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Employment Status, Social Capital, and Political Participation: A Comparison of Unemployed and Employed Youth in Geneva

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Abstract: *This paper examines the relationships between employment status, social capital, and the participation of young people in different kinds of political activities such as contacting, consumer, and protest activities. We focus on the role of social capital for political participation, addressing three related questions: Do unemployed and employed youth display different levels of social capital and political participation? Does social capital favor the political participation of unemployed and employed youth? Is social capital more important for unemployed youth than for employed youth? To address these questions we compare long-term unemployed youth to regularly employed youth using original survey data. Our analysis suggests that the employment status has only a limited impact on political participation, affecting only consumer actions. In contrast, the social capital resulting from associational involvement is positively correlated to political participation. However, rather than countering the effect of exclusion from the labor market, it plays a similar role for unemployed youth and employed youth.*

Keywords: Political participation, Youth, Unemployment, Social capital

Introduction[1]

This paper examines the relationships between employment status, social capital, and the political participation of young people. To do so, we compare long-term unemployed and regularly employed youth. We aim to determine whether social capital can compensate for the exclusion from the labor market and sustain youngsters' political participation. Following a long-standing tradition in sociology and political science, we consider associational involvement as well as social contacts and activities as potential providers of social capital that might spill over higher levels of political participation. Understanding the role played by social capital for unemployed youth political participation is all the more important in the light of the often stressed political alienation of young people (Bay and Blekesaune 2002; Dalton 2009). Thus, our main research question is the following: To what extent does the social capital that can be drawn from membership in voluntary associations, from social contacts with friends and acquaintances, and from participation in social activities help youngsters who are excluded from the labor market becoming politically engaged?

[1] Results presented in this paper have been obtained within the project "Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding the Conditions and Prospects for Social and Political Integration of Young Unemployed" (YOUNEX). This project was funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme (grant agreement no. 216122).

The impact of associational involvement on political participation represents a well-established research tradition (Verba et al. 1995) and was recently addressed both in general (Baglioni et al. 2008; Maloney and van Deth 2010; Maloney and Rossteuscher 2009) as well as more specifically in works on the political participation of migrants (Berger et al. 2004; Eggert and Giugni 2010; Jacobs et al. 2004; Morales and Giugni 2011; Tille 2004; Togeby 2004). The role of social contacts and activities was stressed in earlier works on political behavior (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), but was then largely overlooked, at least when it comes to explaining the participation of ''socially excluded'' groups and individuals. We take into account both aspects in our analysis of the role of social capital for the political participation of youngsters who are excluded from the labor market. We test the hypothesis that the more the unemployed youth are socially integrated (in terms of associational involvement as well as in terms of social contacts and activities), the higher their social capital and the more likely their participation in political activities. More specifically, our analysis deals with three main questions: Firstly, do unemployed and employed youth display different levels of social capital and political participation? Secondly, does social capital favor the political participation of unemployed and employed youth? Thirdly, is social capital more important for unemployed youth than for employed youth?

These questions will be addressed empirically using data from a random survey of long-term unemployed and regularly employed youth conducted in the context of a EU-funded project on youth, unemployment, and exclusion in Europe. The survey was conducted at the local level in six European cities. This paper focuses on Geneva, which is the city in Switzerland with the highest unemployment rate. The data include various indicators of participation in different kinds of political activities (contacting, consumer, and protest activities), variables allowing us to examine the impact of social capital (associational membership, social contacts, and social activities) as well as various measures of subjective grievances, political attitudes, and the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents which we will use as control variables.

Employment status and political participation

The effects of employment on political participation have long been studied following different approaches. One approach, often adopted in the French-speaking literature, looks at the effects of employment on political participation through secondary socialization (Gaxie 2002). Here employment is treated as a sphere of life in which people acquire certain understandings and practices of the world in which they live through socialization processes, and this helps them to form political opinions and influences their political behaviors.

Another approach, mostly found in the Anglo-Saxon literature, focuses on the capabilities and competencies useful for political participation that can be acquired in the workplace through working experiences (Brady et al. 1995; Pateman 1970; Schur 2003; Sobel 1993). In this regard, we can distinguish between the spillover model and the civic skills model (Adman 2008). The spillover model assumes that participation in the workplace offers opportunities to learn how to participate and to develop roles related to social and political participation (Pateman 1970; Sobel 1993). According to this model, participation supports participation, that is, involvement and responsibilities in the workplace have an impact on political participation (Sobel 1993). Moreover, participatory mechanisms in the workplace offer opportunities to develop a sense of political efficacy (Adman 2008). The civic skills approach argues that people participate when they have resources (e.g. time,

money, civic skills), when they have psychological predispositions towards engagement (e.g. interest in politics, concern with public affairs, belief that engagement can make a difference, perception of shared interests), and when they are recruited (e.g. by voluntary associations, by individuals) (Brady et al. 1995). Schur (2003) tested this model, focusing specifically on those variables that can be related to employment. Her findings show that income, recruitment, and civic skills (which include the ability to communicate and to organize) have an impact on political participation. The author shows that employed participate more (on all activities except voting).

