

Student Migration from Greece to the UK: A Life Course Perspective

Vasiliki Toumanidou

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Sociology and Social Policy

June 2020

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Vasiliki Toumanidou to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude to the School of Sociology and Social Policy and, in general, the University of Leeds for awarding me with the Leeds Anniversary Research Scholarship (LARS) and giving me the opportunity to undertake my research project.

I would like to thank my principal supervisor, Sarah Irwin, and second supervisor, Sharon Elley, for the invaluable supervision and all their support, help and motivation throughout my PhD study.

I extend my thanks and appreciation to all those who have contributed to my research project, particularly my respondents, the students and the key informants, for their help and participation. Special acknowledgement to the administrative staff for helping me with the recruitment process. Thanks to Chong, Jianxia, Kamalika, Shareefa and all the people at the School who have supported me at various stages.

This thesis would not have been possible without my family's constant support and encouragement. I want to thank my whole family and, most of all, my mother, Sophia, my father, Giannis, my sister, Stella, and my aunt, Anna who have always been standing by my side, inspiring, motivating, supporting and encouraging me to follow my dreams. There are no words to express how much I love you and how grateful I am for what you have done for me in my entire life. A pillar of inspiration, strength and encouragement is my grandfather, Vasilis, my guardian angel, who has always been with me. Thank you, pappou. I miss you so much.

This has been a very challenging journey with many testing and difficult times and thank you all very much for helping me to keep going.

Abstract

This doctoral study examines taught postgraduate students' migration from Greece to the UK in times of economic recession in Greece and ahead of the UK leaving from the European Union (Brexit). Drawing on secondary data analysis and a series of individual semi-structured interviews with 31 taught postgraduate students from Greece, seven staff members in UK higher education institutions and two education agents, this project traces the patterns and trends of student migration flows over time and investigates various under-evidenced aspects of this phenomenon. Unlike previous studies that have explored educational migration as a 'one-off' migration event, often through instrumental approaches, this project has examined it from a life course perspective, offering deep insights into students' migration and educational aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans. The evidence raises important questions about the complex nature of student migration and indicates that it cannot be approached disconnected from other forms of migration. Students perceive their educational migration as a key stage in their lives, grounded in life course aspirations. Their migration has been driven by several socio-economic, career-related and socio-cultural motivations, and multiple structural and contextual factors have influenced their migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans. Apart from viewing it as an opportunity for self-discovery, self-growth and a path to independence and autonomy, the students primarily perceive their migration as the first stage in a broad emigration project. Under the current changing political, socio-economic and labour market circumstances, they deploy multiple capital accumulation strategies in an attempt to secure employment and, more broadly, a better future. The study does not only enrich literature on the under-researched area of Greek student migration and, generally, intra-European student migration, but also contributes to growing debates on the relationship between student migration and the increasing Southern to Northern European emigration flows of tertiary-educated young people.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Table of contents.....	iii
List of figures.....	vi
Abbreviations and Acronyms	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
1.1 The field of research.....	1
1.2 Setting the context	4
1.3 Theoretical framework	6
1.4 Positioning the research.....	7
1.5 Outline of chapters	9
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 The changing Higher Education landscape	15
2.2.1 Student migration and higher education recruitment policies	17
2.2.2 The brain drain and brain gain framework and the model of push and pull factors	18
2.3 Approaching educational migration from a life course perspective.....	21
2.4 Youth transitions and educational migration.....	26
2.5 Student migration through the lens of Bourdieu’s theory of capitals.....	29
2.6 The role of social networks	34
2.7 Transnationalism: The role of transnational relations in students’ migratory and settlement experiences.....	41
2.8 Conceptualising the relationship between educational migration and other forms of migration: The concept of ‘escalator region’	43
2.9 Summary: Setting up the research questions.....	46
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	51
3.1 Introduction	51
3.2. Research aims and objectives.....	51
3.3 Methodological underpinnings of the study	53

3.4 Sampling.....	54
3.4.1 Sampling strategy	54
3.4.2 Recruitment	57
3.4.3 Sample characteristics	60
3.5 Research methods.....	63
3.5.1 Secondary data analysis.....	63
3.5.2 Semi-structured interviewing	65
3.5.3 Conducting the interviews.....	67
3.6 Data analysis.....	69
3.6.1 Thematic analysis	69
3.6.2 Coding procedure	69
3.7 Ethics	72
3.8 Summary	73
Chapter 4: Student Migration to the UK: Patterns and Trends.....	74
4.1 Introduction	74
4.2 International student migration and UK Higher Education.....	75
4.3 Student migration from Greece to the UK in times of crisis	78
4.3.1 Understanding the contexts of Greek student migration	78
4.3.2 Student migration flows to the UK: Before and after the crisis outbreak.....	82
4.3.3 The profile of students: Changes in subject choice	89
4.4 Summary	96
Chapter 5: Understanding Aspirations and Decision-making	98
5.1 Introduction	98
5.2 Employment constraints in home country as a driver of migration.....	99
5.3 Decision-making patterns	102
5.3.1 Social crisis, resources and decision-making: Facilitators and barriers	102
5.3.2 The drivers of students' migration to the UK.....	107
5.4 The role of social networks	114
5.5 Mobility capital	122
5.6 Leaving the 'family nest'	125
5.7 Summary	130
Chapter 6: Students' Adjustment Experiences	132
6.1 Introduction	132

6.2 Pressures and adaptation to living in the UK	133
6.3 Being ‘here’ and ‘there’: Transnational relationships and connections with the homeland	141
6.4 Enhancing employability	146
6.5 Summary	157
Chapter 7: What next? Students’ Post-study Plans.....	161
7.1 Introduction	161
7.2 Stay in the UK and/or onward migration.....	162
7.3 The role of capitals in students’ post-study plans and career pathways	171
7.3.1 Economic capital	172
7.3.2 Cultural capital and family dynamics.....	175
7.3.3 Mobility capital	178
7.4 Narratives of ‘home’ and return plans.....	180
7.5 Imagining long-term futures: Career and family formation plans.....	186
7.6 Summary	190
Chapter 8: Conclusion.....	193
8.1 Summary and contribution	193
8.2 Limitations.....	202
8.3 Further Research.....	204
References.....	207
Appendix.....	242

List of figures

Figure 1. Distribution of sample by age group and gender (a) and subject area and gender (b).....	61
Figure 2. Top fifteen EU and non-EU countries of domicile (excluding the UK) in 2017/18 for HE student enrolments at all UK HEPs	76
Figure 3. Overall unemployment rate, youth unemployment rate and employment rate of recent graduates (aged 20-34) in Greece (2007-2018)	80
Figure 4. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) at all UK HEPs from 2006/07 to 2017/18 (all levels of study)	83
Figure 5. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) by level of study and mode of study at all UK HEPs (2017/18)	90
Figure 6. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) in taught postgraduate courses by region of study in England (2017/18)	91
Figure 7. Taught postgraduate student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) by gender and subject area at all UK HEPs (2013/14-2016/17).....	95

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BC	British Council
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ELSTAT	Hellenic Statistical Authority
EU	European Union
EU-28	European Union 28 Member States
EUROFOUND	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Union
F	Female
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEP	Higher Education Provider
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ICEF Monitor	International Consultants for Education and Fairs Monitor
ISM	International Student Mobility
M	Male
MA	Master of Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MSc	Master of Science
N. England	North England
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PG	Postgraduate
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SLC	Student Loans Company

STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UG	Undergraduate
UIS	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The field of research

Student migration has rapidly increased over the last decades at European and international levels with millions of young people across the globe moving abroad for study purposes. However, although this phenomenon is of growing scale and importance, mobile students have remained the least studied category of the migrant population in the field of migration studies (Findlay, 2011: 162; see Findlay et al., 2006; King et al., 2010; King and Raghuram, 2013; Van Mol, 2013).

Debates on international education and student migration were mostly promoted through geographical literature (Waters, 2012: 125). Russell King (e.g. King, 2002; King et al. 2010; 2011; 2018), Allan Findlay (e.g. Findlay 2011; Findlay et al. 2006; 2012; 2017) and other researchers have played a significant role in 'raising' the profile of this form of migration through their studies across geography and other disciplines (Waters, 2012: 126; e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2011; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Raghuram, 2013). Student migration has been explored and examined by a number of researchers, principally in early literature (see Grubel and Scott, 1966; Bhagwati and Dellafar, 1973), through the 'brain drain' and, more recently, 'brain gain' framework (Bahna, 2018:1; e.g. Adnett, 2010; Lee and Kim, 2010; Helgesen et al., 2013; Konduah and Glaab, 2018), emphasising its macro-economic consequences to mobile students' sending and receiving countries. Within this analytical perspective, student migration is approached as a type of highly skilled migration, with mobile students seen as 'part of highly skilled labour stock of the future', who may contribute to the economic, technological and scientific development of the receiving country, whilst generating 'brain drain' in the country of origin (Findlay et al., 2006: 293; see Skeldon, 1997; King, 2002; Findlay, 2011; Waters, 2012). On the other hand, return to home country is often perceived as contributing to the country's 'brain gain' through their knowledge and skills that

students have obtained and developed abroad (Li et al., 1996; Skeldon, 1997; King, 2002; Findlay, 2011). Another approach that has been applied to the analysis of this type of migration, often through the ‘brain drain’/‘brain gain’ perspective, is based on the model of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors (see Ravenstein, 1885; 1889; Lee, 1969), mainly focused on its causes at a macro-economic level (e.g. Mazzarol, 1998; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002).

Employing these theoretical approaches to the study of this phenomenon, mobile students’ perspectives and interpretations of their migration decisions and actions have been neglected. Furthermore, a number of other factors that may significantly influence their aspirations and decision-making, such as social, cultural and personal factors, may be overlooked (Li and Bray, 2007; see Raghuram, 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). In 2002, Russell King (2002: 89) emphasised the importance of conducting more research on student migration as a new form of migration derived from new motivations. A number of studies have examined it as a form of migration on its own right over the last two decades (King, 2002), exploring not only the determinants of students’ migration decision-making but also how contextual dynamics, mostly their social networks, may affect their migration decisions (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015). In addition, a few researchers have examined through the lens of Bourdieu’s theory of capitals (1984; 1986; 1990), the social selectivity nature of this phenomenon and how it may contribute to the (re)production of social and economic inequalities (e.g. Findlay et al., 2006, 2012; Waters, 2006; 2009b; 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010).

However, despite the attention that has been relatively recently paid to this study area, academic literature still lacks empirical evidence regarding students’ migration aspirations, perceptions, motivations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans. These aspects of this type of migration cannot be thoroughly examined only numerically and through a market analysis (Kell and Vogl, 2008: 20; see Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Carlson, 2013). Empirical evidence is particularly limited in the case of intra-European student migration patterns, as only few studies have been undertaken on European students, mainly focusing on credit student mobility, such as Erasmus students (e.g. King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Van Mol, 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). Despite the high volume of their migration flows to Northern and Western European countries for study and/or work purposes,

particularly over the last decade, Southern European students have remained understudied. Student migration (often referred to as ‘degree-mobility’) (King and Raghuram, 2013: 129) has remained under-researched at both European and international levels. In particular, taught postgraduate student migration is one category of student migration that has received very limited research attention although postgraduate study is a key part of the higher education landscape of increasing importance, and taught postgraduate students comprise one of the largest groups of European and international mobile student population (Mellors-Bourne et al., 2014). This is the form of educational migration that the present study has investigated.

This empirical study aims to shed more light and contribute to literature in this research area, taking as a focus the students who migrate from Greece to the UK in order to pursue taught postgraduate studies. It has traced the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK over time through secondary data analysis and a number of interviews carried out with key informants, comprised of education agents based in Greece and higher education staff members working at recruitment/international offices at British higher education institutions. In addition, the study has examined students’ migration and educational aspirations and decision-making processes, their perceptions and interpretations of their migration decisions, their adjustment experiences in the host society at academic, professional and socio-cultural levels, as well as their plans after the completion of their studies. These themes have been explored through the analysis of empirical data collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with Greek taught postgraduate students studying in a city in the north of England and in London.

One terminological issue in regard to the study of student migration is whether to use the term of student migration or student mobility, two terms that have been used both in academic literature to describe the movement of students to study abroad (see Findlay et al., 2006; King and Raghuram, 2013). The term of ‘student mobility’ has been mostly adopted in the study of intra-European short-term movements that take place within the framework of a study programme which lasts for a semester or one academic year, often as part of an exchange scheme, such as the Erasmus or Junior Year Abroad scheme (Findlay et al. 2006: 293; King and Raghuram, 2013: 129). This type of mobility is also often referred to as ‘credit mobility’, and in this

case of movement, mobile students are most likely to return home after completing the study programme (Findlay et al. 2006: 293; King and Raghuram, 2013: 129). On the other hand, ‘student migration’ (also known as diploma or programme or ‘degree-mobility’) refers to ‘longer-term moves, for an entire degree programme’ that lasts at least one year ‘with a more open-ended likelihood of return to country of origin’ after graduation (Findlay et al. 2006; King and Raghuram, 2013: 129). ‘Student migration’ is the term preferred in the present study. In particular, the study has explored the movement of students from Greece to the UK for taught postgraduate study that lasts at least one year and the likelihood of remaining in the UK or returning to their home country is open-ended.

1.2 Setting the context

This study focuses on students who migrate from Greece to the UK in order to pursue taught postgraduate degree programmes. Educational migration in Greece is a phenomenon of growing importance, as a large proportion of students move abroad every year for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and postgraduate research studies. For instance, as shown in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics data (UIS, 2018a), the total number of Greek domiciled tertiary-level students studying abroad in 2017 was 37,484. It is noteworthy that since 2011 this number has not fallen below 33,723 (UIS, 2018a).

The UK has been identified, in both Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2018a) and UIS data (2018a, 2018b, 2018c; 2019c), as the study destination that has been by far the most popular among this national group of students at all levels of study. According to HESA (2018a; 2019c), for several years, approximately ten thousands of Greek domiciled tertiary-level students enrol annually at UK higher education providers. Greece constantly holds a high ranking position in the list of the top EU sending countries (among the top five), as far as the number of higher education student enrolments at all UK higher education providers is concerned (HESA, 2018a; 2019c). This phenomenon is not new but a continuation of an older trend (ADMIT, 2001), as Greek students have migrated abroad for their studies for decades. However, despite its long history and increasing importance, Greek student migration has remained under-evidenced in migration research (e.g. Eliou, 1988;

ADMIT, 2001; Pelliccia, 2014), especially in contemporary times, within the context of economic recession. This study aims to expand current knowledge of this phenomenon and provide insights into various aspects of it through the analysis of empirical evidence.

As a social phenomenon, student migration is not fixed and needs to be constantly explored considering the contexts within which it takes place, as its characteristics and dynamics are likely to vary across time and space. My study has examined student migration within the context of the economic recession that hit the EU in 2008. Greece has been one of the worst-affected countries among the European Union's (EU) 28 member states (Statistical Office of the European Union [Eurostat], 2018a, 2018b; Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2018). Within the context of financial crisis, overall unemployment rates of young people (aged 20-34) who have recently completed either upper-secondary or tertiary levels of education have drastically increased (Eurostat, 2018a, 2018b; Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2019). Thus, precarious types of employment, feelings of uncertainty and job insecurity, particularly among young people, have intensified (Eurofound, 2014; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2016; see also Tsekeris et al., 2015).

Under these socioeconomic conditions, the emigration flows of young people, mostly the highly educated, have significantly increased, as they seek better employment opportunities and a better future abroad (Triandafyllidou, 2014; Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016; Mavrodi and Moutselos, 2017; Pratsinakis, et al., 2017). One of the aims of this study was to investigate how educational migration may be perceived, utilised and experienced by students under these socio-economic and labour market circumstances. Aside with the financial crisis in Greece, the results of the EU referendum that took place on the 23rd of June in 2016 and the UK voted to leave the EU (Brexit) is another major political and socio-economic event which young people, in this particular study mobile students who migrate to the UK for their studies, may consider when making and implementing their migration and pre- and post-study decisions and plans. This project has examined how students' migration decisions, aspirations, experiences and post-study plans have been informed and influenced by all these contexts within which they find themselves being situated.

1.3 Theoretical framework

My study utilises a wide range of theoretical concepts for the analysis of student migration, drawing on previous studies in the area of student migration and, more broadly, youth migration (e.g. Brooks and Everett, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Robertson, 2013; 2018; Marcu, 2015; Beech, 2015; Bahna, 2018; King, 2018; King et al., 2018; Kōu et al., 2018). These concepts have been brought together through the research findings. Unlike previous studies that have approached educational migration more as a ‘one-off’ migration event emphasising its macro-economic causes and consequences for both sending and receiving countries, this study has examined it through a combination of various theoretical concepts, mainly informed by a life course perspective (see Kell and Vogl, 2008; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; Beech, 2015; Marcu, 2015; Bahna, 2018). Applying a life course perspective allowed the examination of students’ migration decisions, experiences and plans, not only with respect to study-related purposes but also other life course events and trajectories, such as transition to employment and ‘subsequent mobility intentions’ relating to the rest of students’ life courses (Findlay et al., 2017: 122, 127; see Brooks and Everett, 2008). Bourdieu’s theory of capitals (1986), which has been previously applied to the study of educational migration (e.g. Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012), has helped to enrich the life course perspective, enabling analysis of how participants sought to deploy economic, social and cultural resources in different ways in pursuit of their migration goals and life plans. In regard to social and cultural capital, focusing on students’ social networks was really important for understanding aspects of migration, particularly concerning its social dynamics and how students’ interpersonal relationships have facilitated their migratory and adjustment processes in the receiving society. Although a number of studies have indicated the social embeddedness of student migration (e.g. Waters, 2009a; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Findlay et al. 2012; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Beech, 2015), this issue needs further examination and my project aims to contribute to this area, relating students to their surrounding contexts. By utilising the concept of transnationalism, the study has also examined how students manage their belonging to their home and host country and how they maintain their relations and links to their homeland (Collins, 2008: 400; Raghuram, 2013: 145; see Vertovec,

1999; F.L. Collins, 2013). Furthermore, this concept has provided a useful tool for the investigation of how students' transnational relations may impact on their migratory and adjustment experiences in the UK.

In addition, 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992), a concept that has been previously applied in literature for the analysis of other forms of intra-European migration, such as young graduates' migration (e.g. King, 2018; King et al., 2018; Lulle et al., 2018), has also been useful for the examination of educational migration in this case study. The usefulness of this concept, as part of the study's theoretical framework, was indicated by the research findings, according to which, under particular political, economic and social circumstances, educational migration is highly intertwined with other forms of migration, being grounded in students' aspirations for lifetime mobilities (see also Findlay et al., 2017). As will be discussed in the following chapters, the students mainly perceive their migration for study purposes as the initial step of a broader emigration strategy. The concept of 'escalator region' helps us to better understand and conceptualise these perceptions and students' pre- and post-study migration aspirations and plans for onward migration.

1.4 Positioning the research

In the light of the political, economic and social changes that have occurred over the years at national, European and international levels, student migration needs to be further explored and analysed not only numerically but also through empirical studies which may improve our understanding of the nature and dynamics of this phenomenon. However, since mobile students are the protagonists of their migration stories, in order for educational migration to be better understood, their perceptions need to be explored and not neglected, as happened in much of previous literature which has applied a more positivist approach to the study of this phenomenon.

The significance of this doctoral study concerns the in-depth examination of various aspects of educational migration that have been overlooked in academic research. Previous work has focused mostly on the case of UK students and students originating from East Asian countries studying in English-speaking destinations, whilst little research evidence is available in regard to intra-European student migrants. The present study provides insights into students' migration and educational

aspirations, decision-making processes, their migration, academic, professional and socio-cultural experiences in the host society, as well as their plans after the completion of their studies. Understanding mobile students' perceptions is necessary in order to further understand their motivations and educational and professional aspirations that may generate their desire for migration. There is a strong relationship between perceptions, aspirations and motivations (Hardré and Hackett, 2015). Aspirations refer to 'present and future perspectives' and may be defined as 'from dreams and fantasies to concrete ambitions and goals', often indicating 'the achievement of something high or great' (Morrison Gutman and Akerman, 2008: 1-2). It has been argued that motivations are driven by perceptions and strongly influence individuals' behaviour (Kenner and Weinerman, 2011; Hardré and Hackett, 2015). Further, this research project has examined whether students' migration aspirations, perceptions, decision-making processes and post-study plans are individualised or informed by various structural and contextual factors (see Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Van Mol, 2016).

The findings of the study expand our knowledge and understanding of educational migration beyond a positivist and a market-oriented analysis, which often focuses on marketing and recruitment strategies and the determinants of students' decision-making with respect to study destination, higher education provider and course of study (see also Kell and Vogl, 2008). Through an empirical case study, it focuses on the under-researched, yet of long history and great numerical importance, Greek student migration to the UK. It employs a theoretical framework mainly informed by a life course perspective, which sheds new insights on this phenomenon, exploring how students make sense of their migration decisions, experiences and future plans. Moreover, one of the study's objectives was to trace the patterns and trends of Greek taught postgraduate student flows to the UK through the analysis of secondary quantitative data, identifying any changes occurred over time, particularly since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008.

The study also improves knowledge of the contexts of student migration and contributes to growing debates that address the relationship between student migration and the increasing Southern to Northern intra-European emigration flows of highly qualified graduates, within the context of economic recession, austerity and changing political, socio-economic and labour market conditions in both sending and receiving

countries. In addition, the evidence indicates the complex nature of student migration and its interconnection with other migration forms, such as migration for work purposes. The findings challenge previous literature that has approached student migration as a form of migration on its own right, disconnected from other forms (see King, 2002; Findlay et al., 2017). Students perceive their educational migration not as a momentary event only limited to educational purposes, but as part of their life planning, embedded in life course aspirations. Various structural and contextual factors influence their migration decision-making patterns, with the surrounding political, economic, labour market and socio-cultural environments playing an important role not only in mediating their migration aspirations and decision-making processes but also their post-study pathways.

1.5 Outline of chapters

The following chapter of the thesis reviews the existing literature in the area of student migration and establishes the theoretical framework that has been applied to this study. It discusses previous literature in which student migration has been explored through a more positivist approach, mostly based on the model of push and pull factors and the brain drain/brain gain framework. Following this, it demonstrates and analyses the theoretical framework on which the present study draws. In this study, student migration has been approached and investigated from a life course perspective that aims to comprehend the relationship between this form of migration and students' lifetime mobility aspirations and life planning (Bahna, 2018: 1; see Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017). Drawing on previous studies in the area of student migration and, more broadly, youth migration (e.g. Brooks and Everett, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Robertson, 2013; 2018; Marcu, 2015; Beech, 2015; Bahna, 2018; King, 2018; King et al., 2018; Kōu et al., 2018), this project through the life course scope and the lens of Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986), brings together various theoretical concepts, such as youth transitions, youth mobility cultures, transnationalism as well as the concept of 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992) for a better understanding and examination of students' migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and life plans. A series of sections and subsections discuss each one of these theoretical concepts and justify their utilisation

as part of the study's framework. Finally, the chapter outlines the theoretical implications and contribution of this project to the empirical study of educational migration and demonstrates the research questions that the study aims to answer.

Following the literature review, the third chapter presents and justifies the research design and the methodology that has been applied for the collection and analysis of research data. Firstly, it demonstrates the research aims and objectives and then it addresses the methodological underpinnings of the study. Moreover, it generates insights into the rationale for the qualitative methodological approach employed and discusses how the research was carried out, describing the sample characteristics and specifying the sample groups, sample size, sampling criteria and the strategies applied for the recruitment of the participants. Following this, it demonstrates the application of secondary data analysis for the exploration of the patterns and trends of Greek student migration flows to the UK over time, and justifies the use of semi-structured interviewing for the collection of primary data before it provides an account on the interviews conducted during the course of the fieldwork. Finally, it explains how the data collected have been coded and analysed through the method of thematic analysis and specifies the research ethics procedures followed throughout the research project.

The fourth chapter provides insight into student flows at an international level before it focuses on the UK as a study destination and establishes the patterns and trends of student migration from Greece to the UK. The chapter starts with a brief overview of the increasing outbound flows of mobile tertiary-level students across the globe, primarily to English-speaking destinations, and then it presents and interprets a series of secondary numerical data with respect to the patterns and trends of UK and non-UK domiciled students studying at British higher education institutions. After this, drawing on the analysis of the secondary data, echoed by the primary data collected through the interviews with the key informants, it focuses on the flows of Greek domiciled students to the UK and analyses the variations that have been recorded over the years. Specifically, it examines the patterns and trends of Greek students' distribution across British higher education providers by a number of variables, including age, gender, level of study, mode of study, subject area and location of higher education provider. Additionally, it demonstrates the socio-economic and labour market conditions in Greece to contextualise the qualitative

study and lead to a better understanding and interpretation of the changing patterns and trends of the student migration flows.

The fifth chapter focuses on students' migration and educational aspirations and decision-making patterns, considering students' surrounding contexts. Educational migration was seen by students not as a 'one-off' migration event, but as part of their life planning, with perceived long-term implications upon their life courses and being highly grounded in life course aspirations and life-time mobility intentions (see also Findlay et al., 2017). As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, students have perceived their migration as a strategy of enhancing their employability and a way of overcoming and coping with the socio-economic difficulties and uncertainties they might have faced in their home country. However, apart from economic and career-related factors, their migration was driven by experiential aspirations. Specifically, a considerable number of students have viewed it as an opportunity for self-discovery, self-experimentation and self-growth, and a path to independence and autonomy. These findings indicate the various meanings that this form of migration might be given and the diverse ways it may be perceived by student migrants. The complex nature of educational migration was also reflected in the findings regarding the factors underpinning students' aspirations and decision-making processes. As the evidence suggests, a series of structural and contextual factors have influenced migration decision-making processes, with students deploying in various ways their economic, social and cultural resources in the pursuit of their migration aspirations. In addition, this chapter identifies any variations that have been captured in the migration aspirations and decision-making patterns among the sample of respondents, in terms of gender, mode of study, subject area and study location. One of the sections focuses on the social embeddedness of student migration, in particular the significant role played by students' social networks in their migration aspirations and decisions, such as through establishing 'cultures of mobility' that facilitate migration (Beech, 2015: 335).

Following the chapter of students' migration aspirations and decision-making, the sixth chapter explores how students have perceived and experienced their adjustment in the host society. It discusses any difficulties that the students have encountered over their adaptation to the receiving society and how they have managed/or not to overcome them. The social networks that students have formed

prior and after their arrival in the receiving society have played an important role in facilitating their settling in at personal, academic and socio-cultural levels. One of the sections focuses on the role played by students' transnational relationships in their adjustment processes. It also explores how students have negotiated their belonging to the country of origin and the receiving country by maintaining transnational social relationships through regular transnational communication via online communication technologies and travelling back and forth (see Robertson, 2013; 2018; van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018). The findings discussed in this chapter also indicate that students' professional aspirations have significantly influenced their perceptions and study and living experiences in the UK. Since educational migration is grounded in life course aspirations and perceived as part of their life planning, the students have developed a number of strategies in order to construct and manage their employability through the accumulation of various forms of capital, such as the acquisition of particular academic qualifications and skills development, professional network formation and gaining 'valuable' work experience (see also Tomlinson, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Waters, 2009a, 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012). The evidence suggests that students' employability enhancement may be facilitated by their economic and social capital. A number of considerable variations by location and field of study have been observed in students' job-seeking experiences and employment outcomes.

The last data analysis chapter investigates students' plans after the completion of their studies and, more broadly, provides insight into their life planning. It presents and discusses the main plan of the majority of students, to remain abroad upon graduation, primarily in the UK which they perceive as an escalator region (Fielding, 1992; see also King et al., 2018) that could help them enhance their employment prospects. The findings show that students' pre- and post-study aspirations, post-graduation migration moves and career pathways are highly influenced by their economic, cultural and mobility capital. Approaching educational migration from a life course perspective enables us to better understand how students have viewed their educational migration as a key life course stage. Migration to the UK was mostly perceived as the first step in a broad emigration project, as almost all of the respondents intend to remain abroad after graduation (see also Pratsinakis et al., 2017). Within the uncertain contemporary contexts in which they live, the fluidity of

their plans has been heightened, and many of them keep their plans open, considering onward migration. These circumstances prompt a response by students characterised by being flexible and deploying various strategies in order to secure a better future at personal and professional levels. The chapter also discusses how students' future plans have been influenced by their perceptions, feelings and attitudes to home, and their 'base', as well as other emotional pulls they experience. Finally, it offers deep insights into how students imagine their long-term futures.

The eighth chapter of the thesis, the conclusion, provides a summary of the research findings presented and analysed throughout the chapters of the thesis. In addition, it demonstrates to what extent the proposed main research questions and sub-questions of the study have been answered. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the contribution of the thesis to the academic literature in the field of migration studies through enhancing knowledge and filling gaps in regard to various under-evidenced aspects of the phenomenon of student migration. Finally, the policy implications and the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research are stated.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Student migration is a worldwide phenomenon which despite its long history and growing importance has received limited attention in migration research in comparison with other forms of migration (e.g. King et al., 2010; Findlay, 2011; King and Raghuram, 2013; Van Mol, 2013). It has started to attract more attention in migration studies relatively recently, and several geographers as well as researchers in other disciplines have played a significant role in its establishment as an important field of research that needs to be further examined (e.g. King, 2002; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012; Waters, 2012). This chapter reviews the existing academic literature in this research area, foregrounds evidence gaps and discusses the theoretical framework employed in the present study and how the findings may contribute to the current knowledge base. Before the theoretical framework is presented, a discussion on the changing higher education landscape in the era of neoliberal globalisation may help to better understand the broader contexts within which student migration takes place in contemporary times. In this case study, student migration has been approached and analysed from a life course perspective. The analytical framework examines various aspects of this phenomenon, not as a ‘one-off’ migration event, but as part of students’ life planning, grounded in life course aspirations (Findlay et al., 2017; see also Kōu et al., 2018). Bourdieu’s theory of capitals (1986), the concepts of youth transitions, transnationalism, as well as ‘escalator region’ (Fielding; 1992; see King, 2018 and King et al., 2018) have been brought together to enrich the life course perspective for the analysis of the complex nature and multiple dynamics of student migration. This framework draws on the work of previous researchers (e.g. Brooks and Everett, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; Marcu, 2015; Bahna, 2018), particularly King and colleagues (2018) who have

applied a theoretical scaffold, bringing together most of the above concepts for the examination of contemporary intra-European youth mobilities (see King, 2018).

By applying this framework to the study of educational migration, my research aims to provide deep insights into students' migration aspirations and decision-making processes, their perceptions of their migration journeys as part of their life courses, as well as their adjustment experiences in the host country and their post-study life plans. Particular focus has been placed on the role played by students' social networks in their migration decisions, experiences and plans. After each one of the above theoretical concepts has been discussed and justified as part of the study's framework, the chapter will address the contribution of this research to the gaps identified in literature, and present the research questions that my study aims to answer.

2.2 The changing Higher Education landscape

A discussion on the current higher education landscape within which student migration takes place is important to better understand its contextual dynamics. In the era of neoliberal globalisation, where the fieldwork of this study is located, the higher education sector has significantly changed, especially over the last twenty years, as national higher education systems have been attempting to become internationalised and competitive by adopting internationally defined standards and applying a series of recruitment policies (Altbach and Teichler, 2001; King et al., 2011: 164; McGettigan, 2013). Internationalisation in regard to higher education might be defined as 'the totality of substantial changes in the context and inner life of higher education, relative to an increasing frequency of border-crossing activities amidst a persistence of national systems' (Teichler, 2004: 22-23). The development of communication and information technology in combination with 'cross-border flows' of ideas, students, faculty, and financing have changed the higher education sector worldwide and boosted international collaborations in the context of global competition and knowledge-based global economy (OECD, 2009: 13). Knowledge is being transferred across countries more frequently and fast than in the past through knowledge media, physical mobility of students and academic staff, collaborative research projects, joint curricula, and transnational education provided through distance or online learning, as

well as branch campuses, twinning programmes, and franchising arrangements (Teichler, 2004: 10-11,13; British Council and Oxford Economics, 2012: 21).

Global competitiveness and internationalisation of European higher education have also been enhanced at an institutional level through the establishment of the Bologna Process (OECD, 2009; EHEA, 2017). This Process, which was launched by the EU with the Bologna Declaration in 1999, is one of the main voluntary processes at a European level implemented in 48 states which constitute the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (EHEA, 2017). It focuses on the following issues: the introduction of the three cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), the enhancement of quality assurance, and the easier recognition of qualifications and study periods (European Commission, 2017). In other words, this Process suggested the standardisation of study programmes and degrees and contributed to the internationalisation of the higher education sector, primarily, through the project of European integration by promoting curricular compatibility (Teichler, 2004: 16, 22; King et al., 2011: 164). European integration and ‘Europeanisation’ of the higher education system has also been promoted by the EU through various other policy initiatives, educational programmes and exchange schemes, such as the Erasmus programme (Findlay et al., 2006: 293).

It has been argued that in the context of globalisation, higher education institutions are expected to contribute to the competitive knowledge economy, and the neoliberal market agenda, broadly grounded within the process and ideology of globalisation, has been dominant in the higher education sector for the last 25 years, primarily in the US, the UK and Australia (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008: 76, 78; Mahony and Weiner, 2017). As has been suggested, the neoliberal approach emphasises the economic importance of education, and views education, including higher education, as ‘an investment in human capital’ that may contribute to the enhancement of the national economy and competitiveness (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008: 78). Within this framework, there are arguments that market competition is seen as the most efficient way of delivering goods and services, universities and academic staff are being constructed as ‘competitive providers of a service’, and international students are viewed as an important source of income (Bolsmann and Miller, 2008: 76, 78). Furthermore, global competition among universities is claimed to have been reinforced by institutional ranking systems leading them to compete for research

talent (OECD, 2009:14). Various debates address the marketisation, commodification and corporatisation of higher education at national and international levels. In respect of British Higher Education, a number of studies argue that universities tend to transform into corporations and become more ‘commercial’ and ‘corporate’ in their governance following a series of major changes that have occurred in the higher education sector, mainly over the last twenty years (McGettigan, 2013: 186). Two of these key changes were the increase of the cap of undergraduate tuition fees in 2012 in England from £3,000 to £9,000 and the removal of most direct public funding for teaching (ICEF monitor, 2014; 2015; Universities UK, 2015). The continuing reductions of direct public funding and its replacement by private tuition fee income have been addressed to have led to the internal privatisation of British higher education institutions (McGettigan, 2013: 9). Moreover, as higher education becomes ‘marketised’ and externally ‘privatised’, new private providers, such as ‘new operations with different corporate forms’ are allowed to access the state system in order to enhance competition (McGettigan, 2013: 9, 185).

2.2.1 Student migration and higher education recruitment policies

Previous studies suggest that within the current landscape context, student migration has been approached and analysed as ‘part of the globalisation’ and internationalisation of higher education, and generally as flows of highly skilled individuals who ‘accelerate between integrating economies’ (Altbach and Teichler, 2001; Findlay et al., 2006: 293; Ziguras and Law, 2006; Gribble, 2008; King et al., 2011: 164; C.S. Collins, 2013). Considering the important role that students as part of highly skilled and trained labour may play in filling skill shortages and contribute to the host country’s economic and scientific advancement (see Findlay et al., 2006; Ziguras and Law, 2006; Gribble, 2008; Hawthorne, 2010; Luthra and Morando, 2016; Chiou, 2017), many countries, including the UK, have been applying multiple strategies in order to recruit international tertiary-level students not only to higher education but also to the labour market upon graduation. The recruitment of international students to universities has become a crucial issue for policy makers, university administrators, managers, international offices, schools and faculties,

especially in the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, Germany and France (Adnett, 2010; Bolsmann and Miller, 2008: 75).

A number of studies argue that the USA, the UK and France attempt to recruit ‘the best and brightest’ through the strategy of academic attractiveness and the establishment of their reputation as higher education research centres (Kuptsch, 2006: 42; Manolo, 2006: 22). Two of the main strategies arguably applied by British higher education institutions for the recruitment of UK and non-UK domiciled students (from EU and non-EU countries), mostly over the last decade, are the promotion of employability enhancement and post-study work opportunities (Kuptsch, 2006; Walker, 2014; McCowan, 2015; T.T. Tran, 2016). Employability may be described as a quality of the individual that may facilitate transition to employment (McCowan, 2015: 270). According to Yorke (2004, cited in McCowan, 2015: 270), the concept of employability refers to a set of achievements, including skills, understandings and personal attributes, that increase the graduates’ chances of gaining employment and succeeding in their chosen occupations, which may be beneficial for themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. However, it should be noted that although employability may facilitate one individual’s entering to the labour market, it does not guarantee it, as this may be affected by several external factors, such as availability of job opportunities, the distribution of different types of employment, potential discrimination in the labour market, and various other facilitators or constraints (McCowan, 2015: 270). British higher education institutions emphasis on employability and how students perceive and use the services that the institutions where they pursue their degree programmes provide them with for their employability enhancement will be further discussed over the next chapters as part of the analysis of students’ decision-making processes and experiences in the UK.

2.2.2 The brain drain and brain gain framework and the model of push and pull factors

Within the context of the internationalised higher education sector and globalised economy, mobile students are seen to be generating brain gain or brain drain to receiving or sending societies, as they are perceived a subgroup of highly skilled migrants (Hugo, 1996; Findlay et al., 2006: 293; King et al., 2011: 164). Research

interest in international student migration from the brain drain perspective dates back to the 1960s and 1970s when this form of migration was mostly approached as a 'mechanism suspected of causing brain drain from the developing countries to the West' (Bahna, 2018: 1; see Grubel and Scott, 1966; Bhagwati and Dellafar, 1973). Several studies conducted over the last decades have employed the theoretical framework of brain drain and, more recently, brain gain and brain circulation to the analysis of this phenomenon, exploring the consequences of students' movements on both sending and receiving countries (e.g. Hugo, 1996; Johnson et al., 1998; Sun et al., 2007; Adnett, 2010; Lee and Kim, 2010; Helgesen et al., 2013; Konduah and Glaab, 2018).

From the perspective of the sending country, international student mobility is mainly seen as a form of brain drain with respect to the potential skill losses caused by the recruitment of the mobile students, who are considered as part of the 'highly skilled labour stock of the future', in the host country's labour market (Findlay et al., 2006: 293; King et al., 2011; see Mobo and Xi'an, 1998; Güngör and Tansel, 2008). On the other hand, from the scope of the receiving country, international student mobility is seen as a form of brain gain, considering the role that talented and highly skilled recruited students may play in the enhancement of the local and national labour market after their graduation (King et al., 2011: 164; Beine et al., 2014: 40; see Hugo, 1996; Hawthorne, 2008a; 2008b; 2010; Gribble, 2008; Suter and Jادل, 2008; Findlay 2011; Chiou, 2017). However, a body of recent theoretical and empirical literature by applying the concepts of brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation emphasises the benefits that highly skilled migration may bring to sending countries at economic and scientific levels (Johnson et al., 1998; Bijwaard and Wang, 2013: 6; see Saxenian, 2005; Lee and Kim, 2010; Bhattarai, 2011; Yoon et al., 2013). From this scope, it has been suggested that foreign students who settle down in the receiving country may generate development opportunities for the sending country through remittances, business relationships, direct investment, and technological and ideological exportation (Bijwaard and Wang, 2013: 6; see Johnson et al., 1998; Lowell et al., 2004; Bhattarai, 2011).

Another framework applied to the study of educational migration in literature is based on the model of push and pull factors, often through the brain drain and brain gain lens (e.g. McMahon, 1992; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Soutar and Turner, 2002;

Baruch et al., 2007; Chen, 2007; Wilkins and Huisman, 2011; Wilkins et al., 2012; Ahmand and Hussain, 2017). This framework is rooted in the neoclassical approach (Castles et al., 2014), which views migration decisions as a result of push and pull factors and the outcome of individuals' rational decision-making processes (Todaro, 1976, cited in Raghuram, 2013: 142; see Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; Soutar and Turner, 2002; Eder et al., 2010; Ahmand and Hussain, 2017). Within this framework, educational migration may also be explained as resulting from a combination of push and pull factors that generate students' desire for international education (McMahon, 1992; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002), and students' decision-making is perceived and analysed as rational and made by students as individuals rather than being embedded within 'wider social units' (Raghuram, 2013: 143). In particular, research evidence suggests that students' decision-making with respect to the selection of study destination consists of at least three distinct stages: a) student's decision to study internationally rather than locally (influence of push factors within the home country), b) selection of the host country (influence of pull factors), and c) selection of institution (important role of pull factors which might make an institution more attractive than others: i.e. institution's status, level of market profile, range of courses) (Mazzarol, 1998: 165-167; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002: 83). This model has been mainly employed to determine motivations for global student mobility and, given that these motivations may contribute to brain drain, brain gain, or brain circulation for both host and home countries, studies which have examined student migration through the framework of brain drain, brain gain and brain circulation were often based on the rationale of the model of push and pull factors (Gesing and Glass, 2019: 228; see Saxenian, 2005; Baruch et al., 2007)

It should be acknowledged that although this model might be useful for the examination of the push and pull drivers of students' educational migration, mainly at a macro-economic level, it may overlook a number of other factors, such as social, cultural and personal factors, which may significantly influence students' migration aspirations and decision-making (Li and Bray, 2007; Raghuram, 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). As previous studies have shown, student migration is socially embedded and students' decision-making is not only an individual process but is being made within wider social units and under the influence of various types of social networks, including kinship, friendship, romantic and other relationships

(Brooks and Waters, 2010; Raghuram, 2013; Beech, 2015). Thus, the examination not only of the macro-economic but also the cultural, social and family contexts within which students make their migration decisions is necessary for a thorough examination of the complexity of student migration and the factors that may lead different groups of students to respond differently to similar push and pull factors (Li and Bray, 2007: 293).

2.3 Approaching educational migration from a life course perspective

The present study aims to examine educational migration beyond conceptual frameworks that emphasise the macro-economic outcomes of students' movement for both sending and receiving countries and analyse students' migration decisions as being simply determined by a combination of push and pull factors. In this study, educational migration in regard to students' aspirations, decision-making, experiences and graduation plans has been investigated from a life course perspective, which aims to comprehend the relationship between this form of migration and students' lifetime mobility aspirations and life planning (Bahna, 2018: 1; see Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017). Moreover, this perspective offers unique insight into the role played by students' surrounding environments and socio-economic backgrounds in their migration aspirations, decision-making processes, experiences and post-study plans.

The life course approach in its current form mainly emerged in the 1960s, even though the history of life course studies dates back to the research activities of the Chicago School of Sociology in the early 20th century (Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568). The study considered to be the 'header' of the life course approach was conducted by Thomas and Znaniecki (1918 to 1920) (Thomas et al., 1996), who examined the life journeys of Polish peasants in Europe and America through the use of life records (Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568). Following this, by applying the same research method a number of researchers started to investigate social change and individuals' life trajectories (Elder 1985; Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568). Before the life course idea was articulated, there were two broad methods that social scientists applied in order to observe human behaviour: a) a 'snapshot "social relations" or "structural approach"' that focused on the impact of the social surroundings on the

individual and b) a ‘movie-like “temporal” or “dynamic approach”’ that examined the story of lives over time (Giele and Elder, 1998: 6). One of the main reasons that the life course approach started to become more attractive among researchers in that period relates to the emerging questions concerning how an individual’s life history relates to the cohort and the historical context in which it is embedded (Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568).

According to this approach, an individual’s life constitutes of a series of transitions or life events, which are grounded in trajectories that give them distinctive form and meaning (Elder, 1975: 167; Elder 1985: 31, Elder 1994: 5; Kulu and Milewski, 2007). Life course may be defined as ‘the age-graded sequence of roles, opportunities, constraints, and events that shape the biography from birth to death’ (Shanahan and Macmillan, 2008: 40). According to Elder (1985; 1994: 5), this concept generally refers to ‘the interweave of age-graded trajectories’, such as professional careers and family pathways, which are under the influence of changing conditions and future options, and to short-term transitions that may range from leaving school to retirement.

The four central themes to the life course paradigm, which are also perceived as the key factors that may shape an individual’s life course (Elder, 1994; Elder 1998, cited in Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568), are the following: a) the interplay of human lives and historical times, b) the timing of lives, c) linked or interdependent lives, and d) human agency in choice making. It might be suggested that by relating individuals to broader contexts, the life course approach attempts to negotiate to some extent theories on social construction and human agency and reconcile the interrelationship between individuals and the social structures that affect their choices (Elder, 1994; Hitlin and Kirkpatrick Johnson, 2015; Hitlin and Elder, 2006). From a life course perspective, agency, which may be defined as ‘a human capacity to influence one’s own life within socially structured opportunities’, is viewed as a property owned by the individual and is socially mediated (Hitlin and Elder, 2006: 56-58). Life course theorists focus on how individuals direct their lives within the constraints of social structures (Johnson and Hitlin, 2017: 1016-1017; see Mayer, 1986; Elder et al., 2003; Hitlin and Kirkpatrick Johnson, 2015; Hitlin and Edler, 2006). One of the main axioms of the life course theory argues that individuals construct their own life courses through making choices and acting within the opportunities and constraints that they

encounter under particular historical and social circumstances (Elder and Johnson, 2002). From this scope, individuals are viewed as social actors who internalise, at least partly, their structurally constrained opportunities for agency, being aware of their own skills and their life chances, which they consider when constructing their life courses in constrained situations (Hitlin and Elder, 2006: 60). Thus, although the concept of human agency is prominent, at the same time this approach emphasises the role of contexts and, more specifically, the role of historical and geographical factors in influencing individuals' life courses, arguing that an individual's life course itself is embedded in social institutions and subject to structural factors, such as historical forces and cohort pressures (Elder 1985a: 15, cited in Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568; Elder, 1994: 5; Kōu et al., 2015: 1648). Life course research examines the influential role of these forces on individuals' life paths ranging from the macro to the micro level (Hitlin and Elder, 2006: 60)

Another prominent premise of the life course paradigm that indicates the significant role of contextual factors is the 'interdependent' and 'linked lives', which refers to individuals' life courses' social embeddedness (Elder, 1994: 6; Kōu et al., 2015: 1648). This premise emphasises how all levels of social action interact and influence each other as parts of a whole and as the result of contact between individuals who share similar experiences (Giele and Elder, 1998: 9). In this case study, the life course principle of linked lives is useful to better understand the social embedded nature of student migration as well as how students maintain their relationships across space and their links to homeland. The 'timing of lives' (Elder, 1994: 6) is another important premise which concerns the 'occurrence, duration and sequence' of one individual's life course transitions (Kōu et al., 2015: 1648). From the life course perspective, the social and physical location where the individual is embedded affects their personal experience (Giele and Elder, 1998: 9). This premise emphasises the dynamic relationship of an individual's life course with the contexts that they surround them not only at historical, geographical and social levels but also in terms of time.

The life course approach offers a fruitful framework for the examination of individual life events and patterns of life trajectories over time and in social processes with the aim to explain their movements across various statuses and roles and, more broadly, to explain and understand social change and social phenomena (Elder 1985;

1994; Mayer and Tuma, 1990: 4-5, cited in Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568). As Elder (1998: 9) argued, the life course theory and research ‘alert us to this real world, a world in which lives are lived and where people work out paths of development as best they can’. This type of research generates knowledge of how individuals’ lives are socially organised in biological and historical terms, and how the resulting social pattern influences how we think, feel and act (Elder, 1998: 9). Exploring individuals’ lives across time allows us to capture the complexity of the life course and uncover ‘shifts and changes, stabilities and continuities’, in regard to how people make sense of their world as they pursue their lives in changing personal, social and economic conditions (Edwards and Irwin, 2010: 121-122). From this scope, migration is seen as an inherently dynamic phenomenon, an intrinsic part of the life course of individuals within their surrounding environments, and life course transitions are seen to intermediate between contextual factors and migration outcomes (Bernard et al., 2014: 217). For example, Kōu and colleagues (2015: 1647) applied this approach for the examination of the migration and lived experiences of highly skilled Indians in the Netherlands. Their findings suggest that the highly skilled migration is not ‘a one-off’ event, but the acquisition of skills and work experience may ‘trigger’ other movements (Kōu et al., 2015: 1647).

In line with Kōu and colleagues (2015: 1644, 1647), in this study, a life course perspective has been adopted to understand educational migration not as a ‘one-time’ migration event, but as part of students’ life planning in relation to other life course events and trajectories in key domains of their lives, such as education, employment, family formation and post-study migration. As this approach suggests life trajectories and life course events evolve at the same time or in parallel to each other, often depending on one another (Kōu et al., 2015: 1647). Thus, this perspective enables the exploration of the interdependence of individuals’ life course trajectories and the changes that an event in one trajectory may bring to others (Kōu et al., 2015: 1647). In my study, by using this lens, I could examine how students view their educational migration not only regarding study-related purposes but also the long-term implications they perceive that their migration may have upon other life course events and trajectories, such as career and post-study migration pathways.

Despite the importance of examining educational migration through the life course scope, only a few researchers in this study area have approached it from this

perspective (e.g. Kell and Vogl, 2008; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; Marcu, 2015; Bahna, 2018). Their findings indicate the strong relationship between educational migration and students' career and life planning with which they engage before and after their overseas studies (Findlay et al. 2012; Beech 2015; Marcu 2015; Findlay et al., 2017). For example, Marcu's (2015: 74) findings suggest that international student mobility may be deployed by students and their families as a long-term strategy to pursue an international career and develop a mobile trajectory at an international level. Moreover, Findlay and colleagues' (2017: 127) study on UK students enrolled in foreign universities, and Brooks and Everett's (2008: 325) findings on UK graduates' life planning suggest that educational migration aspirations are often embedded in life course aspirations and 'plans for mobility over the longer run'. Students' migration decision-making is not limited to study purposes, as students also engage in life planning and their motivations for educational migration associate with 'subsequent mobility intentions' that relate to the rest of their life courses (Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2017: 122, 127). The research findings show that student mobility is not simply a 'subset of youth mobility culture' but constitutes part of a wider set of mobility cultures, associated with a person's outlook on their entire life course (Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2011: 122, 127; King et al., 2011)

My study aims to contribute to this area and improve understandings of educational migration focusing on students' aspirations, experiences and future plans by grasping and interpreting their perceptions which have been neglected in a large body of literature. The life course perspective is considered to be appropriate for the examination of all the above issues and in order to capture the complexity and diversity' of students' aspirations, experiences and plans at an individual and collective level (Kell and Vogl, 2008). Moreover, emerging evidence indicates that the social forces that drive educational migration may also contribute to lifetime mobility trends (Findlay et al., 2017). Utilising this perspective in combination with other theoretical concepts that will be discussed below enables investigation of student migration not in isolation from other forms of migration, as it is often examined in previous literature, but in relation to them.

2.4 Youth transitions and educational migration

The concept of youth transitions on which the present study draws as part of its theoretical framework flags perspectives and issues relevant to my study, as students view their migration journey as an inherent part of their life courses and a way of facilitating life transitions (see Kōu et al., 2015). Therefore, a discussion on youth transitions and how they intersect with educational migration, as well as providing insight into youth transition patterns in contemporary times in Europe, will help to better understand how students perceive their educational migration to the UK as part of their life-planning and what they intend to do after their graduation within their surrounding contexts.

Youth, childhood and adulthood are culturally and socially constructed concepts which refer to particular life stages in one individual's life course (King, 2018: 7). These stages are often associated with several characteristics and qualities that define them and distinguish one from the other. According to Western constructions of these concepts, childhood is often associated with play, freedom, innocence, dependency and lack of responsibility, whilst the stage of adulthood is mainly associated with seriousness, independence and responsibility (Evans, 2008: 1663). Drawing on socialisation theories, youth is positioned as a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, and the transition between these life stages is marked by key events, often described as 'rites of passage' to adulthood, such as the transition from full-time education into the labour market, leaving the parental home, partnership formation and parenthood (Evans, 2008: 1664-1665; Aldridge et al., 2011).

As previous studies addressed, and the present study has also found, young people may see their mobility as a rite of passage to adulthood, a way of facilitating their transition to employment, leaving the parental home and, consequently, becoming independent and autonomous (Akhurst et al., 2014). Responding to contemporary macro-economic conditions, young people follow various youth transition and mobility tracks that may enable them to obtain skills and qualifications and enhance their utility opportunities at different points in time and in different locations (King, 2018: 7). From this scope, education, especially overseas education, is often perceived and valued as a form of distinction that they attempt to pursue in

order to cultivate a distinctive identity and enhance their employment and career prospects (Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004: 135, 138; Akhurst et al., 2014; Findlay et al., 2012: 126).

