

# Sharing the Burden of Unemployment:

A Critical theorization of the NEET Phenomenon in the  
Mediterranean EU regions

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Urban Inequalities: Ethnographic  
Insights

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## Current Global Economy Trends& General Framework

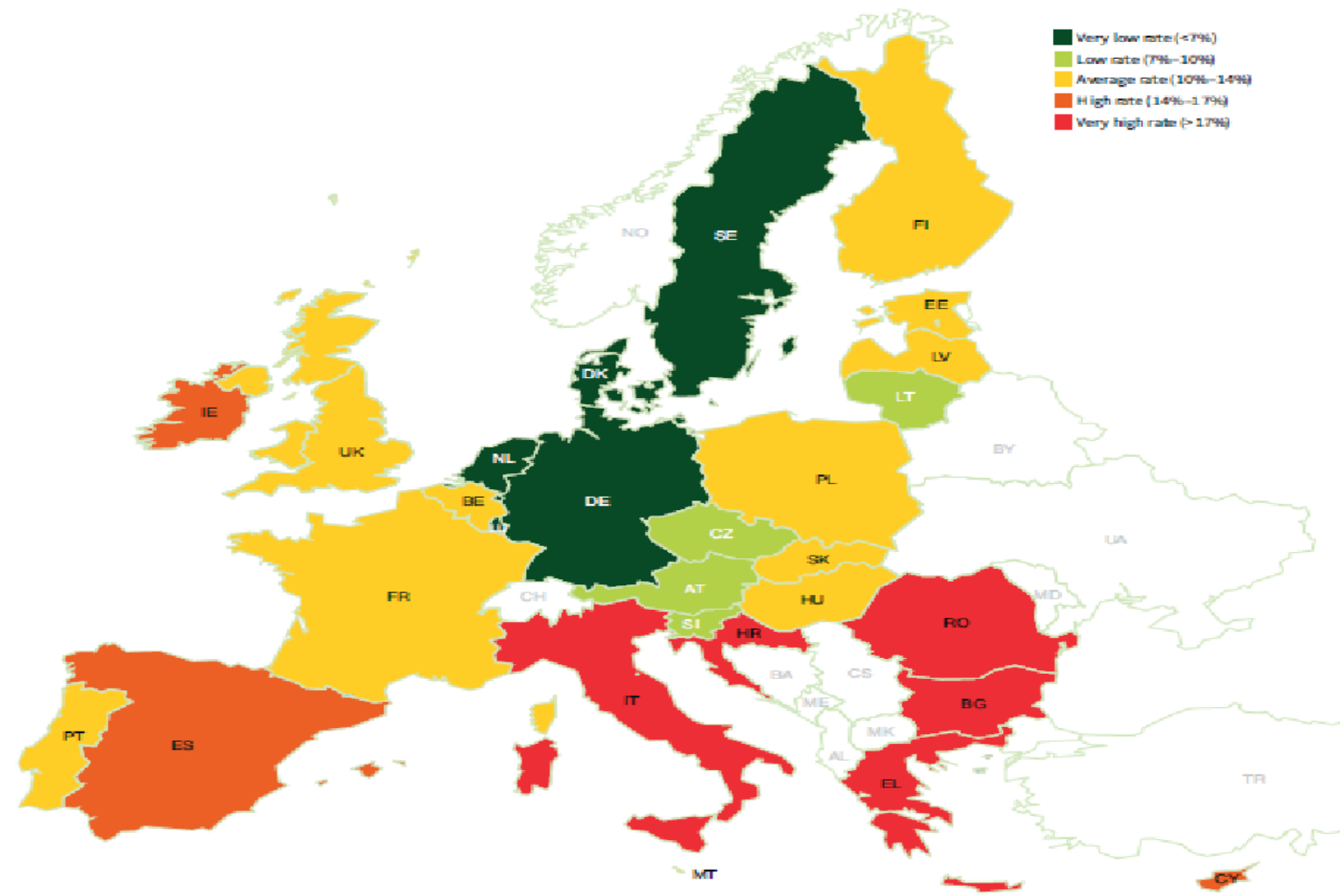
- labor underutilization, flexibility, new forms of work
- capital switching and spatial fixities
- NEETs' rate increase
- diverse economies based on de-growth concept
- re-birth of social economy promoted by public policies
- persistent world-wide economic recession
- increased labor force movements: refugee movements and “brain-drain” phenomenon

### Purpose of the Study

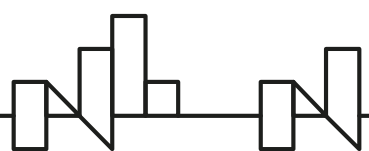
- critical insights on the spatio-temporal trends of labor flexibilization (focus on NEETs 25-29) in MED EEA (Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain)
- analysis of the interrelationships between flexibilization and the NEETs
- dispute of the effectiveness of the social economy practices against youth unemployment and social structures

### Theoretical framework/ Mixed Methodology

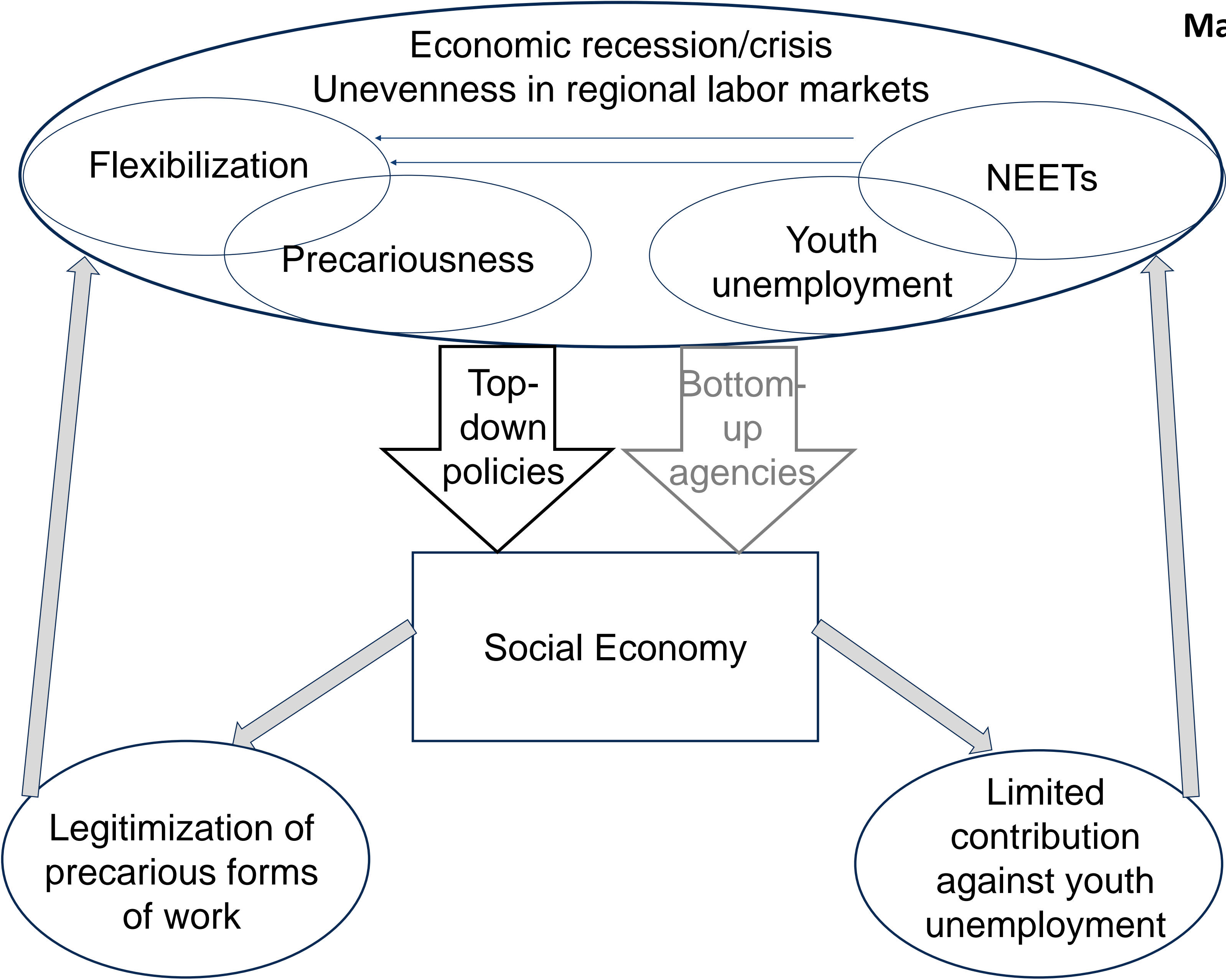
- Geographical Cultural Political Economy and other Radical Political-Economy approaches
- mixed methods of analysis