A recent review of the literature presents expected political attitudes and behaviors of unemployed: high abstention levels in elections; high proportions of extreme-right or left-wing voting; a low degree of trust in political institutions (Chabanet 2007). Thus, we would expect an overall low level of political participation of the unemployed as compared to employed people. However, the effect of unemployment on political attitudes and behaviors has been shown to be contingent upon the socio-economic status (Scott and Acock 1979). Since the impact of unemployment is not the same across social groups, we should place unemployment in a broader life setting in order to study its impact on political participation. In our analysis we therefore take into account the impact of sociodemographic characteristics when testing the effect of the employment status on political participation.

Students of social movements have sometimes examined the collective action by unemployed, showing not only their difficulty to organize and mobilize, but also pointing to a rather unstructured form of mobilization (Bagguley 1991, 1992; Chabanet 2008; Chabanet and Faniel 2011; Faniel 2004; Royall 1997). Thus, their political participation seems to oscillate between apathy and radicalism, also as a result of varying institutional and organizational conditions (Berclaz et al. 2004; Giugni 2008; Baglioni et al. 2008; Zorn 2010).

Scholarly works have also been done on the individual engagement in protest activities by unemployed. They are of particular importance for our present purpose as we also focus on individual participation. For example, Maurer and Pierru (2001) have looked at the individual factors explaining engagement in protest activities. Their research was based on qualitative interviews and examined both engaged and unengaged unemployed in order to understand what explains their mobilization or lack thereof. They found that unemployed mobilize when they are already politicized through the family background; when they are isolated or marginalized and enter the organizational world in search for material and human support which leads them to taking part in protest with no or little political motivation; and for individual reasons, to express their discontent, lacking political socialization and a political vision. We will focus on the second of these three possible explanations, therefore stressing the role of social isolation. However, unlike Maurer and Pierru (2001), following works on the role of social networks and social capital, which we will review below, we argue that social isolation diminishes rather than increases the likelihood that unemployed become involved in politics. Thus, we expect those unemployed who are involved in voluntary associations and have denser social contacts and activities to be more likely to participate in political activities.

While there is a substantial body of literature on the political involvement of unemployed, especially if we include research on collective action and protest activities, work focusing on unemployed youth is sparser. Some have compared unemployed to employed youth, finding predispositions towards violent and illegal actions on the part of the former (Breakwell 1986; Clark 1985). However, these studies focus on attitudes rather than behaviors. Other works have shown that, while being interested and open towards radical actions, unemployed youth display a lower affiliation to political groups such as parties and social

movements. Banks and Ullah (1987) have studied political attitudes and voting behaviors of employed and unemployed youth. They found overall low levels of interest and involvement in politics for youth, tending towards apathy and resignation, but little difference between employed and unemployed. Similarly, Bay and Blekesaune (2002) found that, beyond a specific political marginalization of unemployed youth, youngsters in general are little interested in politics. Nevertheless, unemployed youth were found to be less satisfied with the way democracy works and in particular with the authorities' incapacity to solve problems relating to unemployment (Banks and Ullah 1987).

One of the limits of these studies is that it is difficult to ascertain whether employed people are different from unemployed people from the start as stated by Schur (2003). Moreover, other studies have questioned the direction of the relationship between employment and political participation as well as the very existence of the relationship. Cohen and Vigoda (1999), for example, have found that political participation can explain attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, reversing the relationship between the two variables. To solve this puzzle, Adman (2008) has tested the effect of work on political participation with panel data. The effect found in cross-sectional analyses does not hold when one takes into account the temporal ordering of events (first being involved in a specific workplace setting, then participating politically).

In sum, on the basis of the works reviewed above, one would expect unemployed youth, other things being equal, to be less likely to participate than employed youth due to a lack of resources and political identity. As we will see in more detail below, however, our data do not support this hypothesis as long-term unemployed youth are no less politically active than employed youth when it comes to two of the forms of participation we distinguish, namely contacting and protest activities. The only difference appears with regard to consumer activities as long-term unemployed youth engage significantly less than employed youth on this specific form of political participation. Still, one might wonder, firstly, whether social capital variables play a role in general and, secondly, whether they matter especially for unemployed youth. We discuss these aspects next.

Social capital and political participation

The concept of social capital has become fashionable in recent years in various research fields (see Lin 2001 and Portes 1998 for overviews), including the study of political participation. The mainstream literature linking social capital to political participation has stressed the role of voluntary associations as crucial for the production of social capital. In this perspective, which goes back at least to Tocqueville's analysis of American democracy and was reinvigorated in particular by the work of Putnam (1993, 2000), there is a positive relationship between associational life and democracy (Paxton 2002). A specific strand of research has looked in particular at the impact of people's involvement in voluntary associations on political participation and behavior, specifying the mechanisms linking the latter to the former. The civic voluntarism model (Verba et al. 1995), for example, points to the important role played by involvement in associations for increasing the level of civic skills, political efficacy, and political knowledge. In a similar fashion, recent work has shown more specifically the benefits that people can draw from their involvement in voluntary associations for their political involvement (Baglioni et al. 2008; Maloney and van Deth 2010; Maloney and Rossteuscher 2009).

