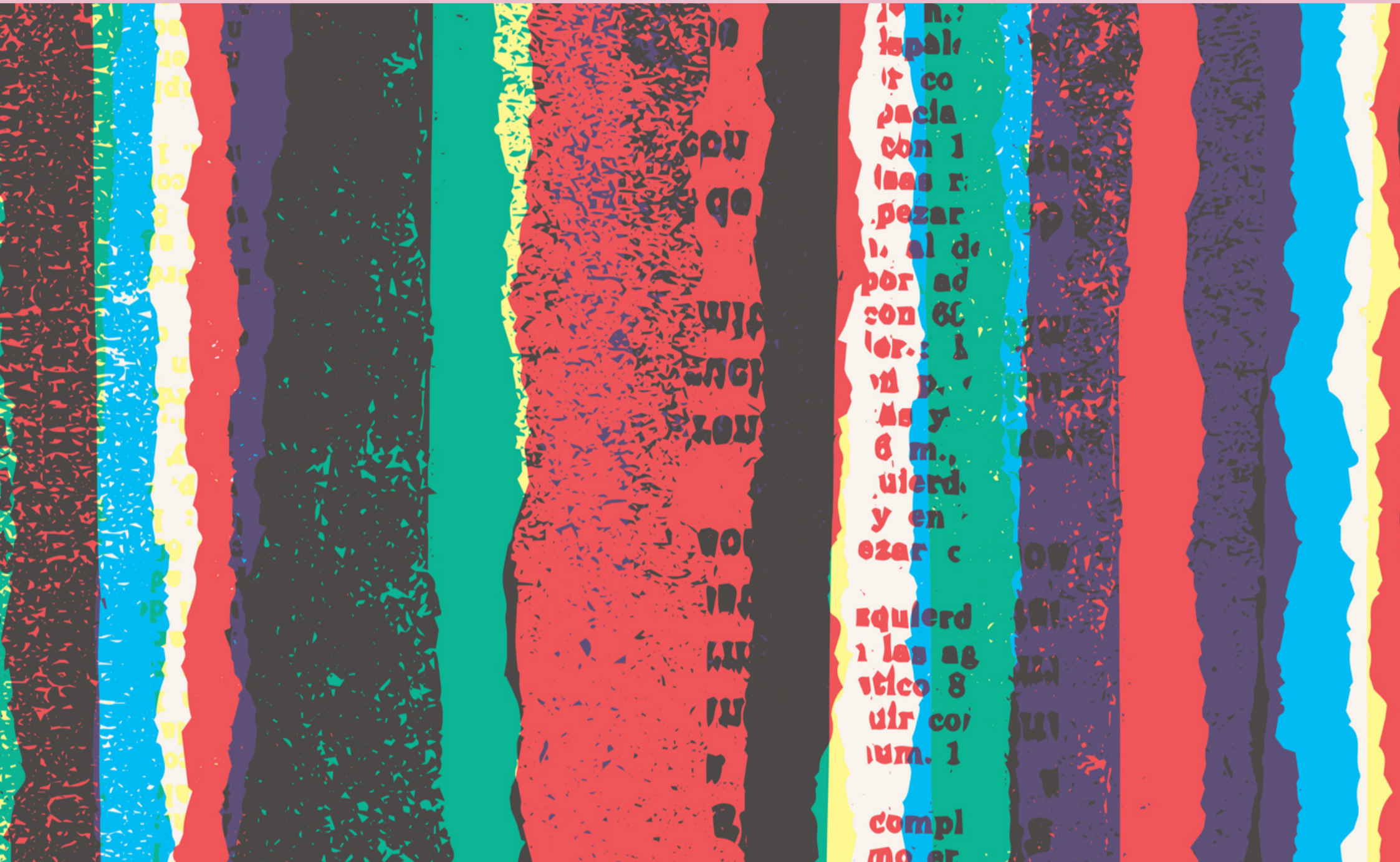


YOUTH IN THE KALEIDOSCOPE

Collective Action, Emotions, and Electoral Attitudes
in Greece during 2023



EDITED BY

Costas Gousis & Loukia Kotronaki

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ON
ETERON

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**Eteron - Institute for Research and Social
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**ON
ETERON**

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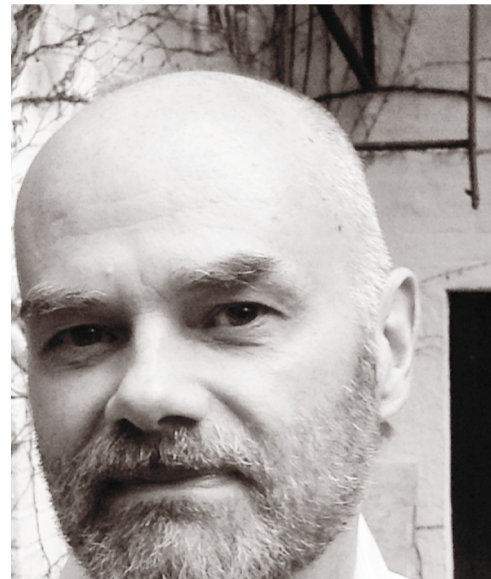
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INTRODUCTION

“The aim of this volume is to provide a thorough examination of the political opinions and voting trends held by young people in Greece building bridges between youth studies, contentious politics, comparative political analysis, and electoral sociology”

Costas Gousis & Loukia Kotronaki

The head-on collision of two trains on 28 February 2023, the deadliest railway accident ever recorded in Greece, is not something that the human mind can easily accommodate. The loss of so many lives, the majority of whom were under 30 years old, came as a shock that plunged society into mourning and, at the same time, led to several days of nationwide mobilisations, the largest seen in the past decade.

The present collective volume presents the main findings of “The New Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster” research and attempts to outline the profile of the young generation by recording, analyzing, and discussing engagement and activism of young people, as well as their positions on a number of political and ideological issues. The research data was collected by aboutpeople, on behalf of Eteron, in mid-April 2023 on a sample of 634 people, aged 17-34 years old.

Further, this volume offers the opportunity for an open dialogue concerning the youth vote in Greece’s 2023 May 21 and June 25 parliamentary elections by analyzing the new context, particularly focusing on the correlation of the electoral attitude with the broader political profile of young people in the post-pandemic context.

The content collected in this volume comes as part of Eteron’s research project “Youth – Voice On”, which is a continuation of Eteron’s previous research project on [Generation Z](#), including a broader age group (17 - 34 years old), a generation hit by successive crises. Its aim is to provide a thorough examination of the political opinions and voting trends held by young people in Greece building bridges between youth studies, contentious politics, comparative political analysis, and electoral sociology.

Youth politicisation and the shaping of patterns of political expression and electoral behaviour are approached as dynamic processes in a matrix of relationships, experiences, lived memories, and political identities, which evolve and transform over time. After all, as [Ruth Milkman](#) put it in an interview published in Eteron’s 1st e-book on [Gen Z](#): “A generation is not a biological phenomenon defined by age but a sociological one defined by the dramas of history.”

Overview of the collective volume

The e-book starts with an interview with **James M. Jasper**. Jasper is an American sociologist with a major contribution to bringing the cultural and cognitive coordinates of movement action and political participation to the fore. Focusing especially on mapping the affects, moods and emotions that trigger different kinds of collective action, Jasper has contributed to the literature with a number of works, including *The Art of Moral Protest* and, most recently, *The Emotions of Protest*. In our interview, we discussed with him these invisible aspects of political behaviour, the modalities and uses of the concept of “moral shock” in the emergence of contentious politics, the electoral rise of the right and the far right, the hopes, fears, and low expectations of young people, and finally, the studies on the younger generation as a field and a springboard for understanding the general processes of socialisation and political mobilisation.

In her article “**The political profile of young people after the Tempi Train Tragedy: Emotions, ideological identification and expectations**”, **Loukia Kotronaki**, lecturer and postdoctoral researcher, answers the above questions by presenting and analysing the main findings of the research. Her analysis focuses on three major subject areas. The first one concerns the participants’ profile, with the emphasis being placed not so much on the specific group’s “ostensible” demographic/sociographic traits, but on the less visible aspects of political participation: the emotional and moral imperatives calling for collective action under the given circumstances. In the second one, the author attempts to document the overall processes of the formation of collective identifications and meanings for this particular age group. The third subject area focuses on the future, mapping the participants’ political expectations and some of the currently observed paradoxes regarding their political stances and preferences.

Next, **Panagiotis Koustenis**, PhD in Political Science, embarks on a journey through time through his analysis “**The youth vote in Greece 1990-2023**”. By providing a historical overview of the evolution

of young people’s voting behaviour over the years, the researcher presents and comments on data and comparative tables on youth voting, starting from the early years of the post-dictatorship period of Metapolitefsi and reaching the double parliamentary elections of 2023. Commenting on the latter, he explains that despite the majoritarian and partly balanced dynamics of Nea Dimokratia’s appeal compared to the past, the younger age groups are its least privileged audience. Among other things, he highlights the persistence of some more general structural features in young people’s voting behaviour, such as reduced electoral participation, a more indecisive attitude and less ideological vote criteria, and, above all, lower party identification as well as the continuous decline in its quantitative value, due to the demographic ageing observed in recent years.

Manina Kakepaki, researcher at the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE) and scientific co-supervisor of EKKE’s research on the young generation “YouWho?”, identifies some key developments in the evolution of public and scientific discourse regarding the concept of the new generation and young people. In her article “**A genealogy of youth surveys: why so many and why so often?**” she addresses the growing research interest in the young generation observed over the past 15 years, and points out the increasing weight that events beyond the boundaries of the “national” have acquired in the shaping of young people’s political identities. According to M. Kakepaki, the challenge for any study of the new generation should be to discern whether the attitudes and perceptions of individuals will accompany them for the rest of their lives, determining who they are, regardless of the age group they belong to.

Costas Gousis, coordinator of the project “Youth - Voice On” and co-editor of this e-publication, attempts a comparative analysis of the findings of the “The young generation after the Tempi train disaster” with those of another research called “An Insight into the Minds of Voters: Ideologies, core values, stances”, which was conducted by Eteron in collaboration with aboutpeople in early April 2023, amongst members of the general population over 17 years of age. In his analysis “**Mapping the young generation: A comparative analysis**” Costas Gousis highlights the dominant trends amongst the younger generation in relation to topics such as: institutions, democracy & collective action, the economy, spending & the role of the State, immigration, LGBTQI+ rights & #MeToo, ideological references & expectations for the future. In this context, he identifies and analyses the findings by age group, commenting on the most pronounced differences that emerge in the light of the generational dimension.

Nikos Serdedakis, Professor of Sociology of Collective Action and Social Movements at the University of Crete, addresses the topic of the individualisation processes of young people. In his article “**Trends of individualisation in the era of post-democratic liquidity**” he points out the broader implications of a perception of society as an individualised place (topos) for the articulation of life plans, while at the same time highlighting the countervailing trends within it. In his article, he draws a distinction between the young people’s age group and “youth”, which constitutes a special social category to the extent that it forms a singular lifestyle, broadly speaking, a “culture” that is distinct from that of the rest of the population. Finally, he traces antinomies in the findings of Eteron’s research, the most significant being that between feelings regarding the Tempi disaster and the youth vote data as captured in the exit polls for the 2023 national elections.

Ioannis Balampanidis, political scientist and writer, comments on the findings of Eteron’s survey, the parliamentary elections and the broader political profile of young people in his article “**Low expectations, high demands: the paradox of the ‘young generation’**”. As he explains, the overall picture for young people aged 17-34 in Greece today suggests that youth has low expectations and major frustrations/ disappointments, but at the same time is more demanding than what its aspiring political spokespersons sometimes think. In this context, he wonders whether long-term processes of identity forging might better explain what the “young generation” is and what it wants, rather than specific incidents, however dramatic and charged they may be.

Then, **Lina Zirganou-Kazolea**, PhD candidate in Political Science (University of Athens) and **Maro Pantelidou-Maloutas**, Professor Emeritus of Political Science (University of Athens) join the discussion with their joint article “**The youth vote in the May 21st elections: Individualisation, ideological fluidity and the limits of the Left turn**”. As they point out, the elections overturned certainties that, until then, seemed to be constant in the political party system of the post-recession period, such as the left-wing youth vote and especially the mass vote for SYRIZA. In this light, through a more comprehensive examination of the political profile of young people in Greece in the last decade, they explore how the recent election results converse with the findings of previous surveys that documented on the one hand the – gradual and conditional – return of young people to politics and on the other hand their shift towards the Left.

Journalist and screenwriter **Maria Louka** writes about the Tempi train disaster emphasising on “the process of externalising, sharing and transforming grief” through gatherings, demonstrations, protests, events and artistic performances. The concepts of absence and trauma also lie at the heart of her recent documentary, “Grief - Those Who Remain”, which she directed together with Myrto Patsalidou. In her article “**The embodied grief of the young generation: a small crack in the banality of inertia**” she shares her thoughts on the post-Tempi mobilisations and their main stake, which is none other than a movement of life affirmation.

In his article “**Young people’s participation in mobilisations: A brief exploration**”, **Kostas Kanellopoulos**, a researcher at the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE), looks back at some of the most important mobilisations that have taken place in Greece in the last few decades. As he explains, the findings of Eteron’s research on the young generation after the Tempi train accident can be used to carry out comparative analyses with the corresponding stances of young people after major protest events in the past. By tracing correlations with the broader political environment of each period, he addresses the very notion of youth as a social construct, as well as the movement collective identities and the evolution of young people’s political behaviour within a context of multiple crises.

The e-book closes with **Costas Gousis’** presentation “**The youth vote as reflected in the 2019 and 2023 election exit polls: Comparative graphs**”, where he returns to the methodological notes and advice of Elias Nikolakopoulos and tackles the following questions: What is the history of exit polls in Greece and what is the best way to approach their results? How did young people vote in the parliamentary elections of the 21st of May and the 25th of June? What do we observe when we focus on the 17-24 age group, the student vote and young people aged 25-34? What are the differences that emerge compared to their voting behaviour in the 2019 parliamentary elections?

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JAMES M. JASPER INTERVIEW

**Emotions
and social movements.
A conversation
with James M. Jasper**



INTERVIEW

At the end of June 2023, Costas Gousis and Loukia Kotronaki conducted a [video interview](#) with James M. Jasper, a sociologist who has made a major contribution to social movements theory by initiating the cultural approach in the study of collective action. James M. Jasper is, among other works, the author of *The Art of Moral Protest* and *The Emotions of Protest*.

In the context of Eteron's "[Youth – Voice On](#)" project, we discussed the role of emotions in social movements, meanings and uses of the concept of "moral shock" in the field of contentious politics, the electoral rise of the right wing and the alt-right, the hopes, fears and low expectations of the youth and youth research as an interesting laboratory for studying socialization and mobilization.

Below you can find the transcript of the interview.

Costas Gousis: Many social scientists and social movement scholars often tend to ignore emotions as an analytical dimension. In contrast, your broader work has significantly contributed to a theory of action that focuses on emotional dynamics, or as you put it in your book *The emotions of Protest* "Brains can feel and hearts can think". What can we learn about politics and protest when we move emotions to center-stage?

James M. Jasper: Right, that's a big question. Let me try to summarize it by saying the following: if you want a theory of action as opposed to a theory of structure and constraint – which a lot of social movement theories are – if you care about action you have to have emotions in there.

Emotions give to our action direction, they give it energy or they take energy away. They guide us through life, in a way, through different streams of action. So, it's really impossible to imagine a theory of action that's not driven by emotions. For example, the simple interest-driven notions of rational choice theory have no way of explaining why we want what we want, why we have alliances with the people we do, why we choose certain tactics rather than others; all of these things are emotional processes. So, we feel our way through life, through action and as you break down action into its fundamental parts either at the level of the individual or at the level of interactions with others, emotions are the driving force. And the more specific we can be about those emotions the better we will understand social action.

James M. Jasper
Interview
ON
ETERON

What we're always trying to do in a social explanation is to break it down into the most

fundamental parts, so that if I say “I did this because I was jealous” everybody accepts that and people understand what jealousy is or what indignation is. When you say “I was angry” or “I was indignant”, people say “oh yes, that’s a satisfactory explanation” and we don’t have to push any deeper to understand that action. I think that’s why emotions are ultimately the main building blocks of a theory of action, political action but all sorts of other kinds of action too, since it’s not restricted to politics.

Loukia Kotronaki: “Moral shock” is one of the most prominent concepts you have introduced for explaining the outburst of collective action in the absence of previous organizational embeddedness. Could you, please, define its main features and functions in the field of contentious politics? Can you please tell us if all moral shocks operate in the same way independently of the political environment or conjuncture in which they appear?

James M. Jasper: A moral shock is, in my view, when something happens that gets our attention and makes us realize the world is different from how it seemed to us. It requires rebuilding some of our feelings or of our thinking about the world to make things right again, so it’s a puzzle and a challenge to who we are and how we view the world. Some shocks can be paralyzing and they may not lead to action at all, they can lead to depression or resignation. But under certain circumstances they can also motivate action. Those circumstances are often the standard factors of mobilization, such as networks of people we know, organizations at work, available resources, things for us to do. That’s a standard way people get mobilized.

But even in the absence of those, shocks can be so mobilizing, they can be so activating that people will go and find networks that they are not yet part of and join them, they will seek out organizations or sometimes they will even start their own organizations – although that’s an extreme case. So, shocks can motivate action and I originally came up with the idea to explain why people join the movement even when they don’t know anybody in the movement or even when they’re not part of networks.

However, what has happened over time is that people have used this concept to talk about people who were already in a movement. And their moral shock consists of re-energizing them, pushing them to participate more. They don’t change their point of view – very few people ever change their point of view – but the moral shock reminds them why they have been active, why they believe in human rights or whatever they have been active in and it makes them want to do more and brings them back into fuller activity because of the energizing part of the shock. The way the concept has been used more recently is sort of keeping a movement going on in the face of adverse events that are rather shocking.

Loukia Kotronaki: We know that there is a negative correlation between low expectations and positive motivations to participate in both conventional and non-conventional forms of collective action. According to the findings of our research, “Generation Z” seems to be a generation of low expectations without any ambition of future social change. Nevertheless, this pessimism is not translated into a reluctant attitude vis-à-vis the electoral process. How can this paradox be decoded? What patterns of love/hate -and of relevant social activity- are likely to be forged in low expectation cognitive and emotional regimes?

James M. Jasper: I can speak from the US experience where I think there was a lot of cynicism about electoral politics among activists on the Left. And there was a lot of cynicism about social change. After all we lived through George W. Bush and then Donald Trump came along. Barack Obama has raised a lot of hopes that were dashed and I think that explains the Occupy Wall Street movement. So, there are a lot of reasons to be sort of cynical and to have low expectations about protests and politics in general. But when Trump was elected, these people that were fairly cynical about electoral politics realized “oh my god, things can get worse, elections really do matter” and so there was a sort of surge of interest I think in mundane activities like voting.

Even though the hopes were not high for positive social change, fear and threat of deterioration under a far right and crazy President were enough to motivate people at least to vote. So, you have different sets of motivations and different arenas perhaps, so you might have a different set of hopes and outrage in electoral politics than you do in social movements and protest politics. Electoral politics might seem low cost but in fact a useful way to act. It’s very easy to be cynical about electoral politics but then things like Donald Trump happen.

Costas Gousis: Indeed, in many recent elections, like for example the Greek parliamentary elections, we are seeing both the right-wing and the extreme right wing (the alt-right etc.) on the rise. Trying to explain this reactionary development, many analysts are stressing the irrationality of the voters and the triumph of emotions over reason. However, as you argue in your work we should move beyond these sterile debates over the rationality of voters and understand that the distinction between beliefs and emotions is wrongheaded. We would like to ask you to elaborate on that and explain what is, then, the feeling-thinking package behind the rise of the extreme right-wing?

James M. Jasper: Well there are what I call affective commitments or affective loyalties which are emotions that are long standing, that really guide our goals in life, our affiliations and we react to things on the basis of those background emotions. For example, a certain kind of love for a country or love for a certain kind of group identity could be very long standing emotional loyalty that shapes what we do.

So in the case of the right-wing, let me speak about the US right because I know more about it but I think there are parallels in a lot of other countries. So clearly one of the the key elements is a suspicion of immigrants, a dislike of foreigners, a kind of nationalism that is suspicious of anything that goes on outside the borders of your country and especially of people coming into your country. That is as much cognitive as it is emotional and in fact it's a fusion of the two. I personally think that, both morally and intellectually, that's a wrong view of the world and how the world works and what benefits the country. But I think that the cognitive elements of that are as wrong as the emotional elements. It's hard to say it's irrational, I think it's wrong but that's not the same as irrational. I just disagree with those points of view but that doesn't mean that they are any more emotional than my commitment to tolerance, diversity, freedom and so on.

In the US there's an additional element since we have the fundamentalist protestants – a quarter of the electorate or a quarter of the population according to some measurements who believe that the bible is literally the word of God. And they have a set of beliefs which especially right now lead to mobilizations against LGBTQ people. And the reason why they are targeted is that there are Christian fundamentalist preachers who are going around and sort of setting the agenda for the Republican party when it comes to what used to be called “family values”. Their concern is that somehow gay people are against God are sinning in some ways.

You know, any belief and any faith like that borders on the irrational but again that's partly because it's so alien to my atheist way of viewing the world that it's hard for me to believe that it's rational. But it's certainly well padded with both symbols and cognitive claims as well as long standing emotional loyalties. That's an element that I think is unusually strong in the US and especially in certain parts of the US but it's not absent in other countries as well; this belief in some sort of religious guiding precepts. So, again the people on the Right – and on the Left as well – who seem way outside the mainstream have their world views that are very well developed, are quite sophisticated in their own way and they're full of facts.

For example, the anti-vaccination people in the US have evidence and facts. What they claim to be facts that look like science and usually turns out not to be really science but they cite studies; studies that have not followed the normal path of science which involves some consensus and persuasion among scientists. But to them they look like science, so these are positions that are well defended, let's say they're not just emotional positions but they are intellectual positions as well.

Loukia Kotronaki: You argue in your work that building confidence is crucial to all strategic action. And that this is important because activists often “burn out” and suffer from frustration, fatigue and the negative effects of exposure to police repression. Are there any specific social movements' mechanisms/interactions that can trigger processes of fear's transformation into hope and diffused defeatism into contentious confidence?

James M. Jasper: Well, first of all just having a social movement is a way that people can transform despair and fear into a sense of hope. The fact that there are people out there doing something, acting, protesting against government policies. And then the fact that you can join those movements and action sort of feeds on itself. You go out one day to a protest and you're not attacked by the police or shot at by the police and that gives you a sense “well I can go out again and it's safer than I realized” or it makes you think, “well these people whom I've seen protesting for years, they actually turned out to be very decent human beings whom I like and feel comfortable with” and you join them and it makes you feel good. So, there are positive experiences of participating in a movement that then feed on themselves.

Repression is a very real thing and sometimes those fears are very real and the police do shoot protesters and lock them up. But even the repression can backfire and even more people will come into the street because they are indignant and outraged by the arbitrary police repression. So, confidence is important not only in the sense that you can win in the end but also confidence that you won't be harmed in acting and speaking out. Because there is also confidence that comes just from being able to voice your opinions and being part of a group that feels the same way that you do; the confidence that gives you that kind of collective identity. So movements do all these things, whether it's inspiring leaders, in some cases in history it is arming themselves for self-protection that gives them some confidence and so on, there are all sorts of things that movements do.

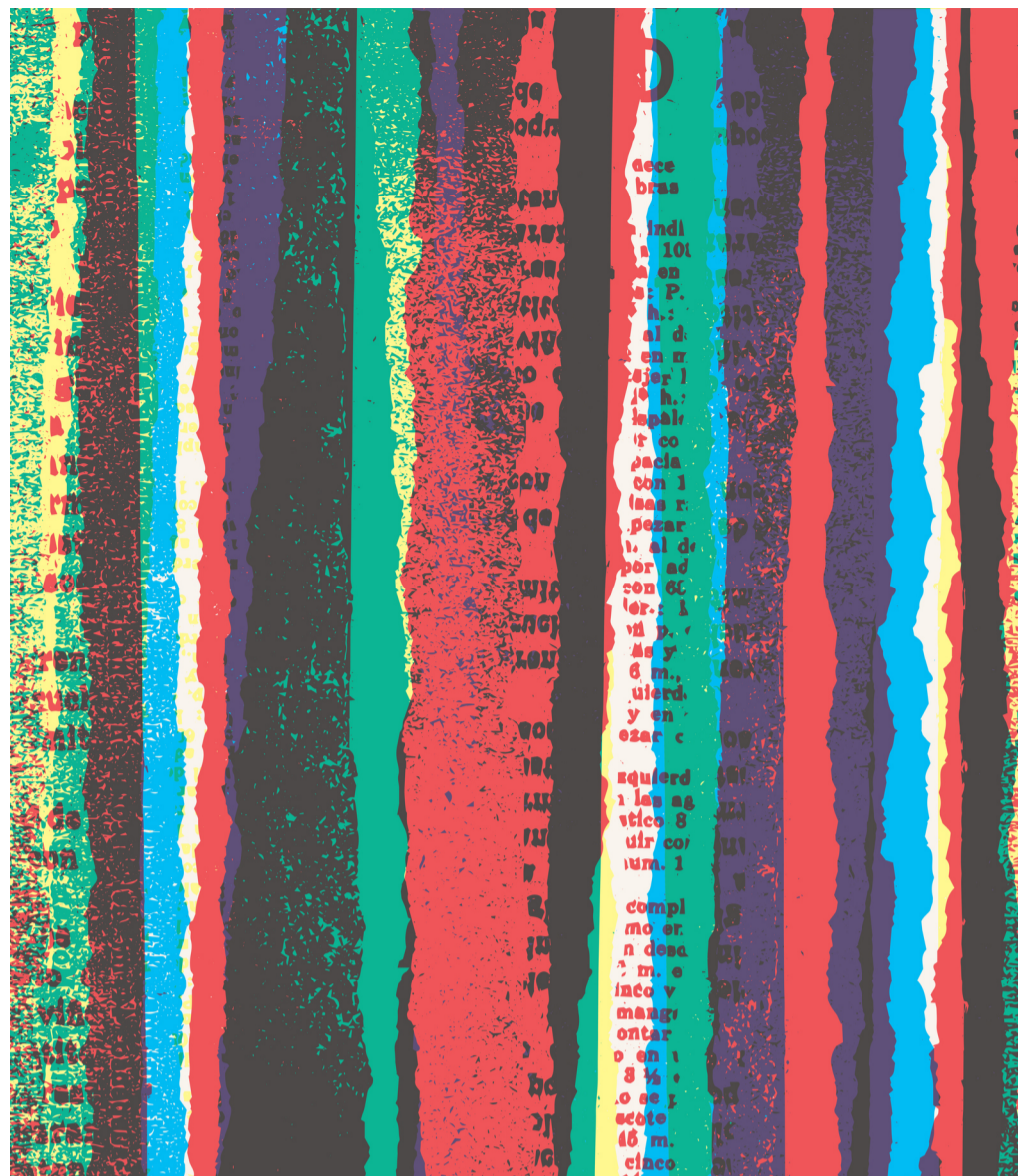
Costas Gousis: Well, things are always contradictory in politicization processes. Now, I would like to ask you about the relation between scholars and specifically social movement scholars and activists. Because there is a new wave of activism, for example union activism in the US right now, with the new unions and young workers playing an important role like they do in Amazon or Starbucks. And these experiences are discussed within social movement studies but there is often no real bridge between action and academic theorization. How can we build a more productive relation between academia and everyday activism?

James M. Jasper: First, I think most social movement scholars in Europe and the US do have political activities and most of them at least have been involved in social movements. Actually, most of them continue to advise or do research for social movement groups. So I think there is an alliance between academics and activists but in the end academics don't give very good strategic advice to activists. The activists are there every moment on the ground and if they're good they have a much better sense of the right tactical moment and the right alliances compared to academics. Academics have a certain distance and you know it's good to have a certain distance because as an academic you are trying to draw broader lessons that will be useful in other movements in other times and places. So in the end the pragmatic understanding of the activist is not quite the same as the more abstracted theories and explanations of academics.

Most social movement scholars in the US want to have that kind of dialogue with the activists and there are lots of conferences that include both activists and academics. But there are limits to that. Academics write in a way that most activists are not going to read, no normal people would really want to read our jargon and our data collection and analysis and all the things we do as professional social scientists. So we write for different audiences in a way and it's hard but most social movement scholars always try to write certain things for both academic audiences and other things for wider audiences in a more comprehensible, clearer and simpler way; maybe simple is not quite the right word but you know, academics try to write well, they just don't always know how to do it.

Loukia Kotronaki: Your approach is very refreshing and I really hope we'll have the opportunity to continue this conversation with you in the near future. Even if there is a geographical distance, political and social phenomena and emotional questions are very similar.

James M. Jasper: Well, exactly this suggests that with emotions we are getting down to some very basic human processes that you can find across political arenas, across cultures. Cultures differ and emotions differ somewhat across cultures but there is also a way in which you're always going to find emotions. And, you know, anger may be a little bit different



“A social movement is a way to transform despair and fear into a sense of hope”

James M. Jasper

in one context or another and culture especially affects how we display emotions quite differently in different places but the emotions are still there and often, very often, they are basically the same emotions. So it's very promising I hope.

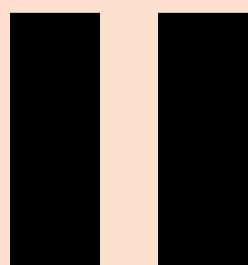
Loukia Kotronaki: Yes it is.

Costas Gousis: Of course, our conversation is an important contribution because our research project "Youth – Voice On" actually began with a tragic event, the deadliest train accident ever recorded in Greece. And we tried to follow the mobilizations after the train accident in Tempi focusing on the youth participation in these mobilizations. Loukia Kotronaki has prepared a research report based on a survey quantitative survey that was conducted by Eteron and was very much inspired by your work and specifically used the concept of "moral shock" to understand the role of emotions in the youth mobilizations all over Greece during March 2023. And this is a dialogue we continued in light of the 2023 parliamentary elections, reflecting on the youth vote and more generally on the role that emotions play in political and collective action.

James M. Jasper: It is important to note that young people may have somewhat different emotional processes than older people. I think the key is that with these affective orientations young people, teenagers, and in their early 20s are very often still working out some of these affective commitments and orientations. So both politically and in terms of their own identity and moral intuitions, they are making a lot of decisions and they are capable of going in different directions in ways that people my age are probably not going to do. So it makes studying youth a very interesting laboratory for studying socialization and mobilization.

Costas Gousis: Thanks for mentioning this and this is another reason why our discussion with you significantly contributes to our "[Youth – Voice On](#)" project and we're looking forward to future cooperation.

The political profile of young people after the Tempi Train Tragedy: Emotions, ideological identification and expectations



Loukia Kotronaki

INTRODUCTION

The news of the fatal accident in Tempi was widely experienced as a moral shock (Jasper 1997), sparking -almost as an instant reflex-, a multitude of collective manifestations of discontent (demonstrations, symbolic protest actions, strikes) that spread to 73 cities across Greece and brought to the streets unknown groups of protesters. The starting point for the present research was an intention to investigate the effects that this particular dramatic event had on the political perceptions, the assertive dispositions as well as the emotional fluxes and motivations for political participation of the (extended) group of young people (17-34) considered to be the protagonists of protest events (Rucht, Koopmans & Neidhart 1999; Fillieule 1999; Serdedakis 2011).

Given the above, this analysis will focus on three major subject areas.

The first concerns the participants' profile. In this context, particular emphasis will be placed not so much on the specific group's "ostensible", demographic/sociographic traits, but on the less visible aspects of political participation: the emotional and moral imperatives calling for collective action under the given circumstances.

The second will attempt to document the overall processes of the formation of collective identifications and meanings for this particular age group. Dimensions of political behaviour related to the political context in which they are manifested, and to more stable variables of political reality, namely, the degree of trust in institutions and ideological predilections as well as the participants' organisational affiliations, are at the core of this section.

The third focuses on the future and aims at demonstrating what seems to be perceived as virtuous and/or relevant political action. In this context, the mapping of the participants' political expectations in combination with the preferred practices for achieving them is expected to shed light on some of the currently observed paradoxes regarding political stances and preferences.

I. Emotional flows, cognitive prompts and motivations for participating in the protest events after the Tempi train accident

The tragic accident at Tempi, as mentioned above, was experienced as a "moral shock" that came to disrupt routines and burst the bubble of common certainties (safe and reliable transportation, social responsibility, etc.), on the grounds of which any minimal social agreement and/or silent disagreement with everyday life's organisation and reproduction patterns is based.

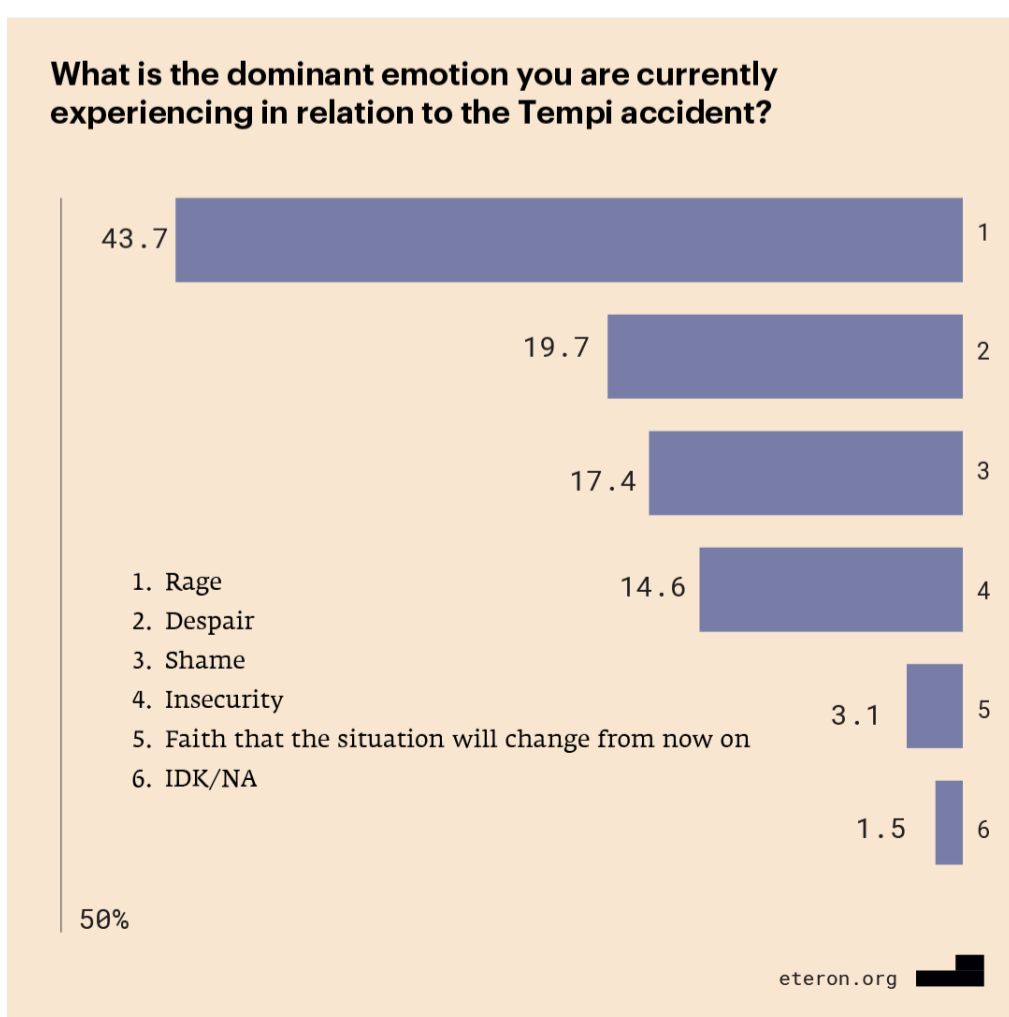
The concept of “moral shock”, as described in the relevant literature (Jasper & Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997), can help us better understand how, on hearing of an event that is deemed to be unfair, in this case the fatal train accident, people who are not embedded in social networks or political organisations participate in protest events en masse.

