GULBENKIAN
GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH
PLATFORM

Economic crisis, contextual factors and mental health in Portugal

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- Reporting on results related to the SMAILE project (based on paper with Maria Matias, Ana Moura, Adriana Loureiro and Paula Santana)
- focus on the unemployment – mental health relationship
- triple interaction: unemployment – age group – education level
- What can we learn this triple interaction?

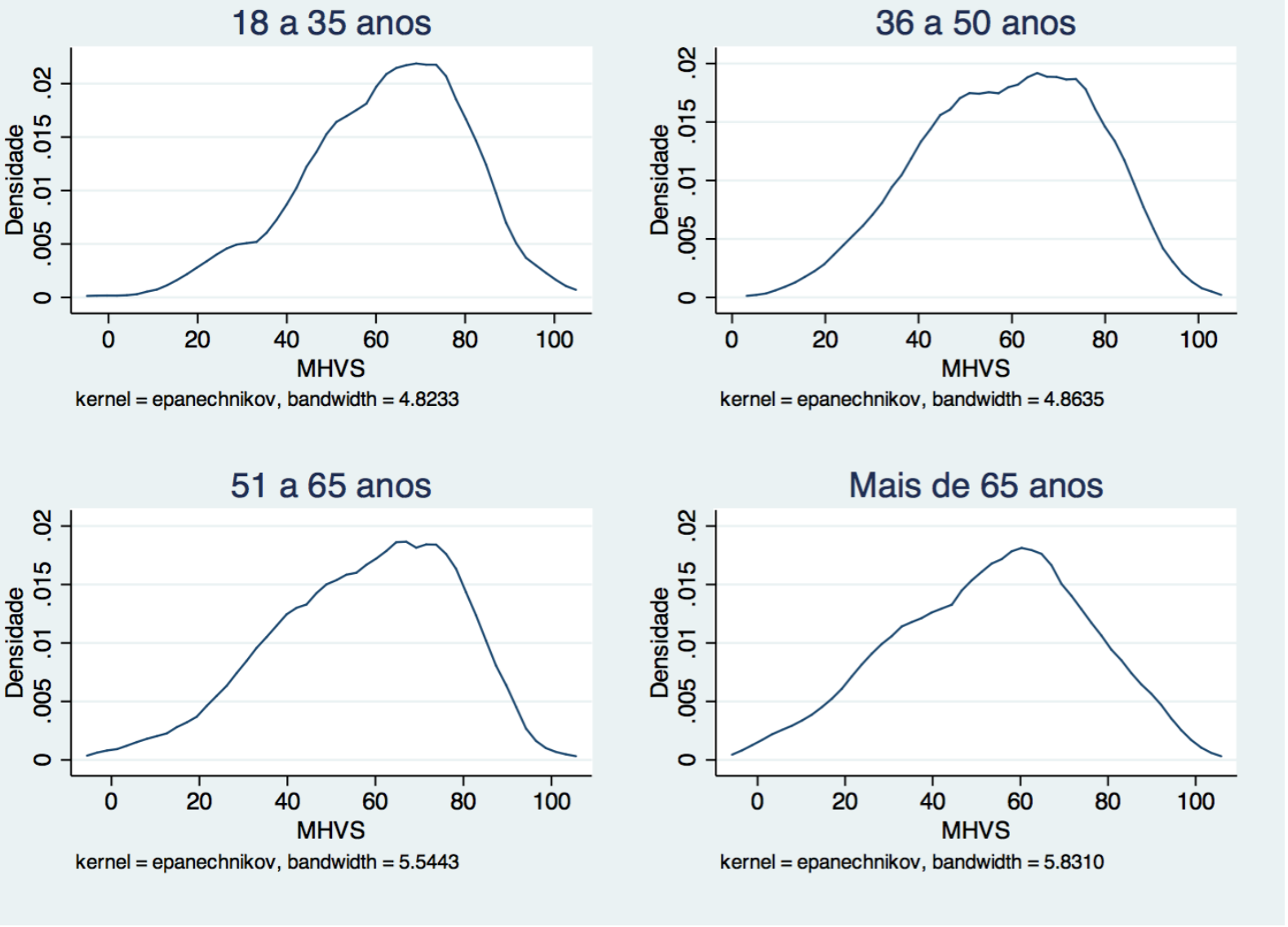
- Literature:
  - relationship of age, education level attained and unemployment vs mental health
  - but are effects homogeneous and independent across these factors?
- our contribution – the impact of unemployment on perceived mental health may differ by age group and, within each age group, may vary according to the education level of the individual

- Survey: August 2014 – February 2015
- population 18+, living Amadora, Lisbon, Mafra and Oeiras
- sample collected of 1609 individuals, due to missing values – 1464 observations are used