Perhaps a particularly relevant body of literature for our present purpose is the one looking at the role of voluntary associations for migrants. While this topic has been addressed

in the past, especially by U.S. scholars (Portes et al. 2008; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001), a group of European scholars have recently revamped the social capital approach by applying it at the political participation and integration of migrants in various cities (Berger et al. 2004; Eggert and Giugni 2010; Jacobs et al. 2004; Morales and Giugni 2011; Tille 2004; Togeby 2004). Inspired by previous work by Fennema and Tillie (1999, 2000) on the impact of organizational networks on the political participation of migrants, these studies show that the more a migrant is a member of voluntary associations, the more she or he participates politically. In this perspective, this is not so much related to the individual skills or resources one can develop in associations, but has something to do with the social capital generated by such an organizational affiliation. The mechanism would be found in the creation of social trust through associational involvement, which in turn would bring to higher levels of political trust and participation (Jacobs and Tillie 2004).

Here we apply this line of reasoning to another group at risk of social exclusion, namely long-term unemployed youth. Thus, we advance the hypothesis that youngsters who find themselves in such a situation benefit from being members of voluntary associations and therefore are more inclined to engage politically in different forms of participation. This, of course, should also apply to employed youth, at least following the literature mentioned earlier. However, we may expect the impact of associational involvement on political participation to be stronger for unemployed youth as this might compensate for the lack of resources and motivations stemming from their situation of exclusion from the labor market.

While involvement in voluntary associations represents a well-established research tradition, the role of social relations outside the associational life has remained largely overlooked in this field. To be sure, one of the seminal studies in the political behavior literature examines this aspect (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948) and more recent works in the same research tradition have pointed to the impact of families, friends, workplaces, and communities on political choices and behavior (Zuckerman 2005), but works on social capital have not paid much attention to it. There are important studies of the role of social networks for insertion into the labor market, including the influential article by Granovetter (1973), but the connection to political participation has seldom been examined. Yet, particularly for socially excluded people, social networks might be a crucial source of social capital as well as other important resources not only to find a job, but also to become politically engaged. In particular, social networks may play a role through the discussion of political issues as they transmit and give access to broader political debates and opinions (Beck et al. 2002; Mcclurg 2003).

Following an argument similar to the one developed by proponents of the social capital perspective, we hypothesize that unemployed youth are more inclined to participate politically when they have frequent social contacts. In particular, we think that friends should play an important role in this regard as they are more likely to engage in political discussions and have a stronger persuasion power. However, we also expect broader networks of acquaintances to be important for they expose youngsters to multiple opinions and opportunities for recruitment in political activities. In addition, we suggest that participation in social activities offers similar opportunities for political discussions and recruitment. This aspect is meant to capture the involvement of long-term unemployed youth in social activities beyond the spheres of friends and acquaintances. Again, the same arguments apply to employed youth, but here too we may expect social relations, both the frequency of social contacts and the extent of participation in social activities, to play a greater role for the political participation of unemployed youth.

Data and operationalization

Our analysis is based on a telephone survey carried between February and August 2010 on a representative sample of long-term unemployed youth and a control group of regularly employed youth. Both groups include people aged between 18 and 34 residing in the canton of Geneva. Long-term unemployment is defined as having been without a job for at least one year. The sample size for each of the two groups is the following: 95 (unemployed) and 320 (employed). The data were retrieved as part of the EU-funded project "Youth, Unemployment, and Exclusion in Europe: A Multidimensional Approach to Understanding the Conditions and Prospects for Social and Political Integration of Young Unemployed" (YOUNEX). Next we describe the operationalization of the variables included in the analysis: forms of political participation (dependent variables), employment status, associational membership, social contacts, social activities (main independent variables), grievances, political attitudes, and the sociodemographic control variables.

Political participation is measured following a standard approach consisting in asking respondents to mention whether they participated in a number of political activities in the 12 months prior to the interview.[2] This question was used to distinguish between three main forms of participation (see Teorell et al. 2007 for a discussion): contacting activities (contact politicians, government officials, the media, a solicitor or judicial body); consumer activities (boycott or buy products for political reasons); and protest activities (wear or display a badge, participate in demonstrations, illegal or violent actions).

The employment status is given by belonging to one of the two groups being compared: long-term unemployed and employed youth. Long-term unemployed have been without a job and looking for one for a year or more, whereas employed youth have had an open-ended contract for at least one year. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic composition of these groups, indicating whether cross-group differences are statistically significant. We find a higher percentage of foreigners than expected among the unemployed. Furthermore, the relationship between employment status and nationality is significant. As far as age is concerned, we include respondents up to the age of 34 in order to take into account youth as a transition period, one in which individuals enter the labor market, gain financial independence, live on their own, and start their own family (Van de Velde 2008). Comparing the median age within both groups, as well as the first and last quartile, we find that employed youngsters are significantly older than the long-term unemployed youth. Finally, there are also differences among the groups with respect to education. Overall, the unemployed have a lower level of education. In particular, there are more unemployed who have stopped after mandatory education and fewer than expected who have reached tertiary education. Nevertheless, we should stress that in our sample more than 20 percent of the unemployed have a tertiary level of education and have been unemployed for a year or more. The differences between the two groups with regard to educational attainments are statistically significant as shown by the chi square test.

