"I wish my father had a job…"

Children's experiences and perspectives of poverty in contemporary Greece

Comment on the cover picture:

This was drawn by a six-year-old girl, Irene. This was the dialogue the followed:

Me – "Who is this?"

I. – "These are the bad guys… the pirates! They are the politicians who stole our money!"

To Stella

I miss you mom. I miss you every single day.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the stuff in the Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB). Their teaching and support made me "grow" and truly "see" children and childhood without wearing tinted glasses.

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Thank you for everything, Mom. May you rest in peace…

Abstract

While Europe is slowly emerging from a devastating financial crisis, in Greece the ordeal is far from being over. Every-day life is frustrating and tough, and the economic figures do not capture the hardship of the austerity-hit economy. In amidst the challenging realities of poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, markets' stagnation and austerity measures children's lives are suffering tremendous and deep impacts. The government programs in education, health, and child protection were amongst the first to be cut due to budget constraints. Furthermore, the financial crisis is intensifying the effects of the increasing cost of the daily life, seriously challenging the abilities of families to cope and of children to thrive.

This study aimed to explore children's experiences and perspectives of poverty in the urban area of Athens, the capital of Greece. Fourteen children, whose one or both parents have lost their jobs, participated and they helped me generate rich and valuable data. Parents, teachers and social workers were also interviewed and contributed with their knowledge to a more diverse and broad understanding of child and familial poverty. The major theoretical perspectives on which this study was based are the Structural perspective of the new Social Studies of Childhood, political economy as well as discourses on agency, resilience, neoliberalism, poverty and social reproduction. This theoretical background constituted an excellent base to build my study upon, pointing out that children are deeply affected by political, economic and societal macro-parameters stemming from the financial crisis and neoliberalism practices. Children, although they are capable social actors, they cannot escape the macro-parametric impacts that extrude them and their families in poverty. Yet, poverty is multifaceted and goes beyond monetary aspects, therefore children's perspectives are very illuminating.

The children in this study are excellent political and economic commentators. Not only they realize that the financial crisis is part of a "global picture" but they also link it with parental unemployment and the consequent economic problems they face in their households. Children exercise their agency in order to get by, to get out and, what I propose, to "get on with life" under poverty. They do not consider themselves poor. Instead, they use other expressions that indicate financial constriction. Children's views on poverty go beyond material deprivation and they include lack of quality-time spent with the parents, inability of going on vacations or on family nights-out, self-exclusion practices and constrains on their dreams for the future. Another aspect of poverty that emerged from the narratives of children is the "parent poverty" which has to do with the physical and emotional absence of the parent. Children endure a harsh, everyday reality and they do so in silence in order not to over-burden their parents. Disrupted social reproduction has led them in shouldering more domestic and caretaking responsibilities. Since there are not many similar studies done in Greece, I consider it very important to let the children's voices to be heard and illuminate their realities.

List of Acronyms

- ❖ CRC   Children's Rights Council
- ❖ ELSTAT (ΕΛΣΤΑΤ)   Hellenic Statistical Authority (Ελληνική Στατιστική Αρχή)
- ❖ EUROSTAT   Statistical Office of the European Communities
- ❖ GDP   Gross Domestic Product
- ❖ IMF   International Monetary Fund
- ❖ NGO   Non-Governmental Organization
- ❖ OECD   Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- ❖ UNCRC   United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ❖ UNICEF   United Nations Children's Educational Fund

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

It has been stated that the current financial crisis is the worst the world has seen since the Great Depression of 1930's. Many countries have been tested and are continuing to do so while, in Europe, controversial rescue plans introduced by EU Commission and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are designed to help the so-called – in a typical colonial way- PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain) (Hadjimichalis, 2011). Along with the negative connotations of the above term and the pun-generating potentials demonstrated by the press, came a distinction of nations between the "strong" and the "week", the "survivors" and the "losers". Ideological debates polarized public opinions and turned a global problem into a debate of moral issues. If the "irresponsible" citizens and the corrupted governments of indebted countries spent "Europe's money" through Structural Funds in an irresponsible way, why should Europe help them out of something that is considered "their problem'? (Hadjimichalis, 2011, p. 267). In the aftermath of the financial crisis attention seem to have shifted from the much needed solidarity and justice into blaming the victims. At the same time reality remains unchanged: beyond the percentages and the indications of soaring poverty throughout European countries there are real people suffering. Real people, namely families and children.

Under the multiple and heavy shadows of the economic recession and the strict "salvation" policies implemented from neoliberal central pillars as IMF, children and their families in contemporary Greece are called to lift a heavy burden. All the implementation and the adjustment programs seem to favor the stagnation and the impoverishment of the weakest population groups. On the contrary, the richest and most powerful grow stronger and remain "out of touch". Families have to deal with constant income loss due to taxation, wage cutbacks or layoffs while there is no hope or indication that the situation is going to improve any time soon. Moreover, families that are in debt in various banks due to mortgage loans are losing their houses. Others live in constant fear and angst that they will soon find themselves in the same position. People's livelihoods change abruptly. Children are in a particularly vulnerable position and NGOs like UNICEF are warning about the rise of childhood poverty, malnutrition and poor living and housing conditions.

1.1 Rationales for choosing the topic

Due to the fact that I have been a part of "Greece in crisis" myself, I was alarmingly noticing all the changes and the consequences that this financial turmoil brought to my people. If I am to explain the reasons why I chose this topic, I will have to admit that there is firstly an emotional reason. Because of my former tutoring employment, I have seen how hard it is for both the families and the children to accept and conform to the new economic reality. Parents are having a difficult time to admit and explain to their children why they have to cut down on everything and at the same time to retain their pride of self-sufficiency and ability of sustaining them. Children are finding themselves excluded in activities in school or in the community and they are called to shoulder new responsibilities, a result of a disruption of the social reproduction in their households.

Beyond the empathy and the emotional connection, I must admit that there were more "selfish" reasons in my choice. A widespread notion of the "lazy southerners" who are purely responsible for the situation they are in, it had let to a polarization of people and opinions both nationally and internationally. I remember that more than once I had felt deeply frustrated by the people of power. Politicians -both Greek and foreigners-and the press had the tendency to hover around numbers and rates and stress about market competitiveness. At the same time they seemed totally oblivious to the suffering of the simple people, the faces behind all the numbers.

What is more, the news and the press where spreading rumors and cultivated an irrational fear to the public about the monetary aftermath of the crisis. Yet, nothing was mentioned about the impacts it had on the vulnerable population and especially children. For example, incidents of children fainting at their schools because of malnutrition were the last to be mentioned, if mentioned at all. Choosing this topic was my own attempt to give a voice to the ones least heard in this situation: the children. Moreover I wanted to show how real people suffer real pains and troubles that go beyond statistics and popular sensationalized notions of blame.

1.2 Aims, objectives and research questions

The main aim of this study is to produce knowledge on the children's experiences of poverty in Greece and on how the financial crisis has altered their lives. Especially important is also the way that children articulate and understand poverty. Thus, the overall **objectives** of this study are:

- To explore children's experiences of familial poverty and their strategies to cope with it.
- To seek the children's perspectives and views on parental unemployment and /or general loss of income.
- To explore for disruptions caused by the financial crisis and how that altered children's role in daily reproduction.

In order for the above objectives to be realized, research questions were formed. They became the main axis around which the study formatted and also fueled the formation of the interview questions discussed with the participants. These **research questions** are:

- How children both articulate and understand poverty?
- Do the children understand the implications of the crisis in their lives? How do they articulate them?
- How does familial poverty impacts on the children's everyday life?
- Do they have a notion of the impacts that their parent's loss of job brought in their lives?
- How do they verbalize the "now" and "then", the "before" and "after"?
- How is that impact defined by, or defining, the greater macro-structures of the political economy?

1.3 Significance of the study

This thesis contributes towards the knowledge of children's perspectives on poverty. Van der Hoek and UNICEF (2005) state that child poverty research has generated valuable knowledge over children, nevertheless little is known about how children experience poverty in their daily live. This study is based mainly in the narratives of children and conclusions are drawn after seeing things from their own point of view. The main prerequisite from the very first steps of my research was that children's voices should and would be heard. In that sense the thesis follows a bottom-up approach to understanding the causes and the consequences of childhood poverty in Greece.

From the search done before and during the writing of this study, I understood that there were not many similar researches done in Greece. Although there were

many articles and books written for the financial crisis and for its socioeconomic impacts on the households and on the families' lives, there were few –next to nothing- on children's actual experiences of poverty in contemporary Greece. What is presented here is shading a light upon this matter. Moreover, I feel that this study gave me a purpose to explore more in this direction later on, generating more knowledge as an aspiring researcher.

1.4 Limitations of the study

First and foremost, I must say that this study was conducted with a relatively small sample of children and participants in general, so some caution is needed when attempting to generalize the findings presented later on. Nevertheless, I tried to be inclusive and discuss with both children and adults, coming from different and diverse backgrounds. Before generalizing, it is useful to have in mind that this study was generated after a small-scaled qualitative research. Moreover, the limited amount of time and the constrained resources on hand, made it difficult to have more than one meeting with the participants, something that could have helped me to generate more data.

1.5 Structure of the study

The **second chapter** of this study is going to set the background of this thesis and the broader context into which the research was realized. The reader will be presented with demographic, historical and social information about Greece. We will also briefly go through the financial crisis: its origins, its declarations and its impacts on the country and the residents.

The **third chapter** presents information about the actual fieldwork. Getting access to the field, the sampling process I followed as well as a brief presentation of the research participants will be discussed. I will also recount the methods used along with their strengths and weaknesses in the context of the fieldwork. There will also be a discussion on the ethical dilemmas faced.

The **fourth chapter** will elaborate upon the theoretical aspects of this study. The point of departure will be the new social studies of childhood with the structural perspective which will be presented later on. Meanwhile, key notions of agency, resilience and poverty will be discussed. Continuing, there will be a discussion upon

neoliberalism and the political economy of childhood. Finally, matters of social reproduction will be presented and discussed.

In **chapters five to six** I will present the data generated through the fieldwork alongside with mentioning researches which bore similar findings. **Chapter seven** is dedicated to a more in-depth discussion on key concepts that emerged through working with the data. Finally, **chapter eight** will serve for summing up the findings, along with the final remarks on the research questions.

Chapter 2: Background

In this chapter I will give some general information on Greece and its capital, Athens. I will also try to explain the socio-cultural context of the research: the meaning of family and other concepts that constitute the social identity of the Greeks. In continuation, I will present political and economic aspects of the research. Amongst these, I will also discuss upon the financial crisis, the reasons and the origins of it both in global and in Greek context.

2.1 Greece: Demographic Context

Greece (in Greek: Ελλάδα "Ellada"), known in the ancient times as Hellas, is a small country in Southern Europe. Famous for its ancient history and considered to be the cradle of Western civilization, modern Greece is now but an echo to this glorious past. Situated strategically between the crossroads of Europe, Asia and Africa, it was always thought as a country trying to balance between the West and the East. Greece shares land borders with Albania to the northwest, the Republic of Macedonia (Fyrom) and Bulgaria to the north and Turkey to the northeast. The country consists of nine geographic regions: Macedonia, Central Greece, the Peloponnese, Thessaly, Epirus, the Aegean Islands (including the Dodecanese and Cyclades island complexes), Thrace, Crete, and the Ionian Islands. The Aegean Sea lies to the east of the mainland, the Ionian Sea to the west, and the Mediterranean Sea to the south. According to EUROSTAT (European Statistical System)[1], the last census of 2011 showed that the permanent population of Greece is 10.815.197 people, 3.089.698 of them live in the country's capital, Athens. Greece has a strong immigrant presence, a percentage of 8, 4% in proportion to the total population to the country.[2]

Athens (in Greek: Αθήνα, "Athina") is the capital and the largest city of Greece. It is located in the general Attica region and it is one of the world's oldest cities with a recorded history of 3,400 years. The Attica region itself is divided into eight regional units: North Athens, West Athens, Central Athens, south Athens, Piraeus, East Attica, West Attica and Islands. All together they make up the urban area of Athens with the

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[1] EUROSTAT http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/main_tables
[2] EUROSTAT report, "Population and social conditions", Vasileva Katya, 2011 , http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-11-034/EN/KS-SF-11-034-EN.PDF

first four regions forming the Greater Athens, while the region of Piraeus forms the Greater Piraeus where the city's harbors are located. The Athens municipality also forms the core and center of Greater Athens which consists of the Athens municipality and 34 more municipalities. The division of the municipalities coincides with the popular Athenian way of dividing the city according to its neighborhoods, each of them with its own history and special features.

2.1.1 Fieldwork site

My fieldwork was not concentrated strictly in one part of Athens since the participants came from different municipalities or neighborhoods. Overall, most of them came from the region of Greater Athens and also from the neighborhood of Ano Liosia (a part of the West Athens region), known for the low-income population living there. Participants from the the Greater Athens region, came from the municipalities of:

- Central Athens:

    -Neighborhood of Neos Kosmos[3]: it is relatively close to the historical city center and it is considered to be middle to lower-class region with strong immigrant presence.

    -Neighborhood of Kolonaki: it is located to the very heart of the historical city center and is one of the oldest and most famous neighborhoods of Athens. It was always considered to be a "rich" and upper-class neighborhood known as the place where the jet-set meets. It is densely populated as every region near the city center. Many actors, artists, designers and people who are considered to be the "old money" (namely coming from old and well-known rich families) live there or in the bordering neighborhood of Likavitos.

- Alimos: located in coastal line of Athens, it is considered to be an upper-class region. Famous for its coastal view, someone can see many villas or luxurious apartments there.

- Amarousio: it is the equivalent of Alimos, although it is located in the inner part of Athens. Again it is a mixture of "posh" and more moderate houses.

- Ilioupoli: It is mainly considered to be a middle-class region

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[3] The neighborhood of Neos Kosmos falls into the municipality of the City of Athens. In the municipality map it is located between the region numbers 25 and 27, bordering with the regions of Nea Smyrni, Kallithea and the city center.

I want to stress here that the distinctions made above between low, middle and upper class regions are purely intuitive and based in the distinctions that Athenians and the inhabitants themselves are making. This is a private, "insider's view" of the places above and although it is difficult to find statistical evidence supporting this division, it corresponds greatly to the reality.

For maps of Greece and Athens, along with an explanatory map of the municipality division, please see Appendix A.

2.2 Social Context

2.2.1 "Greek familism"

According to T. Papadopoulos, Greeks are strongly attached to, and supportive of, the nuclear family. Compared with other European countries, Greece has the highest percentage of couples with children and the lowest number of lone parent families. Moreover, most of the Greeks placed having a family as the highest priority in their lives (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007; T. Papadopoulos, 1996; T. N. Papadopoulos, 1998).

Despite the strong attachment of Greeks to the family and the high esteem they hold for the institution, the welfare support for families and children is almost non-existent. This disturbing reality has led the Greek family to be the main social and welfare provider of its members and, thus, to prolong and reproduce the notion that nuclear family is the sole provider in society. Papadopoulos defines this process as "Greek familism" (T. N. Papadopoulos, 1998).

2.2.2 "Our Own People": family, extended family and secrets

When a Greek is talking about "*our own people*", he is referring to a circle of not only his or hers extended family but also of people with whom they are not related but they feel them really close to the family. This group can be a part "*of personal relationships, mutual dependence and sentimental commitments*"(Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007, p. 402). Most of the time, the circle of "our own people" can be quite large. They help the family members in times of need, they are supporting or being supported, they are a part of the family's joys and sorrows. As Papadopoulos states, "familial solidarity is an integral part of the Greek familism" (T. Papadopoulos, 1996,p. 183). This solidarity and social exchange is sought after by the families and it is "legitimized" sometimes by establishing a relation with some of the people of the circle. This happens with the custom of "*koumbaria*", where by being the best man or

the best woman in a wedding or by baptizing a child, a person is automatically considered legitimate member of the family. This is considered to be an honor and an esteemed position of mutual reciprocity (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007). These formations of the Greek family is similar to what Abebe (2012) describes as family collectives in Ethiopia which "incorporate kinship structures that are connected through livelihood circumstances and mediated by interpersonal relationships, social contracts (inter- and intra-generational) and expectations" (p. 542).

Needless to say, in case of a betrayal, the culprit is automatically erased from the family group, no matter the relationship status or previous solidarity gestures. This signifies the ethical boundaries that are placed in a Greek family. There is an ancient Greek saying which, loosely translated, states: "whatever happens in the house must stay in the house and never go public" (τα εν οίκω μη εν δήμω – ta en oiko mi en dimo). This shows that secrecy is valued and sometimes it is even *"a requirement for membership in any and all of the other families"(Constantine-Kapetanopoulos, 1993, p. 19).*During my fieldwork, I had to deal with this belief more times than once.

2.2.3   The sanctity of the family
It is very characteristic of Greeks that mostly every expression of social life, such as celebrations, feasts or sometimes gatherings is very closely related to religion. Also this kind of gatherings or celebrations is almost always a family matter which contributes to the identity of the family (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007). Even if someone is not particularly religious, most people do not spent Christmas, Easter, birthdays or name days away from their families and loved ones. Food is most of the times an excuse for a gather up and the main "attraction" in these feasts mainly because Greeks consider food sacred, especially bread, and rarely waste it. As Kaldi – Koulikidou states "family has a multidimensional character, which includes being an environment for bringing up children, an engine of economic enterprise and a religious community, as well" (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007, p.404).

Summarizing all the above, I could say that due to the lack of welfare policies and due to unforgiving taxation systems, families in Greece are compelled to play a very important socio-economic role providing welfare for its members. Family is there to support children and young people not only financially but emotionally as well, regardless their age. Family is also a safe haven from isolation and solitude, the very cornerstone of socialization. Due to this reason, an intricate web of social

relationships is formed between the members of the family and other people close to the family. These relationships are characterized by reciprocity, solidarity, power and dependence. In every Greek there is such a powerful sense of family that children of Greek immigrants, sometimes a third or fourth generation, have the same notions and they are brought up with the same ways, no matter the country or the culture they live in.

2.2.4 Religion

Approximately 95% of the Greek population declare themselves to be Orthodox Christians, making Greece a homogeneous country, as far as religion and ethnicity is concerned (Molokotos-Liederman, 2003). Due to the influx of immigrant populations this homogeneity is gradually changing and the current most significant religious minorities are: Muslims, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jehovah's witnesses, Scientologists and Jews (ibid).

It can be said that Greeks "believe without belonging": belief in God remains relatively high but church attendance is confined mostly to special occasions (Molokotos-Liederman, 2003, p. 295). These occasions are mostly rites of passage like marriages, baptisms and burials. Moreover, the particularly high church attendance on religious holidays and national festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Day of the Annunciation, highlights the importance of popular religion in Greece (ibid). According with all the above, it could be said that in many cases and through many conservative voices, Orthodoxy is conceived as being identified with Greek identity and culture (Danopoulos, 2004). This notion can go as far as perceiving the opening to the global economy and the European Union itself as threat to the Greek Orthodox identity (Molokotos-Liederman, 2003).

2.2.5 Children: upbringing, roles and expectations

Children are considered as the cornerstone of the family. The arrival of a child signifies a change in the priorities, the wishes and the goals of the family. Everyone helps with the upbringing of the children, especially the grandparents and less the circle of "our own people"(Ierodiakonou, 1988). Grandmothers are entrusted with the babysitting whenever it is possible (living in close proximity, being physically able, etc.) in a rate of 44% (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007). This close involvement of the grandparents in the raising of the child, gives them the authority to intervene in the

family, stepping on the dependence of the parents - a dependence which becomes stronger the longer hours the parents have to work (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007).

In this extended familial environment overprotectiveness is prevalent. Children are always watched carefully and especially in big cities which are considered more dangerous than rural areas, it is very rare to see a child on its own. Children and young people are dependent on family and there is no such view of the child as "partner" or "participant" in the family decisions (Qvortrup, 1990, p. 35). Papadopoulos explains that *"since welfare support is left to families the dependency of young people on parents is reinforced and thus reproduced and legitimized"* (T. Papadopoulos, 1996, p. 184).

Greeks tend to spent large sums of money in their children's education since it is thought necessary for social mobility (T. Papadopoulos, 1996). They also regard it as the most important offering towards their children, something that will help them built their future accessing employment and rendering social status both to them and their family. It is also a way of children becoming "better" than their parents. There is a notion of reciprocity behind this: "we have done so many things for you, now it is time for you to do things for us". Children and adolescents are expected to be good students, to choose "good" and "proper" friends and to behave accordingly with the values of the family. Though there is resentment from the part of the children for this overprotective and sometimes "suffocating" environment, children are raised to believe that without the support of their families they will not go far in life. It is quite natural for young people to ask help from their families and expect financial and emotional support at all-time (Ierodiakonou, 1988; T. Papadopoulos, 1996). Moreover, staying in their family house up until they are much older, sometimes up until they get married, is common practice.

2.3 Political – Economic Context

Greece is a democratic, parliamentary republic country. The nominal head of state is the President of the Republic, who is elected by the Parliament for a five-year term. The current Constitution was entered into force in 1975 and it has been revised three times since, in 1986, 2001 and 2008. The Constitution, which consists of 120 articles, provides for a separation of powers into executive, legislative, and judicial branches,

and grants extensive specific guarantees of civil liberties and social rights. Women's suffrage was guaranteed with an amendment to the 1952 Constitution. [4]

It was mentioned beforehand that Greece is perceived as trying to balance between the West and the East. This dualism can actually be seen and felt in everyday life of the people as well. The Greeks are still trying to balance the westernized – European way of life with the eastern traditions and notions which still run strong in the country. Greece has been a member of the European Union since 1981, a member of NATO since 1952 and a member of Eurozone since 2001.

The official numbers of poverty in Greece have been relatively stable prior to the financial crisis (UNICEF, 2012). This is though a rapidly changing reality. According with Eurostat, the percentage of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion during 2011 was 31%, a percentage that reached 34, 6% in 2012. Specifically, children in Greece were at risk of poverty in a rate of 35, 4% in 2012.[5]

2.3.1 A brief history of the economic crisis

In order to put what will come next into a broader context, it would be practical here to mention briefly the origins and the evolution of the financial crisis. Interestingly enough, the current recession followed after the most significant boom in recent history: in the years between 2003-2008, international GDP grew by one third (Grigor & Salikhov, 2009). By 2008, conditions have been created for a cyclical crisis:

- over-accumulation and under-consumption resulting from decades of hyper-neoliberal economic policies.
- Growing imbalances and inequalities within and between countries since the productivity growth of the past years did not lead to increases in wages and incomes. The profits have been rising but so did the inequality.
- Increased inflation.

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[4] The Greek Constitution:
http://web.archive.org/web/20070925181747/http://www.parliament.gr/english/politeuma/syntagma.pdf

[5] EUROSTAT
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion

(Grigor & Salikhov, 2009; Hadjimichalis, 2011; Seguino, Folbre, Grown, Montes, & Walters, 2009)

According with Grigor and Salikhov (2009) the aforementioned boom lost stability in August 2007, when a crisis in U.S housing construction became a mortgage crisis and spread to the financial sector. Immediately oil, metal and food prices began to take off. Then the liquidity crisis came: banks traded only with money taken from central banks and did not trust anyone with their own. This consequently brought credit paralysis which the more it lasts the more damage it does to the current economic activity (Grigor & Salikhov, 2009).

The economic crisis may have originated from the US but with a "domino-effect" spread through markets to the rest of the world. In the EU, three highly-connected sectors were initially hit: banks, real-estate and private and public debt (Hadjimichalis, 2011). The first crisis signs came from Spain, former communist countries of Eastern Europe and Ireland. From November 2009, Greece became the epicenter with Italy and Portugal following (ibid). According with Hadjimichalis (2011), the reason why southern countries were so much impacted by the crisis is that, ante-crisis, they were confronted with account deficits, thus begun relying heavily on external borrowing, while expanding domestic debt. False rising credibility and low interest rates allowed these countries to obtain funds for several years, even after the crisis hit the Eurozone markets (ibid.). At that point actually borrowing became a necessity in order to avoid the collapse of their financial systems (Hadjimichalis, 2011).

According to Hadjimichalis (2011), EU was both unable and unwilling to handle the crisis mostly due to dogmatic and inflexible neoliberal pacts that form its ideology and dictate its everyday function. For example, Lisbon Pact prohibits any help towards national economies facing a crisis, such as Greece and Ireland (ibid.). Of course, when EU governments, particularly those of France and Germany, realized that the crisis will not be restricted in these two aforementioned countries only but will spread to the entire Eurozone, a "solution" was found: an IMF and EU joint intervention in the form of a cuts package which would protect the global investors and will increase market competitiveness (Hadjimichalis, 2011). This package proved to be destructive for the working and middle classes. All its "protective" measures

promote a vicious circle of economic stagnation which sinks countries into deeper and lasting depressions with no obvious way out (ibid). More details about the IMF "salvation packages" and how they impacted (and continue to impact) Greece will be given later on.

2.3.2 Livelihoods

According with data drawn from ELSTAT (Hellenic Statistical Authority) [6], during 2010, 88,2% of the Greek labor force was occupied in the market. For the years 2011 and 2012 these percentages were respectively 83,7% and 76,4% . The unemployment rates for these three years were respectively 12,5%, 17,7% and 24,2%. In 2012, from the total of 4,962,000 people of the labor force, approximately the 494,000 of them were occupied in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sections. The section that occupies the most people in Greece is the wholesale and retail trade, with a sum of approximately 679,000 people (again for 2012). The main agricultural products of Greece are wheat, cotton, tobacco, wine, olive oil and citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, mandarins). Tourism is also a profitable seasonal industry for Greece, with the number of tourists reaching the sum of 15.517.622 people during 2012.

The main trade and economic activity is concentrated in the two biggest cities of Greece: Athens, the capital, and Thessaloniki. According with data from OECD[7] (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), in Greece, 49% of the population lives in cities of different sizes. The share of population in metropolitan areas (urban areas with more than 500 000 people) is 40% compared to 49% in the OECD area. The metropolitan area of Athens alone contributed to 80% of the national GDP growth in 2000-10, the highest share among OECD countries. Greece had the 6th lowest regional disparities in GDP per capita in OECD countries in 2010. In the past decade regional growth was as diverse as +3.7% annually in Athens and no growth (0%) in Central Greece (OECD).

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[6] ELSTAT report "Hellas in numbers":
http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/General/ELLAS_IN_NUMBERS_EN.pdf

[7] OECD data from Greece: http://rag.oecd.org/countryprofiles/greece.html

2.3.3 Immigrants and Emigrants

Currently, the 50-60% of the immigrant population in Greece is constituted of Albanian migrants while from the mid-1990s on, there is a constant flow of Asian nationalities—especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi. Recently, there has been a flow of political asylum seekers and/or illegal immigrants from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and other countries. As Karakatsanis and Swarts state very accurately, "*migration has become such an important demographic feature of Greek society that, in a society with negative natural population growth, it has become the sole source of population increase overall*" (Karakatsanis & Swarts, 2003, p. 240).

According with the UNICEF report for the situation of children in Greece (2012), from 1990 and after, immigrants have contributed to a population increase of 1.000.000. It was also calculated that during 2010, almost 200.000 children that live in the country are coming from immigrant families. In the report the importance of their integration in society is particularly stressed since they will contribute positively in the improvement of the low birth rates. It is also mentioned that immigrants were the first group of the population who appeared to be suffering the effects of the financial crisis (UNICEF, 2012). Although, all these past years immigrants were accepted and embraced by the Greeks, who themselves were no strangers to immigration, things are unfortunately changing rapidly after the financial recession. Sadly, as the situation is becoming grimmer, there are more voices who are eager to "blame the foreigners" for every misfortune. Indicative to this notion is the rise of the extremist right - fascist parties in the last elections.

The financial crisis though lead many Greeks to become themselves immigrants. According with OECD, migration of Greeks "in some destination countries show a moderate but accelerating increase" and in 2012 the percentages of people migrating increased sharply, in comparison with those from 2011 (OECD, ,2013, p. 256) . In a familial context, most common is the migration of one of the parents -usually the father- in order to work and support the family by sending money back. It is not unusual though for the whole family to follow after some time, especially if the mother is unemployed herself, when and if the father is well established in the new country. Emigration can be also internal, in other regions of Greece, following the same patterns as discussed above.

