

Applied Qualitative Studies in Education

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Edited by

Evaggelia Kalerante,
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Translation and language editing
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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-6030-9
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-6030-7

To our parents, teachers, and students

In times of crisis the scientific community conducts researches
to seek the 'truth'.

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PREFACE

Research and Education are the main drivers for growth and development. Current socio-economic developments have renewed interest in the roles of research, innovation, education and socio-economic growth worldwide. The reason is that these new developments lead to increased productivity of factors of production, contributing, in the long-term, to the improvement of competitiveness, and entrepreneurial spirit, and substantially contributing towards the development process.

Applied Qualitative Studies in Education summarizes the debate for the future prospects of research, education, and socio-economic development, in the fields of education and sociology. This book identifies and examines relevant key research issues, building a conceptual framework by drawing on the application of education and socio-economic development, and development processes, in obtaining measures of growth and development. It also enables a comparative analysis, both at European and international levels, explaining any related educational and socio-economic consequences. Moreover, the book explores and studies various dimensions of the interaction between education, research, and development, along with links to socio-economic development. The important task is to relate social consequences to a number of factors that are likely to be determinants, and to measure the extent to which they affect economy and society. *Applied Qualitative Studies in Education* considers both education and sociology, to increase the information base and to draw broader conclusions about the social consequences of the economic crisis. This issue is of particular research relevance because evidence shows that even though the economic crisis has been widely analyzed with respect to economic consequences, little attention has been paid to the evaluation of social consequences.

Applied Qualitative Studies in Education consists of twelve chapters from nineteen contributors. Most of the chapters deal with the qualitative content analysis which was considered to be the most appropriate in order to reach some safe results. More specifically, *Applied Qualitative Studies in Education* covers the following sections:

- (1) The first chapter, under the title “Greek Higher Education Institutes’ young male and female students’ interpretative repertoire on the development and meaningfulness of their education”, is authored by Kalerante Evaggelia and Gogou Lela. This chapter attempts to study the viewpoints of Greek Higher Education Institutes’ male and female students regarding the knowledge offered, and the operation of carriers and agencies, as well as their future integration into the labour market upon completion of their studies.
- (2) The second chapter, under the title “An interpretative approach to early numeracy in children diagnosed with Down’s syndrome in Greece”, is authored by Soulis Spyridon-Georgios and Charitaki Garyfalia. This chapter attempts to gain insights into learning mechanisms related to early numeracy in children diagnosed with Down’s, syndrome in order to reveal their importance for educational placement and curricula.
- (3) The third chapter, under the title “Greek secondary teachers’ perceptions toward social exclusion of students with a disability”, is authored by Giavrimis Panagiotis. This chapter attempts to analyze how Greek secondary education teachers understand the inclusion of these people in the ‘normal’ education system, as an important variable which affects both the personal and social development of the individual, and his/her function and effectiveness in the workplace. In this study, there were thirty secondary education teachers as participants, and a semi-structured interview was used as a research tool.
- (4) The fourth chapter, under the title “Parents’ views on the school principal’s role towards school and family communication: a sociological approach”, is authored by Eleftherakis Theodoros and Georgoula Aikaterini. The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the parents’ views towards the principal’s role in promoting communication between school and family. This paper attempts to analyze a survey based on a sample of 20 parents, whose children attend a primary school in the prefecture of Chania, Crete (Greece).
- (5) The fifth chapter, under the title “How Greek kindergarten teachers support school integration of their migrant students”, is authored by Oikonomidis Vasileios and Kontogianni Dionysia. This chapter aims to search the methods and practices adopted by Greek kindergarten teachers to assist immigrant children with their school integration.
- (6) The sixth chapter, under the title of “Towards ICT privatization practices in the Greek educational system? Exploring Free/Open Source Software utilization”, is authored by Kitsiou Angeliki and

Giavrimis Panagiotis. This chapter focuses on the Free Software Movement's (FSM) actions in Greece against the "Ratification of a Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Hellenic Republic and the companies Microsoft Corporation, Microsoft Ireland Operation Limited and Microsoft Hellas", which lead social inequalities in Greek education.

