



POWER2YOUTH

Being a NEET in Turkey: Determinants and Consequences

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Abstract

For a young person, unemployment is one of the most important obstacles to enjoying life. However, recent research has shown that even willingness to work, which forms a key element in unemployment calculations, is not uniformly distributed across society. Those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) comprise a significant portion of society, in Turkey reaching 32 percent of young people aged 15-24, and a high 46 percent of young women. In this paper, we examine the determinants of being a NEET in Turkey, and its consequences in terms of trust, political participation and political efficacy.

Keywords: Turkey | Youth | Education | Employment | NEET | Political participation

1. NEET: A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Although policy makers have emphasized unemployment as an important determinant of the quality of life of young citizens, there is a newly arising consensus on the inadequacy of this concept to define the situation of young persons. Being employed or not is generally used as a methodological tool to classify individuals into different categories within the labour force. However, this classification is insufficient to describe the complexity of the situation of young people. The standard unemployment definition includes those who are not working, but have looked for work in the reference period (past week, month or year). This definition captures students who are looking for part-time employment, and it is open to short-term fluctuations depending on economic situations and transition between job market and education (Bardak et al. 2015: 9).

To complement the more generic category of unemployment, policy makers have developed an alternative measurement: NEET, which captures those who are not in employment, education or training. This concept was first developed in the UK by the Social Exclusion Unit (1999) to describe the situation of youth. It corresponds to the Status Zero concept put forward by Istance and colleagues (1994) (see Furlong 2006 and 2007). The NEET concept has since been used in many different countries such as Japan, Italy and Korea. In adopting the concept, policy makers in the EU have made extensive use of it in the European policy debate. Today, Eurostat measures the NEET indicator in the member and candidate countries by using micro-level data. Moreover, NEET is explicitly included in the Europe 2020 agenda as well as in the 2012 Employment Package “Towards a job-rich recovery” (Mascherini et al.

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2012).

Despite the rising popularity of the concept, there is no consensus on its measurement. In the UK, NEET is confined to youth aged 16-18. The Japanese definition markedly differs from the one adopted in Europe; there, the NEET group is defined as people “aged 15-34 years [who are] not in education, not in the labour force, unmarried and not engaged in housework” (OECD 2008: 45; see also Genda 2007). The main NEET indicator produced by Eurostat covers the 15-24 age group (Lee and Wright 2011, Mascherini et al. 2012, Rose et al. 2012). In our analyses, we have chosen to use the Eurostat definition in order to put our findings in a comparative perspective, but apply it to a slightly different age group: 18-29 years.

Notwithstanding the lack of consensus on the definition of the concept, different academic studies aiming to understand what causes NEET provide almost the same explanations. We will review some of these in the following paragraphs.

Various field studies have shown that the NEETs are generally female, but the gender gap varies significantly across OECD countries (highest in Turkey, Mexico and Chile and lowest in Montenegro, Serbia, Moldova and Russia) (Serban 2014, Carcillo et al. 2015, Bardak et al. 2015).

This gender gap is largely explained by gender roles and the work load of women as a result of family responsibilities. In many countries, childcare and household maintenance are primarily the domain of women, a responsibility which prevents them from participating in economic life and blocks their educational career. Insufficient social services to women tend to keep this gender gap wide (Furlong 2007, Bardak et al. 2015, Carcillo et al. 2015).

According to empirical studies, low levels of education enhance the likelihood of being a NEET, almost independent from the other factors. Early school leavers are clearly at a disadvantage since they do not possess the skills demanded by the job market, they lack access to job-seeking channels and they do not have the social and cultural capital necessary to compete (Raffe 2003, Genda 2007, Eurofound 2011, Mascherini et al. 2012, Bardak et al. 2015, Carcillo et al. 2015, Alfieri et al. 2015, Brown 2016).

Another factor affecting the likelihood of a young person to be in the NEET situation is the income level of his/her family. Children from poorer families stand a lower chance of completing their education and tend to lack the networks needed to find decent jobs. Hence, studies present a clear association between being poor and the probability of being a NEET (Furlong 2007, Genda 2007, Eurofound 2011, Alfieri et al. 2015).

Other factors increasing the likelihood of being a NEET include being a migrant (Eurofound 2011, Mascherini et al. 2012, Bardak et al. 2015), having a disability (Eurofound 2011, Mascherini et al. 2012, Carcillo et al. 2015, Bardak et al. 2015, Brown 2016) and residing in a rural area (Eurofound 2011, Mascherini et al. 2012).