2.3.4 Inequalities

Although Greece was always plagued by inequalities it seems as if the financial crisis has created a real social emergency. It was mentioned above that immigrants were the first ones to feel the pressure of the crisis accompanied by rising rates of social exclusion. According to UNICEF, the rates of poverty in immigrant groups reached 40,4% in 2010, from the initial level of 30,3% in 2008, social exclusion from 44,6% rose up to 50,1%. These numbers seem even more crucial when seen in comparison with the native population: the level of poverty for Greeks in 2010 was 19,4% and the level of social exclusion was 27,5% (UNICEF, 2012). The considerable difference in numbers creates dividing lines which are affecting children as well. The dual discrimination of the immigrant and the poor is enough to possibly stigmatize them (ibid.).

Social inequality though does not stop in the case of immigrants. It seems that life is generally difficult in Greece for those belonging in minority groups. This is particularly evident in the area of religious freedom, where Greece, in violation of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, restricts the rights of religious minorities such as Thrace (north geographical region) Muslims or people of Turkish origin (Pollis, 1992). Another striking example is the discrimination against Roma people. Acts of racism and violence against them from the police and other people are not uncommon. According to UNICEF (2012) Greece had six convictions in the last couple of years for violating Roma's rights. Both UNICEF and CRC reports stress that Roma children are growing up in a hostile and unsuitable environment and they have limited access to health and social services (UNICEF, 2012; Report Consideration on August 13, 2012). There are also a number of unregistered Roma children after birth and a following low enrolment in school. Moreover, due to the financial crisis and the high poverty rate within this group, school dropout rates have increased with "uncertain development prospects for children neither in school nor working" (Report Consideration on August 13, 2012, p. 6).

Perhaps the broader context and the basis of all manifested social inequalities is what stressed in the UNICEF report for the situation of children in Greece (2012): under the heavy shadow of the financial crisis, the middle class seems to shrink continuously, getting closer to poverty lines. At the same time the poor are getting

poorer. This is declared clearly through a profound income inequality. According with OECD, average net adjusted disposable income of the top 20% of the population is an estimated 38 487 USD a year, whereas the bottom 20% live on an estimated 6 378 USD a year (OECD, 2013).

Gender inequalities are also apparent and even highlighted under the event of the crisis. According with data taken from ELSTAT, during 2011, women in Greece were paid 86, 40% less than men in the public sector, while in the private sector the percentage was down to 73, 89%. Furthermore, women are more vulnerable when it comes to job-loss and unemployment. Data show that during 2013 women's unemployment rate reached 31,1% , much higher than the equivalent 24,1% of men (ELSTAT).

Intergenerational inequalities are also evident in UNICEF report (2012) when stated that the public expenditures on children reach the 6,7 %, a relatively insignificant amount when in contrast with the 41,4% spent on elder people. According to Bradshaw and Holmes (2011), this shift of expenditure from children to the elderly in order to maintain retirement living standards, is partly due to demography since the population of children is declining. On the other hand, there are definitely political reasons since "the retired are voters and children are not" (ibid., p. 9).

2.3.5   Children in Greece

Greece signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child on January 26, 1990 and ratified it by Law on May 11, 1993[8]. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in armed conflict was ratified on October 22, 2003 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was ratified on February 22, 2008. UNCRC prevails over customary law in case of conflicting legislations[9]. In all decisions concerning children, whether they refer to legislative

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[8] United Nations Treaty Collections:
http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en

[9] CRC/C/SR.753, 23 January 2002: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G02/401/05/PDF/G0240105.pdf?OpenElement

measures or issues of practical nature, the trend is for the child's interests to be set as the prime consideration.

According with data from UNICEF report (2012), the number of children amounts to 1.959.895 and analogically they consist the 17,4% of the population. Boys are 148.000 more than girls. During 2011, the 75% of the children inhabited urban areas and the 25% of them were in rural areas. During 2010, one out of three children was residing in Athens. The population of children is constantly declining, from 1961 that consisted the 1/3 of the general population, now it barely reaches the 17%. Children in Greece are considered to be an age minority in a population that is constantly aging (UNICEF, 2012). According with Eurostat, childhood poverty in Greece for 2011 reached 21,4% , while poverty rate for the general population is 23,7%.

In Greece the child and the infant mortality rates are lower than the average in the European Union. Indicative of this is the decline of the number of deaths per 1.000 children aged from 1 to 5 years old, to 4,1 in 2010 from the original 11,5 in 1990 (UNICEF, 2012). The reason for this decline is the improving in health services. Nevertheless the inequalities in health sector, namely the access in and the quality of health services are closely related to the socioeconomic status. According to UNICEF (2012), the causes of the social inequalities in health are connected with the fragmentation of the health funds and to the unequal provisions, as well as with the constant degradation of the National Health System.

Always according to UNICEF (2012), in Greece there are 1.492.928 students that are attending in 15.422 units of primary education (kindergarten and primary schools) and secondary education (junior and senior high-schools). The 94% of the students are attending public schools while attending private schools is more often during kindergarten and primary school years. According to the World Bank[10], the ratio of girls to boys' enrolment in primary and secondary education, last measured in 2010, is 98%. Overall, according to UNICEF (2012), school dropout rate is constantly declining: for 2010, it was estimated at around 13,7% of the general population, lower than the 14.1% of the European Union and it was mostly referring to the male population. Bearing in mind the above rates and in accordance with the Greek

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[10] World Bank data: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ENR.PRSC.FM.ZS

Pedagogic Institute, the 70% of the students that drop out of school are entering the labor market. UNICEF (2012) warns that even if the number of the working children seems to have dropped dramatically the last years in Greece, this does not necessarily correspond to reality since children may have turned to more dangerous, thus more difficult to locate, forms of childhood labor.

UNICEF also raises attention to the street children in Greece. Although no official numbers are available, it is stated they mainly come from Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and the Greek population of Roma (both Christian and Muslim). They are mostly engaged with begging or peddling, which is practiced in a way that is assimilating begging. The main reason why children are engaging in such activities is to supplement their families' income. The existence of a family, a house to live in and their parallel school attention do not seem to improve their situation (UNICEF, 2012).

2.3.6 Financial crisis in Greece: origins, reasons and outcome

The contemporary economic recession that began in 2007 has created a huge impact on Greece, a country affected more than any other European country, for reasons that I will try to highlight later on. The origins of this turmoil can be traced back on January 1st, 2001, when Greece became a member of the euro area. At first, this was regarded highly beneficial since euro lowers inflation expectations and therefore interest rates. With low inflation, private investment is enhanced and economic growth is gradually achieved. Euro also eliminates exchange-rate fluctuation and the possibility of competitive devaluations among the countries of the euro arena (Gibson, Hall, & Tavlas, 2012). According with Eurostat, after 2001 the GDP per capita was steadily rising each year[11], following a growth rate that was "the second highest (after Ireland) in the euro area – underpinned by household spending for consumption, housing and business investment." (Gibson et al., 2012, p.3).

Nevertheless, Greece actually had major debt problems that they were present even during the preparations of joining the euro area: the public debt was more than 100% of GDP (article "A very European crisis", The Economist[12]). This was overlooked by European Union due to the fact that, according with the joining fiscal criteria, countries which are already in debt can be a part of the euro arena if their debt

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[11] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114

[12] http://www.economist.com/node/15452594

ratio is approaching steadily and satisfactory the 60% critical value, a criterion that applied to Greece at that time. There were also two main problems which were not touched upon and which –in the long term – were two of the main causes of the crisis: irrespectively to the seeming growth, the country continued to have huge fiscal problems and its already flawed competitiveness was deteriorating rapidly (Gibson et al., 2012). Alongside with the problems mentioned above, there was another reason behind the fact that Greece was hit so harshly by the financial crisis and this was the ever present - in the last decades- problem of tax evasion and political corruption. As Matsaganis and Flevotomou mention "the shadow economy and tax evasion are both widespread in Greece. This has adverse effects in terms of horizontal and vertical equity, as well as in terms of efficiency"(Matsaganis & Flevotomou, 2010, p.1).

In order for the reader to perceive the problem of political corruption I will refer to a vast economic scandal that was discovered in the beginning of 2010 which is indicative of the situation. In 2001, just after the admittance of Greece in the euro zone, representatives from Goldman Sachs[13] secretly visited Greece and helped the government at that time to borrow billions in an "under the table" agreement. "That deal, hidden from public view because it was treated as a currency trade rather than a loan, helped Athens to meet Europe's deficit rules while continuing to spend beyond its means" (article in The New York Times by Story, Landon & Schwartz, 2010[14]). With this deal, billions in debt were carefully hidden by the budget overseers in Brussels and Greece had paid Goldman Sachs over the next years hundreds of millions of dollars in fees for arranging transactions that hid the actual level of borrowing.

After what mentioned above, it is clearly understood why Greece reached that point where its national debt was accelerating and clearly unsustainable. The options the current government had at that time were limited: since leaving euro was ruled out, the most common solution of currency devaluation was precluded. In order to meet its debts, Greece had to borrow €110 billion from the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank (all three briefly called "Troika"). This, of course, was done under strict conditions that included a

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[13] Goldman Sachs: an American multinational investment banking firm that engages in global investment banking, securities, investment management, and other financial services primarily with institutional clients.

[14] http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/business/global/14debt.html?pagewanted=1&hp&_r=0

major cut-back in government spending and a series of austerity measures (Kentikelenis et al., 2011). Ronald Janssen in his article "Greece and the IMF: Who exactly is being saved?" states clearly and numerically what Greece was to achieve in exchange of this loan:

Financial directorate of the European Commission (DG Ecfin) was called in to negotiate a loan rescue. In return for access to a 110 billion euro pool of loans over the next three years, Greece had to commit to a package of 30 billion euros of fiscal cuts implemented over the period from 2010-2014. These cuts are equal to 11.1% of annual GDP, with 5.3% of GDP coming from expenditure cuts and 4% from increased revenue. Structural reforms of the tax system (tackling tax evasion) and the expenditure process (tackling corruption) would yield an additional 1.8% of GDP by the end of the program. Adding the 5% of GDP of structural measures already decided under European peer pressure over the previous months makes for a total consolidation package equal to 16% of annual GDP (Janssen, 2010, p.2).

In practical terms, this "tighten of the belt" meant civil service layoffs, cuts upon the minimum wage and pensions, weakening of job security in order to make the labor market more flexible and a series of property taxes. Dimitris Venieris (2013) mentions in his article "Crisis Social Policy and Social Justice: the case for Greece" that "the emergency policies adopted included heavy and socially 'blind' horizontal cuts in income and spending, matched with significant rises in direct and indirect taxation" (p.21). Even minimum and minimal pensions were cut down and severe cost - cut policies in the health sector still threat the viability of public health services.

In the employment field the "crisis policy" was characterized by an unprecedented assault to long-established worker's rights. The minimum wage was reduced to 560 euros (and soon it will plummet to 476 euros) in order to improve competition. Moreover, following the "corrective" IMF recommendations the total decrease in salaries in both the public and the private sector is estimated to around 25% (Venieris, 2013). Venieris (2013) very aptly mentions that "shrinking rights of employees are matched with almost scandalously expanding rights of employers" (p.26). At the same time and while people of medium and low incomes are suffering from the heavy taxation and the cutbacks in their wages, the matters of tax and contribution evasion remain untouched and even under these critical conditions there is still a "favorable"

treatment and an "opting –out" policy for powerful, "untouchable" groups (Matsaganis 2012, cited in Venieris, 2013, p. 26).

Eurostat tables show the reality beyond all the "salvation" measures: unemployment rates have risen from 6,6 % in May 2008 to 16,6 % in May 2011 (Kentikelenis et all, 2011), 23,08 % in May 2012 and reaching according with the last estimations to 26,7 % in March 2013 (Eurostat tables[15]). The GDP per capita has plummeted from 94$ in 2009 to 79$ in 2011 (Eurostat tables[16]). According with research conducted by the Hellenic Statistical Service, 19,7% of the population was in risk of poverty in 2009,   with the equivalent percentage for children aged 0-17 years (child poverty) coming up to 23.7%. In 2011 the percentage has risen to 21,4% for the general population and the one for children remains stable to 23,7%[17]. Needless to say, the immediate outcome of all the above, was political unrest and social upheaval. Most of the people felt that both the European Union and the European Central Bank failed to provide an effective plan when the crisis erupted. Instead they responded with punitive and unfair measures rather than with solidarity (Venieris, 2013). There were voices that accused Europe and America (banks and Wall Street) of secretly being part of scandalous and secret financial agreements and economic misconduct in Greece - behaviors that, after the crisis eruption, they were eager to exploit or forget accordingly with their interests.

Contrary to the expectations of Troika and the Greek Government, all the aforementioned measures did not manage to meet their promised economic targets for the arranged amount of time. The Greek Adjustment program could not meet its primary goals and Greece now faces an even higher debt. Deficit cuts to economic activity, loss of jobs and of course lower than expected tax revenue can force the economy into stagnation. A punitive policy of "slashing" deficits cannot guarantee growth and "with economic activity as well as prices being pushed downward by aggressive fiscal cuts, the denominator effect of falling GDP pushes an already high debt ratio even higher" (Janssen, 2010, p. 5).

IMF and the other lenders declare that the Greek structural adjustment program, painful as it may be, it will, finally and in the long-term, save and restore the economy

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[15]http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&language=en&pcode=teilm020&tableSelection=1&plugin=1

[16]http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114

[17] Hellenic Statistical Authority: http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE

of the country. In contrast with these public declarations, there are plenty of examples from countries of the Global South that show the failure of the neo-liberal policies and implementations of The IMF. From 1980's when "IMF riots" swept through the Global South up until the progression of 90s, populations in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe still suffer under the "second generation structural adjustment" with loan repayment conditions deepening their hold on debtor states (Habib, Pillay, & Desai, 1998; Patel & McMichael, 2004). Unfortunately, things seem to go that way for Greece as well. Not only economy is not showing any signs of recovery but in April, 2013, an additional loan of 2,8 billion euros was granted to the Greek government in exchange of a new series of austerity measures and reforms[18] (article in the newspaper Kathimerini, April 29, 2013).

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[18] http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_29/04/2013_496655

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss about the changes that had to be made in my initial plans concerning the fieldwork. I will proceed with the issue of me gaining access to the field. Afterwards, the matter of my epistemic thoughts and how these determined my choice of the sampling process will be presented. I will continue with a description of the participants and the matter of their informed consent. Continuing, there will be a presentation of the methods and tools used for gathering and analyzing data. I will conclude this chapter with a discussion upon ethical issues I faced during the fieldwork. These had to do with my role as a researcher and the emerging issues of power, as well as with matters of confidentiality, anonymity and invasion of privacy. Moreover, I will finally describe the challenge that the "taboo" notion of poverty posed to this research.

3.1 Initial ideas and the inescapable changes.

Initially I thought that I should conduct my research through a school, thus it could give me access to a respectable amount of children. I had already an elementary school in mind, the same school I went to as a child. It would have been easy for me to gain access there since I already knew some of the teachers. Moreover, some of my old neighbors had children who attended that school and they could vouch for me. Unfortunately, since my research should be completed during summer such a plan was immediately abandoned because the school would be closed due to summer vacations. In Greece the summer school break lasts from the middle of June up until early September so it would be impossible for me to conduct a proper research in the short period of June. Instead I opted for the snowball sampling method in order to gather my participants. Also, when it came to the usage of my planned methods, there were practical problems that made me change or re-design some of them.

3.2 The actual Fieldwork

3.2.2 Entry to the Field: "welcomes and closed doors"

My fieldwork research was conducted in the homes or the working places of the participants. They were divided in three major categories: the children, their parents and various stakeholders. By saying stakeholders I mean teachers, governmental social workers and people working at NGOs. In order to start my research I had first to gain acceptance by each one of them. Contrary to my initial

impression, I found out that sometimes gaining access to individual homes was significantly far more difficult than gaining access to the workplaces of the stakeholders. The first days of my fieldwork I concentrated all my efforts on contacting and gain access to the stakeholders first, thinking I will not have any problem whatsoever to find families and most importantly children participants. Because of that, my very first step to the field was a focus group discussion with a group of teachers at the elementary school that I attended as a child. I was accepted there immediately since, as I mentioned previously, I already knew some of the teachers. They were happy and proud that a child "of their own" came to visit after so long and is doing now an academic research.

When it came to NGOs my initial plan was to interview people from the two main organizations in Greece that work with destitute children that have fallen from the society safety net. These were the SOS villages and an NGO named "The Smile of the Child" (in Greek: "Το χαμόγελο του παιδιού" – "to hamogelo tou pediou")[19]. Even before I went back home for the official research, I had contacted both the organizations introducing myself, explaining my interest and my future research plans. A social worker from "The Smile of the Child" replied to my e-mail almost immediately and we continued our communication up until I came to Greece. Then, we scheduled a meeting in the NGOs premises for an interview.

Unfortunately, I did not have the same results from the SOS villages. I was particularly interested to interview some of the stakeholders there since there are some articles released in whom the very interesting term of "economic orphans" is mentioned. By this it is implied that some parents have come to a dead-end because of unemployment and serious financial problems so they leave their children in the care of the organization[20]. Even though I was majorly intrigued by such allegations I was not given an opportunity to actually investigate upon the matter or at least interview some of the social workers that work there.

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[19] http://www.hamogelo.gr/42.2/Who-we-are

[20] http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/15/world/europe/greece-economic-orphans and http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2346622/Orphans-EU-meltdown-The-shocking-picture-shows-middle-class-parents-Greece-dumping-children-orphanages-wont-starve.html

Another major difficulty I faced was when I tried to approach governmental social workers. When I tried to ask a social worker appointed in the district I lived for an interview, I found her especially hesitant to do so, no matter my credentials or other people vouching for me. In general, knowing how "the system" works here in Greece, I was never depending only upon my credentials but I tried to have an insider to every place of interest vouching for me. Unfortunately, knowing "a friend of a friend" could actually open more doors to a researcher rather than a recommendation letter. Fortunately enough for me, I was lucky to find this "friend of a friend" in the face of a children psychologist during an interview I had with her. She helped me with so many aspects of my fieldwork, first and foremost by introducing me to her best friend who had a leading position in the Social Services of Alimos, a middle/upper class suburb of Athens. This secured me a focus group discussion with all the social workers working there, admittedly one of the most enlightening experiences I had during this research.

As mentioned before, securing access to children was extremely difficult. The first challenge I had to surpass was the "adult gatekeepers". Children are surrounded and guarded by adults who can control and even limit the researcher's access to them. As Thomas and O'kane (1998) similarly mention about their research, there were cases of children wanting to take part but whose concerned "gatekeepers" prevented them from doing so. Even if adults cannot legally deny the child's right to participate to the research, they are always in control of the places – homes and schools – that interviews may take place (Masson, 2004; Punch, 2002). This proved to be a problem for me since all the interviews with the children would happen in their houses where it would be difficult to obtain privacy. Parents were "hovering around" and it was not always easy for the children to open up and entrust me with more private issues. Moreover, I had to respect and acknowledge the authority of the parents. As Abebe (2009) argues, "researchers often speak to the 'heads' of the households rather than to 'subordinate' members within them, focusing on children *per se* might have risked being seen as a threat to adult authority and power" (p. 457).

Although I had contacted most of my social circle and family long before I leave Norway, asking everyone I knew to help me find some participants or participate themselves, I was very disappointed when I went back home. Most of the possible participants were not very eager to let a stranger in their house, near their

children, asking questions that she should not ask. According to Hood, Kelley, and Mayall (1996) "The privacy of the home has high value… for researchers who are also strangers, to enter the home and ask questions, however sympathetic, is an invasion, and a crossing of traditional boundaries between the public and the private" (p. 119). Supporting all the above, comes the ancient saying that I mentioned earlier: "whatever happens in the house must stay in the house and never go public". I was perceived to be "the public" and the mater I was researching was considered very sensitive. Parents wanted to protect their children from grim realities and words like "poverty" and "misery".

It must be mentioned here that "poverty" is a taboo word in Greece. People do not pronounce it easily even if they are actually confronting it in their daily lives. Most of the people are taught from a very young age that they should hide their hardships and not go public with them. Suffering is considered a matter to be endured silently and within the safety of the family. In the context of the fieldwork though, this was actually the main reason behind the difficulty I had to find eager participants for the research. Since financial problems or potential poverty are considered "taboo" and very personal, most of my participants were initially very skeptical when it came to accept me in their house, to talk to me or to entrust their children with me. Even though I was Greek myself, raised with the same values and having the same beliefs, I was not immediately accepted since I was considered a "stranger", a person outside the circle of their "own people". The only reason why I managed to interview my participants, both adults and children, was the fact that I was introduced and vouched for by another person of their family or close circle.

As a general rule, people are extremely hospitable and they will welcome everyone into their house warmly and generously, even if they lack the means. Nevertheless, this does not in any case mean that a stranger will be let into the family secrets easily. Understandably, if this stranger breaks the social rule and starts asking the "wrong" questions or probing around mouthing the "poverty" word, can be considered as a heavy insult and as being ungrateful to your host.

During the fieldwork, I was very lucky to meet a child psychologist who was kind enough to let me have a pilot interview with her 6 year old daughter in order to try out my methods. Afterwards she introduced me to some other friends of hers that

agreed to participate with their children in my research. After that my luck seemed to change, since other families that I initially contacted started to emerge, accepting to participate. I managed to gain their trust by being very polite and by assuring them times and again about the anonymity and confidentiality of the research. Actually, this is how I managed to win access in this stronghold: I realized that for them it was far more important to reassure them about their anonymity and my integrity rather than to inform them about the purpose of the research. And truth be told, when we built rapport and felt comfortable with me they were eager to leave me with their children without them hovering around.

Last but not least, I think that my gender played a very important part in me gaining access to the field in general. Being a female was perceived as a non-threatening fact by the families. Moreover all of my stakeholder participants (teachers - social workers) were female and I think that this made the rapport building easier. Similarly, Sollis and Moser (1991) mention that women researchers are more successful in obtaining sensitive information from other women (cited in Harrison, 2006).

3.2.3 Epistemology and the Sampling Process
According to Muis, Bendixen, and Haerle (2006) Epistemology is "the theory of knowledge and knowing, is a branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope, general basis, and justification of belief" (p.4). Educational researchers are increasingly interested in the individuals' beliefs about the nature of knowledge and knowing-or epistemic beliefs, namely about how knowledge is acquired and the theories and beliefs they hold about knowing (ibid.). Below I will attempt to convey my epistemic beliefs and, thus, justify my choice of sampling process.

Every sampling method is adopted in order to lead us in generating knowledge through our participants. In my opinion knowledge is not something that can only be contained in books, articles or in the minds of various "wisdom –holders". Knowledge can emerge through an active research, through dialectic procedures with the participants or even through every part of a research planning. This is why we should always consider that the sampling method itself can produce knowledge as well. I chose to use the Snowball sampling method, which is by itself very flexible,

interactive and non-static, thus it is very useful in the contexts of social research. As Noy (2008) very eloquently describes it:

> *...knowledge, then, does not exist solely in an objective form, inside a container. When viewed in this light, sampling procedures in qualitative research are not instrumental means whose sole purpose is to enable access to knowledge. Instead, these procedures entail knowledge in and of itself. Snowball sampling illustrates this argument clearly: it is essentially social because it both uses and activates existing social networks. Attending to this dimension, ties the sampling procedure to other aspects and phases of the research.* (p.332)

As mentioned above, I used the snowballing sampling method in order to gather my participants. According with Noy (2008), "a sampling procedure may be defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses informants through contact information that is provided by other informants" (p.330). This basically means that a participant can actually refer the researcher to another possible participant of her or his own social background, thus causing a repetitive "chain" of references which resembles the snowball effect. According to Atkinson and Flint (2001), snowball sampling method offers practical advantages if the purpose of the study is descriptive, qualitative and explorative. It is valued when there are few participants and when a level of trust is needed to initiate contact (ibid.). In snowball sampling trust is established with referrals from peers or acquaintances (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Since I had few participants to start with and since I needed their referrals and contacts, I found snowball sampling very useful.

However, snowball samples have their deficiencies. Namely there are problems of representativeness and sampling principles: snowball samples are depended on the subjective choices that the first participants make, thus they are biased towards the inclusion of individuals with inter-relationships (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). In order to overcome these difficulties I tried to contact many people and broaden the sample with participants from different backgrounds, without depending solely on the original few and their referrals. Following what Willis (2006) stresses, I tried to start with as many contacts possible and I kept reflecting on the nature of the participants in order to maximize the diversity of the sample.

As I mentioned beforehand, I contacted my social circle first asking for help in finding eager participants. Unfortunately, most of my initial contacts were not able to help me initially due to a lack of understanding in the kind of the participants I was interested in. For some of my possible participants that I had established contact with before I come to Greece, I discovered that due to unpredictable engagements and emergencies could not take part in the study. I also mentioned about my research in every social gathering I attended. I found that in many cases people were eager to help me by introducing me to possible participants but after some days I would find out that they had totally forgotten about me. I can say that many times I felt discouraged on the initial stages of the fieldwork. Nevertheless, in more than one occasions I was happy and honored to see that some people would go to a great length to help me, even if that meant that they sacrificed some of their personal free time.

As for the actual participants, not all of them were quick to introduce me to members of their own social circle after the interview. Understandably, I had to rely in parents introducing to me other parents since I knew that if I broke the adult-gatekeeper "hierarchical chain" I would face difficulties. Ideally I should approach the children in order to introduce me to other children willing to participate. Yet, since the interviews took place at home and not in school premises, I had first and foremost to deal with the parents. After all, home can regularly be seen as their "kingdom". The parents who participated eagerly in the research and they were interviewed along with their children, they were somewhat hesitant to introduce me to others. They did not want to "impose" or even insinuate to their friends that they would be interviewed for a delicate matter such as poverty. I managed to overcome their initial reluctance by assuring them that their help was invaluable and that introducing me to others with similar problems to their, was crucial for my research. When they realized that I was also a person in need of help as well and not a "cold researcher" that came to ask questions around, they helped me a lot.

Overall, the snowball sampling system worked out really well but it certainly needed time, persistence and patience on my behalf. If I was to offer an opinion on the matter, the longest and the most complex someone plans to gather participants before he or she starts a research, the most possible it is for many things to go wrong. Perhaps it is best to plan accordingly with the situations on hand during the research and go with the flow.

3.2.4. The participants – a brief description

- **The Children:** Due to the snowball sampling process, I did not have the luxury of setting neither a strict age limit on the participants, nor specific localities in which I would contact the research. I went to wherever the participants lived and I "embraced" every age. Every child from the age of 6 to 18 could participate. The only stipulation was that one or both of their parents had to be unemployed or recently fired from their job. I interviewed 14 children aged from 6 to 18, 6 girls and 8 boys. The biggest part of the sample was consisting of adolescents aged 11-15. For an analytical table with the pseudonyms, gender and age of the participants, please see Appendix B.

  For this study I tried to establish polyphony in order to see how the consequences of the crisis affected children of different categories and how poverty was generally perceived. Thus, the participants lived in different suburbs with different social backgrounds, so I have data from lower, middle and upper class families. I repeat here, that this distinction was done intuitively and based on the participants' opinion (both children and parents) of their status. The children attended both public and private schools. I also tried to include children coming from families with many siblings, children of parents which were immigrants or of different educational levels. All children were eager to help me and although initially prompted by their parents to participate, at the end they made clear that they wanted their voices to be heard.

- **The Parents:** My initial goal was to also interview the parents of all the children who participated. Although I managed to do so with only five of them, it was not always practical to include everyone. Some of them did not have the time to participate due to their jobs or some, especially mothers, had so many things to do in their household that it was challenging or even inappropriate to try and interview them.

- *NGO "The smile of the Child"*: It is a non-profit, voluntarily organization whose main concern is defending the children's rights. As they declare in their official web-page they are doing so in practice by providing *services "*to children on a 24-hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year-basis, working for their physical, mental, and psychological stability*"[21]*. The smile of the Child cooperates closely with all

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[21] Official page of "The Smile of the Child": http://www.hamogelo.gr/42.2/Who-we-are

state authorities (Police, the General Attorney's Office, hospitals etc.) but also with all responsible individuals wishing to contribute to alleviating issues affecting children. They have a number of offices in different suburbs of Athens, as well as in different cities or islands in Greece. There is also a number of houses all over Greece where children who have fallen under the society net are hosted. I have interviewed one of the social workers that work in Athens. She was the person who responded my initial mail of establishing contact. We had an in-depth interview where we discussed about the ways the organization functions, the current situation of the families and children in need of support in Greece, the ways children negotiate the difficult situations they face and along with their concerns.

