

The Effects of the Economic Crisis on Greek Society and the Youth Unemployment: Self-Perception and Expectations of the Young Neets

Angeliki Politou and Maria Nikolakaki

ABSTRACT

The economic crisis of the previous decade left its mark on Greek society through its multidimensional economic and social effects. However, the most basic issue in Greek society was the rapid increase in unemployment and in particular youth unemployment, culminating in the emergence of the Neets phenomenon, the population of young people who are out of employment, education or training. Young people were affected the most during the economic crisis, shaping their expectations and self-perception against the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. In this context we explore expectations and self-perception of unemployed young people in debt-ridden Greece based on nationwide quantitative research conducted through questionnaires. The sample was 360 young persons of 15 – 25 years old who are out of employment, education or training (Neets). According to the results, the majority of young people maintain their optimism for their future, continuing to make plans, having high job motivations and desiring full employment, as well as the continuation of their training in programs which, however, are linked to the labor market. The reduction of their expectations and their participation in brain drain is done mainly for livelihood reasons and in the absence of other alternatives. The decrease in their optimism is mainly based on the fear of long-term unemployment, the low level of income, but also on the inability to utilize their high qualifications, while despite their optimism, young people show increased levels of anxiety and depression, due to the difficulties that they face. The capture of these expectations and self-perceptions is critical in the effort to develop appropriate and effective social barriers for reintegrating young people into work and social life and avoiding social exclusion. This is an issue of social vulnerability as reflected in modern sociological theory but also in the active practices of applied social and educational policy. This research can be framed also by the principles of critical pedagogy as young people could reach for critical consciousness before they radically change the material conditions of their society.

Keywords: Anxiety, Brain Drain, Depression, Economic Crisis, Education, Employment, Job Motivation, Neets (Not in Employment, Education or Training), Optimism, Poverty, Social Impact, Social Exclusion, Youth Unemployment.

Published Online: February 16, 2023

ISSN: 2736-5522

DOI: 10.24018/ejsocial.2023.3.1.387

A. Politou*

Phd student, Department of Social and Educational Policy, University of Peloponnese, Corinth, Greece

(e-mail: angiepolitou@yahoo.gr)

M. Nikolakaki

Professor, Department of Social and Educational Policy, University of Peloponnese, Corinth, Greece

(e-mail: mnikolak@yahoo.gr)

**Corresponding Author*

I. INTRODUCTION

In order to successfully examine such a critical issue, firstly, it is necessary to understand the causes that led to the crisis as well as its effects on the economic and social fabric. In Greece, the economic crisis has created many social implications over the years. The large reduction in the job opportunities led to the disorganization of the employment sector, whilst the policies for the integration of young people into the labor market seem ineffective, according to the high percentage of the unemployed young people (Kotrogiannos *et al.*, 2016). The increasing absence of young people from the labor market has serious consequences to the economy, society as well as individually. The rising unemployment is forcing young people to search for jobs abroad, resulting them to leave their country and especially, young scientists, depriving Greece from specialized human resources, which strengthens social and economic effects of the crisis. Simultaneously, the difficult living conditions of young people in combination with the dissociation of education and training programs from the labor market, turn young people away from education, leading those, who are unemployed out of education and training (Neets) increasing their relevant percentage, significantly (Koniordos *et al.*, 2016), which means that the long absence from employment or the education system will push them into permanent social exclusion in the long run.

The key to reverse the status quo lies in trying to get young people back into employment and education by promoting human-centered policies and achieving social prosperity while making efforts to grow the economy. While the effects of the economic crisis are perceivable in both economic and social life of the country, affecting the sectors of employment and education as a whole, the young people consists the group of the unemployed with the highest and ever-increasing unemployment rate throughout economic crisis in the country, highlighting the critical phenomenon of the youth unemployment. Moreover, although the changes promoted through labor law have reshaped the data in young people's job search, the job flexibility promoted through these changes makes it even more difficult for them to enter the labor market, increasing their job uncertainty, in their future (INE/GSEE, 2014). Also, the current legislation does not support the creation of a safe environment for the working life of the individual.

II. THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH - FEATURES OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

During the economic crisis in Greece, there was a decrease in wages and disposable income, an increase in the cost of living and a decrease in labor costs, while there was a dramatic decrease in the economic figures of all other economic activities such as construction, industry and agricultural production, with an exception in tourism and shipping industry (Anastasiou *et al.*, 2016). Austerity policies significantly burdened the adjusted gross disposable income of households, which in the period of 2009-2017 fell by 33.7%, disrupting the macroeconomic and financial cohesion of the economy (INE/GSEE, 2019). In the aftermath of the reduction of wages and social benefits and the large increase of taxes in combination with the consequent increase of prices in basic goods, the purchasing power of households was significantly affected during the crisis and the memoranda (Kouzis, 2017).

The most important changes took place in the field of employment, in the context of the reforms issued by the governments for the crisis management, by taking a series of measures such as the introduction of flexible hours, the liberalization of redundancies, but also the reduction of minimum wages, affecting the employment relationships as well as the working conditions. In view of the significant increase in unemployment, and especially youth unemployment, the respective governments have implemented measures for its restraint, through the changes that have been implemented in the labor legislation and in the labor relations, which failed to improve the employment figures, increasing the youth unemployment in high levels, as one out of two young people is unemployed (ELSTAT, 2015). Additionally, the changes in the labor legislation mainly concerned cuts in salaries and pensions, increase of the retirement age and part-time employment, facilitation of redundancies in the private sector, etc. (Anastasiou *et al.*, 2016).

The main policies implemented, concern the drastic reduction of wages in both public and private sectors, failed to stimulate the competitiveness of the Greek economy. The reduction in wages has led to significant reductions in the total income of households, with adverse consequences for their survival, even in daily obligations, leading not only to insolvency, and over-indebtedness, but also to an increased risk of poverty and social exclusion of families, based on the data shown, that the risk of poverty for full-time workers is 9.5%, and for part-time workers is 24.6% (ELSTAT, 2019). The reduction of the country's economic activity, the inability of the economic sectors to recover and the permanent reduction of job opportunities in all economic sectors resulted to the dramatic increase in unemployment. In the public sector, the imposition of increased cuts in public expenditure has led to a reduction in salaries and the suspension of staff recruitment with a strict ratio of recruitment - retirement. In the private sector, the closure of many enterprises, as well as the reduction of the financial data of those who remained open, led to a significant loss of jobs, while the facilitation of companies in collective redundancies and reduction of the provided compensations in case of dismissal contributed even more to the increase of unemployment (Anastasiou *et al.*, 2016).

In particular, young people were requested to handle the gradual reduction of their gross hourly wage, which was significant for those under the 24 ages, the increase in their unemployment and especially long-term unemployment, but also the increase in part-time employment, flexible forms of employment, precarious and undeclared work. Low wages, job insecurity and the inability to support themselves financially minimized young people's ability to become independent, extending their stay in the paternal home. A consequence of the difficulties that young people faced, seems to be their increasing share on the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Thus, according to ELSTAT data for the year 2017, it seems that the percentage of young people aged 16-34 who faced material deprivation (24.3%), risk of poverty or social exclusion (39.4%) increased significantly (ELSTAT, 2018).

Youth unemployment in Greece began its upward trend with the onset of the economic crisis reaching its highest point in February 2013 at 60.5%, while in the following years youth unemployment rates fell, but still remained at very high levels, with the percentage amounting to 56.4% in March 2014, 49.1% in September 2015 and 46.5% in August 2016 - more than twice over the European average term (20.9%) for the same period- showing one out of two young people are unemployed (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). Although,

finding and securing decent employment is one of the most critical transitions of young people, in recent years, though, in Greece, this is no longer a pleasant and productive process but a painful endeavor, with negative consequences in the quality of their lives, their mental health and in their social development.