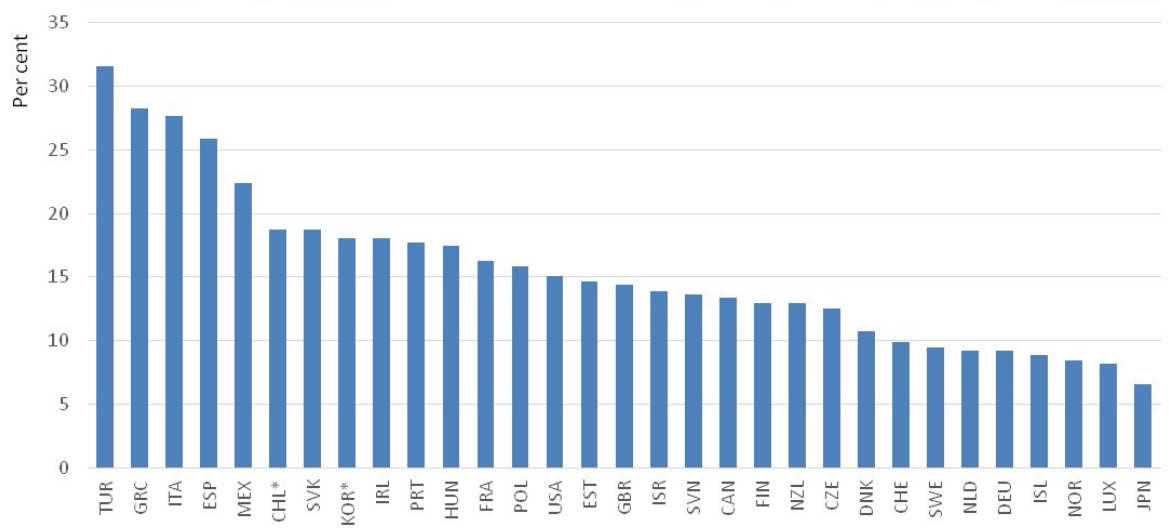
2. TURKEY AND NEET

Before discussing the situation in Turkey we want to present that country's unique position among the OECD countries. First, Turkey's situation is unique vis-à-vis the other Mediterranean members of the OECD. According to the OECD statistics, the NEET ratios in these countries in 2005 were as follows: 20 percent in Greece, 21 percent in Italy, 17 percent in Spain and 12 percent in Portugal. However, Turkey's NEET score has always been higher: 37 percent in 2000, 43 percent in 2005 and 36 percent in 2010 (OECD 2016a).

Second, as shown in Figure 1, Turkey has the highest NEET rate among the youth of all OECD countries, 32 percent, meaning that nearly one third of Turkish youth aged 15-29 are not in employment, education or training. Turkey is followed by Greece and Italy (28 percent), Spain (26 percent) and Mexico (22 percent). Other countries have NEET scores lower than 20 percent. The lowest scores are observed in Japan (7 percent), Luxemburg and Norway (both at 8 percent), and Iceland (9 percent) (OECD 2016a).

Unfortunately, data comparable to those shown in Figure 2 are not available for South-Eastern Mediterranean (SEM) countries. However, drawing on different household surveys, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has compiled a set of data, according to which the percentage of NEETs aged 19-24 in the SEM countries is as follows: Egypt 29 percent; Palestine 35 percent; Tunisia 35 percent; and Morocco 31 percent (OECD 2016b, ILO 2016).

Figure 1 | NEET in OECD countries (15-29 years), 2014

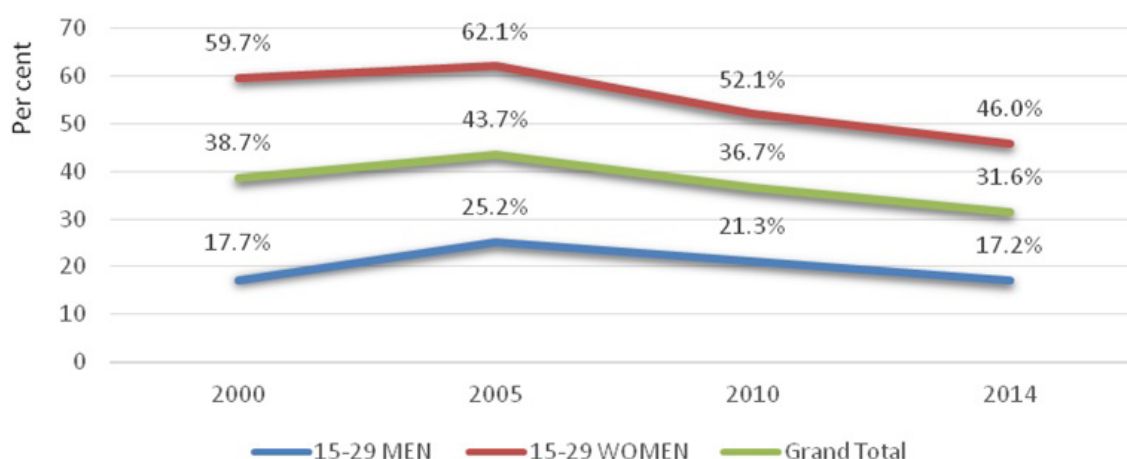


Source: OECD 2016a.

Figure 2 shows significant gender gap in Turkey's NEET scores. It can be seen that the percentage of women who are not in employment, education or training was 60 percent in 2000, increased slightly in 2005, declined to 52 percent in 2010 and again to 46 percent in 2014, thus presenting a steady decline despite the global economic crisis. NEET scores of young men fluctuated between 18 and 25 percent between 2000 and 2014, with the same general trend as for women, namely a drop since 2005. However, the big picture is that the

proportion of NEETs among young men remains the same as in 2000, whereas it has declined by 14 percentage points among young women. Thus, while still wide, the gender gap has substantially narrowed.

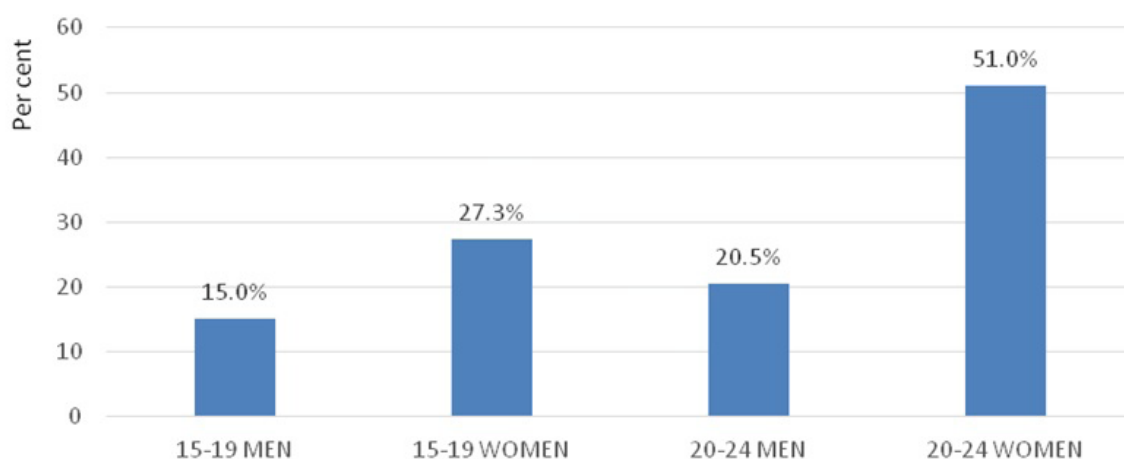
Figure 2 | NEET in Turkey (15-29 years, male-female comparison), 2014



Source: OECD 2016a, ILO 2016.

