



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT

Dark times, bright futures

A study about civil servants finding meaningful work during the
financial crisis in Greece

by

Natalie Flodin

Maria-Anna Pateraki

May, 2019

Master Program in Managing People, Knowledge and Change

Supervisor: Roland Paulsen

Examiner: Tony Huzzard

*To live is to suffer,
to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering
Friedrich Nietzsche*

Abstract

Title	Dark times, bright futures: A study about civil servants finding meaningful work during the financial crisis in Greece
Authors	Natalie Flodin & Maria-Anna Pateraki
Supervisor	Roland Paulsen
Submission Date	May 24 th , 2019
Purpose	To make a contribution to the gap in the literature by exploring how a sense of meaningfulness can be developed in the field of public sector during a financial crisis.
Research Question	How can civil servants in Greece develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work during the financial crisis?
Methodology	Following an interpretive approach, we developed a qualitative study. We got to our findings by conducting seventeen semi-structured in-depth interviews over Skype.
Findings	Civil servants were initially attracted to work in the public sector due to financial security and stability, however they were able to develop a sense of meaningful work at their job through three significant factors: strong relationships at work; having challenges at their job; and being able to connect a personal passion to their work. The sense of meaningfulness also aided in increasing their job satisfaction and well-being, which is also beneficial during the hardships of the financial crisis.

Contributions

Our findings contribute to a more robust understanding of the ways in which civil servants can develop a sense of meaningful work, and thereby also experience more work satisfaction and feelings of wellbeing, as well as demonstrating more engagement and commitment to their role.

Keywords

Meaningful work, financial crisis, Greece, independent authorities

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to our supervisor, Roland, for always remaining positive and supportive when we experienced setbacks and dilemmas along the way of the thesis. Thanks for all your advice, experience, and interesting ideas. We appreciated all of it. Thank you!

Thank you to the Chief Legal Counselor at PTP for allowing us to conduct our research at your authority. And thanks to all the civil servants for your openness and honesty; we received such rich, emotive, and sometimes funny, accounts from all you. Our thesis would not have been possible without it.

Thank you to our friends and family for your support and encouragement. It was very appreciated!

We also want to thank each other for supporting one another, and for always being up for a laugh and a deep discussion about the last season of Game of Thrones during our breaks. Hopefully our thesis will conclude in a much more satisfactory way.

Happy reading!

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	7
1.1 Research Objective.....	8
1.2 Outline of the Thesis.....	9
2. Theoretical Background.....	10
2.1 Meaningful Work - What Does it Mean?	10
2.2 Financial Crisis- “The people of Greece deserve better”.....	14
2.3 Public Sector of Greece- Independent Authorities.....	16
2.4 Why meaningful work is interesting to study in the public sector.....	18
3. Methodology	21
3.1. Research Approach.....	21
3.2. Research Design.....	22
3.3 Case Context	22
3.4 Data Collection Method.....	23
3.5 Data Collection Process.....	26
3.6 Data Analysis Process.....	29
3.7 Quality and Limitations	31
4. Empirical Material.....	33
4.1 “We belong to the P.I.G.S... so we have to be punished”.....	33
4.2 “If I do something that I love... then I sacrifice my sleep or my leisure time”....	43
4.3 Recap: Summary of our Findings.....	56
5. Discussion.....	57
5.1 Working in the Financial Crisis.....	57
5.2 Finding the Meaningfulness.....	61
6. Conclusion	68
6.1 Main Findings.....	68
6.2 Research Contribution.....	69

6.3 Research Limitations 71
6.4 Implications for Further Research..... 72
Reference List..... 74

1. Introduction

The current research and literature on meaningful work is relatively new (Steger, Dik, & Shim, 2019) and, although there has been a significant interest in the concept of meaningful work in recent years, there is little agreement over what meaningfulness actually means (Bailey et al., 2018). However there seems to be consensus that meaningful work encapsulates a positive, individual, and subjective experience in work (Bailey et al., 2018). Meaningful work also seems to be able to be achieved when one can connect to their values and beliefs at work (Spreitzer, 1995), can express their personal passions and mission at work (Chafolsky, 2003), and when the work is seen as significant as it provides an important purpose to the employee (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003).

A sense of meaningful work aids in increasing work engagement, commitment, and performance of employees (Neck & Milliman, 1994; Steger & Dik, 2010; Geldenhuys, Łaba, & Venter, 2014). It also provides employees with a higher sense of purpose in their life (Chalofsky, 2003), as well as assisting in improving their well-being (Frankl, 1984; Steger & Dik, 2010), and increasing their job satisfaction (Allen et al, 1975; Maynard, Gilson, and Mathieu, 2012).

Nonetheless, important gaps in the literature still remain in the areas of how one can achieve, retain, or challenge a sense of meaningfulness (Bailey, et al. 2018). Therefore, due to this literature lacuna, we aim to make a contribution to the literature by exploring how a sense of meaningfulness can be developed. We will narrow down the scope of our research on meaningful work by specifically exploring employees who have fostered meaningfulness in a job where meaning could be difficult to find, but where meaningful work could make immensely positive contribution to their job satisfaction and well-being. In order to research this, the approach we have chosen is to explore the work of civil servants working in public administration during the financial crisis in Greece.

This is an area of research that has been scarcely studied, but it is also an important one. One of the reasons it is an important area of study is due to the fact that the quality of the service provided by the public administration can facilitate how the government operates (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2012), and thereby it is essential that this service is adequate, and thereby that the civil servants are productive.

Additionally, the financial crisis has also significantly decreased the quality of life of many people in Greece (Somarriba Arechavala et al., 2015), as well as increased mental health issues, especially stress-related health problems and depression (Kentikelenis et al., 2014; Kokaliari, 2018). Therefore, finding ways to be able to empower oneself during the financial crisis, and to develop higher levels of satisfaction and well-being would be incredibly beneficial during the tensions during a financial crisis.

Therefore, we theorize that an increased sense of meaningful work in civil servants could aid in mitigating the negative consequences of the financial crisis to their psychological states, as well as improve their engagement and commitment to work, and thereby also improve their job performance in the authority. Of course, there are many factors that go into mental health and job performance, but we aim to specifically focus on meaningful work, and the ways in which civil servants can obtain a sense of meaningful work and how it might improve their sense of purpose in the organisation and increase the meaning in their lives.

1.1 Research Objective

The aim of our research is to develop deeper understandings on how civil servants in Greece, whom are dealing and coping with the negative impacts of a financial crisis, can develop and experience a sense of meaningfulness in their work. Based on our aim, we formulated the following research question:

How can civil servants in Greece develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work during the financial crisis?

We believe that this research will contribute to a more robust understanding of the ways in which civil servants can develop a sense of meaningfulness, and thereby also experience more work satisfaction and feelings of wellbeing, as well as demonstrating more engagement and commitment to their role.

In order to adequately answer our research question, as well as achieve our aim, we will explore how the civil servants working in the Greek authority, PTP, experience their day-to-day life, both inside and outside of work, and their general thoughts and

feelings surrounding their work. We will also delve deeper into their specific struggles and joys in life, as well as what gives them motivation and purpose.

We will evaluate how the civil servants in our study find meaningfulness in their work by understanding their levels of commitment, satisfaction, and engagement in their job, as well as how passionate and thriving they seem to be in their role. We will also evaluate meaningfulness by looking at any kind of higher purpose or significance to their role, that goes beyond the job or themselves, the civil servants see at their work.

1.2 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is structured into six chapters: Introduction, Theoretical Background, Methodology, Empirical Material, Discussion and Conclusion. This chapter provides the reader with background and outlined our research aim and research question. In Chapter 2 the paper first offers a review of the literature of meaningful work and intertwines this topic with the financial crisis in Greece, as well as touching on public authorities. In Chapter 3 we will introduce our case study and elaborate on the methods utilised to answer our research question. This involved the collection of empirical data through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which was analysed in accordance with the interpretative tradition. In the end we will reflect upon the quality and limitations of our methodology. Chapter 4 will present our empirical data, in two main sections: the first contextualising the respondents work and life during the financial crisis, and the second explaining how sources of meaningful work can be realised in this context. Chapter 5 is the discussion, where we will analyse our main findings through the lens of the literature. Lastly, we finish off with Chapter 6, a conclusion of our main findings and suggestions for future research.

2. Theoretical Background

As we want to understand how employees can find meaningfulness in work and in a financial crisis, we first focus our literature review on the definitions of meaningful work, as well as the benefits of meaningful work to the organisation and the individual, and finish the literature about meaningful work on how an employee can develop and create a sense of meaningfulness in their work. We next focus the literature review on the financial crisis, by first giving a brief history and implications of the financial crisis, and then delve further into the impact the crisis has had on people in Greece, and how the crisis has affected the public sector in Greece. We then connect the pieces of literature and create a bridge that joins the concepts of meaningful work and how it can be important and relevant to civil servants in the financial crisis in Greece.

2.1. Meaningful Work - What Does it Mean?

There has been a significant interest in the concept of meaningful work in recent years over many academic fields, however despite this interest, there is little agreement over what meaningfulness actually means, however there seems to be consensus that it signifies a “positive, subjective, individual experience in relation to work” (Bailey et al., 2018). There are significant gaps in the literature of how a sense of meaningfulness emerges, persevere, or is challenged (Bailey, et al. 2018).

Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski (2010) state that meaningful work refers to the level of significance one perceives their work to have. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) explain that work is identified as being significant by the employee if the work provides the employee with a sense of purpose, and this is how Pratt and Ashforth (2003) define what “meaningful work” is. Similarly, the concept of meaningful work is defined as “an inclusive state of being” (Chalofsky, 2003). This “inclusive state of being” is described by Chalofsky (2003) as the extent to which the individual can express their own purpose and mission in their work role and activities. Further, meaningful work is defined by Spreitzer (1995) as the connection between one’s own values and beliefs and the work role requirements.

Many scholars argue that meaningfulness is subjective and personal, and therefore cannot be engineered by organisations (Ciulla, 2012; Lips-Wiersma and Morris,

2009). However, other scholars suggest that meaningfulness can be constructed in an organisation through such factors as culture, job design, value, and human resource management (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003).

Keeping the above definitions and concepts in mind, in our study, we refer to “meaningful work” as work that is seen or experienced by the employee as important and purposeful, as it provides a deeper significance or value to them.

Meaningful Work - The Meaning for the Individual

Meaningful work significantly aids in one’s search for purpose in life (Chalofsky, 2003). Similarly, Steger and Dik (2010) suggest that finding meaningful work aids in enhancing a sense of meaningfulness in the individual’s life too, which is beneficial. As well as this, Yeoman (2014) warns of the harmfulness of the absence of meaningfulness, including that the individual is incapable of satisfying their inevitable need for meaning and unable to live a flourishing life.

Meaningfulness is a significant factor that determines psychological well-being, and therefore finding meaning is important for individuals (Frankl, 1984). The positive effects of meaningful work have been connected to improved life satisfaction, as well as reduced feelings of depression, hostility and anxiety (Arnold et al., 2007). Allen et al (1975) also found that meaningful work is significantly positively associated with life satisfaction and general health, and may also increase well-being. Steger and Dik (2010) have similar findings, stating that meaningful work is also related to higher levels of personal well-being and more positive work attitudes, such as higher intrinsic motivation, more work satisfaction, and greater levels of self-efficacy (Steger & Dik, 2010). Additionally, Maynard, Gilson, and Mathieu (2012) found that meaningful work has a strong relationship with job satisfaction.

However, on the other, “dark side” of meaningful work, the research by Oelberger (2019) suggests that although meaningful work is desired by many, conscientious individuals who find significant meaning in their work can be seduced into working long and erratic hours, and this could damage their close relationships and deprive themselves of other, wider sources of meaningfulness in their lives.

However, for the purpose of our study, we follow the trend of the literature and view meaningfulness as generally positive and beneficial to the individual.

Meaningful Work - The Meaning for the Organisations

There are a number of benefits to the organisation if employees have a sense of meaningful work. Organisational performance, effort and productivity are improved when employees experience meaningful work (Neck & Milliman, 1994). Meaningful work aids in individuals to engage more passionately at work, feel motivated, and develop a sense of purpose, which in turn helps them exceed their own immediate interests, thus increases their productivity at work (Steger & Dik, 2010). This notion is also emphasised by Allen et al (1975) who show that meaningful work promotes work commitment and engagement as well as job satisfaction, and this also positively predicts work performance. Kahn's (1990) study also showed that the more meaningfulness there is in the work role, the more engagement there is at work. Employees are also more likely to genuinely want to stay at an organisation, and have an increased organisational commitment, if they feel that their work is meaningful (Pierce & Dunham, 1987). Many other studies also show that the experience of meaningful work increases greater retention, commitment and engagement (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003, Geldenhuys, Laba, & Venter, 2014). This is also strengthened by Aktouf (1992) who states that disengagement or alienation at work contributes to a lack of commitment, and therefore engagement at work is important for the organisation. As well as this, Arnold et al. (2007) explain that "higher purpose [or less meaninglessness] was associated with increased job satisfaction, perceptions of unit cohesion, and work effort" (Arnold et al. 2007, p. 195).

How Individuals Can Find Meaning in Their Work

We have emphasised how meaningful work is defined and understood, as well as the importance and benefits of meaningful work to the individual and the organisation, but how does one personally judge their work to be meaningful?

Steger & Dik (2010) argue that in order for people to create meaningful work, one should have a clear sense of self, as well as a clear understanding of their work environment expectations and nature. (Steger & Dik, 2010).

Lepisto & Pratt (2017) argue that meaningfulness at work is not attributed to specific tasks, but is rather constructed and interpreted by the individual in situations that may only offer poor opportunities for meaning. The degree to which an individual views

their work has having a wider value that goes beyond the self, determines the degree to which they deem their work to be meaningful (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017).

Boeck, Dries, & Tierens (2019) focus on self-concept and untapped potential as a way to create a sense of meaningfulness in one's work. They argue that untapped potential, which they refer to the distance between the individual's actual self and their desired self, creates a form of meaning-making mechanism, a cognitive bridge between their current and desired self, and crossing this bridge to get closer to their desired self, helps them realise their full potential. Self-actualization (or the realization of one's full potential) is often thought of as lying at the heart of meaningfulness (Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019). Therefore, the more opportunities there are at work that help the individual develop and work towards getting closer to their desired self, and when one is able to realise their potential at work, as well as able to satisfy their personal goals and motives, the more meaningful the work is in the present (De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019).

Additionally, Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) state that having a sense of making a contribution or having a sense of belonging, renders work to be considered meaningful by the individual. Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, (2010) also explains that a central element of meaningfulness is unity and belonging with others. This also goes hand in hand with Toraldo, Islam, & Mangia (2019) who show that a sense of camaraderie and *communitas* can alleviate repetitive, boring tasks into meaningful work. Thus, relationships can be a key source of meaningfulness for employees in the job (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013). Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski (2013) argue how relationship can facilitate a sense of meaningfulness, if the employee can cultivate relationships with others who give them feelings of worth, dignity or pride; or if the employee actively frames their work relationships to be about a meaningful purpose; or if the employee provides others with help and support in the job, and thus also receives help and support in return.

