

The impact of the economic crisis among young people on European identification

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Abstract

When the economic crisis started in the US in 2008, few people could foresee how far its impact would go. In this respect, economic consequences have gone together with political consequences. In this regard, public support for European integration has decreased rapidly during the last years, especially in the South of Europe. However, it is not clear if there is also an effect of the economic crisis on European identity. To address this question I pay special attention to young people. This is one of the groups that is suffering the crisis most intensely and their precarious working situation is contrasted. Not only so, this generation has been socialized in a European Union of benefits and opportunities that do not seem to be fulfilled. In addition, they are considered traditionally more supportive than older people. For these reasons, this paper tackles the effect of the economic crisis on young people's European identification. This paper is based on survey data from the Eurobarometer.

Key words: young people, European identification, Great Recession

Introduction

The great recession has not only economic, but also political consequences. In the context of the European Union (EU), the crisis seems to have resulted in lower support for the EU. Although it seems that the worst of the economic crisis is over, European leaders have failed to prevent the undermining of the EU's image, even among citizens from countries with a long supportive tradition (like Spain or Italy). In this sense, some recent studies (Serricchio et al. 2013; Braun & Tausendpfund 2014; Clements et al. 2014) show an increase in negative attitudes toward the EU in the context of the economic crisis, especially in countries where the crisis has hit more hardly. This adverse situation challenges the legitimacy of the EU and causes debates about the future of Europe. Some authors have claimed that European identity is a necessary factor for the future of the EU (Bruter 2005; Cerutti 2011) and it is considered that legitimacy of the EU entails a sense of European identity (Quintelier et al. 2014). Therefore, it is important to analyze if there is an effect of the economic crisis on European identity, paying special attention to young people.

Undoubtedly, this is one of the groups that is suffering the crisis further. High unemployment rates are the most salient consequences of the great recession. In some countries like Spain and Greece these rates have reached an unseen 26% and 27.5% in 2013¹ amongst the general population. Amongst the young, figures have been even more dramatic, surpassing the 40% in both countries. At the same time, they have been socialized in the benefits and opportunities offered by the UE that now do not seem to be fulfilled.

Moreover, many studies indicate that the young have more pro-European attitudes than the old (Inglehart 1970; Jamieson 2005; Fligstein 2008) and specifically, they are expected to identify themselves with the EU to a greater extent than old people (Jamieson 2005; Fligstein 2008). The young have been socialized in the benefits and opportunities of the EU. In addition, they have higher levels of education in comparison with previous generations and they also have more contact with people from other member states. For this reasons, some studies pay attention to the relationship between the European identification and mobility programs such as Erasmus (Sigalas 2010) and others focusing on university students (Cinnirella 1997).

¹ According to Eurostat data.

It is noteworthy that among the factors explaining European attitudes, the instrumental or utilitarian support has been highlighted, mainly coinciding with the first stage of European integration. The concept of “winners” in the integration project, in terms of material beneficiaries, has been used to describe who are more prone to feel European. According to Fligstein (Fligstein 2008, p.123): “it is the educated, professionals, managers, and other white-collar workers who have the opportunity to travel, speak second languages, and interact with people like themselves in different countries”. In an adverse economic context, these instrumental explanations can take a more relevant role in the attitudes towards the EU underlining the differences between those winners and the losers in the integration project.

Therefore, this paper try to answer if the European identification among young people has changed in the aftermath of the economic crisis, paying attention to the employment status as a marker of those losers.

Young people: generational and period effects

What does it mean to be young? “Young” is a dynamic concept that stands for a stage of life with characteristic features. Although it refers to the time between childhood and adulthood, there is no agreement on the specific age range. In their study, García & Martín (2010, pp.205–206) reviewed different classifications of this concept in political studies and showed the diversity of limits of this concept. As for the beginning of the period, most population surveys start at age 18, with exceptions like Eurobarometer and European Electoral Survey starting at age 15, the upper limit is established between 24 and 35 years of age². It is noteworthy that this concept has evolved in last years.

In the last decades, we have witnessed some demographic changes in most of industrialized countries that have delayed the acquisition of adult roles. According to (García-Albacete 2014) there are five events that can be considered as markers of the transition to adulthood: leaving school, forming a partnership or being married, leaving the parental home, entering the labor market or having a first child. The average ages of first marriage and the first childbirth have risen during the last 30 years, even surpassing age 30 in most North European countries³. The great recession has helped to extend the age at which young people can leave home or have a child due the difficulties to find a

² See García & Martín (2010, pp.205–206) for more details.

³ According to Eurostat data.

stable job. In this paper I consider the period of youth between 15 to 34 years old, distinguishing two different stages. Young people are not a homogeneous group and it is necessary to distinguish between the youngest (15-24 years-olds) which I could assume that have not fully plunged into the obligations of adulthood because they are finishing their studies, and those between ages 25 and 34 that are ones starting to develop their career and form their family.

It is also important to highlight that age may represent a life-cycle effect or a generational effect. Regarding life-cycle effects, I expect that European identification becomes more negative as citizens' age increases. In general, young people are more likely to be considered winners in the integration project than old people (McLaren 2006; Fligstein 2008; Down & Wilson 2013). They have more opportunities to enjoy the advantages offered by the EU, such as travelling, working or living in another country. Moreover, they are less nationally rooted because they lack the responsibility of bringing up children or developing a career that adulthood entails. Conversely, older people will be less adventurous and less likely to have learned other languages than younger people, and they will probably remember who was on which side in World War II (Fligstein 2008, p.127).