- **Teachers and school owners**: As mentioned before, I had a focus group discussion with a group of five teachers in an elementary school of the suburb of Neos Kosmos[22]. It is considered to be middle – lower class suburb with a strong presence of immigrants, mainly from Albania, Russia, Bulgaria and a smaller percentage from middle-eastern countries. The children in this school actually depict this multicultural background. Most of the teachers were living in the area near the school and they were working there for several years. Two of them were my old teachers since this was the same school I attended quite some years ago. All of them are married and have children of their own so during the discussion were giving their opinion not only as professionals but as working mothers too. Additionally, I interviewed the owner of a kindergarten in the suburb of Alimos. She had a dual participant role: she was asked questions that had to do with her profession and experience with children. At the same time she had an unemployed husband and two teenage daughters, so she answered questions about the situation within her family. One of her daughters was in the kindergarten premises and she accepted to participate in the research as well. Last but not least, I interviewed an owner of a small, private prep – school for children with difficulties in doing their homework. Her school was also in the suburb of Alimos.

- **A children psychologist**: I met Katerina through a dear friend and she immediately agreed to participate in the research. As I mentioned before, she also

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[22] In the Index section a map of Athens with all the suburbs mentioned can be found.

gave me permission to do my pilot interview with her 6–year-old daughter. She introduced me to other participants and most importantly to the manager of the Social Services of the suburb of Alimos. She also participated under a dual role: both as a professional and as a mother who dealt with recent financial troubles in the family.

- **Social Services of the municipality of Alimos:** Social Services in Greece have an office in every municipality. I had a focus group discussion with two of the social workers and their manager in their premises in Alimos. As I understood, they were the main workforce there and all three ladies have been working for years in the service. According with Maria, the manager, the social services of Alimos are helping local people with various kinds of problems. Beyond the provision of basic and psychological support, their duties also include referencing people to more specialized services, according with their problems. When it comes to families and children, the last two years they have an increased influx of requests that are closely connected with poverty and unemployment. They have also started to support materially more than 250 families. The services provide them with food and basic necessities along with vouchers and gift cards for grocery shopping. Maria confessed that the number of such requests for support is growing rapidly thus their ability to provide and help is tested.

In general, we discussed about the groups of people who come to ask for material support: their profiles, their problems and how they handle them. Moreover we talked about poverty and how it is manifested in the families as an outcome of the crisis, along with the psychological and social implications of it. They also revealed to me the difficulties they face as social workers when they are called to support all these people with minimal means in their disposal.

3.2.5. Informed consent

As Ennew, Abebe, Bangyai, Karapituck, and Kjørholt (2009) state , informed consent means that a participant has agreed to take part in the research after being fully informed and understanding the research aims and methods, the topic of the research and most importantly that she or he can withdraw from it at any time they wish. In this research I managed to get both verbal and written informed consent by the children and their parents. I had four different kinds of informed consent

forms: one for young children – aged from 7 to 10, one for adolescents, one for parents and one for the various stakeholders (teachers, social workers, etc.).This was done in order for me to establish that each form is context-specific and language-appropriate for each age, thus maximizing its understanding from the participants. Every form had two identical parts: one for the participant to keep and one for the researcher. On the top of the form there was a field where the participant noted down hers or his personal number. After that there was no need for names, except for pseudonyms for the children participants. The consent was declared by the participant's signature. For all the different types of consent forms, please refer to Appendix F.

In general, I first established verbal consent with the parents by talking to them over the telephone and afterwards I visited their house. In every case I was aware that I relied to the parents in order to gain the verbal consent of their child before I visit them. Of course I always had in mind that "any coercion by the parent remains hidden from the researcher" (Valentine, 1999b cited in Bushin, 2007, p. 239). After I informed the parents in detail about my research, I obtained the written consent of both the children and the parents who wanted to participate. Sometimes, verbal consent was so much more important for everyone, so that the signatures scribbled on the form were just a mere formality. In some cases, adult participants thought that the forms were an unnecessary formality that we could do without. In my opinion, this was not because they were cautious about signing them but because they were reluctant to skim through the text, especially after I had already informed them orally about the research. In order to overcome their reluctance, I explained to them that the form actually ensures the confidentiality and anonymity context of the research, plus it gives information about me, along with my cellphone number and e-mail. I urged them to read everything carefully before they sign.

The children on the other hand, were very partial to the forms. The request of a signature felt very "adult-like" to them, mostly because they felt empowered. Moreover the fact that they had to choose a pseudonym created a sense of game out of this and most of the times they were really pleased to check through the form. Actually, sometimes they were keener to keep them, rather than their

drawings. All in all, I would say that I did not face any particular challenges in obtaining the participants' consent.

3.3 Research methods

Earlier in this chapter I mentioned about my epistemic beliefs and how these prompted me to choose a sampling method. The same beliefs dictated the methods I chose to use. Since knowledge can emerge through dialectic procedures, I wished to hold dialogue as the cornerstone of the research methods. Therefore it was my decision to mainly use individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. In this way I could gather information through dialectic, dynamic and flexible procedures.

My initial plans when it came to methods were including some impressive and creative research tools. For example, I was planning to have photo-interviews with children along with the standard interviews. These would include the children taking pictures of their home, their meals, toys, rooms, weekend activities. My pilot interview was indicative of the fact that this was not practical or plausible, both because I had little time with the children and because parents were somewhat reluctant. Needless to say, this plan no matter how creative it seemed in the beginning, it was proved to be problematic. Time was of the essence in each method I used. I had to be flexible, aware of the time limitations and of the children's and parents' tolerance. In a nutshell, the standard meeting with the participants was a triad of ice-breaking techniques, interviews and protection tools.

My initial plans also included me taking diligent field notes while interviewing. This did not work from the very start. Adults and teenagers were very weary when I stopped eye-contact and started writing, thinking that I was making some sort of evaluation in what they actually say. Younger children were very suspicious when they saw me taking notes on what they said, partly because they thought that this was what a teacher would do. Since I did not want to compromise the trust the participants were showing to me, I abandoned every attempt to take notes. Instead, I was completing my researcher's journal after every meeting, trying to include as many things I could remember. Willis (2006) similarly mentions that note taking can indeed influence the participant and that also one needs great skill in order

to combine note-taking, paying attention to what is discussed and prepare one's next questions.

For an explanatory and summarizing table of all methods and tools used, please see Appendix C.

3.3.1 "Ice-breakers" and Life maps or else "The Journey of life"

Since I was granted only one meeting with the children, I did not have much time to slowly build rapport with them before the interviews. For this reason, I had to do something radical to gain their trust somewhat instantly and to "break the ice" between us relatively quickly. As Kilanowski (2012) argues, ice-breakers help the researcher to bond with the participants. All the children participants, irrelevant to their age, were understandably timid or shy when we first met. Even the most social of them were very hesitant to talk to me at first, since at the beginning they could not classify my adult role. Was I a teacher? Was I a friend of their parents, hence another adult of the "parent-world"? Perhaps I was a "scientist" that I was there to evaluate them! In Greece the household is parent-dominated. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, parents seldom seek their children's opinion in family matters. Consequently, the presence of an unknown adult in the house is automatically connected with the parents and regarded with suspicion. She or he may be there to do their parents biding. This was a notion from which I wanted to disengage myself. Moreover I did not want to appear as an authority figure.

Before I even met the children I made sure that I was dressed simply and with vibrant colors. No blacks, no strict, teacher –like clothes. The moment I stepped into the house I greeted the parents first but I forwarded my attention to the children as soon as possible. First and foremost, I explained as simply as I could who I was, my research and its purpose and I always underlined that I was in their house because I needed their help. After I ensured their informed consent I proceeded with "The Journey of Life". This is a life-mapping tool where participants can tell about the "fateful moments" in their lives, may they be moments of adversity or periods of empowerment (Worth, 2011). Life maps are situated within participatory diagramming traditions and they are extremely useful when participants may have a difficulty to get their opinions across verbally (ibid). Nevertheless, diagramming can be used when communication is not an issue since it gives participants a different way

of expressing themselves and adds another layer of knowledge to a research (Gordon et al., 2000). A negative aspect of using this tool has to do with the fact that time could appear as being purely linear and sequential, coming in contrast with the multiplicity of people's experiences of time across the life-course (Worth, 2011). This would arguably be an issue if data collection was depended mainly on the Life-map tool, something which was not the case in this research.

In my case, Life map was to be used more as a tool that would introduce me to my participants and less as a means for data collection. I had prepared an A4 cardboard paper on which I had drawn the most important things that happened in my life from the day I was born, both good and bad[23]. I even included some very personal details like the separation of my parents and my father's death. In this way I opened up to children and led them to meet a deeper "me". After that I gave them a cardboard paper and I encouraged them to draw their Journey of Life. Although most of the younger children were imitating the outlines of my life map, they were including their own personal moments and after the initial drawings they became more creative.

Most teenagers who were insecure or a little bit embarrassed of drawing - since in their minds it was a younger child's activity- chose to narrate their moments by writing them down, or presenting them in cloud- like bubbles. No matter the way, during this procedure I could see the children relaxing, opening up and growing more and more eager to explain to me their drawings of life moments or to narrate funny incidents. Sometimes they even told me their own intimate and personal stories, perhaps not so "dramatic" as an adult could expect, but obviously they mend the world to them. I remember fondly of a seven-year old girl who entrusted me with the fact that two years ago she was raiding secretly her elder sister's candy stash!

Perhaps it could be argued that by presenting my participants with my life map at first was actually a "forced" way of generating data, or that I guided them through it. I will argue that I used this method not to solely generate data but mainly as a way of building rapport. I could see the change in the children's face as I was telling them my "story" without me being afraid of showing emotion. I was not a teacher, a mom or a grown –up any more. I was like them. I could see their acceptance. Perhaps this is because they have learned that secrets should stay in the house and that only friends

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[23] See a copy in Appendix D

and peers are sharing them. After all, it is not common for an adult to share secrets with children. Teenagers were equally accepting me but I noticed they were a tad more reluctant of sharing their secrets. For them the adult reality of "whatever happens in the house stays in the house" is more concrete. I could see that they were elaborating more in what they were writing down or drawing.

In general, no parents or adults were present when we discussed Life Maps with children. This made them more open and eager to share, prioritize and define their own important moments in their lives. This complimented the interview process since it gave me an insight of the significance given by the children to various situations, thus questions were generated or altered in order to elaborate more on their views and thoughts.

3.3.2 Individual Semi – structured Interviews

Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) state that interview is a professional conversation which is based on the every-day life conversations. "It is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (ibid. , p. 2). I chose to use semi-structured interviews which according to Ennew et al. (2009) they are relatively informal and the researcher is using a list of questions or themes instead of a fixed questionnaire. In this way, participants can have certain control over the course of the discussion and they can tell their story in their own way, something which is more enjoyable for them (ibid.). Moreover, the researcher may be inspired to new interpretations to well-known phenomena when reading the transcribed interviews, so interviews can substantially contribute to new knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008). Yet, the simplicity of the interview due to its resemblance to every-day conversation can be deceptive (ibid). If there is not preceding preparation and reflection from the part of the researcher, then spontaneous interviews may lead to the reproduction of common opinions and prejudices (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

The semi-structured interviews I conducted with the children moved from general to topic-specific questions about their lives, their parents' employment status, their expenses and their perceptions of poverty or financial difficulties. Semi-structured interviews with adults were mainly evolving around their everyday lives as unemployed people (or as spouses of unemployed people), as well as their perceptions

about their children and their ability to handle and overcome financial troubles within the family.

On the whole, interviews were flowing without any major problems. The basic and generic questions I had noted down were used as a main "skeleton" of the interview and most questions were created as a natural continuance of what my participants were discussing about. I tried to be as flexible as possible in order not to confine the participants and let the discussion flow naturally. Many times I was going back and forth, using my noted questions, and I was returning to topics previously discussed just because the participants wanted to discuss them more or to clarify some things. I was letting them to exhaust a topic before I move on changing subject.

The basic problem I faced in my interviews was that many times my participants were carried away and they were discussing about irrelevant things regarding to the question or the topic. It was very difficult for me to actually put the whole conversation on the "right" track, especially with very young children. There were moments in what seemed an "out-of-topic" discussion though that something very interesting came out, new questions were asked and data was generated. This of course was the case with participants who were somewhat of "over-talkers". Tongue-tied children gave one-word answers or, after some prompting, they were giving a more verbal answer. In this case unfortunately, I cannot tell if these answers are spontaneous and therefore "real" enough.

Another very challenging problem I faced was that at some times, some parts of the interviews were very distressing for the participants. The most difficult occasions were when children with immigrated parents were confiding in me with sorrow about how much they were missing them. These instances were so intense that I was also feeling distraught and I remember that at some points we had to interrupt the discussion, in order for both me and the participant to take some time and calm down. In these moments I felt doubts about the usefulness of an interview and if it was worth all the emotional turbulence it caused. Robson (2001) addresses the same issue raising questions of potential harm done to the participants and also argues if the distress caused is a price worth paying for the generation of knowledge. She mentions though that children can actually find it supportive to talk to someone outside of the family so sometimes there is no issue of harm (ibid). I could say that

this was the case in this research as well. At the end, children seemed pleased that there was someone that would listen to them patiently. After all, they were confiding things which obviously did not discussed with their parents in fear of burdening them with more sadness. Robson (2001), also mentions that sometimes generating knowledge "is worth the tears" (p. 140) since invisible, poor children need allies in both academia and politics.

Regarding the parents of the children who participated, there was a problem stemming from their equal need to discuss about their problems and sorrows with a sympathetic ear. After I established rapport and they opened up to me, I had this feeling that I was perceived to be more as a psychologist rather than someone interviewing them. In my opinion though, this was a small price to pay in order to make them feel at ease with me. Parents needed someone to talk to. Additionally, after they got close with me they were more eager to give me some privacy with their children. I must note here that this made a difference to the answers I was given by the children. They all seemed eager to be interviewed alone and especially teenagers did not want their parents to "pry".

The semi-structured interviews came to be extremely useful for me when it came to discuss the issues of poverty and deprivation. Since they are both multi-faceted aspects, with different meanings for different people (Wordsworth, McPeak, & Feeny, 2007),the personal and "up-close" nature of the interviews helped me to easily built rapport and also to explore underlying beliefs and strategies, constrains and behaviors (Willis, 2006). Moreover, discussing with children through a semi-structured interview provided their points of view and their opinions on what poverty really is. I will not claim here that interviews with adults were not as useful but, for the purposes of this study, it was necessary to empower children by giving them the opportunity to be listened. After all, according to Crowley and Vulliamy (2007) the effects of poverty in children's beliefs and aspirations, along with their views on how poverty can be tackled, remain under-researched issues.

3.3.3 Focus – Group Discussions
Focus- Group Discussions are group – based interviews that typically last from 1,5 to 3 hours with the researcher in the role of a moderator who facilitates the interaction between the participants (Lloyd-Evans, 2006). They are very useful when

it comes to identify the knowledge, ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes of a group (Ennew et al., 2009) and they are best used alongside other qualitative methods, like interviews or participant observation (Lloyd-Evans, 2006). Nevertheless, focus groups are not appropriate when exploring individual motivations or behaviors and researchers often make the mistake of making assumptions on individuals' lives derived from what they hear in focus group discussions (ibid.). Moreover, it must be clear to the researcher that data gathered during these discussions reflect the views of people at that given space and time and that group opinions may be shaped by the group environment, thus losing their authenticity (Lloyd-Evans, 2006).

According to Kitzinger (1995), "the idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview" (p. 2). I could not agree more. I found most of my focus-group discussions very rewarding and interesting. Lloyd-Evans (2006) stresses that focus groups can be very time-consuming to organize and Ennew et al. (2009) emphasize on the fact that the researcher must be well prepared in advance in order to facilitate a focus group discussion; I must say that my groups were randomly formed without me knowing it. My initial plan was to create a focus group with the parents of the children participants and not to engage in one-to-one interview with them. In practice I found this being impossible because of the long distance between suburbs that the participant families lived. Hence there was considerable difficulty to find a meeting place that would suit everyone. Moreover, parents had very little time or other responsibilities, so I felt really bad to disturb them. This idea for a focus group discussion was therefore abandoned.

In total I had three focus group discussions: one with the elementary school teachers, another with the governmental social-workers in Alimos and the last one with five siblings of a large family. As I mentioned before, all three of them just randomly happened. In my appointment at the elementary school I went there having the impression that I would interview only the head-teacher. Instead, I was welcomed by all the teachers. The same happened with the social workers: I went to interview the head of the office and I found her two colleagues waiting eagerly to participate in the conversation. Last but not least, the siblings of my third group they spontaneously decided when I visited them that they wanted to be interviewed all together. Needless

to say, I had to be flexible and improvise every time I was entering a room with a group waiting.

Lloyd-Evans (2006) mentions that issues of power and social status may influence the ability of the participants to speak freely. In my case, the groups were "even" since they were consistent of colleagues –or siblings- where no power inequalities were an apparent issue. Furthermore, there were no over-powering or too silent participants so everything flowed smoothly. In case of silent participants, I tried to use eye-contact as much as possible and I was asking them direct questions in order to give them a chance to participate.

The focus group discussion with the teachers was actually my first "step" in my research so I was really stressed and nervous. Although the process was confusing in the beginning – there were six teachers – all were very understanding and helpful. Focus Group Discussions with both the teachers and the social workers helped me tremendously in understanding the collective experiences of people who are close to children in need. They also gave me an insight in the contemporary reality of children's poverty in Athens. The Focus Group Discussion with the siblings was also gratifying because, beyond the knowledge generated, I had the opportunity to witness how children communicate and debate the matters of poverty and deprivation with each other. This knowledge was a valuable implementation to data generated through the semi -structured interviews.

3.3.4. Protection Tools: Sentence completion – Drawing

According to rights-based research, there should be a final ethical tool used at the end of data collection with all the children in order to encourage positive thoughts (Ennew et al., 2009). In order to have this smooth ending after the interviews with the children I designed a protection tool. It consisted of an A4 sheet with the drawing of a little boat, a happy sailor, the sun and the sea – a pretty common Greek summer scene. In between the details of the drawing there were placed uncompleted sentences for the children to elaborate on. These were: "I feel safe…", "My best memory…", I am good at…", "The person that loves me most is…", "If I was a king or a queen..", "I like…", "I wish…". This was designed for the younger kids. Teenagers had a more "grown-up" list with pictures but with the same questions. [24] Both teenagers and

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[24] See both protection tools on Appendix E

younger children had questions about some sentences, wanting me to clarify what kind of answers I would like. I explained to them that this is not a test and that I want for them to think freely and write the first thing it comes to mind.

In general I had some very interesting answers. I cannot vouch though about the spontaneity of these answers as the sentence completion came after the interview so the children were affected by the previous conversations. Perhaps there would have been totally different answers if we had done this at the beginning, before the interview. Nevertheless, children really liked that part. Even when they were tired and bored after the interviewing, I did not see them rushing through the sentence completion list. They took their time to complete the sentences and they thought each one of them very carefully. There is no doubt that some of the answers were moving within the margins of social- acceptance. Not every answer is sanctified though. Some of them were in accordance with what children were saying during the interview.

Drawing was another protection tool I had in store for younger children. Although it was pretty interesting, the children and I did not manage to practice it often mainly due to lack of time and concentration on behalf of the children. After approximately 35 to 40 minutes it was impossible for me to keep their attention, even for something fun like drawing. Unfortunately, I did not have the luxury for a second meeting with them in order to arrange a drawing session.

3.3.5 Observation and Research Diary

According to Ennew et al. (2009) "watching (observation) is a researcher-centered method that is a continuous accompaniment to all other methods" (p. 5.7) and it is the basis of all good research. Unstructured observations that "record people, surroundings, sounds and speech, events, overheard comments, noises, smells, behavior and body language" can be extremely useful in a research (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 5.9). Since unstructured observation consist the "background" of the fieldwork, occurring alongside with all the aforementioned methods, I chose to mention it last without diminishing though its significance.

At all-time during the fieldwork, unstructured observation was preceding and complimenting the methods I used. Observing the surroundings or the neighborhoods the children lived or their houses was important since it gave me valuable information about their lives. Moreover, a random comment, a particular gesture, a facial

expression or any non-verbal communication were also complimentary during Life-mapping, the focus group discussions and the interviews. Something that was not officially spoken out it was commuted to me with a simple look. Judging by their expressions, I could understand when my participants were uncomfortable with the topic discussed or if they needed more privacy before opening up. Gestures of impatience declared when the children "had enough" and wanted to be done with the interviews. Random comments or actions from children or adults prior the interviews or the focus group discussions could generate questions and would make me understand more about the personalities of my participants. Observing was an all-time and sometimes even subconscious procedure. After all, it is a "daily activity" and the researcher should never be "off-duty" (Ennew et al., 2009, p. 5.9).

Unstructured observations were written down to my research diary which proved to be an indispensable tool. Apart from my daily observations of the fieldwork, I wrote down a summary of what happened each day and with whom, comments that I wished to elaborate upon, information about my participants, problems that I faced along with brainstorming about possible solutions. Moreover, in my research journal I had stored my thematic questions used in the interviews along with all notes made for implementation or altering these same questions. Admittedly, it was challenging to keep a very detailed diary since I was always short on time and I had decided to abstain from keeping notes during the interviews or the group discussions. I remember that in many occasions I jotted down my notes in brief breaks during the interviews, inside crowded buses or trains or in speeding taxis. Nevertheless, I tried to use any time available to be as detailed as possible without leaving the diary-writing process for the next day (Ennew et al., 2009).

3.4 Data Analysis

According to Ennew et al. (2009), "analysis is a systematic process of sorting and re-sorting the data in different ways so that trends, links, similarities and gaps are identified" (p. 7.26). Moreover, analysis is a process through which patterns and trends in the data are explained (ibid). I chose to process my data using thematic analysis which is the most common quantitative analytic method in social studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Roulston, 2001). Nevertheless it is "poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, organizing and analyzing patterns or themes within data (Braun &

Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2011). Themes represent a meaning or a specific pattern found in the data (Joffe, 2011).

The most positive aspect of using thematic analysis is that it is a flexible research tool with its flexibility stemming from a theoretical independence and freedom (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, the absence of distinct guidelines may sometimes lead to a frivolous way of using thematic analysis (ibid). Indeed, there is no common agreement upon the nature of thematic analysis or upon the ways one could use it (Boyatzis, 1998). During the thematic analysis of my data I followed the guidelines given by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to them, there are five phases that a researcher should go through:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes

(Braun & Clarke, 2006)

During the first stage, I started by transcribing the interviews and the focus group discussions. Although the procedure seemed tedious and tiring, it was the first step towards my familiarization with the data on hand. Afterwards, I read through the data more than two times while I was actively taking notes at the same time. My notes had to do with possible themes or ways of coding. At the second stage, I began coding my data into meaningful groups (Aronson, 1994; Tuckett, 2005) using different colors. Then I transferred everything into tables in order to make an easier distinction between the groups and the data attributed to each one. During the third stage, I combined the different codes into potential themes which were revised thoroughly many times. I ended up producing the main themes and a number of subthemes under some of them.

At the fourth stage I read through the data under each theme searching for a coherent pattern and in order to ascertain if these themes are functional and relevant to the data set. Finally, during stage five, I further read through the themed data trying to capture the "essence" of each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006,

p. 92). Moreover, I tried to connect this "essence" with the general context of my data by producing definitions about the themes and what they entailed. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) it is "important that by the end of this phase you can clearly define what your themes are and what they are not" (p. 92).

3.5 Ethical Dilemmas

It is thought that there is not an unique ethical scheme that all researchers should follow to the letter, therefore it depends upon the researcher to be conscious and find his or her own way to build his ethics framework and resolve ethical issues stemming from his or her research (Ennew et al., 2009). Every research though is presenting to the researcher different kinds of ethical problems and dilemmas according to the topic. In my case I can pinpoint the four major ethical problems I encountered as follows:

3.5.1 My role as a researcher

One of my main concerns was that, since I was doing the research in the city I grew up in, I would be "home- blind" and my perceptions will be clouded by my personal experiences. On the other hand, because of the fact that I am an "insider" it was easier for me to gain access and acceptance. As Unwin (2006) stresses, it is much easier for an "insider" to gain valuable knowledge witnessing particular social situations which normally remain close to outsiders, It was also easier for my participants to share their experiences with me since I was "one of them" (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Doing research "at home" has many practical benefits as well: one does not need to worry about being familiarized with the setting and solving everyday, practicality issues (Unwin, 2006). Moreover, working in one's own language is considerably advantageous (ibid.). Nevertheless, there is always the notion that unprejudiced knowledge about groups is accessible only to nonmembers of those groups (Zinn, 1979). There is also the possibility that the participants will be more afraid of the consequences when revealing sensitive information to a local researcher rather than a foreigner (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012) . I managed to surpass this "insider" – "outsider" conundrum by constantly reflecting and taking notes of my presumptions on what I was going to hear or discover during the interview. Being aware of them helped me to be as less "home-blind" as possible.

What is more, issues of power had to be addressed as well. As Brydon (2006) mentions a researcher should be "context-sensitive, honest and up-frond about his/her own interests and how they affect the research" (p. 28). I was very concerned of forcing my pre-conceived notions not only to children but on their caregivers as well, consequently eliciting "desirable" answers by influencing them. In somewhat the same context, I wondered if I would listen carefully and respect children's agency or the adult researcher in me will overwhelm everything. Thus, I had to reflect both upon my role as a researcher and my methods in nearly every step of the fieldwork. Being reflexive helped me to keep my preconceived notions for children at bay and also to be open and receptive of their views and opinions. As Samantha Punch mentions: "Reflexivity should be a central part of the research process with children, where researchers critically reflect not only on their role and their assumptions, but also on the choice of methods and their application" (Punch, 2002, p.323). In addition to all the above, I tried to always keep in mind how important it is to treat children "as mature and knowledgeable persons" (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012, p.88).

3.5.2 Confidentiality and the danger of over - disclosure

Masson (2004) mentions that research confidentiality encompasses taking considerable care not to reveal any information to those connected with the participant and disclose information only in ways that protect the identity of those providing it. Anonymizing the participants and changing or omitting facts that may be used to identify them, are necessary procedures (ibid). I managed to ensure the anonymity of the children participants by giving them the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. Their real name was not collected or used at all. As for the adults, I collected no names or pseudonyms whatsoever. What I did as a researcher to "identify" the participants, was that I gave to each one a serial number which they noted on their consent form. I kept this number on a list along with the region where the participants lived and their age (for children) or their occupation (for adults). This list was carefully stored and watched at all times. It was something made for my eyes only. What is more, my computer, with all my research material, was protected by a personal password so that no-one could have access except me.

An important advantage of conducting qualitative research is that the participants will often reveal private experiences to the researcher (Eder & Corsaro, 1999). Through such insights the researcher can appreciate the participant's

perspectives and understand complex social phenomena or experiences (Mishna, Antle, & Regehr, 2004). However, in some cases, participants can reveal too much especially when they feel at ease with the researcher. This may lead not only to awkward situations but also in ethical considerations, especially when other members of the family are involved in the narratives of the participants. Pranee Liamputtong in her book "Researching the Vulnerable" very accurately states:

> *...through the process of talking in depth, people might disclose more about their lived experiences than they thought they would do suggests that the informal atmosphere of qualitative research, particularly when it occurs in the home, may lead the participants to disclose more than what they had originally planned. When researching a family, it involves more than one family member and a disclosure of one family member may violate the privacy of others.* (Liamputtong, 2006, p. 27)

I mentioned earlier that many times I had the feeling that many parents, because of their need to let some steam out, they perceived me as a psychologist and they were entrusting me with their deeper problems. At some points though they opened up very much, quickly forgetting that I was a "stranger" to their house, even for intimate and delicate matters that had to do or affected other family members. Complaints about their spouses or their wrong-doings and narrations of tension incidents between family members were, amongst other things, indicative examples. In these cases, since I had to protect them from disclosing too much, I was immediately reminding them of my role and purpose. Most of the adults justified themselves to me afterwards by telling me that it was a relief to talk to someone outside the family about their problems, that they did not think about the sensitivity of the information disclosed. These people had so many things pending up and they needed a release. Perhaps I would have avoided such a behavior if I was stricter as a researcher but in my opinion, being sympathetic and humane gave me access to their homes and their children.

