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ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΔΙΟΝΙΚΟΣ

The social production of vulnerability: Sub-regional and class inequalities in Attica

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The Social Production of Vulnerability: Sub-regional and Class Inequalities in Attica

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Η κοινωνική παραγωγή της ευαλωτότητας: Ενδοπεριφερειακές και ταξικές ανισότητες στην Αττική

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ABSTRACT

Our study aims at a global understanding of social vulnerability focusing on its structural determinants, in social and spatial domains of heightened uncertainty. Vulnerability is approached as a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon contingent both on people's disadvantaged life world and on their agential powers, but also manifested at different scales: the national, the local, and the occupational. Analyzing macro-social data (drawing mostly from 2011 census) and survey data, we examine whether and to which degree vulnerability is patterned along the lines either of class or along other factors, such as geographical location. The geographical focus of the study is placed on the regional units of Piraeus and West Attica, Greece. Our findings suggest that class constitutes a powerful mechanism in the distribution of social risks whose operation interacts with other mechanisms of social differentiation.

KEY WORDS: Vulnerability, social class, inequalities, Piraeus, West Attica.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα μελέτη αποσκοπεί στην κατανόηση της κοινωνικής ευαλωτότητας, εστιάζοντας σε δομικά χαρακτηριστικά, όπως εμφανίζονται σε ένα κοινωνικο-χωρικό πλαίσιο υψηλής αβεβαιότητας. Η ευαλωτότητα προσεγγίζεται ως σύνθετο και πολύπλευρο φαινόμενο που προσδιορίζεται τόσο από τους περιορισμούς που επιβάλουν οι δομές του βιωμένου κόσμου στη δράση των ανθρώπων, όσο και από τις ευκαιρίες που δημιουργεί η ίδια η ανθρώπινη δράση, ενώ μπορεί να εξετασθεί σε διαφορετικές κλίμακες (εθνική, τοπική, επαγγελματική) και επίπεδα. Αναλύοντας μακροσκοπικά στοιχεία, αλλά και μίκρο-δεδομένα, διερευνούμε τον βαθμό στον οποίο η ευαλωτότητα συγκροτείται ως αποτέλεσμα παραγόντων, όπως η ταξική θέση που καταλαμβάνουν τα άτομα μέσα σε ένα πλέγμα κοινωνικών σχέσεων, ή ο τόπος κατοικίας τους. Σύμφωνα με τα ευρήματα που παρουσιάζονται εδώ, η κοινωνική τάξη συνιστά έναν ισχυρό μηχανισμό διαφοροποίησης της έκθεσης σε κοινωνικούς κινδύνους, χωρίς να αποκλείεται ωστόσο η συνέργεια και άλλων μηχανισμών κοινωνικής διαφοροποίησης.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ: Ευαλωτότητα, κοινωνική τάξη, ανισότητες, Πειραιάς, Δυτική Αττική.

1. Introduction

Social vulnerability is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon contingent both on the limitations that people face in their relationship with their life world and on the ways they act, think, or feel in this relationship. Vulnerability and its manifestations can be observed at different scales and levels: the national, the local, and the occupational scale, but also the macro, the meso and the micro-level. At the macro-level, one could examine risk-related factors, and how they vary across time and place, but also across different social locations determined by the relationship of people to income-generating assets of various sorts.

Research literature on vulnerability is organized around the following main axes: A considerable amount of research has been devoted to the conditions that render people or places vulnerable to extreme natural events, an approach which has been called 'the exposure model' (Anderson, 2000). A second stream of research approaches vulnerability as a social condition, a measure of societal resistance or resilience to hazards (Hewitt, 2000). In other research data the emphasis is put on the integration of potential exposures with a specific focus on places or regions (Kasperson, Kasperson, and Turner, 1995). In this paper we examine the social aspects of vulnerability drawing the attention to social class as the condition of possibility for making specific groups of people vulnerable. In that sense, our research intersects the three axes mentioned, inasmuch as we analyze both the physical (geographical location) and the social (class conditions) context of vulnerability. Thus, instead of treating vulnerability as an intrinsic property of the individual, we face it as a relational phenomenon (Moellendorf, 2009) created through class inequalities impacted also from social factors that influence or shape the susceptibility of various groups.

We consider thereby social class to be the most appropriate analytic tool for explaining the social determinants of vulnerability and its connectedness with geographical location. These determinants have mostly been treated within frameworks that are loosely connected with social class. To be more specific, the factors which are usually drawing the attention of the social researchers are as it follows: lack of access to resources (including information, knowledge, and technology); limited access to political power and representation; social capital, including social networks and connections; beliefs and customs; building stock and age; frail and physically limited individuals; and type and density of infrastructure and lifelines (Tierney, Lindell, and Perry, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

The discussion of social risk is also pertinent here. Building on empirical research at the field of risk, Ranci (2010) draws a distinction between old and new social risks. The new social risks emerge at the intersection of job insecurity, income instability, increasing fragility of family support and inertia of welfare institutions (Ranci, 2010: 6). One dimension of those risks is that they cannot be reduced to income, or job losses, as was the case in industrial societies. They are positioned in the gap between labour market, family, and welfare system and their treatment from social actors such as trade unions, and progressive parties is rather problematic (Taylor Gooby, 2004). A second dimension concerns the complexity of these risks. According to the scholarship of the new social risks, the material conditions of people today depend on a number of different social mechanisms, and therefore, there are different possible negative outcomes, which are difficult to correlate with specific causes (Ranci, 2010: 15).

The exposure of the individuals to negative outcomes produced by specific risk factors (such as temporary work, or disability), has different effects, for different groups of individuals, not on

the basis of a unique social mechanism such as class, but on the basis of the access to a number of different resource distribution mechanisms, with labour market being just one of them, albeit central. Accordingly, the concept of vulnerability is employed to explain how the effect of the same risk factor can be different for equally exposed individuals. In this line of argument, social stratification does not suffice to predict social vulnerability in contemporary societies. One should also consider other redistributing mechanisms, such as the social welfare protection, the household structure, as well as contextual factors such as the general level of well-being in a region (Ranci et al 2010: 255). In any case, the once privileged ties between the industrial working-class and the regulation of risk, have ceased to exist, and instead mass vulnerability has arisen. As we will see below, at least some of these labour segments can still be located in a working-class position, under an inclusive and relational theorization of class.

