Life design resources and career decision: a cross-cultural research in three European countries

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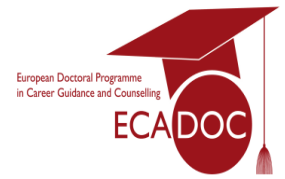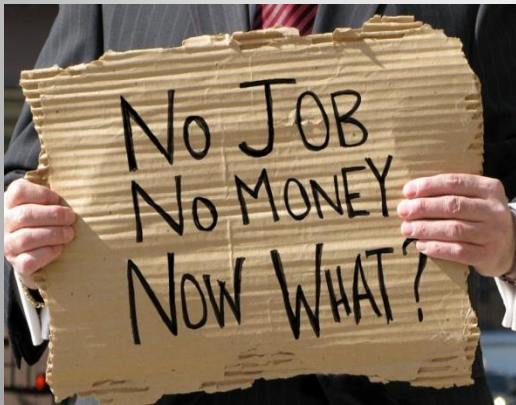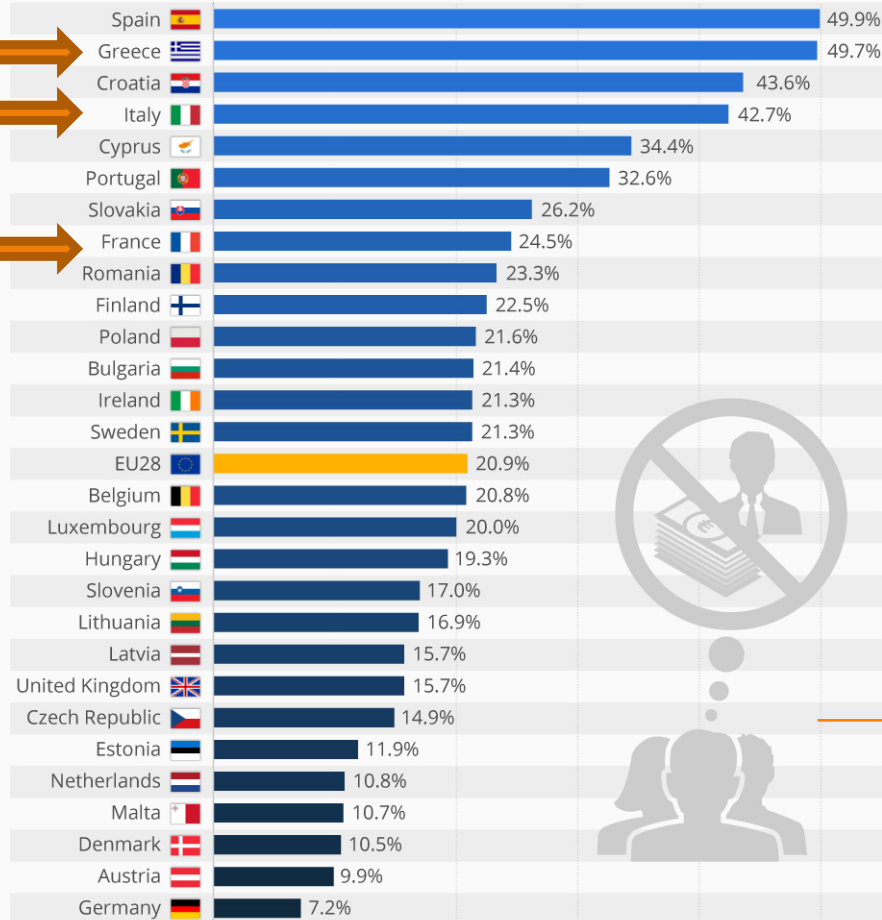
Our Society:

Few important words:

- Globalization
- Risk
- Diversity
- Economic crisis
- Change
- Unemployment
- Insecurity
- Instability

Our Countries:

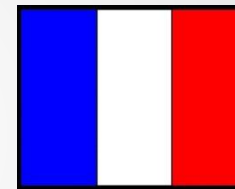## Youth Unemployment Still Unrelenting In Europe
Youth unemployment rate in the European Union in March 2015*

Country	Rate
Spain	49.9%
Greece	49.7%
Croatia	43.6%
Italy	42.7%
Cyprus	34.4%
Portugal	32.6%
Slovakia	26.2%
France	24.5%
Romania	23.3%
Finland	22.5%
Poland	21.6%
Bulgaria	21.4%
Ireland	21.3%
Sweden	21.3%
EU28	20.9%
Belgium	20.8%
Luxembourg	20.0%
Hungary	19.3%
Slovenia	17.0%
Lithuania	16.9%
Latvia	15.7%
United Kingdom	15.7%
Czech Republic	14.9%
Estonia	11.9%
Netherlands	10.8%
Malta	10.7%
Denmark	10.5%
Austria	9.9%
Germany	7.2%