However, evidence suggests that educational migration may also be seen by students as a way of escaping academic-related pressures and expectations, prolonging their youth and postponing their transition to adulthood, which is mostly perceived of being associated with transition to employment and feelings of anxiety and responsibilities (Waters et al., 2011). In this sense, studying for a degree abroad is not primarily perceived as a means of securing particular credentials and, consequently, a step towards employment and adulthood, but as a way of prolonging their youth experiences associated with fun, enjoyment and adventure (Waters et al., 2011: 466). The ways that educational migration may be perceived by students have been found to be often linked to their socio-economic backgrounds (Waters et al., 2011), with those of more privileged backgrounds being more likely to view overseas education mostly as a way of seeking adventure and fun and a way of prolonging their youth (Waters et al., 2011).

In recent years, youth transitions as well as youth mobilities have become more diversified and complex, with the emergence of new youth transition patterns that deviate from the linear-stage model of the passage from youth to adulthood (King, 2018: 7). The ‘standard’ patterns of youth transitions of the past have been significantly affected by various factors that have caused ruptures and reversals, indicating the need for a reanalysis of the linearity of the youth transition through a ‘range of temporalities and spatialities’ which are also ‘enfolded into the migration experience’ (King, 2018: 9). Within the context of neoliberalism, globalisation and consumerism, young people’s biographies in the Western-world have been argued to have become much more individualised (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; King, 2018: 7) and ‘disembedded’ from previously strong framing structures. Individualisation theories have been widely used in literature on youth transitions (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). According to these theories, in modern times, a decline in ‘the importance of “tradition” and “traditional” institutions’ has been observed and led to an ‘associated decline in certainty about “traditional” life courses’ which were previously shaped by various institutions and social structures (Evans, 2008: 1665). Within this context, there is not only one pattern of the transition from

childhood to adulthood which is ‘predetermined and mapped out with defined stages and rites of passage’ (Evans, 2008: 1665). Individualisation theories suggest that ‘individuals are now free to choose their own life path’ and the future is no longer determined by social structures, such as class, gender, religion and ethnicity (Evans, 2008: 1665). Although these theories might help us to explain and understand the ‘complexity’ and ‘multiplicity of lived youth transitions’, there is a danger of claiming that each individual is entirely independent and free to follow their own life path, denying and overlooking the influential role that many structural factors may play in individuals’ opportunities, choices and experiences (Evans, 2008: 1665). In order to better explore, examine and interpret the various patterns of youth transitions, the political, economic, social and cultural contexts within which individuals are situated need to be considered.

Youth transition and mobility patterns may be affected and shaped by a series of contextual factors, such as economic and cultural factors and geopolitical and economic events, which may enhance or disrupt young people’s patterns of mobility and transitions to adulthood (Eurofound, 2014; King, 2018; see Edwards and Irwin, 2010). The globalisation and flexibilisation of European labour markets aside with the extension of full-time education and the delayed access to satisfying professional careers have been argued to have a significant impact on mobility and youth transition patterns (King, 2018). These factors have been addressed to have disrupted the ‘standard’ patterns of life course events, such as career progressions from education to employment or from one type of employment (low-paid, precarious) to another (better-paid, more secure, more career-oriented), as well as how these types of transitions relate to migration’ (King, 2018: 7). It has been argued that over the last decades, in times of economic recession, unemployment and changing structures of employment and labour market demand, a pattern of ‘deferral’ has appeared in the ‘timing of transitions from the partial dependence of youth to the independence associated with adult status’ (Irwin, 1995: 1-2). Economic recession has been suggested that may affect individuals’ life courses not only at an economic level but also in terms of expectations, values, personal and social relationships, needs, attitudes and behaviour (Edwards and Irwin, 2010: 123). For example, according to European and national statistics, an increase has been observed in the age of first marriage and parenthood among young adults (see Hellenic Statistical Authority

[ELSTAT], 2019) reflecting one of the changes that have occurred in the family patterns and structures in European societies, mostly in Southern European countries which economic crisis and austerity have hit the hardest (Lanzieri, 2013.; Oláh, 2015).

However, it should be noted that the deferral in the traditional patterns of these transition may not only be associated with socio-economic factors but also personal, social and cultural factors. For example, as found in previous research, for many young people in Greece, the postponement of marriage and/or family formation, (if ever happened), has been found to be a result of a combination of economic factors and lifestyle reasons, such as the reluctance of young people to give up their ‘bohemian, uncommitted way of life’ (Davies et al., 2014, no pagination). Moreover, as my study has shown in parallel with previous evidence, in contemporary times, affected by economic, social and cultural changes, marriage which had traditionally been a rite of passage to adulthood has lost its centrality compared with previous decades (Davies et al., 2014).

The issues flagged by the concept of youth transitions will help us to better understand how the students in this study perceive their educational migration in respect of their transition to adulthood, taking into account their surrounding contexts. Moreover, this conceptual tool may lead to a deeper interpretation not only of students’ perceptions of their migration aspirations and decision-making regarding their education migration to the UK but also their broader life course aspirations in which their migration journey is grounded, as well as their post-study life plans and narratives of their long-term futures.

2.5 Student migration through the lens of Bourdieu’s theory of capitals

Bourdieu’s theory of capitals (1984; 1986), which has been employed in a number of previous studies on educational migration (e.g. Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012; Waters, 2012; L.T. Tran, 2016), constitutes one of my study’s key conceptual frameworks that generates insights and helps to conceptualise students’ migration aspirations, decisions, experiences and future plans. Specifically, this theory helps to enrich the life course perspective, enabling analysis of how

participants sought to deploy and mobilise economic, social and cultural resources in different ways in pursuit of their migration goals and life plans.

According to Bourdieu (1986), society is constructed by social fields which are characterised by the forms of capitals accumulated by an individual through particular practices, resources, skills and knowledge (L.T. Tran, 2016: 1273). There are three principal forms of capital: a) economic capital, which refers to the access to material and financial resources, b) social capital, which concerns the social assets that arise from an individual's social memberships, networks and relationships, and c) cultural capital, a concept that refers to individuals' skills, knowledge, titles and sensibilities, and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986: 243; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; L.T. Tran, 2016: 1273). Applied to the study of educational migration, economic capital may be defined as mobile students' and their families' financial resources, cultural capital as the students' language competence, foreign credentials, work experience, skills and sensibilities, whilst social capital may conceptualise students' social networks and their family's social status and positional advantage they may access (L.T. Tran, 2016: 1274).

As evidenced in several studies, student migration may be highly motivated by aspirations associated with the accumulation of various forms of capital, including social, cultural and symbolic capital (e.g. Huang and Yeoh, 2005; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Liu- Farrer, 2009; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Findlay, 2011; King et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012; Waters, 2012). Particularly, given the perceived status attached to international education, many students have been found to migrate for their studies in order to develop their cultural capital and gain a competitive advantage over their counterparts who have acquired a local higher education degree (see Morano-Foadi, 2005; Shanka et al., 2006; Waters, 2007; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Findlay, 2011; Findlay et al. 2012). Brooks and Waters (2009b) have explored the choices and motivations of UK students who chose to study abroad for a higher education degree, and found that the key factor in the decision-making of many respondents was their entry to an elite higher education institution. Overseas education was also perceived by many students and their parents as a 'second chance' in case they would not get accepted by the elite British universities they had applied to (i.e. Oxbridge) (Brooks and Waters, 2009b: 199).

Apart from the acquisition of institutionalised cultural capital—mainly represented in the acquisition of highly valued academic qualifications—evidence suggests that students may expect to accumulate embodied cultural capital through their engagement with various extra-curricular activities, immersing themselves within the receiving cultural and language environment and obtaining various cosmopolitan cultural traits (i.e. language ability, accent, style of dress) (King et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2011: 458; Waters, 2012: 127-128). For example, Findlay and colleagues' (2012) study on a sample of 560 UK students enrolled in universities in the USA, Australia, Ireland, France, Germany and the Czech Republic and 1400 final-year pupils in two counties of England has shown that one of the factors that shaped UK students' decision-making for migration was their desire for being distinguished from 'stay-at-home' students by studying abroad. The acquisition of a higher degree awarded by a distinguished 'world-class' university was also perceived by them as a strong asset for their CVs, which might enhance their employability and increase the opportunities for acquiring an occupation of high socio-economic status (Findlay et al., 2012: 125).

Various studies suggest that students who have acquired overseas academic credentials and experiences may often be advantaged upon graduation with respect to their economic and employment prospects, as the accumulation of highly valued cultural capital, represented by the acquisition of overseas academic qualifications and socio-cultural and other experiences, may be 'subsequently converted' into social status and economic capital (King et al., 2011: 178; e.g. Findlay et al., 2006; 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Waters, 2009a; 2009b; 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010). For example, the survey results of King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003) on graduates who had studied for a year abroad as part of their degree at the University of Sussex and on graduates who had not studied abroad have shown that compared with non-Year Abroad graduates, Year Abroad graduates were more likely to engage with further education abroad in the future, establish better job profiles, acquire highly paid jobs and less likely to experience unemployment. Furthermore, the acquisition of specific academic credentials may facilitate the formation of elite networks which might enhance graduates' employment opportunities, as found in Hall's (2011) study on the educational ties, social capital and the translocal (re)production of MBA alumni networks in leading business schools in the USA and the UK.

A considerable number of researchers have found that educational migration has a social selectivity nature and may contribute to the reproduction of social class divisions (e.g. Waters, 2006; 2009b; 2012; Findlay et al., 2006, 2012; Bahna, 2018). According to these studies, most of mobile students come from more affluent socio-economic family backgrounds, often possessing the financial, cultural and social resources that may facilitate their educational mobility and enable them to use the appropriate strategies for capital accumulation (King et al., 2011: 178; see King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; 2012; Adnett, 2010; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Findlay et al., 2012). For example, King and colleagues' (2011) study on the perspectives of English school leavers on studying abroad has shown that in the case of students from privileged socio-economic backgrounds, mobility is often strongly related to their 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), as most of them had travelled abroad frequently and were fluent at least in two languages, having acquired the experiences and skills which may enhance their educational mobility (King et al., 2011). On the other hand, for working-class students educational migration may often be seen as 'only a dream or not even that' (King et al., 2011: 177). These students have been found to be less likely to move abroad for their studies mostly because of the financial and linguistic constraints of the environments in which they are situated, and also because of the 'socio-economic and mobility cultures from which they are drawn' (Findlay et al., 2006: 313).

Various researchers have examined the influential role of social class and family context in children's educational attainment and employment outcomes (e.g. Reay, 2000; 2005; Morrison Gutman and Akerman, 2008; Duckworth et al., 2009; Irwin and Elley, 2013). A number of studies argue that parents' aspirations for their children's education and future work as well as how they engage with their children's prospective futures vary within and across classes (Irwin, 2009; Irwin and Elley, 2013). Evidence suggests that young people's life chances along with educational and career choices are strongly influenced by 'intergenerational resources', with secure family relationships, high expectations and esteem, as well as positive learning identities playing an important role in their educational and professional values and trajectories (Elley, 2013: 148-149). The findings of previous studies indicate that compared with students' of less advantaged and lower parental educational backgrounds, students from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and high

parental education are more likely to access overseas higher education (and the benefits it may have on their life courses at various levels), not only due to higher economic capital, which allows them to cover travel, study and living expenses, but also because they may be more aspired and encouraged to move abroad for their studies by their family and social environments (see Waters, 2007; Findlay, 2011; King et al., 2011).

As shown in literature, student migration is often perceived by middle-class families as a strategy of maintaining their social position in society. A number of studies indicate that the parents of middle-class students may encourage their children to migrate for their studies, as they perceive the accumulation of highly valued cultural capital, represented in Western academic qualifications, as a means of distinction which might enable their children to maintain their social class position and gain an occupation of high social and economic status (see Findlay et al., 2006; 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Findlay, 2011; Wells, 2014, cited in Bahna, 2018: 1-2; Pelliccia, 2014). For example, in China and Vietnam many middle-class families use their financial capital in order to protect their children from the risk of failure in the highly competitive educational system in their country of origin (L.T. Tran, 2016). They encourage them to gain institutionalised capital through the acquisition of academic qualifications which they perceive that it may allow them to reproduce their social status (L.T. Tran, 2016; see also Zhou, 1998). Considering that international student mobility might bring various advantages to mobile students, it has been argued that its social selectivity nature may also impact on students' personal and professional life courses upon their graduation, (re)producing and transferring social inequalities from an educational to a professional level through a socially stratified access to overseas study (Findlay et al., 2006; Kratz, 2012, cited in Lörz et al., 2016: 167).

However, it should be noted that although the majority of international mobile students are more likely to be from privileged socio-economic backgrounds, we could not claim that all students who migrate abroad for their studies are coming from the same backgrounds. L.T. Tran's research findings (2016) revealed that some students from less affluent families, whose family's financial capital was not enough to cover the costs of their overseas studies, managed to migrate in order to study abroad after they had sold their house or taken loans from a bank or their relatives. Her findings

suggest that for the less financially privileged students, international student mobility may be seen not as a way of reproducing their social class, as often happens in the case of middle-class students, but as a way of securing migration in the receiving country, and ‘transform’ and ‘upscale’ their social class through the acquisition of foreign academic qualifications and experiences (L.T. Tran, 2016: 1269). Moreover, the acquisition of institutional and social capital may be expected to help them enhance their economic capital (L.T. Tran, 2016: 1269). These findings suggest that in this case of students, educational migration might be viewed as a way of becoming and, in particular, as a process through which they might overcome the economic and other problems that they may face in their country of origin (L.T. Tran, 2016: 1285).

Drawing on the work of previous researchers (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Robertson, 2013; 2018; Marcu, 2015; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; King 2018; King et al., 2018), the examination of educational migration from a life course perspective was enriched by Bourdieu’s theory of capitals (1986) and a range of theoretical concepts for the investigation of the various factors that may influence students’ decision-making and facilitate or hinder their migration. This analytical framework also concerns the role of contexts in influencing students’ decisions, aspirations and post-study plans, given that life course events take place in a specific place and time (Kõu et al., 1645). How Greek student migrants have perceived their educational migration as a way of accumulating a subset of capitals and how they have mobilised their family economic, social and cultural resources and prior experiences in support of improved job chances or onward mobility prospects will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapters, and Bourdieu’s theory of capitals aids this analysis.

2.6 The role of social networks

Drawing on parallel studies that emphasise social networks and the role played by them in the migratory and settlement process of migrants helps to analyse the socially embedded nature of student migration. A social network analysis provides deep insights into how students’ social networks, conceptualised in this study as part of

their social capital, may influence their migration aspirations and decision-making as well as their adjustment experiences and post-study pathways.

The broader literature on migration addresses that migration processes relate to migrants' embeddedness in social relations (e.g. Samers, 2010; Carlson, 2013). A number of studies suggest that student migration as a form of international migration is also socially embedded (e.g. Ong, 1999; Szelényi, 2006; Waters, 2009; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Findlay et al. 2012; Carlson, 2013; King and Raghuram, 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). Apart from political and economic factors, social networks, comprised of kinship, friendship and other types of relationships, have been found to play an important role in students' educational decision-making processes (see Pimpa, 2005; Shanka et al., 2006; Collins, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015). Parents, siblings, friends, peers or/and other social ties may function as role models, shaping students' decisions and attitudes towards higher education, especially if they have studied overseas themselves, through offering advice and encouragement (Brooks, 2005; Carlson, 2013). For instance, Shanka and colleagues' research findings (2002, cited in Shanka et al., 2006: 36) have shown that in the UK, the main source of information of 37% of international undergraduate students was their parents and friends. In agreement with these findings, Lawley's research (1998, cited in Shanka et al., 2006: 36) on Taiwanese students has also found that students' families and friends have significantly influenced their decision-making with respect to the selection of higher education institution in the USA.

However, it should be noted that most of the studies on educational migration which have explored the role of social networks in students' decision-making and adjustment experiences have been focused on UK students studying abroad as well as East Asian students studying in English-speaking countries (e.g. Collins, 2008; Brooks and Waters 2009b; 2010; Findlay et al., 2010). There is little evidence in literature on the case of European, especially Southern-European students who over the last decade have been increasingly migrating to Northern and Western European countries for study and/or work purposes. Very few researchers have studied mobile European students, and most of them were focused on Erasmus students (e.g King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Akhurst et al., 2014; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). For example, Van Mol and Timmerman (2014) explored the determinants of intra-European student mobility by studying Erasmus students in Austria, Belgium,

Norway, Italy, Poland and the UK. Their research evidence suggests that social networks have an important influence on students' mobility decisions in direct and indirect ways, such as through sharing first-hand experiences of studying and living abroad, and offering support, encouragement and recommendations (Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014).

A number of researchers have shown that students' migration strategies and decision-making processes, as well as their settlement experiences in the destination country may be shaped by family power and gender relations (Sondhi, 2013; Walton-Roberts, 2015). One of those researchers is Sondhi (2013) who explored from a gendered perspective how these power relations may impact on students' participation in international student migration. Focusing on Indian students who migrated to Toronto in order to pursue a higher education degree programme, her research findings shown that students' migration and educational choices may be significantly affected by gender and generational differentiated power relations that exist within their family and cultural contexts (Sondhi, 2013: 226).

Furthermore, previous studies suggest that social networks, primarily family dynamics, may affect mobile students' decision-making, not only through offering advice and encouragement but also sharing mobility experiences (Beech, 2015). For example, friends may subtly influence young people's mobility aspirations by appraising mobility as part of the youth culture and establishing long-distance friendships as relatively commonplace (Brooks and Waters, 2010, cited in Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014: 467). Social networking media may also contribute to the enhancement of social networks' influence on mobile students' decision-making allowing them to contact friends and others who have migrated to study abroad and share their experiences with them (Beech, 2015).

Youth mobility cultures constitutes a significant concept utilised in this study to better understand and interpret how students' social networks may influence their migration aspirations and decision-making, such as by normalising particular patterns of mobility. A relatively small body of literature has applied this concept to the examination of educational migration (e.g. Mansvelt, 2005; Findlay et al., 2006; King et al., 2011). In literature, this concept often embraces travel and living abroad as 'an act of consumption' and a 'rite of passage' for young people, and educational

migration is viewed as being associated with lifestyle migration (King et al., 2011: 164; King, 2018: 8).

As several researchers have found, apart from socio-economic and career-related motivating factors, students' aspirations and decision-making may also be significantly driven by a series of experiential goals, such as leisure, travel, pleasure and adventure-seeking motivations, as well as interest in experiencing foreign countries and cultures (e.g. King, 2002; Mason, 2002; King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Baláz and Williams, 2004; Findlay et al., 2006; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). For example, drawing on ethnographic and documentary research of more than five years and the narratives of 60 free moving European citizens, whom he described as 'Eurostars', Favell's (2008) findings have shown that experiential aspirations were among the factors that had played an influential role in Eurostars' decision to move to 'Eurocities', such as Amsterdam, Brussels and London, three European cities of cosmopolitan vibes. Conradson and Latham (2005: 287) have also found that young New Zealanders' migration to London was highly driven by experiential factors and within this cultural context, where overseas travel is perceived a part of a cultural expectation, moving to London was often seen as a natural and common pattern of mobility (Conradson and Latham, 2005).

The interpretive strand of youth mobility cultures has been associated with the concept of 'individualised biographies' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; King, et al., 2011: 164). It has been argued that within the context of global modernity, mobile students build their own biographies as individuals, perceiving and experiencing their educational mobility as an opportunity for self-exploration, self-identification and self-development (King et al., 2011: 164; Findlay et al., 2016). Within this lens of interpretation, mobility is intertwined with a 'more general process of societal individualisation' that emphasises cultivation and nurture of the individual self (Conradson and Latham, 2005: 289). However, data from previous studies have shown that 'cultures of mobility' may be established through mobile students' social networks (Brooks and Waters, 2010: 153; Beech, 2015: 344, 339). Under the influence of their social ties, mostly comprised of kinship and friendship relationships, students may perceive studying and living abroad as a normal course of action (Beech, 2015: 347), and in this way, mobility may be experienced as 'a taken-

for-granted part of the lifestyle' (Conradson and Latham, 2005: 228; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015).

As shown in literature, students' socio-economic backgrounds may play a crucial role in their exposure to these networks and cultures of mobility (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2011; Beech, 2015). In particular, it has been suggested that compared with their working-class counterparts, students from elite and middle-class backgrounds with greater access to financial resources and mobility capital are more likely to participate in such social networks which establish cultures of mobility and facilitate educational mobility (see Beech, 2015). The research conducted by Brooks and Waters' (2009b: 1099) on UK mobile undergraduate and postgraduate students has shown that in many cases of students, 'networks of privilege' have supported and facilitated their educational mobility. Many of their respondents who came from privileged socio-economic backgrounds had pre-existing familial links overseas and had gained many travel experiences, something that may have prepared them to live and study abroad and, thus, facilitated their mobility (Brooks and Waters, 2009b). Consistent with these findings, West and colleagues' (2000) study on 511 EU (non-UK) higher education students studying at 42 UK higher education institutions also revealed that most of the students were from privileged backgrounds (in terms of perceived socio-economic status and parental educational background).

Previous travel experiences may increase a student's likelihood of mobility by enabling them to acquire cultural capital and access networks which may motivate students to study abroad and facilitate their educational migration (Findlay et al., 2005; 2010; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). These previous mobility experiences have been conceptualised by Murphy-Lejeune (2002) as 'mobility capital', a form of capital that becomes embodied and constitutes part of a person's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977; Carlson, 2013: 172). Mobility capital may influence students' further decisions and actions and encourage them to pursue new mobility opportunities (Carlson, 2013: 172). For example, the findings of West and colleagues' (2000) study indicate that many students, prior to the start of their taught postgraduate studies, had travelled and spent time abroad and some of them had participated in a school exchange programme or had stayed with a family abroad. However, research findings also suggest that the acquisition of these mobility experiences is often linked to students' economic capital (Brooks and Waters, 2010).

Specifically, students' economic resources may enable them or not to study abroad, travel and participate in school trips (which often take place at private schools), and engage with activities through which they may access and form friendship networks and acquire institutional habitus that could facilitate their educational mobility (West et al., 2000; Brooks and Waters, 2010: 154).

Previous researchers who have examined educational mobility have addressed the conversion of mobility capital to other types of capital (e.g. Wiers-Jensen, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2010; O' Reghan, 2010) and indicated their interrelationship and the important role they may play in students' post-study career paths. For example, Rivzi (2000, cited in Brooks and Waters, 2010: 24) and Findlay et al. (2006) examined how the mobility capital that mobile students may accumulate or enhance through overseas education can subsequently be deployed over the life course for enhancement at personal, social or professional levels. Rivzi (2000, cited in Brooks and Waters, 2010: 24) argues that studying abroad apart from contributing to students' cultural adaptability skills and, thus, facilitating their settling in the host country, may also help them develop knowledge and skills which may be rewarded within the workplace. A number of other studies also suggest that students who have been exposed to a greater extent to international contexts are more likely to pursue an international career and international study may transform students' worldview, making them see the world as 'an open book to be explored' wherever opportunities may arise (Bozionelos et al., 2015, cited in Wu and Wilkes, 2017: 126; Gomes, 2015, cited in Findlay et al., 2017: 193).

Institutional factors have also been found to generate migration aspirations and facilitate students' educational migration (e.g. Szelényi, 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Findlay, 2011). Brooks and Waters (2009b: 1096-1098) have identified a close relationship between UK elite schools and colleges and prestigious higher education institutions abroad, highlighting the important role of 'networks of privilege' and localised institutional factors in facilitating access, especially to world-class higher education institutions. Many of their respondents came from privileged backgrounds and a notable number of them had attended private or state schools of high status which had encouraged and facilitated their educational mobility through formal (i.e. admission officers) and informal mechanisms (i.e. informal networks

between individuals and/or schools in the UK and overseas universities') (Brooks and Waters, 2009b: 1096-1097).

Apart from the important role they may play in students' migration aspirations and decision-making processes, social networks may highly affect students' living and learning experiences in the host country (see Tran and Pham, 2016), which is another aspect of educational migration that my study explores. According to previous studies, international students often feel as 'outsiders' in the destination country, possessing different values, norms and behavioural patterns and habits which may cause communicative issues with domestic students and staff (Tran and Pham, 2016: 561, 563). These feelings, language challenges and miscommunication may make them feel vulnerable and lead them to withdrawal, social isolation, prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour, which could negatively affect their safety and wellbeing in the receiving communities (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002, cited in Tran and Pham, 2016: 563; Tran and Pham, 2016). As shown in literature, creating social networks in the host society may provide student migrants with social and emotional support and help them overcome various personal, academic and socio-cultural challenges they may encounter (e.g. Gu and Maley, 2008). Moreover, co-national friendship networks have been found to provide students with a sense of security in the host society and allow them to encounter their cultural identity in the foreign country (see Bochner 1977: 290, cited in Gu and Maley, 2008: 233; Gu and Maley, 2008).

In regard to international students' 'intercultural connectedness', Tran and Pham (2016) suggest that the motives of international students with respect to their intercultural interactions with domestic and other international peers, within and beyond the academic environment, are often being generated by their desire for respect and recognition for individual, intellectual, cultural and linguistic capacities and diversities (Tran and Pham, 2016). International students may also view these interactions as a way of developing their cultural knowledge and awareness of their own and others' cultures, improving their linguistic, cognitive and communication skills, acquiring international learning experiences and learning various behavioural patterns and personal attitudes (Tran and Pham, 2016). In addition, their research evidence demonstrates that intercultural connectedness with domestic and international peers, institutions and the wider community may be perceived by

students as a resourceful means of accumulating social and cultural capital, and socially transforming themselves in order to ‘fit’ in with the new environment, expand their local networks and, thus, increase their employability in the host community (Tran and Pham, 2016: 570).

The present study aims to contribute to the under-evidenced area of student migrants’ migratory and adjustment experiences in the host society, as well as enrich the body of literature on how transnational relations may affect students’ aspirations and experiences in the destination country. It also aims to provide insights into the role played by these relations in the formation of students’ cultural identity and the development of the sense of belonging in the sending and receiving countries. The following section provides further exploration of the theoretical concept of transnationalism which helps to examine these issues.

2.7 Transnationalism: The role of transnational relations in students’ migratory and settlement experiences

The utilisation of the theoretical concept of transnationalism is considered to be important to the present study for the exploration of student migration’s social-embeddedness, mainly in regard to students’ migratory and settlement experiences in the UK. This concept allows a better examination of how students manage their belonging to the country of origin and the host country and how they maintain their relations and links to their homeland (Vertovec, 1999; Collins, 2008; F.L., Collins, 2013; Raghuram, 2013).

Through the lens of transnationalism, educational mobility is seen as a social and geographic process facilitated by transnational social and economic activities that operate between sending and receiving countries, such as through the education agencies’ activities, immigrant entrepreneurship and interpersonal relationships (Collins, 2008: 398; 2013: 475). The transnationalist perspective offers a framework of theorising the connections between places as ‘enactments of the attachments that migrants form to multiple places’, and focuses on how connections across space are maintained, emphasising migrants’ agency in maintaining these transnational relations (Raghuram 2013: 145). According to this perspective, all individuals, institutions and nations are open to transnational practices and this ‘simultaneity’ is located as an

everyday lived experience (Faist et al., 2010, cited in Raghuram, 2013: 145). Applied to student migration, transnationalism has been analysed in particular contexts (Raghuram, 2013). However, most research on student transnationalism has focused on students and transnational families from East Asian countries, where one family member moves to another country for the enhancement of their children's educational opportunities (mostly to English-speaking destinations), whilst other members stay behind in the country of origin (see Waters 2002; 2010; 2012; Raghuram, 2013). However, it should be noted that in these cases of migration, it is the family rather than education itself that becomes transnational and gets 'stretched' across space although both of these types of migration aim to facilitate education (Raghuram, 2013:145).

Transnational relationships have been enhanced and facilitated within the globalisation context, especially due to the rapid development in transport and communication technology that allows individuals to maintain and co-ordinate relationships across the globe (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Sondhi, 2013). For example, Conradson and Latham's (2005) study has shown how young New Zealanders have co-ordinated and sustained their relations in their home country while living and working in London, mainly, through social networks and virtual communication media (King et al., 2018). King and colleagues (2018) have also defined young Baltic graduates working and living in London as 'transnational migrants', given that they maintain multiple social, kinship and economic relations across borders, linking together their sending and receiving communities (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, cited in King et al., 2018: 7). Other studies, such as those of Sondhi (2013) and Walton-Roberts (2015), have shown that parental influences and power relations within family may be maintained, nurtured and exerted even across thousands of miles through the use of transnational communication technologies.

International students have been presented in previous literature to move between sending and receiving countries even upon graduation (Waters and Brooks, 2012, cited in Raghuram, 2013: 146), whilst other researchers suggest that student mobility is itself 'a result of an embedding in these longer processes of transnational connection' (Madge et al., 2009; Perkins and Neumayer, 2011, cited in Raghuram, 2013: 146). However, it should be acknowledged that despite its growing importance, the literature in student migration that has applied the transnational framework is still

underdeveloped. In most of previous studies, international education has been examined from a transnational perspective, mostly in regard to its internationalisation, such as focusing on franchising, and branch campuses (Raghuram, 2013: 146; see Armstrong, 2007; Sidhu, 2007; Miller-Idriss and Hanauer, 2011). A gap has been identified in the theorisation of student migration within this framework concerning transnational student behaviour (Raghuram, 2013; Shanthi, 2013), family dynamics and, more specifically, how kinship and friendship relations in homeland may affect students' experiences and settling in the host country.

The transnational perspective in the present study offers a useful framework of analysing students' experiences with respect to how they manage their belonging to the country of origin and the host country and how they maintain their social relations across space (see also King, 2012; Raghuram, 2013). In addition, this study examines the dynamics of these relations, taking into account the forms of communication, as well as the frequency and types of moves/visits of students to their homeland (see also Conradson and Latham, 2005; van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018). The exploration of the frequency and types of these moves could lead to a better understanding of the 'meaningful connections', 'reunifications' and 'separations' within students' family and friendship relationships, which may affect students' psychological well-being, educational outcomes as well as their future prospects and plans (van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018: 2157). Moreover, this concept allows the investigation of how these transnational relations may impact on students' decision-making and their migratory and settlement experiences, and the role they may play in the formation of their national and cultural identity (see also van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018).

2.8 Conceptualising the relationship between educational migration and other forms of migration: The concept of 'escalator region'

One of the key findings identified in the present study is that educational migration is grounded in students' long-term career goals and life course aspirations and, thus, cannot be examined in isolation from other forms of migration, such as migration for work purposes. This finding underlines the usefulness of the theoretical concept of 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992) to the study's analytical framework. This concept has been previously applied in literature to frame intra-European migration flows and,

more recently, the growing intra-European migration flows of highly qualified young graduates and tertiary-level students to major European cities (e.g. King, 2018; King et al., 2018; Lulle et al., 2018). The utilisation of this concept as part of the study's theoretical framework allows a deeper interpretation and analysis of how students perceive their migratory and study and living experiences in particular destinations in support of improved employment opportunities or onward mobility prospects. Additionally, this conceptualisation helps to establish how various forms of migration might be intertwined under particular political, economic and socio-cultural circumstances.

Fielding's (1992) 'escalator region' is a concept embedded within the 'spatiality' of the core-periphery model which has been applied for the conceptualisation of migration flows by linking employment and career development with geographical mobility (King et al., 2018: 6). In my study, this concept helps with the analysis of the factors that have driven students' migration to the UK, and is particularly useful for the comparison between the specific regions where the respondents have decided to pursue their studies. Moreover, by utilising this concept we could better understand students' post-study plans, particularly for onward mobility.

The 'core-periphery' model in which the concept of escalator region is embedded draws on Marxist political economy, dependency theory and world systems theory focusing on the historical-structural conceptualisation of migration and the uneven nature of capitalist development (Wallerstein, 1974, cited in King, 2018: 5, 9; Raghuram, 2013). Through this lens, migration is perceived as the outcome of 'structural interdependencies' between places that have been positioned unequally within a global economic system (Raghuram, 2013). Within this context, where economic and political power is unequally distributed worldwide, migration from poorer to richer countries is seen to act as a 'mechanism for mobilizing cheap labour for capital' (Raghuram, 2013). According to the core-periphery model which draws on this rationale, core countries in Europe are presented to be grouped together at the centre, be more advanced economically and tend to be dominant at social and political levels (King, 2018: 3). On the other hand, periphery is formed in a ring shape by less developed countries compared with the core ones (King, 2018: 3).

The concept of escalator region that is based on the above rationale was originally used by Fielding (1992) for the analysis of internal migration within England and Wales focusing on London and South East. Drawing on longitudinal data from the census and from National Health Service registers, Fielding's findings (1992: 1) have shown that London and the South East were seen as escalator regions that attracted a large number of young educated people at the start of their career and often acted as an 'upward social class escalator' for them. Moreover, according to his findings, many of those migrants tended to 'step off' these escalator regions later in their working lives and at or near to retirement, moving elsewhere in order to 'cash in' on the economic and human-capital they had accumulated, probably in a place where living costs were lower and lifestyles less intense (Fielding, 1992; King et al., 2018: 6).

Fielding's (1992) 'escalator region' has been deployed by a number of researchers for the analysis of migration patterns in various contexts, especially of young graduates' intra-EU migration (e.g. Findlay et al., 2009; King et al., 2018; Lulle et al., 2018). For example, King and colleagues (2018) used the 'core-periphery' and 'escalator region' concepts together with other conceptual frameworks for the analysis of young graduates' migration from the three Baltic States to London. Many participants viewed their home countries as a peripheral region where there are lower incomes and limited employment opportunities (King et al., 2018). Thus, instead of remaining unemployed or living on low incomes there, migrating somewhere where there were more perceived employment and economic opportunities and prospects was identified as one of the main driving factors of their migration to London (King et al., 2018). In this sense, London was perceived by a number of them as an 'escalator region', a 'temporary stage' before they either return to their home country or further migrate to another country (King et al., 2018: 10). However, in that study, Fielding's (1992) concept of escalator region conceptualised students' perceptions of their migration to London not only in terms of career and economic development but also in terms of experiencing cosmopolitan lifestyle and building self-confidence, as for some graduates, this migration was seen as a way of 'accelerating' the youth-to-adult transition (King et al., 2018: 16).

In accordance with the present results, previous studies have also demonstrated that London is often perceived by young graduates as an escalator

region (Conti and King, 2015, cited in King, 2018: 5). For example, in their study, Conti and King (2015, cited in King, 2018: 5) have examined two migration patterns of young Italian graduates: a) internal migration from South to North Italy and b) migration to London. In the case of in-migrants originating from the central and south part of Italy, the region that was perceived as an escalator was Milan, whilst for the group of external migrants, the escalator region was London due to higher incomes and better employment opportunities compared with their home country (Conti and King, 2015, cited in King 2018: 5). In agreement with Conti and King (2015, cited in King, 2018: 5), Conradson and Latham (2005) found that London was perceived by many New Zealand tertiary-educated graduates as an escalator region that might boost their career, and this was identified as one of the main migration motivating factors. In my study, the concept of escalator region provides a useful tool for the examination of how students have perceived their migration from Greece to the UK, particularly, in the case of many respondents, their migration to London, and for a better understanding of their post-study migration scenarios.

2.9 Summary: Setting up the research questions

Compared with other forms of migration, student migration has attracted less attention in the field of migration studies. It was initially approached and analysed as a type of highly skilled migration and, more specifically, as flows of students who migrate from one country to another in order to develop their knowledge and skills and then contribute to their sending or destination country's development upon graduation (Skeldon, 1997; Findlay et al., 2006: 293; Waters, 2012). More empirical research needs to be undertaken for a thorough examination of this phenomenon going beyond a positivist approach and a market analysis. Particularly, further research is required not only to establish the determinants of educational migration but also improve knowledge and understanding of students' interpretations of their migration journeys, their migration aspirations, perceptions and decision-making, as well as their migratory and adjustment experiences in the receiving country and plans after the completion of their studies. Most of previous literature has focused on UK students studying abroad and East Asian students studying in English-speaking countries (e.g. Collins, 2008; Brooks and Waters 2009b; 2010; Findlay et al., 2010). There is little

evidence on the case of European, especially Southern-European students who over the last decade have been increasingly migrating to Northern and Western European countries, such as the UK for study and/or work purposes. Only a few studies have examined mobile European students, and most of them were focused on credit student mobility, primarily Erasmus students (e.g. King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Baláz et al., 2018). Greek student migrants are among the most under-researched national groups of students in the field of migration studies although Greek student migration is a large-scale phenomenon with long history. There is a large gap in literature, in both quantitative and qualitative evidence, in respect of Greek students' aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study migration intentions and trends.

This empirical case study aims to contribute to filling this gap, not only in relation to Greek student migration but also at an intra-European level and, more broadly, enrich literature in this research area. As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the study aims to navigate the uncharted waters of Greek student migration by tracing first the patterns and trends of student flows to the UK over time through secondary quantitative data analysis and then going deeper by analysing students' accounts on their migration journeys and post-graduation plans.

Due to the complex nature and multiple dynamics of student migration, a one-sided theoretical approach would be insufficient in itself for its framing and analysis. This study draws on a theoretical framework informed by a life course perspective which aims to improve our knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon beyond an instrumental and market-oriented scope which often focuses on the determinants of students' decision-making regarding the selection of study destination, higher education provider and course of study (see Bahna, 2018; e.g. Mazzarol, 1998; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002; 2008; Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003; María-Cubillo et al., 2006; Park, 2009; Eder et al., 2010; Beine et al., 2014; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2014; Wadhwa, 2016; Ahmand and Hussain, 2017; Nafari et al., 2017). Drawing on previous studies (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2010; Robertson, 2013; 2018; Marcu, 2015; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; King 2018; King et al., 2018), a wide range of theoretical concepts have been brought together to shed light on various aspects of this form of migration which still remains under-evidenced, especially at an empirical level. In particular, adopting a life course perspective to my study enables me to

explore how students make sense of their migration journeys as part of their life courses, by focusing on their migration and educational aspirations and their decision-making processes, their migratory and adjustment experiences in the host society, as well as their post-study life plans (see also Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2012; 2017; Bahna, 2018). As part of this analysis, the concept of youth transitions flags perspectives and issues very relevant to my findings, given that students have seen their migration as an inherent part of their life courses and a way of facilitating their transitions to adulthood (see Bernard et al., 2014; Kõu et al., 2015). Another important theme to examine is how students deploy and mobilise their economic, cultural and social resources in pursuit of their migration goals and post-study pathways. A comparison between a diverse sample of respondents studying in two different regions in the UK, in London and a city in the north of England, generated interesting insights into this theme. This analysis will be enabled by utilising Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986), which constitutes one of the building blocks of my analytical framework that helped to enrich the life course perspective. Within this conceptual framework, exploring students' social networks and the role they may play in their migration aspirations, decision-making and life planning might lead to a better understanding of the social dynamics of student migration. My study also investigates the role of social networks in students' migratory and adjustment experiences, another aspect of student migration which significantly lacks empirical evidence in literature, particularly, at an intra-European level.

Similarly, the role of students' transnational networks and how they may affect students' migratory and adjustment processes is another study area that has not investigated enough and my research aims to shed more light on. The concept of transnationalism offers unique insights into the social embeddedness of student migration and facilitates discussion on how students' maintain and sustain their transnational relations across space (see King, 2012; Raghuram, 2013), how these relations may impact on their migratory and settlement experiences, as well as the role they may play in the formation of students' national and cultural identity and the development of a sense of belonging to the country of origin and the receiving country (van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018: 2157). Another issue relating to social networks that this study examines concerns their role in normalising particular patterns of migration, generating migration aspirations and influencing decision-

making and post-study plans by establishing cultures of mobility. In this case study, this migration pattern that almost all of the respondents intend to follow is migrating for study and then for work purposes. The concept of escalator region is useful to further examine and understand this post-study pathway. Moreover, it enriches discussion on the data generated through the London/city in the north of England comparison, especially regarding the symbolic value that students place upon particular destinations, mainly in labour market terms, and how these perceptions may affect their migration decisions and life plans. Considering the surrounding contexts in which students live and make their migration decisions and life plans is essential to this analysis to understand how these contexts in which individuals are embedded may inform and shape their migration journeys and post-study pathways. The examination of students' values, ideas, beliefs and expectations regarding their migration in a given political, economic, social and cultural setting also help to understand the culture of migration, how migration is perceived in a particular setting and how this migration culture may influence students' aspirations, perceptions and decision-making patterns (Boswell, 2008: 557-558, 560).

Therefore, in order to address the gaps identified in literature and add to the current knowledge, the study aims to answer the following research questions by drawing on the theoretical framework discussed above.

1. What are the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK?
2. What are students' migration and educational aspirations and decision-making patterns?
 - a. How do students perceive their educational migration to the UK?
 - b. What are the factors underpinning their aspirations and decision-making?
3. How do students describe their experiences of their educational migration to the UK?
 - a. What are their experiences in the UK at personal, academic, professional and socio-cultural levels?
 - b. What factors impact on their adjustment experiences in the host society?

- c. How do students manage their belonging to their home and host country?
4. What do students intend to do after the completion of their studies?
 - a. What are their future perspectives and post-study plans: stay abroad or return to their home country?
 - b. What are the factors underpinning their post-study plans and, more broadly, their life planning?
 - c. Have students' future plans been affected ahead of Brexit, and if so, how?

The next chapter is going to present and analyse the research design and the methodology that has been applied to this study in order for the above research questions to be answered.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and the methodology that has been applied to this empirical study for the collection and analysis of research data. Before it discusses the research methods, sampling and strategies that have been used for the recruitment of the participants, the chapter provides insights into the aims and objectives as well as the methodological underpinnings of the study. It justifies the qualitative nature of this project and the application of secondary quantitative data analysis and semi-structured interviewing for the examination of the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK, and students' migration aspirations, decision-making processes, adjustment experiences and post-study plans. In addition, it provides an account of how the research was carried out and discusses the sampling strategy and the techniques that have been deployed for the recruitment of the students and the key informants, the two sample groups of the study. One of the subsections describes the sample characteristics, focusing on the profile of the main sample group, the students, with respect to age, gender, mode of study, subject area, location of study, as well as family socio-economic background and area of origin. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates how the empirical data have been analysed through the method of thematic analysis. Finally, the research ethics and the consent processes applied throughout the research are illustrated and explained in the last section of this chapter.

3.2. Research aims and objectives

The present study examines the phenomenon of educational migration from Greece to the UK focusing on taught postgraduate students. Specifically, the study aims to trace the changing patterns and trends of students' migration flows over time and identify

the dynamics and factors that may influence students' migration and educational aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans. Its main aim is to contribute to the theoretical understanding of educational migration by employing a qualitative life course perspective and integrating a number of theoretical concepts that the research findings allowed to be brought together. These concepts are youth transitions, youth mobility cultures, transnationalism, and escalator region. As discussed in the previous chapter, this theoretical framework helps to examine educational migration not as a 'one-off' event isolated from other types of migration, but as part of students' life planning, intertwined with other life course events, trajectories and lifetime mobilities (see Kõu et al., 2015; Findlay et al., 2017).

Moreover, this research project aims to improve our knowledge of the contexts of this form of intra-European youth migration, taking as a focus how students perceive and experience their educational migration in contemporary times. Particularly, the study investigates how educational migration for postgraduate studies in the UK is seen by students originating from one of the countries that the 2008-global financial crisis has hit the hardest, and how students respond within the contexts of economic recession, austerity, neoliberal labour market conditions, and ahead of Brexit. Furthermore, it aims to examine the social dynamics of this phenomenon focusing on the role that students' social networks may play in their decisions, experiences and future plans.

The recruitment of a diverse sample of respondents allows interesting comparisons to be made in regard to students' migration aspirations, perceptions, decision-making patterns, adjustment experiences, labour market practices, as well as life planning, by age, gender, subject area, mode of study and study location. Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) helps to enrich the life course perspective by enabling the examination of how students deploy their financial, social and cultural resources in the pursuit of their migration aspirations and life plans (see Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Van Mol, 2016). Through employing the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter and the methodology that will be outlined below, the project provides fresh insights into this form of migration that still remains under-researched, mostly at an intra-European level.

3.3 Methodological underpinnings of the study

Establishing the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the study, which uncover how the study views the nature of social reality and how knowledge of this reality can be obtained, is necessary to better understand the research strategies applied for the data collection and analysis (Blaikie, 2007: 28). This study adopts a realist approach towards the nature of social world and how our knowledge for this world is produced and demonstrated. The realist position argues that the world is real and exists independently of our theories and perceptions of it (Phillips, 1987: 205, cited in Maxwell, 2012: 3; Mason, 2018: 9). Within this framework, reality refers to 'whatever it is in the universe', such as forces and structures that generate the phenomena we perceive with our senses (Schwandt, 1997: 133, cited in Maxwell, 2012: 3). However, critical realism, one of the most prominent manifestations of realism on which this study significantly draws joins ontological realism with epistemological constructivism or interpretivism (Maxwell, 2012: 5), as it holds that the way we understand social world is 'inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint'. People's behaviour is affected by the knowledge they have of their social world and this world does not simply exist independently of this knowledge (May, 2001: 12). Actions are not simply determined by causes, but causes need to be perceived as tendencies that generate particular effects (May, 2001: 12). A social research underpinned by this position does not aim to simply gather observations of the social world, but to analyse them within theoretical frameworks that examine the underlying mechanisms that inform people's actions (May, 2001: 12). In other words, this approach argues that knowledge is being generated from uncovering causal mechanisms, and the social researcher aims to look for causes or the hidden mechanisms that cause social phenomena (Mason, 2018: 9; see Maxwell, 2012).

Critical realism holds that the social world may be understood and change only if we identify the social structures that generate its social events and discourses (Bhaskar, 1989: 2). According to Bhaskar (1989: 2), whose work has been mainly associated with the critical realist tradition, these structures of the social world are not instantly obvious in the observable pattern of events, but can only be identified through the social sciences in practical and theoretical ways. This branch of realism

aims to explore and identify the ‘hidden’ and ‘enduring’ structures and ‘generative mechanisms’ that underlie and produce observable phenomena and events (Bhaskar, 1989: 2). Within this framework, the consideration of context plays a crucial role in shedding light on the conditions that promote or impede the operation of the causal mechanisms (Bryman, 2016: 25). One of the main characteristics that make critical realism ‘critical’ is that identifying generative mechanism ‘offers the prospect of introducing changes that can transform the status quo’ (Bryman, 2016: 25).

By employing a theoretical framework, informed by the life course perspective, this study aims to examine the social processes that may generate students’ migration aspirations and influence their migratory and adjustment experiences and post-study pathways. Considering students’ surrounding environments when analysing the empirical data collected, the study aims to link individuals with broader contexts and uncover the underlying mechanisms that may generate this phenomenon and inform students’ migration decision-making patterns and actions. In order to understand how students understand the social world under changing political, economic and social conditions, their perceptions and interpretations of their migration decisions and plans, which constitute part of the real world, need to be grasped and analysed. Approaching educational migration from a life course perspective through emphasising the role of contextual factors allows us to examine the social institutions within which students’ life courses are embedded and how life events and patterns of life trajectories are subject to historical and social forces (Kulu and Milewski, 2007: 568; Kõu et al., 2015: 1648; see Elder, 1985; 1994)

3.4 Sampling

3.4.1 Sampling strategy

The sampling strategy applied to this study was purposive. Purposive sampling strategies are non-random ways of sampling, utilised to ensure the representation of particular categories of cases within a sampling universe in the final sample of a research study (Robinson, 2014: 32). The rationale for employing this strategy is the assumption, based on the researcher’s ‘a-priori’ theoretical understanding of the topic in question, that certain categories of individuals may have a unique, different or

significant perspective on the phenomenon that is being examined (Troost 1986, cited in Robinson, 2014: 32; Mason 2002). Thus, their representation in the sample should be ensured (Mason 2002; Robinson, 2014: 32). This type of sampling enables researchers to use their judgment when making choices in regard to sampling at various stages of the research, unlike the survey research where sampling decisions are 'made once-and-for-all' at the beginning of the project following formalised statistical procedures (Emmel, 2013: 52-53).

As mentioned above, specific criteria were applied for the selection of the participants, including students' country of origin, level of study, location of study, gender and subject area. By conducting a number of interviews with male and female students studying courses across various subject areas (i.e. Engineering; Business and Administrative studies; Social Sciences; Natural Sciences) in both locations of study, I anticipated interesting lines of comparison with respect to students' aspirations, decision-making, and attitudes towards education and the labour market, academic and socio-cultural adjustment experiences, as well as their job-seeking experiences and future plans.

The selection of taught postgraduate students as the main sample group of this study was indicated by the study's aim to investigate the educational migration of one of the largest groups of outbound students who tend to migrate in thousands from Greece to the UK every year (HESA, 2018b). Furthermore, this understudied group of students might have gained some work experience in their transition from education to the labour market prior to the start of their taught postgraduate degree programmes and/or during their studies. Their work and/or job-seeking experiences (or the lack thereof), which they might have acquired, may allow a better exploration of students' perceptions and attitudes towards the labour market, and the strategies they have applied in order to construct and manage their employability.

Overall, the main aims of the interviews were a) to examine the factors which may have motivated the students to migrate and engage with taught postgraduate studies in the UK, b) to explore their migration and educational aspirations and decision-making processes, c) to investigate their adjustment experiences in the host society at academic, professional and socio-cultural levels, d) to examine their perceptions and expectations regarding their migration journeys and implications of their taught postgraduate education to their life courses, and e) explore their post-

study plans. The exploration of these issues might contribute to a deeper understanding of students' life course aspirations, career and life planning in which their educational migration is grounded.

Another sampling criterion applied was students' study location. Particularly, an approximately equal number of interviews were performed with a sample of students who pursued a taught postgraduate course in two locations: at one higher education institution in a city in the north of England and four higher education institutions located in London. The selection of the locations was informed by HESA data¹ concerning the number of Greek domiciled higher education student enrolments at all UK higher education providers (HESA Student Record 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16). The higher education institutions from which the sample of this study was derived have been included for several academic years among those institutions in these two locations in the UK and, overall, across the whole UK, which have attracted significant numbers of this national group of students, mainly of taught postgraduate level of study (HESA Student Record 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16).

Conducting interviews with students studying in the two locations might enable interesting lines of comparison in regard to their demographic profile, migration and educational aspirations and decision-making patterns, their academic, professional and socio-cultural experiences in the host society, as well as their plans after the completion of their studies. This sample of respondents would also allow comparisons to be made in terms of students' perceptions and attitudes towards the labour market, and employability enhancement strategies.

This sample composition facilitated the collection of evidence that enabled a comparison of the factors that may motivate students to choose a higher education institution in different locations: in London, the capital, which is a major city at economic, professional and socio-cultural levels on a European and global scale, and one of the most popular destinations among young people, including EU and non-EU domiciled students; and in another city in the north of England, which also attracts a significant number of students from within and beyond the EU, including Greek domiciled tertiary-level students. In addition, through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of

¹The dataset was provided by HESA after submission of a data request to HESA data request services.

capitals (1986), this comparison would allow an investigation of the role played by the students' perceptions of a country, city and university image in their aspirations and decision-making patterns (see Cubillo-Pinilla and Pérez-Aguilar, 2006; Herrero et al., 2015: 191). Moreover, comparing the students' experiences by location of higher education provider was expected to improve our knowledge with respect to how contexts and, more specifically, the location where students live and study may potentially impact on their life courses and career trajectories through the various resources (economic, social and cultural) it may or may not provide them with.

The key informants were also recruited through purposive sampling. The education agents were selected on the basis of the location of their offices. Both of them work in recruitment agencies/offices located in Thessaloniki, a large urban area in Greece from where a high proportion of students of all levels of study move abroad, primarily to the UK, for their studies every year. The higher education staff members were chosen based on the location of the higher education provider where they work (located in the areas where the students were recruited), and their expertise in order to provide more specialised information regarding the EU and, particularly, Greek students' recruitment and the patterns and trends of students' migration flows to the UK over the years. A number of them were recruited from the same higher education institutions where some students who participated in the research project studied. Others work at higher education institutions located in the same areas where the interviews with the students were carried out and which, according to HESA (HESA Student Record, 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16; 2016/17), have attracted large numbers of this group of students for several academic years.

3.4.2 Recruitment

The fieldwork of this case study lasted from December 2017 until July 2018. Two strategies were deployed for the recruitment of the students. The main strategy was advertising my research project through an invitation e-mail (with all the necessary information about my project disclosed), which was sent to the targeted higher education institutions' Schools/Departments in both locations of study. After gaining relevant permission this e-mail was circulated by a staff member of the relevant

administration office at each School/Department to the current taught postgraduate student cohort (Greek and non-Greek domiciled students). It should be noted that in many cases, before the e-mail was sent to the Schools/Departments, I had contacted in person, via phone and/or e-mail a staff member working at the relevant administration office of each School/Department. During these encounters, the staff members were provided with all the necessary and/or any other additional information required regarding the research project before I requested for my invitation e-mail to be forwarded to the taught postgraduate students currently studying at their School/Department. The staff members who finally circulated my e-mail acted as gatekeepers since they had access to channels of communication used within the institution (see Robinson, 2014). The students who responded to the invitation e-mail were provided with all the necessary and any other information they had required with respect to the research project and their potential participation in it. This strategy was proved productive and effective, enabling the recruitment of a diverse sample of students.

