



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens**

— EST. 1837 —

School of Economics and Political Science  
Faculty of Political Science and Public Administration  
MA in Southeast European Studies

MASTER'S DEGREE THESIS

**PRECARITY OF THE GREEK YOUTH:  
LONG-TERM TRENDS, CRISIS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Dimitrios Katsikas

Student:

Boróka Bálint

Athens, September 2019

Precairity of the Greek Youth:  
Long-term Trends, Crisis and Future Prospects

**Abstract**

The paper discusses precarity as a phenomenon linked primarily to the world of work, but without being stripped off of its relevance in depicting insecurities in other aspects of human life. It also underlines the importance of the concept as an analytical tool in analysing the vulnerable position of youngsters on the labour market. To understand the special relation between youth and precarity in the European context, the paper looks into the case of Greece. Being one of the most harshly hit countries by the 2008 economic and financial crisis, Greece witnessed unprecedented levels of unemployment, wage cuts and a drastic drop in living standards. While all segments of the population were affected by the depression, youth, as a vulnerable group, experienced an even deeper fall that lead to extreme precarity in terms of their labour market position and future prosperity. Nevertheless, the paper poses and explores the question of to what extent can the crisis be blamed for the precarisation of Greek youngsters.

**Key words**

Precarity, precarious work, youth, Greece, economic crisis, labour market, social system

# Contents

I. Introduction.....	4
II. Methodology.....	5
III. Precarity.....	6
1. The concept.....	6
2. Precarity: forces bringing it about.....	7
3. What makes one precarious?.....	9
4. Limits of precarity.....	10
IV. Youngsters: vulnerable group in expansion.....	11
V. Youth precarity in Greece.....	14
1. Youth in the Greek labour market: in the crisis and before.....	15
a. Youth in employment.....	15
b. Youth outside employment.....	23
c. Youth precarity over time: the findings.....	25
2. The Greek social system and its evolution.....	26
a. Industrial relations, the position of labour and the representation of youth.....	28
b. The welfare system.....	32
VI. Conclusions and distinct directions in addressing youth precarity.....	36

*"Young people admitted to work must have working conditions appropriate to their age and be protected against economic exploitation and any work likely to harm their safety, health or physical, mental, moral or social development or to interfere with their education."*

Article 32 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights

## I. Introduction

With the coming of the 21st century the concept of precarity and the idea of precarisation of work have gained wider visibility and popularity in the European public sphere. This happened through the proliferation of protests aimed at drawing attention and fighting against the deterioration of working conditions, growing inequalities, a continually shrinking social support system and, as a result, the ever-increasing economic uncertainty, social instability but also ontological insecurity for a large segment of the population, especially to younger generations and vulnerable groups. Across the continent global justice movements putting precarity at the heart of their platforms multiplied, grew and started to coordinate transnationally. From the 2001 Milan Mayday, upsurges spread around the continent and lead to the organisation of Euro May Day movements that popularised the new narrative built around the idea of precarity across the frontiers of the European Union. The Euro May Day protests reached around 20 cities in 2006 paving the way, as such, to the introduction of new perspectives for interpreting and understanding current economic and human conditions, but also power and justice, in contemporary societies.

With the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis at the end of the century's first decade, the phenomenon of precarity became even more visible and tangible in the European sphere. The crisis did not only reveal how the globalisation of economy and capital makes states volatile and exposed to the caprices of an uncontrollable global market and financial system, but also how austerity measures can and do further weaken the state of labour and social protection, wages, opportunities and life prospects. The crisis drove people to the streets again, prominently in the more affected Southern Europe. Anti-austerity protests were the continuity of the anti-precarity movements. Nevertheless, the wave of protests somehow lost its sparkle after a while. Despite scattered demonstrations and riots, it is uncommon to witness mass mobilisations of similar dimensions to protests in France, Italy, Germany, the Euro May Day wave or the anti-austerity revolts of the Indignados in Spain and the Aganaktisménoi in Greece. Still, what they achieved was to question the prevailing narratives concerning economic policy, social justice and political power and point out the importance of finding alternative narratives and societal arrangements to address a yet unsolved problem.

Not surprisingly, young people were at the heart of these protests across Europe due to their increased exposure to risks compared to older generations. A historically documented more volatile socio-economic context, makes younger generations more susceptible to exploitative arrangements of work and be disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of an economic turmoil, such as the recent crisis. Meanwhile, youth is supposed to keep economies function or even grow, make sure that older generations are taken care of and ensure the coming of the next ones. Youngsters are the human capital national economies claim to condition their future on. Thus, there should be a strong focus given to where their situation is heading when thinking about not only the economy's but society's stability and future too.

In order to understand the relationship between youth and precarity in the European context, this paper will look into the case of Greece. Being one of the most harshly hit countries by the 2008 economic and financial crisis, and the recession that followed, Greece witnessed unprecedented levels of unemployment, wage cuts and a drastic drop in living standards. While all segments of the population were affected by the depression, youth, as a vulnerable group, experienced an even deeper fall that lead to extreme precarity in terms of their labour market position and future prosperity. The question to explore is to what extent can the crisis be blamed for the precarisation of Greek youngsters or, in other words, how novel is the phenomenon and where its sources lay.

## II. Methodology

The present paper will first discuss the concept and phenomenon of precarity through presenting an interdisciplinary literature review. Focusing on the writings of scholars such as Guy Standing, David Harvey, Ulrich Beck or Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, among others, precarity's relation to late-capitalism, the transformations in industrial relations and its relevancy beyond labour are explored. Furthermore, conditions that make one precarious as well as the limits of the concept are presented. Following the clarification of the concept and phenomenon of precarity, the paper moves onto presenting why young people constitute a vulnerable group and on the definition of the term.

The second part of the research focuses on exploring the sources of youth precarity in Greece. Macroeconomic data, mostly from Eurostat source, will draw a clear picture on the situation of Greek youngsters on the labour market before and during the economic crisis. The findings will be complemented with a review of the literature on the Greek social system. Through the writings of Maria Karamessini, Dimitri Sotiropoulos or Lefteris Kretsos the

questions of social income, industrial relations and labour's voice will be explored and the transformations over-time discussed.

The final chapter will sum up the findings on the precarity of the Greek youth and discuss a number of narratives on the solution of the problem.

### III. Precarity

#### 1. The concept

The recent rise of precarity as an object for scholarly research coincides with the decline of it as a political concept giving an organizing principle to social movements, at least, in the European context. Following the crisis of the Euro May Day and anti-austerity protests, the concepts' exhaustion or "absorption into official policy circles" came fast (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). Nevertheless, the existence of a mutually influencing and dialectic relation regarding precarity, both as a subject of academic research and a subject with political and mobilizing potential became again visible as debate in academia kept intensifying despite the "political retreat" of the term. This tie has not only played an essential role in shaping the concepts' meaning since its first occurrence in marches in the 1970s or 1980s (Berardi, 2009), but it also worked as an impetus for the somehow alternate, occasionally overlapping, recurrence of precarity on the streets and within the field of scholarly research. This periodic focus, or somehow continuous presence with lower and higher moments of intensity, shows the prevailing relevancy of the topic, the phenomenon's endurance and difficulty to unfold and address it, but also the controversies and obscurities around the concept itself.

The last decades precarity acquired a large set of derivatives such as precariousness, precarisation or precariat. Meanwhile, precarity also went through several alterations and expansions in connotation. The word *precarité*, as used in the 1970s, depicted "a social condition linked to poverty" (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019). In this form, the concept was related to topics such as social exclusion and inequalities. However, with the coming of the so-called atypical forms of contracts, changing jobs, and greater flexibilisation of the labour markets, it became strongly tied to transformations taking place around employment. Precarity, thus served as a tool in an attempt to make sense of the shifts that workers and labour market in advanced economies of the West experienced, most importantly of the proliferation of irregular, insecure types of employment contracts instead of full-time permanent contracts characteristic to what is called the Fordist era (Barbier, 2002).

Nevertheless, beyond insecurities penetrating into the circles of labour, precarity came to be seen as pointing to a larger societal process that brings about a general uncertainty and the

multiplication of risks in societies but in people's everyday life, as well (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019). Thus, precarity is not simply a problem built around the question of labour, but it is a social matter that is able to cause political instability, call into question the legitimacy of institutions and weaken democratic systems (Kalleberg, 2009; Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017). This points again to the political potential precarity has, on the one hand, but it also suggests that uncertainty and insecurity can become a defining element of late-modern society, they can shape its character and relations within it, while further enabling risks to infiltrate in all segments of one's life.

This leads us to look at precarity on the level of the individual. As Allison noted, the current dynamics of economy that produces uncertainty brought not only a constant state of volatility in material terms or an imminent danger of fallout, due to possible material deprivation to the worker, but it fragmented communities and pushed impacted individuals into a feeling of anxiety, stress, helplessness and understanding of one's situation as brought about by personal failures (Allison, 2013; Standing, 2011). This, beyond jeopardizing mental well-being, it also endangers physical health, delays family formation and impacts social cohesion through pushing the individual towards being opportunistic and protective in a competitive way (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017; Standing, 2011).

In this paper, precarity will be used in relation to work and employment, but without stripping the concept off of its relevance in depicting the uncertainties and insecurities in other aspects of human life. The accentuated importance of material compensation received for work in defining one's economic and social wellbeing, as well as, the increasing conditioning of social transfers on employment shows us how indivisible the economic and social sides are, while it clearly points at the sphere of work as central and primary in bringing about precarity.

## 2. Precarity: forces bringing it about

A number of sociologists have put precarity at the heart of their reflections on modernity. The phenomenon was understood as being produced by the dynamics of late-modernity and late-capitalism (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). In Beck's view (1992), for instance, late-modern society, or that of "second modernity", is a "risk society" which bears the consequences of modernity's focus on wealth production that intentionally, but systematically, produced risks for all and their distribution is a key question within this "new-modern" context globally. Harvey (1992), focused on the altering of the accumulation regime within capitalism to explain how flexibilisation of work and restructuring of the labour market came about since the 1970s. Moving to the "time-space compression" of global capitalism, the broadening of

markets, growing interconnectedness, intensification of commerce and innovations in technology and organisation were quickly reshaping the systems' forces and allowed for more flexibility and faster accumulation through it. This, coupled with the crisis of the Fordist-Keynesian regime, unable to face the pressure of flexibilisation due to its rigidity embedded in protections and security offered to the workforce, led to the total shift in labour arrangements and the restructuring of the labour market too (ibidem) The shift to flexibility, in Harvey's understanding, is also a move to neo-liberalism through the social and political regulations that emerged to offer legitimacy to this new mode of accumulation (Harvey, 1992; Harvey, 2005). Moreover, the move from rigidity to flexibility marks also the shift to postmodernity (Harvey, 1992).

Meanwhile, economic sociologists focused rather on the empirical exploration of structural factors that lead to the spread of precarious work (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). Forces such as de-unionisation, growing power of investors and financialization of the business sector, globalisation or digital revolution brought about a new era in which the position of labour vis-à-vis capital have been deteriorating (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). Of course, these factors and the analysis of global transformations are not only connected but they also draw a more detailed picture together on the shifts that, on different levels, contributed to the emergence of precarity.

The question we need to answer here is, however, what transformations did these changes cause for the workers, labour and labour market. De-unionisation, or more importantly the crumbling of the state-industrial sector-labour pact, and the shift to a new economic paradigm, exposed workers to the growing flexibilisation of a world economy. This led to the proliferation of a large variety of labour arrangements that replaced a great part of the full-time, indefinite contracts considered to be the norm. The welcoming of seasonal, fixed-term, part-time or internship contracts have been seen as being part of an economic modernisation across the market economies of Europe (Casas-Cortéz, 2014). Meanwhile, these changes gave a greater power to employers, who became freer in defining workers' wages and in opting for contract forms that served their purposes and gains better (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018).