The interpretative key in this case is the emerging feelings of anger/rage and/or shame. These emotions translate into a moral imperative for taking action and may explain the mass entry of people with no previous organisational involvement in protests due to a previous lack of strong solidarity ties, or of a solid ideological identity (factors that encourage action).

However, as suggested in relevant studies, there is a continuous flow of emotions in any action flow, and what will ultimately determine its duration and characteristic attributes is the balance between positive (hope, indignation) and negative emotions (rage, shame).

More specifically, rage without hope rarely results in coordinated forms of collective action. Instead, it seems to favour other, often individual, forms of resistance or expression of discontent (McAdam & Aminzade 2001; Kotronaki & Seferiades 2012). Respectively, if shame does not acquire a legitimating basis (attributing causal responsibility to powerful decision-making parties) in order for it to be able to be transformed into (sacred) indignation, the paralytic effect caused by the shock, can't be transformed into active political action.

GRAPH 1



By observing the findings of the research at hand, it appears that the above theoretical assumptions are substantiated. When asked “What is the dominant emotion you are currently experiencing in relation to the Tempi accident”, 43.7% of the total sample replied that they felt “Rage”, 17% felt “Shame”, 19.7% experienced a sense of “Despair”, while only 3.1% of the participants stated that they had “Faith that the situation will change from now on”.

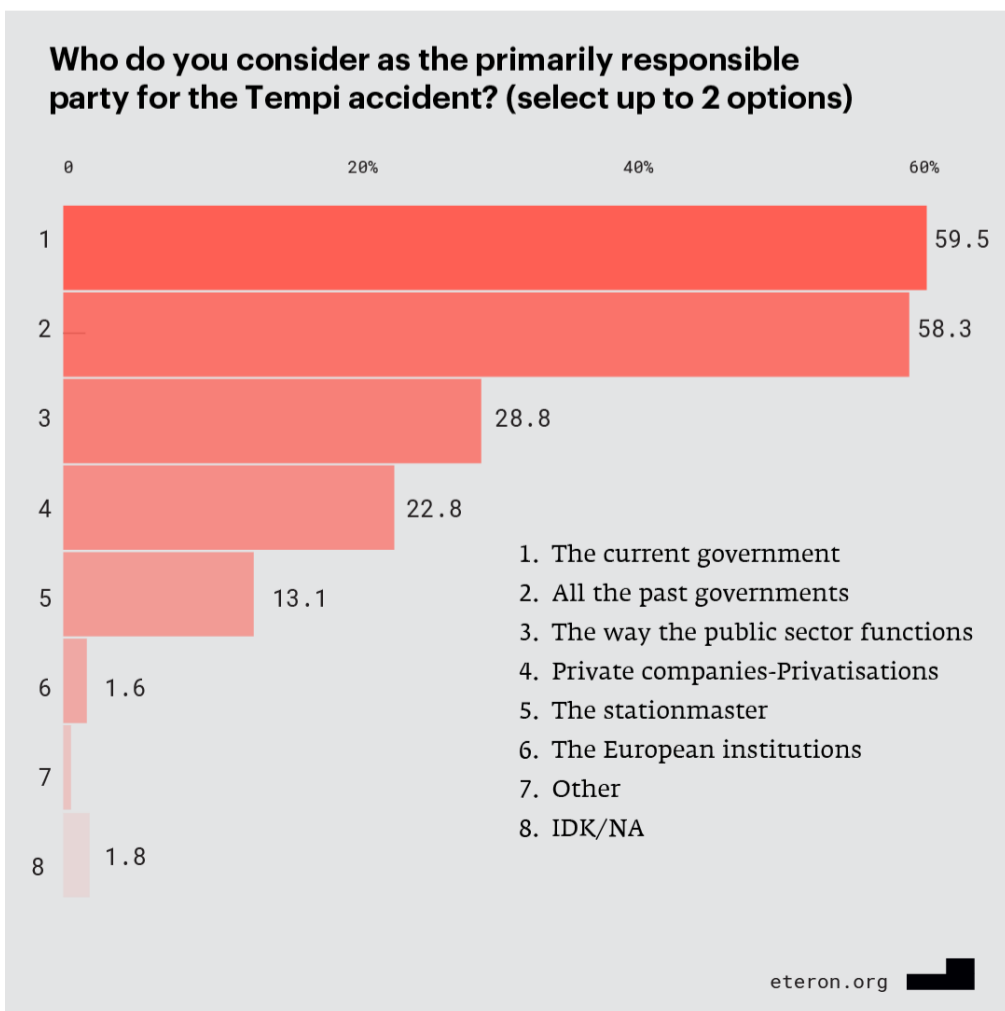
Subsequently, we asked the 37.8% of the sample who stated that they participated in protest actions over the Tempi accident if they participated in an organised block and 64.6% replied “No, I went alone or with my friends” compared to 31.1% who stated that “Yes, I joined an organised block”. Similarly, to the relevant question “How did you get informed about the mobilisations that took place?” 54.3% answered “From Social Media” and only 10.6% replied “Through Political Collectives/ Associations/ Unions”.

Lastly, given the age group to which the participants belong and the exceptional circumstances caused by the pandemic in the past few years, it is particularly interesting that when asked “Were the protest rallies regarding the Tempi accident the first time that you participated in rallies/protests over a social issue?”, 84.9% replied “No” (compared to 13.6% who said “Yes”).

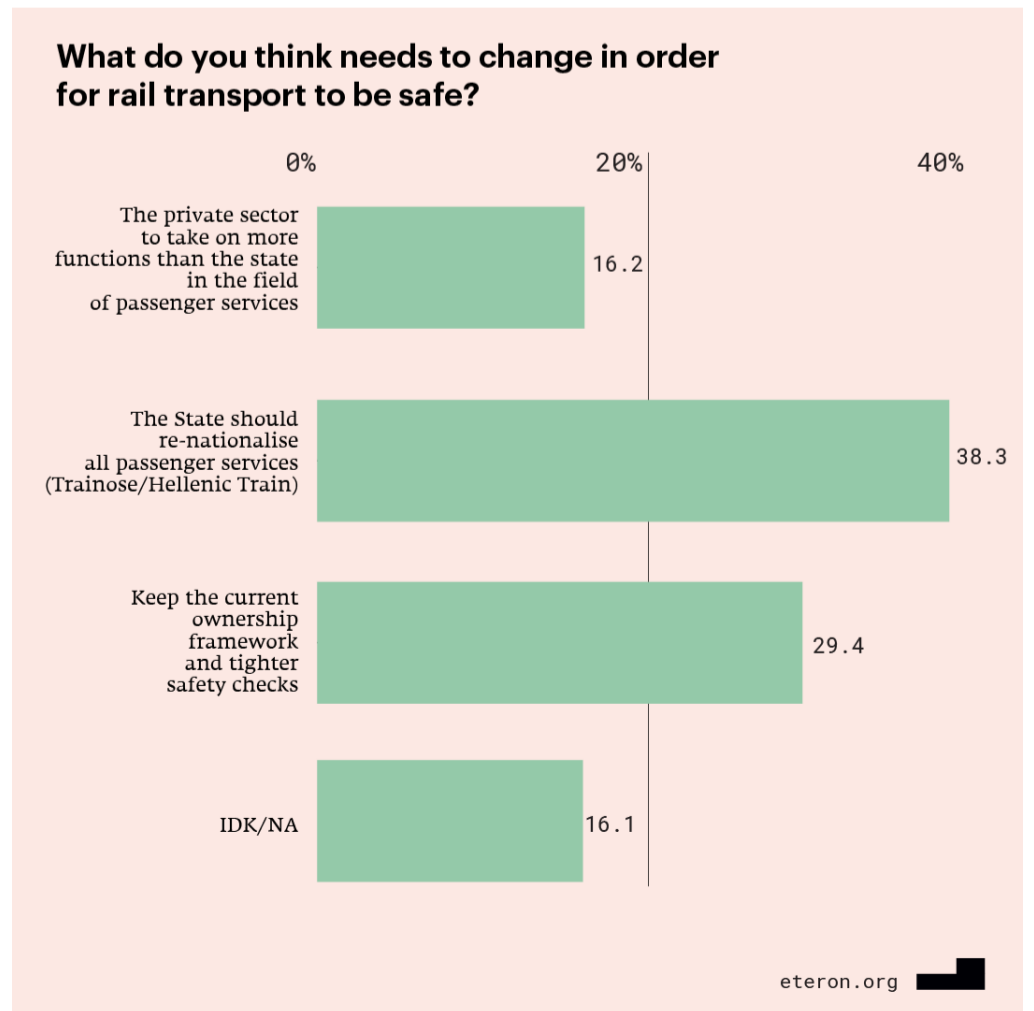
At the same time, looking at the process of attribution of responsibility through the analysis of the diagnostic frame (problem definition and attribution of responsibility), the resulting pattern is not particularly clear-cut, as responsibility is almost evenly distributed among the dominant political actors (the government 59.5%, all past governments 58.3%), as well as the public and private sector (28.8% and 22.8% respectively).

Things are less confusing when we focus on the prognostic frame (proposed solutions to existing problems), where the option “Re-nationalise all the passenger services (Trainose/Hellenic Train)” was picked by 38.3% of the participants and took a lead over the alternatives.

GRAPH 2



GRAPH 3



From the above it can be concluded that, indeed, there are types of emotions that can trigger collective action, mainly in the form of highly emotional protests (marches remain the dominant form of protest, with 44.8%), even in circumstances where the basic organisational preconditions for its emergence (pre-existing assertive vehicles and attachments, solidarity bonds and common value systems) are absent.

However, it is important to stress that emotions alone probably do not suffice to give collective action duration over time. In the absence of established (organisational) spaces of solidarity and reciprocity, as well as spaces where the process of forming collective identities and communities of values can take place, those interpretive frames that can identify and decode the current reality by forging motivations for further action (Snow et al., 1988), the expectation of social change through collective action (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001) fades relatively quickly. As a consequence, any assertive dynamics developed through the protest events are gradually receding.

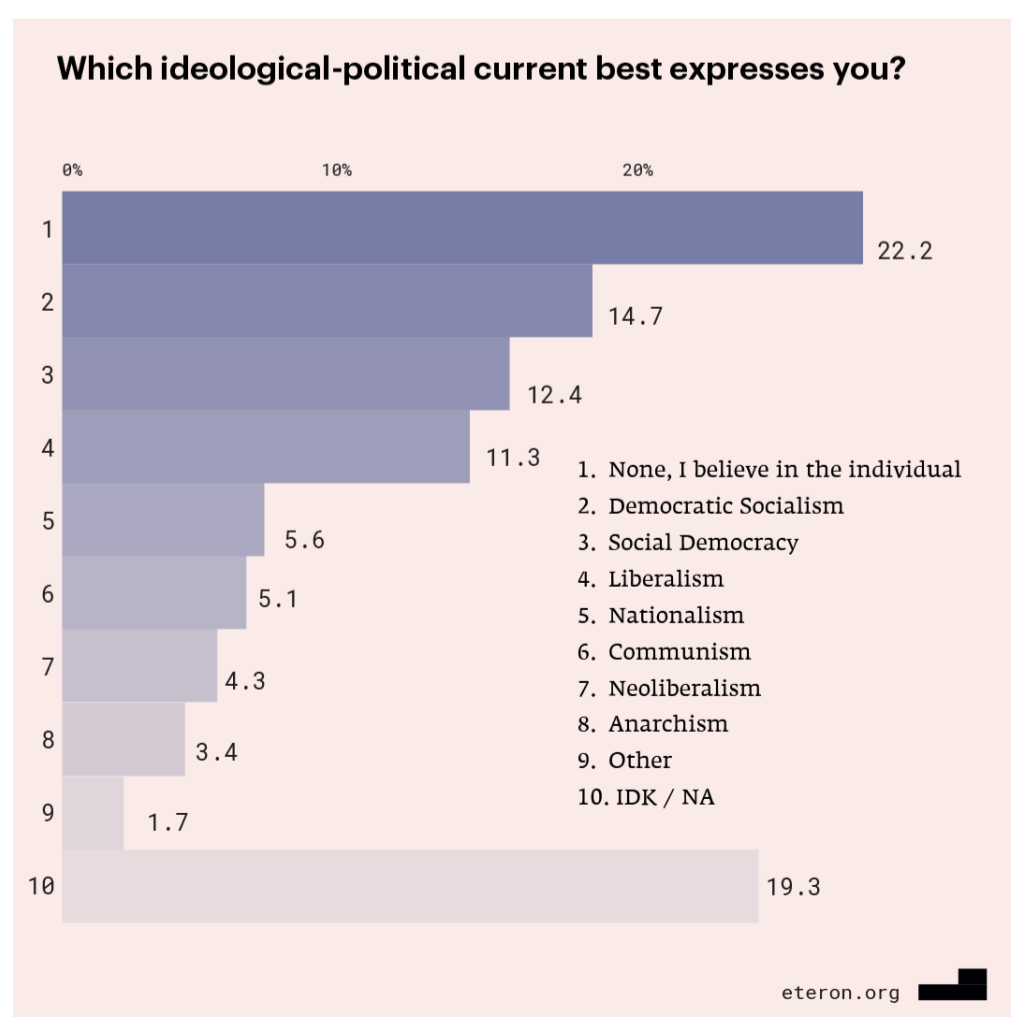
The intense, but ephemeral effect of emotions on the shaping of political attitudes seems to be confirmed by the responses concerning voting intentions. When asked “Which two of the following issues will influence your vote in the May 21 elections?”, the “Tempi tragedy” gets 18.5% while the options “Expensiveness – Inflation”, “Economy – Growth”, “Justice – Transparency” are ahead with 43.4%, 43% and 40% respectively.

II. Weak ideological identifications: Individual success vs institutional failure

If we shift our focus of research beyond the dense and highly emotional context of the Tempì accident, to the more everyday – and arguably more entrenched – political views and identifications of the group being studied, the information and data we collect from our research do not reveal dramatic differences: ideologically diluted political participation, distrust and alienation from the existing institutions.

More specifically, when asked “Which ideological – political current best expresses you?”, the most popular answer (22.2%) was “None (No ideology), I believe in the individual”. The option “I don’t know, I don’t want to answer, Not applicable” was in second place with 19.3%, followed by “Democratic Socialism” (14.7%) and “Social Democracy” (12.4%). Next in line are “Liberalism” (11.3%), “Nationalism” (5.6%), and “Communism” (5.1%). At the bottom of the list are “Neoliberalism” and “Anarchism” with 4.3% and 3.4% respectively.

GRAPH 4



When attempting to compile the fragments of ideological identifications, as they emerge from the research, it would be valid to argue that, despite the relative ideological dominance of individualism (22. 2%) a trend of cultural progressivism extending from Social Democracy to Anarchism is rather noteworthy (35%). This cultural progressivism trend is also detected when we analyse the replies to the question “What is/are the biggest problem(s) that Greece is facing at the moment? (up to 2 answers)”. Here, the predominant issues of the conservative agenda, such as “Immigration/Refugees” and “Greek-Turkish relations” did not rank highly. They received only 11.5% and 5.9% of responses, compared to “Expensiveness/Cost of living” and “Corruption” for which the percentages were significantly higher, (69.4% and 58.3% respectively).

On the other hand, the relative prevalence of the values of individualism is deeply rooted in time and must be seen as the product of the coupling of three different mechanisms (Busso, 2017): a/ the shift of focus from justice to efficiency and, consequently, to governance models that promote the logic of “numbers”; b/ the process of individualisation and the simultaneous marginalisation of social responsibility; and c/ the consolidation of a multilevel governance model in which sometimes the role of civil society organisations appears to be enhanced (provision of social services) while other times it appears to be undermined (possibility of exercising criticism and pressure). This is the long process of depoliticisation, a process of eradicating any political or moral dimension from public life (Held, 2006), in which there is no room for alternative outlets, as everything is subject to the “realm of needs” (Hay, 2007).

The tip of the iceberg of this major process is a phenomenon often referred to as the “(political parties’) ideological convergence at the centre”, a merging which often ends up confusing the body politic or rendering it apathetic. Hence a relatively high percentage (19.3%) of participants appear rather confused as to their ideological self-identification and in response to the relevant question state “I don’t know/NA”.

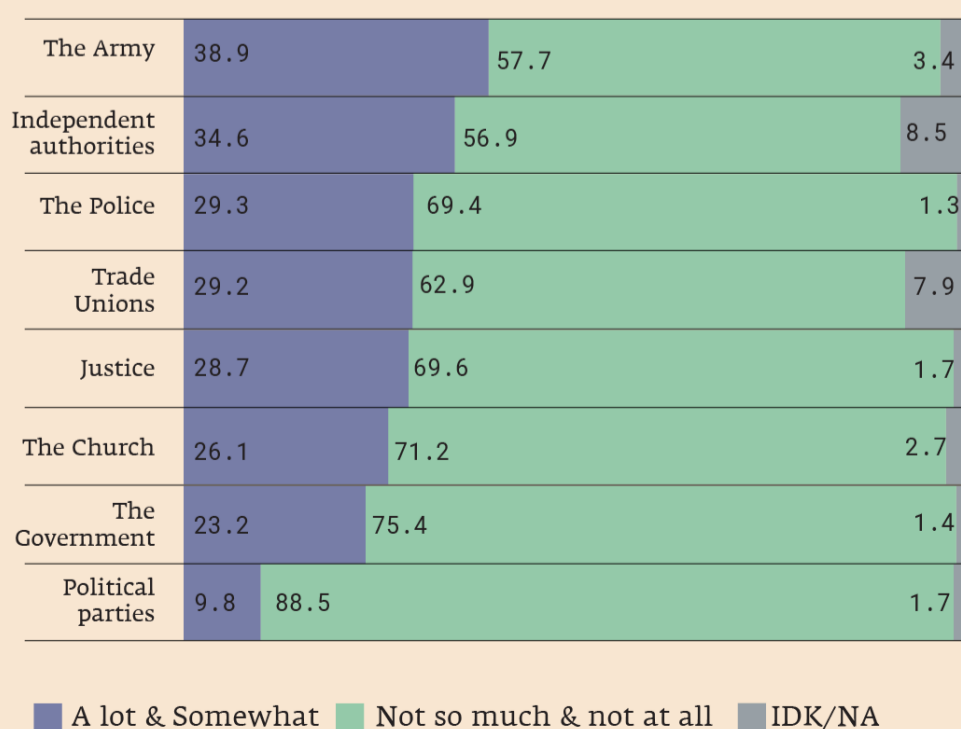
It is equally interesting to note and further investigate the fact that, while individualism is at the top of the respondents’ preferences, neoliberalism, the ideological rationality that promotes and implements it in its most radical form, is in the penultimate place of choices (4.3%), i.e. only 0.9% more than Anarchism.

In order to interpret this paradox of the connection between “individualism” and “neoliberalism”, we need to conduct more in-depth research focusing on different aspects. However, the findings of the present research may be able to shed light on some of the aspects of this obscure relationship.

It seems, therefore, that in terms of attitudes, neoliberalism has negative connotations as it is not related to some imaginary or abstract value system, but to applied policies, and to specific political forces and institutions that implement them. And, most likely, the relevant responses may reflect a widespread intolerance towards the lived Greek political and social experience of neoliberalism. An intolerance which is also manifested in terms of a generalised crisis of confidence in institutions, as stated when we posed the relevant question.

GRAPH 5

How much do you trust the following Greek institutions? (comparative graph)



Specifically, when asked “How much do you trust the following institutions in Greece?”, very few people trust “Political Parties”, (88% of all participants replied “Not much or Not at all”. The “Government” (75.4%) comes second on the same negative scale, followed by the “Church” (71.2%), while further down one finds “Justice” and the “Police” with percentages of 69.6% and 69.4%. In a less unfavourable position are the “Workers’ Unions”, the “Army” and the “Independent Authorities” with respective percentages of 62.9%, 57.7% and 56.9%.

III. LOW EXPECTATIONS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: LIFE CHANGES VS ATTITUDE CHANGES

A search in the relevant literature quickly reveals that there are different (often contradictory) views on the connection between political trust and political participation. According to certain scholars, trust in institutions is a key prerequisite for political participation (Almond & Verba, 1963). According to others, though, distrust is a particular virtue of “citizens with critical minds”, which does not deter political participation and, on the contrary, pushes citizens to engage in unconventional forms of political participation (Norris 1999; Rosanvallon 2008).

The debate on this issue is ongoing and is further enriched by research findings on other factors that jointly encourage/discourage political participation. But regardless of the different directions this discussion may take, there is one thing that is not disputed: the link between political trust and (conventional) forms of political participation.

With the above considerations in mind, the findings of the present research reveal yet another paradox. The paradox of active participation in conventional forms of action (voting) despite the undeniably high rates of lack of trust in political parties and the government.

Namely, in response to the question “In the past I have participated in: (multiple choice)”, a significant

percentage of 70.3% of the participants answered “Elections (I have voted)”. This is followed by participation in “Rallies/demonstrations/protests” (51.9%), “Online activism (adopting a #hashtag/deleting an app)” (51.9%), with 31.3%, and “Strike/work stoppage” (24.3%).

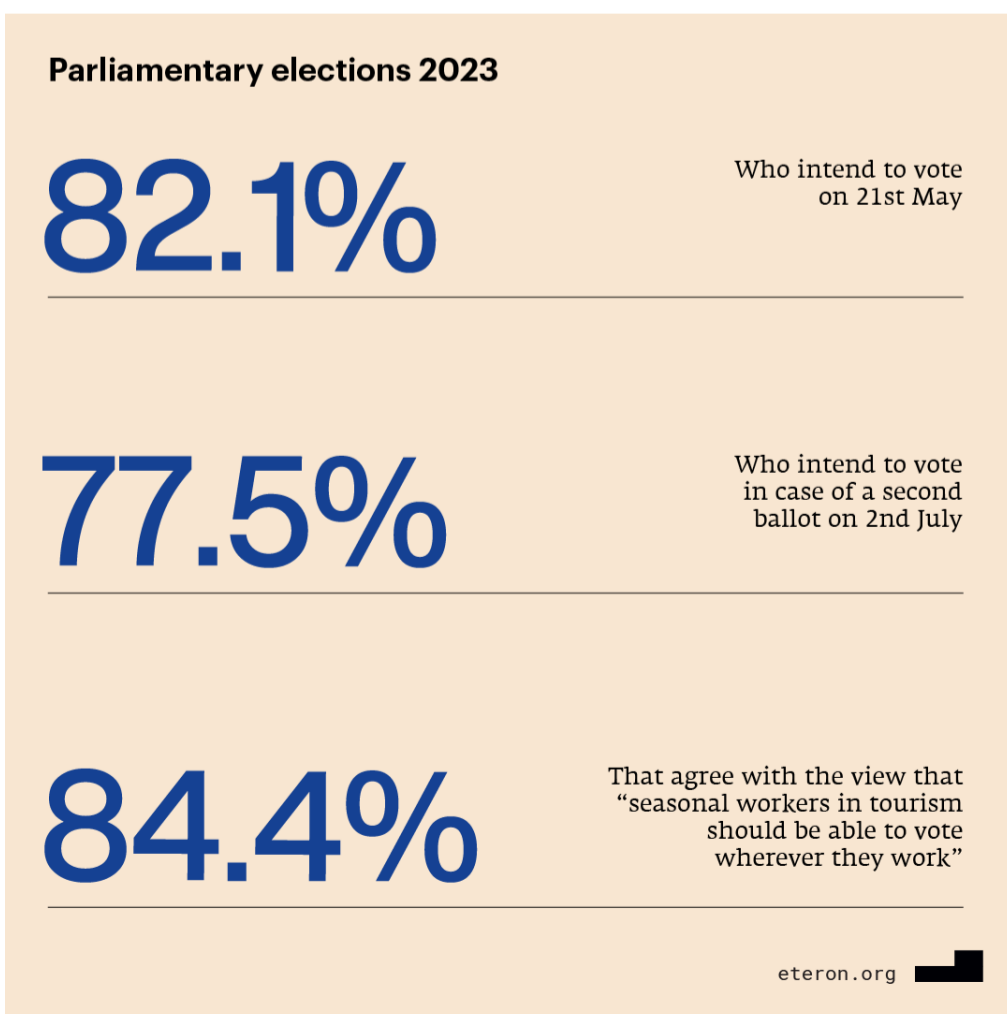
The paradox of participating in conventional forms of action despite the crisis of credibility that runs horizontally through the institutional complex becomes an almost insoluble puzzle when the question “Do you intend to vote in the parliamentary elections taking place on 21 May 2023 or not?” is posed and 82.1% state that “YES”, they will. In the same vein, when asked “If no government is formed after the May 21 elections and elections are held again on July 2, do you intend to vote or not?”, the answer again is overwhelmingly in favour of “YES” (77.5%).

This difficult riddle might have led to an analytical and theoretical impasse if the question “How could you improve your life? (multiple options)” had not been asked and had it not been made clear that voting is portrayed as a defensive political act and a form of low-expectation political participation. Undoubtedly, the most popular answer (66.2%) was “By personally making individual efforts”. Coming second by a very wide margin (35.2%) is “By voting (governmental alternance)”, followed by “By participating in collective actions/social movements” (33.2%). Another equally popular option was “By networking and meeting the right people” (24.1%). The prospect of improving one’s life “By participating in political parties” (8.5%) is quite low, while more people than anticipated stated that “I don’t think that my life can be improved” (8.8%), given what that point of view entails.

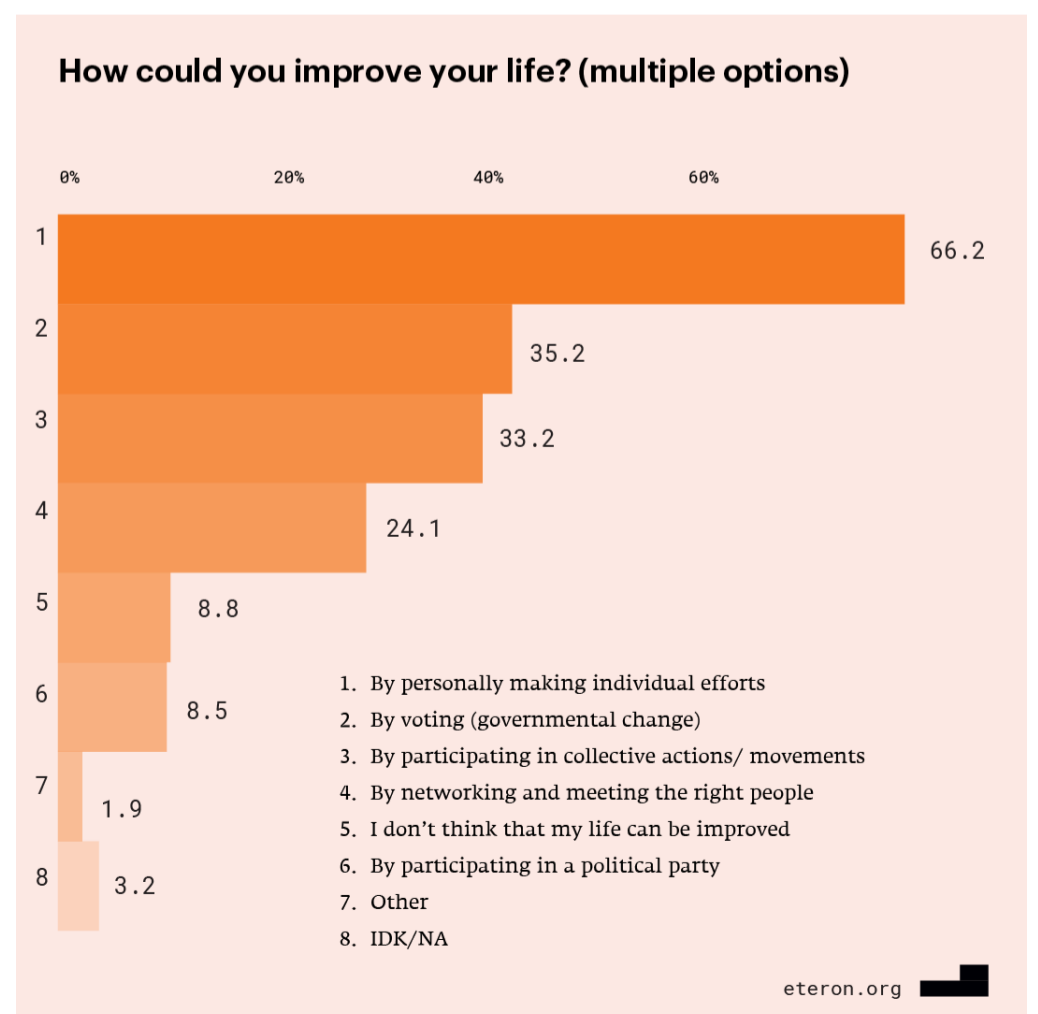
In this case, the responses don't require much interpretive effort. They come to confirm the hypothesis of the institutionalised process of depoliticisation as described in detail above. But they also come to support the argument that a new form of personalised politics is emerging (Bennett, 2012), which is incubated and reinforced in the informal, digital social networks, the imaginary "personalised" online communities to which the younger generations of the DIY political ethos (Thorson, 2012) are attached through loose ties.

In fact, according to a number of researchers, the space defined by digital political action interacts and functions in a complementary manner with that of institutions, as voters who lack a truly distinct sense of options and voting gradually turn away from institutional politics and turn to the politics of individual, digital emotions. But according to the research, they also largely (33.2%) gravitate towards the most "traditional" sources of emotion: collective actions and social movements.

GRAPH 6



GRAPH 7



**The tragic
accident at Tempi
was experienced
as a “moral shock”
that came
to disrupt routines
and burst
the bubble
of common
certainties.**

Loukia Kotronaki



- The tragic train accident that took place in Tempi, Greece was experienced as a “moral shock”.
- The predominant emotions experienced after the accident were rage and shame.
- The transformation of anger into a moral imperative for action explains the mass participation of people with no previous organisational involvement in protest
- The action’s duration depends on the balance between positive (hope, indignation) and negative emotions (rage, shame).
- Rage without hope rarely results in coordinated forms of collective action. Shame without attributing responsibility to powerful decision-making parties does not turn into indignation and instead has a paralysing effect and doesn’t usually lead to collective action.
- The prevailing feelings today in relation to the Tempi accident are, consistently, negative: Rage (43.7%), Shame (17%), and Despair (19.7%). “Faith that the situation will change for the better” is detected in just 3.1% of the participants. 37.8% of the participants participated in the mobilisations.
- The majority of the participants (64.6%) did not join an organised block, while the percentage of those who joined a protest for the first time was relatively small (13.6%) compared to 84.9% who have participated in such mobilisations in the past.
- Those who participated in the mobilisations were informed about the mobilisations mainly through Social Media (54.3%) and their friends and family (23%)
- The main responsibility for the Tempi accident is more or less evenly distributed between the current government 59.5% and all the previous ones 58.3% and, along the same lines, the public and private sector (28.8% and 22.8% respectively).
- The most prevalent preferred solution to remedy the situation is considered to be the re-nationalisation of all passenger services (38.3%).
- “Expensiveness – Inflation” (43.4%), “Economy – Growth” (43%), and “Justice – Transparency” (40%) shape young people’s voting intention more than the “Tempi tragedy” (18.5%).
- In terms of ideological identifications, individualism has a relative predominance (22.2%), while there also seems to be a tendency towards cultural progressivism ranging from Social Democracy to Anarchism (35%). A significantly high percentage (19.3%) stated “IDK/NA”.

- The crisis of confidence affects the entire range of institutions horizontally. Higher rates of distrust are expressed for the “Political Parties” (88%) and the “Government” (75.4%), while the “Army” and the “Independent Authorities” (57.7% and 56.9%, respectively) score lower (participants see them as being more trustworthy). There is also an undeniable lack of trust in the media with TV (86.7%) being at the top of the list.
- The crisis of confidence in political parties and the government does not translate into an intention to abstain from elections. 82.1% stated that they will vote in the 21st May elections and 77.5% stated they intend to vote in the event of a run-off.
- Given the high degree of distrust towards the government and political parties in general, voting is a defensive political act and a form of low-expectations political participation practice. An overwhelming 66.2% of the participants believe that their lives are going to be improved through personal effort.

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The youth vote in Greece 1990 -2023



Panagiotis Koustenis

EXECUTIVE

From the early years of what we call “Metapolitefsi” in Greece -meaning the historical period that came after the 1967-1974 military dictatorship-, the youth played a key role in the political scene, especially after the electoral victory of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) in 1981 and in the aftermath of young people’s left-wing radicalisation, which had peaked during the last years of the dictatorship. However, this political assessment was soon reversed in the 1980s, as the gradual conservatisation of the younger age groups became a key factor in the shift in electoral correlations in 1990, which led to the return of Nea Dimokratia (ND) to power.

Since then, the predominant impression was of a rather politically disengaged young generation, something that was in line with similar trends in the Western world at the time. However, in the following years, the electoral choices of the younger generation were reversed yet again, shaping a pattern that was actually the opposite of the general electoral trends, setting the younger generation almost on the sidelines of political and, above all, electoral competition for quite a while.

However, the generalised shift away from the traditional two-partyism that was observed in the late 2000s amongst all voters under the age of 55, was a forerunner of a broader crisis of the established political system, which was to peak in the 2012 electoral earthquake, of which the youth emerged as perhaps the most dynamic pillar. Since then, the majority of the younger age groups (particularly women) have been associated with the SYRIZA party (Coalition of the Radical Left), which brought them back to the forefront of electoral competition, thus leading, at that stage, to a total electoral realignment.

Even when Nea Dimokratia won the elections in 2019 and returned to government, this did not seem to reverse the electoral correlations amongst people aged up to 34, who for the first time seemed to be electorally autonomous from the rest of the voters, a fact that kept them in the electoral spotlight for the following years.

