

Social and gender gaps in youth political engagement

The influence of education

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PRESENTATION FOR THE UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY INSIGHTS 2024 POLICY
CONFERENCE

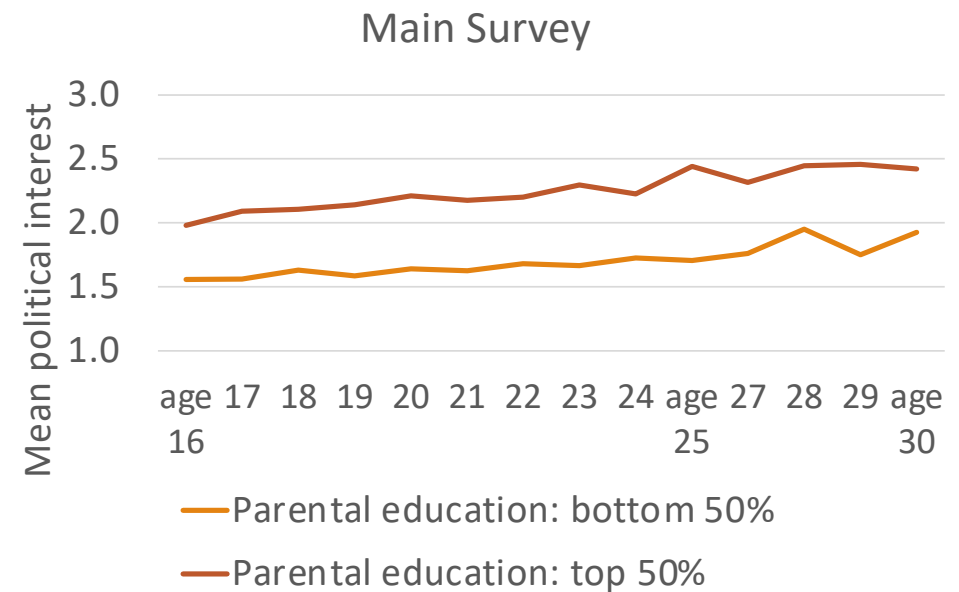
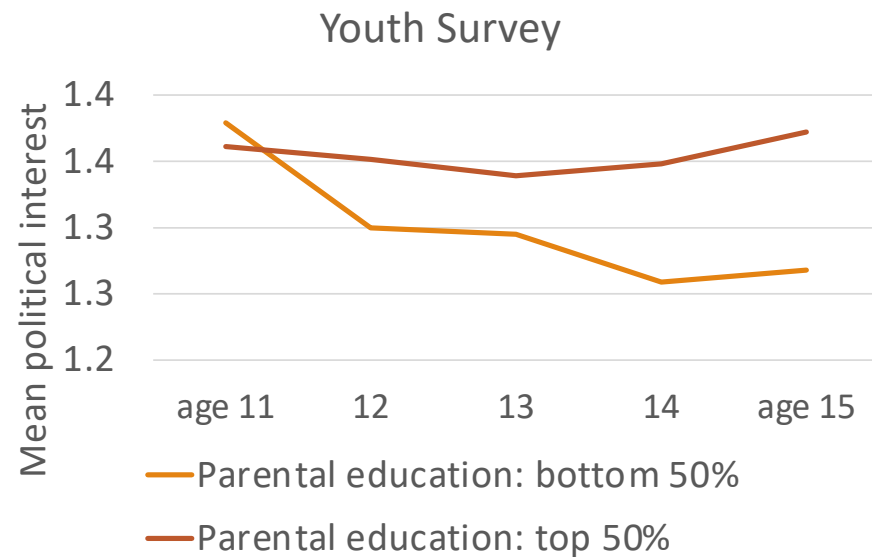
BROADWAY HOUSE, LONDON, 14 FEBRUARY 2024