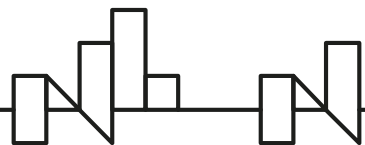
*The social and the sharing economy are [...] like social movements (!!!!!)*



**Main hypothesis Schema**



**A tentative mechanism  
explaining the  
phenomena on hand**



## Recent Spatio-temporal trends of labor Flexibilization

### Aims

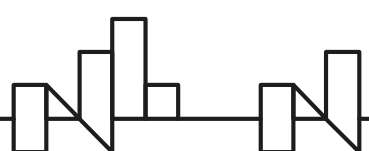
*Within the context of the “widening and deepening” of European Union (EU) integration, the expansion of flexible and atypical employment is a crucially important phenomenon to understand and address, since its growth is highly geographically uneven across the Union (Keller and Seifert, 2005; Keune, 2008).*

*The uneven flexibilization trends found between the Mediterranean regions and cities are seen as an outcome of the interaction between the general devaluation trends, different backgrounds and regionally specific patterns of labour market adjustment, , while employment is found to be neither “rigid” nor “flexicure”.*

- ‘freeing’ labor from rigid employment provisions and geographical immobility
- employment and productivity boost, with the eradication of barriers in labor market entry
- the broadening of the ‘triple bottom line’ to another level out from the enterprise itself and its stakeholders to wider society
- the adjustment of workforce size

### Relevant policies and ways of implementation

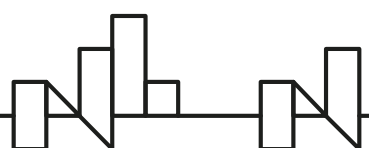
- non-permanent, atypical or precarious employment
- unbalanced employee pay-offs
- working- day limits expansion or relative surplus- value expansion
- negative effects on workers with temporary contracts
- non- voluntary flexibilization
- notion of flexicurity: balance between flexibility and security



## Current trends of flexibilization across the EU South

- regions incorporated into the EU and the global capitalist economy
- traditional patterns and sociopolitical and historical peculiarities with uneven spatial outcomes
- deconstruction of pro-capitalist narratives referring to the rigid character of the Southern- EU labor structures
- typical employment was the exception rather than the norm
- flexible practices tightly interconnected with the geographical reformations of (uneven) capitalist development
- increased precariousness within mostly heavily urbanized areas
- workers' regional immobilization in certain regions
- over-accumulation in one region and devalorisation in another
- Mediterranean metropolitan regions: sites of greater exclusion, higher fragmentation and unstable underemployment

*Under the guiding and often repressive role of supra- regional powers such as the EU, people in one region can be seen to be 'exploiting' others in another region (not necessarily of the same country), while both are being subordinated to the will of capital (Peet (1975), Hudson (2013)).*

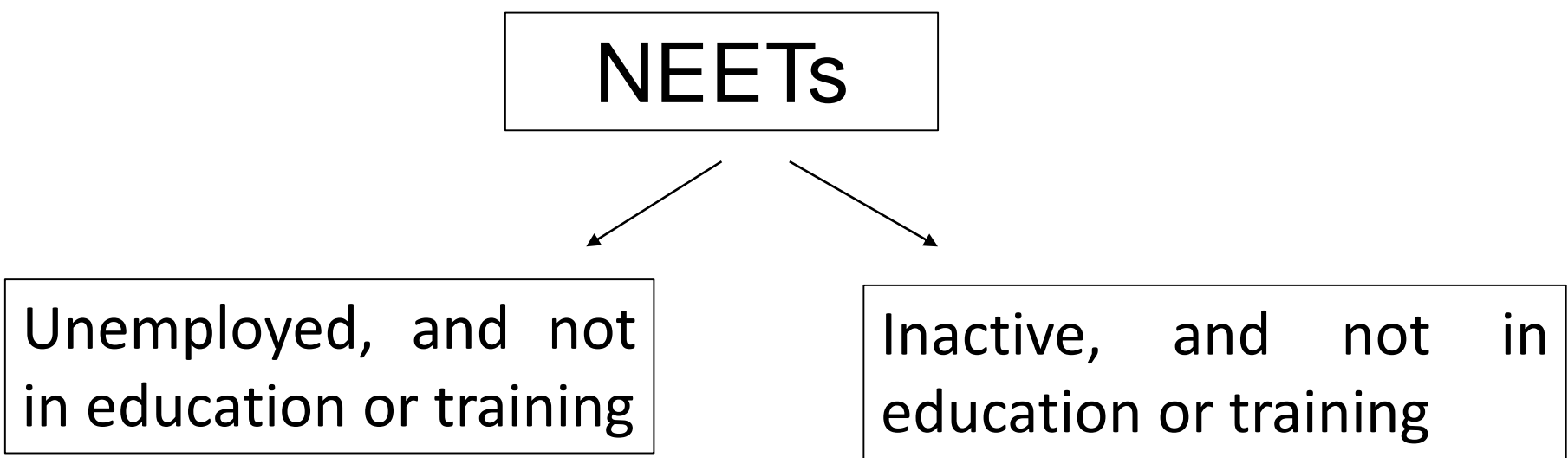
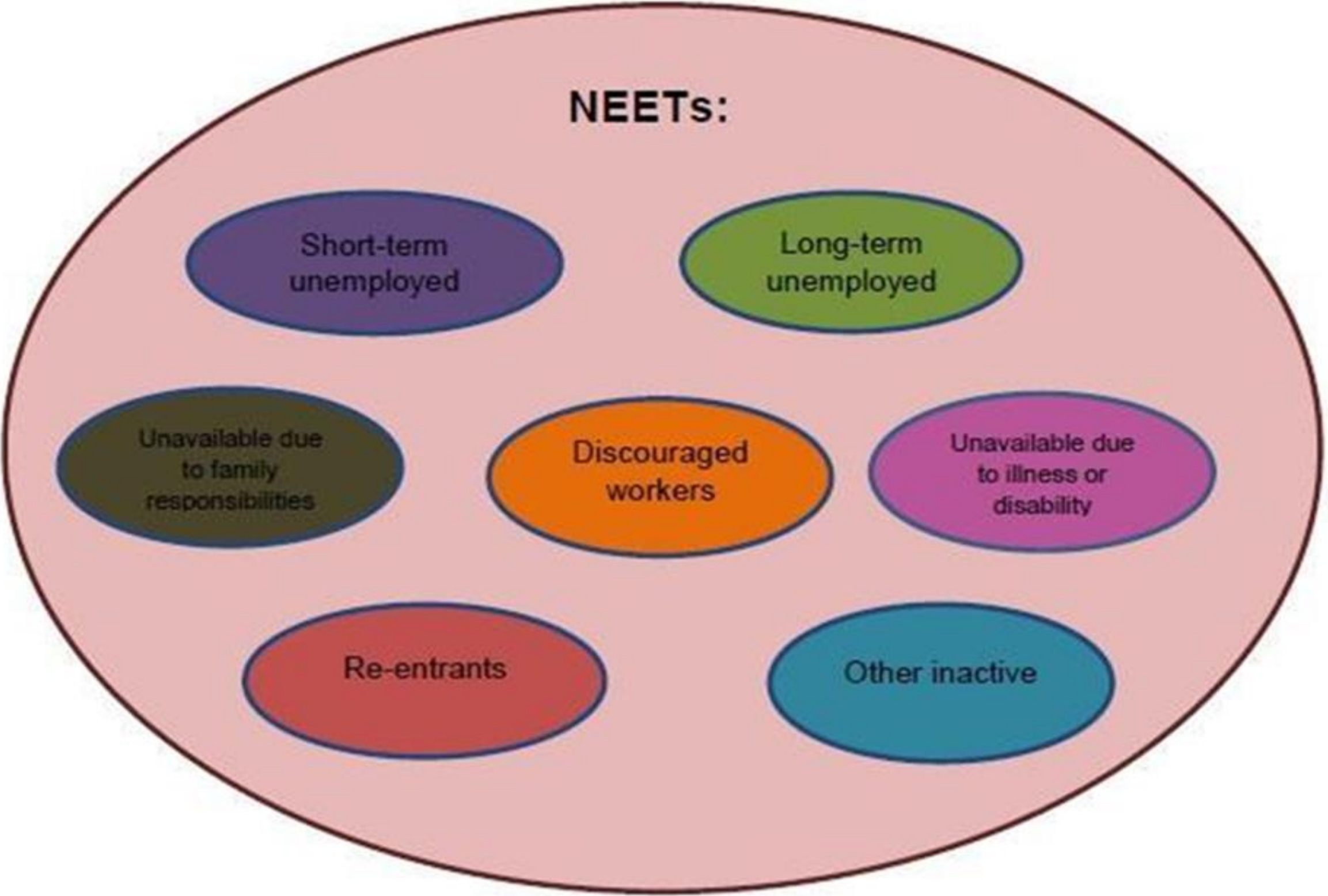