The welfare system due to deliberate attacks from the emerging political elite, but also because of the casualisation of work that endangered its funding, was doomed to undergo transformations (Castel, 2016). New contract types as well as the increased possibility of unemployment episodes between jobs made contribution contingent, on the one hand, and the need for support more likely, on the other. Castel (2016) observed that the reconfiguration of support systems moved towards more restrictive benefits and conditionality in terms of right to access but also in defining the amount to be received,

which labelled support pejorative and its use became stigmatizing to the individual. The interplay between the alterations in labour contracts, wage regulations and the welfare system lead to a situation in which the individual bears most of the risks coming from the flexibilities in economy.

Globalisation and the increased mobility of capital and firms intensified competition internationally among workers but also among states in trying to retain employers (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2016). As a result, labour has moved to a greater casualisation and insecure character, pushing toward the dismantling of clear distinction between regular and irregular forms of work through the normalisation of the latter (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019). While outside the regions covered by the social-pact of Fordism precarity of labour and life was hardly novel, its penetration into the most protected labour markets showed an approximation, amalgamation and simultaneity of different levels of production, work arrangements and socio-economic status within the same space (Beck, 1992; Hardt & Negri, 2000). Thus, flexibility and proximity within the global economic system had a somehow equalising effect in terms of “democratising risks”, spreading insecurity beyond the areas understood as periphery, penetrating into the core and becoming an integral part of the centre too (Beck, 1992).

Furthermore, the flexible organisation of global labour market and intensified competition lead to the lowering of labour cost. Also, it pushed those at greater risks, be those individuals or states, to face economic hardship, keep selling work at ever lowering price (Hardt & Negri, 2000), decrease corporate taxes to attract investments but also to make internal labour markets more flexible. Greater flexibility has also increased worker fluctuation and decreased attachment to the firms, as well as the length of employer tenure on average (Kalleberg, 2011). Of course, not spending a lifetime at the same company or opting for more flexible forms of work arrangement can be preferred by part of the workforce. Nevertheless, to many it is not a question of choice and, when such arrangements clearly cause material deprivation or recurring episodes of being in a limbo or long-term unemployment, they contribute to the deterioration of workers’ development and their chance for social mobility.

### 3. What makes one precarious?

Individual’s precarity can be brought about by various combinations of factors. Beyond employment and job insecurity or low wage, precarity can be related to one’s access to housing, social services, family and community relations, time available to build connections and invest in self-development (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008). Thus, both one’s employment

situation and material and social resources or incomes are relevant to consider when looking for a Weberian “ideal type” of a precarious individual (Standing, 2011).

During the era of the “industrial social contract” or Fordism, employment securities were offered in several ways. This net of guarantees has been shaken in the last decades and, according to Standing (2011), their absence majorly contributed to the appearance of the precariat, even though he admits that today not all workers would see value in having some of these securities. Nonetheless, to have an adequate level of certainty and safety in employment, one should have fair income-earning possibilities available (labour-market security), protective measures applied against being arbitrarily fired (employment security), opportunity to build a career path and chance to social mobility and progress in terms of income (job security). Furthermore, work safety, health and working time regulations (work security) would be essential, as well as the possibility to maximise the use of one's competencies and the opportunity to acquire further skills (skill reproduction security). Additionally, sufficient and stable income (income security), a strong collective voice in labour matters (representation security) shall be assured (Standing, 2011). Clearly, beyond the possibility that full-time jobs might not offer these securities anymore, clearly a-typical forms of contracting further decreases one's chance to enjoy them.

Lacking all seven securities, according to Standing (2011), makes one become part of the precariat. Nevertheless, not having all boxes ticked does not automatically mean that one surely enjoys enough security in professional and private life. The complementary side of these securities is, what we can call, social income that is the aggregate of all resources one can access in case of need. Support of the family and community, benefits beyond salary offered by the firms or public services provided by the state work as complementary to what one earns in financial terms. These additional resources can balance out lower wages and maintain a level of security (Standing, 2011). However, as mentioned earlier, shrinking welfare system and their move towards conditionality in accessing services, but also the destabilisation of communities, have been decreasing the social income side while securities were also majorly altered in the past decades. Additionally, to the question of support provided by the family and housing related issues will be given further importance in the case studies as these factors have had great importance in how crisis impacted younger generations, especially in Greece.

#### 4. Limits of precarity

Precarity's limits as a concept, a condition, or tool in both academic research and political movements have constituted a hot topic for a long time. Barbier (2011) points out that, after 2000, the term made its wider public appearance and its use proliferated across languages

without an existent universally accepted meaning, in the absence of a clear understanding and an adequate statistical toolbox on how to measure it, in comparative analysis especially. Besides the distinct meanings attached to precarity, this problem can relate to the fact that in terms of employment what is considered acceptable job, typical contract or suitable social services might differ significantly across communities. Also, we shall not forget that not all idioms have an equivalent concept to precarity, instead a different set of terms are put to work when looking at changes in labour or alterations in social income. While differences are embedded in the domestic political and cultural contexts, the European movements focus on precarity had facilitated the emergence of a more coherent understanding across the continent. Beyond employment precarity they introduced a more critical position towards the effects that capitalism brought to human condition while they clearly linked the term to an ideological stance (*ibidem*).

If we widen the perspective and comprehend that, despite differences, there is a common understanding concerning the need in the European sphere to explain the condition of precarity, we can also see that there is an inherent “Europeanness” or “Westernness” present in it. If we look at precarity from the side of political, institutional and economic changes that occurred in the past decades, as a result of the process of precarisation, we largely ignore the fact that such a condition have been the norm in the relatively less advanced economies of the globe (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008; Lazar & Sanchez, 2019). Precarisation’s novelty as a process, in the post-war capitalist world, is relevant only in regimes that for some period offered a context of greater security and protection to a segment of their workers.

Does this make the concept not useful? We can argue that, despite its clear limits, the concept of precarity draws attention to a process of possible transformation of working lives globally (Kasmir & Gill, 2018), which makes geo-economic distinctions more and more irrelevant by the “democratisation of risks” worldwide and across social groups (Beck, 1992). Thus, the phenomenon needs to be addressed exactly because it points beyond itself as a European or Western problem. In the so-called Fordist era of the West, but also in the states of the Communist block, there were institutions set up and pacts made to assure a certain level of protection and security for the workers and citizens in general. Since these seem to break down in most of the states and more people find themselves working and living in uncertainty, we should explore the possible ways to follow to alleviate if not eradicate the risks.

#### IV. Youngsters: vulnerable group in expansion

Youth, according to the European Commission, is “the passage from a dependent childhood to independent adulthood” (Eurostat, 2009). Given that the most severe problems young people face are the inability to achieve financial independence and build a secure life, we can look at youth as not a fixed age group but one that can be redefined based on altering circumstances and different contexts. Thus, while youth still has to be linked to age, socio-economic situation plays an important factor in its definition, as well (Perovic, 2016). In EU policy circles the people between 15- 24 or 15-29 are referred to as youth, however, various different interpretations exist based on the scope of particular programmes or policies.

On the level of states, multiple views also co-exist on the age span, but Greece follows the prolonged age model, one that this paper will also consider despite some limitations in terms of available data. The expanded youth model starts at the age of 15-16 and it can go up until 34-35 depending on the policy matter. The model choice in itself indicates, that transition in Greece takes longer time, which means that the widespread delay in achieving financial independence and forming family, often caused by precarity, expands the time and volume of youth (Perovic, 2016). Another factor why it is advisable to consider those around their 30 's as part of youth is the 2008 economic crisis. The negative impact of the crisis on opportunities, jobs, wages and the welfare system started to be felt when individuals in their late 20's or early 30's today arrived to working age (Bell & Blanchflower, 2015). As such, they are likely to be experiencing delay and difficulty in making the transition and experiencing more precarious labour position.

Of course, the entry of youngsters into the labour market has been precarious throughout time (Standing, 2011). There is nothing new in lower wages, limited contracts or apprenticeship arrangements offered to those who are just starting to make their way into the world of work. This relates to understanding that young workforce has a lower productivity despite its possible higher education attainment, which is not seen as compensating their lack of experience (Cholezas, 2018; Filinis et al., 2018). Nevertheless, usually this precarious, experience- and skill acquiring period is seen as a short phase that, as soon as readiness and capability are proven, needs to be surpassed and workers shall move to positions where they can make use of their potential and be adequately compensated for the work they do.

A professional position that facilitates independence and existential security is, for most, the prerequisite for family formation and in making the choice to settle and be part of a community (Perovic, 2016; Standing, 2011). In the recent years, however, many young adults started to believe that a decent job and salary is hardly attainable. Being caught in unemployment or insecure jobs turned transition into a stage without a clear finish line, to a never-ending process or to a permanent state of “youth”. Precarity is getting normalised for

the majority of younger people. Therefore, precarity and youth seem to have a particularly intimate relation. Youth is precarious and precarity makes youth bigger. But there are limits to what can objectively be called youth.

Of course, youth is not a homogenous group in all the terms. Not all young people experience the same level of uncertainty and insecurity given that they also come from distinct socio-economic backgrounds, which clearly affects their opportunities in life. Young people with higher qualifications are still at advantage in finding better paid jobs compared to their peers with lower education levels (Filinis et al., 2018). Nevertheless, it is still important to understand youngsters as forming a specific, more vulnerable social group compared to other age groups due to their higher exposure to possible abuse and exploitation (Perovic, 2016). Also, taking advantages of their vulnerable position can happen at all levels: from unpaid UN trainees, to unqualified young people working without contract. The flexibilisation, which gave way to a variety of contract forms, fragmented the labour-market, redrew social transfers and, thus, strengthened the position of capital versus labour, increased the possibility for those in vulnerable position to fall in the trap of lower-paid and more insecure jobs. Youth is such a vulnerable group.

It has to be pointed out that greater flexibility and freedom in one's professional life is largely embraced by younger generations, however. It is clear that youngsters do not wish to go back to the kind of work arrangements and type of stability previous generations enjoyed. Still, this does mean that they embrace the uncertainty coming from the lack of clear career and life prospects. While those enjoying greater financial security and possibly a higher social income often welcome a nomadic working life, for others, who do not voluntarily choose flexible and insecure employment, these arrangements can cause great hardship. Meanwhile, there is a new understanding that different arrangements might be needed to address both professional insecurity and existential uncertainty, but also work itself. The protests across Europe and Greece having a strong student base put forward the demand to rethink the ways through which security can be assured. The idea of social security detached from labour, the question of the possibility to have a post-work society or the debate around Universal Basic Income all show that there is a quest for exploring more than just the tried forms of offering social protection and safety. One that can better fit the current circumstances and the present human (Alberti et al., 2018).

## V. Youth precarity in Greece

The disadvantaged position of youngsters in terms of access to well-paid, quality employment is not a new feature of the Greek economy (Kretsos, 2014). Nevertheless, as mentioned before, initial precarity and difficulties in a youngsters' life when entering the labour-market has been understood as a somehow normal phase that, within a reasonable timespan, shall be eradicated through acquiring experience and skills, thus having access to quality jobs, better wages, stable contracts and other securities (Standing, 2011). However, Greece's youth unemployment and labour-market inactivity rates have been traditionally among the highest in Europe. This happens in the context in which a high percentage of young workers possesses tertiary education degrees. Despite the endurance and severity of youth's position or its absence in the Greek labour market, the issues traditionally have not made it to the top of the political agenda (Kretsos, 2014). While they are not the only problems to consider, as attention shall be given to the in-work circumstances of young people too, they indicate that the relationship between working-age youngsters and the Greek labour market has been uneasy for a long time.

