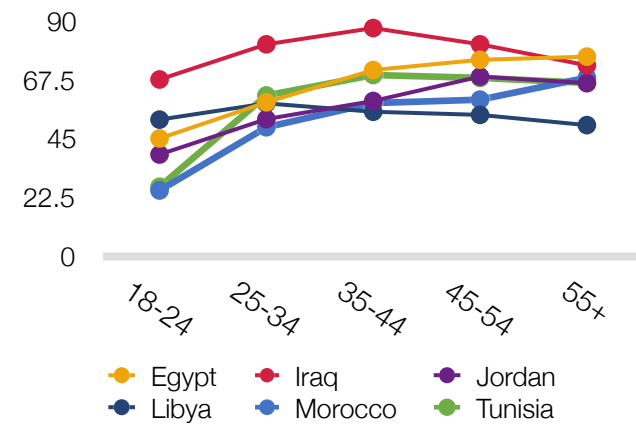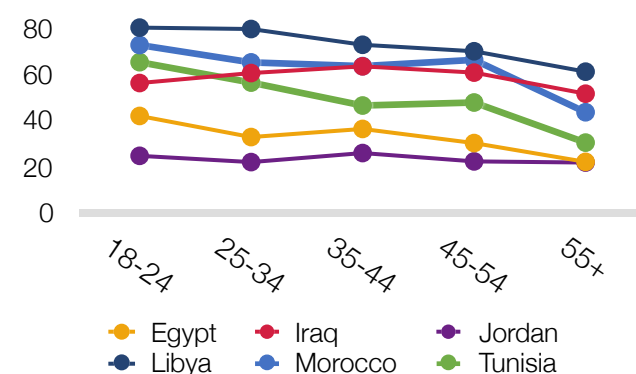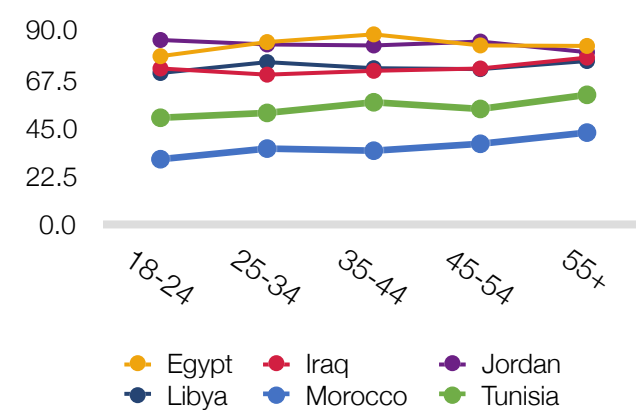**FIGURE 8: PROPORTION WHO VOTED IN THE LAST ELECTION, BY COUNTRY AND AGE GROUP**

FIGURE 9: % SAYING THEY WOULD TAKE PART IN DEMONSTRATIONS, BY COUNTRY AND AGE GROUP

FIGURE 10: % AGREEING THAT MEN MAKE BETTER LEADERS THAN WOMEN, BY COUNTRY AND AGE GROUP.

Modernisation theory would predict that those who have grown up in states which are beginning to develop economically and socially would have more liberal and socially inclusive attitudes than their elders, but this does not appear to be the case in the MENA region. Taking gender attitudes as an example, five questions illustrate the extent to which discrimination is still taken for granted, and none of them shows the youngest generation as much more liberal than

the oldest one. The belief that men make better leaders than women is illustrated by country in Fig. 10, where only 30-40% of people approve this statement in Morocco but over 80% in Egypt and Libya. There is a very slight increase as we move from the left to the right of the graph, but not enough to provide evidence of serious liberalisation of attitudes with respect to gender roles and competencies. The same is true for whether women can be president or prime minister of a Muslim country and whether they can be allowed to go abroad unaccompanied. There is no age trend in the figures for belief that university is more important for young men than young women (affirmed by less than a third, even in Libya). The same is true for the belief that status/family law should be based on the shari'a, believed by more than 60% of Egyptians and Tunisians, nearly 90% in Morocco and Iraq and over 90% in Libya and Jordan.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The romantic story of a wave of Arab Uprisings clamouring for liberal democracy, powered by youth and connected by new media of communication, is not entirely wrong. However, it is not representative of the range of support and participation in any of the six countries which the ArabTrans survey covered. It is true that young people were over-represented among the participants and that the social media were a useful forum for discussion, communication and organisation, but those on the streets and their supporters covered a wide spectrum of social classes and age groups, and other existing organisations – opposition parties, trade unions – played an important organisational role in many countries. It is not true that procedural democracy was the first aim of the protests, nor even freedom of speech. Although these were indeed targets for change, and in all countries the protestors forced the replacement of existing regimes or at least extracted concessions from their autocratic rulers, the fight against state corruption and the demand for social justice were more fundamental as drivers of the Uprisings. (By 'social justice' we mean more decent jobs and better social provision - education, health services, security from sudden of life-stage disruptions of income.) The disruption by two decades of neoliberal 'structural adjustment' of the 'authoritarian bargain' of decent jobs in exchange for toleration of autocracy was

