

## *How does the 'crisis generation' relate to politics?*

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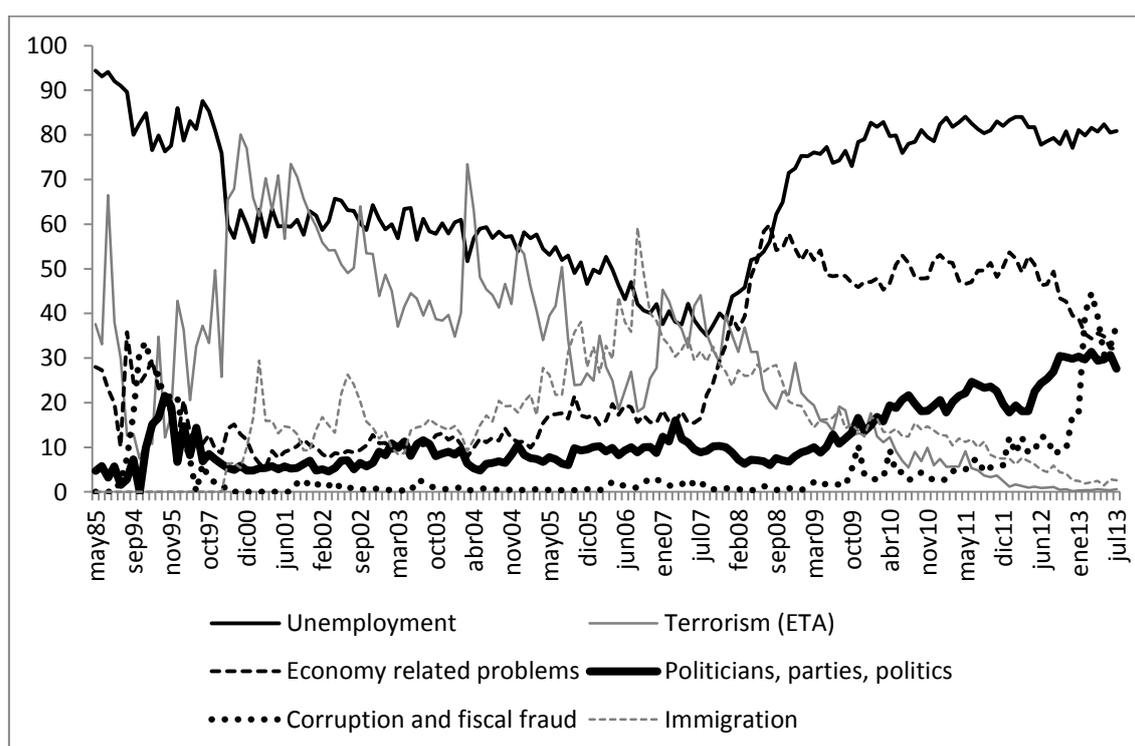
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The current economic crisis is affecting the way in which Spanish citizens relate to politics. On the one hand, political institutions are being questioned (the perception of political parties has become the country's third main preoccupation according to recent surveys). On the other, some indicators bring some light to an otherwise traditionally disaffected society: the frequency of political discussions, levels of political interest and political news consumption has significantly increased during this period. The crisis has particularly affected young people by a dramatic increase of youth unemployment. Furthermore, young people are more sensitive to societal transformations due to their more limited life experiences. *Are young people today resenting the crisis to a greater extent than the rest of society, in terms of their political attitudes and forms of participation? Is the relationship to politics of those unemployed becoming more sensitive to an economic context that increases their difficulties to find a job?* To answer these questions this paper presents a longitudinal exploration of young people's political attitudes and behaviours before and during the economic crisis with particular attention to the unemployed.

## 1- Introduction

Since the economic crisis started, some changes in the political attitudes and behaviours of Spaniards have already become visible. For example, since 2009 politicians are increasingly considered one of the main problems – after the economy and unemployment – that their country has to face (Figure 1). Also, satisfaction with the way democracy works has decreased in a very radical way and the same has happened with political trust. But, together with these indications of a growing distance – or even negative feelings - between citizens and politics, we find signs of increasing political involvement in protests (demonstrations, petitions and strikes), as well as a growing interest in politics, political discussions and following of political news through the media<sup>1</sup>.

*Figure 1: Main problems that the country has to face 1985-2013*

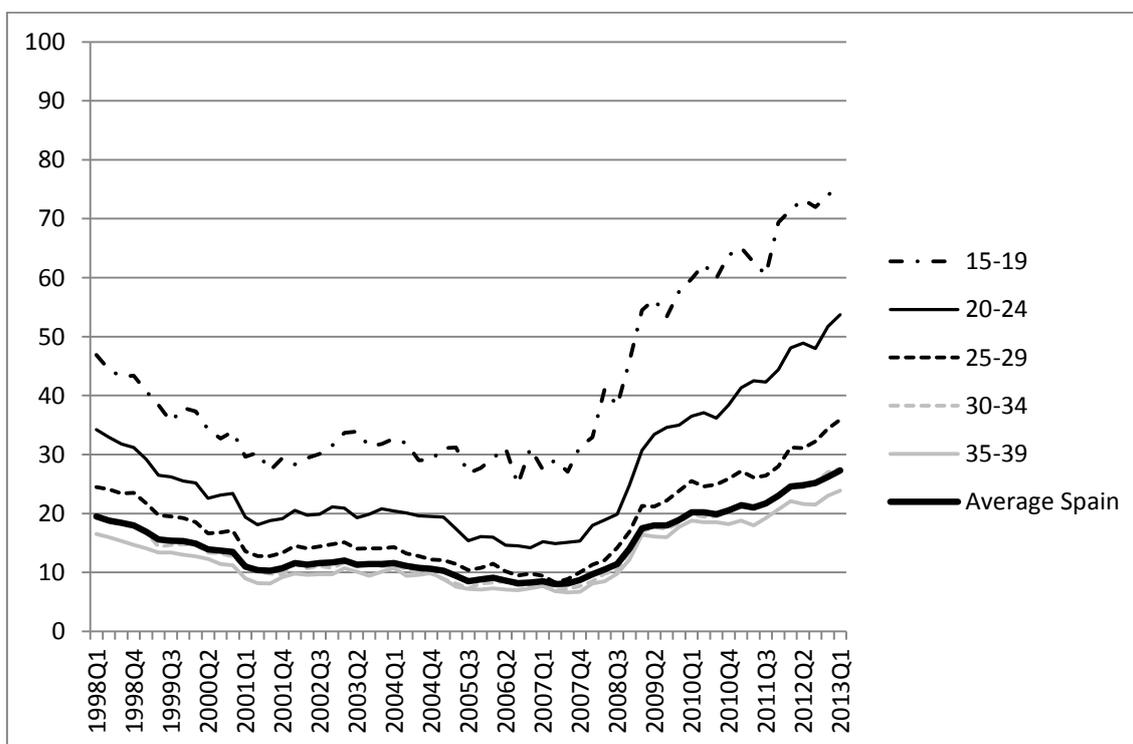


Source: CIS data downloaded August 22 from [http://www.cis.es/opencms/-Archivos/Indicadores/documentos\\_html/TresProblemas.html](http://www.cis.es/opencms/-Archivos/Indicadores/documentos_html/TresProblemas.html). Own elaboration.

<sup>1</sup> CIS data available at [www.cis.es](http://www.cis.es). Not shown here for space reasons.

One of the most dramatic consequences of the financial crisis so far is youth unemployment. Since unemployment started to rise in mid 2008, the most affected have been young people between 15 and 19 years old. This trend was soon followed by those between 20 and 24 years old and those between 25 and 29. In all cases, the level of unemployment was clearly above the average of the Spanish society (see Figure 2). The situation was dramatic because of the high percentage of unemployed: 54%, 31% and 21% by early 2009 respectively in each of the age groups, compared to an average rate of unemployment in Spain of 17%. Two years later, before the November 2011 elections, these percentages had reached 60%, 42% and 26%, respectively, and they have continued to rise since then.

**Figure 2: Unemployment trend across age in Spain (1998-2013)**



Source: Own elaboration with Eurostat data downloaded August 7, from [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment\\_unemployment\\_lfs/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/data/database)<sup>2</sup>

The phenomenon of continuously rising unemployment amongst young Spaniards has been especially frustrating for a generation which can be considered the one with the highest levels of education in the history of Spain so far. In fact, their rage

<sup>2</sup> In Spain the working legal age is 16 years old. Therefore, the first group should be understood as the one comprising those between 16 and 19 years old.

exploded on 15 May 2011, through the unprecedented movement known as the *Indignados*. Even if people from all ages participated in this movement, the youngest were especially present (Martín, 2013; Castells, 2012; Anduiza, Mateos and Martín, forthcoming). The demands of the groups that organized the 15 May demonstration had to do with the deteriorating perspectives to find a job and have a decent living of the generation that was in the age of accessing the labour market<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, they demanded changes in a political system that they felt did not represent them.

The political attitudes and behaviours of young people in Spain have already been analysed (e.g. García-Albacete and Martín, 2011), however, no study has addressed so far how the economic and political crisis is affecting them. Based on both political socialization and political behaviour research, we can expect that the attitudes and behaviour of young people in Spain have been particularly affected. On the one hand, as we have just shown, the economic crisis has been especially harsh on young people's perspectives to enter the labour market. Also, youth is more permeable to societal changes because of their more limited life experiences. Furthermore, we can expect any detected change to persist over time, since basic political attitudes and behaviours crystallized during early adulthood persist substantially throughout an individual's life. For these reasons, two questions guide our study: *Are young people today resenting the crisis to a greater extent than the rest of society, in terms of their political attitudes and forms of participation?* We will also try to answer the question about whether *the relationship to politics of those unemployed becoming more sensitive to an economic context that increases their difficulties to find a job?* Although not all young people are unemployed, many of them are. Posing this question about the unemployed in general, in parallel to the one that refers to young people allows us, not only to see what part of the changes occurring amongst the youngest has to do with their position with regard to the labour market, but also to compare them with another group that, due to the crisis, is also in a very fragile position.