- (7) The seventh chapter, under the title of "Foreign language acquisition in public schools and in foreign language institutes: a qualitative approach", is authored by Birbilis Maria and Papaoikonomou Antonis. This chapter presents a survey among foreign language teachers about the role of private education in foreign language teaching in Greece, and, by extension, the effect of this fact on their professional careers. For this analysis, the semi-structured interview method and its methodological tools were used.
- (8) The eighth chapter, under the title of "Teaching ESP and its effectiveness in the workplace: a case study on Vocational Training Institute students" is authored by Tsantali Calliope. This study attempts to apply a qualitative research approach to five adult learners attending the course of Museum and Archaeological Sites Security Personnel in a Public Vocational Training Institute, in the region of Serres (Greece).
- (9) The ninth chapter, under the title "Self-regulated Learning through Action Research", is authored by Koutselini Mary. This chapter describes an action research study entitled RELEASE, which is a project towards achieving self-regulated learning as a core in teachers' in-service training in Cyprus. This chapter aims to analyze the adaptation of the Teachers' In-Service Training Program in Cyprus to the teachers' and schools' needs, through Action Research. Methodological and pedagogical issues arising from teachers' beliefs and expectations, and the principals' pedagogic roles, are discussed with emphasis on teachers' gradual shift from imposed, predefined teaching and learning to reflective collaboration and response to the different needs of different students.
- (10) The tenth chapter, under the title "The development of scientific thought: content analysis of basic pedagogic ideas", is authored by Tzartzas Georgios. This chapter attempts to develop and test a pedagogic theory, in particular the dual system of theory and practice. On the basis of content analysis, the texts of various historical periods and pedagogues are being tackled, as they illustrate the indicative interchange of pedagogic paradigms and highlight basic pedagogic principles through hermeneutics.

- (11) The eleventh chapter, under the title “A study of the research content of published articles in Greek scientific journals of social sciences” is authored by Nikolaou Sousanna – Maria, Krommyda Eleftheria and Papageorgiou Napoleon. This chapter aims to analyze and present the thematic areas and research issues examined by social researchers in the published chapters in Greek scholarly journals during a five-year time period, from 2013 to 2017.
- (12) The twelfth chapter, under the title “Contemporary communication systems: technocracy and education”, is authored by Constantopoulou Christiana. This chapter attempts to examine and analyze the interaction between communicational systems and education systems from a sociological point of view, and, furthermore, to analyze the efficiency of education systems under these conditions.

Given the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of contemporary education within the technologically-driven, multicultural, and diverse societies of the 21st century, the stakeholders involved in the educational community seek to improve their practices and apply new processes in order to effectively manage the emerging phenomena in the educational space, while they attempt to answer crucial questions about new social phenomena. With regard to the above, several issues are put forward in an attempt to broaden our perspective and help gain insights on the current educational and social reality. The findings of this book aim to be of value for researchers, policy makers, and the academic community. For policy makers, the value stems from a better identification and understanding of the key elements and consequences of the current economic crisis. This will allow government entities to formulate and implement programmes, which will leverage areas of social policy which require further attainment. Last but not least, the value for the academic community mainly lies in an increased knowledge of the impacts of different determining factors on social consequences resulting from the economic crisis. Finally, at policy level, the findings of this book suggest the need to establish assistance programmes to develop social policies and programmes at all levels, along with the limitations and suggestions for further research.

Offering, once more, our thanks and gratitude to all the contributors, for making this edition possible, we strongly wish that this book will act as a platform for further theoretical and empirical research, rendering a creative source for scientific dialogue and knowledge diffusion.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our cordial thanks to the Greek research bodies, international research bodies, international organizations, the Greek Sociological Association, educational commissions of the European Union, research sample participants, fellow University professors, and all the reviewers and proofreaders of this manuscript.

ABBREVIATIONS

EAE	Special Education
EEEEK	Special Vocational Education and Training Workshop
EOPPEP	National Organization for Qualification Certification
EPAL	Vocational Lyceum
FOSS	Free Software/Open Source
HAS	Hellenic Statistical Authority
HELLUG	Hellenic Linux User Group
KANEP-GSEE	Centre for Education Policy Development - Greek Labour Union Confederation
OAED	Manpower Employment Organization
OLME	Secondary Education Teacher Confederation
TEE	Technical and Vocational Education Schools

CHAPTER 1

GREEK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES' YOUNG MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS' INTERPRETATIVE REPERTOIRE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND MEANINGFULNESS OF THEIR EDUCATION

