

Pair Assignment 2

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Proposed Topic

Proposed Methodology and Data Sets

Introductory Literature Review

The intersection and interaction between youth unemployment and political participation/engagement has been explored to varying degrees. The studies tend to investigate the basic premise that unemployment leads to social exclusion which leads to detachment from politics.

A study of unemployed youth in Geneva (Lorenzini and Giugni 2012) found that there was no real difference in the political involvement of unemployed and employed youth when looking at activities like protesting and contacting politicians, though unemployed youth were more likely to partake in consumer-based forms of involvement (e.g., boycotts or buying items with a political motivation). A different study made use of the same data set (Lorenzini 2015), focusing instead on the role life satisfaction plays in fostering political engagement. It found, somewhat unexpectedly, that among unemployed youth, life dissatisfaction actually decreases political engagement. In both studies, the results offer additional perspective on youth unemployment and political engagement, but the focus is quite narrow, since only youths in one specific European city are included. A study from Baglioni, Pasquale, and Theiss (2015) suggested that associational membership can have a positive effect on keeping unemployed youths engaged in politics, the idea being that these memberships compensate for the role a normal working environment would have played in fostering political interest and connections.

On the more general subject of youth political participation, Sloam (2014) looked at youths in the U.S., Great Britain and Germany. The main theme of his analysis is focusing on the evolution of political participation rather than its decline - it is true that fewer young people turn out in national elections these days, but they are more likely to instead partake in a greater variety of activities like demonstrating, campaigning and otherwise engaging with elected officials. Sloam acknowledges the role unemployment and general social exclusion play in influencing whether and how youth engage themselves but doesn't offer a sophisticated analysis thereof. Kiisel, Leppik, and Seppel (2015) took a similar approach, using ESS data to compare responses regarding political and civic participation of both European youths and adults. Similar to Sloam, they found lower levels of traditional political participation among youths today but greater involvement in "newer" forms of political engagement, although they did not find a striking difference between adult and youth involvement for any type of engagement.

Thus while there is ample exploration of how youth political participation differs (if at all) from the political participation of adults, as well as if unemployment is related to political disengagement (both generally and among youths), there have been far fewer efforts to compare country-level data on youth unemployment with country-level data on youth political engagement.

Bibliography

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Lorenzini, Jasmine, and Marco Giugni. 2012. "Employment Status, Social Capital, and Political Participation: A Comparison of Unemployed and Employed Youth in Geneva." *Swiss Political Science Review* 18 (3): 332–51.

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