Further, Grant (2007) emphasises that the design of a job (i.e. the tasks and relationships allocated to an individual in the organisation) significantly shapes the sense of meaningfulness in their work. Tasks in the job can be modified to make the job more meaningful (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013). Tasks are experienced as more meaningful when they include a larger variety of skills (i.e. when there is a higher amount of task variety) (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). This correlates to the findings of De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens (2019) who demonstrate that autonomy and

skill variety are all important for meaningful work.

Wrzesniewski & Dutton (2001) argue to employees can gain meaningfulness in their work by engaging in “job crafting” which involves redefining and reimagining their job designs in ways that are personally meaningful. Job crafting is the way in which employees specifically initiate and carry out alterations to their tasks and job design, as opposed to the employers creating these changes (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013). An example of this is if an individual “job crafts” in a way to create opportunities at work that allow one to pursue their passions, or hobbies and activities that one is deeply interested in, as this can be a rich source of meaningfulness (Vallerand et al., 2003; Wrzesniewski, Rozin, & Bennett, 2002). Berg, Dutton, and Wrzesniewski (2013) also demonstrate that one type of “job crafting” includes “cognitive job crafting” which means crafting one’s perception and mental views of the job, and not altering the “physical” or objective aspects of the job; this can develop a sense of meaningfulness by altering how one thinks about the tasks or job. Mind-sets have a strong power to that can change how employees experience their work, subjectively (Crum & Langer, 2006). For example, to mentally and cognitively make work more meaningful, one can draw mental connections between certain existing tasks or components of the job, and outcomes, aspects of their identities, or interests that are meaningful to them (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013).

2.2 Financial Crisis: “The people of Greece deserve better”

The financial crisis in Greece first appeared after the economic crisis of the U.S. banks, and in 2009, the dramatically growing public debt of Greece kept on continuously affecting the economy of the country, given the significant increase of consumption and the failed investment market (Varoufakis et al., 2011). Later on, it was also discovered that Greece’s external debt had overwhelmingly increased, due to the government acting as the external debtor, instead of the private sector (Varoufakis et al., 2011). Meaning that, the Greek government was borrowing money from foreign banks, with no way to pay it back, due to the country’s low annual revenue.

As a result, in 2010, Greece had to sign the first (out of three) Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies, which included far-ranging austerity measures and structural reforms appointed by the European Commission, the European

Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, or else Troika (Ladi, 2014; Kentikelenis, et al., 2014). This bailout measure was implemented in order to ensure financial help and avoid a complete breakdown of Greece's economy (Ladi, 2014). The second and third bailouts (Memorandum) were signed in 2012 and 2015, respectively, and required more austerity measures and reforms (Kentikelenis, et al., 2014). The end of the third Memorandum in August 2018 signaled the country's exit from these extreme economic measures (L.4549/2018, Gov. 105).

The individual and organisational impacts of the financial crisis

A key characteristic of a financial crisis is austerity, which entails a shortage of liquidity in daily transactions, high unemployment due to low purchasing power and consumption, inability of making ends meet, thereby also contributing to a negative psychology in people (Sharpe, 1963). Greece is among the countries that has experienced the most drastic negative changes in quality of life (Somarriba Arechavala et al., 2015). The financial crisis in Greece has resulted in excessive insecurity, unemployment, and poverty (Kokaliari, 2018).

A financial crisis is a situation during which people tend to review and critique their life choices and work circumstances (Markovits, Boer, & Dick, 2013). Particularly, according to Markovits, Boer and Dick's (2013) research, an economic crisis can change people's attitudes. The researchers mainly focused on the changes the economic crisis in Greece might have on the attitudes of workers' job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Their findings were that extrinsic job satisfaction had been highly affected by the crisis, due to its direct connection to the external economic conditions. People had negative feelings about their future and their lives, especially regarding their job security, resulting to general pessimism (Markovits, Boer & Dick, 2013). Further on, commitment at work was also decreased, probably because of the negative feelings created by the crisis. An economic crisis is more possible to create dissatisfied employees with negative feelings regarding pay and job security, than the employees not experiencing an economic crisis (Markovits, Boer, & Dick, 2013).

The austerity measures in Greece decreased wages (which continue to drop) and pensions and increased taxation (Kokaliari, 2018). The austerity measures also included health-care spending cuts and reduced access and availability of healthcare for Greeks (Kentikelenis et al., 2014). This reduction of income and the increased taxation, as well as the reduced availability of health-care, have increased the

difficulties in Greece and negatively impacted people's mental health (Ifanti et al., 2013). Although there is a drastic decrease in the accessibility and quality of mental healthcare, there was also an increase in depression, suicide, drug abuse, and homicide following the crisis (Economou et al., 2013; Kentikelenis et al., 2014).

As Kokaliari (2018) states, in cases of extreme financial crises with excessive poverty, unemployment, and insecurity, high levels of depression, anxiety and stress are to be expected. Following the study of Kokaliari (2018) about the impact of the financial crisis on the quality of life in Greece, she explains that adult's mental health is deteriorating in periods of economic recession. According to (Kentikelenis et al., 2014) this socioeconomic instability and turmoil has particularly increased stress-related disorders. As well as this, following the crisis, people in Greece also reported higher levels of stress and anxiety (Panayiotou & Karekla, 2013). However Panayiotou & Karekla (2013) also states that there is limited data on the financial crisis's direct impact on stress and anxiety, but it could be assumed that the high levels of stress and anxiety have grown due to the financial crisis, as stress and anxiety are emotional states associated with depression, and they are related to a lower quality of life.

“Unemployment in particular has been consistently seen as a high risk factor for mental health disorders, mainly as a result of a lack of financial security, too much unstructured time, and limited social interactions”(Kokaliari, 2018). Drydakis (2015) also emphasises that unemployment seems to be one of the causes of this drastic increase of these mental health disorders and implications.

Recessions' phenomena, such as the reduction of income, also cause a decrease in people's interactions and in social self-confidence and a sense of personal insufficiency and weakness (Murphy & Athanasou, 1999).

2.3 Public Sector of Greece- Independent Authorities

A phenomenon such as a financial crisis can disrupt the operations and practices of a government. In order for a government to function well during an economic crisis, the public administration needs to be able to cope with the strains of the time. According to a recent research of the European Union (EU Open Data Portal, 2016), the adequate operation of a state relies on the quality of the public sector in correspondence with the amount of trust people can express towards the public administration, the feel of

ease while using the public services, and the overall well-being of the society.

In relation to this, since the recent development of new technologies over the years and an increased understanding towards the continuously growing needs of the society, the state needed to set up new, efficient public services to support and protect the citizens' rights. Thus, regarding, the new social, economic and political "sensitive" values of the society, there were established new public institutions, the Independent Authorities, that were subjected to state supervision, however, they required maximum implementation of legality, transparency and protection for the citizens (ed. Spiliotopoulos & Makridimitris, 2001).

The Independent Authorities are a relatively recent phenomenon in the legal order of the European Union, and particularly in Greece (Markantonatou-Skaltsa, 2016). They have been established since 1989 in Greece, in order to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of administrative action in certain sensitive fields, such as the protection of human rights, certain economic activities or the electronic media (Spiliotopoulos, 2017). In order to achieve the aforementioned institutional goals, as well as succeed in implementing political neutrality (i.e. without the government and political figures' influence), the authorities always need to follow the legislator's instructions. The importance of public institutions with both impartiality and technical specialty has led to a growth in number and responsibilities of independent administrative authorities (Caranta, Andenas & Fairgrieve, ed., 2005). In Greece, there are five constitutionally established independent authorities (Markantonatou-Skaltsa, 2016). All the rest are either administrative or regulatory.

Independent administrative authorities are the administrative Authorities of the State's legal person, which are independent of the executive function and especially of the government. -Independent authorities enjoy functional personal independence and are not required to be monitored and controlled by a government body or other administrative authorities. Independent authorities are subject only to judicial and parliamentary scrutiny in accordance with the Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Spiliotopoulos, 2017). Their independence is guaranteed by the European Union's legal order. The independent authorities have an administrative and economic autonomy, meaning that they are financed through a special budget of appropriations proposed by the authority and voted by the Parliament (Markantonatou-Skaltsa, 2016).

In this study, we are going to focus on the operation of the independent administrative

authorities, because of the interesting characteristics of these administrative bodies of the legal entity of the state that distinguish them from other bodies of the public sector (Spiliotopoulos, 2017). They are able to choose and hire their own staff, allowing them to recruit specialists for each position, in contrast with most of the public sector's organisations and services, where candidates' recruitment qualifications are not as strict (Spiliotopoulos, 2017). In addition, independent administrative authorities have the independence to manage their finances on their own, without the supervision of the executive function and the government. This means that, even though they are subject to the austerity measures affecting the economy of the country and they have to implement every newly voted law, the authorities have the autonomy of earning their own revenue, mainly through taxes and appropriations, and using it according to their needs (Markantonatou- Skaltsa, 2016).

The characteristics of functional, personal and economic autonomy are what lead us to choose an independent administrative authority to conduct our research. We believed that a public institution with a financial independence could be able to create more opportunities for its employees, since they are not as financially constrained as the rest of the public organisations, and these opportunities could potentially lead to more developments of meaningful work.

2.4 Why meaningful work is interesting to study in the public sector

Our research is about how civil servants can develop a sense of meaningful work during a financially strained economy. The reason we chose to explore this concept in the field of the public sector in Greece is the gap that exists in the current literature around the connection of meaningful work, the financial crisis and the public sector.

More specifically, the public administration complies with the regulations and is abided by the laws of the state. Therefore, in a country that is experiencing a financial crisis, the public sector would be automatically affected, because of the government's direct impact on it. The government and the parliament control and legislate the public sector, thus in a period where the country is in such a bad financial situation, the public sector will inevitably suffer.

At the same time, people in a financial crisis do not have so many job opportunities and that leads to them choosing a job for reasons other than purpose, or meaningfulness. These reasons could be the financial security that a stable job in the public sector would offer them in order to build their lives.

As academic literature suggests public sector employees are thought of being more motivated by intrinsic rewards than extrinsic rewards, such as serving the public interest and having a concern for the community, to gain a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. Public employees are less motivated by monetary rewards (Houston, 2000).

Furthermore, employees in the public sector have no capacity to make changes to improve their lives, regarding their salary, position, working hours, etc. These decisions are made by the competent body of the State. Hence, when the government faces economic difficulties the civil servants endure them as well.

Interestingly, a well-known stereotype existing in Greece around civil servants is that employees in the public sector are apathetic and idle. According to Bakas (2012), civil servants, in Greece, take advantage of the job security the public sector offers them, in such a degree that they manage to procrastinate and avoid their tasks for long periods of time, disregarding the amount of work they have to do, or the number of people waiting to be serviced. Paulsen (2014) describes this kind of behavior at work as empty labor and this resistance to work is based on two main findings: first, that employees are not assigned with a lot or any work; and second that the internet and social media or else cyberslacking take up many hours of the employees working time.

However, Paraskevopoulou's (2018) research shows that there are a lot of civil servants, who implement innovative and alternative ideas at work because they believe in them and the benefits they will gain. What differentiates them from apathetic and idle employees is that active and committed civil servants have a positive view of their work environment and they have a sense of identify themselves through their work (Paraskevopoulou, 2018).

Therefore we believe our research around meaningful work in the Greek public sector during the financial crisis would be interesting as there are many gaps and ambiguous views around it. As mentioned before, public organisations in Greece have many legal restrictions that limit their choices and opportunities. Thus, it can undoubtedly be

stated that the financial crisis creates further constraints and conditions to public organisations, which makes employees' lives even more complicated and difficult.

Studying meaningful work in a context of a financial crisis, where there are high rates of depression and anxiety, as well as in the public sector, which is a heavily constrained and constricted field, is especially important, as it is even more critical that these employees find meaning in their work to help them increase their purpose, satisfaction and commitment and perhaps reduce their chances of developing negative feelings about their work and life.

3. Methodology

In this section of our paper, we introduce the reader to our methodological approach. We explain our thoughts and logic about our research design, and the steps we followed to obtain the most holistic, comprehensive, and relevant data for our research.

3.1. Research Approach

With our research, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the lifeworld of civil servants during a financial crisis, and the factors that can aid in creating meaningful work during a financially difficult time. The study aims to research the factors that can contribute to discovering a meaning and purpose for civil servants working in a public authority in a financially strained economy.

Our research design is a qualitative research study, as this is the most suitable to study the perspectives and shared practices of people (Flick, 2007), and will allow us to study social phenomena through the viewpoints of the subjects (Prasad, 2018). Qualitative research is also beneficial for understanding social phenomena and interactions in the contexts in which they are created (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018), as well as to understand and gain insight into the “life worlds” of the respondents (Kvale, 1996). Therefore, a qualitative research study is the most appropriate to study the perspectives and social interactions of the employees in the context of a financially strained economy.

Following the approach of qualitative research, the use of an interpretive approach helps us understand phenomena taking place in an organisation (Prasad, 2018). The need for human interpretation of the routines, norms and values that are developed inside an organisation in order to promote knowledge about the social world (Prasad, 2018), provides us with the opportunity to discover what aids employees in finding meaning in their work, despite living in a country with a financial crisis where work opportunities are limited.

What helped us stay empathetic and put ourselves in their place is that one of us has grown up in Greece and has personally experienced the crisis, making it easier for us

to understand their points, their (Greek) phrases and how the crisis had actually impacted them. However, since each person has different ways of interpreting experiences, they construct their own subjective reality of their life (Prasad, 2018). In other words, each of our respondents described their own interpretation of the crisis' impact in their life, by making sense of the phenomena they experienced (Prasad, 2018).

3.2 Research Design

For the purpose of our research, we chose to study employees at an independent administrative authority in Greece. Our primary source of data is semi-structured interviews with employees at the authority. We will give the reader a better understanding of the authority and why it is an interesting organisation to study in Greece in the Case Context, and then further introduce the reader to our data collection method and processes, as also our data analysis process. We finish this chapter off with quality and limitations of our research design.

3.3 Case Context

Our research was based on one of Greece's independent administrative authorities. The name of the authority has been deliberately changed, in order to anonymise the participants and the authority as much as possible. In this study, when we are referring to the authority, we will address it as Public Tele-Postal (PTP). According to their website, PTP is an independent administrative authority in Greece and acts as the National Regulator responsible for monitoring, supervising and controlling the electronic communications market (i.e. land and mobile telephony, wireless communications and Internet access providers) and the postal services market (i.e. postal and courier service providers). PTP has three areas of work: telecommunications, postal services, and radio-frequency spectrum. Furthermore, PTP has the authority to act as the Competition Authority in the said markets. The authority was established in 1992 and its tasks were mainly focused on the monitoring of the liberalised telecommunications market. PTP's operation began in summer 1995. In 1998, 2000 and 2006 new legislation proposals were submitted and approved, enabling PTP to organise and control the postal services market; to supervise, control

and monitor in an even greater extent; and to define the framework for the provision of electronic communications networks and services and all related facilities in Greece. To put it simply, PTP is responsible for the electronic communications and postal services sectors.

As found on their website, PTP consists of 220 employees, composed of the special scientific staff, regular staff, as well as from outsourcing partners and working group members in order to supervise the spectrum. Regarding the employees' level of education, a significant proportion (over 50%) of the employees hold a Ph.D or Postgraduate title, followed by employees with university or technological education. The authority implements a broad educational program which includes, among other things, monitoring internal training seminars and participation in international conferences, seminars and scientific meetings, due to the need of continuous updating and training its employees on issues that beseech their specialty and their subject. In addition, as part of an ongoing effort to improve the conditions and the working environment of its human resources, PTP offers its employees services of a safety technician and a work physician, working alongside with an external health and safety service.