The most important and challenging issue was when children were over-disclosing sensitive information. In many cases they were eager to confide in me many personal and intimate details about their family life which were going beyond poverty or financial troubles. Although I could understand the need of the children to

"open-up" in a sympathetic ear, there were extremely awkward moments that I had to remind myself of my role. Masson (2004) stresses that the researcher should not, under any circumstances, adopt the role of a mediator, counsellor, social worker, etc. I listened to the children carefully and then most often I suggested them to tell someone who could do something about the situation (Thomas & O'kane, 1998). Afterwards, I used to subtly change the topic of our conversation. I admit I did so reluctantly, fighting an inner-need to comfort and console some of these children.

There was an instance when I was interviewing a girl who had witnessed her father physically abusing both her mother and her younger sister. The incident was recent and I was informed about it by the mother herself. The girl at several occasions, especially towards the end of the interview when she was more comfortable with me, confessed various aspects of the abuse. I listened to what she told me without interrupting her. In the end of the interview, I gave her the number of the children psychologist that helped me with the research. As Ennew et al. (2009) state, it is important to give children information about ways of seeking help, either before or at the end of the session. Moreover, in another occasion, when I met her mother again, I gave her the same number without, of course, revealing that we had such a conversation with her daughter. According to Mishna et al. (2004), children should afford the right to have control over the information revealed during research and keeping information confidential from their parents is crucial.

3.5.3 The "invasion" of home and family

For Greeks their home is as sacred as their family and most of the times these two words come together in greetings, blessings and cultural activities. Most Greeks have a strong attachment to their family and homes and both concepts are highly revered. According to T. N. Papadopoulos (1998):

…the centrality of family as a social institution in Greece is clearly manifested in ideological and symbolic terms in the social values and attitudes held by Greek men and women. In comparison to other Europeans, Greeks appear as the most strongly attached to, and supportive of, the institution of the family. (p. 1).

Since I was a part of the Greek society, I was born and raised with norms and "rules" regarding the sanctity of the family and the house. A visitor must be very respectful towards his or her host, his family and of course, their house. I was very much aware

of that every time I was ready to visit another participant. Since my planned interview questions could be thought as "prying" I was entering every house feeling cautious and careful about the questions I had to ask and about the possibly negative reactions of the participants. The last thing I wanted to do was to insult them, especially after I worked so hard to gain access to their households.

The main reason I was so aware about etiquette was because most of these people were completely strangers to me and I was meeting them for the very first time in person when I visited them for the interview. This is why I wanted to build rapport as fast as possible by lending a sympathetic ear to their problems. I knew that only in this way I could access their children. There was an imminent danger to be conceived as "stranger" not only because I did not knew them in person but also because I was leaving in another country for the time being. For a portion of the population, I could even be perceived as a "traitor" who "bailed off" when things in Greece became too tight with the financial crisis. Unfortunately, this was not an unfamiliar aspect to me since I had to battle with such preconceived notions with various people in my circle. If I faced such an accusation from my participants though, I would be perceived not only as an "invader" of their household but as an "alien" and unsympathetic person to their personal suffering and struggling as well.

3.5.4 Awareness of the "p- word"

As I wrote in the beginning of the chapter, the word "poverty" is not easily mouthed by Greek people. By many is considered a taboo. I saw that some of the participants seemed very uncomfortable when I mentioned the word. Some were reacting even in the thought that I would be asking poverty- relevant questions. There was a case that reminded the "insider" me to tread very lightly when it came to the use of this word. I wanted to interview a teenage boy that lived in a fairly well-off suburb in Athens but whose father had lost a very well-paid job for quite some time and his family had many problems to deal with at that point. When his mother told him about "this girl who wanted to come and ask him about his opinion on the crisis and his everyday life now that dad is unemployed", the boy furiously exclaimed: "She wants to ask questions to see if we are poor? We are NOT poor, we still have the basics. I see no reason to speak to her and I cannot see what reason she has to speak to me!". Fortunately, at the end, he accepted to meet me and I managed to appease him

and explain my whole research purpose, stressing the fact that I was there because I needed his help and not because I wanted to insult him or his family.

Chapter 4: Theory Presentation

In this chapter I will present the main theoretical perspectives of this study. The point of departure here is the new social studies of childhood. Continuing, I will delve in the matters of agency, coping and resilience and then I will discuss upon the structural aspect of the new paradigm, focusing on the macro-perspective theory of Jens Qvortrup (2008). Emerging from the macro-perspective discussions, I will then focus on poverty discourse followed by the concept of neoliberalism and the political economy of childhood. This chapter will be concluded with a discussion on social reproduction.

4.1 The "New" Social Studies of Childhood

During the 1990's a new paradigm for the study of childhood emerged and there are two central concepts to it: first, childhood must be understood as a social construction (Corsaro, 1997). This is the most influential aspect in the "new paradigm" as suggested by Prout and James, asserting that "childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity, is neither a natural nor universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies" (James & Prout, 1997,p. 8). As structural form, childhood is intertwined with other structural categories like social class, gender, ethnicity and age groups (James & Prout, 1997). Moreover, children are seen as social actors, constructing and reconstructing with creativity their realities and everyday lives as well as the lives of others (ibid.). Children, while living their lives in a number of social institutions, they are free to use (or not use) their agency – "their ability to act creatively and to make things happen" (James, 2009, p. 42). Thus, considered as both actors and agents, they are far from being depicted as passive (Corsaro, 1997). This is a reality which is easily unseen, as childhood is usually conceived as a preparation period for the final entrance to society when adulthood comes, even though children are already part of the society from their birth (ibid.).

Within Childhood studies, childhood is recognized as a social phenomenon and scholars have brought forth three different approaches to study it. These are (Alanen, 2001):

1. Sociologies of children
2. (De)constructive sociology of childhood

3. Structural Sociology of childhood

According to Alanen (2001), "the sociology of children is an important sub-field in the new sociological work on childhood; at present it dominates the field quantitatively" (p. 12). Sociologists take children as units of an actor-oriented research, focusing on their everyday lives, their experiences, their relationships and knowledge (ibid.). Children are thus seen as active and creative social agents who "produce their own unique cultures" (Corsaro, 1997, p. 3). They are also actively constructing their own lives and the lives of those around them, as well as the societies in which they live (James & Prout, 1997).

Within the second branch the notions of child, childhood and children are viewed as discourses through which ideas and images of childhood are forwarded in society (Alanen, 2001). Children and childhood are constructed in a certain way through research, theories and theoretical concepts. Scholars like Chris Jenks (1982) has analyzed critically the origins and consequences of how children have been talked, thought and written about in dominant theories and concepts. Moreover he has pondered upon the consequences of certain theories and concepts in research and children themselves (ibid.). Hence, according to Alanen (2001), the task of scholars is "to 'de-construct' such formations -cultural ideas, images, models, and practices of children and childhood" (p. 13). De-construction is then followed by the re-construction, the rebuilding of ideas and notions.

In the Structural approach childhood is a structural phenomenon that it is both constructed and constructing (Qvortrup, Rosier, & Kinney, 2009). Furthermore, childhood is presented as "being in continuous interplay with class and gender (and other social structures) and as being constructed within their interplay" (Alanen, 2001, p. 13). Scholars have as a task to link the manifestations of childhood in children's lives with their macro-level contexts and they focus on social structures that determine and define these manifestations (ibid.). One of the social or macro-structures that this approach is focusing on is "generation" – that distinguishes and separates children from other social groups (Alanen, 2001, p .13). Consequently, the "membership" in the category of children or to the counter-category of adults, makes a big difference in children's lives "in terms of activities, opportunities, experiences

and identities, as well as in the relationships between the generational categories" (ibid, p. 14).

Jens Qvortrup (Qvortrup, 1999, 2008, 2010) has outlined a structural perspective to childhood studies which I use as a theoretical basis in this study. I will delve into this aspect later on while first I will present the -relevant to this study- key concepts of agency, coping, risk and resilience.

4.2 Agency

According to Robson, Bell, and Klocker (2007) "agency is understood as an individual's own capacities, competencies and activities through which they navigate the contexts and positions of their life worlds fulfilling many economic, social and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual/collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives" (p.135). Klocker makes a distinction between "thick" and "thin" agency. Thin agency refers to decisions and actions taken under very restrictive context of few alternatives. Thick agency, on the other hand, is present when someone has the capacity to act within a wide range of options. There is a continuum along which all people are placed and, depended on the circumstances and contexts, their agency is thickened or thinned (Klocker, 2011 as cited in Bell & Payne, 2009).

Children can be seen as social actors thus they are free to express their agency through various ways: activism, media, play, fashion, language (Boyden & Levison, 2000). Moreover, northern children can actually dictate the products that are available on the market by the increasing power of making their own choice (ibid.). Nevertheless, according to Qvortrup (1999), they do not have a decisive influence in changing societies and thus in constructing childhood. Prevailing power relations are forcing children to adapt to new realities and macro societal forces have brought change without considering them. Children, like adults, are resilient and capable social agents in some circumstances while they are vulnerable and dependent in others. They can exercise agency but this is done underneath various structures, which can be enabling or constraining (Abebe & Kjørholt, 2009). For all the above reasons, agency and the circumstances under which it is exercised by children should be handled in a more inquisitive way during research. After all, as Abebe mentions, there is a tendency of "glorifying" agency in contemporary, advocacy-based discussions

(Abebe, 2007, p. 91). Similarly, Huyen Chi warns that researchers should guard themselves from 'romanticizing' agency, keeping in mind the impact that various structural conditions and societal forces have on childhood (Chi, 2010, p. 316).

In following chapters and due to practical reasons, there is a specific usage of Gerry Redmond's views and terms upon agency. In his opinion agency needs to be understood under the context of social and economic constrain, also under the context of dependence on adults (Redmond, 2009). In his article "Children as actors: How does the child perspectives literature treat agency in the context of poverty" he reviews literature to examine agency in a worldwide view. In accordance with this literature, he has rounded up a list of different kinds of agency that children show under circumstances of poverty, taken by Lister's work (Lister, 2004, as cited in Redmond, 2009). From these I will concentrate on the two which are more relevant with my research and my findings: the "Getting by" and the "Getting out" agency. Redmond states that "Getting by" agency is an everyday and personal response to poverty and includes mainly the little things that people do to respond, for example cutting back on daily expenditures. "Getting out" agency is particularly involving taking up employment or improving employment prospects through education.

Agency is a significant concept in this study. Through children's narrations it was clear that by exercising their agency they were forming strategies and they were deciding on the ways they would handle poverty and the various adversities they faced. At the same time though it was apparent how the macro-level aspects of the financial crisis were constricting their agency, leaving them with only "so much" that they could do.

4.3 Coping, Resilience and Risk

It seems that in general literature the concepts of coping and resilience overlap (Gebru, 2009). For example, Panter-Brick (2002) point out that resilience is another reflection of individual's agency and it can also be associated with one's set of competencies or coping strategies to deal with difficulties (Cooper & Boyden, 2007; Ungar, 2008). On the other hand, Compas, Malcarne, and Fondacaro (1988) stress that there is a distinction between the concepts of resilience and coping:

> *Coping can be viewed as efforts to enact or mobilize competence or personal resources, and resilience can be viewed as the successful outcome of these*

actions. Coping includes the behaviors and thoughts that are implemented by individuals when faced with stress without reference to their efficacy, whereas resilience refers to the results of the coping responses of competent individuals who have been faced with stress and have coped in an effective and adaptive manner. However, not all coping efforts represent the enactment of competence, and not all outcomes of coping are reflected in resilience; some coping efforts fail. (p.89)

In general, there is a debate amongst the scholars about the true meaning of resilience and whether a definition can be applied across different scientific backgrounds and disciplines or should be context specific (Buckner, Mezzacappa, & Beardslee, 2003; Cooper & Boyden, 2007). Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) define resilience as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 543). Ungar (2008) states that "resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways." (p. 225)

Thus resilience is conceptualized as a process that has a positive outcome. Nonetheless, Michael Ungar states that that "resilience is not a condition of individuals alone, but also exists as a trait of child's social and political setting"(Ungar, 2008, p.220). Apart from Ungar, Luthar et al. (2000) also stress that resilience is by no means an individual trait, but is related to various risk and protective factors which are at large in a child's environment.

Despite of all the variety, what all of the current definitions about resilience share is that it takes place under circumstances of adversity (Buckner et al., 2003; Ungar, 2008). Moreover, resilience can be conceptualized as a result of the interaction between risk and protective factors (Gebru, 2009). According to Boyden & Mann, 'risk' refers to variables that increase the individual's possibilities for negative developmental outcomes or psychopathology (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Risks could be internal (individual characteristics or neurological structure) or external (poverty, war, etc.). 'Protective factors' are the positive reinforcements and the supportive elements in children's life (ibid.). Protective factors may serve to buffer risks,

interrupt the process in which risk is present or they may prevent risk altogether (Gebru, 2009).

The controversy surrounding resilience theories is ever-present when they are to be applied to poverty research. According to Boyden & Cooper, resilience originates form the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology, amongst others, domains that focus mainly on the individual as object of observation and analysis. Thus, it is arguable if resilience could be used as a concept when conclusions have to be drought in collective human experiences of adversity (Cooper & Boyden, 2007). Buckner et al. (2003) take one step further arguing that resilience should be applied in the aftermath as a term to people who exhibit successful adaptation though they live in an environment full of risk and adversities. Children who exhibit positive outcomes in low-hardship environments can be characterized just competent and not resilient (Buckner et al., 2003). The question of course here is who could define the level of hardships that distinct resilient from competent children and how exactly this distinction could be made. Conversely, Compas et al. (1988) distinct resilience from competence by stating that "competence refers to all the characteristics and resources needed for successful adaptation, and resilience is reflected in outcomes for which competence and coping have been effectively put into action in response to stress and adversity" (p. 89).

According with Gebru, another problematic aspect in children's resilience research is that seemingly children are deprived of agency (Gebru, 2009). This happens firstly because both risk and resilience are defined from an adult perspective and secondly, when it comes to the protective factors, children seem as passive recipients of their environmental outcomes (ibid.). Gebru continues by pointing out that adults define what is considered risky for children and whenever children seem to have a 'successful outcome' they are classified as resilient. There is the possibility, though, that children might not perceive risk in the same manner as adults and there is an underlying danger of overlooking the 'real' risks that children may face (Gebru, 2009).

Considering all the above, there are some focal points that may help in tackling with some of the controversies that children's resilience research poses. First, according to Gebru, it must be taken into account that childhood resilience is about

agency, what children do in order to bring positive or resilient outcomes (Gebru, 2009). Moreover, focusing on children's experiences helps us to bring out their perspectives and views (ibid.). Another crucial aspect of resilience is that it is influenced by a child's environment and the positive outcomes experienced are dependent upon the interaction between the children and their social environments (Ungar, 2008). So resilience is not only taken into account through an individualistic prospect but is placed in a socio-cultural context.

Beyond the "mincing" of terms and the controversial conceptualizations of resilience, there lie significant perils when it comes to practicality issues. This individualistic aspect of resilience that was described above may divert attention from the state and other stakeholders who have the moral responsibility and the power to intervene and alleviate poverty (Boyden, 2007). This is due to the fact that they may charge poverty populations with the responsibility to use their own individual resources and emotional strength in order to overcome the crisis (ibid.). Thus, de-politicizing the project of poverty reduction, what it should be a collective effort of overcoming adversity becomes an individualized matter (Boyden, 2007).

In this study, I chose to view resilience in connection to children's agency as Gebru (2009) mentions. Since it is difficult to presume successful resilient outcomes in such a short-term research, I will mainly focus on the children's perspectives of protective factors and potential risks. According with the children's opinions and views on the adversities they face, resilience seems to be one of the children's concerns in our discussions.

4.4 The Structural Perspective
In between the lines of the "new" paradigm, the Danish Sociologist Jens Qvortrup has conceptualized childhood as a structural form. According to Qvortrup (2002), we can focus on the historical, cultural and societal dynamics of childhood. This comes in contrast to individualistic perspectives like the ones advocated by psychology, which focuses on the individual development and perceives childhood as a life period instead of a social form (Qvortrup, 2002). He also argues that childhood is a permanent phenomenon, a permanent social category, whereas the context in which it exists and the children who inhabit it may change (Qvortrup et al., 2009).

However many the changes are, childhood remains a structural feature of the society (ibid).

Qvortrup also supports that children are exposed in the same societal forces as adulthood. Nevertheless, there is a vast spectrum of macro-social parameters from which children cannot escape. Thus, social forces, economic interests, technological aspects and cultural phenomena actually construct and shape childhood (Qvortrup, 1999, 2002, 2008). The children's exposure to the societal forces though has certain unique characteristics when compared with the adults' case. First, the macro-social parameter influence on children is often indirect and mediated, so it is not recognized easily. Secondly, in many cases legislation is made and changes in the social system are taking place without taking into consideration children (Qvortrup, 2002). As Qvortrup asserts: "Economic and political developments happen behind our back and takes place without giving children and childhood sufficient consideration – not necessarily of bad will, but simply because we have got used to children as a highly privatized phenomenon" (Qvortrup, 2010, p. 18). These same changes in society and legislation can affect children and impact their lives through a ripple or trickle-down effect (Qvortrup, 2002).

Perhaps someone could claim that the above view has a "universal" undertone, thus contradicting the idea of specific childhoods, cultural and social components of given societies. The fact though is that "children's lives in different localities in the world today are affected by profound political, economic and social changes as part of being linked to a globalized society" (Kjørholt, 2013, p. 246). Hardly any community in the world can actually be unaffected by societal powers. However, global processes can affect children's lives in various ways and different social contexts can actually shape and reshape cultures, traditions and the children's place in society (Kjørholt, 2013).

Qvortrup's structural macro – perspective theory is a focus point in this thesis. This is because the financial crisis in Greece is not only a structural process, it is shaped by and it is shaping childhoods in a profound way. On the other hand, children are shaping and redefining their everyday life and social positions through the crisis. During my research, I could see how the vast changes in the country were leading to a chain of events that was affecting children's everyday lives and habits. At the same

time, children were showing their agency by devising strategies in order to cope with the changes and a fluctuating reality. Hence the interplay of structural processes and local manifestations are useful analytical perspectives.

4.5 Poverty

Connective to all the above is the matter of poverty. Conceptualizing poverty is not an easy task since even the word itself "has different meanings, for different people, in different places, at different times" (Wordsworth et al., 2007, p. 9). Poverty is so multi – faceted that it is difficult to produce a single definition of it. Nevertheless, according with Hagenaars and De Vos (1988), all definitions of poverty can be placed into one of the following three categories:

•   Poverty is having less than an objectively defined, absolute minimum

•   Poverty is having less than others in society

•   Poverty is feeling you do not have enough to get along

In the first category Hagenaars and De Vos (1988) include the Basic Needs Approach: a method which defines poverty by calculating the minimum amount in terms of "basic needs", such as food, clothing and housing. In the second category they include the definition of "Relative Deprivation with Respect to Various Commodities", under which households can be defined as poor when they lack certain commodities that are common in the society they live in (ibid, p.215). Deprivation could be understood as "denoting the lack of material conditions and services generally held to be essential in the development of children's well-being" (Wordsworth et al., 2007, p.13). These may include food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and perhaps many more (ibid.). Deprivation is one of the basic dimensions in poverty conceptualization according with NGOs like the Christian Children's Fund (CCF), UNICEF and the Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre (CHIP) (Minujin, Delamonica, Davidziuk, & Gonzalez, 2006; Wordsworth et al., 2007).

In these three categories mentioned above, poverty according with the first one is absolute, according with the second one is relative and according with the third one it may be absolute or relative, or even somewhere in between (Hagenaars & De Vos, 1988). Absolute poverty "counts" people as poor when their income is below a

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poverty line which is pre-established (Minujin et al., 2006). Relative poverty measures on the other hand, are more fluctuate and they have poverty lines that are adjusted as total income in a given country. Both the absolute and relative poverty methodologies are part of the monetary poverty approach that is income based (ibid.).

Most people connect poverty solely with money: a low income or not any income at all is the main factor and the "trademark" of poverty. Nonetheless, multiple studies from the early 1990s suggest that poverty has a multi-dimensional character and income alone is not an appropriate variable (Bourguignon & Chakravarty, 2003; Minujin et al., 2006; Sutton, 2009; Wordsworth et al., 2007). Instead, there were considerations of education, health, political participation, security, dignity, literacy, life expectancy and so on.

Despite this very important turn in poverty research, there is still something that troubles many scholars: the absence of children's voices. It seems as if there is little attention paid to the children's experiences and understandings of poverty and economic disadvantage (Attree, 2006; Sutton, 2009; Van der Hoek & UNICEF, 2005; Walker, Crawford, & Taylor, 2008; Wordsworth et al., 2007). As with the case of resilience mentioned beforehand, poverty was exclusively defined and addressed by adults (Walker et al., 2008). Nevertheless, while perspectives of adults such as parents and teachers are important, including children's standpoints gives us a better understanding of the full impact that poverty has to the life of their families (ibid).

Poverty research has, somewhat recently, included children's perspectives (Sutton, 2009). This is due to the dominating theoretical standpoint that sees children as social actors, capable of agency and choice (Sutton, 2009; Walker et al., 2008). This view provides more information on the diversity of children's poverty experiences and the true impact of both poverty and social exclusion in their lives (ibid.). As Walker et al. (2008) mention, social exclusion can be referred as "inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power" and it is linked to poverty mainly as means of reacting to the financial deprivation. This notion is connected with Redmond's view of exclusion when he focuses in two particularly worrisome aspects of it: the "children as excluders" and "children's self-exclusion" (Redmond, 2009). The aspect that sees children as excluders, refers to the exclusion or the bullying of poor children by non-poor children, also the antagonism children

cultivate for children in different socio-economic groups (ibid). "Children's self–exclusion" represents one of the most alarming aspects of economic disadvantage and concentrates on the fact that children exclude themselves from interactions with their peers or events. This is due to the fact that children try to protect both themselves and their parents from over-burdening them with financial demands (Redmond, 2009).

Moreover, another reason that led researchers to take into account children's viewpoints and expressions of poverty was the growing political attention on the matter (Van der Hoek & UNICEF, 2005). It is recognized that in order to deal with the indicators that really matter to children they should let them participate in the development of policy (ibid.). Integrating children's needs and perspectives leads to a better informed, efficient policy making and it is far safer than adopting adult-centered approaches to potential decision making (Minujin et al., 2006; Walker et al., 2008).

This thesis draws on the above understanding of poverty, to highlight not only how children have a different take on the idea of poverty, but also to elaborate on the ways in which they are impacted by it differently. I also show how children's perspectives narrate to us a multi-layered account of the multiple faces of poverty. They do not focus only in material or economic disadvantages, but they also confer worries of marginalization, exclusion, emotional distress and uncertainty.

Poverty discourse is obviously one of the cornerstones of this thesis. More specifically, children's perspectives and views of poverty is what defined my research questions and drove my interviews, something that will be elucidated by my data, presented in the following chapters.

4.6 Neoliberalism and Global Order

Noam Chomsky (1999) states that neo-liberalism is the current and most defining political economic paradigm. It is a string of policies and processes under which the private interests of a small elite are allowed to take control of social life in order to maximize their personal gain (Chomsky, 1999). Chomsky underlines that neoliberalism, seen under historical perspective, is merely the contemporary version of the strategies that the wealthy few used in order to quench democracy: the civic powers and the political rights of the many.

Kotz (2002), stresses that "neoliberalism is both a body of economic theory and a policy stance" (p. 64). Neoliberal theory claims that a "free-market economy" epitomizes the ideal of free individual choice and it also achieves the best economic results in terms of efficiency, economic growth and technical progress (ibid.). The state's economic role is minimal and state intervention in market failures correction "is viewed with suspicion on the grounds that such intervention is likely to create more problems than it solves" (Kotz, 2002, p. 64). All in all, neoliberalism is viewed as a result of powerful nations imposing trade deals on financially weakened or "poor" countries in order to facilitate the economic domination of corporations and the wealthy without having any obligations towards the people of these countries (Chomsky, 1999).

Neoliberalism is an "updated version" of the classical liberal economic thought that was dominant in the United States and the United Kingdom prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s (Kotz, 2002, p. 64). For some years after, namely up until the mid-1970s a new 'interventionist' approach replaced classical capitalism coming with the notion that capitalism requires significant state intervention in order to be viable (ibid). In the 1970s the classical liberalism "made a rapid comeback, first in academic economics and then in the realm of public policy" (Kotz, 2002, p. 64). Partly due to the Cold War fears and in the premises of modernization, many countries of the Majority World were granted heavy loans. Also, oil-producing countries invested large amounts of "petrodollars" in international banks, who loaned them in low interest rates (Ansell, 2004). Unfortunately, all this amount of loaning failed to bring the promised economic growth and left some countries facing soaring debts.

Thus, a new policy was born: International Monetary Fund (IMF) would reschedule national debts under the condition that the countries would adopt strict structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and that would open their economies to global markets (Ansell, 2004; Boyden & Levison, 2000). In much of the Majority World and in indebted countries in general, the United States has been "successfully dictating neoliberal policies, acting partly through the IMF and World Bank and partly by pressure" (Kotz, 2002, p. 64). The resurgence and continuing dominance of neoliberalism can be partly explained by changes in the competitive structure of world

capitalism, "which have resulted in turn from the particular form of global economic integration that has developed in recent decades" (Kotz, 2002, p. 65).

In every account, neoliberal policies and SAPs had a grim and direct impact to children as the prompted cuts in public spending took their toll mainly in the education and health sector (Ansell, 2004; Boyden & Levison, 2000; Chomsky, 1999; Hart, 2008). In the aftermath, it is clear that the contemporary, constantly liberalized economy impacts heavily the living standards of children and globalization perpetuates poverty, dependency and indebtedness (Abebe, 2007). Since this is a case most prominent in Greece as well, children have already started to feel the grasp of the structural adjustments and neoliberal policies. I chose to discuss neoliberalism since it is one of these macro-parameters who trickle down and affect children's lives. Although children could not give a detailed account on the powers and reasons of the financial crisis and national debt, they all had a notion of something "bigger" and "global" who affects everyone.

4.7 The Political Economy of Childhood

The term political economy is rooted in the Greek polis, meaning "city" and oikonomos, meaning "one who manages a household or estate." Political economy originated as the management of the family and the political households. Thus it can be understood as the study of how a country—the public's household—is managed or governed, taking into account both political and economic factors (Mosco, 1996). Nevertheless, Moen and Eriksen (2010) state that when considering only "written rules and political rhetoric", namely about democracy, governance, development and economic growth is insufficient (p. 8). Influence by informal and unwritten rules of the cultural norms, customs and traditions should be taken into account when considering state-society relations (ibid.). Hence, "political economy studies include less formalized and visible arenas because that is where political, economic and social influence and power often play out" (Moen & Eriksen, 2010, p. 8).

Jason Hart tackles with the matter of the political economy of child poverty by considering it in the light of power asymmetries. According to him, the political and the economical are bound up with each other. The relations of power formed by this bounding are historically perpetuating childhood poverty (Hart, 2008). His views are along the same lines with the ones of Qvortrup about the inescapability of the political

and economic impacts on the lives of children. Moreover, both of them support that placing childhood in a historical context can clearly reveal this fact (Hart, 2008; Qvortrup, 1999). Hart is also discoursing that childhood poverty must be seen in correlation with more general issues, such as the globalization of the markets, the neo-liberal regime and the huge influence of dominant nations reflected by IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization, etc. "Indebted countries are forced to surrender a large degree of control over budgetary allocation, including to areas such as health and education", both sectors that affect greatly the life of children, alongside with the erosion of the welfare system (Hart, 2008, p. 6). Along the same lines, Boyden & Levison state that "few countries have put social safety nets in place to protect the poorest of the poor, and such measures are not part of standard IMF/World Bank packages (Boyden & Levison, 2000, p. 20).

What is more, it could be argued that all the above seem very relevant to the Qvortrup's theory about macro-structures that define childhood. As mentioned beforehand, Qvortrup is giving attention to the political as well explaining that changes happen without taking children into account, partly because childhood is considered "privatized" (Qvortrup, 2010, p. 18). Therefore, children are seen as their parents' liability and state support is not always covering their needs thoroughly, let alone in a case of an indebted government which is inclined towards vast cut-backs in social welfare.

Hart's discussions about political economy are equally important in this thesis, as there is an apparent connection with the political and the financial impact in the lives of the children interviewed. According to Hart, childhood poverty should be examined under the light of the political economic processes intertwined with the relevant culture - ideology of a given society, aspects which are in one way defining the financial challenges the children and their families face (Hart, 2008). Political economy approach is connecting the political, the social and the economical under one umbrella and it is most useful in order to demonstrate how these aspects are intertwined and affecting each other, especially in the narratives of the children. During the interviews, I could see how the cultural and ideological factor of economic disadvantage was palpably affecting children and their parents. This cultural impact had not only to do with their views of the given financial difficulties they faced but also with the ways they chose to resolve their problems. All the above were placed

into a broader political context, which was perceived both as the responsible field for the given problematic situation and as a possible provider of ways of resolving it.