Though we share some of these concerns over the complex nature of vulnerability and social risk in advanced capitalism, we argue that none of these mechanisms are detached from class relations. It is against this background that our research objectives have been developed. In particular, we argue that while most of the quantitative studies make sense of social vulnerability through well-defined social factors, a comprehensive explanatory framework in which these factors are treated as a whole is largely absent. The contribution of the present study is to provide quantitative data showing the differential distribution of social vulnerability among different class positions. The research questions which guided data analysis are the following:

1) Given that the geographical focus of the study is placed on Piraeus and West Attica, two units of the largest Region of Greece, we examine which are the social differences between these areas and the rest of Attica. We selected these areas because they both share a rich industrial past; they have been equally subject to de-industrialization and re-industrialization processes; and they have painfully experienced the impact of the recent economic crisis.

2) How class positioning affects the possibility of poverty, unemployment, and deprivation risk?

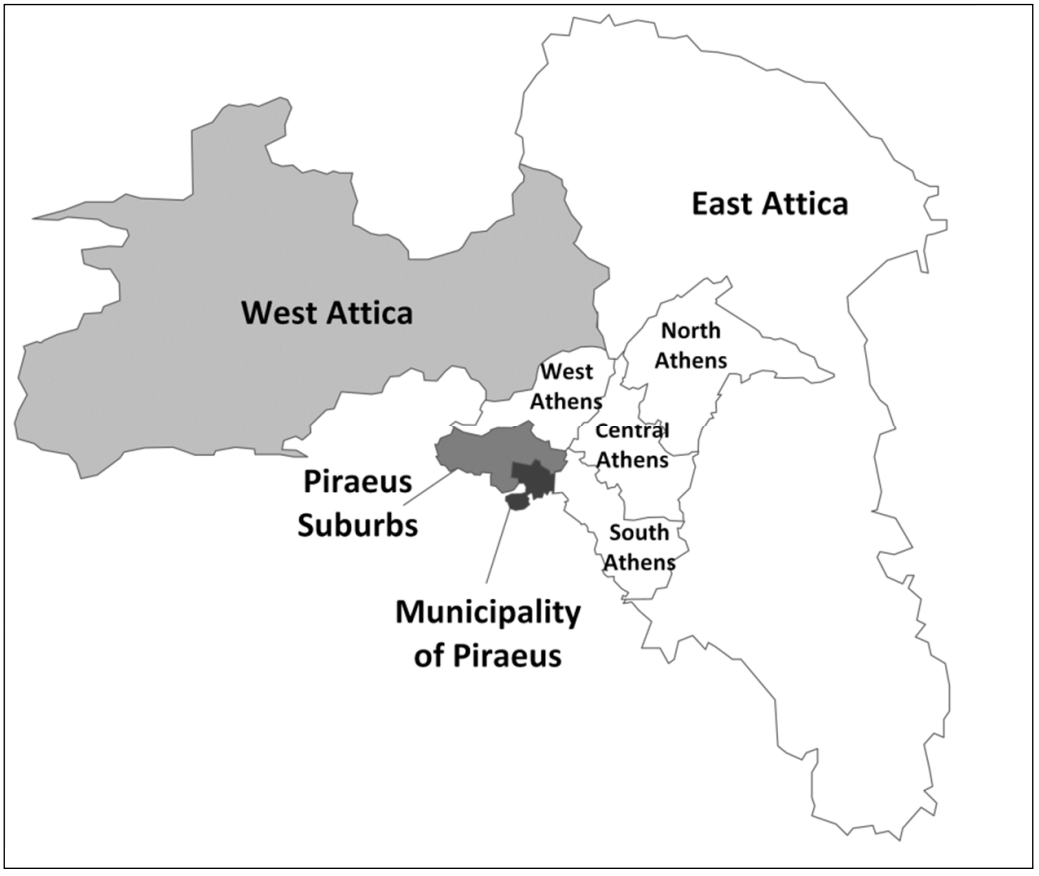
3) How the class-specific geographical location affects social vulnerability?

The first section of the article discusses the concept of social vulnerability, from a perspective of relational class analysis. The second section of the paper examines the social differentiation of the past decade in Attica Region. Attica concentrates almost half of the country's population, and a respectively significant part of the national economic activity. As it has been shown from various studies in different scientific areas, the two sub-regional units of Piraeus and West Attica, demonstrate a historically lower socioeconomic profile in comparison with the rest of the Region. The higher unemployment rates, and the lower levels of mean income, and occupational status, becomes a persisting local trend over time, with the national economic crisis of 2009 aggravating the chronic characteristics of this trend. Finally in the third section the focus shifts from the spatial level to the level of social production. The question we examine here is whether the spatial character of social vulnerability is accompanied with class specificities, or not. The quantitative material draws from a survey among people living in the area, and the operationalization of class relies on EO Wright's second class scheme (2000). The paper ends with the discussion of the findings and some concluding remarks.

2. Social differentiation in Attica

Figure 1 provides an overview of Attica Region along with its division in regional units. As explained below the Regional Unit of Piraeus can also be divided into two sub-units: the municipality of Piraeus (or Central Piraeus) and the Piraeus suburbs. The development of local industrial economy of Piraeus and West Attica has deep historical roots, which go back to the massive installation of refugees from Asia Minor after 1922 in the suburbs of Piraeus, representing 77% of total population as per 1928 Census. The rapid industrialization of West Attica in 1950s-1970s was another factor with similar local effects. These developments had a far-reaching impact on the local socio-economic profile and the local configuration of capital and labour. Thus, despite older significant cultural (ethnic) differentiations between the two areas, both display the lowest socioeconomic profile in the whole Attica region, also given the corresponding east-west residential division in Attica, shown in previous studies (Maloutas, 2016). Indeed, the highest incomes in Attica as well as the lowest unemployment rates are mostly concentrated in the north-eastern and south-eastern suburbs, in the center of the Municipality of Athens and in some areas in East Attica.

Figure 1 Map of Attica Region



In order to evaluate the current socio-economic status of Piraeus and West Attica, we make use of annual household income (as per Minister of Finance 2011 data and unemployment rates as per 2011 Census). A third additional indicator could be the objective real estate value (as per Minister of Finance 2007 data) which significantly determines the cost of housing, but also the cost of living in recent years, due to its use as Taxable Property Value (ENFIA). In several cases this indicator provides additional, and sometimes corrective information on income. For example, areas with relatively low income, but high real estate value, such as Municipality of Piraeus should be analyzed as a separated unit from its suburbs.