However, the 2023 elections caused a new “small” earthquake, this time mainly referring to the collapse of SYRIZA, while younger voters, in particular, strengthened new challenger parties, in a way confirming the instability that often describes their electoral behaviour, although maintaining some of its more general structural features, such as reduced electoral participation, a more indecisive attitude and, above all, lower party identification and less ideological voting criteria.

Besides, even within the context of their volatile final preferences, younger voters seem to maintain certain standards for the time being, such as the somewhat limited (although still majoritarian and partly balanced compared to the past) appeal of Nea Dimokratia, thus still constituting the least privileged audience for the government party. Voters under 35 act uniformly and to a considerable extent distinctly, as a generation defined by the experience of the economic crisis and its consequences. However, it emerges that these younger electorates remain more susceptible to choices that may seem to be unpredictable at first, especially at a time when post-democracy seems to be gaining ground.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The significance of conducting voting pattern analysis based on people's age is based on the assumption or the conclusion that the very stage of life that the voters are in, is a crucial variable that determines, first of all, their political and then, their electoral behaviour. Since the early years of the field of electoral sociology, various theories or observations have been put forward, often in the form of almost stereotypical norms about the relationship between age and voting, such as, for example, that younger voters tend to be more left-wing or "progressive" while older voters, conversely, are usually more conservative, a belief that was apparently reinforced in the wake of the radicalisation of youth in the 1960s.

This observation, despite its relatively consistent verifiability in the course of time, has occasionally fluctuated and in some cases has even been questioned, especially after the 1980s and 1990s¹. Since then, young people's electoral behaviour (despite any internal variations) has become more associated with traits of political detachment, such as reduced electoral participation, more de-ideologised or individual-centred ("rational") criteria, lower party identification etc., while any occasional inclination towards the Left is often directed towards its more alternative expressions². These changes in relation to the past, actually apply to the entire electorate, but in the case of young people, they are much more pronounced, a fact which distances them from their earlier association with the Left and, more importantly, from its traditional values.

Therefore, it becomes clear that any distinct behaviour of younger voters in particular, is directly related to the specific historical context, social perceptions or the general "political climate" of the era when they start to socialise politically, which, in turn, is often determined by the moment of coming of age and acquiring the right to vote and is considered to exert a long-term influence on their choices, thus giving each separate age category the characteristics of a "generation"³. Of course, this perspective presupposes a relative consistency of said choices over time, which is not always the case for the younger generations, at least until the moment of their social integration.

However, even in this unstable situation, the concept of generations and especially that of "youth" is highly significant in explaining major upheavals or realignments in the electoral landscape and the broader political system⁴, when these emerge either abruptly in the context of a single "critical election", characterised by a radical and structural change in the previously established divisions of political competition, or gradually, through a long series of electoral processes (secular realignment)⁵. In theory, such shifts can be manifested or initially interpreted as intergenerational gaps, with younger generations acting as heralds for those changes, since they are less "bound" by traditional electoral identifications⁶. When a similar behaviour is adopted to a certain extent by the intermediate age groups, then a total reversal of the political scene can be assumed to happen in just a matter of time, as it is expected to

occur with the gradual age replacement within the electorate, i.e. with the departure of the older age groups from it and the subsequent change in its overall composition⁷.

Age - related differences in voting behaviours during the years of Metapolitefsi

In public opinion surveys, the behaviour and attitudes of young people, in the most “narrow” sense of the term, are first of all assessed from data concerning the 17-24 age group (i.e. those at the threshold of entry into the labour market). However, this approach is very often extended to the entire general category of 17-34 year olds, a practice that also increases its statistical significance in terms of the overall size of the adult population and, consequently, the electorate. Indeed, in recent years the second (extended) approach has proved to be increasingly useful, especially for the Greek example, as it covers a more comprehensive range of age groups that have experienced the consequences of the preceding more than ten years of economic crisis, while the individual electoral differences (above and below the age of 25), at least in terms of the influence of the major parties, are becoming systematically smaller compared to the respective records before 2009.

In Greece, due to the delayed development of analytical political research, up until the first years of the Metapolitefsi, any indications of the political or electoral behaviour of younger people were primarily based on secondary data (e.g. the results of student elections) or on assumptions based on each period’s general political climate. For example, the youth of the 1960s were considered to be radical and left-leaning, as was the generation of the student uprising of the Polytechnic School in Athens, the first to take centre stage in the political arena with the rise of PASOK to power in 1981⁸.

However, this situation began to change and was eventually reversed during the 1980s, in line with

the broader political changes in the international arena, as the first systematic opinion surveys of the time revealed. This tendency culminated in the elections of 1989-1990, when a clear over-representation of Nea Dimokratia (ND) and, secondarily, of the Green Party⁹ among the youth was recorded, thus placing the Greek case among the exceptions to the stereotypical “norm” of left-wing youth and ultimately playing a crucial role in the reversal of the overall electoral correlations at that particular juncture.

From then on, the impression of a more conservative or de-ideologised young generation began to prevail, in line with similar trends that then prevailed in the Western world¹⁰.

“The young people’s electoral behaviour (despite any internal variations) has become more associated with traits of political detachment, such as reduced electoral participation, more deideologised or individual-centred (“rational”) criteria, lower party identification etc., while any occasional inclination towards the Left is often directed towards its more alternative expressions”

Panagiotis Koustenis

1993 - 2009

This pattern was confirmed in the 1990s, with the introduction of exit polls in Greek political analysis as a fundamental tool that allows us to analyse people's voting behaviour¹¹.

Indeed, as far as the electoral competition of the two-party system is concerned, the overrepresentation of Nea Dimokratia amongst the younger age groups (especially those aged 18-24) is already reflected in the 1993 elections (based on the exit poll conducted in the European elections of the following year), despite the fact that the most privileged age group for Nea Dimokratia was still that composed of voters aged 55 and over (Table 1). This was not just an undisputed fact, but also a trait that was reinforced in the following years, at a time when PASOK's overrepresentation was mostly found in the intermediate age groups (35-54 years old).

However, at the same time, a reverse process seems to be underway. Although Nea Dimokratia maintained its dominant share amongst the youngest age group (18-24 year-olds) at rates higher than or equal to its national average until 2000, this share was constantly decreasing, as PASOK's influence in the same age group steadily increased after the two successive changes in government (in 1996 and 2004) as well as with the gradual entry of a new generation into the electorate during its second term in office. The result was a definitive shift in the electoral correlations amongst the youth from 2004 onwards, as well as the overall restoration of their predominantly left-wing (or rather, "anti-right") positioning, although not with the same comparative intensity as in the past, since at that time, the Left as such (namely the KKE and Synaspismos) no longer had its past dynamic amongst young people.

ND and PASOK's Election Results between 1993 and 2009 by age group

[TABLE 1](#)

	1993	1996	2000	2004	2007	2009
ND						
18-24	44%	40%	44%	38%	35%	30%
25-34	36%	36%	43%	47%	42%	30%
Aggregate 18-34	40%	38%	43%	43%	38%	30%
35-54	37%	36%	39%	42%	38%	32%
Aggregate 18-54	38%	37%	41%	43%	38%	31%
55+	42%	44%	47%	52%	49%	39%
PASOK						
18-24	44%	40%	44%	46%	39%	41%
25-34	47%	40%	43%	39%	35%	40%
Aggregate 18-34	45%	40%	44%	42%	37%	41%
35-54	49%	44%	45%	42%	39%	44%
Aggregate 18-54	47%	42%	44%	42%	38%	42%
55+	46%	40%	42%	38%	38%	47%
ND + PASOK						
18-34	85%	78%	87%	85%	75%	71%
35-54	86%	80%	85%	84%	77%	75%
Aggregate 18-54	86%	79%	86%	85%	76%	73%
55+	88%	84%	89%	90%	87%	86%

Source: Data from the Ipsos-Opinion Exit Polls for Mega Channel 1994-2007 and the cross-channel Exit Poll of 2009

As a side note, it should be pointed out that the aforementioned development works completely in reverse from the final outcome of the elections, a phenomenon that is even more clearly reflected in the student vote (according to people's relevant professional status declaration when participating in exit polls), where Nea Dimokratia consistently prevailed until 2000, when they were the main opposition, while they lost their majority immediately after their return to power in 2004.

In other words, from 1993 until 2007, the party that won the majority of the (student) youth votes was ultimately the one that lost the elections (Table 2a and 2b), a fact that suggests that the youth vote does not always coincide with the broader electoral context, nor is it in itself capable of leading to major political changes, when it is simply registered as an exception or as an isolated reaction and is not followed by a more widespread electoral trend that also crosses other (usually intermediate) age categories.

ND and PASOK's Election Results between 1993 and 2009

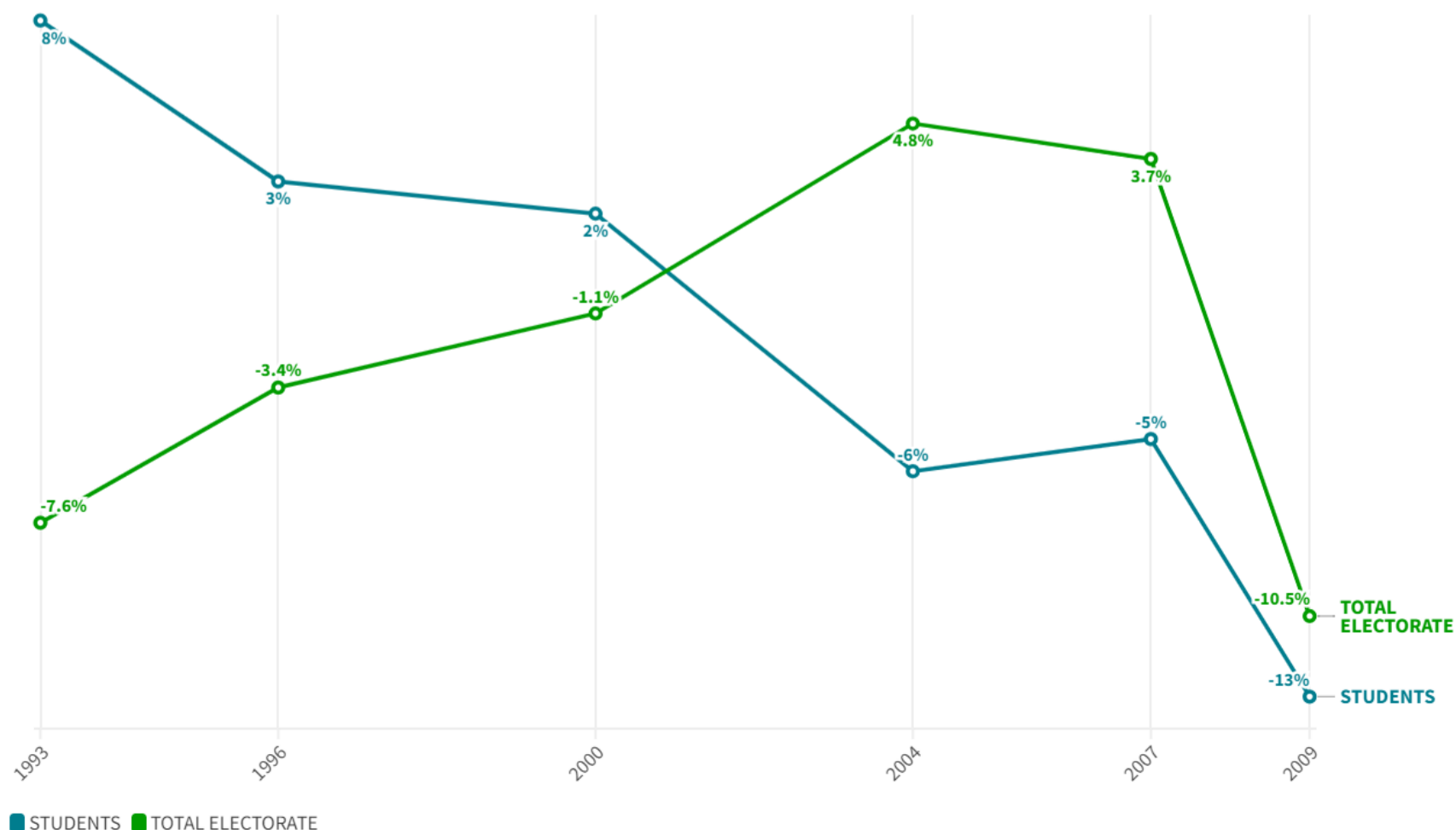
TABLE 2a

	1993	1996	2000	2004	2007	2009
STUDENTS						
ND	45%	40%	44%	38%	34%	29%
PASOK	37%	37%	42%	44%	39%	43%
Difference between ND and PASOK	+8%	+3%	+2%	-6%	-5%	-13%
TOTAL ELECTORATE						
ND	39.3%	38.1%	42.7%	45.4%	41.8%	33.5%
PASOK	46.9%	41.5%	43.8%	40.5%	38.1%	43.9%
Difference between ND and PASOK	-7.6%	-3.4%	-1.1%	+4.8%	+3.7%	-10.5%

Source: Data from the Ipsos-Opinion Exit Polls for Mega Channel 1994-2007 and the cross-channel Exit Poll of 2009

Difference between ND and PASOK

TABLE 2b



Nevertheless, the 2004 elections proved to be an overall turning point in terms of the distribution of the votes according to age and the political parties' corresponding profiles. Nea Dimokratia's victory that year was primarily the result of a 5 percentage points increase in the party's appeal to older voters over 55 (from 47% to 52%, see Table 1), or even of 7 percentage points, amongst voters over 65, while its share of the youth vote remained the same since 2000 (43%), i.e. there is a gap of about 10 percentage points, with an age cut-off at 55 years of age, which was to be maintained at almost the same level until 2009.

On the other hand, although PASOK lost the 2004 elections, it temporarily (perhaps since the early 1980s) put forward a comparatively more youthful profile, which, however, was not to last for long. The loss of almost 3-7 points exclusively in the under-55 age groups in 2007, was only partially regained when the party returned to power in 2009. By contrast, the key factor in PASOK's last electoral victory, was a rise in its share of the vote strictly localised amongst the over-55s, by an aggregate of 9% compared to 2004, which completely reverses the short-term "youthful" result of 2004 and also creates an age differentiation similar to that of Nea Dimokratia. Besides, it was precisely at that time (2007-2009) that KKE and Synaspismos (as well as the newly emerging Green Party) started to regain significant momentum amongst 18-24 year-olds, while at the same time, there was a notable over-representation of the 25-34 age group amongst the supporters of G. Karatzaferis' political party (LAOS)¹².

Ultimately, the result was creating a numerically unprecedented overall 13-point gap in the aggregate share of the two-party voters between those over and those under 55 years old (73% vs. 86% respectively, Table 1). This element, along with the corresponding geographical differentiation between the Attica region and the periphery, which has been consolidated since 2007, were perhaps the two main cracks in the overall countenance of the Greek electorate in the 2004-2009 period and the earliest precursors of the crisis that would follow.

The recession years: 2012-2019

Indeed, this phenomenon took on explosive proportions, initially in the electoral earthquake of May 2012, where the aggregate share of the two main political parties of the Metapolitefsi era plummeted to 20%-25% amongst 18-54 year-olds (with relatively small partial fluctuations), compared to 49% amongst older voters (or even 58% in the case of the over-65s).

Thus, the age differentiation of the vote was determined as one of the three basic rifts (along with the geographical and the social), which essentially divided the electorate into subgroups, almost unconnected to one another. The mass abandonment of the traditional ruling parties by the younger generations and their turn to (mainly anti-memorandum) then emerging parties was one of the most vivid manifestations of the Memorandum-Anti-memorandum divide, which in this case was condensed in a distinction between the "old" and "new" political systems¹³. This pattern was more or less reproduced in the subsequent elections in June, where Nea Dimokratia and SYRIZA increased their shares by approximately 10%. This led to the emergence of a new two-party system, stabilising the age threshold for each party's respective majorities at 55 years (Table 3).

ND and SYRIZA's Election Results between 2012 and 2019 by age group

TABLE 3

*colouring according to the party that was in the lead on each occasion. Red: SYRIZA Blue: ND

Age-group	2012a	2012b	2015a	2015b	2019
17/18-24	13%-17%	23%-29%	24%-36%	16%-42%	31%-38%
25-34	12%-18%	21%-30%	28%-33%	20%-33%	32%-36%
35-44	13%-18%	23%-33%	25%-36%	25%-36%	40%-28%
45-54	16%-22%	27%-32%	24%-43%	27%-37%	40%-32%
55-64	21%-16%	33%-24%	27%-39%	30%-38%	37%-35%
65+	35%-8%	47%-12%	41%-29%	42%-30%	49%-26%
TOTAL	18,9% - 16,8%	29,7% - 26,9%	27,8% - 36,3%	28,1% - 35,5%	39,9% - 31,5%

In this sense, the youth in this particular situation did not display a wholly distinct electoral behaviour, but rather symbolically constituted a kind of “vanguard” of a more general pattern for all voters under 55, leading to an overall electoral realignment. A fact that was nonetheless to reassert its electoral role in a broader sense in the years to come, not simply as a pool for renewing the parties’ electoral base, but again as a key factor determining electoral competition.

Nevertheless, this double election also marks the beginning of the (initially erroneous) perception of SYRIZA as a mainly “youthful” party, when its highest net percentages were recorded in the dynamic age groups of 35-54 year-olds, which mostly consist of people active in the labour market, in other words, the main pillar of its rise to power in 2015.

The confusion was likely due not so much to SYRIZA’s high figures in the under-34 age group (30% in the June elections), but mainly to the fact that said numbers not only granted the party a larger majority (Nea Dimokratia saw its share of the vote amongst the same age group drop dramatically – 22%), but even exceeded the corresponding aggregate of the old two-party system (28%). At this point, we should stress the fact that other parties that emerged in the context of the economic crisis had a much “younger” footprint, with their percentages being clearly age-graded. The most significant and long-lasting example, until 2019, are the percentages of Golden Dawn¹⁴, and to a lesser extent, especially for 2012, those of ANEL and the Green Party, while in 2015, a similar picture was observed in the case of Enosi Kentroon and Popular Unity (LAE). In the same period, the exact reverse age distribution was consolidated for the PASOK electorate, whose percentages in the age group of 55+ were consistently more than double those of voters aged 18-34, thus making it the most “aged” party in electoral terms.¹⁵

For SYRIZA, in the elections that took place in January 2015, the main difference compared to 2012, was the growing trend of demographic – and geographical – homogenisation (which had already been discernible since the 2014 European elections). SYRIZA’s reach increased sharply, primarily in the 65+ age group (by 17%) and then also in the 55-64 age group (by 15%), and in fact, in the latter it recorded one of its highest individual performances (39%), taking the lead from ND and finally raising the age limit of the electoral competition between the two parties to 65, a development that secured SYRIZA’s final victory in the elections.

The main characteristics of this age distribution were essentially repeated in September 2015, with the key difference this time being the further increase of SYRIZA’s appeal amongst 18-24-year-olds (and the simultaneous respective drop of that of ND), with the party recording its strongest ever percentage (42%), in the aftermath of the July Referendum, where this particular age group –

more than any other – had voted for NO (above 75%)¹⁶. This view of SYRIZA, as a truly “youthful” party, was then reflected even more vividly in the 2019 elections, which also marked the end of the Memorandum years. Its share in the 17-34 age group was maintained at the same level as in 2015 (37% overall, despite an interim drop to 22% in the previous month’s European elections).

At the same time, Nea Dimokratia’s corresponding share was 30%, while amongst voters over the age of 65, it was almost 50%, yet balanced compared to September 2015. However, the most critical change for the final outcome of those elections has to be the drop in SYRIZA’s share among the dynamic age groups (35-54 years old, by 7% in total) and the conversely significant strengthening of Nea Dimokratia (+14%), with the dividing line between the two parties descending to 35, reflecting the total reversal of the electoral correlations in the core of Greek society¹⁷.

It was perhaps the first time that the youth as a whole (up to 34 years old) was seen as an autonomous electoral social-demographic group, compared to the rest of the voters, a fact that naturally brought it to the centre of electoral interest, with relevant discussions intensifying dramatically just prior to the last elections, after the tragic train accident in Tempi and the mass protests that followed. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the timing of the 2023 elections that took place, just like in 2019, at the end of the four-year term, that is when four young age groups (i.e. more than 400,000 new registered voters – for the second consecutive time), would join the electorate.

However, in order to determine the real impact of the younger age groups’ vote, one should also take into account the continuous decline in its quantitative value, due to the demographic ageing (plus, to a certain extent, the brain drain phenomenon) observed in recent years.

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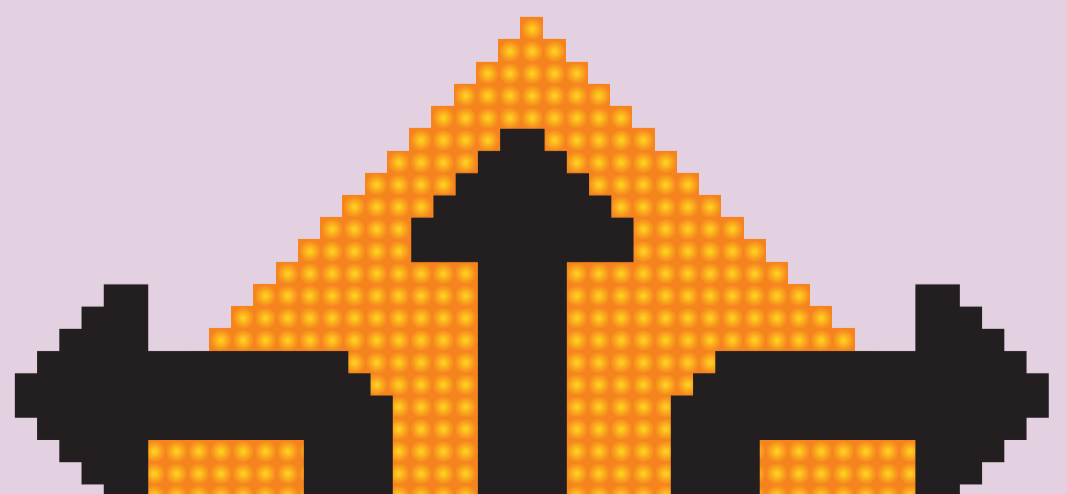
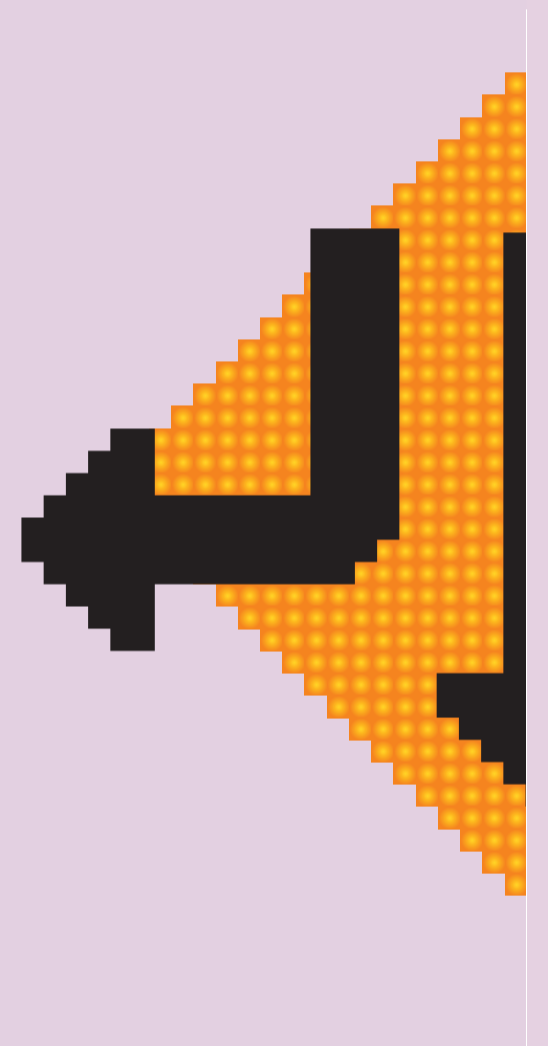
While the younger age bracket (18-34 years old) in the 2001 census represented 32% of the country's adult resident population, this percentage decreased to 27% in 2011 and is estimated to be around 22% after the most recent 2021 census (with the addition of the 17-year-olds), when the corresponding percentage for voters over the age of 55 is about twice as high.

This demographic development, largely verified by the respective participation rates of each age group in the exit polls, makes it much more critical for a party such as Nea Dimokratia to maintain its lead in the older age groups, as the leading opposition party, currently SYRIZA, needs twice as big a share in the younger age groups in order to compensate for it.

The double elections of 2023

As with other key dimensions of the vote, namely its social and geographical aspects, the most defining trait of the recent double elections age aspect was the confirmation (and in some cases even the strengthening) of Nea Dimokratia's absolute dominance (40.8% and 40.6% in both elections) and, on the other hand, not just SYRIZA's dramatic electoral shrinkage, but also the almost complete flattening in terms of its influence. Indeed, all its individual percentages by age category are, with some deviations, around its overall national average (20.1% in May and 17.8% in June), bearing little resemblance to the former age distribution of its electoral base.

It is indicative that, with minor variations, SYRIZA's comparatively lowest percentages in both elections were recorded amongst the intermediate age groups of 35-54 year-olds (Table 4), i.e. amongst those who used to be its most crucial and once privileged dynamic audiences, and where it had suffered the greatest damage in the 2019 elections. At the same time, in the 17-34 age group, the party lost an overall 17 percentage points, i.e. almost half of its former electoral power. This fact dashed any expectations that it could be an "antisystemic" expression of the youth movement after the Tempi train accident.



Election Results by age group May - June 2023

TABLE 4

	2023a			2023b		
	17-34	35-54	55+	17-34	35-54	55+
ND	32%	41%	46%	28%	39%	47%
SYRIZA	23%	21%	21%	20%	17%	18%
PASOK-KINAL	10%	11%	13%	10%	10%	14%
KKE	8%	7%	6%	9%	8%	7%
TOTAL	73%	80%	86%	67%	74%	86%
SPARTIATES	-	-	-	8%	6%	2%
ELL. LISI	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%
NIKI	2%	3%	2%	3%	6%	2%
PLEFSI	5%	2%	2%	5%	3%	2%
MeRA 25	6%	3%	2%	6%	2%	2%
OTHERS	9%	7%	4%	7%	4%	1%
TOTAL	27%	20%	14%	33%	26%	14%

Source: Data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023 (processed by Metron Analysis)

On the other hand, the age distribution of Nea Dimokratia's electoral influence has remained essentially unchanged since 2019, basically replicating the same pattern: around 30% amongst younger voters (17-34 years old), 35%-45% amongst intermediate ages (35-64 years old) and 50% or higher amongst older voters (over 65 years old). The data do not verify the often prevailing impression of a strengthening of ND's influence on young people, which is created due to the advantage it gained as a result of the complete collapse of SYRIZA's figures. It is also worth mentioning the relative levelling out of the age differentiation when it comes to the PASOK vote in the last elections (10%-11% amongst voters under 55, against 13-14% amongst those aged 55+), thus essentially getting rid of the impression of a political party with an ageing electoral base that prevailed throughout the previous decade.

So, looking into their voters' age distribution in particular, SYRIZA and PASOK went from presenting two entirely complementary profiles, up until recently, to a more competitive situation, which nevertheless still favours SYRIZA. Finally, the increase of KKE's percentage was significant, with the 17-34 age group being its comparatively strongest supporter (8%-9%) in both elections, a fact that is relatively unusual for this particular political party since the mid-1980s, but which points to the two consecutive victories of their main student branch "Panspoudastiki" in the past two student elections.

The aggregate percentages of these four traditional parliamentary parties, amongst the three broad age categories (17-34, 35-54, 55+) were 73%, 80%, 86% in May and 67%, 74%, 86% in June, with the gradation of the relevant percentages resembling a miniature version of the electoral earthquake of 2012 or its precursor symptoms of 2007-2009.

However, on this occasion the respective gradation is almost exclusively determined by the corresponding escalation of the rates of ND, since the respective fluctuations for the other three parties are more contained. It thus becomes obvious that any dissatisfaction or the (often misleadingly called) "anti-systemic" nature of the youth vote was expressed mainly at SYRIZA's expense and in favour of smaller players in the electoral competition, i.e. the parties that sought their entry (or their stay) in parliament, with the respective aggregates of their percentages amounting to 27%, 20%, 14% in the first elections and 33%, 26%, 14% in the second. In other words, younger audiences voted for such parties at levels twice as high as those of older voters in the May elections and this pattern was further boosted in June, taking into account the increased abstention by 800,000 votes (or 700,000 valid votes).

MeRA25 had the proportionally youngest vote by far in the last double elections (as it did in 2019 as well), with its share remaining around 6% in the younger age groups (up to 34 years old), while slightly decreasing to 2%-3% in the older age groups, from 2%-4% respectively in 2019. However,

this change, coupled with the aforementioned current demographics, probably cost the party its participation in Parliament. Pefsi Eleftherias had a similar, but slightly more balanced distribution, receiving 5% in the younger age groups (6%-7% amongst 17-24-year-olds) and 2%-3% in the others, but in the second elections the party's share was marginally boosted, just enough to finally cross the 3% threshold.

Meanwhile, Spartiates' influence, as recorded in the June election, was very much reminiscent of Golden Dawn's youth vote in the past, with a greater uniformity in all categories under the age of 45 (8%), yet clearly with less than half of GD's percentage in the older age groups (2%-4%). Finally, the overall vote for other parties reveals a similar youth distribution, despite its shrinkage in the June election, while the data for Elliniki Lisi and Niki do not follow the same pattern, with the former appearing more balanced and the latter having more impact on the intermediate age groups.

At the same time, one can highlight the internal divisions of the youth vote, by cross-tabulating it with gender and educational level (Table 5), however, in this case, the findings generally confirm and often

magnify the corresponding differentiations recorded in the electorate as a whole. More specifically, there are more younger male voters (17-34) who support and vote for Elliniki Lisi (5%-7% compared to 3%-4% amongst the general population) and this is even more prominent in the case of the young male Spartiates' voters (12% vs. 3%), a finding that is perhaps the most recognisable common element with Golden Dawn's past demographic profile.

On the other hand, the female voters favour Pefsi Eleftherias (4% to 6%-7%), PASOK (8% to 12% in June) and mostly SYRIZA, especially after its share dropped to 16% among young men in June. In fact, young women were perhaps the only subset of the electorate in which SYRIZA's share was comparable to that of ND. A contrast which directly points to the consistently observed more left-leaning vote of young women in recent years¹⁸, something which is not confirmed in the case of MeRA 25, especially in the second elections (7% amongst young men against 4% amongst women).

Election Results by age group May - June 2023

[TABLE 5](#)

	2023a	2023a	2023b	2023b	2023a	2023a	2023b	2023b
	17-34	17-34	17-34	17-34	25-34	25-34	25-34	25-34
	Male	Female	Male	Female	No Degree	Degree	No Degree	Degree
ND	33%	30%	30%	25%	29%	34%	26%	29%
SYRIZA	20%	26%	16%	25%	21%	23%	18%	23%
PASOK	10%	11%	8%	12%	11%	10%	9%	11%
KKE	7%	9%	10%	8%	6%	10%	7%	10%
TOTAL	70%	76%	64%	70%	67%	77%	60%	73%
SPARTIATES	-	-	12%	3%	-	-	13%	5%
ELL. LISI	7%	3%	5%	4%	8%	3%	11%	2%
NIKI	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	3%
PLEFSI	4%	6%	4%	7%	5%	5%	3%	5%
MeRA25	6%	5%	7%	4%	5%	7%	4%	7%
OTHERS	10%	8%	6%	8%	13%	6%	6%	5%
TOTAL	30%	24%	36%	30%	33%	23%	40%	27%

Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023

With regard to the differentiation based on the (completed) education level, between secondary and tertiary education, meaning having or not a university degree (applied only for the 25-34 age group, where it makes the most sense, statistically), apart from the traditional parties (and with the exception of PASOK in May), the highest share of young people with higher education (university degree) are observed amongst the voters of Plefsi Eleftherias (in June) and mainly those of MeRA 25 (just like in 2019). On the complete opposite side, Elliniki Lisi (8%-11% to 2%-3%) and Spartiates (13% to 5%), i.e. the two main parties positioned at the rightmost extreme of the traditional ideological axis, have significantly higher percentages among young secondary school graduates (no university degree), which points to the mainly cultural significance of the education variable amongst the younger age groups (given the fairly high ratio of graduates from higher education institutions), as opposed to the older ones, where its value still has a socially divisive dimension, but which is now mainly limited to voters over 65.

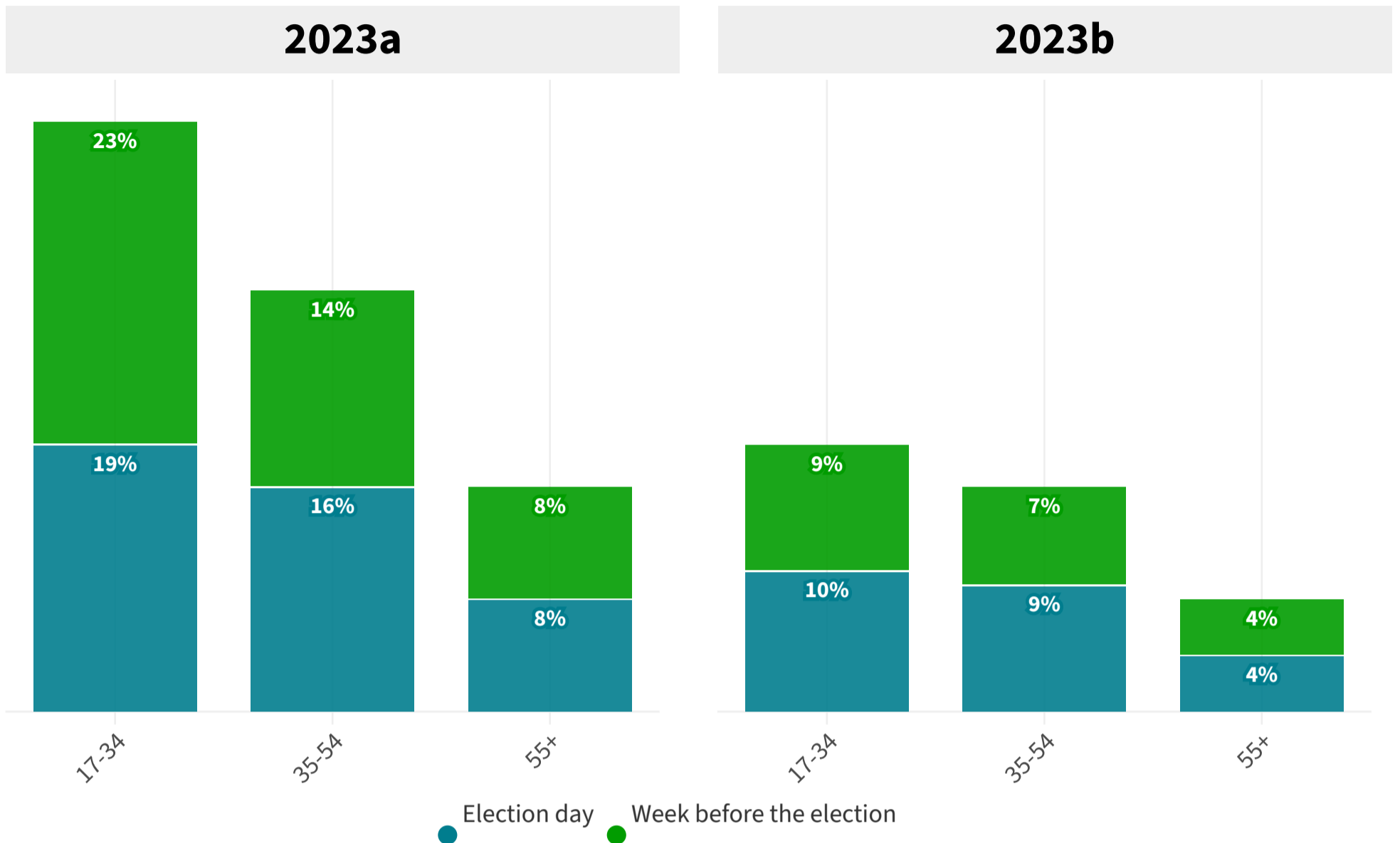
Although the latter findings were perhaps to be expected, there are, nevertheless, two significant differences that emerge at this point between the recent elections and those of the 2012 “electoral earthquake”. The migration of a large share of the voters to newer challenger parties in 2012 was a practice observed mostly amongst people with higher education, while this time, to a comparatively greater extent, it concerned voters with a lower education level, especially among the younger age groups.