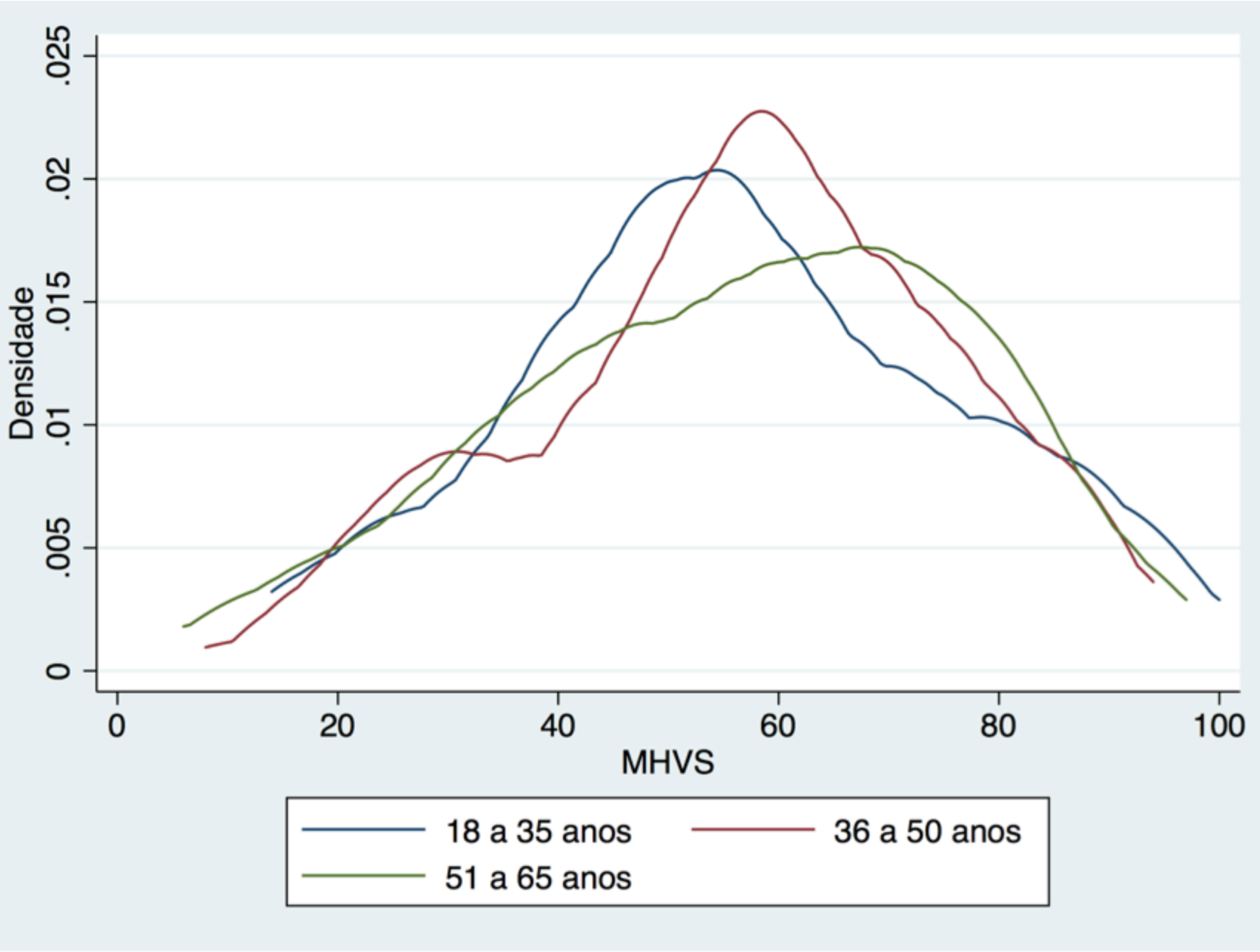
- measure of interest: mental health and vitality scale (MHVS), 0-worst to 100-best

