

## Obstacles to socioeconomic integration of low-skilled immigrants: A Spatial Approach in the Case of Greece

### Ostacoli all'integrazione socioeconomica degli immigrati poco qualificati: un approccio spaziale nel caso della Grecia

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#### Abstract

The obstacles to socio-economic integration faced by low-skilled students with immigrant and refugee backgrounds attending Second Chance Schools and Second Chance Schools within detention facilities in Greece are examined. Specifically, the study investigates the extent to which these foreign learners experience social exclusion. The sample consists of students with immigrant and refugee backgrounds attending adult education facilities in the host country, including Second Chance Schools and Second Chance Schools within detention centers. The study approaches social exclusion in terms of economic, social, individual, and educational components, in order to identify the lack of resources, goods, rights, and services. A total of 320 students participated in the survey, with 165 attending Second Chance Schools and 155 attending Second Chance Schools within detention centers. The results highlight the significant socio-economic obstacles that drive social exclusion and are caused by low skills, including difficulty finding a job, job insecurity, and exploitation at work, particularly among students who have not completed compulsory education.

**Keywords:** Social Exclusion; Students with a Migrant or Refugee Background; Second Chance Schools; Second Chance Detention Center Schools.

#### Riassunto

L'integrazione socioeconomica degli studenti di origine immigrata e rifugiata, appartenenti a un gruppo poco qualificato, è al centro dell'attenzione di questo studio. L'analisi si concentra sulla misura in cui questi studenti stranieri sperimentano l'esclusione sociale all'interno delle scuole della "seconda opportunità" e delle scuole della "seconda opportunità" presenti nelle strutture di detenzione in Grecia. Il campione è costituito da studenti di origine immigrata e rifugiata che frequentano istituti di istruzione per adulti nel paese ospitante, ovvero le scuole della seconda opportunità e le scuole dei centri di detenzione della seconda opportunità. L'esclusione sociale viene studiata in termini di componenti economiche, sociali, individuali e educative, al fine di individuare la mancanza di risorse, beni, diritti e servizi. In totale, 320 studenti hanno preso parte all'indagine, di cui 165 frequentano le scuole della seconda opportunità e 155 le scuole dei centri di detenzione della seconda opportunità. I risultati evidenziano gli ostacoli socioeconomici di grande rilevanza che contribuiscono all'esclusione sociale, dovuti a scarsa qualificazione professionale, come la difficoltà di trovare lavoro, l'instabilità lavorativa e lo sfruttamento subito dai dipendenti, in particolare dagli studenti che non hanno completato gli studi obbligatori.

**Parole chiave:** Esclusione sociale; Studenti con un background migrante o rifugiato; Scuole della seconda opportunità; Scuole dei centri di detenzione della seconda opportunità.

## 1. Introduction

Social exclusion (SE) refers to the marginalization of certain social groups due to their limited access to public goods and services available to the rest of the population (Bradshaw et al., 2004; Levitas et al., 2007). The European Union often sees education as a way to promote social cohesion and prevent social exclusion (European Economic and Social Committee, 2010). The European Social Charter, adopted and ratified by Greece in 1984 through Law 1426/84 (Government Gazette 32 A/21-3-84), guarantees the right to work, education, and social inclusion for all, with a particular focus on vulnerable social groups (Council of Europe, 1961). SE is a multidimensional phenomenon that arises in specific social groups facing social difficulties. These groups, which may include immigrants, refugees, and ethnic or cultural minorities, often experience poverty, inequality, and unemployment, leading to the breakdown of social ties and social exclusion. These groups are therefore often the focus of socio-economic policies in countries, which aim to eliminate exclusion or its effects through targeted measures. Mazel (1996) identifies four stages of SE: risk, threat, destabilization, and decline. The risk stage refers to social groups that have accumulated disadvantages but have not yet experienced SE. The threat stage refers to events or situations that could potentially lead to exclusion, such as unemployment or lack of qualifications. The destabilization stage involves an individual's response to a difficult situation, such as a health problem, layoff, or divorce. Prolonged destabilization can lead to SE. The literature also highlights the cumulative nature of disadvantages, which, if left unaddressed, can increase in intensity over time and result in social exclusion (Levitas et al., 2007). The decline stage is characterized by a break in social ties and an inability to rebuild them. Deduction is a transitional stage that, if consolidated, leads to a phase of genuine social exclusion, in which individuals who have previously experienced a break in social ties exhibit indifference, resignation, fear, and an inability to fulfill their social obligations.