particularly an issue for the young attempting the transition from school/university to the labour market and full adult status. However, it was also an issue for parents concerned that they could not count on decent education and decent employment for their children.

In theory, structural adjustment should have limited the size and powers of the autocratic state and created employment in a private sector which was to a large extent independent of the state. In practice what it led to, in all cases, was the decline of the state as a supplier of decent jobs to young people joining the labour market and the growth instead of a 'crony' elite close to government (including former government members) who took on privatised sectors of government in exchange for profit, preferential access to resources and permissions, and influence over the direction of government. These newcomers accepted little responsibility for providing the jobs the nation needed; the new elite was part of the nation's politics, not a contributor to its socioeconomic wellbeing.

As a result, the theoretical conditions for democratisation were not fulfilled. In theory, young people who grow up in developing economies, with better rewards than their parents and grandparents and more social as well as economic security should become more individualised and less defensive in their orientation, more liberal in terms of their tolerance of diversity, more attuned to the importance of human rights for everyone, seeing a greater role for themselves in the state than their parents saw and expecting a greater role in their own governance. As new generations who have grown up with these attitudes and expectations replace their elders in the political forum we would have expected a rising tide of liberalisation, secularisation and democratisation. In the MENA region's developing countries this tide has not come in, however, because the socioeconomic conditions for it have not been fulfilled. There are some small signs of increased secularisation but few signs of the liberalisation of values that a democracy requires.

There are no easy recommendations that can be made for action that will fix these prob-

lems. The best that can be offered is a list of areas of concern.

▶Corruption has to be eliminated from the public sector. States which succeed in building decent societies for their citizens, in the sense in which we would use the term in Europe and the developed West and North, need to be cohesive and inclusive, and a corrupt state is neither.

▶The practical problems of young people trying to enter the labour market need to be addressed. This probably means not just the creation of jobs of all kinds, or even of decent jobs, but rethinking donor partners' attitudes to economic organisation, to give the state greater powers to treat the economy as a social as well as an economic process – plus, of course, the willingness of governments to do so and their capacity to plan for a cohesive and inclusive society powered by decent employment.

▶The problem with employment is not confined to youth, however; more decent jobs need to be created across the age ranges, and access to them needs to become a question of merit and capacity more than networking and ascribed characteristics.

▶Given MENA's recent experience of elected governments, procedural democracy and political rights may be less important in the short term than the establishment of social justice and assuring citizens of social and economic rights.

▶Legal and structural changes need to be implemented which limit or abolish discrimination against whole sectors of the population. No society has become a successful and sustainable liberal democracy while still treating its women as second-class citizens and considering them as in essence property, for instance, and we have shown that gender attitudes across MENA have not changed much from such a position.

ArabTrans

The Arab Transformations

Policy Brief 10

Youth and the Arab Uprisings: the story of the rising tide

Introduction: a story of youth in the Arab Uprisings

One common story of the Arab Uprisings has young people at the core of protests which were relatively leaderless and organised through social media. While the wave of demonstrations across the MENA region was sudden and took commentators and governments alike by surprise, nonetheless some kind of change had been expected. Political science had been expecting a change in values and norms of public action, matching the change observed in many other locations. Elsewhere it had been found that those who had grown up in a developing society with an expanding economy tended to build new dominant attitudes and develop more liberal, democratic and to some extent individualistic values. This is Modernisation Theory's concept of the 'rising tide': with economic growth and changing relations of production , new cohorts come in at the bottom which take a different set of norms and values for granted. Authoritarian resilience in the form of repression and control of the army and/or police becomes less effective and tends to be replaced by a governance that presents itself as working to fulfil the needs of the populace and as responsive to their wishes – if not democracy, then at least constitutional monarchy or relatively 'benign' dictatorship. The 'democratic deficit' of the MENA