Although, in Greece, traditionally, the transition from education to work environment was usually linear, with the job searching to follow after the graduation, recently, due to the increased unemployment and job insecurity, the young people often choose to combine studies and job finding. The uncertainty in the employment sector affects the current changing experiences of young people working in the country, leading them to redefine their criteria in job search, job motivation factors but also their individual choices regarding lifelong learning, field of study and age of entering the labor market. As the youth unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 increased significantly in Greece during the crisis, women seem to be particularly affected, occupying the first place in the percentages against men both before and during the crisis (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021).

III. NEETS-YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN WORK, EDUCATION OR TRAINING IN THE ERA OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

In recent years, a new social group has been developed at European level called Neet (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and includes young people who are out of work, while at the same time they are not attending any education or training program (European Commission, 2018). This group includes the unemployed but also the non-economically active young people aged 15-24, who are out of employment, education or training and who constitute the Neet population. For the OECD, the age of Neets ranges from 15 to 29 years. According to Eurostat data, the percentage of Neets has increased significantly during the years of economic crisis, leading an increasing percentage of young people to social and employment exclusion. Although prior to the economic crisis, the percentage of Neets was gradually declining due to the participation of young people in work, education and training programs, from 2008 and on, following the development of the effects of the economic crisis on society, the percentage of Neets began to grow in most EU countries and globally according to OECD data (Eurostat, 2017).

The sharp rise in youth unemployment rates during the economic crisis has contributed to the growing of the Neet population in the EU and especially in Greece, while the Neet index is referring to the number of young people out of employment, education or training in relation to the total population of young people (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). The Neets social group includes young people with significant differences between them, as, apart from the age range, the Neets includes young people, who are unemployed for both short and long-term period, in transition process, with family responsibilities, but also those, who are qualified with special abilities or suffer from medical problems. Statistically, female Neets exceed male Neets, while the likelihood of being a Neet is increasing among with age (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021). After all, according to the EU's Gender Equality Index (GEI), Greece has been ranked last every year since 2005, with the biggest gender gaps being found in six areas: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health (Nikolakaki, 2020a).

Thus, at the beginning of the crisis in 2008 the percentage of Neets in the EU was around 10.9%, while in 2012, in the middle of the economic crisis, it reached 13.2%, and in 2016 decreased to 11.5%, a percentage that corresponds to over than 6 million people. It is worth to point out that the percentage of Neets aged 25-29 is also important, reaching to 20% in the EU for 2011 (Eurostat, 2017). In the EU it was estimated that, in 2011, 7.5 million young people aged 15-24 and 5 million aged 25-29 were out of employment, education and training, ie a total of 12.5 million young people (Eurofound, 2012a), while for the year 2015 the Neets aged 15-29 are estimated to 14 million, with 5 million (17.3%) concentrated in the 20-24 age group (Eurostat, 2016a). Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania are the EU countries with the highest percentages of Neets to be recorded during the economic crisis (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

According to a Eurofound survey for Neets, this group includes young people who are unemployed because they cannot find work, or they are not looking for work, or they spend time on other activities or they spend time for themselves (Eurofound, 2012a). While, in a Eurofound study, the Neets are categorized into the duration of unemployment, their availability and the reasons for unavailability, short-term unemployed (29.8%), long-term unemployed (22%), inactive young people due to family responsibilities (15.4%), young people who will soon be re-entered into employment, education or training (7.8%), inactive young people due to disability or illness (6.8%), young people who are frustrated from work (5.8%), and inactive young people for unknown reasons (12.5%) (Eurofound, 2012b). It also appears that in the EU the percentage of females Neets exceeds one of males, especially in the 15-29 age group (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2017).

According to relevant studies by the OECD and the Eurofound, the probability of a person being Neet is related to his level of education, with the high level of education being a defense for young people against unemployment and social exclusion. However, while in Europe Neets are usually low-skilled, in contrast to the EU, in the countries most affected by the crisis, including Cyprus, Croatia and Greece, the highest

percentage of Neets was noticed among young people with higher education (Eurofound, 2016), (OECD 2016). In Greece, over 25% of Neets are graduates of Higher Education (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

In Greece, the percentage of Neets increased almost 50% during the crisis period (Papadakis, 2013), with the economic crisis and the increase of youth unemployment rates being the main factors of the increased percentage of Neets, in Greece. Thus, in Greece, the Neets group recorded a percentage of 11.4% in 2008, reaching 20.4% in 2013, while in 2018 decreased to 14.1%, but still being almost 35% higher than its corresponding average in EU (10.5%) (Eurostat, 2020). It is no coincidence that the highest percentages of Neets are recorded for both Greece and the EU during the years 2012 and 2013, while the economic crisis had already penetrated all aspects of socio-economic reality and its adverse effects mainly affected young people.

Social exclusion is a risk for young people, who ultimately face not only difficulty in finding job for earning income, but also in participating in social structures and sectors such as housing, education, health and access to services, aiming to ensure social and physical well-being as well as to improve the standard of living (Papadakis & Kivelou, 2014). Young women, young immigrants, people with special abilities and young people, suffering from serious mental or physical health problems are dealing with the greatest risk, while in Greece, the institution of the family is an important factor for both financial and psychological support for this group of young people (Papadakis *et al.*, 2017). Also, young people, living in remote areas or in low-income families are at a greater risk of joining the Neets group. According to the KANEP/GSEE survey for the Neets, the main predictors of youth inclusion in the Neets group are the older age, the stay in the paternal home, the previous working history and the low subjective self-efficacy (Basta *et al.*, 2016).

Thus, the urbanity, the gender, the age, the educational level and the family income are the most critical factors for the possibility of young people joining the Neets group, in Greece. The percentage of Neets for 2013 amounted to 16.9%, with the highest concentration of Neets being located in the Region of Central Greece and in the islands of Greece, while young people in rural areas are also likely to join the Neets, probably due to the reduced job opportunities in the province or the seasonal jobs, offered (Papadakis, 2013), although most Neets live in urban areas (Drakaki *et al.*, 2013). Also, the largest percentage of Neets live in families with low monthly incomes, a fact that highlights the intergenerational nature of poverty (Papadakis, 2013), while it seems that the female population of Neets is larger than the male one, as women occupy the 54.4% of Neets and men occupy the 45.6%, which of course is in line with the general distribution of the population group in which they belong. The low levels of school dropouts in Greece, emphasize the high educational level of the Greek Neets along with the importance of the unemployment factor in maintaining the percentage of Neets at high levels and the inability to link education with the labor market, obstructing their effective integration into employment (Kotrogiannos D. *et al.*, 2016). It is therefore clear that the Neets group consists of young people aged 15-24, even up to 29 years old, who are characterized by significant heterogeneity in terms of their social characteristics, given that the factors that lead young people to this social impasse are multiple and diverse. The lack of opportunities for integration into educational and social structures is the main feature that connects all of the above categories of young people (Kiridis & Fotopoulos, 2016).

The provided education and training do not seem to contribute to the integration of young people into employment due to the inability to be connected with the labor market (Kotrogiannos D. *et al.*, 2016). The existence of low quality programs that do not inspire young people or that are unrelated to the labor market, which are constantly changing, discourage young people from being educated (Koniordos S. *et al.*, 2016). Also, young people who belong to socially vulnerable groups or have a low socio-economic level are more likely to drop out of vocational education (Psifidou, 2016). According to Eurostat data for 2015, the school dropout rate amounted to 7.9% in Greece while 11% in the EU. The number of young people belonging to the Neets group is increased at the age of 22-24, with the difficulty of entering the labor market after completing their studies becoming even more intense, as it is estimated that the 87,5% of Neets belongs to the age group of 20-24 years, while only the 12.5% corresponds to a younger age (Papadakis, 2013). Also, the Neets group seems to be strongly despaired and frustrated of the education system and its limited opportunities, while the disability of its connection to the labor market, in combination with the insecurity for work and their social future, aggravate their mental health and often lead them to give up from being active, developing mental disorders such as depression, lethargy, sleepiness and appetite disorders and fatigue. They are also distinguished by low self-esteem and intense insecurity, with the percentage of suicidal ideation being remarkable, but stable in single digit numbers (4.8%) (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). In their daily life, stress, anxiety and irritability are often emotions, usually accompanied by limited social interactions and low self-efficacy. Neets are characterized by increased stress, low sense of well-being and low subjective self-efficacy to a greater extent than non-Neets. The dramatic deterioration of living standards, the mental health problems and the social exclusion are just only the main effects of the economic crisis that young people, especially the Neets, are obliged to deal with (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

The role of the Greek family in shaping and developing of the Neets team seems to be vital, as often contributes to strengthen passivity, marginalization and social and labor exclusion with the financial and

material support provided to its young members, reducing their autonomy and delaying their employment and social integration (Papadakis *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand, the family provides the necessary psychological support that young people need in order to handle all the challenges, facing at the most critical age of their life, during the transition from school and family environment to social and work life, especially, at these times, where the strong feeling of the job insecurity prevails. In this case, the family helps the young people to downgrade the feeling of the social exclusion, creating a protective net against the manifestation of various mental disorders of youth, given the existing shortcomings, in the welfare state and social welfare services.

