

Youth and Neets in Greece, within the Crisis Era.
Social Vulnerability, Unemployment, Public Trust and issues of Political Behavior

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1. Preliminary remarks

7 years after the outbreak of the Crisis in Europe and 6 since the first “Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies”, was agreed (on 2 May 2010) by the Greek Government on the one hand and the EC, the ECB and the IMF on the other, followed by strict conditions and extended austerity measures (see Featherstone 2013: 202), the wake of the Recession are more than evident in the Greek Economy and Society. In fact, despite the rescue efforts, the austerity measures and the domestic reforms, the crisis is ongoing and its social impact is undoubtedly tremendous, while the recession in Greece deepens.

Greece is the country most heavily affected by the economic crisis, more than any other European one. According to Matsagganis, by the end of 2013 the size of the economy was already “*contracted by 23.5 per cent in real terms relative to 2007. This is far greater than the equivalent contraction in other southern European economies – Spain: –5.5 per cent; Portugal: –7.4 per cent; Italy: –7.8 per cent or Ireland –5.0 per cent – over the same period. So deep and drawn out a recession has simply no precedent in the peacetime economic history of most advanced economies*” (Matsagganis 2013: 3).

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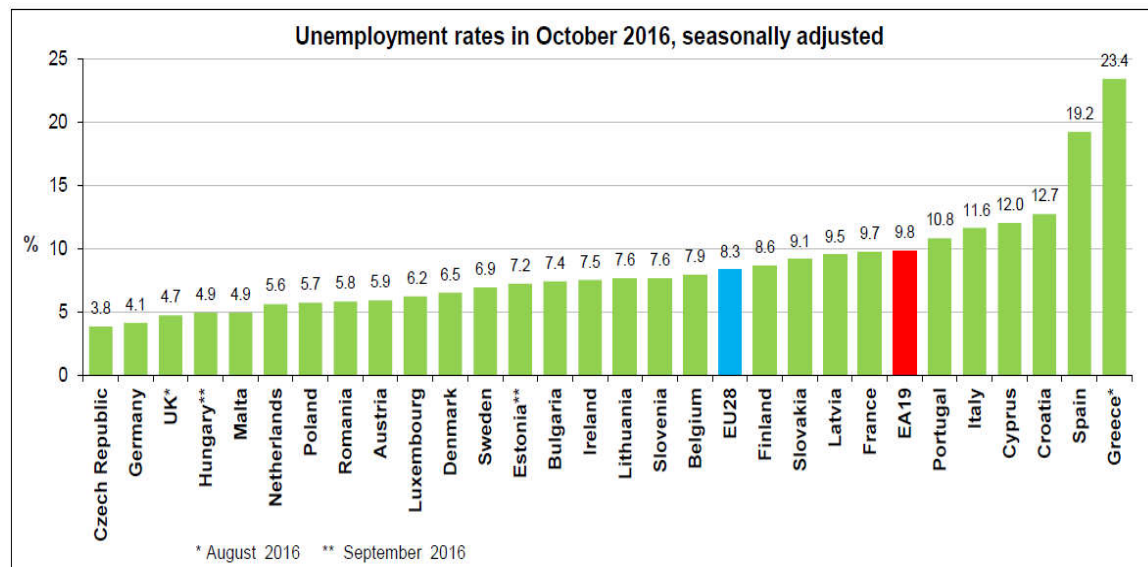
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Furthermore, across the OECD countries, Greece is the country with the highest vertical decrease in real wages, i.e. since the 1st quarter of 2009 the decline is about 5% per year. The crisis has affected both private and public sector in Greece. In the private sector wage cuts were -3.4% per year and in the public sector wage cuts reached -1.9% per year (OECD 2014a: 1).

The impact of the ongoing crisis in employment was huge and persistent. Unemployment has risen from 7.8% in 2008 (see Eurostat 2015a) to 26.1% in 2014, namely 1.245.854 people were unemployed at the end of the 4th quarter of 2014 (see Hellenic Statistical Authority 2015a: 1-2). Since the onset of the crisis, the Greek unemployment remains at its highest level. While the total unemployment in the EU28 dropped in 8,3% in October 2016 (namely 0,8 percentage points lower than the one in October 2015 and the lowest rate recorded since 2009 in the EU28- see Eurostat 2016g), the total unemployment in Greece was 23,1% (September 2016), namely almost the triple comparing to the EU one (Eurostat 2016h: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=teilm020&plugin=1>). In addition, at the 2nd quarter of 2016, the long-term unemployment rate in Greece reached 16,7% (Eurostat 2016c: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_ltu_q&lang=en), namely higher, to the one in EU28, by 317,5%.

Diagram 1: Unemployment rates in the European Union (EU28 & EU19)



Source: Eurostat, 2016g: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7752348/3-01122016-AP-EN.pdf/5f785386-b824-4b65-a09d-99d8bed9958a>.

In 2011, Matsaganis claimed that “*the rise in unemployment is likely to be transformed into higher poverty, while in the past the correlation between the two has been rather weak*” (Matsaganis, 2011: 510). Indeed, that’s the case: 21,4% of the Greek population lives under the poverty limit, while 35,7% is at risk of poverty and social exclusion, according to the Hellenic Statistic Authority (see HSA 2016). Moreover, due to the lack of an effective Welfare State in Greece (which would provide a safety net and a decent level of living conditions for those who are at risk-of-poverty) as well as the increase of

both total unemployment and long-term unemployment, there is a significant rise in the number of Greek jobless households (see Matsaganis 2013 and Papadakis et al. 2016a). Specifically, when the economic crisis hit Greece (2009), the proportion of the population living in jobless households was: 4.9% for 0-17 years and 8.4% for 18-60 years. However in 2013, the jobless population increased in 13.3% for 0-17 years and 19.6% for 18-60 years respectively (Hellenic Statistical Authority 2015b: 38-39), while in 2015 1.111.300 Greeks live in jobless households (see analytically Hellenic Statistical Authority 2016).

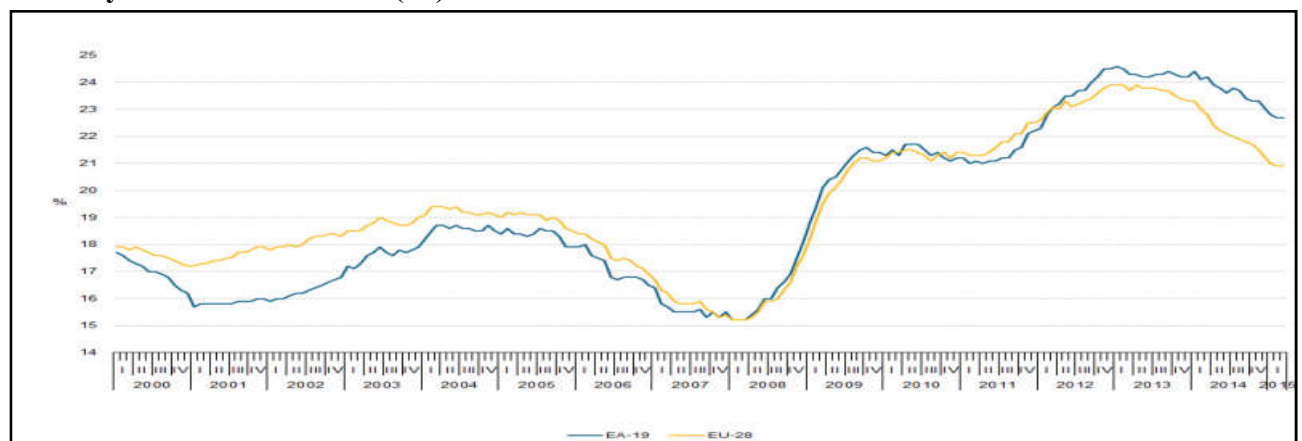
All the key domains and the age- groups of the Greek society are affected by the ongoing Recession, since among others “the fiscal crisis is depriving the welfare state of precious resources” (Matsaganis 2011). Probably the most affected age- group is the youth.

2. Youth unemployment rising

2.1. Youth unemployment in the EU

Historically, the rate of youth unemployment is higher, double or more than double, than the total unemployment rate. The onset of the economic downturn resulted in a dramatic increase in the rates of youth unemployment, culminating in the years 2009-2013 (as shown in the diagram below), reflecting the difficulties and obstacles that young people face in finding jobs and getting integrated in the labour market. Diagram 2 clearly illustrates the changes in youth unemployment rates at the European Union from 2000 to 2015, and, in particular, the sharp increase of the rate from the onset of the financial crisis (2008) until 2013 (see Eurostat 2015a).