SUMMARY
The romantic story of the 'Arab Spring' as a revolt of young people against autocratic rule and in favour of liberal values does not stand up to analysis using representative survey data. It is true that young people were over-represented among both participants and supporters, but there were plenty of older people there as well, and the protests were aimed less at democratic political rights and more at social justice – more and better jobs and an end to state corruption.
There is little evidence for the 'rising tide' in MENA which has been expected to sweep away authoritarian rule in favour of democratisation as successive younger generations became individualised, liberalised and secularised. 'Structural adjustment' has failed to provide a basis for such a normative change.
Countries also vary a great deal, and the boundary of 'youth' is very fluid.
Fundamental changes are needed, not just in laws and governance but in the norms and social institutions underlying them, before much democracy is to be expected in MENA.

region was that this change did not appear to be occurring there, until 2011.

The problem in the MENA has been governments' failure to deal effectively with and capitalise on the 'youth bulge' – the fact that young

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SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

people are a rising proportion of the population and the dependency ratio is temporarily reduced. The cement of MENA societies was the 'authoritarian contract' – the provision of decent jobs in a loose and expansive public sector, in exchange for tolerance of dictatorial government. From the 1980s the World Bank, the IMF and the major donor partners have encouraged authoritarian rulers to let go of this contract and undergo a process of 'structural adjustment', slimming the public sector and privatising activities in the expectation that they would flourish better in private hands and generate new and better employment. The MENA governments never did quite let go, however. What they did was to encourage and support their friends and clients to take what was on offer in order to enrich themselves while bolstering the power of the state. This meant that the expected growth in jobs never did occur. There were therefore a lot of young people lacking decent jobs or even failing to make the school/labour-force transition at all and a lot of parents who were no longer able to support them in the transition. Nor was political repression eased to compensate. This led, the story runs, to an army of discontented youth and a parental generation prepared to support their protests.

The predominant sources of information on which the 'story' of the Uprisings is based suggested that this process of modernisation and normative change was indeed occurring in the Arab World. However, these sources tended to be qualitative research fieldwork and journalistic investigation, confined mostly to Egypt and Tunisia, which talked to, observed and lived with participants mainly in the major cities and within them tended to pick out those who could converse in English (or sometimes French). Alternatively they used quantitative analysis of survey data, which did provide some support for the patterns noted by qualitative researchers but tended to oversimplify and gloss over internal regional differences: 'pooling' samples from different countries highlighted overall trends more clearly and simply but glossed over a great deal of disparity between them.

This Brief is based on the Arab Transformations (AT) survey which took place in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia in 2014, three years after the Uprisings. Its findings are rather different from what was published from, for example, the Arab Barometer.

Were the participants in fact young?
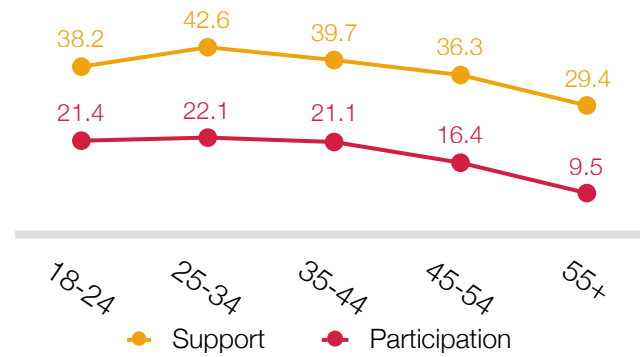
The AT survey confirms that there are age differences in likelihood of being a participant in the Uprisings – in fact, similar patterns are found among the more passive supporters who did not themselves join protests. People in the oldest age group (55+) are under-represented among both participants and supporters – they form a lower proportion of those who protested or supported protest than would be predicted from their size in the population. There is also a marked tendency for younger people to be over-represented. However, protest was not confined to the young: protestors consisted of people of all ages, and even in the oldest age group nearly 10% overall were on the streets and nearly 30% say they were supporters.