Still, overall, the younger age group’s voting behaviour continues to be predominantly left-leaning (or rather, “non-right”), although with less intensity than in the past, but still in contrast to the rest of the age groups, as well as to all the other demographic-social groups that constitute the electorate. This indication is obtained *prima facie* by adding the percentages of the “non-right-wing” forces in the actual election results: In both elections that sum is approximately 50%-52% (compared to 41%-44% in the case of all voters over 35), if we include in this calculation the percentage of PASOK and that of the (ideologically more controversial) Plefsi Eleftherias.

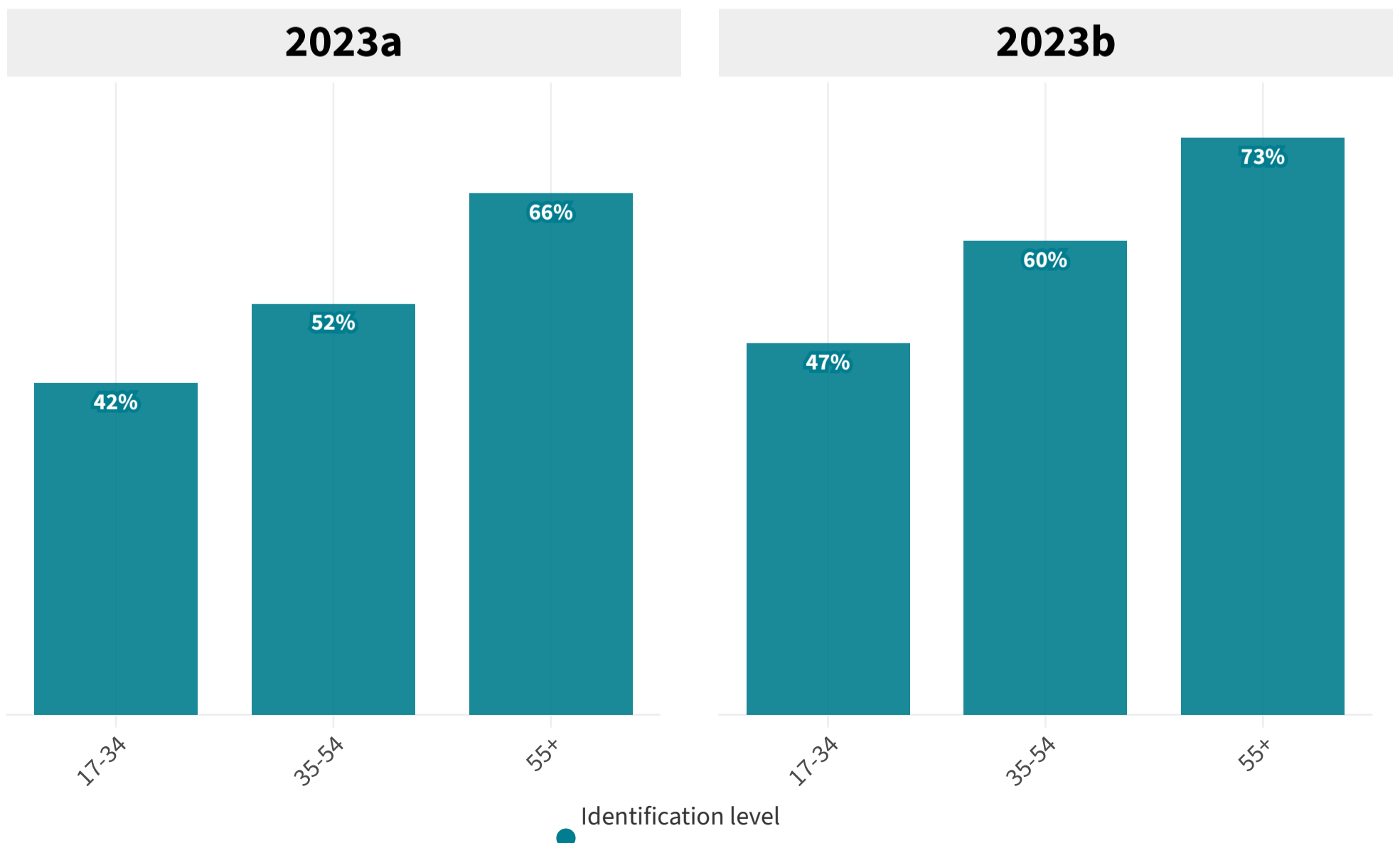
The exit poll responses on the voters’ ideological self-positioning on the Left-Right axis lead to similar conclusions. Quantifying them and assigning values 1-7 on said scale (where 1 = Far Left, 7 = Far Right), the average for the 17-34 age group is lower (that is, closer to the Left) than the median value of 4 (that marks the Centre) in both 2023 elections (3.82 and 3.96 respectively), despite its overall shift towards the Right in the June elections (Table 6d), with a noticeable distance from the 35-54 and 55+ age groups (which are to the right of the Centre, so at values higher than 4), a distance significantly greater than that recorded in similar measurements in the past¹⁹.

The above is based on “valid” responses, i.e. those of perhaps the most politicised participants. At the same time, however, it is worth mentioning the younger age groups’ much higher overall rates (34%-36%) of rejection or non-acceptance of the ideological axis (in other words, the “None of the above” option), compared to the intermediate age groups of 35-54 year-olds (26%-28%) and the older age group of 55+ (14%-16%). Thus, the general perception of the youth’s increasingly de-ideologised behaviour is confirmed, which to a certain extent also conceals “anti-political”-possibly far-right or other socially “unacceptable”-views, which coexist with the more Left-leaning stance of the more openly politicised part of the youth, thus leaving room for unexpected electoral outcomes.

Indications from further processing of the exit poll data seem to confirm additional characteristics concerning the general voting behaviour of younger voters. For instance, they appear to be more undecided: 42% in total decided who to vote for in the last week or on the day of the elections in May, compared to 30% and 16% among the other two age groups (in June the respective percentages were 20%, 16%, and 8%). They also show significantly lower levels of identification with the party they end up voting for (42%-47% vs. 55%-63% for the entire electorate) and are less likely to cast a positive “vote of preference” (44% vs. 49% and 62% for the other two age groups in May). Finally, based on the participation rates of each age group in the exit polls of the two consecutive elections, the increased abstention in June seems to concern younger voters to a much greater extent, as their turnout is estimated to have decreased by 25% compared to May, when the corresponding decrease for voters aged 35-54 was 17%, and the participation of older voters (55+) seems to have remained at almost the same level (-2%).



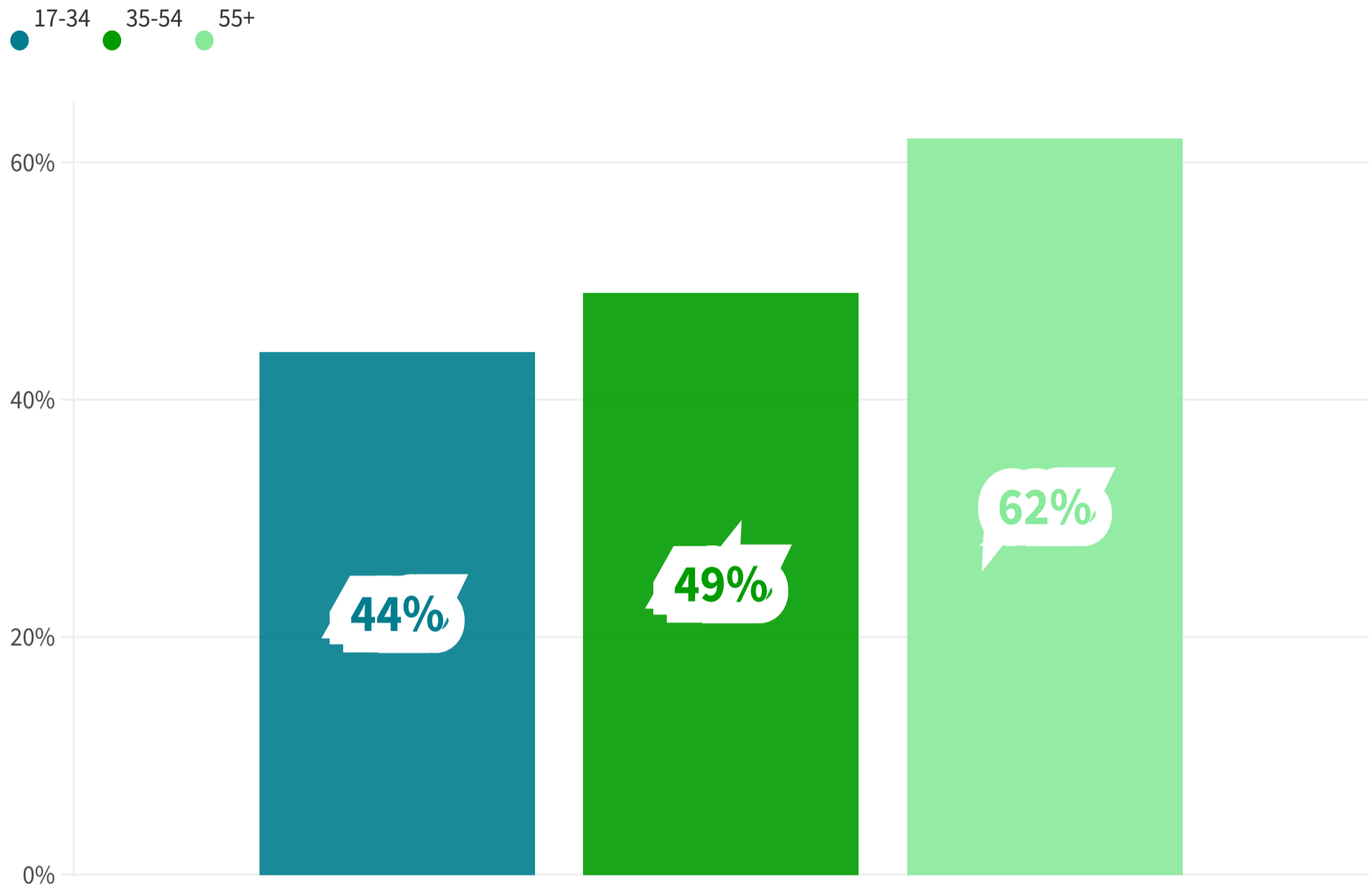
Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023



Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023

They voted for the party they preferred (by age group)

TABLE 6c



Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023

Ideological self - placement

TABLE 6d

	2023a			2023b		
	17-34	35-54	55+	17-34	35-54	55+
Average value	3.82	4.05	4.12	3.96	4.15	4.24
Rejection of the concept + IDN/NA	36%	28%	19%	34%	26%	15%

Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls May-June 2023

Electoral background by age group

Coming back to the concept of generations, we attempted an investigation regarding the temporality of the voting behaviour of each individual age subset of the electorate, depending on the exact year of joining the electorate in parliamentary elections (taking into account the three voting age expansions in 1977, 1984 and 2016, with the age limit changing to 20, 18, and 17 years old respectively, instead of 21 years old). This process is rendered possible through the use of recent exit poll data (from 2012) and checking the ages of voters as calculated from their exact year of birth (a question usually answered by 95%-97% of all participants).

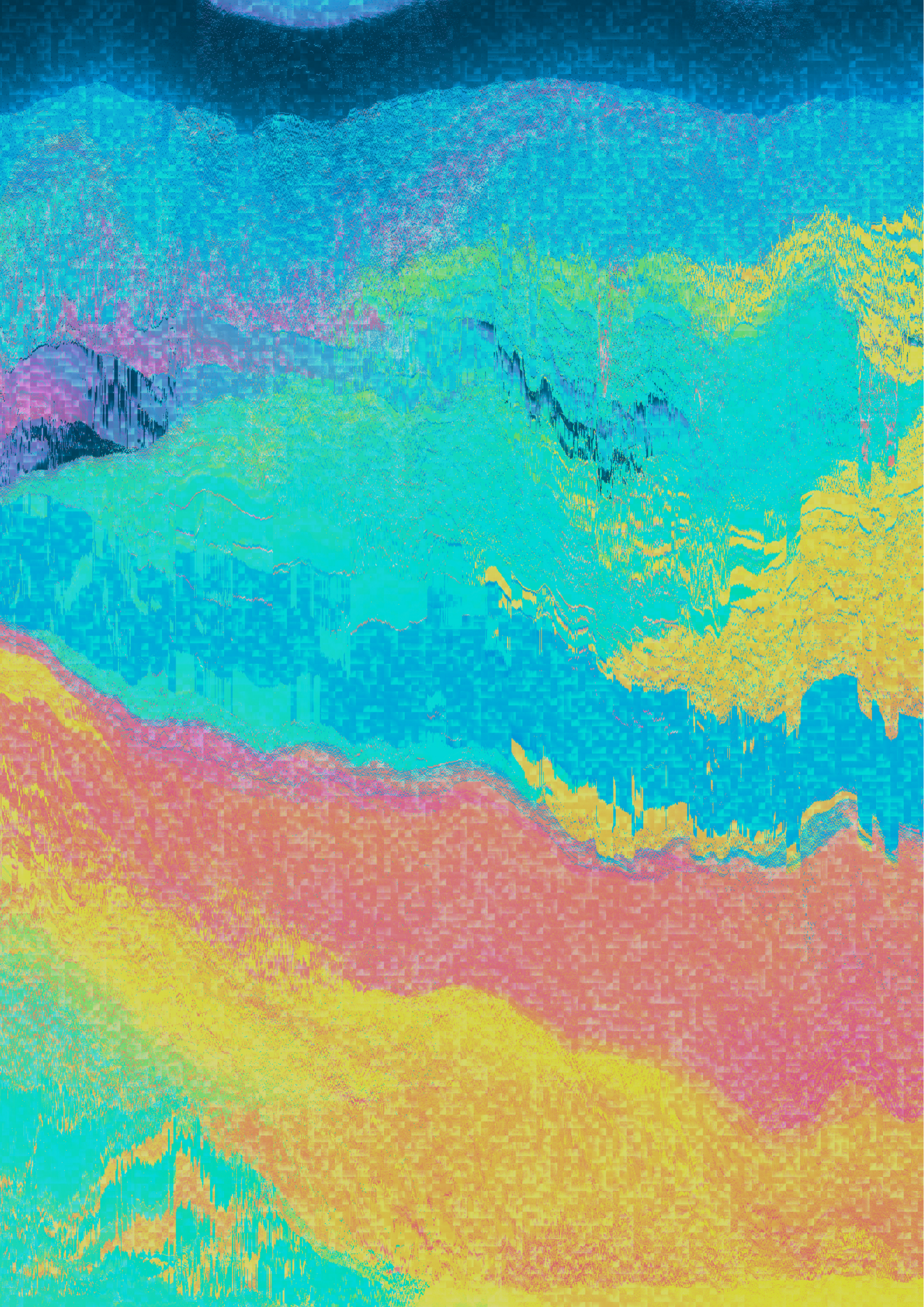
The biggest methodological problem with such an approach is dividing the total sample into tiny groups²⁰, thereby significantly increasing the statistical error. However, the aggregate size of the exit poll (samples of more than 5,000 people), which is far larger than that of almost all similar social or political surveys, ensures relative statistical reliability (similar to that for large age groups in the usual political surveys of 1,000 or 2,000 people), even for these “narrow” age subsets, especially with regard to estimating the electoral influence of the major parties.

Based on the above, Table 7 contains an indicative overview of ND’s intertemporal percentages per age group, from 2012 until May 2023 (the June elections are not taken into account in principle, due to the extended abstention rate, which is partly responsible for any differentiations).

TABLE 7

Birth year	Age in 2023	Year of joining the electorate	2012 α	2012 β	2015 α	2015 β	2019	2023 α
Until 1946	77+	1974	38%	48%	44%	44%	54%	58%
1947-1953	70-76	1977	22%	34%	33%	31%	44%	50%
1954-1956	67-69	1981	19%	29%	25%	31%	35%	43%
1957-1961	62-66	1985	15%	27%	20%	28%	36%	42%
1962-1967	56-61	1989-1990	13%	24%	24%	25%	39%	43%
1968-1972	51-55	1993	16%	28%	24%	31%	39%	44%
1973-1975	48-50	1996	11%	22%	27%	28%	44%	45%
1976-1978	45-47	2000	13%	22%	25%	23%	40%	48%
1979-1982	41-44	2004	11%	24%	27%	21%	41%	35%
1983-1986	37-40	2007	12%	18%	26%	22%	37%	34%
1987-1989	34-36	2009	15%	24%	30%	16%	32%	30%
1990-1991	32-33	2012	18%	16%	23%	14%	29%	35%
1992-1994	29-31	2015	10%	23%	25%	18%	30%	32%
1995-1997	26-28	2019			27%	18%	26%	27%
1998-2002	21-25	2023					33%	33%
2003-2006	17-20							30%
Δεν Απαντώ			20%	32%	26%	29%	45%	42%
ΣΥΝΟΛΟ			18,9%	29,7%	27,8%	28,1%	39,9%	40,8%

Source: Processed data from cross-channel Exit Polls 2012-May 2023



The groups now aged 17-36 years (born in 1987-2006, average sample: 244 people in May 2023), i.e. those who became eligible to vote after 2005, are basically the generation of the economic and political crisis, whose politicisation probably began with the events following the assassination of Alexandros Grigoropoulos or slightly earlier.

These voters to this day are still comparatively the least supportive of ND, as even in the 2019 elections, this group's votes for ND barely exceeded the 30% mark (indeed, in September 2015 they were well below 20%), something that happened in the elections of May 2023, even though briefly, since in the context of the generalised abstention in June, the numbers dropped again. Conversely, the above age categories, up until 2019, were all consistently giving SYRIZA the majority (the relevant figures were usually 35%-40% in the two 2015 elections), but this changed in 2023, when they left the party in second place (20%-25% or even lower in June).

Those born between 1973 and 1986, now aged between 37 and 50 (average sample size per group: 363 persons in May 2023), constitute the group that became eligible to vote in one of the most de-ideologised periods of the Metapolitefsi (1993-2004), given the convergence or consensus between ND and PASOK on issues mainly related to European strategy. Among these voters, ND did not exceed 28% until 2015, but in 2019 it got perhaps the most

impressive boost in its percentages (by 16%-20%), overall displaying the highest electoral mobility within the electorate.

However, in the 2023 elections, there was an internal division in this category, as amongst the older of these voters (those aged between 45 and 50 today), ND's performance increased a bit more, while amongst the younger ones (aged 37-44) it suffered a decline of around 5%. That is, the latter ended up being closer to the patterns of the people belonging in the immediately younger group and the former to those of voters in the older category. In this way, however, a clear and critical dividing line was formed, perhaps more explicitly than ever before, regarding ND's influence, with 45 years of age as the limit, not only for this particular age group, but also for the entire electorate as ND's average percentage is estimated at 46% amongst all voters over the age of 45, and 32% amongst those up to 44 years old.

Voters aged 51-69 (born in 1954-1972, average sample size per group: 481 people in May 2023) are those who came of age during a period of intense politicisation (1975-1990). Within this group, ND shows a more gradual, but still continuing, expansion of its reach: starting from 25%-30% after the June 2012 elections, when it was on second place behind SYRIZA, and even after a temporary decline of 5% in January 2015, its influence rose to 36%-39% in 2019, but almost never exceeding its national percentage. However, its new rise to 42%-44% in 2023, if it does not prove to be conjunctural, may maintain an expanded potential electoral base in the years to come.

On the contrary, the next oldest age group, the 70+ individuals (born until 1953, total sample in May: 835 people who became eligible to vote by 1974), the majority of whom will not be active in the electorate at the end of this decade. This is the group in which ND has always recorded its highest percentages by far, with its share reaching 40% (on average) from June 2012 until 2015 (it was 33% even during the May 2012 electoral earthquake), until approaching and subsequently exceeding 50% in 2019 and 2023. Of course, this age group can also be subject to age and historical distinctions, e.g. between those who came of age during the dictatorship (70-76 years old today), and voted for the first time in 1974, and older people, i.e. those who would be able to vote in 1967, had there been elections instead of the military coup.

The data presented in Table 7 show that for the first group (the “dictatorship generation”), with all its particular historical and political traits, at least as far as ND’s appeal is concerned, while in 2012 its percentages were much closer to those of the younger age groups, gradually, after January 2015, the relative distance from the older age groups began

to shrink. This could be an indication that after a certain threshold (possibly between the ages of 55 and 65), age per se is a more significant determinant of voting behaviour than the generation in which a person “belongs”.

In any case, the above analysis is essentially just a first approach to the temporality of voting patterns by generation, open to multiple additions or revisions in future papers, but indicating a technical and methodological possibility. However, on the one hand it demonstrates that the usual age groupings in polls are likely to obscure the reality of age differentiation regarding voting, to some extent, while a new grouping, following a detailed listing of the individual data, might be more illuminating. An additional element supporting this suggestion is the observation that the differences in percentages

between close or successive age groups are relatively limited, often giving the impression of a certain homogeneity. When this is not the case, then the age divisions within the electorate become more visible.

To conclude, however, with regard to the data presented in this paper, which concern exclusively the study of ND's influence in this particular time period, we should mention that while in some cases there appears to be an overall homogeneity of the vote in almost all age groups below 55-65 years old (see May 2012 and January 2015), in others the existence of a broader internal division (sometimes

more powerful and clear, and sometimes not) of the more dynamic audiences becomes apparent, with the relevant threshold usually ranging between the ages of 35 and 45 and with the possibility of perhaps more individual groupings.

Obviously, the youth, by which I mean all voters under the age of 35 or so today, is included in these as a distinct and relatively uniform age group now, consistently emerging as the least favourable audience for ND since the 2012 electoral earthquake and confirming its electoral behaviour with the characteristic traits of a "generation", that has been through the common experience of the economic crisis and its consequences, and feel the same political disdain for the two-party system in all its forms. Similar intertemporal historicity may be detectable in other sub-age categories, but to strengthen such conclusions it would be necessary to extend the intertemporal overview to the electoral influence of the other parties in future research.

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11. The data for age-based analysis of people's votes in exit polls is provided primarily by the declaration of each respondent's date of birth. However, people's responses can be contrasted and checked against the "researcher's estimate", which arbitrarily classifies respondents into age categories.
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20. Similar questions of ideological self-positioning were included in the exit polls in 2009 and in May 2012, but with only 5 possible choices (not including the options Far Left or Far Right), which makes it harder to directly compare the participants' answers from back then with the ones they gave at the 2023 surveys. Nevertheless, on the scale of 1-5 that was used at that time, the average of the young age group was very close to that of the 35-54-year-olds and closer to the 55+ voters than what we saw at the most recent polls.
21. Each of these groups includes at least three age years. The only exception is the group of voters who are currently between 32 and 33 years old (born in 1990-1991) who joined the electorate in 2009.

MISSES' SIZES 10, 12, 14, 16, 18.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FABRICS WITHOUT NAP

SIZES	- Sleeveless Dress -		Short Sleeve Dress	
	35" Fabric	39" Fabric	39" Fabric	45" Fabric
10	2-5/8 yds.	2-3/8 yds.	2-5/8 yds.	2-3/8 yds.
12	2-3/4 "	2-1/2 "	2-5/8 "	2-3/8 "
14	3 "	2-5/8 "	2-3/4 "	2-1/2 "
16	3 "	2-3/4 "	2-3/4 "	2-5/8 "
18	3 "	2-3/4 "	2-3/4 "	2-5/8 "

SIZES	- 3/4 Sleeve Dress -		Interfacing
	45" Fabric	54" Fabric	35" Fabric
10	2-3/4 yds.	2 yds.	5/8 yd.
12	2-3/4 "	2 "	5/8 "
14	2-3/4 "	2 "	5/8 "

1520



STATE _____ ZONE _____

15-41 ***21.03
18-41 ***20.00
24-41 ***5.00
4-42 ***5.03

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A genealogy of youth surveys: Why so many and why so often?

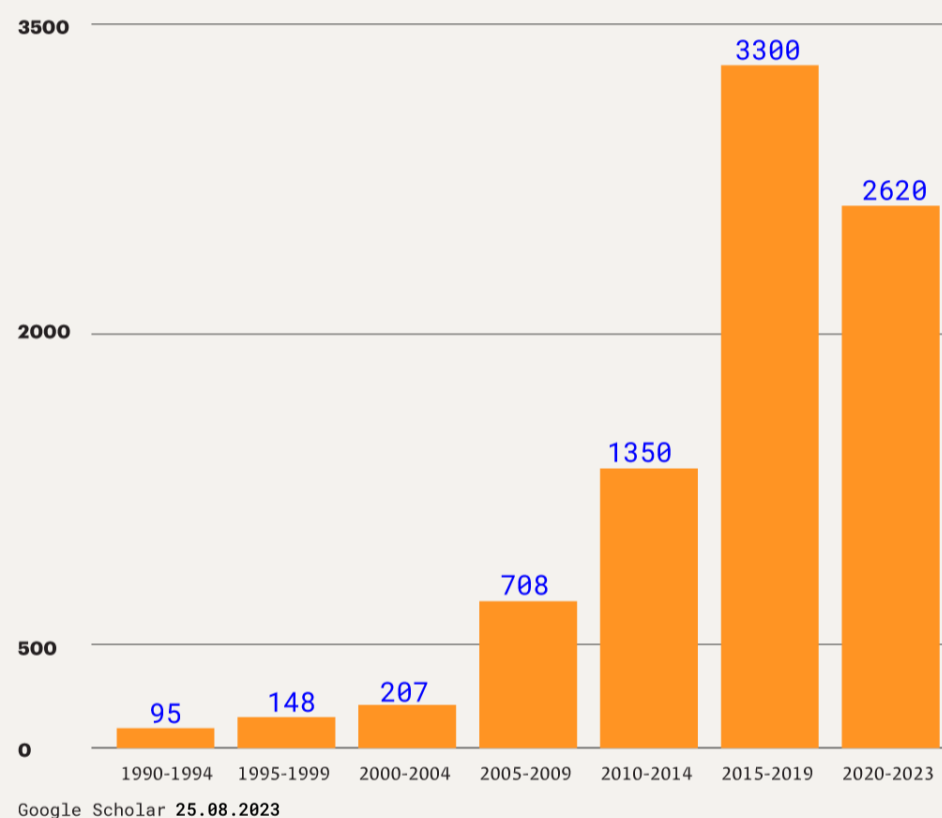


IV

Manina Kapekaki

To paraphrase the title of a reference article that looks at the slow presence of women in politics,¹ perhaps never before in Greece have we had so many and so frequent (and significant, I might add) studies on young people and the young generation. A search on the Google Scholar index of the keyword “youth and politics” (see Graph 1) yields just 95 results for the 1990-1994 period, 148 results between 1995 and 1999, 207 results for 2000-2004, 708 for 2005-2009, 1350 for 2010-2014, 3300 for 2015-2019 and 2,620 results from 2020 to the present date. Beyond any methodological limitations and objections regarding the accuracy of the results that the above-mentioned search offers, the numbers certainly suggest a dynamic that has to be reflected on a national level in terms of produced articles, ongoing public debate and relevant interventions.

Graph 1: Number of results provided when researching the key words “Youth and Politics” into Google Scholar (1990-2023)



Is there a “milestone” that triggered interest in this field either as a temporal juncture or a political event? The data in Figure 1 lead us to the assumption that the five-year period between 2005 and 2009, with 2008 as a milestone, was probably the catalyst for this phenomenon. Indeed, what is now known as “December 2008 events” seems to have acted as a starting point for new scientific and research production in universities, research centres, think tanks, etc.

This phenomenon continued and culminated during the term of the SYRIZA-ANEL government, as both the mass mobilisations in town squares during the passing of the Memoranda, and the electoral behaviour of young people in the elections from 2012 onwards, as well as in the referendum of July 2015, led to a shift of the public interest towards young people (e.g. the article by Pantelidou Malouta and

Zirganou Kazolea in this collective volume, as well as Pantelidou Malouta, 2015). Thus, with the risk of sounding reductive, we could argue that in the field of analysis of political and electoral behaviour, up until 2008, age was mainly considered as a demographic variable rather than a distinct social category, and the actual shift in interest towards youth or young people as a distinct field of analysis, is a product of the last 15 years.²

This is by no means a Greek novelty. It reflects a general shift in the public debate and can, to a large extent, be attributed to factors that point to the impact of the international conjuncture: the global economic crisis that broke out in 2008, the major mobilisations that took place worldwide, but also the socio-demographic changes of the 21st century related to young people, such as: (a) their proportionally lower participation in the electorate, as a consequence of the ageing of the population on the one hand, and of the fact that a larger percentage of older people go to vote, on the other; (b) the fact that they reach certain milestones of adulthood (living alone/ owning a home, marriage, family, steady employment) later than previous generations – milestones that are also linked to political participation, and c) the sweeping changes in employment status (the generation with the highest qualifications and the highest unemployment rates) are affecting people worldwide, transcending national borders and, therefore, are of great interest within the field of research.

From the “Polytechnic generation” to the Millennials and GenZ: from the national event to the “global” generation?

The traditional approaches in youth (and generational) studies, when referring to the socialisation dimension of the concept of generations, used major socialising events related to Greek politics and society as a benchmark and/or a reference point. Following the political transition of 1974 (“Metapolitefsi”), in scientific research, as well as in journalistic and public discourse, there were references mainly to the “1-1-4 generation”, the “Polytechnic generation” or the “Metapolitefsi generation”, while various research initiatives later on cited and referred to other domestic political events.

Indicatively, these include the rise of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) to power in the now regarded as a classic study on “the adolescents of Change” (Pantelidou, 1991), certain mobilisation processes in which young people played a leading role, such as the “generation of the ‘90-‘91 school occupations” (Sklavenitis, 2016) or that “of the events of December of 2008”, while in the periodisation introduced by Martin (2004: 191) in her comparative study of Greece and Spain, it is the

national (event) that names each generation. About a decade ago the term “the 700 euro generation” was introduced in analyses (see Chiotaki-Poulou and Sakellariou, 2010 on how this group was constructed), but not long afterwards its use phased out.

In the last decade or so, as the interest and references to young people have increased, the terminology changed accordingly, and the terms “Millennials”, initially, and “Gen Z”,³ shortly afterwards, emerged dynamically in the domestic discourse as identifiers of the younger generations, thus marking a significant shift in the way these were perceived. Domestic (national) identities no longer appear to suffice, as the globalisation of issues and crises led to a globalisation of identifications and identities. The still unanswered question that is probably trickier to answer, is whether these younger generations also self-identify in more globalised terms compared to the older ones.

There are certain obvious similarities on a cultural, economical as well as technological level that come to mind when addressing this question. Starting from the latter, all the major technological innovations on the field of the Internet that have happened so far during the 21st century -which conventionally are included in what we call “Web 2.0”- have also become available and have thrived in Greece in the past decades. Major political, economic and social events that change the way we perceive and experience our everyday lives (the global economic crisis, refugee flows, the pandemic, the environmental crisis) are disconnected from the “national” sphere. Everyday habits and practices, such as trading in a single currency or travelling without border controls, all form a sense of globalised experiences.

Indicatively, according to a recent survey by the “National Centre for Social Research” (EKKE) conducted amongst young people aged 18-29, aiming to find out which personal experiences have influenced them personally in connection to the EU, “free travelling within the Schengen area” is the most important experience for young people today in terms of their perception of the EU, followed by the “common currency” (Iliou, Kakepaki and Klironomos, 2022: 21). Findings from an earlier EKKE study (Iliou and Kakepaki 2021) that sought the most impactful socialising “event” for individuals born between 1991 and 2003, show that it is mainly personal and family-related experiences that ultimately shape young people’s political identity, thus confirming the ever-present significance of the individuals’ political socialisation process within the family versus the effect that major political events might have on them.

CONCLUSIONS

In this brief note we have briefly recorded some key developments in the evolution of public and scientific discourse regarding the concept of the youth generation and young people. Although not always explicitly stated, an approach to young people is gradually being shaped not so much as an age group or a biological/evolutionary category, but rather as a social group with generational attributes. However, this shift, having taken place over the last 15 years or so, has focused more on the last two generations, the Millennials and GenZs. In other words, it accepts the relevant classification that was formulated and widely adopted in the US, as a continuation of previous classifications (Silent generation, Baby Boomers, Gen X) that were based on demographic, social, political and cultural developments in the US.

At the same time, previous attempts to classify relevant research in Greece, with references to domestic -mainly political- developments [e.g. the “Resistance”, “1-1-4”, “Polytechnic”, “Metapolitefsi”, “Change”, “School occupations”, “December of 2008” etc. generation] are gradually receding. In other words, a 70-year-old person today is highly unlikely to self-identify as a “boomer”.⁴ In contrast, identifying with GenZ seems to be the obvious choice for today’s 16-year-olds. Putting aside any communication-media influences and/or an identitarian cosmopolitanism, we suggest that this

shift rather marks the receding importance of (domestic) politics in the shaping of political identities.

Therefore, the major events that will define and accompany each generation as determinants in future analyses cease to originate and be generated endogenously. Therefore, if in an earlier research we commented that “it is not easy to determine whether [...] the generation of people born after 1991 has not (yet?) experienced its own student uprising at the Polytechnic School, its own Metapolitefsi or Change” (Kakepaki 2020: 7), today we would take this reflection further by arguing that, possibly, the events that define the younger generation are beyond the boundaries of the “national”. As a consequence, events that are shocking at first and seem to be engraved in the memory of younger people (e.g. the Tempi train accident) are not that likely to function as major political identity shaping events.