Alternatively, the generational effect can mean that different cohorts display different European identification due to the context in which was socialized. According to (García-Albacete (2014, p.56), the characteristics of the social and political context during their adolescence shaped their political orientations and made them differ from the other cohorts. In this regard, each younger cohort of Europeans has been raised in a more integrated Europe and they are more familiar with a transnational world.

By taking into account both the life-cycle effect and generational effect, young people appear to identify as European to a greater extent than older people. However, the great recession can be classified as a relevant political event with political consequences. This brings us to period effects. The latter refer to a large change produced by an important event that will have impact on all groups of age. In this regard, young people would have a different level of European identification before and after the financial crisis due to dramatic economic changes in the last years.

In terms to clarify this three general approaches, it can be derived that:

- Young people are more likely to have a European identification due to their life-cycle with more freedom to enjoy the benefits of the European integration.
- Young people are more likely to have a European identification due to the more integrated Europe in which they were socialized.
- Young people are more likely to have a European identification before the financial crisis due to the economic consequences suffered in the last years.

Once I have this general factors relating to age effect, what factors are described in the literature to explain European identification among young people?

European identification among young people

European identification is a difficult concept to measure. It is an active concept, a process in progress and construction. Following this idea, in recent years it have been highlighted its dynamic character showing that identification is not an attribute that people have (Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Bruter 2003, 2005). In spite of this nature, identification is considered a more stable orientation in comparison to attitudes based on evaluations of a more day-to-day decision-making at the EU. It is because European identification entails affective feelings of belonging to the European community while specific attitudes are based on a rational calculus of the benefits perceived. In this respect, the context of the financial crisis appears to have affected the attitudes towards the EU and it is a challenge for European identification. Young people is an interesting group because of the opposing forces that are affecting them. From one point of view, they have particularly suffered the great recession. And from another point of view, they have socialized in the opportunities of the European project and in a more integrated EU.

In addition, paying attention to young people is important because they are at the core of their political learning. On the one hand, young people have a limited political experience and their attitudes are still in formation. For this reason, political attitudes can be shaped by the socioeconomic conditions during these formative years. In addition, people are more open to change in his youth, and once entered in maturity, their attitudes tend to remain stable (Ryder 1965; Sears et al. 1997; Sears & Funk 1999; Jennings et al. 2009; Dinas 2010, 2013). One consequence of this is that knowing how young people relate to EU can anticipate how their relationship citizens will be in the future. On the other hand, I can see changes over time in the young people European identification, in particular, before and after the Great Recession. It is not surprising that the attitudes relating to

specific evaluations or benefits from the European Union have decreased because of the crisis. On the contrary, due to the more stable nature of European identification is not so clear to can find variations. In this regard, its study in young people allows us to analyze possible variations that would be less likely among adults.

Although the literature on European identification among young people is not the widest, most studies consider that young people are more likely to feel European compared to old people (Jamieson 2005; Fligstein 2008; Spannring et al. 2008; Sigalas 2010). Taking into account these works, the theories of socialization, cognitive mobilization and transnationalism have been used to explain this trend. Nowadays, young people have been socialized in the European context which implies that their identities are not simply national and/or regional ones, but a composite of all of them and even a European identity (Quintelier et al. 2014). The young can be considered a political generation more likely to identify with Europe due to the political context in which they were socialized. “This particular generation of young people have come of age when European integration intensified following the Maastricht Treaty, the currency union and the discussions around the European Constitution”(Spannring et al. 2008). Moreover, the young have grown up enjoying the benefits of being European citizens: educational and job mobility; voting in European Elections, etc.

Some of these benefits like individual experiences such as travelling abroad or exchange programmes have fostered the learning of a second language and eased intercultural learning. Because of it, young people are involved in cross-border interaction and mobility what refers to the idea of transnationalism. Some scholars (Fligstein 2008, 2009; Kuhn 2015) have shown that citizens who interact with each other are more frequently likely to view themselves as Europeans. However, it should be noted that the impact has not been homogeneous, increasing the differences between those with better education and jobs, and those with lower education and blue-collar jobs (Fligstein 2008).

Education and interest in politics are factors in which the cognitive mobilization theory (Inglehart 1970; Janssen 1991) focuses on. According to Inglehart (1970, p.47) cognitive mobilization increase the ability to relate to a remote political community such as the European community. For him, more educated groups and more exposed to mass communications tend to favour pro-Europeanism attitudes. In this regard, younger Europeans have undergone a considerable increase of their levels of education and skills.

Accordingly, young people have more tools than their predecessors to be aware of what it means being European and feeling part of it.

The instrumental explanations is another important approach, mainly related to the first stage of the integration process. Some of the measures put in place by the European Union were the removal of barriers to free trade, the free movement of capital and goods and the creation of the euro, the single currency. Therefore, it does not seem strange that citizens display attitudes towards the European Union strongly depends on the costs and benefits that European integration meant for themselves, for their groups and their country (Hooghe, L. and Marks 2005, p.419). In this sense, young people is one of the most benefitted groups by the integration project being classified as one of the “winners” in the EU (Fligstein 2008).