However, aside with this technique through which the majority of the respondents were sourced, a number of students were recruited through the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is often applied as an established method to identify and reach a target population in interview-based qualitative research (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 1-2). In its simplest form, it may be defined as a technique for 'identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents' (Vogt, 1999; Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 1-2). This sampling process is based on the assumption that 'a "bond" or "link" exists between the initial sample and others in the same target population, allowing a series of referrals to be made within a circle of acquaintance' (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 1-2). In the present study, this method was adopted as an alternative or a complementary recruitment strategy, mostly, in case there was a low or no response to the invitation e-mail by students who met specific sampling criteria, such as in terms of gender and field of study.

One of the strengths of this sampling method is that it may help the researcher access and recruit participants who are few in number and/or difficult to access and/or 'some degree of trust is required to initiate contact' (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2; see Griffiths et al., 1993; Spreen, 1992). Through this method, trust may more easily be developed between the respondents and the researchers because referrals are made by

their acquaintances or peers rather than other more formal methods of identification (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2). Moreover, snowball sampling may produce in-depth results, often relatively quickly, and, as found in various studies, it is an economical, efficient and effective sampling method (Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2).

However, one of the weaknesses of this method relates to the potential selection bias that may limit the external validity of the sample (Van Meter, 1990; Kaplan et al, 1987, cited in Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2). Specifically, since the respondents are not randomly selected, but dependent on the subjective choices of the participants initially recruited, the snowball samples may be biased and limited to respondents of particular characteristics, which may not be shared by the wider population (Griffiths et al, 1993; Atkinson and Flint, 2001: 2-3). These concerns were taken into consideration in the present study while collecting and analysing the data. Selection bias was attempted to be addressed and partly limited through the provision of particular information to the participants in regard to the sampling criteria that the new respondents might meet in order for a more diverse sample to be recruited. One of the characteristics of snowball sampling that enabled me to recruit participants of different characteristics (i.e. gender and study field) was the fact that this sampling method allows the researcher to “relinquish” a considerable amount of control over the sampling phase to the informants' (Noy, 2008: 332). Particularly, through this method, the informants may be directed by the researcher regarding the profile and numbers of potential respondents to whom they will refer and then the researcher may decide who and how many of them might be contacted (Noy, 2008: 332).

Moreover, another important issue that was taken into consideration in my study was the importance of establishing the trust of the respondents. This is an essential element in any interview-based qualitative study, particularly in case the snowball sampling method is applied. Since this method is based on the quality of the referring process which is ‘naturally related to the quality of the interaction’, if the participant leaves the interview meeting and feels discontented, or if the researcher does not gain the respondent’s trust and sympathy, then the respondent is less likely to supply the researcher referrals (and vice versa) (Noy, 2008: 334).

Regarding the recruitment of the key informants, it should be addressed that the education agents and higher education staff members were initially approached via phone and/or e-mail. After they had become informed about the research project

they were asked whether they were interested in participating or not in the research project.

3.4.3 Sample characteristics

For the collection of data, 31 interviews were conducted with students, two with education agents and seven with HE staff members. The size of the two sample groups was informed by both theoretical and practical considerations (see Robinson, 2014: 29). In particular, taking into account the nature of the study and the time given for conducting the fieldwork and the data analysis, this number of interviews in each case of sample group enabled me to collect rich data in order to answer the study's main research questions and sub-questions.

The number of participants interviewed allowed me to collect diverse qualitative data that addressed the theoretical and empirical reach of the questions (Bryman, 2016: 418). In the case of students, who comprised the study's main sample group, the study aimed to recruit a diverse sample in terms of age, gender, family economic and cultural capital, mode of study, and subject area in the two locations of study. The recruitment of a diverse group of respondents was informed by the study's objective to collect a dataset that might enable through interesting lines of comparison (based on these variables) a better understanding and examination of students' migration aspirations, decision-making processes, experiences and graduation plans, as well as the patterns and trends of students' migration flows to the UK.

It should be noted that during the course of the fieldwork a key change was implemented to the sample group of students for the improvement of data collection. Approximately two months after the start of my fieldwork and once I had conducted a number of interviews with students studying in a city in the north of England –according to my initial sampling plan– a particular change to my sampling with respect to the location of study appeared to be beneficial to my research findings. Specifically, as will be further discussed in the next section, making a simultaneous initial type of data analysis while collecting the data enabled me to make 'real-time judgments' considering whether further data collection was likely to contribute to the theory-development process (Robinson, 2014: 31; see Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Therefore, after careful consideration, it was decided that conducting interviews with

taught postgraduate students studying in two locations, in the north of England and London, might lead to a deeper understanding and examination of my topic adding further contribution to my research findings.

The study's population comprised students who migrated from Greece to the UK in order to pursue taught postgraduate degree programmes in London and in the north of England in the academic year 2017/18. The sample was composed of 31 students: 17 students studying in a city in the north of England and 14 students studying in London. Of this sample of respondents, 17 were female students and 14 male students studying courses across various subject areas. In particular, nine students pursued courses in the fields of Economics, Business and Administrative Studies (F=3, M=6); nine in Education and Social Sciences (all female); seven in Engineering and Transport Studies (M=3, F=4); four in Natural Sciences (M=1, F=3); and two students studied courses in the field of Creative Arts and Design (F=1, M=1). Most of the participants were aged 21-24 (n=15: F=9, M=6) and 25-29 years old (n=12: F=7, M=5), and four of them were aged 30 and over (n=4: F=3, M=1) (see Figure 1). With respect to the mode of study, the vast majority of the respondents were full-time students (n=26: F=16, M=10) and only five students pursued a part-time taught postgraduate course (F=3, M=2). Of the part-time respondents, three were aged 25-29 years (F=1, M=2) and two were aged 30 and over (all female).

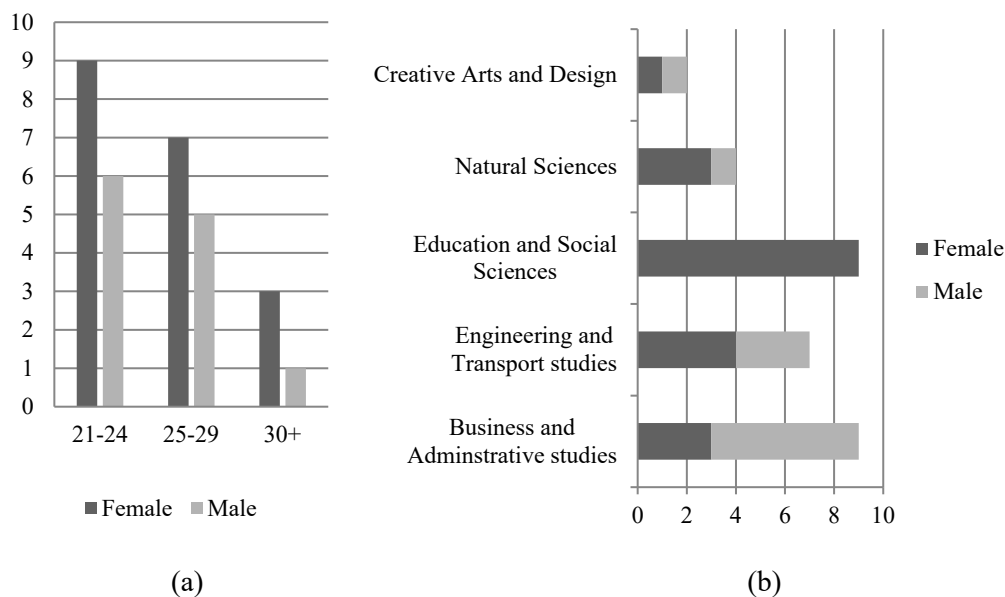


Figure 1. Distribution of sample by age group and gender (a) and subject area and gender (b).

Additionally, in regard to the geographical area of origin, the vast majority of the participants originated from urban areas, with most of them coming from the cities of Athens (n=13) and Thessaloniki (n=10). Six students came from urban environments outside Thessaloniki or Athens, two from the mainland and three from two islands. Only two students originated from rural areas, one from the mainland and one from an island. All of them have their permanent legal residence in Greece and are holders of Greek citizenship, apart from one student who has dual citizenship (Greek-Albanian).

As for the family context, one or both parents of the 21 participants possess higher education qualifications, undergraduate and in some cases taught postgraduate and research degrees. The majority of them have completed their tertiary-level study in Greece, but a small number of parents obtained their academic qualifications abroad, most of them in the UK. The highest educational level completed by one or both parents of 10 participants was upper-secondary level of education, and only in the cases of four students (two of them from vocational backgrounds), one parent had completed primary level of education.

The vast majority of the respondents are from professional backgrounds and only three are from vocational backgrounds, being less financially privileged than the others. The main indicators of students' family economic status were parental occupation and how they have funded their studies. One or both parents of the majority of the students are from a professional background, working or having been employed (as many of them have got retired) in positions relating to the fields of business, education and public administration. A small number of parents also engage with accommodation activities, whilst a very limited number are from vocational backgrounds, employed in a manual occupation (i.e. construction worker). Three respondents from professional backgrounds used to be privileged in terms of family finances before their family business went into bankruptcy in the period of economic crisis. It should be noted that due to confidentiality concerns, no detailed demographic information has been provided for each one of the respondents.

The other sample group in this study was composed of key informants: two education agents based in Greece (F=1, M=1) and seven staff members working at recruitment/international offices at higher education institutions in the UK (F=4,

M=3). The aim of these interviews was to complement the secondary analysis of the statistical sources regarding the patterns and trends of the students' flows to British universities as well as explore the British higher education recruitment policies and the factors underpinning students' migration aspirations and decision-making processes emphasising the role of institutional factors. Furthermore, these interviews were expected to improve our knowledge of the policies and practices applied by higher education institutions for students' employability enhancement, how students perceive and use these practices/services offered by the higher education institutions, and how these institutional policies and practices may impact on their post-study plans and career trajectories.

3.5 Research methods

3.5.1 Secondary data analysis

The study draws on mixed methods in order to address the research questions and achieve its research aims and objectives. As mentioned in the first section, one of the aims of this study was to trace the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK. This issue was mainly investigated through the analysis of secondary quantitative data. In particular, drawing on the analysis of existing numerical data sources, the patterns and trends of student migration flows were explored at an international level before focusing on the UK as a study destination, particularly the case of Greek domiciled tertiary-level students. The main sources from which the data were extracted were the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS). Aside with public domain data, which was available online on the official websites of these organisations, there was an analysis of a dataset that was provided by HESA after I had submitted a relevant data request to HESA services. This dataset concerned the number of Greek domiciled students at all UK higher education providers by age, sex², level of study, mode of study, and principal subject for the academic years 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17. This

²This term was used by the provider of the dataset.

piece of numerical data was considered particularly important to establish and examine the patterns and trends of students' flows over the last academic years with respect to their distribution across UK higher education providers by age, gender, level of study, mode of study and study field.

Moreover, significant numerical data was extracted from other sources, including the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). The interpretation and analysis of various data extracted from these sources allowed the establishment of the setting of this study, providing insights into the socio-economic, labour market and educational sending conditions. Establishing the setting of the study was necessary for a deeper understanding, examination and analysis of the patterns and trends of student migration flows over time, as well as students' migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans.

In social and economic research, secondary analysis of multi-source datasets is a useful tool for the study of trends over time and geographical patterns and variations within countries in regard to social, economic and political behaviour and attitudes (Hakim, 2000: 27). This method may provide access to high quality data collected by other researchers and/or entities, such as international/regional organisations and institutions (Hakim, 2000: 29). Other advantages of applying secondary analysis is that it is less time-consuming and of relatively lower costs compared with other research methods (Hakim, 2000: 31). However, one of its limitations is that the scope and depth of the study may be constrained by the material that is already available (Hakim, 2000: 31; Bryman, 2016). In my case, very limited data was available on the global outbound migration flows of Greek domiciled students. Moreover, no official data was available on the demographic profile of the mobile students, as well as their patterns, trends and career trajectories after the completion of their studies.

Aside with secondary data analysis, the patterns and trends of students' migration flows from Greece to the UK were also explored through the interviews conducted with the key informants. The analysis of secondary and empirical data did not only allow the exploration of the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK but also contributed to a deeper qualitative examination of the phenomenon of educational migration. Overall, one of the aims of this empirical study

was to comprehend and explore educational migration based on the analysis and interpretation of student migrants' accounts. The primary data collected through the interviews with the students provided further understanding and interpretation of the facts and figures identified through the secondary data analysis. Although the secondary numerical data is crucial towards a better understanding of student migration flows' changing patterns and trends over time, without grasping students' accounts and how they interact and respond to their surrounding environments, it cannot offer deep insights into various aspects of this phenomenon.

3.5.2 Semi-structured interviewing

The research method employed in the present study for the collection of the primary data that addresses the theoretical and empirical reach of the questions concerning students' migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans was semi-structured interviewing. Interviewing offers unique insights into people's biographies, experiences, perceptions, feelings, aspirations and attitudes and, therefore, generates rich and detailed qualitative data (Bryman, 2016; May, 2001: 120). In other words, this methodological tool may be used as a resource for a deeper understanding of how individuals 'make sense of their social world and act within it' (May, 2001: 142).

Semi-structured interviewing can be defined as a qualitative research method that allows the exploration and understanding of the meanings of central themes in the interviewees' life stories through their own perspectives (Kvale, 1996: 310). Through qualitative methodology, the researcher may explore social phenomena by investigating what people feel about them, why they feel that way, who feel the way they do, and where, when, and how, aspects that cannot be thoroughly examined only numerically (Basit, 2003: 152). Qualitative research is centred on 'specificity, context and the embedded nature of meaning' (Irwin et al. 2012: 67), and is also often applied to the examination of motivations and other connections between factors (Hakim, 2000: 36). Likewise in the present study, if the researcher aims to investigate not only the contextual and structural factors that may influence individuals' behaviour and views at the macro-level but also how the individuals respond to these factors at the micro-level, then applying qualitative methodology is necessary (Hakim, 2000: 36).

One of the strengths of semi-structured interviewing is that the questions are normally specified, but the researcher has the freedom and flexibility to probe beyond the answers given by the respondents (May, 2001). Moreover, compared with structured interviews, where the respondents must 'fit' their answers into boxes or categories predetermined by the researcher, semi-structured interviews enable them to answer the questions more on their own terms (May, 2001: 125). In addition, although this type of interviews are guided by a set of themes and main questions, they are flexible and not strictly structured, allowing the interviewer to modify the pre-defined questions and/or add new questions/sub-questions 'tailored' to each interviewee (Kvale, 1996: 124; May, 2001: 123). It is also critical to note that although this method offers greater degree of flexibility to the researcher compared with structured interviewing, it still provides 'greater structure for comparability' over what is provided by unstructured interviewing (May, 2011: 123). Interview guide questions also help with thematic data analysis (May, 2001), which is the type of analysis that the present study has applied and will be discussed in the following section.

In this study, semi-structured interviewing enabled the exploration of mobile students' views and interpretations of their migration decision-making processes, their aspirations, migratory and adjustment experiences, motivations and graduation plans. Additionally, it provided a useful tool for capturing the complexity of these themes and the uniqueness of students' experiences (Mason, 2002: 63; Creswell, 2013: 48). The questions that the participants were asked were not very specified and restricting in order to allow them to share and construct their meanings of their own world (Creswell, 2013: 25). Moreover, another theoretical position that underpins this research and informed the type of the interview questions is that knowledge is situated, contextual and interactional rather than 'straightforwardly excavated' (Mason, 2002: 63-64; 68). Hence, consideration was taken to ensure that the relevant contexts have been brought into focus in order for situated knowledge to be constructed or reconstructed through the 'interactional exchange of dialogue' between me and the participants (Mason, 2002: 62-63).

One of the weaknesses of this method is that since each interview is unique, it is difficult for the researcher to 'replicate' and directly compare the participants' accounts (Bryman, 2016). Broadly speaking, all types of interviews are mediated by both the interviewee and the interviewer (Bryman, 2016). At all stages of the research,

from forming the research design to data analysis, the researcher needs to consider and acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the different methods that they utilise, be aware of the possibility for bias and consider its potential impact on findings and generalisability (Bryman, 2016: 143; Robinson, 2014: 36).

3.5.3 Conducting the interviews

In this study, the interviews with the students were carried out individually, in person or via Skype, mainly in the case of students studying in London. The face-to-face interviews took place on the university campus (i.e. the students' School buildings), in areas that the participants were often engaged, to support their comfort and familiarity (Shaikh and Forneris, 2018: 53). The interviews were arranged to be conducted at a time and place that conveniently suit both the participants and me. Before the interviews took place a rapport had been built and the students had been informed through the provision of information sheets and written consent forms, as well as verbally, about the project's content and aims, their potential involvement, voluntary participation and how their anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved. Prior to the commencement of each interview the respondents needed to read carefully the participant information sheet and consent form they had been given and sign the form if they finally agreed to participate. The interviews with the key informants were also one-to-one. Five interviews with the staff members were performed in person at the higher education institutions where they worked, and only two interviews were performed via Skype. Both interviews with the education agents were conducted in person in Thessaloniki where their offices were located. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.

All the interviews with the students as well as the education agents were carried out in the Greek language, which was the respondents' mother tongue allowing them the 'possibility to express themselves in a completely effective way' (Pellicia, 2014: 535). Moreover, a number of students felt more confident with giving the interview in Greek rather than in English. In the case of the interviews with the higher education staff members, the language used was English. Context was an important aspect of the interviewing process that was taken into consideration, as the creation of a friendly atmosphere was essential in order for the participants to feel safe

and comfortable to share their feelings, ideas and personal experiences (Kvale, 1996; May, 2001).

Three separate interview guides were developed: one for the taught postgraduate students, one for the higher education staff members and one for the education agents (see appendix 1). The interview guide for the students were composed of eight sections of questions aimed to initially gain demographic information, such as students' family and educational backgrounds, and then explore their migration and educational aspirations, decision-making processes, perceptions, motivations, experiences and what they intend to do after the completion of their studies. The students were also asked a set of questions in respect of whether Brexit referendum results have affected their post-study plans and expectations. Furthermore, another important issue that was examined was the role that social networks may have played in students' decisions, experiences and actions.

The interview questions for the education agents mainly aimed to explore the patterns and trends of students' flows to the UK and British higher education recruitment policies and strategies. The interview guide for the higher education staff members consisted of three main sections. The first section gained information about the key informants' expertise and student recruitment experiences. The second section explored the patterns and trends of international, EU and Greek domiciled student migration flows to the UK, and the third section looked at their recruitment strategies they apply and how students, particularly Greek domiciled students, respond to them. The fourth section investigated whether they hold any information regarding Greek domiciled mobile students' demographic profile, decision-making, aspirations, experiences and post-study plans and career destinations. Moreover, in the interview guide for education agents and HE staff members, a number of questions addressed the potential impact of the Brexit vote on students' patterns and flows, as well as the recruitment policies and strategies that British higher education institutions apply. However, it should be noted that since the type of the interviews performed was semi-structured, although the questions were posed in a pre-determined order, there was flexibility for using probes, modifying and/or adding new and follow-up questions towards a further exploration and clarification of some issues and/or significant themes identified in the respondents' accounts.

3.6 Data analysis

3.6.1 Thematic analysis

The empirical data collected in this study was analysed through the method of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis may be defined as a method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79). It has been employed across a wide range of theoretical frameworks and research paradigms, primarily in qualitative studies, often seen as a flexible and useful research tool, which may potentially provide rich and detailed data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 78; Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297). This method of analysis is usually applied to experiential research that aims to understand what participants think, feel and do (Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297-298).

In the present study, thematic analysis is used more as a contextualist method which, as Braun and Clarke (2006:81) described, ‘sits between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism’. Specifically, being informed by the study’s methodological underpinning and, mainly, its aims and objectives, and guided by the research questions, the method of thematic analysis enabled the identification of patterns within and across data in relation to the participants’ perspectives, lived experiences, behaviour and practices. Thus, it meets the purpose of this empirical study to explore what mobile students feel, think and do in regard to their educational migration and, more broadly, in relation to their life planning (Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297). However, individuals’ perceptions, experiences, meanings and interpretations of their decisions, behaviour and actions have been approached and examined not in isolation, but in relation to their social world.

3.6.2 Coding procedure

Thematic analysis provides procedures that are accessible and systematic to generate codes and themes from qualitative data (Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297). Codes, as defined by Clarke and Braun (2017: 297), are ‘the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data (potentially) relevant to the research question’. They are seen as the ‘building blocks’ for themes, which are ‘(larger) patterns of

meaning, underpinned by a central organising concept' (Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297). The framework for the researcher to organise and report their analytic observations is provided by the themes (Clarke and Braun, 2017: 297).

Data analysis is considered as one of the most difficult and crucial aspects of a qualitative study, and coding is a significant part of it in order for the textual data to be organised and 'make sense' (Basis, 2003:143). In this study, after the collection of the data, the first step of my data analysis was to complete the transcription and translation of the interviews conducted. The interviews were recorded using an audio digital recorder (after having obtained written consent from the participants), transcribed and translated (when needed) verbatim (Braun et al., 2016), most of them in a short period of time after their commencement. They were transcribed directly into the English language, as translation and transcription occurred simultaneously on Microsoft Office Word. The analysis was conducted on the translated transcripts using word processing, spreadsheets, as well as manually, such as through gathering notes, using coloured pens to organise and categorise data, drawing a spider map of my codes and themes and using sticky notes for analytical memos and codes. The themes that the following chapters of the thesis will analyse were identified in the data through inductive and deductive coding of the transcripts. Microsoft Excel was also used to insert, organise, analyse and visualise data relating to students' demographic profile as well as secondary quantitative data regarding the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK. It is noteworthy that semi-structured interviewing and my continuous engagement with the data collected over the fieldwork had highly facilitated the coding procedure, enabling me to effectively manage and analyse my data without using data analysis software, such as NVivo. In particular, during the course of my fieldwork, I proceeded to initial engagement with the data that helped me consider how to 'make sense' of it and what codes, categories or themes might be used to explain the phenomenon that I investigated (Basis , 2003:145). This process, as discussed earlier in this chapter, contributed to the improvement of the sampling process and, consequently, my data collection.

The transcripts were coded by following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guidance to perform thematic analysis. In the first phase of the coding procedure, I familiarised myself with the data through transcribing the interviews and re-reading the transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 88). At the same time, I was writing down

initial thoughts, searching for meanings and potential patterns and themes, novel and/or previously identified. Transcribing was proved a particularly essential part of the coding procedure, as it informed the early stages of my analysis, allowing me to immerse myself in the data and further understand it (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 88).

In the second phase, initial codes were produced through systematic identification of interesting features of data across the entire dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87, 88). During this process, codes were identified and then matched together with data extracts which represented each code (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87, 89). After this stage, the data was collated together within each code, and the codes that were generated formed the 'basis of repeated patterns (themes)' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87, 89). Following this, the codes were collated into potential themes and all the relevant data extracts were grouped together within the identified themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87, 89). In the fourth phase, the tentative themes were reviewed and refined before they were defined and named in the fifth phase (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91-92). Subthemes were also identified as part of the themes' refinement. The next and last step involved the final analysis and writing-up of the thesis. In this stage, a number of extracts were used to demonstrate and support my analytic narrative and arguments with respect to the study's research questions and existing literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87, 93). It should be addressed that since data analysis is not a linear but rather a 'more recursive process' that develops over time, there was flexibility in following the above phases, often moving back and forth, as needed throughout the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 86-87; Ely et al., 1997).

The themes were identified in both inductive (or data-driven/ 'bottom up' way) and deductive (or theory-driven/ 'top down' way) procedures (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 83). An inductive approach means that the themes identified are strongly associated with the data collected (Patton, 2002), whilst in the deductive coding procedure the themes are pre-identified, derived from the theoretical framework, the research questions, the hypotheses, key research areas and/or variables' that the researcher brings to the study, mainly informed by their previous reading (Basit, 2003: 145; Clarke and Braun, 2006: 83-84; Giguere et al., 2011: 7).

3.7 Ethics

Ethical approval for this study was obtained by the ESSL (Education, Social Sciences and Law), Environment and LUBS (Leeds University Business School) (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds. The amendment to the initial research design, principally in regard to sampling, as discussed earlier in this chapter, had also been approved by the Research Ethics Committee before the recruitment procedures with the students studying in London commenced. Following the University's set of ethical guidelines, particular ethical issues were taken into consideration throughout the study.

It should be noted that all stages of a research study, especially the stage of source sampling, require ethical skills and sensitivity (Robinson, 2014: 35). Through the provision of participant information sheets, written informed consent forms, as well as by becoming informed verbally before they agreed to participate, the respondents had become aware of the aims of the study, what their potential participation might entail, its voluntary nature, how anonymity and confidentiality would be preserved, and any other information they had required and might help them reach an informed and consensual decision to take part in the research (Robinson, 2014: 35; Silverman, 2000: 200). Once the participants had read the participant information sheet and agreed to participate, they needed to read carefully and sign the written informed consent form, which they had been given/sent prior to the commencement of the interview. All participants were able to provide signed consent.

In addition, all the respondents and the higher education institutions where they studied or work have been anonymised. It should be noted that pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to preserve their anonymity and confidentiality. The pseudonyms used in the case of students are all assumed first names, commonly given to male and female individuals in Greece. These names were selected and assigned randomly and none of them matched the real name of any of the respondents. Before the interviews were carried out, the respondents had become informed that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms and any other identifying details would be removed in the present thesis and/or any other publication/conferences in which the data collected might be presented and discussed in the future.

3.8 Summary

This chapter provided insights into the research design and the methodology applied for the collection and analysis of research data. Informed by the conceptual framework and methodological underpinnings of the study, as well as its aims and objectives, a series of main research questions and sub-questions were formed and guided the framework for the research, as presented in the previous chapter. A mixed-methods approach has been applied concurrently in order for the research questions to be addressed. Specifically, the analysis of secondary quantitative data allowed the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK over time to be traced. Aside with this research method, semi-structured interviewing was employed for the collection of empirical data which aimed to provide insights into student migrants' perceptions, aspirations, decision-making, feelings, attitudes, labour market behaviour and future plans. Moreover, these interviews emphasised how students have interpreted and conceptualised their decisions and actions, especially how they have perceived and experienced their educational migration to the UK. In addition, another important aspect that the interviews explored was the contextually embedded nature of students' migration decisions, aspirations, experiences and post-study plans. The primary data collected were analysed through the method of thematic analysis and the themes were identified in both inductive and deductive ways (see Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Regarding the ethical procedures followed in the study, it should be addressed that the recruitment of the respondents and the conduct of the interviews started after ethical approval was granted by the ESSL, Environment and LUBS (AREA) Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds. Following the University's ethical guideline, prior to the commencement of the interviews, the participants were provided with a participant information sheet and a written informed consent form.

The next chapter establishes the context of this study by providing an overview and analysis of the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK ahead of examining students' aspirations, decision-making, experiences and plans in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4

Student Migration to the UK: Patterns and Trends

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the patterns and trends of student migration flows at an international level before it focuses on the UK as a study destination, primarily on the migration flows of Greek domiciled tertiary-level students. Drawing on the analysis of statistical data, the chapter reveals that since the 90's, there has been a general increase in the international student migration flows worldwide, mostly to English-speaking destinations. Following the USA, the UK has been identified as the second most attractive destination country among international and European students, with Greece having been included for several academic years in the list of the top EU sending countries as far as the number of higher education student enrolments at all UK higher education providers (HEPs) is concerned (HESA series, 2015/16; HESA, 2016a). As shown in HESA data, approximately over the last decade (2006/07-2017/18), in the years preceding and after the outbreak of the financial crisis, a number of considerable variations have been recorded in the patterns and trends of the migration flows of Greek students to the UK. These changes concern the number of HE student enrolments at UK HEPs, region of study, as well as students' distribution by level of study and subject area. As will be discussed in this chapter, in order for these changes to be better understood, they need to be interpreted considering the current political, socio-economic and labour market conditions in students' home and destination countries. The changing patterns and trends, which have also been echoed in the accounts of the key informants interviewed in the study, highlight the fluidity of educational migration and how it interacts with broader contexts.

4.2 International student migration and UK Higher Education

According to international, European and national statistical data, over the last decades, the number of students who migrate abroad for study purposes has significantly increased (OECD, 2013a; ICEF Monitor, 2014; 2015; UIS, 2019b). Particularly, UIS (2018a) revealed that the total number of outbound tertiary-level international students worldwide rose from 0.8 million in 1975 to approximately 5 million in 2016 (Migration Data Portal, 2018; UIS, 2018a).

The largest groups of outbound tertiary-level students who pursued a higher education degree or diploma outside their country of origin in 2016 migrated from the following countries: China (866,072), India (301,406), Germany (199,088), Republic of Korea (104,992), Nigeria (95, 731), France (90,543), Kazakhstan (90,187), Saudi Arabia (90,178), Vietnam (82,159), and Ukraine (77,263) (UIS, 2019a). In respect of the selection of study destination, although students worldwide choose various countries to pursue their studies, some destinations, principally English-speaking countries, have regularly been on the top of their preferences, attracting the largest proportions of them. For example, in 2016, only six countries hosted about a half of the total outbound student population: the USA (19.1%), the UK (8.5%), Australia (7.5%), France (4.8%), Germany (4.8%) and the Russian Federation (4.8%) (Migration Data Portal, 2018; UIS, 2019a).

The UK, on which the present study is focused, attracts thousands of EU and non-EU students every year and is the second most popular study destination among international students, after the USA (Universities UK, 2014; HESA, 2016a; HESA, 2016b; OECD, 2016a). EU has regularly been the biggest source of non-UK students, followed by China (Universities UK, 2018). Germany, France, Italy, the Republic of Ireland, Greece, Cyprus and Spain have been for several academic years in the list of the top EU sending countries concerning the number of higher education student enrolments at all UK HEPs (HESA, 2019c). In the case of non-EU countries, apart from China, which has been by far the country with the largest outbound student flows to the UK, the USA, India, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia have also been included in the list of the non-EU countries with the highest number of student enrolments at all UK HEPs (HESA, 2019b). Almost all of the above non-EU and EU countries have remained in the relevant lists for several academic years, with

only few variations identified in their ranking positions (HESA series, 2012/13; HESA, 2016a; 2017; 2018a; 2019b; 2019c).

In the academic year 2017/18, when my fieldwork was conducted, the general list of the top fifteen sending countries (HESA, 2019b) was set as follows:

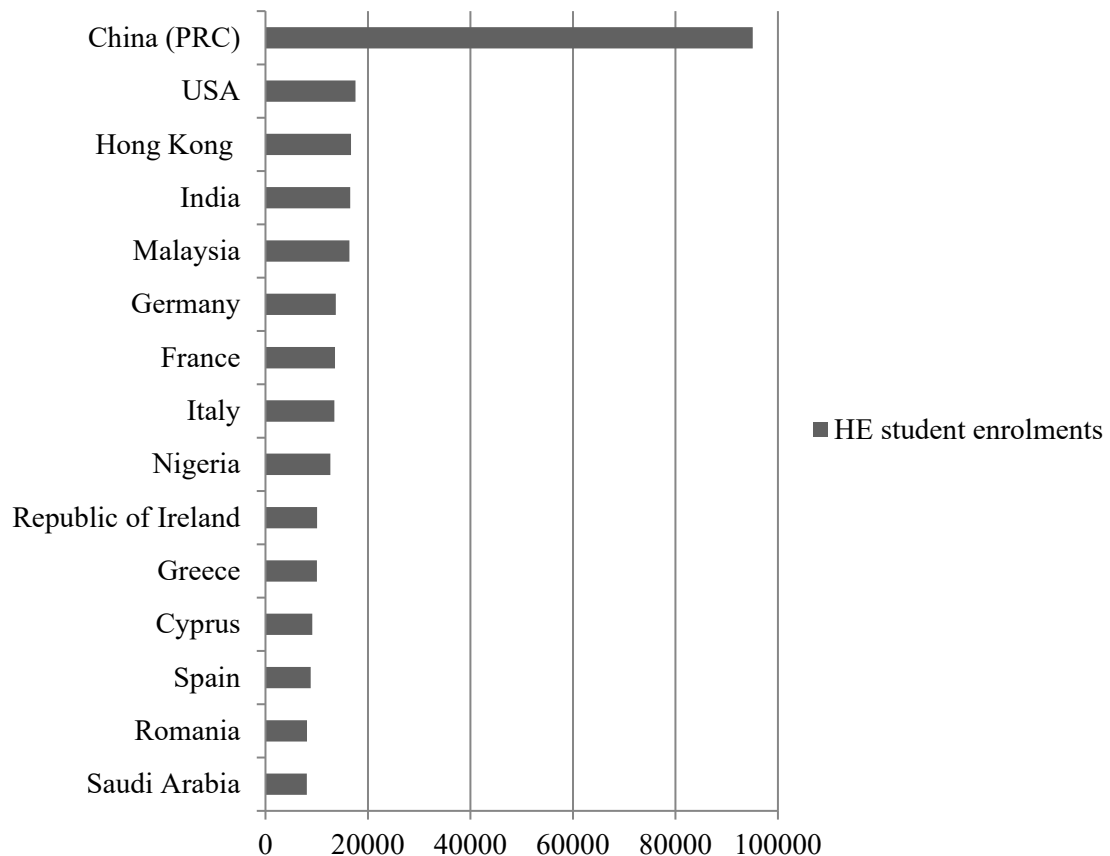


Figure 2. Top fifteen EU and non-EU countries of domicile (excluding the UK) in 2017/18 for HE student enrolments at all UK HEPs. Source: HESA, 2019b; 2019c.

Regarding the distribution of students by level of study, as shown in the data, first degree courses have been found to attract the highest proportion of mobile higher education students, both UK and non-UK domiciled, followed by taught postgraduate and postgraduate research programmes (HESA, 2019a). For example, in the academic year 2017/18, more than half of the total student population (55.7%) enrolled in postgraduate level courses (postgraduate research and taught courses) were non-UK domiciled students (20% were EU [non-UK] students) (HESA, 2019a).

With respect to the distribution of the total student population (all levels of study) by subject area at all UK HEPs, in the academic year 2017/18, the five most popular subject areas, from the highest to the lowest number of enrolments, among UK domiciled students were the following: subjects allied to Medicine (14.1%), Business and Administrative studies (11.5%), Biological Sciences (11%), Social Sciences (9.9%), and Creative Arts and Design (7.7%) (HESA, 2019d; 2019g). However, for non-UK students, Business and Administrative studies were found to be by far the most preferred subject group. More specifically, 27.7% of the total non-UK student population pursued courses in this field of study, followed by Engineering and Technology (11.5%), Social Studies (9.3%), Creative Arts and Design (7%), and Biological Sciences (5.9%) (HESA, 2019d; 2019g). Business and Administrative studies were on the top of the list for both EU (non-UK) (19.6%) and non-EU students (31.2%) (HESA, 2019g). This study field alongside Social Sciences and Engineering and Technology have also attracted high proportions of EU and non-EU students at the taught postgraduate level of study (all modes of study), on which the present study is focused (HESA, 2019d; 2019g). In the case of EU (non-UK) students, approximately 25% of them pursued taught postgraduate courses in the subject group of Business and Administrative studies, 10.8% studied courses in the field of Social Sciences and 9% were enrolled in Engineering and Technology degree programmes (HESA, 2019g).

In respect of gender, it is notable that the number of HE enrolments of female students has remained higher than that of male students at almost all levels of study (HESA, 2019e). In 2017/18, 57% of the student population was female; as was 61% of the taught postgraduate student population (HESA, 2019e). Within subjects, there is an even split in Business and Administrative studies, whilst female students outnumbered male students in the fields of subjects allied to Medicine (71.9%), Education (77.4%), Languages (71%), Creative Arts and Design (64.8%), Biological Sciences (64.1%) and Social Sciences (63.3%) (HESA, 2019f). On the other hand, male students numerically dominated in STEM fields (except for subjects allied to Medicine, Biological Sciences, Medicine and Dentistry, and Veterinary Science), mostly in the fields of Engineering and Technology (81.8%), and Computer Science (82.4%).

4.3 Student migration from Greece to the UK in times of crisis

As mentioned in the previous section, the UK has been the most popular study destination among students domiciled in the hardest-hit by the economic crisis countries, including Greece, Italy and Spain, which have been included in the list of the top ten EU sending countries for several years (Paton, 2012; HESA series, 2015/16; UIS, 2018a; 2018b). According to UIS (2018a; 2018b; 2019c), in 2015, the UK attracted 27.2% of the total outbound Greek-domiciled student population (30,192), followed by Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Turkey and the USA. Moreover, as shown in HESA (2017, 2018a) data, Greece was ranked fourth from 2011/12 to 2013/14 and fifth from 2014/15 to 2016/17 in the list of the top ten EU countries (excluding the UK) as far as the number of higher education student enrolments at all UK HEPs is considered.

However, despite the significant volume of student migration flows from these countries to the UK, this phenomenon, although it is not entirely new, has been under-evidenced. The economic recession might have created new dynamics and characteristics and student migration in contemporary times seems to have emerged as a form of South to North youth migration of growing importance that needs further examination in migration research. This study, focusing on a national group of Greek students, seeks to address various dimensions of this type of migration and improve understanding of its contexts. This includes how it may be approached and used by diverse young people in times of crisis.

4.3.1 Understanding the contexts of Greek student migration

In order to better understand the patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK, the socio-economic and labour market conditions in Greece need to be considered. Greece is one of the EU countries that the 2008-global financial crisis has hit the hardest. The implementation of a series of large-scale draconian austerity measures, huge reductions of wages and pensions, cuts and layoffs following the

bailout agreements imposed by the Troika³ over the years have led the country to a long-term heavy socio-economic crisis and caused widespread feelings of distress, destitution and despair (Tsekeris et al., 2015: 7). Young people have been among the most deeply affected by the crisis groups, facing many difficulties in their transitions to employment (Eurofound, 2014). According to Eurofound (2014:12) study on youth transitions in Europe, young people's transition from education to the labour market has become less predictable and more complicated since the outbreak of the financial crisis. Even if they have completed tertiary education, they are likely to be unemployed or move often 'in' and 'out' of the labour market, doing part-time or temporary low-paid jobs (Eurofound, 2014; OECD, 2013a; 2016b). Over the last decade, Greece has exhibited one of the highest overall unemployment rates and youth unemployment rates of the European Union's (EU) 28 member states, as well as one of the lowest employment rates of young people (aged 20-34) who 'have recently graduated from either upper-secondary or tertiary levels of education' (Eurostat, 2018a; 2018b; 2019c; Eurostat Statistics Explained, 2019; 2018). As shown in Figure 3, since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, a drastic increase has been recorded in both overall and youth unemployment rates, which peaked in 2013 (Eurostat, 2019a; 2019b). According to Eurostat (2019b), in 2013, the youth unemployment rate (unemployed aged 15-24) was estimated at 58.3% (Eurostat, 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b), and the overall unemployment reached its highest rate at 27.5% (Eurostat, 2019a). Figure 3 also indicates the negative correlation between the overall and youth unemployment rates and the employment rates of recent graduates, showing that when the unemployment rate increases, less recent graduates become employed. In 2013, when both types of unemployment rate peaked, the employment of recent graduates reached its lowest point at 40% (Eurostat, 2018b).

³ 'Troika' is an external body that consists of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Eurofound, 2017; Tsekeris et al., 2015: 7). 'Troika' was renamed to 'Quadriga' in 2015 after the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) was added to the group of the three institutions (Chopra et al., 2015: 19).

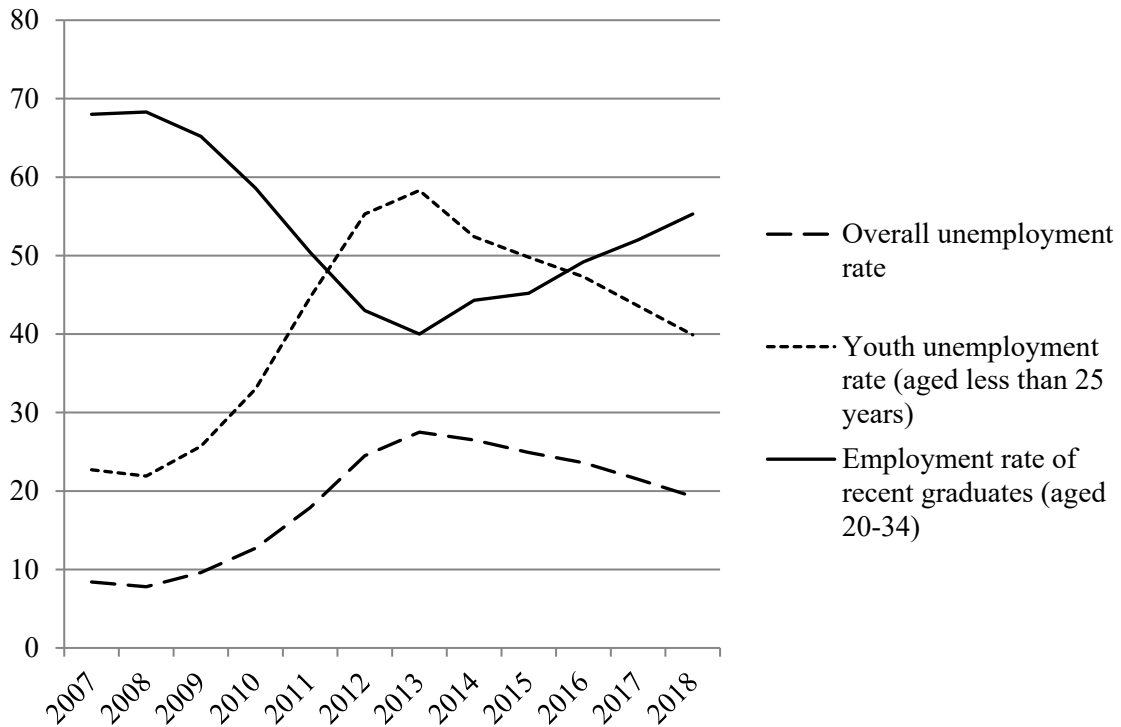


Figure 3. Overall unemployment rate, youth unemployment rate and employment rate of recent graduates (aged 20-34) in Greece (2007-2018). Source: Eurostat 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c.

Greece and Italy, over the last few years, have been the only EU members where the overall unemployment rate was higher than the employment rate of recent graduates (Eurostat, 2016; 2019c). In particular, from 2006 to 2016, the employment rates of recent graduates in these countries fell by approximately 15.0 percentage points (Eurostat, 2016). A fall of 10.0 points or more has been recorded in Spain, Portugal and Ireland, which were also seriously hit by the crisis (Eurostat, 2016). Although the overall and youth unemployment rates have gradually declined in Greece (from 27.5% to 18.5% and from 58.3% to 38.8% respectively, between November 2013 and February 2019), they still remain very high and the highest among the EU-28 countries (Eurostat, 2019a; 2019b). Similarly, despite its increase (from 40% in 2013 to 55.3% in 2018), the employment rate of recent graduates remains among the lowest in the EU (55.3%) (Eurostat, 2018a; 2018b; 2019c).

OECD (2016a) and Eurostat (2018b; 2019c) data suggests that educational attainment may partly protect recent graduates from the crisis' impacts, as statistics across various EU member states have shown that the employment rate of recent

tertiary-educated graduates were higher compared with those who had attained lower educational qualifications. For example, in Sweden, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany and Malta, the employment rates of recent tertiary-educated graduates were the highest, exceeding the percentage of 90% (Eurostat, 2016). However, as shown in various studies, obtaining a higher education degree does not necessarily imply 'smooth' transition to employment, as many graduates across Europe experience unemployment and/or under-employment and precarious types of employment in their transition to the labour market (see Eurofound, 2014; Cartwright, 2015). The acquisition of a higher education degree is not enough to protect recent graduates from the severe impact of the economic recession, especially in the hardest-hit Southern European countries (Eurostat, 2018b; 2019c). This fact is also evidenced in Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT, 2016) data on unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and over. According to this data, the total number of unemployed individuals, both male and female, in the second quarter of 2016, was 1,112,000 (ELSTAT, 2016). The worst-affected belonged to the age groups of 20-29 year olds (25.2%), 30-44 year olds (40.3%) and 45-64 year olds (32.2%) (ELSTAT, 2016). Particularly, 22.3% of all the unemployed population were tertiary-educated and the highest number of them were aged 25-29 years (23.7%) and 30-44 years (47.6%) (ELSTAT, 2016). This data, which is similar to those of previous years, confirms OECD's (2013b:2) finding that 'young people in Greece have been hardest hit by the economic crisis, whatever their level of qualification'.

Within this context, precarious types of employment have been on the rise and feelings of distress, disappointment and frustration have been intensified among young people (Tsekeris et al., 2015). As a response to these conditions, every year thousands of young people, mostly the highly educated, tend to move abroad in search of better employment and life opportunities, as evidenced in various recent studies (e.g. Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014; Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016; Mavrodi and Moutselos, 2017; Pratsinakis et al., 2017). Although the emigration flows of graduates had begun before the crisis, they have evolved into 'a mass movement', only over the last five years (Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2017; Demetis, c2019, no pagination). In particular, according to the findings of Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2016), based on a nationwide representative survey of 1,237 households in Greece, the total emigration outflow of Greek citizens from 2010 until the end of 2015 was

estimated to range between 280,000 and 350,000 people (Demetis, c2019, no pagination).

Although emigration appears to take place on a slightly lower rate since 2014, it has been argued that it is highly likely to continue over the following years, raising public concern and triggering various debates regarding the negative impacts of the on-going brain drain on Greece at economic and social levels (Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2017; Demetis, c2019). This concern mainly derives from the fact that within the last 50 years, a significant change has been recorded in the educational profile of Greek migrants, reflecting a different character of the contemporary migration flows (Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016; see also Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). Until 1980, most of emigrants were inexperienced workers but since 1990, there has been a rise in the migration flows of graduates, who comprise the vast majority of the migrating population during the 2000's, and magnified during the years of economic recession, as approximately two-thirds of the outflow over the last few years have been estimated to be composed of tertiary-educated graduates, around 30 years old (Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2017; Demetis, c2019). The high unemployment rate, lack of employment opportunities and precarious forms of employment are three of the main factors that have led a large proportion of them to the migration path (see Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016; 2017; Demetis, c2019). As will be discussed in the following chapters, in contemporary Greek context, educational migration has been highly intertwined with migration for work purposes, often perceived as a path towards the implementation of an emigration plan.

4.3.2 Student migration flows to the UK: Before and after the crisis outbreak

Despite the fact that the UK has always attracted the highest rate of Greek outbound students, a considerable steady decline has been recorded in the number of Greek domiciled students' higher education enrolments at UK HEPs, approximately over the past decade (2006/07-2017/18), as shown in Figure 4:

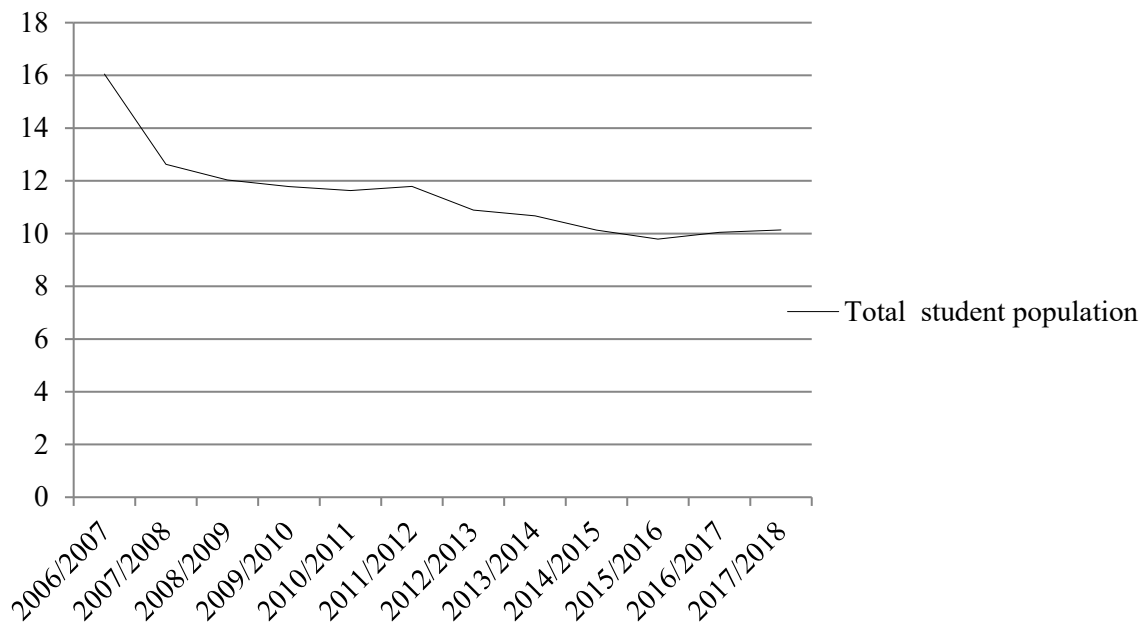


Figure 4. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) at all UK HEPs from 2006/07 to 2017/18 (all levels of study). Source: HESA series, 2006/07-2012/13; HESA Student Record 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16; 2016/174; HESA 2019a.

Although there is a lack of research evidence on Greek student migration, which could have shed more light on the causes of this trend, the decline recorded in student migration flows over the years might be partly explained by various factors associated with changes occurred in Greece at a macro-economic level. For instance, in the academic year 2006/07, before the outbreak of the economic recession in Greece, the number of HE student enrolments of Greek-domiciled students at all UK HEPs was 16,050 (HESA series, 2006/07). This number dropped to 9,790 in 2015/16, in the period of the economic recession in the country, when the overall and youth unemployment rates were recorded at 24.9% and 49.8% respectively, whilst the employment rate of recent graduates reached 45.2% (HESA Student Record, 2015/16; Eurostat, 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b).

Economic recession has arguably been one of the main causes of this drop, as compared with previous years, studying and living abroad might have been less affordable for many Greek students due to financial constraints (ICEF monitor, 2014).

⁴ All HESA data presented and analysed in this chapter has been rounded according to HESA's rounding and suppression methodology.

It is noteworthy that over this period, a number of other destinations, such as the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Turkey have seen a remarkable increase in the number of inbound Greek domiciled tertiary-level students (Huberts Vlek de Coningh, 2018; UIS, 2019a). The key informants interviewed in the present study, comprised of recruitment agents working at education agencies based in Greece and UK higher education institutions, argued that the increasing attractiveness of other study destinations among Greek migrating students might be partly explained by the economic crisis in Greece as well as the increase of tuition fees at UK higher education institutions in 2012, from £3,000 to £9,000⁵ (for UK and EU [non-UK]). As two of them reported:

Over the past few years, due to financial reasons some other European countries have become more popular as study destinations for Greek students, such as the Netherlands, which is the second most popular destination, Scandinavian countries because there are no fees there, such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway.

(Education agent A)

Furthermore:

In our university, there has been a decline in the number of students this year. Students now seem to choose some other countries in Europe. We are competing lots of other UK providers as well as providers in the Netherlands and Germany. They offer much cheaper courses. We just can't compete with these very low fees.

(Student recruitment staff member A, N .England)

Regarding UK higher education tuition fees, it should be mentioned that they were first introduced to UK higher education institutions in 1998, and the Higher Education Act in 2004 brought an increase of the tuition fee cap from £1,000 to £3,000 per year (Universities UK, 2013; Hubble and Bolton, 2018: 3). In 2006, the fees became variable, capped at £3,000 before they rose to £9,000 in 2012 (Universities UK, 2013). Students can pay the university tuition fees in certain ways: they can either arrange to pay it themselves in full or in installments⁶ (self-payment), and/or through sponsorship (full or part-sponsorship), as well as a form of financial

⁵The university tuition fees were capped at £9,250 in 2017/18 (Hubble and Bolton, 2018).