Three variables capture the concept social capital: associational membership, social contacts, and social activities. Firstly, we asked respondents about their membership in

[2] Question wording: "There are different ways of trying to improve things in society or to help prevent things from going wrong. In the following, we name some political activities, for each of them could you please tell me if you have done it during the last 12 months?" The political activities are the following: contacted a politician; contacted a national or local government official; worn or displayed a badge, sticker or poster; taken part in a public demonstration; boycotted certain products; deliberately bought certain products for political reasons; contacted the media; contacted a solicitor or a judicial body for non-personal reasons; participated in an illegal action (e.g. blockade, building occupation); participated in a violent action (e.g. violent demonstration, physical attack).

Table 1: Sociodemographic composition of the two groups (percentages or quartiles)

	Unemployed	Employed
Sex		
Male	51.6	51.4
Female	48.4	48.6
N	95	317
Chi square = 0.001, p = 0.978		
Nationality		
Swiss	49.5	59.9
Foreigner	50.5	40.1
N	95	317
Chi square = 3.275, p = 0.070		
Age		
First quartile	23	26
Median	27	30
Last quartile	31	33
N	95	317
T-test z = −3.732, p = 0.000		
Education		
Mandatory education	**40.9**	**15.0**
Secondary education	38.7	47.1
Tertiary tertiary	**20.4**	**37.9**
N	93	306
Chi square = 30.141, p = 0.000		

Notes: Figures in bold show adjusted residuals higher than ± 1.96. Adjusted residuals are distributed normally with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. They allow to see which cells are significantly different from one another (similar to the chi-square for the overall cross tabulation). When adjusted residuals have an absolute value higher than 2 the relationship is significant (the cut-off point being ±1.96 for a 95 percent confidence interval).

different kinds of associations and we added up the number of associations one is a member of, regardless of the type of organizations.[3] Based on that, we created a dummy variable distinguishing between those who are not members of associations and those who are members of one or more associations. Secondly, the measure of social contacts is based on two questions asking about the frequency of contacts with friends and acquaintances.[4] For the regression analysis we created a categorical variable based on the frequency of contacts with both friends and acquaintances. Thirdly, we include a measure of the frequency of social activities as a self-evaluation of respondents in comparison to other persons of their age.[5]

[3] Question wording: ''There are different ways of participating in social and political life, therefore we would like to ask some questions about your personal involvement. In the following, we name some different types of organizations, for each of them could you please tell me if you are/were a member?'' The types of organizations are the following: trade union, religious organization, cooperative, social movement organization, other civil society organization. All the respondents said either that they are members or not, that is, there are no ''was a member'' answer).

[4] Question wording: ''During the past month, how often have you met socially with friends (respectively acquaintances) not living in your household?'' Answers were coded as less than weekly, weekly, or daily.

[5] Question wording: ''Compared to other people of your age, how often would you say you take part in social activities?'' Answers were coded as less active than most, as active as most, or more active than most.

Since we are dealing with people who are excluded from the labor market, it is important to control for the effect of subjective grievances. Specifically, we include in our models three indicators of the potential consequences of youngsters' exclusion from the labor market: perceived financial difficulties, overall life satisfaction, and satisfaction with economic governance. There is little doubt that joblessness may cause financial difficulties (Rantakeisu 1999), but do such financial difficulties affect individual engagement in different forms of participation? A similar question can be asked for life satisfaction: unemployment can reduce the individual's life satisfaction (Clark, 1994; Winkelmann 1998), but would this affect political participation? In addition, we control for the effect of the perception respondents have of the way in which government deals with the economy, poverty, unemployment, and precarious employment. The first indicators is based on a measure of feelings about present income,[6] the second one is measured through a question on happiness,[7] and for the third one we created a scale of satisfaction with how the government is dealing with issues related to the economy, poverty, and the labor market.[8]

Finally, we control for the effect of two indicators of political attitudes, measured following standard practice: political interest and political efficacy. Political interest is measured through a question asking whether the respondent is interested or not in politics and political efficacy rests on a question about external efficacy.[9]

Do unemployed and employed youth display different levels of social capital and political participation?

The first question we address in our analysis deals with the levels of social capital and political participation displayed by unemployed youth. To address this question we compare long-term unemployed and employed youth on our key dependent and independent variables. Table 2 shows the levels of participation of the two groups in three kinds of political activities. We see that the unemployed and employed youth differ significantly only on consumer activities, with employed youth being more active than unemployed youth. The difference between both groups is statistically significant and it is worth noting that this form is the most common among the youngsters we interviewed. Overall, about one third participate in consumer actions, while participation in protest and contacting is much lower. The weaker engagement of unemployed youth in consumer activities may be linked to their lower purchase power. In the case of contacting and protest activities, we find no significant differences across the two groups.

Moving to the social capital variables, shown in table 3, we find that unemployed youth are not less involved in voluntary associations than employed youth. People in both groups

[6] Question wording: ''Which of the following descriptions comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?'' Answers were coded as finding it difficult to cope on present income or not.

[7] Question wording: ''Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?'' Answer were coded on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means extremely unhappy and 10 extremely happy.

[8] Question wording: ''Could you tell me how satisfied are you with the way the Swiss government is dealing with the following issues?'' Possible answers: scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means extremely dissatisfied and 10 extremely satisfied. We used the following items to create a scale of satisfaction with ''economic governance'': economy, poverty, unemployment, precarious employment. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is. 0.786.