The independence of PTP is granted by the International European Law (Spiliotopoulos, 2017). The authority has functional and personal independence and administrative and financial autonomy to fulfill each of their tasks (Markantonatou-Skaltsa, 2016). This is requested by the European legislator (Spiliotopoulos, 2017).

The authority is proud of its values and aims to be loyal to them. These principles, as found on their website, are Social Responsibility, Trust, Cooperation and Team spirit, Transparency and Impartiality, Modern Administration and Governance and Constant Development. Most of these values will be detected later on, during the analysis of our empirical material.

3.4 Data Collection Method

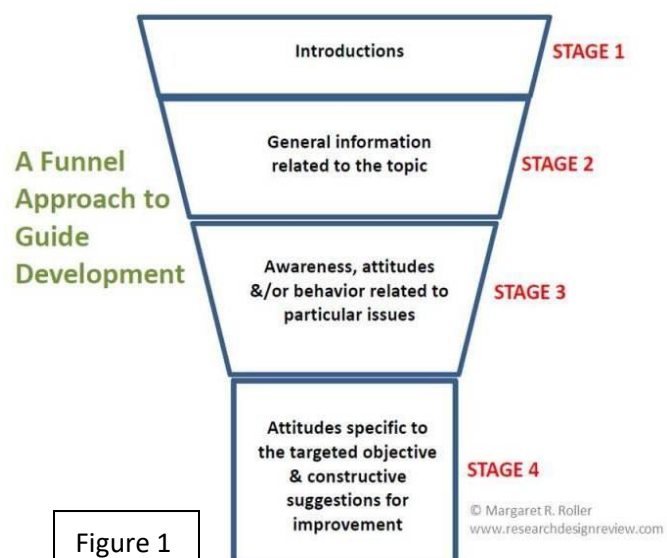
We conducted semi-structured in-depth Skype interviews, which were approximately 30 minutes, with 17 employees at PTP, all of whom held different positions in the authority and worked in different departments.

We decided to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews, as interviews assist the researcher to build a diverse picture into the lifeworld of the interviewee, as well as to present and understand the actions of individuals (Rennstam and Wästerfors, 2015). Qualitative interviews assist in gaining insights on how people describe, understand and make sense of their “life world” (Kvale, 1996). It also helps the interviewer see the “life world” through the participant's eyes, thereby assists in collecting and interpreting the meanings of these descriptions (Kvale, 1996). Hence, in-depth interviews will be beneficial for our research as they provide an effective way for us to understand the lifeworlds of the interviewees and how they make sense of their work and life situation.

Semi-structured interviews also assists to gain a deeper understanding of the “life world” (Kvale, 1996) of the respondent, by allowing the respondent to take the lead in what they want to talk about. We wanted to be able to dive deep into the topics and feelings that the respondent organically brought up during the interview, whilst also mediating the timings of the interview and covering the main topics we deemed relevant for our study. In order to do this, we designed an interview guide using the “4-stage funnel approach”, which consists of starting the interview off broadly and then progressively narrowing down the subject area and lastly finishing off with the topic of highest importance to the research objectives (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Using this approach allowed us to design an interview guide that was divided up into four sections with the main topics we wanted to cover. The four stages of the “funnel” approach (figure 1) are: introductions; general information about the topic; awareness, attitudes and/or behavior related to the topic; and specific attitudes related to the targeted objectives and suggestions

for improvement (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Taking this funnel design into consideration, the four main stages in our interview guide comprised of: an introduction into the



respondents roles and responsibilities in the company; their daily routines in the office and also outside the office (i.e. before and after work, and also the weekends); how they currently manage their time and how they would ideally like to spend their time; and any ways in which they would like their working life at the authority to be improved. According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), this “funnel” interview guide aids the interviewer to efficiently incorporate all of the important issues to help achieve the research objectives, whilst also maintaining clarity on the relevant issues throughout the interview, which is a much more important purpose of the interview guide than the actual questions or probes. Moreover, dividing the interview guide up into these sections allowed us to be able to mediate the interview while still keeping up a conversational flow, as we had some freedom within each section to explore any interesting topics and themes that the respondent brought up. However, we were also able to manage the time of the interview and cover all of the main topics. Additionally, the four stages of the interview aids in providing us with a broad understanding of the respondent's life and work situation, and then allowed us to delve deeper into more specific topics such as their feelings and opinions.

In designing our study, we intended to interview a diverse and varied group of employees at the authority. Some argue that in qualitative research, representing a range of different types of people and experiences in the research sample is important in representing the diversities and similarities of human experiences and beliefs (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995). This view is also reflected by Coast, Mondain, & Rossier (2009), who state that in most qualitative research studies with a small number of respondents, quotas are often required to provide sufficient socio- demographic diversity of the participants. However, this is not to ensure adequate representation of a group; the diversity of respondents is more useful for understanding different perceptions, dilemmas, processes, and constraints (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009). Thereby, our reasoning for interviewing a diverse group of people within the authority was to obtain diverse viewpoints and perspectives in terms of work and lifestyle routines, in order to represent the similarities and diversities of the different employees.

3.5 Data Collection Process

As qualitative research does not involve a large number of respondents, attention must be paid to the sampling and selection of respondents (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009). In addition, to having a diversity of respondents (as mentioned above), one of the most crucial factors for selecting them, is that the respondents are willing to talk, as the fundamental data source of qualitative interviews is words and speech (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009). Therefore, when selecting respondents for our qualitative research study, we aimed to gather a varied group of employees at the authority, in terms of role at the organization, age, gender, and parents and non-parents, who were also willing to participate and talk openly. We achieved this to the best of our ability with the assistance from the Chief Legal Counselor of PTP, who informed the employees of our request at two meetings, and then personally contacting a large and varied group civil servants working across the company and confirmed whether they were willing to participate in our study and if they had the time. Thus, we were able to obtain a range of respondents who were willing to talk to us.

As we studied an independent administrative authority in Greece, the interviews were conducted over Skype, in order to reduce our environmental impact for air travel, as well as to increase the time-efficiency of conducting face-to-face interviews abroad. Skype is a great tool for qualitative interviews to be able to transcend barriers of space and time and break down geographical boundaries by negating distances (Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). A study by Deakin and Wakefield (2013) also found that rapport and responsiveness was built up quickly over Skype interviews. Not being able to build rapport with the respondent to open up during the interview was not a significant issue over Skype interviews, unless the topic is particularly sensitive (Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). Therefore, we thought Skype was a reasonable tool for conducting interviews with respondents in Greece.

Each interview was conducted with one interviewer, rather than both of the interviewers together. This was decided as some of the interviews were conducted in Greek, and only one of the interviewers is able to speak and understand Greek, so it was unnecessary for both interviewers to be present for the Greek interviews. Although, most of the interviews were conducted in English. Nevertheless, the decision to conduct the interviews separately enabled us to conduct more interviews in a short period of time, and the time efficiency of this felt effective and beneficial.

In order for both of us to be across all the data collected from all the interviews, we read all of the transcripts and transcribed each other's interviews. Every interview was recorded and then transcribed afterwards to be able to effectively analyse the data. At the beginning of each interview, we informed the respondent that the interview would be recorded for research purposes but their responses would be anonymised, and asked them if they were okay with this before we proceeded with the interview. This was important to ensure ethical research practices (Crow & Wiles, 2008).

Dr. Olson (2015) highlights that it is important that the interviewee does not interpret or self-assess their experiences, as it is the job of the researcher to interpret the experiences of the interviewees, and thereby the interviewer should guide the interviewee to be more descriptive when recounting their experiences, rather than interpreting them themselves. Hence, although we wanted to discover and understand the sense meaningfulness (or lack thereof) the respondents felt in their work, as well as any impacts of the financial crisis on this, we did not explicitly ask about this, with questions like "how would you describe your sense of meaningfulness at work", "what purpose does your work give you", "how has the financial crisis impacted your life". Instead we asked more descriptive questions about their lives, such as "Can you tell us a bit about your daily routines before and after work?", "Do you feel like you have enough time to do all the things you want to do?", "If you won the lottery and were able to be financially stable for the rest of your life, what would you do and how would you spend your time?", to thereby get a better understanding of their "life world" that we could analyse later. These "main" questions were asked to every respondent, as we felt these questions were important for retrieving useful data for our research objective, without pushing the respondents in a certain direction or asking leading questions to steer the conversation.

In line with this, according to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), interviewers may allow their expectations or personal beliefs to skew how questions are asked and thereby this can bias research outcomes, so we wanted to make sure we avoided doing this to reduce the possibility of biasing or skewing the empirical material. Therefore, we did not want to assume that the financial crisis has impacted the respondents, so we avoided asking questions like -How has the financial crisis impacted your work? Or "In what ways has the financial crisis affected you". Instead we asked general questions about their work and life (as described previously), and consequently this would allow the financial crisis to come up organically in the interviews, if the

respondents felt it was an important issue in their lives. If the financial crisis was brought up by the respondent, then we probed them for more information about it, to gain a deeper understanding of this topic.

As the fundamental data source of qualitative interviews is words and speech, the willingness of the respondents to talk is crucial (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009), so part of the research process is developing effective ways to impel the respondents to talk openly about the issues being studied. Thus, we incorporated some specific techniques to facilitate a more open discussion and flow of conversation. An example of this is asking probing and specifying questions about topics the respondent mentions, to delve deeper into any interesting themes and to give us the breadth and depth of understandings and coverage needed for our research objectives (Ritchie et al. 2014). These type of questions included questions like “Can you explain a little bit more about that?”, “What did you mean when you said ...”, “Could you give an example of that?” and more. We also adopted some specific probing techniques in our interviews to expand on interesting topics in the interviews and gain a more holistic understanding of the respondents’ life worlds. We adopted the approach of “cherry picking”, which is described by Lowndes (2000) as picking up any unusual references or anomalies in the conversation, and using that anomaly to expand the conversation. In other words: to find the “cherry seed”, plant it, and watch it grow. Any anomaly in a conversation can be a great topic to delve deeper into (Lowndes, 2000). Using this technique allowed us to pick up on anything that the respondents said that sounded different, interesting, or very specific to them, and question them further about this particular “cherry” to understand more in-depth about their lifeworld, thoughts, and feelings. This helped greatly to see a much more specific picture of their struggles and joys. Another technique that we used for our interviews was “Parroting”, which means repeating the other person’s words back to them, which prompts the respondent to expand on what they meant or to get deeper into the topic (Lowndes, 1999). Lowndes (1999) also claims that parroting aids in evoking the respondent to open up about their real emotions, which was important to our research as we wanted a personal account of each respondent’s “life world”.

According to Coast, Mondain, & Rossier (2009) “good qualitative research needs to allow for the new and unexpected to emerge, be identified... and then be developed”, and this needs flexibility and responsiveness in the research process (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009). Therefore, we were also open-minded during the data collection process, and allowed for any unexpected results to emerge, and were willing to explore these further too.

3.6 Data Analysis Process

Effective and proper analysis of the qualitative data is crucial to find connections that make sense of the phenomenon or concept being investigated (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). These meaningful connections, in the data are what aid interpretations and implications, and ultimately defines the usefulness of the research, and therefore a quality approach to finding these connections and making sense of the data is crucial to the research design (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

According to Coast, Mondain, and Rossier (2009), the coding of qualitative data should be inductive and steered by the data. Taking this into consideration, to effectively unpack the data, identify key themes and terms, categorise them, and make connections for the analysis of the empirical data, we based our coding in thematic coding, specifically using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach.

We decided to use IPA as it “aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience” (Smith & Osborn, 2015), which is relevant to our study of the life world of employees in a financial crisis. According to Smith & Osborn (2015), IPA is also a specifically useful method for topics which are ambivalent, emotionally loaded, and complex, and helps the researcher to make sense of what they respondents are communicating. This also seemed relevant to our topic, as a lot of emotion from the respondents became apparent during the interviews, as well as the topic of the financial crisis being quite complicated.

IPA is about trying to understand the lived experiences of the participants and to capture and unpack ambiguity, by leaving behind previous research and instead trying

to focus on the actual experiences of the participants to find the phenomena as it appears (Amos, 2016).

According to Amos (2016) the different stages of IPA coding include: reading the transcripts (or listening to them) to capture the feeling and description as a whole to get a sense of the data, picking out words and phrases that seem important (i.e. developing tentative codes), identifying themes, finding connections between the themes, narrowing down or combining the themes to create clustered themes, and looking for patterns across cases in the study. Repeating these stages with all the transcripts aids in either strengthening the initial themes and making them more robust, or developing new themes start as they emerge (Smith and Osborn, 2009). In this way, the researcher can recognise and respect the convergences and divergences between the accounts from the participants (Smith & Osborn, 2009). When patterns begin to emerge as coding progresses, a rich theory can be developed (Holton, 2007). How we specifically employed IPA method involves us to firstly listen to all the recordings and transcribing them, re-reading through all the transcripts, and writing down what we deemed were the most prominent and important themes in order to get a sense and feel for the data. Next with the use of a spreadsheet, we wrote along the first row the names of all the respondents and down the first column all the different initial, broad themes we picked up on whilst reading the transcripts. In this way, we were able to transfer all of the verbatims from the transcripts into the spreadsheet. This ensured that we had all the verbatims in one document to make it easier to further code, sort, and analyse the data. Next we narrowed down the codes to more meaningful, clustered codes, to create connections and develop themes. This was done by writing the code names down in another column, and putting ticks in the boxes for each respondent that demonstrated this code or theme during their interview. In this way we could see what codes and themes are the most prevalent in the study, and thereby we deemed these codes the most important to find connections between and create a narrative.

We decided to then construct the analysis of our empirical data like a narrative, as through narratives, people can order their life events as well as express their emotions, relationships, and identity (Priest, Reberts, & Woods, 2002). Using narratives to present research data as become increasingly popular and provides for a robust interdisciplinary study (DeVault 1994). Narratives generally have a beginning, middle, and end, as well as core plot or meaningful point the researcher is trying to

convey (Priest, Reberts, & Woods, 2002), and this is how we structured our empirical material in order to effectively convey the life worlds, meaning, and feelings of the respondents.

3.7 Quality and Limitations

Quality and Reflexivity

It is important to consciously reflect on any potential biases in the data, and take any steps to address these when possible, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the research (Coast, Mondain, & Rossier, 2009). According to Roller and Lavrakas (2015), it is critical for the researcher to continually contemplate their own role or impact on the outcomes of the research, for example, it is important to critically think about the assumptions and beliefs that research has that could threaten the trustworthiness of the data. This is especially important when researching a different culture, especially as a culture can have unique contexts, complexity, and personal meaning (Roller and Lavrakas, 2015). For example, during some interviews, the respondents used Greek idioms that were directly translated from Greek to English, which when spoken in English can have a very different meaning from the original phrase. Fortunately, one of the researchers is from Greece and was able to understand what the respondents were attempting to communicate, and then could translate this in a different way to convey the original meaning. This would not have been possible without a native Greek speaker. In line with this, respondents may have difficulty in expressing their ideas and thoughts (Alvesson, 2003). This is especially pertinent to our study, as English is the second language of the respondents, thereby expressing themselves in English may also be more difficult for them.