EVAGGELIA KALERANTE AND LELA GOGOU

Abstract

This paper explores the viewpoints of male and female students in Greek higher education regarding the given knowledge, and the operation of carriers and agencies, as well as their future integration into the labour market upon completion of their studies. Throughout a period of economic crisis, an array of complicated economic, social, and cultural factors is conducive to orientating social subjects towards criticizing various institutional carriers tied to formal education and the given knowledge. The present research was conducted among a sample of male and female students in Greek Higher Education Institutes, through semi-structured interviews. The interview content refers to issues tied to the operation of their faculties, and to various institutional acting individuals with whom they interact, as well as their concurrent lived experiences. With regard to their future objectives, a correlation has been found between socio-political contexts and job searching during the Greek Memorandum Period, as well as their relevant personal choices. Based on the participants' discourse, an attempt was made to develop a deep understanding of the manner in which these Greek university students depict and interpret social and educational reality, as well as a highlighting discussion about the relationships between education, job position, and integration.

Key words: economic crisis, educational reality, institutions, juvenile culture, students' interpretations

Introduction

The Ministry of Education attempts to re-visit issues of education policy tied to broader re-adaptations in different educational grades. The term ‘re-adaptation’ does not denote reformations which would include reversals and creation of different educational occurrences within an explicit reversing educational inter-textuality. On the contrary, emphasis is placed on the attempt to inter-connect educational situations towards composing an operational educational structure.

The educational adaptations of the period from 2015 until 2018 are distinctive of studying and analyzing structures, relations, and operationability, in the way they are all formed within the educational structures of various educational grades. A new aspect of education is seemingly pursued within the fluid socio-economic setting of crisis, in which the orders of political discourse and education should be conducive to shaping the conditions of citizens’ trust in the institutions. Therefore, even a limited system of educational re-adaptations is either explicitly or implicitly defined by the contingency of conflicts based on competitive discourse.

In terms of democracy, different instrumental practices, such as deliberation (Waisanen 2018) and continuous communication with differentiated pressing groups, are activated towards shaping an operational environment within which educational practices are legislated. It is well understood that shaping educational meaning is based on social subjects, that is, the educational community. In other words, the educational community is determined by the relationships between individuals, groups, and productive authoritative relations.

The present research takes into consideration policies and dialectical relations among different educational carriers towards developing an education policy to restrain conflicts and competition. Thus, the dimensions of educational reality, as defined by Higher Education students, are being studied within this setting of pursuing educational meaning. Their discourse is organized in the form of educational representations, and consecutive correlations of moments and situations, supported by their personal meanings, within the educational environment. A dialogue with the subjects – students - is established to showcase that organizing an effective education policy should be based on broader definitions, along with other school and university students’ diversified discourse.

Broader juvenile rights, such as participation in elections, should not be established as a typical process. On the contrary, university students should be reinforced through their democratic integration into civil society, along

with utilizing their personal viewpoints about the broader educational procedures towards making education meaningful.

Theoretical framework

This research was conducted during the economic crisis. In the case of Greece, the economic crisis entails a refuted normality (Fouskas and Dimoulas 2018, Siani-Davies 2017). High unemployment rates and the phenomenon of 'brain drain' have already been reported, especially regarding the emigration of juveniles with high educational capital abroad (Boeri et al. 2012). Moreover, the political setting is indicative of reinforced far right tendencies. In other words, the democratic system is plagued by the current situation (Mudde 2016). Other researches indicate the Greek population's mistrust in institutions, education included, resulting in the questioning of the democratic constitution. Therefore, theoretically speaking, this research is conducted in a period when trust in political institutions is refuted.¹

From 2015 until 2018, the years when this research was completed, approximately 300,000 people emigrated to European countries and the United States.² Surveys demonstrate that young male and female people of high educational capital report that they would depart from Greece because of dysfunctional institutions. In particular, quantitative and qualitative surveys highlight the lack of transparency, as well as the corrupt political system.³ Within the formulated juvenile culture, progress and success are gradually defined in individual terms (Houtman, Aupers and Willem 2016).

Therefore, integration into the labour market, and the corresponding social status, is apparently a concern for the young. The shrunken nation-state, disapproved of education and expanded corruption, formulating new conditions, as the young pursue opportunity structures in other countries characterized by stable socio-political structures and robust economies. Familiarization with technology opens up a new communication space associated with the states' systems and economic structures. At the same time, the communication structure is reinforced so that the young are ready to transfer, without major preoccupations regarding their social integration and success in the labour market. On the basis of limited trust in the Greek political institutions, increased technological awareness and readiness for integrating into the labour market, means the young are, apparently, liberated. As a result, they are gradually disengaged from their country of origin towards the cosmopolitan (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis 2009), and technologically supported, juvenile culture (Zuckerman 2013). In this

sense, the social space has expanded beyond determined concepts such as country, family, etc.