FIGURE 2: PARTICIPATION IN THE 2011 UPRISINGS BY COUNTRY AND AGE COHORT, (%)
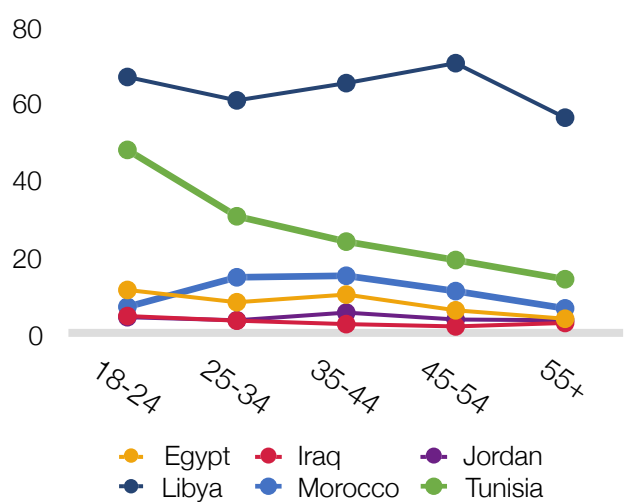
Looking at the six countries individually (Fig. 2), we find that in Tunisia people in the youngest

age-group (18-24) were more than three times as likely to be protestors as those in the oldest group, and the same is true in Egypt, although overall participation was much lower in Egypt. In Morocco, however, the 18-24 group were significantly less likely to be on the streets than the next group up (25-34), so there is a 'youth revolution' only if we expand the boundaries of what is meant by 'young.' There are no significant differences by age in the figures from Libya, Iraq and Jordan, so in half of our six countries the 'youth revolution' story is at best not proven and more probably contradicted by the evidence.

FIGURE 3: SUPPORT FOR THE 2011 UPRISINGS BY COUNTRY AND AGE COHORT, (%)
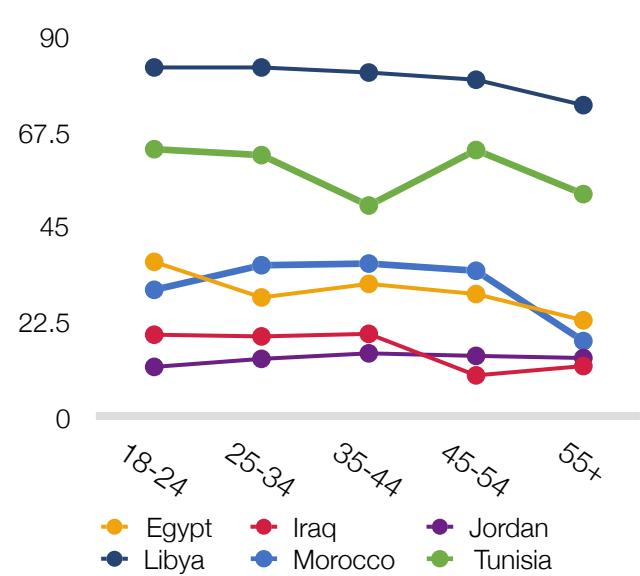
Similarly diverse patterns emerge if we look at the supporters in the six countries (Fig. 3). In Egypt there is something of an overall trend, with the first group significantly higher than the last. In Iraq, those aged 18-44 are significantly more likely to support protests than those aged 45+, and in Morocco those aged 18-54 are more likely supporters than those aged 55+. In Tunisia, the two most over-represented groups are 18-24 and 45-54. There are no significant differences by age in Libya or Jordan.

Thus it is true that in at least some of the countries, and for some definition of 'youth', young people were disproportionately represented among those who protested and perhaps among their supporters as well. They did not dominate, however; both support and activism were spread across the age bands. It is also true that 'new media' played a part in some countries, through their power to spread information

and act as a medium for organisation. To assume, however, that the core of the protests was young, affluent and well-educated computer users would be to do no justice to the role of opposition groups in several countries and also the role of Trade Unions – e.g. in Tunisia.

Were the Uprisings political?