***Not in Employment, Education or Training***

*...“an eminent loss of human potential and productive capacity, which may threaten prospects of sustained and equitable economic growth”*  
(Eurofound 2012)

persons who are involved in the two conditions below

- “they are not employed” or
- “they have not received any formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey”



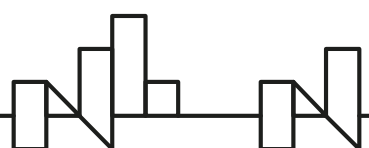
$$young\ NEETs = \frac{\text{young people not in employment, education or training}}{\text{total number of young people in the specific age group, by gender}}$$

## Interrelationships between flexibilization and the NEETs

### vicious circle of degradation - cumulative causality :

*...”I studied business administration as a training course for a month when I left school, then one month after, I started doing retail at another training company. I done that from August last year until January this year. And then in March I started a training course for young-mums-to-be’ cause I was pregnant ...I enjoyed it [her retail training] ’cause I had a place there in a shop doing retail, and they was going to offer me a job there anyway, but I got pregnant”...*

- reproduction of precariousness and NEETs - low probability of finding a permanent job for former NEETs - higher risk of precarious employment
- “scar effect” - distrustful generations, not having many expectations - destructive for the new enters
- low educated youth (not only) is leaded to inactivity, a delay in emancipation, family dependence, lack of integration in society, psychological problems
- trust in social and political institutions is collapsing
- lack of prospects, hopeless job-seeking in an unfavorable labor market, social exclusion ineffective training, severe cuts in the welfare provisions “define the present and undermine their future” - disengagement of young people – marginalization – economic inactivity



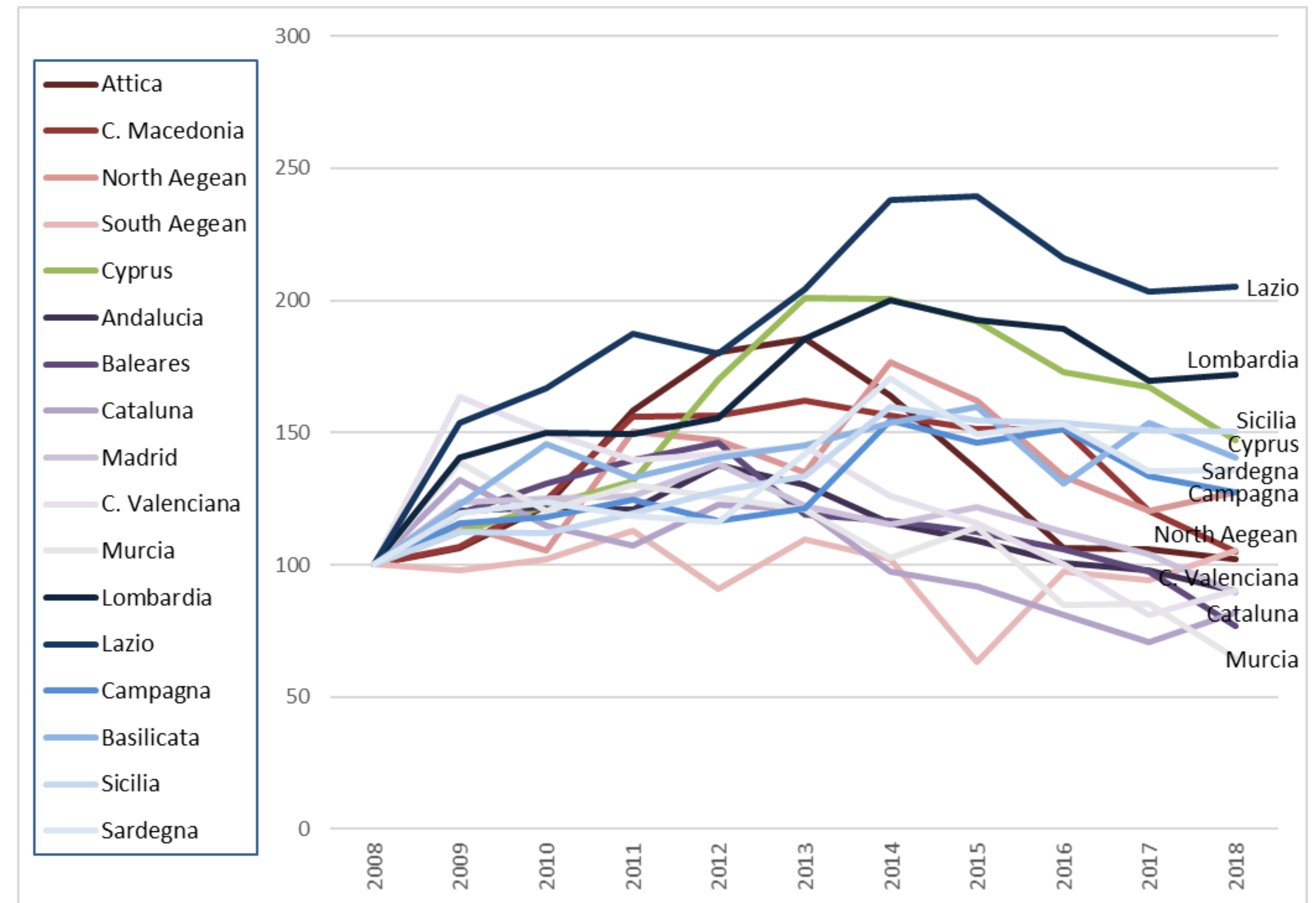
## NEETs in Study Regions

Comparing regions in numbers (2008=100)

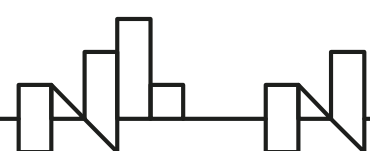
*...“I do not want to start a business because I am concerned that things can go to end badly: for example, in Italy, during the economic crisis, there were people who hanged themselves at 60-70 years for the debts they have with the bank and because they are shamed to the family.”...*

*Lazio, Lombardia, & Cyprus:  
the highest increase since 2008  
Attica: high increase until 2013*

*In all the Spanish study regions:  
the NEET numbers lower  
in 2018 than in 2008*



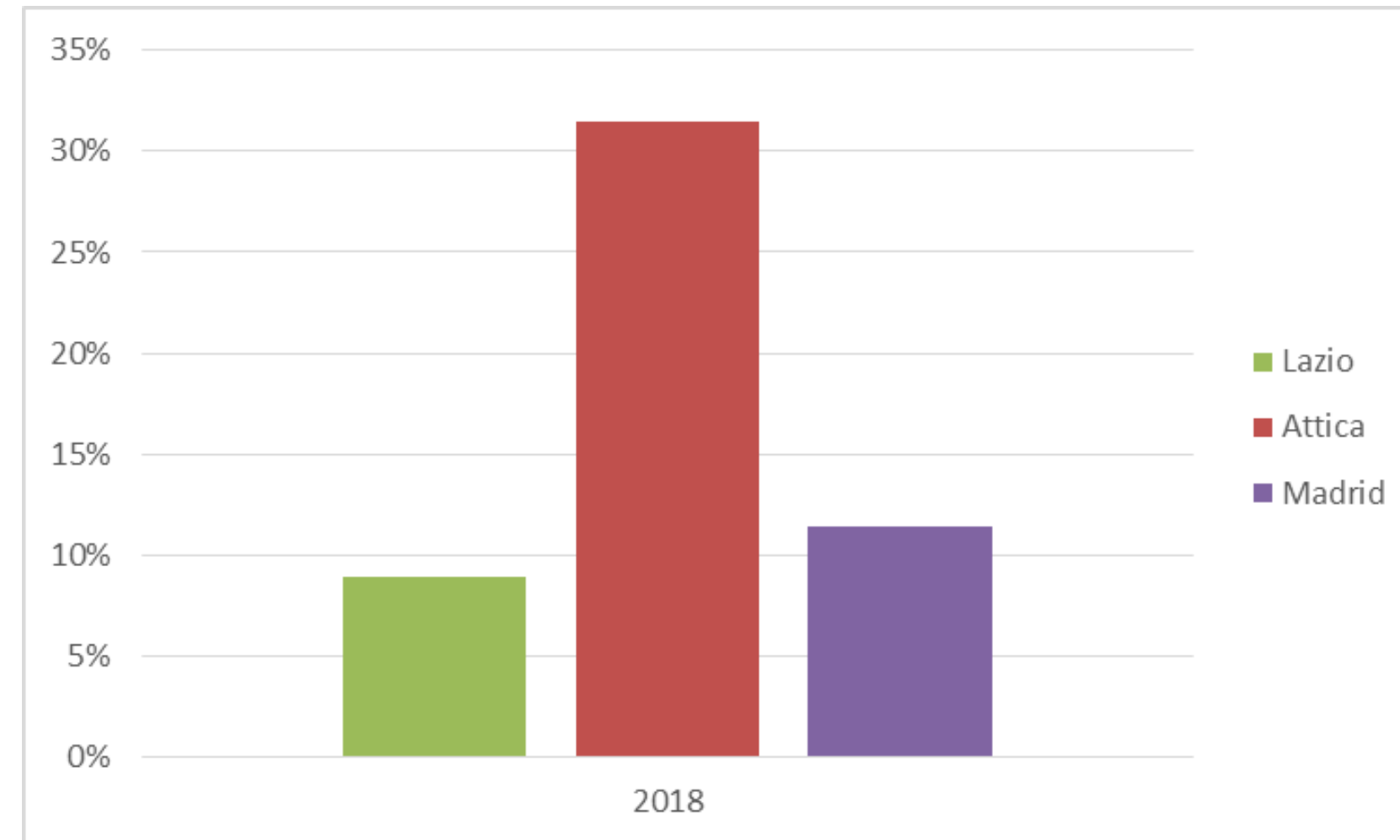
NEET numbers 2008=100 of the study regions (25-29)