With regard to education, it can be argued that, during this period, the education system is in crisis, too. Weaknesses such as university admission through exam-oriented secondary education are showcased, resulting in the cancellation of an operational model for education in humanistic and social terms. A vast number of non-tenured educators, moving from one place to another, leads to complicated operation of the education system. Despite the fact that the effects of economic crisis are primarily tied to the economy, they are further associated with broader social, political, and cultural, consequences. Amidst this transitional period, issues about the role of education should be re-visited in order to re-define its objectives and perspectives. In this sense, the content of knowledge could be revised based on the following themes: a) knowledge and personality; b) knowledge and humanistic capital; and c) the labour market. Thus, new social phenomena arise that could be the focal point of future quantitative and qualitative surveys.

Methodology

This qualitative research (Cohen and Manion 2011, Merriam 1998) explores issues of education appraisal and assessment, in the context they are perceived by university students during the specific time period. They re-interpret educational occurrences in given conjunctures so that in the given time and space they are able to discourse on education. Subjective sensibility developed within textual settings of meanings is emphasized in terms of research, so that through fragile and changing standpoints, the category of the young male and female is shaped along with its conceptual content (Horwarth and Stavrakakis 2000) in sociological terms.

The sample consists of twenty five male and female students attending different universities, ten females and fifteen males. The selection criteria of these individuals were their families' diversified educational capital, and their participation or non-participation in Greek university students' associations. This way, issues tied to standpoints, choices and preferences are showcased within the micro-interpretative tradition of structured discourse and practices directly associated with a diversified whole of social determinations.

This research design was based on the researchers' familiarization with discourse interpretation of complicated structures of juvenile culture acquired through previous educational research (Gogou and Kalerante 2019, 121-135, Gogou and Kalerante 2015, Kalerante and Gogou 2015, 154-159).

Documentation of research data (Mann 2016) gradually helped perceive juvenile discourse as genre corresponding to a certain communicative practice and interpretative framework, so that the dimensions of juvenile culture could become obvious.

Semi-structured interviews were preceded by preliminary discussions with male and female university students in order to form categories and themes for the interview guide, which was continuously enriched throughout the interview process due to various verbal interventions of participants. The researchers were primarily interested in highlighting different combinations of discourse, preferences, choices, practices, and evaluation, as well as enriched educational representations in the form of construction connecting past and present. Issues of stability, instability, change, and determinations, as well as a variety of combined discourses are perceived as positive factors to develop deep understanding of a situation, as this is one of the objectives of the present research method.

All in all, the exploration focuses on the social subjects' meaning-making of education through repetitive stages of viewing issues tied to the educational process. This was achieved through in-depth meanings based on value systems and normative models, which the researchers considered necessary to be put forward.

Discussion - Data

With regard to the evaluation of educational processes in elementary school, high school and lyceums, positive feelings are observed only for the first two educational grades. The lyceum is portrayed as the 'other' grade. The teachers' limited interest in their students' education, and poor teacher – student communication is underscored. The educational process is characterized by indifference and formal processing, whereas learning issues are addressed and solved in extra-curricular tutorial courses (as Greek families spend a part of their budget for tutorial courses delivered in the private sector). Special issues tied to juvenile culture are processed by peers, social networks (Freitas and Smith 2017, Kirsh 2009), and the family. It is noteworthy that issues of bullying and racism are common within the educational environment, yet they are not assessed by the educational community.

"[...] Lyceum should not be compulsory education. [...] Why? What do we do there? Just wasting our time. [...] I did not attend any reunions. I did not want to see any of my teachers. Their wrinkles were not caused by us [...]"

Talking about their school life in the lyceum, most participants state that they do not have memories of their teachers nor did they experience social feelings for them, either positive or negative (Burkitt 1999, Jackson 1993, 201-220). Interestingly enough, their manifestations show that they did not feel they were members of a group, or recognise a group of peers whom they considered competitors, regardless of being candidates for different faculties. In this respect, the lyceum, as an educational institute, is considered a place of mandatory processing.