## 2. Immigration and Social Exclusion in the Host Country

“Social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process that involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods, and services, as well as the inability to participate in normal social relationships and activities available to the majority of people in a society. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole” (Levitas et al., 2007, p. 9). The challenge in addressing this problem lies in the fact that individuals affected by social exclusion are simultaneously excluded from equal participation in the political events of society. It involves the lack or denial of rights, resources, goods, services, and the inability to participate in the usual relationships and activities available to the majority of people in society at the social, economic, cultural, or political levels (Bradshaw et al., 2004; Levitas et al., 2007). Similarly, social exclusion can be the inability to realize basic citizen rights such as the right to work, housing, health, education, and the development of social relationships. In particular, it refers to the situation where individuals or social groups face a combination of interconnected and mutually reinforcing problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, low skills, low income, lack of goods and services, poor housing conditions, high crime, and domestic violence (Ward, 2009).

Minority groups<sup>1</sup> include socially excluded groups who face discrimination based on their particular social, economic, and cultural characteristics (Shirayev & Levy, 2018). These groups are composed of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, etc. who, when they join an immigration flow en masse in an unorthodox manner, can have an impact on the society and economy of the destination state (Cholezas & Tsakloglou, 2009). According to Gotovos (2002), if immigration is presented negatively in the areas of the welfare state and security – whether correctly or incorrectly – this problem can indirectly affect the education system through students and teachers.

1 Minority or ethnic groups are «recognized groups of people with a common heritage and cultural tradition handed down from generation to generation». Minority groups, in a host country, observe their ethnic cultural traditions and cultural celebrations (Liou, Gallois & Volcic, 2018, p. 127).

## 2.1 Causes of Social Exclusion

Low income and poverty can cause social exclusion due to the inability to obtain adequate resources or services, the inability to enter the labor market, and the inability to form social relationships. In addition, the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) is increased, especially for individuals who suffer from regular and prolonged economic deprivation. Rainwater (1974) presents poverty as a key variable of social integration. In particular, an individual's ability to acquire the necessary goods and services directly affects their chances of social integration, as it helps them fulfill their social roles, whether as a parent, spouse, producer, citizen, or worker (Rainwater, 1974). Otherwise, the individual cannot maintain their social role and their relationships with friends, family, and work suffer, leading to exclusion identified by the redistributive model, in which the main cause of social exclusion is a lack of material goods and resources (Levitas et al., 2007, pp. 26-28). According to the redistribution model, these deficiencies prevent a smooth coexistence in society. This model mainly includes the economically vulnerable, and raising income levels is crucial in the fight against social exclusion (Levitas et al., 2007, pp. 26-28). Therefore, the poverty approach is measurable in terms of income and consumption of goods. According to the redistribution model, these shortcomings prevent individuals from living together smoothly in society and equate the phenomenon with poverty.

Work-based social exclusion refers to long-term and short-term unemployment, low-wage work, and unsafe or insecure work environments for workers. Job insecurity, as defined by Paugam (2000), occurs when the work is not interesting to the employee, when the work is poorly paid, and when it is not recognized in the company. Julià et al. (2017) identify precarious employment with low-quality jobs that have limited or no labor and social rights, which do not allow for a decent standard of living. Such jobs may correspond to occupational groups such as farmers, smallholders, and workers who have a higher likelihood of falling into poverty compared to other social groups (Giorgi & Verma, 2002).