Key questions of Nuffield funded project

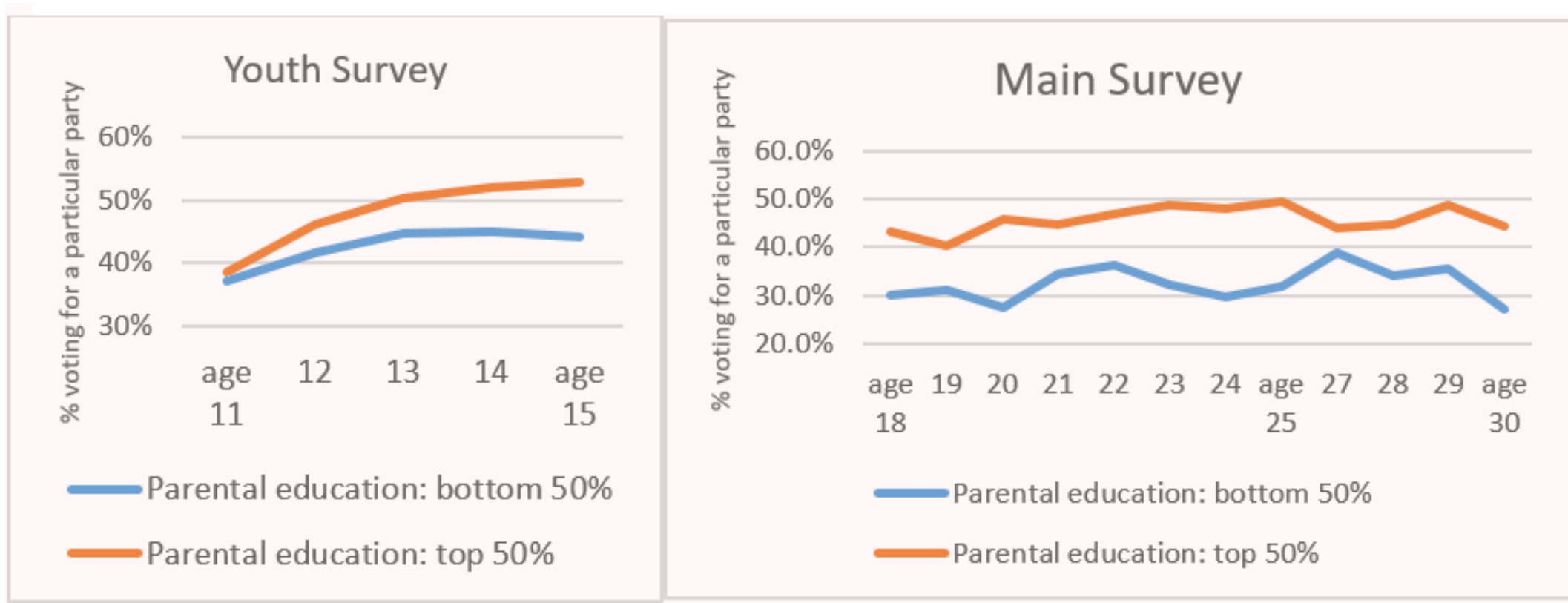
- How do inequalities in political engagement develop during adolescence?
- How does education influence these developments?

The growing social gap in political interest



Source: British Household Panel Study and Understanding Society

The growing social gap in voting intentions



The growing influence of parental education: possible mechanisms

In the home:

- Educational trips (going to museums & art galleries)
- Fostering educational aspirations
- Discussing culture, politics and the news



At school:

- school choice / social composition
- participatory civic learning opportunities



In the community:

- out of school activities
- choice of friends

Results:
analyses on
CELS data

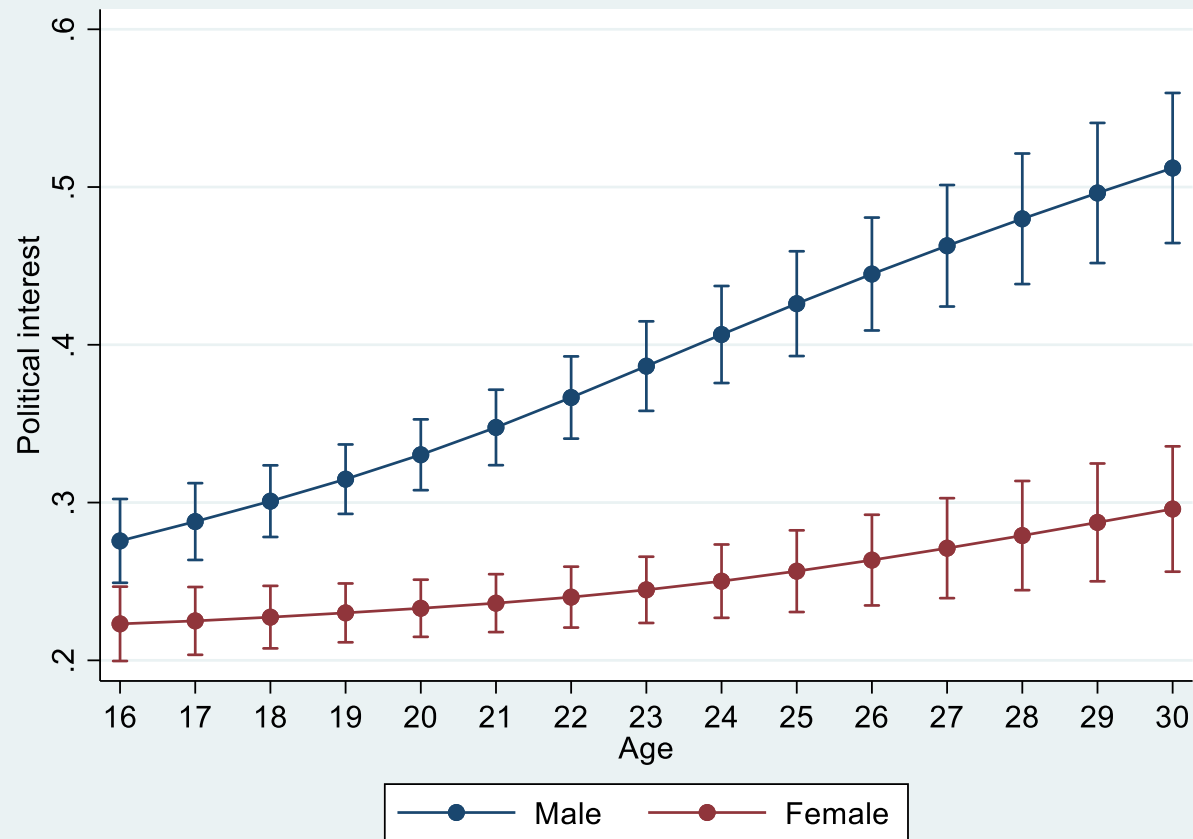
Direct and indirect effects of parental education on the 11-16 change in political interest (CELS data)						
	Model without the mechanisms		Model with the mechanisms			
	Change in political interest between ages 11-16		Change in political interest between ages 11-16		Sum of indirect effects of parental education on the 11-16 change via mechanisms	
	b	b/se	b	b/se	b	b/se
Parental education						
Both left education at 16 (ref cat)						
One left after college; the other at 16	.05	1.6	.02	0.6	.11***	3.9
Both left after college	.01	0.1	-.03	-0.8	.12***	3.7
One studied at uni; the other left earlier	.12***	4.1	.07*	2.3	.17***	4.1
Both studied at uni	.21***	5.5	.10*	2.6	.34***	4.8
Mechanisms						
School SES			.24***	3.6		
In-school political activities			.07***	4.2		
Open climate			.04*	2.4		
Friends not interested in politics			-.11***	-10.4		
Civic activities outside school			-.01	-0.3		
Gender	-.13***	-5.4	-.14***	-6.2		
White British	-.05~	-1.7	-.01	-0.1		
R ² (in %)	7.6		28.0			
RMSEA	.051					
N	3894					

~ P < 0.1; * P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01; *** P < 0.00

Direct and indirect effects of parental education on the 10-15 change in political interest (YSUS data)						
	Model without the mechanisms		Model with the mechanisms			
	Change in political interest between ages 10 and 15		Change in political interest between ages 10 and 15		Sum of indirect effects of parental education on the 10-15 change via mechanisms	
	b	b/se	b	b/se	b	b/se
Parental education						
Both completed lower secondary (Is) (ref cat)						
One completed college; the other completed Is	.01	0.3	.02	0.4	-.00	-0.5
Both completed college	-.02	-0.5	-.04	-0.8	.01	1.2
One completed university; the other left earlier	.01	0.3	-.00	-0.1	.02*	2.4
Both completed university	15**	3.5	.11**	2.6	.03**	3.3
Mechanisms						
My parents take me to museums or art galleries			.04**	2.7		
We discuss books at home			-.01	-0.4		
Educational aspirations			.15**	3.3		
Gender	-.05~	-1.8	-.04~	1.7		
White British	.01	0.4	.02	0.5		
R ² (in %)	14.4		15.5			
RMSEA *	.090					
N	1213					