Diagram 2: Youth unemployment rates, EU-28 and EA-18, seasonally adjusted. January 2000 - March 2015 (%)



Source: Eurostat (une_rt_m) as cited in Eurostat 2015b: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

In September 2016, the youth unemployment rate in the EU28 was 18,2% (Men: 19%, Women: 17,3%), namely scaled back by 1,8% since September 2015 (20%) (see Eurostat 2016a). 4.125.000 young people (aged 15-24) were unemployed in the EU

(425.000 less than the ones in September 2015), while unemployed young people in the EA-19 were 2.875.000 (243.000 less, compared to September 2015).

The decrease of youth unemployment, especially comparing to its historical high in April 2013 (23.8%- see Eurostat 2014a), even relieving, couldn't hold back the fact that the youth unemployment rate is still far higher than the one before the onset of the crisis², as well as the increasing asymmetries among the M-S.

Best performing country is Germany (8,6%), while Greece (46,5% - August 2016), Spain (42,6%) and Italy (37,1%) are indeed low performers (Eurostat 2016b: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=teilm021&plugin=1>).

2.2. Youth unemployment in Greece. A generation lost?

Undoubtedly Greece is one of the EU countries where the impact of the economic crisis was rapid and visible from the very first months it hit the country. Its "visibility" is tremendous when it comes to youth unemployment. Specifically, youth unemployment in Greece dropped to 46,5% in August 2016 (Men: 42,3% & Women: 51,4%) relative to 49,1% in September 2015 (reduced by 2,6%) and 51,6% in April 2015 (see Eurostat 2016a and Eurostat 2016b). However, Greek youth unemployment still remains jointly with Spain (45% in April 2016) at the top of the ranking among M-S. Indeed, an ominous "privilege".

The worth-mentioning decrease on the youth unemployment, relative to its historic high on February 2013 (60,5%- see Eurostat 2015c), shouldn't reverse the fact that:

- a) *Greece has a twice-as-high youth unemployment percentage compared to the EU one (20,9%)*
- b) *youth unemployment is still more than double relative to the one before the onset of the crisis³ and*
- c) *even nowadays (over 7 years since the onset of the crisis), 1 out of 2 young people in Greece are unemployed.*

Concerning youth unemployment and gender in Greece, in September 2016 the percentage of young women's unemployment was higher (51,4%) than men's (41,3%), highlighting the gender-dimension/ gap in youth unemployment (see Eurostat 2016b). In terms of the regional dimension in youth unemployment, we should point out that although the increase in all Greek regions is undeniable within the period 2008-2015, a remarkable increase in youth unemployment rates is observed in Thessalia (2010: 34,4%, 2015: 60,3%), Peloponnisos (2010: 29%, 2015: 50,5%), Notio Aigaio (2008: 14,9%, 2015: 33,8%), Attiki (2008: 19,1%, 2015: 47,2%) and Kriti (2008: 14%, 2015: 40,4%- see Eurostat 2016d).

² In 2008, the rate of youth unemployment in EU was 15,6% (Eurostat 2016f: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tesem140&plugin=1>).

³ In Greece, the youth unemployment was 21,9% in 2008 (Eurostat 2016f: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tesem140&plugin=1>).

Table 1: Youth unemployment rates (15-24 years) in Greece (2008-2015) (NUTS 2 Regions,%)

GEO/TIME	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Greece	49,8	52,4	58,3	55,3	44,7	33,0	25,7	21,9
Voreia Ellada	52,6	54,1	62,5	60,0	51,3	36,0		
Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki	53,8	50,7	59,4	53,0	51,8	40,1		
Kentriki Makedonia	51,9	53,4	62,0	60,7	51,4	34,1		
Dytiki Makedonia	49,4	49,6	70,4	72,3	52,7	35,3		
Ipeiros	58,6	69,8	67,4	61,1	48,6	37,1		
Voreia Ellada (NUTS 2010)							28,6	23,4
Anatoliki Makedonia, Thraki (NUTS 2010)							30,4	21,4
Kentriki Makedonia (NUTS 2010)							28,0	22,4
Dytiki Makedonia (NUTS 2010)							34,8	36,6
Thessalia (NUTS 2010)							26,6	23,7
Kentriki Ellada	55,6	57,3	58,4	55,1	42,9	34,3		
Thessalia	60,3	59,8	57,5	53,7	46,7	34,4		
Ionia Nisia	54,6	44,8	51,5	23,9	26,2	35,2		
Dytiki Ellada	54,6	61,1	59,0	56,8	45,1	35,3		
Sterea Ellada	55,4	59,1	59,5	58,7	42,5	36,9		
Peloponnisos	50,5	52,0	60,3	62,3	39,0	29,0		
Kentriki Ellada (NUTS 2010)							29,8	28,5
Ipeiros (NUTS 2010)							34,7	31,2
Ionia Nisia (NUTS 2010)							26,5	27,1
Dytiki Ellada (NUTS 2010)							28,8	31,3
Sterea Ellada (NUTS 2010)							32,9	27,7
Peloponnisos (NUTS 2010)							25,8	23,1
Attiki	47,2	52,5	60,6	56,0	43,2	30,9	21,9	19,1
Attiki	47,2	52,5	60,6	56,0	43,2	30,9	21,9	19,1
Nisia Aigaioi, Kriti	38,4	38,9	42,9	43,6	39,3	29,6	22,5	15,0
Voreio Aigaio	42,1	40,2	46,1	45,8	43,0	29,7	24,6	
Notio Aigaio	33,8	25,8	37,2	41,0	36,8	28,4	24,5	14,9
Kriti	40,4	46,3	45,4	44,1	39,8	30,4	20,9	14,0

Source: Eurostat 2016d: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

Furthermore, the employment rate of recent Higher Education Graduates is stagnated and remains extremely low. It slightly improved, from 47,4 % in 2014 to 49,9 % in 2015, but was still very far away from the EU-28 average, namely 80,5 % in 2014 and 81,9 % in 2015 (see European Commission 2016b: 6). Additionally, Greece has an alarmingly low employment rate for recent VET upper-secondary graduates. In 2015 it was just 37,5 %, namely half the EU average of 73,0 % (see European Commission 2016b: 1 & 7).

Youth unemployment is explicitly related to poverty- risk and social exclusion. Even though, one could hardly spot a social group which is not affected, within a context of persistent raise of unemployment (which now concerns more than one quarter of the population), povertization (1/3 of the population, approximately) and intensity of social vulnerability, the impact of the crisis on the new generation is particularly worrying and multi-parametric.

3. The case of NEETs

3.1. Definitional Issues and the state of play in the EU

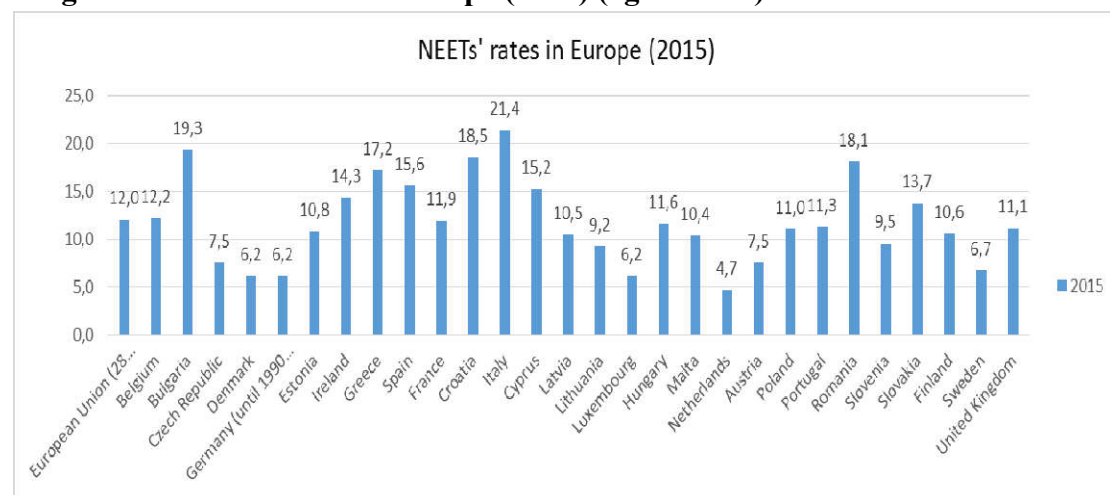
The NEET indicator corresponds to the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex that is not employed and not involved in education or training. In the case of Eurostat “covers the 15-24 years age group” (European Commission 2011 as cited in Eurofound 2012: 22). The term NEET in most European countries refers to young people aged 15-24 (see European Commission 2013: 2), while in the OECD case refers to young people aged 15-29 (see OECD 2013: 326). It is worth-mentioning that “while the youth unemployment rate refers just to the economically active members of the population who were not able to find a job, the NEET rate can be understood as the

share of the total population of young people who are currently not engaged in employment, education or training” (Eurofound 2012: 23 & 40)

NEETs may be classified (according to the Eurofound) in five main sub-groups, namely the following: “the conventionally unemployed, the largest subgroup,the unavailable,the disengaged....the opportunity-seekers....the voluntary NEETs” (Eurofound 2012: 24). It seems that specific groups have an increased probability of becoming NEETs, including those “with low levels of education, an immigration background, some level of disability or problems of mental health as well as young people with a problematic family background” (Eurofound 2012: 55-56). There is obviously a heterogeneity within the NEETs category/ group (Papadakis et al. 2015: 47).