Labour market inactivity or a position characterised by uncertainty and low wage conditions are at the heart of precarity. However, as those can be compensated by the social income side, they make up only part of the story. Therefore, to see how adequate is to say that there is a rather novel precarisation process affecting the life of Greek youngsters, it is necessary to evaluate their conditions in a more extended timeframe. Also, gaining an insight into the characteristics of the Greek labour and social policy, and track transformations occurred in the last decades, are essential because they can reveal what mechanisms existed or were developed, if any, that could prevent one's material, professional and existential insecurity.

This chapter will focus on presenting data on youth participation in the Greek labour market, and identifying the conditions youngsters historically had within the arena of work. Looking into data on labour-market presence and activity, income security and occupational mobility aims to draw a picture on the level of stability youngsters have had on the labour market, while an insight into contract arrangements and their transformation will describe the level of employment certainty. On the social income side, the paper discusses the access to welfare and other sources of social and economic stability that were available in case of difficulties to the individual. Furthermore, in order to have a clear picture on the dynamics of labour, employment and social and political relations, it is necessary to take a retrospective look into policy developments. Therefore, it will be special focus given to the changes in industrial relations, welfare provisions but also social and political dynamics from a historical perspective.

The 2008 crisis, that marked the beginning of an extremely difficult era not only for the Greek economy but also its citizenry, will be considered as a distinct age to be contrasted to the decades that proceeded it. The hypothesis is that in terms of youth precarity the crisis brought a historically low point. The reason for this is not only the disproportionately negative impact of the crisis on youth, but also the severe economic hardship felt on the level of the entire population. In this period, the same indicators and policies will be analysed and policy changes tracked. Additionally, their impact on the social relations and traditional social income sources will be given special focus too. The contrast drawn between the more the pre-crisis period and the last decade in terms of the situation of Greek youngsters shall reveal not only possible long-term trends and new dynamics, but it shall also offer a basis for a discussion on possible prospects and steps to be considered.

## 1. Youth in the Greek labour market: in the crisis and before

### a. Youth in employment

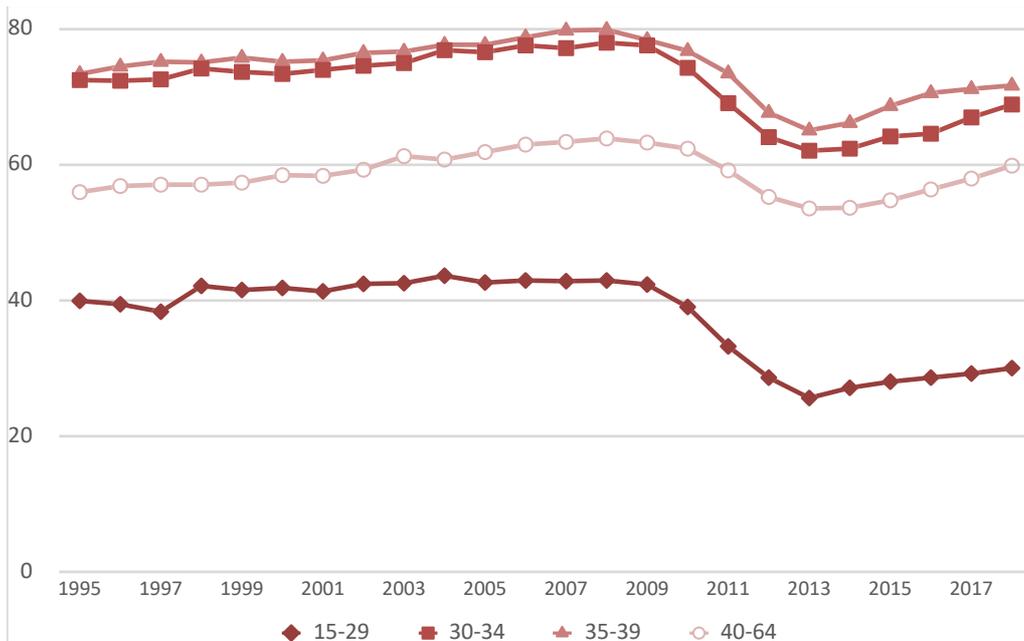
#### Youth employment rates

In order to see how efficiently the Greek labour market integrated young people over time youth employment and unemployment rates, as well as questions of atypical forms of employment and illegal work will be explored. Additionally, data on wage levels or educational attainment will be also considered.

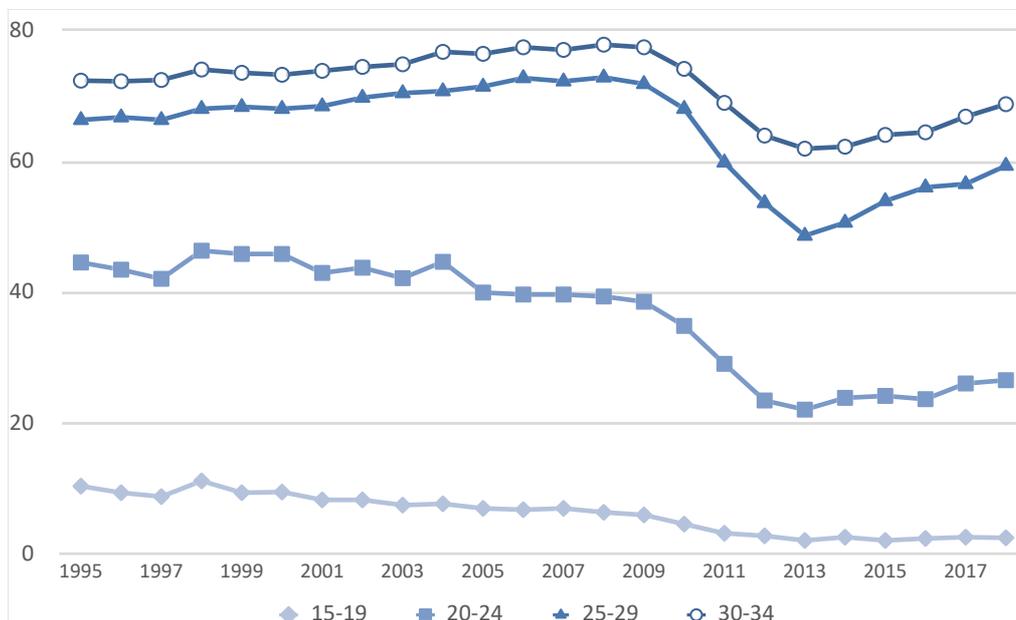
Employment rates across age groups illustrate well the fragmented character of the Greek labour market (Filinis et al., 2018). Also, they are key in opening up the discussion on the social condition of young people, as they indirectly point to those who might be at greater risk to experience material deprivation or poverty in the absence of paid employment and adequate level of social income. As indicated below (Graph 1), youngsters between 15 and 29 years have shown the lowest employment rates on the Greek labour market in the past decades. While individuals in their 30's were the most likely to find jobs, the age group from 40 to 64 years was also significantly more represented in employment than the youngest Greeks.

#### **Graph 1** Employment rates by age group in Greece (Source: Eurostat)

It is clear, therefore, that youth employment rates have been constantly low before the arrival of the crisis in 2008. The high participation of the employees in their 30's is in line with the



trend characteristic to developed countries, in which inactivity declines visibly as higher education graduates also make the transition to the labour market (Bell & Blanchflower, 2015). Nevertheless, if we divide the larger group of 15-34 year old young people (Graph 2), we will be able to have a clearer picture on how within the group participation increased and to what this can be attributed.



**Graph 2** Youth employment rate: broken down to smaller age groups (Source: Eurostat)

The more detailed insight also shows the favourable position of the workforce in its 30's, while it reveals significant improvements in terms of employment rates that occur after the age of 25. Therefore, it is clear that in the extended decade before the crisis, and even

earlier, young people under 25 have sustained the lowest employment rates. Also, right before the hit of the crisis, these rates were showing a decline, while the above 25 age group have been steady increasing its share.

What has to be pointed out, however, is that employment rates on the entire Greek population have been also among the lowest in the EU. With the increase to around 60.0 per cent in 2007, the Greeks were still significantly lagging behind the other member states in activating labour force, which meant that usually around 40 per cent of the population was either inactive, unemployed or working without legal arrangements (Filinis et al., 2018). If this is coupled with the lack of adequate welfare or social transfers, people out of employment face poverty risk or dependence on the earnings and benefits deriving from somebody else's employment, such as spouse or family members. When looking at the Greek social and welfare system, we shall be able to see if there were means that out of employment population could rely on in the lack of paid work.

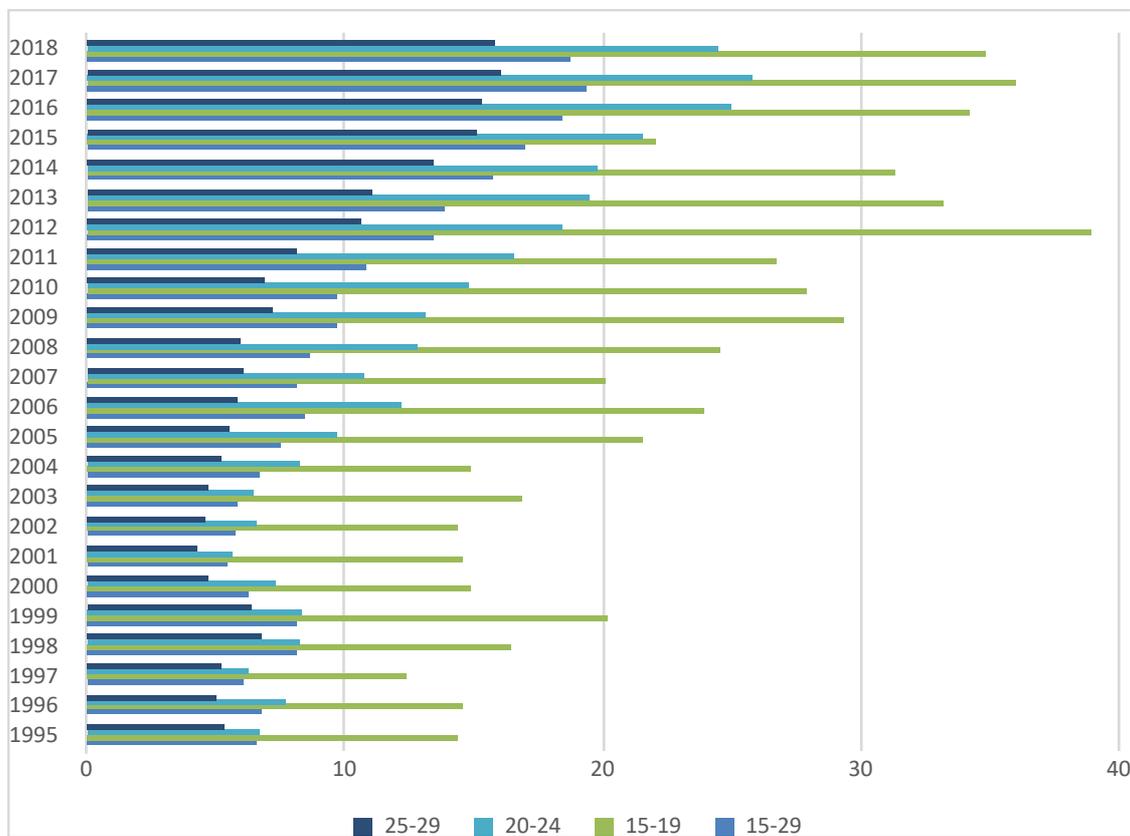
The crisis further aggravated the already uneasy situation of Greek youngsters, while it negatively impacted the entire working population also in terms of employment. Employment dropped drastically across all age groups, but the share of young people in the labour force after 2008 declined strikingly sharply. Youngsters below 25 experienced an almost 60 per cent employment drop in the period between 2008 and 2013 and their situation did not substantially improve in the past years. As such they were the most severely impacted age group in the crisis (Filinis et al, 2018). The crisis sustained, however, the already existing divides along age on the Greek labour market. Individuals belonging to older age groups, while experiencing also a severe backdrop in employment, were more likely to remain active than youngsters. This means that an issue that have been traditionally a feature of the Greek labour market was further deepened by the crisis and created a situation in which young people can hardly see themselves not only in quality jobs, but in jobs at all.