As a postscript, we would add one more thing: any study of the new generation -whatever we may call it- should try to discern whether the attitudes and perceptions of individuals will accompany them for the rest of their lives, determining who they

are, regardless of the age group they belong to. To do this, however, the focus needs to be on the whole population and over a sufficient time period in order to provide the necessary answers.

Otherwise, any study that is carried out will undoubtedly only be fragmentary.

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1. Christmas-Best, V., & Kjaer, U. (2007). Why so few and why so slow? Women as parliamentary representatives in Europe from a longitudinal perspective. *Democratic Representation in Europe—Diversity, Change and Convergence*, 77-105.

2. With the exception of a handful of researchers, with Pantelidou Malouta being the most prominent amongst them, as she has systematically included the term of generations and the significance of political socialisation in her work for decades now.

3. Although there is no definite consensus as to the first use of the terms "Millennials" and "GenZ", the Pew Institute's analyses, focusing on the different generations in the US for almost two decades now, has certainly contributed to the terms' more extended use.

4. It is rather telling that the expression "boomer" nowadays seems to collectively describe all those who do not belong to the younger age groups.



Mapping the new generation: A comparative analysis



V

Costas Gousis

In early April 2023, Eteron Institute released the large-scale research “[An Insight into the Minds of Voters: Ideologies, core values, stances](#)” in collaboration with aboutpeople. Said research is part of the project “[Society: In-depth](#)”, coordinated by Yannis Albanis. The research was conducted by Gerasimos Moschonas, Professor of Comparative Politics at Panteion University, and Petros Ioannidis, Managing Director of aboutpeople. The survey took place between 17 and 27 March 2023 via online and telephone interviews of a sample of **4,182** people over 17 years old from all over Greece. Due to the large sample size of the research, it was possible to analyse the responses according to the participants’ party preference. This was the research’s strong point, as it allowed us to better understand political parties through an analysis of each party’s electorate.

The sample of 4,128 participants includes responses from **721 young people aged 17-34**.

Today, we will bring to the fore the results of the above quantitative research using data sorted by age group, focusing on the findings regarding the young generation’s positions.

The survey takes an in-depth look at views on politics, institutions, democracy and the major ideological and value issues that have long been the subject of public debate.

The main objectives of the following analysis are:

- to outline the young generation’s political profile by focusing on the following topics: institutions, democracy & collective action, economy, spending & the role of the State, immigration, LGBTQI+ rights & MeToo, ideological references & expectations for the future.
- to identify and comment on the most pronounced differences that emerge in some responses by analysing the results by age group.
- to enrich our perspective through a comparative analysis of the findings of this research with those of the “The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster” research, as well as those of the researches and analyses conducted by Eteron last year, on the post-pandemic economy and Generation Z.

METHODOLOGICAL

“The comparative analysis allows us to place young people’s overall views in a wider context and shed light on the circumstances under which they were formed”

REMARKS

“Is there such a thing as the ‘Tempi generation’? One should be cautious. After all, we know that a generation is not merely an age convention; it carries value especially when referring to universal experiences, to broader conditions in which a common ground, an ‘identity’ is formed – even if it is never an identity that’s set in stone. In our case, however, it may be something more than a ‘journalistic’ description. And this is because the Tempi train accident is precisely such a universal event.”

Ioannis Balampanidis in an [article](#) published in Kathimerini newspaper, 5/4/2023

Before moving on to comments on the main topics we shall address, we need to make some brief methodological remarks, as the careless use of the term “generation” can blur rather than clear the path of social research. In a relevant study on the concept of “generation”, published in the autumn of 2019 by Crete University Press, Evgenios Matthiopoulos mentions frivolous uses and/or misuses of the term, attempting a critical overview of generational theories.

As he points out, the fundamental error can be traced in the “passage from the empirical perception of the meaning of a common word, to its use as an abstract concept, without, however, sufficiently clarifying its semantic depth and breadth within the context of a scientifically structured interpretive reasoning” (p. 31).

The use of the concept of “generation” was a major focus point for us during the past year, in the context of the “Gen Z – Voice On” project, with the all relevant analyses included in Eteron’s e-book entitled: [“Gen Z, Politics & Social Media during the Pandemic: Research Findings and Commentary”](#). As sociology professor and former president of the American Sociological Association, Ruth Milkman, points out in the [interview](#) she gave Eteron, **it is wrong to distinguish between generations based on demographic traits or consumer tastes.**

Drawing on the work of Karl Mannheim, she points out that “a generation is not a biological phenomenon defined by age but a sociological one defined by the dramas of history.” In this sense, Milkman helps to approach the concept of “political

generation”. In this approach, it is not the year in which one is born that is most significant, but rather **the historically specific, shared experiences that crucially shape the ways of thinking that differentiate one generation from another.**

In this context, we will outline the political profile of the younger generation and identify some clear generational differences in the participants’ responses according to their age group. We decided to treat young people between the ages of 17 and 34 (Generation Z and young Millennials) as a single age group. Our choice is based on a widely accepted position in the recent literature: that Millennials and Gen Zers were shaped by so many shared experiences that one could argue that they constitute one generation. On the other hand, we ought to acknowledge the limitations of this choice.

As Malouta and Zirganou correctly note in [their](#) article entitled “The young Greek voters of the Left and radicalism during 2010s”, apart from parameters such as class, ideology, gender, place of residence, etc, the time when young subjects experienced the 2008 crisis is “an additional parameter that differentiates perceptions” and “differentiates those who experienced it as a breakthrough (the older ones) from those who have not experienced anything different and therefore perceived it as ‘normality’”.

In other words, if we focus on a sample of young people aged 17-34, we only need to keep in mind that when the country entered the Memorandum years in spring of 2010, the upper limit of our sample was 21 years old, while the lower was just 4 years old.

At the same time, we shall examine the findings in a comparative context, bringing to the discussion, as already mentioned, previous Eteron research and especially the research recently published by Eteron [“The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster”](#), under the scientific supervision of Loukia Kotronaki. The data was collected by aboutpeople in mid-April 2023 on a nationwide sample of 634 young people between 17 and 34 years old.

A comparative study allows us to combine two questionnaires with different emphases, but which complement one another and enrich our perspective:

- The questionnaire of the “An Insight into the Minds of Voters: Ideologies, core values, stances” research, which does not focus on current affairs but rather emphasises on views regarding politics, institutions, democracy and major ideological and value issues &
- The questionnaire of the survey “The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster” that puts more emphasis on the particular context after the fatal train accident in Tempi, highlighting the views, feelings and choices/patterns of participation of young people in the relevant mobilisations.

In other words, the comparative analysis allows us to place young people’s overall views in a wider context and shed light on the circumstances under which they were formed. In nullent vel ipicia versper chitatu repudae perovidebis ulpa que qui blaborum reperfionisedi con nonetur maximus im inveliq uaturibus aditatur, odiatem poruptature, core cores etur mo vid molor resequi tet utecus eos nonsend eruntisqui volestis modita quost qui ra inti consequi del eatem resti dellupt aerciis intiam ut pos dolorun tistiam alis modignisimo que etur, que nonet voluptatem net molupit, susanimi, quias quasperovidi dolor as es doloriatque vollam, quaerios ea pa duntius arum, et volum facepti si cuptae atibus assus vitisit, quaecto veleni diti dit, quis ut id ea eumquamusda voluptat que nobis es porio blam inctiat endignam, voluptae voloreprovid quo quias perfero rehende lique plit endus undae. Ulpa vellitio inctam rerrovitatures sequas velis ut fuga. Et la ducia corporerum dolliquam quuntotat volum sus pro volliquae. Nam nam, eliquam, cus vollaceperum ex enes et, ut mosant eum quaspel il molore velestr umquatquo

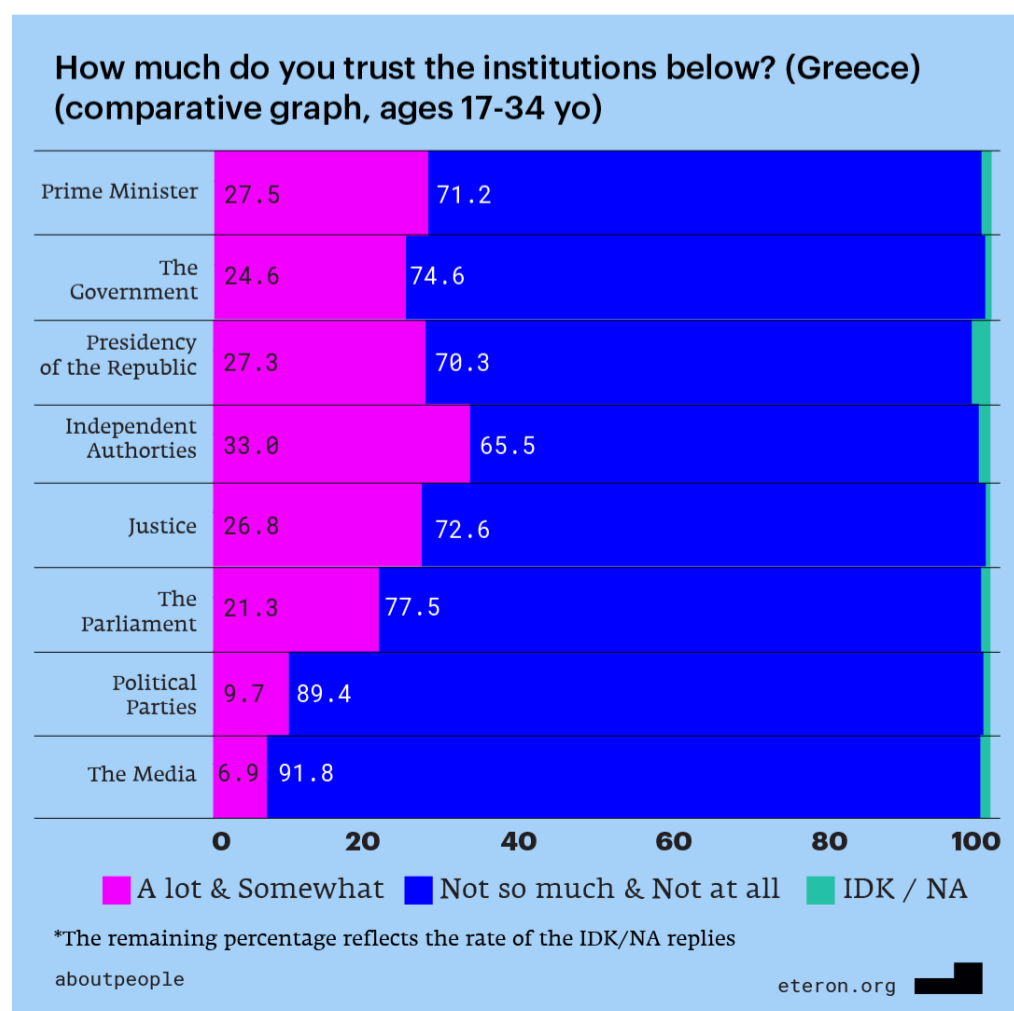
Institutions, democracy & collective actions

The first topic we will address concerns young people’s stance towards the institutions and democracy, as well as their participation in collective actions.

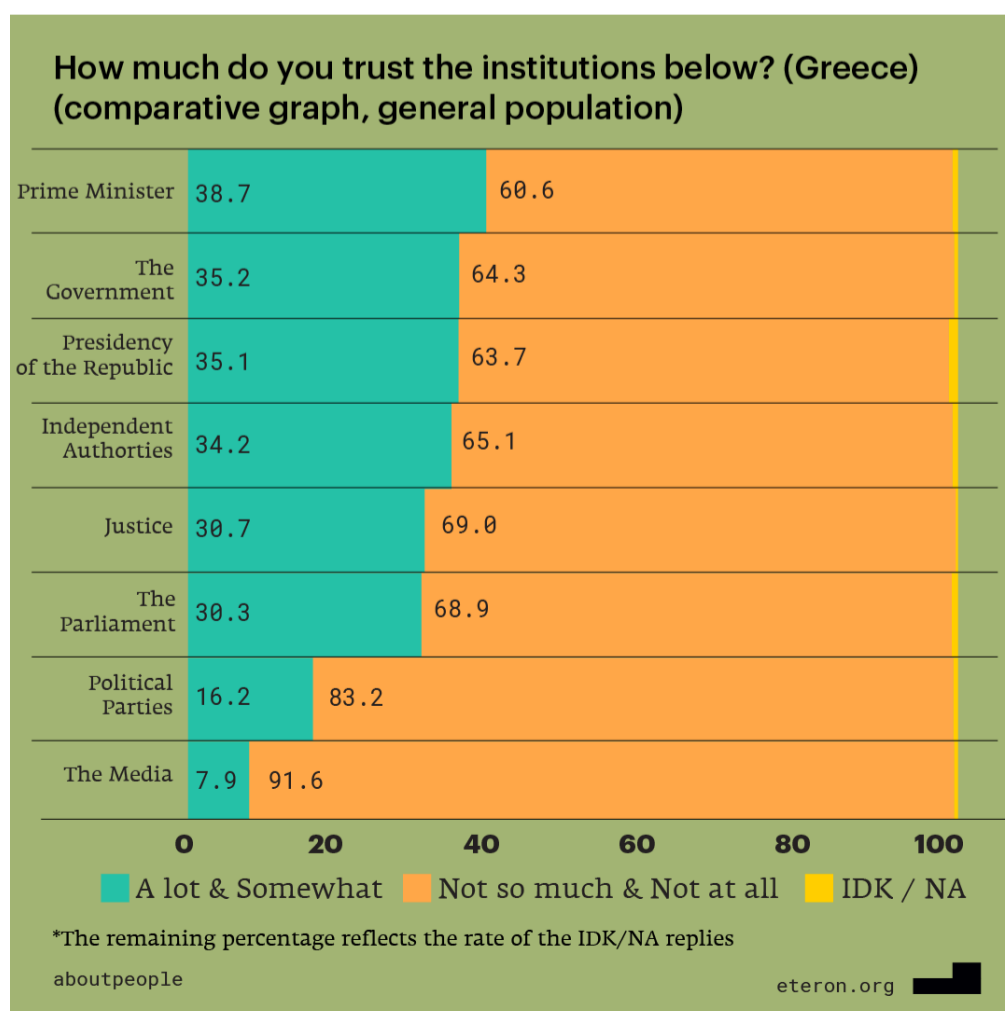
The findings clearly show that after the Tempi accident, the young people’s crisis of confidence in institutions is deepening (Graph 1). All the key institutions that make up the Greek political system score very low in terms of the trust that young people have in them, with **the media** (91.8%), **the political parties** (89.4%), **the Parliament** (77.5%) and **the Government** (74.6%) occupying the top 4 positions. If we compare that with Graph 2, which gathers the results’ average for all age groups, we could argue that the crisis of confidence is generalised and is also recorded at the level of the general population (everyone aged 17 and over).

However, it is obvious that the levels of distrust towards the institutions are much higher amongst the younger generation. For instance, while the only institution that gathers more than 30% of young people’s trust are the Independent Authorities (33%), if we look at all the age groups cumulatively, all the institutions, with the exception of political parties and the media, gather trust rates ranging between 30-40% (cumulative percentages of “I trust them a lot/ somewhat”).

GRAPH 1



GRAPH 2



The findings of the research “[The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster](#)”, are along the same lines, with the government – as an institution – and political parties in general, garnering the highest levels of distrust (75.4% and 88.5% respectively). More specifically when it comes to the media, it appears that young people have turned their backs both on television (distrust rates reaching 86.7%) and newspapers (72.2%).

These findings can also be interpreted in relation to the dominant emotions experienced by young people, such as **rage (43.7%)**,

despair (19.7%) and **shame (17.4%)**, which constitute the emotional background of the extended distrust towards all institutions.

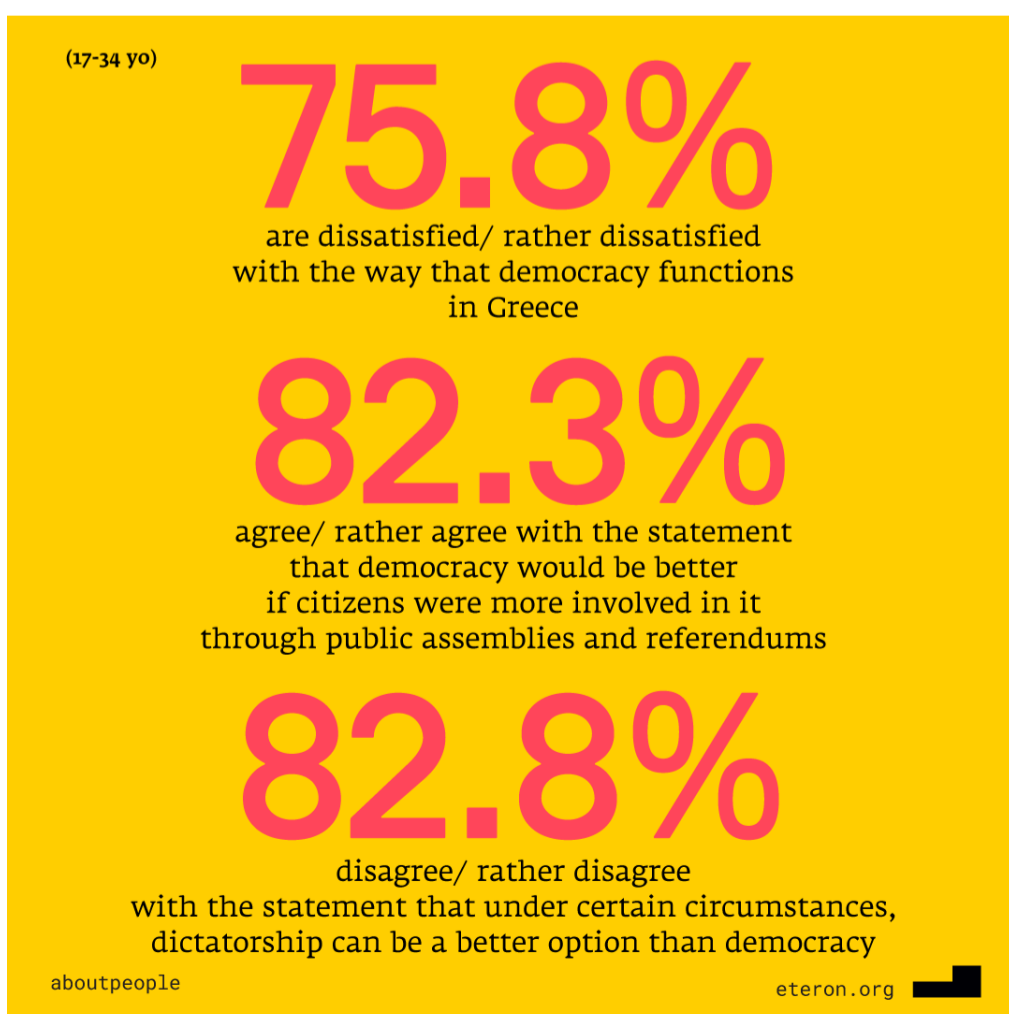
In that same context, the vast majority are **dissatisfied** or rather dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Greece (75.8%), although they state that despite its issues, there is no better regime than parliamentary democracy (76.6%). 82.8% of young people disagree or rather disagree with the statement that, under certain circumstances, dictatorship can be a better option than democracy, while 14.6% agree or rather agree with this statement.

This anti-democratic nucleus of 14.6% is detected in many recent

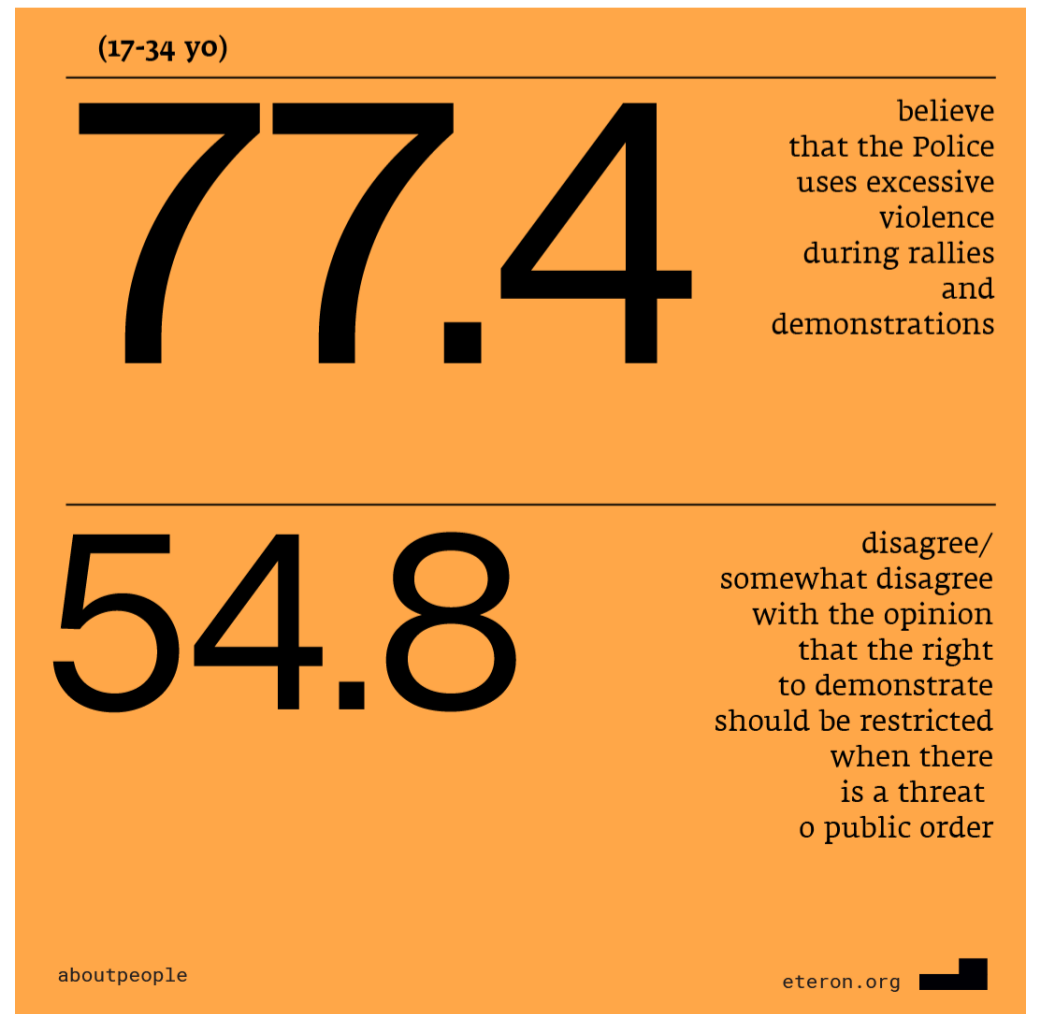
surveys and sets off alarm bells regarding the influence of **the far-right on the new generation**. Similarly, in Eteron’s research on Generation Z conducted last year, while **a majoritarian democratic and anti-fascist reflex** is clearly identified in the **young generation**, there is still evidence of an existing minoritarian far-right zone of influence.

Coming back to Graph 3, it is noteworthy that 82.3% believe that democracy would be better if citizens were more involved through **public assemblies and referendums**. Therefore, young people’s dissatisfaction with the way democracy functions in Greece is basically linked to a trend towards a **deepening of the democratic imaginary**.

GRAPH 3



GRAPH 4



When comparing the responses of 17-34 year olds with the average of the relevant figures for all age groups, it is worth pointing out that there are indeed some – though not that big – generational disparities.

More specifically, across all age groups, 69.7% express dissatisfaction with the way democracy functions in Greece, 83% say that despite its issues, there is no better regime than parliamentary democracy, 13% agree or somewhat agree that in some cases dictatorship is preferable to democracy and, lastly, 78.6% believe that democracy would be better if citizens were more involved through public assemblies and referendums.

Back to the younger generation, a high percentage state that they are **very & somewhat interested in**

politics (67.9%) although the percentage of those who often discuss political issues when they are with friends is still low (30.3%). On the other hand, as we found in last year's Gen Z workshops organised by Eteron, young people's perception of the term "politics" and the topics they consider "political" is a more complex matter than it might seem at first.

In any case, another indicator of the potential deepening of the democratic imaginary of the young generation is the extent of their familiarity with movement repertoires of action. The findings of Eteron's research on young people's participation in the mobilisations over the accident in Tempi are typical in this respect, with 37.8% responding that they participated in demonstrations, strikes and other initiatives in memory of the victims, while for 13.6% of them, the March 2023 mobilisations were their first experience of participating in a demonstration on any social issue.

The data we are publishing today shows that the right to protest and an opposition against police violence are high on the list of priorities of the younger generation (Figure 4). A similar finding emerges in the research on the mobilisations after the accident in Tempi. The vast majority (70%) of both those who participated and those who did not participate in the demonstrations agree that the police used excessive force.

Moreover, 1 in 2 people replied that they have participated in a protest in the past and 1 in 4 said they have previously participated in a strike. In terms of the right to strike, a noteworthy finding from Eteron's 2022 economic research, was that 82.3% of 17-24 year olds and 77.1% of 25-34 year olds agree/somewhat agree with the position that the right to strike is sacred. Moreover, in last

year's Eteron research on Generation Z, 1 in 4 young people responded that they had participated in a demonstration during 2021, which is impressive, especially considering the extended lockdown and the restrictions that Law 4703/2020 unsuccessfully imposed on the right of assembly.

In conclusion, the findings support the hypothesis that for a significant part of the younger generation, the demand for democratic deepening is linked to the participation in collective actions and social movements.

The economy, expenditures & the role of the State

In last year's Eteron economic research, Gerasimos Moschonas highlighted in his analysis, that the pandemic led to the reinforcement of "state-oriented economic ideas at the expense of directions and values originating from the paradigm of economic liberalism". This could also be a central conclusion drawn from the data we present today on the new generation, as clearly reflected in the findings summarised in Graph 5.

It is telling that only 20.7% believe that private businesses are the best possible means of creating better conditions for economic growth. In the same vein, the welfare state (80%) is very popular among the participants, while the Memorandums are extremely unpopular (84.6%).

It is striking that the percentage of young people who advocate for an "increase in defence spending in order to better protect national integrity" barely reaches 19.8%. Besides the strong message of redirecting public spending in areas such as healthcare, education and social security, this finding is significant for one more reason. Greece is the world leader in defence spending, surpassing even the US last year, as Greece spent 3.54% of its GDP on defence, while the US spent 3.46%.

When shifting back to the average rates for all age groups, we can observe the following: 57.1% think that the term "privatisation" represents something bad, 62.7% agree that defence spending should be decreased and 64.5% think that the State should intervene more in the economy in order to create better conditions for economic growth. There are some differences compared to the relevant percentages amongst 17-34 year olds, but these do not alter the main picture. On the contrary, they are a serious indication that the trend of state-oriented economic ideas, highlighted by Gerasimos Moschonas, is even stronger amongst the younger generation.

Similar findings emerge from the research "The Young Generation after the Tempio Train Disaster", with the most indicative question being "what do you think needs to change in order for rail transport to be safe?". The responses reflect young people's disapproval of railway privatisation, with the majority being in favour of the re-nationalisation of all passenger services.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to underestimate the visible and invisible effects of neoliberalism. In Eteron's 2022 economic survey, the responses to the following question are telling: When asked "Which of the following social groups is the one that mainly produces wealth in the economy? Is it mainly business owners or the workers?", 46% of young people between the ages of 17 and 24 and 36.8% of those between 25-34 answered that "wealth is produced mainly by business owners".

Finally, it is important to highlight a confusion that is reflected in some of the young people's replies. For example, 60.2% consider that capitalism as a notion represents something negative. At the same time, 52.1% consider the market economy (a metonym for capitalism) to be a good thing. Similarly, 55.1% consider multinationals to be a bad thing but 58.9% regard foreign investment as something positive. In conclusion, we would say that the description given by Moschonas and Ioannidis in their analysis of the minds of voters, of a "mixed economic culture with prevalent left-wing ideas", is also true for the young generation.



64.7

believe that the term “privitisation”
represents something bad

68.5

agree that the defence budget
should be decreased in order to reinforce sectors
such as healthcare, education and social security

67.3

believe that the State should intervene
more in the Greek economy in order
to create better conditions for economic growth

Migration

So far, it seems that there are certain stances and attitudes that are starting to crystallise amongst the younger generation as well as tendencies that are gaining ground on matters regarding democracy, economics and distrust towards the institutions. On the other hand, the new generation is not homogeneous in its views and practices and there are variations on the way young people stand towards several topics. One such topic is migration.

Let's start from the "The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster" research findings, and more specifically the question "What is/are the biggest problem(s) that Greece is facing at the moment? (up to 2 answers)". As the research supervisor Loukia Kotronaki points out, one can detect a certain leaning towards cultural progressivism in the participants' responses: "Here, the predominant issues of the conservative agenda, such as 'Immigration/Refugees' and 'Greek-Turkish relations' did not rank highly. They received only 11.5% and 5.9% of responses, compared to 'Expensiveness/Cost of living' and 'Corruption' for which the percentages were significantly higher

On the other hand, Graph 6 shows the deeper influence of the conservative agenda on the younger generation. The majority (47%) believes that the immigrants' presence in Greece does more harm than good, while the percentages of those who agree or somewhat agree that the immigration levels in our country in the past 10 years have been too high and that immigrants should embrace Greek values and the Greek way of life are very high (71.1% and 64.6% respectively).

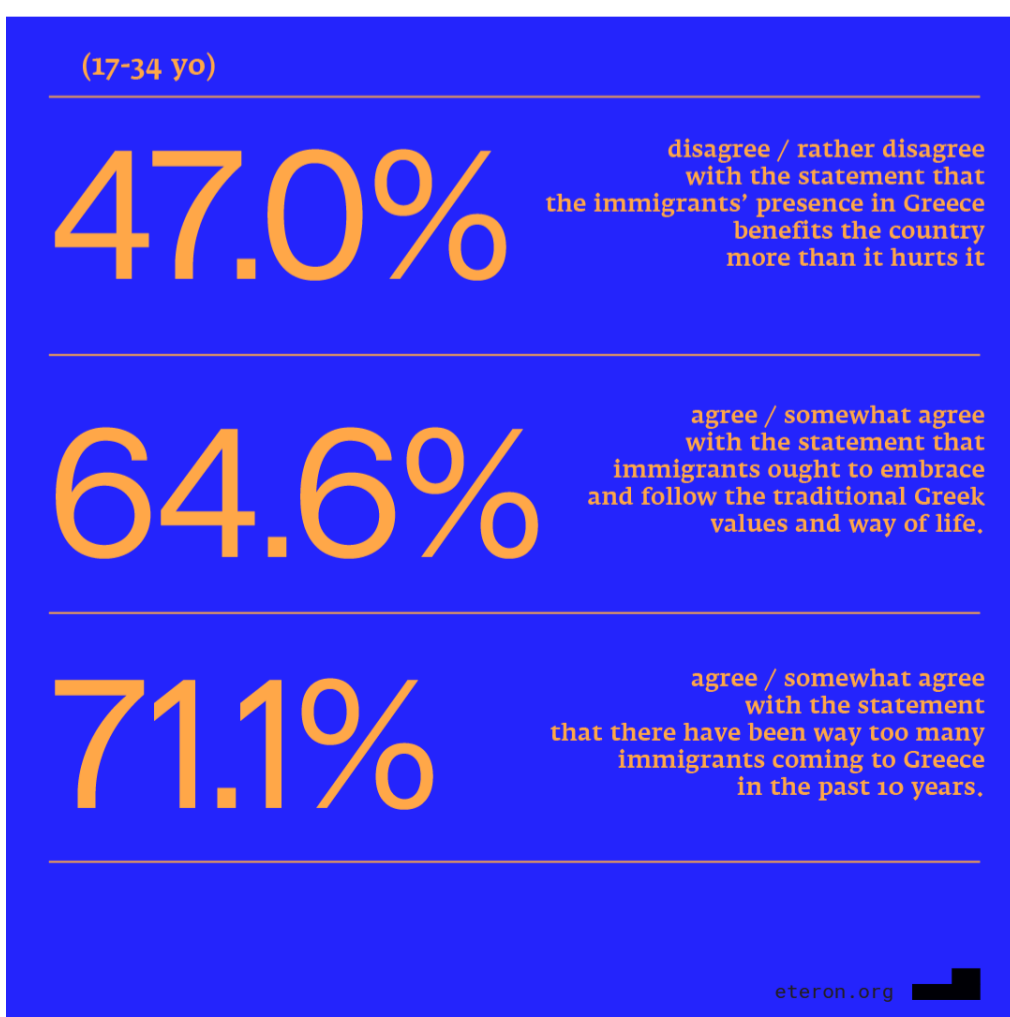
At this point, it is interesting to point out the significant generational differences as derived from the responses of the rest of the age groups. 58.7% of the 35-54 age group and 54.3% of the 55+ age group believe that the presence of immigrants in our country does more harm than good. Even more participants agree or somewhat agree that there have been too many immigrants coming to Greece in the past 10 years (77.7% of 35-54 year olds and 79.4% of 55+) and that immigrants should embrace Greek values and the Greek way of life (79.7% of 35-54 year olds and 89.4% of 55+).

The findings of Eteron's economic research last year were quite similar, since 42% of 17-24 year olds and 50.8% of the young people between the ages of 25 and 34, agree or somewhat agree with the statement "Enough with immigrants! Greece cannot accept any more foreigners". Here too, the differences between age groups stand out, as in all the other groups, the percentages of agreement with this xenophobic position range between 66.9% and 69.2%.