The rate of young people not in education, employment or training (15-24) in EU28 reached 13% in 2013, while it was just 10,9% in 2008 {see Eurostat, EU-LFS data [edat_lfse_20] as cited in European Commission 2015: 17}. The share of the NEETs population varies among EU member states. In Greece, Italy and Bulgaria the NEET rate exceeded 20% in 2013 (see Eurostat 2015d: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>). The NEET percentage in the EU gradually decreased since 2013, yet remains higher (12% in 2015) than the one before the onset of the economic crisis (see European Commission 2015: 17). In the vast majority of the EU countries, the raise in NEETs rates was a consequence of the increase of youth unemployment, rather than inactivity. Specifically, in Greece, Spain and Croatia around 70% of NEETs were unemployed but active in 2014, while in Bulgaria, Romania and Italy the majority of NEETs were inactive (see European Commission 2015: 48).

Diagram 3: NEETs rates in Europe (2015) (aged 15-24)

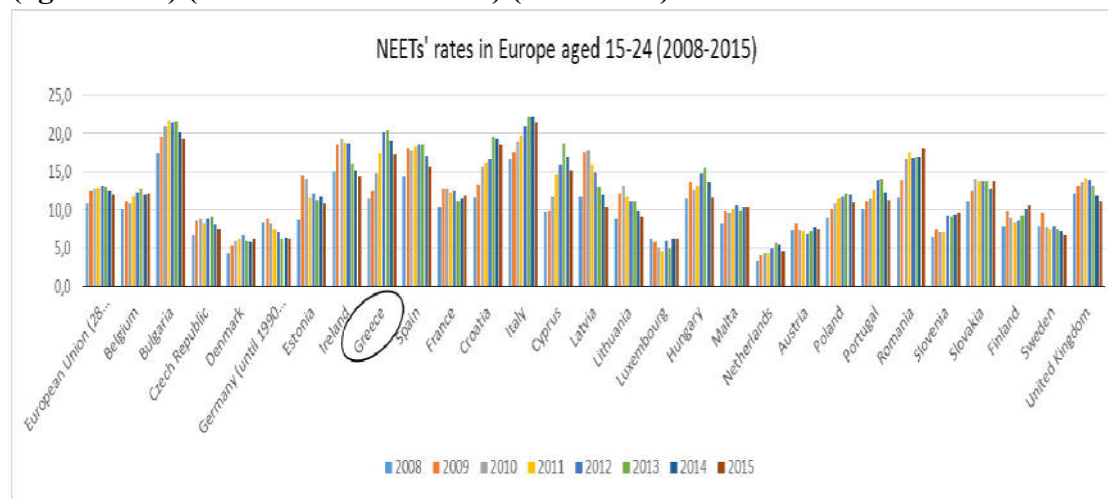


Source: Eurostat 2016e: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupDownloads.do>.

In countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Croatia and Romania the NEETs rate increased considerably since the beginning of the crisis until 2015. In 2015, the NEETs percentages in these countries were 19.3%, 17.2%, 15.2%, 15.6%, 21.4%, 18.5% and 18.1% respectively (see Eurostat 2016e and Diagram 3).

It is worth mentioning that in the abovementioned EU Member States, especially in the southern ones, the youth unemployment was sharply raised during 2008-2015, which is directly related to the NEETs population growth.

Diagram 4: NEETs rates in Europe (by sex, age and educational attainment level (aged 15-24) (all ISCED 2011 levels) (2008-2015)

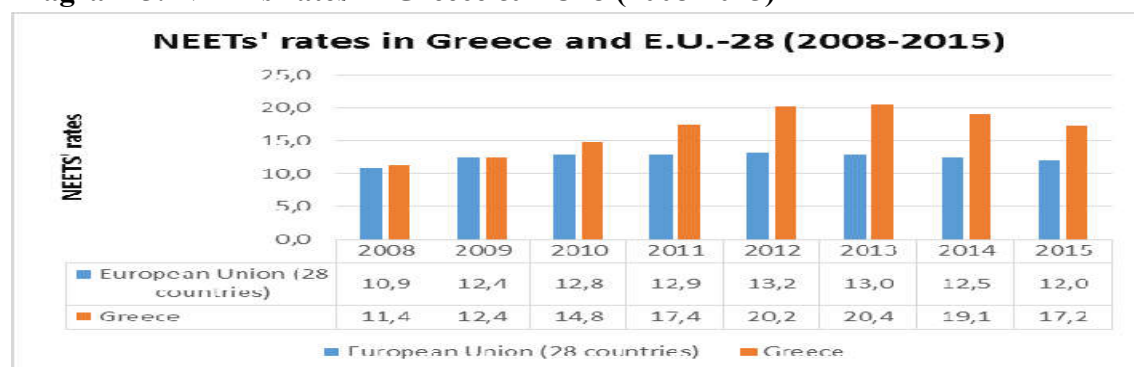


Source: Eurostat 2016e: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupDownloads.do>.

3.2. NEETs in Greece

In 2015, the percentage of NEETs in Greece was 17,2%, namely it dropped by 1,9 percentage points relative to the one in 2014 (19,1%). At this point, we should bear in mind that although the NEETs rate in Greece was almost comparable to the EU one in 2008 and 2009, now it is by 42% (5,2 percentage points) higher. More specifically, in 2010 the NEETs rate raised to 14,8% (EU: 12,8%), in 2011 it reached 17,4% (EU: 12,9%), in 2012 was 20,2% (EU: 13,2%), while in 2013 reached 20,4% (EU: 13%), namely 9 percentage points above the rate of 2008 (see Eurostat 2016e). In other words, it nearly doubled in 5 years.

Diagram 5: NEETs rates in Greece & EU28 (2008-2015)



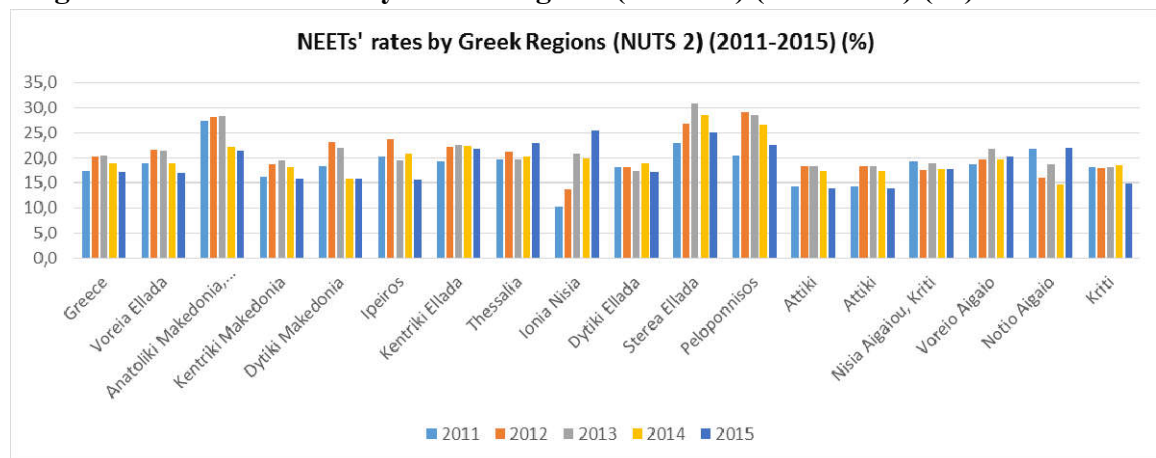
Source: Eurostat 2016e: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupDownloads.do>.

During the period 2008 to 2012, the percentage of women NEETs in Greece was higher than men's. In 2012 the male NEETs rate was 19%, 2,9% higher than the one in 2011 (16,1%) and 2,3 percentage points below the female corresponding rate (21,3%). In

2013, the female NEETs rate slightly decreased to 20%, while men's percentage was increased (20,9%). In 2014, both NEETs rates dropped (18,7% for men and 19,6% for women), while in 2015 the NEETs rate for both men and women further dropped and got equated (17,1% and 17,2% respectively) (see Eurostat 2016e).