"[...] The disadvantage was that we caused stress among each other (when reporting the exercises processed during the tutorial courses), there was no competition, as everyone was trapped in their own bubble. I resented my not attending school, not meeting my friends [...]"

Even though they pursue degrees, lifelong education (Sutherland and Crowther 2006), and training, they question the relationship between degrees and real knowledge which can be efficient in the educational environment. They consider professional experience to be more important, while they choose to expand their formal qualifications. At the same time, they believe that the knowledge provided is downgraded, especially when referring to individual fragmented programmes.

"[...] Were I to change something that would make the difference, that would be practice. I am an undergraduate in the School of Economics [...] I know the theory, but I don't know how to fill in a tax income statement [...]"

The most effective type of knowledge is learning foreign languages, which is determinant to children whose parents hold a high educational capital. Even when attending the lyceum, these students choose to learn a foreign language, despite the fact that it is not a prerequisite to attend university. It is also noteworthy that the combination of high economic and educational capital (Kalerante 2013, 379-389) supports language learning through supplementary courses and activities. This way, the conditions for solid knowledge are established through tutorials delivered by foreign speakers, summer schools, etc.

"[...] I consider myself to be lucky because my parents never trusted the Greek education system [...] They were not trapped in any way. [...] Now, I would be in trouble. I miss playing. I look at the ball and I don't know what it reminds me of. [...] But I've learnt two foreign languages [...]"

With regard to the selection of university faculties, students' selection criteria are not obviously affected by their families. On the contrary, they gather information from social networks and corresponding websites or expanded groups of friends. The interest in a certain faculty outweighs the professional role. On the other hand, students, whose families are characterized by limited economic and educational capital, report their parents' obsession and pressure on them to choose those faculties that contribute to their immediate professional settlement, for instance, military and police academies. Moreover, some university candidates feel that their choices were directed by their parents, given that the selection criterion was shaped by their families in the sense that family expenditures can be lessened in the case of selecting a close-to-hometown faculty.

"[...] Who could tell me that my leftish father would have a son – policeman? Approved by him, of course. [...] The 'cop' became a policeman. [...] This is something new [...]"

Young people, both male and female, question the effectiveness and efficacy of state carriers and institutions. They are preoccupied with issues of corruption and lack of meritocracy. They seem unwilling to move within dynamic pressure groups or develop conflicts with conventional conservative structures. They are indifferent to syndicalist solutions and practices, and they even refuse to participate in university student elections, since they consider it a 'ceremonious' process.

"[...] I do not know what happens in the faculty. Politics and political groups are for those who are settled down. I always seek something to do. [...] Oh, when it comes to politics my eyes and ears are shut. [...] Whom can you trust? Me and myself as a whole [...]"

There is intense contact with social networks, and the expanded group of friends (Turner 1990) is informed through them about personal matters, while users systematically avoid being involved in political conversations. Where basic political involvement is traced, it is locked in compact mottos, distanced from political structural content. It is noteworthy that individuals following left wing political parties underline the restrained socio-political space of social networks.

"[...] But alas if you write about politics [...] You are at risk of being deleted. We must be more inventive, how to balance between void discourse and the political demand for revolution! We all say the same things, but we are simply interested in how to settle down [...]"

The economic crisis (Douzinas 2013, Tzionas 2017) is interpreted in terms of individual criteria tied to reversals or cancellations, mainly in the family environment, given the fear about the future, even though issues of social inequality are also underlined. The effects of the economic crisis are emphasized, while the ineffective institutional operations and structural social inequality within the capitalist system are highlighted as real conditions without any unfolding transcending or reversing narratives.

“[...] I attended tutorials and was admitted in the School of Medicine, whereas some of my classmates, even though smarter than me, did not succeed. This is because (sic) my parents could afford more things, foreign languages included. You need money to obtain all these qualifications. This way, you can succeed. Furthermore, teachers make discriminations in the sense that they like some students more than others, simply because you are a good student, thus you are good at everything [...]”

Analyzing the effects of various situations at a group level, such as ongoing unemployment, cancellation of labour rights, impoverishment, etc. is not observed in any case. On the contrary, personal interpretations are put forward, which, when extreme, are defined by antagonism and social exclusion (Parson 1951), as a reality in which individuals focus on how to avoid their personal exclusion in a single-sided manner.