Figure 3 illustrates further the depth of the gender gap. In the 15-19 age bracket, an age when most young people attend school, the difference between men and women is about 12 percentage points. However, this difference increases to 30 percentage points for the 20-24 age bracket, indicative of the impact on NEET status of the exclusion of women from the labour force.

Figure 3 | NEET in Turkey (male-female comparison) 2014



Source: OECD 2016a.

The high rates of NEET in Turkey are explained by low level of female labour force participation. According to the last available statistics, the labour force participation rate in Turkey is 51.3 percent overall. But while it is 71.6 percent for men, it is only 31.5 percent for women. During the last quarter, the female labour force participation rate fluctuated between 28 and 35

percent, the lowest score among the OECD countries (OECD 2016b). The main factor affecting female labour force participation is the division of labour within the family. In Turkey, women are in charge of household chores and childcare. The household workload of married women is so high that it prevents them from participating in the labour force (Toksöz 2008). As a result of the lack of social services to support mothers, Turkish women are the principal caretakers of children and other household members (Tasci and Tansel 2005, Yentürk and Başlevent 2007, Tunalı and Yanık-İlhan 2009, Gökşen et al. 2015 and 2016, Susanli 2016).

Another factor that explains the employment gender gap is the relatively low education levels of women in Turkey. Official statistics show that Turkish women tend to leave education earlier than men. As a consequence, they more often lack the skills needed to compete on the job market (UNDP 2008, Gökşen et al. 2015).

Early exit from education is highly correlated with the household workload of young women, discussed above, and the financial situation of the family. Lower-income families have difficulties coping with education expenses and therefore sometimes give priority to the education of sons over the education of daughters. This is a symptom of the patriarchal culture of Turkish society, which still tends to assign women a secondary role.

Apart from the low female labour force participation and low female educational attainment, a third major factor affecting higher rates of NEET in Turkey is the overall low level of education. According to official statistics, only one third of Turkish youth are given a chance to attend tertiary education (2011) and therefore many young people lack the skill sets that could provide them a decent employment opportunity. Consequently, there is a negative correlation between level of education and probability of falling into the NEET category, for young people. As discussed above, this correlation is higher for women (ILO 2013, Bardak et al. 2015, OECD 2016b, Susanli 2016).

The economic standing of the household in which young people live also affects the NEET status because it impacts the level of education and skills. Individuals from poor families tend to have a higher likelihood of becoming unemployed than children from wealthier families (Gökşen et al. 2015).

Other studies show that migrant youth in Turkey tend to be NEETs more often than others, since they are often not well integrated into the job market of the host community (NNN 2014). Similarly, young people who lack work experience and those residing in urban areas have higher likelihood to be NEETs (Gökşen et al. 2015, Susanli 2016).

In the following parts of the report, we will show how the above-listed factors affect the status of the young person according to recent survey data.

3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

Our analysis is based on a national representative household sample survey, which was carried out within the framework of the Power2Youth project. Data were collected at 226 locations in 25 provinces from 2 January to 10 February 2016. Altogether 1,804 young people

aged 18-29 were interviewed face to face using a questionnaire developed by researchers from 12 universities and research institutions in South-Eastern Mediterranean and European countries. In addition to Turkey, the same survey was also implemented in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon.²

To classify young people as NEETs, we relied on the following survey question: “What were [...] doing most of the time last month?” Answer options were: 1) Working (666 respondents); 2) Student (637); 3) Housewife/housekeeper (272); 4) Unemployed, not looking for work (56); 5) Unemployed, looking for work (171); 6) Unable to work (1); 7) Retired (0); and 8) Other (1). In the following we have grouped all respondents into three groups: students (answer 2), 32 percent; the employed (answer 1), 41 percent; and NEETs (answers 3-8), 27 percent.

Table 1 shows the bivariate relationship between the NEET status of the respondents and basic demographic characteristics. The gender gap is clearly observable. Forty-one percent of female respondents are NEETs compared to 14 percent of young men. Just above one quarter of female respondents are working whilst twice as many young men are employed. The proportion of students is almost the same in both groups. With increasing age, the percentage of students drops and the share of NEETs surges: there are 17 percent NEETs in the 18-19 age bracket, increasing to 33 percent in the 25-29 age bracket.

Table 1 | NEET status of youth aged 18-29 by various background characteristics

		NEET (%)	Employed (%)	Student (%)	No.
Overall		26.8	41.1	32.2	1,804
Gender	Male	14.2	54.0	31.8	972
	Female	41.4	26.0	32.5	832
Age group of youth	18-19	16.8	21.7	61.5	365
	20-24	26.3	34.1	39.6	761
	25-29	32.6	59.3	8.0	678
Highest education completed	Less than basic	61.1	37.8	1.0	182
	Preparatory/Basic	30.5	40.9	28.6	421
	Secondary	18.0	33.3	48.7	871
	Post-secondary	26.1	63.5	10.4	330
Marital status	Never married	19.1	38.1	42.8	1,345
	Ever married	49.2	49.8	1.0	459
Economic situation of household by national standards	Above average	15.6	48.5	35.9	280
	Average	24.7	41.2	34.0	1,195
	Below average	44.4	34.2	21.3	323
Type of living area	Urban	27.2	41.1	31.8	1,680
	Rural	20.9	41.3	37.8	124
Ethnicity	Turkish	22.1	44.2	33.7	1,419
	Kurdish	45.3	30.2	24.5	341
	Zaza	50.0	25.0	25.0	10
	Other	36.7	26.7	36.7	19

² See the Power2Youth project website (<http://www.power2youth.eu>) for more on the project, including the survey instrument and additional results.