⁶ The arrangements regarding the payment of tuition fees in installments vary cross universities.

aid, such as a scholarship or bursary and/or a student loan provided by Student Finance England or equivalent. The tuition fee loan covers the full cost of the tuition fees. Greek students, likewise UK students, have been eligible to the student loan as being EU nationals. Student loans first became part of the student support package in 1990/91 (Bolton, 2019: 5) and expanded over the following years, in a period of public funding cuts (Universities UK, 2013). Before the late 1990s, repayments of loans were made on a ‘mortgage-style’ system (GOV.UK, 2013). Students were ‘required to repay the loan in fixed monthly instalments over a set period of 5 or 7 years’, with interest being charged at a rate equivalent to the Retail Prices Index (RPI) (GOV.UK, 2013; Legislation.gov.uk, 2018: 2). The borrower could defer the repayments for a year at a time if their income was below a certain threshold (GOV.UK, 2013). In 1998, income contingent repayment loans replaced the ‘mortgage-style’ loans (Legislation.gov.uk, 2018: 2). Students are now required to start making repayments of this loan after the end of their courses and only if their earning is above a repayment threshold, set by the Government (Legislation.gov.uk, 2018: 2). The earnings threshold for student loan repayments, likewise its amount and the tuition fee cap, has increased over time: from £10,000 in 2000 to £21,000 in 2012/13, and to £25,000 in 2018 (for post- September 2012 loans-Plan 2). It is noteworthy that in case the student leaves the UK for more than three months, they need to inform SLC, which will work out if they have to repay while they are not in the UK, and if so, how much they need to pay (GOV.UK, 2020b). The rules for repayment are the same as in the UK. However, the repayment thresholds may be different for each country. The earnings thresholds for foreign countries are set each year (GOV.UK, 2020b). Although they are eligible to the tuition fee loan, unlike UK nationals, Greek students, as being EU nationals, cannot apply for a maintenance loan⁷ and/or a maintenance grant⁸ which could help them pay for living costs during their studies (GOV.UK, 2020a). Only EU students who have lived in the UK for more

⁷ The amount of loan varies depending on students’ household income and location of study (GOV. UK, 2020a).

⁸ UK nationals are eligible to apply for a maintenance grant based on household income. In 1999, the maintenance grants were abolished before they were subsequently introduced in 2006 (Hubble and Bolton, 2017, no pagination). In the Summer Budget 2015, the government announced its intention to abolish and replace the grants with increased maintenance loans from the academic year 2016/17 (Hubble and Bolton, 2017, no pagination).

than five years before the first day of the first academic year of their course are eligible to some help with their living costs (GOV.UK, 2020a).

Regarding taught postgraduate and postgraduate research programmes, unlike undergraduate courses, there is no particular tuition fee cap, set by the Government, and cost may vary across courses, Schools/Departments and higher education institutions. However, it should be noted that a high increase has been recorded in the fees over the years. Since the academic year 2016/17, UK and EU students (including Greek students) have been eligible to the postgraduate Master's loan (Hubble et al., 2018). According to the loan arrangements, in 2016/17⁹, both full-time and part-time students who met particular eligibility criteria were able to apply for up to £10,000 as 'a contribution towards their course and/or living costs' (GOV.UK, 2019, no pagination). The loan needs to be repaid when one student's income is over a certain threshold amount (GOV.UK, 2019). In the case of EU taught postgraduate students who started their course on or after August 2016, the threshold amount is £21,000 a year (before tax and other deductions) (GOV.UK, 2019). Similarly to the undergraduate student loan, according to the arrangements of the postgraduate Master's loan, if the student who has granted the loan plans to travel and/or work abroad for more than three months after completing or leaving their course (either temporarily or because they will reside in another country) is required to make the repayment under particular financial arrangements determined by SLC (GOV.UK, 2019). The threshold amount in another country may not be the same as in the UK and the amount of repayment will be determined by SLC (GOV.UK, 2019).

The introduction of the postgraduate Master's loan may partly explain the slight increase (3.5%) recorded in the number of Greek HE student enrolments in 2016/17 since the academic year 2014/15 (HESA series, 2015/16; HESA, 2018a; 2019a). The role of the availability of the student loan in the slight increase of Greek (and other EU) student enrolments at British universities was also seen to be salient across the education agents and several student recruitment staff interviewed. However, it should be mentioned that, reflecting the trend of EU (non-UK) taught postgraduate students' flows, despite the provision of the postgraduate Master's loan,

⁹Students are eligible to apply for a loan of £10,906 if their course starts on or after August 1st, 2019 (GOV.UK, 2019).

the number of Greek domiciled taught postgraduate students slightly declined in 2017/18, one year after the Brexit vote. This trend might be partly explained by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and various Brexit-related concerns, as it is also indicated by my research findings (see chapter 7).

Despite the changes occurred over time, the number of migrating Greek students to the UK remains very high. Greek students have migrated abroad for several years, and the UK has always been the most popular study destination among them. However, the dynamics and characteristics of this phenomenon in regard to the migration motives, students' migration aspirations and post-study migration pathways seem to have changed across time, and study destination as well as students' level of study need to be seriously considered when interpreting the research evidence. In previous years, as suggested by the very few studies that have explored Greek student migration, mostly focusing on undergraduate students (Eliou, 1988; ADMIT, 2001; Pelliccia, 2014), one of the main drivers of undergraduate students' migration was the failure or the fear of failing in the nation-wide exams (known as 'Pan-hellenic examinations' or 'Panelladikes eksetaseis') that students need to take in order to access higher education in Greece. This failure' was argued to be often perceived as being equivalent to social failure due to the importance attached to the acquisition of a higher education degree, primarily to a degree that could enhance employability in the public sector (see ADMIT, 2001; Eliou, 1988).

Regarding postgraduate student migration, there is a large gap in literature. Eliou's (1988) study, one of the very few studies which have addressed this type of migration, suggests that in late 80s, the limited availability of postgraduate programmes at Greek higher education institutions was one the main drivers of migration (Eliou, 1988). The study argues that many of those who wished to obtain a postgraduate degree in order to pursue an academic career or get a graduate job, used to move abroad to study (Eliou, 1988). Thirteen years later, in 2001, the research project ADMIT, which explored student mobility and Higher Education admissions in five EU countries (France, Germany, Greece, Sweden and the United Kingdom), found that migration for postgraduate studies in the UK was associated with the perception that postgraduate programmes in Greece were 'highly competitive', given the limited number of students they accepted (ADMIT, 2001: 58). Furthermore, the study found that one of the reasons Greek students decided to pursue a taught postgraduate degree

programme in the UK was their perception of Master's programmes in the UK being 'more specialised', 'focused' and 'better administered' compared with some postgraduate programmes offered in Greece (ADMIT, 2001: 13). The acquisition of a postgraduate degree was perceived by some of them as a way of enhancing their employability and improving their career opportunities and, thus, enabling further upward social mobility (ADMIT, 2001: 13).

As previously stated, there is a significant gap in literature on this phenomenon to which the present study aims to contribute. In the next chapters, there will be a discussion on how students perceive their educational migration in the context of economic recession, what generates their migration aspirations and what their post-study life plans are, dynamics that appear to have changed over time. In the past, a large number of students who migrated abroad for their studies tended to return to Greece upon graduation (Eliou, 1988). Although there is no official data and very limited, mainly anecdotal, evidence on Greek mobile students' post-study migration pathways, there is a general presumption (which has been confirmed in this study) that over the past few years, this tendency has changed, as a large proportion of students who migrate abroad for their studies, primarily, to Northern and Western European countries, intend to remain and work abroad after graduation (ICEF monitor, 2012).

The lack of official data on students' post-study migration pathways in the UK, and generally abroad, was also reported by both education agents and student recruitment officers. Their views, based on anecdotal impressions they have formed through their long-term experience in recruiting and liaising with Greek mobile students prior and during their studies, were found to fit these wider interpretations regarding the contemporary post-study non-return trend of students. As two of them stated:

We don't have any official data, but over the last years, more and more students have been choosing to remain in the UK upon graduation. I would say that definitely more than 50 percent of the students tend to remain in the UK. [...] I would say that 70 percent of half of the students who remain in the UK after their graduation manage to find a job relevant to their study area.

(Education agent B)

Most of them migrate in order to pursue a Master's degree and a PhD after that, with the intention of not coming back to Greece. They want to stay abroad.

(Education agent A)

Furthermore, another explains:

We just have some general data, not by country [...]. Many students tell us that they have found a job and stayed there. Most of the times alumni don't let us know, so we can't have the records, but I know that many students get employed within six months upon graduation. They get employed not only in the UK but also beyond the UK, also in their country. [...] The expectation of the majority of them, especially of postgraduates, is 'I'll come, study, and then stay'.

(Student recruitment staff member B, London)

The present study, confirming the key informants' presumptions, has found that student migration within the context of economic recession is seen by the majority of students as the first stage of their emigration plan. As underlined in the research findings regarding their future perspectives, almost all of the students migrated to the UK for their studies with the intention to remain there and/or further migrating to another country upon graduation. The high unemployment rates of recent graduates, precarious forms of employment and lack of employment prospects and opportunities in their home country have been identified as some of the main drivers of their migration. Considering the role of contextual dynamics has led to a deeper understanding of the new momentum that this phenomenon has acquired and has helped to interpret the changing patterns of student's flows, such as regarding their subject choices. The interpretation of these changes is important to better understand the meanings that students may place on their migration journeys.

4.3.3 The profile of students: Changes in subject choice

Despite the great volume and numerical importance of Greek student migration flows worldwide, very little data is available with respect to the patterns and trends of students' flows and their demographic profile. In the case of the UK, according to

HESA Student Record (2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16; 2016/17)¹⁰, the largest groups of Greek tertiary-level students studying at British universities over the past years have been undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, followed by postgraduate research students. In particular, the total number of HE enrolments of students domiciled in Greece who were enrolled at UK HEPs from 2013/14 to 2017/18 stood at 50,770. The highest percentage of them pursued first degree (47%) and taught postgraduate courses (36.2%), whilst 15.5% were enrolled in postgraduate research programmes, and 1.5% engaged with other undergraduate courses.

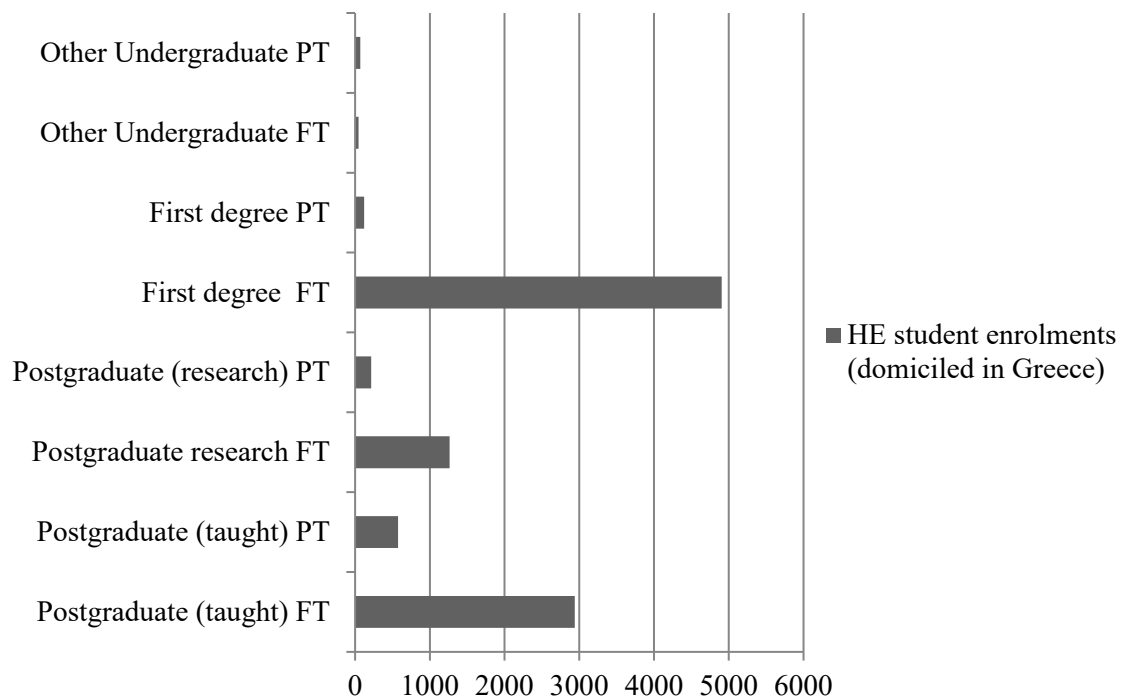


Figure 5. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) by level of study and mode of study at all UK HEPs (2017/18). Source: HESA, 2019a.

The vast majority of them were full-time students (88.6%), whilst a percentage of 11.4% followed a part-time degree course. Most of the students who followed a part-time degree course were taught postgraduate (56.6%) and research postgraduate

¹⁰In regard to the academic year 2017/18 (HESA, 2019a), it should be noted that since the number of Greek domiciled HE student enrolments at all UK HEPs has remained at a similar level compared with the past four academic years, students' distribution by gender, age, level and mode of study, as well as subject area were expected to be similar, with no considerable variances recorded.

students (23%). This pattern was also evidenced in HESA data (2019a) concerning the student population in the academic year 2017/18, from which the sample of this study was derived. In 2017/18, 5,025 out of the 10,135 students domiciled in Greece, who were enrolled at all UK HEPs, pursued a first degree programme, whilst 3,515 were taught postgraduate students, 1,475 engaged with postgraduate research study, and 115 pursued other undergraduate courses. Of the total student population, almost all of the students (90.3%) were enrolled on full-time study programmes. The largest numbers of students who pursued a taught postgraduate course were aged 21-30.

The most popular regions of HEPs for Greek students at all educational levels in the UK over the years, from the most to the least popular in terms of HE student enrolments, were the following: total England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (HESA, 2019a). London has remained by far the most popular region of study for students of all levels of study, as illustrated in Figure 6:

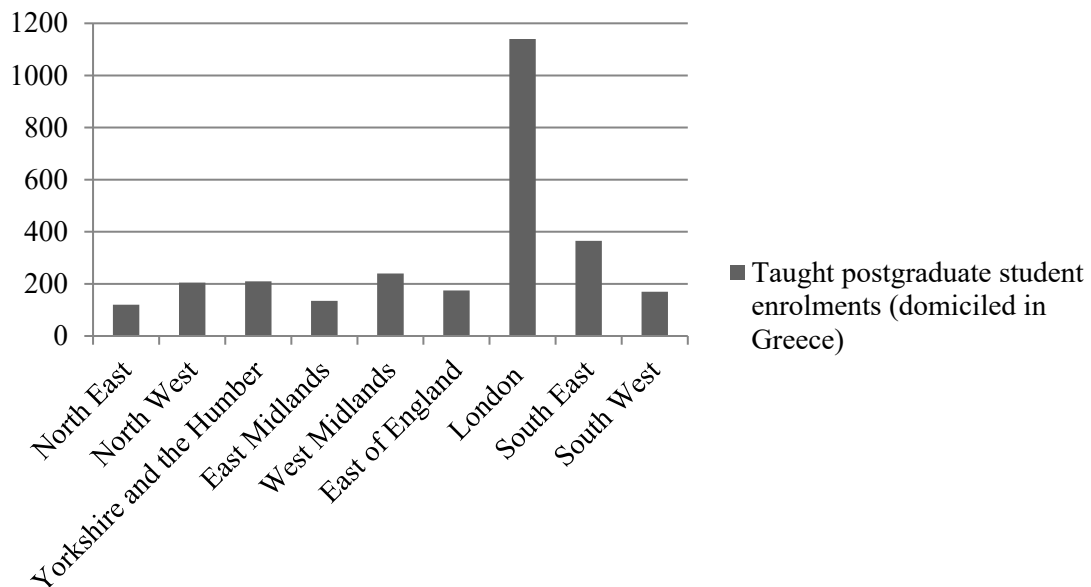


Figure 6. HE student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) in taught postgraduate courses by region of study in England (2017/18). Source: HESA, 2019a.

In regard to students' socio-economic backgrounds, there is no official data available. However, given the amount of fees and the costs accompanied students' study (study and living expenses), it can be hypothesised that the majority of the students are from middle- and upper middle-class socio-economic backgrounds, as

also shown in my findings (see chapter 5). This is a hypothesis also echoed in the accounts of the key informants, both education agents and recruitment officers, drawn on their recruitment experiences. Some of them referred to the different forms of funding that students from lower and higher socio-economic backgrounds choose, with the former seeking for various forms of financial aid, such as scholarships, student loans and part-time employment in order to fulfil their migration and educational aspirations. Throughout the next chapters there will be an analysis of the role that economic capital may play in students' perceptions, aspirations, experiences and future plans. As two of the key informants stated regarding the socio-economic backgrounds of the students they have recruited:

On the one hand, I have students from very high socio-economic backgrounds who say that they want to go to London for their studies, and pay everything in advance, both fees and accommodation. On the other hand, I have some students from lower backgrounds who want to get the loan... they can't find a scholarship and want to find a part-time job to fund their studies.

(Education agent A)

I've seen students coming from middle-class socio-economic backgrounds, but also students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who are about to work. I can see that almost all of them work while studying and in order to get by, especially postgraduate students. That's why many times, most of them want to study part-time. And something else that we have found is that they are interested in work placements and ask us to help them with finding one.

(Student recruitment staff member B, London)

One of the most notable changes identified in the patterns of students' migration flows concerns their subject choices, changes that might be partly explained considering the socio-economic and labour market conditions in both sending and receiving countries. Specifically, variations have been recorded in the number of students' enrolments in particular study fields. HESA data has shown that for several years the subject group of Business and Administrative studies has been at the top of the list of the most popular subject areas of Greek-domiciled students of all levels of study alongside Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Law, Education, Psychology, and Social, Economic and Political studies, as well as Creative Arts and Design have also been included among students' top preferences.

This data reflects a general trend that has seen over the last decade (2007/08-2017/18), a large number of students of all levels of study enrol in courses (mainly in the cases of EU [non-UK] and non-EU students), in the fields of Business and Administrative studies and STEM subjects, primarily Engineering and Technology, whilst other subject areas, most notably Education, have seen a drop (Universities UK, 2017:24).

In the case of Greek-domiciled students, although the field of Engineering has always been included among the most popular ones among tertiary-level students of levels of study, a decline has been recorded in the number of student enrolments compared with previous years. Particularly, since the outbreak of the financial crisis in Greece, a significant drop has been noticed in the number of male and female undergraduate and postgraduate students' enrolments at UK HEPs in the fields of General, Civil and Mechanical Engineering, as well as in the field of Architecture. On the other hand, the subject group of Business and Administrative studies has been increasingly attracting a large number of male and female undergraduate and postgraduate students, reflecting the general pattern and trend identified in the data with respect to the total UK and non-UK student population (HESA, 2019d; 2019g). More students seem to switch to vocational courses. Regarding the field of Education, although this is an area that has traditionally been very popular among female taught and postgraduate research students (especially the subfield of Academic studies in Education), over the last years it has also seen a significant decline, mostly in the number of enrolments in teacher training courses. These changes were also addressed by the education agents and the higher education staff members interviewed in this study.

The changes recorded in respect of Greek tertiary-level students' educational preferences might be better explained considering the macro-economic conditions in students' both sending and receiving countries, such as the changes that have occurred in the Greek labour market during the years of economic recession. Many university departments that used to be remarkably popular among prospective undergraduate students in the years preceding the crisis in Greece due to graduates' high employability, mainly in the public sector, such as Pedagogical Departments (Primary Education), over the last years, have lost to a great extent their popularity due to the high unemployment rate of their graduates. Construction is another economic sector

that has been hardest-hit by the financial crisis, resulting to a drastic decline in the construction activity and, consequently, increase in the unemployment rate of Engineering and Architecture graduates. Thus, it might be suggested that these negative labour market conditions in the above sectors may have strongly affected Greek students' educational choices and contributed to the declining numbers of HE Greek students' enrolments in the above subject areas, not only at higher education institutions in Greece but also abroad.

Overall, it can be argued that domestic labour market conditions may significantly affect students' educational decisions although the largest proportion of them tend to migrate for their studies with the hope to remain and work abroad upon graduation (ICEF monitor, 2012). This trend was also revealed in the present study. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, nowadays, Greek students increasingly consider the receiving country's labour market conditions when choosing their study destination country and course of study. As the findings of my study indicate, a number of students may pursue undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses in fields of study (even not relevant to their previous educational backgrounds) that they perceive they may provide them with more and better employment opportunities in the labour markets abroad after graduation. For instance, as mentioned earlier, the subject group of Business and Administrative studies have been by far the most popular subject group among higher education students followed by STEM fields, mostly the fields of Engineering and Technology, which are of high demand in terms of employment opportunities and career prospects in labour markets abroad, especially in the British labour market which suffers a STEM skills' shortage.

Concerning the distribution of student population by subject area and gender, no significant differences in the number of male and female entrants across all levels and modes of study have been identified. A slightly higher proportion of male students than female students at all levels and modes of study were enrolled at UK HEPs from 2013/14 to 2016/17. In the case of taught postgraduate students, the proportion of female students enrolled at UK HEPs was almost equal to that of male students (50.2% and 49.8% respectively). However, there were specific fields of study where significant differences recorded in gender distribution. As illustrated in Figure 7, the subject areas in which female taught postgraduate students outnumbered male students were the following: Education, Law, Creative Arts and Design, and Social

Sciences. On the other hand, the study fields that were numerically dominated by male students comprised Engineering and Technology, and Computer Science. In the disciplines of Mathematics and Physical Sciences, male students were slightly overrepresented, whilst in the case of Architecture, Medicine, subjects allied to Medicine, and Biological Sciences female students outnumbered their male counterparts.

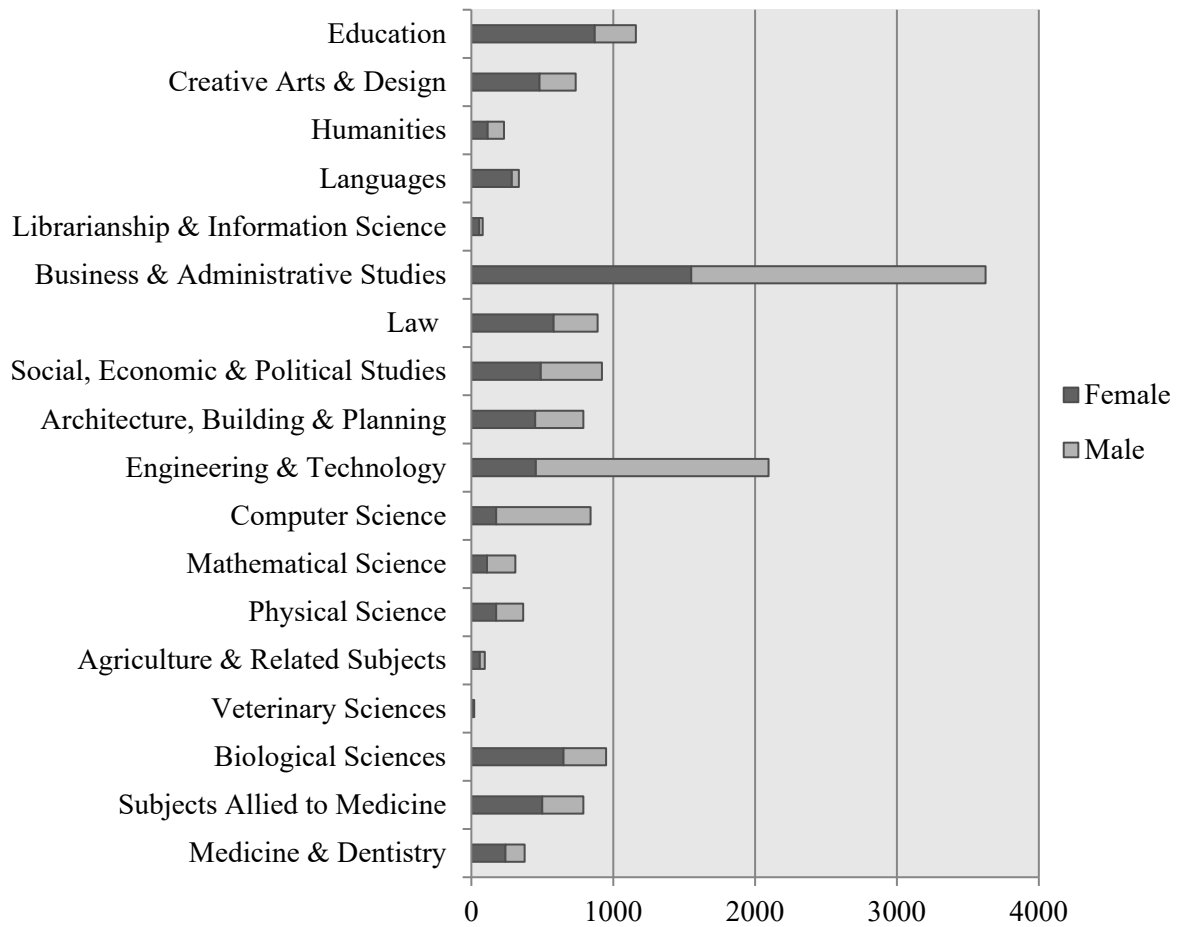


Figure 7. Taught postgraduate student enrolments (domiciled in Greece) by gender and subject area at all UK HEPs (2013/14-2016/17). Source: HESA Student Record 2013/14; 2014/15; 2015/16; 2016/17.

These findings reflect to a great extent the general patterns identified in the case of the total UK and non-UK student population (HESA, 2019d; 2019g) (see section 4.1). Despite the increase recorded in the number of female tertiary-level students in STEM fields over the years at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, some study disciplines, such as Engineering and Technology, and Computer Sciences

still remain male-dominated, whilst female students consecutively outnumber in the fields of Social Sciences and Education. The investigation of the factors that may explain these variations is beyond the scope of this study, but these results reflect a general pattern regarding students' distribution by gender and subject area that is evidenced in various studies, facts and figures and needs further examination.

4.4 Summary

Over the past decades, there has been a growth of international student migration on a global scale. Drawing on the analysis of secondary numerical data, this chapter has traced the patterns and trends of student migration flows at global and European levels focusing on the UK as a study destination, in particular Greek student migration flows to the UK. In addition, it has explained the changing patterns and trends exhibited over time taking into account the macro-economic circumstances under which students make their migration and educational decisions.

As shown in the data, the most popular study destinations among students have been English-speaking countries, with the USA attracting the largest number of them, followed by the UK and Australia. A number of changes have occurred in the patterns and trends of Greek students' migration flows to the UK since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. Although thousands of them enrol at UK HEPs every year, a drop has been recorded in their enrolments compared with the years preceding the crisis. One of the most significant changes concerns students' educational choices. Although there is a lack of evidence on Greek student migration, these changes may be partly explained by the socio-economic and labour market conditions in both sending and receiving countries. For example, Business and Administrative studies have been placed on the top of students' educational preferences at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. A possible explanation of this trend might be the increasing employment opportunities in this field in contemporary labour markets. Other subject areas that used to attract large number of students have decreased to some extent in popularity, possibly due to low graduate employability rates and declining employment opportunities.

The analysis of these facts and figures shows that students' educational choices are significantly influenced by the socio-economic and labour market

conditions in their home and host countries. Evidence suggests that a large proportion of them may migrate for study purposes with the intention to remain abroad upon graduation. This non-return post-study pattern has been increasing over the last decade, overlapping with the growing migration flows of Greek nationals, mainly the highly educated, who tend to move abroad in search of better employment and life opportunities. In contrast to this contemporary trend, in the years preceding the crisis, many students tended to migrate for study purposes with the intention to return to their home country after graduation. The changing patterns in students' migration flows, mostly in regard to subject choices, might hint at changes in the meaning that people place on their migration journeys and life plans. In the next chapter, there will be a discussion of how students' have perceived their educational migration to the UK over their life courses, what their migration and educational aspirations are and what factors have underpinned their decision-making patterns.

Chapter 5

Understanding Aspirations and Decision-making

5.1 Introduction

From a life course perspective, this chapter examines students' migration and educational aspirations and decision-making processes, taking as a focus how students perceive their educational migration to the UK. As shown in the findings, students do not view their migration as a 'one-time' event, but as part of their life planning, highly grounded in life course aspirations and life-time migration intentions (see also Findlay et al., 2017). Their migration journeys have been attached with various meanings and perceived implications upon their life courses in the short and long term. In particular, educational migration has been considered by them in two main ways: a) as a way of overcoming and coping with the socio-economic difficulties and uncertainties they might have faced in their home country, and a strategy of constructing and enhancing their employment prospects, and b) as an opportunity for self-discovery and self-experimentation, and a path to independence and autonomy. Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) has allowed a deeper examination of the various ways in which students deploy their economic, social and cultural resources in the pursuit of their migration aspirations, and how they attempt to overcome employment constraints in home country by applying a capital accumulation strategy. Specifically, the students seek to enhance their employment prospects by accumulating cultural and social capital, mainly represented in the acquisition of 'highly valued' academic credentials, work experience and professional network formation (see also Tomlinson, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Waters, 2009a, 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012). The location of study has also been perceived as a subset of capitals that they attempt to accumulate, with London being attached with high value in aiding employment. However, aside with professional and career-related aspirations, for a number of students, especially those from more financially privileged backgrounds, their educational migration has been significantly driven by

experiential motivations. The concept of youth transitions enables a better understanding of how the students conceptualise the state of independence over their life courses and how their migration was perceived by them as way of becoming independent and autonomous through leaving the parental home and becoming financially self-sufficient after graduation.

Their migration and educational aspirations and decision-making processes have been influenced by various structural and contextual factors, and a number of variations by gender, mode of study, subject area and location of study have been captured among the sample. One of the sections focuses on the role of students' social networks and how they have influenced their migration aspirations and decisions through establishing 'cultures of mobility' (Beech, 2015: 335) and normalising certain migration patterns, particularly, in this case study, the pattern of migration for study and then for work purposes.

5.2 Employment constraints in home country as a driver of migration

Contrary to studies that often create binaries by approaching certain types of migration in isolation from others, the findings of my study indicate that student migration cannot be examined disconnected from other forms of migration (see King, 2002; Findlay et al., 2017). In agreement with the findings of Findlay and colleagues' (2017: 192) research on UK students enrolled in foreign universities, my study has found that educational migration is embedded in students' life course aspirations and 'subsequent life-time mobility intentions'. Specifically, educational migration was identified to be inextricably linked to migration for work purposes, as almost all of the participants have perceived it as the first stage in a broader plan for emigration (see Pratsinakis et al., 2017; Sakellariou and Koronaiou, 2018).

The socio-economic conditions in Greece have played a crucial role in students' aspirations and decision-making processes. High unemployment rates, lack of employment opportunities and career prospects in their field of study as well as precarious types of employment were identified as some of the main drivers of their migration. Most of them had decided to migrate abroad for study and then for work purposes, even before completing their undergraduate studies in Greece considering

the difficulties they might have faced in their transition to employment after graduation. As one of the respondents reported:

The working conditions are awful! It's not just the very low salary, but also how the employers treat their employees. [...] They don't even provide you with the standard working conditions! They are taking advantage of you! You need to beg everyone in the city in order to find a job.

(Manolis, M, 31, Transport Studies, N. England)

Fifteen students pursued their taught postgraduate studies straight after completing their undergraduate degree courses, whilst the rest started their studies one or more years after graduation. Six male students started their courses one year after they had completed their undergraduate level of study because they wanted first to perform their 9-month mandatory military service in Greece. Due to financial constraints, a number of respondents migrated for study a few years after having saved some money by working in often insecure, short-term and low-paid job positions, irrelevant to their studies. For 10 participants, the negative experiences they had gained by moving often 'in' and 'out' of the labour market, and working in precarious forms of employment and/or being unemployed had generated and/or enhanced their desire for migration, as expressed in the following statements:

The whole situation made me want to leave more. [...] I worked two years as a waitress in a café. That's something that all Psychology graduates tend to do. [...] I was wondering 'what about my studies?' Will four years of study go to waste? So, I wanted to leave and do something relevant to my studies, something that I'd like to do.

(Alexandra, F, 30, Psychology, N. England)

I got disappointed by not finding a job in Greece. After my graduation, I could see that everything in terms of job vacancies had got frozen. Nothing was moving on in Greece and in my city. I could find just some very low-paid jobs irrelevant to my studies and field.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Furthermore:

The crisis played an important role because I felt that I was blocked at some point. My mind got stuck somehow. You know, I couldn't do

many things and think creatively etc. I felt stressed and that this job was not something that made me feel nice. [...] You obviously see all these things and you want to see what may happen in the future and what would be the best for you.

(Kiriakos, M, 28, Arts, London)

Almost all of them perceived their educational migration to the UK as a strategy of enhancing their employability and facilitating their transition to employment abroad (see also Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). For some participants, migration for studies and then for work was viewed as a ‘natural’ path that they would follow over their life courses, and as a ‘one-way’ option, primarily in the case of students of lower family financial resources. Views similar to the following ones were cited by a few respondents projecting the necessity of following the migration path after graduation:

I didn’t overthink that. [...] It feels like something that has come naturally. So, I try not to look at it in an emotional way, thinking whom I’ve left behind etc. [...] I saw it as a form of natural progression in terms of, you know, since I decided to make a change, this is an important step I need to make in order to make that change. And also I have no problem living abroad.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

My main problem in Greece was that I couldn’t find a job. We are currently going through an economic crisis, especially for civil engineers there is nothing, you can’t find a job. [...] I clearly came here in order to find a job in the UK and stay abroad.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

Poor working conditions have set migration as a ‘one-way option’ [...] When you think of the working conditions, the prospects you may have for the next five years or maybe ten years, you can’t turn a blind eye. [...] My main goal was to get a job, and getting a Master’s degree first was seen as a ‘small step’ in order to achieve my goal.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

As will be discussed in the following section, students’ aspirations and decision-making have been influenced by various factors. These factors were identified to act as facilitators or barriers to their migration and participation in international higher education, shaping educational and employment pathways and opportunities.

5.3 Decision-making patterns

5.3.1 Social crisis, resources and decision-making: Facilitators and barriers

Students' family economic resources and other financial and institutional factors have strongly affected their migration aspirations and decision-making, such as with respect to the selection of study destination, higher education institution, location and course of study, as has also been demonstrated in a number of studies that have examined the determinants of student migration (e.g. Findlay et al., 2006; International Graduate Insight Group [i-graduate] 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). In order to better understand students' decision-making and how students have deployed their economic resources in pursuit of their migration and educational aspirations, the impact of the financial crisis on their family contexts needs to be discussed.

As shown in the findings, the financial crisis has affected the families of all of the respondents. However, some were hit harder than others, especially those whose parents worked in the private sector, such as in sales, trade and construction sector. Talking about this issue one respondent stated:

My family was definitely affected by the crisis. My father is a merchant. He deals with trade, so that had a big impact on us.
(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

Furthermore, the large cuts in wages, pensions and layoffs, followed the implementation of the austerity measures by the government, led many families to financial hardship, and students as well as both their parents needed to work in more than one job positions in order to financially support the family. Some students had to move out from the location of their undergraduate study and returned to their hometown, as their families could not financially support them. One of these respondents stated:

I went to Thessaloniki for my undergraduate studies while my father was still working. However, I had to move out after some years because

one day, my father wasn't called to go to work, and so, he had to immediately submit the required documents in order to get retired, but had to wait for nine months for his pension to be obtained. Over that period he would not get any income. During those months, we had a very difficult time. My mother had managed to find a part-time job and I had to move out and went back home. [...] I also found a job, but the salary was much lower than it used to be.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

The crisis hit dramatically the families of three respondents. Prior to the crisis their financial status was very high, as their families used to own prosperous businesses. However, after the outbreak of the crisis their businesses started to decline and, finally, went into bankruptcy. One participant defined himself as being a 'bankrupt class' student in an attempt to describe the dramatic change in his socio-economic status:

My father used to run various tourism businesses, but after the crisis, he went bankrupt. [...] Before the crisis we were a high class family, but after the crisis we became a 'bankrupt class' one.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

The students from vocational backgrounds were also hardest hit by the crisis and the consequences were very severe causing financial hardship and psychological distress. The students whose families were worst affected by the crisis had to start working at a young age, some from the age of 15, in order to get by and fund their studies, as well as contribute to the family income. As one respondent explained:

I am not a member of a middle-class family. I had always had in mind that I had to save some money because you never know. [...] After the crisis had hit our family, we changed apartment. I didn't have my own bedroom. I had to sleep with my sister in the living room. My parents felt very down. It was a psychological damage. [...] And of course, we have never been able to buy our own apartment. We never had a stable income [...] I had to work to earn and save some money for my studies.

(Anastasia, F, 25, Education, N. England)

The impact of the crisis on their family finances has affected students' migration and educational decision-making. Of the total sample, 13 students were self-funded. The rest have received the loan and/or a scholarship offered by their university or another provider in the UK or in Greece. One of the main motivating

factors for studying in the UK, apart from the English language, was the postgraduate Master's loan, introduced by the British government in the academic year 2016/17 (see chapter 4). One of the students who have received the loan mentioned:

Another main reason I came here was the student loan [...] A hundred percent I came here because of this, as I didn't have the money. [...] If I hadn't got that loan, I would still have been in Greece.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

A regional difference has been identified regarding students' family economic status, mainly indicated by parental occupation and how they have funded their studies. Of the sample of the 17 students studying in the north of England, only five participants were self-funded, whilst the rest have received the loan and/or a scholarship provided by the university. On the other hand, in the case of the 14 students studying in London, four students have received the loan, two have received one or more scholarships, one has received the loan and a scholarship, and eight students were self-funded. Almost all of the participants studying in London are from professional backgrounds, with some of them being more financially privileged than the others. Most of them were self-funded although the tuition fees of some courses in some study fields, mostly in the subject group of Business and Administrative studies, and Engineering, are higher compared with the fees at the higher education institution in the city in the north of England. Most of the students who have received the loan and/or scholarships in order to fund their studies are less privileged in terms of family economic resources. Two of these students are the ones who used to be from an affluent family before their family business went into bankruptcy.

The families of these students could not financially support them not only during their postgraduate studies but also their undergraduate studies. Therefore, in order to cover their study and living costs these students needed to work:

I have been working since I was 15 years old due to economic circumstances. [...] I had to work 9 hours per day in order to earn the money for my studies. Also, I had to spend 3 hours in commuting. [...] So, I didn't have any free time. I could hardly sleep for a few hours.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

I've been on my own since I was 18 years old, you know, at an economic level. My family could support me by giving me very little money. [...] So, I had to find a way to come here.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

One of these students aside with the loan and his personal savings, he had received financial support from one of his previous employers in order to cover his study and living costs in the UK. The other one had managed to set up two online businesses, but in order to cover a part of the cost for his taught postgraduate studies, he had to sell his share to his partner. In addition, he has also received a scholarship and the loan. As he put it:

I sold my share to my partner and this is how I paid a large amount of my expenses here [...] I got the scholarship and with the money I got after I had sold my share I covered the fees plus some other initial costs, and with the loan money I'm just getting by.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

This regional pattern in regard to students' socio-economic backgrounds and way of funding was also echoed in the accounts of the education agents. Drawing on their experience in consulting and recruiting students for several years, both education agents reported that London is the most popular study destination, mostly among students from affluent families. They mentioned that the vast majority of the students who apply for study abroad are of middle-class and some from very privileged backgrounds who usually want to go to London and tend to pay all the study and accommodation costs in advance. One of them reported that in the case of less privileged students, receiving the postgraduate Master's loan, scholarships and/or other forms of financial support, as well as working while studying are the only ways through which they may fulfil their migration and educational aspirations.

The findings indicate that many students from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds have chosen their degree programmes and location of study being mostly influenced by considerations with respect to the institute's reputation, mainly indicated by its ranking in university league tables, without expressing high concerns regarding the costs involved, such as the tuition fees. Regarding the selection of the higher education institution and course of their study, three respondents stated:

I had checked the rankings. This university was ranked very high. I had also some professors who had studied here. And you know, [I considered] what is generally said about the university, its reputation etc.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

[I took into account] Reputation, rankings, most of all, and whatever this means, in terms of employability.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

No [I didn't take the fees into account]. I'd take them into account if I could access a university with lower fees. Then, I would do it, but to an equally good university. [...] If I went to a university where its Business department is ranked very low in the rankings, then there would be no point in doing it.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

On the other hand, for students from families with less financial resources, their decision-making was highly influenced by economic factors. Some students could not access their first choice university, course and study location due to financial constraints. One of them highlighted:

My first goal was getting into a university in London, but unfortunately, I couldn't do that because of financial circumstances. It is too expensive there!

(Dionisis, M, 24, Business, N. England)

It is noteworthy that all of the students in both regions reported that although the loan is crucial to funding their studies, it is not enough to cover all their expenses. Almost all of them are partially or fully reliant on their families in order to cover their living and other expenses, and some full-time students are currently working or looking for a part-time job although they are worried about balancing work and study. Three out of the four part-time students have received the loan for their studies and one of the main reasons they had decided to follow a part-time degree programme was the fact that this mode of study might allow them to combine work with study.

5.3.2 The drivers of students' migration to the UK

My data provides insight into students' motivations for pursuing taught postgraduate studies, and focuses on the UK, which, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, has been the most popular study destination among Greek students for several years. In respect of students' decision to engage with taught postgraduate study, employability enhancement was identified as the strongest motivating factor. Moreover, apart from personal interest, which had also significantly influenced their decision-making, specialisation in their subject area that would be obtained through taught postgraduate study was perceived by many of them as necessary and in some cases inevitable for professional and educational development and in support of employment prospects. As one student said:

I wanted to do it for two main reasons; a practical and a romantic one. I knew that there would be no future if I had obtained only a Bachelor's degree in Engineering, and without having my parents working in this field and with no networks. However, I also like my study field a lot. Civil engineering is a very broad field. [...] So, I wanted to specialise more in this area.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

In addition, some students wanted to follow a different career path through their taught postgraduate study. Most of them have changed their field from Education to Business, mainly to Management and Marketing. They decided to do so, partly because of personal interest, but primarily to enhance their employability due to greater availability of job vacancies in relevant disciplinary fields in contemporary labour markets in the UK and other countries abroad. For example, one interviewee said:

I decided to change my field and study Management, mostly because of the conditions in Greece. I couldn't do the job I really liked. [...] If I could find a job as a teacher upon graduation, I wouldn't think about migrating.

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

Most of the respondents had applied only for taught postgraduate degree programmes offered by British higher education institutions, whilst a few of them

apart from the UK, had searched and applied for courses at universities in other countries, such as in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. For many students, migrating to the UK for study was primarily perceived as a means of accumulating cultural capital, mainly represented in the acquisition of academic credentials. The status attached to an academic qualification awarded by a British university, as well as the good worldwide reputation and the academic quality of the British higher education system were cited by almost all of them as a key motivating factor for studying in the UK. This perception is reflected in the comment below:

British universities have a very good reputation. A British higher education degree has a different value to degrees awarded by universities in other countries. They are very highly valued in the labour market even beyond the UK. I believe it may improve my career prospects a lot!

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

The accumulation of ‘institutionalised cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 243; Brown, 1995; L.T. Tran, 2016) through the acquisition of ‘highly valued’ British academic qualifications was expected to enhance their employability and advance their career prospects. Almost all of the participants highlighted that it would be impossible for them to find a ‘good’ job in their field in Greece, the UK or in any other country abroad by obtaining only a local undergraduate degree due to high competition in their career field. Some students had come up with this perception after having faced difficulties in finding employment in the UK before they decided to migrate there for their studies. Therefore, due to the difficult socio-economic and labour market conditions in their home country, a number of students had already started considering and/or searching for employment in the UK with the intention to migrate for work. As they pointed out, through their job-seeking experiences they had realised the important role that a British academic qualification might play in increasing their employment prospects in the British labour market. The acquisition of this qualification was perceived, especially by many students studying Business and Administrative studies, as a ‘passport’ which might ‘open doors’ to more career opportunities and as a requirement in order to enter the highly competitive global labour markets. According to one participant:

When I was applying for jobs (in the UK) they were asking me ‘What is this university? We don’t know this’. They wanted a British ‘stamp’ on your qualification, you know, even if it is awarded by a mediocre, not very good university. So, I realised that an important requirement for getting a job here is the acquisition of a British degree.

(Dionisis, M, 24, Business, N. England)

Aside with the British higher education system’s reputation and the higher education institution’s reputation in their field of study, the English language was identified as another significant reason the students had chosen the UK for their studies. The important role of the English language in students’ decision-making is reflected in the following statement, which was typical among a few respondents:

One of the main pros of coming here was the language. Of course, you could also be taught and communicate in English at another European university, but I thought that I would always feel like a ‘stranger’ if I lived in a country where I didn’t speak the native language. [...] I feel confident with speaking English without thinking about that.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

Other motivating factors for coming to the UK were the availability of degree programmes, the length of study and course entry requirements, social network recommendations, socio-economic conditions and educational and/or employment opportunities in the UK, the postgraduate Master’s loan and/or other forms of financial support, personal interest, socio-cultural, and other experiential factors. Five participants who wanted to pursue a taught postgraduate degree programme in order to engage with postgraduate research study in the UK reported that they did not want to stay for their studies in Greece because the research and employment opportunities in their study fields would be very limited compared with the UK. However, almost all of them highlighted that the only way to pursue a PhD degree is through some form of financial support, such as a scholarship.

Students’ social networks, mainly comprised of former university lectures/professors, have played a significant role in their aspirations and decision-making, especially with respect to the selection of study destination, higher education institution and course of study. Some students have followed their former university lecturers’/professors’ academic footsteps by choosing the university and in some cases even the same course they had studied in the past. The fact that their university

lecturers/professors had studied that course and/or at the same university in the UK acted as an indicator of the university's quality and reputation, and the academic and market value of a degree awarded by this institution. As one of the students commented:

One of my professors had also pursued a similar Master's course and a PhD programme here. So, he had a lot of experience and knew what is going on here and, in general, abroad. So, he told me to move abroad if I wanted a better future.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Aside with asking for personal advice and recommendations from their social networks, almost all of the respondents had checked the university ranking tables in order to become informed regarding the reputation of higher education institutions and degree programmes. For some students, the rankings had played an important influential role in their decision-making, whilst others reported that although they had considered them to some extent, they do not fully trust them as a reliable and representative source of information. As demonstrated in the following statements, visiting online professional networking sites, like LinkedIn as well as universities' websites and other online sources was another strategy that many students applied, mainly those studying Business and Engineering, in order to get informed about the universities' quality and graduates' employability:

As I've told you one of my professors was in this university. [...] So, I had found out more about this university through him. I had searched how many alumni are currently working or not through LinkedIn. [...] I had talked with many people on LinkedIn about the Master's courses they had done, the guys who had already graduated.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

Institutional factors, such as university education representatives, student recruitment agents and the British Council were cited by very few participants as a source of information they had used as part of their decision-making. These networks were not identified to have played an important influential role, apart from in the case of very few students. The location of the higher education institution was another significant criterion that many participants had seriously considered when making their migration and educational decisions (see Bennett and Turner, 2012). Before they

applied for courses, the respondents had made an online research about the location of the higher education institutions in terms of cost and quality of living, employment opportunities, lifestyle, infrastructure, transport, entertainment facilities and other socio-cultural factors. The location of study has also significantly affected the perceptions of many students regarding the university's image and the reputation of a degree awarded by that university, primarily in terms of labour market value (see also i-graduate, 2013). Likewise in Herrero and colleagues' (2015) study in Spain, students' perceptions of a university, in this case British universities, particularly those located in London, have been affected by their perceptions of the institution's quality, indicated by multiple variables, such as its global reputation (mainly associated with its ranking position in university league tables), facilities, academic programmes, and other factors, such as graduate employability rates and the employment outcomes of alumni (Herrero et al., 2015; see Soutar and Turner, 2002; Cai and Loo, 2014; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2014). The image of the universities was found to be interrelated with the image of the city and the image of the country where the universities are located, highly influencing students' decision-making with respect to the selection of study destination and higher education provider. The image of a country may positively or negatively influence the image of a city that may impact on the university's image (Herrero et al., 2015; see Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002; Cai and Loo, 2014). In this case study, students' positive perceptions of the city of London and, more broadly, of the UK were associated with positive perceptions of British higher education institutions. The country's and, in particular, the city's positive image was mainly associated with various economic and career-related factors, such as availability of employment and educational opportunities, professional development and career advancement, level of income, as well as technological and socio-cultural factors, such as infrastructure, lifestyle, quality of living and cultural diversity (see Herrero et al., 2015).

The UK, especially London, has been attached with a high value in aiding employment. Specifically, the participants, perceived that obtaining a degree awarded by a university in the capital may facilitate employment and advance their career prospects in the labour market in the UK, in Greece and/or another country abroad because this city has a long-standing worldwide reputation, as being one of the world's major financial and cultural centres:

I just believe that the capital's universities, London's universities, likewise the universities in Athens in Greece, are of a bit higher reputation in labour market terms. So, saying that you have graduated from a university in London may be different from saying that you have graduated from a university located in the province. Unfortunately, this is what the labour market is like. However, this doesn't mean necessarily that the educational level is the same. A university in the province may be equally good.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

In line with King and colleagues' (2018:14) findings on young Baltic graduates living in London, some students in the present study have perceived their studying and working in the UK as an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992), a 'stepping-stone to somewhere else'. The location of study has been perceived as a subset of capitals that students seek to accumulate. Studying and working for a period of time in the UK, primarily in London, was seen by some students as necessary in order to develop professionally and enhance their employability not only in the UK but also in other labour markets in their home country and/or another country abroad. Apart from accumulating 'institutionalised cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986: 243; Brown, 1995; L.T. Tran, 2016) through acquiring 'highly valued' qualifications and 'valuable' work experience, many participants, mostly those studying courses in the fields of Business, Engineering, and in other STEM fields, have perceived their educational migration as a way of accumulating 'valuable' social capital through network formation. They expected that being in London might enable them to keep updated on the latest labour market conditions, trends and job vacancies, and form professional networks that might enhance their career progression. As two of them put it:

London is the biggest financial centre in Europe and one of the biggest in the world. Business Schools here are among the best ones in Europe. [...] Most of the companies in my field are staffed by graduates from London's Business Schools. So, I thought that my study here might be a kind of 'passport' in order to enter industry.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

I mostly wanted to come to London for networking, for sure. [...] This university may give you some privileges in terms of networking. [...] You can be on standby in case they call you for a job interview.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

Another student commented:

I wanted to do a Master's course here in order to enter the country and do some networking because I have some friends who came here straight after their bachelor's study and faced some difficulties with networking.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

Many participants have viewed their educational migration to the UK and the acquisition of a British awarded taught postgraduate degree as a 'requirement' that they need to meet in order to secure a good job position in terms of economic, professional and social status, and gain access to 'valuable' social networks (see Hall, 2011). Two respondents pointed out:

The UK has a very good reputation in Business and Management studies and the university's links are very helpful in order to do some networking.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

What I actually expect from my Master's study is networking in my field and to make me think in a more professional way, to help me enter the British labour market, and mostly to find a PhD relevant to my Master's course.

(Evelina, F, 24, Biosciences, London)

Likewise Business students, students of other fields, particularly Engineering students, also believe that the UK, especially London, is the place where they could advance their professional career and gain valuable work experience due to the ongoing high construction activity and the high demand for Engineering graduates. The negative Greek labour market conditions in their field had motivated them to migrate for study and then for work to this destination. Most of these students had already got informed about the British labour market conditions and some of them had started searching for job positions in their field even before they arrived there for their studies. The availability of employment opportunities in their field had played a crucial role in their decision-making. As two respondents explained:

My main problem in Greece was that I couldn't find a job. [...]
Especially for civil engineers there is nothing, you can't find a job. [...]
Of course, I had searched about the labour market conditions here. Here

they ask for a civil engineer every day. [...] There are jobs. [...] You know, London is like a machine moving all the time.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

Because of the crisis there is no development in my field. So, even if I was in Greece and had a well-paid job, something that could not really happen, but anyway even if that happened, I wouldn't gain the work experience that a colleague of mine could get by working in the UK where much better construction projects take place.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

The findings indicate that within the context of neoliberal economic and social changes students deploy a number of strategies in order to manage the uncertainties and riskiness of their transition from education to employment (see Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004; Findlay et al., 2011; 2012; Akhurst et al., 2014). Accumulating a subset of capitals through their educational migration to the UK is perceived by them as a way of cultivating a distinctive academic and professional identity that might enhance their employment prospects (see also Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004; Akhurst et al., 2014; Findlay et al., 2012). The acquisition of academic qualifications awarded by 'prestigious' higher education institutions, work experience, professional network formation, the study location as well as specialisation in their field of study have been identified as forms of distinction that a number of students attempt to pursue not only due to personal interest but also for professional development.

5.4 The role of social networks

Consistent with previous literature (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2010; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Beech, 2015), my findings confirm the socially embedded nature of educational migration. Students' social networks, mainly comprised of family, friendship and romantic relationships as well as 'weak ties' (i.e. former university lecturers), have played an important role in generating migration aspirations and facilitating students' migratory and settlement process in the host country, something that will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Almost all of the participants had relatives, friends, peers, former university lecturers/professors and/or other people they knew who had previously migrated for study and/or work or were currently studying and/or working abroad, mainly in the

UK. Before choosing their study destination, course and higher education provider, most of them had consulted their networks. Their social networks, through sharing their own experiences and providing advice, support and encouragement, often acted as role models for them and, therefore, had importantly influenced their migration and educational aspirations and decisions.