Under the light of these approaches, young people seem to be most likely to identify as European. Whether due to life cycle or generational effects, the youngest will feel more European than the oldest. However, the financial crisis could have changed this pattern. Undoubtedly, young people have been deeply affected by the consequences of this crisis. This leads me to wonder whether the European identification among young people today is changing because of the adverse situation that the crisis has left. The expectations about the effect of the financial crisis is the issue to which I now turn.

The effect of the financial crisis: Expectations

As I said before, the great recession can be categorized as a relevant political event whose consequences will most likely last on the long run (Gourevitch 2013). This crisis appears to have undermined the image of Europe, triggering changes in attitudes of citizens towards the European Union. The increased level of Euroscepticism due the financial crisis is a fact (Serricchio et al. 2013). Not only in Southern Europe, because of the austerity policies, but also, in the Northern countries where they complained about paying for the bailout packages ((Laffan 2014; Hobolt & Tilley 2014). In this context, young people are suffering the consequences in their own flesh. The unbearably high levels of unemployment amongst young people⁴, particularly in some Southern countries, are rising frustration amongst them. It should be noted that the situation in some countries like Greece, Spain, Italy or Portugal is far worse. However, this context has showed the

⁴ See table A1 in the appendix for more details.

very different positions of the EU member states in terms of solidarity. Although not all young people are unemployed, those who not, now have witnessed not only the benefits of the EU, but also, the shadows of the European project.

Since young people have a limited political experience and their attitudes are still in formation, they will be most influenced by the context in which they grew up. Taking into account the life-cycle effect and also the idea that youngest cohorts have been socialized in a more integrated Europe, young people should feel more European than old people. However, my first expectation is that young people have been particularly affected by the economic crisis, which should diminish their European identification in contrast with older citizens. It is important to highlight that there are differences in the economic situation between countries. In this regard, I expect that young people from countries most affected by the crisis would be suffering even more the consequences of the crisis and the impact on their European identification will be bigger.

There is no doubt that the main economic consequence of the great recession for young people is the increase of unemployment. Getting a job is a crucial and necessary step to reach adulthood. Young people due to their precarious labor situation have difficulties to leave the parental home and start to create their own family. They may blame the EU for the economic outcomes. In the case of Southern Europe the national leaders have responsibility the EU for the austerity measures while in the North countries they criticized the payment of the bailout packages. The effect of the European socialization of younger cohorts could have been neutralized by the effect of the economic crisis and they could be included not into the winners in the integration process. The employment status can be make a difference stressing the called “winners” from the “losers” in the EU. Here, my expectation is despite the fact of their socialization, young unemployed show lesser European identification than the young employed.

In a nutshell, my expectations are the following:

H1: In times of no crisis (2004), young people should have more European identification than old people because they could enjoy the benefits of being European (life-cycle effect) and their socialization in a more integrated Europe (generational effect) in comparison with older people.

H2: In times of financial crisis (2014), young people should have been particularly affected by the economic consequences which could lead to decreasing European identification.

H2a: In countries most affected by the crisis, young people would have suffering even more the consequences of the crisis and the impact on their European identification will be bigger.

H3: Young unemployed should show less European identification than young employed because employment status could have stressed the distinction between “winners” and “losers” in the integration project.

Research design and data

To explore the impact of the economic crisis I have selected two surveys that were conducted before (2004) and after (2014) the great recession. I have selected data from the Eurobarometer to have the opportunity to compare between different EU Member States. In the models⁵, the countries that entering in 2004 and 2007 in the EU are not included. I assume that they do not have enough time to European identification. Thus, the analyses are carry out in 15 EU Member States.

The dependent variable used is European identification. It is considered as an ordinal variable that answers how attached you feel to the EU. As I mentioned in the previous section, it a variable less sensible to contextual fluctuations than other questions that attempt to measure evaluations or attitudes towards the EU.

Taking into account the reviewed literature, control variables included are: sex, interest for politics, education, the economic situation of the country and the personal job situation of the respondent. Education and interest for politics could introduce some variability due to the fact that higher levels of education are said to produce higher levels of cognitive mobilization which, in turn, lead to more cosmopolitan attitudes and higher levels of support for EU integration. Moreover, more educated are more prone to enjoy the benefits from the European project and also interact with citizens from another countries. However, it is a control since testing for such phenomenon is not the aim of the paper. I

⁵ See table A2 in the appendix for more details.

also introduced two variables relating to the economic situation in order to test the role of instrumental theories.