* Persons under 25
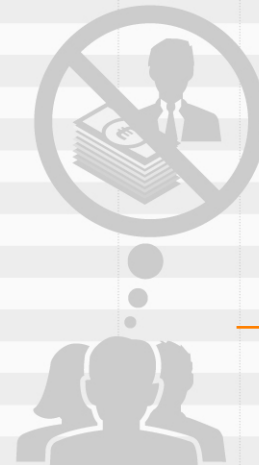@StatistaCharts   Source: Eurostat

statista

NEET (15-34):
2006:17,2%
2015: 27,1%

NEET (15-34):
2006:14,6%
2015:25,8%

NEET (15-34):
2006:20,3%
2015:26,9%

Different level of **FEAR**:
- Germany and Great Britain: the level is lower
- France, Greece, and Italy: the level is higher

Influence on adolescents:

- New issues:
  - how young people face to the increased uncertainties (Brannen & Nilsen, 2007; Devadson, 2008; Leccardi, 2008; Pais, 2003; Woodman, 2011)
  - the influence of changes, job instability, and precariousness on young people development:
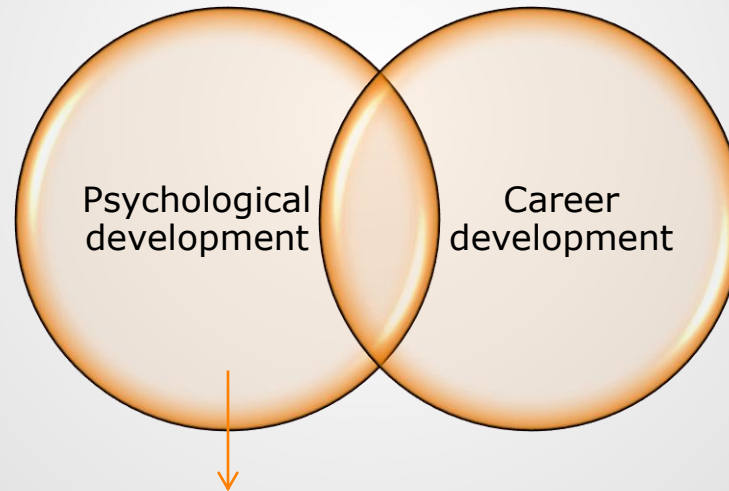
- "Emerging adulthood" (Arnett, 2000; Reifman & Grahe, 2015);
- association with suicidal ideation, substance abuse, criminal behaviors, smoking, depression, and anxiety (World Health Organization, 2011)

Influence on career of career development:

- future is viewed risky, uncertainty, unpredictability, with fear and obstacles;

- adolescents and young adults perceive more **fears and worries** about their future (Nurmi, 2005);

- thinking about the future is one of the principal fears and stressful concerns among other domains;

- career decisions, and other life-related choices, are taken later (Vilhjalmsdottir, 2015);

- **disinvestment** in education → decline of enrollment in the university.

A possible answer:

DESIGN YOUR LIFE.

Other important words:

Innovation
Flexibility
Opportunity
Personal Resources:
- Career Adaptability
- Optimism
- Resilience
- Hope
- **Courage**

Design your... LIFE

PLAN A PLAN B

bravery Grit Boldnes
Courage Darin
Valo
Backbone
Audacity
Heroi

CREATIVITY

opportunity.

COURAGE:

- The courage definition and its prototypic peculiarity are still under investigation (e.g., Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, & Sternberg, 2007)

Persistence	Intentionality	Deliberation	Virtuous or beneficial goal or a social purpose

Handling warning, risk, or obstacles	Significant cause despite the perception of a threat

- Different types of courage:
  ◦ Physical, moral and psychological (Putman, 1997)
  ◦ General courage and personal courage (Pury, Kiwalski, and Spearman, 2007)

The Role of Courage:

- New construct: it has received a sporadic attention by the psychological literature (Lopez, O'Byrne, & Peterson, 2003);

- Courage predicts **adaptive academic outcomes** (Martin, 2011)
- Courage is positively associated with:
  - persistence,
  - self-efficacy,
  - resilience,
  - future time perspective (Hannah et al., 2007; Pury et al., 2007; Rachman, 2004)
  - implementation of multiple solutions
  - confidence (Ginevra & Capozza, 2015).

- Courage can be considered a **psychological resource** in order to cope the difficulties and the crisis and to make career decisions albeit future-related fears.

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Our Hypothesis:

- For the first time, we aim to investigate courage in mutual interaction with career adaptability, hope, optimism, psychological flourishing, and career decision-making difficulties

- Test an interactional model and to identify the constructs with the higher influence as well as to understand how these influences are structured.

- Examine the cross-cultural variations in the interactional model.