“[...] I do not want to belong to the losers. [...] Yes, some will remain losers. That's why I am cautious with my movements. I do not waste my time in meaningless political situations. My problem will not be solved by any political party or democracy that does not exist. [...]”

Differentiation in terms of gender is of special interest. In this respect, girls report experiences of social inequality in terms of gender in their faculties, especially the School of Medicine, the Polytechnic School, or the Computer School. There is a form of transmutation of stereotypic roles which, during the Memorandum period, seems to reinforce differentiations and exclusions under different theoretical patterns.

“[...] I do not know what it was like before, but to some people it is very annoying that I attend the School of Computers. Yes, I am a good student, particularly when smartness is necessary. [...] They try to find how much of a lesbian I am [...] Success with boys is limited at University [...]”

It is important to note that both native and migrant students are ready and willing to live and create in any country abroad. The natives, particularly, seem to have a loose connection with the nation-state and the

family. Familiarization with technology and the expanded social environment through social networks have been conducive to shifting locality and social emotions. The expanded linguistic code of communication, that is, the English language, reinforces a community of thought within an open environment of definitions. In this vein, issues of acceptance, integration, and social integration, are highlighted as challenging within the broader juvenile culture, in which the cosmopolitan flâneur (van Leeuwen 2019, 301-316) is the millennial who experiments, instead of being perceived as an issue of concern.

"[...] Who thinks of the country. The issue is where I will find a job. [...] Yes, I can go anywhere. My bonds to Greece are not strong. The internet has everything. Ready relations, in any form and whenever you want them [...]"

Having succeeded in the Panhellenic examinations, and having been admitted to their preferred faculty, or another one, participants question the effectiveness of this process. They claim that there is a lack of meritocracy, while the system focuses exclusively on a single-sided assessment of students' knowledge, which is merely memorization rather than a critical approach to knowledge. What is more, the fact that the restricted assessment is carried out only in the third grade of the lyceum is also pinpointed.

"[...] No, they happened to know the particular answers. A fellow-student of mine did not succeed in her first attempt to attend university because she had been overwhelmed with panic before taking the exam in Biology. All this happens because we are being bombarded with the Panhellenic examinations issue, who knows what will happen [...] The first year I sat the exam, essay writing, I remember expecting the exam questions and, at the same time, wishing to curl up and die. As soon as I read the exam questions, I realized that it was just another test! You think that we should not have been brainwashed for a whole year, making us feel awful and that our whole life depends on this exam [...]"

Participants underline the dysfunctional university environment, such as the large number of students in each department, as well as the fact that it lacks libraries, while student life in the university environment is absent. They feel simply present in the premises, without any form of real communication. Their interaction is restricted to formal verbal exchanges related to subjects. There is no continuation of this interaction. Their only positive recall is the event of the freshman reception, a rather conventional ceremony, primarily interpreted as a void 'feast'. However, during the following years, students seem to reminisce about it, as they miss group events. They feel that time is running out, and there are numerous missed

moments and occurrences due to the priority of acquiring a professional role and integrating into the labour market. Some of them may be lucky to meet the labour market demands, others may not.

"[...] I will speak in the same way I write in my diary. It could be titled gradual demystification or reduced degree of emotions, landing to reality. I was enthusiastic to have succeeded in my preferred faculty. The first day was great. I graduate, get my degree, never look back. It's over. The only thing I remember is the examinations day. It was fun [...]"

Taking into consideration the above remarks, it can be said that male and female participants do not hold different viewpoints, although this was expected. Focusing on the labour market is obviously an end in itself both for boys and girls. Four thematic categories are derived from research data: a) general appraisal of educational procedures tied to university entry exam preparation; b) awareness or non-awareness of associating social class with corresponding privileges or lacking opportunities; c) gender-based diversifications at university; and d) the labour market.

The respondents indicate the necessity of preparing for university entry examinations through private tutorials. Interestingly enough, they argue that not attending the lyceum, but rather tutorials, is sensible. The instructional work offered in the lyceum is disapproved of in terms of the knowledge provided, as well as in terms of students' supporting structures. On the contrary, the family environment is crucial to planning and organizing their offspring's education. It is noteworthy that strict preparation for university entry examinations has cancelled significant life moments of childhood and adolescence. Moreover, the fact that the Greek family is actively involved in their offspring's education implies mistrust in the public education system. Amidst the economic crisis period, distinctive of experienced political and social consequences, male and female young persons are politically apathetic and indifferent, while they disapprove of politics, even though an interest in politics should have been expected. Even those who argue on the reproduction of the social class system and its connection with social inequality, manifest that they are not interested in getting involved in political parties or subsequent political contradictions. Their single-sided perspective on success and progress overshadows any political interest, resulting in their confinement in personal choices.