## A-typical employment

### Part-time work

Other than being in employment, it is also essential to enjoy securities that derive from it to avoid precarity. Flexible contractual forms, such as part-time or temporary employment, especially when they are involuntarily taken, can significantly increase one's material uncertainty, which can have negative effects in other aspects of the individual's life. In Greece, part-time work has constituted a very small segment of all employment forms, historically. Nevertheless, as shown in the overview by ELSTAT (2017) on labour market's trends, since 2006 there was a steady rise in part-time employment that have had a greater impact on young people. The proportion of part-time workers among all Greek employees in

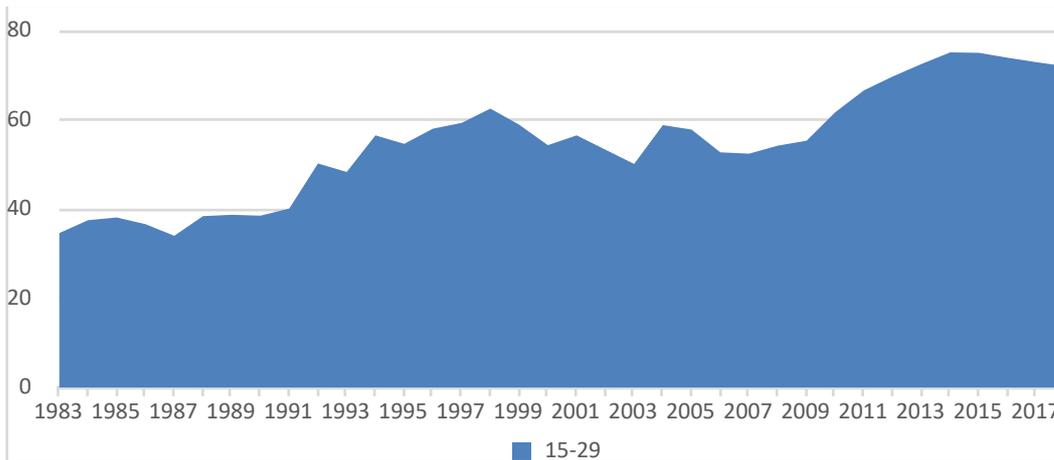
the years preceding the crises was moving around 5-6 percent. Meanwhile, among youngsters the percentage was already higher (Graph 3).



**Graph 3** Part-time employment as percentage of the total employment for young people (Source: Eurostat)

The data also indicates that the lower age groups were more likely to be hired into part-time jobs, while those in the second half of their 20's were closer to the 5 per cent share of all employees before the crisis, but increased significantly during the depression.

While part-time jobs are for many a matter of personal choice, for others it is the only opportunity to take when they are unable to find full-time employment. In the case of the Greek youth since 1992, with the exception of the first years of the 2000s, more than half of the young part-time workers accepted this arrangement in the absence of full-time opportunities (Graph 4). With the coming of the crisis, not only employment, but working hours also decreased across Europe and involuntary part-time employment was the highest in Greece in the euro area (Filinis et al., 2018).



**Graph 4** Involuntary part-time employment as percentage of the total part-time employment for young people (Source: Eurostat)

### Temporary work

Temporary work arrangements are also well known by younger people. While many students opt for seasonal work in their vacation time, there are youngsters that are offered short-term contracts in order to gain experience or acquire skills. Also, newcomers of the labour market often face the issue of initial temporary employment that can be turned into open-end contracts following the assessment done by the employee after the probation period. In Greece, temporary employment has been more widespread among the below 20 age group before the crisis. This group was around twice as more likely to be in temporary employment than youngsters above 25 years of age. Nevertheless, prior to the coming of the crisis, temporary employment was on the increase in the context of growing total employment. Following the drastic drop in the overall employment during the depression, both the number of temporary contracts and their share in the total employment fell. A factor in the latter could be played by the changing employment protection that significantly extended probation period of regular contracts, thus incentives for temporary agreements decreased (Filinis et al., 2018).

### Self-employment

While temporary contracts are more and more used in hiring first time employees, in Greece the number of those who in their first job are self-employed have been significantly higher than in the rest of Europe in the mid-2000's (Dendrinis, 2014). Given the traditionally high self-employment rates in Greece this is not surprising, however. It is also possible to assume, especially given the vulnerable position of younger people, that in their case it can be even more probable that such contracts are used to hide a dependency relation with an employer who prefers avoiding the material and administrative responsibilities that come with contracting a person (Filinis et al, 2018). Thus, self-employment, in the case of Greek youth, can be considered to a great extent another type of flexible form of work. According to Karamessini (2010), 5-7 years after starting their career, university graduates increased their

share in self-employment, while 32 per cent of them remained in temporary jobs in the 1998-2000 cohort.

As this indicates, uncertainty have been significantly present in youngsters' professional life even years after starting their first jobs. The crisis generated an even greater increase in self-employment's share in total employment, and rose the ratio of those who do not employ another person than themselves. The increase in the number of self-employed without employees was to a great extent the result of the need of small and medium-sized enterprises to reduce costs and increase flexibility in order to cope with the context that was getting more and more precarious (Filinis et al, 2018). Also, in the growing lack of job opportunities, self-employment remained a way to offer services and receive some social security. However, conditionality made access to them more and more uneasy.

#### Undocumented work

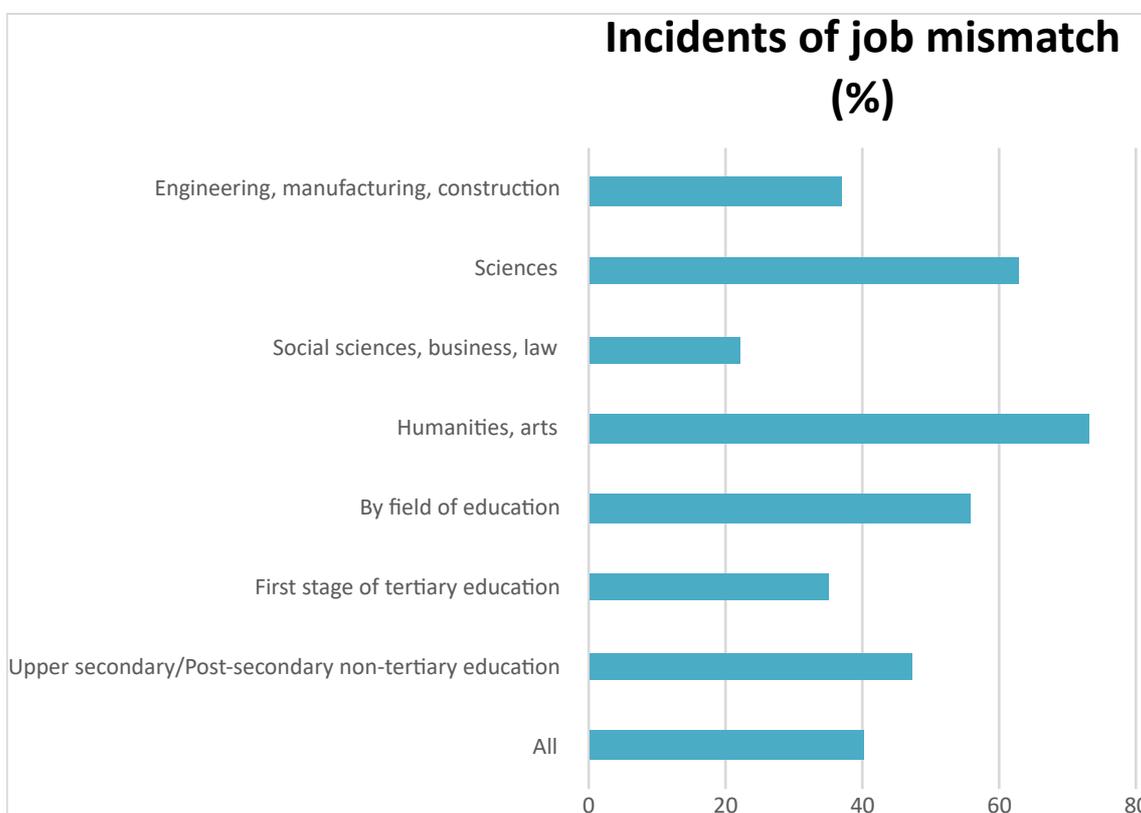
Shadow economy has made up more than 20 per cent of the Greek GDP for decades (Schneider & Williams, 2013). According to the ILO report (2016) on Greece's undeclared work, youth is described as part of the "lower tier" population, together with those in financial need, which makes them more exposed to illegal work arrangements. Nevertheless, all social groups of the country are engaging in undeclared work, so it is not solely a form of survival strategy for the excluded. According to the profile made by ILO, the individuals most likely to engage in undeclared work are childless young adults living in urban areas, in households with more than three adults above 15 years. While it is hard to find exact data on how many young people engage in undeclared work, it is clear that their intersectional disadvantaged position (likeliness to be unemployed, student without income or underpaid) makes them more exposed to employment in the shadow economy. Given the fact that such work does not offer state social transfers of any kind, it makes people even more vulnerable.

#### Educational attainment and job opportunities

When it comes to employability a lot of attention is given to education levels. Indeed, in one's access to employment opportunities education level can play an important role. Greek jobseekers with higher education degrees have had higher chances to find a job than their peers with less qualifications and years spent in education. This trend was visible already before the crisis, which indicates that tertiary education diplomas could offer greater security against unemployment (ibidem). According to this dynamic, education attainment was on the increase in the wider population in the decades before the crisis already. Of course, younger generations had a larger share in it, which makes them exceed in education level the generation that preceded them (Themelis, 2017).

While it is positive that long years of studies could be translated to greater chances to employment, it does not necessarily mean that prospects were great for Greek graduates, especially when contrasted with the situation of other young Europeans. The proof of this can be found in a generally lower employment and higher unemployment rates, lower wage levels or slower professional mobility. Furthermore, the prospects of youngsters with tertiary education are highly affected by factors such as type of institution they attended or the field of study they graduated (Ibidem). In this sense, it is not only the education level but also the demand on the market for certain profiles and qualifications that increase one's labour market possibilities. This can result in university graduates finding employment but often in fields other than that of their interest or subject studied, or they work in positions that do not require their qualifications. Ultimately, this can mean that graduates occupy the jobs that are aimed at employees without university degree and further decrease the opportunities for the latter.

According to Eurostat data on incidents of job mismatch in 2000 in Greece, 40 per cent of all graduates employed did not work in the job that fit either their qualifications or level of education. Tertiary education graduates still took the lead in having access to jobs according to their qualification, still, more than 30 per cent were working in jobs that did not match their levels of study (Graph 5). Additionally, it is also striking the gap among fields of study and employment prospects in fitting sectors.