As shown in Table 1 Piraeus suburbs and mainly West Attica record essentially lower income (19,125€ and 18,746€ respectively) and real estate value rates (950€/m2 and 750€/m2) compared with the whole Attica region (24,082€ and 1,400€/m2), with unemployment being much higher as well (at least in 2011). On the other hand, the respective figures for Municipality of Piraeus are much closer to Attica average values, while local real estate values are higher than average. Similar conclusions have been drawn from other studies based on the Census data of 2011. A study in the field of poverty and social exclusion that has been conducted under the aegis of the Regional Authority of Attica (Kalogirou, 2015), ordered the 66 municipalities of Attica according to the Human Poverty Index used by the United Nations. Among the 10 Attica's municipalities with the highest record in Human Poverty, 4 municipalities belong to the target areas (the total number of municipalities in the two Regional Units are 10).

Other direct or indirect determinants of socio-economic status, such as education and occupational skill level corroborate the evidence mentioned above. West Attica presents by far the largest deviations from the corresponding average values in Attica, with only 9.7% higher education graduates (in comparison to a total 22.2% in Attica), while in Piraeus suburbs the corresponding percentage is 12.5%. Regarding the occupational skill level, West Attica concentrates the highest percentage (46.6%) of lower skill occupations (Skilled workers, technicians-operators and unskilled workers, based on ISCO classification) and the lowest percentage (14.1%) of high skill occupations (Managers, Professionals, based on ISCO classification). Piraeus suburbs give significant but much more limited deviations from total Attica values (27.6% and 27.8%) and only Municipality of Piraeus is close to Attica's average profile. To summarize, the socio-economic differentiation, though moderated across time, continues to affect the overall social profile of Attica, reproducing inequalities within the Region.

Table 1 Social differentiation of Piraeus - West Attica regional units

		Greece	Attica Region	Municipality of Piraeus	Piraeus Suburbs	West Attica
Unemployment 2011 (%)		18.7	18.0	19.6	21.6	23.2
Avg. Annual Income 2011 (in Euros)		20,202	24,082	22,071	19,125	18,746
Real estate values 2007 (in Euros/ m2)		n/a	1.400	1.450	950	750
Education Level	Up to Primary (%)	42.0	32.3	31.4	38.4	46.9
	Secondary (%)	41.3	45.6	49.7	49.1	43.4
	University or higher (%)	16.7	22.2	18.9	12.5	9.7
Occupational Skill Level	High Skill Level (%)	24.1	27.8	23.3	17.4	14.1
	Middle Skill Level (%)	39.4	44.6	49.9	49.1	39.3
	Low Skill Level (%)	36.5	27.6	26.8	33.4	46.6

Sources: Ministry of Finance, Census 2011.

3. Operationalizing social class through E. O Wright's conceptual scheme

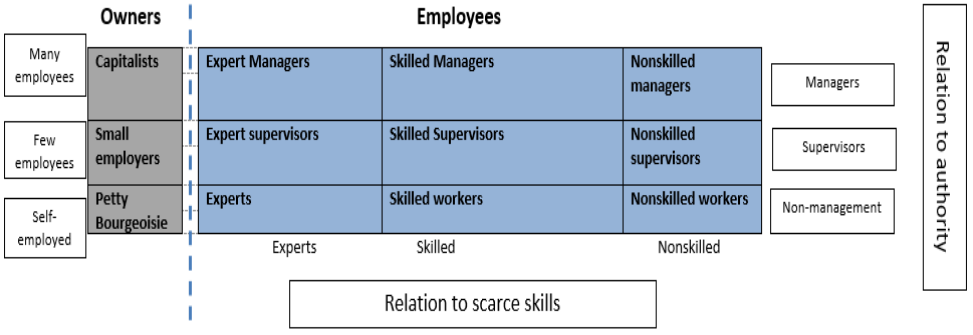
The core analytical category of our survey is class location, as designated by EO Wright in the class scheme presented in his book Classes. According to Wright: 'Class location is a basic determinant of the matrix of objective possibilities faced by individuals, the real alternatives people face in making decisions' (1985: 144).

Class structure, class relations, class locations, class formation, class struggle, and class consciousness are the building blocks of Wright's class analysis (Wright, 2005; 2000). A detailed description of how these elements interact in the macro, meso, and micro-level, falls outside the objectives of this paper. Suffice it to say that class locations are primarily empty places in the social structure, which are filled with individuals. Depending on the scope of the research question, one could limit the analysis of class structure to a model of three class locations: capitalists, workers, and self-employed, or even two (workers and non-workers). Given the complexities of the divisions within the contemporary employee population, it would make more sense to differentiate class locations among wage earners, particularly if we want to explain the variation of the prospects for living a comfortable and secure material existence. The great merit of using the concept of class location, is the avoidance of treating classes as things, either in the form of statistical aggregations, or in the form of social organizations. As Wright has put it 'classes constitute common positions, those positions are relational, those relations are contradictory, and those contradictory relations are located within production' (Wright, 1980: 20). This is precisely why he preferred using the term working-class as an adjective, rather than as noun.

Despite its theoretical elegance, as any taxonomy in quantitative empirical research, Wright's analysis builds on categories that run the risk of being 'fixed' in the sense that a predetermined set of criteria is applied in different countries at different times. As it is shown below, the application of these categories is adjusted properly to fit into the specific social formations under scrutiny. It is important to stress that class locations designate the social positions occupied by individuals within a particular kind of social relation (Wright, 2005: 14). They are distinctive locations within class relations. As every social relation, class relations are structured patterns of human interaction, but their specificity derives from the fact that this interaction is contingent upon the power people have over productive resources, which in turn determines whether they exploit productive resources, or they are exploited. Though in capitalism the central form of exploitation is based on property rights in the means of production, Wright stresses two additional dimensions that differentiate the positioning of individuals within the structure of exploitation: first, their relationship to authority within production, and second, their possession of skills or expertise. The 12 class positions of Wright's scheme (2000: 22) are distinguished according to a combination of three kinds of assets: means of production, skills/credentials, organization assets (Figure 2). Due to limitations on the number of observations in our survey, we concluded with 8 class positions, which are further merged to 4, as depicted in Table 2.

Managers and supervisors are merged into one category (managers/supervisors) with three sub-categories: expert managers/supervisors, skilled managers/supervisors, non-skilled managers/supervisors. In addition, those who are non-managers/supervisors (not managers, nor supervisors) are grouped in three respective categories: Experts, skilled workers, workers. With the exception of the workers, the rest employees occupy a contradictory location within the exploitation structure. Thus, the model presented here differentiates 2 class locations within wage earners/salaried employees (contradictory locations and workers), plus two locations for non-wage earners: Petty bourgeoisie (self-employed) and employers (employers with few employees). As there is no employer with more than 9 employees in the sample, the location of capitalists (big employers) has been omitted. Table 2 illustrates the way that respondents have been allocated to class locations.