FIGURE 4: REASONS FOR PROTESTING IN 2011 UPRISING, BY AGE COHORTS (%), IN THE POOLED SAMPLE
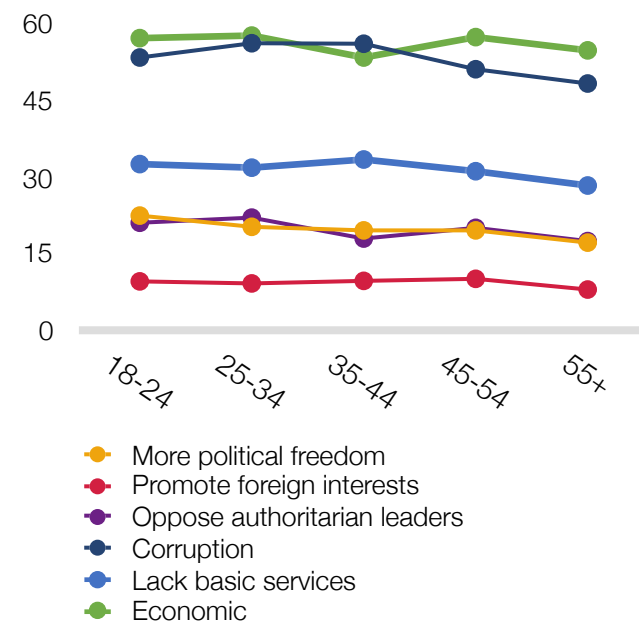

All public protests are always political – they are about governance, control of resource and influence over events – and some of the reasons that were given in the AT survey for being on the streets were about politics as conventionally defined – setting dictatorship and authoritarian power aside, changing governments by free and fair elections, being able to criticise the government without penalty. More people, however, picked economic issues as the most important – economic grievances, lack of access to basic services and necessities, lack of employment. Often the single biggest issue was the level of corruption (Fig. 5 below). Overall there were few interesting differences by age (Fig. 4). There were a few small but significant differences at the country level – in Egypt, for example, the younger age groups were more likely to nominate corruption as an important problem and the oldest group were less likely to select the economic situation – but on the whole the differences are between countries rather than between age-groups.