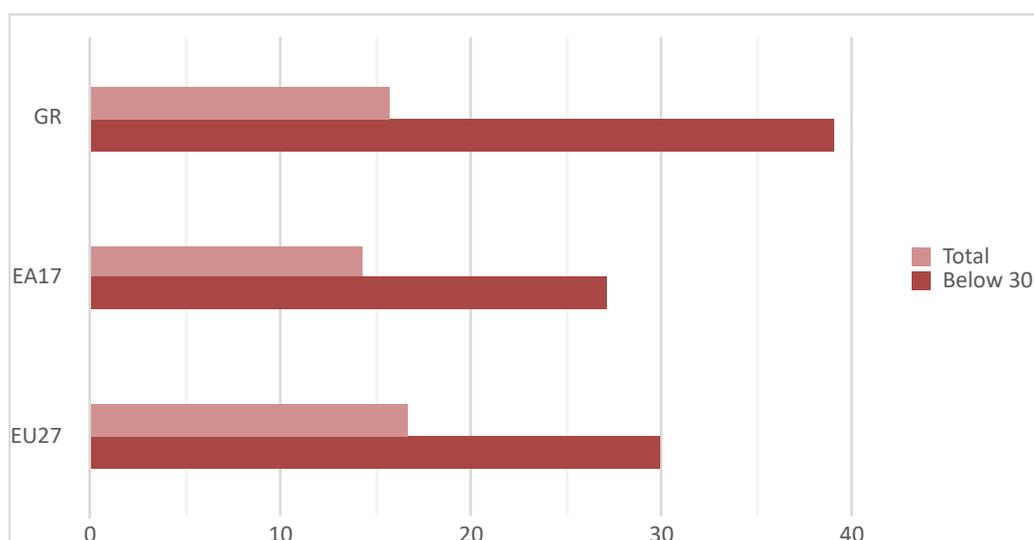


**Graph 5** Incidents of job mismatch among young graduates by field of specialisation  
(Source: Eurostat)

While it can be argued that job mismatch shows how the education system is not well-designed to offer the skillset and knowledge that could be better used on the labour market, it is questionable whether that is the only problem or the curricula adjustment to labour market demands the only way to address the issue. Nevertheless, what is sure that working in jobs that do not fit one's education level can cause stress and the feeling of shame to the individual (Standing, 2011). Moreover, it can also reduce the chances for upward professional mobility in the fields one aspires to work and it can have lower financial returns, as well (Themelis, 2017). For the state, on the other hand, it is an issue of underutilisation of the its human resource that clearly does not help productivity on any level.

## Wages

The issue of financial compensations is also crucial to look at. According to Eurostat data, in 2006 the rate of low wage earners in Greece was just slightly below 16 per cent that was close to the EU and Eurozone average (Graph 6). Among youngsters under 30, however, this rate was close to 40 per cent, so was much higher than the European average.



**Graph 6** Rate of low wage earners: on the entire population and the under-30 age group  
(Source: Eurostat)

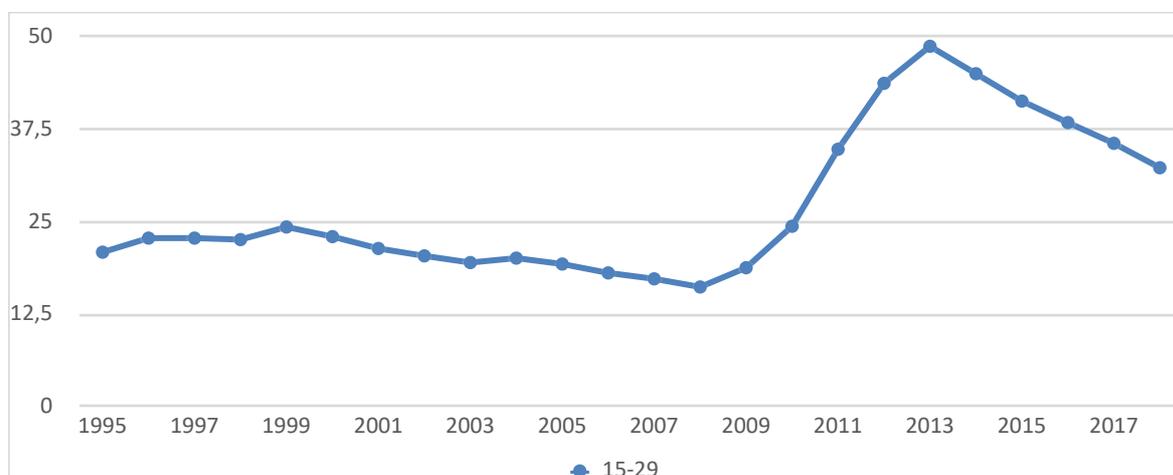
Furthermore, according to Eurostat, among the 16-19 age group in-work at-poverty-risk rate have been above 20 per cent during the 2000s, but above 10 for other age groups too. While in the decades before the outbreak of the crisis disposable incomes were on the rise in Greece, for the youngest age group they were significantly lower and an expanding gap

between youngsters and the older generation could be noticed. Also, Greek wages remained under the EU average despite their visible growth over time. Nevertheless, in times when the value of earnings or the wages themselves are on a rise, it can be expected that actual security, but also the feeling of being protected, grew. In cases when it seems that economy is doing well and it is possible to earn and spend more than before, or save more, the feeling of insecurity and the possibly inadequate level of welfare benefits are more easily compensated. Even the relative disadvantage of youngsters can be further soothed through the general increase in the incomes of the familiar networks. The crisis, however, broke the feeling of security and brought a serious drop in wage levels. For younger generations cuts in incomes were greater than for other age groups, while they had to face the weakening of their protective familial context, as well, given the overarching impact of the recession on the entire population, including its protected segments.

## b. Youth outside employment

### Unemployment

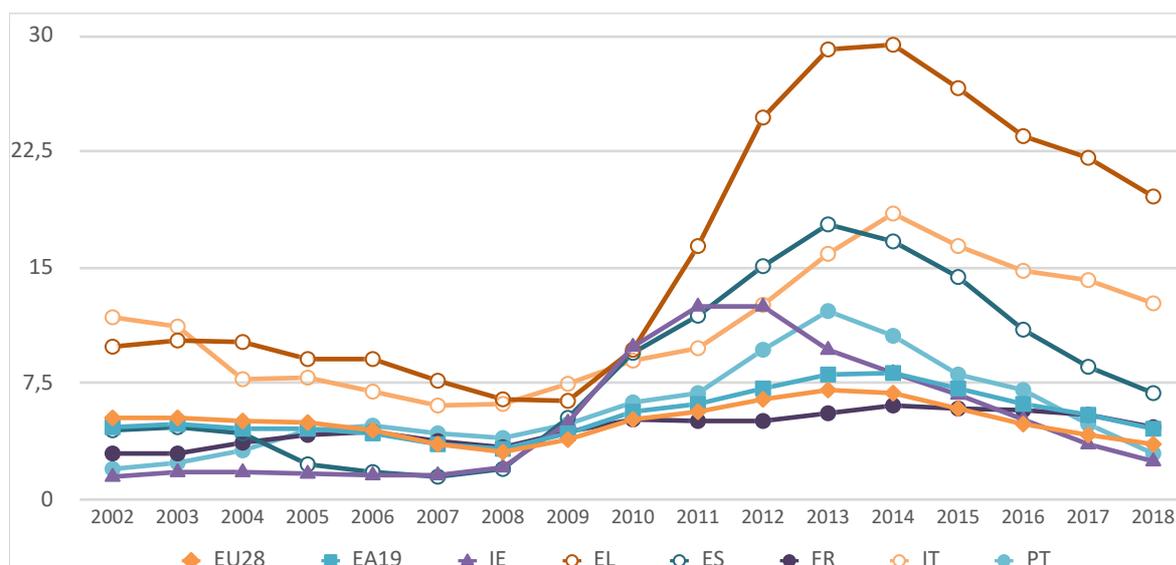
High youth unemployment has also been a known problem of the Greek labour market. As illustrated below (Graph 7), during the 1990's unemployment rates have never gone under 20 per cent among the youngsters in the 15-29 age group. Nevertheless, in the years before 2008 a general decline can be noticed, which in comparison to other age groups, however, remained significantly higher. For instance, while 22.7 percent of youngsters under 25 were unemployed in 2007, the unemployment rate for the rest of the groups remained in the one-digit territory. Reaching a historically low level of unemployment in 2008 showed a first-time convergence towards the EU and euro area averages (Filinis et al.). The crisis, however, reversed the trend and brought a drastic rise in unemployment. Greece, among all severely impacted countries, was especially hardly hit that is shown by the above 20 per cent, or even close to 30 per cent, unemployment rates the country experienced for long years.



**Graph 7** Youth unemployment rate over time in Greece (Source: Eurostat)

Long-term unemployment & youngster neither in employed nor education

Even before the crisis, Greece has been among the most affected states in the EU, but also among the Southern European tier, by the issue of long-term unemployment among youngsters (Graph 8).

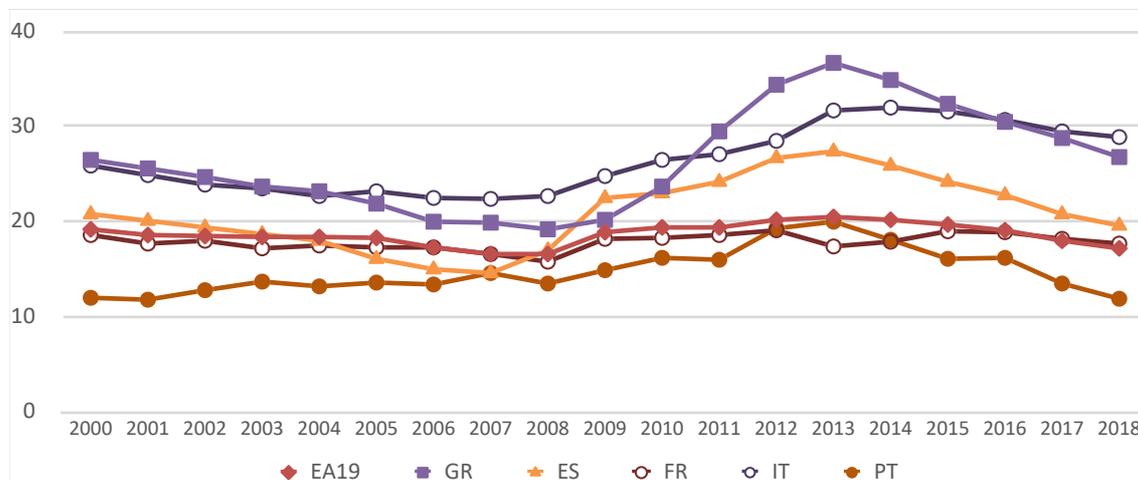


**Graph 8** Long-term unemployment (12 month or longer) among young Europeans (Source: Eurostat)

Long-term unemployment is important to consider as it indicates poverty risk and it reduces the chances for the individual to find a job (Filinis et al., 2018). Interestingly, in Greece even in times of economic growth long-term unemployment was extremely high and the share of the 15-34 age group in it was above 60 per cent in the pre-crisis period (Tubajdi, 2012). Nevertheless, in order not to draw an overly pessimistic view on the situation of youth, given the lower rate of active youngsters on the total population, it is important to consider Greece's NEET rate which reveals the share of individuals between either 20-34 or 20-34 of age on the total age group who are neither employed nor studying, drawing as such a more accurate picture on the situation of youngsters.

Tubaji (2012) observed that between 2000 and 2006 the NEET ratio was on the fall while, unemployment was not following a similar trend. Despite being among the worst performing states, the decrease in NEET rate was more significant in Greece than in other Southern states, or the average in the Eurozone (Graph 9). This can be considered a significant improvement. During the crisis this process was reversed and NEET rate increased more than 30 per cent between 2007 and 2016, reaching a above 30 per cent levels (Filinis et al.,

2018). Since then decreases were experienced but the number of youngsters outside both education and labour market remains extremely high, which on long-term can exercise a strong negative effect on the situation and future of younger generations.