Figure 2 Wright's elaborated class typology



Source: Wright, 2000: 22.

Table 2 Class locations and assets in the sample

	Ownership/control over the means of production	Authority/control over organization assets	Skills - Variable 1	Skills - Variable 2
Employers	Employer			
Petty-bourgeois	Self-Employed			
Contradictory Locations	Salaried Employee	High	High	High
		High	High	Low
		High	Low	High
		High	Low	Low
		Low	High	High
		Low	High	Low
		Low	Low	High
Workers		Low	Low	Low

It should be stressed here that in the analysis of deprivation the selected unit is the household. This is not a data driven choice, but a methodological response to the problem of 'cross-class' household composition in contemporary capitalist societies. Once again, we rely on the research question to find a solution, which can hardly be uncontroversial in general. For example, a municipality worker married to a civil engineer, does not share the same class position with a municipality worker married to a receptionist. And yet, to allocate the former worker to a 'middle-class position' (based on whose occupation is the main source of family income) renders his/her own job irrelevant for class analysis. This is at odds with ethnographic and other studies showing that subjectivity is deeply shaped from the micro-experiences on the job (Spyridakis, 2013). On the other hand, as Wright argues 'if one sees the central explanatory power of class as linked to the ways in which class positions shape material interests then household class composition becomes a more salient issue' (Wright, 2000: 127). Wright offers a useful insight, by distinguishing between direct and mediated class locations. The proper metaphor of class location, says Wright, is a node in a network of relations. In such network relations, one can find individuals with direct relations to their class location, in the sense of an unmediated link between the individual's immediate job and personal ownership of productive resources. But there are also individuals related to other family members, whose link with productive resources is indirect, and therefore they occupy a mediated class location.

The distinction between direct and mediated locations has been operationalized through the sample's separation in two clusters, depending on whether the respondent is the main contributor to household's income, or not. In the cluster of the main income contributors, the assignment to a class location depends on the criteria of Table 2. Class location for employers and self-employed is directly determined by their employment status. However, for the salaried employees, we have to check their values in management/control over organization assets variable (given by their authority within production) as well as in two variables determining Skills (education and profession level). In order that an employee is located in working class, it is necessary to have low values in all these three variables. Otherwise, the employee is located to contradictory class locations as per Wright's definition.

Regarding housewives and students, all these variables are determined by the corresponding available data about the reference person in the household or parental home, meaning the spouse or the father respectively. However, due to lack of information on the authority of the spouse/father at the workplace, household income is used as a proxy variable of organization assets. As for retired or unemployed, we have no specific information on their prior employment status. We use instead the information on their authority status when they were economically active, as a proxy variable of ownership/control over the means of production. Former CEOs/Owners of an enterprise are excluded because it is not clear whether they were employers/self-employed or salaried employees.

In the second cluster (those respondents who are not the main income contributors in their household), the assignment to a class position depends on the respective criteria as met by the reference person in the household, either the spouse, or the father, exactly like housewives or students in the first cluster. For example, a married self-employed individual of low income occupies an employer's class location as long as her spouse is employer. All the information regarding the assignment of the respondents to specific class locations is presented in the form of Table 3.

Table 3 Assignment to class location based on Employment Status

		Ownership/ control over the means of production	Authority/ control over organization assets	Skills - Variable 1	Skills - Variable 2
Not Main contributor to Household's Income	Employment Status of Spouse: Other than employed/ retired	Employment Status of father	Income	Education Level of father	
	Employment Status of Spouse: Employed/Retired	Employment Status of Spouse	Income	Education Level of Spouse	Profession Level of Spouse
Main contributor to Household's Income	Retired/Unemployed	Authority	Income	Education Level	
	Student	Employment Status of father	Income	Education Level of father	
	Housewife	Employment Status of Spouse	Income	Education Level of Spouse	Occupation skill Level of Spouse
	Employed	Employment Status	Authority	Education Level	Occupation skill Level

Table 4 shows the corresponding variables' values (high or low) along with their description. Regarding the Occupational level, the value 'high' designates high skill occupations (Managers or Professionals, according to ISCO classification). The 'middle' value corresponds to middle skill professions (such as Technical Assistants, Office Clerks, Employees in Sales & Personal Services), and the 'lower' value designates skilled manual workers, technicians-operators and unskilled workers. Based on the scheme described above, the frequencies for class locations of the sample are shown in Table 5.

Table 4 Variables and Values

Variables	Values	
	High	Low
Income	>1,500€	<1,500€
Occupational Level	Upper	Middle, Lower
Authority/Supervision Level	CEO/Owner, Manager/Supervisor	No Authority
Authority/Supervision Level (for Retired/Unemployed)	Manager/Supervisor	No Authority
Education Level	University or higher	Up to Primary/Secondary

Table 5 Class locations - frequencies

	Class Location Variable		
	n	%	% (Valid)
Employers	26	4.7%	6.4%
Petty-bourgeois	83	15.0%	20.4%
Contradictory/ mediated class Locations	214	38.6%	52.7%
Workers	83	15.0%	20.4%
Total Classified	406	73.3%	100.0%
Unclassified	123	22.2%	
Other	25	4.5%	
Total	554	100.0%	

4. The demographic profile of the sample

Survey data were collected through telephone interviews using a structured questionnaire, consisting of 69 items, organized on five sections: values, inequalities, political attitudes, emotional responses to Covid-19 pandemics, and socio-demographics. For the purposes of this paper, we draw on inequalities and socio-demographics. The survey was conducted by Greek Public Opinion - GPO.

The survey was carried out between 1 and 12 October 2020, on a total sample of 554 respondents, over 16 years old, who reside in the regional units of Piraeus and West Attica, with the method of stratified random sampling. The municipalities of the two regional units constituted the research sampling strata, with the selection of each random sample being proportional to the area's population (aged 16 and over) on the basis of Census 2011. The sampling method ensured the randomness and representativeness of the sample, in terms of some core characteristics of the actual population. The maximum margin of error for the survey results is 4.2% (at 95% confidence level).

The distribution of the study population in Table 6 shows that women, senior citizens, graduates, and occupations of high skill level are over-represented in the sample. Professions such as skilled workers, technicians-operators and unskilled workers represent only 18.5% of the sample

(compared to 35.1% of the area's population). 57.1% of the sample have no access to organization assets (authority) at the workplace. 48.4% live in households of a total monthly income lower than 1,500€. Mean income value is 1,221.1€, much lower than the Attica average (2,000€). On the other hand, the respective figures are homogenous within any separate regional unit without significant fluctuations among the municipalities. Regarding geographical distribution, overall sampling fraction in Piraeus is 1 in 815.0 (0.12%) approximately double than West Attica (0.06%).