Many students had pre-established notions of their overseas experiences and built pictures of what these experiences might be like through exposure to the first-hand experiences of their stronger ties, such as their family members and friends, as well as of their weaker ties, comprised of former university lectures/professors and other people they knew who had previously studied or currently studying in the UK or somewhere else abroad (see Beech, 2015: 339, 344, 347). Furthermore, by sharing their own experiences and offering support and encouragement, students' social networks had influenced students' migration aspirations and decisions through establishing 'cultures of mobility' (Beech, 2015: 344, 347; 339) and normalising the migration pattern for study and then for work purposes. These networks had encouraged students to migrate for their studies highlighting the potential benefits that educational migration might bring to their lives at personal, educational, socio-cultural and, mainly, professional levels in terms of employment opportunities and career prospects. One student stated:

If my brother hadn't come here, I don't think I would have come. [...] I have watched all his steps till now [...] He had influenced me by telling me what I could not do if I stayed in Greece. Because I was still a student, I hadn't realised how bad the things had been. I started to realise that during the fourth year of my studies. He was also telling me about his own experiences here, he knew how things had been in Greece and he was talking about the UK, his studies, how satisfied he had been.

(Aspa, F, 22, Education, N .England)

Some participants moved closer to where family members or other contacts were as a strategy in order to secure social protection and cope with the risks and uncertainties accompanying migration (see also Michielin et al., 2008; Bilecen and Sienkiewicz, 2015), as will be further discussed in the following chapter. As two students pointed out:

I came here because it's the centre of the UK and Europe. [...] There are more job opportunities and, of course, because I had some people I knew here. This has also played a role, for sure.

(Kiriakos, M, 28, Arts, London)

Another reason I came here was my brother, who was also studying here. [...] We would live together and share the expenses.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

In families where other members, especially the elder siblings, had already been abroad for their studies, educational migration and remaining abroad after graduation was perceived as a normal course of action that the younger siblings were expected to perform. As a fact, three participants pointed out that their elder sibling had previously studied or currently studying and/or working in the UK. This had significantly influenced and facilitated their educational migration. Additionally, their migration was viewed not only by themselves but also their parents as something that had come naturally and they were expected to do over their life courses. Their parents, although they felt sad that their children would leave away from them, were supportive and did not get surprised with their migration decisions because they often expected them to do what their siblings had also done. According to one of these respondents:

My family thought that it was a kind predetermined that I would do that, as my sister had also done that. You know, this is something common with the younger children. Because your older sister had left, you would do the same. [...] They didn't put any pressure on me, but I didn't have to try a lot to persuade them. [...] They knew that it would happen.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

In a similar way, some students who were the first family members who had migrated for study believed that they might start to establish a culture of mobility within their family contexts by acting as role models for their younger siblings:

I have two younger sisters. [...] I think that I may be a role model for them. I've been trying to encourage my middle sister to go abroad maybe for Erasmus or for an internship just to see how things are abroad because she has never left home [...] My youngest sister is already saying 'I want to study abroad!'

(Evelina, F, 24, Biosciences, London)

Students' exposure to cultures of mobility that may generate and enhance migration aspirations and facilitate their migration was found to be influenced by their family economic and cultural resources (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2011; Beech, 2015: 347). The findings suggest that compared with students from vocational backgrounds and lower family financial status and parental education, students from professional backgrounds with greater access to financial resources and mobility capital may be more likely to participate in such social networks that establish cultures of mobility and facilitate educational mobility (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009b; 2011; Beech, 2015). Specifically, most of the students who had family members that had previously or currently studying and/or working abroad were from more privileged backgrounds and of higher parental education level. On the other hand, most of the students of lower family economic status reported that they had not any close family members, such as siblings, who had previously or currently studying abroad.

Moreover, support and encouragement for migration has been stronger in the case of students coming from families with higher educational background and mobility capital, when one or both parents had previously studied and/or worked abroad. These parents were very supportive towards students' migration decision for educational migration, as well as their intention to remain abroad upon graduation, encouraging them to implement their migration aspirations, as they believed that in this way their children could have better career prospects there, but also in order to gain various socio-cultural experiences. Two of these students reported:

My parents were very warm and supportive! [...] I think that the fact that both of them had also studied abroad, my mother did a Master's degree in the UK and my father did two Master's degrees, a PhD and a post-doc in France and Belgium, and with the feedback they had given me had played a very important role in my decision-making. [...] They would like me to stay here upon graduation because they think that I could have a better future here.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

Because my mother had lived in a big city abroad and knew what living abroad was like, she was very supportive. [...] She was always telling me that I should gain some experiences living abroad, that this is a good 'stepping-stone'.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

Furthermore, for some participants, following their parents' footsteps was something that they liked and felt proud of doing, as for them their parents act as role models:

Studying here feels somehow that I am following my father's footsteps. I really like this. We have been very close to each other, especially after the difficult financial hardship we had been through.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

In other cases, where the parents had never been abroad, even if their educational backgrounds were high, students' decision for migration was treated with more reluctance and concern. As one respondent addressed:

They wanted me to stay in Greece [...]. I think it's because of the fear, if something happens to me. You know, the distance. It's very difficult for someone to come here and support you, especially if this person hasn't been abroad before.

(Efi, F, 25, Physics, N. England)

In some cases, the parent who was found not to be very positive and more reluctant with the migration decision was the father, whilst the mother was more supportive:

My father wants me to go back to Greece. [...] My mother supports me very much, letting me do whatever I want. She doesn't make any kind of psychological 'war' to me. [...] She migrated to Greece many years ago, as she fell in love with my dad and decided to come here. So, she knows what is like.

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

My mother encouraged me to leave because she could see that I really wanted that. [...] She knows that there is no future in Greece. My father had been abroad for a long time because of his job. He was a sailor but now has got retired, and wants to spend more time with us. So, first he was telling me the negative things rather than the positive ones.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

A number of students mentioned that their parents' concerns about their home-leaving and decision for migration is a tendency often observed in many Greek families, where family values are usually strong and parents are often overprotective

towards their children. However, it should be noted that even in most of the cases of students, where one or both parents were not initially positive about their children's decision to move abroad, the parents finally supported their migration decisions as they perceived that this action would be in their children's best interests, as illustrated in the following statements:

They supported me, but you know how families are in Greece. They worry a lot about their children and don't want them to leave home and live abroad. Now, they are fine.

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N .England)

My parents agree and support me. You know, parents are parents, especially Greek parents and how Greek family is structured, you know, they want their kids to be close [...], but ok, they know that I always had some ambitions, trying for the best. [...] They know that I wanted in my life to try and do some things I'm interested in. So, they support this effort.

(Kiriakos, M, 28, Arts, London)

Despite their concerns that their children would move away from them, almost all of the respondents reported that their families have finally supported their decision to migrate to the UK for their studies, and then stay there or migrate to another country upon graduation, considering the current socio-economic conditions in Greece. They perceived that through their migration the children might secure a better future abroad. As one of the respondents addressed:

They said 'leave to save your life!', but then they were more reluctant thinking 'our two children will be abroad'. [...] But I know that given the time period they were very open-minded. [...] They were very supportive. They knew that if I stayed there, I would have no job.

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

Aside with family members, students' social contexts, in particular friendship relationships have also been identified as another influential factor in students' aspirations and decision-making. Most participants' friends have been supportive towards their decision to migrate although they felt sad that they would move abroad:

All my friends want me to be abroad, because they know that I try, they know that I'll achieve something good. [...] And when you see that

someone is going well, you don't want him to stay in a village or in a small town, to do what there?

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

A number of respondents also reported that some of their friends would have also migrated abroad for studies and then work, if they had the economic capacity to do so. The main factors that have generated their desire for migration were their experiences of being unemployed, and/or working in precarious types of employment often not matching their qualifications and interests. Apart from family members, friendship networks were found to contribute to the establishment of mobility cultures, as a number of them mentioned that their friends have already migrated or intend to migrate to the UK or another country abroad for studies and/or work. As three of them reported:

I've already been waiting for my friends to come here next year. They have also made an application for a Master's degree here. So, I think I have influenced them.

(Athena, F, 24, Education, London)

My friends are spread out. My best friend has been living permanently in Switzerland over the last three years. My other friend left to Switzerland when I also left from Greece. Our generation learns how to cope with different conditions. [...] We learn to adapt.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

My friends are all around the world. [...] They left once we had finished high school in 2009 during the crisis. Most of them had left for studies and remained abroad as they have found a job there.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

Two other students commented:

I see that more and more friends of mine tend to migrate abroad. Others for studies and others for work. [...] Many just want to go and live somewhere for some time, get familiarised with the new environment and find a job.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

That wasn't something I had thought about a lot because I knew that it would happen sometime in one way or another.

(Athena, F, 24, Education, London)

Partners have also played an important role in students' migration aspirations and decision-making. Seven respondents reported that a significant driver for their migration was their partner, who was already studying and/or working there or he/she was going to migrate to the UK for study and/or work. As one of the students said:

It was a very strong motivating factor the fact that my girlfriend would come here for her studies too. She made me want to study and pass my modules to graduate. She was about to leave, and I had to do something to leave too. [...] We wanted to study and live here together.

(Anastasia, F, 25, Education, N. England)

Furthermore, for five students, considerations of the preferences and plans of their partner have significantly influenced their decision-making regarding the selection of the location of their study. Thus, given that some of them would move there with their partner, an important factor they considered when choosing a study destination was the employment opportunities that would be available there for both of them as their post-study plan was to remain in the UK:

One of the most important reasons I came to the UK was my boyfriend who has been here for two years. I wanted to study in a big town, so my boyfriend could have more job opportunities.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

However, although some participants were highly motivated to migrate to the UK in order to live with their partner, for others their educational migration contributed to the end of their relationship with their partner mostly due to different future aspirations and/or distance. After the end of their relationship with their partner in Greece, the educational migration was seen by two students as a turning point marking a new start in their life course not only at educational and professional level but also in their personal lives. As one student commented on this:

That was the perfect timing for me, I think. I had also broken up so I thought there was nothing else holding me back, so let's go there. [...] In general, I wanted to start a new chapter at all levels in my life.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

Therefore, students' migration decisions are not only informed by educational and professional factors but are also highly influenced by their social and family contexts. Students' social networks and relationships with others, mainly family, friendship and romantic relationships, significantly affect their decisions and consequently, their life courses. These findings indicate that the nature of student migration is socially embedded, as students' decision-making is not only an individual process but is being made within wider social units and under the influence of various types of social networks (see Brooks and Waters, 2010: 146; Raghuram, 2013).

5.5 Mobility capital

Social networks and the social and cultural capital that students had accumulated by studying and travelling abroad have importantly motivated and facilitated their migration (see Brooks and Waters, 2009a; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). The study found that previous mobility experiences, which have been conceptualised by Murphy-Lejeune (2002) as 'mobility capital', may increase the student's likelihood of mobility, as cultural capital, which could be acquired through travel experiences, may motivate them to study abroad (Brooks and Waters, 2010:154; see Findlay et al., 2005; 2010; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014: 468). This form of capital becomes embodied as part of a person's habitus that may influence their further decisions and actions 'urging' them to pursue new mobility opportunities (Carlson, 2013: 172).

Almost all of the participants had already been abroad mostly for holidays. Many students had visited their family members/friends/partners while they were studying and/or working in the UK. Their travel experiences had strengthened their desire to migrate there because they felt familiar with the study destination at social, cultural and academic levels, as seen in the following quote:

I had already been here a couple of times, as my brother had come here for his studies and now he is working here. So, I felt more familiar with this country rather than another country. [...] Travelling helped me see what living abroad is like. [...] Definitely those experiences have influenced my decision.

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

It should be noted that some participants after having been to the UK in order to visit their family members/friends/partners who were studying and/or working there, they got particularly enthusiastic, especially with the place and the universities' facilities. Some of them who had been to the UK when they were high school or undergraduate students expressed strong desire for pursuing their undergraduate studies there, but due to financial constraints and/or family and other personal reasons, they were not able to do so:

I had some relatives here who had come for master's studies and finally, stayed. [...] They came here when I was on junior high school [...] So, firstly I got really excited with the city, the idea of coming to London, you know, amazing lifestyle, everything was perfect! So, I would have come here for my Bachelor's study as well if I could have afforded that. However, the cost was too high, so I couldn't do that.
(Evelina, F, 24, Biosciences, London)

Three participants pointed out that although their travel experiences had played an influential role in their decision to migration, travelling abroad for tourism is notably different from the decision to migrate for studies and work. They highlighted that migration is often accompanied by high levels of uncertainty and risks, particularly in regard to how it would finally end up and the conditions of living. They also addressed that spending some period of time in a country as a carefree tourist is different from those of living there as a student migrant and/or as an employee:

I think that making a decision for migration is much different from travelling. I mean when you travel you organise your trip, you know where you'll go and in the end you know that you'll go back home.
(Manolis, M, 31, Transport Studies, N. England)

Studying abroad experiences prior to their migration for taught postgraduate study had also enhanced migration aspirations and facilitated the migration decision of eight respondents. Three of them had pursued their undergraduate studies in a foreign country: one in Italy, one in the UK and another one had acquired a Bachelor's degree at a British higher education institution studying for a period of time in the UK and then completed his course at the institution's branch campus located in Greece. Moreover, five students have participated in the Erasmus and/or

another exchange study abroad scheme during high school and one student had taken part in the Erasmus+ programme after the completion of her undergraduate studies. Aside with broadening their horizons, enriching their socio-cultural experiences and increasing their intercultural awareness through spending some period of time abroad had helped them feel more independent, develop personally and academically, familiarise themselves with studying and living in a foreign country, and developed significant knowledge and skills, such as their English language skills. The development of these skills boosted their confidence with studying and living abroad, as demonstrated in the following statement:

Definitely my Erasmus+ experiences influenced my decision. [...] It was like I got a feeling about many countries, something that was definitely very helpful. [...] If you have spent some time abroad, definitely your view on some things changes a bit. You broaden your horizons.

(Athena, F, 24, Education, London)

It should be noted that family finances have played an important role in facilitating students' mobility experiences and, therefore, the accumulation of mobility capital by enabling travelling, overseas study, school trips, as well as private schooling through which students may be more likely to access and build social networks, and acquire institutional habitus that could facilitate their educational mobility (see Brooks and Waters, 2010). As shown in the evidence, most of the students who had studied abroad were from professional backgrounds and all of them were financially supported by their families. However, in the case of one student, whose family could not financially support his study abroad after they were hardest-hit by the crisis, in order to fulfil his dream of studying in the UK he had to work in order to finance his studies. He also needed to leave from the UK and complete his course on the university's branch campus in Greece due to financial constraints.

As the next chapter will analyse, the acquisition of mobility capital, facilitated by economic capital, has played an important role not only in generating and enhancing students' migration aspirations but also helped them to adjust more easily into the receiving society compared with their counterparts who had never lived outside the family home before their migration. For these students, educational migration was highly driven not only by career-related aspirations but also

experiential motivations. As will be discussed below, a number of respondents were highly motivated by aspirations relating to self-development, self-experimentation and their desire for becoming independent and autonomous by moving away from the parental home.

5.6 Leaving the ‘family nest’

Another main finding of this study is that educational migration has not been perceived by students only as a response to the difficult socio-economic conditions in their home country and a strategy of enhancing employability in search of better employment and life conditions abroad. For many respondents, mostly the more privileged ones, educational migration has also been driven by experiential aspirations and viewed as a life-time experience, an opportunity for self-experimentation and self-growth (see also Brooks and Waters, 2009; Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2016). Their migration journey was perceived as a rite of passage to adulthood, a route to independence and autonomy, living away from parental control and family’s protection. Their migration to the UK has not been limited to study purposes, but viewed as a turning point in their lives, attached with multiple meanings and significant long-term implications over their life courses. As two participants highlighted:

I also wanted to leave to test my limits away from the family’s protection. [...] If you live alone and have to do some things on your own, you may discover some aspects of yourself you didn’t know and, in general, this may help you develop personally. [...] One of the main reasons I wanted to leave was to get to know myself better, to think outside the box.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

I really like travelling, experiencing different cultures. [...] I wanted to leave and get a change of environment [...], to gain more experiences, to expose myself to an international context. I wanted to come to London, which is one of the most multicultural cities in the world. [...] I’ve made friends from different countries and I really like that each one of them has a story to tell about their country, their culture. My knowledge about the world has increased a lot this way.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

It is noteworthy that for many respondents, their transition to adulthood, mainly marked by the transition from education to employment and parental home-leaving had been postponed in their home country, mostly due to financial constraints. One of these students said:

No, I couldn't afford living alone. [...] I would have done so if I could have afforded that. [...] Mostly to learn how to become independent. Cleaning up, washing up, to form my own household, and also without having to tell my parents when and with whom I go out, what time I go back home, you know, to become more independent.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

For many of them, moving away from the family home and living alone in a foreign country was one of the strongest motivating factors, as they perceived that their educational migration might help them develop personally and become independent by taking on responsibilities and managing their lives. Apart from developing personally and becoming mentally and emotionally stronger, living alone, was viewed by them as an opportunity to develop some necessary skills for independent living and self-sufficiency, such as daily living skills, personal care and safety, household and money management, and social skills. Educational migration was seen as an opportunity to learn how to 'stand on their own feet' without relying on their parents' 'safety net'. Therefore, in the case of students who had never left their family home, living alone and becoming independent were identified as two of the important motivating factors for migration, as shown in the quotes below:

Definitely my migration was seen as a way of becoming more independent. In Greece I had learnt, you know, to drive my car and then go home straight after, and there was no danger at all. And parents did anything I wanted. [...] You know, if I got a cold I was sure that someone would go and get me some medicine from the pharmacy. So, living alone is a much bigger experience than studying. You learn better how to stand on your own feet.

(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

I was looking forward to finishing my undergraduate studies and coming here. Also, I wanted to be independent, you know, to live alone. Of course, I am not alone now, I am with my boyfriend, but you know, I mean living away from the parental home, being more independent.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

The research findings confirm the association of leaving the parental home and entering the labour market with young people's transition to adulthood. Leaving the family home is considered as a key moment in the life course and along with transition from education to employment is often perceived as an one of the two 'first active transitions to adulthood' (Eurofound, 2014: 19; Hochstenbach and Boterman, 2017). Educational migration was seen by many participants as an opportunity to achieve these two transitions associated with the state of independence and autonomy. The findings suggest that young people deploy particular strategies in order to facilitate their transition to adulthood under the current unstable political and socio-economic circumstances. Their migration journey, grounded in life course aspirations and life-time migration intentions, constitutes part of their life planning, perceived as an inherent part of their life courses within the contexts in which they find themselves being situated (Bernard et al., 2014; Kōu et al., 2015). From this scope, their life course transitions seem to 'act as an intermediary between contextual factors and migration outcomes' (Bernard et al., 2014: 217). In particular, as noted above, studying for a degree in the UK was primarily perceived as a means of building a portfolio of particular skills and qualifications that might allow them to enhance their employment prospects and make a step towards employment, and consequently adulthood (see Waters et al., 2011; King, 2018). Specifically, they expect that the academic qualification they will obtain and the knowledge and skills, as well as the professional networks they will develop during their studies may advance their career and help them secure a good job. In this way, they anticipate that their migration may also help them become financially independent adults, as most of them are currently fully or partially financially reliant on their families. For them, the state of independence with which adulthood is attached might be achieved not only by leaving their family home and forming their own household but also becoming financially self-sufficient. As one of the respondents stated:

I had studied at a university in my home town. So, I had never left from home. So, I surely wanted to leave. However, I still don't feel autonomous because I get by with my parent's money [...]. I will become autonomous next year once I've started working and this is something I really want to do.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

Experiential aspirations had significantly influenced students' migration aspirations in both regions of study. However, in the case of students studying in London, these aspirations were often highly associated with the city of London. In parallel with previous studies, my findings have indicated that London has been one of the most popular destinations for young European graduates, not only due to economic and professional factors but also for socio-cultural reasons (e.g. Favell, 2008; King et al., 2016; 2018). Apart from being a major financial centre and the employment opportunities and career prospects that may provide students with upon graduation, the students were highly attracted by the city of London due to its multicultural and cosmopolitan vibes, social and cultural attractions and urban lifestyle (see Favell, 2008; King et al., 2016; 2018; Lulle et al., 2018), as illustrated in the following quote, which was typical among many students studying in this location:

London is a very beautiful city, in terms of architecture etc. [...] You can also go on getaway trips at the weekends. [...] I have also chosen this city for the city itself, you know. You can find everything here, from opera to everything. Entertainment, lifestyle etc.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

The findings have also shown that although all the participants were driven by experiential motivating factors alongside other factors, for most of the students of higher family economic status, the influential role of experiential aspirations have been stronger compared with their less privileged counterparts who were mostly driven by professional aspirations. For them, the pathway of staying abroad has been one of the options that are available to them, as another option might be returning to Greece and working in their family business. In particular, three participants from professional backgrounds, two of them more privileged in terms of family economic resources, reported that although they could have stayed in Greece and worked for their family businesses, they did not want to do so. They pointed out that aside with professional and career-related reasons, they also wanted to migrate for study and remain abroad in order to discover themselves, test their limits away from their family's safety net and gain various personal and socio-cultural experiences. As shown in the following quotes:

We have a family business in Greece [...]. I could find a job there in various positions, anywhere I wanted but no, I can't say that I like that idea [...] Because I wanted to escape a bit from the family context and the Greek context.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

I worked at my father's accounting office for some period of time, but after a while I realised that that was something I wouldn't like to do for the rest of my life.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

The evidence suggests that within the context of economic recession, a new form of youth mobility culture has emerged. In much of previous studies, the concept of youth mobility culture is often linked with experiential and lifestyle aspirations (e.g. Conradson and Latham, 2005). However, within the current Greek context, although travelling abroad and exploring the world is considered as part of youth culture, with some students' being significantly driven by experiential aspirations, youth mobility culture in contemporary times has been given a different content and dimensions, been highly informed by the current macro-economic context within which it is embedded. As discussed earlier in this chapter, as a response to the current difficult socio-economic and labour market conditions in their home country, migration for study and then for work purposes is viewed as a normal and common migration pattern. More specifically, for young people whose generation has been worst-affected by the financial crisis, this migration path is followed every year to a great extent in search of a better future abroad. As was analysed in the section of social networks, given that individuals are situated within a wider society, their mobility practices are highly intertwined with broader social networks that contribute to the 'normalisation' of particular mobility patterns (Brooks and Waters, 2010: 146; Conradson and Latham, 2005: 294). Youth mobility cultures have received limited attention in the broader field of research and very little has been found in the literature on the nature and multiple dimensions of this concept and how it may be shaped by the wider contexts within which it is grounded. This study provides insights into this under-studied area and, as indicated in the findings, further research needs to be conducted in the examination of this concept, which is multidimensional and receives varied meanings and interpretations across time and space.

5.7 Summary

The findings have shown that educational migration was perceived by students in two main ways. Firstly, as a response to the current difficult socio-economic and labour market conditions in their home country, almost all of the respondents have seen their educational migration to the UK as the first step in an emigration project in search of a better future abroad (see also Pratsinakis et al., 2017). Having a capital accumulation plan in mind, the students expect to enhance their employability and, thus, facilitate their transition to employment (see also Tomlinson, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Waters, 2009a, 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012). Secondly, many of them decided to migrate to the UK not only for professional reasons but also for experiential and other personal motivations. More specifically, for some participants, their migration was perceived as an important opportunity for self-experimentation and self-growth and a way of becoming independent and autonomous. The students linked the state of independence and autonomy not only with transition to employment and financial self-sufficiency but also with parental home-leaving and learning how to ‘stand on their own feet’.

Various contextual and structural factors have significantly influenced their aspirations and decision-making. Students’ family finances and institutional factors have played a crucial role in facilitating or constraining their educational migration, shaping educational opportunities and choices by allowing or preventing some students from accessing overseas higher education and their first-choice higher education provider, course and location of study (see also Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). Apart from their family economic, cultural and mobility capital, students’ social networks, mostly comprised of relatives, friends, partners, peers, former university lecturers/professors, were identified as another important influential factor in their aspirations and decision-making. By offering advice, recommendations, sharing first-hand experiences and providing support and encouragement, students’ social networks facilitated their educational migration and contributed to the establishment of mobility cultures that normalised the path of migration for study and then for work purposes (see also Brooks and Waters, 2010; Carlson, 2013; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Beech, 2015).

Student migration, like other forms of migration, is multidimensional and its dynamics and characteristics may change across time and space, as individuals' life-journeys and mobility choices are always being informed and influenced by a variety of factors and the contexts in which they are embedded. Students' decisions for educational migration are grounded in life course aspirations, as students engage in life planning and their migration decision-making is not only restricted to study purposes (Brooks and Everett, 2008; Findlay et al., 2011; King et al., 2011). The following chapter is going to present and analyse students' academic, professional and socio-cultural adjustment experiences in the host society and discuss the various strategies that they have deployed in order to enhance their employability while studying in the UK.

Chapter 6

Students' Adjustment Experiences

6.1 Introduction

This chapter traverses three main component parts of analysis in regard to students' adjustment experiences in the UK: issues relevant to adaptation to living in the receiving society, transnational links and employability enhancement strategies. It discusses how students have experienced their adjustment processes in both locations in the UK, providing insights into the various difficulties that they have encountered and how they have mobilised their economic, social, cultural and mobility capital while adapting to the host societies and in support of improved job chances. For a number of respondents, adjustment to the UK was experienced as a process that has accelerated their transition to adulthood through living alone and learning how to 'stand on their own feet' away from their family's protection. The social networks that they had established prior and/or upon their arrival in the UK have played an important role in facilitating the process of adapting to the receiving society at personal, academic and socio-cultural levels. Another facilitator to students' adjustment to the new academic and socio-cultural environments was their transnational links with their homeland. The relationships that they have maintained and coordinated through regular transnational communication via online communication technologies have enabled migration and influenced their adjustment experiences, especially when encountering various difficulties. Through maintaining these social ties of kinship, friendship and/or other relationships back home and travelling back and forth, the students have negotiated their belonging to the country of origin and the receiving country (see Robertson, 2013; van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018).

Another theme examined in this chapter concerns the strategies that the students have applied while studying in the UK in order to construct and manage their employability. Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) has provided a useful conceptual

framework for this discussion. As noted in the previous chapter, almost all of the participants have migrated to the UK mostly driven by professional aspirations to find employment and remain after graduation. Their migration aspirations have significantly influenced their perceptions and study and living experiences in the UK, with the majority of them attempting to enhance their career prospects through the accumulation of various forms of capital. Some variations have been identified among the sample of students in regard to their perceptions and level of engagement with employability enhancement strategies. The evidence suggests that students' transition to employment may be facilitated by their financial and social resources. Their economic and social capital may enable them to migrate and pursue highly valued academic credentials and engage with various academic and other activities through which they could develop knowledge and skills of high market value.

Although a number of studies have explored UK home students' and graduates' perceptions of employability, employment and adjustment experiences (e.g. Tomlinson, 2008; Bridgstock, 2009; Saunders et al., 2010; Tymon, 2013; Rätty et al., 2018), little scholarly attention, with most of it focused on Chinese students studying in the UK (e.g. Li, 2013; Huang et al., 2014; Huang and Turner, 2018), has been paid to the case of student migrants. This study contributes to this under-evidenced area of research by generating insights into how student migrants and, specifically, students who migrate from one of the worst-affected by the economic crisis European countries experience their educational migration to the UK. Exploring students' experiences from a life course perspective and focusing on the interplay between their life events and surrounding environments allows us to better understand how they experience their migration and settlement process in the sending country not as a temporary stay but as the first stage of their post-study migration plan that facilitates life transitions.

6.2 Pressures and adaptation to living in the UK

As was addressed in the previous chapter, educational migration has been viewed by many participants as a key stage over their life courses that signals a route towards independence and autonomy by accelerating life transitions.

Leaving the parental home is one of the key events that students have associated with the state of independence, and their educational migration has enabled them to achieve. Almost half of the respondents who had never left home before their migration have experienced their migratory and adjustment processes in the UK as a turning point in their lives which helped them to develop personally and become more independent and autonomous away from their families' safety net. Living alone and taking care of themselves and their own households were among the most important experiences that they have gained during their stay in the UK, giving them the opportunity for self-discovery and personal development:

You learn how to be more organised [...], how to sort some things out. Getting along with other students has definitely helped me a lot with being socialised. But I think that I mostly depend on myself. I've learnt how to live alone. Although I was afraid of living alone and expected that I'd like to be with someone all the time, I've changed in that. I'm having a nice time on my own. You get to know your strength, your programme. In general, you see that you develop personally.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

A number of studies (e.g. Burns, 1991; Ramsay et al., 1999) have found that not only international students but also local students may experience many of the issues that the participants in the present study have encountered when adjusting to the new academic and socio-cultural environments. However, this study suggests that in the case of student migrants, such as Greek students, these difficulties may be exacerbated and magnified due to the additional difficulties they may face, associated with separation from their families and friends, unfamiliarity with the new academic and socio-cultural contexts, lack of social networks in the location of study and/or host country, and language-related issues. Specifically, some respondents, mostly those who had never lived outside the family home, have faced more difficulties over the adaptation process at practical, emotional and socio-cultural levels, mainly during the first months upon their arrival. The fear of living alone, study-related stress and anxiety, problems associated with urban lifestyle, the weather and, mostly, loneliness, separation from family and friends and lack of social supports in the host society were identified as some of the issues that some students had to deal with. In some cases of respondents, these difficulties have had an impact on their physical and psychological

wellbeing. Commenting on their study and living experiences in the UK, two students said:

I've gone through some difficult time... you know, when I feel very down. Yeah, sure, I don't think that lifestyle is easy here. However, I think that this is mainly because I don't have many people close to me here.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

You know, I've learnt better how to stand on my own feet, and because I had never lived alone, everything was very difficult for me, everything! Just imagine, that I didn't eat. I lost some weight because I didn't know how to cook.

(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

Most of them have managed to overcome these difficulties, whilst others, by the time of the interview, were still trying to adapt, especially at personal and social levels:

I'm still adapting. Although I'm sociable, I don't get close to many people very easily. So, I'm still adapting at this level. You know, building a circle of friends as similar as possible to the one I had in Greece.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

Of course, I miss so much my family, friends, you know, my people there. I really miss my cat as well. You know, I miss this kind of sense. When you are on the plane landing and you see from the window the sunny sky, the sea, you just exhale with relief... the sense that you'll go home and be safe without caring and thinking 24 hours how you'll protect yourself. [...] Friendship is a complicated and deep word for me. I have some people that I know and hang out with a bit, but these people may not come to you if something happens.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

Aside with the influential role of various contextual dynamics, students have taken some form of control of the process of adaptation when encountering various personal, academic, social and cultural challenges in the receiving society, with some of them showing strong willingness and self-determination to reach adaptation and fulfil their educational and professional aspirations. Self-determination was perceived by students as one of the key factors that have contributed to these achievements,

followed by support from family and friends (see also Gu et al., 2010). Self-discipline, confidence, flexibility, adaptability to changing situations and environments, and determination were also identified by the participants as ‘weapons’ that might help someone to adjust to new educational and socio-cultural environments and circumstances. One of them argued:

And the most important thing is not getting ‘swallowed’ by the big city, but being able to float. [...] You could do this by taking control of yourself, being aware of your limits, knowing yourself, being confident and sure about the choices you have made, defending them and chasing your dreams and the things you want to do. Lifestyle is harder in London. Things are more impersonal, but this is something that is common in big cities. [...] However, I think that I am fine. In general, as a person I can easily adapt somewhere. That’s one of my assets.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

Students’ ‘mobility capital’ (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) has been identified to play a significant role in their adjustment processes, as those who had previously travelled and lived for a period of time abroad for study and/or work purposes have adapted to the new environments more easily compared with others who had never left their parental home and/or their home country. Two of them noted:

I didn’t need a lot of help because I don’t have any issues. I can adapt very easily. I have also travelled abroad a lot. So, I didn’t have any problems with that. However, definitely, my friends helped me in terms of companionship, you know, having friends, some company, hanging out.

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

I think that the experiences I’ve gained by travelling and studying abroad helped me to learn how to adapt to new contexts. For example, my short-term study in Germany helped me a lot, as I had to fit in there, something that was very difficult. If someone goes through some difficult situations somewhere, it’ll be much easier for him/her to adapt to another new context.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

The findings reflect once again the social embeddedness of educational migration not only in regard to students’ aspirations and decision-making but also their adaptation to living in the host society. One of the main ways through which

almost all of the participants attempted to manage the various difficulties that they had encountered over their adjustment at personal, academic, and/or socio-cultural levels was by developing and using their social capital. Students' social networks were found to ease their settling in. Many of them have managed to overcome various issues they had faced when adapting into the new academic and socio-cultural contexts through their existing social networks and/or by creating new friendship and other support networks with individuals of the same and/or other nationalities in their study location. Two students said:

I knew some people who were willing to help me if something went wrong. But I have built my social circle here. I am very satisfied with London. It is such a multicultural city, so it's impossible not to find some people to match. [...] Friends always help. You can't be alone in a foreign country.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

Well, I think that studying is a kind of individual thing. I mean, to adapt. But in terms of living in London, yes, of course, we all have and need each other in many things.

(Andreas, M, 24, Engineering, London)

Drawing on parallel studies in migration research with respect to the role played by social networks' in migrants' settlement process, my findings have indicated that in the case of student migrants, social network formation is important in aiding their adjustment to the receiving society by reducing the economic, social and psychological costs and risks with which migration is associated, such as through offering accommodation and other important information and contacts as well as emotional support (e.g. Boyd, 1989; Conradson and Latham, 2005; Boswell, 2008; Brettell and Hollifield, 2008; Haug, 2008; Samers, 2010; Bilecen and Sienkiewicz, 2015). For example, as shown in the following quotes, the sense of belonging to a community and sharing similar experiences has helped some students to overcome and cope with feelings of loneliness, especially over the initial phase of their adjustment:

My friends have definitely helped me adjust here. You know, I feel that I belong to a group of people. I have friends and it's easier to meet other people through your own friends etc.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

I wanted to come, but I was scared. You know, I was like ok... I'll go to the university and then go back home. I couldn't feel relaxed because I didn't know anyone. It was difficult, but because I live in a student accommodation and all of us are students being in a similar position... you know, once I had started meeting people, going out, having someone to ask for help if anything happened, then I started feeling more relaxed.

(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

Furthermore, two students commented:

I knew a girl from my hometown who was studying here. I had stayed at her place at the beginning before I found my room. [...] She definitely helped me a lot. [...] She had also introduced me to a Cypriot girl who was studying here. She helped me with my studies here.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

I knew very few people, two to three people. Also, a friend of my sister's [...] He was working here. [...] He helped me a lot, especially at the beginning.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

Students' social networks, comprised of family members who were currently studying or have previously studied in the UK, co-national, local and/or international classmates and friends, aside with facilitating their socio-cultural adjustment had also played an important role in aiding their adaptation to the new academic environment. Particularly, through the help and support offered by their networks, some students have managed to cope with the difficulties they had faced at an academic level, mostly over their transition from the Greek higher education system to the British one, as well as from undergraduate to taught postgraduate level of study. These two types of transition were accompanied with various changes, such as with respect to teaching, learning and assessment methods, alongside the intense nature of their degree programmes, which for some students had a significant impact on their psychological wellbeing, causing feelings of stress and anxiety, as demonstrated in the following account:

I felt so stressed! So much pressure with my studies! You know, once I came here, I got shocked because the way you work here as a Master's student, I mean in terms of studying, is much more

different from the way you study, do essays at an undergraduate level. A big change! [...] Somehow, I felt like I was drowning because of my anxiety. [...] My friends definitely helped me keep going here. They've been supporting me and helping me a lot to deal with all those issues.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

Socialising with co-nationals, primarily upon their arrival in the UK, was a pattern identified in the accounts of many respondents, often perceived as a way of easing their settling in and overcoming the initial acculturative stress experienced in the receiving society (see also Gu and Maley, 2008). Many respondents over the first weeks upon their arrival, when they experienced more difficulties with their adjustment to the location of their study, interacted more with Greek students:

We just met on a Greek students' group on Facebook. So, we just chatted there. Now we are very close. We are also studying the same course. We are four Greek students studying here.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

At the beginning, I met lots of Greek students. [...] I met some Greek guys at the Greek café. [...] You know, I was looking for someone to help me with some practical stuff, where to go, find a place to live, someone to show me around the city etc. However, during my study I made friends of other nationalities, such as from Italy, China, Indonesia...`

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

Reflecting finding of previous studies, the evidence has shown that English language fluency is an important factor associated with feelings of stress and anxiety within the academic environment, and also in everyday life, affecting students' academic performance, adjustment, intercultural engagement and communication with local and/or international students (e.g. Samuelowicz, 1987; Ramsay et al., 1999; Robertson et al., 2000; Yeh and Inose, 2003; Liu and Winder, 2014). Apart from sharing similar cultural characteristics, the most important reason for the formation of friendship networks with co-nationals was sharing the same native language, as illustrated in the statements below:

I think that this [having more friends of the same nationality] happens maybe because of the language. You know, there are some moments when you want to relax and don't want to speak English.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

I felt nervous when I was about to talk in front of the class. In general, because I think first in Greek and then in English, I had to think more before I spoke [...] I also felt nervous when they were looking at me like they couldn't understand what I was saying or because of my accent.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

At the beginning, because of the language I used to talk more with Greek students, but now I feel more comfortable talking with students of other nationalities. [...] Not because the Greek language is my language, but because I didn't feel very comfortable with talking in English [...] Now, I feel much more comfortable.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Although they have established friendship networks with students of the same nationality, many respondents have shown great interest in meeting people and forming social networks with students of other nationalities, indicating an intention to build a more cosmopolitan identity (see Schweisfurth and Gu, 2009). One of the characteristics of the British society, that students expressed their high appreciation for, mostly those studying in London, was its multicultural nature that gives them the opportunity for intercultural engagement. Making friends and interacting only with individuals from their own culture and country was seen by them as a practice that might constrain their intercultural engagement, without giving them the opportunity to experience different cultures, broadening their horizons and discovering the world. As two students said:

You know, although my School is full of Greek students, I could say that somehow I avoided hanging out with Greek students [...] because I had thought that I didn't come to London to be with Greeks again. [...] However, I also hang out with Greeks. I couldn't avoid that and don't want to avoid that, but first I was trying to be with guys coming from all over the world. I've made friends who are from Switzerland, Morocco, Egypt... from everywhere.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

I've met many people coming from different countries, from Latvia, Serbia, Croatia, from everywhere. [...] This is something that I like. We always hang out with Greeks. I wanted to get to know something else, other cultures etc. This is something good for you because you can see how other people think.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

One more reported:

I like London as a place. [...] In general, you have the opportunity to do everything there. You can meet amazing people from many countries, something you might not do in Greece. [...] Meeting people, you know, the multicultural aspect is very nice.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

Overall, the study suggests that the adaptation processes of student migrants in the receiving communities may influence and also be influenced by personal, educational, socio-cultural and organisational factors (Gu et al., 2010). These factors might be students' personal histories and prior experiences, their social relationships and their surrounding academic and socio-cultural environments (Gu et al., 2010). The provision of support and the conditions of contact within the environments that students experience have been identified as two of the most influential factors in these processes (Gu et al., 2010: 7). In order to ease their settling in, students deploy adaptation strategies, such as by mobilising their mobility and social capital. Prior travel and study abroad experiences, as well as the social networks they had formed before and after their arrival in the UK have helped them to manage and overcome difficulties and adapt to the receiving contexts at personal, social, academic and socio-cultural levels. Another important factor that will be discussed in the section below and has facilitated students' adjustment processes is their transnational links with their homeland.

6.3 Being 'here' and 'there': Transnational relationships and connections with the homeland

Transnational communicative processes help enable migration and significantly facilitate students' adaptation to in the host country by keeping them connected with their social networks across space. Students' families and/or friends have become part of their adjustment processes by providing them with support, encouragement and comfort which helped them cope with the various difficulties they had encountered, mostly over the first weeks upon their arrival, such as loneliness, study-related anxiety, homesickness and other problems associated with adjusting to the new academic and socio-cultural environments (see also Walton-Roberts, 2015).

Moreover, the evidence indicates that the formation of local friendship networks during their residence in the host society as well as maintaining transnational links and encounters with family members and friends during return visits to their home country have played an important role in the development and negotiation of students' 'translocal subjectivities' (Conradson and McKay, 2007; Robertson, 2018: 5437) and sense of belonging to the country of origin and the destination country.

Specifically, during their stay in the UK the participants have not only attempted to build new social networks in the host society but have also maintained and coordinated their family and friendship relationships back home. Almost all of them regularly contact their families and friends living in Greece or their friends who study and/or work in the UK or somewhere else abroad through the use of mediated communication technologies that have facilitated cheap, rapid, instantaneous and simultaneous communication across transnational space compressing space-time (Robertson, 2013: 138, 142; see Conradson and Latham, 2005; King et al., 2018). The students communicate with their families and friends in Greece, using various forms of communication, but mostly online messaging, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) calls (mainly using Skype, Viber and WhatsApp), and/or social media platforms, such as Facebook (see Robertson, 2013). Consistent with the findings of other studies (Beech, 2015: 344), my findings also indicate that social networking media and mobile applications, contribute to the enhancement, nurturing and sustaining of long-distance friendships allowing students to contact friends and others who have remained back home or migrated to the UK or another country abroad. Similarly, Robertson's (2013: 156) research findings have shown that social media, as well as e-mail and online messaging were used by international students in Australia for social communication with friendship networks dispersed across the globe. Aside with information seeking, students have used the social media in order to manage acculturative stress and improve their psychological well-being in the host society (Zhao, 2016: 2), as reflected in the following statement of one of my respondents:

For one month I felt awful, I was calling my parents, crying every day. [...] They have been supporting me a lot. [...] I was so close to book tickets and go to Greece for three to four days. I thought about that many times.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

Many participants have referred to the high concerns of their families regarding their wellbeing, and as they have reported, they communicate with them almost on a daily basis or once in two to three days. One variation identified among the sample with respect to the frequency of contact with their family networks. The students who had never left their parental home were found to be in contact with their families far more regularly, at least once or more than once a day. The quotes below were typical:

They want to be relaxed but I know that they are generally worried about me. You know, if I don't answer their phone call, then after a few minutes I'll find many unanswered calls.

(Rania, F, 23, Mathematics, N. England)

Almost every day my mother calls me on Viber. [...] Can you imagine? My mother never had a mobile phone in her life and now she has bought a smart phone in order to speak with me on Viber.

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

As the following statements suggest, some forms of communication that the students often use in order to contact their families and friends, such as video phone calls, may function as a type of 'virtual co-presence' simulating the intimacy of face-to-face interaction through the provision of images of faces and gestures, connecting them visually with the family environment and the family members' and friends' faces (Robertson, 2013: 143):

Now, it is easier with the media. You know, via Viber, WhatsApp. If your family want to send you something they can do it easily. You know, even a picture of a T-shirt they've bought. It's not something difficult now. This would be almost the same if I was in Athens. We would also use WhatsApp, even if I was there.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

I've been talking all the time with my friends in Athens on face time. [...] It's very easy now. Instead of giving them a voice call, you can have a video call.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

In addition to the regular communication that the students had with their families and friends in Greece through the use of such technologies, their 'spatial imaginaries of belonging' were extended into 'translocal space' during return visits to

their home country (Robertson, 2018: 550). Particularly, the students have linked together their country of origin with their host country by maintaining and coordinating their social ties of kinship, friendship and/or other relationships back home through travelling back and forth. By the time of the interview, the majority of them had already been to Greece once and in some cases twice or more times, and planned going back again over the Easter break, as well as in the summer. In the case of seven students, their parents have already visited them and/or planned visiting them in the following months. For example, two interviewees said:

It hasn't been a long time since the last time I saw them because I've been to Greece for my graduation ceremony and also for Christmas. I didn't see them only in September and October. Now, they'll come here in one month. Maybe I'll go to Greece for Easter.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

I talk with my family almost every day on Skype, Viber, Messenger. My mother will come here next month. [...] I went to Greece for the Christmas break. Now, if I go again, I'll go for Easter and I don't know exactly when I'll go there in the summer.

(Dionisis, M, 24, Business, N. England)

Moreover, through the use of communication technologies, such as social media, students could not only manage to communicate with their families and friends back home but have also been using them in order to get informed about the current conditions existing in their home country, at political, economic, social and cultural levels (see also Gomes, 2014; Zhao, 2016). As one of the students commented:

I usually get informed about what is going on in Greece mainly from my family and friends when talking and/or chatting, and the social media, such as on Facebook, because I follow some online news websites. I also visit some online news websites or Google and read different news, at least once a week.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

Maintaining transnational connections with their homeland through the above transnational communicative practices, aside with offering students 'virtual home-based' support networks, also contributes to the formation of 'imaginary bonds' with their country of origin (Zhao, 2016: 4), connecting 'idealised notions of "home"' with the 'physical realities of "here"' (Collins, 2009: 854) and, thus, allowing them to

negotiate being both 'here' and 'there' (Robertson, 2013: 149). Such technologies allow students to engage with spaces of belonging at personal, familial and national levels by bringing a 'sense of home' in terms of their own particular home and family and friends' lives, but also a more general sense of home in terms of their home country to the host country (Collins, 2009: 855). For all respondents, by shrinking the time and distance between 'here' and 'there', the use of such technologies enables migration and influences onward plans through keeping them connected with their social networks and, therefore, reducing the psychological and social costs that migration is often accompanied by (see also Brettell and Hollifield, 2008; Collins, 2009; Samers, 2010; Bilecen and Sienkiewicz, 2015). These communicative processes allow students to negotiate the differences in time and distance between the country of origin and the receiving country which take shape over their stay in the host country and return to their homeland (Collins, 2009: 854-855).

In addition, maintaining transnational links and encounters with family members and friends during return visits to their home country aside with the networks that the students have formed during their stay in the receiving society have played an important role in the development and negotiation of students' 'translocal subjectivities' (Conradson and McKay, 2007) and enhanced their sense of belonging to the country of origin and the destination country (Robertson, 2018: 540). The term of 'translocal subjectivities', which refers to the 'multiply-located senses of self among those who inhabit transnational social fields', coined by Conradson and McKay (2007: 168) and used by Robertson (2018), was useful in this study to understand how student migrants' transnational links and encounters with family and friends back home, as well as with friends in the host country may shape senses of self that are both 'multiply located and transformed through transnational mobility', and also how they may shape senses of belonging (Robertson, 2018: 540).

Although return to home has been associated with feelings of nostalgia and excitement for almost all of the participants, there were two cases of students who felt that they have undergone some sort of personal transformation (see Robertson, 2018: 549) after studying and/or working and living for some period of time abroad, which in the case of one participant have caused some feelings of ambivalence and 'not quite fitting in' with her immobile friends in Greece:

I can't say that I've faced anything intense, but if you have lived for some years abroad, definitely your opinion about some things may change a bit. You have more broadened horizons, you know. So, there were some moments when I realised that I have changed compared with my friends, but I can't say that I've ever left, you know. [...] Normally, I return to Greece every three to four months. [...] Of course, there is some contact with my family and friends on WhatsApp, Skype etc. I know how they are doing, and they know how I am doing.

(Athena, F, 24, Education, London)

These findings indicate the complexities of students' 'multiple placed identities', reflecting Robertson's (2008: 550) suggestion on how translocal subjectivities need to be negotiated with 'more static and emplaced subjectivities'. In particular, students' sense of belonging is not fixed but subject to constant negotiation and renegotiation through encounters with old and new friendship networks within different local contexts both in the host country and country of origin in return (Robertson, 2008: 550).

6.4 Enhancing employability

Another important theme identified in regard to students' adjustment experiences concerns their perceptions and activities with which they have engaged during their studies in the UK in support of improved job chances. The current socio-economic environments in both sending and receiving countries have affected their perceptions and motivations for engagement with higher education and their experiences when studying and living abroad (see also Saunders, 2011). Within the current unstable political and labour market landscape, students experience high pressure with securing employment. The migration of almost all of the respondents was mostly driven by professional and career-related aspirations. The students feel pressured with finding employment and, by the time of the interview, most of them had already started searching for a job because, as will be thoroughly discussed in the next chapter, their main plan is to remain in the UK or migrate to another country abroad upon graduation in search of better employment and life opportunities. Being aware of the uncertain labour market conditions and the difficulties with their transition to employment, especially in case they had not previously obtained work experience,

students respond by being flexible and likely to follow job openings wherever they may be, keeping the scenario of onward migration open. The following statements were typical among them:

I would like to find a job here. I wouldn't have a problem if that was an internship first and then a full-time job. I want to try to do everything, try to find a job and stay here, not only in London.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

I have been searching for job opportunities in different cities in the UK. The main reason for staying here is work. You know, I am not looking for a high-paying job. I mean, I would like to find a well-paying job, you know, something sustainable...

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

[About finding employment] I just feel a bit vulnerable in terms that I have to make some decisions. However, this doesn't mean that I am not open to moving somewhere else, but this is something that it will have to do with my work.

(Nasia, F, 35, Arts, London)

In an attempt to manage this pressure and the risks associated with entering the labour market, the students apply particular strategies for the accumulation of a subset of capitals that they perceive that it may help them enhance their employability. The valuation of these forms of capital has been reflected on their perceptions regarding the quality of education received and their academic experiences. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) for this analysis, the evidence suggests that capitals are important in aiding transition to employment and, as will be further discussed in the next chapter, within particular contexts some students are better able than others to thrive by mobilising their capitals.

The majority of the respondents have mostly viewed their engagement with taught postgraduate education as a way of improving their employment prospects and advancing their career. Previous studies suggest that responding to contemporary labour market conditions, students' perceptions towards higher education have become instrumentalised (Tomlinson, 2008: 59; Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005), as the acquisition of an academic qualification is often viewed by many of them as a 'tool' which may help them enhance their human capital and facilitate their transition to employment. Most of the respondents have a capital acquisition plan in mind. They attempt to accumulate through their studies and engagement with a number of

academic and other activities various forms of capital that they perceived as valuable. In order to improve their chances of getting employed and stand out in the labour market, especially in the case of highly competitive and difficult to acquire jobs (see also Tomlinson, 2008), one of the main strategies that students apply is the accumulation of social and ‘institutionalised cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 243; Brown, 1995; T.T. Tran, 2016). Aside with the acquisition of the formal academic credentials and professional network formation, students also seek to develop additional skills, which might further add to their marketability as graduates (see Tomlinson, 2008). They anticipate that the accumulation of this set of capitals could significantly improve their level of human capital and provide them with advantages in the labour market by opening up a wide range of economic, professional and social opportunities (see Tomlinson, 2008).

The accumulation of institutionalised cultural capital has been identified as one of the main forces that had generated students’ educational migration, as addressed in chapter 5. This form of capital has also been described in literature as ‘academic capital’ (Courtois, 2018: 4), which may be translated into cultural capital of high value within students’ disciplinary field (Watson, 2013: 417). Academic capital might be primarily accumulated through formal education and, mainly, through the acquisition of educational credentials and academic knowledge and skills development (Courtois, 2018: 4). As Courtois (2018: 4) suggests, the value of this form of capital is not fixed, but ‘changing in nature’ and subject to the ongoing labour market conditions.

Students’ economic capital plays an important role in facilitating employability enhancement and, therefore, aiding the transition to employment by enabling them or not to migrate and acquire institutionalised cultural capital aside with other forms of capital. In particular, the higher education institutions, where students pursue their academic qualifications in the UK, might facilitate knowledge acquisition, skills development as well as work experience and professional network formation through the various facilities, resources and services they may provide them with (see also Waters, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Hall, 2011; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012). As the next chapter will address, the study location is another important factor which may enable students to mobilise their capitals and, consequently, affect their post-study career pathways.

Although all respondents are keen on employability, some variations have been identified across disciplinary areas with respect to their perceptions and level of engagement with employability enhancement strategies. Compared with students in the fields of Education and Social Sciences, students studying courses in STEM fields, such as in Physics, Mathematics, Engineering and Biosciences as well as in the field of Business and Administrative studies emphasise more the importance of acquiring knowledge not only at a theoretical but also a practical level, which they perceive that it is essential to their personal and professional development, and, consequently, to their employability and career progression. These students were particularly pleased with the workshops included in their course's curriculum, such as working in laboratories and/or computer clusters because they expect this type of teaching and learning activities to help them to develop not only their theoretical knowledge but also practical skills in their disciplinary area. Apart from personal and professional development, technical and practical skills' development is also desirable for employability reasons because such skills are perceived as needed and valuable in the labour market. One of the students said:

This course familiarises you with the labour market and its needs and demands. For example, you can learn programs and software that you are going to use when you enter the labour market. [...] I really like that we learn how to use some software. We don't have only theoretical classes and this is something that I like here.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Another element of their studies at the British higher education institutions that students perceive important in aiding their transition to employment is the connection of British higher education with the labour market. This was one of the aspects of students' academic experiences that were identified as the most positive, mostly among the respondents in STEM fields and the subject group of Business and Administrative Studies. For many participants, graduate employability constitutes a significant indicator of the quality of a higher education provider, and graduate employability rates had played an important influential role in their decision-making regarding the selection of study destination, higher education institution and course of study. As two participants reported:

I think that one of the things in which British universities outperform [compared with Greek universities] is their connection to the labour market. For example, some company executives come and recruit university students, and this is something that, in my opinion, should be happening.

