting out the Recession	3
Sub Theme or Concept	Frequency Total
7.1 Anger or Frustration & Feelings of Injustice	9
7.2 Uncertainty	9
7.3 Anxiety & Stress	2
7.4 Embarrassment	3
7.5 Powerlessness & Hopelessness & Depression	11
7.6 Distrust of Politicians	4
7.7 Disappointment	5
7.8 Desire to Work and for Job Opportunities	7

7.9 Hope for Change	4
8.1 Post-Secondary Education System Reform	3
8.2 Economic Reform	8
8.3 Labour Relations Reform	2
8.4 The Mentality of Greek Society & Greek Politics	13
8.5 Political Change	9
8.6 Collective Action	5
9. Other	4
8.7 Expecting or Waiting for End of Crisis	2
8.8 Targetted Initiatives for Young Graduates	4
8.9 Practical Experience Training or Educational Refocus	3
6.7 Protesting	3
9.2 Identification with and Views of Strikes & Protests	13
1.6 Precarious or Undesirable or Unrelated Jobs	10
9.1 Pessemistic Future Views	10
3.5 Overqualified Labour Force	9
5.4 Differences in Systematic and Institutional Structures	2
6.8 Looking for All Types of Employment and Unrelated to Studies or Training	5
6.9 Employment Resources	3
1.7 Greece's Weak Economy	4

## **Appendix G – Conceptual Framework – emergent themes from data**

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK -- Main Emergent Themes and Sub-Themes

#### **1. Barriers to Full Time Employment**

- 1.1 The Greek Fiscal crisis
- 1.2 Greece's Weak Business Sector
- 1.3 Post-Secondary Education & Training mismatch with the Labour Market
- 1.4 The Role of one's Age & past Work Experience
- 1.5 A System of Clientelism and Patronage

#### **2. The Impact of Unemployment in Personal & Daily Lives**

- 2.1 The Inability for Long Term Life Planning
- 2.2 The Infringement of Individual Personal Freedoms and Choices
- 2.3 The Unaffordability of Life

#### **3. How Unemployment is Rationalized**

- 3.1 Lack of Work Experience
- 3.2 Lack of Technical Training
- 3.3 No Job Opportunities
- 3.4 Poor Government & Public Policy and Planning in Greece.

#### **4. Greece's Fiscal Crisis & the Black Economy**

- 4.1 The Nature, Intensity and Duration of the Crisis
- 4.2 The Cyclical Nature and Prevalence of Tax Evasion
- 4.3 Employer-Employee Rights
- 4.4 Inadequacy of Social Policy
- 4.5 The Contraction of the Greek Economy

#### **5. Greek Graduates vs. EU Graduates**

- 5.1 The North-South Economic Divide
- 5.2 Differences in Politics and Employment Policy & Practices targeted to Young Graduates
- 5.3 Comparative Quality of Life

#### **6. Coping Mechanisms and Strategic Management of Unemployment** (aside from typical networking and regular job searching tactics)

- 6.1 Working in the Black Economy
- 6.2 Moving or Seeking Employment Outside of Greece
- 6.3 Under Declaring Qualifications
- 6.4 Re-Orientation of Education and Occupational Training
- 6.5 Starting Own Business
- 6.6 Waiting out the Recession
- 6.7 Protesting

**7. Feelings**

- 7.1 Anger
- 7.2 Uncertainty
- 7.2 Depression
- 7.3 Anxiety & Stress
- 7.4 Embarrassment
- 7.5 Powerlessness
- 7.6 Distrust of Politicians
- 7.7 Disappointment
- 7.8 Desire to Work and for Opportunities
- 7.9 Hope for Change

**8. Solutions & Future Prospects**

- 8.1 Post-secondary Education System Reform
- 8.2 Economic Reform
- 8.3 Labour Relations Reform
- 8.4 The Mentality of Greek Society
- 8.5 Political Change
- 8.6 Collective Action

## Appendix H – Demographics Comparison Chart

Age & Sex	Male: 31 Alexandros	Male: 25 Nikos	Female: 29 Tasoula	Female: 28 Kassandra	Female: 27 Marina	Female: 27 Athena
Type of Post-Secondary Training	MA in Economics	BA in International Trade	BA in Greek Philosophy & Linguistics	BA in Life Long Learning & MA In Consulting for Unemployed Women	BA in Physical Education & Sports	BA in Journalism
Completed in Greece or Out of the Country	Completed in the United Kingdom	Completed in Greece	Completed in Greece	Completed in Greece	Completed in Greece	Completed in Greece
Unemployed for 6 months & Looking for F/T Employment	Unemployed for over 1 year	Unemployed for 2 years	Unemployed for at least 6 months	Unemployed for at least 6 months	Unemployed for at least 6 months	Unemployed for at least 6 months
Seeking Employment in Study Related Field or Non-related	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both	Both
Seeking Employment in Occupation(s):	Consulting Business & Management	Banking Sector, Financial Services, Trade and Investment	Teacher	Public Service & Social Sector	Yoga Instructor & Fitness Sector	Journalist in a magazine or newspaper
Live in a Village, Town, City or Metropolis	City	Town	Town	City	City	City
Live with Parents or Relatives	Lives w/girlfriend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Lives w/boyfriend	Yes
Occupation of Parents	Father - Retired Mother - Housewife	Father – Retired Mother - Factory Worker	Father – Farmer Mother – Housewife	Father – Retired Mother – Retired	Father: Engineer/Contractor Building Homes Mother: Housewife	Father: Retired Mother: Retired

## Appendix I – OECD Table - Average Annual Hours Actually Worked per Worker in Total Employment (Hours)

Average annual hours actually worked per worker							
Employment status - Dependent Employment Frequency							
Time	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
<b>Country</b>							
<u>Canada</u>	1735	1734	1734	1727	1699	1704	
<u>Germany</u>	1354	1352	1354	1351	1309	1340	
<u>Greece</u>	1811	1796	1782	1803	1777	1754	
<u>Iceland</u>	1751	1735	1725	1739	1653	1635	
<u>Ireland</u>	1562	1564	1549	1522	1470	1588	
<u>Luxembourg</u>	1524	1555	1513	1544	1559	1594	
<u>Portugal</u>	1680	1694	1674	1686	1664	1659	
<u>Spain</u> <sup>i</sup>	1634	1622	1603	1613	1616	1623	
<u>United Kingdom</u>	1666	1648	1655	1634	1630	1620	
<u>United States</u>	1801	1802	1799	1797	1776	1786	

### Data Characteristics

Data are expressed in number of hours worked per year per person in employment. The concept used is the total number of hours worked over the year divided by the average number of people in employment. The data are intended for comparisons of trends over time; they are unsuitable for comparisons of the level of average annual hours of work for a given year, because of differences in their sources. Part-time workers are covered as well as full-time workers.

The series on annual hours actually worked per person in total employment presented in this table for all 30 OECD countries are consistent with the series retained for the calculation of productivity measures in the OECD Productivity database ([www.oecd.org/statistics/productivity/compendium](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/productivity/compendium)). However, there may be some differences for some countries given that the main purpose of the latter database is to report data series on labour input (i.e. total hours worked) and also because the updating of databases occur at different moment of the year