4.8 Social Reproduction

As Cindi Katz uniquely states "social reproduction is the fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life" (Katz, 2001, p. 711). She continues by mentioning that it is constituted by various practices and social relations that are in dialectical relation to production, moreover it encompasses social, cultural and environmental aspects (ibid.). Social reproduction envelops daily and long term reproduction, referring to both the means and the labor power that sustain production. It is therefore basically linked to the biological reproduction of the labor force and the equivalent acquisition of all the means necessary for their existence, such as food, housing and health care (Katz, 2001). As Hart similarly argues, "a key function of the practices of social reproduction is to prepare emerging generations for their role as socio-economic actors" (Hart, 2008, p. 23). All in all, if social reproduction is to be seen as the "nitty gritty" of everyday life, then it is materialized, as Katz points out, through an assortment of social practices and interactions that are connected with households, the state, the market and the workplace (Katz, 2001).

Cindi Katz stresses that social reproduction has been shaken and altered worldwide due to the globalized capitalism, explaining that "the demise of the social contract as a result of neoliberalism, privatization, and the fraying of the welfare state is a crucial aspect of this shift" (Katz, 2001, p. 710). In most cases, women are the ones directly suffering from these shifts since they try to bridge the gap between the lost or privatized services, previously provided by the state, and the maintaining of their household's reproduction and well-being (Boyden & Levison, 2000; Katz, 2001). It is what Sylvia Chant (2006) refers to as "feminization of poverty" or more aptly as "feminization of responsibility and obligation" (p.182). Feminization of poverty is not only about lack of income, it also entails human development frameworks like education and health, livelihoods frameworks which emphasize both in social and material assets and finally, social exclusion (Chant, 2006).

Chant (2006) stresses that, under the shadow of price liberalization and reduced subsidies on basic staples, women are "diversifying their activities in household survival" (p. 179). This could mean more time-consuming domestic labor,

greater efforts in self-provisioning and more care when it comes to budgeting and expenditure (ibid.). Work is shifted from a formal part of the economy to an informal one and previously paid work now becomes unpaid (Boyden & Levison, 2000). Most importantly, all this "informal" work shifted to women most commonly is shared with children or it is completely shifted to children under women's supervision (ibid.). Along the same lines, Tatek Abebe also stresses that "when families live in economically precarious situations, adults must engage in alternative livelihood strategies, partly by transferring the burden of domestic work to children"(Abebe, 2007, p. 83)

Unfortunately, the currently dominant neo-liberal economic policy is turning a blind eye to this precarious results, maintaining "the assumption that the production and maintenance of 'human resources' is undertaken for love and are unaffected by money, and therefore they are not affected by economy-wide changes"(Boyden & Levison, 2000, p. 21). Perhaps this is closely connected to what Qvortrup called "privatization" of childhood, a concept also mentioned previously (Qvortrup, 2010, p. 18). Children are largely perceived by the state as "private" family matter with their parents being solely responsible for them. Under this conception, their interests go largely unnoticed when it comes to policy-making (ibid.).

Jason Hart indicates that highlighting various aspects of social reproduction can reveal links between global political economy and childhood poverty in particular places (Hart, 2008). Indeed, social reproduction has a strong political-economic aspect. Nevertheless, as Katz argues, it is very important to also understand and highlight the practical, every-day activities and the lives of the people that constitute social reproduction and not concentrate only upon the political or socioeconomic aspect of it (Katz, 1991). Similarly, Chant stresses that the issue of poverty analysis cannot afford not taking into account women's personal experiences and perceptions and the vast range of challenges they face (Chant, 2008). Chant also points out that poverty should be "understood not only as income poverty but as a massive restriction of choices and options", in this way positive steps could actually be taken in order to improve livelihoods (Chant, 2008, p. 175).

It is only natural to say that the same goes for children when it comes to research childhood poverty. Children's experiences and perspectives of poverty

should be taken into account along with their changed roles in a disrupted social reproduction system. In this study, children narrate the changes in their everyday lives caused by financial instability and parental job loss. They had to shoulder more or different responsibilities and thus position themselves in a changed every-day reproductive reality.

Chapter 5: Understanding poverty

In this chapter I will start presenting the data generated by my research, concentrating mainly to the various aspects of how poverty is understood in Greece. First, there will be a discussion on participants' narratives about poverty in the context of shame along with the words used by them in order to describe their difficult financial situation. Next, I will argue about the notions of "Deprivation" and "Basics" based on the children's views on both. In continuation, there will be a discussion on parental overprotectiveness and the practice of concealing financial adversities from their children. I will also present the different forms of agency that children exercise in order to deal with the adversities of poverty and I will conclude with the ways they decide to handle and spent their money.

5.1 Poverty and Pride

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the word "poverty" is not easily mouthed in Greece. I confirmed this fact during my research, where no participant actually said this word. I even caught myself to be very unwilling to use the term "poverty" when I was writing this thesis. Of course, not using the word does not mean that the situation does not exist or it is easily alleviated. Likewise, children may not have used the word "poverty" directly, but they had other expressions to convey the problem to me. These were the same expressions that adults also use and are quite common in everyday conversations:

- "We are currently minus in money, we don't have…"
- "we do not make ends meet easily"
- "we are a little bit difficult financially"
- "we make ends meet but we don't do stuff as we used to do"
- "now we are more frugal"
- "times are difficult now, we don't make ends meet that well"
- "we manage but with difficulty"
- "we cannot manage"
- "we are very tight"[25]

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[25] The above expressions in Greek (in the order they appear): «είμαστε μείον, δεν έχουμε», «δεν τα βγάζουμε πέρα εύκολα», «είμαστε λίγο δύσκολα στα οικονομικά», «τα βγάζουμε πέρα αλλά δεν

Children who were part of relatively well-off families would merely say that "we are fine (in terms of money)[26]". This is very relevant with the findings of Sutton (2009) in a research done amongst two groups of children from contrasting backgrounds: one from a council estate setting and another form a private school. Sutton mentions that estate children, although experiencing poverty, they did not characterize themselves as "poor". On the other hand, children attending the private school did not define themselves as "rich". Both of the groups were eager to be seen as "average" (Sutton, 2009). Similarly, Chase and Walker (2013) state that in their research the terms "poor" or "poverty" was rarely used. Instead, people conveyed their financial troubles with words like "struggling", "it's really hard", "nightmare", etc. (Chase & Walker, 2013, p. 742).

Along the same line, according to other scholars, poverty is not a word that is easily mouthed since it is tightly connected with shame, stigma and other undesired labels (Chase & Walker, 2013; Reutter et al., 2009; Sutton, 2009). Chase and Walker (2013) mention that the inability to produce material goods and attain economic goals – the contemporary symbols of success – can bring shame, a universal attribute of poverty. Interestingly, Scheff (2003) points out that the word "shame" is surrounded by a certain "taboo", in the same aspect poverty is viewed in Greece. Thus, much like the word "poverty" in this research, Chase and Walker (2013) stress that in participants' narratives shame often goes unnamed and rather than verbalize it, people use different words.

Discussing with the teachers, I learned that very few parents came to them in order to inform them about the financial difficulties that they faced so that the school could provide for the child in terms of school trip fees. They were sure that many more parents had the same problems but they were extremely embarrassed to come and tell them so. They also pointed out that they never discussed the names of the children that they were providing for, this was their secret. These children also were not revealing it to their classmates. In some of the teachers' opinion, it was a matter of dignity for both the children and the parents. Eleftheria, one of the teachers, told me:

κάνουμε πράγματα όπως παλιότερα», «τώρα είμαστε πιο μαζεμένοι», «είναι δύσκολοι καιροί τώρα, δεν τα βγάζουμε και τόσο πέρα», «τα καταφέρνουμε με δυσκολία», «δεν έχουμε πώς να τα βγάλουμε πέρα», «ζοριζόμαστε αρκετά».
[26] The phrase in Greek: «είμαστε καλά»

I believe that children are always children. They will never reveal what they feel and a little child is always thinking of beautiful things. They don't want to use words like poverty, misery, panic and all those… these things must not be a part of a child's vocabulary.

Similarly, social workers in Alimos mentioned cases of people that came to ask for help but they were very unwilling to name the situation they were in during the interviews they had with them.

Image is very important here in Greece, said Filareti, one of the social workers, *many people could be in a really difficult situation but they try not to show it and they say so many lies to cover it up. One lady came to us, took the bag with the food we gave her and then she went a little bit further away and emptied everything in her own bag in order for no-one to see the welfare bag… it is a matter of dignity… a matter of what will the neighbor say.*

The other social workers also commented that especially older children are very reluctant to admit that their families are on welfare and they do not want to accompany their parents to the Social Services.

Teenagers are very affected by it because they think that it is very humiliating, says Maria.

Erato, the youngest of the social workers, explained a case whereby a mother was taking the food from them and she hurried back at home in order to put it in the pot before her kids come back from school, in order to appear that she made it herself. Maria narrated to me about some cases she had, where children were very insistent and they were asking their parents to define to them if they were poor and if yes, how much poor they were:

…the children need this specification in order to live… they need to be informed and close to reality

She also agreed with Filareti, that it is a matter of image and hypocrisy sometimes:

It is not easy to define yourself as poor. It is true there is a cover –up when it comes to this word because the word itself is scary and you define a very-very undesirable situation with it. So, if you don't give this definition to yourself,

then maybe you do not belong in this part of the population. It is something as an exorcism. But deep down both children and their families know. Especially children know much more that we imagine.

According with the above, Reutter et al. (2009) mention that in their research expressions of similar "impression management" in concealing their poverty were understood as strategies to enhance acceptance and inclusion (p. 306). Moreover, visibility is crucial when someone attempts to maintain appearances and pass as non-poor (Reutter et al., 2009). Material deprivation becoming evident can break down the "non-poor illusions" (ibid.). Reutter et al. (2009) also add that that amongst the strategies the people adopt to respond in poverty, is the "cognitive distancing" (p. 306). According with it, people deny their true social identity by distancing themselves from it, refuting that it does not reflect the reality (ibid.). Similarly, Chase and Walker (2013) point out that their participants were also adopting the strategy of concealing the financial hardships or the fact that they were receiving benefits. It could be said that the social workers' experiences and opinions, as presented above, do show the exact same try of the people in Greece to disengage themselves from the reality and their disadvantaged position either by distancing themselves from it, by hiding it or by not naming it. This is very much due to reasons of shame and fear of social exclusion.

In the interviews conducted with the children, when I was asking them if they were talking with their friends about money problems most of them replied that they avoided doing so. *These are personal matters*, Panos (boy aged 15) told me. Although most of my participants admitted that it was a "personal" and sometimes awkward matter to discuss, some others pointed out to me that money was not an issue raised in their conversations with their friends. Likewise, in the research conducted by Van der Hoek and UNICEF (2005) it was reported that children were never talking about money with peers since they consider money-related matters "not so much an issue" (p. 31).

5.2 "Deprivation" and "Basic Needs"

So. - I wish we were ok financially…

Sm. - (scolding her) *Why? Are you now deprived of anything? We have the basics!*

(Smaragda and Sofia, sisters, aged 11 and 9)

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During the interviews I had with the children, I found it most interesting that most of them kept on adding the same phrase: "We are not deprived of anything. We still have the basics". For them only when someone did not have the basics was deprived. The question here is what is considered as "deprivation" and what are the "basics" according to them. Giannis, aged fifteen, told me:

I am ok, we have the basics. At one point I maybe want something that I do not necessarily need but since I don't have it, it means that I do not need it.

In our discussions, I realized that food was the cornerstone of "basics". When someone did not have to eat then he or she most certainly did not have the basics. Next in the hierarchical line of "basics" come the clothes, shoes and school supplies. Eleni, the social worker from the NGO "The child's smile" told me that, especially for very young children, sometimes food comes second. The most important thing for them is to have decent clothes and shoes and all the school supplies needed in order not to be embarrassed to go to school. She added that this is part of the provisions they give in families in need.

Being part of the school ritual and not being left out is really important for younger kids. Maria, the manager of the social workers in Alimos, told me about a mother that she admitted to them with tears in her eyes that she did not have the money to buy a cake and take it to the kindergarten for her child's birthday, as all the other mothers used to do.

Her despair was that she could not offer the basics… You could ask me now 'is the cake considered a basic thing?'… Well, for a six-year-old it is. She may not have had any food to cook for the day but to take a cake to the school for the classmates was very important for the child. In the same day she told me about a conversation she had with her son… every noon that the kid was coming back from school he was telling her 'spaghetti again for lunch, mom?'…you know what she told me? She said, 'It didn't bother me that he complained about the spaghetti… it bothers me that every noon he sits there and eats them in order not to make me sad'.

At one point, near the end of the interview, I was asking children about their wishes. Some of them wished that their parents got their jobs back but most of them replied that they wanted to have more money in order not to ever miss the basics.

> *I wish we had lots of money in order not to have any concerns… in order for my parents not to calculate all the time. They calculate constantly in order not to do something that will deprive us from our basics,* said Andreas, a fourteen –year-old boy.

Some of them were jokingly wishing for "millions" but they were quickly letting the joke die and they returned back to talk about "basics". At two cases, children told me that they wished that their families had no debts and that they could get their old house –that was confiscated- back. As they told me, they viewed a "*debt-free*" life amongst the necessities for a good life. This prioritization of "basics" from the children agrees with the findings of Crowley and Vulliamy (2007), in the research of whom young people and children viewed food, clothes and school supplies as essential for a "basic life".

In this subchapter there was a presentation of poverty through the children's eyes and experiences. All the above demonstrate that poverty does not have a single "face" and it is rather multi-dimensional. Children argued what the "basics" are and what is the meaning of true deprivation – the measure of poverty in their own eyes. All the above are in agreement with what Wordsworth et al. (2007) point out, that "children experience poverty in a deeply relational way" (p. 15).

5.3 Overprotectiveness

As I have previously explained in the background chapter, Greek parents have a tendency to overprotect their children. There is a common belief that children must be shielded against ugliness, hardship and sorrows. During the interviews I had with some of the parents, I saw that it was of paramount importance for them not to let the children realize the severity of their financial problems. Some of them went indeed to great lengths in order to conceal the reality from their children, even by giving extra pocket –money when they had difficulties to pay for their daily food. Most of them try to hide their bad emotional state from their children in order not to make them feel sad or afraid about the future of the family. In most cases though children were not oblivious to the problems their parents were facing. They knew exactly what was

happening in their family and they sometimes resented their parents for not including them. Sometimes they told me that they are eavesdropping on their parents or that they discuss with their older siblings who know more.

Katerina, the child psychologist, told me that most of the parents are keeping their children away of the financial or decision – making discussions in order not to stress them. The social workers I interviewed are backing up this view, although all of them stressed that they were not recommending such practice to the parents visiting them. As Maria told me:

> *You cannot put the children in a fishbowl and protect them from an evolving situation that is constantly changing…you must inform them. How can you hide things from them, things that are so important for their lives?*

They also informed me that in their experience, children had a much better and immediate understanding of the hardships that their family went through than the parents themselves. Maria also narrated that many children have been complaining to them about this exclusion. They think that their parents, by not including them in the family decisions, they are not considering them as equal members of the family and thus they are not respecting them. In children's opinion, the fact that their parents try to protect them is only an excuse for keeping them in the darkness.

5.4 Familial Solidarity
In UNICEF report for the situation of children in Greece (2012) it is stated that family and other social networks are covering for the deficits of the welfare state and they act like a protective wall against total deprivation and social exclusion. Indeed in an interview conducted with the owner of a private kindergarten, I was told that many of the kids there were able to attend because the grandparents were chipping in with their pensions. Grandparents were also the steady suppliers of pocket money for most of the children. The day that they were receiving their pension, they were setting aside an amount for their grandchildren. Even if this amount was really small, children had learned to expect it and include it to their plans. On their behalf, children were doing chores for their grandparents.

The social workers both form the NGO "The smile of the child" and the district of Alimos told me that many parents coming to them for support were

entrusting them with the fact that grandparents were helping them with the bills or their rents. As a form of reciprocation, grandparents were taken care of and helped in their everyday life by both their children and grandchildren. Smaragda, a girl aged 11, told me:

> *Sometimes it is a little bit difficult financially but we have grandma and her sister who support us… and we take care of them.*

In some cases, families are living together with the grandparents in one house in order to have, along with the helping pensions, one less house to support. Nevertheless, Katerina, the child psychologist, told me:

> *In this way* (living all together) *they manage it better…on the other hand, I don't know how this is affecting the interfamilial relationships on the long-term… but, truth be told, everyone is helping: parents, uncles and aunts… there is this connective bond in general.*

Sometimes, many parents try to avoid this "communal" living arrangement since they think that reciprocating in this way is like giving the control of their household to the grandparents. Of course, when push comes to a shove they are really left with no choice. Children are generally welcoming this prospect since most of the times grandparents are more permissive than their parents and more eager to satisfy their desires.

Along in the same lines are the findings of Walker et al. (2008) in their research on children coming from single-parented families and their views on poverty. They state that extended families frequently provide childcare for the working parents, they enable children to participate in leisure activities, they buy them presents that parents cannot afford and they also provide emotional support to children. Attree (2006) however, confirms that relying on grandparents can have potential disadvantages such as interference in family life, loss of privacy and expectations of reciprocity.

5.5 Forms of agency

As I explained in the theory chapter, I will use Lister's definitions of "Getting by" and "Getting out" agency (Lister, 2004, cited in Redmond, 2009). I would like to extend these two aspects by suggesting another type of agency that children seem to

exercise, according with their accounts. I choose to call it "Getting on with life" agency. All these types include strategies and steps that children take in order to deal with difficult situations, make some sense out of them and move on with their lives.

5.5.1 "Getting by" agency

"Getting by" agency is an everyday and personal response to poverty and includes mainly the little things that people do to respond, for example cutting back on daily expenditures . Nearly all children showed "getting by" agency although it is so commonplace that it largely goes unnoticed up until it breaks down (Lister, 2004 cited in Redmond, 2009). In our conversations children stated that, along with their parents, they had to cut down on their own personal expenses. These involved going out, shopping clothes, buying cellphone credit, etc. Children explained that they prefer to do things that they do not have to spend money on, like visiting a friend's house, going for a walk or play in the park. They avoid asking their parents for money. Instead, they try to get by longer with what they are given and in order to buy something they really want, they save up money they get for their birthdays or from relatives. Sometimes children get resourceful:

> *Even when we go to the cinema we cheat a little. We are going first by the supermarket, we buy pop-corn and we hide it in our bags. We then go to the cinema and inside, when the lights are out, we give some to each other. In this way we do not pay so much money for just a little*. Smaragda, eleven year-old girl.

Along in the lines of "getting by" agency, children tried not to complain to their parents for the lack of money in the family or for pocket money. They knew how hard it was for the parents and they did not want to overburden them. They also tried to relief their parents by doing chores in the house, taking care of younger siblings and do some grocery shopping. In general, it was apparent by the children's narratives that they were trying to find a logical explanation and a silver lining behind every problem they had to face.

Tess Ridge in her article "It's a Family Affair: Low-Income Children's Perspectives on Maternal Work", recounts the strategies children were adopting in order to ease some of the pressures a low-income working life could generate in their family. According with Ridge (2007) , these children were undertaking household

chores, they cared for their younger siblings, they emotionally supported their mothers, they moderated their needs and they did all so with tolerance and acceptance. As Abebe (2007) stresses further, when shouldering most of the household responsibilities, children and young people are actually impacted by the burdens of social reproduction which are transferred to them.

Turning to Van der Hoek's research with poor children in the Netherlands (2005) it is stated that children bought their own toys with pocket or birthday money they managed to save up. They also tried to reframe their perception of the situation by providing a positive and optimistic level. What is more, they also tried to do their best in order to hide their disappointment from their parents or they tried not to complain and burden their parents with additional worries. This is what Van der Hoek (2005) calls "role-reversal" (p. 33): parents try to protect their children from the financial problems they face but at the same time their children are trying to protect them as well.

Something else that falls into this definition is what some of the children were very proud to tell me: they tried to help their parents by giving them part of their pocket money, no matter how insignificant the sum was. Van der Hoek (2005) states that in her research some children did the same. Attree (2006), through her review of different studies in childhood poverty, mentions that many children narrated that they try to reduce their demands on their parents when they sense that they struggle financially. She stresses that children can be seen as active agents coping with poverty when they try to protect their parents from the full knowledge of the full impact poverty has in their lives (Attree, 2006).

5.5.2 "Getting out" agency
The second type of agency is "getting out" agency. It involves taking up employment or improving employment prospects through education (Lister, 2004, cited in Redmond, 2009). During the interviews, most of the older children expressed their desire to find a part-time or summer job in order to cover their expenses. Others expressed their anticipation to finish school in order to start working and contribute to their household. Again, the oldest children aspired to get into university hoping that higher studies will ameliorate their opportunities for a good, well-paid job, thus viewing education as a way out of financial difficulties. Crowley and Vulliamy

(2007), mention that children in their research in Wales also recognize education as a way out of poverty, although they believed that it is difficult to get a good education when you live in poor areas.

5.5.3 "Getting on with life" agency

Apart for the above types of agency, children narrated more subtle forms of strategies that they employed in order to carry on with their lives, living parallel and hand-in-hand with the problems they faced. These strategies seem to belong in another type of agency, called here "getting on with life" agency.

This is a strategy apparent in children's accounts of their constant efforts to alleviate their parents' stress by being optimistic and positive themselves or by using their sense of humor when dealing with financial difficulties in the house. They also tried to console and encourage their parents not to give up while they were trying to hide their own sadness. Melina (aged 18) told me about her mother:

> *I helped her, I was encouraging her, I was telling her that 'it's ok mom, we'll get by'... and this is how she changed and we started doing fun things together again.*

Some children tried to spent time with their parents doing "fun things" as Melina said, like going for walks, playing board games or watching TV together. Most of the kids stated that they were trying to be good students in order to please their parents and they were avoiding making them angry. The emotional support offered by the children to their parents is also mentioned by Walker et al. (2008) in their research in UK, by Ridge (2007) with her research conducted also in UK and it can also be placed under the previously presented notion of "role-reversal" by Van der Hoek (2005, p. 33).

Continuing with the "getting on with life" agency, there was another aspect of it evident from the children's accounts. It involved their attempts of informing themselves about the financial crisis. Thus in this way they tried to make some sense out of the various financial difficulties they faced and "go on" with their lives. At the same time they felt empowered. It was as if knowledge was giving them an amount of control over the situation. This was perhaps one of the most interesting parts of the interviews.

Most parents were convinced that their children were unaware of the crisis and the general political background of the practical difficulties they faced. They attributed this ignorance to apathy, lack of interest or immaturity and they, in their turn, ignored that their children were more informed on the matter than they thought. Some parents admitted though that they were not discussing these matters with their children and as mentioned above they excluded them from the general discussions in the household. In their point of view, since their children were rarely watching the news with them, they could not possibly know much on the topic.

Children on the other hand explained that they tend to inform themselves through the internet or by discussions at school with some of their teachers and in rare occasions with some classmates. Most of them, told me that even if their parents do not notice them, they overhear them discussing or sometimes they are simply present. When I was asking them to give me their account of what the financial crisis really is, they were vague about the specifics but they all concentrated on the practicalities that the whole matter boils down to: lay-offs, higher taxes, less money in the household and families in need. Also in the people responsible for this situation I was receiving a unanimous answer: the politicians. There is uncertainty though as to if these views expressed were their own, or they were sporadic reproductions of what their parents were discussing.

5.6 Money Handling

It was mentioned above that children told me that they had to cut down their expenses and be more frugal when it came to money. The way that children handle their money is perhaps another token of their agency and this is why I would like to expand the topic more. Deciding where and how to spend the money they manage to get, was indicative of the situation they and their families were in. In most cases, it was apparent that children were more frugal in relevance with what they did before their parents were fired. According with the finances of the family, they were accustomed to have bigger or smaller amounts of money to handle. The bigger the financial status of a family was, the more expensive were the things that children were buying.

Giving an exact and set monthly or weekly allowance to kids is not common to Greece. Nearly all the children stated that they did not have a steady allowance.

Instead they were asking for money from their parents every time they wanted to go out or buy something. The parents were sometimes debating the amount if they thought it was too high for the purpose their children mentioned. Other times they were giving to them a bigger sum of money and expected form their children to bring back home the change. Some children told me that their parents were letting them keep the change sometimes so they were saving them up for later. The same happened when they did not spend all the normal amount of money they were getting.

According with what the children narrated, they tend to save up money for "big projects", like buying something more expensive they wanted, for instance video games, bikes, hobby equipment etc. They saved up all the money they could scour from whatever it was left from the amount their parents were giving them, money given to them to their birthdays, name days or Christmas[27] or from their grandparents. Some children were even encouraged by their parents to save up in general for their future. As Alexis told me:

Have some money aside and you'll have it good in life (15 year-old boy).

As for where the children usually spent their money, according with what they told me, it was when they went out with friends. Usually they were going to the cinema, to a café or a fast-food restaurant. If they are low on money and willing to spend some, they go out with friends, buy snacks and then go to a park or for a walk. Clothes, shoes and cellphone credit are also things to spent money on, lesser for younger children and more for teenagers. Younger children are more focused on toys and on fairy tale books.

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[27] During Christmas, apart from the amounts of money children get from relatives, they earn more with caroling. Every Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve morning children go from house to house, singing the carols and they are given small amounts of money in return. It is a tradition that is considered to bring good luck to the household. Children can earn a good sum if they are organized and visit enough houses. Sometimes, some of them they even devise strategies beforehand in order to earn as much as possible!

Chapter 6: Manifestations of Poverty

In this chapter I will present data focusing on various direct and indirect manifestations of poverty in Greece. Direct manifestations are mainly connected with material deprivation aspects, along with all the related consequences. Indirect manifestations on the other hand are mostly about all the "hidden" or unforeseen psychological and social aspects of poverty. Arguably, both direct and indirect manifestations can be seen as the outcomes of the financial crisis or as the impacts of it in the life of children.

6.1 Direct manifestations

It seems fit to start this part with the children's own words when it comes to the direct impacts that crisis had in their lives. Children's voice has not often been heard when it came to poverty research. Thus, I will first present children's views of financial constraints and their narratives of how poverty is manifested in their lives and households. Then I will touch upon the growing need of welfare support and I will conclude with a discussion on social exclusion as a direct and worrisome consequence of poverty.

6.1.1 Children's perspectives on household economic difficulties

One of my initial inquiries was if the children had a sense of transition after all the changes and problems in their households. These were emanating in the micro-perspective from the unemployment of one or both parents and in macro-perspective from the financial crisis. Equally important is the way that children are actually articulating both the problems and their adjustment to them. Moreover, it is significant to acknowledge how children experience the "ripple or trickle-down effect" (Qvortrup, 2002, p. 83) of the crisis to their household level.

One of the key issues that emerged from interviewing the children was the fact that children realized the outcomes of the crisis mostly in terms of practical matters. Practical though does not necessarily mean material. For example, many children mentioned that their household economics were compromised and how their families were buying less food and groceries. They also mentioned a cut-back on recreational activities or going out as a family and of course in shopping (clothes, shoes or toys). So transition and change for them was seen as the gradual material discomfort or

"luxury" deprivation along with an actual change in everyday habits, as eating out, going on trips or going for vacations. In every aspect, they were always well-informed and in grips with reality. They knew why they had to cut back on all those things and, in my surprise, no child actually complained to me for this. Most of them they seemed to grasp the importance and the gravity of the situation and in my question on how they perceive their family in terms of money, literally all of them told me that: w*e are not deprived of anything. We have the basics*. Below, I will present some of the children's views on the changes they experienced due to the general cut-backs their family had to make.

- *We cannot have such a good time now as we had before… we used to go out at weekends and buy something…now we are much more frugal.*
  Andreas, 14 year-old boy, member of a family of seven.