[9] Question wording for political interest: ''How interested would you say you are in politics?'' Answers were coded as interested or not interested. Question wording for political efficacy: ''To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'parties are only interested in our votes, not in our opinions'.'' Answers were coded as disagree or agree.

Table 2: Participation of unemployed and employed youth in different forms of political participation (percentages)

	Unemployed	Employed
Contacting activities		
Contacted a politician, a national or local government official, the media and/or a judicial body	11.6	13.6
N	95	317
Chi square = 0.252; p = 0.615		
Consumer activities		
Bought or refused to buy products for political reasons	**22.1**	**37.2**
N	95	317
Chi square = 7.474; p = 0.006		
Protest activities		
Wore a badge, participated in a demonstration, an illegal, and/or violent action	20.0	18.3
N	95	317
Chi square = 0.140; p = 0.709		

Notes: Cronbach alpha: contacting = 0.644; consumer actions = 0.541; protest = 0.437. Figures in bold show adjusted residuals higher than ± 1.96. Adjusted residuals are distributed normally with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. They allow to see which cells are significantly different from one another (similar to the chi-square for the overall cross tabulation). When adjusted residuals have an absolute value higher than 2 the relationship is significant (the cut-off point being ±1.96 for a 95 percent confidence interval).

Table 3: Measures of social capital of unemployed and employed youth (percentages)

	Unemployed	Employed
Associational membership		
Member of one or more associations	42.6	39.8
N	94	314
Chi square = 0.226; p = 0.360		
Social contacts		
Less than weekly contacts with friends and acquaintances	17.0	11.4
Weekly contacts with friends and acquaintances	45.7	45.1
Daily contacts with friends and acquaintances	37.2	43.5
N	94	315
T-test = 2.462; p = 0.292		
Social activities		
Less active than most people of same age	**34.4**	**21.8**
As active as other people of same age	52.7	58.2
More active than other people of same age	12.9	19.9
N	93	316
Chi square = 6.925; p = 0.031		

Notes: Figures in bold show adjusted residuals higher than ± 1.96. Adjusted residuals are distributed normally with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. They allow to see which cells are significantly different from one another (similar to the chi-square for the overall cross tabulation). When adjusted residuals have an absolute value higher than 2 the relationship is significant (the cut-off point being ±1.96 for a 95 percent confidence interval).

are predominantly members of no associations. However, a sizable amount of unemployed youth as well as of employed youth is member of one or more associations. The figures also suggest that unemployed youth may be more isolated socially, not because they have less frequent contacts with friends and acquaintances, but rather due to a reduced participation in social activities. Thus, we see that there are statistical differences between the two groups with regard to how often they participate in social activities in comparison to other people their age, but not on the frequency of contacts with friends and acquaintances.

Looking at grievances in table 4, in contrast, we find that the long-term unemployment youth face more financial difficulties, are also less satisfied with their life on the whole, and are more dissatisfied with how the government deals with economic policies. On all three counts we find statistically significant differences across the two groups. Hence grievances could support engagement in certain forms of political participation by unemployed youth. In particular, we expect political grievances to be important for participation in protest, and personal grievances to impact on contacting elected bodies and public actors. We measure the predictive power of both the social capital variables and the grievances in our logistic regression below.

Does social capital favor the political participation of unemployed and employed youth?

Our second question concerns the impact of social capital on political participation. Since our dependent variables are measured as dummies, we use logistic regression to estimate the effects of social capital and other variables on political participation (either youngsters participated or not in the different kinds of political activities). We show three separate models, one for each form of participation. All three models include variables on employment status, social capital, grievances, political attitudes, and the sociodemographic controls.[10] The results are shown in table 5. Membership in voluntary associations appears as an important predictor of participation in all three kinds of political activities. The associational involvement of youngsters supports their political participation, confirming the wealth of studies showing the importance of the social capital stemming from voluntary associations for becoming involved in politics (Baglioni 2008; Mahoney and Van Deth 2010; Maloney and Rossteuscher 2009).

While the social capital that can be drawn from involvement in voluntary associations seems to play the role that was observed for other ''socially excluded'' groups such as migrants (Berger et al. 2004; Eggert and Giugni 2010; Jacobs et al. 2004; Morales and Giugni 2011; Tillie 2004; Togeby 2004), that which could be derived from social relations outside associations does not seem to matter as much. None of the effects concerning the frequency of contacts with friends and acquaintances is statistically significant. Rather than supporting the social capital perspective, this finding is in line with the cross-pressures hypothesis developed by Mutz (2002) according to which an extended interpersonal network can results in multiple, countervailing political positions and opinions that would not

[10] We tested for multicollinearity in each model, and scores for tolerance and VIF remain within an acceptable range. In addition, it is important to recall the identification problem faced by cross-sectional studies of political participation. In our case, this would be that the same characteristics that help youngsters to find a job could make them more likely to participate in politics, creating the risk of a spurious relationship between employment status and political participation due to an omitted variable. This problem can be addressed through the panel data or an instrumental variable approach. Since we do not find a systematic lower participation by the unemployed and the employment status has no effect on political participation, we decided not to adopt such an approach.