Participants et procedure:

- *France*: 252 high school students
  - 164 ♀ (65%) and 87 ♂ (35%)
  - M$_{age}$: 16.08, SD$_{age}$: .92
  - 10th grade: 45%, 11th grade: 29%, 12th grade: 25%

- *Greece*: 251 high school students
  - 133 ♀ (54%) and 114 ♂ (46%)
  - M$_{age}$: 16.28, SD$_{age}$: .65
  - 10th grade: 56%, 11th grade: 37%, 12th grade: 7%

- *Italy*: 465 high school students
  - 219 ♀ (47%) and 246 ♂ (53%)
  - M$_{age}$: 17.23, SD$_{age}$: .68
  - 10th grade: 12%, 11th grade: 43%, 12th grade: 45%

- *Procedure: The most effective and culturally relevant approach was used in each country to collect data* (van de Vijver, 2002)

Instruments:

- Career Adapt-Abilities Scale – CAAS (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)

- Career Decision-making difficulties Questionnaire – CDDQ (Gati et al., 1996)

- Flourishing scale (Diener et al., 2010)

- Courage (Norton & Weiss, 2009)

- Optimism (Ginevra et al., 2015)

- *All these scales were available in Italian. Back-translation procedure was used to adapt several of these scales in French and Greek*

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First results (1/2):

- Graph 1. Mean score for each variable across sample
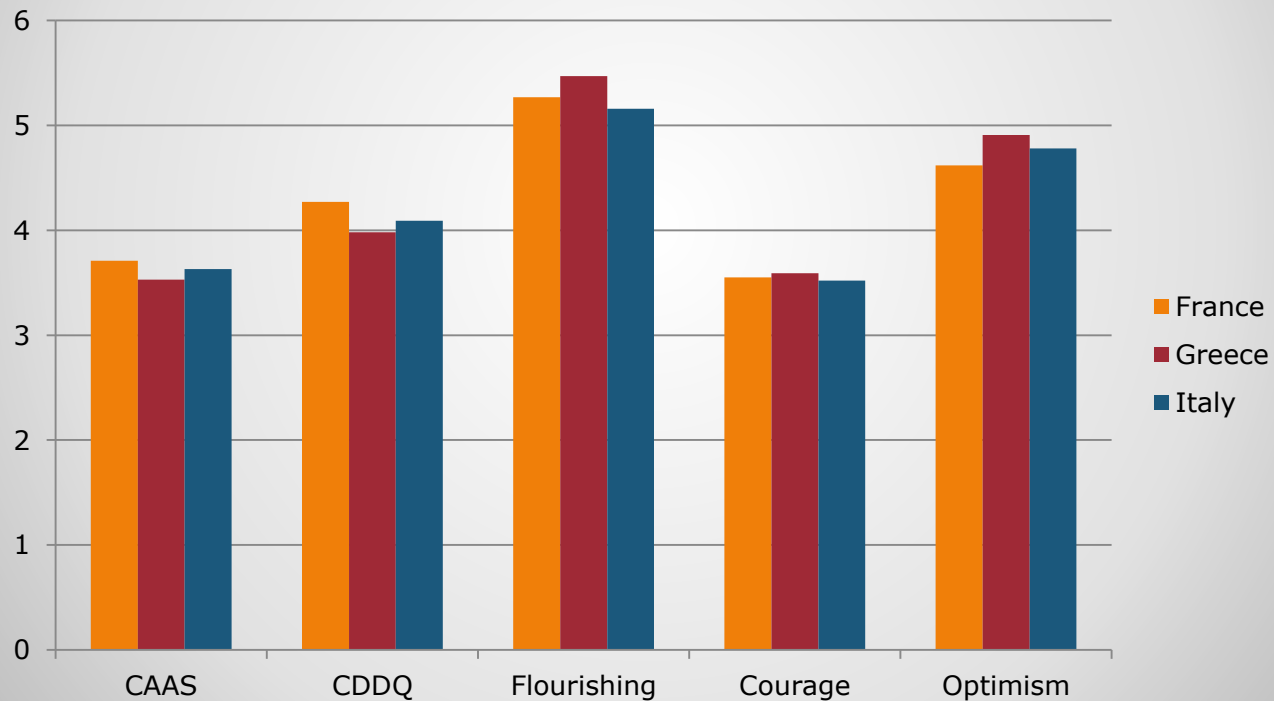
First results (2/2):

- Table 1. Correlations between all the variables

	France		Greece		Italy	
	CAAS	CDDQ	CAAS	CDDQ	CAAS	CDDQ
CDDQ	**-.34***	–	**-.23**	–	**-.34***	–
Flourishing	**.63***	-.26***	**.45***	-.18**	**.48***	-.34***
Courage	**.36***	-.18**	**.51***	-.29***	**.51***	-.31***
Optimism	**.68***	-.36***	**.54***	-.20**	**.47***	-.42**

***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$

Discussion:

- Positive psychological resources and career adaptability

  ◦ Need to develop a holistic approach of individuals (Zunker, 2012)

  ◦ The causal relationship between these variables must be examined

- As preliminary results, further analyses are needed

  ◦ Measurement invariance prior to examine cross-cultural differences (Duarte & Rossier, 2008; Sovet, Dimillo, & Samson, 2016)

  ◦ Components of CAAS and CDDQ

  ◦ Mediational model

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Conclusions:

- Perspective of positive psychology in the field of career counseling (Sovet, Carrein, Jung, & Tak, 2014)

- Need to increase positive psychological resources among youths in order to face challenging decisions and transitions

- Cross-cultural comparisons across Europe may be relevant to improve the European orientations about career practices and employment policies

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