(Andreas, M, 24, Engineering, London)

Another thing here is that you can find a job immediately. The percentage of this university's graduates' employability is about 130-140 percent. [...] Forty percent of the students manage to find a job even before they graduate.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

The students attempted to accumulate and develop their cultural and social capital not only through the acquisition of academic credentials and professional knowledge and skills but also participation in various academic and other activities and/or events taking place within the university context. Some considerable variations by subject area and study location have been identified in the perceptions and practices of students towards employability enhancement. In particular, compared with their counterparts in the fields of Education, Social Sciences, Creative Arts and Design, students studying courses in STEM fields, Transport Studies and Business and Administrative studies in both regions of study, to a greater extent those studying in London, were found to be more proficient at accumulating and mobilising capitals in search of employment by engaging more actively with these activities. They pointed out that during their studies they participated in a number of events and recruitment fairs that had taken place at their universities, giving them the opportunity to become informed about the current labour market trends and conditions in their disciplines, and also build professional networks which are perceived to be valuable in terms of enhancing their career prospects. A number of participants across disciplinary areas have also used some services offered by their Schools and/or universities' career centres and participated in various workshops and/or seminars which allowed them to familiarise themselves with British labour market demands and conditions. As seen from the following quotes, participation in such events is expected to enhance their employability by helping them develop various necessary skills, such as in CV, cover letter and job application writing, as well as job interview skills:

Of course, there is some connection with the labour market. There is no doubt about that. For example, I started the course in September and by October ten career fairs had already taken place. There is also the career centre to promote you, to help you with the application process etc. That's important.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

They help you get prepared for job applications, job interviews, presentation skills etc. Some representatives of some companies come to the School and take some interviews. So, I can see that they want their students to get employed in the UK labour market. [...] They familiarise you with the labour market needs and demands.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Furthermore, lectures and/or seminars delivered by guest speakers, mainly comprised of professionals in their fields, have been perceived by almost all of the students, mostly those studying Business and Engineering, as a very important aspect of their studies in the UK because, according to them, it may enhance their knowledge and skills not only at an academic but also a professional level, keeping them updated about the current labour market conditions and providing them with some important professional information and advice that may facilitate their transition to employment. Two students mentioned:

Here, for example, they bring some professionals to give some lectures in their expertise, whilst in Greece the same professor who has been there for 30 years would teach you the same things that he taught 30 years ago. The system doesn't get modernised.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

I got impressed by the people who come and talk to us [...] The guest speakers who come once in a while. This is something I wouldn't experience in Greece.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

All the above British higher education institutions' characteristics that the participants have identified as some of the most positive aspects of studying in the UK reflect what various studies have argued in respect of the increasing emphasis that the UK higher education institutions has been placing upon students' employability enhancement within the current employment landscape (e.g. Andrews and Higson, 2008; O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2017). Some types of these practices, which the participants in the present have also referred to, when discussing their

academic experiences, are the following: provision of career centre services, student work placements/internships, and enterprise engagement in university practices, such as through the employers' involvement in curriculum development and delivery (i.e. guest lecturers, career fairs/events and graduate recruitment) (Räty et al., 2018: 108; Davey et al., 2011 and Hogarth et al., 2007, cited in T.T. Tran, 2016: 63; see also Andrews and Higson, 2008; Saunders and Zuzel., 2010; O'Connor and Bodicoat, 2017).

Responding to the unstable labour market conditions, students attempt to improve their employment prospects through developing their own human capital (Allais 2014; Brown et al., 2011, cited in McCowan, 2015: 271), equipping themselves with attributes that may allow them to maintain employment and transfer between work positions. As a number of studies have shown, the acquisition of a higher education degree on its own is commonly seen as not being enough, and emphasis has been increasingly placed on the development of a set of skills perceived by students, graduates and employers as highly valued (e.g. Andrews and Higson, 2008; Tomlinson, 2008; Bridgstock, 2009; Saunders et al., 2010; Tymon, 2013; Räty et al., 2018). These skills, known as 'soft skills' are technical, social and personal abilities that are not based on university degrees as such, and refer to a set of aptitudes that are intangible and difficult to quantify (Brown et al., 2003; Prokou, 2008, cited in Räty et al., 2018: 108; Sapiña Grau, 2020: 9). Some personal characteristics, attributes and types of behaviour included in this set of skills are the following: creativity, team-working, presentation and communication skills, ambitiousness, innovativeness, analytic and critical thinking, problem-solving, networking, risk-taking, flexibility, adaptability and time-management skills (see Bridgstock, 2009; Räty et al., 2018; Sapiña Grau, 2020).

Respondents across disciplinary areas, especially those studying courses in STEM fields and Business and Administrative studies, have already been aware of the above skills and their value, mainly after the experiences they had gained when searching for employment and undergoing the application and recruitment processes. Through these experiences, they have also realised the high competition that exists in their fields. Specifically, most of the respondents in both locations of study, by the time of the interview, had already started searching for and applying for job positions

in the UK, as they intend to remain after graduation. Talking about their job-seeking experiences in London, three of them stated:

They put you through the wringer. You have to go through an interview, they want to check your level, your knowledge, how you think, if you are clever, how you deal with problems, how you co-operate and work with others.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

The interview was very difficult. [...] We were 30 candidates for one position. [...] It was a 2-hour interview, with technical questions, Excel... It was very demanding. They finally didn't hire me and I experienced a lot of competition there. There was so much stress!

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

There are some rules, some norms that you have to follow. [...] In the labour market, there is definitely competition. I realised that very well when I went to an assessment centre for a job position, where I had to do a group exercise with other candidates. [...] Although you may see it in a cool way like, you know, being in a group and work with others and such things, actually you are alone and everyone wants to get the other one's job.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

The students reported that the high competition they had experienced when searching for employment was also reflected within the academic environment. Across all disciplinary fields, a number of respondents have observed and experienced high competition in their classes. The increasingly competitive atmosphere in the graduate labour market has been identified by some students as one of the main explanations for the high competition that exists among their classmates in their cohorts. As the following statement suggests, within this context, by viewing their classmates as potential competitors in the graduate labour market (see Houghton, 2017), students may compete each other at an academic level in order to add value to their credentials, as higher academic achievement, which is often simply translated into higher grades (Tomlinson, 2008: 59), may give them an advantage in the highly competitive job market upon graduation:

It is very competitive. One wants to 'eat' the other, to get a higher mark than yours. I don't know if this may help you get a job more quickly here, but maybe they do it because they might think that since we have come here, so let's do something to be first, to be the

best. [...] Maybe that's happening because the labour market is so competitive. We don't know each other. We don't know what we may find upon graduation. So, they might think that 'we need to be first, so we could find a better job'. All of us are fighting for the same jobs.

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

Another challenge that the students have encountered when searching for employment in the UK was the sense of unfamiliarity with the British labour market demands and conditions, mainly in terms of the application and recruitment processes that they need to go through in order to acquire a job position. Most of the participants mentioned that they have experienced many difficulties over this 'difficult' and 'highly demanding' processes with which they were not very familiar, something that made them feel being at a disadvantaged position compared with their British and other European counterparts:

The whole process, seeking for a job is so much different and not familiar to a Greek student. [...] It is more complicated, a long process, as you need to go through many stages: online tests, applications, two to three interviews in order to get an offer. [...] It is very difficult to find a job, not impossible, but difficult. [...] I didn't have that way of thinking which British students and European students do. They use to start applying, building their CVs even from the first year of their undergraduate studies, doing internships...

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

Most of the guys who study in the UK usually undertake some internships over the summer. So, that counts a lot to their CVs, as they have already gained some relevant experience.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

The evidence also reflects the current socio-economic and labour market conditions in the context of crisis, where young people's transition and integration to the labour market in many countries in Europe has become more difficult and complicated, often characterised by long periods of unemployment and/or underemployment, job shifts and job mismatches (e.g. Teichler 1999, cited in Allen and van der Velden, 2007: 55; Allen and van der Velden, 2007; MacDonald, 2011; Christie, 2016). In particular, a few respondents during their stay in the UK, but also prior to their educational migration (see chapter 5), had already experienced difficulties with finding employment. By the time of the interview, a number of them

who had already started searching for full-time and/or part-time employment (even irrelevant to their studies) had not received any positive responses by the employers:

I've been looking for a job, to gain some experience and cover part of my living costs here as well. However, I haven't found anything yet. I went for a job interview at a restaurant here. We'll see...

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

I have already started looking for a job, but I haven't received any offers yet. I've been applying for positions anywhere in the UK.

(Dionisis, M, 24, Business, N. England)

Some students have mobilised their social capital in support of their job chances. Family members, friends and/or other people they knew who were currently studying or had previously studied and/or worked in the UK, helped them to improve their chances of getting employed by offering them significant support and guidance while searching and applying for job positions. In particular, students' social networks had provided them with important advice on the British labour market demands and conditions in regard to the application and recruitment processes and the qualifications and skills that they needed to acquire and showcase in their application forms. They have also helped them to prepare the job application documents required, such as their CVs and personal statements. As one participant mentioned:

A friend had a look at my CV because, of course, he is more experienced in that. He told me about some things that I could change in order to improve it and make it be more close to what the recruiters look for because, basically, this is a kind of game that you have to play.

(Marios, M, 24, Business, London)

In order to boost their career prospects, some participants apart from the acquisition of academic qualifications, knowledge and soft credentials, even before the start of their degree programmes, and some of them during their studies, tried to engage with other CV-building type activities, such as undertaking internships, in order to gain relevant work experience which represents another highly valued element of cultural capital. The CV is perceived by them as an important way of showcasing their individual potential, competence and skills, especially during the early stages of labour market entry, responding to the competitive labour market

demands (Tomlinson, 2008: 57-58). Such perceptions are reflected in the statement below:

I have learnt how to write my CV, to give interviews. Somehow you learn how to 'sell' yourself in a good way, to get into the labour market game. In the UK, they pay much attention to this, you know, how to build your CV.

(Stamatis, M, 22, Economics, N. England)

These findings reflect those of previous studies on graduates' employability which have shown that, in contemporary times, graduates are aware that in order to increase their chances of getting employed and advance their career progression apart from acquiring a higher education degree, they need to develop additional skills and attributes (e.g. Tymon, 2013). Andrews and Higson's (2008: 420) analysis of graduate and employers' perspectives of graduate employability in four European countries (UK, Austria, Slovenia and Romania) suggests that work experience is perceived as an important element that employers consider when recruiting graduates. Their study has found that in the case of the UK, the work placement scheme was found to be highly valued by both graduates and employers, whilst in the case of the other countries the employers recognised that many graduates lack the opportunity to receive such formal training, and the only work experience that many of them may acquire is through engagement with part-time employment, undertaken during their studies (Andrews and Higson, 2008: 418, 420).

For students across all subject areas, internships are perceived as a valuable means of enhancing employability and a way of learning new skills at workplace (O' Connor and Bodicoat, 2013: 446). Undertaking an internship position, especially in London, was seen as the entryway which might lead to full-time employment and help them acquire a job position matching their interests and qualifications:

I think I will start searching for an internship even if it is unpaid, you know, in order to gain some work experience in the UK. And after that, do what everybody does, you know, job interviews etc. I know that your dream job, if it exists, you can't find it immediately, so I feel that London is the only city in Europe where you can say that there are lots of jobs.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

Six respondents across a wide range of disciplinary areas, including the fields of Education, Social Sciences, Biosciences, Engineering and Business, prior to the start of their degree programmes, had gained some relevant work experience, mostly through undertaking an internship: two students in the UK, three students in Greece and one student in Belgium as part of the ERASMUS+ programme. One student in London has also already started undertaking an internship while studying, and two other students, at the time of the interview, were working in positions relevant to their study fields. Two of them stated:

I've been to London since last summer. I had done an internship in a company before my Master's course started. [...] I started searching for labour market demands and conditions once I had come to the UK last summer and once I went to that company, I started thinking about what I could do with the course I'm studying, where it could take me, what the options might be for me. [...] I expected things to be slightly easier, not such hard competition.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

I worked for 6 months as an intern in a hospital in Greece. It was voluntary. [...] I would need one more year to write my dissertation, to present it etc. So, I would have a 6-month gap, and decided to it because I liked that and also for other reasons, such as work experience, publications etc.

(Evelina, F, 24, Biosciences, London)

The findings indicate that the forms of capital that the participants attempt to accumulate through their studies and engagement with various academic and other activities in order to enhance their career prospects are highly determined by contemporary labour market demands and conditions. Moreover, the accumulation of these forms of capital is significantly influenced by students' economic and social resources which may facilitate or impede the implementation of their capital acquisition plan and, thus, their career advancement by enabling them to mobilise their capitals.

6.5 Summary

Educational migration has not been experienced by students as a short-term period in their lives, limited to study purposes, but as a key stage with significant long-term life

course implications. Through moving away from their parental home, living alone in the receiving country and learning how to ‘stand on their own feet’, many respondents perceive that they have carved a path to a state of independent living. Their adjustment to the host society cannot be divided in ‘clear-cut’ phases characterised by particular feelings (see also Lysgaard’s, 1955; Oberg 1960; Zhou et al., 2008). When adjusting to new contexts, the students have experienced a wide range of positive and negative feelings and encountered various issues at personal, emotional, academic, social and cultural levels, such as stress, anxiety, loneliness and other issues associated with the new academic and socio-cultural environments to which they needed to adapt (see Brown and Holloway, 2008; Lin, 2006). Although a number of studies have found that these difficulties may be experienced not only by international students but also local students, this study suggests that for student migrants, such experiences may be sharper and more intense. This might be explained from the fact that this group of students may feel being in a more vulnerable position due to the various challenges they may encounter upon their arrival in the host country, associated with separation from their families and friends back home, unfamiliarity with the new academic and socio-cultural contexts, lack of social networks in the location of study and/or host country, and language-related issues.

Exploring the socially embedded nature of student migration not only in regard to students’ migration aspirations but also their adjustment experiences allowed us to better understand the role of social networks in facilitating students’ adaptation into the host society (see also Brooks and Waters, 2010). The social networks that the students had established prior and/or upon their arrival in the UK have facilitated their adaptation processes and helped them to cope with the various difficulties they had encountered through offering practical and emotional support, help and encouragement. Their transnational links in their home country, such as family and friendship relationships, which they have maintained and coordinated through the use of online communication technologies, have also played an important role in enabling migration and facilitating students’ adaptation to living in the UK through the support and comfort they have provided them with. Through these transnational communicative processes as well as travelling back and forth, the students have also managed their sense of belonging to the country of origin and the receiving country (see Robertson, 2013; 2018; van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018).

Specifically, the participants have maintained their bonds with their homeland, primarily, through nurturing and sustaining their kinship, friendship and other relationships back home and getting informed about the current political, economic and socio-cultural conditions existing in their home country through the use of online communication technologies, which have facilitated rapid, instantaneous and simultaneous communication across transnational space compressing space-time (Robertson, 2013:138, 142; Zhao, 2016). These findings provide fresh insights into how student migrants may negotiate their belonging to both sending and receiving countries. As the evidence suggests, transnational communication and encounters with their social networks in both sojourn and return act as a 'bridge' which links their home with their host country and allows students to 'cross' national borders in an audio-visual and realistic way and negotiate being 'here' and 'there' (Collins, 2009; Robertson, 2013: 149).

In addition, over their stay in the UK, the students have engaged with various practices in order to enhance their employability. Their perceptions and experiences in the host country have been significantly influenced by their migration aspirations and post-study plans. Mostly driven by professional aspirations, with the intention to remain abroad upon graduation, the students have a capital acquisition plan in mind. Feeling pressured to find employment within the competitive British labour market landscape, they apply a number of strategies in order to improve their chances of entering the labour market through constructing and managing their employability. Particularly, by engaging with particular academic and other activities, they attempt to accumulate a subset of capitals, such as institutionalised cultural capital and social capital, which are perceived as highly valued and essential to their career prospects (see also King et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2011; Waters, 2012). Capitals play an important role in aiding students' transition to employment, such as by enabling them to pursue overseas academic credentials and access higher education institutions which could provide them with various facilities, resources and services facilitating capital accumulation (see also Findlay et al. 2006; 2012; Waters, 2009a; 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Findlay, 2011; King et al., 2011). Some considerable variations by subject area and location of study were observed in the perceptions and practices of students towards employability enhancement. Specifically, in comparison with their counterparts studying courses in the fields of

Education, Social Sciences, Creative Arts and Design, students in STEM fields, Transport Studies and the subject group of Business and Administrative studies, particularly those studying in London, were found to be more proficient at accumulating and mobilising capitals in support of employment prospects by engaging more actively with employability enhancement activities. As will be further discussed in the following chapter, study location is an important factor which may enable some students to thrive by mobilising their capitals in pursuit of their life course aspirations and post-study career plans.

Chapter 7

What next? Students' Post-study Plans

7.1 Introduction

The post-study plans of mobile students is one of the least studied areas in the literature on student migration (e.g. Baruch et al., 2007; Lee and Kim, 2010; Soon, 2010; 2012; Findlay et al., 2017; Wu and Wilkes, 2017). My study aims to shed more light on this issue and in agreement with previous evidence (e.g. Findlay et al., 2017), has revealed students' aspirations for different migration trajectories. This chapter provides insight into students' life planning and what they intend to do after the completion of their studies: whether they remain abroad or return to their home country. The main plan of the majority of them is to remain abroad upon graduation, primarily in the UK, whilst many participants keep their migration plans open and express aspirations for onward migration. Although Brexit augurs uncertainty, it has not yet undermined their post-study emigration plans.

My evidence indicates the fluidity and complexity of students' future plans, mostly due to the uncertain and unstable political, socio-economic and labour market conditions in both sending and receiving countries. Within these contexts and in order to manage the risks associated with their life courses at personal, economic and professional levels, the students engage in life planning focusing on securing employment. They prioritise transition to employment and career progression over family formation. Almost all of the respondents had already formed prior to the start of their courses a post-study short-term or long-term non-return plan, with most of them intending to stay in the UK, mainly in London, which has been viewed by them as an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992) in support of improved job chances. Their plans have been highly influenced by the aspirations that had initially driven their educational migration, and shaped under the influence of various contextual and structural factors, such as economic capital, cultural capital, family dynamics, cultural outlooks and norms about mobility patterns. Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) has

been applied to a better understanding of how the students have deployed their capitals in pursuit of their post-study migration goals and life course aspirations and how within particular contexts some students are better able than others to thrive by mobilising their capitals. Another important theme that this chapter examines is how students' future plans have been influenced by their perceptions and attitudes to home, how they feel about home and their 'base', as well as other emotional pulls they experience. This study does not only establish the underpinning factors with respect to students' plans of remaining abroad or returning to their home country, but offers deep insights into how students interpret their post-study migration plans and imagine their long-term futures. Through exploring how students make sense of their post-study migration aspirations and plans in the short and long term, this chapter contributes to the study of educational migration from a life course perspective that comprehends the relationship between students' lifetime migration aspirations and life planning (see Findlay et al., 2017).

7.2 Stay in the UK and/or onward migration

Educational migration is perceived by students as part of a life plan to secure employment and advance their career. The main plan of the majority of them is to stay in the UK after graduation. Of the total sample, 27 respondents intend to find employment and remain in the UK after the completion of their studies, at least over the next few years. Their post-study migration plans have been mainly driven by economic and career-related motivations and their perceptions of the labour market conditions and availability of employment opportunities in the country of residence compared with the country of origin (see also Baruch et al., 2007). As analysed throughout the chapters, the students have a capital accumulation plan in mind. They perceive the acquisition of higher education credentials, skills and work experience in the UK as a means which might enhance their employment prospects and help them secure a better career and life future abroad. In these ways, they expect their emigration plans, which for most of them had originally driven their educational migration, to be facilitated. Many respondents expressed similar views to the following ones:

Greece cannot be included in my plans. I'd like to stay here. I've already found a job. [...] I have no deadline in mind about staying here. We'll see. [...] [I do not want to return to Greece] because there is no development in my field due to the crisis. [...] Payment is not good there and work experience is another issue.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

Here, you can change job positions more easily. There are more employment opportunities. I mean there is more flexibility. [...] There are lots of things that I'd like to do. I don't have in mind that I'm going to live here for the rest of my life.

(Alexandra, F, 30, Psychology, N. England)

The students are flexible and likely to follow job openings wherever they may be. Twenty-four respondents, although they intend to remain in the UK straight after graduation, keep their post-study plans open and/or consider apart from the UK, other migration destinations in case they find better employment opportunities (Findlay et al., 2017; Wu and Wilkes, 2017; King et al., 2018). A number of them consider onward migration after having pursued a few years in the UK. The openness and flexibility of students' plans reflect elements of what Engbersen and Snel (2013) defined as 'liquid migration', a concept that captures the fluid open-endedness of contemporary migration flows (see Engbersen, 2012; 2018; see also King, 2018; King et al., 2018) that take place in modern times, which are characterised by constant change, fluidity and temporariness (Bauman, 2000). This type of migration has been increasingly demonstrated by young people in the times of economic recession in Europe, especially in the case of the Southern European countries where the emigration flows of tertiary-educated graduates have drastically increased (e.g. Pratsinakis et al., 2016; de Almeida Alves, 2018; Sakellariou and Koronaïou, 2018). This migration trend reflects the flexibility that characterises contemporary migrants' perceptions, behaviour and practices in regard to how they respond to unexpected events and changing circumstances, develop new forms of space-time mobility in order to 'take advantage of economic and lifestyle opportunities in a widening cognitive and geopolitical space of free movement' (King, 2018: 5; Lulle et al., 2018). Three of the respondents who keep the scenario of onward migration open stated:

Yes, why not (about considering other migration destinations)? I have in my mind that I would stay here for 5 years maybe or a bit more and

then I will leave, but if something good comes up and have a nice time here I would think about that.

(Andreas, M, 24, Engineering, London)

My plan is to stay here for the next two years and if I find something better anywhere else in Europe, such as in Switzerland, of course, I would go. [...] But for the next two years my plan is to stay in Europe.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

The fact that I have come to the UK for a Master's course and to get some work experience doesn't mean that I will stay here permanently. There are about 200 other countries, 212 on the planet. If it doesn't go well, I'll leave.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

Apart from the UK, students consider migration to other destinations, taking into account the availability of employment opportunities in their disciplinary areas, income and their perceptions of the labour market value of the work experience that might be gained in these destinations, and its long-term implications on their career future. For example, apart from the UK and other European countries, mainly in Northern and Central Europe (i.e. Germany and Sweden), a few students in the fields of Engineering and Business and Administrative Studies consider other migration destinations beyond Europe, such as Dubai, due to the availability of employment opportunities in their disciplinary areas, higher salaries and their perceptions that the work experience they would gain there might advance their career. Three of them reported:

I'd like to go to Middle East because I want to cover some financial issues I have. [...] Apart from the economic motives, the experience I could get there may be more valuable. I mean, compared with working in a graduate scheme here for two years.

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

I've been thinking of going to Dubai after a few years and not straight after my graduation, basically, because of the work experience. They usually hire senior professionals there, which means that you need to gain three to four years of work experience, to do some stuff, and then things are very good. Jobs, salary etc.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

I'd like to live and work in some places around the world. For example, I'd like to live in Switzerland, in Dubai...now, after I've

been there and seen what it's like. I would also like to work in Asia, such as in Hong Kong. In many places...

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

For most of the participants, their intention to stay abroad after graduation was linked to their prior motivations for educational migration, and a positive association was identified between original and current intentions, in most cases when the initial intention was not to return, indicating that non-return is often 'a pre-planned decision' (Güngör and Tansel, 2008: 3083). More specifically, students' post-study plans have been highly influenced by their aspirations that had initially driven their educational migration. Almost all of them, prior to their migration, had already formed their post-study emigration plans, and migrating to the UK was viewed by them as a means which might help them to implement them. Therefore, their plans to stay in the host country or further migrate to another country after graduation have been consistent with their original aspirations and non-return intentions, which were mostly associated with professional aspirations. As one respondent mentioned:

Well, my plan is finding a job I like and live abroad for many years. [...] I want to live in the UK or somewhere else abroad. The Master's degree is a way of finding a job more easily. I've already started applying for jobs here, but also in Canada, the Netherlands...

(Rania, F, 23, Mathematics, N. England)

In an attempt to improve employment chances, the respondents perceive their studies and working experiences not only in the UK but also in another place abroad as an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992) which might advance their employment prospects. A few students expressed their desire for staying in the UK, mainly in London, for a few years or further migrating to another country, not only because of personal and socio-cultural aspirations but mostly because they perceive it as a place where they could develop skills and gain work experience that might help them develop and enhance their cultural, social and economic capital. By doing so, they expect that they may gain a competitive advantage over their counterparts, and their transition to employment not only in the British labour market but also in another country abroad and/or in their home country—in case they return there in the future—may be facilitated. Some of them reported that they may return home in the

long term to take advantage of their investment on these forms of capital which are perceived to enhance their career prospects after their return (see also Beine et al., 2014, cited in Gesing and Glass, 2019: 228). Such perceptions were widely projected among the participants, and these are three examples:

I'd like to stay here, but maybe for a while. [...] Mostly because I'd like to return to Greece after having gained some work experience here [...] In this way, maybe I'd be in a more advantaged position among the thousands of applicants there.

(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

Coming here is a good 'path', you know, to see how things are, get a UK certificate and then maybe go somewhere else far away.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

I want to gain some experience here, so I could go back, maybe after ten years, and find a better job there. If I go back with no experience, the job opportunities and salaries will be so limited. If I return with 10-year work experience obtained in the UK, maybe I'll find something good.

(Stamatis, M, 22, Economics, N. England)

The open-endedness of students' future plans has been intensified within the uncertain atmosphere accompanying Brexit (see King et al., 2018; Lulle et al., 2018). Brexit augurs uncertainty but, as will be discussed below, has not yet undermined students' post-study non-return plans. When they first heard about the EU referendum result, many respondents had become highly concerned in respect of the potential impact of Brexit on their studies before they were reassured that there would be no changes for EU students entering British higher education by the academic year 2018/19, in terms of fee status and eligibility to any form of financial aid, such as the postgraduate Master's loan for which many participants intended to apply. The following quotes reflect some of the concerns that the students expressed:

I got worried and asked from British Council to inform me about that. They reassured me that nothing would change in the academic year when I was going to study here.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

Since I had checked that I would be eligible to get the loan, I didn't get worried about that. I don't know what will happen in the future. There is so much uncertainty around Brexit.

(Fotis, M, 26, Transport Studies, N. England)

Most of the respondents got particularly worried not only about the potential impact of Brexit at an educational level but mostly its long-term implications on their life courses, as the post-study plan of the vast majority of them is to remain in the UK. As one of them commented:

Brexit has definitely caused some concerns. One moment I was sure about my future here and the next one I got so worried! I thought ‘Ok. Even if I study there and find the perfect job, what will happen if they kick us out? Will that worth it?’”

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

Supporting previous findings on the causal impact of Brexit on students’ perceptions and plans (Falkingham et al., 2018:2), my study indicates that the UK’s departure from the EU may affect students’ post-study decisions through three main ‘channels’: an economic, a legal and a psychological/socio-cultural channel. Specifically, some students expressed their concerns that Brexit may have some economic implications on their transitions to employment and career prospects, as they perceive that there might be less employment opportunities for them, and/or entering the labour market in post-Brexit Britain might be more difficult for non-UK nationals. Moreover, most of the participants who anticipate engaging with further study at a postgraduate research level were particularly worried about the potential impact of Brexit on the British higher education sector and academic research, mostly in terms of research funding:

I’ve noticed that the number of PhD scholarships for non-UK students has significantly decreased. [...] Many funding opportunities and scholarships used to be given in the past to EU students for doctoral study. I think that Brexit will affect university research.

(Manolis, M, 31, Transport Studies, N. England)

Such economic and career-related concerns are highly intertwined with concerns relating to Brexit legal implications for EU citizens, in terms of rights of residence, employment, study and travel and, specifically, whether EU nationals would need to apply for a VISA in case freedom of movement ends (see also Falkingham et al., 2018). This is one of the most-cited concerns and was identified as

an important factor which may enhance some students' likelihood to leave the UK.

The following concern was cited by many participants:

I got mostly worried about what will happen in terms of employment because I knew that if anything happened that would be at least after 2018-2019. So, I had in mind how difficult would be finding a job here because the conditions might be very different if you need a VISA or something like that to work. [...] That made me think about going to other countries. If that happened, I mean the VISA thing, I'll search for other places in Europe.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

In addition, some students have been worried about Brexit consequences at social, cultural and psychological levels. A number of them expressed their concerns whether the UK might be a less welcoming country to live, study, and/or work (see Falkingham et al., 2018) and are afraid that Brexit may significantly affect their own and other people's everyday lives leading to increase of incidents of discrimination, xenophobia and racism against them at various domains of their everyday lives:

I still hope that it won't happen. If it does, I think that it'll affect me. Maybe employers may not like hiring EU employees. If this happens, obviously, I'll change my mind about staying here. If I need a VISA to live here, I think that finding a job will be tough.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

There is high uncertainty, you know about the fees, work... For example, I don't know what will happen. I was thinking, what if they want only British employees? I'm a migrant, will they want me? Will there be any racist attitudes against us in the workplace and, in general, in everyday life?

(Rania, F, 23, Mathematics, N. England)

Holding the belief that they might be more secure if they sign an employment contract and enter the British labour market before Brexit happens, some participants feel under more pressure to find employment over the following months:

I believe that since you have come here and entered the labour market before Brexit happens, then you may be safe. The most difficult thing would be for someone to come here after Brexit.

(Xenia, F, 23, Politics, N. England)

I mean one friend of mine has found a job and signed a 3-year contract; another one has signed a 4-year one. So, they feel safe for now. Hope I find a job soon.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

Aside with securing employment, applying for British citizenship after completing five consecutive years of residence in the UK is another strategy that one student, who has been living and working in the UK for the past few years, considers applying in order to secure her employment and residence rights after Britain's departure from the EU:

This is something awful for the UK and Europe. Very sad! [...] I've been studying, working and living here. I would get the British citizenship in five years. I don't think that they would kick me out of the country.

(Anastasia, F, 25, Education, N. England)

Despite their concerns about Brexit and its potential consequences on various aspects of their lives, by the time of the interview, the majority of the participants pointed out that they had not changed their initial plans to remain in the UK after graduation since there had not been an official announcement by that time about what would finally happen and what policies would be implemented by the British government for EU-nationals in post-Brexit Britain. For some of them, staying is perceived as a pathway that they need to follow since they have already made their first migration step, and considering the socio-economic conditions in their home country, they feel that they need to take the risk and make a new start. However, the students reported that their plans are subject to change depending on how Brexit will finally turn out. Therefore, they keep their migration plans open:

It hasn't changed my plans as I had no other choice. [...] I can't talk about something I'm not aware of what is going to be like. I don't know how it'll end up. Of course, I have this in mind and feel worried about this, but I don't want to base my decisions on any sources of misinformation. Let's see what will finally happen.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

Of course, the first thing I'm worried about is work, if I need to get a VISA. I've been thinking of what may happen and unconsciously you think of some other options, of what you'll do next, if something

happens [...] My plans haven't been affected yet, until something really happens, something which may have some consequences. Then, I'll start thinking about that.

(Aliko, F, 22, Education, N. England)

However, due to Brexit uncertainty some respondents, whose initial intention was to remain in the UK after graduation, have already started to consider other potential destinations:

Brexit definitely worries me, mostly for professional reasons. [...] The things I've been hearing are not positive at all. [...] For sure, it has affected my plans. [...] Ideally, I'd like to find a job in my field. I think that this is something that everybody wants, but in practical terms things aren't that easy. Now, with Brexit, things are getting worse. I've been thinking of some other destinations.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

I'd like to stay here. The first priority for me and my partner is finding work here and then I search for a job in Scotland because of Brexit. I believe it's safer for us being there than here. [...] I don't know if I get a job and then must leave. I don't know if I need to apply for a VISA, what the requirements would be.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

It is noteworthy that a few students feel double unsettled, finding themselves situated in both sending and receiving countries in contexts of uncertainty, in the UK mostly because of Brexit and in Greece because of the economic recession, as the quote of one of them clearly reflects:

I think that Brexit will definitely bring some changes, I mean even to our everyday lives. I don't think that our everyday lives will be the same after that. You know what is going on now? You are leaving from Greece where there is so much uncertainty because of the crisis, and you are coming here where there is also uncertainty because of Brexit.

(Manolis, M, 31, Transport Studies, London)

Students' future plans are highly intertwined with the way they approach their education, career and labour market, taking into account their surrounding political, socio-economic and labour market conditions. The research findings on students' pre- and post-study aspirations and decision-making partly support, but also call into question theories of individualisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). According

to these theories, within the context of global modernity, young people's biographies in the Western-world have become much more individualised (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; King, 2018: 7) and their choices are no longer determined, but are 'disembedded from the previously strong framing social structures' (King, 2018: 7; Evans, 2008: 1665). Within this lens of interpretation, mobility and student mobility might be framed as a type of individualised movement, an option that young people choose and a 'do-it-yourself' or 'elective' biography (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Brooks and Waters, 2010: 3; Conradson and Latham, 2005: 289; Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014: 210). Supporting these theories and concurring with previous findings in the literature, my results have also projected the 'individualised nature' of student migration (Brooks and Waters, 2010: 7), as students' pre- and post-study aspirations and plans have been driven by personal, professional, experiential, socio-cultural and other aspirations (see also Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). However, the evidence also indicates that although migration may be viewed and experienced as a way of personal and professional development (see Conradson and Latham, 2005), it has been strongly influenced by multiple contextual dynamics which have generated aspirations for non-return plans, as the next section will discuss.

7.3 The role of capitals in students' post-study plans and career pathways

Although a number of studies have explored international student mobility's social selectivity, mainly focusing on the determinants of students' educational mobility, the role played by students' capitals, including economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986), as well as their family and socio-cultural contexts in their post-study plans remains under-evidenced (Bahna, 2018). My findings suggest that economic capital is important to understanding students' future plans, as it shapes their post-study migration options and creates the conditions for the accumulation and mobilisation of a subset of capitals that affect students' career pathways and, more broadly, their life courses. Moreover, students' post-study moves are shaped by their cultural capital, with family dynamics affecting their perceptions and attitudes towards return and non-return plans. The way that students perceive return and non-return post-study pathways is also influenced by their mobility capital and cultural

outlooks and norms of mobility—conceptualised as mobility cultures (Beech, 2015)—that are established within their family and social surrounding environments. All these forms of capital that shape post-study pathways and migration outcomes are interconnected and cannot be examined in isolation from one another. My study supports the argument of Brooks and Waters (2010: 23) that mobility capital instead of being understood as a ‘sub-component of human capital’, might be better conceptualised as a form of capital that exists alongside the others and can be both converted into these other types of capitals and produced by them. Economic and cultural capital enable mobility capital accumulation and access to cultures of mobility that encourage non-return post-study moves and career pathways through which cultural and economic capital accumulation may be facilitated.

7.3.1 Economic capital

Economic capital may enable or prevent students from following particular pre- and post-study pathways and, consequently, create or inhibit opportunities for the accumulation and mobilisation of forms of capital which may have importable short- and long-term implications on their career lives and, more broadly, their life courses. One of the ways that students’ economic resources may affect their post-study plans is through acting as a facilitator or a barrier to their access to educational institutions and locations of study which through the various structures, services and resources they provide students with might aid or impede their transition to employment and advance their career prospects. The evidence suggests that within particular locations, attached with perceived high value in both symbolic and pragmatic terms and where more employment opportunities are available, students are more likely to thrive and advantages can accrue. Economic capital was a crucial factor that has underpinned students’ decision-making with respect to the selection of higher education provider, course and study location, as discussed in chapter 5. London was identified as the most desired destination among many students who intend to remain in the UK after graduation, mainly for career-related reasons, such as the availability of a wide range of career opportunities and better career prospects (see also King et al., 2018). However, for some respondents who wanted to study and reside there for the aforementioned reasons, economic capital acted as a barrier (see chapter 5).

Looking at how the location of study may influence students' career paths and employment outcomes, some variations were identified among the respondents between the two locations. By the time of the interview, almost all of the students in both locations had already started searching and applying for job positions in the UK, with five of them also searching for employment in other countries. However, the larger number of respondents who had found employment was comprised of those studying in London (seven out of the twelve respondents). All of them became employed in London: three students in the field of Engineering had found a full-time job position and would start working after the completion of their studies, one student in the field of Business was already working at a university-funded position, and three respondents were currently working in part-time job positions: one in the field of Education (part-time), and two students in the field of Creative Arts (part-time). Moreover, two respondents have received a scholarship provided by their higher education institution to engage with further studies: one to pursue a PhD degree in London and the other one to engage with a dual degree programme in Italy.

On the other hand, only two participants who were interviewed in the city in the north of England had managed to find employment and/or currently working: one in the field of Psychology was already working in a part-time job position relating to her educational background (previously living and working in London), and one in the field of Education (a part-time job position not relevant to her study). This evidence indicates that most of the students in London might have been better-resourced, mainly in terms of the employment opportunities that they were available to them in their disciplinary areas, facilitating their transition to employment. Two of them pointed out:

I've been working part-time at a Greek primary school in London. [...] Labour market conditions have played a role because in London there is a big labour market and there are also many Greek schools. So, I could apply and find a job at both British and Greek schools.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

There is high competition, but there are also many opportunities. I think you can find a job here in my field, even if you don't have a Master's certificate. As I said, I had already received a job offer before I got the scholarship to study here.

(Marina, F, 25, Engineering, London)

The findings suggest that in case more employment opportunities are available in the study location, students have more chances of entering the labour market not only after graduation but also during their studies. This is also reflected in previous studies which have revealed that differences in labour market structures across regions and structural factors may impact on students' and graduates' career trajectories and employment/unemployment and underemployment outcomes (e.g. Rafferty et al., 2013; Behle, 2017). As shown in relevant literature, the work experience that students could gain during their studies may also enhance their employability in the long term, as work experience constitutes one of the main requirements that employers have been increasingly requiring from applicants, especially in the case of positions of higher social and economic status. However, it should be noted that although this research evidence sheds light on the under-evidenced role of mobile students' economic capital in their post-study career paths, it needs to be interpreted with caution due to the limited number of the locations where the study was carried out and the fact that the participants were still current students, and some of them who had not found employment by the time of the interview may have become employed later on.

Another way in which students' economic capital as well as institutional factors, such as university tuition fees and the availability of scholarships, may significantly impact on their post-study plans and career pathways is by facilitating or inhibiting their engagement with further studies. Particularly, seven students expressed their interest in engaging with postgraduate research level of study in the UK after graduation. However, for almost all of them, the only way of pursuing a PhD degree programme is through a scholarship or another form of financial support. Otherwise, they intend to enter the labour market and remain in the UK. The following quote is an example which reflects the crucial role that economic resources may play in influencing students' educational and career opportunities by enabling or inhibiting further studies:

I want to continue with my studies at a PhD level. That's why I decided to study this course. I wish I could get a scholarship. If not, I'm afraid I can't do it. That's why I'm also looking for a job here.
(Xenia, F, 23, Politics, N. England)

Remaining in the UK and/or onward migration, a pathway that the vast majority of students intend to follow in search of better career prospects and opportunities, seems to be an advantaged pathway that students of lower economic capital are less likely to follow in case they have not found employment prior to the completion of their studies due to the high costs included. Specifically, the respondents from less financially privileged backgrounds expressed higher concerns with finding employment before graduation because, as they reported, they could not simply stay in the UK or further migrate to another country abroad if they had no work. The following statement was typical among a few respondents:

I'd like to work here at least for one year. I don't know if I find anything. The money is too little for living in London. [...] I've already started applying for jobs. I haven't received any replies yet.
(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

As the following section will discuss, aside with economic capital, cultural capital is another important factor to understanding students' future plans, with family dynamics playing a significant role in shaping return and non-return intentions. Within their surrounding family and social environments, students may be exposed to cultures of mobility that normalise mobility patterns and facilitate migration (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015). In the context of these cultures, particular cultural outlooks and norms of travel are established and mobility capital accumulation, which is facilitated through economic capital, is encouraged. This form of capital, intertwined with the others, affects students' perceptions and attitudes towards particular post-study pathways and, thus, shapes migration outcomes and students' life journeys and opportunities.

7.3.2 Cultural capital and family dynamics

Although the students expressed individual aspirations for staying abroad and pursuing an international career, family dynamics have influenced aside with their pre-study migration motivations, their post-study plans. As addressed in chapter 5, almost all of the respondents have been supported by their families on their decisions

for educational migration and their post-study plans to stay in the UK or migrate to another country. Despite their concerns, likewise the respondents, their families viewed the migration path as a way for their children of escaping the difficult socio-economic conditions in Greece and securing a better future. However, bearing a resemblance to evidence of earlier studies (e.g. Marcu 2015; Findlay et al., 2017; Bahna, 2018), some variations by family economic and cultural capital background have been identified with respect to the role played by the family in shaping students' perceptions and attitudes towards future plans. The evidence suggests that high cultural capital family background positively affects students' post-study non-return intention (see Bahna, 2018).

Drawing on previous research on student mobility, the more encouraging and supportive attitudes exhibited by the parents of most of the students from professional backgrounds and higher parental educational level. These attitudes might be explained as a reflection of a middle-class reproduction project among the educated middle classes who anticipate seeing their children succeed and secure a better career future, even if they do so overseas. The parents of middle-class students have been found to usually view their children's international education funding as an opportunity to provide them with a highly valued cultural and symbolic capital, represented by the acquisition of prestigious Western academic credentials, which is expected to be converted into economic capital and social status (see Brooks and Waters, 2010; Findlay, 2011; King et al., 2011).

As illustrated in students' accounts, the students' parents have been concerned with their children's future and prospective career. Considering the limited employment opportunities existing in Greece, the majority of them, especially those of higher cultural capital, have significantly supported their children to migrate not only for studies but also for work, as they perceive that this pathway might help them secure a better life. Specifically, in the case of students coming from families with higher educational backgrounds and often high mobility capital—mainly, when one or both parents were university-educated and/or previously studied and/or worked abroad—family support and encouragement towards students' intention to remain abroad has been stronger, as their children's migration decision was viewed as a way for them of building better employment opportunities and boosting their career. These are two examples highlighting the support and encouragement which some students

received from their parents concerning their migration decision and non-return post-study plans:

My parents were very supportive with my migration decision [...] When I told them, some time after I had come here, that I wouldn't like to stay and work here, they were a bit reluctant. They told me to wait and see, to think more about that, the employment prospects I might have here etc.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

My family have been very supportive with my plan to stay here [...] My father had also done a Master's in the UK. [...] You know, I have some friends whose parents were very negative with the idea of them leaving from Greece. Mine were not like that. I would say the opposite. It was a kind of pre-determined that I would do that, as my sister had also done so.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

On the other hand, in some cases of respondents from lower family educational backgrounds and/or mobility capital (even if economic capital was high), their parent(s), mostly the father, were more reluctant and concerned, and in two cases of students (one from more financially privileged background and the other one from less privileged) were not positive with their children's post-study non-return intention. Some of the concerns their parents expressed are captured in the following quotes of two respondents:

My father first said 'Of course, you can go if you want this and you are sure about this', and all these things. However, he wasn't that positive when I told him that I don't want to come back. [...] Yeah, he said 'Go of course, and stay there for a year if you want to work, but come back'.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

My father was not very positive, especially at the beginning, with my plan to stay here. He was telling me the negative things rather than the positive ones about living abroad. [...] Now, my parents know about a 5-year plan I have in mind. I haven't told them yet that I'm thinking of staying more. However, I think they'll finally accept this if they see that there is some progress and I'm having a good time here.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

However, even in these cases of students, despite their families' attitudes and concerns towards their post-study non-return or return plans, students pointed out their parents have finally supported them to pursue their future goals and aspirations.

7.3.3 Mobility capital

The evidence shows that within family and social contexts often of higher economic and cultural capital, exposure to cultures of mobility, which establish specific cultural outlooks and norms of travel and normalise particular mobility patterns, increases the chances for students of following a non-return post-study pathway and pursue a career life abroad. This trend may also be enhanced through the accumulation of mobility capital which is promoted within the mobility cultures (Beech, 2015), usually relating to more financially privileged family backgrounds, within which mobility is facilitated.

The mobility capital that students had accumulated prior and/or after their educational migration to the UK has been identified as a significant factor that has influenced their post-study moves. Students who have previously acquired various mobility experiences are more likely to consider onward migration and/or keep their post-study migration plans open, having a more global and cosmopolitan vision regarding their career and the place where they could envision themselves working and living in the future (Wu and Wilkes, 2017: 129). In particular, the experiences that some participants had acquired through travelling, studying and/or working abroad had motivated and facilitated their decision for staying abroad, such as by developing adaptation skills and increasing their confidence with living in a foreign country, as identified in the statements of some respondents:

I've made many trips. I've travelled to Africa, Asia, America, I've been to almost all European countries. [...] I believe that wherever you go it is the same. I don't have any problem with adjusting to a different environment, a different lifestyle, culture, I've never had. I could go anywhere. I can adapt easily and quickly. Definitely these experiences may help you adapt more easily.

(Leonidas, M, 27, Business, London)

My experiences here have helped me a lot to learn how to stand on my feet. You know, now I feel much more confident with living abroad than I did before.

(Dimitra, F, 24, Education, London)

Students' family economic and, mostly, cultural capital backgrounds were found to be often linked to their mobility capital, which has been identified as a significant influential factor not only in regard to their pre-study migration decision-making, but also their non-return post-study plans. As discussed in chapter 5, in many cases of students, their social networks had established a culture of mobility through sharing their first-hand study and/or working abroad experiences and offering support and advice, normalising not only the decision for migration for study purposes but also students' post-study emigration plans. As Findlay et al. (2006: 314-315) argue, such mobility cultures may shape students' motivations, migration aspirations and behaviour, encouraging many to experience foreign places through travel and for educational or professional reasons. However, as analysed in the previous chapter, these mobility cultures, which may encourage students to study and remain abroad for better opportunities, are more likely to be established within a family context of high economic, but, mostly, cultural capital background. The mobility capital possessed by the respondents and their parents, in most of the cases, was found to be positively linked to their family economic and, primarily, cultural capital, something that reflects another element of the socially reproductive nature of student mobility (see also Findlay et al., 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015).

Although they could not pre-determine how students may actually utilise their mobility capital after graduation and how it may affect their career paths in the long term, my findings have shown that students' non-return post-study plans may be significantly generated and facilitated by their previous travel and/or study abroad experiences. Students are more likely to stay abroad after the completion of their studies if they are situated in contexts of mobility cultures (Beech, 2015), established in a family and social environment where studying and remaining abroad upon graduation is perceived as a normal course of action for an individual who anticipates to boost their career and build better employment and life opportunities.

These findings indicate how student migration may contribute to social class reproduction (see Findlay et al., 2006; 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2010). Considering

that international student mobility might bring various advantages to mobile students at professional and economic levels by enhancing their employability and, consequently, opening better employment opportunities of higher social and economic status—as evidenced in relevant literature— it might be suggested that its social selectivity and reproductive nature in regard to students’ financial (in)capacity to access overseas study (see King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Findlay et al., 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Waters, 2009a; 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011) may also impact on students’ personal and professional life courses upon their graduation. In these ways, social inequalities may be (re)produced and transferred from an educational to a professional level through shaping employment and life opportunities (see Findlay et al., 2006; Brooks and Waters, 2010; Kratz, 2012, cited in Lörz et al., 2016).

Aside with economic, cultural and mobility capitals students’ post-study moves and life planning are also influenced by social and cultural dynamics, such as their perceptions and attitudes to ‘home’ and their ‘base’ as well as to family formation and long-term futures, as the section below will discuss.

7.4 Narratives of ‘home’ and return plans

Another important theme identified in the data is how students’ conceptualisations and attitudes to ‘home’ and their ‘base’, how they feel about home and some emotional pulls they experience may affect their post-study plans in the short and long term. As shown in previous chapters, high levels of disappointment and uncertainty were expressed by the respondents regarding the current socio-economic conditions that exist in their home country. The majority of them believe that the financial crisis will finally come to an end, but not in near future. The following view was widely reported by the participants:

I think that it’ll finally come to an end, but not soon. I believe that these things go around in circles. I think that over the next decade, things will start to change.

(Xenia, F, 23, Politics, N. England)

Return to home country was perceived by the majority of them as the last option they would choose, only if they could not find employment in the UK or somewhere else abroad, for those who also consider onward migration. Although many respondents would like to return, mostly for reasons associated with family and friends and socio-cultural factors, they would rather not to do so, at least over the next few years. They pointed out that they would return only if they could find employment matching their interests and qualifications, and which might provide them with good living standards. However, they highlighted that this might be unlikely to happen at least over the next decade:

My first option would be finding a job in the UK or Frankfurt, as it's another important financial centre. [...] Greece would be my last option because I wouldn't find anything there, especially in my field. And, in general, there are no prospects.

(Michalis, M, 29, Business, London)

Aside with generating aspirations for onward migration, students' academic and socio-cultural adjustment experiences in the host country and/or personal circumstances may disrupt their initial plans for staying abroad and generate aspirations for post-study return migration (see Robertson et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2017). Only three participants intend to return to Greece immediately after graduation. Two female students want to return mostly for personal and emotional reasons. Their pre-study intention was to migrate to the UK for their studies and then remain and work for some years upon graduation. However, their plans have changed during the course of their study, mostly because of some negative experiences they had encountered at academic, personal and/or socio-cultural levels. One of them explained:

My initial plan was to stay here, but now my plans have changed. [...] Crisis was one of the main reasons I was thinking of not going back upon graduation. However, after having spent some time here, I realised that the most important thing in life is being somewhere where you feel nice and happy. You know, having just a good job and a good salary is not something that could make me feel happy.

(Nikoleta, F, 24, Education, N. England)

One male student also plans to return upon graduation due to family reasons although his initial plan was to remain in the UK for at least four years in order to

pursue a PhD course. However, he leaves open the possibility of return to the UK in the future:

Unfortunately, I have to go back [...] My initial goal was to stay here for at least four years, so I could do a PhD. However, although I don't know what I'll finally do in the future, I believe that I'll return to Greece and maybe after a few years I'll come back here.

(Fotis, M, 26, Transport Studies, N. England)

Although almost all of the students argued that they plan to remain abroad after graduation over the next few years, they are uncertain whether they would stay in the UK or return to Greece or further migrate to another country in the long term. The findings indicate that students' plans, especially, long-term life mobility plans are significantly being influenced by the 'mix of home perceptions and mobility experiences' (Wu and Wilkes, 2017: 130). In some cases of respondents, the sense of 'home' was associated with what they had referred to as their 'base', when talking about their future plans. In particular, although a number of participants expressed their desire to travel around the world, to work and live abroad over the next years, most of them need to feel that they have a 'base' somewhere, where they would return and live permanently in the future because as they reported 'moving places' is not something that they would envision themselves doing in their entire life:

I don't think that changing places all the time is quite 'healthy'. You know, going somewhere to live in my 30s then go somewhere else in my 40s. I don't think I'd do that.

(Kiriakos, M, 28, Arts, London)

However, it should be noted that the concepts of 'home' and 'base' did not always overlap. Specifically, in some students' narratives, these two notions were related, mostly in a sense of a location where they perceive that there are the appropriate conditions, at personal and contextual levels (political, economic, social and cultural), which would make them feel that they could settle down in short or long term. 'Home' was attached with a more emotional meaning and, for the majority of students, was mainly associated with the place where they had grown up and where their families and friends are. For the majority of the participants, 'home' was their country of origin where their families and friends are and where they plan to return in

the future in order to settle down and have their own families once they have fulfilled their personal and professional aspirations abroad. The reasons that most of them have perceived Greece as their ‘home’, and according to some respondents as their ‘base’, are mostly related to family and friendship ties, as well as the language, lifestyle and other socio-cultural reasons, as demonstrated in the quotes below:

My home is in Greece. You know, my family and friends are there...the culture, the language... However, because of the current situation, I’m not sure if I’d go back.... If something good comes up and I have a nice time here, then I would think about living here permanently and having a family here.