- *Before, when we didn't have all these debts and we didn't have so much trouble making ends meet, times were much easier. We had more money and every time they* (his parents) *were giving me some allowance I could buy something to share with the rest – a ball, let's say. I remember we used to go out all family together but now where could we go? We are such a big family that we can't go anywhere…when you have to pay for tickets and such.*
  Dimitris, 13 year-old boy, member of a family of eight

- *Before my mother got fired, we were a middle–class family, financially speaking. We weren't deprived of anything, we were ok, we had more money to spend for our entertainment but now things are different. Now that we have only one salary in the family, my father's, we are stressing a lot. We have cut down on most things we were previously doing in order to have fun. We are now in a bearable level though…*
  Melina, 18 year-old girl

- *Before we used to go out together. We had much more (money) in order to do more things… we went on trips, my father used to buy us more toys. We also used to travel to Switzerland…*
  Alexis, 15 year old boy

From all the comments above it is apparent how children are in reality excellent commentators of household economics. They elaborated on the financial status of their family and how it consequently changed after parental employment

loss. What is more, they had an exceptional understanding of their parents' daily struggle to make ends meet. Although there was resentment for the fact that they had to "do without" many things, they did not resent their parents. The most important aspect here is their acceptance of the situation and their determination that they have to "make do" with whatever is on hand without complaining.

Another interesting point here is that children concentrated on the lack of holidays or family outings as a direct outcome of the financial difficulties they face. This is something also mentioned in Van der Hoek's research in the Netherlands: the lack of holidays was an area that children felt vulnerable from poverty in relation to their peers (Van der Hoek & UNICEF, 2005). According to UNICEF'S last report about the situation of children in Greece (2013), during 2010 the 81% of the poor population could not afford a week's vacation, a percentage that reached 85% for 2011. The equivalent percentages of the non-poor population were respectively 33,3% for 2010 and 40,5% for 2011 (UNICEF, 2013).

As mentioned, children had a clear view of the difficult situation their parents were in, as well as for the expenses they had as a family. For that reason, there was a tendency of the children to actually try to justify their parents instead of holding a grudge against them. For example, Christina, a 15 year-old girl, told me:

> *Actually, my mom was telling me even from a month ago that we don't have much money…at least now she got paid. We are not in a perfect situation. Money is leaving you easily. My sister studies in Creta* (a Greek island), *we have rents to pay, generally all our house expenses…*

When I asked her about the worst situation her parents are experiencing due to expenses, I received a very indicative answer:

> *I think that the worst for them is that they can't say "yes" to whatever we ask from them anymore. I think that this is what makes them sad…this belief that they can't provide everything to us anymore.*

Interestingly enough, in Crowley & Vulliamy's research in Whales children mentioned something very similar: "parents felt sad because they couldn't give their children what other children had" (Crowley & Vulliamy, 2007, p. 22). Later on in our

discussion with Christina, I asked her about the changes she has noticed after her father was fired. She told me:

> *Before we used to go to the supermarket and buy everything! Then we started to…especially my father… well, this is how I understood the crisis. Before I couldn't understand what the crisis was. When we started going to the super market and pay so much less, then I understood it. But this is very good, I do not miss the old times…well, at the beginning I did…I used to say that the fridge was empty but now I am ok!*

The changes that the children notice in the "before" and "after" in their households, sometimes are about the long working hours of the parent who still has her or his job. Alexis (15 year-old boy) told me:

> *Mom works from morning till dusk. She is the only one who makes money now. She can't even come for a walk with us anymore as we used to do.*

Similarly, Sofia, aged 9 and one of five siblings I interviewed, mentioned that her mom is also working very hard and that: (all day) *she is out on the streets and she also visits work counselors*. Walker et al. (2008) refer to the above aspect as "time poverty" (p. 433) and they stress that this is a very significant issue for children and young people. They also mention that a combination of time and financial factors is often restricting children's ability to spend some "quality time" with their parents (ibid.).

Even though children are more aware of the practical aspect of the crisis in the micro-level of their household, they also have some perspectives of a higher, political, macro-level implication. In the interviews conducted, I asked all the children to describe to me what the financial crisis is and who is to be blamed for it. Their answers varied from more or less informed and most of the times could not give me many specifics. Most of them though concentrated one the one aspect of the crisis that actually had an impact on their families: the fact that now our country is in a very difficult situation, no-one had so much money anymore, the taxes and the bills are very high and that we must cut down on everything. When it came for the people responsible for this, their answers varied accordingly with the political background of

their family or at least on how much they have heard adults discussing about this matter.

It was my understanding that children were adopting phrases they were hearing from the adults in their background. They also adopted sporadic phrases they heard on the news, sometimes without understanding the true meaning of them. I must note here that most of the participants, even the very young ones, told me that they were occasionally watching the news alone or along with their parents or grandparents. The answer I was steadily given was that the ones to blame are the politicians. One of my youngest participants, Irene, aged six, told me:

> *I believe politicians are stupid because they don't give us back our money because they have already 'eaten' them up. The police must catch them and take all their money away from them. Papandreou* (the previous prime minister of Greece) *is an idiot as my grandmother says!*

The oldest my participants were, the more elaborate answers were giving me on that. Melina, an 18 year-old told me:

> *Our parents and our grandparents are also to be blamed, because when it was their turn they didn't try to fix some of the wrongs they were seeing happening. Of course the people in the government who are in charge of our country have the biggest part of the blame, but along with them we must also blame the people that all these years did not try to change a situation which was obviously not going well.*

In the bottom line, children were recognizing the depth and the gravity of the problems they were dealing with in their house and they were struggling to give a broader explanation, broader than the lines of their own household. No one told me for example that it was mom's or dad's fault that they could not handle money well. They all tried to find someone or something to blame and they were "connecting the dots" by what they were hearing in their households, in their schools and in the news. Sometimes, I had the feeling that they were striving to form an explanation about all the difficulties their family was facing, as if they were trying to find some logic behind a truth that was unfair on their eyes.

6.1.2 Increasing need of welfare support

Eleni, the social worker from the NGO "The child's smile" told me:

> *The financial crisis has affected us a lot. As a result we see that the percentages of the families we are supporting have doubled up from the moment the crisis first started. In order for you to understand the big difference I can give you numbers. In 2011 we had supported 4.465 children but in 2012 this number soared up to 10.927 children. We are talking for a big increase here, indicative of the recent situation.*

Both Eleni and the social workers from Alimos told me about a deeper change in the realities of welfare support. Up until recently, the profile of the supported families was the one that someone could expect: parents of chronically low income, low educational status, serious health problems or disabilities. The situation has changed rapidly. Eleni told me that the families that are supported now they had, up until very recently, a very good standard of living. Maria, the supervisor in the Social Services of Alimos, told me that the same people that are coming to them now asking for support, five years ago they did not even know that they existed as a service. When unemployment is a reality for both parents, then things change rapidly and their problems become very pressing. They reach to the point that they cannot fulfill their basic needs anymore, such as the family's meals or their rent, so they come in touch with the available services asking for material support and food. Unfortunately, the social workers discover more unmet needs through the interviews and the counseling. Maria told me:

> *A very big percentage of this population has no health benefits. They do not have access to basic health services and thus this affect the children[28]. We have children that have no medical insurance; they didn't get their shots, children that they don't have access to a doctor anymore. This is something unheard of.*

Eleni mentioned that "The Child's Smile" has a group of volunteer doctors who take care of such cases. Katerina, the child psychologist, gave me a concerning -yet hidden- possible outcome of welfare shortage: social exclusion. As she explained, in

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[28] In the Greek medical system the child is medically insured through their parents' health benefits up until the age of 18.

her daughter's school there was a child who could not participate in PE (physical education) since she had no medical insurance and no doctor could sign a permit for her.[29] Another parent who was in the School Board and was a doctor, volunteered to examine this girl for free so at the end she was able to participate. Katerina exclaimed that:

> *If there wasn't for this cooperation with the parent and the school then she would be a kid outside the 'frame', outside the class, outside school, because she wouldn't be able to play* (in team sports or during PE).

This notion of "outside the frame" is perhaps very indicative way to rephrase social exclusion, a matter that will be discussed next.

6.1.3 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is often connected directly with poverty. Arguably, an equality sign cannot be put between these two phenomena. Social exclusion can exist without poverty or the other way around, nevertheless there is a significant co-occurrence that is defined by strong feedback mechanisms (Kalinowski, 2011)[30]. Indeed, poverty has social costs for children (Attree, 2006). As mentioned in the theory chapter, Redmond (2009) stresses that "children's self-exclusion" is a very worrisome aspect of social exclusion that could impact children. In the interviews conducted, many kids told me that they try not to participate in activities with their friends if they have to pay for them or they try to narrow them down only during the weekend. Christina, a fifteen year-old girl told me that she decided against going to a summer camp that she really loved because she did not want to burden her financially strained parents with the expenses.

This practice of self-exclusion "interrupted" children's social life and made them enter an evaluation process of what was really important for them. They tried to hierarchize their needs, thinking about the cost of every activity and plan accordingly. Sometimes they avoided something expensive in order to participate in something that would be less costly to their parents, for example instead of an expensive summer camp a short holiday to a friend's summer house. Still though they were absent from

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[29] In Greece every child in the beginning of the school year must deliver a permission slip from a doctor, which certifies that child is healthy and able to take part to the course of Physical Education.
[30] Cited from an article informally published in "Liberte" internet newspaper: http://liberteworld.com/2011/01/15/the-manifestation-of-social-exclusion/

activities in which their peers participated, something that set them aside from the "rest". Sometimes they did not even negotiate their participation to costly activities or clubs with their parents since they already knew that the answer will be "no". In this case, their resignation was apparent, along with the fact of their unchallenging acceptance of the situation. Researches done by Crowley and Vulliamy (2007), Attree (2006), Ridge (2007) and Van der Hoek and UNICEF (2005) similarly state that children avoid participation in costly activities and kept their wishes to themselves in order to alleviate their parents.

6.2 Indirect Manifestations

In this section I will discuss the indirect aspects of poverty that in some cases they may be really subtle. First, I will present the emotional and psychological impacts of poverty in children's lives followed by a discussion upon the fears and the uncertainty the children face. Then, I will explore the "hidden" aspect of dynamics changing within the household and I will conclude with the aspect of emigration.

6.2.1 Emotional and psychological implications

It was very clear, especially while interviewed the teachers from the elementary school and the social workers from the suburb of Alimos, that children are affected emotionally and psychologically by the outcomes of the crisis. Children are a part of the household, active agents that are affected by and affecting the difficult situation their parents are in. Even if parents do not realize it at some points, their own worries and agonies are mirrored to them as well. This "mirroring" could be so deep and substantial at some times that children actually experience anxiety disorders. Katerina, the child psychologist participant, narrated about cases of children, who suffered from sleeping and bowel disorders, alopekia[31], stuttering. One or both the parents of these children were recently fired from their jobs. Whereas the children were not deprived of anything initially, they were experiencing their parents' disappointment and depression.

The teachers mentioned that children were open to discuss with them the difficulties they faced in their households. They seemed aware and very concerned about what their parents were going through. Fotini, one of the oldest teachers there, told me about one of her students:

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[31] Alopekia areata is a condition in which hair is lost from some or all areas of the body, usually from the scalp. In some cases it is stress-induced.

One little girl came to us from another school and you could tell she was carrying such a load, such sadness and melancholy. She told me that 'my dad doesn't have a job for some years now and he has so many qualifications' or 'he has to take care now for these things but there are some other things concerning him as well and that makes me so sad. Sometimes he is feeling so bad'.

Teachers also stressed on several occasions that some of these children have school performance issues. They seem to be absent-minded, they have low attention span and they neglect their homework. Moreover, the social workers mentioned that cases of attention deficit disorders were increasing at schools as well as cases of bullying. They were uncertain though when it came to make a connection between these facts and the financial problems these children may face at their homes. According with the last report from UNICEF (2012) about the situation of children in Greece, from 2002 up until 2010, bullying has indeed gone up to 74%.

The social workers were of the opinion that the children are adopting the adults' attitudes. As the lead social worker told me:

When a father, who is inside the house all day after six months without a job, is rundown and with depression symptoms then this automatically starts to crystallize to the household as well.

It also appears from my conversations with both the social workers and the child psychologist that lack of money and various financial difficulties are amongst the main factors responsible for increasing conflicts within households. Parents are less patient with each other and their children so the communication within the family is becoming increasingly difficult. I was told that in comparison with two years before, the number of divorces is up. In my try to find some statistical data to confirm this claim, I found that neither EUROSTAT nor ELSTAT (Hellenic Statistical Authority) had any data beyond 2010. Conversely, between the years of 2005 and 2010, the divorce number seems to remain relatively steady[32]. Nevertheless, both children and adults mentioned tensions in their households and a general bad mood stemming from financial hardships. The children psychologist I interviewed told me:

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[32] http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=demo_ndivind&lang=en
http://www.statistics.gr

There is so much "grumpiness" and pent up anger that it seems as everyone waits for the slightest opportunity to take everything out. Parents now are definitely putting up less and less with their children because they are so stressed and angry (with the whole situation).

During the interviews with the children, all seemed to be very concerned over their parents' disappointment and sadness due to their job loss. They witness and acknowledge their parent's anxiety about making ends meet, even if most of the parents try to hide it from them. Some of the children also told me that they have seen their parents' behavior changing after being fired and becoming less patient with them. Melina, an eighteen-year-old girl whose mother had lost her job for over a year, told me:

I was taking inside me all her sadness and anxiety and I was feeling so sad as well…she was trying not to transfer her worries to me but I knew, I'm not a small kid anymore! I live in the same house and I know my mother, all the changes she feels in her…sometimes she was taking out on me her frustration and she was yelling to me because I was forgetting to do some chores. I understood she was trying to release some pressure…

Some children even expressed concern about their parents' health. Manos, a 13-year – old boy, told me:

My brother and I, we didn't like that my dad was sitting home all day doing nothing, not even going to the gym…instead of taking care of his body he started smoking again!

The fact that adults are passing down all their disappointment, sadness and anxiety to the children was a recurring theme in interviews. I heard it from both adults and children. Moreover, every stakeholder I interviewed, the teachers and the social workers, both from the Social Services of Alimos and the one at the NGO "The child's smile" told me that children are definitely affected emotionally by the problems their parents face due to the financial crisis. They are part of the family so they inescapably experience the financial turbulence and the emotional impact it brings with it.

6.2.2 Fears for the future

During the interviews and the discussions I had with the participants, both children and adults, what I got out as the possibly most devastating manifestation of the crisis in their lives was a tangible and obvious fear most of them had for the future. Most adults were living in insecurity, fearing that they are going to lose their job, at least whoever had a job. Unemployed people were mostly afraid that the situation will never get better and the future will become bleaker than it already is. Even the social workers were very much afraid about their professional future. Maria, the supervisor in the Social Services of Alimos told me:

Sometimes, as the social workers we are persons in need as well. And then you start to wonder: how am I going to help? How will I be able to support others when I have to deal with survival matters myself? Many times I felt that I am mirrored… that I have many things in common with the people I help. The only thing that makes us differ is the loss of my job.

Most teenagers I interviewed were very much expressing the same fears for their future. They were afraid both for the near and the distant future and sometimes appeared to be resigned or apathetic. They were wondering what is to become of them if things go terribly wrong or if they will be able to find a job later on to support themselves and their families. One positive aspect of the whole matter was that some of them tried to be optimistic and they were expressing hopes for a change and a future with better chances. Some of their responses in my questions about the future are very indicative:

- *I don't like it when I think about the future and the possibility that bad things could happen. I am afraid that we are going to be very hungry…but very, very hungry. Generally I like to dream… I want to be a kindergarten teacher and a speech therapist… but I don't know if I can dream. I know that I mustn't stop dreaming but as you can see…*
- *You can see people sleeping outside and you feel…it's tragic. We see them and sometimes we are scared of them but they are just people. The worse thing is to have your house taken away. I have also seen in the super market people searching the garbage and we are looking at them disgusted but you don't know how hungry is the other person…what is becoming of us?*

Both by Christina, 15 year-old girl

- *I think that things will become worse and they will reach a point that it cannot be any worse. Now there are many jobs lost, already so many people go hungry… so many people. I know it that at some point it will come here as well. I don't know with which way but I am sure of it.*
Sofia, 9 year old girl

- *You are waking up one morning and you wonder what will happen now? What will happen tomorrow? Will we still be around? Will we be not?*
Smaragda, 11 year-old girl

- *Hopefully things will change positively (in the future) because there will be better politicians, mostly from our generation, that they would have experienced these same problems and they will want to change everything.*
Andreas, 14 year-old boy

- *I would like to see things a little bit more optimistically. We are indeed going through a financial crisis and through many difficulties as a country but for sure at some point we are going to recover and up until then we must stand on our feet, we must do things that we like, have a nice time, be patient… this is what I believe…we must be optimistic.*
Melina, 18 year-old girl

As it could easily be understood from the above comments, children have indeed very sensitive receptors. They can grasp and understand a reality that is gradually taking a turn to the worse and all the political, economic and social implications that this fact brings along. They perceive themselves as a part of this reality and they feel largely affected and threatened. Most of them are uncertain if they can pursue their dreams of higher education and good employment. The value of education was questioned and some children even argued that practical issues and a necessity of extra income would make them put aside their dreams and pursue a low – paid job after they finish school.

Fear and uncertainty about what the future holds made some of the children imagine a bleak and inevitable outcome that they will have no power to change it or even to prevent it. For most children, the worst case scenario was losing their house or going hungry. The children generally maintained hopes that at some point things will get better, perhaps through political mediation. Nevertheless, as Andreas expressed

above, the politicians who should bring the much-desired change must be from their generation thus more understanding of the difficulties and the challenges they are facing now. However much the children stressed over the future they perceived that being optimistic and patient was something that would help everyone to endure contemporary hardships.

6.3.3 Change of dynamics within the household

Arguably a very apparent result of job and income loss is a change in the dynamics and the roles of power within the family. Traditionally, men were considered to be the main breadwinners of the family in Greece. Even nowadays when women are contributing equally to the finances of the household, the notion that men must bring "the bread and butter" on the table is still lingering around. As Kaldi – Koulikidou mentions in her article "The Family Strengths in Greece, then and now": "Though the claims of modern times and the structures of the family have become more diversified, the grounding of the roles by gender has basically not changed" (Kaldi-Koulikidou, 2007, p. 407).

Under the light of the above, when in a family the father loses his job, apart from the financial aspect, he suffers a more personal blow on his self-esteem. Since he cannot provide for his family no more, he feels that he is not worthy enough. His power, which is ascending from the fact that he is the "breadwinner" of the family, is automatically lost or transferred to the mother, especially when she still has her job. This can be a source of tension in the household with unforeseen consequences (UNICEF report, 2012). On the other hand, it may lead to a redefinition of values and a positive outcome. Perhaps the best way of describing the whole situation in a nutshell, comes from Maria, the manager of the social workers of Alimos:

You can see two realities…actually we all struggling in between various roles now… between the traditional one and the modern one, so there are two oxymora things that apply in families. On one hand, the father loses his power now since he doesn't have a job so he also cannot assert himself on his children by his role. For example, he may say something and his angry teenager child may respond back 'who are you that you are patronizing me? You are inside all day and you are doing nothing!' On the other hand, the role of the father may be somewhat uprated, especially to a father that he was previously distant, invisible or ignorant

about the whereabouts of his children, absent… due to his job, that is. He was working so much that he did not have any contribution to the upraising of the children, so he is forced now to learn new skills and at the end he masters them… at least this is true for those who do not fall in depression, they find new values in life. This is what happens… a redefinition of values: to be near my children, to live, to enjoy.

6.3.4 Emigration

Emigration is one of the most challenging issues that some children have to face and it is something that becomes more and more frequent. In the focus group discussion I had with the teachers of the elementary school I was told about multiple cases of children that they had to cope with the internal or external migration of their father. I was informed that these kids were under emotional stress and anxiety due to the parental absence and separation. One of the teachers told me about one of her students:

> *When his father had moved in Zakinthos* (a Greek island) *because he had found a job there, we had so many problems with him. Emotionally speaking, he was out… he was crying constantly and he was telling me all this stuff…*

They also told me about cases of immigrant parents that were thinking of going back to their countries of origin or to immigrate in a different country. The school principal mentioned that some of them had already done so and their children were very reluctant to follow initially. In her opinion, they had struggled to learn Greek and intergrade when they first came, sadly they had to do the same thing all over again.

Economic difficulties in contemporary Greece have also promoted parents to leave their children behind and look for alternative places where they can earn income. This was stated by another participant of mine, Katerina, the children psychologist. She told me that she was working with children that they were under extreme emotional stress due to the imminent emigration of their family. She gave me an example of one of her recent cases, an eight-year-old girl, who was about to move with her mother to Germany were her father had found a job.

> *She is losing her friends, her cousins and her aunt… you know… this family situation that we value so much here in Greece. She is crying so much. At first*

she was crying from morning till dusk. She was crying when her dad left a month ago, she was crying while her mother was packing, she was crying during the farewell-party at her school… now she is a little better because of all the support. Even though her father found a very good position in a big company, the blow is too heavy… both for the kid and for the whole family.

Irene, a six-year-old girl, told me that when her father had to go and work to another city in Greece, far away from Athens, she had trouble visiting the toilet and she had "lots of bad dreams and nightmares". Other children also stated this feeling of abandonment. Irene's mother, whom I also talked later on, confirmed this and told me that their family doctor attributed her toilet problem to stress.

In another instance, I interviewed five siblings who were living in Ano Liosia, a working-class suburb of Athens. Both their mother and father had lost their jobs and the father had left for Germany a year ago in order to work and support his large family. All the kids, three boys and a girl, told me that they were extremely sad to see their father leave but they realized that he had to. Beyond this rationalization though, it was obvious that they were missing him terribly. They recounted all the games they used to play with their father and how much time he used to devote to them, things which their stressed and constantly tired mother was unable to provide. Such hidden costs of economic problems often go unnoticed or unaccounted for in conventional economic statistics. This is also a clear example of what Sylvia Chant refers to as "feminization of poverty" or feminization of responsibility", previously mentioned in the Theory chapter (Chant, 2006, 2008). Women suffer directly and disproportionately from economic blows, not only in the premises of lacking income but also in terms of growing responsibilities and obligations (ibid.).

Children shoulder the emotional burden of parental absence. Their narratives were often heartbreaking, sorrowful and indicative of how deeply they missed their parents. They were not content by the communication they had with their absent parent, even if it was more visual through Skype. Interestingly enough, this had nothing to do with the quality of the signal and the technicalities of the telecommunication services. They were more concentrated on the fact that distance could not help them understand the true emotional state their parent was in. As Nikos,

a boy aged 9 told me about his father: *Only if he feels ok that he is there, I will feel ok as well…*

In some cases, the children insisted that they could understand from the tone of their parents' voices if they were "faking" happiness or not. Perhaps the most touching aspect was when some of them told me that technology, no matter how helpful it is, does not allow them to physically comfort their parents with a hug or a kiss. Eleven-year-old Smaragda, told me about her emigrated father:

The situation in the house has changed now. The nights he was coming back home tired but in the mornings he was waking up with our kisses and our good mornings… now all these things are not happening anymore.

Her brother, the thirteen–year-old Dimitris, adds:

It is bad…when your father goes away in order to send money back to you and you not being able to see him for a year…it is hardly the best thing.

In my question about the frequency they talk on the phone he mentioned:

It is as if you are hearing a distant voice and not knowing if it belongs to your father. His voice has changed, I can understand if he is not ok. My biggest concern is that he is in a foreign country, he doesn't know this language and he can't communicate…when he is talking to us though, he always is full of joy, and he doesn't appear to be sad.

All these children, the ones who had experienced parental emigration and the ones who emigrated themselves, appeared to be resilient. After overcoming the initial shock and sadness, with great difficulty in some cases, they developed a strategy of rationalizing the decision taken. In this way they made some sense out of the reality, minimizing the emotional stress.

6.4 An unforeseen positive aspect

Along with all the negative aspects mentioned in this chapter and the grim figures of reality, there is a positive outcome of the crisis within a household. The most imminent one is that in some cases there can be seen a newfound strength and unity in the family, necessary sometimes for the survival and the psychological endurance of the family members. In the focus group discussion with the social workers from

Alimos, I was told about several cases of fathers who, after they lost their jobs, they came closer with their children. Fathers that were over-consumed with their demanding careers and who were previously detached from the family matters, they found themselves discovering the joys of being with their children. Maria, the manager in the Social Services, remembered a case of a father whose family business went bankrupt. During a counselling meeting they had, he told her:

> *For the first time in my life I said to my child 'my Niko, bring me some water please'…most of the time previously I used to order him around…all these years I didn't even think of it. I was too concentrated on money.*

Alexis and Manos, two siblings (boys) of 15 and 13 years of age, had a similar story to share about their father who had gotten fired a year before:

> M. - *We connected more… like men do. When he got fired, we helped each other….how can I explain it to you? Yes, sometimes we made him mad but we were joking so much and we learned many things from him.*

> A. – *We were so many hours together so that connected us…like family…of course, we weren't forgetting about mom.*

Christina, aged fifteen, told me that after her father was fired, her mother insisted on everyone being united and loving.

> *When she sees us hugging each other she likes it very much and she tells us that she loves us…just like this, out of nowhere!*

Accordingly with all the above, I must add that there was another positive aspect that some of the children shared with me. They expressed the opinion that it was so much better having their parents at home with them more, something that came to me as quite a surprise. They explained to me that while their parents were working they were spending very little time with them because they were constantly exhausted. From their point of view, irrespectively with all the problems they had to face as a family, their parents' losing their job was not a complete disaster. One of the participants told me about her mother:

> *Before, she used to come back home at 6.00 in the afternoon. She had to sit down with me and help me with my homework and we didn't have the time to*

do something together, to play, go for a walk, that kind of things… We spent our time doing the homework, eat dinner and then, as she was exhausted by that time, she went to bed. I remember that when I was younger, I always wanted my mom to be at home with me and I couldn't have her because she was working so much… so, I was very happy when I was coming back home from school and my mom was there. Melina, 18 year-old girl

Even the elementary school teachers confirmed that while previously nannies and grandparents were picking children up form school, it is more common nowadays to see their parents waiting for them outside, something that makes the children much happier.

Similar in what is discussed above is what stated by McLoyd (1989) in an article review on the impact of paternal job and income loss on the child. Unemployed fathers view their increased contact with their children as a positive aspect out of an otherwise negative experience. They also report significant increases in the amount of time they devote to their children (McLoyd, 1989). In UNICEF report on the situation of children in Greece (2012), it is also stated that sudden changes in the income of the household do create conditions of concord and unity amongst the members. Nonetheless, in both McLoyd's article and UNICEF report, it is stated that these feelings are temporary and on the long term financial strains bring distress and interfamilial conflicts.

Continuing, there seems to be yet another positive outcome according with the participants' opinion. Mostly mouthed by the adults in my research, there is this notion that all these financial strains that the families face put an end to a prior over-consumption. Parents used to work for so many hours and they spent less and less time with their children. As a result, they tried to over-compensate materially and ease their guilt feelings by buying lots of new toys to their children or by giving them whatever they desired without asking questions. In the aftermath, parents had to reduce all this bulk-buying and the children had to learn how to deal with this reality. One of the teachers I discussed with told me:

Because the parents were deprived of some things when they were young, they wanted to give more to their kids. Of course, they ended up giving much more

than it was necessary. This is the good in crisis: it restrained the over-consumption to kids.

Children eventually learned to adapt and they limited their asking. As Katerina, the child psychologist, told me:

Well, they tend to accept easier the fact that you cannot buy them new playmobils let's say… beforehand they would step their foot down and protest. Now they do not have this reaction anymore… not necessarily because they do not want to make mom and dad sad but because they can see there is no money. They are not so spoiled anymore…how shall I put this? They do not have this selfish reaction of 'I want it now and you must buy it to me'.

Nearly all the interviews with the children confirm this. As mentioned before, they told me that they try not to ask their parents for so much anymore. Children have a very good picture of the financial troubles their parents face, even when their parents are not so open to them about the severity of these problems.

Chapter 7: Discussion

In this chapter I am going to discuss upon some key issues and aspects of this thesis. Firstly, there will be a more in-depth discussion about the kinds of agency that children exercised followed by a discussion of resilience. Afterwards, I will discuss upon the macro-societal forces that impact children in Greece, followed by a presentation of the disruptions in social reproduction that households experience. Subsequently, there will be a presentation of poverty aspects according to children's views.

7.1 Agency: a "romanticized" view or a "constrained" reality?

As stated in previous chapters, children exercise their agency by adopting a line of strategies in order to face adversity. They mostly try to cut down on their expenses or they try to do their best in order to "make do" with what they have. Either by accepting reality or by "sugar-coating" a difficult situation, they show tolerance and patience. This is not only because they want to protect and alleviate their parents from additional strains, it is also because they understand that there is no other way out of this.