The table shows a correlation between educational attainment and NEET status. Two thirds of the respondents who have not completed basic education fall in the NEET category while between a quarter and half as many of young people with basic, secondary and higher education do the same. The percentage in employment is considerably higher amongst young people with a university degree (over 60 percent) than those with less education (from 33 to 41 percent).

Approximately one half of married respondents fall in the NEET category and the other half are employed. There are extremely few married young people who are students, suggesting that there is a correlation being married and dropping out of education.

With improved household economy, the percentage of NEETs falls while the percentage of employed persons and students increases. For example, 16 percent of respondents who consider their economic status above average are NEETs and 49 percent are employed. This contrasts with respectively 44 percent, almost three times higher, and 34 percent of respondents in the lowest segment. This confirms earlier discussions on the effect of economic status.

The table shows a difference between young people residing in urban versus rural settings. While the proportion in employment is the same, the share of NEETS is 6 percentage points higher and the share of students is 6 percentage points lower in urban than in rural areas.

Finally, a comparison across ethnic origins reveals a significant difference between Turkish and Kurdish youth. Whereas the percentage of NEETs among Kurdish youth is 45 percent, it is only 22 percent among Turkish youth. In contrast, the percentage in employment and the percentage of students are significantly higher amongst young people with a Turkish background.

The data presented in Table 1 partly confirm previous discussion on the determinants of being a NEET for young people in Turkey. There is a significant gender effect in favour of men, and the level of education and economic status of respondents also matter. However, these conclusions may be misleading due to possible correlations between various explanatory factors and potential spurious correlations. In order to draw a better picture, we conducted a series of multivariate analyses in which being a NEET or not is used as the dependent variable and the following variables are used as independent variables: gender, education, marital status, household economy, education of parents (as a proxy variable representing the socioeconomic status of the family) and ethnic status.

We have used the Generalized Linear Models (GLM) procedure because of its flexibility.³ Table 2 presents the results of the GLM analysis where being a NEET or not is used as the dependent variable. The findings generally confirm our discussion above.

³ Generalized Linear Models were introduced by Nelder and Wedderburn (1972) for calculating a wide range of statistical models from multiple linear regression to Poisson regression. The model is defined by $g(\mu) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik}$ $i = 1, \dots, n$ where β s are unknown coefficients. In our models, the link function is LOGIT since dependent variables are binary: 1 "NEET" and 0 "not NEET". The interpretation of exponential (β) coefficients is similar to the interpretation of logistic regression models.

First of all, the analysis shows that the most important determinant of being a NEET or not is gender. For a male respondent, the probability of being a NEET is 0.24 of the likelihood for a female, after controlling for the effect of other variables. In other words, young women's probability of being a NEET is four times higher than is true for their male counterparts, independent of other variables. This significant difference confirms our earlier discussion about the gender gap in the Turkish context.

Our analysis also shows that age matters. Respondents aged 18-19 have a lower probability of being a NEET. This situation may be a result of the compulsory education system, keeping the majority these young people in the school. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference between people in the 20-24 and 25-29 age groups.

Table 2 | Determinants of being a NEET in Turkey (output of the GLM)

		Exp(B)	Sig.
	(Intercept)	8.224	0.000
Gender	Male	0.239	0.000
	Female	1.000	
Age group	18-19	0.689	0.071
	20-24	0.996	0.977
	25-29	1.000	
Highest education completed	Less than basic	2.480	0.000
	Preparatory/ Basic	1.155	0.468
	Secondary	0.701	0.034
	Post-secondary	1.000	
Marital status	Never married	0.352	0.000
	Ever married	1.000	
Type of living area	Urban	0.857	0.501
	Rural	1.000	
Economic situation of household by national standards	Above average	0.372	0.000
	Average	0.558	0.000
	Below average	1.000	
Ethnic origin	Not Kurdish	0.441	0.000
	Kurdish	1.000	
Parental education		0.898	0.032
	(Scale)	1.000	
Deviance/d.f.		1.454	

Another finding is the importance of education. As expected, the probability of being a NEET is highest amongst a young people who have failed to complete basic schooling. In fact, the chance of being a NEET amongst those with less than basic education is 2.5 times higher than amongst university graduates. However, the relationship between educational attainment and NEET status is not linear, since this probability is lower for youth who have attained secondary education. This difference may be attributed to gender differences and the labour market structure. In the following parts of the report, we will examine this gender difference further.

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that being married is another important determinant of being a NEET. A married young person's probability to be a NEET is three times higher than for those who are not married, confirming theoretical expectations.

Whilst there is no significant impact of urban versus rural location, the analysis found that family income matters. Young people from relatively richer households have a lower probability of being a NEET than those living in poorer households, and the likelihood of being a NEET grows gradually with falling economic standing. Another indicator of social status, education levels of parents, also has a significant effect, as the probability of being a NEET amongst children of relatively well educated parents is lower than amongst children of parents with lower education.

Finally, our multivariate model demonstrates that ethnic origin matters. The propensity of a non-Kurdish young person to be a NEET is almost half that of his/her Kurdish counterpart, after controlling for other variables.