Table 4: Measures of subjective grievances for unemployed and employed youth (percentages or means)

	Unemployed	Employed
Financial difficulties		
Feelings it is difficult to cope on present income	**35.8**	**8.2**
N	95	317
Chi square = 44.711; p = 0.000		
Life satisfaction		
Mean on a scale from 0 to 10	7.22	8.13
Standard error	2.26	1.57
N	94	316
T-test = 19.359; p = 0.000		
Satisfaction with economic governance		
Mean on a scale from 0 to 40	18.99	22.32
Standard error	8.04	5.96
N	91	291
T-test = 11.915; p = 0.001		

Notes: The scale of satisfaction with economic governance is based on questions about satisfaction with how government deals with economy, poverty, unemployment, and precarious employment. Cronbach alpha = 0.786.

favor more political participation (see also McAdam and Paulsen 1993). The same can be said of the social activities variable, which does not display any significant effect. Participating more in social activities than most people of the same age does not produce social capital that spills over into political participation, nor does the opposite effect come from being less active that other people of the same age.

Associational involvement is not the only variable that significantly affects the political participation of youth across all three forms. The same applies to one of our three indicators of grievances, namely satisfaction with economic governance. We find that satisfaction with the way in which the economy is governed strongly diminishes the engagement in contacting, consumer, and protest activities. Of the other two indicators, only the overall life satisfaction displays a significant effect on one form of participation, namely contacting activities. This means that we observe an impact of both personal and political grievances favoring this form of participation as being dissatisfied with one's personal life and with how the government handles economic issues both increase engagement in contacting activities

In contrast, we observe a limited impact of the two indicators of political attitudes included in the analysis. The single significant effect that we observe concerns political interest, which increases participation in protest activities. The fact that political interest has a poor predicting power in our models may be linked to the fact that the indicators of subjective grievances also capture the political interest of youngsters to some extent. Especially for the unemployed youth, those who are interested in politics are also more likely to have a political understanding of their joblessness, which in turn makes them dissatisfied with how the government handles economic and employment-related issues. The other political attitude variable, political efficacy, has no significant effect on any of the activities studied here. This seems to be in contrast with previous work on the individual engagement in social movements, which points to the role of the perceived effectiveness of action on

Table 5: Logistic regression on unemployed youth political participation (unstandardized coefficients)

	Contacting activities		Consumer activities		Protest activities	
	B	S.E.	B	S.E.	B	S.E.
Employment status						
Unemployed	−0.881	0.554	−0.744*	0.366	−0.449	0.406
Social capital						
Associational membership	0.815*	0.375	0.839***	0.257	1.440***	0.323
Social contacts (ref. weekly contacts)						
Less than weekly contacts	−2.320	1.190	−0.729	0.447	−0.061	0.574
Daily contacts	0.395	0.380	−0.187	0.278	0.511	0.330
Social activities (ref. as active)						
Less active	−0.371	0.507	0.264	0.319	−0.482	0.422
More active	0.785	0.419	0.597	0.329	0.391	0.371
Grievances						
Overall life satisfaction	−2.155*	1.072	−0.327	0.776	0.187	0.912
Financial hardship	0.583	0.547	−0.236	0.415	0.795	0.437
Satisfaction with economic governance	−3.005*	1.185	−2.279**	0.836	−2.779**	0.987
Political attitudes						
Political interest	0.634	0.396	0.496	0.272	0.700*	0.319
Political efficacy	−0.399	0.398	−0.389	0.275	0.517	0.323
Sociodemographic controls						
Female	−0.847*	0.392	0.179	0.266	−0.352	0.322
Swiss	−0.533	0.375	0.629*	0.267	−0.007	0.317
Age	2.002*	0.859	1.560**	0.559	−1.300*	0.627
Education levels (ref. tertiary education)						
Mandatory education	−1.008	0.626	−0.440	0.407	−0.384	0.486
Secondary education	−0.304	0.400	−0.326	0.285	0.031	0.353
Intercept	−0.211	1.379	−0.728	0.980	−0.740	1.157
N	363		363		363	
Nagelkerke R squared	29.4%		25.3%		23.3%	
Correctly predicting abstention	−1.3%		−12.8%		−3.1%	
Correctly predicting participation	+21.7%		+43.8%		+18.8%	

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

individual participation in social movements (Klandermans 1984; Marwell and Oliver 1993; McAdam 1986; Opp 1989; Passy and Giugni 2001).

Finally, among the sociodemographic controls, we observe a significant effect of age on all the forms of participation as well as a significant effect of sex on contacting activities and of nationality on consumer activities. Women and the younger respondents are less likely to engage in contacting activities, while foreigners and the younger respondents are less likely to engage in consumer activities. Moreover, the older respondents are less likely to protest. Quite surprisingly, education, which is a variable that typically impinge upon political participation in important ways, has no effect whatsoever in the models predicting these three forms of participation. The focus on a specific age group might be at least in part responsible for that as the distribution of respondents on this variable tends to be more homogeneous than in the overall population.

Table 6: Significance test for differences in predicted probabilities of political participation by unemployed and employed youth and associational membership (percentages)

	Unemployed	Employed	F-test
Contacting activities			
Member of no associations	5.4	8.7	F (1, 211) = 2. 762
Member of one or more associations	14.0	21.2	F (1, 148) = 6.170*
Consumer activities			
Member of no associations	12.4	33.7	F (1, 211) = 44.404***
Member of one or more associations	27.2	51.2	F (1, 148) = 25.139***
Protest activities			
Member of no associations	11.3	11.2	F (1, 211) = 0.002
Member of one or more associations	27.4	30.9	F (1, 148) = 1.364

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Is social capital more important for unemployed youth than for employed youth?