Regarding the regional dimension, Greece has witnessed a significant increase from 2011 to 2015, mainly in the regions of Thessalia, Ionia Nisia, Sterea Ellada and Peloponnisos. Further, we should mention that despite the slight decrease at the country level, in island regions a mirror-image trend is traced. In 2015 the NEETs rate in Ionia Nisia reached 25,5% from 19,9% in 2014, while the NEETs rate in Notio Aigaio increased to 22% in 2015 from 14,8% in 2014 (see Eurostat 2016i and Diagram 6).

Diagram 6: NEETs' rates by Greek Regions (NUTS 2) (2011-2015) (%)



Source: Eurostat 2016i: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>.

It's more than obvious that there is a direct and persistent correlation between the broader impact of the crisis and the NEET rate, that reflects the ongoing disengagement of the youth from the labour market and the key social institutions.

3.3. Mapping Social Vulnerability in Youth.

In Greece, the national-scale research project on NEETs, namely the “Absents’ Barometer: The NEETs” (2011- 2013) set the base for a) a NEETs composite indicator, b) the development of an integrated set of policy proposals concerning the public policy complex, c) the formation of the NEETs GIS, and d) the creation of a road map for a multilevel intervention to prevent the social exclusion of NEETs. At the same time, a) NEETs’ demographic and social characteristics were mapped, b) the main factors contributing to the shifting of a young person at the NEET category (gender, age, urbanity, educational level, family income, nationality) were examined, c) their views and attitudes in respect to education and training, employment and social welfare were analyzed, while d) taxonomic categories to address the profile of the NEET in Greece (in relation to the profiles of the NEETs in Europe) were developed.

Further a new, EEA- funded (EEA Grants/ GR07- 3757), national- scale project titled “*Research and Comprehensive Intervention for the social inclusion of a major socially*

vulnerable group: Psychological profile / psychopathology, skills' profile, needs assessment and programmes' development for training-reskilling and psychological support towards the re-inclusion of "young people not in education, employment of training/ NEETs2"”, was recently completed (14/12/2016). The Project “NEETs2” includes, among others, a large-scale quantitative research aiming at a) mapping the specific psychological profiles and/or possible high risk for psychopathology among Greek NEETs and b) analyzing the different facets of the impact of the ongoing recession to NEETs’ life course, civic values, public trust and political behavior. As already mentioned, *NEETs consist a heterogeneous and vulnerable social group, that may be associated with several different parameters, such as poor educational attainment, poverty, socio- economic inequalities etc* (see Papadakis et al 2015: 44-75 and Kotroyannos et al 2015: 272- 276).

The main findings of the first project on NEETs in Greece, titled “Absents’ Barometer” (2011-2013), could be synopsized as following (see analytically Papadakis 2013: 15- 75, Drakaki et al. 2014: 240- 254, Papadakis et al 2015: 44- 75): Neets, in Greece show a remarkable heterogeneity. However the analysis of their socio- demographic characteristics enabled the sketching out of the main parameters and determinants of this socially vulnerable group. Thus, the Greek Neet belongs more often in the 20-24 age group, can be male or female (most often female), mainly has medium educational level (yet, with high rates of tertiary education graduates), often has prior work experience, comes from a family with low (primarily) income, while he or she (the vast majority) has not attained a training program. He or she is supported by his family, is often uninsured and tends to be absolutely skeptical towards the Welfare State, while he/ she expresses intense discomfort for the political personnel. At the same time he/she is discouraged in respect to the functions and opportunities provided by the sphere (education-training-employment) from which is absent (primarily not willingly). Despite the multiple parameters of inconvenience, the aforementioned frustration, and given that stress is part of his/her everyday reality, he/she sets goals and develops exit strategies from the difficult situation in which he/she has fallen. NEETs are not always optimistic that they will succeed, however pose as key priorities the (re)integration to the labor market and secondly the return to the learning process. The biographical rupture, which a NEET has suffered and the vulnerability which he/she undergoes do not prevent him/her from redrawing his/her life course and from highlighting broader proposals to address social vulnerability and tackle socio –educational inequalities.

4. Greek Youth within the Crisis. The current state of play

4.1. Sketching the socio- demographic profile of Youth and Neets.

The, recently completed, project titled “Neets2” (EEA Grants/GR07- 3757) emphasized among others issues related to NEETs’, as well as young people’s in total, key determinants of life-course, civic values, public trust, political behavior and survival

strategies, while it provided (in terms of the quantitative research) an overall overview of the Greek Youth today.

Based on the stratified, quota- based, sampling (2.769 respondents in the total of the 13 Administrative Regions), the Key Findings of the “NEETs2” Project are:

- ✓ NEETs rate, in May 2016, was 16,4% of the Greek young population (15- 24) (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 7).
- ✓ NEETs compared to our control group (namely young people 15- 24) are older, have less age-adjusted years of education, are more likely to live with their parents, have more work experience and lower family income.

Table 2: Socio – Demographics Comparison between Neets and Control Group

	Neet	Control Group	p
Age (years)	22.03 (2.09)	20.16 (2.85)	.005
Education (years)	12.82 (2.17)	12.12 (2.42)	.0001
Age-adjusted education (years)	11.95 (2.11)	12.27 (2.44)	.001
Education type			.0001
Elementary School	2.0	2.8	
Middle School	7.1	18.8	
High School	50.2	52.4	
Technical	13.1	4.9	
Technological	8.7	5.4	
University	18.4	15.0	
Graduate degree	0.4	0.7	
Women	51.9%	54.3%	.19
Married	10.3%	3.6%	.0001
Lives with parents	71.9	62.5	.0001
Has medical insurance	72.7%	83.8%	.0001
Previous work history	73.4%	52.2%	.0001
Vocational training	17.9%	15.6	.13
Family income (Euro)			.0001
<500	22.0	15.1	
501-1000	37.3	30.7	
1001-1500	23.0	26.6	
1501-2000	10.6	17.0	
>2000	7.1	10.6	

Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016b: 11-12.

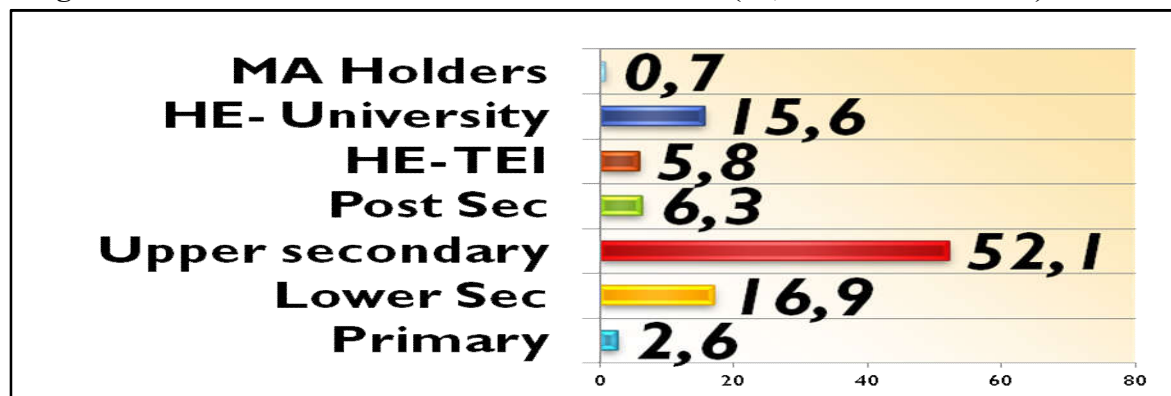
Age seems to be a determining factor that affects a young person’s chances to qualify as Neet. Following a descriptive analysis, we can document that after the age of 22 the

Neet phenomenon becomes exponential and culminates at the age of 24 years, where 34.9% of people of this age are now NEETs (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 7).

This allows us to conclude that the Greek **family** and less the Greek society have managed to find the mechanisms that prevent the marginalization of younger people, mechanisms which, however, do not cover equally efficiently older ages. The relatively low rates of early school leaving/dropout and respectively the high rates of completion of upper secondary education in Greece explain the low incidence of Neets in the younger age groups. On the other hand, *“the family protection even “unintentionally” contributes to young people’s entrapment in a family enclave, which is transformed into a key tool of informal social protection, especially when the welfare State fails to actually protect, the traditional social enclave of family undertakes the treating of social pathologies that “occur” to its members, assuming the role of “social protector” not only where when its members cannot be protected but also acting unsolicitedly”* (Papadakis/ Kyridis/ Papargyris 2015: 52). Yet, family seems to operate as an individualized policy substitute, given the deconstruction of the Welfare State, preventing the total disruption of NEETs’ life course.

Regarding the **education level** of the young people in Greece, almost 1 out of 4 young people (15-24) is high skilled. 27,4% of the Greek Neets are Higher Education graduates (clearly more than their peers- 21,2%), namely more than 1 out of 4 Neets is high skilled in Greece. Indeed, this is an alarming finding, especially given the fact that in the majority of EU countries, NEETs are usually low or medium skilled (see Eurofound 2012: 31 and Eurofound 2016: 2⁴).