The GLM analysis showed that young people's NEET status in Turkey is chiefly explained by gender. In order to dig deeper into the matter, and particularly to see how young women and men may be differently impacted by the various background factors, we repeated the above analysis for men and women separately. This deeper analysis reveals that factors affecting the probability of being NEET not only work differently for men and women, their impacts are different (Table 3).

Table 3 | Determinants of being a NEET in Turkey, according to gender (output of the GLM)

		Male		Female	
		Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
	(Intercept)	4.353	0.012	3.689	0.006
Age group	18-19	1.255	0.446	0.393	0.002
	20-24	0.944	0.814	0.986	0.947
	25-29	1.000		1.000	
Highest education completed	Less than basic	0.608	0.232	10.079	0.000
	Preparatory/Basic	0.512	0.040	1.945	0.015
	Secondary	0.336	0.000	0.988	0.955
	Post-secondary	1.000		1.000	
Marital status	Never married	2.334	0.010	0.164	0.000
	Ever married	1.000		1.000	
Type of living area	Urban	0.456	0.028	1.329	0.377
	Rural	1.000		1.000	
Economic situation of household by national standards	Above average	0.164	0.000	0.506	0.028
	Average	0.209	0.000	0.947	0.810
	Below average	1.000		1.000	
Ethnic origin	Not Kurdish	0.383	0.000	0.420	0.000
	Kurdish	1.000		1.000	
Parental education		0.794	0.014	0.971	0.637
	(Scale)	1.000		1.000	
Deviance/d.f.		1.189		1.333	

For example, the likelihood of being NEET for young women aged 18-19 is less than one third of the rate for women aged 25-29, keeping all other variables constant. However, this probability does not differ between women in their early and late 20s. By contrast, there is no significant difference across age for young men.

The impact of education is much more significant. The probability of being NEET for a young woman without any education as compared with a young female university graduate is 10 times higher. It is also twice as high as for young women with basic schooling. There is no significant difference between secondary and post-secondary education levels with regard to the impact on women's NEET status, so we can conclude that even a secondary education considerably reduces the probability of women being in this situation in Turkey. For women, the relationship between education and NEET is linear.

In the case of young men, this relationship is not linear. The rate of NEET status decreases from no education to basic schooling and again to secondary education. However, for young men, the probability of being NEET is highest for university graduates. This picture may be a result of the structure of the Turkish labour market, which is characterized by a mismatch between the skills that universities can offer and the needs of private businesses and the labour market more generally (OECD 2016b).

An important finding concerns the role of marriage as a determinant of being NEET. We have previously argued that for women, as a result of the accompanying workload of child care and domestic chores, marriage tends to block education and work opportunities. This is confirmed by the GLM analysis, which shows that a single woman's probability of being NEET is one sixth the probability of a married woman, keeping the impact of other factors constant in our model. In contrast, single men's probability of being NEET is 2.3 times higher than that of married men. The divergence in findings for women and men is explained by gender roles: men are not "allowed" to marry before finding a job, whereas women tend to leave their education or work career upon marriage.

The economic situation of households also has a considerable impact on NEET status, especially for young men. The probability of being NEET for a young man from a household with above-average economic conditions is one sixth that of his counterpart from a below-average household, and for a young man residing in a household with an average economy the probability is one fifth that of a young man from a below-average household.

This relationship is bidirectional. We know that if the number of employed people increases, economic conditions of households also improve. On the other hand, we know that young people from poor families are generally not well equipped to find a decent job, their access to education is limited and they do not possess necessary social or symbolic capital to access the labour market. The negative effect of the level of parents' education on the probability of being a NEET for male respondents may be accepted as the indicator of how economic conditions are working on behalf of the rich.

The direction of the relationship is similar for female respondents, but with smaller coefficients. The probability to be a NEET for a young woman from the upper segment is half that of her counterpart from the lower and medium segments. This difference may be a result

of the factors discussed above: the failure of young men to find a job affects the economic conditions of the household since they are among the main contributors to the family budget. Meanwhile, the contribution of women to the family budget is rather modest and so the effect of their exclusion from employment is relatively smaller.

Young men living in urban locations have lower probabilities of being a NEET, whereas the place of residence doesn't have any statistically significant effect for women.

Our analysis shows that there is no difference between men and women when considering the impact of ethnic origin. However, Kurdish youth have a two times higher propensity to be NEET than non-Kurdish youth, independent of other variables employed in the model.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF BEING A NEET

In the previous part of the paper, we analyzed the determinants of being a NEET in Turkey, with our analysis showing that gender is the most important factor. Education and economic status are also among the most important determinants but work differently for women and men, as presented above. Furthermore, we found significant variation across youth from different ethnic origins. Hence, any policy attempting to reduce the proportion of NEETs has to consider all of these factors and their interactions.

In this part of the paper, we will focus on some of the consequences of being a NEET in Turkey. Previous studies have shown that NEET status impacts happiness, mental health, future employment and wages (Bardak et al. 2015, Mascherini et al. 2012, Alfieri et al. 2015). We can also add social and political participation to this list, since being a NEET acts as an important obstacle to accumulating necessary economic, cultural and social capital. In this paper we will concentrate on a) political efficacy and political participation, and b) confidence/trust (Atkinson and Hills 1998).

4.1 Trust and Being a NEET

Trust in other people is an important component of social life. The first type of trust is trust in the people in the primary or immediate circle of the person, such as family and relatives, based on kinship. We can also add people living in the same neighbourhood or village to this primary circle. The second dimension of trust includes people who are a bit more distant from us but whom we know well and often cooperate with, for example our colleagues and friends. Our relationship with this group of people is based on mutual transactions and is labelled "strategic trust" by Eric Uslaner (2001). The final type of trust is generalized trust, indicating our feelings towards the people we do not know personally and with whom we do not have any transaction. Our trust in these people is associated with our value system and is generally understood as a major indicator of social capital in a society (Rothstein and Stolle 2008).