The university is considered a 'dead space', merely associated with obtaining a degree or certification, while the content of knowledge, which actually does not correspond to labour market demands, is disapproved of as well. At the same time, despite the expectations for multi-dimensional university life, this space is exclusively conveyed as a place for lectures and

examinations. Student life, and the corresponding juvenile culture, are absent, resulting in cancelled expectations for socio-political change through juvenile involvement.

The dimension of social gender is another interesting issue. Despite the broader intervention policies developed in western culture to support gender-related social equality (Lombardo and Meier 2008, 101-129) the stereotypes are obviously mutated, especially when it comes to certain persons' suitability to attend exact sciences faculties. As a result, the 'secret' prerequisites of such faculties, in terms of social gender, are put forward, along with corresponding reference to differentiations in the labour market.⁴

Both male and female students manifest their readiness to utilize any means by which they can achieve their integration into the labour market. Personal progress is an end in itself, whereas any connection to family or country is considered obsolete. They are presented as individuals, within expanded spaces, and they intend to live and work in "economically developed and politically robust countries". Therefore, they are intensely self-centred, focusing on personal growth and the sensible choice to lead life away from the economic crisis and a socially deregulated setting. Technology is apparently conducive to transforming perspectives, expanding information networks, and generating social security.

Concluding remarks

The different educational grades are characterized by a different degree of emotions tied to a subjective condition of the developed social self. The educational environment is shaped in the form of an intervening social space. The individual creates meanings, while social moments are being fragmented. Thus, discourse related to processes within educational spaces is constructed on the basis of participants' verbal communication, and their experience in primary and secondary education.

The dialectical and emotional involvement in the educational community, in actions and everyday situations, is highlighted. Self-awareness is related to memories of fulfilment, as the dynamics of feedback tied to relations and situations are naturalized. In this respect, the gradual transfer from the higher lyceum grades to university signifies differentiated situations in which the practices of meaning-making are conducive to segregating individual discourse from the socio-educational space. Based on conditions of exclusion, individuals formulate their subjective standpoints.

Individuals' solidarity is refuted, and political discourse is distorted, within such a structural environment. Political normative expectations, formed through the operation of a democratic system, are cancelled (Preiss

and Brunner 2013, Rich 2017) because there is a gradual loss of the political symbolic system of democratic institutionalization. The value normative system of the juvenile population is gradually being developed, without embedding democratic political morality in the new form of individual example in which personal interests are codified in any action and choice. Success and progress are defined in individual terms. Therefore, the individuals themselves formulate theoretical action patterns and apply their own plans within a globalized setting with which they are gradually familiarized, as they are prepared to live in a *modus vivendi* which includes political, economic, and juvenile, cultural risks (Archer 2003).

Authentic juvenile discourse tied to theory of choices and actions is determined by the culture of symbolic individual advancement. Spontaneity and creativity are enfeebled within a restricting individual, symbolic, composition. Theoretically speaking, the university space would be integrated into the field of radical definitions within a macro-environment of political conceptualizations. However, this is not the case, as it seems to be developing into a symbolic restricting space in which individuals act as operators within interactive formal constructions distinctive of symbolic examinations and subjects. In this respect, the university space is not able to contribute to upgrading processes of de-familiarized, differentiated, humanistic capitals.

Passive individuals engaged in social networks can only formulate superficial fields of communication within an inter-subjective formal process of understanding the other. Understanding is characterized by selective focus on particular issues which are typically examined, yet not theorized, due to a lack of humanistic political capital. Therefore, interactions within social networks do not reinforce any forms of communication, but rather represent passive or symbolic interactions. It should be noted that this symbolic restricting setting of social networks must be conceptualized within the environment of political and economic reclassifications, that is, of the symbolic structures conducive to reversing, and essentially refuting, democratic operations.