It is possible that certain jobs limit an individual's access to resources, rights, goods, and services, as well as their ability to participate in normal relationships and activities, leading to social exclusion (Bradshaw et al., 2004; Levitas et al., 2007). According to human capital theory, Becker (1975) found that initial unemployment can have significant effects on the development of human capital, such as hindering an individual's access to education through work, as well as negatively impacting their future income. The OECD supports this theory (1975) by demonstrating the negative impact of youth unemployment on future income levels (European Commission, EACEA, Eurydice & Cedefop, 2014). Health is broken down into individual factors that are indirectly related to social exclusion. These include drug use, alcohol abuse, mental health problems and teenage pregnancy, which can lead to or result from social exclusion (Silver, 1994). In particular, the consumption of substances such as drugs and alcohol affects physical and mental health with a direct consequence of social exclusion. The majority of users are young, which negatively affects this age, which could be used as educationally productive time (Bradshaw et al., 2004). Alcohol consumption at a young age in particular increases the likelihood of drug addiction (Bradshaw et al., 2004). The above view is consistent with the social model of disability, according to which people with disabilities fall short of their full potential because society places the responsibility for change on society and not on disabled people. People with disabilities are no longer the object of intervention and are repositioned as subjects in their own lives (Watson, 2004). Hussain (2021) adds the existence of conditions that allow disabled people to access public wealth and participate in the labor market and education. In education, for example, the absence of study conditions, such as the possibility of access to educational institutions for students with mobility impairments, is a brake on their studies, since they are indirectly excluded from the learning process and thus lose the basis of the right to education.

Prisoners are a vulnerable social group with significant social exclusion as a result of incarceration (Silver, 1994). Officially ordered imprisonment marginalizes these population groups, since imprisonment by definition marginalizes the perpetrator group and excludes them from free society. This group is associated with other forms of social exclusion due to moral and cultural factors, most notably delinquents, criminals and deviant individuals (Levitas et al., 2007). Silver (1994) identifies social groups at risk as socially excluded young people who have dropped out of school, the illiterate, the unskilled, but also those who have not completed education or training. The impact of education on social exclusion is understood through the pedagogical perspective of the school, but also indirectly through socialization at all levels.

Individual peculiarities, special educational needs, poor performance, a bad relationship with the teachers and low self-confidence can lead to abstinence from studying. Accessing and remaining in education, be it compulsory, lifelong learning, formal or informal, gives individuals the opportunity to avoid social exclusion.

## 2.2 Social Exclusion: The Negative Drive of Early School Leaving

In this research, social exclusion (SE) is examined in the context of second chance educational structures, which operate both inside and outside of prisons. These structures are attended by undergraduate students who dropped out of education at a young age, adding an additional factor of exclusion: early school leaving (ESL). Education is not only a traditional variable of social stratification, but also a common denominator in factors of downward or upward mobility (Jason, 2021). In modern societies, education is provided free of charge to citizens, but the same is not true of income, capital, or employment. Fine (1986) famously stated that earning a diploma is more useful for those belonging to a privileged class, race, ethnicity, or gender, depending on the society in question. Therefore, education should not be considered as a separate institution from socio-economic life, but as an integral part of it, linked to the possibility of social exclusion from both society and the labor market.

As a factor of social inequality, ESL affects the potential social work pathways that individuals may follow. Vallejo and Dooly (2013) also link early school leaving to equity in education, future employment opportunities, and social inclusion. The connection between SE and ESL is evident in the literature. Mazel (1996) analyzed the gradations of SE and found that it is related to the characteristics of at-risk populations, such as illiteracy and school failure, which are consistent with the factors that may lead young people to drop out of school. Similar to the second tier of threat, more unfavorable situations, such as single parenting and unemployment, are observed in the third level of destabilization, which relates to the strength of social ties and how individuals respond to the second level of threat. Bynner (2001) states that the most valid predictor of SE probability is education. Social class, income level, precarious work and unemployment, health, and crime are all linked to educational attainment and the acquisition of related skills and qualifications, which can be a result or cause of dynamic variability in socio-economic status. This means that social policies should focus on improving educational attainment and reducing the phenomenon of early school leaving as a preventive or compensatory measure for the socio-economic stability of citizens, rather than measures that simply redistribute income. Identifying the causes or events in an individual's life that lead to dropping out of education can help in the implementation of targeted measures against SE.