**Graph 9** Young people neither in employment nor in education and training by age/ NEET rates (Source: Eurostat)

### c. Youth precarity over time: the findings

While the information presented in this section on youth employment and unemployment related issues does not always cover the same timespan due to lack of data for certain periods, it still offers an insight into the Greek youth's labour market situation and prospects before and during the crisis. It is clear that improvements, when occurred in the past, were rather slow, unsubstantial and partial. While education attainment has been growing, it seems that employers were not willing or able to value youngsters, neither in terms of opportunities nor reducing the wage gap among age groups. Youngsters over-time have kept their relative disadvantaged position in all aspects. Curtailed and uneasy access to the labour-market, high share in the inactive population or in the low-wage earning group have been long standing problems that due to their endurance lead us to some assumption on the functioning, structure and dynamics of the Greek economy, industrial relations and welfare system too. In the crisis times young people's prospects further deteriorated and the problems they have been experiencing for decades became more acute. Thus, the precarity of young generations in Greece is not transitory or temporary, they show significant endurance in time, and the crisis seems to assure their persistence in the next period by deepening the problems and limiting the articulation and implementation of measures that could effectively combat them.

While the topic will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter, it is evident that youth's precarious employment and position was not adequately addressed on policy level over time, and the welfare system was also unable to offer basis for smoother transition from school to work, or protection in terms of unemployment or inactivity. Still, in moments of greater economic development or times when the overall situation of the population was improving, youngsters could imagine better prospects even if their relative disadvantage was not shrinking. Nevertheless, they have been part of the "outsiders" of the Greek labour market and never really enjoyed securities. As such, their existential precarity in the lack of support from other sources has been highly probable, due to the insecure nature of their employment or access to the job market. In this sense, Greek youth's precarisation, that have been mentioned many times since the outbreak of the crisis, is not a process that pushes youngsters from a secure position to insecurity, it is rather the intensification and further deterioration of their already uncertain position.

## 2. The Greek social system and its evolution

Historically, Greece's social system and labour market have been characterised by strong fragmentation, along several lines, which resulted in a deep divide between the "insiders" and the "outsiders". While "insiders" enjoyed employment security in protected sectors and received related social services and benefits, the latter had limited access, if any, to all this support (Sotiropoulos, 2004). The state, characterised by strong interventionism, had a substantial influence on industrial relations and negotiations. While through 'social pacts' across producer groups it has been keeping some control over wages, it generally offered weak social protection and has been rather inefficient in addressing inequalities in incomes, social transfers and opportunities (Zambarloukou, 2006).

While workers' unions were of a major importance in negotiating wages across the industrial Western world, in the case of Greece their effectiveness in securing fair income and services for a large part of the population has been limited. Their strength was mostly invested in exercising political influence with the aim to protect the interests and privileges of their own bases (Sotiropoulos, 2004). This, not once, contributed to the reinforcement and deepening of the gap between "insiders" and "outsider". Also, as informal economy and self-employment have been historically high in the country, many citizens were not falling under union coverage or lacked similar forms of representation despite the effort of the state to support the formation of bodies that would speak for not unionised workers (Karamessini, 2008).

Moreover, the constantly present low employment rates, especially among youngsters and women, as well as high youth unemployment show that certain groups have been more affected by the risk of being outside the regulated labour market and more exposed to performing work without legal arrangements and securities. The Greek labour market has been largely segmented along various lines, such as private/public sector, large/small enterprises, formal/black economy but also along gender, place of living or age (Ibidem). This resulted in a multi-tier employment scenario that was reflected in welfare benefit distribution, as well. Thus, the type of treatment provided by the Greek welfare system was highly dependent on one's profession and employment (Filinis et al., 2018).

Exceptionally high rates of self-employment or inactivity in the formal labour market and the large number of family businesses indicate that there has been strong social and economic role attributed to the family. Being the source of reproductive, care-taker work performed by women but also entrepreneurial activities, the Greek family has played a fundamental role in redistributing material incomes and expand rights to social services to dependents of those in legal employment (Karamessini, 2008). While small family businesses offered legal work and associated social benefits for some, they often provided relatives with opportunities to earn money without being registered employees, so they had a share in sustaining Greece's informal work and economy (Sotiropoulos, 2004). Nevertheless, the family itself has been an important, and for many the primary, source of protection and income. This aspect is especially important in the case of youth, as families were an essential source of financial and social support for them in times of transition from education to work but also in helping with childcare or housing. According to Mingione (2002), this centrality of the familial unit has been calculated into the Greek social policy design after the post-war period. As such, stronger employment protection was provided by the state to regular male workers (breadwinners of the family units), especially in specific sectors, but social services remained greatly underfunded and the low participation of women in labour force seen as a normal (Karamessini, 2008).

Following the fall of the military junta in 1974, popular demands for not only political rights, democracy but also better economic and life prospects became louder and more urgent to tackle (Sotiropoulos, 2004). Thus, the way for reforms had to be laid down to make improvements in the social structures and workers' positions beyond specific occupation lines and traits. Besides the domestic necessity for change, Greece's membership in the EEC was another factor that foresaw policy transformations and economic influence. Integration to the Community came with new regulations, directions and funds, while it also meant a greater integration of the Greek economy into the global currents, and a higher connectedness of its markets to that of other states. Europeanisation stirred the introduction of economic stabilisation policies but during the 1980's social-democratic party rule an

increased focus on welfare system efforts and greater redistribution was visible, too (Karamessini, 2008). Interestingly, while in the rest of Europe welfare systems came to be dismissed, in Greece the idea to follow the model and keep up with the West stirred an opposite dynamic aiming at building a Western style welfare system.

Although the European Economic Community membership brought several advantages, it also generated a greater exposure to international competition. Together with the acceleration of industrial developments and the emergence of the global economic and financial markets, it was clear that Greece will need to break with its past patterns in order to keep up with other economies and become more efficient in using its resources and potential. Also, transformations penetrated into all aspects of society quickly in the late-20th century: women started to be present in greater numbers in the labour force, life expectancy was on the rise, birth rates going down. This clearly could not leave untouched the traditional male-centred family economic unit either (Karamessini, 2008).

#### a. Industrial relations, the position of labour and the representation of youth

The 1975 Constitution not only restored but also extended freedoms and rights for individuals and enhanced collective bargaining. These advancements strengthened unionism at the time, and intensified labour relations in a framework in which women were recognised as workers entitled to equal treatment and pay with male employees (Karamessini, 2015). In the 1980s, with the shift of the Greek political system to the left, welfare expansion as well as further efforts to enhance workers' representation and rights took place. In 1982 the union movement was fully democratised and strikes under recognised unions gained more space. Also, in this decade workers-participation in decision-making was institutionalised and the proposal of establishing work councils for small enterprises raised. Expanding union density or workers' representation and participation could have contributed significantly to the dissolution of "insider" and "outsider" divide. Nevertheless, efforts of this kind have not always succeeded. Meanwhile, due to the prerogative of the Greek state to extend collective wage agreements to employees not belonging to unions, assured a more extensive coverage (Zambarloukou, 2006).

Traditionally, a core element of the Greek system was the national level determination of the minimum wage. The National Collective Agreement, beyond setting a national minimum wage, also laid down the framework and regulations concerning employment, working conditions and the rights of employees (Karamessini, 2015). Thus, a set of standards and

requirements that employers had to provide for their workers in terms of work time, leaves, trainings, rights and treatments have been formulated within the context of a regulated collective bargaining. Nevertheless, the Greek state traditionally preserved the right to act as a final decision-maker or arbitrator in these bargaining in order to align outcomes to its policy priorities (Zambarloukou, 2006, Karamessini, 2015).

Despite the existent mechanisms for collective action and the organisational unity of the trade union federations, the politicised character of the factions contributed to the development and maintenance of differences across occupational groups and workers (Zambarloukou, 2006). Both within the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), representing employees of the private sector, and the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY), internal fragmentation across ideological lines and party influence, especially those of the larger Socialist and Conservative parties, was a visible feature. These divisions put a stamp on union strategies and the responses to problems and the recent crisis too (Kretsos, 2011).

Meanwhile, younger employees' participation in the unions have been on the decline in the years that followed. If we take into consideration the disadvantaged position of youngsters on the labour market, the decrease in their union density might not come as a surprise. In the last decades, young Greeks have been generally more exposed to be employed in jobs and sectors that offered more precarious work and less collective representation (Ibidem). Their greater concentration in the emerging service sector, smaller private enterprises as well as their significant share in the group of self-employed made for many unlikely to become an "insider" through union representation. Also, main labour unions have not recorded the age of their members and lacked effective strategies to attract youngsters, which severely restricted their ability to focus on youth related issues. As such the position of the young, not unionised "outsiders" could have been addressed by better organisation or recruitment. As for the individual, finding new ways to fight for rights and wages, union membership or acquiring a job in the already protected sectors were the only available options for representation. The latter, however, due to the relative advantages of the "insiders" assured by strong employment protection, which made dismissal of senior employees more difficult and costly, limited the prospects of newcomers in this sense (Filinis et. Al, 2018).

During the 1990's and 2000's both union density and strike activity were on the fall. At the outbreak of the crisis in 2008 union density was at 24 per cent, while in 1992 was still close to a 40 per cent coverage (Karamessini, 2015). The numbers were even lower for the youngest age-group under 25, who in the late 1990's had a participation rate close to 10 per cent (Kretsos, 2011). In the same period, unions' participation in shaping industrial relations

also went through major transformations following the recession of the early 90's and the accession of the centre-right government. Additionally, the fall of the iron curtain has had an ideological impact all over Europe, as well (Karamessini, 2015).

In the 1990's the social-partnership approach was introduced in shaping industrial relations, which was promoted by the EU, as well, in order to stir convergence to a European social system (ibidem). The establishment of new mechanisms and institutions to facilitate social dialogue, however, could not overcome the marginal position of certain occupational groups and close the gaps between government plans and the social partners, neither (Sotiropoulos, 2004). Meanwhile, due to the fragmentation within factions, since the 2000s the national collective agreement has also been called into question by certain groups that tried opting out or dismiss collective bargaining (Kretsos, 2011). When the crisis kicked off inequalities in wages were substantial, in-work at-poverty-risk rate was above 8 per cent, but the national minimum was above poverty line (Karamessini, 2015). According to Kretsos (2011), this shows that GSEE and ADEDY were traditionally successful in achieving higher minimum wage levels through the collective bargaining, which was in accordance with the demands of younger workers, but they could not facilitate the better distribution of incomes across age groups and decrease the share of young people among low salaries earners. Moreover, none of the large confederations came up with strategies that would effectively recruit or help youngsters organise themselves. While through the Young Workers Committee, created by GSEE, actions and events have been implemented, they offered a space for discussion rather than targeting the attraction of employees with specific profiles (ibidem).

Besides less voice, lower wages and prospects, the flexibilisation of the labour market is another issue that weakens the position of youngsters. Since the late 1990s reforms gave way to wage flexibilisation and opt-outs from the national agreements, while also promoted part-time work in order to increase participation in employment and combat unemployment (Papadopoulos, 2016). In the Greek context, the issue of self-employment and illegal work shall not be forgotten either. Self-employment many times has been functioning as a flexible employment realised through service providing contracts that frees the "employer" from paying non-wage labour costs and makes the relationship between parties more flexible.

Meanwhile, illegal work has remained widespread. While this for many offers just one more source of income that is free of taxation, with the inflow of immigrants the availability of such work arrangements conveyed significant power to all who are at the offer side of work. Therefore, despite the traditionally existent strong employment protection for certain workers, flexible work has been widespread even if initially this did not mean temporary or part-time employment, rather undeclared work or self-employment (Kretsos, 2011).