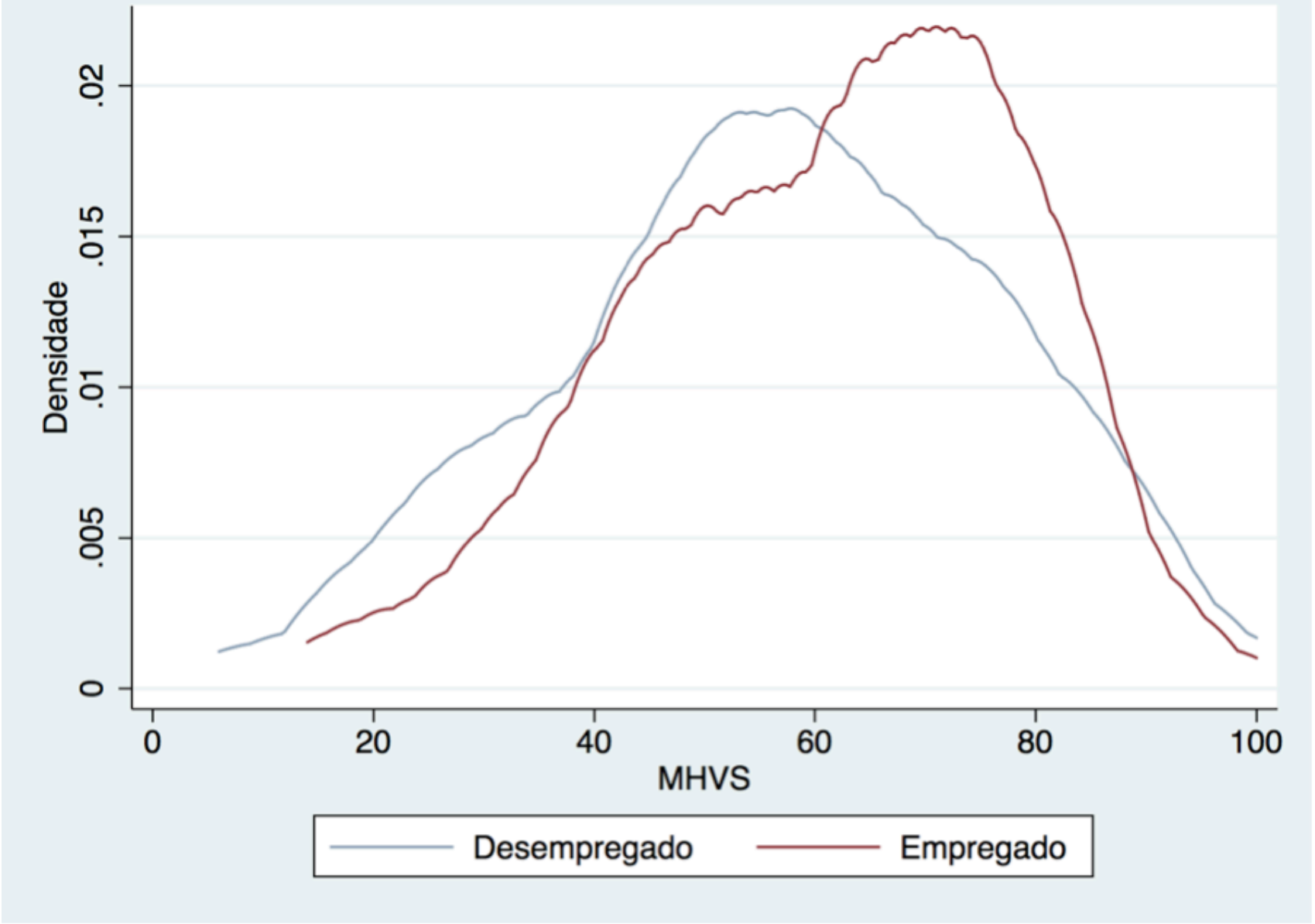
- Analysis:
  - basic descriptive statistics and differences
  - regression analysis using OLS

- socio-economic determinants of mental health – the usual suspects + some specific variables of this survey (being concerned with daily expenses and being difficult to meet current household expenditures)