This economic crisis-driven setting of exclusions is actually the outcome of turbulent capitalism in which the novel rational individual is characterized by personal choices and selective privatization even when feeling a member of a globalized setting. Young people's preferences, choices and actions derive from de-socialized processes in a single-sided manner, that is, abstaining from all fields of social and political reflection. The game of personal actions gradually cancels the limits, given that discipline and models are neither visible nor interpretable.

The major narrative on the role and dynamics of the young as carriers of change, as acting subjects of political socializing, seeking to focus on social equality issues, democratic operation, integration into the civil society, and reversed secret exclusion codes, are gradually being cancelled. Thus, viewed in the broader framework, the millennials seem to be confined within conventional personal concepts of interest, both enfeebled and deprived of their potential myths and imaginary constructions.

The historical memory of this generation could inscribe more personal trajectories rather than their socio-political involvement in socio-political collectivities with corresponding vindications. Their symbolic social losses also unfold different losses in other fields, such as the joy of love, the unconventional self-fulfilment due to formulated symbolic social objectives, and the overall loss of meaning due to substantial understanding and reflection in terms of potential collective progress and prosperity.

Within the framework of self-definition, isolated persons and self-reflective subjects cannot be integrated into political interactive situations, resulting not only in the loss of symbolic structures of the social world, but also in intense forms of social inequality on all levels. Competing and conflicting practices contribute to emphasizing structural elements of the neoliberal economic paradigm. Within this status of individualism and determined success of the upper social class members, and selectively of some other individuals as well, the gap of the reconstructed social exclusion is widened. In this chaotic continuum set by the economic environment, subjugation policies are conceptualized resulting in obsessive tendencies of marginalization on all inequality levels.

Thus, issues tied to gender inequality and ethnic community are instrumentally activated within a dense political description of competitions emphasizing the construction of the 'others'. In other words, this is a structural interpretative situation of constructing and transforming basic political democratic values in a representative process, or, perhaps, a transcendence of democratic institutions. The policy of rights, in terms of body disposition (sexuality), transgender groups, or communities, given the present individualization stage, can be a potential topic for future research, as it may be the outcome of this individual 'autonomy' transforming the individual right into a political one (Barket and Scheele 2016, Brubaker 2016).⁵

The individualization processes (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1996) seemingly disrupt the conditions which, even though incomplete, build trust in democratic political operations. Young students' viewpoints showcase the formulation of a habitus (Bourdieu 1977), as a whole of pre-dispositional choices, distinctive of lost feelings and political humanistic

values. This is a major issue of consideration for the entire educational community. The normative demands of educational settings have been formed in such a way so that individuals do not face the possibility to internalize political humanistic and social values.

The process proposed should be activated towards the formulation of different systems related to beliefs, and communication with the external environment of real actions by gradually refuting single-sided messages of the virtual exemplary setting. Scientific ideas and instruments should contribute to a structural approach towards forming a dispositional environment that could encourage individual involvement in the socio-political space. The Ministry of Education should take into consideration the views of university students regarding the education system so that a dialogue is established pertaining to educational issues. Emphasis can be placed on assessment in education about the creation of democratic citizens, mitigation of social inequalities, and teacher training, as well as knowledge and skills acquisition to support students' integration into the labour market.

Notes

¹ Kappa Research and diaNEOsis surveys are particularly interesting, as they deal with measurements in trust or mistrust of institutions. Both surveys indicate citizens' low trust of political institutions, justice and education

https://kaparesearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/KapaVima_Dec13_GR.pdf

https://www.dianeosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/WVS_Ekthesi_SKoniordos_Upd_250918.pdf

² INE/GSEE annual fiscal report states analytical data on unemployment in Greece and brain drain

<https://www.inegsee.gr/ekdosi/etisia-ekthesi-2018-ine-gsee-i-elliniki-ikonomia-ke-i-apascholisi/>

³ Despite the association of brain drain with the Greek population because of the economic crisis effects, surveys indicate their considerations on institutional dysfunctionalities such as corruption and lack of meritocracy

<https://www.icap.gr/Default.aspx?id=11242&nt=146&lang=1>

⁴ According to the European Institute survey on gender equality, Greece is ranked in the last positions. This means that the education policy does not favour gender equality. Thus, men and women do not have equal opportunities in the labour market.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/annual_report_ge_2019_en.pdf

⁵ Legal recognition of gender identity – National Apparatus for Conducting, Monitoring and Assessing Action Plans on the Rights of the Child and other provisions L. 4491/2017. (13.10.2017). Government Gazette A' 152.