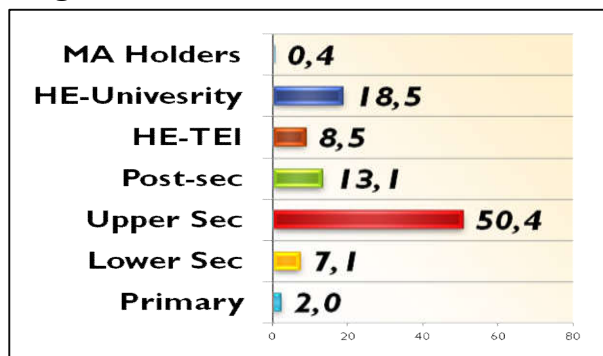
Diagram 7: The Education Level of the Greek Youth (22,1% HE Graduates)



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 12.

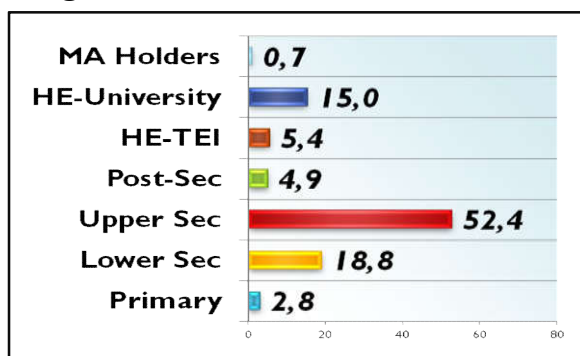
⁴ According to the recent Eurofound report on Neets: *“The largest group of NEETs is composed of young people with an upper secondary level of education – the so called ‘missing middle’, often excluded from the policy discourse. However, beyond absolute numbers, the probability of becoming NEET still decreases as educational level increases: hence, education is confirmed as the best protection against unemployment and exclusion. Nevertheless, southern European and Mediterranean countries tend to have a large proportion of well-educated NEETs as a result of the crisis”* (Eurofound 2016: 2). Undoubtedly, Greece fits the southern- Mediterranean case in terms of NEETs’ educational level.

Diagram 8: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 12.

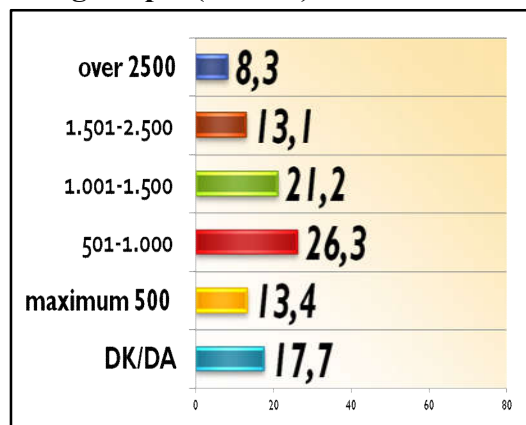
Diagram 9: no NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 12.

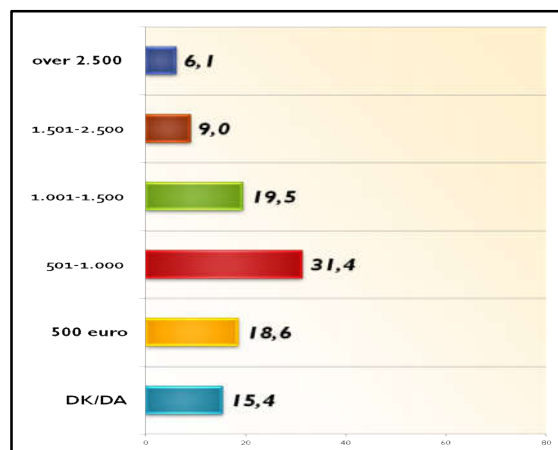
In terms of **family income**, it should be noted that the majority of both the youth as such and the NEETs live in households with low or very low income. This finding is of particular interest. Further analysis, documents that NEETs are usually members of families with a lower income than their peers. We can, therefore, state that the family income is a decisive determining factor that increases a young person's chances to fall in the NEET category (see Papadakis et al. 2016b: 36- 37). In other words, the lower the monthly family income is, the greater the risk of social exclusion becomes. There is no doubt, that NEET status in Greece is more frequent among lower socio-economic levels/ groups (with less age-adjusted years of education and lower family income). What is even more alarming is the fact that approximately 40% of the Greek young people live in households, whose monthly income is less than 1000 Euros.

Diagram 10: Family Income of the Young People (in total)



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 19.

Diagram 11: Family Income of NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 19.

The above-mentioned findings further confirm the hypothesis of intergenerational transmission of poverty in today's Greece (see Papatheodorou/ Papanastasiou 2010 and Papadakis/ Kyridis/ Papargyris 2015: 56).

What about NEETs' **psychological profile**? Anxiety but not depressive symptoms are more frequent in NEETs. Smoking, but not other substances use, is more frequent as

well. NEETs status is associated with less social contacts and isolation. Among NEETs women, smokers, having less social contacts and low self-efficacy are more likely to have increased anxiety symptomatology (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016b: 12 – 27 & Basta 2016). In other words, NEETs status in Greece is associated with increased anxiety, leading to isolation and affecting quality of life. In contrast to other countries, Greek families may support the NEETs preventing them from developing heavy depressive symptoms, suicidality and substance abuse early on. However, future longitudinal studies should examine if depressive symptomatology and substances increase in this group later on in life.

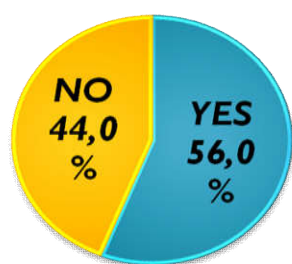
4.2. Youth employability and unemployment: entering the vicious circle.

Given the abovementioned, the **self- definition of the individual condition** by the young people in Greece is not surprising. 30,8% of the young people and 45,8% of NEETs in Greece describes their situation as hard and unbearable (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 26). Thus, 1 out of 3 young people in Greece and half the NEETs face severe difficulties in their daily life. The significant variation of 17.9 percentage points between Neets and their peers (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 32) demonstrates the strong psychological impact caused by the marginalization of young people and their alienation from the labour market and the educational process.

It is worth mentioning at this point, that the majority of young people and the vast majority of the NEETs has **prior working experience**.

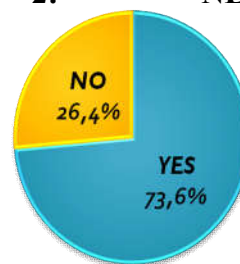
Prior work Experience

Chart 1: Young people, in total



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 13.

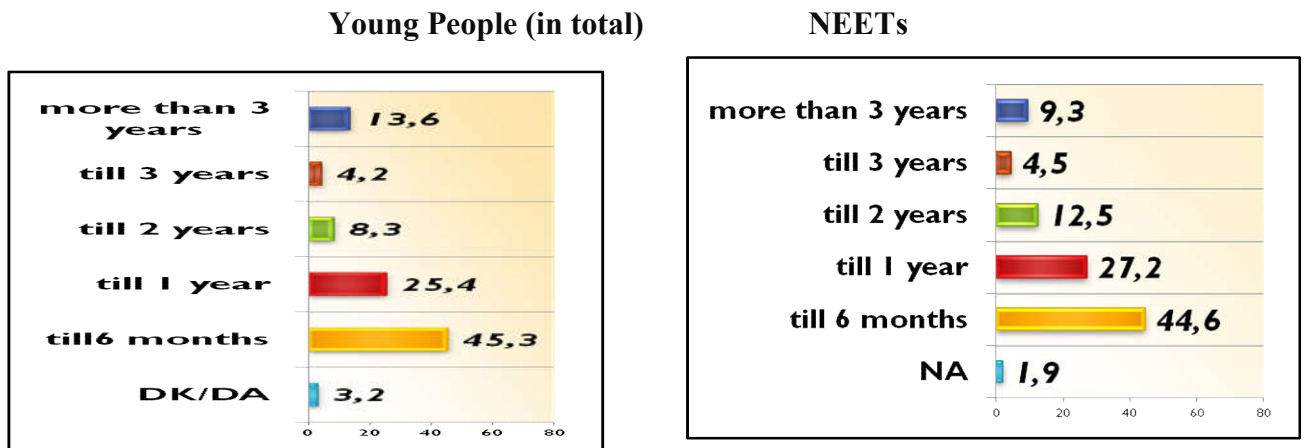
Chart 2: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 13.