To understand the effect of the crisis on the political involvement of young people and the unemployed this paper first reviews expectations regarding how societal transformations – and particularly the economic crisis – could affect young people's attitudes and behaviours. Secondly, we test those expectations by examining if the

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, the characteristics of the *Indignados* movement are in line with the kind of unstructured nature of mobilizations usually held by the unemployed (cit. Lorenzini and Giugni, 2012: 334).

referred symptoms (dissatisfaction with democracy, distrust in institutions, lack of interest in politics and protest activities) are visible amongst the youngest generations and the unemployed to the same extent as in the rest of society or if young people and the unemployed have been particularly affected by the crisis given that they are more sensitive to the context. If the last is the case, we would have to conclude that the economic crisis has contributed to increase political inequalities between the youngest and the rest, and between the unemployed and the employed. In order to test these changes, we first carry out bivariate analyses and then proceed to confirm the results through multivariate regressions. As expected, we find larger changes in the attitudes of behaviours of young citizens, although not exactly amongst the youngest group. In addition, there is evidence that the economic crisis has created new gaps between citizens that have a job and those that are unemployed. Finally, we identify a new gap within the youngest group when we compare those that have a job and those that are unemployed.

## **2- The effect of the financial crisis on young people's political attitudes and behaviours: Expectations**

There are two main reasons to expect that the economic situation has particularly affected younger citizens' political attitudes and behaviours: political socialization during the formative years and the impact of the employment status. From what the literature on political socialization has taught us, we know that individuals are affected by the social and historical context in which they grew up and, in particular, during their formative years. In other words, young citizens are the most influenced by severe transformations in societal conditions, since they are confronting the political system for the first time. This leads to different cohorts having different attitudes and predispositions to political participation no matter the moment of the life cycle in which the individuals that form them are (e.g., Jennings and Niemi, 1981: 380; Jennings and Niemi, 1974: 333; Kinder and Sears 1985: 724). Furthermore, the values and attitudes developed during formative years persist over the course of an individual's life (for a review, see, Kinder and Sears, 1985). For this reason, young people are the harbingers of things to come. Our first expectation is thus that younger cohorts have been particularly affected in their relationship towards politics by the dramatic economic changes in the last years.

The second argument refers to the relationship between political attitudes and participation and the employment status. There are several mechanisms by which being employed – or unemployed – influence political behaviour and political attitudes. Entering the labour market is a crucial step in the acquisition of adult responsibilities, and the workplace exposes individuals to fundamental political mobilization networks (Lane, 1959: 218; Verba and Nie, 1972; Strate et al., 1989). Once in employment, a person develops certain skills, and the working environment provides social networks (Verba et al., 1995). Furthermore, main determinants of political participation such as economic security and resources are dependant of job conditions (Lane, 1959: 218; Verba and Nie, 1972). Finally, by both direct and indirect mechanisms, the work environment functions as a socialization agent (Sigel, 1989).

There is no consensus in the literature regarding the impact of being unemployed on political participation. On the one hand, unemployment implies a more challenging economic situation. Insecurity and lower resources can be expected to increase the costs of political involvement (Rosenstone, 1982). But, on the other hand, it is usually associated to greater time availability and motivation to change things in society. Citizens that are unemployed may blame the government and turn to political action as a solution, resulting in a high turnout average (Lipset, [1960]1981: 192). For instance, Parry et al. (1992: 122) found that given their relatively lower levels of resources, the unemployed in fact show a reasonable tendency toward political activism. Arceneaux (2003) also shows that those facing economic adversity are more likely to vote when they blame the government for economic outcomes. Overall, it is not easy to interpret the relationship between unemployment and political participation and, as suggested by Parry et al. (1992: 122) different evaluations may apply in individual cases.

Authors focusing on the relationship between employment and political involvement amongst young people have also reached varying conclusions. For example, some have found that unemployed youth are more prone to violent and illegal actions and less involved in organized groups, tend more towards apathy and resignation, are less satisfied with the way democracy works, less interested in politics and talk less about politics (for a review see Lorenzini and Giugni, 2012: 335; Bassoli and Monticelli, 2011: 4; Bay and Blekesaune, 2002). However, other authors have found that unemployed young people were quite similar to those employed both in

terms of their political participation, whether institutional, through protests or via social capital (Lorenzini and Giugni, 2012 and Lorenzini, 2012)<sup>4</sup>.

As reviewed, we can expect that the crisis has altered younger citizens' attitudes and behaviour, but the direction of those changes is not clear. There are different possible scenarios we can find, with different implications each. We may find that young people and/or the unemployed are increasingly becoming the most politically disaffected in the Spanish society developing attitudes such as distrust, lack of interest, dissatisfaction with the way democracy works..., as well as becoming apathetic in terms of political participation in general. If this were the case, this generation would not only be excluded from the labour market, but would also become politically excluded. This would imply that the political decisions that will be taken in the coming years, and that will crucially impact their future, would be taken without their participation. Another possible scenario is that the young are becoming especially critical citizens given their age, level of education and employment circumstances. In this case, they would be more politically involved than former generations. They would also have political attitudes that would show a rather critical –negative - stance towards politics. In this case, more protests from young people are to be expected as long as the effects of the economic crisis stay and keep affecting this group in particular. A final scenario is the one in which there are no differences between young people and/or the unemployed and the rest of the population, and that changes are affecting all citizens in a similar way.

### **3- Changing political attitudes and participation in the context of the economic crisis**

To explore the impact of the economic crisis we need a longitudinal study over time. We have selected four surveys that are representative of the Spanish population taking into account both the period in which they were conducted and the availability of indicators for both attitudes and behaviours.<sup>5</sup> The most recent data available refer to the

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<sup>4</sup> Some authors have also focused on the impact of precarity in the labour market showing that young people with a precarious job can even be more active in politics than both the employed and the unemployed and more politically interested, satisfied and trustful than those employed (Bassoli and Monticelli, 2011:29)

<sup>5</sup> All surveys were carried out by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, their reference numbers are CIS-2450, CIS-2736, CIS-2914, CIS-2915-2920. Data and documentation are available online at <http://www.cis.es>.

pre and post-electoral studies conducted in late 2011 (October and November-January, respectively)<sup>6</sup>. The results from 2011 are compared to those of a survey that was carried out in October 2007, previous to the financial crisis. Additionally, to control for the possibility of exceptional changes in 2007 and as a robustness test, an earlier survey from March 2002 is also included in the analyses.

We analyse a group of indicators that cover different dimensions of the political culture of a country. More specifically, we examine the changes occurred in the following political attitudes: political trust (measured by the attitude of trust in political parties), political interest, satisfaction with the way democracy works and party identification. The first two are part of a group of attitudes that have been identified as sharing some common characteristics (Montero, Gunther and Torcal, 1997). However, it is interesting to analyse the two of them, since they seem to be following different trends in recent years. Satisfaction with the way democracy works is different from the previous two in that it is related to the political context and, therefore, more inclined to change than political trust, political interest or party identification. Also, we have selected two forms of non-institutional political participation that have been frequently used in recent years: participation in demonstrations and signing of petitions. We will also analyse electoral turnout in order to see if different forms of participation are translating social inequalities in different ways.

In the first place, we compare the attitudes and behaviours of Spanish citizens of the same age before and after the economic crisis. This way we control for the period of the life cycle in which they find themselves. If in 2007 (before the crisis), citizens that were, for example, 25 years old were as satisfied with the way democracy works as older citizens, but in 2011 (during the crisis) those with the same age are more dissatisfied than the rest, we will conclude that the crisis is having an impact on political attitudes<sup>7</sup>. Before analysing the graphs, it is important to bear in mind that the surveys

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<sup>6</sup> The two different studies from 2011 are used alternatively according to data availability.

<sup>7</sup> The fact that political participation differs across the life-cycle and that a delayed transition to adulthood implies a delayed political start-up for young people (e.g. García-Albacete, forthcoming) would advise to compare young people at slightly different ages but equivalent stages in the life-cycle. However, in this paper we compare citizens at the same age. This decision is guided by the short time interval we are analysing (less than 10 years) and because one of our main focus of interest – employment – is directly related to the transition to adulthood. Thus, using different ages to compare the same stage in the life-cycle would confound the effects of the economic crisis and unemployment and their repercussions on the life-cycle.

here analyzed were asked to citizens 18 years old and above. Therefore, the group most affected by the rising unemployment levels is not fully represented in the following analyses.

Figures 3 to 8 illustrate the bivariate relationship between age and the referred political attitudes and behaviours.<sup>8</sup> We see that in 2011, compared to the period before the crisis (2002 and 2007), all citizens – whether young or not - are less satisfied with the way democracy works, distrust political parties to a greater extent and have participated more by signing petitions and attending demonstrations (see Figures 3 to 8). Somehow unexpectedly, we also find that, regardless of their age, they are more interested in politics. This is a first sign that attitudes such as political distrust and political indifference, that until now were considered part of the same syndrome of “disaffection”, are following different paths nowadays. On average, there are no clear differences regarding electoral turnout (see Figure 9).

These graphs also show that – with the exception of political interest - the changes observed in 2011 are especially intense amongst young people. However, they are not particularly noticeable among the youngest, but in the group that are in their late twenties and in their thirties. Therefore, these results do not support the expectation that societal transformations have a stronger impact on those citizens that have less political experience<sup>9</sup>. On the contrary, this initial descriptive results, may point at the importance of the specific moment of the life cycle.