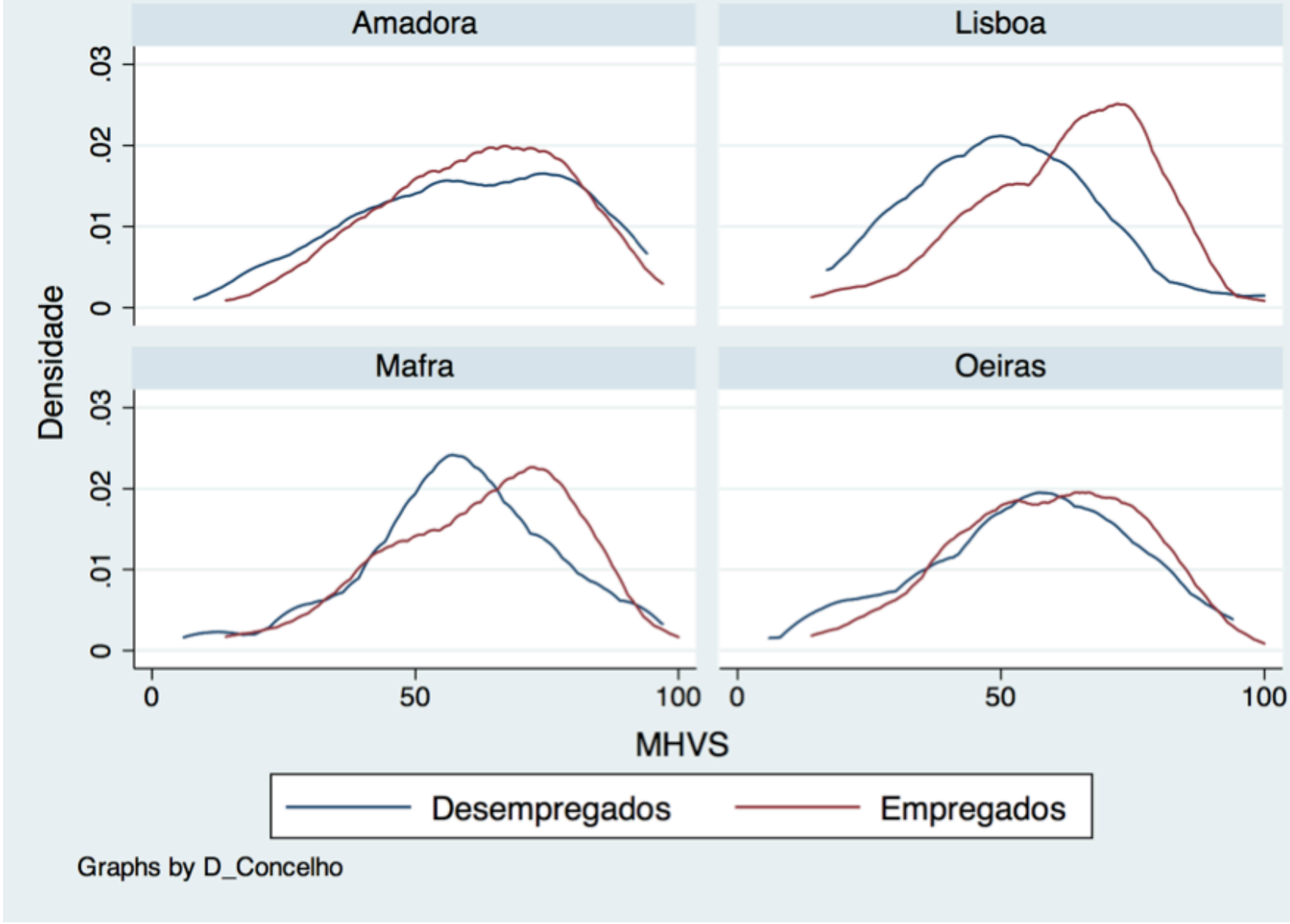


in this sample, the mental health score does not have a gradient on age


Densidade
0
.005
.01
.015
.02
.025
0
20
40
60
80
100
MHVS
18 a 35 anos
36 a 50 anos
51 a 65 anos



unemployed are more frequently located in the lower tail of the score



by municipality

selected estimates

variable	Value of impact on MHVS
Unemployed, < 35y, basic level education	-24,41
Unemployed, < 35y, secondary level	-27,73
Unemployed, < 35y, college+	-35,54
high financial constraints	-4,99
female	-7,15
unemployed	non-significant

Main results

- negative association between unemployment and mental health for individuals below 35 years
- the magnitude of this association increases with education
- unemployment impact on health varies with age (average impact is non-significant, effects only appears in younger group)
- labour market policies targeted to the young unemployed are an implication from this analysis

- Robustness of these findings?
- use the information from the 5th National Health Survey of 2014/2015 – different index for mental health: PHQ_8
- build variable as
  - score=1 if PHQ >=20 (very low mental health)
  - score=2 if PHQ >= 10 (low mental health)
  - score=2 if PHQ < 10 (good mental health)
- more observations, population weights, different set of controls, country-level data

- sample: 17684 observations with the required information, representing 8,656 million aged 15+
- provides distinct results from previous survey (irrespective of using 3-levels variable or score in range 0-24)

variable	coefficient / country	Lisbon area
unemployed	-0,163	-0,155
female	-0,380	-0,267
Unemployed, < 35y, basic level education	-0,185	-0,501
Unemployed, < 35y, secondary level	-0,325	-0,977
Unemployed, < 35y, college+	0,098	non-significant

impact on young differs according to education, but higher educat
protect mental health in this national sample

The results are not very different restricting to the Lisbon area – in the
national health survey, higher education seems to protect mental hea

And there are important education and income gradients .

Final remarks

- The SMAILE survey called our attention to a particular group – young unemployed, and an inverted education gradient for this group
- The SMAILE survey covered 4 municipalities
- Using a national survey that has become available, the role of this education gradient for the young unemployed seems to change.
- Still some road to go before a robust