The uncertainty and insecurity expressed by the Neets group are also reflected in their relationship with employment. In order to enter the labor market, young people seem to be willing to work in positions either with low economic and employment prospects or irrelative to their qualifications, due to the lack of options, thus accepting both their difficult social situation and inability to change social reality (Koniordos *et al.*, 2016). Young people are unable to react to the difficulties, they are facing in integrating into employment, while society has legitimized their disadvantage in the name of crisis. Also, many young people, under the fear of social exclusion, often lower their expectations or choose to leave abroad for searching work as a solution to the deadlock in labor market (Koniordos *et al.*, 2016).

The effects of the crisis on the Neets and young people in general are mainly found in the deterioration of their standards of living, mental health problems, and ultimately in social exclusion, phenomena that require the adoption and implementation of comprehensive interventions for the effective return of young people to social network and their integration into the work process (Papadakis *et al.*, 2017). Neets in Greece abstain from employment, education and training, of mostly due to the lack of opportunities and possibilities provided to them and much less because of their own choice. The majority of Neets continue wishing to join an employment, education or training program, but the lack of comprehensive and targeted political interventions reinforces their distrust of the political system, as well as their frustration for the existing training and employment programs (Drakaki *et al.*, 2013). The issue of Neets, however, becomes important not only because of the absence of young people from the labor market, education and training structures, but also of their general absence from all social structures and processes, which is threatening the potential cohesion of society and influencing the shaping of psychosocial characteristics of young people (Kiridis & Fotopoulos, 2016).

Under the youth unemployment at these high levels, the catering and tourism sectors seem to be a hope in the job demand for young people in Greece. However, even in this case, the jobs offered are usually seasonal, providing temporary employment and low paid jobs. Thus, there is a continuous expansion of part-time employment and the respective contraction of full-time, since the flexible forms of employment now exceed the 50% of new hires, according to the data of the Information System of the Ministry of Labor called Ergani. In the light of this imbalance between supply and demand in the labor market for young people in Greece, as well as the prevailing working conditions, the phenomenon of brain drain seems to be strengthening (Lamprianidis, 2011). Following to this increase in the brain drain phenomenon, the country seems to keep constantly losing young, capable well-trained and well educated people, while half of those, who remain, are affected by the unemployment with the rest ones to be employed in informal and precarious forms of work (INE/GSEE, 2014).

Through the data of the primary research of KEADIK it is found that a large percentage of young people, who are not engaged in employment, education or training (Neets) show a positive attitude towards the process of either internal movement in another region of Greece, at a rate of 44.3%, or emigration abroad at a rate of 56.8%, in order to achieve their goal to join the labor market. It is worth noting that the trend of emigration abroad is even more pronounced among higher education graduates, ie those with university degrees, who emigrate abroad as specialized staff, reinforcing the phenomenon of the brain drain that is growing rapidly in the country (Papadakis, 2013).

The main interest of young people is noticed in that, while, searching for a job, they consider the education system unrelated to the labor market and the educational process unnecessary for their integration into field of employment. The loss of jobs as a result of the financial crisis, the lack of effective policies to control job insecurity, the ineffectiveness of training programs and the non-correlation of the educational system with the labor market have all contributed to the growing proportion of young people seeking for job security abroad. In addition to that, the high unemployment rates of young people underline the impossibility of the effective transition of young people from education to work as well as the gradual deregulation of the labor market, leading young people systematically either to the social exclusion, despair and poverty or to the emigration abroad. In many cases, the job searching ultimately leads young people abroad, resulting in the intensification of the brain drain phenomenon (Pechlivanidis, 2016).

The work environment is subject to continuous, intense and rapid transformations, with society failing to manage these changes effectively and for the benefit of workers. It is important to give the necessary space and time to society as a whole to adapt to these changes, through policies to strengthen jobs, ensure labor rights, integrate young people into the labor market, highlight public education and generally support

social state. In addition, the new challenges posed by the digitization of the labor market, the advent of the digital economy and the intensity of the development of teleworking, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, are data that are expected to place new needs in knowledge and skills for inclusion in the labor market (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021).

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This quantitative research was conducted nationwide in spring 2022, using a structured questionnaire and collecting data from 360 young people not in employment, education or training in Greece. The topics examined were related to the degree of optimism or depressive symptomatology of the young people, their expectations and their self-perception in relation to job motivation, but also their thoughts about their future and the phenomenon of brain drain. Also, it was examined how they plan their entry into the labor market, having as options for education, a change in the employment sector, or even the brain drain.

The circulated questionnaire was established based on standardized questionnaires from the international literature, which have already been validated, and marked as reliable. Specifically, it consisted of the following four sections: section A Demographics, section B Job Motivation using the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985), (Tsounis & Sarafis, 2018), section C The Level of Optimism using the Life Orientation test R (Scheier *et al.*, 1994), (Moustaki & Stalikas, 2012) and section D The Depression Level using the Symptom Checklist-90-Revised (Derogatis *et al.*, 1973), (Donias *et al.*, 1991). Participants replied on the questions on a case-by-case basis either through a point Likert scale, multiple choices, or open answers.

Our research hypothesis is that young people seem to have revised the data regarding their expectations for their professional and personal development due to the changes their social reality has undergone since the economic crisis. A large percentage of young people would have thought about working abroad, they will be discouraged by the education system and the thought of continuing their studies, but they will maintain a good level of optimism for the future, despite the increased levels of anxiety and depression they may experience due to the uncertainty in their lives.

Therefore, this study aimed to examine of all those factors that influence Neets in their daily life, according to which they shape their self-perception and their expectations for their social, educational and professional path, combined with their optimism, their depressive symptomatology, as well as their job motivations, so that appropriate strategies can be drawn up to eliminate the Neets phenomenon and reintegrate young people into work and social life.

V. RESULTS

A. Demographics

Table I shows the frequencies regarding the demographic and social characteristics of the sample. According to this table, from the total 360 persons, participated in this research, 160 corresponded to men (44.4%) and 200 to women (55.6%).

TABLE I: DEMOGRAPHICS

		N	%
Gender	Male	160	44.4%
	Female	200	55.6%
Marital Status	Married	43	11.9%
	Divorced	18	5.0%
	Unmarried	299	83.1%
Education Level	Compulsory Education	34	9.5%
	Secondary Education	113	31.4%
	Bachelor's Degree	168	46.7%
	Master's Degree	45	12.4%
Age	15-20	91	25.4%
	21-25	269	74.6%
Residence	Urban City	256	71.2%
	Semi Urban City	40	11.1%
	Town	36	10.0%
	Village	28	7.7%
Monthly Family Income	<500 €	72	20.0%
	501-1000 €	36	10.1%
	1001-2000 €	221	61.4%
	>2000 €	31	8.5%
Monthly Personal Expenses	<200 €	306	85.1%
	201-350 €	36	10.0%
	>351 €	18	4.9%

Also, it was observed that the majority of the participants belongs to the age group of 21-25 years (74.6%). Moreover, the majority of those are University graduates (46.7%), the 83.1% of them are unmarried, while the 61.4% declared a monthly family income of 1001 to 2000 euros and 85.1% of the participants spend up to 200 euros per month for their personal expenses. With reference to the areas of residence of the participants, it was noticed that the largest percentage (71.2%) lives in an urban city in Greece, 11.1% in a semi-urban city, 10.0% in a town and the 7.7% in a village.