(Aspa, F, 22, Business, N. England)

All my family and friends are in Greece. My home is there. However, I’m not sure if I could envision myself living there permanently because of the crisis and all these things, you know. If I had my husband, my kid here, having been here for a couple of years, I’d like to settle down here.

(Anthi, F, 25, Transport Studies, N. England)

Another participant stated:

Definitely, I’d like to go back to Greece sometime but not now. Maybe after 10 to 15 years I would go and stay there permanently. I’d like to have a ‘base’ somewhere. I wouldn’t like to be all around for the rest of my life. [...] I’d like to have a family in Greece. I love Greece. That’s why I want to go back and live there permanently after some years. My roots are there, my friends and family are there, the weather...

(Rafail, M, 25, Engineering, N. England)

However, for some students, the place that they consider as ‘home’, which is mostly associated with their country of origin where their family home is, may not necessarily be perceived by them as their ‘base’, the place where they would envision themselves settling down. The participants have negative perceptions of the labour market conditions in their home country, in terms of availability of employment opportunities, income and working conditions. Therefore, although family and friendship ties as well as socio-cultural factors were found to be very important in many cases of students who expressed their desire to return in the future, their negative perceptions of the socio-economic conditions in Greece had made their migration decision seem as necessary, and return was mostly viewed as a trajectory

that they would follow not in near future, but in the long term. The evidence indicates that in case economic and labour market conditions are satisfactory, cultural or social forces play a more important role in students' return decisions compared with professional motivations (see also Lee and Kim, 2010). Career-related factors have a stronger influential role in the case of students who may not have been as certain about their employment prospects upon return to their home country (see also Lee and Kim, 2010). Many respondents expressed similar views to the ones cited below:

I don't think of going back in near future because the fields I'm mostly interested in at a professional level are either underdeveloped or don't even exist. [...] It feels a bit like looking for a needle in the haystack.
(Athena, F, 24, Education, London)

I'd like to go back but it'd be too difficult for me to do it now, working for 8 hours and getting paid only €400.
(Kiriakos, M, 28, Arts, London)

This data echoes the findings of Wu and Wilkes (2017: 130) which suggest that international students sometimes 'simply cannot go "home"', and the conceptualisation of 'home' 'confines, but does not determine migration behaviour'. For example, although students may have 'an ideal perception of home' associated with a particular place, social, political and economic barriers may prevent them from return (Wu and Wilkes, 2017: 130). Similarly, in my study, although some participants want to return to their country of origin, which they perceive as their 'home', socio-economic and career-related factors were found to prevent them from doing so, at least in near future.

Moreover, there were some participants who, apart from the aforementioned reasons, expressed their desire to return to their home country in order to help it recover and contribute to its economic and scientific advancement, arguing that Greece might benefit from circular migration of graduates through the knowledge, skills and networks that they may acquire and develop when studying and working for a period of time abroad (see Tsekeris et al., 2015). However, in this case study, as seen in the following statements, this is a plan that the participants want to implement not in near future, but in a few years' time because firstly, aside with gaining various experiences and developing their knowledge and skills in their field, they also intend to develop their economic capital which some of them need in order to implement

their plans of starting up their own businesses and make an investment in Greece later on:

I'd like to go back to Greece after I turn 35 or 40. Not now [...] Greece is a beautiful country to have your family. [...] I love my country. However, my plan is to live and work abroad, earn some money and gain some experience and then return to invest my money and bring new ideas to my country, in my field... I don't know yet what I'm going to do. [...] I don't know, but when you go abroad for further studies and work, you can bring back new ideas.

(Rania, F, 23, Mathematics, N. England)

The ideal thing for me would be doing my Master's course for two years and then gaining some work experience for a few years- let's say overall five years, and then go back to Greece with other prospects either starting up something or finding a job matching my interests.

(Kiriakos, M, 29, Arts, London)

However, for other students, although it is too early to make long-term plans regarding permanent settlement and family formation, the UK or another country could be the place where they would settle down and have a family under the proper conditions at personal, professional, social, and cultural levels, and if other factors were favourable for their children and themselves, such as in terms of employment and living standards, lifestyle, quality of education, social services, professional expectations and career prospects:

I wouldn't have any problem with living here permanently. I don't have any issues. [...] Yes, sure, I'd like to have a family here and my children to grow up here. [...] I'd like to do whatever is the best for them. If I thought that here they could get better education and have more opportunities for a better future, I would definitely stay with no second thought.

(Manolis, M, 31, Transport Studies, N. England)

Well, I think it's too early to say [...] At least what I think now is that I wouldn't live abroad in my entire life [...] Because I want to live in my country, and I'd also like my children to live in their country, but I don't know. I would think more about that if there were the proper conditions here, you know in terms of quality of life, employment conditions...

(Kiriakos, M, 29, Arts, London)

Furthermore, for some respondents another factor that may determine their migration destination and the place where they could envision themselves settling

down does not only relate to family and social ties, and economic and professional factors but may also be influenced by aspects associated with rights and societal attitudes towards gender and sexual orientation. More specifically, one of the main reasons two homosexual female participants perceive the UK as their ‘base’ and intend to remain there after graduation relates to British current laws and regulations on gender and LGBTQ’s rights and equality policies, along with the more accepting social environment that they have found to exist in the UK compared with their home country and other countries abroad. As one of them stated:

I believe that this ‘base’ is here in the UK. [...] Here, apart from more employment opportunities and career flexibility, there are also some other good things. For example, in terms of women’s position and rights in society, LGBTQ rights, equality etc. [...] I think that it’d be better to have my ‘base’ here, as here the position of women and homosexual women is much better. [...] This is something important to me.

(Alexandra, F, 30, Psychology, N. England)

Students’ future migration decisions and the selection of their destination is a complex and dynamic process that involves many considerations which are embedded in cultural, economic, political and social contexts (see Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Basford and Riemsdijk, 2015, cited in Wu and Wilkes, 2017). These decisions are also significantly shaped by their perceptions and attitudes towards career and family formation plans as well as their imaginations of their future in the long term.

7.5 Imagining long-term futures: Career and family formation plans

Consistent with a number of studies on youth transitions in Europe in times of crisis, the findings of my study indicate that apart from transition to employment and leaving parental home, other life course events which traditionally mark transition to adulthood, such as marriage and family formation, have been affected by the socio-economic contexts within which young people are situated (see Irwin, 1995; Jeffrey and McDowell, 2004; de Almeida Alves, 2018; Irwin and Nilsen, 2018; Sakellariou and Koronaiou, 2018). As documented in previous studies, these life course events may be postponed in times of economic recession and labour market uncertainty with people trying to adjust their family planning to the ongoing conditions within they

find themselves being situated (Kotzamanis and Kostaki, 2015; Goldstein, et al. , 2013; Newsroom, 2019). In my study, transition to employment and career progression were identified as students' first priority, whilst family formation was not reported by almost any of them as part of their plans at least for the next few years during which they intend to remain in the UK or further migrate to another country for work and/or further studies.

The findings did not identify any considerable variations by gender. However, compared with female participants, some male participants, especially those studying courses in the fields of Business and Administrative Studies, and Engineering, being highly focused on their career plans, were found to be more determined and absolute regarding their plans and age at which they would like to have a family. Family formation was out of their life plans at least for the next ten to fifteen or more years, whilst many female students did not set a specific life course timeline. Moreover, compared with most male participants, some female respondents expressed their intention to stay and work abroad for fewer years before they return to Greece for permanent settlement and family formation. The following perceptions were typical mostly among the male respondents:

There are no family plans at least for the next 15 years, maybe after 35 and still not sure. [...] Possibly I'll stay in the UK at least for two years as long as the graduate position for engineers lasts. [...] After that, staying here would depend on what kind of job I'll get or I want to go to the USA.

(Giannis, M, 25, Engineering, London)

I'd like to stay here at least for five years and return approximately after ten years. Now I'm 22, so I'd like to go back when I'll be 30, more or less. [...] Because I believe that this would be a good amount of time for me to gain the experiences I want. I think that ten years will be enough for me to say that I've spent part of my life somewhere else and gained some experiences.

(Aris, M, 22, Business, London)

Although they have a post-study plan in mind, most of the students expressed high levels of uncertainty, relevant to their future career and the location where they would end up living and working, and as shown previously in this chapter, their plans are subject to change according to the ongoing political and socio-economic conditions. Therefore, within these contexts surrounded by high levels of uncertainty,

some students do not feel ready and confident yet with having their own families because first they want to secure their future, in terms of employment and place of work and residence. The prioritisation of career plans over family formation was evidenced in the accounts of many respondents, and these are two examples:

I could imagine myself having a family, but later, once I have earned some money and gained some work experience which could enhance my employability and help me get a good job in Greece.

(Panagiota, F, 26, Business, N. England)

Family formation is not in my plans now. My plan now is finding a job abroad, earn some money, gain some experiences and then go back to Greece after many years to have my family

(Rania, F, 23, Mathematics, N. England)

Moreover, for some of them, these types of uncertainty have had an impact on their lives at personal and social levels by acting as a ‘barrier’ to the creation of a stable romantic relationship in the host country in the fear of getting hurt if they finally need to return to their home country or further migrate to another destination, as shown in the following quote:

It’s very difficult here abroad to develop interpersonal relationships, as you don’t know if you’ll stay here forever or return to your country [...] There is a concern, you know, ok I’ll make a relationship now, but if I leave after three years, what will happen to this relationship? Why would I do that and then get hurt? So, you don’t get attached personally all this time. So, when you are about 30, you may think I’ll return to find my partner’.

(Lina, F, 26, Education, London)

Furthermore, in regard to young peoples’ trends in personal relationships and social life, a number of studies have shown that over the last years, apartment-sharing has significantly increased among young people, with many couples living together without getting married, often resorting to ‘sustainable, low-cost solutions for their shared life’ (e.g. Lanzieri, 2013; Karaiskaki, 2019; Newsroom, 2019). This trend is also evidenced in my study, as all of the eight respondents who reported that they have been in a relationship have been sharing accommodation with their partners who have been studying and/or working in their study location. Apart from emotional reasons, the findings have shown that financial factors and pragmatic aspirations may

also influence students' decisions and plans to live together, sharing accommodation and living expenses. Thus, as reported in one of the previous sections, in the case of these respondents, their future plans regarding the place of work and residence have been intertwined with those of their partner's. The following quotes reflect the views of most of these participants:

My first option would be London. Because you know that there is the 'partner' factor and it's not just the emotional aspect, but also the financial one. It's a combination of things. I'd prefer to avoid moving away. I'd prefer to get a worse job here and not beyond London. I never reject the idea of going somewhere else abroad, but that would be my plan B or C.

(Sofia, F, 24, Engineering, London)

I'm with my boyfriend here. We're living together. So, I'm not alone. We're not sure yet whether we stay in this city or not. We need to think of what the employment opportunities might be for both of us.

(Despoina, F, 26, Business, N. England)

However, the data has indicated that the postponement of family formation among young people may be caused not only by economic reasons, but also by a combination of personal, cultural, and social factors, such as changing lifestyles and behavioural patterns (Davies et al., 2014). Specifically, many respondents expressed their aspirations for gaining various experiences by travelling, working and living abroad over the next years, reflecting what current debates argue. Furthermore, as mentioned above, for most of them, their career and transition to labour market are perceived as their first priority at least over the next years, with wedding and family formation not currently included in their life course plan:

This is not in my mind at the moment. I want to focus on my studies and career over the next years: four years for my PhD and then I'd like to do some research work for some years.

(Evelina, F, 24, Biosciences, London)

The research data supports the argument with respect to youth transitions in contemporary times which claims that in times of economic, social and cultural changes, marriage which had traditionally been 'a rite of passage to adulthood' has lost its 'centrality' compared with previous decades (Davies et al., 2014, no

pagination). Regarding their transition to adulthood students have applied more individualistic criteria, such as leaving the family home, ‘learning how to stand on their own feet’, entering the labour market and financial independence from their families (see Petrogiannis, 2011: 131). These events constitute the main markers that the majority of the respondents considered of indicating their transition to adulthood, perceived as a state of independence and autonomy, and on which they have been currently focused.

7.6 Summary

Students’ post-study migration pathways are not disconnected from other life course events, but constitute part of their life planning, being contextually situated and driven by life course aspirations (Findlay et al., 2017). Educational migration is not perceived and experienced by students as an isolated incident limited to educational purposes, but as a key life stage with significant implications on their life course trajectories. In this case study, students have perceived their migration to the UK as the first step in a long-term strategy focusing on securing employment in the host or home country (after their return) or in another destination. As was discussed in chapter 4, this data indicates that Greek student migration has acquired a different momentum compared with previous decades, when the main driver of migration was the failure or fear of failing in the university admissions exams in Greece, and many students tended to return to their home country upon graduation (Eliou, 1988; ADMIT, 2001).

In search of securing employment and, more broadly, a better future, students’ main plan is to remain abroad, primarily in the UK, after the completion of their studies. Despite the concerns that Brexit augurs, their non-return plans have not yet changed. The UK, especially London, is perceived by them as an ‘escalator region’ (Fielding, 1992) which might improve their chances of finding employment and boost their career (see also, King et al., 2018). However, they appeared to be flexible and keep their plans open, also considering onward migration in case better employment opportunities emerge. The fluidity of students’ plans has been mainly generated within the uncertain contexts of economic recession, austerity and unstable labour market conditions. As a response to these conditions, students’ pre- and post-study

non-return migration decisions are highly motivated by aspirations for cultural, social and, mostly in the case of post-study decisions, economic capital accumulation, as conceptualised in Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986). Capital accumulation is one of the strategies that many students deploy in order to manage the risks, mainly associated with their transition to employment and career progression, which have been identified for most of them as their first priority over family formation in their short- and long-term life plan. For almost all the respondents their post-study non-return plans have been consistent with their original goals and aspirations which had driven their educational migration.

The findings challenge the argument that, in contemporary times, structural and contextual factors no longer play a 'strong shaping role as they did in the past' (King, 2018: 5), as well as neoliberal discourses which argue that individuals are 'ultimately responsible for their own career destiny and life trajectories' (Behle, 2017: 5). Contextual and structural factors, such as economic, cultural and mobility capital, as well as family dynamics, cultural outlooks and the cultures of mobility within which some students are situated, play an important role not only in mediating migrating aspirations and decision-making processes but also post-study pathways. Within particular contexts, some students are more able to thrive than others by accumulating and mobilising forms of capital that aid transition to employment and career advancement. Economic capital is important to understanding students' future plans, as it is one of the factors that shapes their post-study migration options and creates the conditions for the accumulation and mobilisation of a subset of capitals that impact on students' career pathways and, more broadly, their life courses. One of the ways that students' economic capital may affect their post-study plans is by enabling them to enter educational institutions and locations of study where advantages can accrue through access to more resources and opportunities. Aside with economic capital, students' plans are also affected by cultural capital, with family dynamics playing an important influential role in shaping perceptions and attitudes towards return and non-return intention. Within family and social contexts, often of higher cultural and economic capital, students are also more likely to follow the non-return migration pathway after being exposed to cultures of mobility which establish specific mobility patterns as normal courses of action and enhance mobility capital accumulation that facilitates migration (Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015).

Approaching educational migration through the life course scope has enabled the exploration of students' future plans going beyond a positivist analysis. The examination of students' narratives of home and, in particular, how they conceptualise and feel about home and their 'base', as well as exploring some emotional pulls they experience and how they imagine their long-term futures have shed light on the cultural and social dimensions of their plans and the factors that underpin their decisions.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Summary and contribution

This empirical study contributes in several ways to the field of migration research concerning educational migration, a form of migration that, compared with others, has received less research attention. The study provides deep insight into various aspects of this phenomenon in regard to mobile students' migration and educational aspirations, perceptions and decision-making as well as their migration, academic, professional and socio-cultural adjustment experiences in the host society. Another important aspect that has been under-evidenced in the literature and the study has sought to shed new light on relates to students' post-study migration intentions, future aspirations and, overall, their life planning. The findings expand our knowledge and understanding of educational migration beyond an instrumental approach and a market analysis which often emphasise the macro-economic impact of students' movements on sending and receiving countries (see also Bhana, 2018). Through an empirical investigation and employing a conceptual framework informed by a life course perspective, this project contributes to the study of this phenomenon by grasping students' perspectives and analysing how they perceive and conceptualise their migration decisions, behaviour, experiences and future plans. Educational migration has not been approached and analysed as a 'one-off' migration event with particular causes and implications, but as part of students' life planning, embedded in life course aspirations (see Kōu et al., 2015; Findlay et al., 2017).

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on intra-European student migration, primarily, in the case of students migrating from Southern to Northern/Central European countries for study and then for work purposes, a phenomenon that in spite of its growing scale and concern, seriously lacks empirical investigation. This research project has been one of the very few attempts to offer fresh insights and thoroughly examine Greek student migration to the UK which

despite its long history, has been overlooked in literature. The analysis of statistical sources has identified a number of considerable variations in the patterns and trends of student migration flows over time, especially since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, in regard to the number of HE student enrolments and, mainly, students' subject choices. The changes may be partly explained by a combination of various contextual factors at political, economic, educational and socio-cultural levels in both sending and receiving countries. These factors have significantly influenced students' migration and educational choices. For example, as shown in UIS data (2019c), the outbound flows of students have seen a high increase during the period of financial crisis, when overall and youth unemployment rates peaked and the employment rate of recent graduates drastically declined (Eurostat, 2019a; 2019b). Moreover, the rise of student migration flows has overlapped chronologically with the growing flows of the highly qualified who within the context of high unemployment rate, lack of employment opportunities and precarious forms of employment in Greece have migrated abroad in search of better employment and living conditions (see Triandafyllidou, 2014; Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2014; Labrianidis and Pratsinakis, 2016; Mavrodi and Moutselos, 2017; Pratsinakis et al., 2017). The evidence contributes to recent debates concerning the relationship between student migration and the increasing Southern to Northern intra-European emigration flows, especially of the highly educated. The insights gained expand our understanding of young people's perceptions, behaviour, needs and concerns in regard to higher education and labour markets in contemporary societies.

The findings have raised important questions about the nature and dynamics of educational migration, as they indicate that this form of migration cannot be approached disconnected from other modalities (see also King, 2002; Findlay et al., 2017). Educational migration has been found to be not a fixed and straightforward process that could be simply explained by a combination of push and pull factors (Mazzarol and Soutar, 2002). As a social phenomenon, it is multidimensional and in order to be better understood its various dynamics and characteristics as well as the contexts within which it takes place need to be examined. One of the major findings is that, in the case of Greek students, migrating for study purposes is perceived as the initial stage of an emigration plan, principally, driven by professional aspirations (see also Pratsinakis et al., 2017). Within the context of economic recession in Greece,

educational migration is inextricably linked to migration for work purposes. For almost all of the participants, migration for taught postgraduate studies in the UK has been deployed as a way of coping with the socio-economic difficulties they might have faced in their home country, and a means of constructing and enhancing their employability focusing on securing employment. Thus, apart from its intrinsic value, the evidence suggests that international education has been mostly perceived by the majority of the respondents in a more strategically located way, as a means in order to advance their employment prospects in graduate labour markets (see O' Reghan, 2010).

One of the main strategies that the students apply in order to enhance their employability and career prospects through their educational migration is the accumulation of cultural capital that is mainly represented in the acquisition of 'highly valued' academic credentials (see also Tomlinson, 2008; Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Waters, 2009a, 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010; King et al., 2011; Findlay et al., 2012). The majority of the students anticipate obtaining this form of capital apart from personal interest and professional development, mostly because they perceive that its acquisition may facilitate their transition to employment and advance their career prospects in the labour market in the UK, their home country and/or in another country abroad. The accumulation of cultural capital, attached with symbolic value, constitutes one of the most important drivers of students' migration and plays a crucial role in their migration and educational decision-making with respect to study destination, location of study, higher education provider and course of study. Moreover, aside with obtaining academic credentials, many students attempt to enhance their cultural capital and, thus, their employability by gaining work experience which in particular regions is associated with high labour market value (see also Andrews and Higson, 2008). Specifically, in line with the findings of other researchers, some participants in my study perceive studying and working in the UK, primarily in London, as an 'escalator region' (Fielding, 1992) which might boost their employment prospects (see also King et al., 2016; King et al., 2018). Additionally, while studying and working in the UK, the students expect to accumulate 'valuable' social capital through network formation, which might also enhance their career progression (see also Hall, 2011).

However, educational migration may not only be driven by career-related and economic factors but also experiential and other personal motivations. For a significant number of respondents, studying, working and living abroad was seen as an opportunity for self-experimentation, self-discovery and self-growth, and a route to becoming independent and autonomous (see also Akhurst et al., 2014; Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2016). The state of independence and autonomy was perceived by them of being associated not only with financial self-sufficiency and accessing the labour market but also with leaving the family home and learning how to 'stand on their own feet'. In addition, exploring the world and experiencing foreign cultures was identified as another significant motivating factor for students' decision to study and remain abroad after graduation.

Another main finding is that the concept of youth mobility culture is not only associated with experiential and lifestyle aspirations, as often discussed in Anglophone literature (e.g. Findlay et al., 2006; King et al., 2011), but receives different meanings across time and space, as young people's perceptions, aspirations, decisions and mobility practices always interact with their surrounding environments. As shown in the data, migrating for study and work purposes has become part of youth culture within contemporary Greek society, as students perceive and experience their migration as a common pattern of mobility that young people, especially of their own generation, tend to follow, primarily, as a response to the current socio-economic and labour market conditions in their home country. Students' social networks, primarily comprised of family members, friends, peers and former university lecturers/professors who have previously and/or currently studying and/or working abroad, have played a crucial role in normalising these migration patterns (see also Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015). Through sharing first-hand experiences, offering advice and recommendations and providing support and encouragement, they establish cultures of mobility and influence students' migration aspirations and decision-making (see also Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Beech 2015). Complementing the findings of previous studies, my study supports the argument that educational migration has a socially embedded nature (Brooks and Waters, 2010: 146), as students' social networks have an important impact not only on their migration aspirations and decision-making processes but also their academic, professional and socio-cultural adjustment experiences in the UK.

In addition, the findings indicate the significant role that surrounding political, economic, labour market and socio-cultural environments may play not only in mediating migration aspirations and decision-making processes but also post-study pathways. The vast majority of the respondents intend to remain and work in the UK and most of them are likely to follow job openings wherever they may be, keeping the onward migration scenario open. The fluidity of students' plans has heightened with the uncertain contemporary contexts within which they live, prompting a response characterised by being flexible and deploying various strategies in order to secure a better future. For many of them, return to Greece after obtaining their degrees would be the last option that they would choose due to the current economic crisis and the lack of employment opportunities and career prospects in their career fields. Some students reported that they would like to return to their home country upon graduation, mostly, for reasons associated with family, friends and lifestyle, but highlighted that they would do so only if they could find a job matching their interests and qualifications, and which might provide them with a good quality of life.

The evidence partly projects the individualised nature of student migration (Brooks and Waters, 2010: 7), as students appear to have their own agendas (see Hall and Moss, 1998, cited in Baruch et al., 2007: 103) and 'build' their biographies as individuals, trying to exercise some form of control over their futures by making and implementing their pre- and post-study migration decisions (see Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014; Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2016). However, various contextual and structural factors have highly influenced their migration and educational aspirations, decisions and actions. Economic capital was identified as one of the most significant factors that influence students' migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and future plans through creating or inhibiting opportunities for the accumulation and mobilisation of forms of capital that may have significant implications on their life courses in the short and long term (see also Brooks and Waters, 2009a; 2009b; Findlay et al., 2012; King et al., 2011; Waters, 2009a, 2009b, 2012). One of the ways that students' economic capital may impact on their decision-making and post-study plans is through enabling or impeding access to educational institutions and locations of study which through their various structures and resources they provide students with might aid or impede their transition to employment and career progression. In line with earlier research on student migration (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009; Findlay

and King, 2010; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Pelliccia, 2014) my findings have shown that the majority of the participants are from professional backgrounds, with some of them being more privileged than others in terms of family financial resources, and very few students are from vocational backgrounds. For many respondents, a number of institutional factors, such as the provision of the postgraduate Master's loan by the British government and/or other forms of financial support, had played a crucial role in facilitating their educational migration (see also Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that due to financial constraints some respondents could not access their first- choice higher education institutions and taught postgraduate degree programmes which apart from personal interest, they wanted to pursue because they perceive that its acquisition might aid their transition to employment and advance their career prospects due to the symbolic value attached to them. As shown in the findings, access to particular locations, such as London, which are associated with high value, in both symbolic and pragmatic terms, and where more employment opportunities are available, students are more likely to thrive and advantages can accrue.

A number of considerable variations by disciplinary area and study location were observed in the perceptions and practices of students towards employability enhancement, as well as their employment outcomes. Particularly, in comparison with their counterparts studying courses in the fields of Education, Social Sciences, Creative Arts and Design, students in STEM fields, Transport Studies and the subject group of Business and Administrative studies, particularly those studying in London, seemed to be more proficient at accumulating and mobilising capitals in support of employment chances through more active engagement with activities which might enhance their employability. The location of study was also identified as an important factor which may enable students to mobilise their capitals and, consequently, influence their post-study career pathways and employment outcomes through the various resources (economic, social and cultural) it may or may not provide students with during their studies. Specifically, by the time of the interview, the larger number of respondents who had found employment was comprised of those studying in London, in various subject areas, mostly in the field of Engineering, with students having already found a full-time job position in their expertise. London had been identified as the most popular destination among many students who intend to stay in

the UK after the completion of their studies, mainly for professional reasons, such as the availability of a wide range of career opportunities, better employment prospects and, generally, the high labour market value that this city is attached with. However, the high study and living costs that this location is often associated with were found to act as a barrier to a number of students from less financially privileged backgrounds.

Aside with economic capital, students' social networks –conceptualised as 'social capital' through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of capitals (1986) – has a significant impact on their perceptions, aspirations, decisions and plans alongside their family cultural capital. Most of the students come from families with high parental educational level, as one or both of the parents of 21 out of the 31 participants have completed higher education. The findings suggest that within family and social contexts, often of higher cultural and economic capital, students are more likely to migrate and follow a non-return post-study pathway after having been exposed to cultures of mobility that establish specific cultural outlooks and normalise particular mobility patterns (see Brooks and Waters, 2010; Beech, 2015). This exposure may increase the chances for them of following a post-study non-return route and pursue a career life abroad. Moreover, within these socio-cultural contexts the accumulation of mobility capital (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) is promoted and may also facilitate migration, adjustment experiences and students' non-return post-study plans (see also Brooks and Waters, 2010; Carlson, 2013; Beech, 2015). In particular, in most of the cases of students from professional backgrounds and high parental educational level, when a family member had previously studied abroad, the educational migration and the post-study path of remaining abroad upon graduation was significantly supported within the family context. The parents perceived that through obtaining 'valuable' academic credentials in the UK, their children might advance their career prospects and secure a better career and life future abroad.

Overall, the research generates evidence in regard to the social selectivity nature of student migration (Findlay et al., 2006, 2012; Waters, 2006; 2009b; 2012; Waters and Brooks, 2010). Institutional and structural factors may facilitate or impede students' educational migration and, consequently, shape educational, career and life opportunities, given the potential advantages that international education and study and living abroad experiences might bring to students' life courses at professional and economic levels, such as through advancing their career prospects and potentially

enabling them to acquire an occupation of high social and economic status (see also Findlay et al. 2006; 2012; Waters, 2007; 2009a; 2012; Brooks and Waters, 2009b; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Findlay, 2011; King et al., 2011).

This data challenges arguments that illustrate individualist discourses that claim that, in modern times, structural dynamics no longer play ‘such a strong shaping role as they did in the past’ (King, 2018: 5), and individuals are ‘ultimately responsible for their own career destiny and life trajectories’, and only themselves may stop them from achieving their dream job (Behle, 2017: 5). Contrary to these arguments, my study suggests that students’ future plans and career pathways are contextually embedded, as multiple structural and contextual factors highly inform and shape their decisions and actions, and act as facilitators or barriers to them to fulfil their dreams and aspirations, reflecting wider social, economic and educational inequalities (see Burke 2015; Behle, 2017).

The research findings may have a series of important practical and policy implications at national and international levels, and may prove a useful aid, primarily, for policy makers who deal with education and employment. As shown in the data, one of the main drivers of students’ migration was the high unemployment rates in their home country, the lack of employment opportunities and career prospects in their fields as well as precarious working conditions. In both sending and receiving countries, the students are highly concerned with their transition to employment and career future and apply various strategies in order to enhance their employability and manage the risks and uncertainties existing in contemporary labour markets. This empirical evidence indicates the high importance of the implementation of national and international strategies aimed at creating employment opportunities that would match individuals’ interests, skills and qualifications. Additionally, a series of measures must be taken in order to tackle inequalities existing in the labour market and protect the employees from precarious forms of employment and any attempt of exploitation and violation of their rights. In addition, as reflected in students’ accounts, appropriate support and services need to be provided to help young people to enhance their employability and enter the labour market.

Furthermore, the findings may be useful sources of information for policy makers at an institutional level in both countries. In regard to the Greek higher education system, although the vast majority of the respondents reported that they are

very satisfied with the quality and level of education that they had received during their undergraduate studies, many of them highlighted that compared with British higher education institutions, the higher education institutions where they had studied in Greece outperform in terms of facilities and learning resources. The data indicates necessity of increasing state funding for higher education in order for the Greek higher education institutions to be improved and students' studying and learning experiences to be further enhanced and facilitated.

Moreover, the wider inequalities in education and the labour market, which have been reflected in the data, need to be taken seriously into consideration by policy makers. Although there is no official data available regarding the demographic profile of Greek mobile students, confirming evidence obtained in a considerable deal of previous work on student migration (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2009; Findlay and King, 2010; Waters and Brooks, 2010; Pelliccia, 2014) and echoing the anecdotal information provided by the key informants, this study indicates that mobile students are likely to be from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This evidence is an indicator of the social inequalities that exist in overseas higher education. Students of lower economic capital are more likely to be excluded from accessing international education, and the only way of achieving is mainly through the provision of various forms of financial support, such as student loans, scholarships, bursaries and other types of financial aid, provided by higher education institutions and/or other private and state organisations and foundations. Thus, a number of measures need to be taken at national and institutional levels by ministries and governmental authorities, higher education policy makers and other organisations and institutions, such as reducing tuition fees and enhancing the financial support provided to students of lower economic capital, in order to tackle inequalities and ensure that all students can access international higher education and pursue their educational and professional aspirations without being excluded.

Another important practical implication suggested by the research findings relates to students' academic and socio-cultural adjustment processes in the host society. As mentioned above, a number of students reported that after their arrival they encountered various difficulties at an academic level since they were not familiarised with the structure and operation of the British higher education system. Some of them had also reported that the process of adapting to the host society at a

socio-cultural level was accompanied by some negative experiences, such as with respect to lifestyle and social life. To help students who originate from different educational and socio-cultural contexts to feel welcome and confident in the host society and easily adjust to the new academic and socio-cultural environments, in support of previous studies, my findings also suggest that higher education institutions need to enhance the various forms of support and services they provide students with (i.e. student counselling; mental health and wellbeing support; educational and training services), as well as the socio-cultural activities and events they may hold. In case such services are already provided, higher education institutions need to encourage students to access and make use of them because many students may not be aware of the provision of these services and/or hesitate using them.

Finally, it should be noted that this study contributes to the growing literature and recent debates concerning Brexit potential implications in the UK and how EU nationals who are currently studying and/or working in the UK perceive and respond to them (e.g. Falkingham et al., 2018; Lulle et al., 2018; King et al., 2018). In particular, confirming evidence of recent studies in this area, my study has shown that students are highly concerned in regard to the potential impact of Brexit on all aspects of their everyday lives, at personal, professional, academic and socio-cultural levels. The uncertain atmosphere accompanying Brexit has caused feelings of stress, anxiety and vulnerability, and many respondents have already started considering other post-study potential destinations although their initial plan was to remain and pursue their personal and professional lives in the UK. The British government, national and local authorities, institutions and organisations must seriously consider the voices and concerns of all these young people and implement appropriate policies and regulations that will protect their rights and entitlements and, overall, their lives and future in post-Brexit UK.

8.2 Limitations

The results presented and analysed throughout the thesis in respect of students' migration aspirations, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans are based on the analysis of data collected through 31 semi-structured interviews with a diverse sample of Greek domiciled taught postgraduate students studying in two locations of

study in the UK. A larger number of interviews conducted with students of different levels of study studying in more locations across the UK and at different types of higher education institutions might allow more comparisons to be made and enrich evidence regarding Greek student migration to the UK. However, it should be noted that the methodology applied to this case study was principally implied by the nature of the research project, its aims and objectives as well as particular practical issues, such as the research timeframe, which was a significant factor that needed to be seriously considered when designing and conducting the research fieldwork. The purpose of this case study was not to be representative of the wider student population. By employing qualitative research methodology, particularly semi-structured interviewing, I have aimed to provide insights and deeper understandings of various aspects of educational migration through grasping student migrants' perceptions which have often been neglected in relevant literature. This case study offers valuable insights into this phenomenon through interesting comparisons among a diverse sample of respondents, and enables theoretical generalisability. The findings are indicative of potential patterns and trends with respect to students' migratory and labour market behaviour, perceptions, decision-making, experiences and post-study life planning in contemporary times, primarily in the case of students who originate from sending contexts of difficult socio-economic and labour market conditions.

Likewise, the number of the key informants recruited has been sufficient for the purposes of the study. This group of interviews mainly sought to provide data that could support the analysis of existing numerical data sources for the examination of the patterns and trends of Greek student migration flows to the UK. Moreover, the informants provided some significant general information with respect to student recruitment strategies as well as the policies and practices applied by British higher education institutions for students' employability enhancement, how students perceive and use these practices/services, and how these institutional policies and practices may impact on students' post-study plans and career trajectories.

One limitation of the study that needs to be highlighted relates to the analysis of secondary quantitative data. As mentioned in the third chapter, a number of difficulties had been encountered over the course of the fieldwork concerning the establishment of the patterns and trends of Greek student migration flows worldwide and, particularly, in the UK due to the lack and/or absence of official numerical data

sources, mainly, concerning students' demographic profile and post-study migration trends and destinations.

8.3 Further Research

The insights gained in the present study are hoped to trigger further research on various issues relating to student migration as well as other key areas in youth studies and beyond, including employment and higher education. This section provides a series of recommendations for further work that could improve evidence on the topic explored in this study, and suggests that further research is needed in order for under-researched relevant areas to be further examined.

Further research on a larger sample of respondents, of all levels of study, studying courses across various disciplines in a wide range of higher education institutions across the UK and/or other study destinations might enable the researcher to collect rich data which through comparisons could lead to a deeper examination of the phenomenon of Greek student migration to the UK and, more generally, contribute to the broader relevant literature. In addition, if sufficient time for research was given, this topic is highly recommended to be further investigated from a life course perspective through a longitudinal study. This type of research addresses individuals' perceptions and experiences at different stages of their life courses and under changing personal, social and economic circumstances, enabling the researcher to capture 'the immediacy and complexity of real lives over time' (Edwards and Irwin, 2010 : 121-122). In this study, interviewing a sample of respondents at different stages of their life courses, prior to their educational migration, during their studies in the receiving country and post-graduation, would allow the researcher to explore students' pre- and post-study aspirations, perceptions and attitudes towards higher education and the labour market, and examine whether they have changed or not over time and what factors have contributed to this change. A longitudinal study might also provide the opportunity to further examine students' post-study migration paths and career trajectories and the implications of their educational migration on their life courses, and explore to what extent their pre-study expectations have been fulfilled, and which factors may facilitate or impede the implementation of their aspirations.

Another research suggestion concerns a cross-national examination of student migration. Few researchers in this study area have adopted a cross-national comparative lens, mostly focusing on intra-European credit student mobility (i.e. Erasmus students) (e.g. Van Mol and Timmerman, 2014). A comparison of various national groups of students regarding their migration aspirations, perceptions, decision-making, experiences and post-study plans may improve the theoretical understanding of student migration, especially in respect of the role that contextual dynamics could play in the way they perceive their educational migration. For example, comparing students who originate from countries with different political, socio-economic, labour market conditions and socio-cultural contexts would shed more light on the nature and dynamics of student migration, as well as how studying abroad may be conceptualised and utilised by students as part of their life planning. An examination of student migration from a cross-cultural perspective may also contribute to our understanding of the concept of youth mobility cultures and its various dimensions and meanings it may be given across time and space.

Moreover, a study focusing on secondary-level high school students could improve our knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon and how it may be viewed by young people. A sample composed of students studying at a number of state and private schools in various geographical areas (rural/urban) across Greece enables the examination of students' future imaginations and the personal, structural and contextual factors that may generate/or not migration aspirations and influence decision-making patterns (see also Tsekeris et al., 2015; Cuzzocrea and Mandich, 2016). An exploration of students' family members' perceptions, aspirations and attitudes towards their children's education, future work and potential educational migration could also provide important evidence regarding the role that students' family contexts may play in their migration aspirations and decision-making. This is a fundamental issue for future research that needs to be further examined.

This research has raised several issues in need of further investigation in the areas of youth, education and employment. Further research is required to determine how young people perceive contemporary labour market conditions at national and international levels, how they respond to varying labour market conditions, how they conceptualise employability and what strategies they apply in order to construct and manage their employability (see also O' Regan, 2010; Tomlinson, 2007). Future

studies should focus on young people's job-seeking and employment experiences across time and space, in various labour markets worldwide, and explore their perceptions and attitudes towards higher education and the labour market, as well as their employability enhancement strategies.

Finally, future work should concentrate on British higher education policy, mainly, in relation to student migration and the labour market. A greater focus on the policy and strategies applied by British higher education institutions for the recruitment of non-UK mobile students could enhance our knowledge of how student migration and, more broadly, higher education is perceived and promoted at an institutional level. In addition, an examination of the strategies deployed for the recruitment of both UK and non-UK students, combined with the policies and practices (i.e. curriculum, services, events and other activities) that the British higher education institutions apply for students' employability enhancement, may improve our understanding of the relationship between higher education and the labour market and, particularly, how British higher education policy relates and corresponds with the national employment policy and British labour market needs and demands.

The findings of my study have a number of significant implications for future research and practice. The theoretical framework that has been established for understanding student migration from a life course perspective may be applied and further improved in future work to provide fresh and deep insights into this phenomenon. More empirical research should be undertaken in order to better understand the complex nature and dynamics of educational migration and shed more light on this and other relevant study areas which despite being of growing concern and importance, still remain under-researched. My study has been one important step to filling this gap.

References

- ADMIT. 2001. *Higher Education admissions and student mobility within the EU*. [Online]. London: Centre for Educational Research (LSE). [Accessed 2 September 2018]. Available from: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/socialPolicy/Researchcentresandgroups/ERG/pdf/cmp18.pdf>
- Adnett, N. 2010. The growth of international students and economic development: friends or foes? *Journal of Education Policy*. **25**(5), 625-637.
- Ahmad, S. Z. and Hussain, M. 2017. The analytic hierarchy process of the decision-making factors of African students in obtaining higher education in the United Arab Emirates. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **47**(2), 163-176.
- Akhurst, J., Janik, M., Szewczyk, M., Mucha, M., Westmancoat, H., Lever, V. and Walmsley, A. 2014. Polish young peoples' narratives: Impacts of living and studying in the UK. *International Migration*. **52**(1), 192-208.
- Aldridge, J., Measham, F. and Williams, L. 2011. *Illegal Leisure Revisited: Changing patterns of alcohol and drug use in adolescents and young adults*. London: Routledge.
- Allen, J. P. and van der Velden, R. K. W. 2007. Transitions from Higher Education to Work. In: Teichler, U. ed. *Careers of University Graduates, Views and Experiences in Comparative Perspectives*. Springer, pp.55-77.
- Altbach, P. G., and U. Teichler. 2001. Internationalisation and exchanges in a globalized university. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. **5**(1), 5-25.
- Andrews, J. and Higson, H. 2008. Graduate Employability, 'Soft Skills' Versus 'Hard' Business Knowledge: A European Study. *Higher Education in Europe*. **33**(4), 411-422.
- Armstrong, L. 2007. Competing in the global higher education marketplace: outsourcing, twinning, and franchising. *New Directions in Higher Education*. **2007**(140), 131-138.

- Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. 2001. Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies. [Online]. *Social Research Update*. (33). [Accessed 10 July 2019]. Available from: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU33.html>
- Bahna, M. 2018. Study choices and returns of international students: On the role of cultural and economic capital of the family. *Population, Space and Place*. **24**(2), 1-10.
- Baláž, V. and Williams, A. M. 2004. 'Been there, done that': International student migration and human capital transfers from the UK to Slovakia. *Population, Space and Place*. **10**(3), 217-237.
- Baláž, V., Williams, A. and Chrančoková, M. 2018. Connectivity as the facilitator of intra-European student migration. *Population, Space and Place*. **24**(3), n/a-n/a.
- Baruch, Y., Budhwar, P.S. and Khatri, N. 2007. Brain drain: Inclination to stay abroad after studies. *Journal of World Business*. **42**(1), 99-112.
- Basit, T. 2003. Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*. **45**(2), 143-154.
- Bauman, Z. 2000. *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. 2002. *Individualization*. London: Sage.
- Beech, S.E. 2015. International student mobility: The role of social networks. *Social & Cultural Geography*. **16**(3), 332-350.
- Behle, H. 2017. The early career paths of UK-educated intraEuropean mobile graduates. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. **41**(6), 802-816.
- Beine, M., Noel, R. and Ragot, L. 2014. Determinants of the international mobility of students. *Economics of Education Review*. **41**, 40-54.
- Bennett, P. and Turner, G. 2012. *PTES 2012 National Findings from the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey-Final Report*. [Online]. York: Higher Education Academy. [Accessed 3 June 2018]. Available from: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ptes_2012_report.pdf
- Bernard, A., Bell, M. and Charles-Edwards, E. 2014. Life-course Transitions and the Age Profile of Internal Migration. *Population and Development Review*. **40**(2), 213-239.
- Berrington, A. and Murphy, M. 1994. Changes in the Living Arrangements of Young Adults in Britain During the 1980s. *European Sociological Review*. **10**(3), 235-257.

- Bhagwati, J. N. and Dellafar. W. 1973. The brain drain and income taxation. *World Development*. **1**(1), 94-101.
- Bhaskar, R. 1989. *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*. London: Verso.
- Bhattarai, K. 2011. Brain gain (drain), immigration and global network: Nepalese students in the UK. *International Journal of Economic Policy in Emerging Economies*. **4**(4), 345-365.
- Bijwaard, G.E. and Wang, Q. 2013. *Return migration of foreign students*. [Online]. Bonn: Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA). [Accessed 1 March 2019]. Available from: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp7185.pdf>
- Bilecen, B. and Sienkiewicz, J. 2015. Informal Social Protection Networks of Migrants: Typical Patterns in Different Transnational Social Spaces. *Population, Space, and Place*. **21**(3), 227-243.
- Binsardi, A. and Ekwulugo, F. 2003. International marketing of British education: Research on the students' perception and the UK market penetration. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*. **21**(4-5), 318-327.
- Blaikie, N. 2007. *Approaches to social enquiry: Advancing Knowledge*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bolsmann, C. and Miller, H. 2008. International student recruitment to universities in England: discourse, rationales and globalisation. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. **6**(1), 75-88.
- Bolton, P. 2019. Student Loans Statistics. [Online]. Briefing Paper: 1079. House of Commons Library. [Accessed 2 April 2020]. Available from: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN01079/SN01079.pdf>
- Boswell, C. 2008. Combining Economics and Sociology in Migration Theory. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **34**(4), 549-566.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. The Forms of Capital. In: Richardson, J.G. ed. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241-258.

- Bourdieu, P. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J. 1977. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Boyd, M. 1989. Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas. *International Migration Review*. **23**(Fall 89), 638-70.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. **3**(2), 77-101.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. and Weate, P. 2016. Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In: Smith, B. and Sparkes, A.C. eds. *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise*. London, England: Routledge, pp.191-205.
- Brettell, C. and Hollifield, J. F. 2008. *Migration theory: talking across disciplines*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Bridgstock, R. 2009. The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*. **28**(1), 31-44.
- British Council and Oxford Economics. 2012. *The shape of things to come: higher education global trends and emerging opportunities to 2020*. [Online]. [Accessed 10 May 2017]. Available from: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_-_higher_education_global_trends_and_emerging_opportunities_to_2020.pdf
- Brooks, R. 2005. *Friendship and educational choice: Peer influence and planning for the future*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brooks, R. and Everett, G. 2008. The prevalence of 'life planning': evidence from UK graduates. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **29**(3), 325-337.
- Brooks, R. and Waters, J. 2009a. International higher education and the mobility of UK students. *Journal of Research in International Education*. **8**(2), 191-209.
- Brooks, R. and Waters, J. 2009b. A second chance at success: UK students and Global Circuits of Higher Education. *Sociology*. **43**(6), 1085-1102.

- Brooks, R. and Waters, J. 2010. Social networks and educational mobility: The experiences of UK students. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. **8**(1), 143-157.
- Brooks, R. and Waters, J. 2011. *Student mobilities, migration and the internationalization of higher education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brown, P. 1995. Cultural capital and social exclusion: some observations on recent trends in education, employment, and the labour market. *Work, Employment and Society*. **9**(1), 29-51.
- Brown, L. and Holloway, I. 2008. The initial stage of the international sojourn: excitement or culture shock? *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*. **36**(1), 33-49.
- Brown, P., Hesketh, A. and Williams, S. 2003. Employability in a Knowledge-driven Economy. *Journal of Education and Work*. **16**(2), 107-126.
- Bryman, A. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. London: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, R. B. 1991. Study and Stress among First Year Overseas Students in an Australian University. *Higher Education Research and Development*. **10**(1), 61-77.
- Cai, J. and Loo, T. 2014. Decision Making in International Tertiary Education: The Role of National Image. *Advances in Journalism and Communication*. **02**(03), 109-120.
- Carlson, S. 2013. Becoming a Mobile Student- a Processual Perspective on German Degree Student Mobility. *Population, Space and Place*. **19**(2), 168-180.
- Cartwright, L. 2015. *Permanently Temping? Education, Labour Markets and Precarious Transitions to Adulthood*. [Online]. Doctoral thesis (PhD), University of Leeds. [Accessed 9 March 2019]. Available from: <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/10757/>
- Castles, S., Haas, H. D. and Miller, M. J. 2014. *The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chen, L. H. 2007. Choosing Canadian graduate schools from afar: East Asian students' perspectives. *Higher Education*. **54**(5), 759-780.

- Chiou, B. 2017. Two-step migration: A comparison of Australia's and New Zealand's policy development between 1998 and 2010. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. **26**(1), 84–107.
- Chopra, A., Gros, D. and Whelan, K. 2015. *The ECB's role in the design and implementation of (financial) measures in crisis-hit countries*. [Online]. European Parliament. Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy. Economic and Monetary Affairs. (Monetary Dialogue, November 2015-Compilation of notes). Brussels: European Parliament Publications Office. [Accessed 20 May 2020]. Available from:
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/105467/IPOL_IDA\(2015\)569963_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/105467/IPOL_IDA(2015)569963_EN.pdf)
- Christie, F. 2016. *Uncertain Transition: exploring the experience of recent graduates*. [Online]. University of Salford: Graduate Prospects/HECSU. [Accessed 8 April 2019]. Available from:
https://www.agcas.org.uk/write/MediaUploads/Resources/HECSU%20funded%20reports/University_of_Salford_-_Uncertain_transition_-_exploring_the_experience_of_recent_graduates.pdf
- Clarke, V. and Braun, V. 2017. Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. **12**(3), 297-298.
- Collins, C. S. 2013. Student mobilities, migration and the internationalization of higher education by Rachel Brooks and Johanna Waters. *Higher Education*. **66**(6), 769-771.
- Collins, F. L. 2008. Bridges to learning: international student mobilities, education agencies and inter-personal networks. *Global Networks*. **8**(4), 398-417.
- Collins, F. L. 2009. Connecting 'Home' With 'Here': Personal Homepages in Everyday Transnational Lives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **35**(6), 839-859.
- Collins, F. L. 2013. Regional Pathways: Transnational Imaginaries, Infrastructures and Implications of Student Mobility within Asia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. **22**(4), 465-599.

- Conradson, D. and Latham, A. 2005. Friendship, networks and transnationality in a world city: Antipodean transmigrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **31**(2), 287-305.
- Conradson, D. and McKay, D. 2007. Translocal subjectivities: Mobility, connection, emotion. *Mobilities*. **2**(2), 167-174.
- Courtois, A. 2018. From 'academic concern' to work readiness: Student mobility, employability and the devaluation of academic capital on the year abroad. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **38**(4), 468-484.
- Creswell, J. W. 2013. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Cubillo-Pinilla, J. M. and Pérez-Aguilar, W. S. 2006. Engineering Students Decision-Making Process: The Role of Aspirations. In: *Technology Management for the Global Future*. PICMET 2006 Conference, 8-13 July 2006, Istanbul, Turkey. [Online] [no location]: IEEE, pp.489-497. [Accessed 2 December 2016]. Available from: <http://0-ieeeexplore.ieee.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/stamp/stamp.jsp?arnumber=4077424>
- Cuzzocrea, V. and Mandich, G. 2016. Students' narratives of the future: Imagined mobilities as forms of youth agency? *Journal of Youth Studies*. **19**(4), 552-567.
- Davies, L., Penketh, A., Burgen, S., Smith, H. and Adekoya, R. 2014. Marriage falls out of favour for young Europeans as austerity and apathy bite. Experts blame economic and cultural changes for decline in weddings. *The Guardian*. [Online]. 25 July. [Accessed 10 April 2019]. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/jul/25/marriage-young-europeans-austerity>
- de Almeida Alves, N. 2018. Youth transitions and generations in Portugal: Examining change between baby-boomers and millenials. In: Irwin, S. and Nilsen, A. eds. *Transitions to adulthood through recession: Youth and inequality in a European comparative perspective*. Youth, young adulthood and society series. London: Routledge, pp.115-136.
- Demetis, C. c2019. Who are the Greek neomigrants?. [Online]. *New Diaspora*. [Accessed 20 June 2019]. Available from: <http://www.newdiaspora.com/greek-neomigrants-research/>

- Duckworth, K., Akerman, R., Gutman, L., and Vorhaus, J. 2009. Influences and leverages on low levels of attainment: a review of literature and policy initiatives [Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 31]. In *Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning*. Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Eder, J., Smith, W. W. and Pitts, R. E. 2010. Exploring factors influencing student study abroad destination choice. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*. **10**(3), 232-250.
- Edwards, R. and Irwin, S. 2010. Lived experience through economic downturn in Britain-perspectives across time and across the life-course. *Twenty-First Century Society*. **5**(2), 119-124.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. 1975. Age Differentiation and the Life Course. *Annual Review of Sociology*. **1**(1), 165–190.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. 1985. Perspectives on the Life Course. In: Elder, G. H., Jr. ed. *Life Course Dynamics: Trajectories and Transitions, 1968–1980*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 23–49.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. 1994. Time, Human Agency, and Social-Change: Perspectives on the Life course. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. **57**(1), 4–15.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. 1998. 'The Life Course as Developmental Theory'. *Child Development*. **69**(1), 1–12.
- Elder, G. H., Jr. and Johnson, M. K. 2002. The life course and aging: Challenges, lessons, and new directions. In: Settersten, R. A. Jr. ed. *Invitation to the life course: Toward new understandings of later life*. Amityville, NY: Baywood, 49-81.
- Elder, G. H. Jr., Kirkpatrick Johnson, M. and Crosnoe, R. 2003. 'The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory'. In: Shanahan, M. J. eds. *Handbook of the Life Course*. New York: Kluwer, pp. 3-19.
- Eliou, M. 1988. Mobility or Migration? : The case of Greek students abroad. *Higher Education in Europe*. **13**(3), 60-66.
- Elley, S. 2013. *Understanding sex and relationship education, youth and class : a youth work-led approach*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M. and Anzul, M. 1997. *On writing qualitative research: living by words*. London: Falmer.
- Emmel, N. 2013. *Sampling and choosing cases in qualitative research: A realist approach*. London: SAGE.
- Engbersen, G. 2012. Migration transitions in an era of liquid migration. In: Okolski, M. ed. *European Immigrations: Trends, structures and policy implications*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 91-105.
- Engbersen G. 2018. Liquid Migration and Its Consequences for Local Integration Policies. [Online]. In: Scholten, P. and Van Ostaijen, M. eds. *Between Mobility and Migration*. IMISCOE Research Series. Springer, Cham. [Accessed 22 July 2019]. Available from: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-77991-1_4
- Engbersen, G. and Snel, E. 2013. Liquid migration: dynamic and fluid patterns of post-accession migration. In: Glorius, B., Grabowska-Lusinska, I. and Rindoks, A. eds. *Mobility in Transition: Migration Patterns after EU Enlargement*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 21-40.
- European Commission. 2017. *The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area*. [Online]. [Accessed 6 March 2017]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). 2014. *Mapping Youth Transitions in Europe*. [Online]. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. [Accessed 5 March 2017]. Available from: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1392en_0.pdf
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). 2017. *Troika*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 October 2018]. Available from: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/troika>
- European Higher Education Area (EHEA). 2017. *European Higher Education Area and Bologna process*. [Online]. [Accessed 6 March 2017]. Available from: <http://www.ehea.info>

- Eurostat Statistics Explained. 2018. *Unemployment Statistics*. [Online]. [Accessed 9 June 2018]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment
- Eurostat Statistics Explained. 2019. *Employment rates of recent graduates*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 June 2019]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_rates_of_recent_graduates#Employment_rates_of_recent_graduates
- Evans, B. 2008. Geographies of Youth/Young People. *Geography Compass*. **2**(5), 1659-1680.
- Falkingham, J., Giulietti, C., Wahba, J. and Wang, C. 2018. *The Impact of Brexit on International Students' Return Intentions*. [Online]. Bonn, Germany: IZA Institute of Labor Economics. [Accessed 19 March 2019]. Available from: <http://ftp.iza.org/dp12032.pdf>
- Favell, A. 2008. *Eurostars and Eurocities: free movement and mobility in an integrating Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Fielding, A. J. 1992. Migration and social-mobility: South East England as an escalator region. *Regional Studies*. **26**(1), 1-15.
- Findlay, A. 2011. An assessment of supply and demand-side theorizations of international student mobility. *International migration*. **49**(2), 162-190.
- Findlay, A. M, King, R., Geddes, A., Smith, F., Stam, A., Dunne, M., Skeldon, R. and Ahrens, J. 2010. *Motivations and experiences of UK students studying abroad*. [Online]. Research Paper, no. 8. Department for Business Innovation and Skills. [Accessed 13 November 2019]. Available from: http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/37183/1/Findlay_et_al_Final_Report_BIS_WP_8.pdf
- Findlay, A. M., King, R., Smith, F. M., Geddes, A. and Skeldon, R. 2012. World-class? An investigation of globalisation, difference and international student mobility. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. **37**(1), 118-131.
- Findlay, A. M., King, R., Stam, A. and Ruiz- Gelices, E. 2006. Ever reluctant Europeans: The changing Geographies of UK students studying and working abroad. *European Urban and Regional Studies*. **13**(4), 291-318.
- Findlay, A. M, Prazeres, L., McCollum, D. and Packwood, H. 2017. 'It was always the plan': International study as 'learning to migrate'. *Area*. **49**(2), 192-199.