The impact of early school leaving (ESL) on the social development of individuals is an indicator and a cause of social disadvantage associated with exclusion and feelings of loneliness. Ramsdal et al. (2013) attribute subsequent socialization difficulties to ESL, including an increased chance of becoming involved in conflicts or arguments, being bullied, feeling socially unsafe, and experiencing humiliation, exclusion, and loneliness. In addition to the social impacts, dropping out of school can also worsen an individual's financial situation. Oreopoulos (2007) found a negative relationship between educational level and expected future income and concluded that when people with low educational attainment do find work, it tends to be part-time, resulting in low wages.

In addition, there is a correlation observed between (SE) and educational traits. This is consistent with the causes of ESL. Poor student performance and unfavorable relationships with school teachers often result in low self-esteem, exclusion within the school, and frequent absenteeism from class. As a result, students who were frequently absent during their school years are characterized in adulthood by employment in low-level jobs, instability in their careers, and an increased likelihood of unemployment (Bradshaw et al., 2004).

## 3. Education as a means of integration and Second Chance educational structures in Greece

Tsironis (2003) argues that social exclusion is perpetuated by social inequalities, which are influenced by a society's political, economic, and social structure. To address this issue, Tsironis suggests implementing



action plans through social policy that remove barriers to access and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens. This idea highlights the importance of building a social state that prioritizes social integration and inclusion. Alexiou (2008) adds that programs aimed at reintegrating marginalized groups into society and the labor market aim to alleviate the consequences of social exclusion and promote social cohesion. These programs often focus on the specific characteristics of marginalized groups in order to resocialize and integrate them into society.

Social exclusion can be reduced through education by promoting the development of social capital. Social capital refers to the value of social relationships and networks, and can provide access to professional, financial, and other opportunities, as well as strengthening an individual's sense of identity (Lin, 2001). Portes (1998) also notes that social capital consists of social connections, relationships, and networks that are crucial in achieving goals, and is connected to cultural capital as individual social culture is formed through these connections and the culture of society. In conclusion, education that fosters social capital can facilitate inclusive social development and participation in community activities.

Education can either facilitate or hinder the reproduction of social classes, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), and affects the likelihood of social inclusion or social exclusion. Papastamatis (2010) emphasizes the importance of considering the social and political dimension as a necessary resource for the eventual social integration of students as responsible and conscious citizens. Burden et al. (2020) also find that dropouts are less likely to participate in civic engagement, such as voting or actively participating in political discussions. McMahan (2004) notes that education, in all its forms (formal, non-formal, and informal) and as a lifelong process, is related to the level of education.

Second Chance Schools (SCS) and Second Chance Schools for Detention Centers (SDEDC) were created to provide the best possible education and training to adults who have previously been excluded from the education system (Law 2525/1997, Gazette A' 188/23-9-97). The implementation of SCS is part of the formal education of adults, offering a certificate of secondary compulsory formal education at a later time, with the goal of promoting social and work integration through the acquisition of skills and qualifications. In particular, the financial inclusion of students through second chance structures can be achieved by strengthening connections with the labor market (such as finding employment through public or private agencies, improving vocational guidance counseling, implementing employment programs within SCS/SCSDC, etc.), which are identified by SCS and SCSDC teachers as key in combating potential social exclusion (Bitsakos, 2021). This means that students who fail to complete compulsory education have a second opportunity to do so at a later time. This perspective is also supported by SCS and SCSDC teachers who view the structure as a means of addressing social exclusion. Second chance education is based on a flexible adult education program that allows individuals who have dropped out of the education system before completing their compulsory education to continue their studies and earn a qualification equivalent to a high school diploma. Adult citizens who have not completed compulsory education can obtain a title equivalent to a high school diploma through this program, which focuses on acquiring basic qualifications and skills with the goal of social, economic, and professional integration (Law 2525/1997, Official Gazette A' 188/23-9-97).

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the available evidence:

**Hypothesis 1:** Early school leavers with an immigrant or refugee background will report higher levels of economic causes of social exclusion.

**Hypothesis 2:** Early school leavers with an immigrant or refugee background will report higher levels of social causes of social exclusion.

This study reflects on the presented evidence and indicates that:

- Early school leavers with an immigrant or refugee background will report higher levels of economic causes of social exclusion.
- Early school leavers with an immigrant or refugee background will report higher levels of social causes of social exclusion.