FIGURE 5: TWO MOST IMPORTANT DRIVERS OF THE UPRISINGS BY COUNTRY (%)
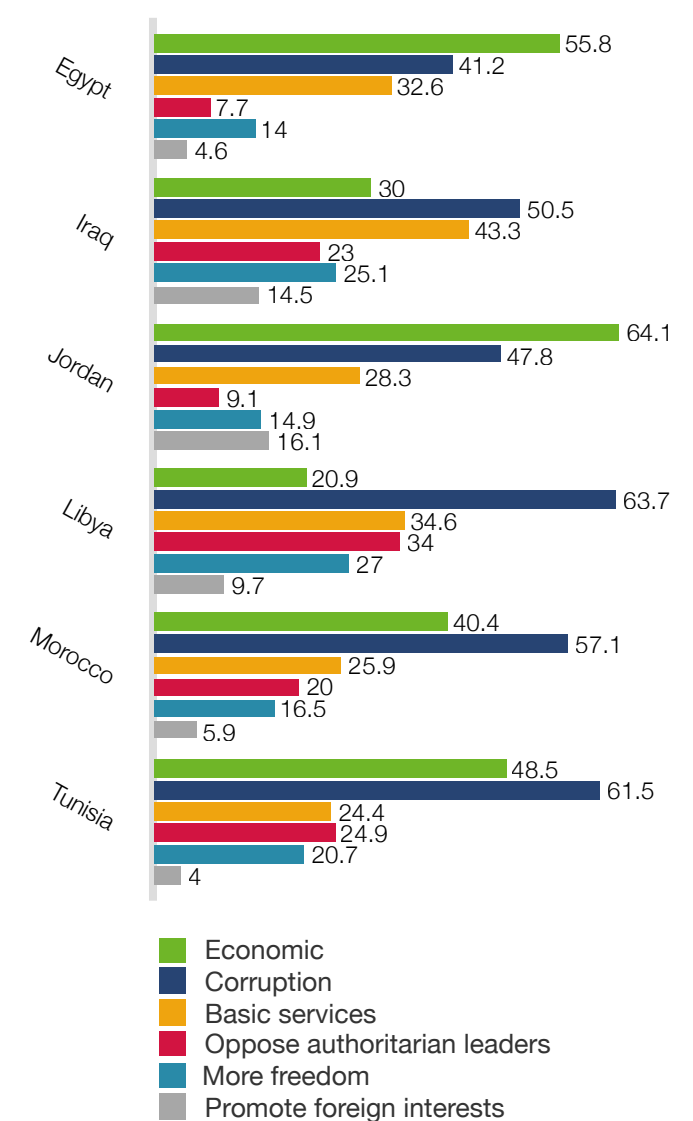

Are attitudes changing? Liberalisation and secularisation

FIGURE 6: PROPORTION DESCRIBING THEMSELVES AS 'RELIGIOUS', BY COUNTRY AND AGE GROUP
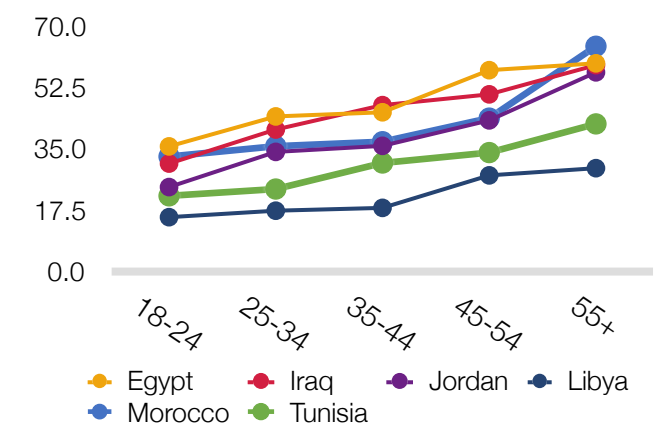
Like the Arab Barometer, the AT survey shows less involvement in religion among the younger age groups than the older ones – fewer young people describe themselves as more than 'somewhat' religious. There are large differences between the countries – Egypt and Iraq, at 40-50%, have far more self-described religious people than Tunisia and Libya, at the other end of the scale with respectively 21% and 32% – but the pattern of decline by age is much the same in all countries (Fig. 6). However, there is no trend by age in identifying oneself as a Muslim rather than by nationality, though there are substantial differences by country, and the same is true for other markers of secularism or religiosity – agreeing that religion is a private matter to be kept separate from socioeconomic life, feeling that religious leaders should not meddle with elections nor advise government, preference for a religious party, or even the belief that the Shari'a should be the only law.

FIGURE 7: INTEREST IN POLITICS BY COUNTRY AND AGE GROUP, %
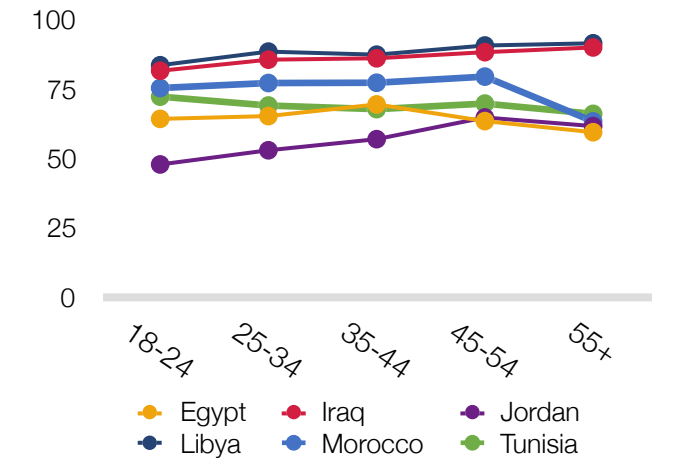
The youngest age group are less interested in politics than their elders in two or perhaps three of the countries (Jordan, Egypt and perhaps Morocco), though there is a falling off as we approach the oldest age group – see Fig. 7. On the other hand, they are more interested in Tunisia, and there is no trend by age in Iraq or Libya. They also appear to be less prepared to vote in elections, or, at least, in the most recent one in their country (Fig. 8), though, again, in three of the six countries it is the middle-aged who are most likely to vote, with a decline at the top of the age scale. It is the youngest, however, who are most likely to say that they would take part in political actions – demonstrations or protest marches, for example – or that they have already done so (Fig. 9), except in Jordan, where there is no significant trend by age.