Further on, it is important to consider that the interviewees may give an overly positive description of their own work and organisation, perhaps to avoid embarrassing themselves or the organisations or highlighting only relevant positive examples (Alvesson, 2003). Additionally, it is significant to mention that the people who chose to participate in our study were employees who felt that they had the time during their work to partake in our study, so they willingly accepted to participate in the interview. However, one can assume that the employees who did not have time to participate may be the ones feeling more stressed and under-pressure at work, and

thereby may have communicated different, less positive views of their work.

Practical Limitations

As the interviews were conducted over Skype, there are quite a few limitations that we need to keep in mind. Since we were distanced from the interviewees, some of the nonverbal cues may have been lost (Iacono, Symonds, & Brown, 2016). Non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions are useful for providing richness in qualitative data, however this can be lost during some forms of interviews (Novick, 2008), such as Skype interviews. We also lost the opportunity to make observations at the company, which also reduces the richness of our data.

Furthermore, another limitation on our research was that the respondents could choose where they would be located at the time of the interview, and thereby the environment chosen by the employees could have impacted our data (Iacono, Symonds & Brown, 2016). As Iacono, Symonds and Brown (2016) explain, the researcher cannot control the interviewees' environment during the Skype meeting, they cannot know whether there is something that distract their interviewees from focusing on the questions (i.e. colleagues in their office, kids at home).

In addition, Deakin & Wakefield (2013) clarify that even though Skype interviews do not cost any time or money to the researcher, the possibility the interviewee would miss or reschedule the interview are quite high.

4. Empirical Material

In this part of our research, we are going to present our empirical data, collected during our interviews with PTP's employees. We will firstly present the empirical data related to their work and life situation in the financial crisis, and next present empirical data concerning themes around meaningfulness at work, to formulate an understanding on how civil servants can develop a sense of meaning in their work during the financial crisis.

4.1 “We belong to the P.I.G.S... so we have to be punished.”

This section of the empirical material aims to contextualise the case, as well as show the history of the financial crisis and their current circumstances through the eyes of the respondents. The aim of this is to show and analyse how civil servants make sense of their work and life within this. The impacts of the financial crisis became a crucial and relevant topic during our empirical research, as it was brought up frequently, and by every respondent, without the interviewers explicitly asking about the financial crisis, to contextualise the working situation in Greece, and in PTP. The financial crisis significantly impacts life in Greece by making life and work more difficult, and puts many employees in a situation with very little control over their external circumstances, and very little opportunities available to them to change or improve their situation. This has huge impacts on their working life.

The hullabaloo of the financial crisis: stability and security are valued

Most significantly, the financial crisis has made it much more difficult for people to find work in Greece, as Danielle puts it “here, life in Greece it is difficult”. Sarah also explains that “many people are unemployed”. Sarah goes on to exemplify how the financial crisis has increased the stress in people's lives in Greece.

(The financial crisis) brings more stress, for people who are un-secure... I think I enjoy my work without even imagining it at first. I've come to really enjoy it..., but that's not common in Greece, especially with the crisis. Because many people might be unemployed, work in places that is not their first choice,

or they are underestimated or under budget, so it's quite difficult. I feel lucky, and I think I am. (Sarah)

The point of the financial crisis bringing stress and high unemployment rates to people's lives is exemplified by Sarah with feelings and statements of gratitude, as she understands she is lucky to not only have a job, but also enjoy the work that she does. The issue of high unemployment and difficulty in finding work is also emphasised by Mikayla.

I cannot say "okay I'm leaving my job to find another job", because in Greece it's not very easy to find a new job, there are not many job offers, and a lot of young people, and also people my age, are going abroad to find a better paid job and pursue their other goals. (Mikayla)

The quotes show an understanding of how difficult it is to find desirable employment in Greece, as well as to receive a reasonable salary, which also increases the difficulty of living and working in Greece. This difficulty in finding work and staying employed due to the financial crisis was repeated by multiple respondents. A result of this is that they also demonstrated that the public sector is a favorable place to work in Greece as it provides the employees with job security, as well as stability, which is of high value in a situation with financial instability and high unemployment.

The salary is not very good, but you know in Greece, we are in the 9th year of severe financial crisis, so we consider ourselves well paid. Workers in the private sector have the threat of losing his job every day. It is not my preference actually (to work in the public sector), 14 years ago the private sector found me a bit old for them, because I was 35 years old at the time, so I had no option but to seek for a place in the public sector. (Gordon)

Gordon emphasises that the public sector was not his desired career path, however he felt he had no option as he was becoming too old for the private sector, and also mentions that in the private sector there is a high threat of losing one's job, thus referring to the fact that there is more job security in the public sector. This next quote from Andrew strengthens the notion of job instability in the private sector in Greece,

as well as confirming the need to transfer to the public sector to be able to benefit from job security.

I used to work in the private sector, I was reaching 40 and the crisis was coming as well. You know, you have heard about the crisis in Greece, probably, and there was the danger of being unemployed if I couldn't get a job in the public administration, the Greek public administration where at least there is a job security. Okay? So that was a major reason for me when I reached 40. (Andrew)

From these quotes, it is clear that the private sector is much more risky and unpredictable to work in due to the risk of losing your job, than the public sector which offers job security. In a time of financial instability, this job security is seen as a significantly positive aspect. It also seems that job stability is much more important when people get older, as both Gordon and Andrew mention that as they reached an older age (35 and 40 years old, respectively), moving to the public sector was the best option for them to gain more job stability. This is also interesting as, to us, the ages of 35 and 40, do not seem to be what we would consider “old”, however it is considered old in the private sector in Greece.

Making the choice to work in the public sector for security and stability was expressed by female employees as well, especially current mothers or women who were considering to start a family.

I'm a mother with two young children, and having a husband that works very much, I need to have this kind of stability that my current job provides me. In the future I would consider having a change, but not the moment. (Charlotte)

Having stability at work was beneficial for working mothers during the financial crisis, especially to be able to care for their children and manage the household.

I was in the private sector and the hours weren't standard by any means. Everyone was telling me I was getting older and that I would start a family and that it would be smart to choose a stable timetable. That's what made me take my decision then (to work in the public sector). (Ginny)

Interestingly, it was mostly working mothers who mentioned that stability in their job was important for their family, more than job security like the men mentioned earlier. Although, stability and security seemed to go fairly hand-in-hand in the interviews, both job security and job stability were strong driving forces that pushed the employees to get a job in the public sector. This makes sense when one considers the financial instability and insecurity faced by many in the financial crisis.

The brouhaha of salary cut-backs and decreased personnel

The financial crisis also contributed to a cut-back in salaries, as well as many employees to lose their job, due to the decreased revenue in the public sector. This seemed to have affected many employees at PTP. Firstly, because a cut-back in salaries increases the financial strain on employees, but also because, with most employees earning the same amount of money, there seems to be no financial motivation to work hard and perform well in the public sector.

During the crisis we have lost 40% of our wages. I think that this is unheard of for people my age. So we had planned our lives somehow and then we had to re-plan it again. So I would like to see our salaries increase as well. Although, every worker would say “increase my salary and I will feel better” ... But I feel depressed for so many years because no one recognizes the job we are doing at PTP. And this is like saying that “okay, everybody is having a decrease in their salaries, so whatever you’re doing, either a good or bad job, everybody will have the same salary” and then you don’t care anymore if you are going to do a quality job or whatever. (Matthew)

The quotes demonstrate that a decrease in salary due to the strained economy, has had devastating effects on employees. Matthew uses emotive language such as “depressed” and “you don’t care anymore” to express his sadness and feelings of hopelessness in a situation where himself, and others, are not recognised (at least financially) for the job they are doing, and thereby this decreases the motivation to perform well at work.

The reduced revenue in the public sector lead to, not only salary cut-back, but also to many positions to be abolished, and thus many employees lost their jobs. This then caused a ripple effect for the existing employees as their workload increased significantly, or as Franks puts it “we have a lot of work to do and we are not so many people”, and Charlotte “we are not that many for all the things that we need to do”. This notion was expressed by many of the civil servants.

It is very difficult to get a new personal since we have to lose 5 in order to gain 1, regretfully we have lost almost 20% of our most high level educated experts during the crisis, and we haven't been able to recover people. This is for us, not very pleasant. Fewer people have to deal with the same amount of work. (Gordon)

Gordon mentions that due to the financial strains, they have lost many expert employees, and also uses emotive language such as “regretfully” and “not very pleasant” to demonstrate his disgruntledness with the financial situation and how it has made working life more difficult. He also goes on to say that increasing salaries is not really an option in a public organisation in Greece.

In a very strained economy it is not possible to increase the cost of the salary of the public servant. (Gordon)

This quote shows that the issue of the lowered salaries and cut-backs is cannot be solved easily, due to the impossibility of increasing salaries.

The Long Hours of the Daily Grind

Due to the loss of personnel as well as the inability to hire more employees, many respondents claimed that a significant amount of employees in Greece work long hours and also have extremely large workloads.

Some people work 10 or 12 hours, so it's also a little sad for Greece I think. (Sarah)

Sarah explains how many people work long hours and how this causes her to feel “sad for Greece”, showing that it is a dismal national issue that affects many. When Gordon was asked on his thoughts about the possibility to reduce the number of hours that civil servants in Greece worked, and if this could be helpful to them, he responded by laughter.

(Laughter) This would not be possible because we are public servants and we have to follow the law that fits well with the public servants and the ministries... We have to work not 8 hours, but 10 or 12. (Gordon)

Gordon’s laughter to this question shows how absurd the thought of working less hours was to him, and how impossible it would be to impose on a public organisation during this time in Greece. This also emphasises how strict the regulations are around the public sector and their working hours. More laws around the public sector was mentioned by other respondents too, and how this restricts their opportunities for more flexible working and options to work-from-home, despite them thinking that these opportunities could be beneficial to their lives.

More flexibility would be nice, but that’s not really easy in the public sector... because the public sector has many legal side effects, so you have to really careful and it’s quite complicated. (Sarah)

Sarah shows that, although some more flexibility would be favourable, it is difficult to implement in the public sector due to the laws, thereby demonstrating that the public sector has many restrictions and constraints. These limit the opportunities of the company and the employees to engage in benefits like flexible working.

Stressed and Depressed

The long working hours and heavy workload also reduces the employees’ free time and increase their levels of stress and feelings of being under pressure. This can be shown by Ginny who feels very tired “I would like to sleep a little. That’s what I would like” and by Matilda who has a very tight-packed schedule “Okay, yes, I am stressed”. These feelings are also expressed by many other employees too.

If I had more time for myself I would do more exercising, do all the things without being under pressure. When you go to the supermarket being under pressure, you don't really enjoy this activity, but if you had more time then it's something that you like to do... (The pressure) It's something that I don't like, and I am not satisfied with this situation, but I always have in mind that this is not forever. My motto is "make the most of what you have now, because the now doesn't come back" Now is now, and you have to live it, even if it is difficult you have to make the most of it. (Charlotte)

Charlotte demonstrates that she experiences a lot of pressure in her life to complete all of her errands, and she feels dissatisfied with this situation. Yet, she ends the quote on a positive note saying that she understands that her current situation is temporary and has faith and hope that things will get better, and the only thing to do is make the most of the "now". This positivity, despite her difficult circumstances, shows an admirable attitude and character. However, her stress is mimicked by other respondents.

With my wife (after work), we like to go to the movies, or go to the theatre, or to a concert, it depends... But not all the time, because I get home and I'm very tired so then we prefer to stay at home... I am out 12 hours per day, I leave around 7:30 and I am back 6:30 or 7 o'clock in the evening. So a decrease in working hours may give me the opportunity to be less stressed at the end of the day, and more willing to do other things, to go out. (Gordon)

Gordon also demonstrates that his long working days results in him feeling overly tired and exhausted, so much so that he would rather stay at home than go out and engage in a leisurely activity with his wife. This seems like a sad predicament where one cannot do the things they truly enjoy after work as they feel too tired to go out. However, he does mention that it is not the work itself that is exhausting, but the long commuting hours, or as he put it "the work does not frighten me".

Ginny mentions that some of her colleagues do work less hours in order to increase their time after work, however this is not an easy decision to make in Greece as reducing one's hours also means reducing one's salary.

There are some of my colleagues who work for 6 hours, because they have no time. With lower income, of course. But this is difficult to do, because the money is already not so much. So, mums are more likely to get less time... and even if you lose 100 Euros it is a big issue. (Ginny)

The quote demonstrates that considering working less hours and thereby reducing one's salary is a tough decision to make. This is significant, as we have seen how the long working hours has negatively impacted on these respondents lives, however reducing the hours do not seem like a viable option due to a reduced salary being too difficult to cope with in Greece during the financial crisis.

PTP vs. other Greek public organisations - the difference

In relation to civil servants feeling demotivated, many employees at PTP talked about how, in general, employees in the Greek public sector are not hard-working nor pro-active employees. But they also emphasised how this is not the case for employees at PTP, that the employees at PTP are effective and dedicated workers.

For other public organisations, I do not know, since they do not work anyway. (Ginny)

This quote that mentions that “they do not work anyway” is an inside joke in Greece about how civil servants in public organisations are lazy and do not do any work. Although it is a joke and a stereotype, this kind of attitude and belief about civil servants in Greece was repeated by many different respondents in the interviews, despite them themselves also being civil servants. However, they do not identify with the civil servants who “do not work anyway”, nor do they want to feel associated with them.

Greek public administration is usually disgraced by the public. And PTP is a great exception of all that. And it has very good salaries, in relation to the rest of the public administration organisations. It has a very good working environment and very good highly educated personnel that distinguish our staff from the rest of public administration. I don't want to disgrace the

colleagues in the rest of the public administration organizations in Greece, but we have a higher profile. You know? (Andrew)

This quote shows that the public administration has a negative reputation in Greece. It also shows that the employees of PTP view PTP as different to other public administrations, in the sense that they offer better salaries and have more educated and motivated employees. The notion that other public organisation employees have a reputation for being passive workers that do not work hard was also repeated by Gordon.

(I'm) also trying to persuade people to change their working standards in public administration. Because this is another task I have undertaken, not because someone has asked me to, but because I believe in this... They (civil servants) have to... stop waiting for the minister or the general secretary, to tell them what to do. I share this attitude with most of my colleagues at PTP. That's why I can survive here, otherwise it would be impossible. (Gordon)

Although Andrew and Gordon are quite different in their approaches when talking about other public organisations, with Andrew not wanting to “disgrace” other public organisations by talking negatively about them, yet wanting to make the point clear that public organisations are viewed in a bad light by the public, and that PTP is different and better than other public organisations, whereas Gordon is much more passionate in his opinions about other public organisations and feels strongly about wanting to change their attitudes of having a poor work ethic. Gordon mentions he shares this attitude with his colleagues, demonstrating that this opinion and view of public organisations are shared by many.

Gordon goes on to mention that he is proud that PTP is not associated with the image of other, “traditional” public organisations.

So the image that I can take from the social network at the internet is that we are something not very traditional in the public sector in Greece. They say “okay yes, you are something else, but the ministries and the other public services, they are awful, but you are something else”. So I'm proud about this. (Gordon)

This quote also emphasises that the view of public services in Greece is -awfull, which is very strong language, and that Gordon is “proud” that PTP is not viewed in this same way. Although Gordon seemed more passionate about this topic than the other respondents, it is still interesting to point out that PTP has a completely different reputation than other public service organisations, and that the employees seem so much more motivated and diligent in their work.