## 4. Research methodology

### 4.1. Sample

This study aims to examine the causes of social exclusion among early school leavers with immigrant or refugee backgrounds who have not completed compulsory education and have chosen to return to education through second chance structures. The research focuses on gathering and analyzing data from these individuals in order to understand whether they have experienced social exclusion and to explore their perceptions of the factors that may have contributed to this exclusion.

The reference population of the research was defined as the set of trainees with an immigrant and refugee background studying in SCS and SCSCDC in the Greek territory, in an age range that is identified with the regulation for accepting students in SCSC, i.e. from the age of 18 and over. The purpose of this research is to clarify whether these individuals have experienced social exclusion and to investigate the opinions of SCS and SCSCDC trainees with an immigrant and refugee background regarding (a) the reasons that contributed to social exclusion in their own case as and (b) the extent to which each cause contributed to social exclusion in their opinion. The research sample consists of 320 trainees. As part of the harmonization with the rules of ethics and integrity, permission to conduct a survey in all SCS was obtained from the Department of Study Programs and Organization of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education.

### 4.2. Research tool

A structured questionnaire was used as the research tool in this study, following a pilot study with a sample of 52 students in Second Chance Schools (SCS) with diverse characteristics. Participants were asked to provide feedback on each question, offering general observations and suggestions. The data from the pilot survey were used to make corrections and revisions to the questionnaire.

Exploratory factor analysis was used to select the final elements of the questionnaire, examining the intercorrelations between the variables that make up the questionnaire and extracting four basic groupings of individual factors based on the theoretical framework. Principal Axis Factoring and the Promax Axis Rotation method were applied, and each variable was considered to be part of a factor if the loading was in the range  $\pm 0.30$  to  $\pm 0.40$  relative to the factor with the highest interpretability, with minimum acceptable values set at  $\pm 0.40$  (Hair et al., 2014). The quality of the data was checked using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index (KMO = 0.932), which is considered excellent for performing factor analysis, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity index ( $\chi^2 = 3187.918$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), which rejected the null hypothesis, indicating that factor analysis could be performed. From the factor analysis, four factors emerged which are presented in Table 1) and are the Individual Causes of SE (9 propositions), the Economic-Professional Causes of SE (8 propositions), the Social-Family Causes (4 propositions) and the Educational Causes of SE (3 sentences).

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the internal consistency of the data collection tool. The internal consistency and homogeneity of the groups of questions were examined, and the overall correlations between them when combined to form a scale were investigated. This process allowed for the creation of variable-total indicators from the average of the individual variables.

### 4.3. Procedure for administering questionnaires

The research was conducted through visits to SCS and SCSCDC premises by the researcher, or by mailing questionnaires to teachers who were willing to collaborate, or by completing an electronic questionnaire. This was preceded by communication with the directors of SCS and SCSCDC.

#### 4.4. Data processing

The IBM® SPSS® software was used to conduct an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in order to identify the factorial structure of the questionnaire on the causes of social exclusion among students with immigrant or refugee backgrounds in SCS and SCSDC. EFA is a technique that examines the intercorrelations between the variables that make up the questionnaire and extracts basic groupings of individual factors (Hair et al., 2014). Descriptive analysis was then conducted, followed by inductive statistics to investigate statistically significant differences in the students' responses. Specifically, the data were analyzed using t-tests and one-way ANOVA with post hoc tests (Tukey's Honest Significant Difference). The most important findings from the analysis, where statistically significant differences were found, will be discussed below.

### 5. Results

#### 5.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Research

The EFA showed that the theoretical model of SE Causes satisfactorily explains the data (Hair et al., 2014). The overall SE Causes model shows high reliability with Cronbach's index Alpha =0.982. The individual categories of Educational Reasons (=0.755), Social Causes (=0.871), Economic Causes (=0.915) and Individual Causes (=0.946) of SE show correspondingly high reliability. The data of the above categories can be combined into individual total variables, which is the average of the individual factors (Table 2).