Our questionnaire includes a battery of questions to measure youth's trust in different segments of society: the immediate family/household, the extended family, neighbours, the people we work with, people we know personally, people we meet for the first time, people of a different faith, and people of a different nationality. In addition to this list, the questionnaire

also includes trust in Syrian refugees and trust in immigrants.

We conducted a factor analysis after excluding the last two items. As expected, it produced two dimensions. The first dimension, explaining 30 percent of the total variation, is correlated with trust in the immediate family/household, the extended family and neighbours. The second dimension, also explaining 30 percent of the total variation, is loaded by trust in people we meet for the first time, people of another religion and people of another nationality. Trust in co-workers and people we know personally are correlated with both dimensions, but their loading is larger in the first dimension.

We decided to label the first dimension “primary trust”, or primordial trust, since it includes relations with the primary circle, and the second dimension is labelled “generalized trust”. We employed these two variables as dependent variables where being NEET or not and gender were used as independent variables. We also included interaction of these two variables. The output for the two trust variables is presented in Table 4. Figure 4 comprises two graphs stylizing findings of both models.

Table 4 | Being NEET and two dimensions of trust (output of the GLM)

		Model 2 Primary Trust		Model 1 Generalized Trust	
		B	Sig.	B	Sig.
	(Intercept)	-0.096	0.132	-0.175	0.006
NEET	Not NEET	0.155	0.050	0.204	0.010
	NEET	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Gender	Male	-0.094	0.403	0.223	0.048
	Female	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Interaction	Not NEET male	0.070	0.580	-0.224	0.077
	Not NEET female	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	(Scale)	0.994		0.996	
Deviance/d.f.		0.996		0.998	

Figure 4 | Two dimensions of trust and interaction of gender and being NEET

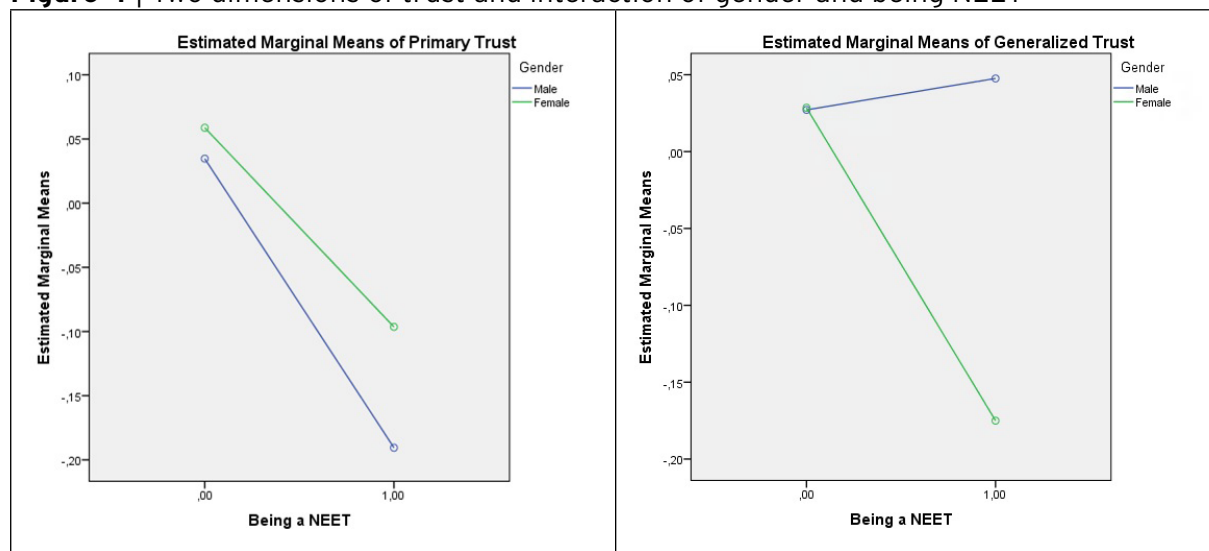


Figure 4 demonstrates how being NEET affects the level of trust of youth in Turkey, in its two dimensions. Model 1 (the graph to the left) shows that both young female and male NEETs have lower levels of trust in their primary circles since there is no significant difference between male and female respondents, and the interaction between gender and being NEET is statistically significant. Thus, being employed or attending an educational institution affects how young people feel towards their primary circles.

On the other hand, there is a significant difference between NEETs and non-NEETs in terms of generalized trust (the graph to the right). Young people who are students or employed have higher levels of generalized trust. Moreover, young men exhibit higher levels of generalized trust than young women. Negative coefficient of the interaction between being male and not NEET indicates that young male NEETs have higher scores on this dimension than male non-NEETs. The right figure shows that there is no difference between men and women if they are employed or a student. But, male NEETs have higher scores compared to female NEETs. By using this information, we can conclude that being NEET or not does not matter for the generalized trust of young men, but if a young woman is employed or a student, her tendency to trust in other people increases.

4.2 Political Participation and Being a NEET

Previous studies show that the most common practice of political participation is voting, and that no other form of political participation has been experienced by more than 10 percent of Turkish youth. This low level of participation has been an enduring phenomenon since 1999 (Erdoğan and Uyan-Semerçi 2017). The poll dataset confirms that the proportion of young people who have participated in different forms of political action, other than voting, is very limited and ranges between 2 percent who have ever participated in a strike and 8.5 percent who have ever signed a petition. This latter form of activity has become much easier in recent years due to the Internet.

In order to demonstrate that NEET status impacts the level of political participation of Turkish youth, we constructed an index of political participation by taking the simple average of the 6 items of political participation used in Figure 5. This additive index is highly reliable (Cronbach Alpha is 0.81). Then, we employed this index as a dependent variable, and being NEET and gender were used as independent variables.