The value of highly educated colleagues

The view that employees at PTP are very motivated and have a good work ethic (as opposed to other public organisations) is also echoed by many respondents. Mostly they mention how highly educated the employees at PTP are and how this contributes to trust and motivation, as well as a good working environment.

I can't complain because I have very good colleagues and partners. So I supervise them and they do the work I want them to do, without any problems, so pretty much the work is done at the end of the day so I can come home and, you know, relax... It (PTP) is an organisation with a very high quality personnel. Most of the people have years of experience and they are highly educated, so they all have a very good background. So the results are okay, the outcome is good. (Karl)

The quote shows that having highly educated employees is seen as a positive as it is both helpful for achieving high results and outcomes (as well as being able to trust your colleagues that they are able to do this). This notion of appreciating the highly educated personnel in PTP was mimicked by many other respondents, such as Simon.

The working environment is very good regarding other organisations at the public sector of Greece. First of all, because of the people. The age limit here is relatively low... also, the educational level of the employees is quite high. There are many people who have doctorates, postgraduate degrees, and are special scientific staff. (Simon)

In this quote Simon, one of the youngest employees, expresses his appreciation for the young age among his colleagues, as well as their high levels of education. He mentions that the working environment as very good due to these factors. The respondents felt that highly educated employees contributed to a good working environment, as well as feelings of being able to trust that your colleagues or subordinates will complete their work to a high standard, which was very appreciated and meaningful to the civil servants.

4.2 “If I do something that I love... then I sacrifice my sleep or my leisure time”

Employees working in a financial crisis feel quite stressed and under-pressure due to long hours and a heavy workload, however they also do not really have the opportunity to change their working circumstances, in terms of reducing their hours, having flexibility at work, or increasing their salary; and they also do not have many opportunities open to them for finding a better or higher paid job or a job that fits better with their education or passions. This creates more financial strain in their lives and limited possibilities. However, despite being in these circumstances, we found that some civil servants managed to find and create a sense of meaningfulness in their work, satisfaction, as well as feeling engaged and committed at work. Many expressed feelings of enjoyment and vitality in their work, although there were others who did not express the same feelings of energy and zeal.

The gift of strong friendships and a good environment

The strong relationship between colleagues at PTP was made very clear during the interviews, and these relationships were also emphasised as acting as significant contributors towards feelings of job commitment and satisfaction at work. Danielle explains the kind of relationships she has with her colleagues.

When I get to my office, I talk with fathers and mothers who are dealing with the same problems with our kids. (Danielle)

The quote shows that the friendship Danielle has with her colleagues is personal and deep, they are able to share their experiences with each other, such as sharing personal stories about their families. It is not a superficial or shallow relationship she has with her colleagues, nor a relationship where they only converse about work-related topics.

Additionally, many employees of PTP emphasised the friendly environment between colleagues in the authority and how that made them feel motivated and satisfied at work.

Yes we still have the motivation (to work hard).... There is this good environment that we have... this family and friendly environment we have here, I have not seen it in any other organisations or jobs.....and there a lot of times that I've found something else (a new job), and I have not left PTP, because this (environment) is very important for me. (Ginny)

Ginny emphasises how much she values the good work environment at PTP. She finds this extremely important and claims that she values her relationships with her colleagues to such a high degree that this is the reason she would want to stay at PTP, even though she sometimes has had thoughts of pursuing a different job. Especially as she feels she has not encountered the same friendly environments in other jobs, we understand that the environment at PTP must be quite special to her. The value of a good and friendly environment at work is apparent.

Similarly, many respondents drew attention to how they worked in good teams and had strong relationships with their colleagues, and spoke about these things very positively.

Sometimes the work is tough. You feel like you are really down in it, but we have really good relationships here with the colleagues so we feel like yeah we can manage it... On a daily basis we have support from the colleagues. (Sarah)

Sarah explains that she values the good relationships at PTP is because it provides support for employees when the work is tough, and thereby can make the job easier to manage. Charlotte also expresses notions of the importance of good teamwork.

Another thing that I think is important at your job is to have people that you like to work with, to cooperate with, so at least at the moment we are a very good team, so this is also something nice to have in order to get some motivation to work. (Charlotte)

The quote emphasises how important good relationships are at these employees' jobs, as it provides motivation and high levels of cooperation. Danielle even attributes her good relationships and friendships at PTP as a major reason why she would want to stay at PTP and not move jobs or quit, even if she had the opportunity to.

Because I have a good relationship with my colleagues, I am getting a lot from the friendship we have. I like to have a commitment outside my family that brings joy to me... It's nice to accomplish things, and also what I get from the friendship circle, from my colleagues. We don't have a problematic relationship in the working area. (Danielle)

What Danielle "gets" from her friendships with her colleagues is so meaningful to her that it provides her with a strong reason to want to stay at PTP. The quotes about good relationships and teams at PTP highlight their value and how much they mean to the employees. It is interesting to note however that only women explicitly talked about the good relationships and friendships, whereas the men were more likely to mention the highly educated personnel that made work better for them. Both genders value their colleagues, but they seem to value them for different reasons, or at least have different ways of expressing how they value them. Nevertheless, both genders valued their colleagues to a high degree.

Gimme, Gimme, Gimme, a Challenge!

Having work tasks that provides employees with challenges and variety keeps them engaged and interested in the work.

Acquiring challenges in the work made the respondents enjoy their work more and consider it more interesting, which can be seen from the following quotes.

By joining PTP and working on this subject –spectrum management- I found it very interesting as I was going on. And then, because this subject has a lot of challenges and issues with wireless communication, which are very important nowadays, new interesting things arise very often. New things come and we have to prepare for that, so I find a lot of challenges and interests in my day to day activities. (Matthew)

In this example, it is apparent that having challenges and new tasks at work contributes significantly to increasing feelings of enthusiasm about their job. The fact that they also are able to face new and novel of tasks and issues also seems to be an important contributor to facing positive and interesting challenges at work.

At the moment I like this international project group at my job, because I can cooperate with many people from other European countries. I also like the fact that we are dealing with new technologies that are really evolving continuously, and you have to be updated all the time... the issues that we are dealing with are challenging and there is technological development... Yeah, okay I'm more tired, but the thing is that I like the new business challenge with the international corporation team. So I understand that I do less things for myself, I rarely go out with a friend of mine just for a coffee because there is not time, but I understand that it is not forever, so it is just at this moment, and I try to make the most of this challenge. (Charlotte)

The quotes portray challenges in the job as a positive and enjoyable part of work. Even though having more challenging work and new issues made Charlotte feel more tired and have less time outside of work, she enjoyed the challenges it provided her. The quotes also mention that dealing with new issues and technologies are interesting and also make work more enjoyable. This notion is also echoed by other respondents.

It's really interesting, it has many energies... It's the different tasks and varieties that I think I enjoy most, I think having variety is a good thing. (Sarah)

Sarah enjoys variety of tasks, and finds that it contributes to making her work more interesting and energetic. In addition, the opportunities for new tasks and experiences presented in the authority seem to excite the employees, especially due of the prospect of meeting new people of the same profession and sharing the experiences and knowledge.

Also, I can do new things, I can travel and go to meetings, meet people from the same job in other countries and talk about it, that's very helpful, because we know how they do their job, and we try to improve our work here in this way. And also we meet these people and that's very helpful for us and very interesting. (Matilda)

The quote shows that being able to work on new things, and have a variety of work tasks, also make work more enjoyable and engaging. Matilda also mentions it aids in improving how their work is done too, as they themselves can learn better ways to do their job by being exposed to new tasks and people too.

In contrast, employees who felt that their job was routine and repetitive felt bored with work and wanted more challenges and new tasks.

Maybe it would be more interesting if they could change the subject we work on from time to time, so we would not have to work on the same things for too long. That would be good... and different to have a change from time to time. Currently, sometimes it (the work) gets boring, because you do that same work over and over again, so that's why I'm thinking that if you change the work to something different, that would be better. (Katrina)

Katrina feels bored with the repetitive tasks she has to perform at her job, and longs for something new, different, and more challenging, thus demonstrating that having variety and challenges at work is desired. Needing to perform simplistic or boring work tasks also made Charlotte feel like she was not reaching her full potential or able to use the expertise that she had.

The thing is that the structure of the organisation is quite flat, and at the same time the people are quite experienced, so you don't make the most of this experience if you have a very flat structure. (Charlotte)

Charlotte mentions that her and her colleagues have high expertise, yet they have to work on simple and mundane tasks. In the interview she goes on to explain that hiring younger people could help to support them and then “we could spend less time on issues that don't require the expertise that we have”.

Having challenges at work, as well as working with new and different tasks seems to be incredibly important and meaningful for the respondents to be able to enjoy their work. When they lacked any kind of challenge or variety in their work, when their work was tedious and unchanging, they longed for something new and different, as they seemed to want something new to engage them or to be able to use their expertise and reach their potential.

Passion - Work to Thrive, Not Just Survive

Employees who felt passionate about their work, or were able to combine their passion or hobby with their work, seemed much more high-spirited about their work, as it gave their work more meaning and purpose. This contrasted to some other employees who seemed to work for the sake of working and did not appear to share this same kind of vitality when talking about their work and their life.

Kevin, one of the oldest employees of PTP, feels greatly connected to the authority, but at the same time also manages to combine his passion for the authority with his second job as a university professor.

To tell you the truth, it is a good idea of combining theory at the university and practice in the authority. So that's why I still keep both positions. Because, it helps me either to resolve difficult questions in the authority, or to present interesting, modern examples in the university. (Kevin)

In this quote, Kevin explains how by combining his knowledge from both his professions, he manages to develop and challenge himself every day. The

responsibilities of one profession intertwine with the needs of the second one, creating the perfect balance for him. The passion he has for both his jobs urges him to find ways in order to use the best parts of each one to benefit the other.

Other respondents also mentioned how they are able to combine work with one of their personal values or passions, and thereby express how their work complements and enhances their passion.

I have an interest for this academic field, so parallel with my main job I am trying also to pursue my academic goals. Because it is my hobby. But I also love my job here, because I have the opportunity to handle these things, to resolve some cases... If I go to the court, I like that I am representing my authority at the court, and if I win the case then I am very happy with that... Academic work is more theoretical, but here I have the opportunity to practice it... (My job) gives me free time to pursue my academic goals, that's why I am very happy with my job. (Mikayla)

Mikayla expresses her strong passion about her academic work, and how this also helps her love her job, as she has the opportunity to practice some of the theoretical learnings she gains through her academic work. She also uses emotive language such as “love” and “very happy” to really highlight the extent to which combining her academic passion with her work is meaningful and beneficial to her. Gordon also expresses similar views.

As I have an expertise in quality and government procedures, and I am also qualified instructor for these matters, the national school for public service employs me as a tutor for one day, especially for an introductory course for new public servants... This is what I really like, to share my knowledge with others. Okay, I do my job here for living, but I find I always try to exploit opportunities to do more sophisticated things, more than trivial administrative work. (Gordon)

Gordon is able to use his knowledge from his work as a civil servant to teach others and share his knowledge, and this is what he is passionate about, thereby work complements his passion too as his job aids in providing him with the expertise in the

subjects he tutors about. This notion is also shared by Katrina, who also feels passionate in her work, but is also truly passionate about something outside of work, yet they go hand-in-hand.

My responsibilities at work are what keep me motivated, it's what I studied at university. I studied public administration, and that's what I want to do. I'm really happy that I'm one of the people that actually works with what they studied to do. PTP is a service for the public sector, for the community, for the people, for the state, so for me it is important that I can put my little input into the public mechanism of services. (Katrina)

Katrina enjoys her work because it is related to what she studied at university, and that keeps her motivated and happy about her work. She also claims that PTP offers a public good and service for people, and that's what she believes is important, this is meaningful for her and she feels passionately about it. This passion of wanting to provide a public good for people is also reinstated later in the interview when she mentions she is going to run for the local election.

This year I am finally able to do something on my own, something I have been dreaming about, and that is I am finally able to work for the public good, I am interested in the political scene, and the local elections are coming up in Greece, and I am running to be elected in the local council. I am really excited about that. (Katrina)

Katrina uses emotive language like “dreaming” and “really excited” to express her passion for working in the public good, it is clear that this is what fills her with passion and purpose. Working in the public good is also related to what she said earlier about her motivation for working at PTP, as she identifies PTP as an organisation that provides a public good.

However, although Mikayla (mentioned earlier), is passionate about academic work and loves her job, she would like to have a job that is more aligned with her academic goals, in order to be able to pursue her passion of academic work more.

If another opportunity was open to me, then maybe I would take another job that would be more suitable for my academic background, then I would do the other job... if I would find something that would fit with me more and my academic goals... without having the agony for my survival. (Mikayla)

Although Mikayla enjoys her work, she would prefer a job that is more suitable to her passion of academic work. This also implies that combining one's passion with work is very meaningful.

In contrast, Andrew does not mention any kind of passion for working at PTP, however, he does mention his guitar playing and passion for music, frequently, during the interview.

I have guitar lessons, because I'm playing guitar... And at the weekends I normally, you know, rehearse with my band, one of the two days of the weekend... Sometimes I DJ as well, because I am pretty much into music. (Andrew)

When Andrew was asked what he would do if he could be financially stable for the rest of his life without having to work, he said he would like to pursue his hobby of music as a career.

Probably I would like to leave Athens... and try to start something, a small business on my own. Maybe something that could combine music and hospitality and something like that... something in that field, you know? Try to make my hobby as a profession. And, you know, combine it with something that has to do with tourism, which is a big industry in Greece. And live off that. (Andrew)

The quote implies how pursuing one's hobby or passion in a career is desirable and meaningful. Andrew also shows a lower commitment to PTP than his more passionate colleagues.

The quotes about passion emphasises how when one is able to incorporate a hobby or a passion into a job, their job engagement, commitment, and satisfaction is increased and makes the work more meaningful.

Another interesting aspect about having a passion or a love for something is how this helps them prioritise their activities. It is clear from the interviews that time is scarce and managing time is crucial in Greece; however a passion allows one to prioritize their time better and also give a meaningful reason to sacrifice other activities and aspects in life, thereby allowing one to feel fine about what they sacrifice.

I prioritise what I am going to do... If I do something that I love, for example working on the academic stuff, I stay sometimes late in the night, I work until 1 or 2 o'clock, in order to cut the deadline... So if I like what I am doing, then I sacrifice my sleep or my leisure time. This is mostly for my academic work. (Mikayla)

Mikayla is willing to sacrifice her sleep or leisure time for her academic work, thereby demonstrating how meaningful the academic work is to her, and also implying how when one has a passion, sacrificing other aspects in life feel okay, and not like one is missing out on something. Similarly, Gordon expresses, how he is okay with sacrificing time for hobbies in order to spend time with something he loves and values (his wife).

No, I don't have enough time to do the things I want to do. But this has nothing to do with my job. My job is under control, other things that I have no time anymore to do. I used to be a sailor, I do not have time anymore because my wife doesn't follow. I have to choose to be with my wife or with my friends at sea. (George)

This shows, in general, the meaningfulness and value that having a passion or something you love has in people's lives. Life is about prioritising tasks and values, and having a passion or love that one can prioritise over all else, gives meaning and purpose to the sacrifices one makes for the sake of this passion. Thereby, connecting this to work, sacrificing leisure time or chore time for work could feel satisfactory, if there is some passion or love connected to work. If not, sacrificing time for hobbies or leisure to work could feel tough and stressful.