Factors	Charges
A. Economic-Professional Causes of Social Exclusion	
Limiting job opportunities to low-level positions	.825
Bad ones relationships work	.823
Low fees	.822
Discrimination in work	.808
Dismissal	.784
Exploitation in work	.782
Insecurity for loss work	.734
Unemployment	.658
B. Individual Causes of Social Exclusion	
Social marginalization	.783
Delinquent behavior	.779
Problematic interpersonal relationships	.776
Weakness coverage medical and pharmaceutical care	.768
Use of substances	.727
Lack of housing	.719
Poverty	.682
Dependence from programs welfare	.637
Emotional disorders	.602
C. Social-Family Causes of Social Exclusion	
Indifference for culture & culture	.860
Indifference for the environment	.850
Indifference to political life	.809
Indifference for fellow human beings	.784
D. Educational Causes of Social Exclusion	
Lack of basic qualifications & skills	.842
Unequal opportunities to access lifelong education programs	.782
Low self-esteem due to low level of education	.766
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.	

**Table 1:** Factor loadings for each of the 24 propositions of the Causes of Social Exclusion Scale using the Promax axis rotation method (n = 320).

## 5.2 Descriptive statistics

A total of 229 men (72.2%) and 88 women (27.8%) participated in the survey, of which 166 (51.6%) study in SCS and 155 (48.4%) study in SCSDC. 30% of the sample is under 30 years old, 44.2% is 31-40 years old, 16.8% is 41-50 years old and 9% is over 50 years old. Regarding the level of education, 3.3% of the sample did not enroll in primary school, 12.2% completed a few grades of primary school, 44.1% completed primary school, and 40.5% completed the first or second year of secondary education (Table 2).

Demographic characteristics/ response rate (%)		f	% of total responses
Gender (99.1)	Men	229	72.2
	Women	88	27.8
Age (94.7)	18-30	91	30.0
	31-40	134	44.2
	41-50	51	16.8
	51-60	25	8.3
	>61	2	0.7
Education level (95.0)	Did not enroll in primary school	10	3.3
	Completed a few grades of Primary	37	12.2
	Completed primary school	134	44.1
	Completed the 1st year of secondary education	51	16.8
	Completed the 2nd year of secondary education	72	23.7
Marital status (97.8)	Single	130	41.5
	Married	153	48.9
	Widowed	8	2.6
	Divorced	22	7.0
Study structure (100)	SCS	166	51.6
	SCSDC	155	48.4

Table 2: Participant demographic information

According to the results of the data analysis, 50.1% of the participants indicated that economic factors contribute significantly to social exclusion, with an average rating of 2.51 on a scale of «Very Much» to «Too Much.» Similarly, 34.1% of the participants noted that individual factors contribute significantly to social exclusion, with an average rating of 2.16, while 34.2% cited educational factors, with an average rating of 2.15. Additionally, 30.1% of the participants stated that social factors contribute significantly to social exclusion, with an average rating of 2.09 (as shown in Table 3). The following section provides more detailed information on the variables within each category, with a focus on those variables with the highest average rating.

	N	Mean	SD
Economic-Professional	204	2.51	.9126
Individual	197	2.16	.8804
Educational	159	2.15	.9849
Social-Family	128	2.09	.9742
Valid N (listwise)	93		

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of the four structural/composite variables regarding the views of learners with a migrant or refugee background on the causes of social exclusion

With regard to the economic causes of social exclusion, 60.5% of participants cited unemployment as the primary cause, with a mean score of 2.81, while 57.9% identified job insecurity as a significant contributor, with a mean score of 2.71. Other notable factors included exploitation in the workplace (mean score of 2.63) and low wages (mean score of 2.49).



	Unimportant		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Mean	SD
	N	N%	N	n%	N	n%	N	n%		
Unemployment	128	49.6	23	17.8	28	21.7	78	60.5	2.81	1.14
Work insecurity	153	60.7	22	20.6	23	21.5	62	57.9	2.71	1.14
Exploitation at work	127	50.2	27	20.1	29	21.6	78	58.2	2.63	1.07
Low fees	122	48.0	34	22.8	44	29.5	71	47.7	2.49	1.09
Limitation of work opportunities	117	46.8	36	26.1	41	29.7	61	44.2	2.43	1.13
Dismissal	148	58.7	30	27.0	30	27.0	51	45.9	2.41	1.12
Bad working relationships	134	53.2	32	25.2	38	29.9	57	44.9	2.39	1.06
Discrimination at work	137	55.0	37	28.7	36	27.9	56	43.4	2.34	1.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>1066</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>.91</b>

Table 4: Economic-Professional Causes of Social Exclusion

With regard to the individual causes of social exclusion, 43.5% identified living in poverty as a significant factor, with a mean score of 2.31, while 39.4% cited dependence on welfare programs, with a mean score of 2.26. Other notable individual causes included substance abuse (mean score of 2.24) and delinquent behavior (mean score of 2.21).