Figure 6 summarizes the findings of our model. The average level of participation of NEETs is significantly lower than for other respondents ($b=0.57$ for non-NEETs). There is an insignificant positive difference between males and females overall. However, this difference is non-existent for the non-NEET category. As the figure shows, being NEET or not creates a small and significant difference for young men (b for the interaction of NEET and male = -0.42). Meanwhile, being employed or a student, i.e. non-NEET, significantly contributes to the level of political participation of young women.⁴

⁴ All other coefficients are statistically insignificant and deviance/d.f.=2.35, indicating a relatively poor explanatory power of the equation.

Figure 5 | Different forms of political participation

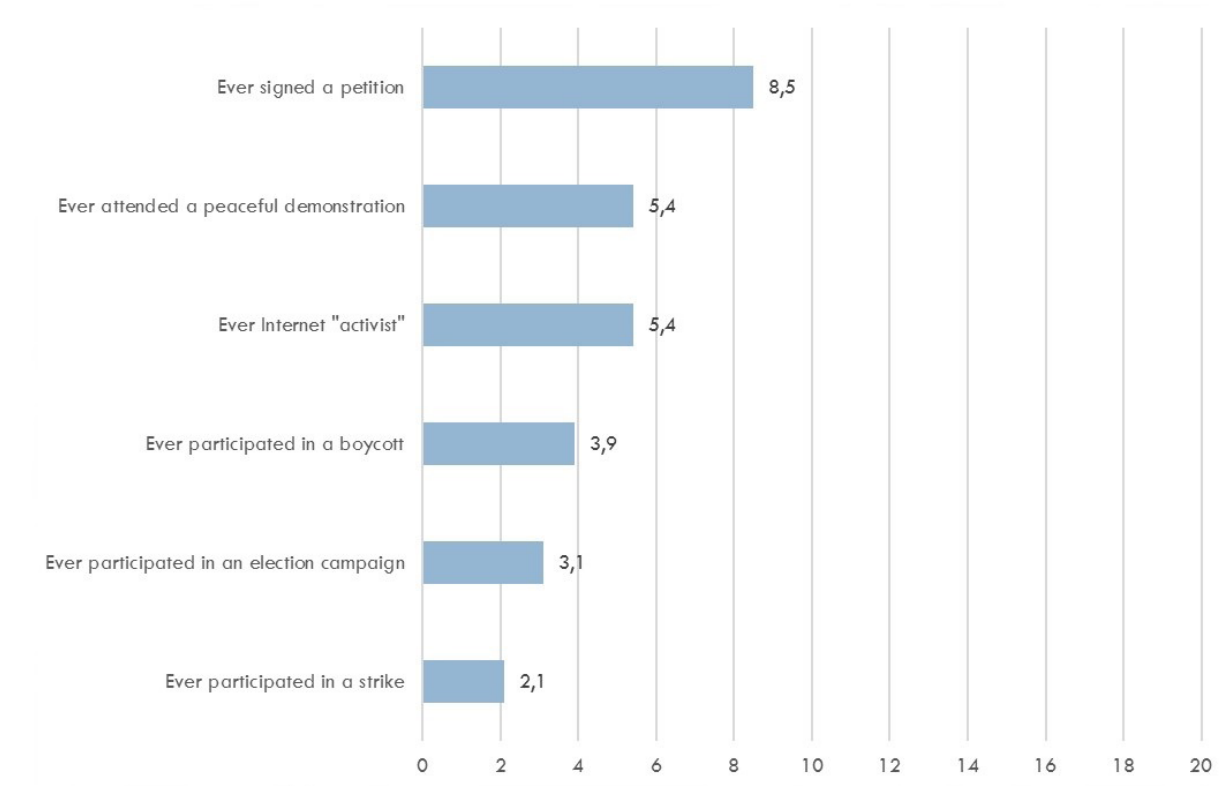
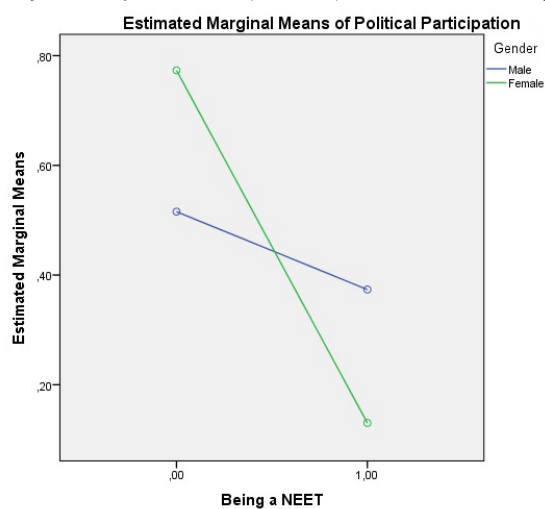