Perhaps the most formidable way of showing their agency is in their tries to inform themselves about the financial crisis and put a context in the difficulties they face within their household. They often "rebel" against the notion that they should be protected from the truth and they try to exercise their right to information with whatever means they have: eavesdropping to the adults' conversations, watching the news or search through internet, engage in discussions at school with their teachers or with their elder siblings. Redmond (2009) suggests that some types of agency can actually be understood as a rebellion against parent authority.

Most of the times, parents were oblivious to this situation or even if they knew they could not grasp the full extent of their children's involvement. Some considered it "cute" that their younger children were trying to form opinions on the political matters and they were convinced that they did not make the full connection to the broader concepts. As for their older children, parents generally believed that they were too apathetic to care. Parents were also unaware of the supportive and protective roles their children adopted. In their distress and daily toil, they could not see the full extent of their children's tries to support them emotionally.

It could be said that children "picked their fights" behind their parents back. On one hand, they could understand that the broader political context of the crisis was inescapable, thus they were despairing over the future. Nevertheless they were leaving a beam of hope by stating that eventually change will come. On the other hand, they actively pursued what they could do: firstly, take over new roles in the household and do so with patience and optimism. Secondly, they struggled to learn more about the crisis and about the full extent of the adversities their parents face. As Redmond (2009) states: "poverty both facilitates and constrains children's agency" (p. 544). He explains that economic constrains compel children to make decisions that in other circumstances would avoid making. These same constrains limit the children's ability to turn to other paths or solutions to their problems (Redmond, 2009).

Overall, children exercise agency and they form coping strategies in order to get through the difficulties. Nevertheless, they cannot prevent or change the macro-parameters that are responsible for the financial, social and psychological impacts that affect their lives. Children do not have a saying in the formulation of laws and policies that will eventually affect their everyday lives. What is more, people in power who are responsible for the creation of these same laws and policies are not taking children into account. After all, childhood is a privatized phenomenon as Qvortrup (2010) argues.

The economical is interwoven with the political and together they create power asymmetries that perpetuate childhood poverty (Hart, 2008). Therefore agency, no matter how powerful as a notion and ever-present in childhood studies, should be treated with caution when used in contexts of poverty and deprivation. As Chi (2010) mentions, agency should not be romanticized since "to say children have agency does not necessarily mean they act on their own free will or resist their conditions and the dominant interpretations of these conditions" (p. 316). This implies that agency has a very differentiated and contextual nature. As Abebe (2008) points out the extent to which children exercise agency "depends on the interaction between personal agency –the ability to create and pursue a goal- and structures of opportunities and constrains" (p. 105).

7.2 Resilience: protective factors and risks

As stated in the theory presentation chapter, resilience is a much debated notion. Since it is conceptualized as a long - term process with a positive outcome, it is not easy to stress upon examples of resilience in children during a time-wise limited fieldwork. The children I interviewed seemed to go through an on-going process, struggling to find this positive outcome. In such case, it seems unsafe to discuss upon resilient outcomes so early. However, the general context that resilience is building in can be presented. Initially I will concentrate on Gebru's view that resilience is about agency and what children do in order to bring positive or resilient outcomes (Gebru, 2009). As discussed above in the sub-chapter of agency, children do engage in different strategies in order to cope with the difficult situations they face. Nevertheless, a successful resilient outcome has much to do with their interactions with their social environments (Ungar, 2008), thus resilience should be seen under a socio-cultural prospect. At the same time, children's experiences and their views on potential risks and protective factors should be heard (Gebru, 2009).

Initially, I will try to focus upon what children perceive as protective factors. Most of them were concentrating on their family as a focal point and source of strength. They understood that parents and siblings are there for emotional support. The extended family is there also, supporting them both materially and emotionally. This is why being in good terms with everyone was of paramount importance for the children. They also understood the need of reciprocation through emotional support and chores. Children seemed finely tuned with a "give and take" relationship which, the bigger the family was the more substantial it grew. This is something passed and cultivated to them by both their parents and the Greek society. I have already discussed about the importance of the family in Greek society and the strong attachment that members form with each other. Greek parents tend to over-protect their children. What is often projected is the notion that family can shield you from possible dangers and that no matter what, your family will never give you a cold shoulder. Children thus know that they always have their parents and siblings to talk to and ask for support when something goes wrong.

In the interviews, even when children expressed strong fears about the future of their family and while they knew the severity of the financial problems their parents faced, they felt sheltered and they maintained the belief that "as long we are

all together we will be ok". This is also supported by Levidioti-Lekkou (2006) in her comparative research between Greek and Swedish youths and their life perceptions. She argues that Greek adolescents turned more to their family for support and along with their own coping they were dealing with social concerns, fears about the future and social dangers. "Greek adolescents' focus on … caring about the family may reflect collectivistic values of their culture" (p. 47) and since the main support comes from the family, the family's position is respected in Greek culture (ibid.).

Another protective factor according to children is their friends and their social life. Although social exclusion may threaten the last, most of the children stressed on their attempts of finding ways to enjoy the company of their friends without having to pay much money in the process. Nearly all children included their friends in their narratives and were eager to tell me about the things they did all together in order to have fun. Socializing is really important for children. They may not always confide in their friends about financial issues or problems their family face but they draw strength from spending time with them. One very positive aspect is that, amongst friends, children find an excellent opportunity to cultivate their humor, to laugh and ridicule difficult situations they may be in. According to them, this is something that it is valued in the contexts of the family as well. Laughter and good mood in their family or with their friends were often mentioned by children as an instant "pick-me-up" and a prerequisite for "having fun". According with Benard (1991) a sense of humor, hence an ability to look things in a more positive way and generate comic relief is an aspect of resilience.

Gebru (2009) stresses that when it comes to protective factors, children are seen as passive recipients of the environmental outcomes, thus lacking agency. Nevertheless, the children I interviewed showed that they were far from passive, at least when it has to do with the protective factor of the family. Although children turned to their families for support, they rebelled against the adults' overprotectiveness and shielding them from the truth. They did so by informing themselves on the crisis openly through the news or the internet and sometimes they were even eavesdropping. Friends and socializing were also important to them but they were not hindered much by the fact that financial problems restricted their outings. Instead, as I mentioned beforehand, they showed their agency by conceiving plans to enjoy the company of friends without spending any money.

Since protective factors were presented - as perceived by the children- it is also important to explore their perceptions of risk. As seen by their narratives in the previous chapters, children had their own views about what constitutes "risk" and what are the dangers they are facing or they may face. They focused on the aspects of extreme poverty – in their eyes, hunger and lack of a house-, debts and fear of loneliness. Loneliness was more connected to parents being away for long hours or emigrated rather than the absence of friends. Apart from the above risk factors which could be characterized as external, there are more that have a more internal nature. These are the distress and the uncertainty for what the future holds as well as the frustration on the lack of policies and provision by the government. Some of them also reported loss of faith in education as a way for having better opportunities in life.

It is stated that there is a danger that individualistic resilience conceptualizations may divert attention from the state and stakeholders in power when it comes to poverty alleviation (Boyden, 2007). Instead, they may charge the poverty populations with the responsibility to use their own emotional strength and resources in order to overcome the crisis they are in (ibid.). This seems to be the problem in Greece as well. I have written before that families in Greece fend for the gaps of the welfare system and thus they have undertaken the role of the state. Thus the notion of the family as the sole provider in society is further prolonged and reproduced (T. N. Papadopoulos, 1998). This creates a vicious circle: the state is less and less eager to provide for the poor families and children since there is a strong belief that family will always be able to manage.

However, things are rapidly changing and families seem less and less able to cope with and overcome the financial struggles they face. This was apparent in the social workers' narratives about their experiences with families in dire danger: evicted from their houses, inability to fend for everyday needs and in some extreme cases, even malnourished. These families were not falling under the typical profile of the ones that regularly needed welfare assistance in the past. According to them, they were "normal, everyday people", families which up until recently they were in no need of assistance whatsoever.

In the same way, UNICEF in the report for the situation of children in Greece (2012), warns that the biggest problem Greece will face the next years is social

consistency. It is also stated that up until now, families and social networks were covering the state deficits and thus they were protecting poor households from extreme poverty and social exclusion. Since all these networks are now affected greatly from the financial crisis, the equivalent depended households will also be exposed to the socio-economic changes. Hence, the danger of social bonds rupturing is more than imminent (UNICEF, 2012). It seems as if there was never a better moment for the state to fend for poor families, leaving aside the popular projection that "no matter what, the family will manage".

7.3 Childhood and macro-societal forces

In this point I will return to Qvortrup's theory about macro-social parameters and forces that shape childhood and how children cannot actually escape them (Qvortrup, 1999). In the case of contemporary Greece, there are various macro-parameters that are affecting children and shape childhoods. Starting from a global point they trickle down to reach and impact every household member, including children. First and foremost, there is the most apparent trigger factor of the financial crisis followed by imposed austerity measures, which stem from neoliberalism ideals and augmented by IMF implementations. Consequently follows the "crisis" policy which commands lay-offs, forwards unemployment, discourages public spending in education and health sectors and incubates social exclusion. Harper, Jones, McKay, and Espey (2009), in their article "Children in times of economic crisis: past lessons, future policies" they have included a schematic framework of the effects of crisis on the children which is most explanatory (p. 2):

Figure 1: Framework to understand the effects of crisis on child vulnerabilities
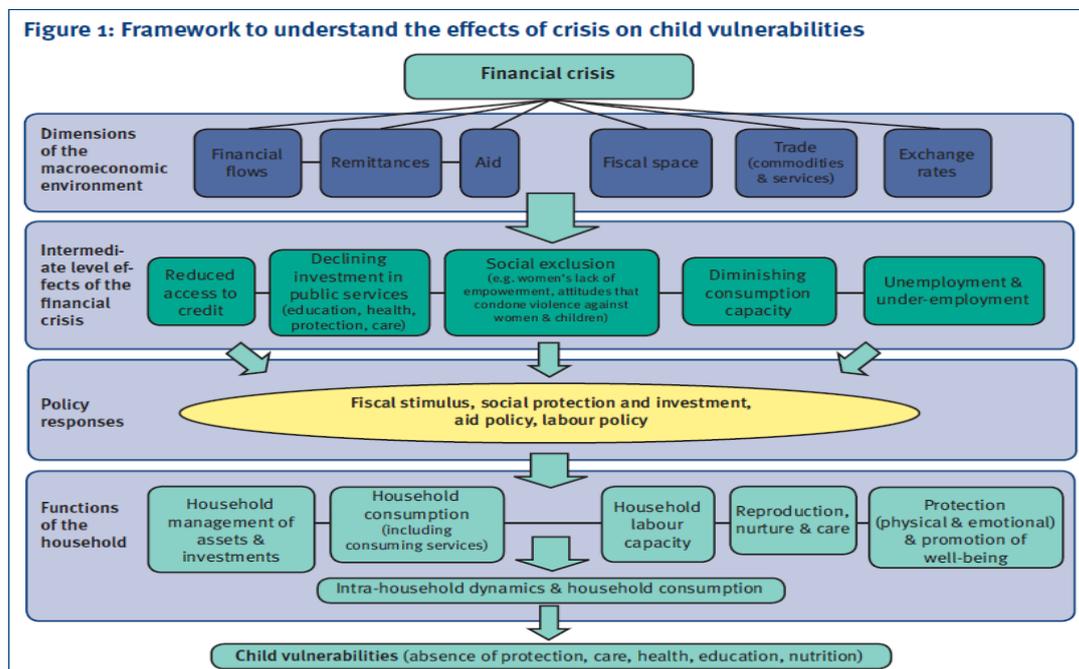
In accordance with all the above, children's narratives in the previous chapters have shed light on the ways that macro-parameters connected with the financial crisis affect their lives. It is apparent that children in Greece experience poverty and deprivation that goes beyond financial or material perspective, a matter that will be discussed further later on. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the most obvious blow of the financial crisis in the Greek society is manifested by the fast growing numbers of families that are in need for welfare support. Arguably, this is a fact that clashes with a flawed system that spends constantly less and less on families and even less on children (UNICEF, 2012).

What can be derived from children's own words is that they are indeed excellent financial and political commentators. That was a fact that most of the times escaped their parents' attention. As stated by Wordsworth et al. (2007), "children are often more attuned to the macro-economic processes that divide their social worlds than adults think" (p. 17). Thus, it is apparent that children have a clear view of the contemporary macro-parameters that affect their lives. Indeed, they perceive the severity of the crisis and they grasp the larger context that is placed. At the same time they can connect the macro-perspective of the crisis with the financial strains their households face daily. Children, through their narratives, discuss the changes that parental job-loss brought in their lives, along with the adaptations they had to make in their everyday habits and routines in order to accommodate a reality of low or no parental income. This adaptation is silent and tolerant. Children do not complain since, according to their opinion, their situation could be worse - at least they have the "basics" for survival, such as food, clothes and a house.

The financial crisis though has impacted children's life in a more indirect way. Amongst other things, they have to deal with their parents' emotional distress which they tend to shoulder and take inside them. As active parts of the family, they are experiencing the collective stress and the uncertainty their parents express. This distress could manifest as psychosomatic phenomena, depression, learning disorders and bullying. Moreover they are exposed to their parents' bad temper and low patience. In times of difficulty within the family, parents are more prone to take out their disappointment and stress on their children. According to both McLoyd (1989) and Harper et al. (2009), violence against children and women seems to rise under conditions of economic stress and parental unemployment. Harper et al. (2009) stress

that children's emotional well-being and long-term development are deeply affected by household depression and violence.

The general uncertainty, the major lay-offs and the unstable conditions of the market make children to question their future and their ability to fulfill their dreams. At the same time, while older children perceive higher education as a way out of poverty some of the younger children tend to question the merits of education. They also wonder if there is any practicality of pursuing a "dream" job when practical issues and financial problems will push them to a low-paid job after they finish school. Harper et al. (2009) indeed warn that in time of economic shocks children might be propelled to abandon school in order to enter the labor force.

Similarly, UNICEF extends a corresponding warning. In the report for the situation of the children in Greece (2012), it is stated that the low educational level is a factor that can intensify and reproduce poverty. The poor parent does not have the ability to offer his or her kids educational opportunities and at the same time there are several "educational depreciation" practices adopted. In this way poverty becomes inter-generational and difficult to escape. The low educational level forces poor population to engage with professions that are characterized by low wages, uncertainty and they are more vulnerable to economic changes. Even with the low levels of school drop-outs in Greece, there is always an additional danger manifesting in the low expectations of the future that the youths may have and their entrance in the labor market immediately after finishing school. These factors are against all opportunities for additional education or training and they can construct frames that may not enable youths to finally escape poverty (UNICEF, 2012).

The above discussion highlights that the macro-parameters of the financial crisis are indeed affecting children but conversely this can go both ways. As Harper et al. (2009) state, the impacts of economic shocks can affect the individual and the household but also they feed back into the society and the economy as a whole, especially when individuals cannot recover – something that is frequently the case. For example, higher education benefits labor market outcomes, fertility, participation in society and women's empowerment, to name but a few (Harper et al., 2009). Children who lose opportunities for further education, diminish the opportunities of these benefits in their adult life. Understandingly, children and young children should

be protected by the crisis adversities not only because child suffering is alleviated, but also because future economic growth is benefited (ibid.).

7.4 A disrupt in Social Reproduction

The financial crisis most obviously has shaken social reproduction in contemporary Greece. Everyday realities and livelihoods change constantly and people try their best to adapt. This process is ongoing, it impacts children's everyday lives and consequences can be both tangible and long-term manifested. Tangible because they can be seen in "here" and "now", long-term manifested since no one really knows the final outcome of the whole situation. Mentioned already in the theory chapter, I will return here to what stated by Katz (2001), that women are the ones who suffer directly from shifts in social reproduction and Chant's term of "feminization of poverty" or most aptly, "feminization of responsibility and obligation" (2006).

Women in Greece are shouldering many burdens that the crisis brought to their household. These have to do with various aspects: job-loss, unemployment and wage cut-backs, to name but a few. In case of an unemployed or emigrated spouse, women have to work more in order to manage with the household expenses. Since most of the times women are paid much less than men, they have to supplement their wages working longer hours. According with data taken from ELSTAT[33], during 2011, women in Greece were paid 13,6% less than men in the public sector, while in the private sector the equivalent percentage is 26,11%. Moreover, women are the ones that are mostly threatened by unemployment: during 2013 women's unemployment rate reached 31,1% , much higher than the equivalent 24,1% of men. Seguino et al. (2009) state that in developed and middle income countries men are in a better position to endure the crisis. Most of the times, their jobs offer them higher salary, benefits and unemployment insurance. Women's jobs on the other hand pay lower wages, partly because women tend to have a higher rate of part time employment, and they are often not covered by social safety nets (ibid.).

Both by the interviews conducted and from the informal conversations I had with women and children, it is obvious that women feel that they have now more responsibilities: they have to shield their children from the financial struggling, they

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[33] ELSTAT (ΕΛΣΤΑΤ) : Greek Statistical Service

have to supplement their family's well-being with working longer hours, they have to be the emotional supporters of their unemployed spouses and above all they have to maintain their everyday household reproduction. In cases of unemployed women, though they have more time to spend with their children, they have shouldered most of the responsibilities of the household due to the same seeming abundance of time: domestic work, child-rearing, handling of household expenses. At the same time they have to deal with the time consuming and distressing task of job-hunting. More or less the same goes for women that their spouses have emigrated and they have the sole responsibility of household reproduction. According with all the above, it is easily understood why Chant (2006) talks about feminization of responsibility and obligation. Very fittingly to what is actually going on in contemporary Greece, she states the following:

> "At the same time as women are diversifying their activities in household survival, their reproductive labor also undergoes intensification as they come under the hammer of price liberalization and reduced subsidies on basic staples, as well as limited or declining investment by the public sector in essential infrastructure and basic services. This may imply more onerous or time-consuming domestic labor, greater efforts in self-provisioning, and/or more care or forethought in budgeting and expenditure" (p.179)

It is also clear that in Greece the struggle to protect children from deprivation and poverty is something that the state is less and less inclined to pursue. Instead, the obligation of children's welfare is transferred solely to the private sphere of the family. According with ELSTAT, during 2009 the social costs for families and children amounted only to 1,83% of GDP . While the overall social transfers in the period from 2000 to 2009 increased by 4,6 GDP percentage points, the equivalent amount for families and children remained stable. This fact does not seem to change even during these financially challenging times. On the contrary, cut-backs are made both to the welfare section and to sections as education and health. Childhood, according with Qvortrup (2010), is perceived as a privatized phenomenon with parents being solely responsible for their children. It is taken for granted that certain aspects of production and reproduction are a matter of the family, and more specific of women. As Boyden and Levison (2000) state, these same aspects are thought to be "undertaken for love and are unaffected by money" (p.21).

As mentioned in the theory presentation chapter, Abebe states that in times of economic stress, families will transfer the burden of domestic work to children in order to engage in alternative livelihood strategies (Abebe, 2007). Therefore, children can play a very important role in filling the gap in social reproduction caused by the disruptions in the systems of production and reproduction within the household (Abebe & Kjørholt, 2009). This was apparent in the interviews conducted with the children: they mentioned that doing chores, taking care of siblings and grandparents and trying their best to be good students were amongst their responsibilities. Children also recounted that while their mothers had to work more to support the household, their "share" of domestic work became bigger. Even in cases when the mother was unemployed, children were eager to help in order to alleviate her emotional stress and make her feel better.

Girls mentioned that they were mainly responsible for domestic chores such as making the beds, cleaning, re-heating the food and serving it both to siblings and sometimes grandparents and babysitting younger siblings. Boys were mostly responsible for "outside" chores, like grocery shopping or in some cases taking lunch to parents who happened to work nearby, thus many also mentioned that they help with housework and with the care of younger siblings. Overall, beyond the political and economic aspects of the matter on hand, the every-day activities of children and the daily practical challenges they face underline the real nature of the contemporary disruption of social reproduction in Greece.

7.6 Children's views on poverty

It was stated beforehand that poverty is connected by many people solely with the lack of money. Yet, multiple studies have shown the multi-dimensional character of poverty that goes beyond material aspects (Bourguignon & Chakravarty, 2003). Although the children I interviewed understood the financial crisis through its material declarations, they also highlighted other aspects of poverty. In their vocabulary, the words "basics" and "deprivation" were often mentioned. This calls for a deeper analysis of the concepts of "basic needs" and "relative deprivation" suggested by Hagenaars and De Vos (1988). In the first approach poverty is regarded as absolute and in the second as relational. Nevertheless, both terms are used in monetary poverty approach which is income based.

Yet, when children use the terms "basics" and "deprivation" they do so under their own perspectives and obviously they do not have in mind a pre-established income line under or over which people's poverty is rated. Children give their own definitions of "basics" and "deprivation". They do so under monetary perspectives but their narratives are definitely differentiated. "Basics" and "deprivation" are used by the children in order to set the limit to what they consider absolute and relational poverty. Beyond that though, they give an account of so many shades of poverty that tint their lives. I will continue with a brief discussion on different kinds of poverty, derived from children's narrations which go beyond material aspects.

Overall, according to children, poverty can be also conceptualized as follows:

7.6.1 "Time poverty"

This term is used by Walker et al. (2008) and it perfectly describes what most of the children stated. They miss spending quality time with their parents who in most cases work for long hours in order to make ends meet. Basically, the parent who they "miss" the most is the mother who, as described previously, shoulders many time-consuming responsibilities extending beyond her job and reaching well into the household reproduction. After all, an unforeseen outcome of the crisis is that children enjoy having their parents back at home with them after they lost their jobs. Nevertheless, even when a parent is unemployed it does not mean that he or she spends some quality time with his or hers children. This would be due to the fact that job-hunting is claiming much of their time and emotional or physical stamina.

7.6.2 "Parent poverty"

In distinction with parental poverty, which focuses on parents unable to materially provide to their children, this term goes beyond the monetary aspect. It delves well into the deprivation of the actual parent. Most of the times, this is due to the fact that one of the parents has emigrated. Children feel deeply deprived of their parent, although they "rationalize" the fact by admitting that it is for the best. Technology –for example skype-,which can definitely enhance communication, is not enough for them as they are deprived of actual, physical contact. Parent poverty also applies in cases that the parent is emotionally absent. This is due to the fact that most of the times fired or bankrupted parents have to face various psychological problems with depression being the most common of them. Alcoholism is also a case, as I was informed by the social workers. This is perhaps more painful for children who,

beyond the absence, they also have to deal with their deep concerns for their parent's mental or physical health which, to them, seems to deteriorate day by day.

7.6.3 "Holiday poverty"

Most of the children were very concerned of their inability to go for a holiday or for a family day out. I was told that this was the first thing they had to give up on and what they actually missed terribly. Once more, they appeared understanding of their family's difficulties and they rationalized why they had to cut down on this kind of "luxuries". However, when I was asking them to tell me about their best memories, nearly all of them recounted holidays or pleasant incidents from family outings. As mentioned previously, Van der Hoek and UNICEF (2005) had similar findings in her research with poor children in the Netherlands.

7.6.4 "Self-exclusion poverty"

Although children were excluding themselves from activities in order to save up money and not burden their parents, it really cost them to do so. Many reported that they missed going out with their friend and be more often able to spend money on "fun things" like cinema, eating out or going to a café. Being able to join camps or various athletic activities and sport teams is also an issue as children, parents and social workers alike told me. As mentioned before, some of them do not even propose it to their parents since they know already that they cannot afford it. The same goes for school trips and participating in them is also important for the children. In every case that parents cannot afford participation fees, children "play down" the whole incident, pretending that it is not that important for them to participate anyway. According to both parents and social workers, self-exclusion is something very precarious as it could distinct them from their peers, make them feel "the odd one out" or even inferior to them. As it is stressed in UNICEF report (2012), the chasm between poor and non-poor children is continuously growing bigger and bigger. The same goes for the poor children's feelings of inferiority and for their exclusion from joint activities (ibid).

7.6.5 "Dream poverty"

This is perhaps the most unnerving kind of poverty. Children are feeling that they cannot afford to dream about their future. They consider that their dreams are not "practical", meaning that they will not help them put food on the table soon enough. Some of them consider education a "luxury" that they may not be able to afford.

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Other children still aspire that higher education will be an investment both for them and their families but due to fears of an uncertain future, they are not sure if "we will all exist the next day or we will all go hungry". They understand that beyond their dream, reality is constraining their choices and there is nothing to be done about it. As Chant (2006) mentions, poverty should be understood not only under income perspectives but as a "massive restriction of choices and options" (p. 175). Along the same lines, Attree (2006) states that "at worst, the cost of 'make-do' for children can be acceptance of current restrictions, economically and socially, and reduced expectations of the future" (p. 62). Wordsworth et al. (2007) also stresses that "children's experiences of vulnerability are captured through simply 'not knowing what will happen tomorrow'" (p. 18).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this chapter I will first give a summary of the findings from the research accompanied by my final remarks. I provide my recommendations for policy and future research on specific matters that will produce more knowledge and will complement the topic of children's experiences of poverty in Greece.

8.1 Concluding remarks

This study has provided valuable information as to views and experiences of children concerning poverty. Although these perspectives from the 14 children that participated are not representative of all children living in Greece, it makes them no less important.

One of the objectives of this research was to explore children's experiences of familial poverty along with the strategies they were adopting in order to cope with it. I was particularly interested in the ways children articulate and understand poverty. Moreover I wanted to learn about children's perspectives on the crisis and on its implications in their lives. What I discovered was that children did not mouth the word "poverty". Instead they were using a vast array of words and expressions such as "we have difficulty to make ends meet" or "we are tight". The words "poor" and "poverty" have an extremely negative connotation in Greece and people are reluctant to use them. This fact, in connection to adults, was due to maintaining a good image and "exorcising" the reality by euphemizing negative words. No doubt, children as active members of their family are influenced by these notions. I would stress though that children were not attached so strongly to them. Instead they were conferring that they are "not deprived of anything" since they have "the basics". According to them, basics entailed food, clothes and a house to live in. Under the light of this notion, children believed that they were not "poor", despite all the financial difficulties they were facing.

In order to deal with familial poverty children exercised their agency and they employed strategies. These strategies come under specific types of agency. According to Redmond (2009), under "getting by" agency type children responded to financial problems by cutting down on their own expenses or finding inexpensive ways of entertainment. Under the "getting out" agency, children viewed higher education and

a consequent well-paid job as a way out of poverty. Nevertheless, there were children who questioned the power and the practicality of higher education.

In this point, I take a step further in the types of agency by proposing the "getting on with life" agency. Under this category were the strategies the children were imploring in order to get on with their lives while they were still affected by poverty. Children recounted their tries to act as emotional "buffers" for their parents by providing moral support and entertainment. Furthermore, following the old saying "knowledge is power" children were actively trying to make some sense out of the reality by informing themselves. This entailed learning more about the crisis either by watching the news and reading net-papers or by listening to the adults' conversations. Moreover, they learned about their household's true financial troubles by eavesdropping or discussing with older siblings. This happened without their parents being fully aware. Children, for some of the adults, were considered "immature" and incapable of political thought.

Children live in households which depend much on familial solidarity. An intricate web of relationships between family members and "their own" people is a big part of children's every-day lives. In this environment, children are considered as in need of protection from the "ugliness" of this world. Their parents are not entrusting them with financial issues or family problems. However, children are excellent economic and political commentators. In our discussions they were fully understanding and conveying the financial troubles their families were facing along with the reasons behind them. At the same time they were discussing the financial crisis by placing it in a larger, global scale. They could not guide me through the specifics but they knew that the crisis was a global problem which affected our country and finally it trickled down to their family. They all blamed the "politicians" who are corrupted and guilty for the country's debt. I believe though that many of their views of the political situation were influenced by their parents' opinions and political background.

Poverty is manifested in children's every-day lives in both direct and indirect ways. A direct outcome of poverty is that, due to the increasingly worsening financial situation, more children and families are in need of welfare support. At the same time, the danger of social exclusion is prevalent with the specific form of self-exclusion

being more prominent. The indirect manifestations of poverty have also to do with emotional and psychological implications. Children are concerned about the mental and physical health of their unemployed and thus depressed parents. Furthermore, they are affected by their parents' agonies and distress. This situation can be so profound that it could result to anxiety disorders, depression, school performance issues and incidents of bullying. In the household, the general negative climate can lead to intra-familial tensions. Tensions are also a result of the changed dynamics in the household. Men, who are considered to be the breadwinners, after the loss of their job, are confined into the house and they are struggling to accept a new reality with women being the main providers. In some cases, they manage to overcome the difficulties and learn to appreciate the fact that they have more time to spend with their children and families.