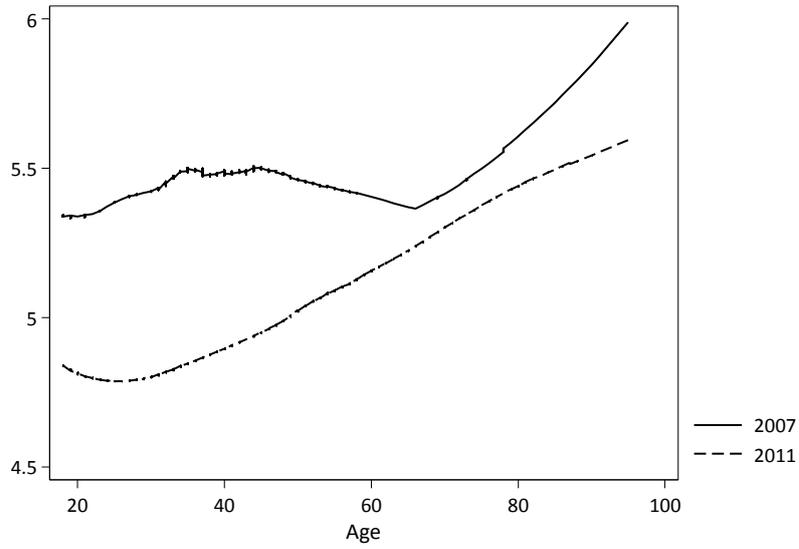
The fact that changes are more acute among those in their late twenties to early forties could be related to economic conditions, since they are in a stage in life with larger responsibilities such as family, housing and so on. We thus turn to analyse how the employment status is related to political attitudes and behaviours in order to see if those that are unemployed after the crisis are suffering that change to a greater extent than those that are in the labour market. For this exploration we compare attitudes and behaviours of all respondents in diverse main occupations: employed, retired, unemployed, students and household work.

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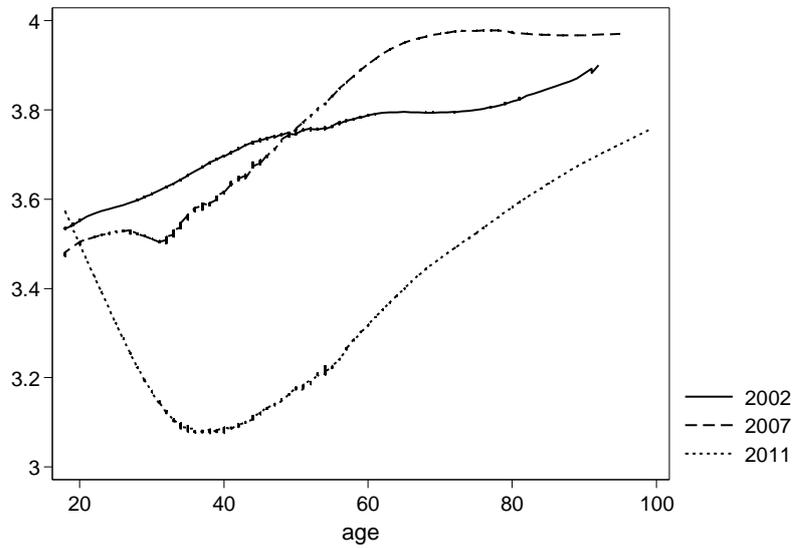
<sup>8</sup> Locally weighted polynomial regressions are used to explore the trends in political attitudes and behaviour across age without imposing a functional form on the data.

<sup>9</sup> In Figure 7 we can see that when it comes to participation in demonstrations the average age of the most involved is lower than when it comes to analyzing signing petitions, or political attitudes.

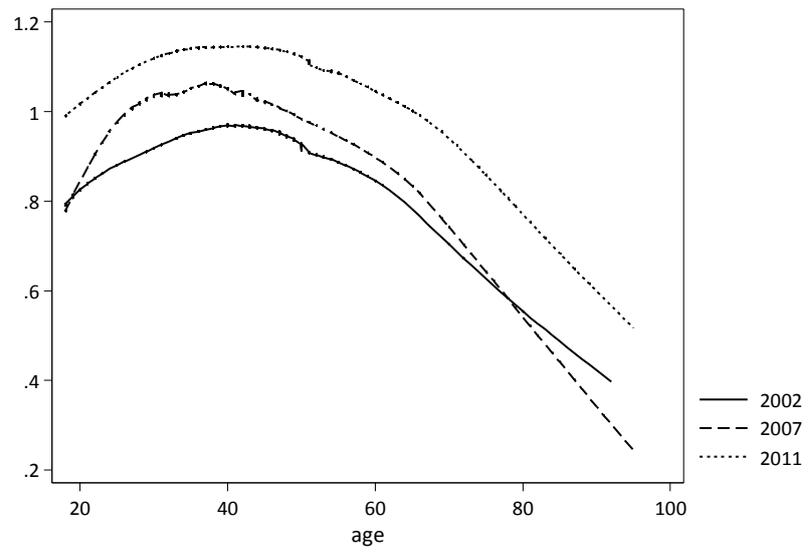
**Figure 3: Satisfaction with democracy across age and over time (2007 and 2011)**



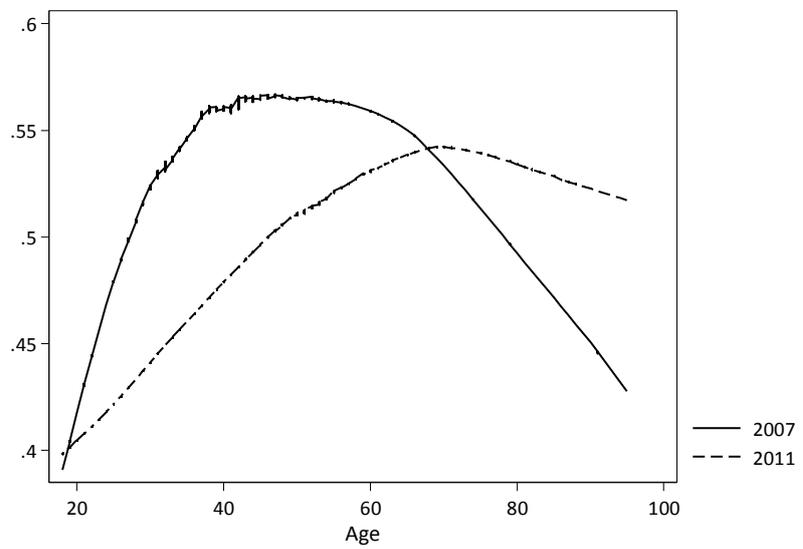
**Figure 4: Trust in political parties across age and over time (2002-2011)**



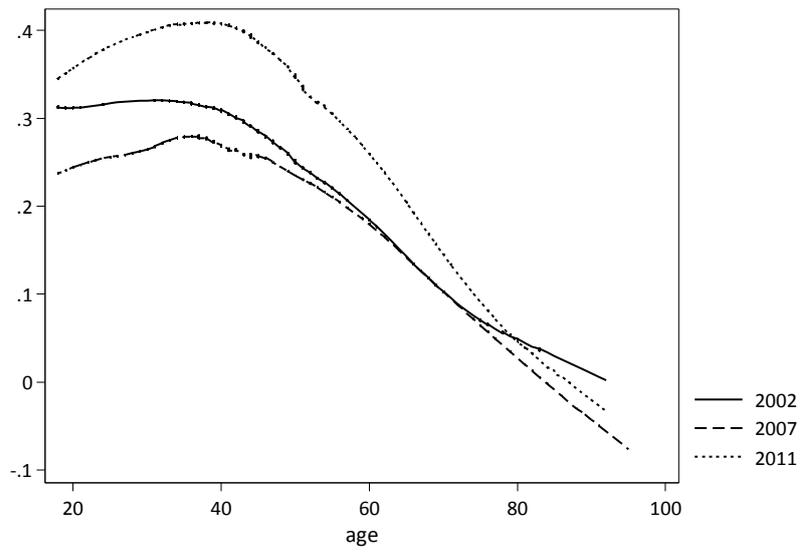
**Figure 5: Political interest across age and over time (2002 – 2007)**



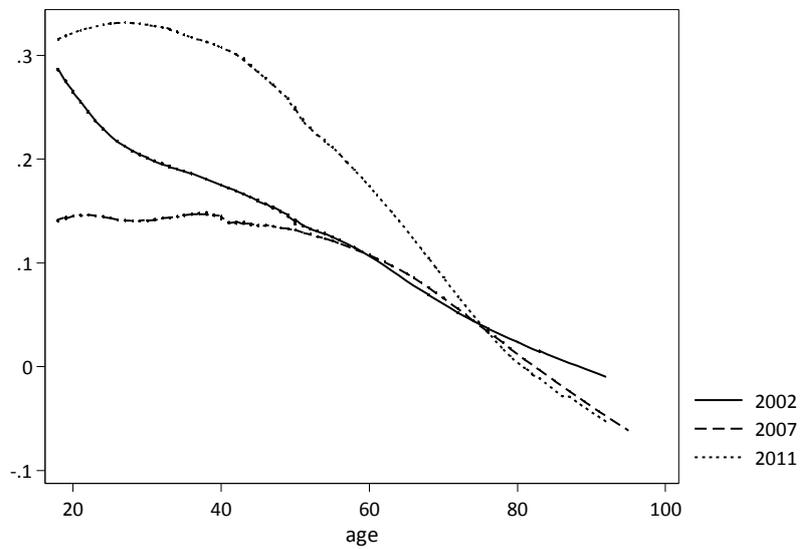
**Figure 6: Party identification across age and over time (2007 and 2011)**



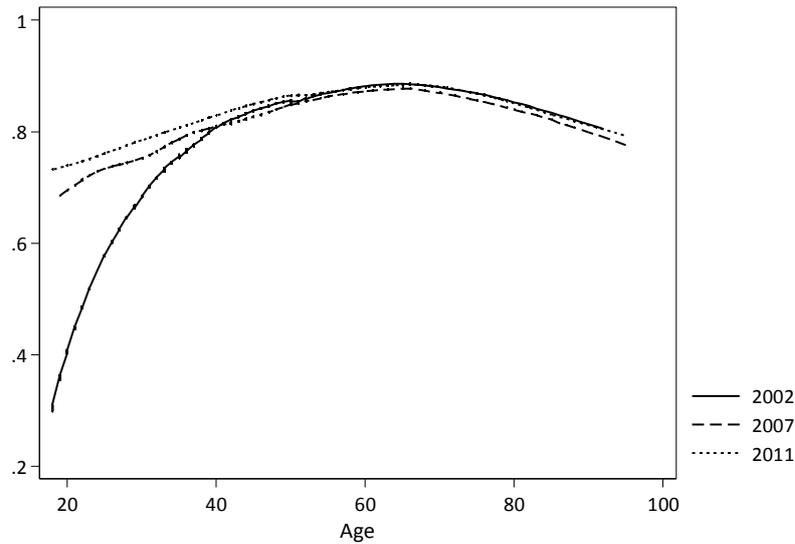
**Figure 7: Signing of petitions across age and over time (2002 – 2011)**