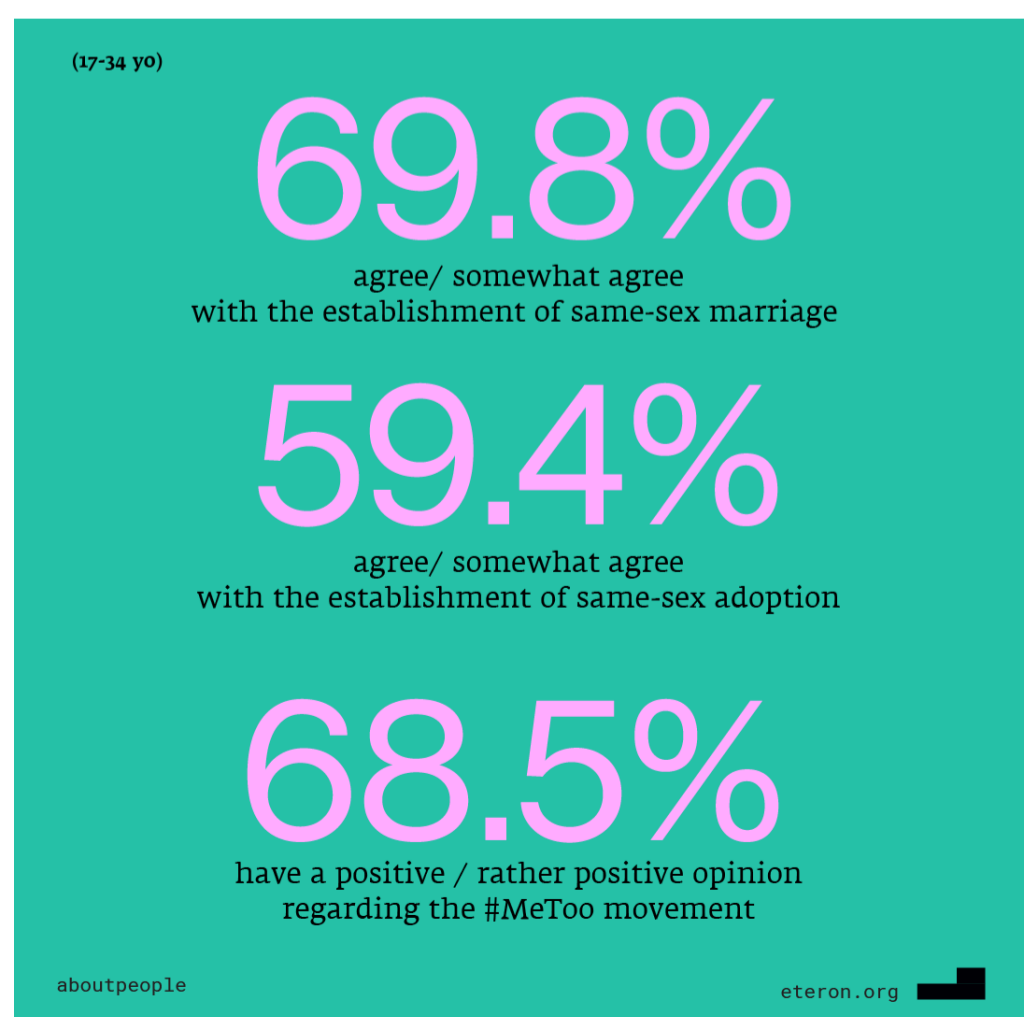
In conclusion, as far as the migration issues are concerned, one could say that although the effects of the conservative agenda on the younger generation are evident, at the same time xenophobia seems to have less impact on them than on the older generations, thus providing grounds for a possible and conditional change of attitude in the future.

LGBTQI+ rights & the MeToo movement

GRAPH 6



GRAPH 7



The topic where there seems to be a very clear mentality shift in the new generation is LGBTQI+ rights. The difference in the responses given by the different age groups is striking:

69.8% of young people agree/ somewhat agree with the establishment of same-sex marriage. The relevant percentage drops down to 55.1% for the 35 – 54 age group and to 46.2% for those over the age of 55. 59.4% agree/ somewhat agree with the establishment of same-sex adoption. In this case, the corresponding rate drops even more so, to 39.2% in the 35-54 age group and 29.1% in the 55+ age group. A similar question on same-sex couples adopting children was included in Eteron’s broad-scale economic research last year. The gradual decline in the percentage of those who agree with that practice as the age of the participants gets older is rather telling. 70.4% of 17-24 year olds and 56.1% of 25-34 year olds agree & somewhat agree that same-sex couples should be allowed to adopt children. The percentage drops to 48.9% for ages 35 – 44, 37.5% for ages 44 – 55, 33.9% for ages 55 – 64, and then rises again to 37% for ages 65 and older.

Finally, 68.5% have a positive & somewhat positive opinion regarding the #MeToo movement. Although the younger generation appears to support the movement more than the other age groups, generational differences are not that pronounced on this particular subject. More specifically, 67.3% of those aged 35-54 have a positive & somewhat positive opinion regarding the #MeToo movement while 62% of those aged 55 and over share this view.

The high acceptance of the MeToo movement by the younger generation is also evident from Eteron’s previous research on Generation Z during the pandemic, where the percentage of young people who said they supported the reasoning and goals of the #MeToo movement reached 86.9%.

Ideological references & expectations for the future

In terms of their overall ideological positioning, the leading response among young people is liberalism – democratic centre (18.3%), followed by social democracy (15.2%) and democratic socialism (13.2%). The average rates for the total sample (all age groups) are similar, although with slight differences: liberalism – democratic centre is at 19.7%, social democracy at 18.2% and democratic socialism at 16%. At the same time, the distinction between the Left and the Right remains important for 41% of young people compared to 53% who believe that this distinction is no longer relevant.

If we compare Graph 8 with Graph 9, which depicts the ideological – political currents, as recorded in the research “The Young Generation after the Tempi Train Disaster”, a number of interesting coincidences and divergences emerge, as well as questions that require further investigation:

GRAPH 8

Regardless of who you vote for at the elections, which of the ideological notions/ traits or identities below better matches your personal ideology?

Age 17 – 34 ετών

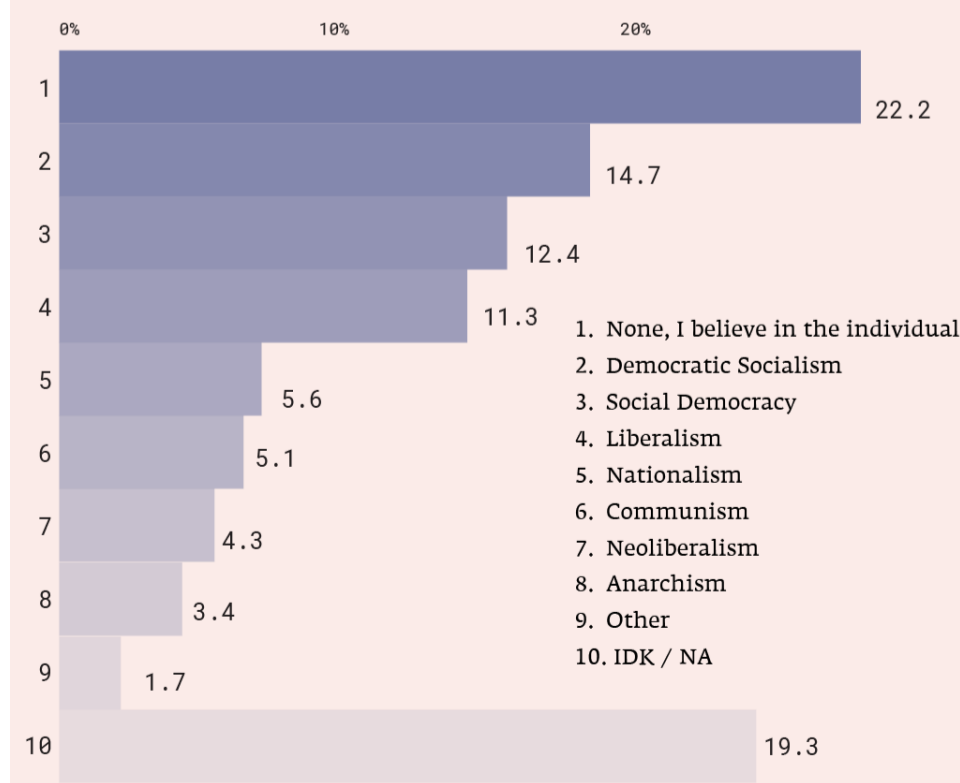
Nationalism	7.0
Conservatism	4.1
Neoliberalism	5.6
Liberalism - Democratic Centre	18.3
Social Democracy	15.2
Ecology	6.5
Democratic Socialism	13.2
Communism	5.5
Other	9.9
IDK / NA	14.7

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GRAPH 9

Which ideological-political current best expresses you?



1. None, I believe in the individual
2. Democratic Socialism
3. Social Democracy
4. Liberalism
5. Nationalism
6. Communism
7. Neoliberalism
8. Anarchism
9. Other
10. IDK / NA

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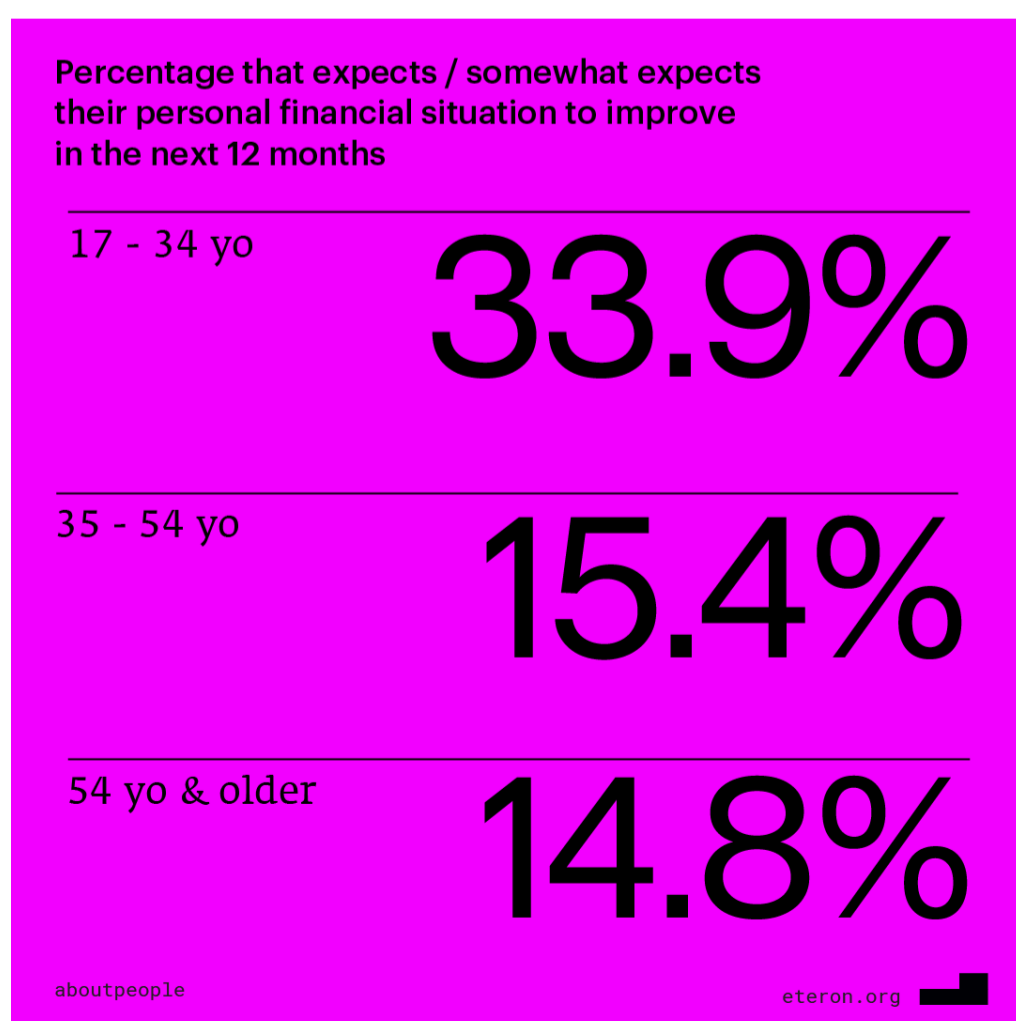
- The addition of the option “None (no ideology) – I believe in the individual” stands out in Graph 9, and is the most popular one amongst young participants (22.2%). At a time when neoliberalism registers low percentages in both researches (5.6% and 4.3% respectively), its visible and invisible effects seem to remain significant. The link between neoliberalism and the “None (no ideology) – I believe in the individual” option demands further investigation.
- While liberalism in Graph 9 is at 11.3%, liberalism – democratic centre in Graph 8 occupies the lead (18.3%). The influence of the “democratic centre” designation requires further investigation.
- It is also quite interesting to study the ideological-political reference to “democratic socialism”, which in Graph 8 comes in third place with 13.2% and in Graph 9 is in second place with 14.7%. From the resulting correlations that emerge at a general sample level (ages 17 and over) and according to political party preference, we can see that “democratic socialism” is the most popular response amongst SYRIZA (40.4%) and MeRA25 (35.2%) voters and the second most popular one amongst those of the Greek Communist Party KKE (22.5%) and PASOK/KINAL (14.4%). It would be interesting to further investigate how voters perceive the term as well as the meanings they attribute to it.
- In both graphs the percentage of participants who picked “I don’t know / NA” is remarkable (14.7% and 19.3% respectively). In Graph 8 there is an equally uncharted 9.9% who responded “Other”.

To conclude our analysis, we shall take a look at young people’s expectations for the future. The majority are dissatisfied with their personal financial situation (55.7%). However, when it comes to their expectations, 1 in 3 people expect & somewhat expect that their finances will improve in the next 12 months. This finding is striking, as is the difference in the responses of young people compared to other age groups. While 33.9% of young people expect & somewhat expect that their personal finances will improve in the next year, the relevant percentage drops to 15.4% amongst 35-54 year olds and 14.8% amongst those aged 55 and over.

The comparative analysis gives us a more comprehensive view, as the research “The Young Generation after the Tempì Train Disaster” includes the question “how could you improve your life?”, where the leading answer is “by personally making individual efforts” (66.2%), followed by “by voting – governmental change” (35.5%) and the third was “by participating in collective actions and social movements” (33.2%), while 8.8% said that nothing could be done to improve their lives.

Again, the cross-associations enrich our perspective, as it turns out that more than 1/3 of those who advocate for making individual efforts in order to improve their lives, also participated in the protests after the Tempì disaster. Let’s think about this the other way around: although they participated in the protests, they have not come – or at least not yet – to the conclusion that collective action is a means to improve one’s life.

GRAPH 10



CONCLUSIONS

The citizens' crisis of trust towards the institutions is deepening after the Tempi accident, and the levels of distrust towards all the institutions of the political system are a lot higher amongst the young generation. Young people are dissatisfied with the way democracy functions in Greece. A small anti-democratic nucleus is emerging, which can be linked to the influence the far-right has on the young generation.

However, the vast majority of young people associate dissatisfaction with a demand for democratic deepening through participation in public assemblies and referendums. Overall, the young generation participates in collective actions and social movements, prioritises the right to protest and takes a stand against police brutality.

As in other age groups, a mixed economic culture with a predominance of left-leaning ideas emerges when it comes to economic issues. In this respect, what stands out among the research findings is the strong call for a redirection of public spending in sectors such as healthcare, education and social security, and young people's support for increased State intervention in the economy.

The young generation is not homogeneous in its views and practices and there are variations on the way young people stand towards several topics. For example, the impact of the conservative agenda on topics such as immigration is visible in younger people. At the same time, xenophobia has less profound influence on the young compared to older generations, thus establishing space for a possible future and conditional change in attitudes.

The area with the clearest evidence of a progressive shift in the mindset of the new generation is LGBTQI+ rights.

Young people's interest in politics alongside their expectations that the situation will improve in the coming months leaves all options open for future developments. Finally, with regard to ideological-political currents, as mentioned in a previous analysis, there is an ongoing struggle within the young generation between, on the one hand, the key role of collective action, empathy, solidarity and a new left-leaning politicisation and, on the other hand, the significant impact of individualism and other key pillars of the dominant ideology.

Some ideas for further study and analysis could be to dig deeper into the age differences within each generation (e.g. between 17-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds) or to outline more coherently the political profiles of each age group before moving on to comparisons. Similarly, as an idea for further research, one could examine the generational differences within each electorate by looking at the results by party preference combined with an analysis by age group.

In any case, focusing on what we have already touched upon in the context of this analysis, the combination of quantitative research with qualitative research methodologies (focus groups, interviews, etc.) opens up new perspectives in our understanding of the issues in question. Eteron's quantitative researches, which we attempted to review in a comparative perspective in the context of this analysis, open up multiple avenues of interdisciplinary investigations by building bridges between comparative political analysis, youth studies and the study of collective action and social movements.



Trends of individualisation in the era of post - democratic liquidity



VI

Nikos Serdedakis

In an ageing society, such as Greece, younger people are, of course, a special social group (on the basis of its distinct demographic traits) that is smaller in numbers compared to the older ones, but that is also not self-evidently a specific social category. In other words, the younger generations should not be perceived as being synonymous to “the youth”, as they are often called in public discourse.

Youth constitutes a specific social category to the extent that it forms a singular lifestyle, broadly speaking, a “culture” that is distinct from that of the rest of the population. Youth constitutes a particular and distinct social category only in particular periods, when young people put forward alternative conceptualizations of social reality, radically different value paradigms, against the dominant-established cultural norms and consequently adopt emerging social practices, questioning the rules of institutional reality in the field of everyday life.

According to the above, Eteron’s quantitative research can be seen as a significant tool that helps us understand the dominant trends among young people in Greece, formulate research hypotheses about their characteristics at this particular juncture, but also to verify whether the detected trends justify a view of young people as a distinct social category. The survey data focusing on young people’s ideological stances, their trust in a number of institutions, the extent of their socio-political participation, and their views on current issues, can also be compared to the exit poll data on the youth vote, in the elections of May and June 2023.

A first finding of the Eteron research concerns the mapping of ideological trends within the sample’s age group: 22.2% of the respondents, state that no ideology expresses them and 19.3% refrain from answering the question “which ideological-political current best expresses you”. Around a fifth of the young people in the sample stated that no ideology expresses them, and that they only “believe in the individual”. Bearing in mind the emphasis placed on the individual by liberal and neoliberal ideology, overall, we can assume that about 40% of the sample tends to endorse a view of society as an individualised place (“topos”) for the articulation of life plans. What is noted here, just as in other surveys, is the intensification of the processes of individualisation, which are inherent and accentuated in the modern capitalist world-system.

This does not, of course, mean the complete absence of close social ties among those who are part of the peculiar contemporary “lonely crowd”. More specifically, with regard to the Greek reality, the family and the extended networks of relatives play a decisive role in young people’s life plans and decisions, as well as their mostly circumstantial integration into peer groups. Rather paradoxically, or perhaps not so much, in modern societies, the more pronounced the processes of individualisation, the more intense is the search for identification, no longer on the basis of social class position, but based on more or less ephemeral identities and identifications, with national, regional and religious tradition offered as an internalised stock of knowledge, able to offer a kind of “reciprocity of perspective”, security and the “taken-for-grantedness” of reality, within a complex and dynamic social world.

Fanaticism, bully groups that engage in acts of violence in the name of national identity, masculinity, sexism, as well as musical subcultures, such as trap for instance, may be performative manifestations in the context of sought identities and identifications, capable of providing a meaning to individualised reality, especially when individualisation manifests itself in an environment of systemic crisis, which reinforces tendencies of disembedding from fundamental social institutions. This is probably one side of the coin. The research findings suggest both countervailing trends and significant antinomies.

When asked “how do you think your life could be improved” (a multiple reply question), despite the fact that most research participants tended to select the option “by making individual efforts” (66.2%), about one third of the respondents stated that the improvement of young people’s individual life can be achieved through collective action and the broader political participation within the existing institutional political environment (approximately 35%). These data are of course more reflective of the values of the young people who participated in this research, since, as shown by the answers to subsequent questions, actual socio-political participation is less common. Only 15.3% state that they have experience of participating in a “grassroots collectivity”, 12.4% have joined a “student political organisation”, 10.6% are or have been members of a “political organisation – political party” and only 6% are members of a “trade union”, percentages that probably overlap, therefore making active socio-political participation significantly weaker than the value orientations of the members of the survey sample.

However, the percentage of participation in elections is rather higher than the national average (70% say they have voted at least once), despite the tendency to distrust political parties: only 9.8% of the participants stated that they trust political parties, ranking them last amongst the evaluated socio-political institutions, with the army, independent authorities and the police occupying the top three places in the relevant list.

The major antinomy in the research findings concerns the participants' feelings regarding the Tempi train accident compared to the results of the 2023 national elections. Approximately 73% of young people stated that the Tempi tragedy "was an event that affected [their] opinion on the current government", with the same percentage stating that Tempi "affected [their] opinion on all the parties that have governed".

On the one hand, rage seems to have been the dominant emotion regarding the accident, leading around 38% of the young people surveyed to take part in collective and symbolic protest actions. On the other hand, the youth vote in the national elections (May 2023) seems to reward the right-wing government, which in the protests over the Tempi tragedy was the main recipient of the broader social indignation. Eteron's summary of exit poll data, regarding the vote of young people aged 17 to 24, Nea Dimokratia (ND) recorded an increase of three percentage points compared to the 2019 elections, SYRIZA registered a ferocious decline of 14 percentage points, PASOK and KKE recorded an increase of close to four percentage points and Mera25 remained at a low percentage, with small losses in terms of the young people's vote.

How can one interpret this "conversion" of the feelings of outrage of young people into "mobilising grievances", in this case over the Tempi accident, which has been rapidly reduced to occasional manifestations of social protest, without actually managing to translate into institutional politics, but rather giving way to rewarding those politically responsible for the broader conditions of insecurity?

Eteron's research findings largely capture the new cultural environment that nourishes our meta-political fluidity, within which the dystopia of the dominance of a "presentism regime" is confirmed, with collective memory being neutralised and with no alternative perspective for the future. The exploited, the precarious, the stigmatised, the socially marginalised, seem incapable of weaving their own "realistic utopia". The "angel of history" now fixes his gaze down on the wreckage of the present, unable to turn it to the past of the accumulated ruins and to link the present with the past in a narrative about the causes of human suffering.

"The major antinomy in the research findings concerns the participants' feelings regarding the Tempi train accident compared to the results of the 2023 national elections."

Low expectations, high demands: the paradox of the “young generation”



VIII

Ioannis Balabanidis

Can we speak about a “Tempi generation”? After the recent tragic train accident, a public debate has reopened, regarding the characteristic traits, stances, perceptions, and core values of the ever-sought-after and permanently elusive “young generation”. Its waters remain uncharted, but less so than in the past. The painful Tempi context has brought the matter back to the forefront, but arguably this didn’t happen just because of the current conjuncture. Nowadays, in addition to an ever-growing rich dialogue, we also have an increased body of research data on what people that we call “youth” in Greece today are and what they may want – so, “youth” either in an overall, broader interpretation or in terms of specific generational profiles, such as millennials and gen Z.

The “[Youth – Voice On](#)” project widens the scope of the previously conducted “[Gen Z – Voice On](#)” research, by exploring stances and perceptions across a wider age range (17-34 years old), in a broader conceptualisation of “youth”. The fact that it almost coincided with the May elections gives it added value, as one can compare, for instance, the dominant feelings regarding the Tempi accident (outrage: 43.7%) with the actual voting behaviour of younger people -as captured in the exit polls at least.

Although this is not our focus here, let us make a preliminary observation that may better elucidate what we shall argue next. This outrage does not seem to have been automatically translated into an anti-government vote, since Nea Dimokratia maintained or even boosted its influence on young people (e.g. 17-24-year-olds), while SYRIZA suffered the heaviest losses, although said generations were considered, and quite rightly so, to be a friendly audience. In fact, almost all the rest of the Left/ Centre-Left (from PASOK-KINAL and KKE to Mera25 and the more obscure Plefsi Eleftherias) seems to have recorded gains, and the same goes for Elliniki Lysi and Niki on the far right end of the political spectrum.

This electoral snapshot raises a broader issue. Granted, the emotions that a moral shock may evoke do not automatically translate into a political identity. One would argue that political mediation channels as well as some necessary and appropriate social conditions are needed in order to make this process possible. At the same time, however, there seems to be something else that is missing from the general picture. As Antonio Gramsci has explained long ago, the elections are a moment which nevertheless encapsulates and crystallises trends that have been developing and taking shape for years. So is it possible that long-term processes of identity formation might better explain what the “young generation” is and what it wants rather than specific incidents, however dramatic and charged they may be?

If we phrase the question in this way, and consider it beyond the electoral context, Eteron's research presents us with some very useful data, or at least indications. To summarise it somewhat provocatively right from the start, we could say that the overall picture for young people aged 17-34 in Greece today suggests that youth has low expectations and major frustrations/ disappointments, but at the same time is more demanding than what its aspiring political spokespersons sometimes think. It may sound like a paradox, but it is not.

An extremely enlightening feature of this insight of the minds of young people, which exceeds the current electoral context, is the mapping of their ideological stances. From the unstable and still developing politicisation of the first post-pubescent age to the largely established identity of the thirty-year-olds, the Greek "youth" appears to be moving along a progressive rather than a conservative ideological trajectory.

Indeed, the dominant identifications with an ideological-political current are stronger in the case of social democracy (12.4%) and democratic socialism (14.7%) and much less so with neoliberalism (4.3%) or nationalism (5.6%), or with the more "hard-line" ideological categories of communism (5.1%) or anarchism (3.4%). This finding can be interpreted in conjunction with that of the previous "Gen Z-Voice On" research as well as other surveys on younger generations, in which we saw that Gen Z tends to position itself more to the left of the political centre than to its right, with the largest concentrations being in positions 4 (10.2%) and 5 (14.8%) of the Left-Right axis.

At this point, however, there is one more point that needs to be made. The identification with "liberalism" is significant (11.3%) and, more importantly, a large share, more than 1 in 5, declare that they identify with "no ideology, I believe in the individual". Assuming that the former refers to a liberal tradition that emphasises on individual rights and that the latter points to an element of pronounced individualism, then we need to complete the picture. Greek youth today is not "individualistic"; but it is, just like young people in Europe and the Western world in general, strongly individualised, attaching particular value to the possibility – or the freedom – for each and every person to craft his/her individual biography, in a context where human and individual rights weigh heavily. Therefore, they are forming a progressive identity, with democracy and rights at the epicentre, against all authoritarianism.

The other side of the image described above is distance and suspicion towards institutions and organised political representation. It certainly comes as no surprise that 88.5% state that they do not trust political parties. This constant and entrenched foundation of distrust is also expressed in response to the Tempi tragedy: 72.7% said that the accident had affected their opinion of all the political parties that have governed the country. Perhaps here we can find a more satisfactory explanation why the tragic event did not have a major impact on the final choice of young people at the ballot box: none of the political actors interested in governing the country is "shielded" against young people's suspicions. This is a long-standing and deeply rooted pattern, with clear political consequences.

What's more, the Tempi accident revealed young people's not temporary but rather more permanent frustration with the country's governing system – a frustration that we can assume simply surfaced after the railway accident but has its roots at least in the events of the past decade. Eight out of 10 question the State's credibility, and almost as many of them (77.3%) reported that their view regarding the country's future has been affected, apparently for the worse. A smaller but still majoritarian percentage expressed a change of opinion regarding privatisations, a major public policy issue on which there has been a voluntary or forced consensus in the past few years (64.2%).

However, the fact that the opinion that the rail network should be re-nationalised is only strongly supported by the majority amongst the supporters of only one of the above key ideological attitudes (52% amongst those who identify with democratic socialism, but 42.6% amongst the supporters of social democracy, 26.5% amongst liberals and 29.7% amongst those who picked “no ideology, I believe in the individual”) may indicate a view that complex problems require complex solutions.

To summarise our main point: the key word is the frustration of young people’s expectations from the political system, the state (i.e. the mechanism which, according to our social contract, has undertaken to offer protection to its citizens and the possibility for them to develop their aspirations in an environment of freedom and rights), and the foreseeable future. This is why the answer to the question “what should we do?” lies overwhelmingly on the side of individualism: our lives can be improved primarily through individual efforts (66.2%) – but not through individualism, as the view that our lives can be changed through networking and useful contacts only appeals to 24.1%. At the same time, of course, the purely political dimension is not negligible, since voting (35.5%) and collective actions (33.2%) remain significant pathways towards improving one’s living conditions.

Alongside the obvious concept of frustration, however, there is the more implicit notion of demandingness. It would be a mistake to think of frustration (only) as resignation. It possibly has the opposite effect. This individualistic, liberal, largely progressive youth formed its identity within a context of constant crises (permacrisis) and a horizon of internationally low expectations for the future. The Greek situation, after the ravaging effects of the economic crisis (not just when it comes to material poverty but also in terms of institutional, labour and cultural conditions) and the uneven social consequences of geopolitical instability or the pandemic, exacerbates the disillusionment.

At the same time, however, a generation that highly values democracy, human rights and freedoms, the ability of each and every one to shape their individual path, is at the same time a demanding

generation that expresses a demand for a serious and coherent political representation if it is to trust the political system again – and especially from the progressive forces that correspond to its ideological profile. Young people are demanding when it comes to their education and universities, their working environment, the cultural sphere (and even the quality of the pre-election Tik Tok videos, which may make them cringe, but are appreciated when they are nice and well crafted).

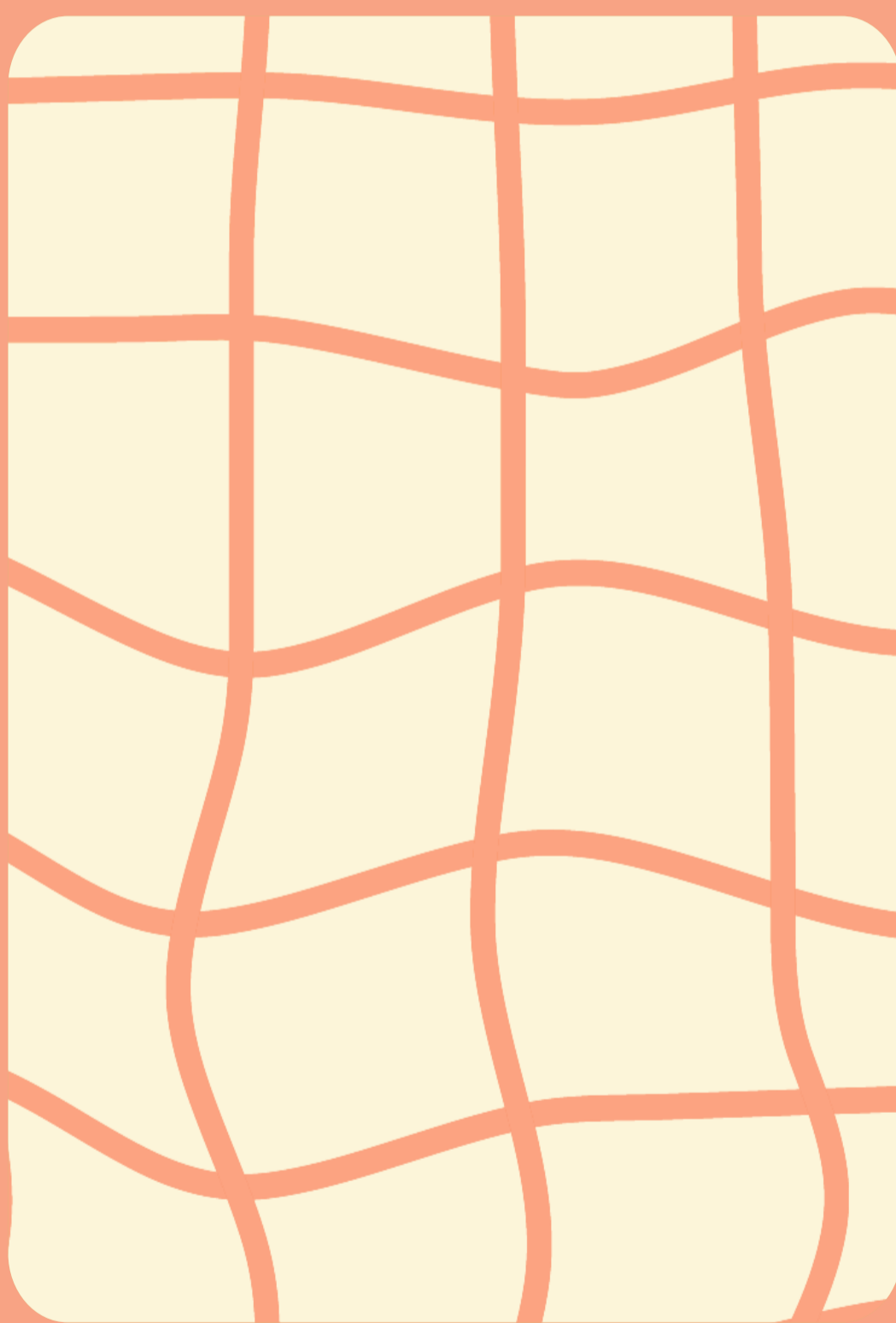
Their demands are clearly stated. We need to address: the climate crisis, gender identities, decent work, democracy rather than authoritarianism. Moreover, we shall invoke data from the Eurobarometer Flash 502 “Youth and democracy in the European Year of Youth”, conducted in 2022 amongst people aged 15-30, which addresses the national and at the same time the transnational/ European context of the whole debate. In the question “What do you expect from the EU to do for your generation?”, among the many available answers the top four for young people in Greece were peace and international cooperation (42% vs. 37% in the EU average), decent employment opportunities (45% vs. 33%), fighting social inequalities (46% vs. 33%) and climate change (34% vs. 31%).

The question, in the end, is how to establish relations of political representation for this progressive, liberal, “rights-oriented”, frustrated and yet demanding generation – especially by those political actors who are closer to it but who should stop taking it for granted. There is no easy answer, since the people asking the question, the demand that is, are more demanding than is often assumed. However, no one from now on can bypass this (not exclusively Greek) paradox.

“The key word is the frustration of young people’s expectations from the political system, the state and the foreseeable future”

Young people's vote in May 21st elections

Individualisation,
ideological fluidity and the
limits of the Left turn



VIII

Lina Zirganou - Kazolea
Maro Pantelidou - Maloutas

The notions of “young people” as well as of “generations”, have recently re-emerged as analytical categories, both in academic and non-academic public discourse, as attested by the publication of numerous papers and empirical material. This development was also fuelled by the mass mobilisations (the biggest in the last 12 years according to Public Issue’s data) that followed the fatal train accident in Tempi, in which young people took the lead, according to relevant research findings. This paper attempts to interpret the findings of Eteron’s research on young people aged 17-34 in light of the election results of the 21st of May 2023.

However, before we can outline the political profile of today’s Greek youth, we must make a necessary remark: the segmentation of society, and young people in particular, into generations, requires caution. A major event is not in itself enough, even if it is received as a blow with tragic consequences primarily against the youth. The dispersal of blame (all governments are to blame), as well as the opposite (it was the stationmaster’s fault), combined with a reasoning of incredible/unprecedented human error rather than a natural disaster, confine the socialising impact of said event to the realm of the “exceptional”. Therefore, we can’t really talk of a “Tempi generation”, since to do so would promote an invalidating perception of generations that succeed each other rapidly, on the basis of very heterogeneous socialising influences. A succession that would therefore explain nothing.