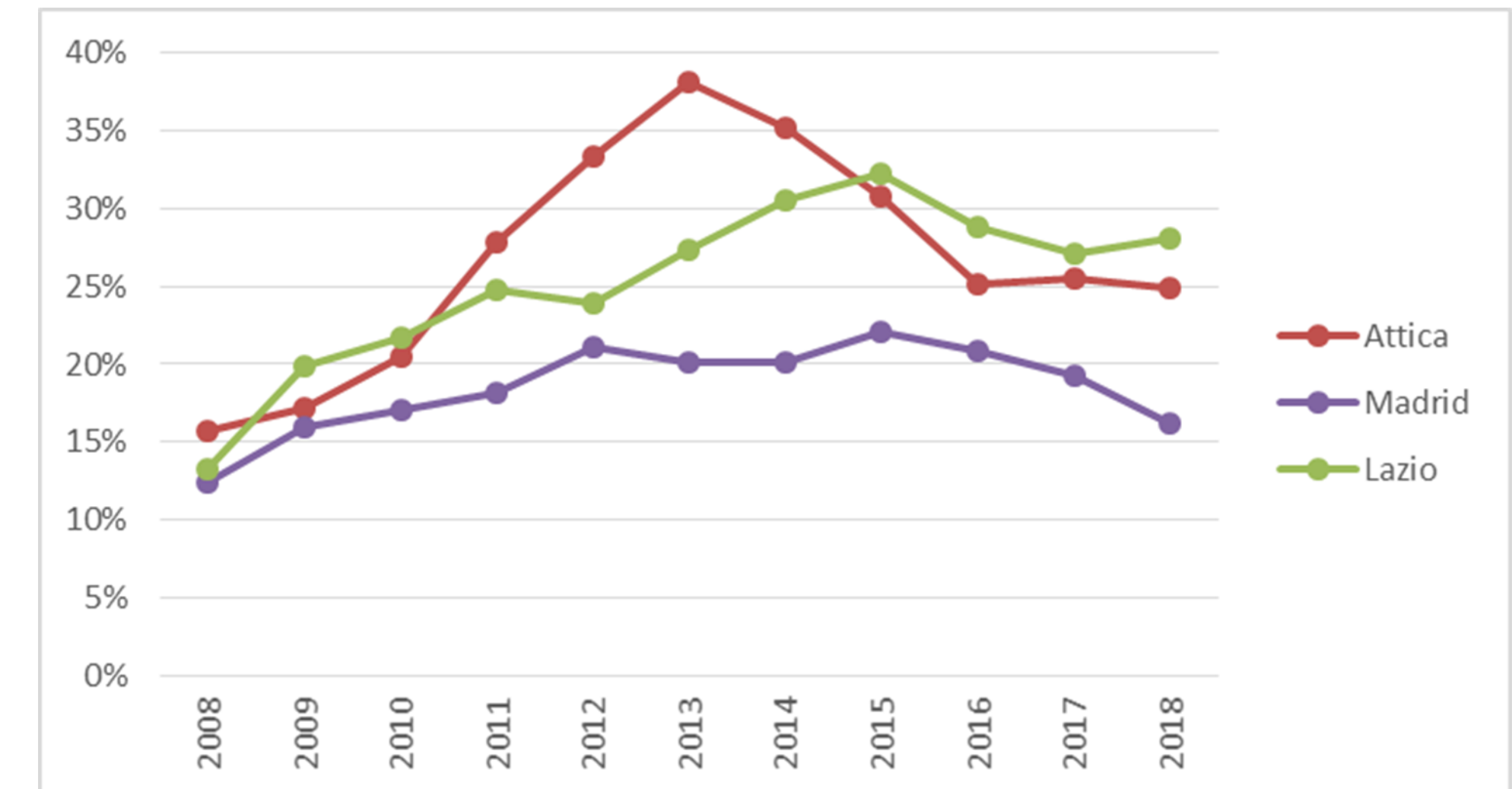
## NEETs in Study Regions

### Comparing the metropolitan areas in numbers and rates

*...“There is discrepancy between what is being studied and what is required in the work. I did an internship, but just for not examining. It was a little useful experience. University does not provide knowledge useful for the workplace”...*

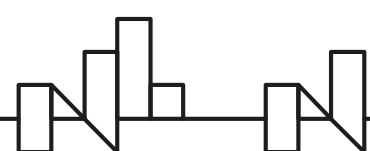


NEET share out of the total population of each country, 2018 (25-29)



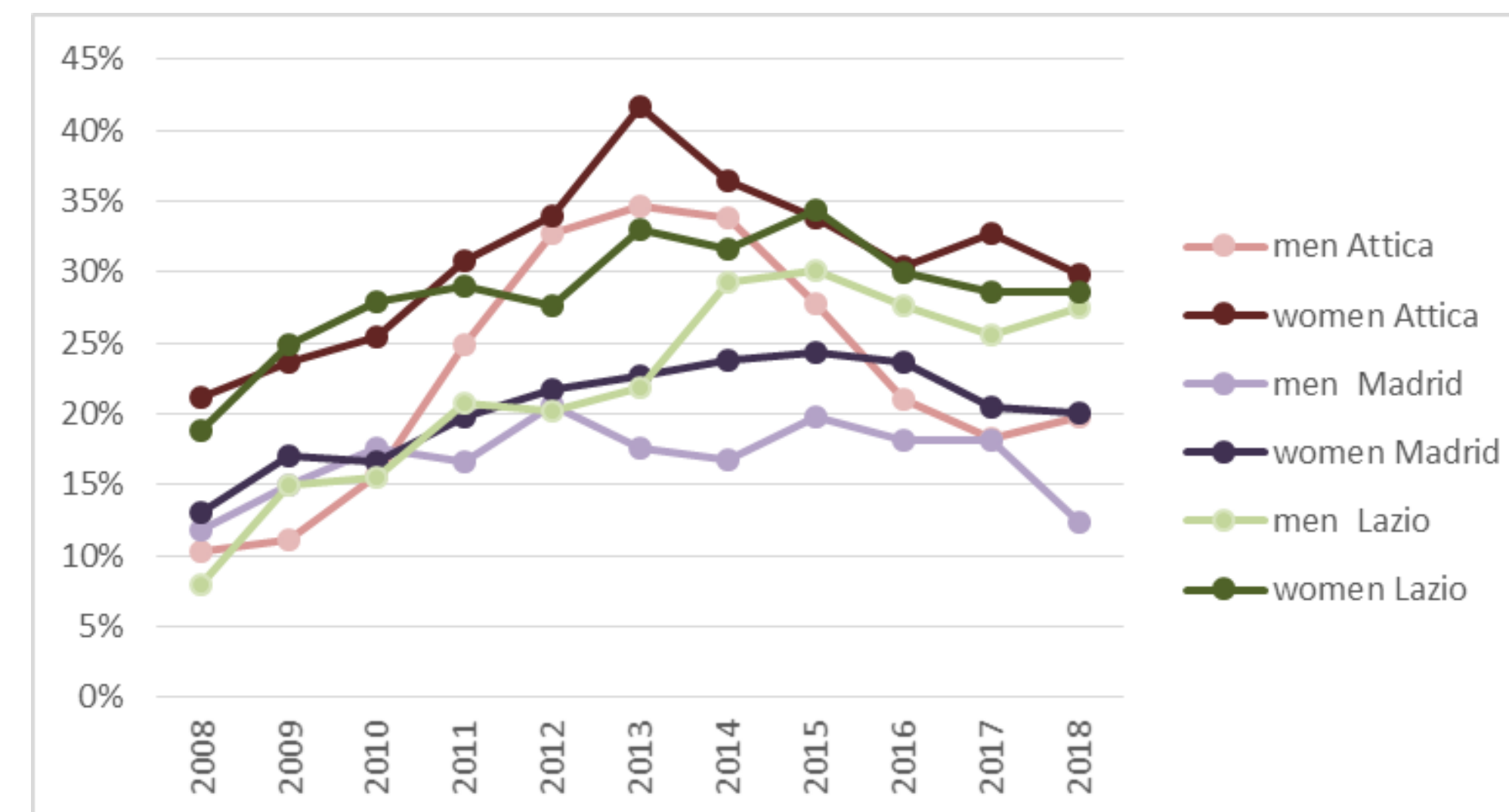
NEET rates of the studied metropolitan areas (25-29)