On average, the young people aged 15 to 25 who participated in this research have been unemployed for 2.3 years. 65.0% of them are considering to continue their studies until they find a job, but 70.0% of them do not think that continuing their studies would help them to find a job. Of the 81.2% who has worked in the past, the 19.2% has worked in the primary sector, the 23.8% in the secondary sector and the 38.2% in the tertiary or quaternary sector. On average, the working time in each field is 2 years. Regarding the extent of how long, they have been looking for a job, it was observed that 45.7% of the participants have been looking for a job in the last six months, 35.0% in the last year, while 12.3% for more than a year (Fig. 1). The 85.8% of the participants in this survey cannot find a job in their field, while 7.0% are not currently looking for work. The reasons, considered, according to them, to be the most deterrent in looking for work are frustration (45.0%), low wages (35.0%), health reasons (10.0%), but also family obligations (10.0 %) (Fig. 2). The majority (45.0%) wish to work in the tertiary or quaternary sector. The 82.8% of the participants would prefer to find a full-time job, while the 69.8% would accept to work part-time and the 24.5% to work with an undeclared employment. Moreover, the 65.8% of young people would consider immigrating to work abroad for a better financial future, but the 59.2% of those are intending to leave the country in the near future. The main reasons, for which, the young people keep staying in Greece, although they are while considering leaving for work abroad are generally, connected to family issues or health problems.

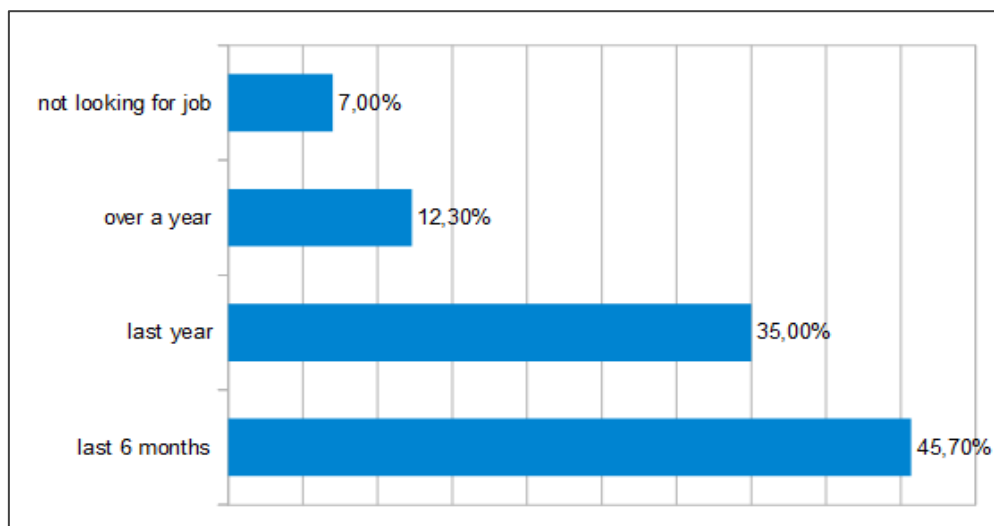


Fig. 1. Job search time period.

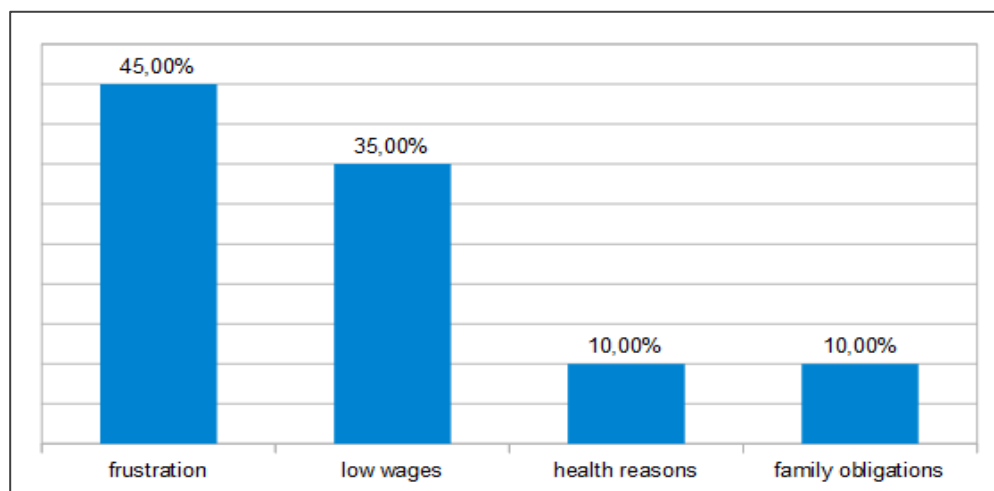


Fig. 2. Deterrent reasons in job search.

B. Job Motivation

Table II shows the descriptive data of Spencer's (1985) JSS scale for job motivation. It is observed that the participants give great importance to the salary ($M=20.1$; $SD=5.6$), the benefits of their job ($M=20.8$; $SD=3.9$) and the working conditions ($M=20.3$; $SD=3.8$) while they seem to give less importance to recognition ($M=12.6$; $SD=6.8$) and promotion ($M=13.2$; $SD=6.5$) as a job motivation.

TABLE II: THE DESCRIPTIVE DATA OF JOB MOTIVATION

Scale	Mean	SD
Recognition	12.6	6.8
Promotion	13.2	6.5
Salary	20.1	5.6
Benefits of the Job	20.8	3.9
Working Conditions	20.3	3.8
Overall satisfaction	19.5	4.8

C. The Level of Optimism

Table III presents the descriptive data of the sample for the degree of optimism of young Neets. As it turns out, individuals appear to be largely optimistic ($M=22.6$; $SD=4.6$). More specifically, it turns out that 85.0% of the participants maintain their optimism for the future, 10.5% feel moderate optimism while only 4.5% feel low optimism.

TABLE III: THE DESCRIPTIVE DATA FOR THE DEGREE OF OPTIMISM

Scale	Mean	SD
Optimism	22.6	4.6

D. The Depression Level

In Section D of the questionnaire, participants were requested to reply on questions, concerning their general psychological strain. Table IV presents the means and standard deviations of the depression questionnaire. Young people who participated in this research show moderate to low levels of embodying ($M=7.40$), anxiety ($M=7.32$), interpersonal sensitivity ($M=8.36$) and obsessive compulsion ($M=9.49$). At lower levels are phobic anxiety ($M=2.51$), aggressiveness ($M=5.08$), psychoticism ($M=6.09$) and paranoid ideation ($M=6.13$). On the contrary, an increased tendency is observed in the levels of depression in relation to the rest of the subscales, although the levels of depression ($M=15.34$) also fluctuate at relatively low levels. Therefore, it is observed that the participants in this research, people aged 15-25, present low psychopathology, with a moderate to low level of negative emotions. Nevertheless, given the young age of the participants, the increased levels of some of the above subscales of the psychopathology questionnaire, such as anxiety and depression, remains a concern.