	Unimportant		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Mean	SD
	N	N%	N	n%	N	n%	N	n%		
Poverty	132	52.4	47	34.1	31	22.5	60	43.5	2.32	1.17
Dependence on welfare programs	190	76.3	20	32.8	17	27.9	24	39.4	2.26	1.12
Substance abuse	201	79.1	21	33.9	17	27.4	24	38.8	2.24	1.13
Delinquency	161	63.4	33	31.4	34	32.4	38	36.2	2.21	1.06
Lack of housing	159	63.3	33	31.4	40	38.1	32	30.4	2.14	1.03
Troubled interpersonal relationships	178	70.6	24	31.2	29	37.7	24	31.2	2.13	1.01
Inability to cover medical care	183	73.2	34	42.0	17	21.0	30	37.1	2.12	1.14
Emotional disorders	172	69.9	35	38.0	33	35.9	24	26.1	1.98	.97
Social marginalization	170	66.9	35	36.8	38	40.0	22	23.1	1.95	.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>1546</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>2.16</b>	<b>.88</b>

Table 5: Individual Causes of Social Exclusion

In terms of educational causes of social exclusion, 46.8% of participants with an immigrant or refugee background identified unequal access to lifelong learning programs as a major contributor, with a mean score of 2.33. Additionally, 29.3% of participants cited low self-esteem due to a low level of education as a significant factor, with a mean score of 2.07, while 24.6% identified a lack of basic qualifications and skills as a cause of social exclusion, with a mean score of 2.02.

	Unimportant		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Mean	SD
	N	N%	N	n%	N	n%	N	n%		
Unequal opportunities to access DBM programs	138	54.8	42	33.9	24	19.4	58	46.8	2.33	1.15
Low self-esteem due to level of education	144	57.6	37	33.9	40	36.7	32	29.3	2.07	.997
Lack of qualifications & skills	134	54.5	39	36.8	41	38.7	26	24.6	2.02	1.02
<b>Total</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>.99</b>

Table 6: Educational Causes of Social Exclusion

When considering the social causes of social exclusion and combining the responses of «Very» and «Too Much,» it was observed that 38.6% believe that indifference to political life is a cause of social exclusion, with a mean of 2.33. Additionally, 29.9% consider indifference to the environment to be a cause of social exclusion, with a mean of 2.12. Finally, 22.8% believe that indifference to culture is a cause of social exclusion, with a mean of 3.16.

	Unimportant		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Mean	SD
	N	N%	N	n%	N	n%	N	n%		
Indifference to political life	167	66.8	33	34.4	25	26.0	38	39.6	2.33	1.22
Indifference to environment	177	70.5	24	31.2	30	39.0	23	29.9	2.12	1.0
Indifference to culture	180	72.0	28	35.4	33	41.8	18	22.8	1.97	.95
Indifference to fellow human beings	186	74.4	34	50.7	16	23.9	17	25.3	1.87	1.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>.97</b>

Table 7: Social-Family Causes of Social Exclusion

### 5.3 Statistical analysis

In terms of demographic characteristics, statistical analysis was conducted on the populations of learners with an immigrant or refugee background. Significant differences were found in terms of gender, attendance at SCS or SCSDC, and the level of compulsory education. Results showed that, on average, economic-occupational causes of social exclusion were statistically significantly higher for women ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = .11$ ) than for men ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = .06$ ),  $t(263) = 3.89$ ,  $p = .005$ . Additionally, economic-occupational causes of social exclusion were statistically significantly higher for SCS trainees ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SE = .083$ ) compared to SCSDC trainees ( $M = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ),  $t(266) = 2.74$ ,  $p = .006$ . An ANOVA test on the education level of the trainees revealed statistically significant differences in the educational causes of social exclusion ( $F = 2.77$ ,  $p = .028$ ). Post hoc comparisons showed that students who completed primary school had a statistically higher mean ( $M = 2.96$ ) compared to students who completed some classes of primary school ( $M = 3.56$ ).