Nevertheless, in the crisis this was taken further by the proliferation of jobs that offered less security, even for the earlier protected employees. Instead of bringing under protection the “outsiders” or those having less security in their employment, employees having permanent contracts with dismissal protection also moved towards more precarious positions. Thus, the eradication of the divide between “insiders” and “outsiders” meant a move towards a more general precarisation of jobs (Karamessini, 2015).

This shows that the 2008 crisis and the austerity measures that came with the bailout packages impacted the entire Greek society in several aspects and, both directly and indirectly, worsened the situation of young Greeks. On the one hand, unemployment among Greek youngsters was skyrocketing already in the early years; on the other, welfare spending was also cut back. Public sector work-placement contracts held by young people were terminated in mass in 2009 and soon a lower minimum wage for young workers and more restricted benefits for the unemployed were also introduced (Kretsos, 2011). The reduction of minimum wage for employees under 25, and the further decrease for the 15-18 age group, seems to go against any logic. Already experiencing significant disadvantages on the labour market, the Greek youth had to bear greater reductions in wages and even lower benefits than other age groups. This break in the minimum wage policy shows that earlier successes of the unions to efficiently represent youth in this matter came to an end.

The crisis also showed that many young people, despite not being associated to the large labour unions, were looking for representation elsewhere to voice their demands and discontent with Greece’s social and economic system. Believing in the need for more radical changes, young people were mobilised more efficiently by political parties and other social movement organisations during the crisis. Also, more attracted by newly formed small unions with more democratic and participative character, often led by leftist or anarchist-oriented workers, youngsters openly dismissed the existent way of functioning of the traditional trade unions (ibidem). Furthermore, demonstrations and riots swapping the cities after 2008 brought youngsters, and not only, of different backgrounds and socio-economic status together by the understanding that for all prospects of employment and well-being are deteriorating (Sotiris, 2010).

While unrests became integral part of the urban space in the crisis, they were not born out from it solely. They were not necessarily addressing particular policies, instead they formulated a more profound request for a radical transformation of a system that has been building up over time, and not only within the borders of Greece. The weakening of labour versus capital, the captivity of states in an international competition dictated by capital and the erosion of democracy were seen as the general dynamics of the global economic and

financial system that bring precarity even to those who felt more protected and a future without prospects for masses. The crisis proved that deterioration is indeed possible.

The reforms and cuts Greece meant to carry out according to the agreements with the creditors were based on the idea that state's costly and oversized welfare, irrational wage-setting and employment systems played a significant role in the country's loss of competitiveness and the accumulation of deficit over time. The idea of wage-driven inflation was not novel to the crisis, however. During the 2000s, wage-cuts and the limitation of their growth was proposed in order to fix inflation, even if that was more profit and tax-driven than caused by growth in wages (Karamessini, 2015). The low impact of labour cost on the loss of competitiveness was also emphasised by the labour union federations. Nevertheless, as the salary- and bonus cuts, newly introduced wage regimes, increased working hours without additional pay were the measures taken in the crisis, more pronouncedly in the public sector, it is clear that the employees were supposed to bear the burden for inefficiencies that had nothing to do with their salaries, especially not with those that have traditionally experienced lower wages or, as new-comers, have not even experienced increases.

#### b. The welfare system

Efforts to catch-up with the welfare states of the EU15 have started in the 1970s and intensified in the 1980s. Despite developments, in the mid-1990's the state was still giving a significantly smaller part of the GDP to social protection than what was spent on average by other EU members (Karamessini, 2015). Nevertheless, the process of expansion continued in the late 1990s and early 2000s as well, but it was majorly driven by increases in health care and pension related expenditure growth (Sotiropoulos, 2018). Despite the rapid economic developments that the state experienced in the 1990's and early 2000's, growing expenditures were not accompanied by an increase in Greece's revenues, which jeopardised the efficiency, but also sustainability, of the system (Karamessini, 2015).

Unemployment compensations in Greece have been relatively ungenerous even after reforms introduced in the 1980s. Also, entitlement to them has been conditioned on the earlier employment, therefore it has had more relevance, or more to offer, to those previously employed under regular contracts and virtually irrelevant to a large amount of people who have been working outside of these arrangements (ibidem). The weaker unemployment compensation scheme was also related to the high employment protection enjoyed by mostly adult male workers in certain industries. With the coming of more flexible and temporary forms of work, which was relevant for the younger labour force to a great

extent, many could find themselves receiving an even more residual benefit, if any at all, of the already low compensations (Kretsos, 2014).

The fragmented labour market and large informal economy have produced great inequalities in entitlement and coverage in other services too. Due to the underdeveloped social services and the often poorly implemented policies, the outsider-insider divide has been reinforced in the welfare system, as well. The fragmentation lead to the structure's low efficiency in combating poverty and social exclusion that majorly affected the outsiders, such as workers with atypical contracts, unemployed or youngsters (Sotiropoulos, 2018). Nevertheless, the Greek welfare reforms and expansions have managed to have equalising effects and reduce the distance among the protected workers and others to a certain degree (Karamessini, 2015). Still, as youth unemployment rates have increased in the 1990's and the issue of shadow economy kept being unresolved, both contributions of youngsters, as well as their future access to benefits, have been endangered. Since 1993 higher contribution to social protection were requested from those newly joining the labour market, which increased the financial burden on the shoulders of younger, and upcoming, generations in terms of sustaining the social safety net for a continuously ageing population (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

An important development within the Greek welfare system was the establishment of a universal national health care in 1983 that introduced full coverage to all citizens. However, due to the high cost of the system in the absence of increasing revenues, access has started to be conditioned step-by-step, and the private share in the system grew significantly over the last decades. The result of these developments was a greater disparity in terms of access and level of services provided to different population segments (Karamessini, 2015). The residual nature of unemployment compensation or family- and social assistance policy indicates that the family was given the role to care for dependent family members, including unemployed, next to children and the elderly (ibidem). As such, the extended family substituted social services that were inefficiently run by the state (Sotiropoulos, 2018).

Nevertheless, with the coming of the post-dictatorship era, economic growth, Europeanisation and more extensive liberalisation, the family's earlier role and structure have gone through major alterations. The absence of women on the labour market has started to decrease in the past decades, which was a major transformation for a country where most of the women remained home to run the household and take care of children and elderly. This alteration triggered a shift towards the dual-wage earner family unit and weakened the traditional model that positioned the male breadwinner at its centre (Karamessini, 2015). Young women's move towards more independence through paid employment, and their desire for social mobility, redraw not only the understanding on family,

but redefined the labour-market and triggered changes in terms of education and social services, as well.

Demands and necessity to replace traditionally unpaid child- or elderly care performed by women with state provided services became more and more urgent. While Greece came to the point to introduce childcare provisions, it did so with a significant delay and more modestly than other states. As such the family have retained an important role in care and, in cases where mothers were wage-earners, grandparents took over such responsibilities (ibidem). Furthermore, the lack or inadequacy of family assisting services could play a role in young people delaying the decision to have children, especially if their employment was not offering material security. A drop-in fertility rates, which aggravated in the years of the economic crisis, further reduces the strength of the welfare system, in which the state has constantly decreased its investment.

The measures taken in the crisis to assure fiscal consolidation reduced social transfers dramatically. Through the decrease of the state's GDP and the drop in social expenditure, the welfare system experienced an unprecedented curtailment. Cuts in the health care system, coupled with more and more people becoming unable to pay the necessary contributions for dependent family members and themselves, resulted in a decreased contribution but also in the number of insured through work. Meanwhile, increase in co-payments, reduction of services in the benefit packages, as well as the shrinking number of facilities, healthcare personnel and cut in their wages further impaired the system (ibidem).

Also, the problems concerning employment, wage levels and youth emigration resulted in the decrease of pension contributions that puts at risk the future of the Greek pension system and younger generations' possibility to retire. Gaps in social security coverage due to unemployment or atypical forms of work reduces entitlement to pensions, while low wage levels decrease their amount. Clearly these issues deeply impact the youngsters and their future prospects. Having the lowest wages among all age groups and the greatest exposure to atypical or undocumented work, the benefits and transfers they can access, or will be able to access, are constantly diminishing. Meanwhile, the number of those in need for social assistance or with entitlement to pensions have been increasing.

While the Greek state intended to introduce measures that could aid those in need and implement reforms to eradicate inefficient practices, the safety these policies could offer were not matching the depth of the economic crisis and its negative effects on the population (Sotiropoulos, 2018). Changes in unemployment- and family benefits aimed at extending the coverage of the support offered by state but they could not offer for all an adequate level of protection against poverty and deprivation. Unemployment insurance was extended to self-employed, thus coverage in terms of number was increased, but benefits were severely cut

and the stricter conditionality actually reduced the number of possible beneficiaries (Karamessini, 2015). Even if consecutive governments aimed at expanding the eligibility of the benefits and find ways to assist those in need for support, the severity of the crisis, decline of living standards and downward mobility of middle strata, beyond the extremely worsening situation of lower classes, were disproportionately more severe than the new benefits generated (Sotiropoulos, 2018).

Furthermore, benefits targeting families have also been reformed: child tax allowances and the stronger protection offered to large families, regardless of their income, have been abolished and replaced by support given after each child. These means-tested measures covering all types of families, without differences made based on occupation of the parents, could bring positive effects for the smaller family units and modernise the family-policy that have remained based on long-standing but traditionalist and particularistic basis (ibidem). Nevertheless, maternity leave has been reduced and the lifetime pension given to mothers of four or more children has been abolished (Karamessini, 2015, Sotiropoulos, 2018). Additionally, rent subsidies and housing allowances were revoked. (Karamessini, 2015).

While it is clear that social protection offered by the Greek welfare system was fragmented and significantly flawed in the pre-crisis times, it seems that in the last decade, marked by deep economic problems, governmental cuts in social expenditure brought uncertainty and deeper hardship for a large segment of the Greek population, especially for those belonging to the lower and middle classes (Sotiropoulos, 2018). The measures introduced to combat the increased risk of falling into material and social deprivation did not match the severity of the crisis and could not alleviate its effects. Young people, due to their already disadvantaged position, had to face an increasing hardship and reduction of benefits and opportunities. Meanwhile, low unemployment benefits, active labour market programmes offering short and poorly paid employment, and for only a few, could not address the general uncertainty, insecurity and decreasing space for social mobility for youngsters, so far. Also, reforms in family support are not enough to compensate for the insecurities in labour market, the reduced social transfers and the weakening of the support that the extended family could provide for youngsters and young adults. Therefore, the crisis while reduced the distance among different population segments, it did so by worsening everyone's situation (Filinis et al., 2018). As such, the support coming from the family, and substituting state-provided social benefits, have been jeopardised. This in the case of youngsters, greatly relying on family support, is another major setback in terms of having basis for building a future and sustain the existent welfare structure, as well.

## VI. Conclusions and distinct directions in addressing youth precarity

The present paper aimed at examining the sources of precarity of the Greek youth and investigate the effects of the crisis on youngsters in terms of precarisation. The closer look given to young people's labour market position over time, opportunities and access to social transfers, both in the pre-crisis decade as well as the period that came after 2008, showed that youth precarity is not a new feature of the Greek system. On the other hand, it also revealed the fragmented character of the social system that created and sustained gaps along different lines within the population, among which along age, as well. Nevertheless, the crisis further intensified and accelerated the already existent youth precarity. High youth unemployment rates, youngsters' absence from labour market, the introduction of sub-minimum wages and curtailed state-provided social support worsened the already harsh context in which young Greeks were supposed to arrive to adulthood, characterised by material and professional stability. Nevertheless, the indirect effects caused by the general deterioration of the living standards across professions, ages and often status too, were developments that indirectly but substantially aggravated youth precarity.