**Figure 8: Participation in demonstrations across age and over time (2002 – 2011)**



**Figure 9: Electoral participation across age and over time (2002 – 2011)**

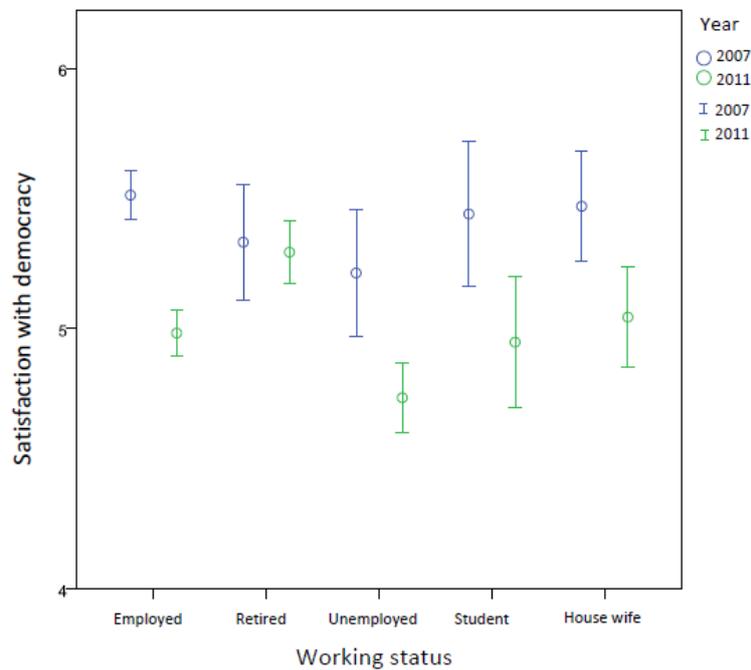


Figures 10 to 15 present average levels of political attitudes and behaviours according to employment status. Growing dissatisfaction with the way democracy works and increasing distrust of political parties in 2011 as compared to before the crisis characterize both the employed and the unemployed. This is not the case when talking about the changes in political interest. Those that are unemployed are more distrustful of political parties and are more dissatisfied with the way democracy works than those employed. And, what is more important, this difference is found to be significant in 2011 while it was not during the years previous to the crisis (Figures 11 and 12). Those employed were already more interested in politics before the crisis than those unemployed. But the difference has deepened, since the employed seem to be more interested in politics in 2011 than prior to the crisis, while no changes are observed amongst the unemployed (Figure 12). With regard to political participation beyond elections, the differences between the two groups seem to have grown. The second group participates less in demonstrations and sign less petitions than the first (Figures 14 and 15). These differences do not seem to exist in electoral participation (Figure 16).

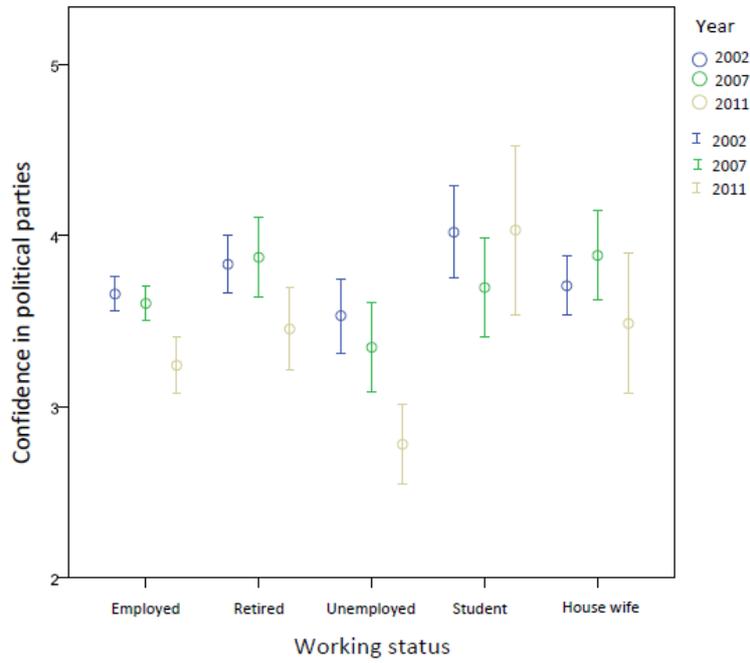
Up until here we can reach several conclusions. In the first place, contrary to what we would expect according to socialization studies, the attitudes and behaviours of the youngest cohort are not the most affected by the crisis, but it is rather those in their late twenties and thirties who have changed their perspectives regarding political

institutions and political involvement. Secondly, it seems that the economic crisis has increased political inequalities between those worst affected by the financial crisis (the young and the unemployed) and the rest of society. In some cases these inequalities existed already but the crisis has deepened them while in other cases new political inequalities have appeared recently (i.e. the unemployed are now more dissatisfied and more distrustful than the employed). Thirdly, unemployed citizens' higher levels of dissatisfaction with democracy and political parties are not transformed into higher participation through protests to the same extent as in the case of citizens that do have a job. These last two findings indicate that resources linked to the employment status are becoming increasingly important when explaining political participation in demonstrations and in signing petitions. In other words, social inequalities are increasingly being transformed into political inequalities when citizens express themselves through protests (Barreiro, 2000).

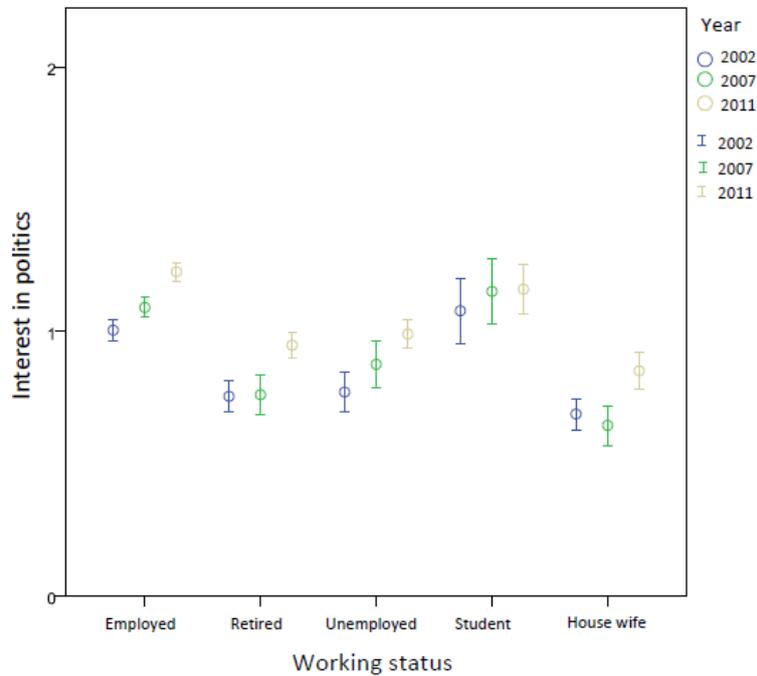
**Figure 10: Satisfaction with democracy and employment (2007 and 2011)**



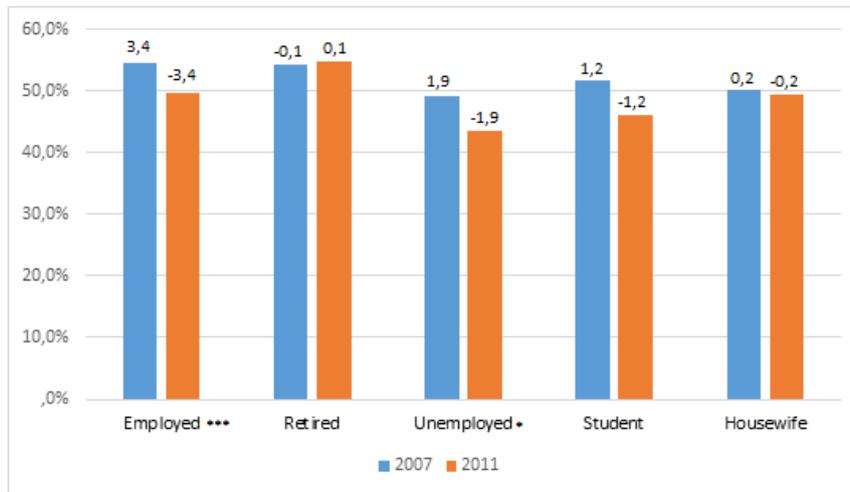
**Figure 11: Confidence in political parties and employment (2002 – 2011)**



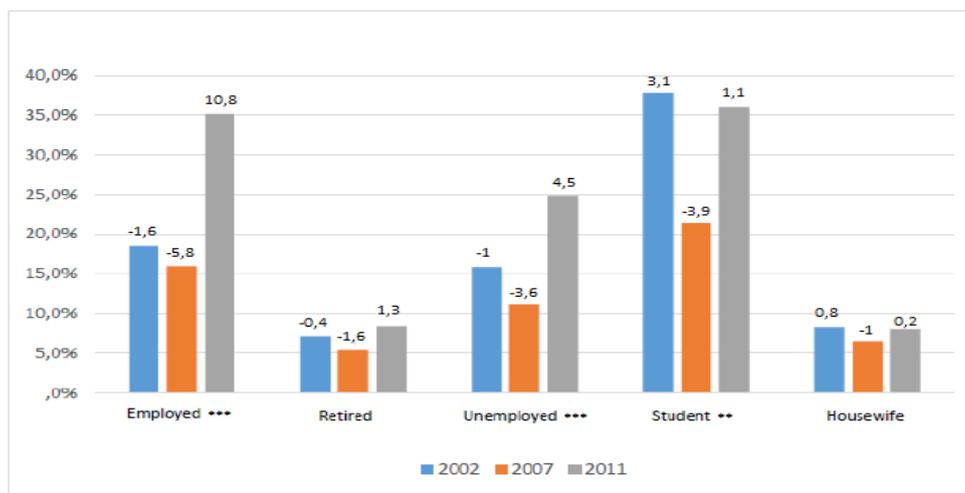
**Figure 12: Interest in politics and employment (2002-2011)**