Metropolitan areas: lower rates  
but  
numbers reveal extreme youth vulnerability

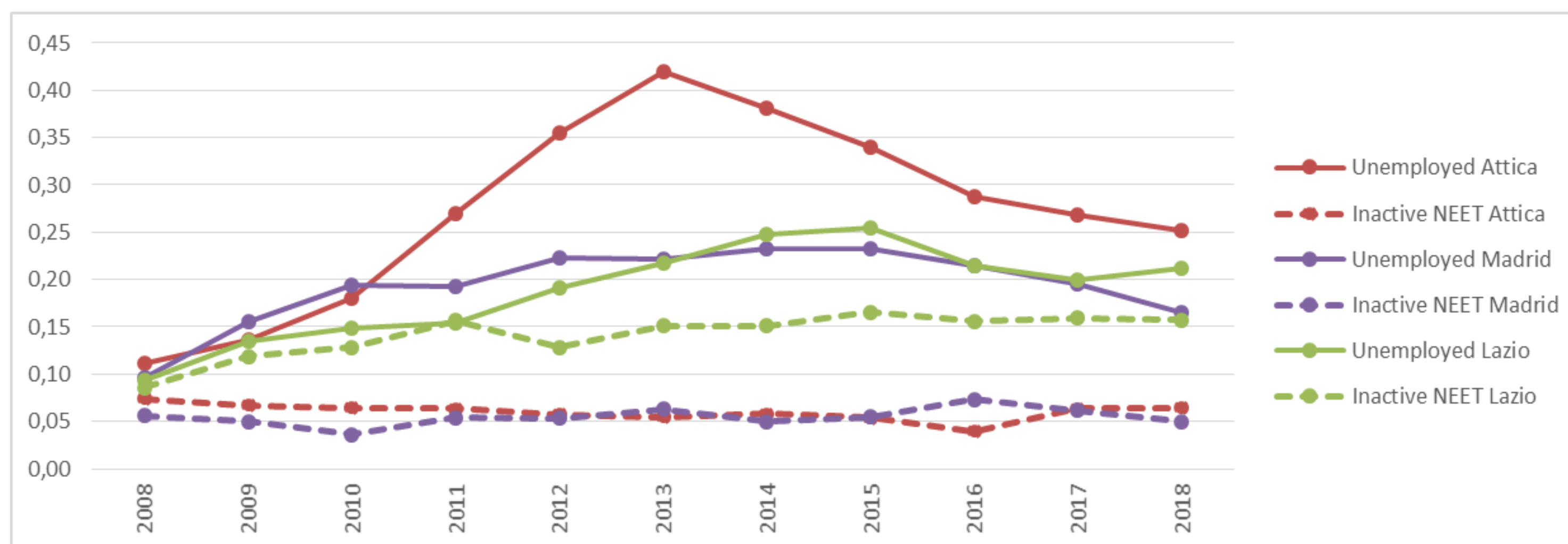


## NEETs in Study Regions

*...“The problem is that under 30... who would ever want to borrow for life with a bank, after asking for a mortgage? If the business is unsuccessful, what happens? I am concerned about it!”...*

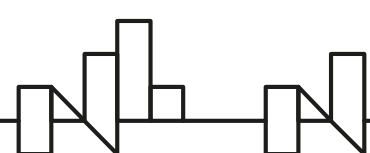


Gender distinction of NEETs, at the metropolitan areas (25-29)



Unemployed – Inactive, not in education, at the metropolitan areas (25-29)

Unemployment or Inactivity?  
A problem of structure or agency?



# Unevenness between regions using the LQ index

## LQ index:

for analyzing uneven concentration:

$$LQ = \frac{E_{ir}}{E_r} / \frac{E_{in}}{E_n}$$

LQ > 1,2 – over-concentration

LQ < 0,8 – de-concentration

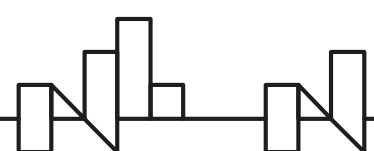
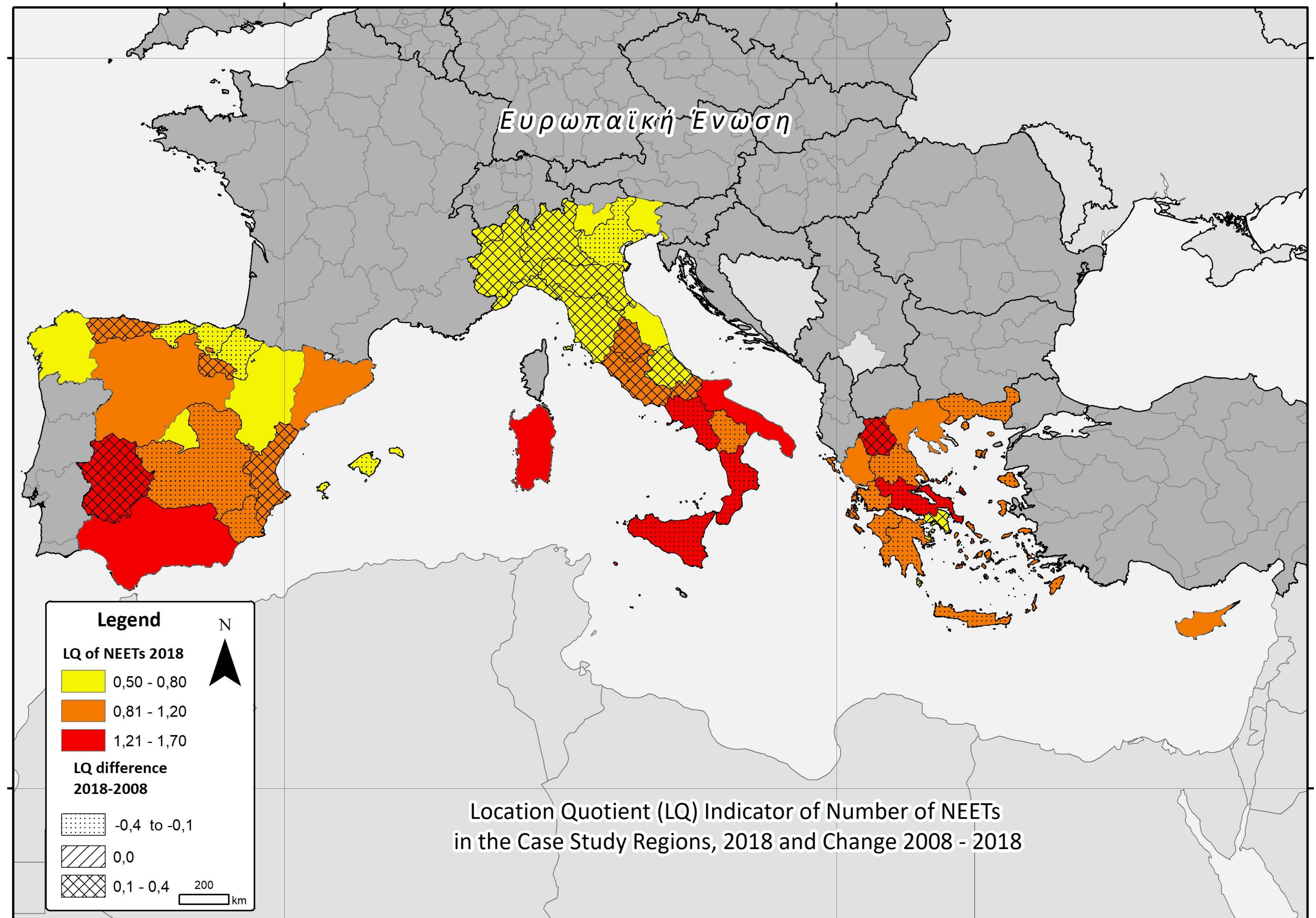
Attica, Madrid, Lazio: de concentration