Although we are still in the midst of a prolonged election period, the elections of the May 21 already seem to acquire a particular significance, both because of the -almost unprecedented and largely unexpected- difference between the two first parties, as well as the reversal of trends that seemed to be consolidating in the fluid but stabilising party system of the last ten years. The sweeping victory of Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy or ND), with 40.79% and SYRIZA’s concurrent electoral crush (20.07%) are clearly reflected in the unprecedented predominance of Nea Dimokratia in all the country’s electoral districts, with the sole exception of Rhodope, as well as in all socio-demographic categories (gender, age, employment status).¹

Specifically, this was the first time since the double electoral shock of 2012 that ND gained the vote of the majority of young people, especially the youngest among them, although with percentages significantly lower than its national average, something that ought to be acknowledged. According to the joint exit poll data,² 33.1% of young people aged 17-24 and 31% of those aged 25-34 voted for ND – percentages that were the same or very close to those gained in the same age groups in 2019³. SYRIZA, the party which used to come first amongst the young generation by quite a margin from the party that came second in all parliamentary elections from 2012 to 2019, suffered a significant decline in terms of the youth vote, one that arguably reflects its overall plunge: it drew 24.1% in the 17-24 age group and 22.9% amongst the 25-34-year-olds. By

that it is abundantly clear that young people have not been unaffected by ND's predominance in all socio-demographic categories and the overall reinforcement of the Right and Centre-Right elements of the party system.

However, it should not escape our attention that the age pyramid of the (much fewer) SYRIZA voters in 2023, compared to 2019, does not reveal any changes regarding the youth's position compared to 2019. They still constitute the largest age group within SYRIZA, which is voted for with percentages above the national average. Moreover, the overall vote in favour of left-wing parties amounts to 36.5% for 17-24-year-olds and 37.4% for 25-34-year-olds (sum of SYRIZA, KKE, and MeRA25 percentages), down by about ten points compared to the 2019 elections, but well above their sum amongst the general population, which does not exceed 30%. Indeed, if we add the percentages of the other non-right-wing forces to the above (including PASOK and the – largely unclassified based on traditional divisions – Plefsi Eleftherias), then this figure rises to 52.1% for the 17-34 age group.

As for the vote of young people for the remaining parliamentary political parties (PASOK – Kinima Allagis, KKE, and Elliniki Lisi), there are no major deviations from the national average. However, all three parties have higher percentages among voters aged 17-34 than they did in the 2019 elections, based on the exit polls comparison, especially PASOK, which almost doubled its percentages. The only significant difference appears to be in the appeal of smaller parties that did not manage to cross the electoral threshold of 3%, namely Plefsi Eleftherias and MeRA 25, which, in the 17-34 age group gathered percentages even more than double their national average. The above is also indicative of a share of the youth vote shift, although there is no data on the age segmentation of voter migration.

Similarly, when it comes to the student vote, ND (31.1%) has a lead over SYRIZA (26.9%). In any case, both political parties saw a drop in their percentages in this particular category, especially SYRIZA (in the 2019 parliamentary elections 39% of students voted for SYRIZA and 35% for ND), while PASOK, KKE and Elliniki Lysi recorded a significant increase.

It is also quite interesting to observe the gender dimension of the vote, as the overall female vote is slightly more left-wing than the male one, including a higher support for SYRIZA. Although the 2023 exit poll data do not (yet?) allow for the cross-tabulation of gender with age and, therefore, the comparative study of the vote of young women and men, the more left-leaning vote of young women has been documented multiple times, in the double elections of 2012, as well as in January and September 2015. It is a fact that seems to have become a constant within Greek political culture in recent years.⁴ At the same time, less women cast their vote for far-right parties, a fact that has been observed in the past as well, when looking into the vote for the far-Right Golden Dawn, which was mainly supported by men.

It is therefore obvious that the elections of the 21st of May 2023 overturned certainties that, until then, seemed to be constant in the political party system of the post-recession period, such as the left-wing youth vote and especially the mass vote for SYRIZA. Are these changes that (should) surprise us? And how do they converse with the findings of previous surveys that documented on the one hand the – gradual and conditional – return of young people to politics and on the other hand their shift towards the Left?

In order to address the questions above, we must incorporate them in a more comprehensive analysis of the political profile of young people in Greece over at least the last decade, focusing on their values, positions and general ideological traits. Young people's rekindled involvement in politics was already foreshadowed by the events of December 2008 and intensified during the economic crisis, with their massive participation in the mobilisations of 2010-11, where they took the lead.⁵ The double elections of 2012 and then the referendum of 2015 intensified and completed their return trajectory, which was taking place through both institutional and non-institutional participatory channels, as well as the clear electoral shift of young people towards the Left.⁶

However, it is worth bearing in mind that the estimate of young people's electoral turnout cannot be done in the immediate future, on the one hand because of the unverified electoral rolls that lead to the usual problems of overestimating abstention,⁷ and on the other hand because of the lack of specific data regarding the age profile, and other demographics of the citizens who abstain from voting. In the May 2023 elections, the overall participation increased compared to 2019, both in terms of percentage and absolute numbers: 60.9% versus 57.8% and 6,061,098 voters versus 5,769,644, although we do not have information regarding the voters' age breakdown.

Nevertheless, both in Eteron's research and in other surveys conducted during the same period,⁸ it is multiply documented that young people vote in elections in very high percentages, and according to their own responses, they intended to do the same in the June 25 election (77.5% replied they would vote in June). At the same time, there is significant participation of young people in rallies, demonstrations, protests (as many as 52%), online activism (31%) and strikes or work stoppages (24%). It should also be noted that more than 1 in 3 respondents participated in protest events after the Tempi accident, while for 13.6% it was the first time participating in movement actions.

As for young people's Left turn and their potential radicalism, Eteron research findings confirm some previous hypotheses that challenged existing certainties about the radicalization of Greek youth. These hypotheses argued that even though young people have been voting for left-wing parties en masse between 2015 and 2019, if not since 2012,

they cannot be described as radical.⁹The left-wing vote was therefore far from consolidated, precisely because it was not based on a value and ideological foundation of a coherent leftist worldview.

Indeed, SYRIZA's very high percentage amongst young people in September 2015 -significantly higher than the one it received in January- foreshadowed the limits and fragility of young people's supposed left turn. Moreover, the low levels of identification or affiliation with political parties that young people express,¹⁰ especially against a broader background of ideological fluidity and decline of grand narratives, render the results of the May 2023 elections less unexpected than may have seemed at first glance.

Although the aforementioned data by no means suggest that voting in elections is not a valid way for younger generations to participate in politics, as is sometimes stated, it nevertheless seems to have lost part of its gravitas and subversive potential. It is worth mentioning that only 35.5 % of the participants replied that voting – in the sense of governmental change – is a way of improving their lives. This suggests, as the scientific supervisor of the research, Loukia Kotronaki, rightly points out in her report, that voting is a “low-expectations political participation practice” for young people and is therefore not necessarily indicative of their overall political profile.

Certainly, from the point of view of the politically active individuals, voting is less important than their values, which constitute the core of their identity, as well as their political attitudes, which obviously influence their electoral choice but, more importantly, determine the overall climate of a particular time period. And clearly it is of less importance than the overall vision of society that the voters hope for, and which is only slightly discernible in the electoral results.

What seems to prevail amongst the young generation is a “progressive” rights-based worldview, which, by disconnecting social radicalism from its political content, can even coexist with a right-wing vote, as we saw in the recent elections. This coexistence finds fertile ground especially when the diverse category of young people is characterised by a particular “ideological syncretism”,¹¹ as well as by perceptual and value contradictions, which have been reflected in numerous studies.¹² Even if we concede that today's youth are generally left-leaning in terms of their values, at the present juncture this does not mean that they are left-wing -whatever that means – or used to mean – politically and practically. And even more so, it does not mean that it is radical in its majority or an actor with a vision for a society based on equality, freedom and solidarity.

SYRIZA's trajectory, already since the summer of 2015, has blurred things further and rendered left-wing politics and worldview even harder to

discern, since, on the one hand, it alienated the -small- minority of essentially left-wing youth who identified with it politically, and on the other hand, it has not managed to plant a seed of radical vision in the minds of the younger ones. Instead, it rather aimed at appealing to them with better/fairer governance and identity issues with rights-based mentalities. Yet, those same issues and mentalities can now be served, under neoliberal hegemony conditions, by unexpected social/political alliances. Even if the distinction between Left and Right, and ideologies as we have known them, continue to be useful analytical categories and are still invoked by individuals, they no longer define coherent and opposing visions of society and the world in the way they used to.

At the same time, they determine less than in the past “the array of the preferences and values of citizens”,¹³ especially young people, a development that also renders their voting more fluid and volatile. This happens precisely due to the predominance of neo-liberal ideas masked as common sense that have also affected part of the left-wing social perception. However, in essence, the Left-Right distinction has never been ideologically and primarily value-wise more clearly opposed than it is today.

The findings of Eteron's research on Greek youth support the conclusion of a muddled and contradictory ideological orientation amongst the young generation, as well as profound individualisation. More specifically, when it comes to the ideological and political current people primarily identify with, most young people who participated in the research, position themselves within the broader spectrum of the Left (14.7% say they feel closer to democratic socialism, 12.4% express the same for social democracy, 5.1% for communism and 3.4% for anarchism).

However, the most popular option, with 22.2%, is “None [No ideology], I believe in the individual”, a position directly linked to the core of neoliberal ideology, although neoliberalism as such is not as popular (4.3%). Moreover, almost 1 in 5 young people chooses not to answer this particular question (19.3%). Both of these findings demonstrate the decline of grand narratives and their corresponding identity function as we knew them until recently, but also the ideological impact and diffusion of neoliberalism far beyond those who describe themselves as neoliberal.

Moreover, we should not overlook the fact that this development is in line with the “Zeitgeist”, which is defined by the personalisation of all aspects of human experience, including politics. The fragmentation of the cultural fields that provided solid identities for people, such as class or gender, means that individuals rely less and less on ideology or fixed identities; instead, they are increasingly acting politically in their everyday lives,

and in order to do so, they choose flexible means of expression and single-issue causes. In this context, it is not surprising to find strong elements of individualisation even within what we can call left-wing politics and worldviews.

In the same vein, when asked “How do you think your life could be improved?” 66.2% answered “by making individual effort”, and only 33.2% think that improvement can be achieved through participation in collective actions and movements (the same percentages were recorded amongst both men and women in both answers). Also, a considerable 24.1% believe they will improve their lives through networking and making useful contacts, a rate that is significantly higher amongst men. Also interestingly, almost half as many women than men choose voting and joining political parties as a means of improving their lives. It is again confirmed that young women join political processes largely by bypassing the formal, institutional participation channels, sometimes criticising their inherent androcentrism. Lastly, 8.8% responded that nothing could improve their lives, possibly indicating a low sense of political efficacy or even political cynicism in an implicit manner.

The general devaluation of the previously established, mainly collective ways of managing the common aspects of our lives together is also consistent with the loss of trust in major institutions, as shown in the findings of multiple research reports. In fact, Eteron’s research confirms the general pattern of very low levels of trust in institutions, which were already visible in Greek society shortly before the onset of the economic crisis, with the lowest rates observed amongst the youngest age groups. In descending order, the more distrusted institutions are political parties (88.5%), the government (75.4%), the Church (71.2%), Justice (69.6%), the police (69.4%), trade unions (62.9%), independent authorities (56.9%) and the army (57.7%), indicating the extent of the trust crisis that affects all institutions. Furthermore, there is widespread distrust towards most media outlets, especially television, while only news websites and social and family circles are viewed positively.

The general disappointment and sense of frustration with the current way politics function is also corroborated in the [findings](#) of another Eteron survey, the insight into the minds of voters, where 75.8% of young people responded that they are dissatisfied or rather dissatisfied with the way democracy operates in Greece. We know that this sense of dissatisfaction, which involves contradictory interpretations, is linked to an overall feeling of malaise rather than a (now much more than in previous time periods) sense that democracy in Greece is currently under attack. A characteristic example highlighting the solidity of this argument, is the very low ranking of the wiretapping scandal, a major issue of democratic operation, among a list of issues that will influence the vote of the young (it ranks last among the possible options cited, with just 6.4%).

At the same time, however, 14.6% of young people agree or rather agree with the statement that “in some cases, dictatorship is preferable to democracy”, a percentage that is very close to the relevant figures amongst the overall population (13%). This finding is corroborated by other surveys conducted at the same time, where along with young people’s Left turn, another segment systematically leans towards the far-Right, although in this case there is a clear gender differentiation. This is also reflected at the level of electoral records, where Golden Dawn gathered much higher percentages amongst young men, even more than double its national average. In the May 21st elections, the electoral current of far-right’s influence on young people appears to be reduced compared to previous elections, with the sum of the votes for Elliniki Lisi and Niki amounting to 6.9% amongst 17-24-year-olds and 7.3% amongst 25-34-year-olds, slightly below their national average.

However, there are two remarks that ought to be made at this point: On the one hand, the fragmentation of the far-right forces does not allow a very clear picture of its appeal amongst young people, since the released exit poll results do not include data on votes cast for parties that did not reach the electoral threshold of 3%. On the other hand, the same is true for the gender and age cross-section, which would provide valuable information as to the continuation or not of past trends. However, even if it is declining, there is still a sympathetic audience for far-right rhetoric within the Greek youth, which may exceed its electoral appeal.

The May 2023 elections revealed a new political landscape that strays from much of what seemed to be the cultural norms of the political process for young people in Greece until recently. And from a long-term perspective, far more important than the vote itself is the process of shaping the cultural parameters that seem to be crystallising within the context of the current elections and the general all-encompassing political reality. Thus, potentially fruitful directions for further research emerge, both in terms of the -visible and more covert- ways in which neoliberal ideological hegemony affects progressive youth, as well as their ideological profile.

What does the coexistence of movement dynamics and the choice of diverse forms of political participation on one hand, with the massive rejection of political parties and the comparatively smaller rejection of institutions such as the government, the Presidency of the Republic, or independent authorities on the other, ultimately demonstrate? What kind of profile does that outline? Does it confirm, once more, that young people perceive the notion of “freedom” through a rather liberal lens, with “equality” clearly lagging behind? Finally, it would also be interesting to investigate in more detail the internal age sub-groups that constitute Greek youth today, which, considered in conjunction with basic socialisation experiences based on each period’s overall context and climate, could lead to substantial conclusions.

In conclusion, although the political profile of young people seems to be shifting, based on who they voted for, it is worth stressing the fact that their ideological profile remains more or less stable. It is just that, in the current context, it can be expressed through many different political (party) voices. Is this practice superficial? Maybe so. But this is the general atmosphere, the cultural Zeitgeist shaping progressive, pro-rights and pro-diversity young people, who develop no ability to perceive social reality from a social (class) perspective. Young people inspired by a “live and let live” mentality, rather than by a mobilising motto, such as the one indicating that, “another world, unimaginably better, is possible” Only the Left can convince young people of the latter. But of course, the Left itself must first prove that it wholeheartedly believes in that statement.

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11. According to Yiannis Albanis in efsyn.gr, where he comments on Eteron’s research “An Insight into the Minds of Voters”.
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The embodied grief of the young generation: A small crack in the banality of inertia



Maria Louka

On March 7, our film “Grief – Those who Remain” premiered at the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival without any exclamations, whispers or murmurs. There was nothing. An unbearable silence. The only thing interrupting it was the collective snuffle of a muffled tension that one didn’t know how to handle, you feel it inside you, encased and trapped, resonating in your skin, anxiously searching for the tiniest air passageway. A solid mass of sorrow and anger. The very substance of trauma. It shatters, redefines and composes us.

As we were leaving the theatre someone pointed out a girl who was wearing a collar around her neck. “She was on the train”, they said. The train which we all have taken dozens of times, to go to college, to visit student friends, to visit family, to find jobs, to leave work, to fall in love or say goodbye, to watch films and visit exhibitions. It was the cheapest, most convenient and least lonely way to travel. A glimmer of serenity in a context of generalised stress. You could hop in and not think about anything, just stare across clusters of greenery, sleep or immerse yourself in your thoughts without distractions or dizziness. The train didn’t have the pricey impersonal swiftness of an aeroplane, the tedious focus of driving, or the stiff and irritating bustle of a coach. There was something sweet and familiar about it. That’s why it was so loved.

All in the past tense. Between the “before” and the “after” there is an incision in the form of an overwhelming shock. And then, back at that moment, just five metres from me stood this girl who wore a collar around her neck instead of a necklace; a girl who probably was in pain, who probably remembered and will never forget. A total stranger to me, a girl amongst more people that I didn’t know but who all had teary eyes, who might have been friends, college classmates, brothers and sisters of the dead or the survivors of the Tempì train accident, or maybe they were none of those things but were mourning something that felt like their own and was lost in the same train cars.

A hope of healing for what we have suffered in our adult lives that was dashed. One more frustration among countless others. I want to tell you that the thread that connected us, even though we hadn’t exchanged a single word until recently, was invisibly woven for years until it became a noose. It is what Judith Butler describes in “Precarious Life” about the insightful and reflective experience of trauma for “all [those things that] tear us from ourselves, bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not are own, irreversibly, if not fatally.”

The Tempì train accident – a product of the criminal strategy of degradation of the railway network and generally a deadly reflection of the state’s indifference towards the safety and well-being of its citizens – was experienced by the younger generation, as aptly described in Eteron’s research, as a “moral shock”. It was an event that raised in our psyches a violent awareness of our constitutional expendability, of how devalued, vulnerable and

ultimately expendable our lives have become, meaning that they can be crushed for nothing in a single moment, in a routine that was considered pleasant and harmless, in a train journey that did not make it to its destination.

It was like the culmination of a long process of vulnerabilisation, not from an ontological point of view, but in terms of harsh biopolitics, where class, ethnic, racial, gender, and sexual prioritisations, leave individuals and groups constantly exposed to conditions of deprivation, inequality and injustice, while making them jump between the parallel tracks of a crises continuum: from the economic to a political, health, energy, housing and climate crisis. “The care deficit is at the epicentre of the successive and interconnected crises and states of emergency that late capitalism produces as it normalises all the daily, persistent and widespread phenomena of social suffering and institutionalised neglect”, comments Athena Athanasiou in her preface to the “Care Manifesto”.

The generation that was most affected by the Tempi tragedy is the generation that came of age in a labour landscape brought to its knees by the economic crisis, that experienced the rise of the far right and its bloody consequences, that was subjected to all kinds of disciplinary and repressive policies, that was punished with confinement during the pandemic and saw its relatives suffer in public hospitals ravaged by budget cuts, that cannot secure its financial and housing independence, that cannot pay the exorbitant rents and is displaced, watching in a state of stupefaction and bewilderment as both the Athens city centre and the islands are transformed into alien geographies of an unregulated and unrestrained touristic development, that has its future compromised by the growing environmental destruction, that is becoming overwhelmingly aware of gender-based, homophobic and transphobic violence.

Frustration was already there and, as we now know from social psychology of trauma, each new wound reopens old ones that were left unhealed or covered up hastily in order for the individuals to survive. In this sense, the train accident added to an already aggravated state of accumulated pain and acted as a fuse, releasing righteous indignation.

The feelings that overwhelm young people are negative. Rage, despair, shame and insecurity. It is understandable and to a certain extent inevitable, as the social context is bleak and does not provide any visible or tangible alternatives that would inspire optimism. However, it is crucially important to remember that those feelings have not been locked up inside people to consume them with paralytic force. They were expressed.

The dead of the Tempi tragedy were mourned in a public and communal context, in contrast to the incomplete mourning for the victims of the pandemic, about which Katerina Malsa has written with great clarity and insight: “Modern societies have effectively banished grief. We do not mourn the dead, people often go to funerals having taken sedatives, which means they are not conscious of where they are. Alienated from others, and therefore also from themselves, from their own human social nature, withdrawn into themselves, they are unable to experience the loss, process it, overcome it and move on. We experienced the exile of grief to an extreme extent during the pandemic, before vaccines were introduced into our lives. The dead had to be buried immediately, in sealed coffins, relatives did not get to see their loved ones, and there was a danger that the impossibility of grief would become embedded in their psyche, creating a crypt of loss, which is also a crypt of shame and guilt.”

After the Tempi accident, the young generation participated en masse in physical performances of mourning in the form of gatherings, protests, demonstrations, events and artistic performances. It is a process of externalising, sharing and transforming grief. We have seen this happen with other events that have caused a strong shock to society, such as the numerous recent femicide cases, where the local feminist movement, drawing from traditions of international feminist practices, mourned the murdered women in the streets, through rituals of honouring the dead and preserving their memory, each time evoking the names of the murdered women, creating and keeping an archive of the victims of patriarchal violence, with red cloths, discarded shoes, stencils and performances.

At the same time, on several occasions of public grieving, forms of communal memorialisation emerged to counter the official memorialisation of the status quo, which is most commonly a marble or bronze mirror of a white, male, heteronormative, national-Christian and privileged elite. The monument of Alexandros Grigoropoulos and its restoration last year on Messologiou Street, the graffiti of Pavlos Fyssas in Keratsini, the “Zackie Oh Street” sign that is stubbornly and insolently re-engraved on Gladstonos Street every time someone destroys it, are some examples of communal memorialisation. In a similar vein, a memorial for the students who perished in the accident was now created at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki through the initiative of the students’ associations.

“Through our sensory receptivity, vulnerability, and bodily interaction, we form communities that challenge the dominant interpretations of legitimate grief and desire. Against the propriety of normative grief, public mourning and collective practices of commemoration preserve an openness towards histories of loss that redefine the boundaries of the political”, as Elena Tzelepi remarked on the mobilisations that followed the brutal murder of Zak Kostopoulos.

Given the fact that the grief for those who died in the Tempi accident did not remain unseen and didn't follow the dictate of withdrawal and solitary sadness, but instead broke the authority's established protocol for private mourning, it is no surprise that it caused the status quo's alarm and outrage. Hence the all sorts of admonitions about how we are allowed to grieve, that were culminated in Kyriakos Mitsotakis' pre-election attack on mourning people. Because in reality, defending the memory of the dead as a way to demand justice, rejecting the narrative of "a stroke of bad luck" or of the individual responsibility of just one person, constantly commemorating the criminal accident, insisting on the collectivisation and, in this sense, the politicisation of rage, all form a small crack in the banality of inertia.

Such practices somewhat shatter the process of familiarisation with horror and the consequent insensitivity towards suffering, a process that is, however, necessary for maintaining power. And they do so embodiedly; corporeality is transformed from a field on which hegemonic strategies are exercised into a vector of resistance, a conduit that metabolises grief into a struggle against the politics of death.

What is striking in Eteron's research, is that despite their participation in mass collective events, the deconstruction of fundamental neoliberal convictions, and their left-wing ideological-political orientation, the most popular answer to the relevant question is still "[None – I don't identify with any] no ideology – I believe in the individual", and when asked how they could improve their lives, most young people replied, "by personally making individual efforts".

In my opinion, this partly reflects the resilience of individualism as a theory that may lie within the ideological core of neoliberalism, but today is being promoted with great vigour in more sophisticated versions, for example by using the cloak of "self-improvement" and "self-care", concepts which permeate broader cultural settings, finding footholds as elements of hope for individual peace, bliss and brightness in the parched soil of the absence of positive collective visions. For a generation that has no strong representations of euphoria and is being consumed by dystopia, the prospect of reaching a personal rebirth of sorts through individual effort and focusing on oneself seems enticing.

On the other hand, the processes that took place at the level of collective action need time, familiarisation, stability, and multimodality in order to move beyond the realm of discharging, produce anti-hegemonic discourses and establish new relationalities. This concept of autonomy, of the self-made personality that perseveres, struggles and finally makes it, was forged and promoted very heavily through different communication channels, from social media and mass culture to the self-care industry and mainstream psychotherapeutic trends, and as a result, it became an archetype.

As the authors of The Care Manifesto aptly put it, “Over the past decades, many of us have experienced life in an accelerating social system of organised loneliness”. It is a neatly kept edifice that hides desolation and heartbreak.

The inconsistency in the form of the registered influence of conflicting ideological traits, the fragmentation of social struggles, the inherent contradictions of what we label as a “generation”, the inability to articulate positive and inspiring narratives, all combined with the underlying conservatisation of a part of society -as reflected in the election result, causing additional and unbearable despair among the young people who participated in the mobilisations in the past few months- certainly intercept or overpower the dynamics that had previously developed.

It will require serious processing, dialogue, revisions of intellectual paradigms, resourcefulness and caring interventions to understand the new situation. But what we have experienced and our feelings about it have not been cancelled, even if right now they seem to have shrunk.

We walked together, we put our bodies in motion next to one another, we wept together, we wiped each other’s tears, we chanted together for the sake of truth, we spelled the names of the dead and recited their stories together so that they would cease to be mere figures of a faceless annihilation. Together we faced tear gas and violent blows, we got upset with the hubris of power and together we rejected arrogance and callousness as compasses that map the course of one’s path. And that was great. A shared feeling but also an awareness of social vulnerability and interdependence. The challenge now, perhaps more crucial than ever, is to figure out how this whole experience will not go to waste; how, where and when will we come up with the necessary materials to create a movement of life affirmation.

We walked together, we put our bodies in motion next to one another, we wept together, we wiped each other's tears, we chanted together for the sake of truth, we spelled the names of the dead and recited their stories together so that they would cease to be mere figures of a faceless annihilation. Together we faced tear gas and violent blows, we got upset with the hubris of power and together we rejected arrogance and callousness as compasses that map the course of one's path. And that was great.

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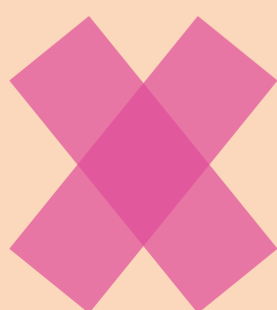
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Young people's participation in mobilisations: A brief exploration



Kostas Kanellopoulos

There is a deeply rooted perception that younger people participate in social movements and protest mobilisations in greater numbers and with more intensity than the middle and/or older age groups. However, this perception is based more on certain stereotypes than on factual data. Eteron's recent research "Youth – Voice On" that focuses on the stances of young people aged between 17 and 34 on a range of political, value and ideological issues, is a significant input as it contributes precisely to the creation of a reliable database that can be used for more empirically accurate analyses.

When it comes to the participation of young people in mobilisations, which is the focus point of the present note, Eteron's research helps us understand what is the current situation and how did young people react after the Tempi train accident and the mobilisations that followed. This data could be used to carry out comparative analyses with the corresponding stances of young people after major protest events in the past, and/or more generally with other empirical research that has been conducted on the attitudes and political behaviour of younger age groups.

Young people are expected to be more involved in protest movements than those belonging to older age groups, not so much because of some idealised and rather romanticised notion of the supposedly inherent radicalism of youth, but mainly because of the comparatively greater resources, mainly in terms of time, that in modern societies younger people have available. Indeed, in the decades following the Second World War, the expansion of the policy regarding compulsory education and the increase of people who decided to go into higher education, contributed to the fact that large segments of the population were excluded from the labour market for a number of years and this usually led to a delay in undertaking family responsibilities.

As a result, the amount of available time for possible participation in collective action projects was increased. Also, the pupil or student status can indeed create collective identities, but this does not mean that they automatically result in the kind of collective identities found in social movements. Movement collective identities are much more about the development of political self-consciousness, joint participation and the dynamics that are generated in it than about any exogenous characteristics.

The very concept of youth is socially constructed and its specific content varies from one period to the next. Many of the main protagonists of the French Revolution would by today's standards be considered absurdly young to undertake such a far-reaching task, but in their time, people around the age of 30 were not considered to be all that young. Going back to the current conditions and conceptualisations, we shall attempt, through a brief, and therefore de facto incomplete, historical overview of some important mobilisations in the Greek social formation of the past few decades, in order to explore the contribution of youth participation and its connection to the overall political orientation of each time period.

From the very beginning of the Third Hellenic Republic, the student uprisings at the Law Faculty and the National Technical University (known in Greece as the Polytechnic school) in 1973, which in the wider context of the anti-dictatorship movement did not merely mark the onset of the independent political intervention of the youth movement, but also produced catalytic political results, were of crucial importance. The student movement in the years following the regime change (i.e. the era called *Metapolitefsi* that started after the fall of the dictatorship in 1974) and up until the early 1980s was massive and contributed decisively to the consolidation and deepening of the young democracy.

Young people at that time participated by the tens of thousands in the political youth wings of both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary parties of the Left, while youth participation in the various anarchist collectives was also strong. The progressive demands and claims of the student movement are in tandem with those of the workers' movement, in which young people are also actively involved. The mass political mobilisation of Greek civil society, with the always decisive contribution of young people, also led to the revival of the feminist movement, the re-emergence of the peace movement, the emergence for the first time in Greece of an ecological movement, and the emergence on a smaller scale of movements against compulsory conscription and in favour of the rights of LGBTQI individuals.

In this period of political turmoil, a large and very visible percentage of young people are mobilising collectively and becoming involved in all kinds of social and political change initiatives that envision the socialist transformation of Greek society.

When PASOK (the Panhellenic Socialist Movement) rose to power, the goal of political change and some of the social movements' demands and claims started to be met and/or integrated in State policies. The partial integration of some demands is accompanied by the incorporation of several young activists either into State mechanisms and institutions and/or by the assumption of family responsibilities. In the 1980s, the radicalism of the previous decade has subsided, while a withdrawal from the public sphere, political cynicism and the values of individualism are steadily gaining ground both in society in general and among young people in particular.

The political youth and student factions affiliated to left-wing parties still attract mass participation from students, but it is clear that the visionary element has now receded. Political participation is rather passive and is more about integration and acceptance of bureaucratic structures and mechanisms. Besides, the hegemony of the Left amongst students, in all its aspects, which was absolute until that time, is not only being challenged but eventually ended up being overturned. For the first time ever, DAP, the student wing of Nea Dimokratia (the right-wing party New

Democracy), won the student elections of 1987. From then on and to this day, DAP dominates in Greek universities. The conservative orientation of the Greek youth is in line with the general conservative orientation in Greece and abroad. The 1980s close with two significant events that mark the profound political defeat of the Left: in 1989 the actually existing socialist regimes collapse one after the other worldwide, while in Greece the unified coalition of the parliamentary parties of the Left (*Synaspismos* or SYN) forms a coalition government with Kostas Mitsotakis' Nea Dimokratia (ND). A direct consequence of the ND-SYN coalition government was the division and, essentially, the dissolution of the political youth branches of the parties that made up *Synaspismos*.

The beginning of the new decade is marked by the dominance of the free market and the ideology of the so-called "end of history". Private TV channels and mass-circulation lifestyle magazines unabatedly promote a mix of neoliberal and conservative values that is favourably received by a large part of the public and young people at the time. A first resounding response to this ideological and political dominance of the Right comes rather unexpectedly from the student movement of 1990-91.

High school students at the time, react to the authoritarian provisions that the Ministry of Education's bill attempted to reinstate by occupying schools all over the country and, along with other members of the educational community (teachers and university students), created a massive resistance movement that forced the ND government to back down and withdraw the controversial bill. However, this movement, despite its forcefulness and mass participation rates, proved to be more of a flash in the pan than a turning point towards the Left. The following year, many of those same young people participate in the nationalist rallies over the "Macedonian issue" organised by the ND government with the support of the opposition parties [with the exception of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which has since left *Synaspismos*].

Furthermore, the occasional mass mobilisations of the workers' movement at the time against attempted privatisations, were mainly rearguard battles of a defensive nature. When PASOK returned to power in 1993, the organised trade union movement unwittingly came to terms with the policy of partial privatisations implemented by the new government. The youth of the time once again goes along with the broader political arrangements and ideologies that prevail in Greek society. A noteworthy development in the students' sphere is the creation of the EAAK students party by extra-parliamentary left organisations and many individuals who were not affiliated with any political party. In a period of conservatisation, EAAK didn't just manage to keep student radicalism alive, even if only in minority terms, but also experimented with anti-hierarchical and horizontal forms of organisation. It was only towards the end of the 1990s that the Greek Communist Youth (KNE)

began to re-establish a relatively massive presence, mainly through the KKE's strong involvement in the protests against NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia.

At the same time, away from the universities, in local neighbourhood hangouts, a small number of young people joined the anti-authoritarian and anarchist scene. As it turned out during the demonstrations against globalisation that took place at the turn of the century, the two hundred "known-unknowns" (meaning the unnamed usual suspects) as they were called in news aphorisms were probably a few thousand spread across the country.

In the first decade of the new century, even though the political correlations and ideological premises have not changed substantially, a share of the youth reacted when they felt that their expectations of participation had been dashed and that they were unable to follow the dominant consumption norms. In the all-levels education movement of 2006-07, and even more so in the December 2008 uprising, the young people involved reject government policies and state repression without putting forward a vision for the future or adopting innovative organisational forms.

It is rather indicative that through these mobilisations the youth branch of Synaspismos manages to acquire a significant number of members for the first time ever, but still the bureaucratic organisation and logic was never challenged. When the capitalist crisis breaks out and the Greek economy collapses, the role of the youth and the student movement in the mobilisations against the austerity measures and the Memoranda that follow is of minor significance.

In the mobilisations of 2010-2012, which were the most numerous in the whole Third Hellenic Republic era in terms of participation, the trade unions and the parties of the Left were at the forefront. Even in the concurrent occasion of the anti-memoranda movement of the Indignados ("Aganaktismeni" in Greek) in 2011, the leading voice is that of activists who were young in the previous decades. Young people are once again following and keeping up with the existing general currents and trends in society. They participate, as do older people, in the various social economy and solidarity projects that emerge at the time, some joining the far right while others strengthen the ranks of the anti-fascist movement.

Even after 2015, when the main political exponent of the opposition against the Memoranda forms a government coalition with a nationalist party and soon joins actually existing neoliberalism, young people do not react much, but opt, just like the older generations have done in the past, for either integration or withdrawal.

In the current decade of multiple crises and the almost absolute political dominance of the Greek Right, young people are indeed leading some major mobilisation protests (after the Nea Smyrni events or

the Tempi train accident) and actively participate in a number of issue-based movements (LGBTQ+, anti-racist, environmental).

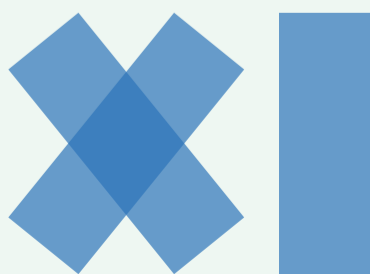
Therefore, there seems to be a shift in the pattern as young people seem to be on a different track from the rest of society. Of course, one could argue that once again, as in the 1990s, this is just a small minority of young people whose political footprint is being magnified due to the political bankruptcy of the ruling Left and cite the results of the recent parliamentary elections which show that young people also voted mainly for conservative and far-right parties. The difference, however, is that the contradictions caused by the successive crises are of such magnitude that they render the ideological dominance and political coherence of the ruling power bloc very weak, while today's children, unlike all the previous generations after the Metapolitefsi regime change, have known nothing but crises, with all the unpredictable consequences that this may entail for the evolution of their political behaviour.

“Eteron’s research helps us understand what is the current situation and how did young people react after the Tempi train accident and the mobilisations that followed.

**This data could
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in the past”**

The youth vote as reflected in the 2019 and 2023

Comparative graphs



Costas Gousis

INTRODUCTION

The double elections in May and June shaped a **new political landscape** in Greece and created very different correlations compared to the previous national elections in July 2019.