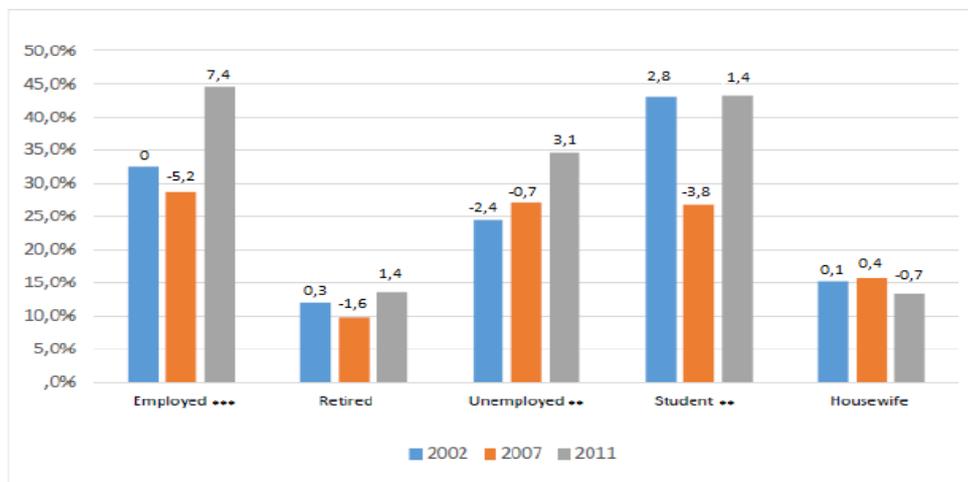
**Figure 13: Party identification and employment (2007 and 2011)**



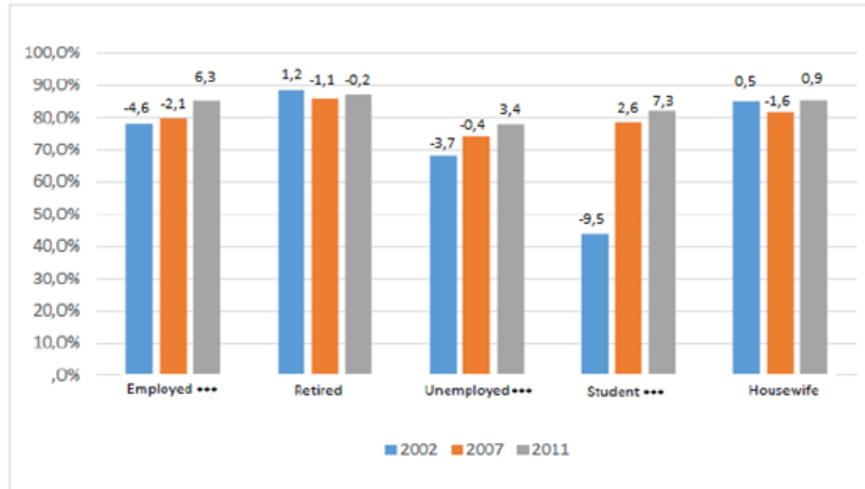
**Figure 14: Participation in demonstrations and employment (2002-2011)**



**Figure 15: Signing of petitions and employment (2002-2011)**



**Figure 16: Turnout in elections and employment (2002-2011)**



#### **4- The young and the unemployed**

To this point our empirical strategy assumes that having a job – or not – has the same effect for all citizens independently of other relevant characteristics such as education. For example, younger cohorts have higher levels of education, which may interact with our conclusions regarding youth and unemployment. Once identified the changes in attitudes and behaviours, we conduct a more systematic test regarding the impact of the financial crisis on our two groups of interest. We run multivariate models for each of the seven indicators described before. The models include two control variables - gender (women traditionally participate less in politics) and education<sup>10</sup> (higher levels of education are very often linked to higher levels of participation) -, as well as the main independent variables we are interested in: the economic crisis (measured through the years before and after it<sup>11</sup>), age<sup>12</sup> and employment status<sup>13</sup>. OLS regression models are used to examine the three political attitudes and logistic

<sup>10</sup> Education is measured as the highest level of education achieved by the respondent (‘primary education or less’, ‘secondary education and vocational training’ and ‘university studies’).

<sup>11</sup> The year 2002 has been used as the reference category.

<sup>12</sup> To examine whether young people have been particularly affected, and given the curvilinear relationships observed above, we have created five different age groups. The different age groups comprise those 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 years old. However, since we will analyse the relationship between employment status and age, and given that unemployment is almost non-existent within the later age group as they are already retired, including them in the models implies empty cells. This is the reason why we dropped the latter group (65-74 years old) from the models presented here.

<sup>13</sup> For the same reason, to analyse changes across employment status we include a reduced version of the indicator presented above that consists of two categories: ‘unemployment’ and ‘others’.

regression to the three variables measuring political participation and party identification. The results of the models are included in Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix.

Since we are interested in knowing whether young people and the unemployed are resenting the crisis to a larger extent, we replicate the models described and we add and interaction term. To examine if the crisis had a particular effect on younger citizens we test if the year interacts with age. We expect young people to be more affected in their political attitudes and participation in 2011 than the rest of society, given that they are one of the groups that is being most affected by the economic crisis. The results are shown in the second column of each variable in Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix. The same strategy is used to explore the effect of the crisis on unemployed respondents. An interaction term between unemployment – in comparison to other occupational situations – and the year is included (see third column of each variable in Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix) and we expect the unemployed to be more affected given that their economic situation is more fragile than that of the citizens that have a job. Since the coefficients of multiplicative terms and their level of significance are not necessarily informative (Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006) for each model the marginal effects were computed and the results visually inspected.

Let us focus first on changes on political attitudes across age groups. As illustrated above, satisfaction with democracy and trust in political parties have decreased in general, while levels of political interest have increased. Computing the marginal effects for each age group over time confirm these results, with only slight differences for specific age groups. As an example, Figure 17 illustrates predicted values of trust in political parties for each age group in 2002, 2007 and 2011. While our initial expectation was that the effect would be stronger on the youngest group, we can observe again that this is not the case. Moreover, examining partial contrasts shows that in 2011 all groups trust political parties significantly less than in 2002 or 2007 except the youngest group (18-25 years old), for which differences cannot be observed. Furthermore, results show – and the contrast of marginal effects confirms – that the effect of time is larger for the 36-45 years old group.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> As a robustness test we run the same analysis for trust in the parliament – comparing 2002 and 2011 due to data availability – and found the exact same pattern. Details are available from the authors.

Levels of satisfaction with democracy have decreased similarly for all age groups, the exception in this case being the 56-65 age group (see Figure A1 in the Appendix). Furthermore, in this case the change is larger for those between 26 and 35. Political interest has increased significantly from 2007 to 2011 for all groups except for those between 46 and 55 years all (see Figure A2 in the appendix). Finally, results concerning party identification resemble those described for satisfaction with democracy, the probability of supporting a concrete political party has decreased for all age groups from 2007 to 2011, although the differences over time are not statistically significant for the youngest and oldest groups (see Figure A3 in the appendix).

Changes in political participation across age show the same pattern for participating in demonstrations and signing petitions. Figure 18 illustrates how the probabilities of participating have increased for all age groups over time. The differences over time – 2011 versus 2007 – are statistically significant for all groups and the contrast shows that the change has been larger for those that are 26 to 35 years old. The exact same results are observed for signing petitions (see Figure A4 in the Appendix).<sup>15</sup> Regarding participation in elections, results point to the same age group (26-35) as the only group for which the probability to cast a ballot has increased from 2007 to 2011 (see Figure A5 in the Appendix). Although this is quite a paradox (young people becoming more likely to vote in the context of a crisis that affects them in a special way) we should keep in mind that those who took part in the 15M/Indignados protest, turned out to vote in the November 2011 elections as much as in previous ones. The changes had more to do with switching their vote to smaller parties than with a decline in turnout (Anduiza, Martín and Mateos, forthcoming).

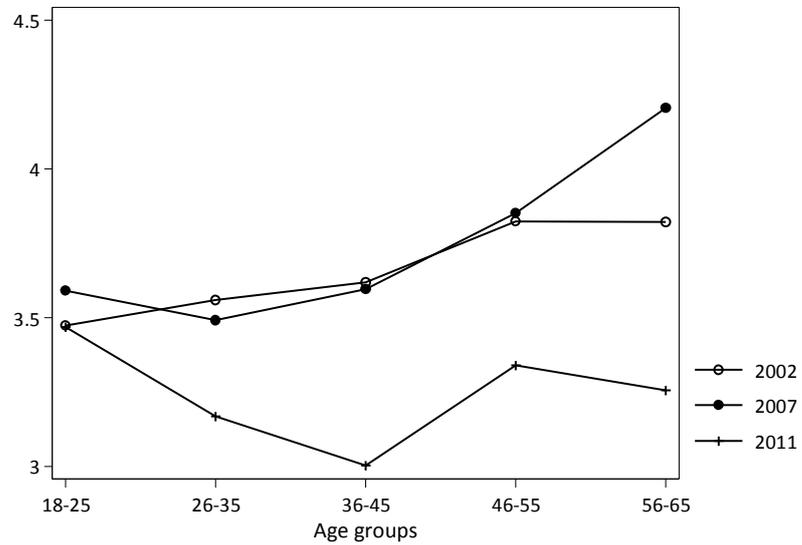
Let us now turn the attention to changes over time according to employment status. We focus on the comparison between respondents that are unemployed and those that are in other situations. In general, the results of our analyses point in the same direction: there has been an increase in inequalities between those that are unemployed and the rest of the population. For instance, while there was no difference between the unemployed and citizens in other situations in 2002 or 2007, in 2011 those unemployed are significantly less trustful of political parties (see Figure 19). Interest in politics has increased significantly for both groups, although the increase is larger for citizens in