NEETs, coming from families with lower income, were more forced to enter earlier the labour market, yet all of the 73,6% of them who have worked in the past are now unemployed. It is a crystal clear effect of the persisting crisis. The following findings makes it self- evident. The vast majority of the NEETs (84,3%) as well as of their peers (76,5%) have lost their jobs during the last 2 years.

Diagram 12: Q: For how long, are you unemployed? (concerns the ones who have prior working experience)



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 14.

Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 14.

The vast majority of young people (including NEETs) who has worked in the past, did it mainly in the tertiary sector. Mainly Neets, usually have previous work experience, due to seasonal employment (catering, leisure and tourism). Given that, we could presume that the ones recently unemployed belong to the category of seasonal employment. However, 32,7% of the young population and 39,7% of the Neets, being before employed, have lost their jobs more than 6 months and less than 2 years ago. That's not the case for seasonal employment. Within the age group of 15- 24 with prior work experience, the majority are men 20-24 years old. 44% of the young people (26,4% of Neets and 47,8% of their peers) have not ever entered the labor market. 26,1% (26,3% of Neets) of the ones who did it, are now long-term unemployed (see analytically KEPET & KEADIK 2016a). Delaying entry or being disengaged from the labour market decisively hampers the possibility of (re)integration into employment in general and eventually feed-backs the vicious circle of youth unemployment.

Regarding the employment status and broadly the relationship of young people (including NEETs) to employment, the research findings clearly document that the economic crisis has contributed decisively to youth unemployment, while two main taxonomic categories are formulated, grosso modo:

- a) those who never have worked and
- b) those who have worked for a while and have been laid-off, either as a result of cutbacks in personnel and in other cases due to bankruptcy of the company- enterprise they were employed in, or because they were seasonal or occasional employees. Of course, it should not also be ignored the case of those who left voluntarily.

When it comes to **training and its relation to employability**, the findings are discouraging. Just 15,9% of the young people (17,7% of Neets and 15,6% of their peers)

have attended a training programme in the past. The minority of young people has attended a training program and, among them, the vast majority considers training ineffective. It is obvious that despite unemployment, young people neither are attracted from training nor trust it at all.

Evaluation of training’s effectiveness by the participants (whether it helped them finding a job – with regard to the ones who have attended a training program).

Chart 3: Young people, in total

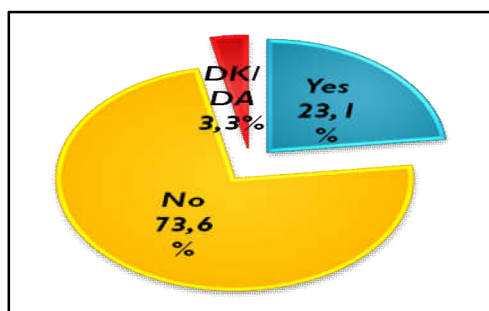
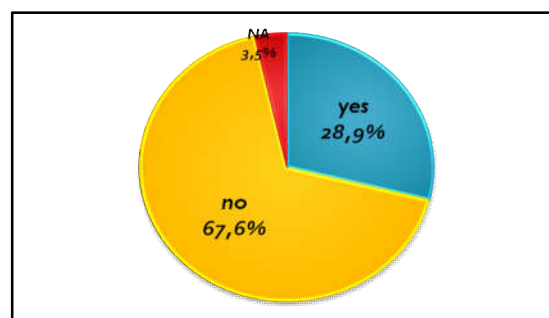


Chart 4: NEETS



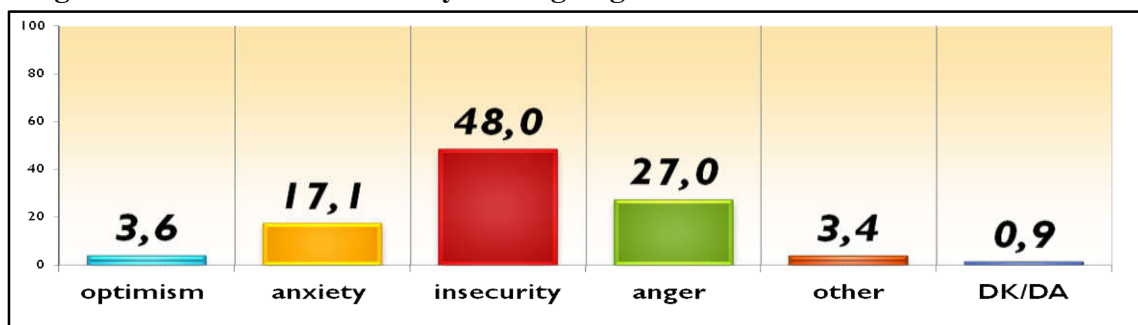
Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 16.

Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 16.

4.3. Young people’s priorities and survival strategies in the Era of Crisis: An insecure and angry youth.

The emotions caused to young people in Greece as a result of the economic crisis are basically insecurity (48%), anger (27%) and anxiety (17,1%). Almost none is optimistic (just 3,6%), while there are no statically significant differences between NEETs and their peers.

Diagram 13: Emotions caused by the ongoing economic crisis

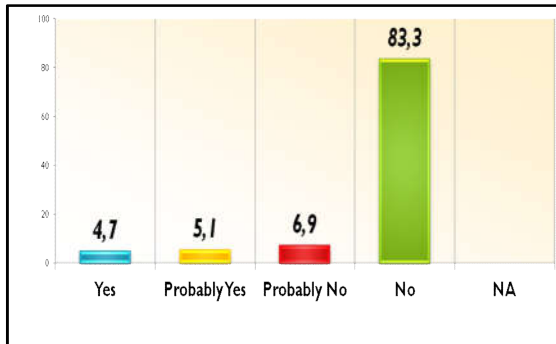


Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 35.

Yet, when it comes to the **individualized perception of social exclusion**, a seemingly paradox rises. The relevant findings related to whether NEETs, a typically socially vulnerable group, unemployed and cut off from Welfare State institutions and provisions, feel socially excluded seem unexpected: NEETs do not feel socially excluded at a rate of 90,2%, almost equally to their peers (93,6%).

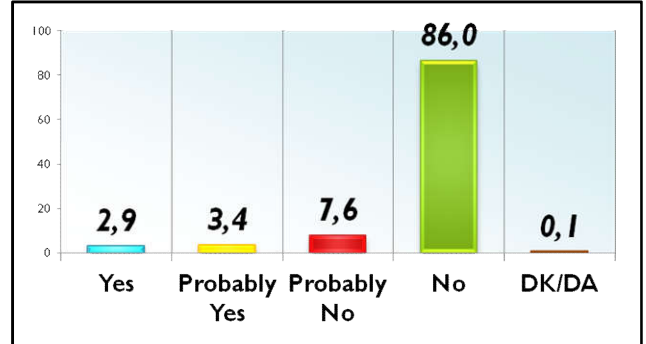
Q: Do you feel cut off/ isolated from the society?

Diagram 14: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 26.

Diagram 15: no NEETS



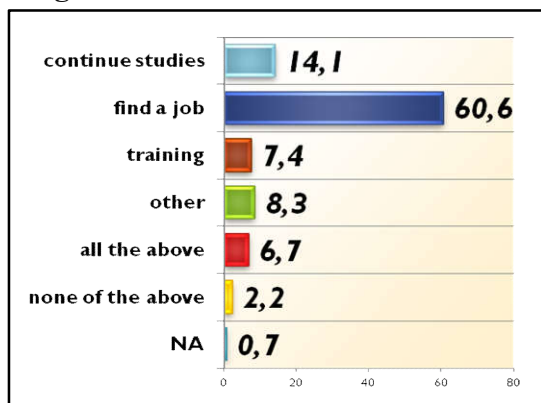
Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 26

Undoubtedly NEETs qualify for classification as socially excluded. However, as already stated, they do not feel so themselves. Given that, is the abovementioned finding interpretable? Definitely. In fact, this precise finding totally resembles the relevant one, within the framework of the previous survey on NEETs (“Absents barometer”/ 2011-2013). It seems that, still *“the family security grid, the widening of social vulnerability that inevitably brings many young people in a similar situation with Neets, reduce the feeling of alienation and isolation”* (Papadakis/ Kyridis/ Papargyris 2015: 64). Alteris verbis, NEETs are not on their own, since a lot of their peers are in similar situation. The broader troubled state of play diminishes the feeling of isolation, yet it clearly documents an ongoing hardened situation for numerous young people in Greece. In other words, NEETs do not feel excluded mainly due to the fact that there are so many others suffering.

Given the abovementioned, how do young people cope with this extremely troubled situation? Here we can easily notice a totally reverse image, in terms of **life-course design**, between the NEETs and their peers. While job-seeking is a clear priority for Neets, learning process far exceeds in their peers’ priorities.