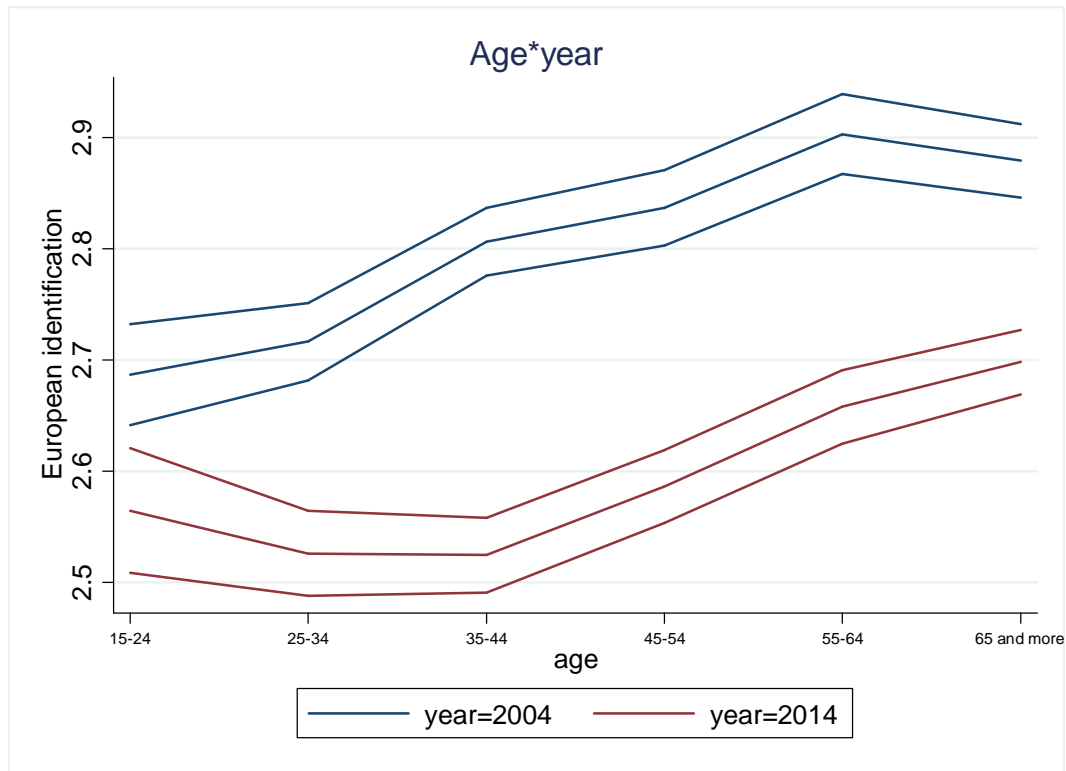
The main independent variables are age, employment status and year of survey. This paper puts the spotlight on young people, comparing them to older groups but also between themselves given my expectation that the youth is a wide category where not every young person is in the same situation. To test for these differences I categorize respondents into age groups instead of using age as a continuous variable. In general, I expect the youngest to display higher levels of identification than their older counterparts (Fligstein 2009). However, the relationship seems to be moderated by the employment status. The unemployed should feel less European than those in other situations. Since I expected students to behave similarly to employed respondents, this variable was included into the models with two categories: the unemployed and other situation (employed and student). Finally, the election year was included as a means of taking into account to a certain extent contextual differences: presence and absence of the economic crisis. This is not a random choice. Since European identification is a variable with a stable nature, I paid attention to select a clear moment of economic prosperity (2004) and another one where the economic crisis was fully yielding its consequences (2014) with a difference of ten years. Moreover, both are years of European Parliament elections.

Analyses and results

In the first place, I compare the overall European identification of citizens before and after the economic crisis taking into account the 15 Member States that formed the EU until January 2004⁶. This way I control for life cycle effects. If in 2004 (before the crisis), citizens that were, for example, between 15-24 years old had more European identification than older citizens, but in 2014 (during the crisis) those with the same age feel less European than the rest, I will conclude that the crisis is having an impact on European identification.

⁶ Model can be found in the annex (Table A3).

Figure 1. Levels of European identification by age and year.



Source: Eurobarometer data, surveys 62 (2004) and 82.3 (2014).

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between age and year over European identification. I categorized respondents in different age groups because my expectations give a relevant role to being young or adult. As I expected, the great recession has had an effect on European identification. I observe that in 2014, compared to 2004, all citizens feel less European without distinction of age. I also find that, before the financial crisis, the youngest do not have the highest levels of European identification. Those between 55 and 64 years old show more feelings of belonging to the EU in the period before the economic crisis. It could be that those who keep alive the trauma of World War II consider the UE as a guarantee of peace in Europe and for this reason they have more European identification. Conversely, this pattern changes after the great recession. At first sight I can see that the differences across age have been slightly reduced by the economic consequences. In 2014, although the oldest remain more European, the youngest (15-24) are those who display less changes comparing the period before and after the crisis. This graph also shows that the changes observed in 2014 are especially intense in the group that are in their late thirties and their forties. This results may point to the importance of