We want to work!

Regardless if the respondent felt passionate or unpassionate at their current job at PTP, the factor that connected all of them is that they all wanted to keep working in their lives, even if they were financially stable enough to not have to work.

Mikayla is one of the respondents who said that she would choose to continue working even if she were financially stable. It appears that people prefer to work either in order to pursue their passions and explore their skills and talents, or to feel productive in their lives.

We asked respondents what they think they would want to do if they won the lottery and could be financially stable for the rest of their lives. Every respondent said they would want to keep working, or at least they could not imagine not working, however the degree to which they wanted to work varied, with some respondents wanting to work full-time and others feeling that perhaps reducing their working hours would suit them better.

I would never stop working, I think that would be unhealthy. Getting money without working and spending it, I don't think that's healthy. (Mikayla)

Mikayla demonstrates that a healthy life to her is one that involves working for an income. Similarly to Andrew, who was passionate about his music, a few respondents desired to start their own businesses.

Now when some people say "I will not work again" I do not know - I cannot think of my life without working. I just want to have a job, working less hours and to be closer to my house... I would definitely buy something, like some store that sells clothes, jewellery, or whatever. Anything for me to run, but to also like it. To start my own business, yes if I had that kind of money yes. I could take the risk, without fearing of failure. (Ginny)

Ginny also mimics the notion that living a healthy life involves working, she wants to work. However she would like to pursue something more aligned with what she likes, something that holds some meaning for her. She mentions she would do this if she could take the risk without fearing failure, thus also showing that fear and risk are

what stops her from pursuing her idea of starting her own business. Katrina mentions similar themes to this.

I would not want to quit my job because I wouldn't be able to do nothing for the rest of my life, but maybe take a year off and go sailing, because I love sailing. Other than that, I would continue with my job or start my own business. Something small for me. (Katrina)

Katrina demonstrates she would like to do something “for me”, implying that she wants to work for her own reasons and meanings, and this is what drives her. She also demonstrates she would like some time to do what she loves: sailing. Matilda also emphasises that she would like to start her own business, however she feels much more passionately about this because she desires a change and something new.

If I would choose the work... it would be completely different to what I do here... I would do something like start my own business. That would be completely different, I've never done anything like this in my life. I would maybe feel more free, because I won't be employed by someone else and have to be here from this time to that time, and do things that I'm obliged to do. (Matilda)

According to Matilda, experiencing something new and feeling more free are meaningful reasons for her to start her own business. Matilda was the respondent who mentioned earlier that she feels bored of the routine work tasks and longs for more challenges and diversity of tasks at work.

These quotes show that the respondents had a desire to keep working, even if they were financially stable enough not to, and that if they could they might start their own business. Reasons for this include that they want to have something that they own themselves and to be able to pursue something that is truly meaningful to them, this showing how their passions and interests can translate into wanting to engage in meaningful work.

Other respondents said they would want to keep their current job, but perhaps have more time for travelling and other things they enjoyed.

Yes I would travel, definitely. But yes I would keep my job, but maybe part-time, or maybe even full time, and then travel without any stress. (Sarah)

Family traveling, the most. And I would like to have a garden, and a dog. I wouldn't leave my job. I would travel a lot with my husband and my kids, but I would have to have a garden, and a bigger house, and a garden. That's all. (Danielle)

Both Sarah and Danielle felt they wanted to keep their current job, and both of them also talked about how they had good relationships with colleagues in the interview too. Sarah also mentioned earlier that she enjoys that she has a variety of challenging work tasks at PTP. Thereby showing that these strong relationships and work challenges could translate into wanting to keep their job. Charlotte echoes these responses too, and delves into more reasons why she would want to keep working.

I think I would probably take some years off, but I like to work to be honest, I like to feel that I am productive in work, and I like interactions with people, so even if I won the lottery, I may take a break to travel, but then I would go back to work... even if you work at the same place, if you manage to find some different challenges this helps you with your personal development. (Charlotte)

Charlotte wants to work to feel productive and to interact with people, as well as develop herself and her skills.

Although some respondents wanted to stay at PTP and others (theoretically) wanted to leave to pursue different careers and goals, like start their own business and find a job more aligned with their education or passions, every respondent wanted to work, showing the high value that working has for people in their lives. Every respondent seemed to want to work with something that was meaningful to them, or at least provided them with some meaningfulness and purpose in their lives.

4.3 Recap: Summary of our Findings

Ultimately, the employees at PTP feel secure and stable in their jobs, which they highly value during the turbulence and insecurity of the financial crisis. Living in Greece in a financially unstable period is difficult and adds more stress in people's lives; it is a situation which causes civil servants in Greece to be unable to change their circumstances at work and there are limited opportunities available to them, so therefore finding meaningfulness in their job is incredibly helpful to them to feel more satisfied, engaged, and committed to their work. Many of the employees at PTP seemed to have found this, as despite other civil servants being thought of as apathetic and idle, the majority of PTP's employees seemed highly motivated and were driven to perform well at their jobs.

Some respondents seemed much more invested in their job, as well as showing vitality, when talking about their job and lives, whereas other respondents felt that "work is work" and that everything is in a routine and in a schedule. These respondents did not seem as passionate in their work and were much more likely to imagine doing something completely different in their career path if they had the opportunity.

The respondents who did find meaningfulness for working at PTP were respondents who either had really good relationships at work, had challenges and new tasks in their jobs, and/or were able to combine their passion or hobby with work in some way.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, we link the empirical data back to the literature, and view our empirical material through the lens of the literature. We begin by relating the civil servant's experiences of work and life during the financial crisis, to the existing literature. We then evaluate the sense meaningfulness that the civil servants experienced in their job and how they are able to create this sense of meaningfulness during the implications of the financial crisis, through an understanding of meaningful work from the existing literature.

5.1 Working in the Financial Crisis

Stability and Security Mitigate Stresses and Worries

Our empirical material shows that many civil servants are stressed, tired, and time-poor. This is due to the fact that many civil servants work long hours, however many emphasised that their feelings of stress and exhaustion were mainly attributed to their responsibilities and obligations outside work. This notion was especially prevalent amongst working mothers, as they often stressed how busy they felt before and after work, when they had to fulfil their family obligations. The fathers also talked about how they had family obligations before or after work too, and that this reduced their time for leisure or relaxation, however they did not seem to emphasise how stressed or tired they felt to the same extent as the mothers. As Floro and Dymski (2000) explain, working mothers are prone to exhaustion and stress due to overwork. The authors stress the fact that marital and family conflicts may appear during a financially strained period and that mothers usually are the ones who feel obligated to manage the household (Floro & Dymski, 2000).

In line with the notion of feeling stressed and tired, much of the literature about the Greek financial crisis has pointed to how the crisis has increased mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Kokaliari, 2018; Kentikelenis et al. 2014; Ifanti et al. 2013; Economou et al. 2013). Much of this literature attributes this rise in mental health problems to unemployment. Unemployment being a factor that contributes to the negative mental health problem does not directly relate to our research as the civil servants we interviewed are not unemployed; the civil servants do

not even have the threat of being unemployed due to the job security in the public sector. However, these extremely negative effects of unemployment and the high risk of being unemployed in Greece does indicate to why job security and stability is so highly valued by civil servants. Our empirical data showed that stability and security where the major driving forces for the respondents to get a job in the public sector.

Choosing employment between the public and the private sector is a clearly subjective choice. People, who prioritise factors such as job security, regulated working conditions and highly educated colleagues tend to choose working in the public sector, even at the cost of a lower salary (Molnár & Kapitány, 2013). This perspective is mirrored by our respondents, who admitted that what attracted them to work in the Greek public sector, especially during a strained economic period, such as the financial crisis, was reasons such as job security, job stability, or simply because they are becoming “too old” for the private sector.

According to Simeonidis (2014) civil servants in Greece feel secure by working in the public sector, and this feeling, alongside the relief provided by the financial security, helps motivate them to be more engaged in their work and feel that they are “not being disrupted by the stress of tomorrow” (Simeonidis, 2014). The civil servants were very aware of the difficulties of life in Greece and the high rates of unemployment, and therefore also expressed gratitude that they had stability and security in the public sector. The civil servants know that they have a stable and steady job that gets paid on time and thereby this helps them to reduce their worries in a very unstable and insecure time.

However, “stability” and “security” are not what we would consider as deeply meaningful reasons to work. These reasons are more for providing safety in one’s life in a time when losing a job or losing an income is a high risk. Therefore, we could consider that “safety” is a driving factor to work in the public sector, and therefore the civil servants were attracted to the public sector for more pragmatic reasons, rather than ambitious or passionate reasons.

However, although the civil servants were drawn to working in the public sector for “safe” and pragmatic reasons, many civil servants managed to discover enjoyment and satisfaction in their work, as well as displaying high levels of engagement and commitment to their job. Thereby leading us to believe that they found some deeper and personal meaningfulness in their work, beyond security and stability. This will be discussed further in the 5.2. Meaningful Work section.

Transcending the Stereotypes

The civil servant's levels of engagement and commitment is especially interesting when one considers the Greek stereotype of civil servants being lazy and apathetic workers (Bakas, 2012). Considering that people are attracted to the public sector for pragmatic and un-idealistic reasons such as safety and job security, and that it is very difficult to get fired, one can understand why many civil servants become unengaged and uncommitted to their work. The civil servants in our study also emphasized how civil servants in other organisations “do not work anyway” and that the public sector in Greece is “disgraced by the public”. However the civil servants in our study did not identify themselves with the stereotypical civil servants, and felt proud that their company was “a great exception” and distinguished from other public administrations. They felt proud that PTP was different and that they shared a committed and hard-working attitude with their colleagues, which help them to “survive” at their job. It is interesting that the civil servants at PTP demonstrate high commitment and engagement, and tried to un-identify to other civil servants by using the word “other” to describe them so as to separate themselves from the “other” and to highlight that they are different, as well as by emphasising how much better and different PTP is.

They Came for the Safety, They Stay for the Meaningfulness

Although civil servants were initially attracted to work in the public sector due to stability and security, and although many other civil servants have a reputation of being uncommitted and unengaged at their work, the civil servants in our study expressed joy, engagement, and satisfaction in their jobs. Some civil servants explicitly stated that they like or love their job, and that they find it interesting, especially as there are new and challenging issues that arise and they deal a lot with new technologies and developments. They have a sense of motivation to work hard. Others expressed themselves enthusiastically when talking about the challenges at their job and the tasks and projects they are currently working on.

A sense of meaningfulness at work contributes to higher levels of satisfaction, engagement, and commitment (Steger & Dik, 2010; Geldenhuys, Łaba & Venter, 2014; Allen et al. 1975; Maynard, Gilson & Mathieu, 2012). Many civil servants expressed satisfaction, engagement, and commitment in their work, and thereby, we use these three factors as a reason to believe, or as a testament, that the civil servants are potentially able to find and develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work. We will explain how we define satisfaction, engagement, and commitment, and demonstrate how the civil servants expressed these three themes.

We refer to job satisfaction as “how well people like their jobs, or more formally, an emotional state emerging from a cognitive appraisal of job experiences” (Steger, Dik, & Shim, 2019, p. 374). The civil servants showed significant levels of satisfaction by stating that they “loved” or “really liked” their job, as well as talking about the specific tasks or projects that they were currently working on and what they enjoyed about it. They also expressed satisfaction when they expressed their happiness over the good teams and relationships they have at their job.

We refer to engagement as holding a positive attitude towards the organisation and working with colleagues to increase job performance (Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, 2004), as well as “the extent to which people value, enjoy and believe in what they do” (DDI, 2005, pp. 1). The civil servants expressed engagement as many of them expressed that PTP was better and positively different to other public authorities, thus demonstrating a positive attitude towards PTP. The civil servants also showed high levels of teamwork and working well with their colleagues, and some also demonstrated that their job allowed them to work for the public good or helps them pursue their personal passions, thus demonstrating personal values in their work and believing in what they do.

Work commitment will be referred to as the level of identification with the profession, the dedication to apply effort on behalf of the organisation, and the willingness to remain in the profession (Morrow & Wirth, 1989). The civil servants identified with the profession by, as mentioned above, viewing PTP and their role in it as a positive. The civil servants at PTP expressed work commitment, as they were willing to work long hours to complete projects on time, and many of them expressed that they wanted to stay working at PTP (at least for a time), even if they had the opportunity to move jobs or quit and still be financially stable. However, not every civil servant expressed that they would like to stay at PTP if they have the opportunity to change

their career path, thus these civil servants demonstrated less work commitment. Therefore, the civil servants generally expressed high levels of engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, and as these factors are positive outcomes of meaningful work (Steger & Dik, 2010; Geldenhuys, Łaba & Venter, 2014; Allen et al. 1975; Maynard, Gilson & Mathieu, 2012), we use these factors as testimony that the civil servants are potentially able to find and develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work. We explore the concept of meaningful work and how the civil servants could cultivate a sense of meaningfulness in the next section.

5.2 Finding the Meaningfulness

Our research showed that three factors were strongly linked to developing a sense of meaningful work for civil servants during a financial crisis in Greece, they are: strong relationships with colleagues; having challenges and variety of tasks at work; connecting a personal passion to their job. We will explore these themes in depth.

Relationships and Belonging at Work

Strong relationships with colleagues were seen as a major contributor for civil servants to gain a sense of meaningful work. The civil servants expressed how much they valued the strong relationships they had with their colleagues, and some even attributed these relationships as reasons to want to remain at the company, thus demonstrating how important and meaningful these relationships were to them. The feelings of camaraderie and *communitas* can alleviate “routine” work into meaningful work (Toraldó, Islam, & Mangia, 2019), thus emphasising the impact that strong relationships can have to the work itself. Similarly, the feelings of belonging and unity are core elements of making work more meaningful to the individual (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

It is, perhaps, not too much of a surprise the belonging and human relationships came out as a central theme of meaningful work, when one considers how important these things are to human nature. One of the most prevalent and interesting findings that arose from the “Harvard Study of Human Development”, one of the longest studies of

adult life with the purpose of trying to predict well-being and health later on in life, was that the people who coped best in life, were the people with the strongest and highest quality relationships with friends, family, and community (Waldinger, 2015). Waldinger (2015) significantly emphasises that social relationships and connections are truly the key to our happiness and health. In line with this, the importance of belonging and human relationships is no secret, with studies showing that social relationships are an important part of facilitating and predicting well-being across the course of life (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Diener & Oishi, 2006), and that social capital, such as ties in the workplace, friends, and trust, is strongly linked to well-being and life satisfaction (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). As the financial crisis has significantly increased negative mental health problems of people in Greece, such as their increasing their levels of stress and depression (Panayiotou & Karekla, 2013; Kentikelenis et al., 2014; Kokaliari, 2018), one can understand that finding this sense of belonging and emotional support from friendships at work can be an incredibly positive support for alleviating the negative side effects of the financial crisis. Thereby these relationships can be significantly more meaningful during a financial crisis.