The third and final question, once we have seen that social capital does matter, asks whether the latter is especially important for unemployed youth. In other words, we examine whether our social capital variables (associational involvement, social contacts, and social activities) have a stronger impact on the political participation of unemployed youth, therefore compensating for the social exclusion of the former from the labor market. If this holds true, the relationship between the social capital variable of interest and political participation should be different for the two groups. This analysis is done by testing the differences between unemployed and employed youth in the predicted probabilities of participating in each of the three kinds of political activities. The predicted probabilities used in these tables have been calculated based on the logistic regressions shown in table 5. Hence they take into account all the variables included in our models. We ran separate F-tests between the unemployed and employed youth for each category of interest (first those who are members or not of associations, then based on the frequency of social contacts, and finally on the frequency of social activities) and tested for statistically significant differences between the means of the two groups with regard to the predicted probabilities of participating in contacting, consumers, or protest activities. The results are shown in tables 6, 7, and 8.[11]

Table 6 shows the predicted probabilities of participating in contacting, consumers, and protest activities for unemployed and employed youth who are members, respectively nonmembers of voluntary associations, our first measure of social capital. First of all, the results reiterate the impact of associational involvement as respondents who are members of at least one association have systematically more chances to engage in all three forms of participation. This holds for both unemployed and employed youth. The most relevant findings for the present purpose, however, concern the differences between the two groups in relation of associational membership across the three forms of participation. In this regard, we observe, firstly, that unemployed youth are significantly less likely to participate in contacting activities when they are members of one or more associations, while the difference between the two groups is not significant for those who are not members. This suggests that

[11] In addition to the analysis of predicted probabilities, we also tested for interaction effects by including interaction terms in the logistic regressions. Strengthening our findings, none of the interactions between employment status and each of our three measures of social capital appeared as statistically significant.

Table 7: Significance test for differences in predicted probabilities of political participation by unemployed and employed youth and social contacts (percentages)

	Unemployed	Employed	F
Contacting activities			
Less than weekly contacts	1.4	2.5	F (1, 43) = 0.361
Weekly contacts	6.4	12.7	F (1, 160) = 8.866**
Daily contacts	16.2	17.6	F (1, 154) = 0.182
Consumer activities			
Less than weekly contacts	20.1	23.1	F (1, 43) = 0.296
Weekly contacts	20.6	40.1	F (1, 160) = 36.135***
Daily contacts	24.9	37.1	F (1, 154) = 8.873**
Protest activities			
Less than weekly contacts	14.1	9.9	F (1, 43) = 1.550
Weekly contacts	14.9	15.6	F (1, 160) = 0.108
Daily contacts	25.2	24.9	F (1, 154) = 0.006

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

associational membership makes a difference between unemployed and employed youth. Yet, the predicted probabilities of participating are higher for the latter, which points in the direction opposite to the hypothesis that associational membership helps reducing the gap in participation among the two groups. Secondly, the predicted probabilities of participation in consumer activities, which we previously found to be the only form of participation displaying a statistically significant lower engagement of the long-term unemployed youth, are significantly different regardless of whether one is member or not of associations. Therefore, we cannot conclude that associational membership reduces the gap between the two groups, which remains in favor of employed youth. Thirdly, both groups show similar predicted probabilities to participate in protest activities when they are members and when they are not members of associations. No significant differences can be observed in this case. In other words, the, chances of participating in this kind of political activities raise considerably for those who are members of at least one association, be they unemployed or employed youth. Again, this suggests that associational membership is not more important for unemployed youth than it is for regularly employed youth. Quite on the contrary, being involved in voluntary associations is important for both groups.

Table 7 shows the predicted probabilities of taking part in contacting, consumers, and protest activities depending on the frequency of contacts with friends and acquaintances, our second measure of social capital. The findings largely reflect those concerning associational membership. Overall, they do not provide strong evidence of a differential impact of social contacts across the two groups. However, for contacting and consumers activities, there is some indication that the social capital arising from social contacts play some role. On the one hand, unemployed youth who have weekly contacts with friends and acquaintances are significantly less likely to engage in contacting activities, while those who have less or more frequent contacts with them do not differ from the employed youth. On the other hand, both unemployed and employed youth who have less than weekly contacts with friends and acquaintances do not differ in the predicted probabilities of participating in consumer activities, while among those who have either weekly or daily contacts with them, the employed have significantly higher probabilities of participation in consumers' activities. Finally, when it comes to protest activities no significant difference can be observed: the

Table 8: Significance test for differences in predicted probabilities of political participation by unemployed and employed youth and social activities (percentages)

	Unemployed	Employed	F
Contacting activities			
Less active than most	11.0	10.0	F (1, 85) = 0.108
As active as most	6.3	11.2	F (1, 206) = 6.087*
More active than most	16.8	25.0	F (1, 66) = 1.730
Consumer activities			
Less active than most	26.0	41.9	F (1, 85) = 16.417***
As active as most	15.7	32.0	F (1, 206) = 28.902***
More active than most	37.3	45.6	F (1, 66) = 1.398
Protest activities			
Less active than most	16.7	12.4	F (1, 85) = 2.710
As active as most	17.5	17.8	F (1, 206) = 0.028
More active than most	27.4	29.4	F (1, 66) = 0.131

Notes: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

predicted probabilities of engaging in this form of participation are very similar for unemployed and employed youth. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that only a minority of them engages in protest.