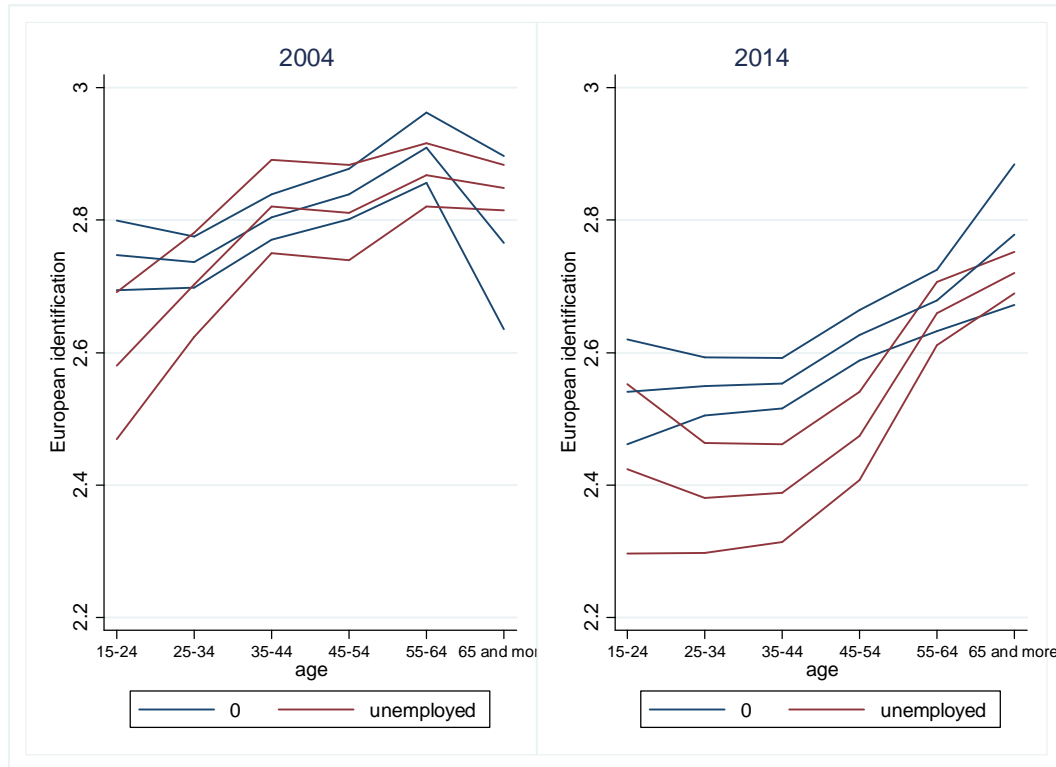
the specific moment of the life cycle, since they are in a stage in life with larger responsibilities such as supporting the family, mortgages, etc.

It seems that, contrary to my first hypothesis, young people do not have more European identification than older people. In spite of their socialization in a more integrated Europe and having enjoy the benefits of the EU, young people display lower levels of European identification. It seems that the fact that older people identify themselves as the generations that “constructed” the EU somehow may play a relevant role, even if the EU was an elitist project. Nevertheless, with reference to the second hypothesis, I can confirm that the economic crisis has had an impact amongst young people. I can see substantive differences amongst young citizens. The crisis did not hit the youngest with a high intensity in terms of their identification compared to old young people (25-34 year-olds) that have suffered a significant fall in their European attachment in 2014. It can be explained by the fact the youngest may not have fully plunged into the obligations of adulthood because they are finishing their studies. Thus, the young-but-not-so-young people (25-34 year-olds) are in a more crucial moment of their life-cycle in which the economic crisis has undermined their professional and family expectations for the near future. So, is the fact of being unemployed relevant to identifying with Europe?

I turn to analyse now how employment status and age are related to European identification using another additive model⁷. Figure 2 depicts the results for the regression model taking into account the 15 Member States that form UE until January 2004. Since I am interested in knowing whether young people and the unemployed are resenting the crisis to a larger extent, it is an additive model showing the impact of age and unemployment status over the same dependent variable.

⁷ Models can be found in the annex (Table A4).

Figure 2. Levels of European identification by age and employment status.



Source: Eurobarometer data, surveys 62 (2004) and 82.3 (2014).

As in the previous analysis, the economic crisis has led to a general decrease of the European identification amongst the population, across age groups and employment status. As I expected the unemployed are more vulnerable given that their economic situation is more fragile than that of citizens with a job. While in 2004 there were not significant differences between being employed or unemployed for feeling European, in 2014 I find that this interaction is statistically significant regarding some age groups. In this sense, in terms of testing my third hypothesis, I can find how being unemployed makes a difference in the European attachment, for citizens between age 25 and 54. Older young people (25-34 year-olds) and those in their early adulthood (35-44 year-olds) have become particularly critical towards the EU, significantly more than other age groups. Although for those no matter their employment status, being unemployed after the great recession stressed their decreasing in European identification. It is the same for those in the age group between 45 and 54, who have a lower score on the European identification if they are unemployed. However, it is not the situation amongst the youngest and the oldest. The youngest people (15-24 year-olds) are not different in their identification depending on their employment status. I can think that most of the youngest do not have

the concerns and responsibilities of adult ones. Moreover, they may be mostly students and given the EU's investment in educational policy and their socialization, this could be a feeble sign of their success in building support for EU.

It is interesting to highlight how young people are not a homogeneous group and I find substantive differences amongst them. The youngest seems to be closer to the older cohorts than those that come immediately after (García-Albacete 2014). And those older young people (25-34 year-olds) and in their early adulthood (35-44 year-olds) have become particularly critical towards the EU having a similar pattern. This heterogeneity is due in good measure to their employment situation, given that I introduce a control for different levels of education levels. In spite of this differences, I would like to underline the relevance of paying attention to the young people since they are in their formative years. As I said before, their attitudes are still in formation and their political attitudes are more likely to be shaped by the crisis. If despite their socialization, they are feeling less European, it could be a challenge for the future of the European Union. As I observe 2014 pictures a very different landscape from that in 2004 but, is this situation even worse in countries most affected by the crisis?