Figure 6 | Political participation and being a NEET

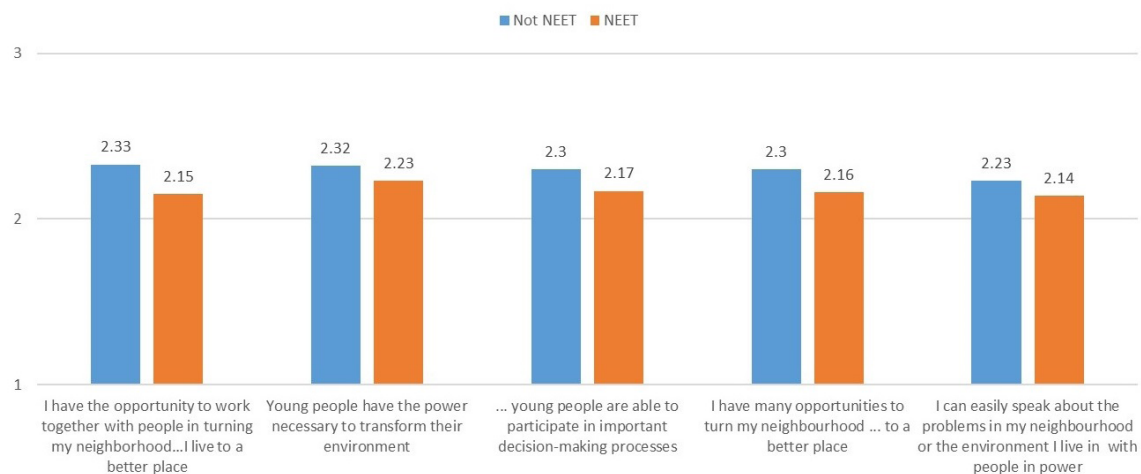


4.3 Political Efficacy and Being a NEET

Political efficacy is one of the important determinants of individual political participation. Campbell et al. (1954: 187) characterized efficacy as the “feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e., that it is worth while to perform one’s civic duties”. In other words, the feeling of political efficacy serves to give meaning to an individual’s political actions.

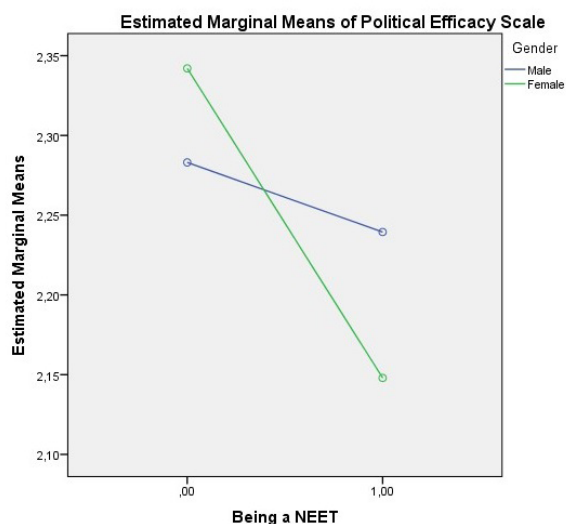
In order to measure the feeling of political efficacy, we developed the battery of questions presented in Figure 7, which also provides the difference between NEETs and other participants in each component of political efficacy, demonstrating that NEETs' self-efficacy is relatively lower for each item. Bivariate tests show that three of these differences are statistically significant: "Young people participate in important decision-making processes in their neighbourhoods", "Have many opportunities to turn the neighbourhood into a better place" and "Have the opportunity to work with other people in turning the neighbourhood into a better place". These three items are associated with opportunities provided to youth, and it seems that NEETs are less optimistic about such opportunities.

Figure 7 | Components of political efficacy and being a NEET (averages, agree-disagree scale, 1-4)



Using the answers given to these questions, we constructed a scale of political efficacy (Cronbach Alpha: 0.86). Figure 8 shows the effect of being NEET or not, in interaction with gender, on the feeling of political efficacy.

Figure 8 | Political efficacy and being a NEET



There is a significant difference between NEETs and non-NEETs in terms of the feeling of political efficacy ($b=0.20$ for non-NEETs) and this difference is valid for both sexes. However, the difference between male NEET and non-NEET participants is relatively smaller than for females (b for interaction between male and NEET= -0.16). Being employed or a student substantially contributes to young women's feeling of efficacy.⁵

To conclude, our analyses show that there are important consequences of being a NEET in Turkey, especially for women. Being a NEET implies having low trust in people, lower levels of political participation and less feeling of political efficacy for young women.⁶ Their male counterparts are able to compensate for differences with their employed or student counterparts, most probably through other mechanisms such as their free time habits allowing them to be active and engaged in public space. However, young women do not have access to these mechanisms and the effect of being a NEET is much more restrictive for them.

ANNEX

		%
Gender	Male	53.9
	Female	46.1
Age group	18-19	20.2
	20-24	42.2
	25-29	37.6
Highest education completed	Less than basic	10.1
	Preparatory/ Basic	23.3
	Secondary	48.3
	Post-secondary	18.3
Marital status	Never married	74.6
	Ever married	25.4
Type of living area	Urban	93.1
	Rural	6.9
Economic situation of household by national standards	Above average	15.6
	Average	66.4
	Below average	18.0
Ethnic origin	Not Kurdish	80.5
	Kurdish	19.5
		Mean/SD
Parental education		3.38/ 1.51

⁵ All other coefficients are statistically insignificant. Deviance/d.f.=0.516

⁶ These four different political phenomena are weakly correlated: Corr(Political Efficacy, Political Participation)=0.08, Corr(Generalized Trust, Political Participation)= 0.085, Corr(Political Efficacy, Generalized Trust)=0.102. All other correlations are statistically insignificant.

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POWER2YOUTH is a research project aimed at offering a critical understanding of youth in the South East Mediterranean (SEM) region through a comprehensive interdisciplinary, multi-level and gender sensitive approach. By combining the economic, political and socio-cultural spheres and a macro (policy/institutional), meso (organizational) and micro (individual) level analysis, POWER2YOUTH explores the root causes and complex dynamics of the processes of youth exclusion and inclusion in the labour market and civic/political life, while investigating the potentially transformative effect of youth collective and individual agency. The project has a cross-national comparative design with the case studies of Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Occupied Palestinian Territories and Turkey. POWER2YOUTH's participants are 13 research and academic institutions based in the EU member states, Norway, Switzerland and South East Mediterranean (SEM) countries. The project is mainly funded under the European Union's 7th Framework Programme.

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