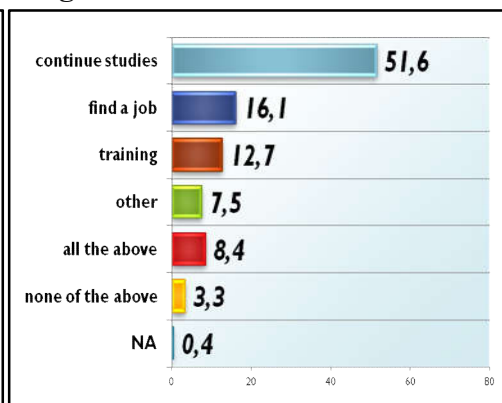
Young people’s priorities.

Diagram 16: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 30.

Diagram 17: no NEETS



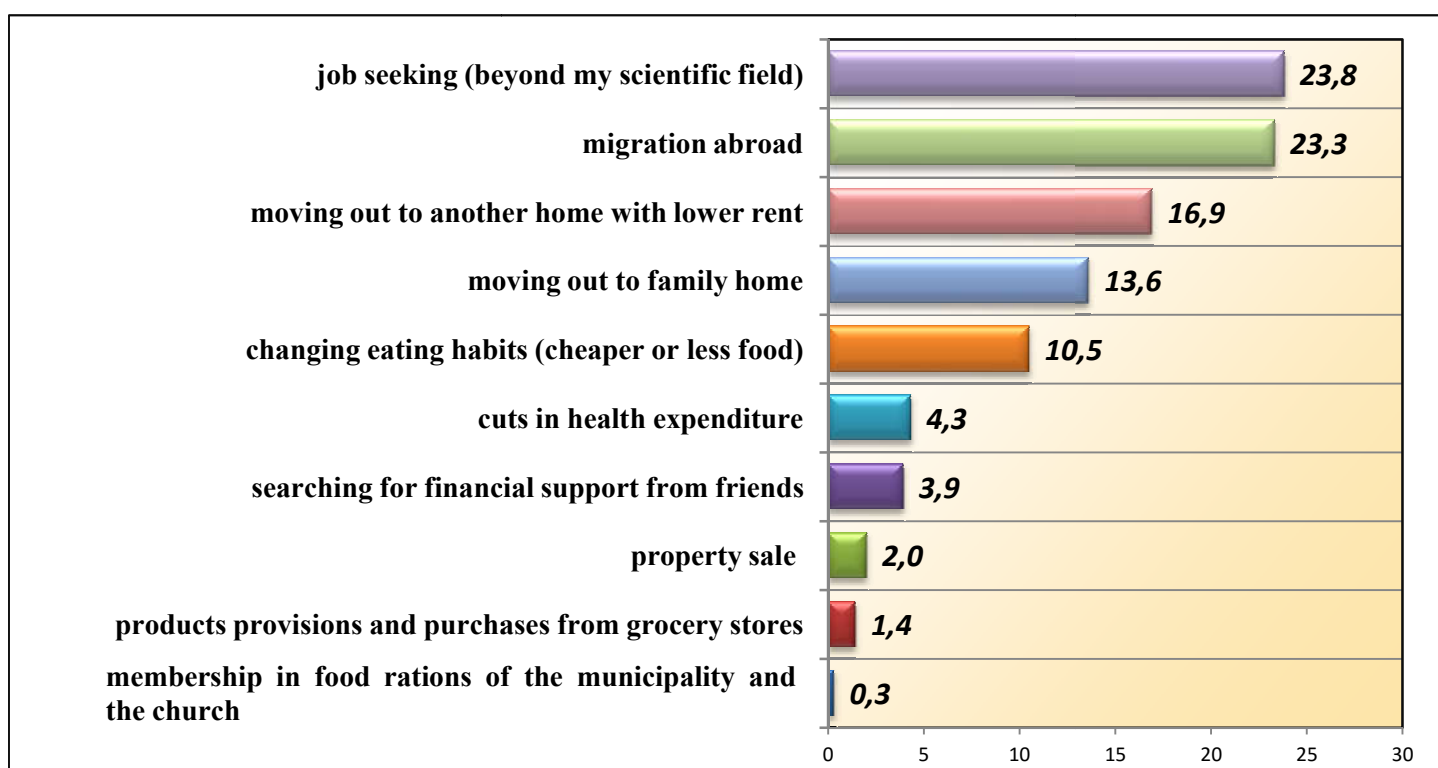
Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 30.

The abovementioned clearly affects young people’s survival strategies. The key choices, young people have already done or are highly likely to do, include seeking for a job regardless its relation to their specialization and studies, migration abroad, changing residence (moving to another cheaper apartment or to family home) and changing even their dietary habits, by proceeding in severe cuts (see Diagram 18).

It should be mentioned at this point, that these top-5 choices are identical both to NEETs and their peers, namely the rest of the youth (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 28). Indeed the impact of the crisis is multi-parametric, affecting substantial aspects and facets of young people’s daily life.

Diagram 18: Which is the most likely to do firstly or have already done of the following, as a result of the crisis?

Young people, in total



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 27.

4.4. Public trust and determinants of political behavior of the Youth.

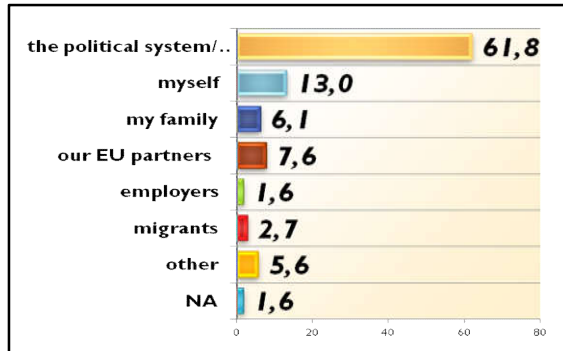
The findings of the research project “Neets2” are indeed alarming when it comes to issues of public trust and political behaviour. Public trust is collapsing among youth, while the vast majority of young people have a negative view on the political system and personnel, blaming them for their discouraging situation and the increasing difficulties they face in their daily life.

More specifically: 54,4% of the young people (61,8% of NEETs and 53% of their peers) blame primarily the political personnel for its gradually worsening situation.

Entering the Blame Game: Who's to blame for his/her own condition

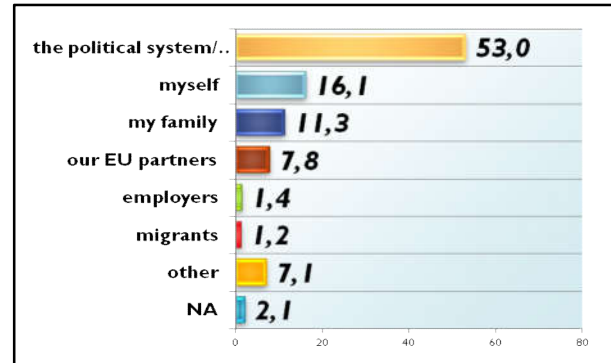
(according to the young people themselves)

Diagram 19: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 34.

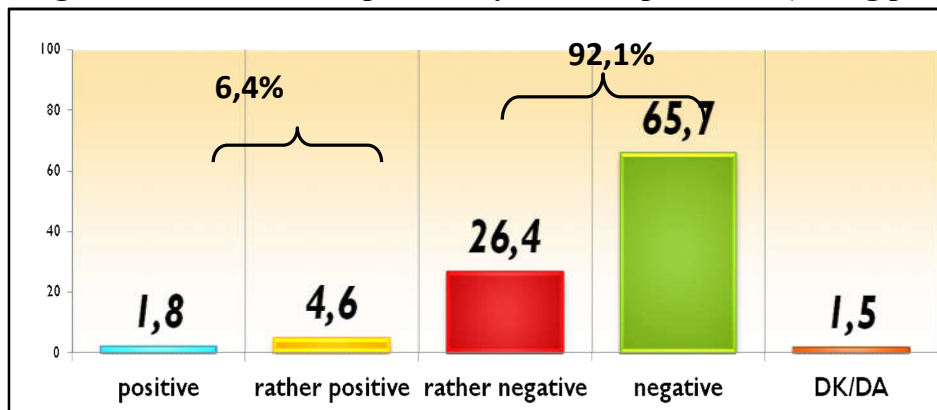
Diagram 20: no NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 34.

Additionally, 92,1% of the Youth (95,3% of NEETs and 91,5% of their peers) has a negative or rather negative view on the political system and political personnel.