In order to test for differences between countries, I run two models distinguishing two groups of EU Member States⁸. Taking into account their young unemployment rates, in the graph 3 I observe the results for Italy, Ireland, Greece, Spain and Portugal. In these countries the financial crisis has hit harshly in comparison to the rest of the countries analysed⁹. As a result, my expectation is that the impact on their European identification will be bigger in the countries hardest hit by the crisis, measuring it in terms of youth unemployment rates. In graph 4 I present the same analyses but taking into account those countries in which the youth unemployment rates have not increased as sharply as in the other group of countries.

Generally, the graphs confirm the descent of European identification in all countries. However, the picture of 2014 is very different from 2004, as I expected, in the countries undergoing the most economic troubles, namely Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal. In these countries, it is interesting to see how in 2004 the relationship between age and European identification draws a shape somehow close to an inverted U. The youngest and

⁸ Models can be found in the annex (Table A5).

⁹ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Great Britain, the Netherlands Sweden.

the oldest are the most critical towards the EU. 2014 means a fracture in this trend and there is not only a significant increase of those who identify less with the EU, but also that the different age groups level up and differences across them disappear. In addition, being unemployed in the period after the crisis means a significant decrease in the European identification of those between age 25 and 54. The figure 3 shows how the financial crisis has created or has stressed inequalities between those who have a job and those who are unemployed.

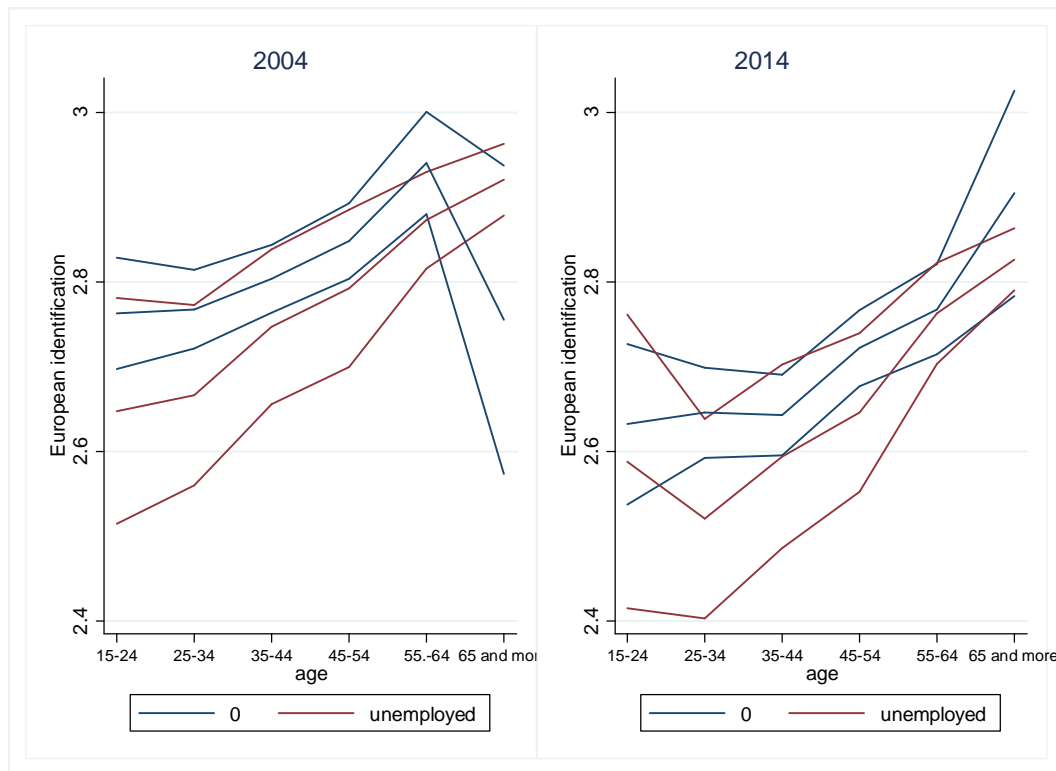
Figure 3. Levels of European identification by age and employment status in Italy, Ireland Greece, Spain and Portugal.



Source: Eurobarometer data, surveys 62 (2004) and 82.3 (2014).

In spite of the decrease being higher in Southern European countries (and Ireland), citizens from the Northern countries have also changed their European feeling due to the financial crisis. In this case results show that young people feel less European than old people in both years. This pattern has been stressed with the financial crisis and those old young citizens (25-34) display the lowest levels of European identification. As I expected, the unemployment status is not as relevant as in the other group of countries. Despite the unemployed showing less European identification than the employed, there are no statistically differences.

Figure 4. Levels of European identification by age and employment status in Northern European countries.



Source: Eurobarometer data, surveys 62 (2004) and 82.3 (2014).

Taking into account these results and contrary to what I would expect according to socialization studies, the attitudes 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 European identification. Furthermore, it seems that the economic crisis has increased political inequalities between those worst affected by the financial crisis (unemployed) and the rest of society, particularly in the countries most affected by the crisis.