TABLE IV: THE DESCRIPTIVE DATA FOR PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Scale	Mean	SD
Embodying	7.40	7.06
Obsessive Compulsion	9.49	6.50
Interpersonal Sensitivity	8.36	6.24
Depression	15.34	8.75
Anxiety	7.32	6.61
Aggressiveness	5.08	5.04
Phobic Anxiety	2.51	3.69
Paranoid Ideation	6.13	4.43
Psychoticism	6.09	6.83
General symptom index	0.74	0.56
Positive Symptom Index	1.58	0.53
Positive Symptom Nuisance Index	38.04	20.21

E. Correlations Between Variables

According to specific correlations between variables, people aged 23 to 25 show increased levels of anxiety, depression and psychoticism. People aged 15-17 and 18-20 show increased optimism compared to people aged over 21. Also, participants with a master's degree experience more anxiety and depression than those with a lower educational level. In addition, participants with a master's degree have lower feelings of optimism than those with a lower educational level.

According to Anova analysis, the effect of family income on participants' depressive symptomatology was found to be statistically significant for depression ($F=3.124$; $p=0.002$), anxiety ($F=4.112$; $p=0.001$) and obsessive compulsion ($F=5.104$; $p=0.001$). Using a Bonferroni adjustment for the number of comparisons,

a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was found in individuals with a monthly family income either below 500 euros or between 501 and 1000 euros compared to the remaining individuals. More specifically, it was found that participants with a lower family income (below 1000 euros) are owned by more anxiety, depression and obsessive compulsion than people with a higher monthly family income (above 1001 euros). Furthermore, the effect of monthly family income on the degree of optimism was found to be statistically significant ($F = 4.452$; $p = 0.003$). Participants holding a lower family income (below 1000 euros) show a lower feeling of optimism than those with a higher monthly family income (above 1001 euros).

According to the Pearson correlation coefficient, the years of unemployment affect the feeling of optimism as well as the individual's psychopathology, as there is a negative correlation between the years of unemployment and the feeling of optimism ($r = -0.751$), which indicates that as the years of unemployment increases, the individual's feeling of optimism decreases, respectively. A positive correlation appears between years of unemployment and anxiety ($r = 0.745$), depression ($r = 0.769$) and psychoticism ($r = 0.687$), which indicates that the more years of unemployment, that a person is experiencing, the greater is the feeling of anxiety, depression and psychoticism.

The correlation analysis between job motivation and the degree of optimism according to the Pearson correlation coefficient showed that the degree of optimism of the participants reveals a statistically positive correlation with salary ($r = 0.734$), promotion ($r = 0.728$), recognition ($r = 0.762$), benefits ($r = 0.774$) and working conditions ($r = 0.684$). These results reported that young people with high job motivation, they also show a high degree of optimism. And therefore it seems that the higher the optimism, the more motivated the employees are.

A correlation analysis was also performed between the degree of optimism and the young people's psychopathology. Specifically, it was revealed that the degree of optimism decreases as anxiety ($r = -0.876$), depression ($r = -0.789$), aggression ($r = -0.587$), phobic anxiety ($r = -0.952$), paranoid ideation ($r = -0.669$) and psychoticism ($r = -0.774$) increases. Therefore it seems that the higher the optimism, the lower the levels of depression. An X2 test results ($X^2 = 113.540$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) indicate that the level of education of the participants significantly affects their decision to leave abroad. More specifically, 45.0% of people, who intend to leave in the near future, holding a master's degree or being university graduates.

A correlation test between the time period of job search and the degree of optimism of the individuals showed a statistically negative correlation. The participants' feeling of optimism decreases for those who have been looking for a job for more than a year, but also for those who are not looking for a job at all when conducting the present survey. Correlation analysis was also performed between the individual's psychopathology and the time period of job search. In particular, it was found that as the time period of job search increases, so does anxiety ($r = 0.778$), depression ($r = 0.741$) and psychoticism ($r = 0.795$). Also, there is a statistically positive correlation between psychopathology and those who are not looking for work at all during the conduct of the present research, showing a tendency to increase depressive symptomatology for those who are not looking for work at all at the moment.

VI. DISCUSSION

Through the study of the economic crisis in the second decade of the 21st century, as well as the analysis of the economic and social indicators that affected the Greek society, the social and economic effects that shaped the Greek reality during the economic crisis, and which mainly affected young people, were emerged. Young people in Greece were forced to rethink and revise their expectations for their work and social environment. Young women have to deal with a competitive social environment both at work and home, which could lead them to withdraw from the work environment in a greater proportion than young men, with the female population of Neets to be recorded larger than the male (Papadakis, 2013). In the years of the crisis, it seems that women face more unemployment, while the majority of those working part-time are mainly women (Nikolakaki, 2020a). It appears that economic crises are closely linked to greater gender inequalities (Nikolakaki, 2020a).

The educational level of young people in Greece and especially Neets is quite high compared to most European countries, which is consistent with the sharp increase in the number of young people belonging to the Neets group that is observed around the age of 22 and up to age of 24. The difficulty of joining the labor market after completing their studies is becoming even more intense, with the majority of Neets belonging to the 20-24 age group (Papadakis, 2013). The relationship of young people in Greece with education can be seen both through the recorded low levels of school dropout in the country and the high level of education of the majority of young people. The majority of Neets prioritize finding a job and not continuing their studies and training in the future (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). But, in many cases, the inability to find a job could push many young people to prolong their studies just to cover the gap left by the absence of employment. The majority of Neets characterize the situation they experience as difficult and unbearable, which highlights their burdened mental health (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). Young people who have already

completed a level of education and cannot join the labor market feel more strongly the fear of social exclusion, the inability to use their qualifications and the pressure of age, a pressure that intensifies as time passes and they grow older, remaining for a long time in the same situation. However, young people still consider their education, as necessary, which is justifying the high educational level of Neets in Greece, but they tend to be possessed by a disappointed for the education system and its structural features. Young people would be willing to return to education and training, in order to help their integration into the labor market, in the event that education and training programs would acquire the necessary interconnection with the labor market (Koniordos *et al.*, 2016). Although the majority of young Neets do not strongly feel social exclusion, with the majority of them continuing to wish to be included in some employment, education or training program, the absence of appropriate political interventions increases their mistrust of social and educational system (Drakaki *et al.*, 2013).

As, the effects of precarious forms of work are not limited only to the short-term framework of employment and integration into the labor market, but also to deeper long-term social conditions, related to the livelihood and professional career prospects especially of young people (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021), it seems that many young people are considering immigrating to work abroad for a better financial future. Under these conditions of job uncertainty for young people in Greece, the phenomenon of brain drain is reinforced, with young scientists leaving abroad to find work after the end of their studies, in order to utilize their scientific education (Lambrianidis, 2011). The majority of young people who immigrate abroad are graduates of higher education (Labrianidis, 2015). Thus, the majority of young people consider migrating abroad to find a better job, they consider it to be the last resort when their efforts to find a job have been exhausted (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021). Also, the family ties kept by young people in Greece seem to make it hard for them to decide to migrate abroad. The income variable appears to influence the degree of optimism and depressive symptomatology of Neets, as young people from low income families are at greater risk of joining the Neets group and the majority of Neets appear to live in families with low monthly incomes, a fact that also highlights the intergenerational nature of poverty (Papadakis, 2013). Also, family income status plays an important role in young people's feeling of social isolation, as the lower the income, the more intense the feeling of exclusion (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

In southern European countries, such as Greece, the proportion of Neets is higher than the EU average, consisting mainly of long-term unemployed or discouraged former workers (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2017). The majority of young people have worked in the past and wish to find work in the future in the tertiary or quaternary sector, with the working time in each sector being on average of 2 years, and the average of unemployment to be more than 2 years, highlighting long-term unemployment as an important vulnerability factor of young people for the possibility of their belonging to the Neets group. The more the years of unemployment, the more the individual's feeling of optimism decreases, while the feeling of anxiety, depression and psychoticism increases. Young people who experience the long-term effects of the economic crisis and flirt more strongly with social exclusion have long-term difficulties not only in finding work and earning an income, but also in participating in social structures and in areas such as housing, education, health and access to social services, which aim to ensure physical and social well-being (Papadakis & Kivelou, 2014).