Table 6 Demographic-socioeconomic characteristics of respondents (n=554) and population

	Sample		Population		Sampling Fraction (1 in X)
	n	n (%)	N	N (%)	
Regions (>16 y.o.)					
Municipality of Piraeus	176	31.8	142,644	27.8	810.5
Piraeus Suburbs	294	53.1	240,423	46.9	817.8
West Attica	84	15.2	129,483	25.3	1,541.5
Gender (>16 y.o.)					
Male	252	45.5	249,406	48.7	989.7
Female	302	54.5	263,143	51.3	871.3
Age, years range (>16 y.o.)					
16-29	60	10.8	107,326	20.9	1,788.8
30-44	125	22.6	147,095	28.7	1,176.8
45-60	258	46.6	124,163	24.2	481.3
>60					
111	20.0	133,966	26.1	1,206.9	
Family status (>16 y.o.)					
Married/cohabitated	347	62.6	286,864	56.0	812.6
Separated	6	1.1			
Single	128	23.1	156,824	30.6	1,225.2
Widowed/Divorced	69	12.5	68,862	13.4	998.0
Unknown/no answer	4	0.7	0	0.0	0.0
Education level (>16 y.o.)					
Up to Primary	31	5.6	145,412	28.4	4,690.7
Secondary/Post-secondary	287	51.8	284,869	55.6	992.6
University or higher	234	42.2	82,269	16.1	351.6
Unknown	2	0.4	0	0.0	0.0

Employment status					
Employed (Employer)	15	2.7	207,892	40.6	704.7
Employed (Self-Employed)	62	11.2			
Employed (Salaried Employee)	218	39.4			
Unemployed	44	7.9	56,230	11.0	1,278.0
Student	36	6.5	40,644	7.9	1,129.0
Retired-Pensionners/household	174	31.4	174,432	34.0	1,002.5
Other/Unknown	5	0.9	33,352	6.5	6,670.5
Income					
Up to 1,500€	268	48.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
1,500€-3,000€	158	28.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
>3,000€	30	5.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
No answer	98	17.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Authority at the workplace					
No Authority	320	57.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manager/Supervisor	43	7.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
CEO/Owner	69	12.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
No answer	122	22.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
ISCO OccupationalLevels					
Lower Skill Level	40	18.3	72,290	35.1	1,807.3
Middle Skill Level	144	65.8	96,148	46.6	667.7
High Skill Level	35	16.0	37,677	18.3	1,076.5

5. Class locations and exposure to vulnerability. The case of poverty risk

The social risks that we have examined concern the exposure of the respondents of the four groups of class locations (employers, self-employed, contradictory locations and workers) to the following risks: the risk of poverty, the risk of unemployment, and the risk of deprivation. As it was shown in previous section, the census data of 2011 indicate a significant social differentiation between the two Regional Units under scrutiny and the rest of Attica Region. It should be noted though that the nature of the administrative, or census data differs substantially from the survey data, for more than one reasons. The temporal dimension is one factor that should be taken into account, insofar as our survey has been conducted almost a decade after the last census. Additionally, one should also consider the inherent constraints of survey data. Despite the satisfactory levels of the representativeness of the survey in regard with some key features of the target population, there is a misrepresentation of lower strata, not least because a substantial number of poor households cannot be accessed through telephone. This specific limitation of

random sampling is not unusual in telephone surveys, and on that basis, generalizability needs caution. Most notably, as it is also explained, our final sample, excludes participants that cannot be assigned to one of the four class locations (mostly because they left unanswered some of the demographic questions). This means that by default, the economically active population is over-represented in this sample. This is not a problem per se, considering that our aim is to see what is happening within a specific class structure consisting of direct and mediated class locations. But it would be unwise to compare the data presented here with findings from other surveys pointing to the general population.

Another constraint concerns the questionnaire itself: a telephone survey cannot but entail a limited number of items. In the sensitive field of income, we followed the rule of thumb of income levels. This makes the construction of a standardized and comparable poverty index practically impossible. Instead, we constructed a tailor-made index of poverty risk, combining the level of household's net income, the household's size, the number of children and the poverty thresholds as determined by Greek Statistic Authority (ELSTAT).[3] The first group (high risk) comprises households located between those with incomes below the poverty threshold and incomes up to 30% above this threshold. The second group (low risk) comprises the rest of the households with incomes that are at least 30% above the poverty threshold. Table 7 shows the distribution of the poverty risk within the four different groups of class locations both when the unit of analysis is the household (structure with direct and mediated locations) and the individual (structure with direct locations only). The differences among the four class locations in the distribution of risk, are statistically significant at the $p < .5$ level in both cases.

Table 7 Poverty risk along class locations

		Class structure based on direct and mediated class locations				
		Workers	Contradictory locations	Self-employed	Employers	Total
Poverty risk (2 categories)	Low	36,8%	84,1%	77,5%	94,4%	73,0%
	High	63,2%	15,9%	22,5%	5,6%	27,0%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		Class structure based on individual's location				
		Workers	Contradictory locations	Self-employed	Employers	Total
Poverty risk (2 categories)	Low	57,4%	87,4%	75,9%	90,9%	78,7%
	High	42,6%	12,6%	24,1%	9,1%	21,3%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Because income is built-in determinant both of poverty risk index and of mediated class locations, we will limit our analysis to the direct class locations. The workers' class location is by far the most exposed to the risk of poverty. 42,6% of those respondents who directly occupy a working-class location live in a household that runs a high poverty risk. This is the most striking evidence of the deep class divide within the Regional Units of Piraeus and West Attica, given that the total share of those falling into the high-risk category, is 21,3%. As expected, employers

constitute the class location with the less exposure to poverty risk. What is also worth noted is that the share of the self-employed who are exposed in high poverty risk (24,1%), is considerably higher than the respective share within contradictory class locations (employees with organization or/and skills assets). This finding corroborates with other aspects of the socioeconomic profile of the respondents who occupy the self-employed location: half of them lack university degree (the share of those in contradictory locations without degree is only 34,6%), while 29,3% position themselves to the working class (the respective percentage within contradictory locations is 21,7%). Perhaps a further distinction between traditional (such as craftsmen and technical professionals) and new petty bourgeoisie (such as scientists and professionals) would make sense, but this would require a detailed conceptual discussion that cannot be delivered here.