Conclusions

In sum, as expected, young people and the unemployed are changing their political attitudes as a result of the crisis. The current economic situation, particularly the unbearably high levels of unemployment amongst young people are rising preoccupation amongst many and have an effect on their European identification. Despite the fact that the great recession seems to be a relevant event with consequences in all citizens, these analyses indicate how young people are not a homogeneous group and this heterogeneity

is due in good measure to their employment situation, given that I introduce a control for different levels of education. In this respect, those between ages 25 and 34 seem to be the ones with a more critical vision of the EU. By contrast, the youngest (18-24 year-olds), which I could assume that have not fully plunged into the obligations of adulthood because they are finishing their studies, display lower levels of Europeanism compared to the older cohorts. This may indicate that the moment of the life cycle in which they are is playing a crucial role.

Unexpectedly and in spite of the socialization of younger cohorts, the oldest seem to feel more Europeans. The data used here have limits and I cannot predict either what will be of the future. However, given these results it is necessary to pay attention to this trend. If the future generations are changing their minds with respect to EU, it could mean a challenge to the European project. The future will tell if they remain still less supportive or they join their older peers. Moreover, this trend is not only in countries specially troubled by the economy, but also, in Northern countries that complained about paying for the bailout packages (Laffan 2014; Hobolt & Tilley 2014). The differences between countries will be a future research line to jump into.

These results also point to the fact that unemployment is undermining years of educational programmes focused on building a European identity and socialization theories. The crystallization of differences between workers and the unemployed on the long term opens the door to translating social inequalities into political inequalities. A new gap between those in their middle ages according to whether they are unemployed or not seems to be appearing. The idea of “losers” and “winners” in the integration project seems to be more relevant in period of economic crisis. Although the European identification is based on feelings of belonging, the perception of benefits from the EU remains to play an important role on it, specially in vulnerability groups like those starting their career and forming their families and in vulnerability countries like those in which the crisis hit harshly.

This paper has spotted the changes in European identification among young people and the unemployed before and after the financial crisis showing substantive differences amongst young groups and in comparison to older groups. The results lead to further questions to explain: Why does the crisis have an overall stronger effect on young people but not on the youngest group? Why do the youngest in Northern European countries feel

less European than in Southern European countries? These questions should be answered in future research.

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Appendix

TABLE A1. Youth unemployment rates (15-29 years).

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Belgium	13,0	11,7	13,9	14,8	12,4	13,0	15,1	15,1
Denmark	6,0	5,8	10,0	12,1	12,4	12,3	11,2	10,8
Germany	10,4	9,0	9,8	8,7	7,5	7,0	7,0	6,6
Ireland	7,4	10,9	19,9	22,9	24,6	24,2	21,3	19,8
Greece	17,9	16,8	19,2	24,8	35,4	43,7	48,6	45,0
Spain	12,6	17,4	27,3	30,9	33,6	39,4	41,4	38,9
France	13,8	13,2	16,7	16,6	16,4	17,3	17,7	17,6
Italy	14,7	15,6	18,7	20,5	20,7	25,8	29,9	32,4
Luxembourg	9,8	11,6	8,4	8,1	8,3	9,6	10,4	12,5
Netherlands	4,2	3,6	4,9	6,6	5,8	7,2	8,8	8,4
Austria	6,8	6,1	8,1	7,2	6,6	7,3	7,7	8,1
Portugal	14,1	13,3	15,3	17,3	21,8	27,7	28,5	25,2
Finland	11,9	11,7	15,7	15,2	14,5	14,1	14,9	15,7
Sweden	13,0	13,7	17,3	17,1	15,0	15,8	15,8	14,7
United Kingdom	10,5	11,3	14,8	15,1	16,2	15,9	15,2	12,5

Source: Eurostat

TABLE A2. Description of variables

2004					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Europe identification	15175	2.801.318	.8353267	1	4
Female	15443	.5410218	.4983305	0	1
Education	15366	2.246.974	.9371299	0	4
Interest politics	15384	1.883.255	.6469429	1	3
Economic situation	15087	205.813	.6514356	1	3
Job situation	14356	2.122.249	.5501308	1	3
Age	15400	3.670.844	1.685.449	1	6
Unemployed	15443	.4051026	.4909278	0	1

2014					
Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Europe identification	15364	2.598.933	.8699389	1	4
Female	15605	.5177187	.499702	0	1
Education	15401	227.245	.8929304	0	4
Interest politics	15560	1.832.262	.6762906	1	3
Economic situation	15280	2.038.874	.5857856	1	3
Job situation	13961	2.107.084	.5109762	1	3
Age	15605	4.068.504	1.642.679	1	6
Unemployed	15605	.4745915	.49937	0	1

Source: Eurobarometer data, surveys 62 (2004) and 82.3 (2014).

TABLE A3. Models of regression (OLS) for the figure 1 (age*year). Dependent variable: European identification.

Gender (Ref.cat: man)	0.002 (0.010)
Education (Ref.cat: without studies)	
Up to 15	-0.075 (0.060)
16-19	0.089 (0.060)
20 and more	0.274*** (0.060)
Still studying	0.208** (0.064)
Interest for politics	0.138*** (0.008)
Economic situation	0.129*** (0.009)
Job personal situation	0.052*** (0.011)
Age (Ref. cat: 15-24)	
25-34	0.030 (0.029)
35-44	0.120*** (0.028)
45-54	0.150*** (0.030)
55-64	0.216*** (0.030)
65 and more	0.192*** (0.029)
Year (Reference 2004)	-0.122*** (0.032)
Interaction term age*year (Ref.cats: 18-25 and 2004)	
25-34*2014	-0.068+ (0.041)
35-44*2014	-0.160*** (0.040)
45-54*2014	-0.128** (0.040)
55-64*2014	-0.123** (0.041)
65 and more*2014	-0.059 (0.039)
Constant	1.925*** (0.070)
Observations	27190
R-squared	0.070

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Source: Eurobarometer.