Greece: insignificant uneven concentration

0,8 < LQ < 1,3

Spain: 0,8 < LQ < 1,2 in all regions,  
except Andalucia, LQ = 1,4 in 2018

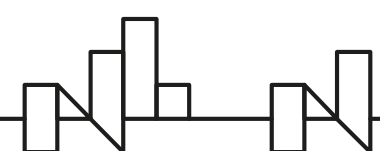
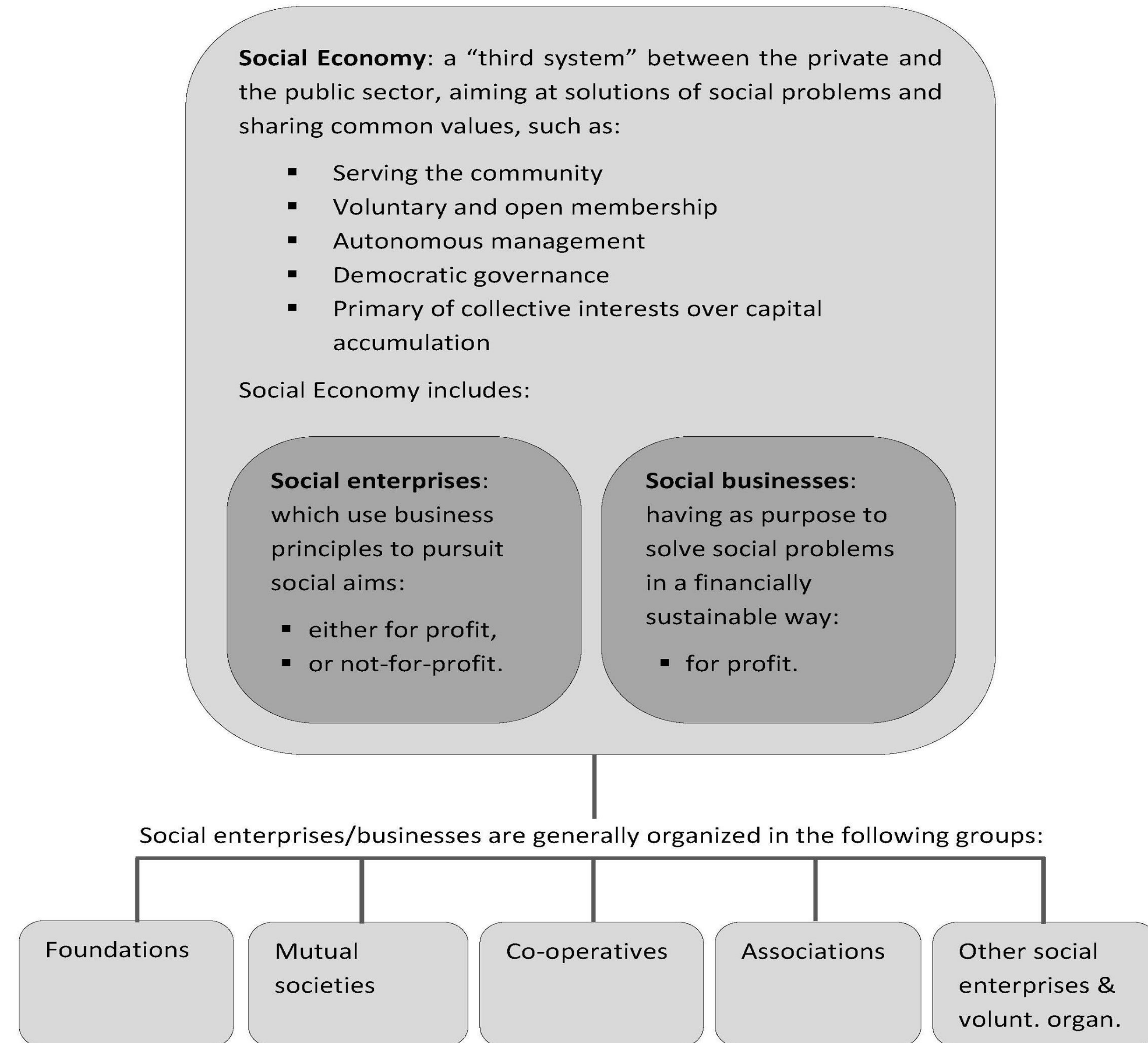
Italy: South regions < 1,2 < LQ < 1,9  
over-concentration



# Social economy

*A blurring of sector boundaries [...] in addition to innovative not-for-profit ventures, social entrepreneurship can include social purpose business ventures, such as for-profit community development banks, and hybrid organizations mixing not-for-profit and for-profit elements*  
(Certo & Miller, 2008).

*The set of organizations that do not belong to the public sector, operate democratically with the members having equal rights and duties and practice a particular regime of ownership and distribution of profits, employing the surpluses to expand the organization and improve its services to its members and to society*  
(Monzon & Chaves, 2008).



# Social Economy against youth unemployment

## Aims

*In contrast to McMurtry, Westlund (2003) argues that the social economy and the commercial economy should be viewed as “parts of a continuous spectrum” rather than as distant extremes.*

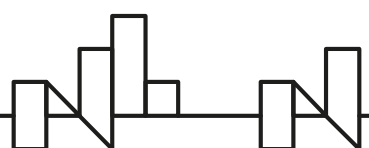
*Social and economic enterprise and entrepreneurship make this a stark issue because they force the juxtaposition of social and economic outcomes.*

*This goes beyond the so-called ‘**triple bottom line**’ to another level broadening out from the enterprise itself and its stakeholders to wider society.*

- social solidarity, democracy and socio-economic development
- stable and sustainable economic growth
- reciprocity with economic, social and environmental value
- social integration, employment of disadvantaged groups
- innovative business models, collaborative networks of interorganizational and intersectoral nature

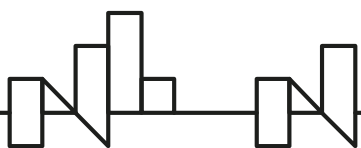
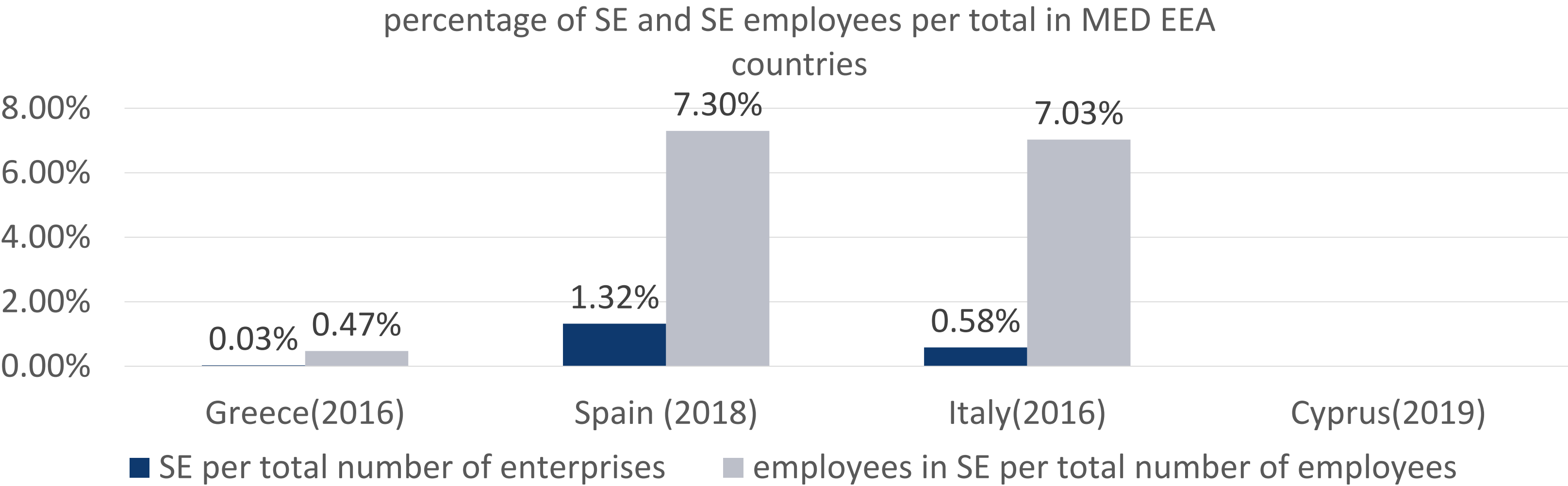
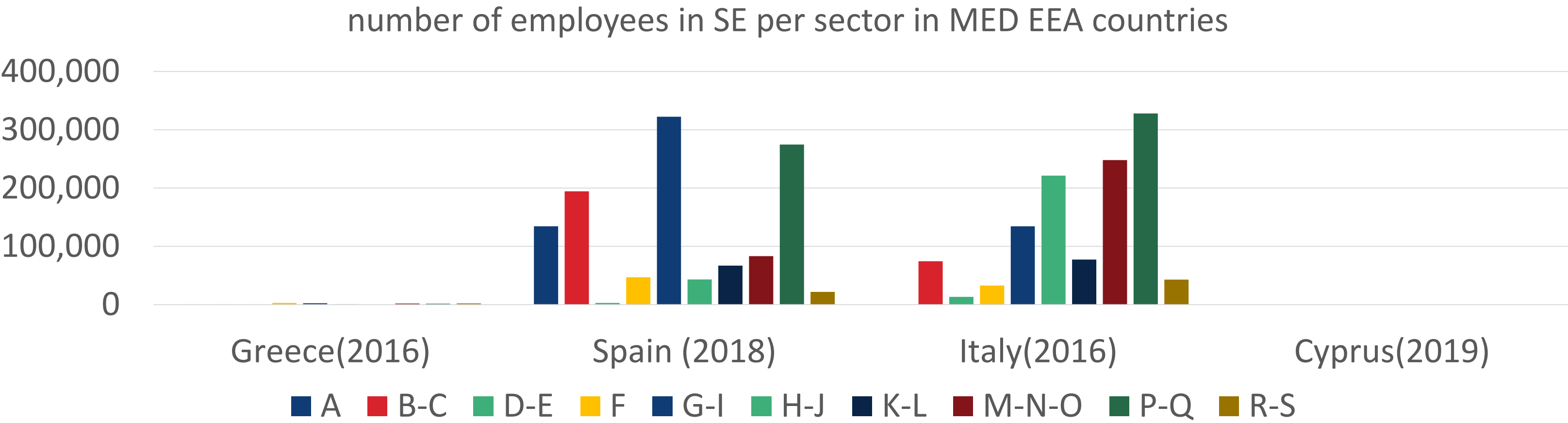
## Relevant policies and ways of implementation