To test whether other factors, such as contribution to the household's income, age, place of residence, and gender, exert more influence on the possibility of being at high, or low poverty risk, we performed a binary logistic regression (BLR).[4] Binary logistic regression (BLR) aims at modelling the relationship between one or more predictor variables and a binary dependent variable, and its great merit is that it makes no assumptions about distributions of classes in feature space. The dependent variable is poverty risk (category 'low'=the respondent's household income is at least 30% above the poverty threshold, and category 'high'= the respondent's household income is up to 30% above the poverty threshold). Table 8 gives an overview of the independent variables. The results shown in table 9 indicate that the model fits the data significantly better than a null model, $x^2(8)=21.191$, $p<.05$. The overall classification accuracy based on the model is 80,4%. SPSS allows to use Hosmer & Lemeshow test to evaluate global fit. The non-significant test result (as seen in Table 10, $p=.53$) is an indicator of good model fit.

As shown in Table 11, class location is a significant predictor of poverty risk. In fact, it is the only significant predictor, as far as the contribution to household's income, age, gender, and place of residence are non-significant predictors. Those in contradictory locations are less likely to fall into the category of high poverty risk compared with those in Workers' location by a factor of .188. ($b=-1.673$, s.e.= .444, $p<.05$). Self-employed are less likely to fall into the category of high poverty risk compared with those in Workers' location by a factor of .410. ($b=-1.673$, s.e.= .413, $p<.05$). Employers are less likely to fall into the category of high poverty risk compared with those in Workers' location by a factor of .113. ($b=-2.183$, s.e.= 1.126, statistically significant only at the $p<.10$ level). In other words, employees with scarce skills and/or organization assets are subject to the 1/5 of the risk of poverty in comparison with those employees without scarce skills/authority. In addition, self-employed run almost half of the risk of poverty in comparison with workers. This finding elucidates the importance of class differences within wage labour, and hence the pivotal role of organization and skill assets in class relations. The impact of the property relations on the exposure to poverty, is less straightforward, mainly due to the small number of employers in this sample.

Table 8 Categorical Variables Codings

		Frequency	Parameter coding		
			(1)	(2)	(3)
Class location	Workers (Ref. category)	47	.000	.000	.000
	Contradictory locations	119	1.000	.000	.000
	Self-employed	58	.000	1.000	.000
	Employers	11	.000	.000	1.000
1. Region	Municipality of Piraeus	78	1.000	000	.
	Piraeus suburbs	121	.000	1.000	
	West Attica (Ref. category)	36	.000	.000	
31. Gender:	Male	122	1.000		
	Female (Ref. category)	113	.000		
Age group	up to 44	93	1.000		
	45 plus (Ref. category)	142	.000		
Are you the main contributor to the HH's income?	No	110	1.000		
	Yes (Ref. category)	125	.000		

Table 9 Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	21.191	8	.007
	Block	21.191	8	.007
	Model	21.191	8	.007

Table 10 Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	7,075	8	,529

Table 11 Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1a	Contribution to the HH Income	-.490	.362	1.839	1	.175	.612
	Gender	-.194	.366	.280	1	.597	.824
	Age group	.232	.352	.434	1	.510	1.261
	Region			.726	2	.696	
	Region (1)	-.168	.513	.107	1	.743	.845
	Region (2)	-.379	.483	.615	1	.433	.685
	Class location			17.628	3	.001	
	Class location (1)	-1.673	.413	16.384	1	.000	.188
	Class structure (2)	-.892	.444	4.049	1	.044	.410
	Class structure (3)	-2.183	1.126	3.758	1	.053	.113
	Constant	.207	.572	.131	1	.717	1.230

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Contribution to the HH Income, Gender, Age group, Region, Class location.

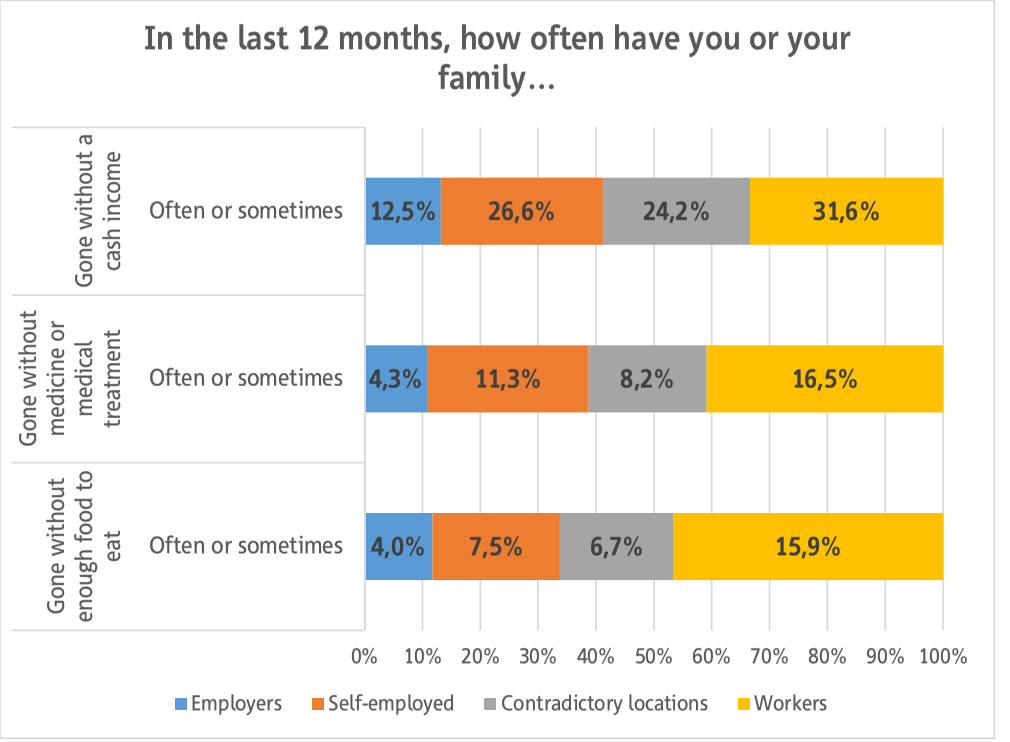
6. Class locations and exposure to vulnerability. The case of deprivation and of unemployment risk