**TABLE A4. Models of regression (OLS) for the figure 2 (age*unemployed).
Dependent variable: European identification.**

	2004	2014
Gender (Ref.cat: man).	-0.000 (0.014)	0.013 (0.015)
Education (Ref.cat: without studies)		
Up to 15	0.002 (0.132)	-0.150* (0.068)
16-19	0.130 (0.132)	0.063 (0.068)
20 and more	0.237+ (0.132)	0.305*** (0.068)
Still studying	0.132 (0.135)	0.282*** (0.080)
Interest for politics	0.083*** (0.011)	0.178*** (0.011)
Economic situation	0.126*** (0.012)	0.126*** (0.015)
Job personal situation	0.036* (0.015)	0.078*** (0.017)
Age (Ref. cat: 15-24)		
25-34	-0.010 (0.033)	0.008 (0.045)
35-44	0.058+ (0.033)	0.013 (0.046)
45-54	0.092** (0.035)	0.085+ (0.046)
55-64	0.162*** (0.039)	0.138** (0.049)
65 and more	0.019 (0.073)	0.237*** (0.069)
Working status (Reference employed)		
Unemployed	-0.166** (0.063)	-0.116 (0.077)
Interaction term age*unemployed (Ref.cats: 18-25 and employed)		
25-34*unemployed	0.132+ (0.076)	-0.052 (0.089)
35-44*unemployed	0.182* (0.074)	-0.049 (0.088)
45-54*unemployed	0.139+ (0.075)	-0.035 (0.086)
55-64*unemployed	0.126+ (0.072)	0.097 (0.084)
65 and more*unemployed	0.249** (0.093)	0.059 (0.096)
Constant	2.119*** (0.140)	1.655*** (0.088)
Observations	13,762	13,428
R-squared	0.034	0.093

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Source: Eurobarometer.

**TABLE A5. Models of regression (OLS) for the figures 3 and 4 (age*unemployed).
Dependent variable: European identification.**

	Figure 3		Figure 4	
	2004	2014	2004	2014
Gender (Ref.cat: man)	-0.064* (0.026)	-0.022 (0.025)	0.030+ (0.017)	0.028 (0.018)
Education (Ref.cat: without studies)				
Up to 15	0.105 (0.167)	0.179+ (0.102)	-0.329 (0.230)	-0.387*** (0.092)
16-19	0.251 (0.168)	0.343*** (0.104)	-0.200 (0.230)	-0.250** (0.089)
20 and more	0.347* (0.170)	0.545*** (0.106)	-0.081 (0.230)	-0.013 (0.089)
Still studying	0.164 (0.174)	0.466*** (0.132)	-0.109 (0.233)	0.023 (0.102)
Interest for politics	0.054** (0.019)	0.192*** (0.018)	0.092*** (0.014)	0.155*** (0.014)
Economic situation	0.173*** (0.022)	0.199*** (0.025)	0.098*** (0.015)	0.056** (0.018)
Job personal situation	0.040 (0.025)	0.113*** (0.029)	0.027 (0.018)	0.027 (0.021)
Age (Ref. cat: 15-24)				
25-34	-0.014 (0.057)	-0.032 (0.084)	0.005 (0.041)	0.014 (0.053)
35-44	0.129* (0.058)	-0.022 (0.084)	0.041 (0.040)	0.011 (0.055)
45-54	0.145* (0.061)	-0.004 (0.086)	0.085* (0.042)	0.090 (0.055)
55-64	0.154* (0.072)	0.022 (0.092)	0.177*** (0.047)	0.136* (0.057)
65 and more	0.057 (0.109)	-0.013 (0.134)	-0.008 (0.100)	0.273*** (0.080)
Working status (Reference employed)				
Unemployed	-0.229* (0.110)	-0.200 (0.123)	-0.115 (0.076)	-0.044 (0.101)
Interaction term age*unemployed (Ref.cats: 18-25 and employed)				
25-34*unemployed	0.290* (0.129)	0.018 (0.139)	0.014 (0.095)	-0.081 (0.119)
35-44*unemployed	0.323* (0.128)	-0.060 (0.137)	0.059 (0.091)	-0.005 (0.117)
45-54*unemployed	0.231+ (0.129)	0.035 (0.136)	0.060 (0.092)	-0.032 (0.114)
55-64*unemployed	0.260* (0.130)	0.184 (0.137)	0.048 (0.086)	0.040 (0.109)
65 and more*unemployed	0.221 (0.151)	0.207 (0.166)	0.281* (0.122)	-0.034 (0.120)
Constant	1.978*** (0.185)	1.156*** (0.141)	2.475*** (0.238)	2.288*** (0.114)
Observations	4,808	4,757	8,954	8,671
R-squared	0.051	0.118	0.031	0.057

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Source: Eurobarometer.