## 5. Discussion

This study examined the causes of social exclusion in a population group of learners with an immigrant or refugee background studying at second chance institutions in Greece. The results indicate that economic-professional causes are the main focus of research participants, and that the accumulation of disadvantages in various aspects of socio-economic life increases the likelihood of social exclusion. In particular, the results of the survey showed that unemployment, job insecurity, exploitation at work, and low wages are the causes with the highest frequency among the population of SCS and SCSDC trainees with an immigrant or refugee background. Economic-occupational causes of social exclusion were also found to be statistically significant in terms of gender and education level. The findings highlight the importance of economic-occupational causes of social exclusion for the immigrant population, who have not completed compulsory education and are studying at SCS and SCSDC. Difficulty finding a job and exploitation at work were identified as the main causes of social exclusion. This is consistent with the conclusions of Oreopoulos (2007), which found that exclusion from the labor market is a major cause of social exclusion. It also supports the findings of Gordon et al. (2000), who concluded that low income and poverty are causes of social exclusion due to the inability to access adequate resources or services and the inability to enter the labor market. In addition, the risk of social exclusion increases, especially for individuals who experience economic deprivation on a regular and prolonged basis. The results also confirm the findings of Silver (1994), which show that long-term and short-term unemployment, working in un-

certain and insecure environments, and low wages are major causes of occupational accidents. In conclusion, the majority of the population does not have the opportunity to accumulate goods and resources and is pushed into a state of social exclusion by societal trends.

The research results showed that deprivation, in the form of limited work opportunities and reduced income/remuneration, is directly linked to economic causes of social exclusion (SE). However, it was observed that the causes of SE are subjective, with SE also being attributed to individual causes such as poverty, dependence on welfare programs, and substance abuse. Educational causes of SE, such as unequal opportunities to access DBM programs, low self-esteem due to low levels of education, and a lack of basic qualifications and skills, received less emphasis. This supports the conclusion of Rainwater (1974) that successful social integration is linked to an individual's ability to acquire the necessary goods and services to fulfill their social role, whether as a parent, spouse, producer, citizen, or worker. Otherwise, the person may not be able to maintain their social role, leading to a breakdown in relationships with friends, family, and colleagues and ultimately to marginalization (Levitas et al., 2007, pp. 26-28).

It is worth noting that there may be an indirect overlap of economic-vocational and educational causes of SE in the research population, as the low level of education of SCS and SCSDC students highlights the «co-morbidity» of economic causes of SE and student leakage, which together lead to SE. This interpretation is consistent with the literature, which suggests that employment issues may be due to deficiencies in skills, qualifications, and education, potentially leading to student leakage in a highly skilled labor market.

Therefore, it is important to consider social exclusion as an independent phenomenon. It is interesting to explore the relative contribution of social exclusion and income poverty, material and health deprivation, depressive symptoms, and life satisfaction among people with a migrant or refugee background. The high percentage of positive responses indicates that SCS and SCSDC trainees with an immigrant or refugee background have experienced social exclusion. On the one hand, the recent economic crisis and high levels of unemployment in Greece (Greek National Productivity Board, 2021) may contribute to the emphasis on economic and, to a lesser extent, individual and educational causes of social exclusion among immigrants. On the other hand, the increasing phenomena of nationalism (Karagiannopoulou et al., 2021) in the past five years may also play a role. The social exclusion faced by immigrant trainees is a collection of social, economic, and political pathologies that were exacerbated during the recent Greek debt crisis of 2009.

The presence of immigrant and refugee trainees in second chance institutions indicates an effort to integrate into Greek society. SCS and SCSDC can serve as a catalyst for this integration, leading to not only the direct positive result of completing compulsory schooling, but also indirect positive socio-economic consequences. A new approach is needed to address social exclusion by redefining SCS and SCSDC as institutions that serve as a launching pad for creating an integrated reception mechanism.

## Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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