Let us now see the connections between class and individual deprivation. Though associated with the poverty risk, deprivation is not reducible to it. The relation between money income and welfare is rather loose and depends heavily on socio-cultural context therein. To overcome the problems arising from the context-specific nature of poverty and welfare, Amartya Sen (1992; 1996) proposed to measure welfare directly by observing capabilities of individuals and households. He then defines poverty as the failure of some basic capabilities to function–a person lacking the opportunity to achieve some minimally acceptable levels of these functionings (such as the inability to be healthy, well-fed, clothed, sheltered, etc.). Notwithstanding its usefulness this alternative to income-based calculation of poverty leaves room for debate about the most appropriate way to identify, weigh, and measure capabilities (Klasen, 2000: 36). In its most inclusive operationalization individual deprivation can be thought of as a composite index of the following components: income and employment levels, perceived well-being, access to education, housing type, access to water, sanitation and electricity, transport mobility, nutrition, access to health care and safety (Klasen, 2000: 39-40). Narrower approximations of individual deprivation have also been in circulation (Canale et al. 2018). Drawing from the questionnaire of the last wave (2016-2020) of the World Values Survey (WVS) we used the following scale of four questions to approximate deprivation: 'In the last 12 months, how often have you or your family…':

- Gone without enough food to eat.
- Felt unsafe from crime in their home.
- Gone without medicine or medical treatment that they needed.
- Gone without a cash income.
- Gone without a safe shelter over their head.

This battery of questions is similar to many of the scales assessing deprivation (Canale et al. 2018). The differences along class lines, are less sharp compared with the huge differences in regard with poverty, though they are statistically significant with the notable exception of the sense of unsafety at home (there is a strong feeling of unsafety which cuts across class locations, and in that sense, its operation at the micro-level is place-based, rather than class-specific). The following figure, summarizes how individual deprivation (in terms of food, medical treatment, and income cash), is distributed along the four class locations (mediated locations are included here – see Table 2).

Figure 3 Indications of deprivation



In these instances of deprivation, the share of workers is overproportionate. The most frequent indication of deprivation is the lack of cash income, with almost a third of the workers answering that they have run out of money often or at least sometimes in the last 12 months. The differences become more obvious when the workers are compared either with employers, or with employees in contradictory locations. As in the case of poverty risk, the workers are socio-economically closer to the self-employed, rather than to other employees.

Both poverty risk and deprivation, are related to employment status. As already said, only a part of the unemployed of the total sample (32 out of 44) have been assigned to a mediated class location on the basis of their spouses', or their parents' status. This means that unemployed are under-represented here. It is obvious though that unemployment concerns mostly those in the working-class location (half of the sample's unemployed are assigned to the working-class location) and to a lesser extent those in contradictory locations, while there is also a 12,5% of the unemployed assigned to the class location of self-employed. In this sense, it is hardly surprising that more than a half of our sample's unemployed consider themselves working or lower class (compared to a 30,9% in the total sample). The employment intensity for wage earners could potentially be another predictor of employment risk. In regard with the type of employment (contingent, non-contingent), the differences among the four class locations are not statistically significant.

7. Discussion and conclusions

In the advent of the global economic crisis of 2008, social class gained once again traction among a wide range of disciplines in social sciences. According to the forecasting results of a recent article on the evolution, topic landscape, and dynamics of social class and inequality research, the field will continue to attract more attention in the future, with the most significant contribution coming from health and medicine-related studies, educational research, and industrial relations studies, particularly in areas focused on the fourth industrial revolution (Guo et al. 2018: 14).

The binary logic that fuelled the discussion over class in the 1980s and the 1990s, seems to be superseded by a more pragmatic approach, at least among class analysts. Today most of those who persist using class as an analytical tool to explain inequalities, do not feel obliged to renounce the individualistic societal shift of the second half of the previous century. The opposite is less true; the tone against the sociology of class, was (and still is) polemic among key scholars of the new social risks. This should not surprise us: the post-class or anti-class research agenda was built upon an identity that has mainly been constituted as a negative response to an existing body of knowledge, and most importantly, it downplayed its own class biases. The appropriation of a macabre terminology (death of class, dying of class, zombie categories and the like), manifests the defence mechanisms that were (and still are) at work.

The impact of such agendas is more observable at the policy level, where the desocialization and depoliticization of poverty foregrounds drastic cuts and restructuring in social spending by individualizing social risks and privatizing welfare functions (Papanastasiou, 2019; Papanastasiou and Papatheodorou, 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic offers another point of reflection on arguments in favour of the individualization of risk and how they are strategically employed to understate the unfair results of neoliberal arrangements. The case of West Attica is once again telling: the area's exposure to the dynamic spread of the virus, has mainly been associated either with the reduced responsibility of individuals, or with the behaviour of specific ethnic communities. The responsibility of the big firms of the area (industries, warehouses, and logistics infrastructure) passed largely unnoticed from the government and the mainstream media, not to mention the class mechanisms that are at work for decades, limiting the choices from a perspective of inclusive citizenship. In any case, there is ample evidence that accepting both the individualization mega-trends in modern societies and the persistence of class divisions can produce valid explanations on why the distribu-

tion of goods (things, practices, and goals) that are currently valued remains so stubbornly inequal.

In the present article we adopted the relational framework of EO Wright to empirically examine in what extent class is linked with social risks, such as the risk of poverty, deprivation, and unemployment. To this end, we performed a two-steps analysis: First, we examined social differentiation at the sub-regional level, comparing two Regional Units of Attica with the rest areas of the Region, relying on various risk-related indicators (unemployment, income, poverty index). The census-based data that we collected from primary and secondary sources, confirmed that Piraeus and West Attica demonstrate a distinct socio-economic profile. Social risks, such as the risk of poverty, or the risk of unemployment, were considerably higher in Piraeus and West Attica in 2011, and there is no evidence that the differences were lessened during the decade of the Greek crisis. The question then, was whether this contextual social differentiation of Piraeus/West Attica, supersedes class differences within these two areas. Drawing from survey data, we concluded that social inequalities, which are deeply grounded on the macro-processes of the division of labour at regional scale, are also contingent upon the current state of class relations at the local level.

The evidence of class-specific vulnerability gives credit to the notion of dynamic asymmetry coined by EO Wright. The possibility of being vulnerable against social risks, changes unevenly along class, geographical, and other socio-cultural lines, depending on the specificity of the risk. For example, the risk of deprivation for workers of the target areas is perhaps mediated from factors other than their class location, particularly when it comes to the feeling of unsafety at home (with gender and age, playing a much more decisive role here). More striking is the class-based mechanism of the distribution of poverty risk, which affects disproportionately those with no control over physical, organization, or skills assets within social production. Needless to say that agentic determinants, such as the subjects' values, political attitudes, and practices, shape (and are shaped from) their life chances and the concomitant risks and opportunities. Qualitative research is better placed in assessing such complexities, and we intend to complement this study with future analyses on interview and ethnographic material. Overall, the findings corroborate the argument that class matters, in the sense that it is a mechanism whose function augments the results of other patterned ways of social differentiation, such as place of living, and in some cases, class matters more.