Expanded uncertainties, instabilities and risks that did not leave untouched the traditionally more protected employees, the breadwinners of the families, around which the security and support of others could be built, resulted in the weakening of the capacity of the family to support its members in need. In the decades before the outbreak of the crisis, the extended family was able to provide unemployed or low-paid youngsters with the support the Greek state and welfare system have not offered. Now, this source of social income was getting weak and dry. In the lack of measures that could combat the unprecedented economic and social disaster that hit the Greek population, youth precarity arrived to extreme heights and does not seem to disappear or be substantially soothed in the near future.

Interestingly, the findings proving the long-standing precarity of Greek youngsters point to one of the limits of precarity as a concept which aims at explaining global transformations and their worldwide applicability. Clearly, the Fordist era characterised by high employment protection and benefits deriving from work was, first of all, a Western phenomenon, and one that was relevant for certain segments of the societies of the developed countries, to those who were included in the industrial and social pacts. In the case of Greece, it is clear that youngsters have never managed to become insiders fast, if at all. As such, precarity has been their accepted reality, compensated by the family and possibly overcome after spending long years in jobs that did not offer neither material nor professional stability. Moreover, the existent stability enjoyed by a part of the employment force, and the strength

this offered for the rest of the population managed to ameliorate risks and feelings of uncertainty. This linkage, however, was broken in the economic crisis.

Nevertheless, the tendencies for greater liberalisation and flexibilisation of national economies and markets, within the increasingly globalised world had started earlier than the 2008 crisis. However, all these can be seen as related to its coming. The rising power of capital, decreased strength of labour and the need for competitiveness that trapped states in a vicious race against each other, and limited regulations and redistribution efforts beyond the national levels, have already resulted in deep divisions across regions and states. Still, this dynamic expanded exposure to risks and insecurity to all. In the Greek case this is very well illustrated by the effects of the crisis, which showed that instead of increasing security for those who lack it, there is a tendency of lowering protection for all, including those who yet enjoy some bits of it. As such, it is quite unlikely to see increased security for youngsters, while their relative uncertainty and risk exposure will possibly diminish as all segments of the population became more susceptible to them.

The repercussions and potential irreversible effects of the deep precarity of youngsters and the socio-economic hardship of the entire Greek population are various, and depend to a great extent on the nature and success of the measures and directions taken by the government, and possibly other actors, how the future will look like. It is clear that the sustainability of the Greek economic and social system or their ability to deal with the present and future challenges have been seriously jeopardised. The quest for reforms and solutions is still there, they still have to come.

There are several narratives and directions to consider in tackling youth precarity. Some of these have already gained popularity across Europe, while others, despite demands voiced on the streets, have not been received with enthusiasm in political circles. According to the narrative that we could call conventional, based on neoclassic or neoliberal ideas, over- and under-education are the issues to solve; while technological advancement and skill development through educational and training are the primary factors that define one's chances to find adequate employment. In this view, the capacity of educational systems to meet human capital requirements of the advancing technologies and the labour market shall be in focus and the mismatch between existent skills and jobs solved to combat the disadvantaged position of youngsters in labour.

In the Greek and European context, the idea to reform education or training systems to offer a skillset to youngsters that labour market demands is not a new. Initiatives promoting mobility and skill development are well known and used by youngsters. Nevertheless, instead of higher education attainment creating demand for certain jobs, it seems that these

systems shall prepare youth to adapt to the exciting reality of ruthless competition on a labour market where labour and income are polarising. In this view the context is given, the dynamics of global capitalism and the transformations are accepted, so the individual but also states have to adapt to it by increasing their competitiveness. This narrative remains blind to the structural conditions of insecurity generated by capitalism (ibidem).

According to the neo-Keynesian view, education is not the source of the problem or the solution, either. While educational attainment has been on a continuous rise, quality employment and income have been decreasing. Thus, university graduates have to occupy jobs that do not fit their credentials. The surplus of educated people on global level gives greater power to capital, which leads to the decrease of wage levels. Therefore, the problems come from a more complex socio-economic context that can be shaped through state intervention and progressive policies. As such, the solution shall be found in formulating measures that specifically target the issue of youth employment and precarity by channelling public funds to stimulate the demand side, create jobs and design a set of regulations that can assure rights to workers and oversee to an extent capital accumulation (Means, 2015). Thus, labour market position of youth is seen as a governmental issue and a question of policy rather than a problem born out of the inherent tensions of capitalism.

The ideas taken to the streets in the crisis, by mostly young Greeks but also workers of all ages, seem to go beyond the idea of state regulations to find a way out from the deteriorating situation. While problems such as drying funds for education or deterioration of domestic regulations protecting the interest of workers remain strong in the public discourse, with the idea of precarity gaining popularity in street actions, the problem is seen as one that oversteps the frontier of the state. If that is true, long-term solutions are not to be found domestically and not within the existent capitalist context either. In this understanding, neither the neo-liberal nor the state-interventionist neo-Keynesian approach are able to offer remedies, as they fail to identify the source of the tensions in the class, power or property relations on which capitalism has been built. Moreover, they are unable to understand that there is a need for radical change in the underlying structure for addressing the problem at its heart. This view is in accordance with the Marxist line of thought, which in the crisis acquired greater popularity among youngsters, who because of their experience of precarity and fear of a futureless life demand justice that cuts through age, gender but also national frontiers.



## Bibliography

- Alberti, G., Bessa, I., Hardy, K., Trappmann, V., & Umney, C. (2018). In, *Against and Beyond Precarity: Work in Insecure Times*. *Work, Employment and Society*, 32(3), 447–457. doi: 10.1177/0950017018762088
- Allison, A. (2013). *Precarious Japan*. North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Barbier J.-C. (2002). A survey of the use of the term *précarité* in French economics and sociology. *Documents de travail CEE*, n°19, Noisy le Grand, CEE.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: towards a new modernity*. (M. Ritter, Trans.). London: Sage Publications.
- Bell, D. N., & Blanchflower, D. G. (2015). Youth unemployment in Greece: measuring the challenge. *IZA Journal of European Labor Studies*, 4(1). doi: 10.1186/2193-9012-4-1
- Berardi, F. (2009). *The soul at work: from alienation to autonomy*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Casas-Cortés, M. (2014). A Genealogy of Precarity: A Toolbox for Rearticulating Fragmented Social Realities in and out of the Workplace. *Rethinking Marxism*, 26(2), 206–226. doi: 10.1080/08935696.2014.888849
- Castel, R. (2016). The Rise of Uncertainties. *Critical Horizons*, 17(2), 160–167. doi: 10.1080/14409917.2016.1153886
- Cholezas, I. (2017). What Makes Greek Youth More Vulnerable to Unemployment? *European Youth Labour Markets*, 45–60. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-68222-8\_4
- Dendrinou, I. (2016). Youth employment before and during the crisis: rethinking labour market institutions and work attitudes in Greece. *Social Cohesion and Development*, 9(2), 117–132. doi: 10.12681/scad.8895
- EUROSTAT Press Office (2009, December 10). *Youth in Europe. A statistical portrait of the lifestyle of young people* [News Release]. Retrieved from [https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STAT-09-177\\_en.pdf](https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-09-177_en.pdf)
- ELSTAT (2017, February 17). *Labour Force Survey: 1981-2015* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/f2aa84e4-f47e-4546-b081-bbfa6b7760e1>
- Filinis, K., Karakitsi, A., & Katsikas, D. (2019). Employment and Unemployment in Greece Before and After the Outbreak of the Crisis. In *Socioeconomic Fragmentation and Exclusion in Greece under the Crisis* (pp. 55–88). S.I.: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-68798-8\_3
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2001). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1992). *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge, MA: B. Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

International Labour Organisation (2016). *Diagnostic Report on Undeclared Work in Greece*. Retrieved from [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms\\_531548.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_531548.pdf)

Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition. *American Sociological Review*, 74(1), 1–22. doi: 10.1177/000312240907400101

Kalleberg, A. L. (2011). *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs. The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s*. New York: The Russell Sage Foundation.

Kalleberg, A., & Vallas, S. (2017). Probing Precarious Work: Theory, Research, and Politics. In *Precarious Work* (Vol. 31, pp. 1–30). Emerald Publishing Limited. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320170000031017>

Karamessini, M. (2010), “Transition Strategies and Labour Market Integration of Greek University Graduates”, LSE Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe, *GreeSE Paper* No 32.

Karamessini, M. (2015). The Greek social model: Towards a deregulated labour market and residual social protection. In *the European Social Model in Crisis. Is Europe Losing its Soul?* (pp. 230–288). Geneva, Switzerland/Cheltenham, UK: ILO. doi: 10.4337/9781783476565.00011

Kasmir, S., & Gill, L. (2018). No Smooth Surfaces: The Anthropology of Unevenness and Combination. *Current Anthropology*, 59(4), 355–377. doi: 10.1086/698927

Kretsos, L. (2011). Union responses to the rise of precarious youth employment in Greece. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 42(5), 453–472. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2338.2011.00634.x

Kretsos, L. (2014). Youth policy in austerity Europe: the case of Greece. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 19(sup1), 35–47. doi: 10.1080/02673843.2013.862730

Lazar, S., & Sanchez, A. (2019). Understanding labour politics in an age of precarity. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 43(1), 3–14. doi: 10.1007/s10624-019-09544-7

Means, A. J. (2015). Generational Precarity, Education, and the Crisis of Capitalism: Conventional, Neo-Keynesian, and Marxian Perspectives. *Critical Sociology*, 43(3), 339–354. doi: 10.1177/0896920514564088

Mingione E. (2002). Labour Market Segmentation and Informal Work. In *Economic Transformation, Democratization and Integration into the European Union. Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave.

Neilson, B., & Rossiter, N. (2008). Precarity as a Political Concept, or, Fordism as Exception. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25(7-8), 51–72. doi: 10.1177/0263276408097796

Papadopoulos, O. (2016). Economic crisis and youth unemployment: Comparing Greece and Ireland. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 22(4), 409–426. doi: 10.1177/0959680116632326

Perovic, B. (2016) . Defining Youth in Contemporary National Legal and Policy Frameworks across Europe. Defining Youth in Contemporary National Legal and Policy Frameworks across Europe. Youth Partnership: European Commission, Council of Europe. Retrieved from <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/Analytical paper Youth Age Bojana Perovic 4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c>

Schneider, F., & Williams, C. C. (2013). *The shadow economy*. London: IEA, Inst. of Economic Affairs.

Sotiris, P. (2010). Rebels with a Cause: The December 2008 Greek Youth Movement as the Condensation of Deeper Social and Political Contradictions. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 34(1), 203–209. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00949.x

Sotiropoulos, D. A. (2004). The EU's Impact on the Greek Welfare State: Europeanization on Paper? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 14(3), 267–284. doi: 10.1177/0958928704044627

Sotiropoulos, D. A. (2018). Too Little, Too Late: The Mismatch Between Social Policy and Social Crisis. In *Socioeconomic Fragmentation and Exclusion in Greece under the Crisis*, (pp. 89–108). S.I.: Palgrave Macmillan. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-68798-8\_3

Standing, G. (2016). *The precariat: the new dangerous class*. London: Bloomsbury.

Themelis, S. (2017). Degrees of precariousness: the problematic transition into the labour market of Greek higher education graduates. *Forum Sociológico*, (31), 53–62. doi: 10.4000/sociologico.1811

Tubadji, A. (2012). Youth unemployment in Greece: economic and political perspectives. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Discussion paper*.

Zambarloukou, S. (2006). Collective Bargaining and Social Pacts: Greece in Comparative Perspective. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 12(2), 211–229. doi: 10.1177/0959680106065042