Regarding building strong relationships with colleagues, studies show that friendships in the workplace are a significant source of belonging and connection. Friendships at work can be a significantly important source of community (Fischer 1982). According to Pringle's (1989) study, workplaces do not manage to exclude the personal from work, meaning that elements of one's personal life are brought into work and thereby work is a social space which combine the public and the private. Pringle suggests that due to this, meaningful and strong relationships at work can occur between colleagues (1989). This was demonstrated in our empirical data too, which showed the deep and personal relationships were built between the civil servants; their friendships with their colleagues did not seem superficial or shallow. Similarly, research by Pedersen and Lewis (2012) demonstrated that friendship contributed to a critical aspect of participant's lives, and showed that respondents believed their friendships improved their job performance, aided in collaboration, and enhanced their quality of life through providing emotional support (Pedersen & Lewis, 2012). Pederson and Lewis (2012) concluded that work settings could provide new openings and new ways of building friendships for busy people, and thereby also achieving a better work-life

balance. For workers with long working hours and work-life imbalances, developing close friendships with work colleagues was significantly important (Wilkinson, 2019). This literature further strengthens our empirical data by illuminating how workplaces can be a space to develop meaningful friendships and why they are meaningful for workers with long working hours and work-life imbalances. The civil servants did experience long working hours and struggled to balance their personal responsibilities and work commitments. The relationships at work provided the civil servants with support and alleviated their heavy load and thus made life a little bit easier for them. This notion of feeling supported by their colleagues was a strong theme in the empirical data. When an employee provides support and valuable help to other colleagues, and in return receives support and help too, the relationships can facilitate a sense of meaningfulness in the job (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013).

This also relates to Kokaliari's (2018) research on the Greek financial crisis, who found that a majority of Greek adults reported higher satisfaction when they had access to personal networks of people who they could trust and felt emotionally supported by (Kokaliari, 2018). Research shows that Greek people rely heavily on their informal support networks of friends and family (Kokaliari, 2018). Therefore, developing strong relationships at work in Greece during the financial crisis seems especially important to find meaningful work at a public organisation.

In addition to this, this was specifically prevalent amongst the working mothers at PTP. This can relate to Wilkinson's (2019) research who states that friendships at work are especially important for women to engage in a personal life outside the family, as women often carry the burden of domestic work plus paid work on top of that, therefore they are especially time poor with little time for leisure. Work may provide openings for working women to engage in friendships, and they often develop personal friendships at work (Wilkinson, 2019). The working mothers at PTP also demonstrated how stressed and time-poor they felt outside of work, with most of their free-time going towards family obligations.

What can be concluded from these studies is that friendship and connection are critical aspects of people's lives and their wellbeing, and work is a space that has the ability to foster these meaningful relationships. When one considers this, plus takes into consideration that a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and unity is a key part in

creating meaningful work, one can begin to understand the importance and value of the bonds formed between civil servants during a financial crisis, and their contributing in creating meaningful work. Therefore, human relationships and belonging are paramount of gaining a sense of meaningful work for civil servants during the financial crisis in Greece.

Challenges and Task Variety

Job design and tasks has a significant impact on how meaningfulness is shaped at work (Grant, 2007). The job design and tasks that made work meaningful to the civil servants was having a sense of challenge in their work, as well as new and different tasks. They often expressed that they “*like the new business challenge*”. When they mentioned that their work was challenging, they would follow it up by expressing that they enjoyed this or found it interesting, thus demonstrating that they highly value challenges in their work. The word “challenge” was used by civil servants in a positive way to express what they enjoyed in their work. The civil servants also use the word “new” frequently to also express what they enjoyed in their work, such as new issues, new tasks, and new developments. This also demonstrates that civil servants value having novel and unfamiliar tasks and activities, thus demonstrating that they enjoy a variety of tasks. The civil servants who had repetitive tasks or a lot of simple administrative work, explained that they did not enjoy these tasks as they find them boring and that they have too much potential or experience to only be working on simple or repetitive tasks; they wished for more opportunities to have some new and interesting work. Skill and task variety are significant factors of job and task design that aid in making work more meaningful to employees (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019). “Job crafting” is also a way to make work more meaningful to the employee, by being able to redefine and reimagine their job design and tasks to be more personally meaningful (Wrzesniewski & Dutton 2001). However, the civil servants are unable to engage in “job crafting” as work in the public sector is quite concrete and fixed, and there’s little flexibility in their job design. The civil servants who did not experience challenges or job variety cannot do much about this, as they do not have much opportunity to change their work tasks. Matilda even mentioned that she has worked in the company for nineteen years and moved departments several times, yet her work has remained fairly similar.

However, Berg, Dutton, and Wrzesniewski (2013) argue that some forms of “job crafting” involve “cognitive job crafting” which is explained as how the employee can mentally change the way they view or perceive their work or their role, and thus can gain a sense of meaningfulness by altering how they understand their work. If the civil servants are able to “cognitively job craft” then they may be able to view their work as meaningful, despite having repetitive tasks. This type of “cognitive job crafting” may have been seen by the civil servants who expressed that their work contributed to their hobby or passion in some way, which we address in the next section.

Passion in Self and in Work

As a civil servant during the financial crisis, being able to bring one’s personal passion into work, or being able to use work to strengthen one’s passion, significantly aids in feelings of satisfaction at work and also wanting to continue with work. The extent to which one can express their own mission and purpose in their work aids in creating meaningful work (Chafolsky, 2003). On the other hand, when civil servants had a passion completely separate from work, their commitment and satisfaction with work seemed low and they could imagine embarking on a completely different career path if they had the opportunity.

What made the work more meaningful to the civil servants was when they could connect their passion to their work, or in other words, if their work could allow them, in some way, to realise their inner purpose and passion. Gordon demonstrated that he felt passionately about his tutoring and sharing his knowledge, and this filled his life with purpose, and also made his job more meaningful to him as his job facilitated him to develop his passion as it increased his expertise in the areas he wanted to teach. Katrina feels passionately about the public good and engaging in politics to support this agenda. Her passion for public good is also able to be realised at PTP, as PTP in her view is a public service that works towards helping the public. Mikayla is passionate about her academic work; this is what gives her purpose in life. Working at PTP aids her academic work, as she claims that, although the academic work is more theoretical, she is able to apply this theory, practically, in her role at PTP, and thereby the two complement one another. Kevin feels passionately about his lecturing job at the university. His role at PTP and his role at the university complement one another

as he is able to bring his practical experiences from PTP into his lectures at the university. Therefore, his role in PTP allows him to better realise his passion and purpose. These respondents also demonstrate struggles and stresses in their life, but most of this is not attributed to their work, or as Gordon put it “the work does not frighten me”.

These examples demonstrate that when a civil servant has a sense of passion that they can apply to some degree to their work, or if their work supports their passion in some way, this creates a sense of meaningfulness at work. Meaningful work is constructed and interpreted by the individual, not attributed to specific tasks (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017). These civil servants seem to have been able to “cognitively job craft”, in the sense that they were able to mentally view their job as being beneficial in some way to pursuing their personal passion or hobbies further. “Job crafting” to create opportunities that allow one to pursue their passions or interests can be a rich source of meaningfulness (Vallerand et al., 2003).

Furthermore, when an employee’s work allows them to develop their passion and their purpose, the work is significantly more meaningful to them, as this allows them to work towards getting closer to their desired self and to realise their untapped potential (Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019). Realizing one’s full potential lies at the centre of meaningfulness, and thereby when there are opportunities at work for the individual to move from their current self towards their desired self, and to satisfy their personal goals and motives, they are able to work towards realizing their true potential and therefore work is seen as meaningful to them Boeck, Dries, & Tierens (2019). The civil servants who managed to find ways to either exploit opportunities at work that helped them to work towards their personal motives and purposes, or were able to cognitively frame and interpret their work as allowing them to work towards their passions, the work was much more meaningful to them. They also became much more committed to the work, found satisfaction in their work, and expressed higher levels of engagement. Chafolsky (2003) argues that meaningful work helps in one’s pursuit of purpose in life, and this is also seen by the civil servants who found that they could utilize aspects of their work to pursue their own personal values and purposes to some extent.

In addition to this, the civil servants who lacked challenges and felt bored at their work resulted in feelings of being unable to use their expertise and therefore unable to

realise their true potential. This perhaps contributed to higher feelings of *meaningless* work.

Work is also viewed as much more meaningful if an individual views their work as having a wider value that goes beyond the self (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017), and, interestingly, many of the passions of the civil servants expressed related to helping and educating others (or themselves). Therefore, helping others and education can be seen as values to these civil servants. When one can connect their own values and beliefs to their work role requirements, the work becomes meaningful (Spreitzer, 1995).

Additionally, as these civil servants' values revolve around the themes of helping others and education, and keeping in mind that PTP is also viewed by the civil servants as an authority that provides a public good and service, which can also be used to help further their own or someone else's education, there seems to be a good fit between these civil servants and the job. Employees are likely to have a stronger sense of personal meaningfulness in the job when they see a fit between their jobs and themselves (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

In contrast, the civil servants who did not view their passion as being able to be realised or related to their work did not have the same sense of meaningfulness in their work. For example, Andrew feels passionately about his music, and his role at PTP has nothing to do with music. He has not been able to connect his passion with his work. If he had the opportunity to have a different career path, he would choose to open his own business that is related to music somehow. This can be seen as a lack of commitment to his job at PTP, and he demonstrates low levels of seeing meaningfulness in his work. But can also demonstrate that working with one's passion is meaningful, as this is what Andrew truly wants to do.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Main Findings

In our study, we wanted to explore how civil servants in Greece can develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work during the financial crisis.

Our core findings suggest that life in Greece is tough and stressful, especially due to the instability and insecurity of jobs and salary. The civil servants enjoy job security, which helps them to mitigate their worries of becoming unemployed or not having a steady income. Nevertheless, public sector's employees have very heavy workloads, limited incomes and low career development. These large workloads cause the civil servants to work for long hours, and consequently this decreases the amount of time they have at home to complete their home obligations and errands. This point was specifically prominent for working mothers, who seemed to carry more of the double-burden of work and home chores, more than the fathers.

Despite these difficult circumstances, many of the respondents expressed enjoyment and satisfaction in their job, as well as demonstrated engagement and commitment to their role. Of course, each employee voiced their own subjective thoughts and even though some of them expressed different levels of satisfaction and work commitment, the predominant theme was that many civil servants did feel satisfied, engaged and committed to their work; qualities which we attributed to them creating a sense of meaning at work.

The main three factors that we found that significantly contributed to providing the civil servants with a sense of meaning in their work were: strong relationships with colleagues; challenges and new tasks in their work; and connecting a personal passion to their job.

The strong relationships that the civil servants built with their colleagues provided them with emotional support at work, which helped to alleviate some of the stresses and hardships experienced due to the heavy workloads. Some civil servants expressed how meaningful these relationships truly were to them by attributing them as the main reason they would want to stay at their job, thereby also increasing their commitment to their job.

Having challenges, as well as variable tasks, at work, also provided the employees with a sense of meaningful work, as they felt much more engaged in their work and experienced enjoyment and fulfillment. Through this, they were able to develop themselves and learn new things. When the civil servants lacked challenges or new

work tasks, they felt bored at their work and demonstrated lower levels of commitment, alongside with feeling that they were unable to realise their true potential.

Lastly, when the civil servants were able to connect a personal passion or interest to their work, it was viewed as much more meaningful to them. They were able to find opportunities to further pursue their passion at work and develop themselves in their desired direction, by giving work more purpose.

Ultimately, every single civil servant admitted that they wanted to continue working in their lives, even if it was not at PTP, since they believed that working provided some sense of meaningfulness and purpose in life (i.e. pursuing a passion, feeling productive, or developing themselves further).

Thereby, we can conclude that meaningfulness at work is significantly important for civil servants in Greece during a financial crisis, as it provides them with more enjoyment and satisfaction in work, as well as aids in increasing their job engagement and commitment. These factors mitigate some of the stresses and hardships of the financial crisis. The civil servants can gain a sense of meaningfulness at work by developing strong relationships, finding challenges and new tasks at work, and being able to use work to develop their passion.

6.2 Research Contribution

With our thesis, we aim to contribute to the gap in the literature on how a sense of meaningful work can be developed in the public sector in Greece during the specific struggles experienced during a financial crisis.

Therefore we posed the following research question:

How can civil servants in Greece develop a sense of meaningfulness in their work during the financial crisis?

Our research contributes to the literature on meaningful work, with a narrowed-down focus on meaningful work in the public sector in Greece, during a financial crisis. For the purpose of our study, we combined existing research on meaningful work, the benefits of meaningful work, and ways in which employees can gain a sense of meaningful work. We further integrated literature on the social, economic, and psychological effects of the financial crisis on employees, as well as the economic effects the financial crisis has had on the public sector. Thereby we joined the bridge

between why meaningful work could be specifically beneficial to civil servants in a financial crisis. This is an area of study that has been scarcely researched, but it is an important one.

It is important because countries are relying on the quality of the service provided by the public administration. According to Holmberg and Rothstein (2012) a country's public administration reflects the institutional foundations and its functionality. It acknowledges the society's needs and operates based on its organisational structures, relationships and policies (Holmberg & Rothstein, 2012). Unfortunately, the public sector in Greece has issues of apathetic civil servants with low work engagement and commitment (Bakas, 2012).

On top of this, the financial crisis has significantly decreased the quality of life of many people in Greece (Somarriba Arechavala et al., 2015), as well as increased mental health issues, especially stress-related mental health problems and depression (Kentikelenis et al., 2014; Kokaliari, 2018).

A sense of meaningful work aids in improving work engagement, commitment, and performance of employees (Neck & Milliman, 1994; Steger & Dik, 2010; Geldenhuys, Łaba, & Venter, 2014). Additionally, meaningful work provides employees with a higher sense of purpose in their life (Chalofsky, 2003), as well as assisting in improving their well-being (Frankl, 1984; Steger & Dik, 2010), and increasing their job satisfaction (Allen et al, 1975; Maynard, Gilson, and Mathieu, 2012).

Hence, when relating the literature on the financial crisis in Greece, to the literature on meaningful work, one can begin to understand why meaningful work would be an interesting and relevant topic to study in civil servants in Greece during a financial crisis. In other words, as there is a low quality of life for Greeks during the financial crisis, and civil servants in Greece can be apathetic and idle, one can understand how meaningful work could be specifically important and beneficial to Greek civil servants during a financial crisis, since it can improve their job performance and overall well-being.

Our findings support the literature about life in Greece being stressful and unstable during the financial crisis (Kokaliari, 2018), and thereby demonstrates how and why job stability and financial security is significantly important and desirable. In our study we have shown that, despite initially being motivated primarily by stability and security to work in the public sector, many of the civil servants were able to develop a

sense of meaningfulness in their work, and this greatly impacted their feelings of job satisfaction, engagement and commitment. Our findings also support the literature that suggests strong relationships and a sense of belonging and community at work aids in developing a sense of meaningfulness at work (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski 2013; Toraldo, Islam, & Mangia, 2019; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010). Our findings also support the literature that a sense of meaningful work can be achieved by being able to find opportunities to work towards their desired self and realise one's potential (Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019), as well as opportunities to pursue one's passion (Vallerand et al., 2003). Our research also revealed that finding challenges in work and having new tasks aid in an increased sense of meaningfulness at work, which can be related to the literature that expresses that job and task variety and job design can contribute to meaningful work (Grant, 2007; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019).