- job numbers increase
- survival rates similar to or better than those of mainstream businesses
- reproduction of growth orientated profit-driven business models
- flexible or precarious employment reproduction, lower job satisfaction
- with the increase of employment rates remaining questionable
- alternative solution to social Welfare State

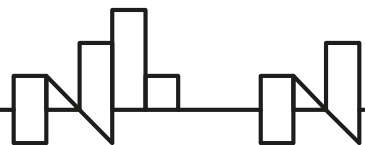
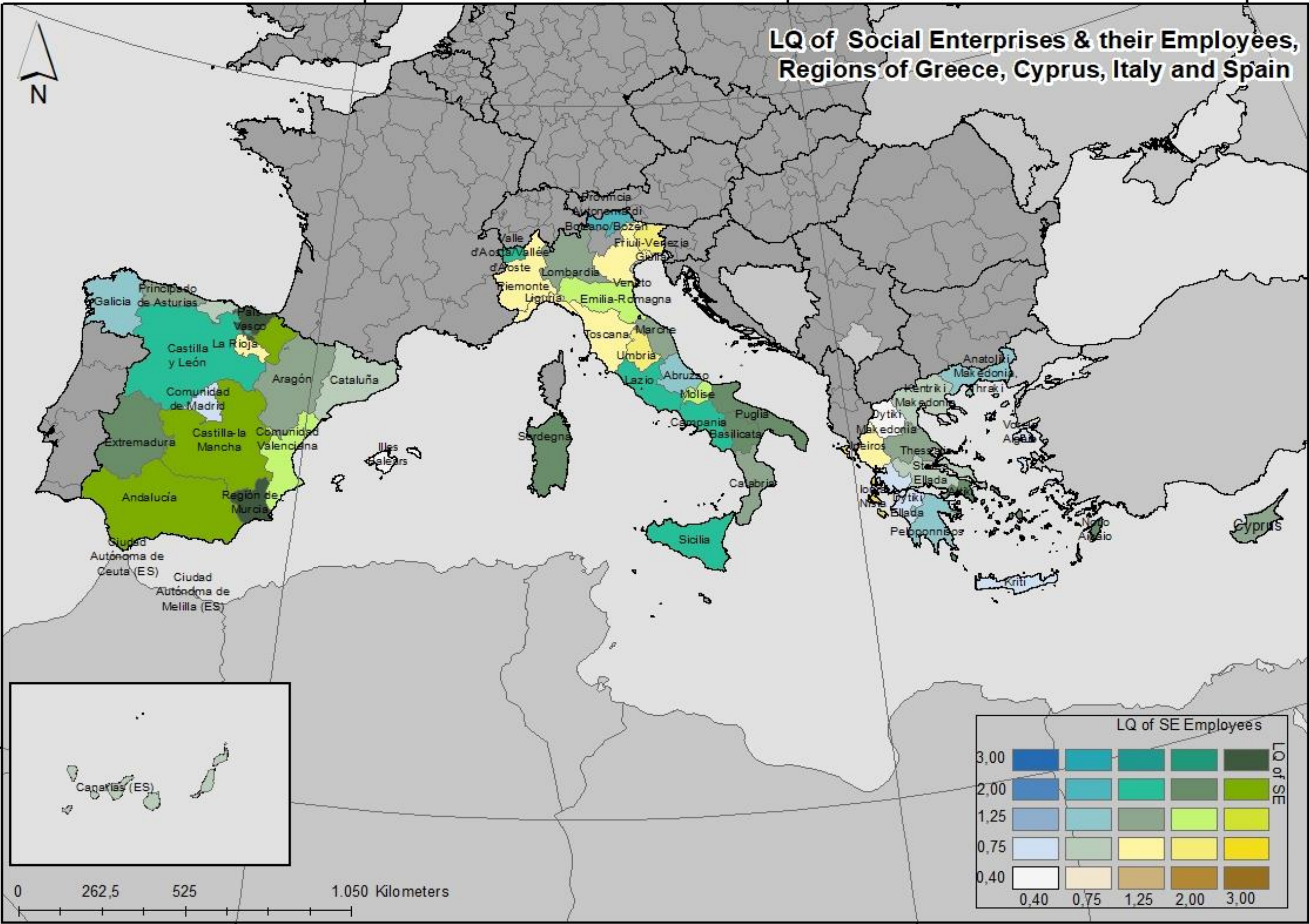


# Social Economy in Study Regions

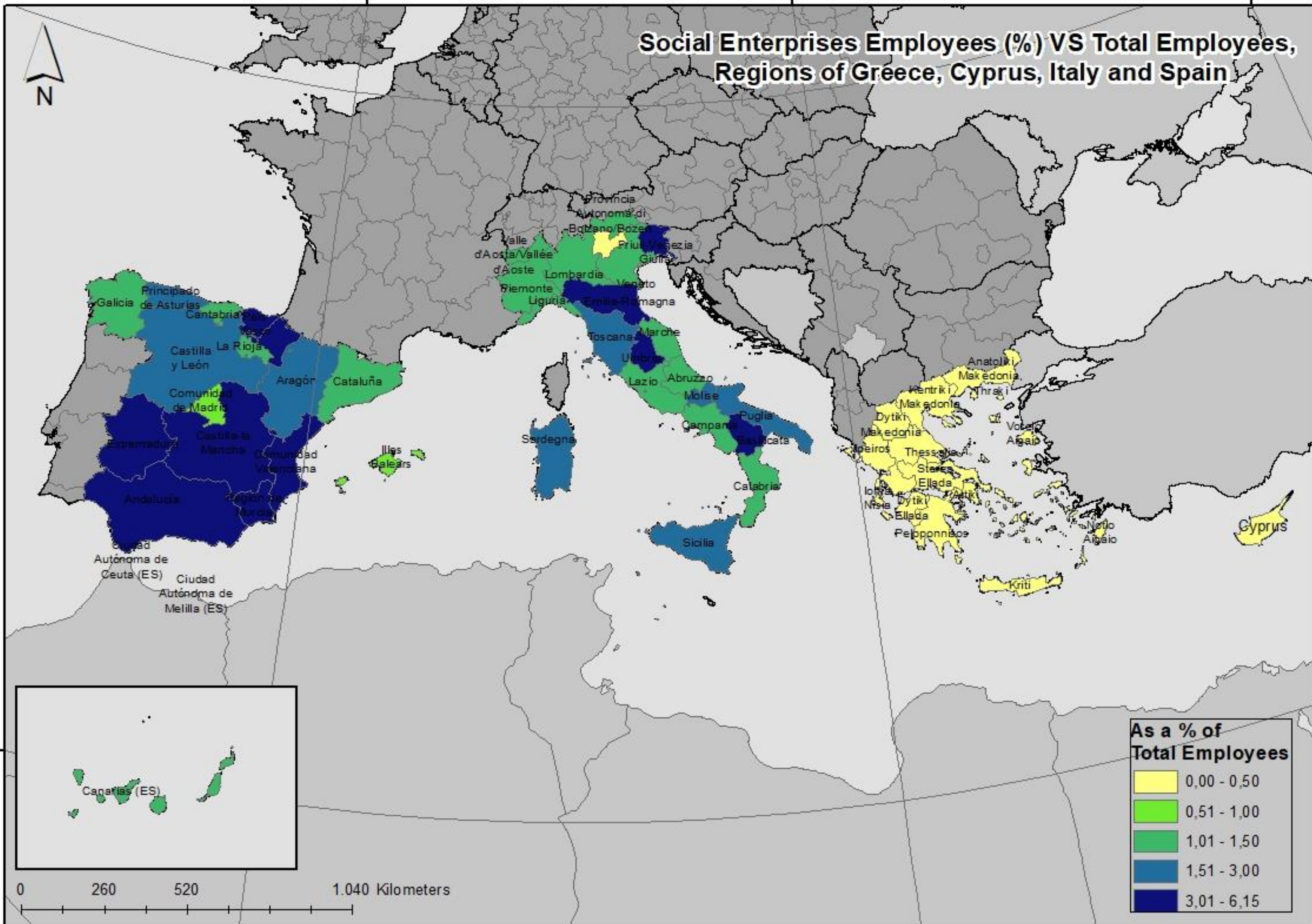
- *low rates of SE, higher rates in SE employment*
- *wholesale, retail trade and accommodation are the dominant sectors of SE in Spain, referring to employment rates*
- *construction is the dominant sector of SE in Greece, referring to employment rates*
- *wholesale, retail trade and accommodation are the dominant sectors of SE in Greece and Spain, referring to number of entities*
- *higher SE employment rates are mainly located in urbanized regions*
- $LQ : Location\ Quotient = \frac{E_{ir}}{E_r} / \frac{E_{in}}{E_n}$
- *LQ >1,30: over-concentration of the phenomenon*