~ P < 0.1; * P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01; *** P < 0.001

Results:
analyses on
Youth Survey
data



The growing
gender gap in
political interest

(probability of being
quite and very
interested)

Reasons for the growing gender gap suggested in the literature

Early childhood:

The role of parents in socializing children in distinct gender roles
(parental education and gender attitudes)



Adolescence:

- Educational level and track
(different effects of civic learning opportunities
+ gender segregation in vocational tracks)

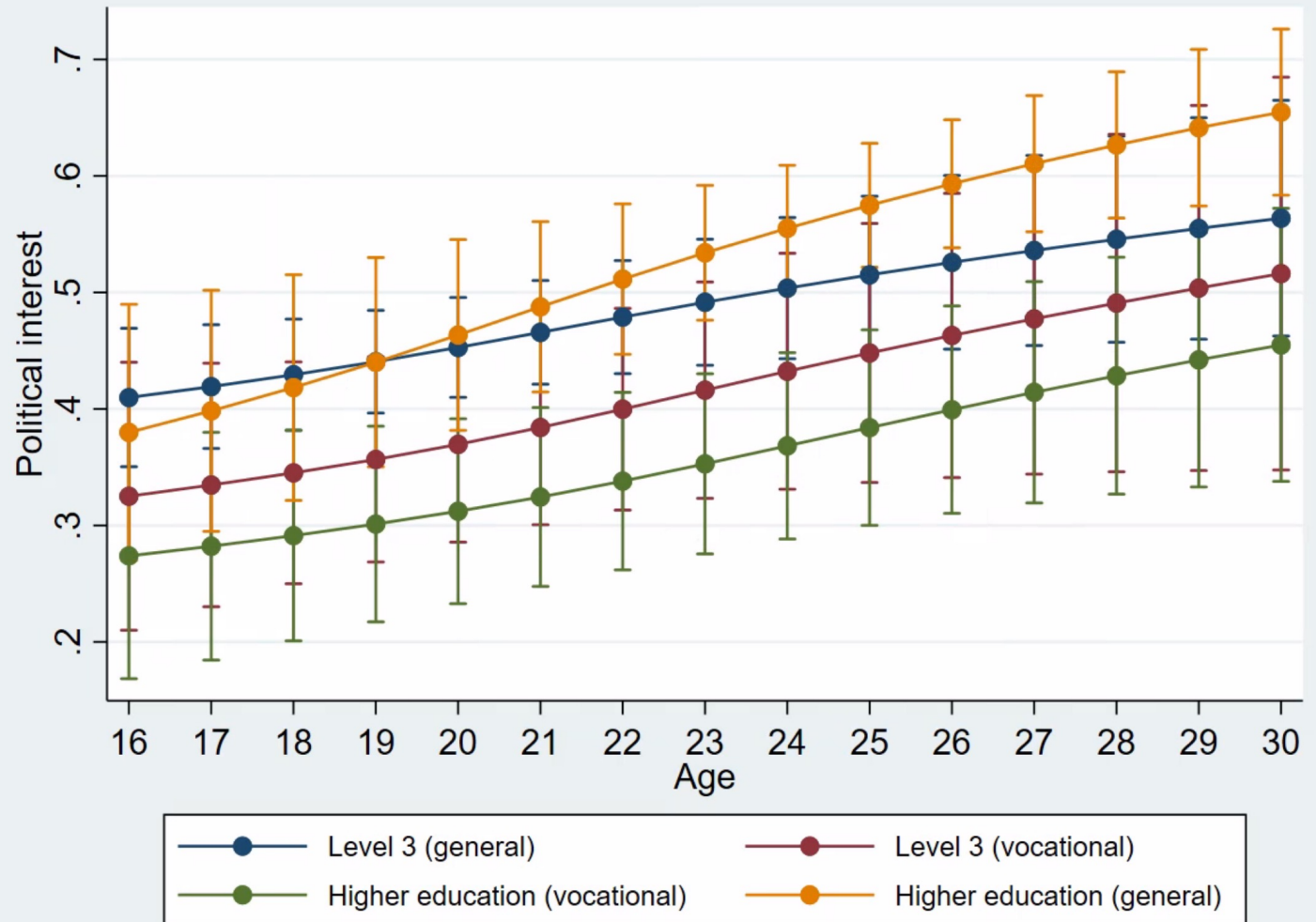


Adulthood:

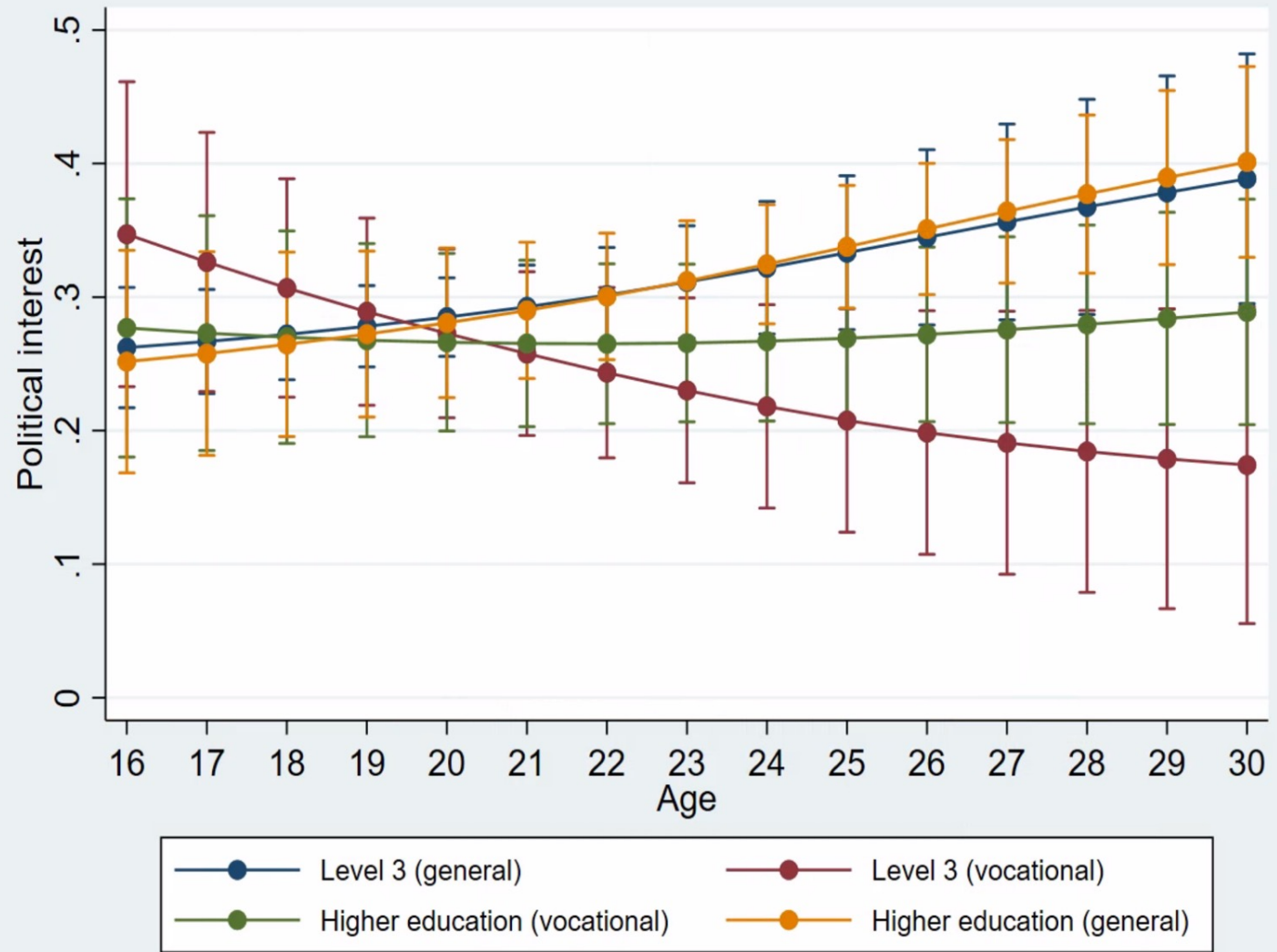
- Difference in resources (jobs, income, civic participation)
- Starting a family