Young people with a high level of education are at risk of being on the margin of the society, joining the Neets group, trying to find their desirable job and hoping to use their potentials. However, in this difficult situation experienced by young people and due to the difficulties they face as a result of the economic crisis, they seem to consider either the possibility of looking for work in a field different from their field of study, or the possibility of migrating abroad to find work, or even their returning to the parental home (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). The transformations in the labor market led to the increase of flexible and precarious forms of work (Spiridakis, 2018), which also led to the degradation of the role of full and stable employment and the strengthening of non-formal and flexible work (Kouzis, 2011). The majority of young unemployed people are looking for full-time employment, but are willing to work part-time in order to join the labor market. The choice of part-time employment is being made mainly due to the lack of full-time jobs, while especially young people, who are affected by high unemployment, often lower their expectations and more easily accept a part-time job in order to join the labor market (ELSTAT, 2016).

Also important are the figures observed in Greece regarding undeclared work, which increased during the crisis, under the threat of high unemployment rates and the lack of new jobs, factors that lead to the exploitation by employers of young people who accept to work even without insurance, for their survival (Kapsalis, 2015). However, instead of strengthening the competitiveness of businesses and the attraction of new investments, as promoted by its supporters, the strengthening of flexible forms of employment, on the contrary, only managed to have negative effect on the productivity of workers, who work under conditions of job insecurity (Eustratoglou, 2015).

When looking for a job, young Neets are mainly interested in the benefits of the job, the working conditions, as well as their salary, while they are less interested in the recognition at work and their promotion prospects. In the Greece of the economic crisis, with the sharp increase in unemployment, social

unrest and labor changes that occurred, workers lost years of acquired rights, were forced to downgrade their work expectations and revised their job motivations. With the prevailing feeling of fear of unemployment, young people seem to have revised their job motivations. Young people are interested in initially entering a working environment that will provide them with the basic needs for their survival, i.e. a decent wage under good working conditions. In this light, it is a given that employee motivation also needs constant adaptation to the current social and work conditions. After all, even for a large percentage of the workforce in the EU, the salary, the working conditions and the working environment are determining factors of job satisfaction. It is no coincidence that the main axes of the European Pillar of Social Rights are based on social protection and inclusion, equal working conditions and equal opportunities to access the labor market, with the aim of improving working terms and conditions in the EU and ensuring equal access to social welfare systems (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021).

However, young people who maintain high levels of optimism plan their professional future with more flexibility, looking for jobs based on their qualifications, skills and abilities, but also on their interests and their personality, as well as jobs that will provide them not only with a satisfactory salary and working conditions, but also with more stability, security and prospects for professional success (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021). In general, Neets' view of their physical health is relatively good, given their young age, but the same is not true of their mental health, which appears quite strained due to job insecurity and financial difficulties (Papadakis *et al.*, 2013). Anxiety, insecurity and frustration are some of the dominant emotions of young people. Although the group of Neets flirts with work and social exclusion, the majority of Neets maintain their optimism for the future and for achieving the goals of inclusion in the work or educational process (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016). However, the degree of optimism decreases as anxiety, depression, aggression, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation and psychoticism increase, while the higher the optimism is, the lower the depression levels are. Young people who maintain their optimism show a reduced degree of psychopathology.

Young people try to keep their optimism for the future despite the unfavorable situation that prevails in Greece (Papadakis *et al.*, 2021), while at the same time struggling with feelings of insecurity, anxiety and anger created by the uncertain prospects for their future (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016) and often developing mental disorders, such as depression, sleepiness and appetite disorders and fatigue, conditions that ultimately affect their optimism, their sense of guilt, but also the frequency of psychosomatic symptoms. Many factors such as frequent social contacts, protection of the family home and high family income, which are considered to reduce anxiety and depression and increase the feeling of well-being, may help manage anxiety and depressive behavior of young people (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

In the search for the motivations that would lead the young Neets to their integration into society and the labor market by improving their prospects and expectations, the data that will emerge through the examination of the relationships between the variables of optimism, depressive symptomatology and motivation to find a job will play an essential role. As Neets grow older and remain out of work they feel less optimistic about their future and develop more anxiety about their situation. This conclusion highlights the increasing social pressure, that young people feel when looking for a job, as their efforts to integrate into the working environment fail, pushing them closer and closer to social exclusion.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this research, an attempt was made to capture the perceptions and expectations of young people who are out of employment, education and training in Greece with the aim of a more complete understanding of the Greek Neets group, as well as the contribution to the search for the possibilities of curbing youth unemployment and the potential ways integration and reintegration of the young people into the labor market. It is critical to find the motivations that would push the young Neets out of this unfavorable situation and enter them into the labor market by providing opportunities to improve their prospects and expectations.

The sharp rise in youth unemployment rates, occurred during the economic crisis has subsequently contributed to the growth of the Neets population in the EU and in particular in Greece (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016), while the situation seems to have worsened during the pandemic that followed the economic recession further intensifying social inequalities. In recent years it seems that a new order of things is being attempted in world society with the aim of the continuous impoverishment of populations under the weight of continuous global crises. It is crucial to look for those elements that will strengthen the entry of young people into the labor market both through enhancing the motivations and goals of young people for their inclusion in the labor market, as well as through the reorganization of the educational system and state structures in order to form the appropriate conditions for the continuous support of them on their way to job finding. The management of the Neets phenomenon should be a basic pursuit of the policy of the EU countries, with an emphasis on training and promoting the employment of young people with the purpose of their social inclusion. But reintegration policies need to aim for a long-term development course with

permanent results in the reintegration process of the young people in the labor market that will ensure the utilization of their skills and qualifications, while enhancing their standard of living and their long-term professional prospects, with providing high quality employment (Kiridis & Fotopoulos, 2016).

The issue of Neets, however, becomes important not only because of the absence of young people from the labor market, education and training structures, but also because of their absence from the social structures and processes, affecting the formation of the psychosocial characteristics of young people. Therefore, in the view of developing a comprehensive strategy for the social integration of the Neets, the social support, required for the young people, should re-consider the policies and include new ones not only for their professional orientation, but also for their social, psychological and cultural factors, which play a decisive role in their lives and their decisions, always, harmonizing employment with education, training and lifelong learning (Kiridis & Fotopoulos, 2016). Taking into account the factors that influence the degree of optimism and depressive symptomatology of young people, as well as the job motivations, the necessary data are formed, the study of which can contribute to the development of appropriate policies and the provision of the necessary incentives to shape the desired environment to enhance the employment of young Neets and their reintegration into the social and work environment. The overturning of the existing situation lies in the effort to re-enter young people into employment and education through the promotion of targeted policies centered on people (Gouvias & Fotopoulos, 2015).

The orientation of educational qualifications and professional skills, by providing upgraded knowledge and specialization, and designing a flexible and enriched curriculum related to the labor market, could be an effective strategy for succeeding the link between education and the changing work environment as well as the potential correlation amongst of skills and jobs (Gouvias & Fotopoulos, 2015). After all, the purpose of all education is justice for the most vulnerable in our society, those who suffer needlessly. This is the goal of humanization, our ontological inclination to become more complete people, as Paulo Freire indicated to us in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Nikolakaki, 2021). With the cooperation of all relevant bodies and the development of targeted policies, a smoother integration of Neets into the labor market could be achieved. Especially for the EU, managing the consequences of the economic crisis is crucial for those employed in precarious forms of work (Papadakis *et al.*, 2016).

Since, employment is considered to be the main axis for the social integration of the individual, the strategy pursued for the entry of young people into the labor market requires to be based on enhancement of the motivations and goals of young people for their integration into the labor market, as well as the reorganization of the education system and the state structures for the foundation of the appropriate conditions, under which, the young people will be, continuously, supported on their way of finding job. Upgrading the education system, restoring its credibility and connecting to the labor market, as well as strengthening the welfare state through state structures by providing specialized programs for the unemployed or attractive training programs, tailored to the needs of young people, could create the necessary incentives and conditions, through the appropriate supplies, for supporting socially vulnerable groups to integrate to the labor market and fight against social exclusion (Kiridis, 2014). Social cohesion, development and social prosperity are directly linked to the policies which front social uncertainty and liquidity experienced by young people, in the country (Kiridis & Fotopoulos, 2016).