Another indirect manifestation of poverty is the increase in feelings of fear and uncertainty for the future. Children feel threatened by a changing reality which seems to hold no place for them. Teenagers are mostly wondering if they will be able to pursue a higher education and find a good job. Sometimes they appear apathetic and resigned but they still retain some hope that things will possibly change at the end. Children are mostly worried about losing their "basics", namely food and housing. Moreover, children with emigrated parents are afraid that they will never come back home. Emigration is another indirect aspect of poverty. Children have to accept that one of their parents has to leave and that is for the "best interests" of the family. Others have to follow their parents and thus leave back everything that is familiar and comforting -their house, family members and friends. At the same time, they have to face an uncertain future in a new and unknown country.

Children's understandings of poverty are very enlightening and they go far beyond material aspects. For them poverty is the fact that they cannot afford holidays, a short trip or a family night out. Moreover, they are excluding themselves from taking part in after-school paid activities or summer camps in order not to burden their parents. Children also feel that a constrained financial reality hinders their dreams and aspirations for the future. Poverty is also about the absence of spending quality time with their over-worked parents. What is more, there is another, heartbreaking aspect of poverty which I choose to call "parent poverty". This was conveyed to me by

children who had one of their parents emigrated and it refers to the actual emotional and physical deprivation of a parent.

The second objective of this study was to seek the children's perspectives and views on parental unemployment and /or general loss of income. Children understood the impacts of these aspects primarily in material discomfort. Firstly, "luxuries" were abandoned along with trips or vacations and a cut down on the amount of groceries came next. Although, this created feelings of resentment to the children, they did not turn this resentment towards their parents. Instead, they were concerned that their parents were "feeling sad" because they were unable to provide them with "everything". Another negative aspect stemming from parental unemployment, according to children, was that the remaining working parent had to work for long hours in order to supplement the household income. This situation though was like a coin with two sides: when referring to the parent that had lost his or her job, children were thrilled to have him or her at the house with them. In this case, parental unemployment was not necessarily bad in the children's eyes. Of course this was applicable when parents were keeping an optimistic outlook of the situation and they were not distressed. Children referred that in many cases their parents insisted of the family members being loving to each other and united in face of adversity.

My third objective was to explore for disruptions caused by the financial crisis and how that altered children's role in daily reproduction. I also wanted to know how the crisis impacts on their lives were defined by, or defining, the greater macro-structures of the political economy. It is apparent that the economic crisis has brought disruptions in the social reproduction of women and children. The first to be affected are the women since they are called to shoulder many more responsibilities in their households. Some of these responsibilities are transferred to the children who, in their turn, are called to adjust their every-day lives according to new realities. Domestic work and various chores along with taking care of younger siblings and grandparents are amongst children's tasks. They all mentioned that although they were always assigned some chores, they have taken up much more in order to help their over-worked or distressed mothers. At the same time, schoolwork is equally important and takes up much of their time. According to children, being "good students" -or at least try to be- is very important. This way their parents are content and they are not burdened with additional worries.

Children perceive the severity of the economic crisis and they connect it as a macro-parameter with parental unemployment and the consequent financial problems in their household. Nevertheless, the crisis impact is felt in a deeper level which goes beyond monetary implications. Parental unemployment is followed by distress and anxiety which children shoulder too. They are also more eager to financially support the family by entering in the labor force immediately after finishing school. Simultaneously, poor parents are not always able to provide their children with educational opportunities. Therefore, lack of higher education diminishes children's possibilities for a well-paid job in the future.

When discussing macro-parameter implications, it is useful to remember that children live in a country where the state is less and less eager to invest on families and children. Instead, a punitive taxation system is extruding many families below poverty line. The increasing need for welfare support is an attestation to this situation. At the same time, the ailing governmental welfare system is unable to meet the needs of the soaring numbers of people in need. Hence it is supplemented by NGOs with limited support capability.

Another aspect of macro-parametric impact is the constriction of children's agency. As previously mentioned, children do exercise their agency by engaging themselves in various strategies in order to face and overcome adversity. Nevertheless, this is done in a restrained context. Children cannot alter or prevent the forces which impact their lives. Conversely, they have to "make do" under a complex macro-system of intertwining political, economic and societal contexts. Although macro-parameters define children's lives in many ways, children in their turn are defining them back. Some children are skeptical in pursuing higher education, yet it is proven that higher education is beneficial for the society as a whole.

Moreover, children have a certain power over markets specifically designed for them. Market stagnation is a general outcome of the financial crisis. I would additionally suggest that children abstain from what it is considered to be "children's and youths' market", such as toy companies for example. What is more, many fast food joints in Athens, which are places typically visited by children and youth, are now visibly empty. However, both children and adults narrated that "this cloud has a silver lining" since it means an end in over-consumption, something that characterized the Greek society the last years.

Concluding, I would say that children are profoundly and deeply affected by the crisis in so many different and complex levels. Their narratives reveal a disturbing reality that goes beyond material deprivation. In a country that is plagued by the economic crisis, deep inequalities and state inefficiency the official numbers of child poverty and poverty in general are swelling. Austerity measures imposed by Troika[34] seem to only perpetuate poverty instead of bringing the much expected growth and recovery.   It is very important that Greek society as a whole, along with every responsible governmental institution, should comprehend the full and multifaceted nature of this issue. After all, the responsibility of fighting poverty back lies collectively with everyone.

8.2 Children's wishes

I would like to include here, in the closing part of this study, the children's wishes. Thus I remain faithful to my prime goal: children's voices should and will be heard. After I conducted the interviews with the children we usually discussed casually for some time. Before I leave them I was asking them a question: "If I was a genie coming out of a magical lamp and I told you that you have been granted a wish, what would that be?" Their answers most of the times amazed me and made me think a lot about the true meaning of happiness in life. Below is the "wish-list" of the children. This is my final tribute to them, the stars and co-creators of this project.

- ♣ 'I wish that the crisis would not exist…" Sofia, girl, 9 years old
- ♣ "I wish that the crisis would go away, but first it should unite us." Panos, boy, 15 years old
- ♣ "I wish for no-one to go hungry"   Nikos, boy, 9 years old
- ♣ "I wish all children's families to be always healthy." Marialena, girl, 9 years old
- ♣ "I wish there weren't bad people…"   Irene, girl, 6 years old
- ♣ "I wish more people would donate to charity." Eliza, girl, 18 years old
- ♣ "I wish things were more humane…" Smaragda, girl, 11 years old
- ♣ "I wish Greece to be helped with the right decisions of the politicians"   Dimitris, boy, 13 years old
- ♣ "I wish for a better world" Manos, boy 13 years old
- ♣ "I wish for a better Greece" Christina, girl, 15 years old

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[34] See page 18 – Troika: International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank

- "I wish for everyone to be happy."   Giannis, boy, 15 years old
- "I wish for everyone to be healthy" Andreas, boy, fifteen years old
- "I wish my father had a job" Alexis, boy, 15 years old
- "I wish that people could share with each other…you know… no selfishness" Babis, boy, 15 years old.

8.3 Recommendations for policy

Now more than ever, policy makers in Greece should abandon the "traditional" notion of the family self-sufficiency. Families cannot cover for a crippled welfare system anymore. Children are not a "matter of their parents" and the state must provide for and protect them. In contrast with the reality of the existent austerity-hit policies, "safety nets" must be placed for the population that is below poverty lines. Moreover measures must be taken for the alleviation of child poverty. Policies targeting this task must take into account children's perspectives and allow them to contribute to poverty discussions. In this way, decisions will be taken *with* them instead *for* them.

8.4 Recommendations for future research

This study has contributed to the growing discussions about children's perspectives and experiences on poverty. It has also shed some light to the everyday lives of children in Athens under the shadow of the economic crisis. Based on my experiences and the knowledge gained during the conduction of this study, I would recommend additional research on the following:

- The very interesting term of "economic orphans" is introduced by the foreign press. This would be a very interesting topic of research[35].
- A very alarming fact in the aftermath of the crisis is the constant rise in the suicides. Although it is a very sensitive matter, it would be very important to delve into this aspect of the crisis, seen in a familial context.
- If a similar study could be conducted in schools, it would definitely generate more data and it would give the topic more generalized, diverse and broad aspects.

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[35] See page 26

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Appendix A - Maps

Maps of Greece and Athens

Municipalities of Athens
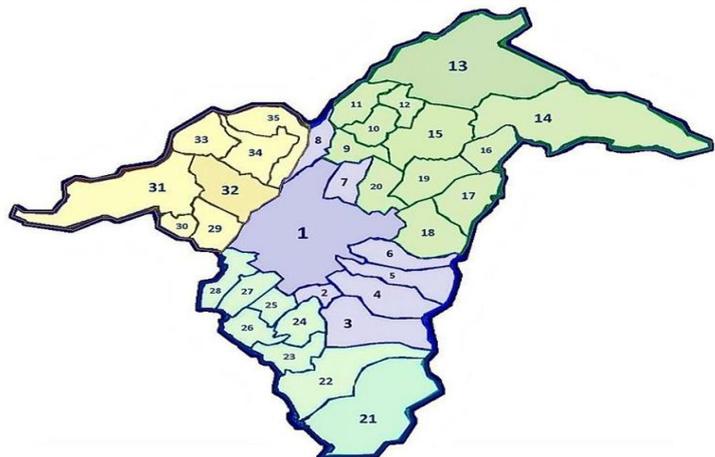
East section:	North Section	South Section:	West Section:
1. City of Athens 2. Dafni 3. Ilioupoli 4. Vyronas 5. Kaisariani 6. Zografou 7. Galatsi 8. Filadelfeia	9. Nea Ionia 10. Irakleio 11. Metamorfosi 12. Lykovrysi – Pefki 13. Kifissia 14. Penteli - Melissia 15. Amarousio 16. Vrilissia 17. Ag. Paraskevi 18. Cholargos – Papagou 19. Chalandri 20. Filothei – Psychiko	21. Glyfada 22. Elliniko-Argyroupoli 23. Alimos 24. Agios Dimitrios 25. Nea Smyrni 26. Faliro 27. Kallithea 28. Moschato	29. Egaleo 30. Agia Varvara 31. Chaidari 32. Peristeri 33. Petroupoli 34. Ilion 35. Agioi Anargyroi – Kamatero

Appendix B – Table: participants

Participants: Analytical table

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Region
Irene	Girl	6	Alimos
Sofia	Girl	9	Ano Liosia
Nikos	Boy	9	Ano Liosia
Marialena	Girl	9	Neos Kosmos
Smaragda	Girl	11	Ano Liosia
Dimitris	Boy	13	Ano Liosia
Manos	Boy	13	Ilioupoli
Christina	Girl	15	Alimos
Giannis	Boy	15	Ano Liosia
Andreas	Boy	15	Ano Liosia
Panos	Boy	15	Marousi
Alexis	Boy	15	Ilioupoli
Babis	Boy	15	Neos Kosmos
Melina	Girl	18	Kolonaki

Appendix C – Table: methods

Summarizing table of the methods and tools used:

Method	Participants	Themes explored	Advantages
Life Mapping	14 children	Important events and turning points in children's lives	Building rapport quickly Pleasurable activity for the children
Individual Semi-structured Interviews	9 children 7 adults	Familial poverty Children's aspects and views on poverty Strategies and Coping Economic crisis	Flexibility Informal "conversation" Participants could guide the conversation
Focus Group Discussions	5 children 5 teachers 3 social workers	The same with the above Impact of poverty in local communities according with the participants' experiences from their line of work	Collective knowledge on people's experiences Insight of contemporary reality Knowledge on how children communicate poverty with each other
Protection Tool	14 children	Children's wishes	Soothing activity Closure
Unstructured Observation	Every participant		Complimenting all the methods Generates ideas and themes to explore

Appendix D – Life Map

Appendix E – Protection Tools

Protection Tool for children

NEXT PAGE: Protection tool for adolescents

Protection tool for adolescents

Νιώθω ασφαλής_____

_____ Μου αρέσει_____

_____

_____

Η καλύτερη μου ανάμνηση_____

_____

_____

Είμαι καλή/καλός σε_____

_____

_____

Εαν ήμουν παντοδύναμη/παντοδύναμος

θα_____

_____

_____

Εύχομαι_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F – Informed Consent Forms

Consent Form for Children

☺ Χαρτί συμφωνίας ☺

Εγώ, ο / η _____ (όνομα) ξέρω ότι η μαμά και ο μπαμπάς μου ή ο κηδεμόνας μου, είπαν ότι είναι εντάξει να βοηθήσω σε μια εργασία με θέμα τις ζωές των παιδιών στην Ελλάδα. Την εργασία την κάνει η **Ευτυχία Καλαϊτζίδου**.

Παίρνω μέρος γιατί το θέλω. Μου έχουν πει ότι μπορώ να σταματήσω όποτε θέλω και δε θα με μαλώσει κανείς αν θέλω να σταματήσω. Επίσης, μου έχουν πει ότι δε θα χρησιμοποιηθεί το πραγματικό μου όνομα.

Υπογραφή:_____

Ημερομηνία: _____

Το ψευδώνυμο μου (ψεύτικο όνομα) θα είναι:

_____

Αν θέλω να ρωτήσω κάτι μπορώ να πάρω τηλέφωνο την Ευτυχία στο νούμερο **6932347527**
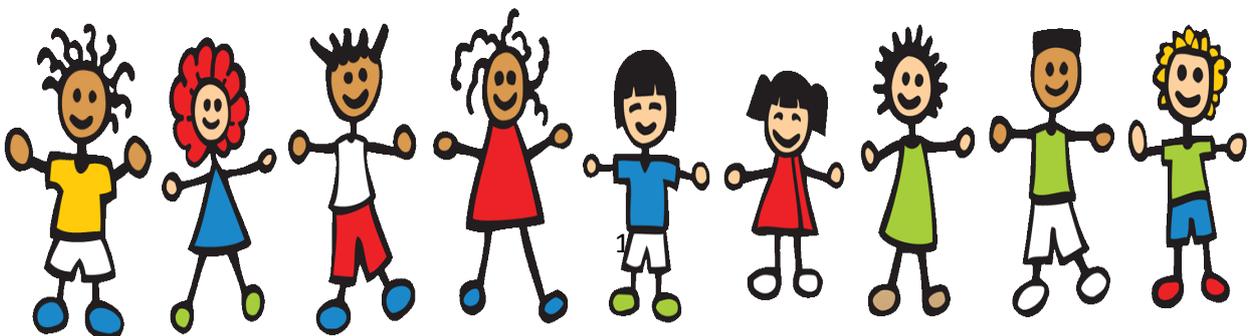
Consent Form- Teenagers

Έντυπο συμφωνίας

Εγώ ο / η _____ γνωρίζω ότι οι γονείς μου / ο κηδεμόνας μου, έχουν δώσει τη συγκατάθεσή τους να συμμετέχω σε μία έρευνα για τις ζωές και τις γνώμες των παιδιών πάνω στα οικονομικά προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίζει η οικογένειά τους λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης. Η έρευνα πραγματοποιείται από την **Ευτυχία Καλαϊτζίδου**.

Παίρνω μέρος επειδή το θέλω. Έχω ενημερωθεί ότι μπορώ να σταματήσω όποτε θέλω χωρίς να αντιμετωπίσω συνέπειες. Επίσης έχω ενημερωθεί ότι όποια στοιχεία συγκεντρωθούν από μένα και για μένα θα είναι **ανώνυμα**.

Υπογραφή: _____

Ημερομηνία: _____

Το ψευδώνυμό μου: _____

Εάν έχω οποιαδήποτε απορία μπορώ να καλέσω την Ευτυχία στο **6932347527** ή να της στείλω mail στη διεύθυνση eftychik@stud.ntnu.no

Consent Form Parents

<p align="center">Συναίνεση μετά από ενημέρωση</p>

(Συναίνεση για εσάς και τα παιδιά σας να πάρετε μέρος σε μια συνέντευξη η οποία αποτελεί μέρος μιας έρευνας μάστερ)

Σας παρακαλώ, διαβάστε τα παρακάτω πολύ προσεκτικά πριν αποφασίσετε να πάρετε μέρος στην έρευνα.

Αγαπητοί μου,

Είμαι φοιτήτρια μάστερ στο Νορβηγικό Πανεπιστήμιο Επιστημών και Τεχνολογίας (NTNU) στην πόλη Τρόντχαϊμ και δουλεύω πάνω στην πτυχιακή εργασία μου. Το θέμα της εργασίας είναι οι εμπειρίες των παιδιών κάτω από την σκιά της οικονομικής κρίσης στην Ελλάδα. Ενδιαφέρομαι να μάθω εάν τα παιδιά έχουν συναίσθηση της μετάβασης μετά από αλλαγές και προβλήματα εντός νοικοκυριού τα οποία προκαλούνται από την κρίση: για παράδειγμα, η απόλυση ενός από τους δύο γονείς . Επίσης, θέλω να διαπιστώσω αν και πώς οι οικονομικές δυσκολίες εντός της οικογένειας επιδρούν στην καθημερινή ζωή των παιδιών.

Για να μπορέσω να ερευνήσω σωστά τα παραπάνω πρέπει να πάρω συνεντεύξεις από 12 έως 14 παιδιά, ηλικίας 8 – 18 ετών. Επιπλέον, θέλω να συναντηθώ με τους γονείς τους για να τους ακούσω να ανταλλάσουν απόψεις κατά τη διάρκεια μιας προγραμματισμένης ομαδικής συζήτησης.

Οι ερωτήσεις της συνέντευξης θα έχουν να κάνουν με την καθημερινή ζωή των παιδιών και τις αλλαγές που έχουν τυχόν προκύψει μετά την απόλυση του ενός ή και των δύο γονιών Θα ήθελα επίσης να ρωτήσω την γνώμη των παιδιών σχετικά με τα οικονομικά προβλήματα που μπορεί να αντιμετωπίζει το σπίτι τους. Θα προσπαθήσω επιπρόσθετα να ανακαλύψω εάν τα παιδιά έχουν υιοθετήσει στρατηγικές προσαρμογής ή παράκαμψης αυτών των προβλημάτων.

Θα ήθελα να μαγνητοσκοπήσω τις συζητήσεις μας αλλά και να κρατήσω κάποιες σημειώσεις. Η συνέντευξη με τα παιδιά θα κρατήσει για περίπου μία ώρα και θα πραγματοποιηθεί σε μια συμφωνημένη από κοινού ώρα. Το βολικότερο θα ήταν να σας πάρω συνέντευξη στο σπίτι σας αλλά δεν υπάρχει κανένα πρόβλημα να συναντηθούμε σε οποιοδήποτε μέρος σας βολεύει.

Η ομαδική συζήτηση στην οποία θα συμμετέχουν οι γονείς θα πραγματοποιηθεί σε συμφωνημένο μέρος και ώρα. Θα κρατήσει για μία με δύο ώρες το πολύ. Θα φροντίσω να σας ενημερώσω τουλάχιστον μια εβδομάδα πριν για την πιθανή ημερομηνία και ώρα της συνάντησης.

Η συμμετοχή για εσάς και τα παιδιά σας είναι εθελοντική και έχετε πάντα την πιθανότητα να σταματήσετε να συμμετέχετε όποια στιγμή εσείς θέλετε, χωρίς να χρειαστεί να εξηγήσετε για τους λόγους για τους οποίους το κάνετε.

Επίσης, θα πρέπει να γνωρίζετε ότι όσα δεδομένα μαζευτούν για εσάς ή από εσάς θα είναι ανώνυμα. Οι πληροφορίες θα διαχειριστούν εμπιστευτικά και δεν πρόκειται κανένα άτομο να ονοματιστεί στην τελική εργασία μου. Οι πληροφορίες και οι μαγνητοσκοπήσεις πρόκειται να καταστραφούν μετά το πέρας της εργασίας μου, το πολύ μέχρι τον Ιούλιο του 2014.

Εάν θέλετε εσείς και τα παιδιά σας να πάρετε μέρος σε αυτήν την έρευνα, θα ήταν πολύ ευγενικό από μέρους σας να υπογράψετε το έντυπο συμφωνίας που θα σας παραδώσω και να το δώσετε σε εμένα. Τα παιδιά σας θα έχουν την δυνατότητα να υπογράψουν το δικό τους έντυπο συμφωνίας. **Ακόμα και αν εσείς τους δώσετε άδεια να συμμετέχουν στην έρευνα, αυτά μπορεί να μην συμφωνήσουν να το κάνουν. Εγώ, ως ερευνήτρια, οφείλω να σεβαστώ την επιθυμία τους.** Εάν εσείς οι ίδιοι δεν επιθυμείτε να συμμετάσχετε αλλά συμφωνείτε τα παιδιά σας να πάρουν μέρος (ή και το αντίθετο), δεν υπάρχει κανένα απολύτως πρόβλημα. Απλά υπογράψτε το αντίστοιχο πεδίο στο έντυπο συμφωνίας.

Εάν έχετε την οποιαδήποτε απορία σας παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να με καλέσετε στο 6932347527, ή να μου στείλετε ηλεκτρονικό μήνυμα στη διεύθυνση eftychik@stud.ntnu.no. Επίσης, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τον υπεύθυνό μου, κ. Abebe Tatek, στο Νορβηγικό Κέντρο Έρευνας για Παιδιά (Norwegian Center for Child Research) στο νούμερο 004741554327 ή στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση tatek.abebe@svt.ntnu.no.

Η έρευνα έχει κατατεθεί στον Υπεύθυνο Προσωπικού Απορρήτου, και υπόκειται στους κανονισμούς της Νορβηγικής Υπηρεσίας Κοινωνικών Επιστημών και Δεδομένων (Privacy Ombudsman for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services - NSD).

Με εκτίμηση,

Καλαϊτζίδου Ευτυχία

Διεύθυνση:

Moholt Alle, 04

7050, Trondheim

Informed Consent – Stakeholders

<p align="center">**Συναίνεση μετά από ενημέρωση**</p>

(Συναίνεση για να πάρετε μέρος σε μια συνέντευξη η οποία αποτελεί μέρος μιας έρευνας μάστερ)

Σας παρακαλώ, διαβάστε τα παρακάτω πολύ προσεκτικά πριν αποφασίσετε να πάρετε μέρος στην έρευνα.

Αγαπητοί μου,

Είμαι φοιτήτρια μάστερ στο Νορβηγικό Πανεπιστήμιο Επιστημών και Τεχνολογίας (NTNU) στην πόλη Τρόντχαϊμ και δουλεύω πάνω στην πτυχιακή εργασία μου. Το θέμα της εργασίας είναι οι εμπειρίες των παιδιών κάτω από την σκιά της οικονομικής κρίσης στην Ελλάδα. Ενδιαφέρομαι να μάθω εάν τα παιδιά έχουν συναίσθηση της μετάβασης μετά από αλλαγές και προβλήματα εντός νοικοκυριού τα οποία προκαλούνται από την κρίση: για παράδειγμα, η απόλυση ενός από τους δύο γονείς . Επίσης, θέλω να διαπιστώσω αν και πώς οι οικονομικές δυσκολίες εντός της οικογένειας επιδρούν στην καθημερινή ζωή των παιδιών.

Για να μπορέσω να ερευνήσω σωστά τα παραπάνω πρέπει να πάρω συνεντεύξεις από 12 έως 14 παιδιά, ηλικίας 8 – 18 ετών. Επιπλέον, θέλω να συναντηθώ με τους γονείς τους για να τους ακούσω να ανταλλάσουν απόψεις κατά τη διάρκεια μιας προγραμματισμένης ομαδικής συζήτησης.

Οι ερωτήσεις της συνέντευξης θα έχουν να κάνουν με την καθημερινή ζωή των παιδιών και τις αλλαγές που έχουν τυχόν προκύψει μετά την απόλυση του ενός ή και των δύο γονιών Θα ήθελα επίσης να ρωτήσω την γνώμη των παιδιών σχετικά με τα οικονομικά προβλήματα που μπορεί να αντιμετωπίζει το σπίτι τους. Θα προσπαθήσω επιπρόσθετα να ανακαλύψω εάν τα παιδιά έχουν υιοθετήσει στρατηγικές προσαρμογής ή παράκαμψης αυτών των προβλημάτων.

Εκτός από τα παιδιά και τους γονείς, θα ήταν πολύ χρήσιμο για την έρευνα μου να πάρω συνέντευξη από εκπαιδευτικούς, ανθρώπους που ανήκουν σε κοινωνικούς φορείς ή οργανισμούς και ειδικούς (ψυχολόγους, παιδιάτρους).

Θα ήθελα να μαγνητοσκοπήσω τις συζητήσεις μας αλλά και να κρατήσω κάποιες σημειώσεις. **Η συνέντευξη** θα κρατήσει για περίπου μία ώρα και θα πραγματοποιηθεί σε μια συμφωνημένη από κοινού ώρα. Το βολικότερο θα ήταν να σας πάρω συνέντευξη στον επαγγελματικό σας χώρο ή στο σπίτι σας αλλά δεν υπάρχει κανένα πρόβλημα να συναντηθούμε σε οποιοδήποτε μέρος σας βολεύει.

Η συμμετοχή σας είναι εθελοντική και έχετε πάντα την πιθανότητα να σταματήσετε να συμμετέχετε όποια στιγμή εσείς θέλετε, χωρίς να χρειαστεί να εξηγήσετε τους λόγους για τους οποίους το κάνετε.

Επίσης, θα πρέπει να γνωρίζετε ότι όσα δεδομένα μαζευτούν για εσάς ή από εσάς θα είναι ανώνυμα. Οι πληροφορίες θα διαχειριστούν εμπιστευτικά και δεν πρόκειται κανένα άτομο

να ονοματιστεί στην τελική εργασία μου. Οι πληροφορίες και οι μαγνητοσκοπήσεις πρόκειται να καταστραφούν μετά το πέρας της εργασίας μου, το πολύ μέχρι τον Ιούλιο του 2014.

Εάν θέλετε να πάρετε μέρος σε αυτήν την έρευνα, θα ήταν πολύ ευγενικό από μέρους σας να υπογράψετε το έντυπο συμφωνίας που θα σας παραδώσω και να το δώσετε σε εμένα.

Εάν έχετε την οποιαδήποτε απορία σας παρακαλώ μη διστάσετε να με καλέσετε στο 6932347527, ή να μου στείλετε ηλεκτρονικό μήνυμα στη διεύθυνση eftychik@stud.ntnu.no. Επίσης, μπορείτε να επικοινωνήσετε με τον υπεύθυνό μου, κ. Abebe Tatek, στο Νορβηγικό Κέντρο Έρευνας για Παιδιά (Norwegian Center for Child Research) στο νούμερο 004741554327 ή στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση tatek.abebe@svt.ntnu.no.

Η έρευνα έχει κατατεθεί στον Υπεύθυνο Προσωπικού Απορρήτου, και υπόκειται στους κανονισμούς της Νορβηγικής Υπηρεσίας Κοινωνικών Επιστημών και Δεδομένων (Privacy Ombudsman for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services - NSD).

Με εκτίμηση,

Καλαϊτζίδου Ευτυχία

Διεύθυνση:

Moholt Alle, 04

7050, Trondheim

Appendix G – NSD Form

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

NSD

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
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Vår dato: 11.06.2013   Vår ref:34637 / 3 / SSA   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 28.05.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

34637	*Children's experiences and perspectives of poverty in contemporary Greece*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Tatek Abebe*
Student	*Eftychia Kalaitzidou*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 17.08.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen
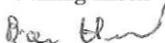
Bjørn Henrichsen

Sondre S. Arnesen

Sondre S. Arnesen tlf: 55 58 25 83
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Eftychia Kalaitzidou, Moholt Alle 04, 7050 TRONDHEIM

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Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

According to the notification form there will be obtained written consent based on written and verbal information about the project and the processing of personal data. The Data Protection Official for Research finds the letter of information satisfactory according to the Personal Data Act.

The information will be registered on a private computer. The Data Protection Official for Research presupposes that the use of a private computer is in accordance with the routines for data security for NTNU.

When the project is completed, by 17.08.13, the data material will be made anonymous by deleting directly and indirectly identifying variables and audio- and video-recordings will be deleted. In order for the data to be fully anonymised, all directly identifying data, such as names/referance numbers must be deleted, and indirectly identifying data in the remaining material must be deleted or changed.