The development of political interest among men by educational pathway

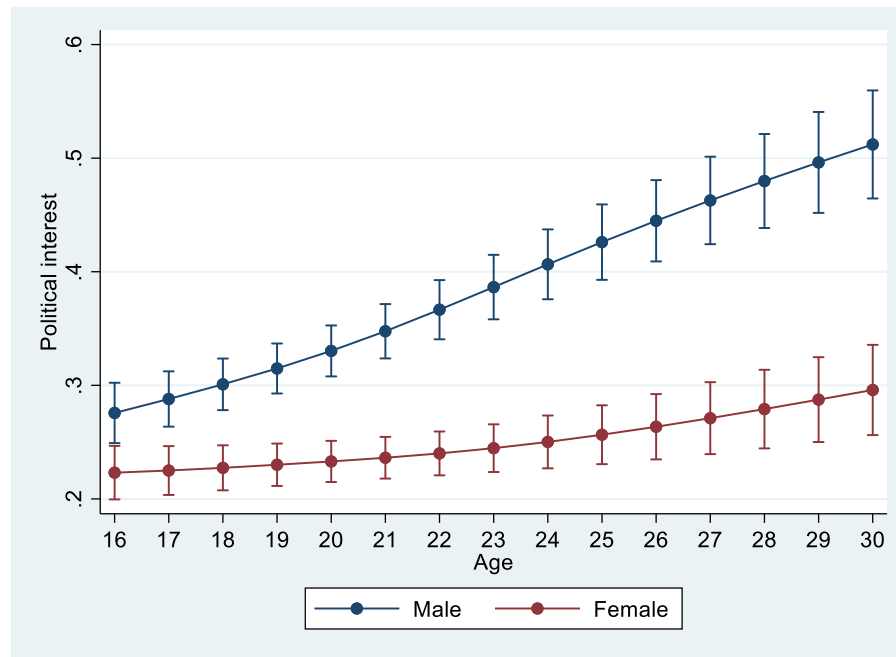


The development of political interest among women by educational pathway

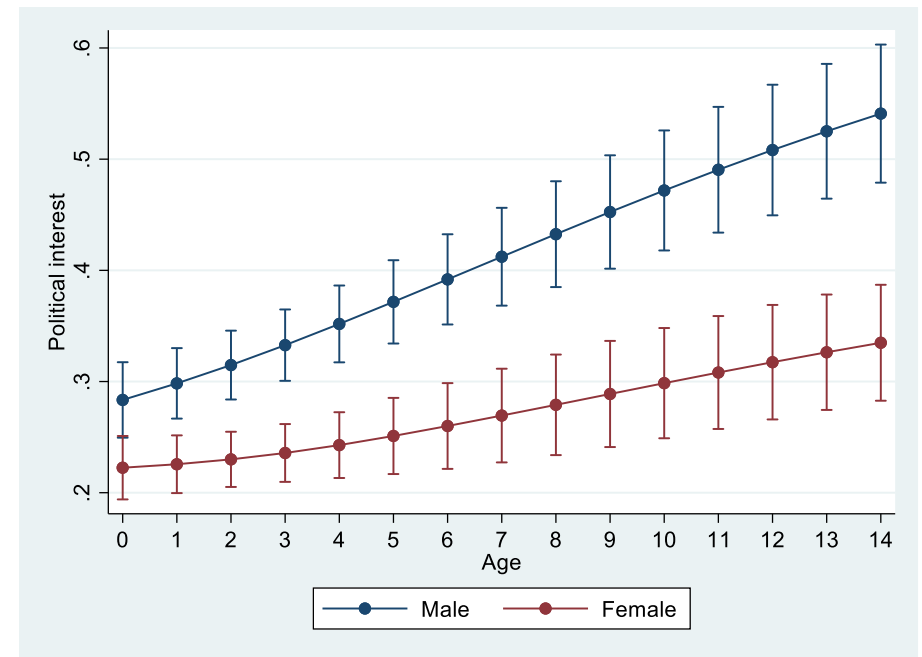


The development of the gender gap before and after accounting for all the explanatory variables (probabilities)

BEFORE



AFTER



Implications for policy and practice

THE GROWING SOCIAL GAP

- Reduce school social segregation
- More participatory civic learning activities in schools with a disadvantaged intake
- Ensuring that all children take part in these activities (active role of teacher)

THE GROWING GENDER GAP

Provide more civic learning opportunities in the female dominated vocational tracks