Young people seem to have revised the data on their expectations for their professional and personal development due to the undergone changes from the economic crisis. The entry of young people into work is changing, the dynamics of vocational training, counseling and vocational guidance are entering new foundations, the basic choices of young people are related to education, change in employment or even labor migration, while educational policy seems to play an important role more than ever in the evolution of unemployment and in the opportunities provided to young people to enter the labor market. Thus, in order to develop all the required strategic interventions for the necessary support of the Neets group to their social integration, it is very important to examine, deeply, all these factors, that influence the Neets in their daily lives, and based on which, the self-perception and the expectations for their social, educational and professional course, are shaped, throughout the difficult times of the economic crisis. Young people should, also, be empowered to adopt the necessary changes in their lives, through their personal development and the cultivation of the necessary social skills, in order to achieve their social inclusion on a personal, professional and political level, and understand and manage these factors and the data that led them to social marginalization, initially (Pavli-Korre *et al.*, 2016). This social phenomenon of the Neets group is a matter of social vulnerability as reflected in modern sociological theory but also in the active practices of applied social and educational policy. However, young people can take their fate into their own hands and through the approach of critical consciousness radically change the material conditions of their society. Based on the principles of critical pedagogy, in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*, community members have the opportunity to change themselves through critical consciousness (Freire, 1994). Young people now more than ever have to fight for their future and their place in life and society, guided by their hope for a better future and with the support of the entire society. As the Brazilian educator

Paulo Freire says, the future is born from the contradictory conditions and the struggle of forces and should not be taken for granted but as a continuous process of formation (*quoted by Pavli-Korre et al.*, 2016).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Anastasiou, S., Siasiakos, K., Tountas, K., Filippidis, K. (2016). Labor Market and Employment during the Economic Crisis in Greece. *Education, Lifelong Learning. Research and Technological Development, Innovation and Economy*, 1, 398-408.
- Basta, M., Dafermos, V., Papargiris, A., Drakaki, M., Papadakis, N., (2016). The Psychological Profile of Neets in Greece today, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, The Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part A, The Research for the Neets and the new generation. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.). Sideris Publications, Athens.*
- Derogatis, L.R. (2000) Symptom Checklist-90-Revised. Handbook of psychiatric measures. *American Psychiatric Association*, 2000, 81-84.
- Donias, S., Karastergiou, A., Manos, N. (1991) Weighting of the Symptom Checklist-90-R psychopathology scale in a Greek population. *Psychiatry*, 1991(2), 42-48.
- Drakaki, M., Papadakis, N., Kiridis, A., Papargiris, A. (2013). The profile of NEET in Greece, in *Papadakis (ed.), Barometer Absent: the Neets in Greece, Athens: I. Sideris.*
- Eustratoglou, A. (2015). *Economic Crisis, Productivity and Flexible Forms of Employment, Policy Briefs / 10, INE / GSEE, Observatory of Economic and Social Developments*, November 2015, Employment and Labor Research Unit. Retrieved from: <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Policy-brief-10.pdf>.
- Eustratoglou, A. (2018). Recent Developments in Employment and the Productive Model of the Greek Economy, Intervention Texts for the Promotion of Dialogue in Politics, Economy, Education. *INE-GSEE*. Retrieved from: https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/keimeno-paremvasis-2_.pdf.
- ELSTAT. (2001); (2011). *Demographic Characteristics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/demographic-data>.
- ELSTAT. (2015). *Life and Health Expectation 2012*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/0e4581f1-ce02-4ea7-a7cf-86474f490c3d>.
- ELSTAT. (2016). *National Health Research: Year 2014*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/1845c3bc-b9d5-41f6-89df-a5436ad3dc23>.
- ELSTAT. (2015); (2016). *The Greek Economy*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/the-greek-economy>.
- ELSTAT. (2018). *Young people in Greece*. Retrieved from: https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/12044283/elstat_publication_young_2018_gr.pdf.
- ELSTAT. (2018). *Income and Living Conditions of Households*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SFA10/2018>.
- ELSTAT. (2019). *Estimated Population (1.1.2019) and Migration Flows of the Country (2018), Migration Movement*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SPO15/>.
- ELSTAT. (2019). *Risk of poverty*. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SFA10/2018>.
- ELSTAT. (2019). *Consumption, Household Expenses 2019*. Retrieved from: https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/16786229/KATANALOTHS_2019pdf.pdf/9837f8d9-4963-fe21-765e-f35591dfa72f?t=1567515415034.
- ELSTAT. (2019); (2015). *Greece in figures*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/greece-in-figures>.
- ELSTAT. (2019); (2020). *Income and Living Conditions Survey of Households. 2018, 2019: risk of poverty*.
- ELSTAT (2020; 2016; 2015). *Living Conditions in Greece*. Retrieved from: <https://www.statistics.gr/living-conditions-in-greece>.
- Eurofound (2012a). *NEETs. Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/pubdocs/2012/54/en/1/EF1254EN.pdf.
- Eurofound (2012b). *Young people and NEETs in Europe: First findings. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*, (σσ. 1-8). Dublin: Publications Office.
- Eurofound (2016). *Exploring the diversity of NEETs*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1602en.pdf.
- Lecerf, M. (2017). *NEETs: who are they? Being young and not in employment, education or training today*. European Parliamentary Research Service. EN PE 599.360. Retrieved from: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599360/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599360_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599360/EPRS_BRI(2017)599360_EN.pdf).
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, (2018). *Effective outreach to NEETs: experience from the ground*, Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/788210>.
- Eurostat, (2016a), *Youth neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET) rate, age group 15-24*. Retrieved from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tesem150&plugin=1>.
- Eurostat, (2016b), *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex and NUTS 2 regions (NEET rates)*. Retrieved from: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat_lfse_22&lang=en.
- Eurostat (2017). *Harmonised unemployment rate by sex-age group 15-24*. Available online at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=teilm021&plugin=1>.
- Eurostat (2020). *Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by sex (tesem150)*. Retrieved from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tesem150&plugin=1>.
- Gouvias, D., Fotopoulos, N. (2015), *Lifelong Learning & Contemporary Work Environments: Interpretations and Extensions on the Occasion of the Elements of "European Social Research", KANEP/GSEE*. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281864157_Dia_biou_Mathese_synchrona_ergasiaka_periballonta_Ermeneies_kai_p_roektaseis_me_aphorme_ta_stoicheia_tes_Europaikes_Koinonikes_Ereunas/link/55fc3a5b08aec948c4b1c9d1/download.
- INE/GSEE (2014). *The Greek economy and employment - Annual Report 2014*. Athens: INE-GSEE Labor Institute GSEE <https://www.inegsee.gr/ekdosis/etisia-ekthesi-2014-i-elliniki-ikonomia-ke-i-apascholisi/>.
- INE/GSEE (2016). *The Greek economy and employment - Annual Report 2016*. Athens: INE-GSEE Labor Institute GSEE. <https://www.inegsee.gr/ekdosis/etisia-ekthesi-2016-inc-gsee-i-elliniki-ikonomia-ke-i-apascholisi/>.
- INE/GSEE (2018). *The Greek economy and employment - Annual Report 2018*. Athens: INE-GSEE Labor Institute GSEE. <https://www.inegsee.gr/ekdosis/etisia-ekthesi-2018-inc-gsee-i-elliniki-ikonomia-ke-i-apascholisi/>.