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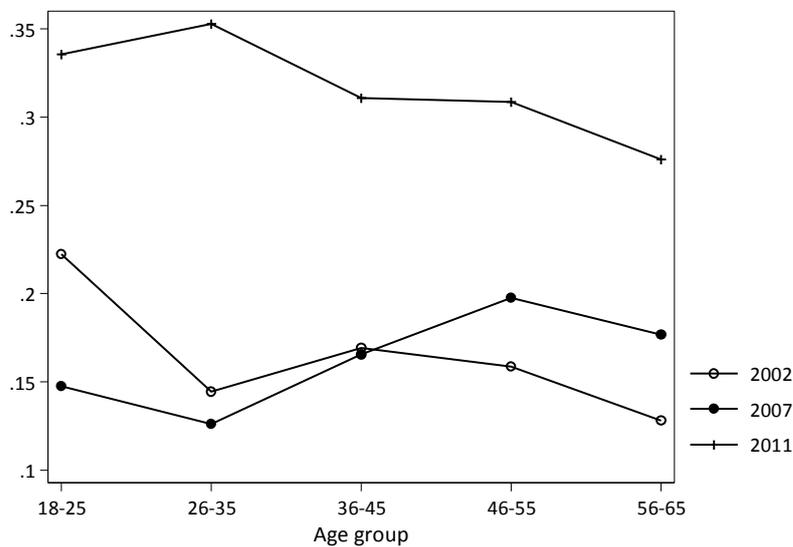
<sup>15</sup> For the sake of space only some graphic representations of the results are presented. Detailed results are available from the authors and the rest of figures are available in the Appendix.

other situations than for the unemployed. Regarding satisfaction with democracy, no differences can be observed according to occupation (see Figure A5 in the Appendix).

**Figure 17: Predictive margins for trust in political parties and age (2002-2007)**



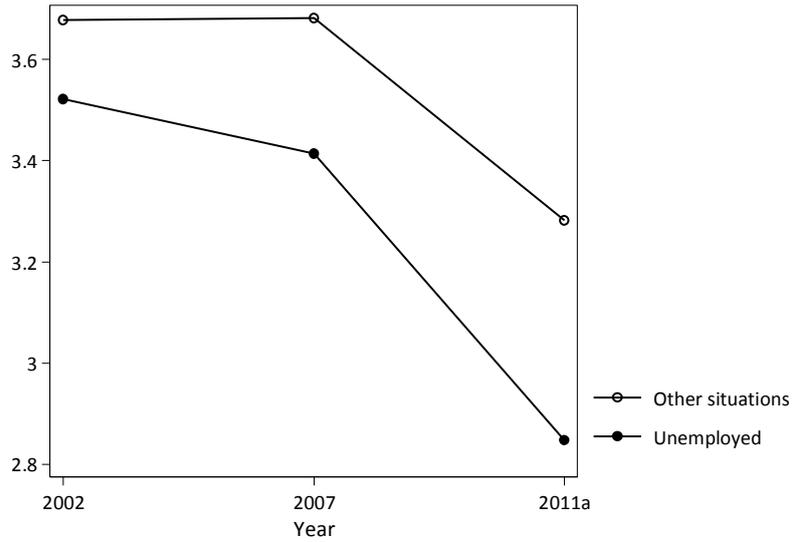
**Figure 18: Predictive margins for participating in demonstrations and age (2002-2011)**



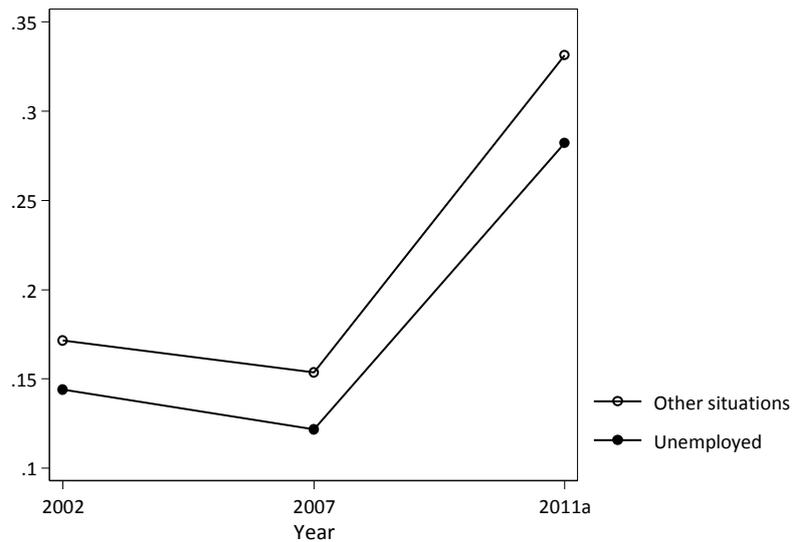
The lower trust in political parties of those unemployed does not imply higher participation of this group in protest activities. Signing petitions and participating in demonstration has increased similarly for all respondents independently of whether they are unemployed or not. The pattern is illustrated in Figure 20 for participation in demonstrations and there are no significant differences between the two groups in either

2007 or 2011 (see also Figure A9 in the Appendix). However, inequality has increased in electoral participation, while the probabilities to cast a vote have increased from 2007 to 2011 for those that are not unemployed, it has not change for respondents who are unemployed (see Figure A10 in the Appendix).

**Figure 19: Predictive margins for trust in political parties and employment (2002-2011)**



**Figure 20: Predictive margins for participating in demonstrations and employment (2002-2011)**



So far we have identified an increase in political participation that particularly affects young citizens between 26 and 35 years old. However, our expectation that the

youngest group would be the one reflecting more changes has not been corroborated. Actually, some attitudes such as trust and support for political parties have decreased for all age groups except for the youngest (18 to 25 years old). Regarding unemployment, we have shown indications of higher inequality.

What we still do not know is whether unemployment has had a stronger impact on specific groups of the population. Young people and adults are in different stages in life and we could expect the impact of unemployment to differ across groups of the population. Our exploration above already points in this direction. We have observed larger changes over time for citizens around their 30s and we speculated that the larger impact of the crisis on this group may be due to their life-stage. Unemployment may have more dramatic consequences, or raise more political awareness, on those citizens that are forming a family, have to take care of paying a mortgage, etc. The responsibilities that come with adulthood require more economic stability. Furthermore, adult roles entail the knowledge and awareness that makes participation more meaningful (Strate, Parrish, Elder, and Ford, 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). In addition, unemployment has affected young citizens in an unprecedented way, thus being young and unemployed could have an impact on the development of attitudes and participation that it did not have previously. If this is the case, we should observe differences in those that are unemployed in 2011 that could not be observed previously.

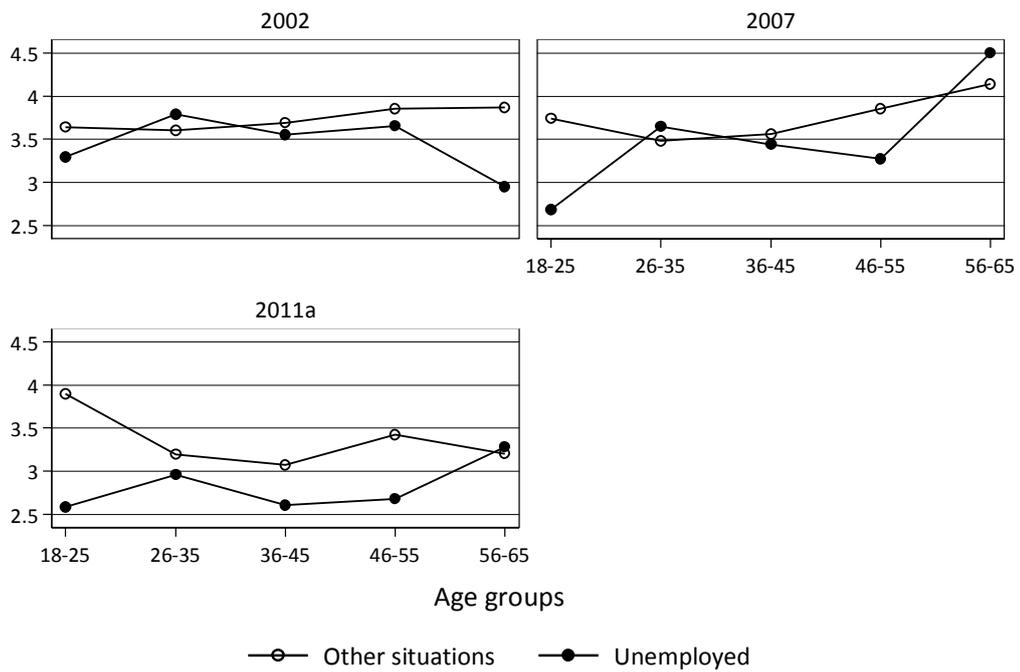
To test this possibility, we add a triple multiplicative term (year, unemployment and age) to the models presented above. In this fashion, we can examine whether unemployment has stronger consequences in 2011 than in 2007 for specific age groups.<sup>16</sup> In general, we do not find differences in political attitudes or behaviours among unemployed respondents that could not be observed already in 2002 or 2007, but with some exceptions. We find that unemployment indeed implies less trust in political parties, fewer probabilities to support a political party, to vote and to sign petitions for the youngest group (18 to 25 years old). Figure 21 illustrates these results for trust in political parties. The figure shows the predictive margins of unemployed respondents – in comparison with respondents in other situations – for the three years we are analysing. The figure shows that an unemployment gap for almost every age group, however, the difference between the unemployed and the rest of the population is only statistically significant in 2011 and for the youngest group (18 to 25). The new gap that

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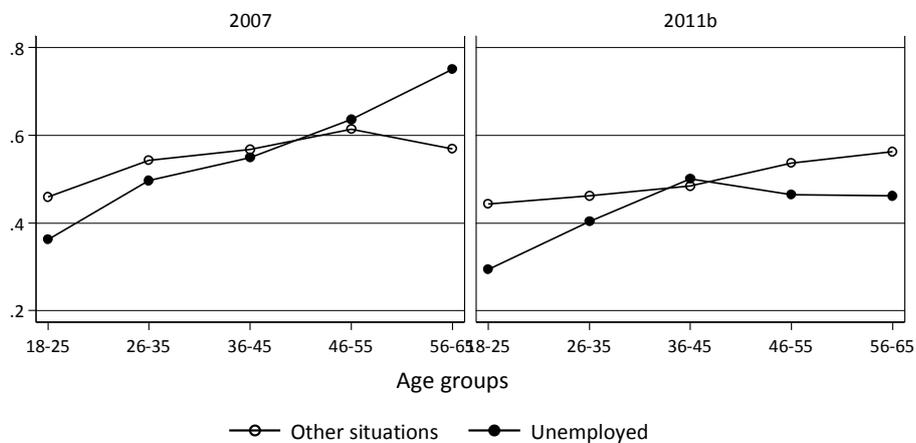
<sup>16</sup> For the sake of space, only some figures are presented in the text, the detailed results are available from the authors.

only affects unemployed respondents younger than 25 years old is also observable regarding support for a specific political party as shown in Figure 22. Although the gap is observable for several age groups, again the contrast indicates that it is only statistically significant for the youngest group in 2011. The same result applies to the probability to vote and signing of petitions.