Concluding, as the civil servants work in a situation where there are many hardships and very limited opportunities, ultimately, we see our research as going -back to the basics of what is fundamentally meaningful to people. When fancy benefits and opportunities are stripped away, one can discover what is meaningful to people at their core: relationships and belonging; a sense of challenge; and engaging in a passion or purpose. These findings are important to consider if one wants to develop a sense of meaningful work.

6.3 Research Limitations

Throughout our research we have explored the significance of meaningful work in the field of the public sector in Greece, and more specifically during the financial crisis. Thus, the main concepts we tried to explore and analyze were three: finding meaning in work; the function of the public sector; and the impacts of the financial crisis in Greece. These three concepts are deeply researched separately, but when combined the research is limited. Some of these limitations regarding language barriers, busy work schedules and distanced interviews have been analysed in Chapter 3.

The concept of meaningful work is rather new in the literature, so it could become complicated for someone to discover and decide on which approach they would need to follow in order to evaluate meaningfulness (Steger, Dik, & Shim, 2019). Meaningful work is a rather subjective concept, as is understanding and measuring it. Our approach to the concept was first to come to terms with what meaningful work means to us and our research, and then to attempt to connect this definition to explore meaningful work in the public administration during the financial crisis.

Further on, the ambiguous views surrounding the field of the public sector in Greece, did not allow us to find dive deeply into the everyday hardships of the civil servants. Nevertheless, the personal experiences of one of us made it easier for us to be critical about the existing literature around the work of the civil servants in Greece and the public sector overall.

The amount of studies that have been done on the topic of the financial crisis in Greece, aid us to understand the current situation in the country. A limitation on researching information about the Greek financial crisis was that a majority of the literature was in Greek, making it impossible for one of us to understand and complicated for the other to communicate the message of the article, due to the legal and economic terms.

Consequently, following our main findings as well as our theoretical limitations, the last subchapter of our study will introduce implications for future research, based on theories and gaps that they have not been studied yet.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

Based on our findings, we suggest that further research on the influences and creations of meaningful work, as well as the implications that financial strains and limited opportunities has on this, could be interesting for various scholarly fields such as economics, sociology, and psychology. In addition, we strongly suggest the benefits of researching meaningfulness in situations where, on a surface level, there seems to be little meaningfulness present. This is interesting to discover how meaningfulness can be created and sustained in seemingly barren and fruitless situations.

Moreover, the concept of “cognitive job crafting” would be an interesting area to research further in regards to meaningful work, as we consider this to be a relevant concept for creating meaningfulness in work situations that are not considered evidently meaningful, and where a sense of meaningfulness in the job might be more difficult to find. It is also a concept that is fairly new in academic literature (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2013).

Additionally, researching a public organisation in Greece where complacency and apathy are prominent would be an interesting future study to develop our study further, and discover the “other”, “lazy” side of the public sector. This research could aid in understanding the effects of meaningless work, whether a sense of meaningfulness could be developed in these authorities, and if that would improve the employees’ engagement and commitment to work.

Reference List

Aktouf, O. (1992). Management and theories of organizations in the 1990s: Toward a critical radical humanism, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 17, pp. 407–431

Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond Neopositivists, Romantics, and Localists: A Reflexive Approach to Interviews in Organizational Research, *The Academy Of Management Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 13-33

Amos, I. (2016). Interpretative phenomenological analysis and embodied interpretation: Integrating methods to find the ‘_words that work’, *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 307-317

Arnold, K.A., Turner, N., Barling, J., Kelloway, E.K. & McKee, M.C. (2007). Transformational Leadership and Psychological Well - Being: The Mediating Role of Meaningful Work, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 193-203.

Bailey, C., Lip-Wiersma, M., Madden, A., Yeoman, R., Thompson, M., & Chalofsky, N. (2018). The Five Paradoxes of Meaningful Work: Editorial Introduction to the Special Issue-Meaningful Work: Prospects for the 21st Century, *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 481-499

Bakas, G. (2012). Η θζλή ηων δεμοζίων ζπαλλήλων. Μικπή εκδίδεζε για ηηρ μεγάλερ ηαλαιπωπίερ πορ μαρ σαπίδορ. Available Online: <https://www.athensvoice.gr> [Accessed 22 May 2019]

Berg, J. M., Dutton, J. E., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2013). Job crafting and meaningful work, in B. J. Dik, Z. S. Byrne & M. F. Steger (eds), *Purpose and meaning in the workplace*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 81-104

Caranta, R., Andenas, M. & Fairgrieve, D. (ed.). (2005) *Independent Administrative Authorities*, London: British Institute of International and Comparative Law

Cartwright, S, & Holmes, N. (2006). The Meaning of Work: The Challenge of Regaining Employee Engagement and Reducing Cynicism, *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 16, no. 10, pp. 199-208

Chalofsky, N. (2003). An emerging construct for meaningful work, *Human Resource Development International*, vol. 6, no.1, pp. 69-83

Ciulla, J.B. (2012). Worthy work and Bowie's Kantian theory of meaningful work, in D.G. Arnold & J.D. Harris (eds), *Kantian Business Ethics: Critical Perspectives*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 115-131

Coast, E., Mondain, N. & Rossier, C. (2009). Qualitative research in demography: quality, presentation and assessment. In: XXVI IUSSP International Population Conference, Marrakech, Morocco.

Crow, G. & Wiles, R. (2008). Managing anonymity and confidentiality in social research: the case of visual data in community research, *Economic & Social Research Council*, London, GB.

Crum, A., & Langer, E. (2007). Mind-set matters: Exercise and the placebo effect, *Psychological Science*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 165-171

De Boeck, G., Dries, N., & Tierens, H. (2019). The Experience of Untapped Potential: Towards a Subjective Temporal Understanding of Work Meaningfulness, *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 529-557

Deakin, H., & Wakefield, K. (2013). Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers, *Qualitative Research*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 1-14

DeVault, M. (1994). Narrative analysis, *Qualitative Sociology*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 315-317

Development Dimensions International. (DDI). (2005). Whitepaper – Driving Employee Engagement, Available Online: <https://www.ddiworld.com/employee-engagement> [Accessed 18 May 2019]

Diener, E., & Oishi, S. (2006). The nonobvious social psychology of happiness. *Psychological Inquiry*, vol. 5, no. 6, pp. 162–167.

Diener, E., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). Very happy people. *Psychological Science*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 80–83

Drydakis, N. (2015) ‘The Effect of Unemployment on Self-reported Health and Mental Health in Greece from 2008 to 2013: A Longitudinal Study Before and During the Financial Crisis’, *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 128, pp. 43–51

Economou, M., Madianos, M., Peppou, L.E., Patelakis, A. & Stefanis, C.N. (2013). ‘Major Depression in the Era of Economic Crisis: A Replication of a Cross-sectional Study across Greece’, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, vol. 145, no. 3, pp. 308–14

EU Open Data Portal. (2016). Standard Eurobarometer 85, Data Vol. A‘

Fischer, C. (1982). What Do We Mean by ‘Friend’? An Inductive Study. *Social Networks*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 287–306

Floro, M., Dymiski, G. (2000). Financial Crisis, Gender, and Power: An Analytical Framework. *World Development*, vol. 28, no. 7, pp. 1269-1283

Frankl, V.E. (1984). *Man’s search for meaning* (3rd edn.). New York: Pocket Books

Geldenhuis, M., Łaba, K., & Venter, C.M. (2014). Meaningful work, work engagement and organisational commitment. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 1-10

Grant, A. M. (2007). Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference. *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 393-417

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1980). *Work Redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Helliwell, J., & Putnam, R. (2004). The social context of well-being, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, vol. 346, no. 1449, pp. 1435–1446

Holmberg S. and Rothstein B. (2012). *Good Government: The Relevance of Political Science*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing

Houston, D. (2000). Public-Service Motivation: A Multivariate Test, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 713-727

Iacono, V., Symonds, P. & Brown, D. (2016). Skype as a Tool for Qualitative Research, *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 1-15

Ifanti, A.A., Argyriou, A.A., Kalofonou, F.H. & Kalofonos, H.P. (2013). 'Financial Crisis and Austerity Measures in Greece: Their Impact on Health Promotion Policies and Public Health Care', *Health Policy*, vol. 113, no. 1-2, pp. 8–12

Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work, *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 692-724

Kentikelenis, A., Karanikolos, M., Reeves, A., McKee, M., Stuckler, C. (2014). Greece's health crisis: from austerity to denialism, *The Lancet*, vol. 383, no. 9918, pp. 748–53

Kokaliari, E. (2018), Quality of Life, Anxiety, Depression, and Stress among Adults in Greece following the Global Financial Crisis, *International Social Work*, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 410-424

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to Qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage.

L 9/2018, (Government Gazette A' 105/14.06.2018). Provisions for the Completion of the Financial Objectives and Structural Reform Agreement - Medium-Term Framework of the Financial Strategy 2019-2022 and other provisions.

Ladi, S. (2014). Austerity politics and administrative reform: The Eurozone crisis and its impact upon Greek public administration. Macmillan Publishers Ltd. 1472-4790, *Comparative European Politics*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 184–208

Lepisto, D. A. and Pratt, M. G. (2017). 'Meaningful work as realization and justification: toward a dual conceptualization'. *Organizational Psychology Review*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 99 –121

Lips-Wiersma, M. and Morris, L. (2009). 'Discriminating between -meaningful work and the -management of meaning'. *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 88, no. 4, pp. 91– 511

Lowndes, L (1999) *How to talk to anyone*, Manhattan: McGraw-Hill Companies. Inc

Lowndes, L (2000) *Conversation Confidence*, Manhattan: McGraw-Hill Companies. Inc

Luborsky, M. & Rubinstein, R. (1995). Sampling in Qualitative Research: Rationale, Issues, and Methods, *Research on Aging*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 89-113

Markantonatou-Skaltsa, A. (2016). *Εγχειρίδιο Διοικητικού Δικαίου. Εισαγωγή-Θεμελιώδεις Έννοιες*. Athens: Sakkoulas Inc.

- Markovits, Y., Boer, D., Dick, R. (2013). Economic crisis and the employee: The effects of economic crisis on employee job satisfaction, commitment, and self-regulation, *European Management Journal*, vol. 32, pp. 413–422
- Maynard, M. Travis, L., Gilson, L., & Mathieu, J.E. (2012). Empowerment—Fad or Fab? A Multilevel Review of the Past Two Decades of Research, *Journal of Management*, vol. 38, no.4, pp. 1231–81
- Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A.J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 426–447
- Molnár, G., Kapitány, Z. (2013). Munkahely a közszférában. Biztonság és hivatás, a szubjektív szempontok szerepe. *Közgazdasági Szemle*, vol. LX., no. 7-8, pp. 808-809
- Morrow, P, & Wirth, R. (1989). Work commitment among salaried professionals, *Journal of vocational behavior*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 40-56
- Neck, C.P. and Milliman, J.F. (1994). -Thought self-leadership: finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 9-16
- Novick, G. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research? *Research in Nursing & Health*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 391-8
- Panayiotou, G. and Karekla. M. (2013). ‘Perceived Social Support Helps, but Does Not Buffer the Negative Impact of Anxiety Disorders on Quality of Life and Perceived Stress’, *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 283–94
- Paraskevopoulou, L. (2018). Υπάσσογν καινοηόμοι δεμόζιοι ζπάλλελοι; Το παπάδοξο θαινόμενο ποζ λαμβάνει σάπα ζηο ελληνικό δεμόζιο και οι 5 ήποι δεμοζίων ζπαλλήλων. Retrieved on May 22nd, 2019 from: www.huffingtonpost.gr

Paulsen, R. (2014). *Empty Labor: Idleness and Workplace Resistance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pedersen, V.B., and Lewis, S. (2012). Flexible Working Time Arrangements, Blurred Work-Life Boundaries and Friendship. *Work Employment & Society*, vol. 26, no.3, pp. 264–280

Pierce, John L., & Randall B.D. (1987). Organizational Commitment: Pre - Employment Propensity and Initial Work Experiences. *Journal of Management*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 163-178

Prasad, P. (2018). *Crafting qualitative research working in the post-positivist traditions*. (2.edn.) M.E. Sharpe. New York: Routledge

Pratt, M. G., & Ashford, B. E. (2003). Fostering meaningfulness in working and at work, in K. Cameron, J.E. Dutton, & R.E. Quinn (eds), *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*, San Fransisco: Berrett-Koehler, pp. 308-327

Priest, H. Roberts, P, & Woods, L. (2002). An overview of three different approaches to the interpretation of qualitative data. Part 1: Theoretical issues, *Nurse Research*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 30-42

Pringle, R. (1988). *Secretaries Talk: Sexuality, Power and Work*. Sydney: Allan & Unwin

Rennstam, J. & Wästerfors, D. (2018). *Analyze! – Crafting your data in qualitative research*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Ritchie, J, Lewis, J, Nichols, C, & Ormstom, R. (2014). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, Sage: London

Roller, M. & Lavrakas, P. (2015). *Applied Qualitative Research Design: A Total Quality Framework Approach*. New York :The Guilford Press

Rosso, B.D., Dekas, K.H. & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). 'On the meaning of work: a theoretical integration and review', *Research in Organizational Behavior*, vol. 30, pp. 91–127

Sharpe, W.F. (1963). A Simplified Model for Portfolio Analysis, *Management Science*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp.277-293

Smith, J. & Osborn, M. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: theory, method and research, Sage: Los Angeles

Smith, J. & Osborn, M. (2015). Interpretative phenomenological analysis as a useful methodology for research on the lived experience of pain, *The British Journal of Pain*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 41-42

Somarriba, A.N., Espina, P.Z. & Trapero, B.P. (2015). 'The Economic Crisis and Its Effects on the Quality of Life in the European Union', *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 120, no. 2, pp. 323–43

Spiliotopoulos, E., (2017), Εγχειρίδιο Διοικητικού Δικαίου. 15th ed. Vol. 1. Athens: Law Library.

Spiliotopoulos, P.E. & Makrydimitris, A. (ed.). (2001). Η Δεμόζια Διοίκηση στην Ελλάδα. Athens:Ant. N. Sakkoulas

Spreitzer, G.M. (1995). Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 38, no. 5, pp. 1442–1465

Steger, M. F., & Dik, B. J. (2010). Work as meaning: Individual and organizational benefits of engaging in meaningful work. In P. A. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), Oxford library of psychology. *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work*, pp. 131-142, New York, NY, US: Oxford University Press.

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J. and Duffy, R. D. (2012). 'Measuring Meaningful Work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI)', *Journal of Career Assessment*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 322–337

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J. & Shim, Y. (2019). Positive psychological assessment: A handbook of models and measures, 2nd ed, in M.W. Gallagher & S.J. Lopez (eds), Washington: American Psychological Association, pp. 373-388

Toraldo, M, Islam, G, & Mangia, G. (2019). Serving Time: Volunteer Work, Liminality and the Uses of Meaningfulness at Music Festivals, *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 56, no. 3, pp. 617-654

Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C. & Léonard, M. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 85, no. 4, pp. 756-767

Varoufakis, Y., Patokos, T., Cherkezis, L. & Koutsopetros, C. (2011). Η οικονομική κρίση στην Ελλάδα και την Εξώπει το 2011, *The Observatory of Economic and Social Developments*, Athens: Work Institute of G.S.E.E.

Wilkinson, J. (2019). *The Public Life of Friendship: Work, Neighbourhood and Civil Society*, Palgrave Macmillan: Cham

Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J. E. (2001). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work, *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 179-201