Social Economy in Study Regions



## Social Economy in Study Regions



Different types of enterprises in Greece, Spain, Italy and Cyprus that belong to social economy		Main criteria							
		Must include special or vulnerable groups	Must contribute to sustainable development or/and provide social service	Must belong to the employees	Must be non-profit	Restrictions on profit distribution	Restrictions/ guides on the management (e.g. democratic participation)	Autonomy (e.g. independence from the public authorities)	Restrictions on the enumerations of the members
GREECE	GENERALLY (guiding principles)		•				•		
	- Social Cooperative Enterprises	• <sup>1</sup>	•						
	- Workers' Cooperatives								
SPAIN	- Agricultural/ Urban Cooperatives		•			•	•	•	•
	GENERALLY (guiding principles)		•			•	•	•	
	- Co-operatives						•		
	- Employee-owned Companies			•					
	- Mutual Societies		•		•		•		
	- Special Employment Centers	•	•						
	- Social Integration Enterprises	•	•			•			
	- Fishermen's Guilds		•		•				
ITALY	- Associative Movements		•						
	- Social Economy Foundations		•		•	•	•	•	
	Social Cooperatives (type A & B)	• <sup>1</sup>	•						
CYPRUS	Social Enterprises		•		•	•	•		
	Cooperative Society		•				•	•	

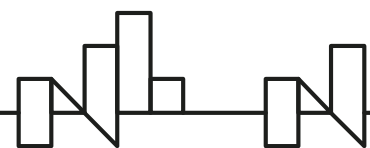
<sup>1</sup>: does not apply to all sub-types

# Current trends of Social Economy across the EU South

- differentiated definitions and conceptualizations within MED EEA
- lack of unified, coherent data
- still a minor part of the economy
- not stable and sufficient income
- sensitive part of the economy
- more as an “unemployment absorber” than a radical solution

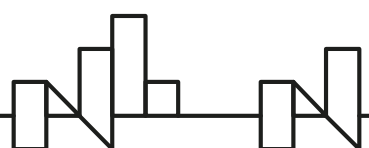
## Regional disparities

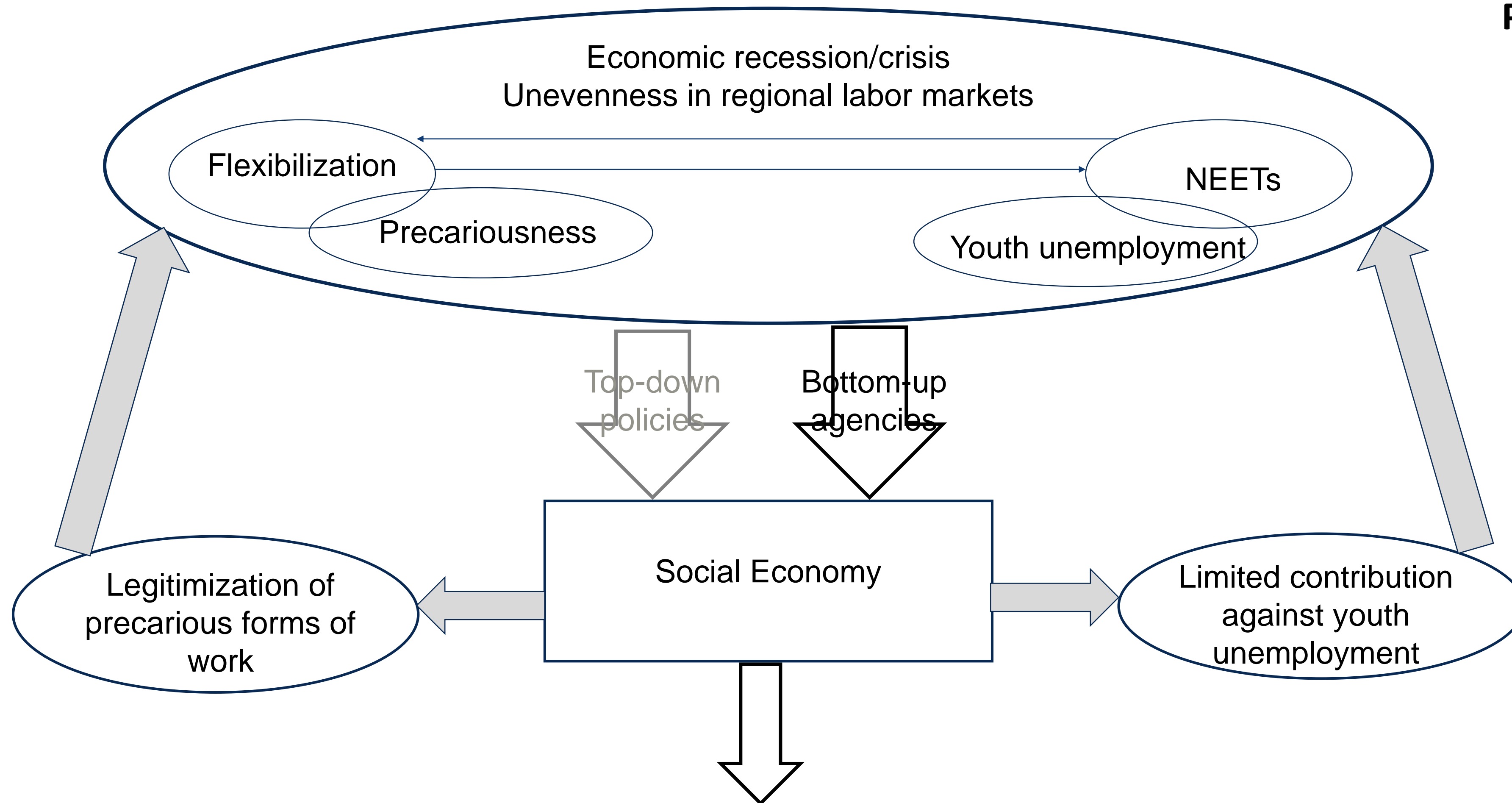
- important share of employment in some study regions
- high rates of NEETs within the same regions
- regional disparities in social economy rates
- thriving in developing economies, despite the social and economic dislocation in developed societies of the western world



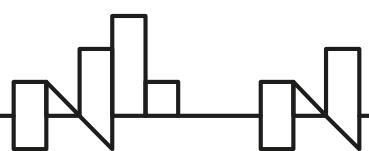
*Divergent flexibilization trends constitute different regional manifestations of the deeper crisis in terms of capital (re-) production and lead to an employment collapse that marginalizes socially integrated long-established atypical employment forms and expands more precarious ones (Vaïou, 2014).*

- myopic exuberance of the interconnected informal and diverse economies
- questionable voluntary nature of part-time work and earnings and full-time work substitution
- vicious circle of precariousness and flexibilization
- reproduction of precariousness, unemployment and inactivity
- regional disparities are treated in common ways
- policies aiming at a common set of 'less rigid' labor markets with certain and less protective security provisions than those of the previous era
- jeopardising labor markets in favor of capital interests





- reassessment of the adopted economic policies for labor market regulations for better quality jobs
- the promotion of a radical change that fosters both socially-just growth and labor protection
- focus on more community-level and bottom-up processes
- policies so as to avoid being “used by government as the low-or no-cost alternative to state-funded social welfare”



**Thank you for your Attention!**

*...“Many companies require experience, especially in the field of research or in science, but where can we begin to do an experience if no one takes/hires us?”...*

*...“I have no idea of where I could find money for starting a business. Who can help me start a business? I am 28 and I have nothing in my hands, I have not savings”...*

*the ‘neverland’ ‘can be a place of fear and ambiguity as much as a landscape filled with wonder and hope’ (Jonas, 2010: 22)*