Reflecting both on the micro and macro-level, it could be said that geographical and class location interact in a way that being a working-class in West Attica may differ from being working-class in more affluent areas of Attica. This seems in line with Milanovic's research (2012) who underlines the role of location in determining to a large extent one's income and the exposure to vulnerability. However, according to the analysis of the poverty risk purported here, the exposure to this specific risk, is over-proportional among workers, with other socio-demographic factors playing practically no role. Other relevant studies (Navarro 2002; Marmot 2005) corroborate this finding, highlighting the way that social inequalities affect well-being in general, for example, in what regards heart disease mortality. According to these studies the mortality gradient cannot be attributed to diet, physical exercise, or cholesterol alone; these risk factors explain only a small part of the gradient. The most important factor was the position that people held within the social structure and the differential control that people had over their own lives.

Pertinent here is the study of Zissi, Stalidis and Benos (2017), on the state of mental health of people living in socioeconomically distinct urban neighbourhoods of Thessaloniki (Greece) within the context of the economic crisis. The authors stress the explicit and non-reducible class

dimension of the widening inequalities in mental distress, illustrating how the Greek crisis affected in different ways different social classes. In terms of our study, the exposure to vulnerability can operate asymmetrically, at the structural-limiting level or the contextual-selecting level, depending on the question at hand. Although scholars that have elaborated on Wright's notion of dynamic asymmetry suggest a shift from analysing class as individualized hierarchies to focusing on how class and other forms of social difference are organized in relation to each other (Eidlin and McCarthy, 2020), we contend that a combination of the micro- and macro-level analysis is a valid research strategy in integrating complex and interrelated forms of difference.

The macro-analysis does not necessarily entail national or supra-national scales. The power of class relations in determining vulnerability, can be empirically tested at the sub-national level, insofar as regional and sub-regional disparities are the outcome of variability in the social and institutional fabric that sustains and regulates capitalist employment relations (Peck, 1996). David Harvey has systematically shown how the production of space is linked to the on-going accumulation process, mainly through the creation of 'spatial fixes' (Harvey, 1982). From another point of view, Doreen Massey has illustrated how the changing spatial organization of capital structures the social relations of capitalist accumulation (Massey, 1995). Furthermore, labour's struggles themselves have their own impact on the production of the material landscape and of the geographical relationships between different places (Herod, 2003).

This is not to suggest that spatial inequalities, or family structures, or welfare strategies are overdetermined by capitalist social relations, and class struggle. Nor that every social risk is the causal effect of the class structure of a given society. Potential causal factors other than class differences, such as the strategic positioning of trade unionism, or the role of family, may become salient in the context A, but not in the context B. Echoing EO Wright's relational analysis, we rather argue that most people's lives are fairly well contained within specific class locations, notwithstanding intergenerational mobility and the relative permeability of class boundaries. In addition, social inequalities that are assumed place-bound, may (or may not) be interwoven with the class divide. The answer(s) here can hardly be merely theoretical. One need to empirically examine together macro-processes, their micro-foundations, and the interaction between the two, if it is to assess which vulnerabilities are class-related and at which scale.

Notes:

1. This paper is based on the research project titled "Cultural conditions in the formation of class identities: culture and working class in Piraeus and Thriasio" funded by the Business Plan, Human Resources Development, Training and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020 and monitored by the University of the Peloponnese for the academic period 2020-2021, under the academic guidance of Professor Manos Spyridakis, University of the Peloponnese. Members of the team project: Dr. G. Bithymitris, vice academic advisor, National Center of Social Research, Dr. P. Koustenis, Research Fellow, University of the Peloponnese, Dr. F. Iliopoulou, Research Fellow, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.
2. For 2020 (the year of the survey) ELSTAT determined the poverty threshold at 410 EU for households with one adult, plus 0,5 * 410 EU for each extra adult and 0,3 * 410 EU for each kid. For instance, the poverty threshold for a family with two adults and two kids, is 861 EUR.

3. For 2020 (the year of the survey) ELSTAT determined the poverty threshold at 410 EU for households with one adult, plus 0,5 * 410 EU for each extra adult and 0,3 * 410 EU for each kid. For instance, the poverty threshold for a family with two adults and two kids, is 861 EUR.
4. We could avoid including gender, age, place, and contribution, in the model, but we preferred highlighting that the differences in place, gender and age distribution along classes, had practically no impact on the exposure of an individual to the risk of poverty. Remember though that housewives, pensioners, students, and unemployed are excluded from the analysis of poverty risk.

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Biographical Notes

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Panagiotis Koustenis, (Master of Political Science and Sociology, University of Athens; PhD Political Science, University of Athens) is currently Research Fellow of the University of the Peloponnese. Dr. Koustenis has taught Political Parties and Opinion Polls in the capacity of the Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of the Peloponnese. He has also taught Political Science Quantitative Methodology and Modern Political History in Panteion University (2014-2018). He holds a BCs in Mathematics from University of Athens and his PhD thesis was a comparative analysis of Electoral Systems and Electoral Laws in Greece. He has published mainly on the fields of Electoral Sociology and Electoral History.

Michalis Christodoulou has studied sociology (Department of Sociology, University of Crete) and philosophy (Department of Philosophy, University of Patras) and holds a PhD in sociology (University of Patras). He is carrying out a postdoc research on relational social theory at the University of Crete. He is co-author of Social Causation and Biographical Research: Philosophical, Theoretical and Methodological Arguments (Routledge, 2020) and of Critical Realism and Biographical Methods in qualitative research (2019) (in Greek). He is a member of the academic staff at the Department of Philosophy, University of Patras, Greece.

Iliopoulou Triantafyllia holds a PhD from University of the Peloponnese in crime prevention and she is conducting post-doc research in cyber crime. She has taught Social Policy & Social Work, Methodology of Community based Programs and Counselling Skills in University of West Attica and she is currently teaching Forensic Psychology in National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

Manos Spyridakis is Professor of Social Anthropology. He teaches Anthropology of Work and Economic Anthropology in the Department of Social and Educational Policy at the University of the Peloponnese. He studied History and Archaeology in the University of Crete; he got his Master's degree in Social Anthropology from the University of Durham, and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the Sussex European Institute in the University of Sussex, as a bursar of the State Scholarship Foundation. His research interests focus on employment relations and social policy, on the concept of space, on qualitative social research, on economic anthropology and on anthropology of health.