- Gesing, P. and Glass, C. 2019. STEM student mobility intentions post-graduation and the role of reverse push-pull factors. *International Journal of Educational Development*. **65**, 227-316.
- Giele, J. and Elder, G. 1998. Life Course Research: Development of a Field. In: Giele, J. and Elder, G. eds. *Methods of life course research : qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, pp. 5-27.
- Giguere, A., Legare, F., Grad, R., Pluye, P., Rousseau, F., Haynes, B. R., Cauchon, M. and Labrecque, M. 2011. Developing and user-testing Decision boxes to facilitate shared decision making in primary care-a study protocol. *BMC Medical Informatics & Decision making*. **11**(17), 1-9.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L. and Szanton-Blanc, C. 1992. *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Gomes, C., Berry, M., Alzougool, B., and Chang, S. 2014. Home away from home: International students and their identity-based social networks in Australia. *Journal of International Students*. **4**(1), 2–15.
- GOV.UK. 2013. *Sale of mortgage style student loan book completed*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sale-of-mortgage-style-student-loan-book-completed>
- GOV.UK. 2019. *Student Finance*. [Online]. [Accessed 11 July 2019]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>
- GOV.UK. 2020a. *Student Finance*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>
- GOV.UK. 2020b. *Repaying your student loan*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/repaying-your-student-loan/when-you-start-repaying>
- GOV.UK. 2020c. *Student Loans Company*. [Online]. [Accessed 1 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company>
- Gribble, C. 2008. Policy options for managing international student migration: the sending country's perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. **30**(1), 25-39.

- Griffiths, P., Gossop, M., Powis, B. and Strang, J. 1993. Reaching hidden populations of drug users by privileged access interviewers: methodological and practical issues. *Addiction*. **88**(12), 1617-1626.
- Grubel, H. B. and Scott, A. D. 1966. The International Flow of Human Capital. *The American Economic Review*. **56**(1/2), 268–274.
- Gu, Q. and Maley, A. 2008. Changing Places: A Study of Chinese students in the UK. *Language and Intercultural Communication*. **8**(4), 224-245.
- Gu, Q. Schweisfurth, M. and Day, C. 2010. Learning and growing in a ‘foreign’ context: intercultural experiences of international students. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative Education*. **40**(1), 7-23.
- Güngör, N.D. and Tansel, A. 2008. Brain drain from Turkey: An investigation of students’ return intentions. *Applied Economics*. **40**(23), 3069-3087.
- Hakim, C. 2000. *Research design: successful designs for social and economic research*. *Social research today*. 2nd ed. Routledge: London, UK
- Hall, S. 2011. Educational ties, social capital and the translocal (re)production of MBA alumni networks. *Global Networks*. **11**(1), 118-138.
- Hardré, P. I. and Hackett, S. 2015. Understanding the graduate college experience: perceptual differences by degree type, point-in-program and disciplinary groups. *Learning Environments Research*. **18**(3), 453-468.
- Haug, S. 2008. Migration Networks and Migration Decision-Making. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **34**(4), 585-605.
- Hawthorne, L. 2008a. The Impact of Economic Selection Policy on Labour Market Outcomes for Degree-Qualified Migrants in Canada and Australia. *Diversity, Immigration and Integration*. **14**(5), 2-50.
- Hawthorne, L. 2008b. *The Growing Global Demand for Students as Skilled Migrants*, [Online]. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. [Accessed 2 April 2010]. Available from:
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/growing-global-demand-students-skilled-migrants-0>.
- Hawthorne, L. 2010. How Valuable is “Two-Step Migration”? Labor Market Outcomes for International Student Migrants to Australia. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. **19**(1), 5-36.

- Helgesen, Ø, Nettet, E. and Strand, Ø. 2013. “Brain Drain” or “Brain Gain”? Students’ Loyalty to their Student Town: Field Evidence from Norway. *European Planning Studies*. **21**(6), 909-943.
- Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). 2016. *Unemployed persons of 15 years and over by age groups, sex and education level*. [Online]. Labour Force (Quarterly data)/2nd Quarter 2016. [Table 23]. [Accessed 22 October 2016]. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/SJO01/->
- Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT). 2019. The average age of women in motherhood (1975-2017). [Online]. Demographic Indicators. [Accessed 1 June 2019]. Available from: <http://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics/-/publication/DKT75/2017>
- Herrero, À., Martin, H., de los Salmones, G. and Peña, A. 2015. Influence of country and city images on students’ perception of host universities and their satisfaction with the assigned destination for their exchange programmes. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. **11**(3), 190-203.
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2016a. *HE students studying wholly overseas by location (top 20 countries) and level of provision- Year 2014/15*. [Online]. [Table P]. [Accessed 2 October 2016]. Available from: <https://events.hesa.ac.uk/intros/stuintro1415>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2016b. *Student Introduction 2014/15*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 October 2016]. Available from: <https://events.hesa.ac.uk/intros/stuintro1415>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2018a. *Top ten European Union countries of Domicile (excluding the UK) in 2016/17 for HE Student Enrolments 2012/13 and 2016/17*. [Online]. [Figure 10]. [Accessed 2 March 2018]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-10>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2018b. *HE student enrolments by domicile 2012/13 to 2016/17*. [Figure 8]. [Online]. [Accessed 2 March 2018]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-8>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019a. *HE student enrolments by domicile and region of HE provider (2014/15-2017/18)*. [Online]. [Table 11]. Accessed 8 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>

- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019b. *Top ten non-European Union countries of domicile in 2017/18 for HE student enrolments (2013/14-2017/18)*. [Online]. [Figure 11]. [Accessed 8 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019c. *Top ten European-Union countries of domicile (excluding the UK) in 2017/18 for HE student enrolments (2013/14-2017/18)*. [Online]. [Figure 10]. [Accessed 8 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/where-from>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019d. *HE student enrolments by subject of study (2014/15-2017/18)*. [Online]. [Table 9]. [Accessed 12 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019e. *HE student enrolments by personal characteristics (2013/14-2017/18)*. [Online]. [Figure 4]. [Accessed 12 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019f. *HE students by subject area and sex (2017/18)*. [Online]. [Chart 7]. [Accessed 12 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). 2019g. *HE student enrolments by subject of study and domicile (2014/15 -2017/18)*. [Online]. [Table 22]. [Accessed 12 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2006/07. *Students in Higher education institutions 2006/2007. Non-UK domiciled students by domicile and qualification aim 2006/07*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2006/07. [Table 6]. [Accessed 9 September 2018]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2007/08. *Non-UK domiciled HE students by domicile and qualification aim 2007/08*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2007/08. [Table 6]. [Accessed 24 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>

- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2008/09. *Non-UK domiciled HE students by domicile and qualification aim 2008/09*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2008/09. [Table 6]. [Online]. [Accessed 24 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2009/10. *Non-UK domiciled HE students by country of domicile, location of HE institution and level of study 2009/10*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2009/10. [Table 8]. [Accessed 24 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2010/11. *Non-UK domiciled HE students by country of domicile, location of HE institution and level of study 2010/11*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2010/11. [Table 8]. [Accessed 24 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2011/12. *Non-UK domiciled HE students by country of domicile, location of HE institution and level of study 2011/12*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2011/12. [Table 8]. [Accessed 24 May 2019]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications>
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2012/13. *Top ten other European Union countries of domicile in 2012/13 for student enrolments on HE courses by location of HE Institution and country of domicile 2008/09 to 2012/13*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2012/13. [Table 5]. [Accessed 2 January 2018]. Available from: [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/overviews?keyword=All&breakdown\[0\]=577&year=9](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/overviews?keyword=All&breakdown[0]=577&year=9)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) series. 2015/16. *Top ten other European Union countries of domicile in 2015/16 for HE student enrolments by location of HE provider and country of domicile 2011/12 to 2015/16*. [Online]. Publications: Students in Higher Education. Publication 2015/16. [Table 8]. [Accessed 2 January 2018]. Available from: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/12-01-2017/sfr242-student-enrolments-and-qualifications>

- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record 2013/14. *The number of students domiciled in Greece at UK HE providers 2013/2014 by level of study, mode of study, age, principal subject, sex & HE provider*. Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited. Higher Education Statistics Agency Services Limited (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk>).
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record 2014/15. *The number of students domiciled in Greece at UK HE providers 2014/2015 by level of study, mode of study, age, principal subject, sex & HE provider*. Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited. Higher Education Statistics Agency Services Limited (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk>).
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record 2015/16. *The number of students domiciled in Greece at UK HE providers 2015/2016 by level of study, mode of study, age, principal subject, sex & HE provider*. Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited. Higher Education Statistics Agency Services Limited (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk>).
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record 2016/17. *The number of students domiciled in Greece at UK HE providers 2016/17 by Level of study, Mode of study, Age, Principal subject, Sex & HE provider*. Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited. Higher Education Statistics Agency Services Limited (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk>).
- Hitlin, S. and Elder, G. H., Jr. 2006. Agency: An Empirical Model of an Abstract Concept. *Advances in Life Course Research*. **11**(C), 33–67.
- Hitlin, S., and Kirkpatrick Johnson, M. 2015. Reconceptualizing Agency within the Life Course: The Power of Looking Ahead 1. *American Journal of Sociology*. **120**(5): 1429–1472.
- Hochstenbach, C. and Boterman, W.R. 2017. Intergenerational support shaping residential trajectories: Young people leaving home in a gentrifying city. *Urban Studies*. **54**(2), 399-420.
- Houghton, E. 2017. *Students' experiences: choice, hope and everyday neoliberalism in English higher education*. [Online]. Doctoral Thesis (PhD), Lancaster University. [Accessed 01/03/2019]. Available from: eprints.lancs.ac.uk/88337/
<http://crisisobs.gr/wpcontent/uploads/2015/11/%CE%95%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B7%CF%84%CE>

%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C%CE%9A%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BC%CE%B5%
CE%BD%CE%BF_19_Tsekeris%CE%95%CE%9DG.pdf

- Huang, R. and Turner, R. 2018. International experience, universities support and graduate employability – perceptions of Chinese international students studying in UK universities. *Journal of Education and Work*. **31**(2), 175-189.
- Huang, S. and Yeoh, B. 2005. Transnational families and their children's education: China's 'study-mothers' in Singapore. *Global Networks*. **5** (4), 379-400.
- Huang, R., Turner, R. and Chen, Q. 2014. Chinese international students' perspective and strategies in preparing for their future employability. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*. **66**(2), 175-193.
- Hubble, S. and Bolton, P. 2017. *Abolition of maintenance grants in England from 2016/17*. [Online]. Briefing Paper: 07258. House of Commons Library. [Accessed 1 April 2020]. Available from: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7258/CBP-7258.pdf>
- Hubble, S. and Bolton, P. 2018. *Higher Education tuition fees in England*. [Online]. Briefing paper: 8151. House of Commons Library. [Accessed 1 July 2019]. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8151/>
- Hubble, S., Foster, D. and Bolton, P. 2018. *Postgraduate loans in England*. [Online]. Briefing paper: 7049. House of Commons Library. [Online]. [Accessed 1 October 2018]. Available from: <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07049/SN07049.pdf>
- Huberts, D. and Vlek de Coningh, M. 2018. *Incoming student mobility in Dutch higher education 2017-2018*. [Online]. Dutch Organisation for Internationalisation in Education (Nuffic). [Accessed 1 July 2018]. Available from: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/publications/incoming-student-mobility-dutch-higher-education-2017-2018/>
- Hugo, G. 1996. 'Brain Drain and Student Movements'. In: Lloyd, P.J. and Williams, L. S. eds. *International Trade and Migration in the APEC Region*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.210-228.
- International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) Monitor. 2012. *Eurozone crisis boosting student mobility in the south*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 October

- 2016]. Available from: <http://monitor.icef.com/2012/08/eurozone-crisis-boosting-student-mobility-in-the-south/>
- International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) Monitor. 2014. *Continuing economic crisis in Greece pushes and pulls on student mobility*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 October 2016]. Available from: <http://monitor.icef.com/2014/10/continuing-economic-crisis-greece-pushes-pulls-student-mobility/>
- International Consultants for Education and Fairs (ICEF) Monitor. 2015. The state of international student mobility in 2015. [Online]. [Accessed 17 October 2016]. Available from: <http://monitor.icef.com/2015/11/the-state-of-international-student-mobility-in-2015/>
- International Graduate Insight Group (i-graduate). 2013. *Understanding the Information Needs of Postgraduate Taught Students and how these can be met*. [Online]. Bristol: Higher Education Funding Council for England. [Accessed 4 February 2018]. Available from: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2013/pginfoneeds/>
- Irwin, S. 1995. *Rights of passage: Social change and the transition from youth to adulthood*. London: UCL Press.
- Irwin, S. 2009. Family contexts, norms and young people's orientations: Researching diversity. *Journal of Youth Studies*. **12**(4), 337–54.
- Irwin, S. and Elley, S. 2013. Parents' hopes and expectations for their children's future occupations. *Sociological Review*. **61**(1), 111-130.
- Irwin, S. and Nilsen, A. eds. 2018. *Transitions to adulthood through recession: Youth and inequality in a European comparative perspective*. Youth, young adulthood and society series. London: Routledge.
- Irwin, S., Bornat, J. and Winterton, M. 2012. Timescapes secondary analysis: comparison, context and working across data sets. *Qualitative Research*. **12**(1), 66-80.
- Jeffrey, C. and McDowell, L. 2004. Youth in a Comparative Perspective. *Youth and Society*. **36**(2), 131-142.
- Johnson, M. and Hitlin, S. 2017. Family (Dis) Advantage and Life Course Expectations. *Social Forces*. **95**(3), 997–1022.

- Johnson, J., Regets, M. and National Science Foundation, A. 1998. International Mobility of Scientists and Engineers to the United States-Brain Drain or Brain Circulation? *SRS Issue Brief*.
- Karaiskaki, T. 2019. The changing Greek family. *Ekathimerini*. [Online]. 2 February. [Accessed 14 May 2019]. Available from: www.ekathimerini.com/237261/article/ekathimerini/community/the-changing-greek-family
- Kell, P. M. and Vogl, G. J. 2008. Transnational Education: The politics of mobility, migration and the well being of international students. *International Journal of Asia: Pacific Studies*. **4**(1), 21-31.
- Kenner, C. and Weirnerman, J. 2011. Adult Learning Theory: Applicationsto Non-Traditional College Students. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*. **41**(2), 87-96.
- King, R. 2002. Towards a new map of European migration. *International Journal of Population Geography*. **8**(2), 89-106.
- King, R. 2012. Geography and Migration Studies: Retrospect and Prospect. *Population, Space and Place*. **18**(2), 134-153.
- King, R. 2018. Theorising new European youth mobilities. *Population, Space and Place*. **24**(1), e2117- n/a (1-12).
- King, R. and Raghuram, P. 2013. International student migration: Mapping the field and new research agendas. *Population, Space and Place*. **19**(2), 127-137.
- King, R. and Ruiz-Gelices, E. 2003. International student migration and the European 'year abroad': Effects on European identity and subsequent migration behaviour. *International Journal of Population Geography*. **9**(3), 229-252.
- King, R., Findlay, A. and Ahrens, J. 2010. *International Student Mobility Literature Review*. [Online]. London: Final Report to Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). [Accessed 20 April 2018]. Available from: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/pubs/2010/rd2010/rd20_10.pdf
- King, R., Findlay, A. M., Ahrens, J. and Dunne, M. 2011. Reproducing advantage: the perspective of English school leavers on studying abroad. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. **9**(2), 161-181.

- King, R., Lulle, A., Conti, F. and Mueller, D. 2016. Eurocity London: A qualitative comparison of graduate migration from Germany, Italy and Latvia. *Comparative Migration Studies*. **4**(a3), 1-22.
- King, R., Lulle, A., Parutis, V. and Saar, M. 2018. From peripheral region to escalator region in Europe: Young Baltic graduates in London. *European Urban and Regional Studies*. **25**(3), 284-299.
- Konduah, A. and Glaab, K. 2018. *Brain drain or brain gain: examining the effects (impact) of foreign education on home and host countries: the case of African student migrants in Norway*. Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås.
- Kotzamanis, B. and Kostaki, A. 2015. The Implications of the Recent Economic Crisis on Fertility in Greece. *European Journal of Economics and Business Studies*. **1**(3), 154-171.
- Kōu, A., Van Wissen, L., Van Dijk, J. and Bailey, A. 2015. A Life Course Approach to High-skilled Migration: Lived Experiences of Indians in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **41**(10), 1644-1663.
- Kulu, H. and Milewski, N. 2007. Family Change and Migration in the Life Course: An Introduction. *Demographic Research*. **17**(19), 567–590.
- Kuption, C. 2006. Students and talent flow- the case of Europe: From castle to 'harbour'. In: Kuption, C. and Pang, E. F. eds. *Competing for Global Talent*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labor Office, pp. 33-61.
- Kvale, S. 1996. *Interviews. An introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Labrianidis, L. and Pratsinakis, M. 2016. *Greece's new emigration at times of crisis*. [Online]. Hellenic observatory papers on Greece and Southeast Europe. [GreeSE-N.99. [Accessed 20 June 2018). Available from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/66811/1/GreeSE-No.99.pdf>.
- Labrianidis, L. and Pratsinakis, 2017. Crisis Brain drain: Short-term Pain/Long-term gain? In: Tziouvas, D. ed. *Greece in Crisis: The Cultural Politics of Austerity*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., pp. 87-106.
- Lanzieri G. 2013. *Towards a "baby recession" in Europe? Differential fertility trends during the economic crisis*. [Online]. [Statistics in Focus 13]. Luxembourg: Eurostat. [Accessed 8 April 2019]. Available from:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3433488/5585916/KS-SF-13-013-EN.PDF>

- Lee, E. S. 1969. A theory of migration. In: Jackson, J.A. ed. *Migration*. London: Cambridge University Press, pp.282-297.
- Lee, J. J. and Kim, D. 2010. Brain gain or brain circulation? U.S. doctoral recipients returning to South Korea. *Higher Education*. **59**(5), 627-643.
- Legislation.gov.uk. 2018. *Explanatory memorandum to the education (student loans) (repayment) (amendment) regulations 2018*. [Online]. No 284. [Accessed 3 April 2020]. Available from:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/284/pdfs/uksiem_20180284_en.pdf
- Li, F. L. N., Findlay A. M, Jowett, A. J. and Skeldon, R. 1996. Migrating to learn and learning to migrate. *International Journal of Population Geography*. **2**(1), 51-67.
- Li, M. and Bray, M. 2007. Cross-border flows of students for higher education: Push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau. *Higher Education*. **53**(6), 791-818.
- Li, Z. 2013. A critical account of employability construction through the eyes of Chinese postgraduate students in the UK. *Journal of Education for Business*. **26**(5), 473-493.
- Lin, C. 2006. Culture Shock and Social Support: An Investigation of a Chinese Student Organization on a US Campus. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*. **35**(2), 117-13.
- Liu, D.W.Y. and Winder, B. 2014. Exploring foreign undergraduate students' experiences of university. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. **27**(1), 42-64.
- Liu-Farrer, G. 2009. Educationally Channeled International Labor Mobility: Contemporary Student Migration from China to Japan. *International Migration Review*. **43**(1), 178-204.
- Lörz, M., Netz, N. and Quast, H. 2016. Why do students from underprivileged families less often intend to study abroad? *Higher Education*. **72**(2), 153-174.
- Lowell, B., L., Findlay, A. and Stewart, E. 2004. *Brain strain: Optimising Highly Skilled Migration from Developing countries*. Asylum and Migration, London: Institute for Public Policy Research. [Accessed 2 April 2019]. Available from:

https://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/brainstrain_1365.pdf

- Lulle, A., Moroşanu, L. and King, R. 2018. And then came Brexit: Experiences and future plans of young EU migrants in the London region. *Population, Space and Place*. **24**(1), e2122.
- Luthra, R. and Morando, G. 2016. The best and the brightest: EU students at UK universities and as highly skilled graduate workers in the UK. [Online]. [no location]: Institute for Social and Economic Research. [Accessed 29 October 2016]. Available from:
<https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/files/news/2016/brexit/brightest-best-graduates-eu.pdf>
- Lysgaard, S. 1955. Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States. *International Social Science Bulletin*. **7**, 45–51.
- MacDonald, R. 2011. Youth transitions, unemployment and underemployment: Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose? *Journal of Sociology*. **47**(4), 427-444.
- Mahony, P. and Weiner, G. 2017. Neo-liberalism and the state of higher education in the UK. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*. **43**(4), 560-572.
- Manolo, A. 2006. Global competition for skilled workers and consequences. In: Kuptsch, C. and Pang, E.F. eds. *Competing for Global Talent*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, International Labor Office, pp.11-32.
- Mansvelt, J. 2005. *Geographies of Consumption*. London: Sage.
- Marcu, S. 2015. Uneven mobility experiences: Life-strategy expectations among Eastern European undergraduate students in the UK and Spain. *Geoforum*. **58**, 68– 75.
- María Cubillo, J., Sánchez, J. and Cerviño, J. 2006. International students' decision-making process. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **20**(2), 101-115.
- Maringe, F. and Carter, S. 2007. International students' motivations for studying in UK HE: Insights into the choice and decision making of African students. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **21**(6), 459-475.
- Mason, J. 2002. *Qualitative Researching*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.
- Mason, J. 2018. *Qualitative Researching*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.

- Mavrodi, G. and Moutselos, M. 2017. Immobility in times of crisis: The case of Greece. [Online]. In: Lafleur, J. M. and Stanek, M. eds. *South-north migration of EU citizens in times of crisis*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, pp.33-48. [Accessed 2 March 2018]. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-39763-4>
- Maxwell, J. A. 2012. *A realist approach for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.
- May, T. 2001. *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*. 3rd ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Mayer, K. U. 1986. Structural constraints on the life course. *Human Development*. **29**(3), 163–170.
- Mazzarol, T. 1998. Critical success factors for international education marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **12**(4), 163-75.
- Mazzarol, T. and Soutar, G.N. 2002. “Push-pull” factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **16**(2), 82–90.
- Mazzarol, T. W. and Soutar, G. N. 2008. Australian educational institutions’ international markets: A correspondence analysis. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **22**(3), 229-238
- McCowan, T. 2015. ‘Should universities promote employability?’. *Theory and Research in Education*. **13**(3), 267–285.
- McGettigan, A. 2013. *The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education*. London: Pluto Press.
- McMahon, M.E. 1992. Higher Education in a world market: an historical look at the global context of international study. *Higher Education*. **24**(4), 465-482.
- Mellors-Bourne, R., Hooley, T. and Marriott, J. 2014. *Understanding how people choose to pursue taught postgraduate study*. [Online]. London: Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). [Accessed 25 April 2018]. Available from: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2014/pgtinfoneeds>
- Michielin, F., Mulder, CH. and Zorlu, A. 2008. Distance to parents and geographical mobility. *Population, Place and Space*. **14**(4), 327-345.

- Migration Data Portal. 2018. *International Students*. [Online]. [Accessed 2 June 2019]. Available from: <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-students>
- Miller-Idriss, C. and Hanauer, E. 2011. Transnational higher education: off-shore campuses in the Middle-East. *Comparative Education*. **47**(2), 181-207.
- Mobo, G. and Xi'an, L. 1998. 'From Student to Citizen'. *International Migration*. **36**(1), 27-48.
- Morano-Foadi, S. 2005. Scientific Mobility, Career Progression, and Excellence in the European Research Area. *International Migration*. **43**(5), 133-162.
- Morrison Gutman, L. and Akerman, R. 2008. *Determinants of Aspirations*. [Online]. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning. Institute of Education. [Accessed 27 November 2016]. Available from: <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/2052/1/Gutman2008Determinants.pdf>
- Murphy-Lejeune, E. 2002. *Student Mobility and Narrative in Europe: The new strangers*. London: Routledge.
- Nafari, J., Arab, A. and Ghaffari, S. 2017. Through the Looking Glass: Analysis of Factors Influencing Iranian Student's Study Abroad Motivations and Destination Choice. *SAGE Open*. **7**(2), 1-19.
- Naidoo, R. and Jamieson, I. 2005. Empowering participants or corroding learning? Towards a research agenda on the impact of student consumerism in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*. **20**(3), 267-281.
- Newsroom, T. 2019. Greek women postpone marriage & maternity due to the ongoing crisis. *Proto thema*. [Online]. 6 October. [Accessed 27 May 2019]. Available from: en.protothema.gr/greek-women-postpone-marriage-maternity-due-to-the-ongoing-crisis
- Noy, C. 2008. Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. **11**(4), 327-344.
- Oberg, K. 1960. Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology*. **7**(4), 177-182.
- O'Connor, H. and Bodicoat, M. 2017. Exploitation or opportunity? Student perceptions of internships in enhancing employability skills. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **38**(4), 435-449.

- Oláh, L. Sz. 2015. *Changing families in the European Union: trends and policy implications*. [Online]. Families and Societies. [Accessed 8 April 2019]. Available from: www.familiesandsocieties.eu/wp.../WP44Olah2015.pdf
- Ong, A. 1999. *Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- O' Regan, M. 2010. *Graduate transitions to employment: Career motivation, identity and employability* [Online]. Reading: Centre for Career Management Skills. University of Reading. [Accessed 20 March 2019]. Available from: https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/ccms/Graduate_transitions_to_employment.pdf.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2009. *Higher Education to 2030. Executive Summary (Vol.2)*. Globalisation, OECD Publishing. [Online]. [Accessed 27 March 2017]. Available from: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/44101074.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2013. *How is international mobility shaping up? Education Indicators in Focus*. [Online]. No.14. [Accessed 20 October 2018]. Available from: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/how-is-international-student-mobility-shaping-up_5k43k8r4k821-en
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2016a. "United Kingdom", in *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing (pp. 1-11). [Online]. [Accessed 22 October 2016]. Available from: http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016/united-kingdom_eag-2016-85-en#.WAvp_snXDDc#page11
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2016b. "Greece", in *Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing (pp. 1-7). [Online]. [Accessed 22 October 2016]. Available from: http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/education/education-at-a-glance-2016/greece_eag-2016-57-en#page1
- Park, E. L. 2009. Analysis of Korean students' international mobility by 2-D model: Driving force factor and directional factor. *Higher Education*. **57**(6), 741-755.
- Paton, G. 2012. Eurozone Crisis 'driving students to British Universities'. *The Telegraph*. [Online]. 2 August. [Accessed 23 October 2016]. Available

from:<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9444411/Euroz-one-crisis-driving-students-to-British-universities.html>

- Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications.
- Pellicia, A. 2014. Modern Greek student mobility in Italy: between inaccessibility and social reproduction. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*. **14**(4), 530-547.
- Petrogiannis, K. 2011. Conceptions of the transition to adulthood in a sample of Greek higher education students. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy*. **11**(1), 121-137.
- Pimpa, N. 2005. A family affair: The effect of family on Thai students' choices of international education. *Higher Education*. **49**(4), 431-448.
- Pratsinakis, M., Hatziprokopiou, P., Grammatikas, D. and Labrianidis, L. 2017. Crisis and the resurgence of emigration from Greece: Trends, representations, and the multiplicity of migrant trajectories. In: B.Glorius & J. Domínguez-Mujica. eds. *European mobility in times of crisis. The new context of European south-north migration*. Bielefeld: J. Transcript Verlag, pp. 75-102.
- Rafferty, A., Rees, J., Sensier, M. and Harding, A. 2013. Growth and Recession: Underemployment and the Labour Market in the North of England. *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*. **6**(2), 143–163.
- Raghuram, P. 2013. Theorizing the Spaces of Student Migration. *Population, Space and Place*. **19**(2), 138-154.
- Ramsay, S., Barker, M. and Jones, E. 1999. Academic Adjustment and Learning Processes: a comparison of international and local students in first-year university. *Higher Education Research & Development*. **18**(1), 129–144.
- Räty, H., Komulainen, K., Harvorsén, C., Nieminen, A. and Korhonen, M. 2018. University students' perceptions of their 'ability selves' and employability: a pilot study. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*. **4**(2), 107-115.
- Ravenstein, E. G. 1885. The laws of migration. *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*. **48**(2), 167-235.
- Ravenstein, E. G. 1889. The laws of migration. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. **52**(2), 241-305.

- Reay, D. 2000. A useful extension of Bourdieu's conceptual framework?: emotional capital as a way of understanding mothers' involvement in their children's education? *Sociological Review*. **48**(4), 568–585.
- Reay, D. 2005. Doing the dirty work of social class? Mothers' work in support of their children's schooling. *Sociological Review*. **53**(s2), 104–116.
- Robertson, M., Line, M., Jones, S. and Thomas, S. 2000. International Students, Learning Environments and Perceptions: A case study using the Delphi technique. *Higher Education Research & Development*. **19**(1), 89-102.
- Robinson, O. C. 2014. Sampling in Interview-Based Qualitative Research: A Theoretical and Practical Guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. **11**(1), 25-41.
- Robertson, S. 2013. *Transnational Student-Migrants and the State: The Education-Migration Nexus*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robertson, S. 2018. Friendship networks and encounters in student-migrants' negotiations of translocal subjectivity. *Urban Studies*. **55**(3), 538-553.
- Robertson, S., Hoare, L. and Harwood, A. 2011. Returnees, student migrants and second chance learners. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **41**(5), 685–698.
- Sakellariou, A. and Koronaïou, A. 2018. Young people, transition to adulthood and recession in Greece: In search of a better future. In Irwin, S. and Nilsen, A. eds. *Transitions to adulthood through recession: Youth and inequality in a European comparative perspective*. Youth, young adulthood and society series. London: Routledge, pp.156-175.
- Samers, M. 2010. *Migration*. London: Routledge.
- Samuelowicz, K. 1987. Learning Problems of Overseas Students: Two Sides of a Story. *Higher Education Research and Development*. **6**(2), 121-133.
- Sapiña Grau, A. J. 2020. *Visual Soft Skills: The Diagrams to Do to Achieve Self-improvement*. Great Britain: Amazon.
- Saunders, D. B. 2011. *Students as customers: The influence of neoliberal ideology and freemarket logic on entering first-year college students*. [Online]. (Open access dissertations. Paper 377). [Accessed 08/03/2019]. Available from: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1378&context=open_access_dissertations

- Saunders, V. and Zuzel, K. 2010. Evaluating Employability Skills: Employer and Student Perceptions. *Bioscience Education*. **15**(1), 1-15.
- Saxenian, A. 2005. From brain drain to brain circulation: transnational communities and regional upgrading in India and China. *Studies in Comparative International Development*. **40**(2), 35–61.
- Schweisfurth, M and Gu, Q. 2009. Exploring the experiences of international students in UK higher education: possibilities and limits of interculturality in university life. *Intercultural Education*. **20**(5), 463-473.
- Shaikh, M. and Forneris, T. 2018. The influence of junior coaches on club members in the Start2Finish Running & Reading Club: A qualitative study. *Journal of Adolescence*. **68**, 50-60.
- Shanahan, M. J. and Macmillan, R. 2008. *Biography and the sociological imagination: Contexts and contingencies*. New York, NY: WW Norton & Co.
- Shanka, T., Quintal, V. and Taylor, R. 2006. Factors Influencing International Students' Choice of an Education Destination-A Correspondence Analysis. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*. **15**(2), 31-46.
- Shanthi, R. 2013. *Transnational student-migrants and the state: the education-migration nexus*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sidhu, R. 2007. GATS and the new developmentalism: governing transnational education. *Comparative Education Review*. **51**(2), 203-227.
- Silverman, D. 2000. *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Skeldon, R. 1997. *Migration and Development: A Global Perspective*. Longman: London.
- Sondhi, G. 2013. *Gendering international student mobility: an Indian case study*. [Online]. Doctoral thesis (PhD), University of Sussex. [Accessed 21 March 2019]. Available from: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/46066/>
- Soon, J. J. 2010. The determinants of students' return intentions: A partial proportional odds model. *Journal of Choice Modelling*. **3**(2), 89-112.
- Soon, J. J. 2012. Home is Where the Heart Is? Factors Determining International Students' Destination Country upon Completion of Studies Abroad. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **38**(1), 147-162.

- Soutar, G. N. and Turner, J.P. 2002. Students preferences for university: A conjoint analysis. *International Journal of Educational Management*. **16**(1), 40–45
- Spren, M. 1992. ‘Rare populations, hidden populations and link-tracing designs: what and why?’ *Bulletin Methodologie Sociologique*. **36**, 34-58.
- Srikatanyoo, N. and Gnoth, J. 2002. Country image and international tertiary education. *Journal of Brand Management*. **10**(2), 139–146.
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2016. *Unemployment statistics*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 October 2016]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Main_statistical_findings
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2018a. *Unemployment rate – annual data*. [Online]. [Accessed 12 June 2018]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tipsu_n20&language=en
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2018b. *Employment rate of recent graduates*. [Online]. [Accessed 12 June 2018]. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&pcode=tps00053&language=en>
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2019a. *Unemployment rate, 2008-2018 (%)*. [Online]. [Table 1]. [Accessed 30 May 2019]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/7/7d/Unemployment_rate_2008-2018_%28%25%29_new.png
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2019b. *Youth Unemployment figures, 2008-2018 (%)*. [Online]. [Accessed 30 May 2019]. Available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment_figures_2008-2018_\(%25\)_T1.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Youth_unemployment_figures_2008-2018_(%25)_T1.png)
- Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat). 2019c. *Employment rate of recent graduates*. [Online]. [Accessed 18 June 2019]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Employment_rates_of_recent_graduates#Employment_rates_of_recent_graduates

- Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.
- Sun, L., Zhang, L., Baker, D., Ford, K., Geiger, R., Guthrie, D. and Reimherr, M. 2017. *Brain Circulation: International Student Mobility, Expatriate Researchers, and International Research Collaboration*. [Online]. (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing). [Accessed 8 April 2019]. Available from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1987953888/>
- Suter, B. and Jandl, M. 2008. Train and retain: National and regional policies to promote the settlement of foreign graduates in knowledge economies. *International Migration and Integration*. **9**(4), 401–418.
- Szelényi, K. 2006. Students without borders? Migration decision- making among international graduate students in the U.S. *Knowledge, Technology & Policy*. **19**(3), 64-86.
- Teichler, U. 2004. The changing debate on internationalisation of higher education. *Higher Education*. **48**(1), 5-26.
- Thomas, W., Znaniecki, F. and Zaretsky, E. 1996. *The Polish peasant in Europe and America : a classic work in immigration history*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Tomlinson, M. 2007. Graduate employability and student attitudes and orientations to the labour market. *Journal of Education and Work*. **20**(4), 285-304.
- Tomlinson, M. 2008. 'The Degree Is not Enough': Students' Perceptions of the Role of Higher Education Credentials for Graduate Work and Employability. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **29**(1), 49-61.
- Tran, L. T. 2016. Mobility as 'becoming': A Bourdieuan analysis of the factors of shaping international student mobility. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **37**(8), 1268-1289.
- Tran, L.T. and Pham, L. 2016. International students in transnational mobility: intercultural connectedness with domestic and international peers, institutions and the wider community. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **46**(4), 560–581.

- Tran, T. T. 2016. Enhancing graduate employability and the need for university-enterprise collaboration. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*. 7(1), 58-71.
- Triandafyllidou, A. 2014. *Migration in Greece: Recent developments in 2014*. [Online]. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). [Accessed 2 June 2018]. Available from: https://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Migration-in-Greece-Recent-Developments-2014_2.pdf
- Triandafyllidou, A. and Gropas, R. 2014. "Voting with their feet": Highly skilled emigrants from Southern Europe. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 58(12), 1614-1633.
- Tsekeris, C., Pinguli, M. and Georga, E. 2015. *Young people's perception of economic crisis in contemporary Greece: A social psychological pilot study*. [Online]. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). Crisis Observatory. [Accessed 2 March 2018]. Available from: http://crisisobs.gr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/%CE%95%CF%81%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BD%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C-%CE%9A%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BC%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%BF_19_Tsekeris-%CE%95%CE%9DG.pdf
- Tymon, A. 2013. The student perspective on employability. *Studies in Higher Education*. 38(6), 841-885.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2018a. *Global flow of tertiary-level Students*. [Accessed 2 May 2018]. Available from: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2018b. *Education: Outbound internationally mobile students by host region*. [Online]. [Accessed 8 June 2018]. Available from: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172#>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2018c. *Education: Inbound internationally mobile students by country of origin*. [Online]. [Accessed 8 June 2018]. Available from: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172>

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2019a. *Global flow of tertiary-level students*. [Online]. [Accessed 8 June 2019]. Available from: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2019b. *Facts and figures: Mobility in Higher Education*. [Online]. [Accessed 25 May 2019]. Available from: <https://en.unesco.org/node/252278>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics (UIS). 2019c. *Education: Outbound internationally mobile students by host region*. [Online]. Education: International student mobility in tertiary education. [Accessed 9 June 2019]. Available from: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>
- Universities UK. 2013. *Where student fees go?* [Online]. [Accessed 2 April 2020]. Available from: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2013/where-student-fees-go.pdf>
- Universities UK. 2014. *International students in UK higher education: the UK and its competition*. In: *Higher Education in Focus: Funding environment for universities 2014*. [Online]. London: Universities UK publications. [Accessed 1 November 2016]. Available from: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2014/international-students-in-higher-education.pdf>
- Universities UK. 2015. *Patterns and trends in UK Higher Education*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 October 2016]. Available from: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Pages/patterns-and-trends-uk-higher-education-2015.aspx>
- Universities UK. 2017. *Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education 2017*. [Online]. [Accessed 18 June 2019]. Available from: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Documents/patterns-and-trends-2017.pdf>
- Universities UK. 2018. *Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education 2018*. [Online]. [Accessed 18 June 2019]. Available from: <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Documents/patterns-and-trends-in-uk-higher-education-2018.pdf>

- van Geel, J. and Mazzucato, V. 2018. Conceptualising youth mobility trajectories: thinking beyond conventional categories. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. **44**(13), 2144-2162.
- Van Mol, C. 2013. Intra-European student mobility and European identity: A successful marriage? *Population, Space, and Place*. **19**(2), 209-222.
- Van Mol, C. 2016. Migration aspirations of European youth in times of crisis. *Journal of Youth Studies*. **19**(10), 1303-1320.
- Van Mol, C. and de Valk, H. A. G. 2016. Migration and immigrants in Europe: a historical and demographic perspective. [Online]. In: Garcés-Mascreñas, B. and Penninx, R. eds. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe. Contexts, Levels and Actors*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 31-55. [Accessed 6 March 2017]. Available from: http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4_3
- Van Mol, C. and Timmerman, C. 2014. Should I stay or should I go? An analysis of the determinants of intra-European student mobility. *Population, Space, and Place*. **20**(5), 465-479.
- Vertovec, S. 1999. Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. **22**(2), 447-462.
- Vogt, W. P. 1999. *Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.
- Wadhwa, R. 2016. Students on Move: Understanding Decision-making Process and Destination Choice of Indian Students. *Higher Education for the Future*. **3**(1), 54–75.
- Walker, P. 2014. International Student Policies in UK Higher Education from Colonialism to the Coalition: Developments and Consequences. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. **18**(4), 325-344.
- Walton-Roberts, M. 2015. Femininity, mobility and family fears: Indian international student migration and transnational parental control. *Journal of Cultural Geography*. **32**(1), 68–82.
- Waters, J. L. 2002. Flexible families? ‘Astronaut’ households and the experiences of lone mothers in Vancouver. *British Columbia. Social and Cultural Geography*. **3**(2), 117–134.

- Waters, J. L. 2006. Geographies of cultural capital: Education, international migration and family strategies between Hong Kong and Canada. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. **31**(2), 179-192.
- Waters, J. L. 2007. Roundabout routes and sanctuary schools: the role of situated educational practices and habitus in the creation of transnational professionals. *Global Networks*. **7**(4), 477-497.
- Waters, J. L. 2009a. Transnational geographies of academic distinction: The role of social capital in the recognition and evaluation of ‘overseas’ credentials. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. **7**(2), 113-129.
- Waters, J. L. 2009b. In pursuit of scarcity: Transnational students, ‘employability’ and the MBA. *Environment and Planning A*. **41**(8), 1865-1883.
- Waters, J. L. 2010. Becoming a father, missing a wife: Chinese transnational families and the male experience of lone parenting in Canada. *Population, Space and Place*. **16**(1), 63–74.
- Waters, J. L. 2012. Geographies of international education: Mobilities and the reproduction of social (dis) advantage. *Geography Compass*. **6**(3), 123-136.
- Waters, J. and Brooks, R. 2010. Accidental achievers? International higher education, class reproduction and privilege in the experiences of UK students overseas. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **31**(2), 217-228.
- Waters, J., Brooks, R. and Pilmott-Wilson, H. 2011. Youthful escapes? British students, overseas education and the pursuit of happiness. *Social and Cultural Geography*. **12**(5), 455-469.
- Watson, J. 2013. Profitable Portfolios: Capital That Counts in Higher Education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. **34**(3), 412–30.
- West, A., Dimitropoulos, A., Hind, A. and Wilkes, J. 2000. *Reasons for studying abroad: A survey of EU students studying in the UK*. In: European Conference on Educational Research, 20-23 September 2000, Edinburgh. [Online]. London: Centre for Educational Research (LSE), pp. 1-13. [Accessed 8 April 2018]. Available from: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001602.htm>
- Wiers-Jensen, J. 2008. Does higher education attained abroad lead to international jobs? *Journal of Studies in International Education*. **12**(2), 101–130.

- Wilkins, S. and Huisman, J. 2011. International student destination choice: The influence of home campus experience on the decision to consider branch campuses. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*. **21**(1), 61-83
- Wilkins, S., Balakrishnan, M. S. and Huisman, J. 2012. Student choice in higher education: Motivations for choosing to study at an international branch campus. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. **16**(5), 413-433.
- Wu, C. and Wilkes, R. 2017. International students' post-graduation migration plans and the search for home. *Geoforum*. **80**, 123-132.
- Yeh, C. J. and Inose, M. 2003. International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction, and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. **16**(1), 15-28.
- Yoon, I-J., Rha, K., Jongtae, K. and Hwang, J.K. 2013. Brain circulation of South Korean students in Japan and China. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. **22**(4), 501-525.
- Zhao, X. 2016. *Social Media and the International Student Experience*. [Online]. Research Digest. 10. International Education Association of Australia. [Accessed 18 January 2019]. Available from: <https://www.ieaa.org.au/documents/item/842>
- Zhou, M. 1998. Parachute kids' in Southern California: the educational experience of Chinese children in transnational families. *Educational Policy*. **12**(6), 682-704.
- Zhou, Y., Jindal-Snape, D., Topping, K. and Todman, J. 2008. Theoretical models of culture shock and adaptation in international students in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. **33**(1), 63-75.
- Ziguras, C. and Law, S. F. 2006. Recruiting international students as skilled migrants: the global 'skills race' as viewed from Australia and Malaysia. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. **4**(1), 59-76.

Appendix

Interview Guide

A) Interviews with the students

Section 1: Introduction

- *Can you tell me about yourself?*
- *How long have you been in the UK?*
- *How do you find it?*
- *Is it how you expected it to be?*

Section 2: Educational background

- *Can you tell me about your study here?*
- *What were your previous studies about? Where did you pursue your undergraduate degree? In Greece or in the UK?*

Section 3: Family background and work experience

- *Tell me about your family at home – did you live with your parents before you left or alone?*
- *Are your parents working? What are their occupations?*
- *What is your parents' educational background?*
- *Was your family affected by the financial crisis?*
- *Do you have any work experience? Had you worked before you decided to migrate?*
- *Are you working now while studying?*

Section 4: Migration aspirations and decision-making processes

- *Why did you decide to pursue a taught postgraduate degree after the completion of your undergraduate studies?*
- *Why did you decide to come to the UK for your study rather than remain and study in your home country?*
- *Why did you decide to study in this city and at this university?*
- *Why did you choose to study this course?*
- *Had you ever travelled abroad before you came to the UK for your studies (for leisure or/and educational or/and other purposes)?*
- *Do you think that your previous travel/study experiences abroad (or the lack thereof) have played a role in your decision for educational migration to the UK?*
- *Was it an easy decision for you to migrate, would you say, or a difficult one?*

Section 5: The role of social networks in students' migration aspirations and decision-making

- *Has anyone encouraged you to migrate to the UK for your study? (family/friends/teachers etc.)? What do your family think of your migration decision?*
- *Has anyone else in your family migrated (what have they done etc.)?*
- *Do you have any family members/friends or others (i.e. teachers, professors etc) who have studied/currently studying or lived/currently living here or anywhere else abroad?*
- *Do your parents have any expectations from your educational migration to the UK? What kind of expectations do they have?*
- *Do you believe that your family's expectations have influenced your migration decision, as well as your own expectations?*
- *Did you ask for any help/guidance/support for your application process or any other issues regarding your study in the UK (i.e. educational agents; British Council)?*

Section 6: Adjustment experiences in the UK

- *How would you describe your life in the UK as a student migrant?*

- *Are you happy with your choice at personal, social and academic levels?*
- *Have you built any social networks since your arrival or had you already created ones before you arrived here? Do you think that these networks have influenced your adaptation process in the UK? If yes, how?*
- *Do you miss/visit your family?*
- *Do you keep in touch with them while being here? How?*
- *Do you support them? How? / Do they support you? How?*

Section 7: Expectations and post-study plans

- *What are you planning to do upon graduation?*
- *Do you want to remain in the UK/ migrate to another country or return to Greece? Why? What would it mean for you?*
- *Is this an easy decision for you or a difficult one? Why?*
- *Do your parents want you to remain in the UK/abroad or return to Greece?*
- *What do they think about that?*
- *If you want to stay in the UK/abroad: do you think you might settle in here permanently? Why?*
- *What would that mean for you and your family?*
- *Would you like to create your own family here?*
- *Do you hope or expect to have children at any point? – does it matter to you which country you bring them up in? Why?*
- *Has the Brexit vote changed your expectations and post-study plans?*
 - *What do you think of the Brexit vote?*
 - *Has it affected your plans? If yes, how?*
 - *If you consider remaining in the UK after your graduation, do you have any concerns about your future in the UK as an EU citizen working and/or studying here?*
 - *[if relevant]Do you think the atmosphere in the UK has changed at all?/ Has this affected you?*

B) Interviews with the key informants

a) Education agents

Section 1: Introduction

- *Could you tell me about your work position/education agency?*
- *What is your expertise/ work experience?*
- *How long have you been working in this agency?*

Section 2: Policies, services and recruitment strategies

- *What is your strategy in regard to the promotion of British Higher Education in Greece? Do you run/organise any marketing campaigns/seminars/workshops/conferences in Greece?*
- *What kind of help/support/guidance does your agency provide the prospective and current Greek mobile students with?*
- *Do you collaborate with any schools in Greece (primary schools/lower and/or upper secondary schools)? What is the nature and purpose of your collaboration with these schools?*

Section 3: Greek students and their parents

- *What types of services do Greek students ask from your agency regarding their educational migration to the UK?*
- *How many applications approximately do Greek mobile students, who ask for your services, submit to British higher education institutions every year?*
- *What is the students' participation in the activities/programmes/events and services with which you provide them?*
- *Do you receive any enquiries from the students' parents? If yes, what kind of enquiries do you receive from them?*

Section 4: Patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK

- *Do you have any data with respect to the volume of student migration flows from Greece to the UK? Have they increased or declined over the years and, specifically, since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008?*
- *Do you have any data regarding their demographic profile/socio-economic background and distribution across British higher education institutions by level of study, gender and subject area?*
- *What are the most popular educational choices (study location/higher education institution/course of study) among Greek taught postgraduate students?*

Section 5: Students' decision-making processes, experiences, expectations and post-study plans

- *Do you have any data on students' migration decision-making with respect to the selection of the study location, university and course of study?*
- *Do you have any data regarding their aspirations, motivations and adjustment experiences in the UK?*
- *Is there any official data regarding their plans and destinations upon graduation? Do they tend to return to Greece or remain and study or/and work in the UK?*
- *Do you provide current students as well as alumni with any help/guidance/support in regard to post-study work opportunities?*

Section 6: Brexit

- *Has the Brexit vote affected the number of Greek mobile students' applications to British higher education institutions compared with previous years?*
- *Do students express any concerns regarding this issue and if yes, what kind of concerns do they express?*
- *Have you changed your policy following the Brexit referendum results?*

b) Staff members at international, admissions or recruitment offices at British higher education institutions

Section 1: Introduction

- *Could you tell me about your position/role at the higher education institution?*
- *What is your expertise/work experience?*
- *How long have you been working in this position?*

Section 2: Recruitment strategies

- *What is the higher education institution's strategy for the recruitment of international students?*
- *Has this changed over the years?*
- *What is your strategy for the recruitment of Greek students? Do you run any marketing campaigns/events in Greece? What is students' participation in these events etc.? Are you satisfied with this?*
- *Have you established any branch campuses in Greece? Are you satisfied with the enrolments of Greek students in these campuses?*

Section 3: Patterns and trends of student migration flows from Greece to the UK

- *Do you have any data regarding the number of Greek mobile students who have enrolled at your higher education institution in the current academic year?*
- *Has their number changed over the years, especially since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008?*
- *What is their distribution by gender, level of study and subject area?*
- *What is their demographic profile/socio-economic background?*
- *What are the most popular subject areas and degree programmes among Greek taught postgraduate students? Why do you think Greek students decide to pursue these programmes? Have their choices changed over the years?*

Section 4: Students' decision-making processes, experiences, expectations and post-study plans

- *Do you have any data on students' migration decision-making with respect to the selection of the study location, university and course of study?*
- *Do you have any data regarding their aspirations, motivations and adjustment experiences in the UK?*
- *Is there any official data with respect to their plans and destinations upon graduation? Do they tend to return to Greece or remain and study or/and work in the UK?*
- *Do you provide current students as well as alumni with any help/guidance/support regarding post-study work opportunities?*

Section 5: Brexit

- *Following the Brexit referendum results, have you noticed any changes in the numbers of international and EU applicants to your higher education institution? What about Greek students?*
- *Do students express any concerns in regard to Brexit? Have these concerns affected their post-study plans?*
- *Have you changed your recruitment policy after the Brexit vote?*