**Figure 21: Predictive margins for trust in political parties across age groups and over time.**



**Figure 21: Predictive margins for party identification across age groups and over time.**



## 5- Conclusions

In sum, as expected, we see that both young people and the unemployed are changing their political attitudes as a result of the crisis in a way that makes them increasingly different to the rest of society. In other words, the crisis has made them more unequal in social terms and these inequalities are being translated into political inequalities.

These results do not clearly support the idea that it is during the formative years that attitudes tend to change more easily. We have seen that it is the group in their late twenties and thirties that has changed its political attitudes with respect to the period prior to the crisis. This may indicate that the moment of the life cycle in which they are is playing a crucial role. Adult roles entail the knowledge and awareness that makes participation more meaningful (Strate, Parrish, Elder, and Ford, 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). However, other explanations are possible. The impact of the crisis may have had different consequences for those that most likely had already started their careers and formed their families than for those that confront their first search for employment in such a dramatic consequences. We could speculate that the first group had already confronted the political system and thus they are more experienced and willing to participate politically and react to the situation, while younger citizens have more difficulties to do so.

Thirdly, we have seen that political attitudes and behaviours are not changing in the same direction at the aggregate level. When looking at the results for the different groups, we see that it is not necessarily the same people that are experiencing these changes. If political involvement is growing mainly amongst the better off, and those most affected by the crisis are, in turn, becoming more politically apathetic, political inequalities are bound to keep growing. Actually, this seems to be the case for the youngest group in our sample. We detected a new gap within young people according to whether they are unemployed or not, that could not be observed previously – at least not to the same extent. Unemployed youth show lower levels of trust and support for political parties and those attitudes do not translate in higher levels of political participation, rather these are accompanied by fewer probabilities to vote or sign petitions.

In its exploratory nature, this paper has provided a first examination of changes in attitudes and political behaviours of young people and the unemployed before and

during the financial crisis, and has found indication of ‘new’ or ‘increasing’ political inequalities. This is an important first step that we aim to further explore by focusing on specific questions that we have left unanswered such as: Why the crisis has an overall stronger effect on young people but not on the youngest group? Or, is the new unemployment gap among the youngest group simply a matter of the larger number of unemployed citizens in that group?

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## Appendix.

Table A1: OLS Confidence in political parties, satisfaction with democracy and interest in politics. OLS regression models

	Confidence in political parties			Satisfaction with democracy			Interest in politics		
Female	0.134*	0.134*	0.132*	0.0499	0.0501	0.0504	-0.206***	-0.206***	-0.205***
	(0.0523)	(0.0523)	(0.0523)	(0.0501)	(0.0501)	(0.0502)	(0.0157)	(0.0157)	(0.0157)
Education	0.272***	0.277***	0.270***	0.122***	0.120***	0.122***	0.397***	0.398***	0.398***
	(0.0377)	(0.0378)	(0.0378)	(0.0331)	(0.0331)	(0.0332)	(0.0110)	(0.0110)	(0.0110)
Unemployed	-0.285***	-0.288***	-0.0183	-0.211**	-0.211**	-0.256	-0.0873***	-0.0868***	-0.152**
	(0.0755)	(0.0754)	(0.194)	(0.0662)	(0.0661)	(0.275)	(0.0215)	(0.0215)	(0.0521)
Age groups (ref: 18-25)									
26-35	-0.110	-0.0222	-0.107	0.00564	-0.118	0.00522	0.0728**	0.0893***	0.0713**
	(0.0788)	(0.0897)	(0.0788)	(0.0797)	(0.103)	(0.0798)	(0.0245)	(0.0264)	(0.0245)
36-45	-0.0781	0.108	-0.0753	0.162*	-0.0885	0.162*	0.149***	0.185***	0.148***
	(0.0804)	(0.122)	(0.0804)	(0.0796)	(0.154)	(0.0797)	(0.0246)	(0.0328)	(0.0247)
46-55	0.198*	0.480**	0.201*	0.155	-0.247	0.155	0.242***	0.299***	0.241***
	(0.0911)	(0.166)	(0.0911)	(0.0886)	(0.229)	(0.0887)	(0.0271)	(0.0441)	(0.0271)
56-65	0.312**	0.688**	0.313**	0.234*	-0.314	0.234*	0.254***	0.332***	0.254***
	(0.0988)	(0.210)	(0.0988)	(0.0962)	(0.303)	(0.0962)	(0.0292)	(0.0553)	(0.0292)
Year (ref: 2002)									
2007	0.0206	0.168	0.0363	.	.	.	0.193***	0.217***	0.190***
	(0.0615)	(0.0951)	(0.0624)	.	.	.	(0.0211)	(0.0256)	(0.0212)
2011	-0.439***	-0.130	-0.389***	-0.539***	-0.763***	-0.543***	0.286***	0.354***	0.275***
	(0.0694)	(0.167)	(0.0771)	(0.0535)	(0.129)	(0.0575)	(0.0191)	(0.0458)	(0.0208)
Edad * year		-0.0523*			0.0414			-0.00765	
		(0.0257)			(0.0218)			(0.00466)	
Unemployment * year			-0.131			0.0127			0.0224
			(0.0879)			(0.0760)			(0.0163)
Constant	3.084***	3.053***	3.072***	5.154***	5.144***	5.156***	0.126***	0.111**	0.130***
	(0.110)	(0.111)	(0.110)	(0.0946)	(0.0948)	(0.0952)	(0.0332)	(0.0344)	(0.0334)
Observations	8370	8370	8370	7912	7912	7912	11460	11460	11460
R <sup>2</sup>	0.019	0.020	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.128	0.128	0.128

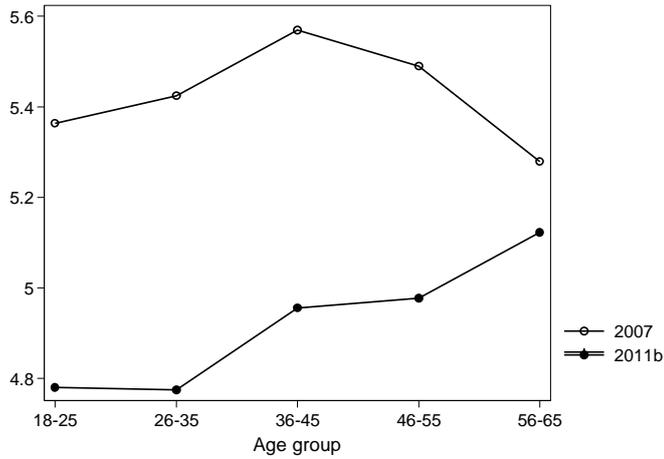
Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table A2: Logistic regression participation in demonstrations, signing of petitions and electoral turnout.

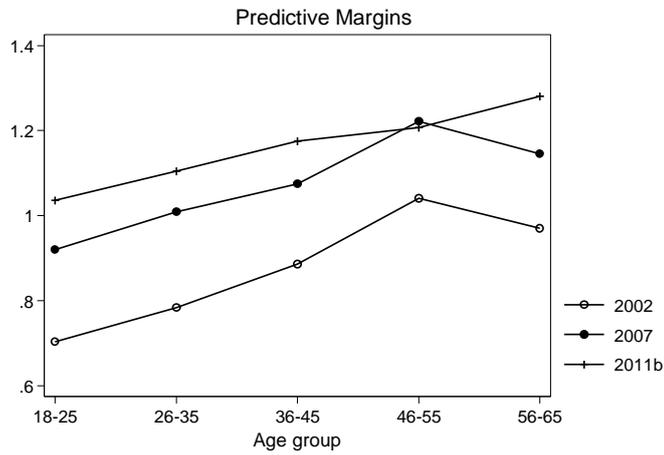
	Participating in demonstrations			Signing of petitions			Electoral turnout		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Female	-0.245*** (0.0603)	-0.246*** (0.0603)	-0.245*** (0.0604)	0.0585 (0.0506)	0.0584 (0.0506)	0.0599 (0.0506)	0.0661 (0.0483)	0.0645 (0.0484)	0.0647 (0.0483)
Education	0.693*** (0.0437)	0.692*** (0.0437)	0.693*** (0.0437)	0.604*** (0.0366)	0.602*** (0.0367)	0.605*** (0.0367)	0.364*** (0.0358)	0.381*** (0.0361)	0.363*** (0.0359)
Unemployment	-0.234* (0.0910)	-0.231* (0.0908)	-0.214 (0.226)	-0.150* (0.0754)	-0.149* (0.0753)	-0.342 (0.189)	-0.236*** (0.0617)	-0.225*** (0.0617)	-0.141 (0.144)
Age (ref: 18-65)									
26-35	-0.330*** (0.0863)	-0.394*** (0.0993)	-0.329*** (0.0863)	0.00567 (0.0746)	-0.0738 (0.0864)	0.00397 (0.0746)	0.425*** (0.0666)	0.639*** (0.0747)	0.427*** (0.0666)
36-45	-0.170 (0.0878)	-0.304* (0.135)	-0.170 (0.0878)	0.188* (0.0757)	0.0235 (0.118)	0.187* (0.0757)	0.948*** (0.0714)	1.403*** (0.101)	0.951*** (0.0715)
46-55	-0.164 (0.102)	-0.365* (0.186)	-0.164 (0.102)	0.171* (0.0868)	-0.0765 (0.162)	0.169 (0.0868)	1.382*** (0.0858)	2.108*** (0.144)	1.385*** (0.0859)
56-65	-0.349** (0.117)	-0.620* (0.241)	-0.349** (0.117)	-0.348*** (0.102)	-0.682** (0.212)	-0.348*** (0.102)	1.696*** (0.0999)	2.678*** (0.189)	1.698*** (0.0999)
Year (ref: 2002)									
2007	-0.124 (0.0696)	-0.225* (0.104)	-0.123 (0.0705)	-0.0249 (0.0575)	-0.153 (0.0911)	-0.0362 (0.0584)	0.373*** (0.0646)	0.629*** (0.0761)	0.378*** (0.0649)
2011	0.922*** (0.0807)	0.708*** (0.185)	0.925*** (0.0889)	0.604*** (0.0708)	0.330* (0.167)	0.566*** (0.0785)	0.510*** (0.0594)	1.268*** (0.134)	0.531*** (0.0661)
Edad * year		0.0383 (0.0297)			0.0478 (0.0264)			-0.0970*** (0.0153)	
Unemployment * year			-0.00981 (0.103)			0.0990 (0.0891)			-0.0343 (0.0470)
Constant	-2.634*** (0.124)	-2.623*** (0.124)	-2.635*** (0.124)	-2.173*** (0.106)	-2.158*** (0.106)	-2.165*** (0.106)	-0.311** (0.100)	-0.447*** (0.103)	-0.318** (0.101)
Observations	7862	7862	7862	7957	7957	7957	12746	12746	12746
Adjusted $R^2$									

Standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

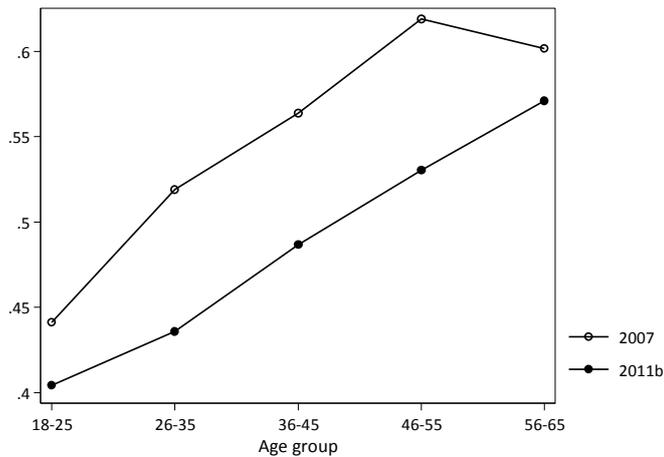
**Figure A1: Predictive margins for satisfaction with democracy and age (2007 and 2011)**



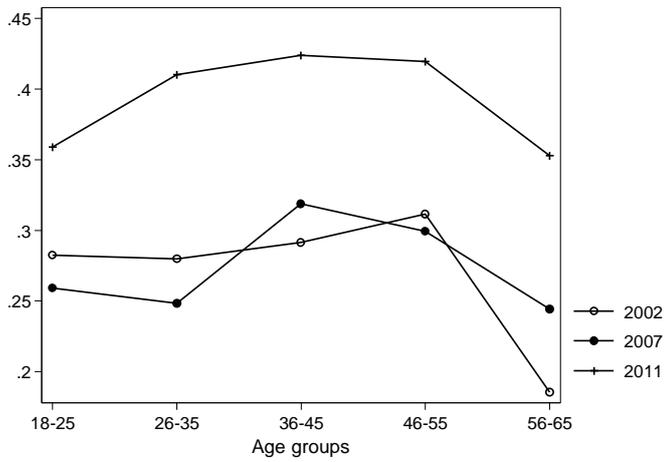
**Figure A2: Predictive margins for interest in politics and age (2002-2011)**



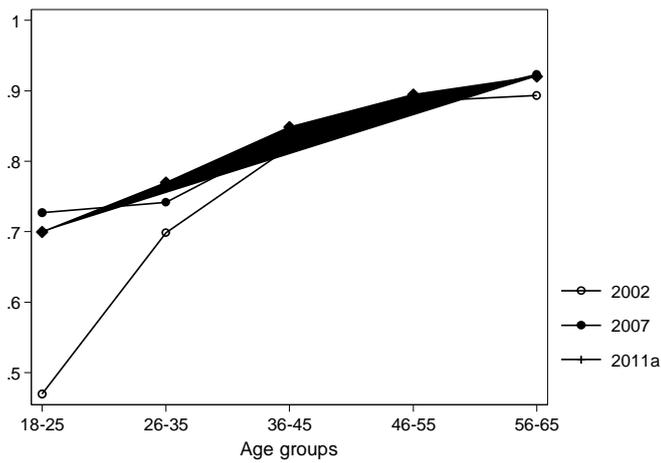
**Figure A3: Predictive margins for party identification and age (2007 and 2011)**



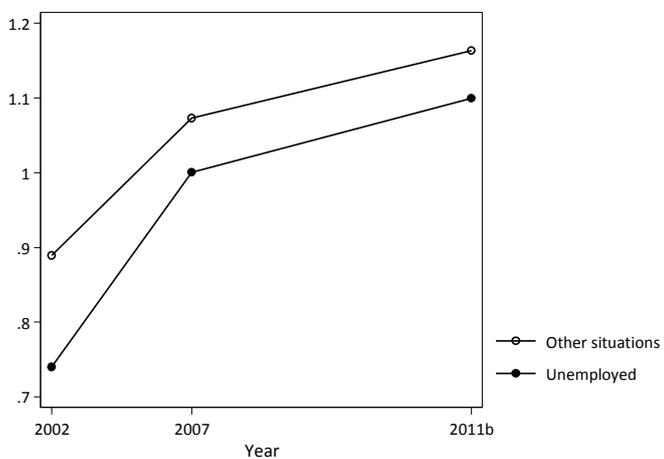
**Figure A4: Predictive margins for signing of petitions and age (2002-2011)**



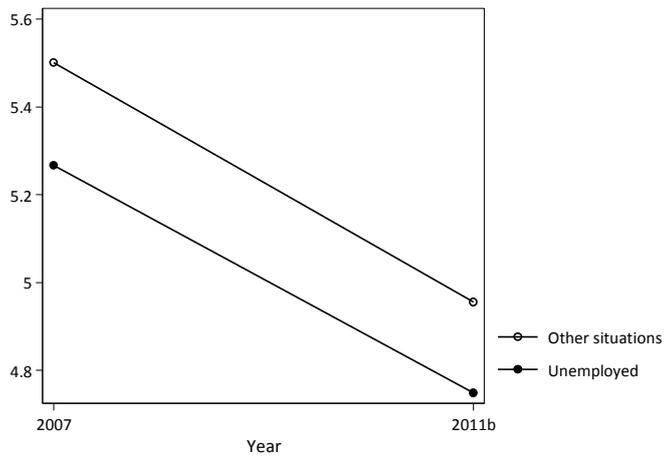
**Figure A5: Predictive margins for electoral turnout and age (2002-2011)**



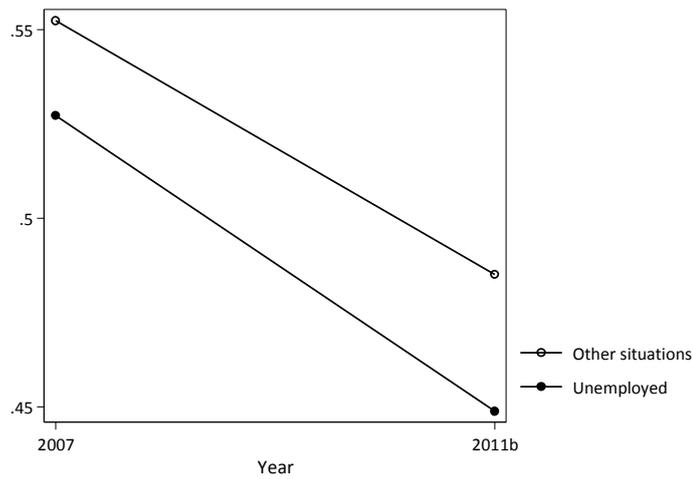
**Figure A6: Predictive margins interest in politics and employment (2002 to 2011)**



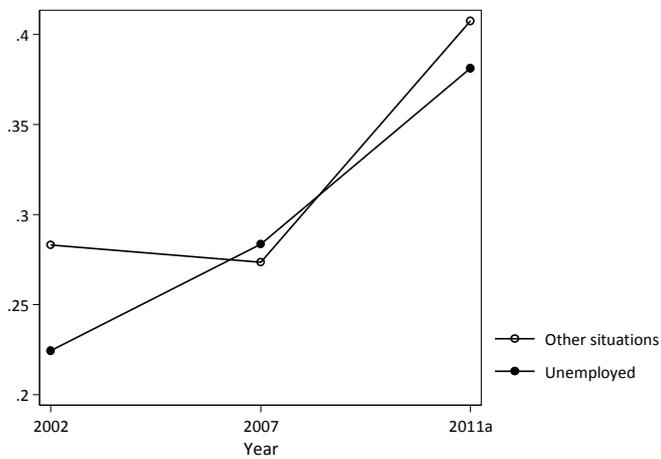
**Figure A7: Predictive margins satisfaction with democracy and employment (2007 and 2011)**



**Figure A8 Predictive margins for party identification and employment (2007-2011)**



**Figure A9. Predictive margins for signing petitions and employment (2002-2011)**



**Figure A10. Marginal predictions for electoral turnout and employment (2002-2011)**