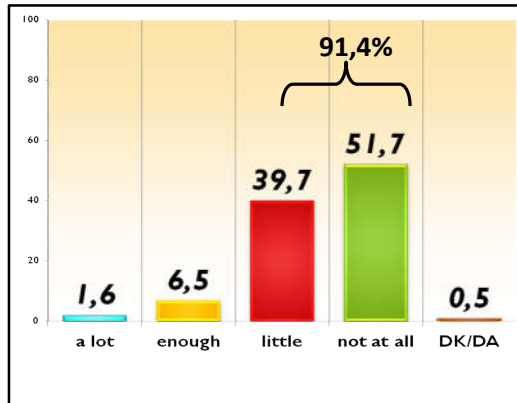
Diagram 21: View On the political system and personnel (Young people, in total)



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 39.

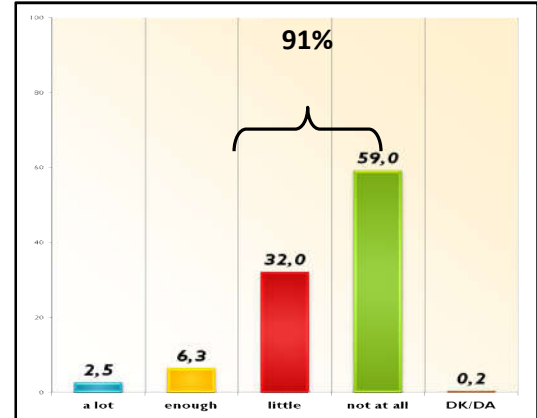
When it comes to the Degree of Confidence on the Greek State in respect to the welfare provisions, 91,4 % of the Greek Youth do not trust at all or trusts a little the social welfare system in Greece. This lack of confidence is equally diffuse both in NEETs and their peers. This is indeed a further indication of the collapse of the public trust among young people in Greece.

Diagram 22: Young people, in total



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a:3

Diagram 23: NEETs

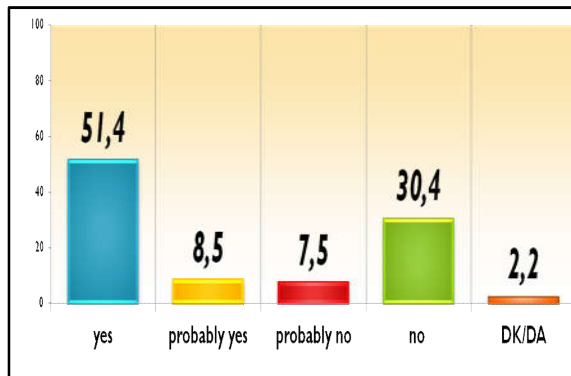


Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 38

The lack of confidence in the political system, results in a remarkable intention for abstention from the election procedure. 37,9% of the young voters (45,2% of NEETs and 36,2% of their peers) state that they do not intend to participate in the next elections, regardless of when they will take place. Thus, the intentional turnout is limited to 59,9% among the youth. It is worth mentioning that the abstention rate increases as family income decreases and is correlated to the employment status (see KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 46).

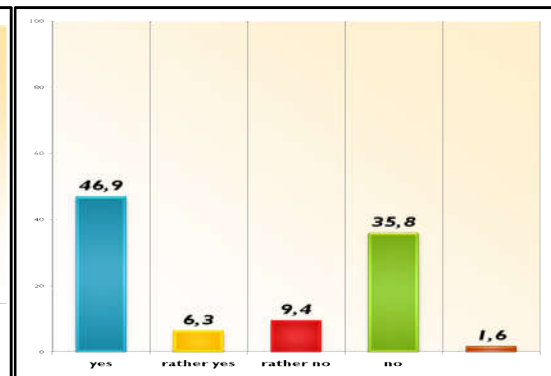
Intention to vote in the next elections.

Diagram 24: Young people, in total



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 41.

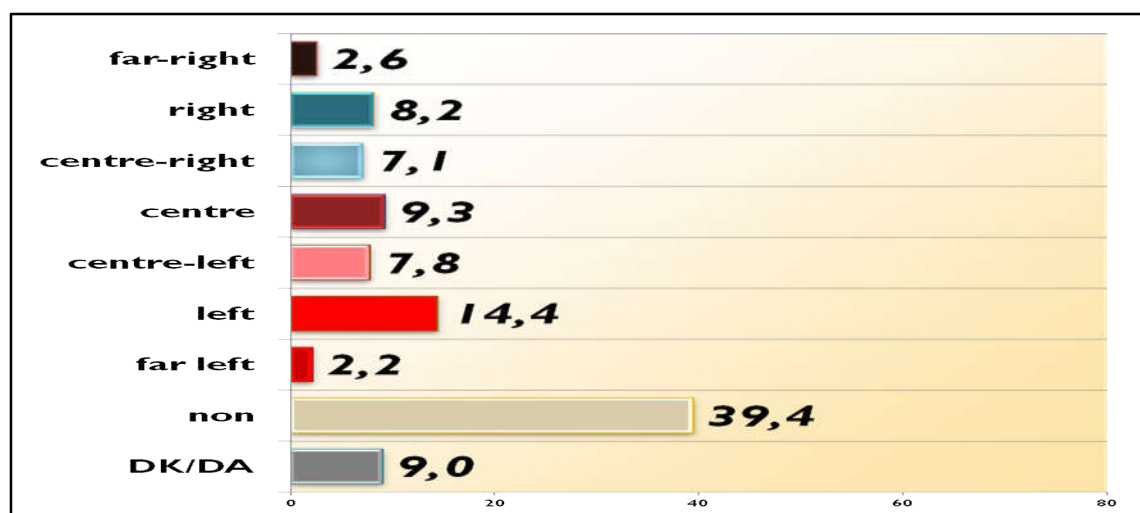
Diagram 25: NEETS



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 42.

The rising of a “disengaged self” is clearly and further documented by the findings related to the ideological self- definition. 39,4% of the Greek young people (42,9% of NEETs and 38,% of their peers) feel isolated and alienated from any established ideology. In other words, they are ideologically disengaged.

Diagram 26: Ideological self- definition. Young people, in total



Source: KEPET & KEADIK 2016a: 43.

5. Conclusions: The disengaged self rising, in the wake of the Crisis.

Jennifer M. Silva, based on her research on adulthood trajectories and working class lives in US East Coast (see Silva 2013), documents her breakthrough concept of the “hardened self” in findings such as the following: *“for these young men and women, adulthood is not simply being delayed; Instead, adulthood is being dramatically re-imagined along lines of work, family, relationships, intimacy, gender, trust, and dignity.... At its core, this emerging working- class adult self is characterized by low expectations of work.... widespread distrust of social institutions, profound isolation from others... the sources of dignity and meaning of adulthood of their parents' and grandparents' generations – the daily toil of the shop floor, the making of a home and family - slip through their fingers.... (Meanwhile), experiences of betrayal within both the labor market and the institutions that frame their coming of age experiences teach young working-class men and women that they are completely alone, responsible for their own fates and dependent on outside help only at their peril.... (Silva 2013: 8, 9, 10 and 83).*

Given the current state of play in Greek economy and society where the ongoing Recession prevails and its impact over-determines adulthood and young people’ life course, things seem even worse. Facing a discouraged and devastated reality, substantially reflecting on every key aspect of their life course, young people in Greece become increasingly frustrated, pessimistic and even angry. Their trust in social and political institutions is gradually collapsing, resulting in a crystal clear ideological alienation, that affects their political behavior. Lack of prospects, hopeless job- seeking in a disjointed labour- market, social exclusion (even not perceived as such, due to the extent of social vulnerability), ineffective training and severe cuts in the welfare provisions define their present and undermine their future. Not surprisingly, the abovementioned result in a deepened and extended discrediting of the political system and the political personnel.

The insecurity and uncertainty, among young people, deconstructs the framework of standard biography⁵ of numerous young people in Greece, while the long-lasting Crisis and the subsequent Recession limits their future prospects and over-determines their choices, especially of the ones being unwillingly isolated from every major Welfare Provision and the Labour Market (let alone the long-term unemployed ones), trapped in daily stress and relying almost exclusively on family (in many cases, a family “squished” in terms of available resources). Indeed this is a deadlock, affecting self-esteem and maximizing pessimism and anger. Not surprisingly, young people’s survival strategies mainly include (any) job seeking and migrating abroad, which might probably further increase the existing brain drain.

The combination of social vulnerability and pessimism results in both an individualized multi-level withdrawal (see Papadakis/ Kyridis/ Papargyris 2015: 67) and a broader institutional disengagement, transformed into a vicious circle of degradation. Social vulnerability piled upon social exclusion combined with the widening of socio-economic disparities and inequalities directly threatens social cohesion (see Wilkinson/ Pickett 2009, Green/ Janmaat/ Han 2009: 4 and Green/ Janmaat 2012) and eventually feeds back social exclusion. Given all the abovementioned (including the increasing intergenerational transmission of poverty that deepens socio-economic inequalities among youth), the social cohesion is at great risk in Greece.

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⁵ see in more detail on this issue Alheit & Bergamini 1998: 122

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