- INE/GSEE (2019). *The Greek economy and employment - Annual Report 2019*. Athens: INE-GSEE, Labor Institute GSEE. Retrieved from: <https://www.tovima.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/14/INE.pdf>.
- Kapsalis, A. (2015). *Undeclared work in Greece, Evaluation of modern measures to combat the phenomenon*. INE-GSEE, Studies/43. Retrieved from: <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Meleti-43-INE.pdf>.
- Kiridis, A. (2014). *Vulnerable Groups and Lifelong Learning*. Athens: GUTENBERG.
- Kiridis, A., Fotopoulos, N. (2016). Dimensions of Social Vulnerability and Intervention for the Social Inclusion of the Neets, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part B, Policy Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, edited by Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Koniordos, S., Kamarianos, G., Tsioumis, K., Christodoulou, A., Pandis, P., Zagkos, Ch., (2016), The Neets in Greece: Social Characteristics, Education and Skills Profile, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, The Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part A, The Research for the Neets and the new generation. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Kotrogiannos, D., Tzagarakis, S.I. (2016). Neets and the welfare state, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part A, The Research for the Neets and the new generation. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Kouzis, G. (2017). The Crisis and the Memoranda Damage Work. *Social Policy*, 6, 7-20. doi:<https://doi.org/10.12681/sp.10878>.
- Kouzis I., (2011). The working environment in Greece after the memorandum. *INE/GSEE, INFORMATION*, (181), March, Athens. <https://www.inegsee.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/files/ESOTERIKO%20181.pdf>.
- Lamprianidis, L. (2011). *Investing in flight: the outflow of scientists from Greece in the era of globalization*, Athens: Critique.
- Lamprianidis L. (2018). *Brain drain: Myths and truths*, 18.08.2018, Huffington Post, <https://www.knowledgebridges.gr/sites/knowledgebridges/files/testimonials/files/huff.pdf>.
- Lamprianidis, L., Pratsinakis, M. (2015). *The new outgoing migration from Greece, the profile of the Greek immigrant in the years of crisis*, Inserts, 6.12.2015, (accessed 2020): <https://enthemata.wordpress.com/2015/12/06/profile/>.
- Lamprianidis, L. (2015). *External migration from Greece during the crisis*. The Huffington Post, 10.11.2015, (accessed 2020): http://www.huffingtonpost.gr/lois-labrianidis/_2408_b_8520596.html?utm_hp_ref=greece.
- Lavdas, K. (2016). Policy Proposals: Risks, Opportunities, Limitations, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part B, Policy Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Moustaki, M., Stalikas, A. (2012). Optimism Questionnaire (Life Orientation TestLOT). In A. Stalikas, S. Triliva, & P. Roussi (Eds.), *Psychometric tools in Greece (p.28)*. Athens, Pedio.
- Nikolakaki, M. (2021). *The Anatomy of Neoliberalism and Education*. Greenwich, USA: IAP.
- Nikolakaki, M. (2020a). The Greek Crisis and the Gender Gap: Reinforcing Connections between Education and Women's Empowerment. *Transnational Feminist Politics, Education, and Social Justice*, 171–184. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350174498.ch-10>.
- Nikolakaki, M. (2020b). Post-Covid-19 and EU: Education for what citizenship? *Rethinking Critical Pedagogy*, 1(2), 1-18.
- OECD (2016). *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Papadakis, N. (2013). The Neets in Europe: Convergences, Divergences and the Interpretable Visible Aspects of the Phenomenon. *Papadakis N. (Ed.) Barometer Absent: The Neets in Greece, Athens, I. Sideris: 15-75*.
- Papadakis N., Kivelou, S. (2014). Poverty, Youth Unemployment, Social Vulnerability and the Challenge of Inclusive Prosperity in Coastal and Island Areas: Aspects of the Problem and Policy Proposals. *International ESPON-on-the-Road Conference: "Blue Growth and land-sea interaction: Realities and Perspectives in Europe and in Greece", Piraeus, 10-12 November 2014*.
- Papadakis, N. (2016). Research and Integrated Intervention for the Neets and Youth Unemployment: The "Neets2" Project and the phenomenon of dis-engaged self, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part A, The Research for the Neets and the new generation. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, edited by Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. Sideris Publications, Athens*.
- Papadakis, N., Theodorikakos, P., Dafermos, V., Basta, M., Papargiris, A., Drakaki, M. (2016). Greek Young People not in Education, Employment or Training, in the era of crisis: NEETs' social inclusion/ exclusion, employability, civic values and political behavior. In *UCL-IOE LLAKES Research Conference 2016 Proceedings ("Growing up and global austerity: Comparing youth opportunities, aspirations and civic values around the world / London 27- 28 June)*. London: UCL-IOE LLAKES & The Sociological Review Foundation.
- Papadakis, N. E., Drakaki, M., Kyridis, A., & Papargyris, A. (2017). Between a frightening Present and a disjoined Future. Recession and social vulnerability in the case of Greek Neets: Socio-demographics, facets of the Crisis' Impact and the revival of the intergenerational transmission of poverty. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 4(18). <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.418.3688>.
- Papadakis N., Drakaki M., Saridaki S., (2021), The Degree of Despair, Athens, I. Sideris.
- Pavli-Korre, M., Papageridou, D., Vamvakidou, I. (2016), Expected learning outcomes from the reskilling program for the Neets, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part B, Policy Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Sideris Publications, Athens*.
- Pechlivanidis H., (2016), Confronting Youth Unemployment and the Public Sector: The Case of the National School of Public Administration and Local Government, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, The Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, Policy Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Psifidou, R. (2016). Facing the Early Dropouts of Education and Training: What Are the Next Steps in Europe?, in New Generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, The Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part B, Policy Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention. *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.)*. Sideris Publications, Athens.
- Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994). Distinguishing optimism from neuroticism (and trait anxiety, self-mastery, and self-esteem): a reevaluation of the Life Orientation Test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(6), 1063.
- Spector, P. E. (1985). Measurement of human service staff satisfaction: Development of the job satisfaction survey. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 13(6), 693-713.
- Spiridakis, M., (2018). *Homo Precarius. Experiences of Vulnerability in Crisis*. Athens, Pedio.
- Tsounis, A., Sarafis, P. (2018) Validity and Reliability of the Greek Translation of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). *BMC Psychology*, 6, 27.
- Vlachaki F., (2016), Career Counseling for 15-29 year olds out of employment, education or training (Neets), in the new generation and Neets in Greece of Crisis, the Urgent Dimensions of the Problem, Research and Integrated Intervention, part B, Policy

Proposals and the Components of an Integrated Intervention, *Proceedings of the GSEE Conference, December 2, 2016*, Papadakis N., Kiridis A., Fotopoulos N., I. (Eds.). Sideris Publications, Athens.



Angeliki Politou lives in Athens, Greece. She holds a BA from the Department of Primary Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (2008), a BA from the Department of Management Science and Technology, Athens University of Economics and Business (2004) and a MA in International and European Economic Studies, Athens University of Economics and Business (2007). Currently, she is a PhD student in the field of Social and Educational Policy in University of Peloponnese. She also works as a school teacher in Primary Education for the past fourteen years.



Maria Nikolakaki is Professor of Pedagogy and Education at the University of Peloponnese, Greece. She received her doctorate (Ph.D) from the University of Athens (2000) and is a widely considered to be a leading expert on democracy and critical education. In addition to her PhD, Nikolakaki holds two BA degrees and two MA degrees in education from the University of Athens. She worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of London (UCL) and at the University of Athens. She was Honorary Fellow at the University of Wisconsin (Madison, USA), Visiting Professor at Anglia Ruskin University (UK) and the Autonomous University of Puebla, Mexico (PUAB). She has published extensively in the areas of neoliberalism and critical pedagogy, mathematics education, citizenship education, and teaching and learning. Her recent publications include the books: *The Autonomy of Neoliberalism and Education* (2021, IAP publications) *Critical Pedagogy in the New Dark Ages* (2011, Ed. With Noam Chomsky, Henry Giroux, Howard Zinn, Paulo Freire and others), *Critical Perspectives in Educational Policy: The Changing Terrain of Power and Knowledge* (2012) with Tom Popkewitz). She has published more than 100 articles in journals and conference proceeding.