The elections of May 21 resulted in a **sweeping victory** (40.79%) for NEA DIMOKRATIA – ND (New Democracy) and a **crushing defeat** for SYRIZA – PROODEFTIKI SYMMACHIA (20.7%). PASOK – KINIMA ALLAGIS (11.46%) increased its share by more than 3 percentage points compared to the 2019 parliamentary elections, and managed to come second in six regions. KOMMOUNISTIKO KOMMA ELLADAS – KKE (Communist Party of Greece) won 126,174 more votes, reaching 7.23%. ELLINIKI LYSI (Hellenic Solution) rose from 3.7% to 4.45%, while MeRA25-SYMMACHIA GIA TI RIXI (Alliance for Rupture) failed to gain seats in the Parliament, as it received 2.63% of the total votes. Niki (Victory) (2.92%) and PLEFSI ELEFThERIAS (Course of Freedom) (2.89%) came very close to entering the Parliament, while the total percentage of votes for parties that didn't reach the 3% threshold and were therefore left out of the Parliament was 16.1%.

In the June 25th elections, Nea Dimokratia recorded a 40.56% lead and formed an autonomous government, while the decline of SYRIZA – PS continues, with the opposition party recording 17.83%. PASOK-KIN. AL. is in third place with a marginal increase in its share (11.84%). The KKE also shows a slight increase compared to the May elections with 7.69%.

Moreover, there are several parties to the right of Nea Dimokratia that secured parliamentary representation. Endorsed by Ilias Kasidiaris, who is convicted and sentenced for leading the criminal organisation Golden Dawn, Spartiates ran for elections for the first time and came in fifth place with 4.63%. They are followed by Elliniki Lisi (4.44%) and Niki (3.69%). Finally, with 3.17%, Pleafsi Eleftherias ensured parliamentary representation having as their central slogan “Neither Right nor Left. Let's look ahead”. MeRA25 – Coalition for Rupture only received 2.5% of the vote and thus didn't pass the 3% threshold for entering the Parliament, while in total, the parties that didn't secure parliamentary representation, received 6.15% of the votes.

Consequently, all the political parties as well as society as a whole, each from their own perspective and standpoint, have all been engaging in conversations regarding interpretations of the election results. In this context, we shall focus our attention on **the vote of young people aged 17-34**, as reflected in the exit polls.

The youth vote in 2019 and 2023: A comparative recoding

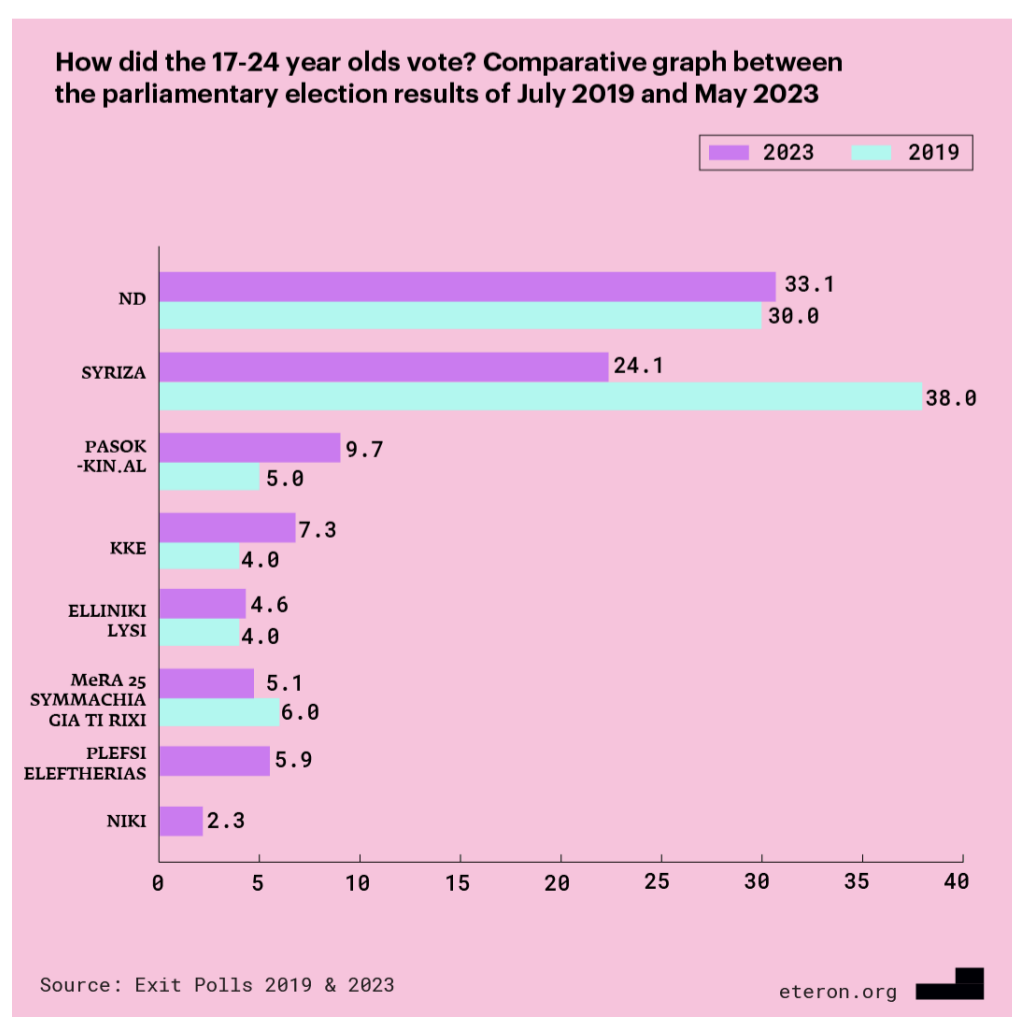
We compared the voting choices of the young generation, as obtained from the exit polls in the parliamentary elections of 2019 and May 2023, and recorded the performance of the political parties: a. amongst **17-24 year olds** (graph 1), b. more specifically amongst **students** (graph 2) and c. amongst **25-34 year olds** (graph 3).

ND is the **top performer** across all three of the above-mentioned age groups. Its share of the vote amongst those aged 17-24 is **33.1%**, an increase of 3.1 percentage points compared to the 2019 parliamentary elections. On the other hand, in the student vote, ND's strength dropped from **35%** in 2019 to **31.1%** in May 2023. Finally, amongst 25-34-year-olds, it registers 31%, the exact same percentage as in 2019.

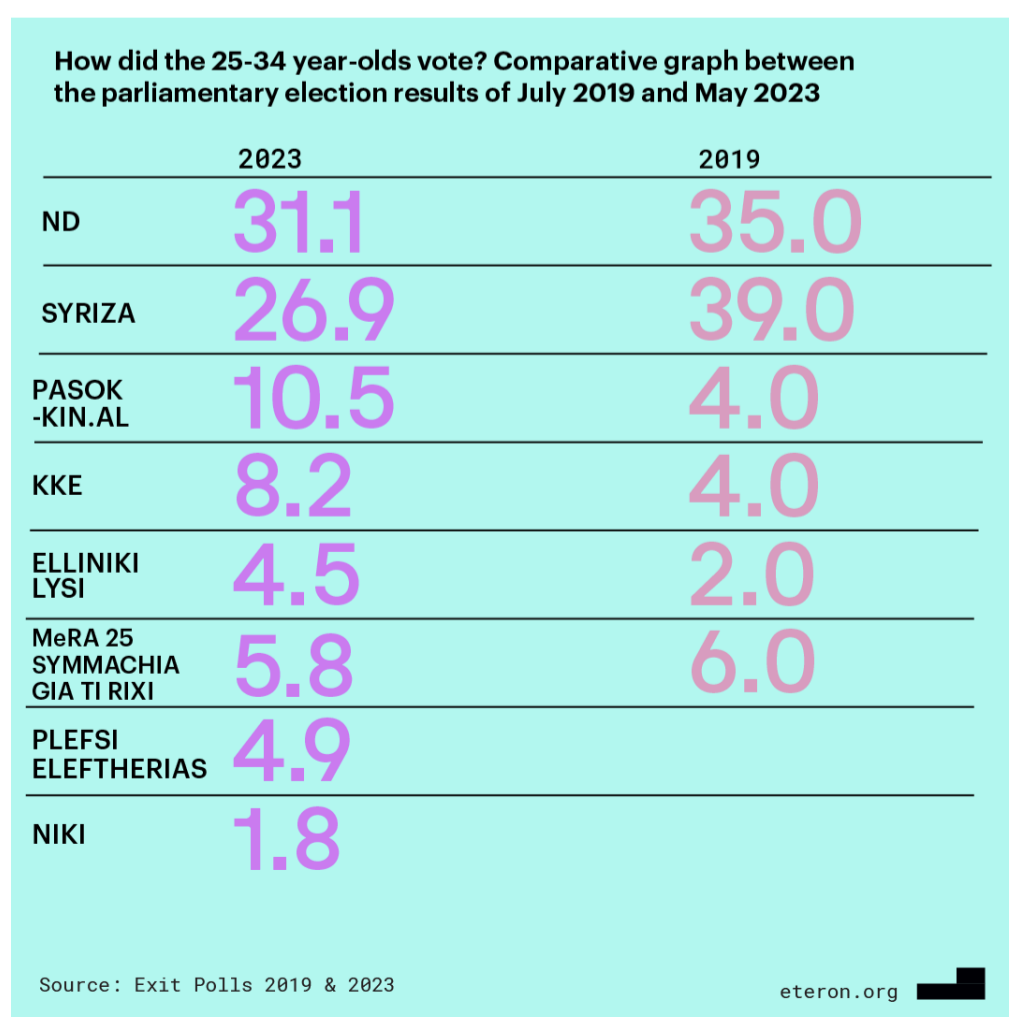
Although in the young generation, ND is almost **10 percentage points below** its overall figures, the fact remains that – with the exception of the student vote – it has not suffered any damage and it managed to come first in parliamentary elections among the younger age groups after many years.

SYRIZA is clearly the defeated party when it comes to the young people's vote. Compared to the 2019 parliamentary elections, it recorded drops in all the age groups (by 13.9 percentage points in the 17-24 age group, 12.1 in the student vote and 13.1 in the 25-34 age group). It therefore came in second place with **24.1%** (17-24 year olds), **26.9%** (students) and **22.9%** (25-34 year olds). It is worth mentioning that in all parliamentary elections since 2012, SYRIZA has been comfortably in first place amongst the younger

ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 1



ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 2



generation, with the exception of the 2019 European elections.

PASOK – KIN.AL. is recording a significant **increase** in its electoral influence amongst young people. More specifically, according to the results of the exit poll, PASOK got a **9.7%** share in the 17-24 age group (+4.7 percentage points), **10.5%** of the student vote (+6.5) and **10.2%** in the 25-34 age group (+4.2).

KKE is also **gaining ground** among the young generation. In the 17-24 age group it obtained **7.3%** of the vote, with a 3.3 percentage points increase compared to the 2019 parliamentary elections. Similarly, in the 25-34 age group, it registered **8.1%** (+ 2.1 percentage points), while, amongst students, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) registered the second highest rate with **8.2%** (+ 4.2). Moreover, on the subject of the significant rise of the KKE in the student vote, it is worth noting that its student party

branch, Panspoudastiki, has won the past two student elections.

ELLINIKI LYSI got **4.6%** of the 17-24 year olds' votes. Amongst students its share rose from 2% to **4.5%** and in the 25-34 age group it increased by 2.1 points reaching **5.1%**.

Although **MeRA25 – SYMMACHIA GIA TI RIXI** failed to win the votes that would grant it parliamentary seats in the May 2023 elections, it still kept the same increased percentages that it had in the 2019 parliamentary elections amongst the young generation. More specifically, it registered a **5.1%** share in the 17-24 age group, a **5.8%** share of the student vote, and a **6.4%** share in the 25-34 age group.

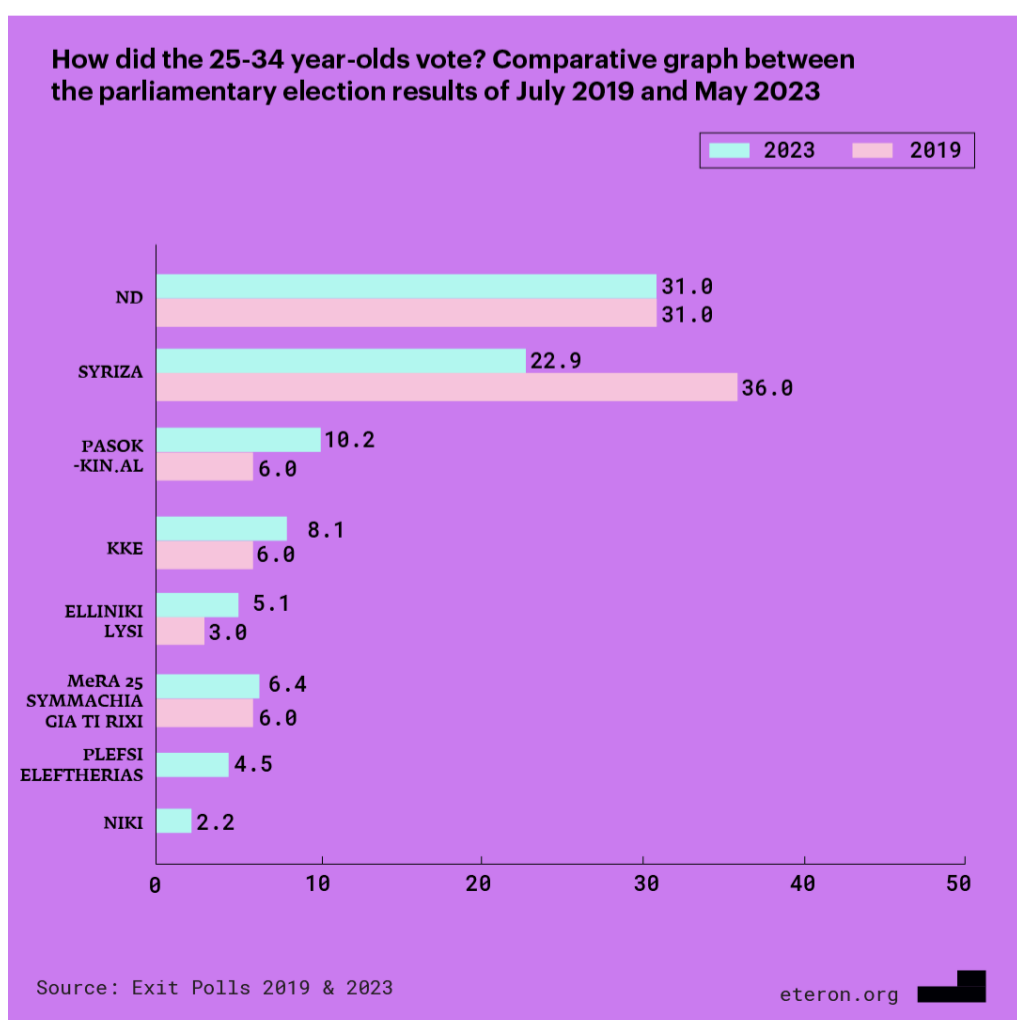
PLEFSI ELEFThERIAS got a surprisingly high percentage of the young generation's vote, more specifically 5.9% among those aged 17-24, **4.9%** of the student vote and **4.5%** amongst 25-34 year olds. Although Course of Freedom did run in 2019, there isn't any data available on its results in the younger generation. Its electorate that belongs to the age groups we are currently focusing on is still largely uncharted.

Finally, the far-right **NIKI** party ran for the first time in May 2023 and underperformed in the younger generation, registering **2.3%** in the 17-24 age group, **1.8%** amongst students and **2.2%** in the 25-34 age group.

It is noteworthy that the percentage of young people who voted for another party, compared

to what we have reported here, is 8% among 17-24 year olds, 6.2% among students and 9.5% among 25-34 year olds. Unfortunately, there is no available data on how the youth vote is distributed among the other extra-parliamentary parties.

ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 3



The youth vote: From May 2023 to June

In this context, below you can find comparative data on the youth vote, as derived from the exit polls in the parliamentary elections of May 21st and June 25th 2023: a. amongst 17-24 year olds (graph 4), b. more specifically amongst **students** (graph 5) and c. amongst 25-34 year olds (graph 6).

Nea Dimokratia recorded a **28.8%** share of the vote among young people aged 17-24, down 4.3 percentage points compared to the May parliamentary elections. In the student vote, Nea Dimokratia's influence decreases from 31.1% to **29.4%**, while in the 25-34 age group it drops by 3.4 points to **27.6%**.

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Overall, the party records a **lead** in the second election as well. At the same time, the differences in Nea Dimokratia's electoral influence in each age bracket are impressive. While its electoral influence in the 35-54 age group stands at 39% and in the 55+ age group even reaches 47.1%, **we still find it to be less than 30% amongst the younger generation.** In any case, it is important to keep an eye on what Nea Dimokratia's second consecutive leading result

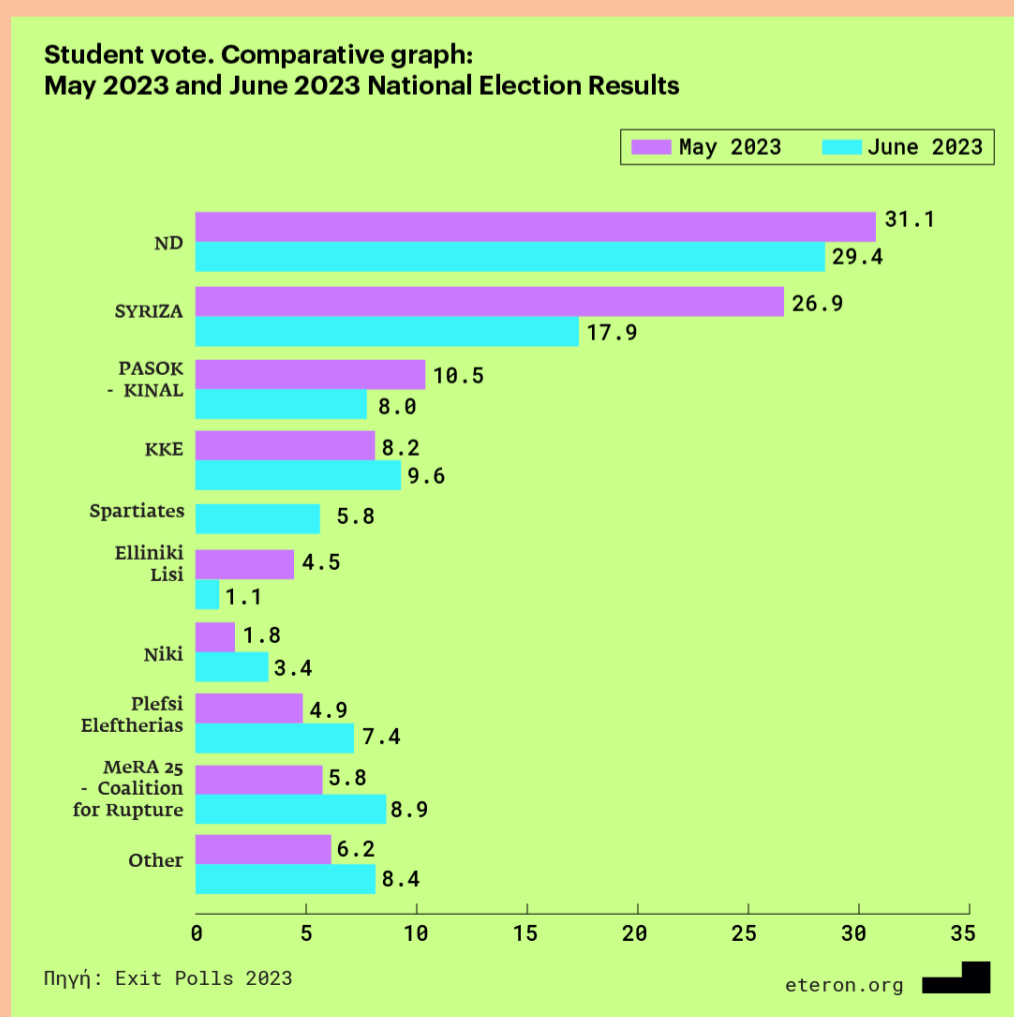
will mean in terms of its broader social and political influence on the younger generation.

SYRIZA – PS keeps losing ground in terms of its electoral influence amongst the younger generation. Compared to the May elections, the party registered a 4.9 percentage points drop amongst the 17-24 age group, a 9 points drop in the student vote and a 2.3 drop in the 25-34 age group. Therefore, according to the aforementioned data, it comes in **second place**, having received very low scores compared to its usual electoral performance amongst young people, with **19.2%** (17 – 24 years old), **17.9%** (students) and **20.6%** (25 – 34 years old).

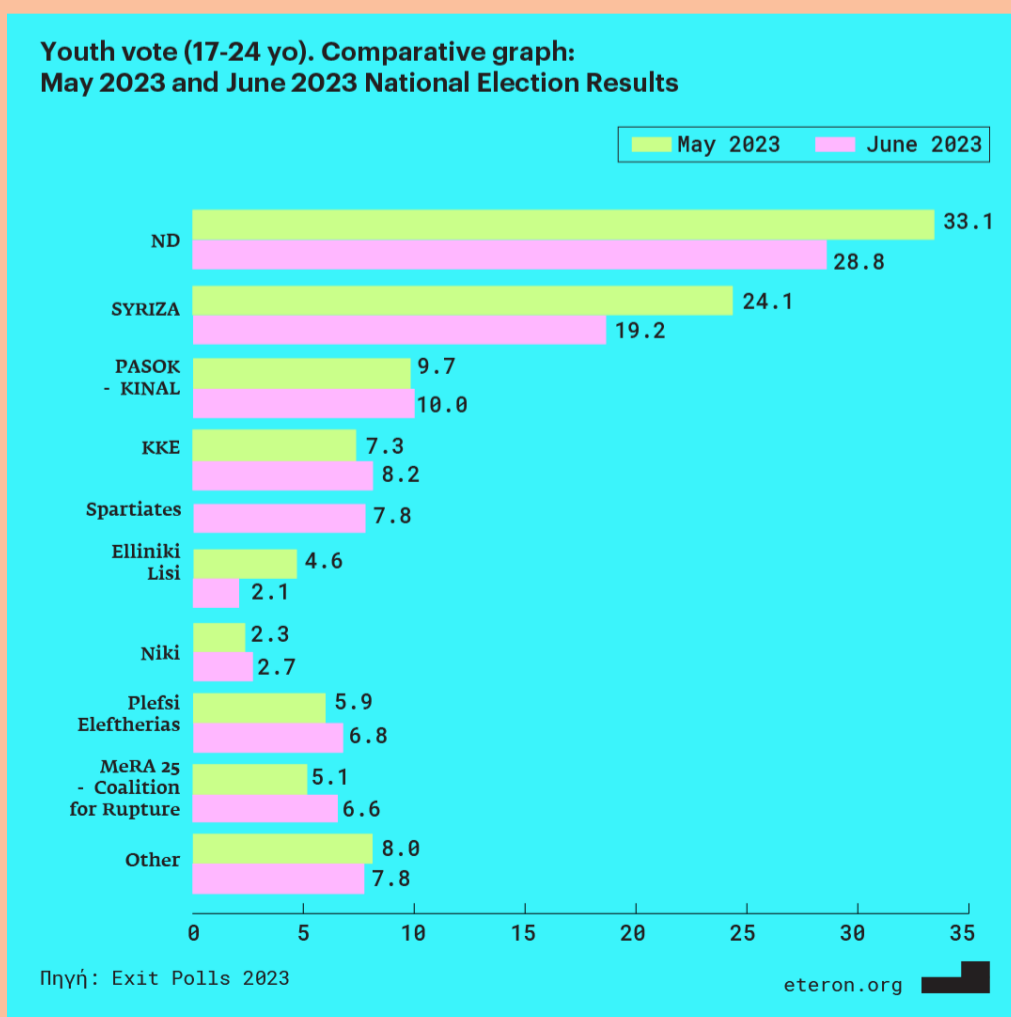
PASOK – KIN.AL. recorded a marginal increase and received **10%** in the 17-24 age group and a slight decrease amongst 25-34 year-olds, with a rate of **9.9%**. In both of these age categories, the party comes in **third place**. On the other hand however, PASOK registered a 2.5 percentage points decrease in the student vote compared to the May elections (**8%**) and came in fifth place as it was outperformed by both KKE and the MeRA25-Coalition for Rupture.

KKE keeps gaining ground with the younger generation. In the 17-24 age group it reached **8.2%** while also increasing its electoral influence by 1 percentage point amongst young people aged 25-34 with a rate of **9.1%**. The rise of KKE is also significant amongst students, where from 8.2% in the May elections it is now in third place with **9.6%**. It is worth noting that KKE's student brunch, Panspoudastiki, has been in first place for the past two years in the student elections.

ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 5



ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 4



The impact of the far right on the young generation is also worth noting. This phenomenon highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the ways in which the far right reaches the young audiences in order to then be able to address the phenomenon. Endorsed by Ilias Kasidiaris, who was convicted and sentenced as a leader of the criminal organisation Golden Dawn, the far-right party **Spartiates** ran for the first time and recorded its highest rates among the younger generation. In the 17-24 age group it is at 7.8%, in the student vote at 5.8% and among voters aged 25-34 at **8.2%**.

Elliniki Lisi drops from 4.6% to **2.1%** amongst voters aged 17-24, from 4.4% to 1.1% in the student vote and increases its rate from 5.1% to **6%** amongst voters aged 25-34.

Niki increases its percentage to **2.7%** in the 17 – 24 age group (+0.4 percentage points), **3.4%** in the student vote (+1.6 pp) and **3.3%** in the 25 – 34 age group (+1.1 pp).

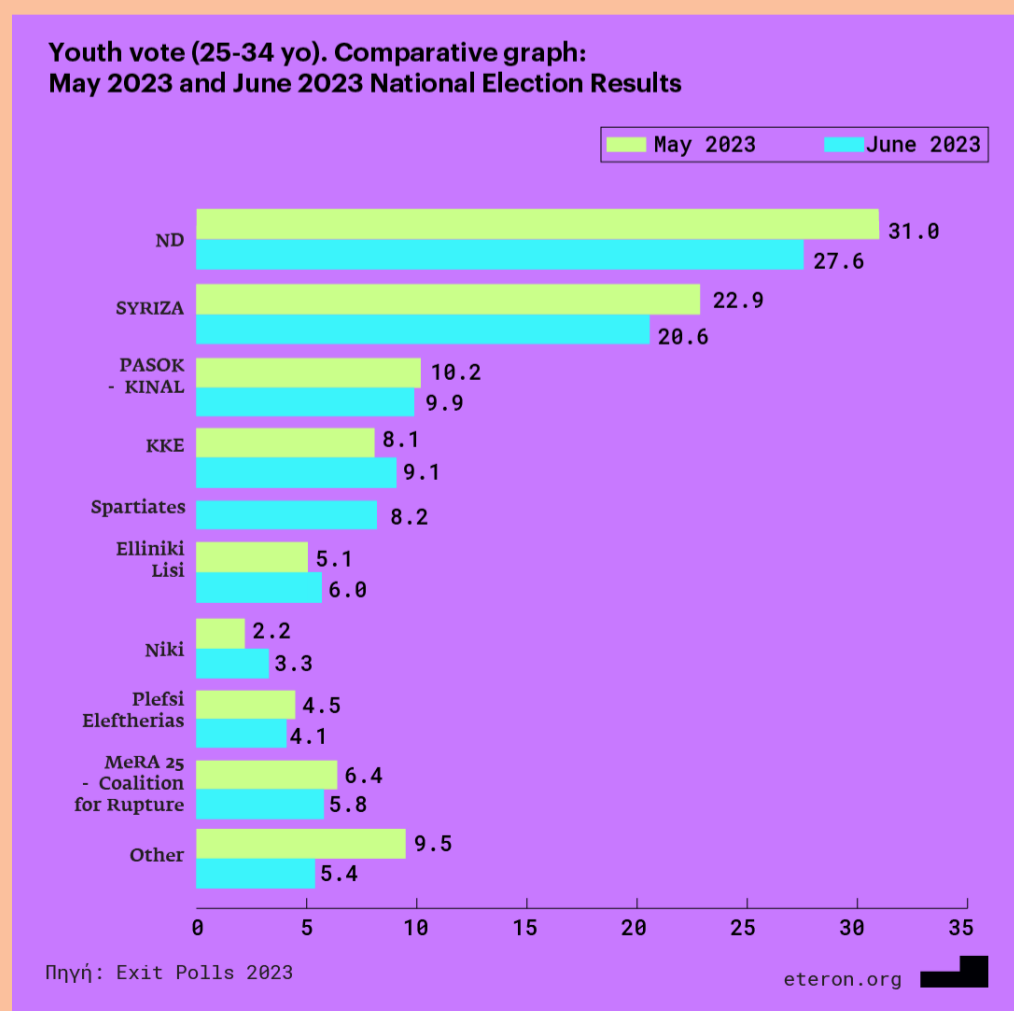
Plefsi Eleftherias also continues to increase its influence and records its best results amongst the younger generation. More specifically, it registers 6.8% in the 17 – 24 age group (+ 0.9 percentage points), 7.4% in the student vote (+2.5 pp), while in the 25 – 34 age group it drops from 4.5% to 4.1%. Finally, **MeRA25 – Coalition for Rupture** increases

its overall share amongst the younger generation, although it will not be represented in parliament due to its very low rates in the older age groups (2.4% in the 35-54 age group and 1.7% in the 55+ age group). More specifically, it gained **6.6%** of the 17-24-year-olds' vote (+1.5 percentage point) , while it dropped from 6.4% to **5.8%** in the 25-34 age group. It is worth mentioning its results in the student vote where it came in 4th place with **8.9%** (+3.1 pp).

The percentage of young people who voted for parties that we haven't mentioned in this report is 7.8% in the 17-24 age group, 8.4% among students and 5.4% in the 25-34 age group. However, we do not have data on how the youth vote is distributed among the other non-parliamentary parties.

As it has been correctly pointed out, it is wrong to limit any analysis to just percentages, it is therefore important to take into account the number of votes received by each political party (see detailed [data](#) from the Ministry of Interior), the age composition of the electorate (see electorate [statistics](#), Ministry of Interior, p. 33 – in Greek) and of course the elephant in the room, which is none other than the high level of abstention, which reached a record high of 47.17%.

ΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ 6



“Most of the articles about the youth vote are based on the initial rather than on the final exit poll results, which are much more accurate and closer to the actual results”

PLEASE

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The election
results,

public
opinion

surveys
and the missing
perspective

The recording of the results that we presented in the form of comparative graphs, is based on the joint exit poll (by the polling agencies Metron Analysis, Alco, Marc, MRB & GPO) for the 2019 parliamentary elections, for the May 21, 2023 election, as well as for the June 25, 2023 election accordingly. In the May 2023 election, the survey was conducted on a representative sample of 5,946 voters, with face-to-face interviews outside 90 polling stations nationwide. Likewise, in the June 25 parliamentary

elections, the survey was conducted amongst a representative sample of 5,029 voters, with face-to-face interviews outside 90 polling stations nationwide. For both [2019](#) and 2023 ([May](#) and [June](#)) elections, we have drawn our data from the joint exit poll Results Report, available from Metron Analysis. These clarifications are even more significant, as most of the articles about the youth vote are based on the initial rather than on the final exit poll results, which are much more accurate and closer to the actual results.

At this point, it is worth taking a closer look at exit polls and their history, focusing on the methodology of their findings' interpretation. For this reason, what could be more useful than to **return to earlier remarks** and advice on **methodology** by the political scientist, professor and pollster Ilias Nikolakopoulos, whose sudden loss at the end of June last year was a major blow to scientific research. Nikolakopoulos was, after all, the man who introduced "exit polls" in Greek elections back in 1994.

Practically, exit polls are **second ballot boxes** set up outside a representative sample of polling stations,

where, after having voted, a number of people are invited to fill in a questionnaire with information regarding their gender, age, education, etc., as well as the party they have just voted for. Although this innovative method was considered to be a total success when it was first introduced, as Ilias Nikolakopoulos explained in an interview at [VIMA](#) newspaper back then, we should not overestimate the value of its advantages, as no poll can in fact serve as a 100% accurate recording of the results. Instead of seeking the magic figure of the political parties' final rates, Nikolakopoulos stressed that surveys indicate "**phenomena trends**" and give us opportunities to make further estimates.

GAP

In a similar vein, in an interview published at [NEA](#) newspaper back in 2002, the great political scientist stated that “the problem with political polls is that all interested parties as well as the general public demand a level of accuracy that no statistical theory can possibly guarantee”. When asked what the **recipe for success** is, interestingly, he replied: “It is necessary to have composure, a certain ‘distance’ and a clear mind. But still, one also needs luck.”

Ilias Nikolakopoulos described “survey saturation” as a pollster’s worst enemy and as he aptly put it, “as a rule, the people concerned are inclined to ‘read’ in a poll only the things that are positive for them and resent it when someone tries to point out any of their shortcomings”. He often made interventions in which he repeated that **only the ballot box can deliver accurate messages**, and pointed out the benefits one gets from re-reading opinion surveys after the elections, because “only then does one realise what they had previously misread.”

In a more recent and equally relevant [intervention](#) in 2018, Nikolakopoulos made a distinction between **academic surveys on political culture and traditional polls**. As he explained, political culture surveys attempt to describe the political landscape and voting intention is only one of the parameters examined. By limiting the discussion to just projections and presentations of voting intention rates for the different political parties, we tend to overlook a lot of significant information. Finally, he pointed out that, in recent years, there has been more swaying compared to the past, since many **people now vote based on the current conjuncture rather than on their individual political identity**.

The reason why we return today to Ilias Nikolakopoulos’ methodological remarks and advice is to give ourselves the opportunity to see the **bigger picture**, avoiding simple explanations, which are

refuted as quickly as they are formulated. After all, the amount of times that friends and colleagues have recently commented on how big a loss Ilias Nikolakopoulos’s sober and penetrating gaze is in the analyses of the election results is indicative of his contribution to the field.

Obviously, discussions both about Exit Polls (e.g the Association of Greek Market & Opinion Research Companies – [SEDEA](#)– Press Release on 23/5/2023) and opinion polls/ surveys are still taking place, and that’s a good thing in itself. In any case, frustration from opinion polls and public opinion surveys in general, is mostly related to the false expectations that are cultivated in public opinion and the devaluation of surveys through their exploitation for political and communication reasons.

So there are many questions arising especially after the second ballot. For all these reasons, the dialogue that Eteron has initiated and all the contributions brought together in this e-book aim to record and analyse the new context, focusing on the political stakes of the near future and the correlation of the electoral attitude with the broader profile of young people, their dynamics, transformations and positions on a number of political, value and ideological issues.

YOUTH IN THE KALEIDOSCOPE
17 - 34

**ON
ETERON**