Table 8 shows the predicted probabilities of engaging in contacting, consumers, and protest activities depending on the participation in social activities. Concerning contacting activities, the results are similar to those for social contacts. The unemployed youth who are less and more active than most people of their age do not differ significantly from the employed youth participating in social activities to the same extent. However, the unemployed youth who say that they are as socially active as most people their age are significantly less likely to participate in contacting activities than the employed youth who are socially as active as they are. The situation is somehow different for consumer activities as the unemployed youth differ significantly from the employed youth when they are less or as active as most people of their age in social activities. However, when they are more active, they are as engaged as employed youth in consumer activities. Finally, we once again do not find any statistically significant difference between the two groups on protest activities. In this case, unemployed and employed youth who share similar participation in social activities also have the same predicted probabilities of engaging in protest activities.

In sum, the answer to our third question is clearly a negative one: social capital, be it in the form of associational membership or social contacts and activities, does not matter more for unemployed than for regularly employed youth. To be sure, we found some evidence that social capital might help the socially excluded to become more active in politics, especially in the less contentious forms of participation such as contacting and consumer activities. Overall, however, social capital seems a resource that can benefit everybody, regardless of their employment status, particularly so when it comes to more contentious forms of participation such as protest activities.

Conclusion

In this paper we looked at some connections between the social capital of long-term unemployed youth and their engagement in three forms of non-electoral participation: contacting,

consumer, and protest activities. The main focus of our analysis has been on the role of social capital originating from formal involvement in voluntary associations and from more informal social relations. To study the impact of these types of social capital on the political participation of unemployed youth, we have addressed three related questions: Do unemployed and employed youth display different levels of social capital and political participation? Does social capital favors the political participation of unemployed and employed youth? Is social capital more important for unemployed youth than for employed youth?

Perhaps quite surprisingly, especially in the light of works that have stressed the obstacles faced by unemployed to engage politically (Bagguley 1991, 1992; Chabanet 2008; Chabanet and Faniel 2011; Faniel 2004; Royall 1997), we found, to begin with, that the employment status does not have a strong impact on the political participation of youth. More specifically, long-term unemployed youth in Switzerland are no less engaged than employed youth in two quite different forms of participation such as contacting and protest activities. The only difference between the two groups concerns consumer activities, the long-term unemployed youth being less likely to engage in this form of political participation. This effect remains statistically significant in the regression analysis when controlling for indicators of social capital, subjective grievances, political attitudes, and sociodemographic characteristics. Similar findings were found for our three measures of social capital: unemployed youth are by no means less integrated than regularly employed youth, at least as far as associational membership is concerned. Some evidence of less frequent contacts with friends and acquaintances on the part of unemployed youth can be observed, but the difference with employed youth is not significant. In contrast, we see that unemployed youth are participating significantly less in social activities.

We then tested the predictive power of social capital variables through regression analysis, controlling for the effect of alternative sets of predictors, and found a strong impact of associational membership, but not of social contacts and activities, on youth participation in contacting, consumer, and protest activities. Our analysis thus suggests that associational involvement as well as the social capital that can be derived from it impinges upon the political participation of both unemployed and employed youth. Such a strong and consistent impact of associational involvement across all three forms of participation reflects previous studies on social capital, especially those recently dealing with migrants (Berger et al. 2004; Eggert and Giugni 2010; Jacobs et al. 2004; Morales and Giugni 2011; Tille 2004; Togeby 2004).

The most challenging finding, however, is in our view the one referring to the differential impact of social capital on the political participation of unemployed and employed youth, or at least what we expected to be a differential impact. Based both on the literature on the role of social relations for resource-poor groups and the works on the impact of voluntary associations for the political participation and integration of migrants, we may have expected social capital to be especially important for long-term unemployed youth. We tested this hypothesis both for associational membership as well as for social contacts and activities, but could find only limited evidence of such a differential impact. Overall, unemployed and employed youth behave in quite a similar way with regard to these two social capital variables. In particular, associational membership, as shown in previous work, is indeed important and stimulates political participation in the three forms we have distinguished. However, this effect is not greater for the unemployed than for those who have a regular job, but affects all youngsters in the same way. This might be due to the fact that the political participation of the young depends on factors other than socialization through work.

This finding might seem at odds with those of recent works arguing and showing that the political participation of migrants benefits from the social capital that can be drawn from involvement in voluntary associations. To our knowledge, however, these works do not test for a possible differential impact of associational involvement on the participation of migrants as compared to other groups, most notably nationals. Either they focus on migrants only or they do not distinguish between the two groups. Therefore, they end up showing that associational involvement is indeed important and favors political participation in general, but fail to show that it is particularly important for migrants themselves. Here we have provided evidence for this more general impact of social capital in the case of long-term unemployed youth in Geneva. In addition, we have shown that such an apparently complex relation between unemployment situation, social capital, and political participation varies in part from one form of participation to the other.

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